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Spatial Awareness and Social Construction Behind Selayar's Eclectic Attitudes to Choosing a Personal Name

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Abstract

Tulisan ini mengkaji sebuah fenomena unik yang terdapat dalam kehidupan sosial salah satu masyarakat di Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan yang tinggal di Pulau Selayar, yaitu sikap eklektik mereka dalam memilih nama diri. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, dengan menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Selayar, khususnya sebelum tahun 1990-an, memiliki kebiasaan memberikan nama kepada anak-anak mereka yang dikaitkan dengan benda-benda berharga atau gelar kebangsawanan. Dalam analisis sosiologi ruang, fenomena ini dapat dilihat sebagai sebuah kesadaran keruangan dan konstruksi sosial budaya, terutama dalam kaitannya dengan sosialisasi.

Keywords: *Kesadaran Ruang, Konstruksi Sosial, Nama Diri*

Abstrak

This paper examines a unique phenomenon found in the social life of one of the communities in South Sulawesi Province who live on Selayar Island, namely their eclectic attitude in choosing a personal name. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research, using data collection techniques namely observation, interviews and documentation. The results show that the Selayar community, especially before the 1990s, had a habit of giving names to their children that were associated with valuable objects or titles of nobility. In the sociology of space analysis, this phenomenon can be perceived as a spatial awareness and socio-cultural construction, especially in relation to socialization.

Kata Kunci: *Spatial Awareness, Social Construction, Personal Name*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of geographical space (Nunes, 1991), Indonesia is envisioned as a pluralistic country in terms of religion, ethnicity, language (Pradhan & Visweswaran, 2011), and various other socio-cultural attributes. Its people, who reside and live in various parts of the country, develop based on their own traditions and cultural heritage (A. Ahmadin, 2024), which also serves as a distinctive feature that distinguishes them from other communities. The diversity of these socio-cultural aspects makes Indonesia appear as a country with a unique society that has always been an object of visit and research for many people who come from various countries. In the mountainous geographical space, a distinctive way of life and culture is idolized in accordance with the conditions of its ecological space (Yang, Bao, & Liu, 2020), as well as in the coastal geographical space (Tolvanen & Kalliola, 2008) showing its own characteristics, and the people who inhabit the type of geographical space in rural (Tolvanen & Kalliola, 2008) and urban areas (Weeks, 2010) have their own characteristics.

One of the provinces in Indonesia that has received a lot of attention from world researchers is South Sulawesi, which is inhabited by four main ethnic groups, namely: Makassar, Bugis, Mandar and Toraja. Although the four ethnic groups share many similarities in terms of cultural heritage, each has its own distinctive features. One of the Makassar sub-ethnic groups that serves as the unit of analysis in this paper is Selayar, which has an interesting social and cultural heritage.

The Selayar people have a habit of choosing and naming their children after valuable objects or using the name of a noble title before the name. Some examples include: Daeng Bulaeng (called *Dembu*), Intan Daeng Sikamar, Andi Tikno', Andi Mulia, Patta Arung, Andi Ratu, Andi Raja, and many others. This naming trend continued until the introduction of Islam to the Selayar Islands. Even after Islam became the religion of the Selayar people, this tendency to give names like this was then blended and juxtaposed with Islamic names.

The eclectic nature of the Selayar people's choice of names for their children is interesting to study in relation to spatial awareness and social construction. The famous English poet William Shakepeare (Holderness, 2015) once said what's in a name (Spevack, 1993), but for the people of Selayar, a name is everything. So important and precious is the meaning of a name that the people of Selayar do not just choose any name, especially since this tendency is legitimized by the principle that a name is a prayer and the best

hope for its owner. This paper will examine the reasons why Selayarese people (Suhaeb, 2022) choose this type of name in relation to social construction and the extent to which the social implications are linked to spatial awareness and practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is descriptive research using qualitative data both for explanation and analysis (M. Ahmadin, 2022). The study approach uses the sociology of space perspective, to explain forms of social construction and spatial awareness (Gans, 2002). The data collection process uses observation techniques, namely observing the social behavior of people who have names like the examples mentioned earlier (Wildemuth, 2016). Interviews were conducted especially with community leaders, descendants of the nobility, religious leaders, ordinary people, and those who have sufficient knowledge about the object and subject of this research study. The documentation technique was used to find documents relating to Selayar society in a broad sense (Suhaeb, Ahmadin, Sari, & Kaseng, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning of Personal Names for Selayar People

Discussing the meaning of names for Selayar people in the context of social and cultural identity (Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011) must use a historical sociology paradigm and approach (Aminzade, 1992). This is because the process of name selection and the development of Selayarese names has taken place over a long period of time (Ahmadin, 2022). Sociologically, the meaning of a name for the people of Selayar is not simply a prayer and best wishes for the owner of the name, but more than that it is a social construction based on a set of goal-oriented cultural values (Schwartz, 2006). Research into people's preferences in choosing names for their children shows that there are three categories of names, namely: (1) names associated with the identity of social status, (2) names that symbolize glory for the owner, and (3) names associated with important birthdays. These three categories constitute the construction design for the setting of Selayar people's eclectic attitude in choosing names for their children as well as the basis for their goal orientation in relation to spatial awareness.

For the first category, names are related to social status, such as: Baso Daeng, Daeng Pattola, Baso Opu, Opu Lolo, Baho Opu, Patta Bolong, Patta Lolo, Patta Lasang, Patta Buki, Andi Ratu, Andi Raja, Raja Pati, Raja Indah, and many others (Ahmadin, 2017). In the

perspective of Sociology, the motivation for giving names like this can be seen as a social construction (Danziger, 1997) driven by the desire to preserve their social strata (the descendants of nobles). Even more than that, it can be perceived as a "social capital" oriented tendency for a child in the future (M. Ahmadin, 2019).

The second category includes names associated with symbols of nobility (Romaniello & Lipp, 2016), such as Baso Intang, Daeng Bulaeng and many others. A look at Selayar's history reveals a similar practice, especially during the royal period, when it was customary to give titles to respected figures of the day. In the lontara' on the Epic of Bulaenna Parangia, the Tanete king, I Maddukelleng Daeng Silasa, describes some of the names attached to the king. Names such as Intanna Tonjo (Intan from Tonjo), Zamarru'na Kassa' Bumbung (Emerald from Kassa' Bumbung), Mutu Manikanna Butta Barro' (Mutu Manikam from Butta Barro), and others (Ahmadin, 2017).

The third category is no less interesting, namely naming based on the momentum of birth (Gage, Wood, Gay, & Akilimali, 2024), such as Andi Syawal (born in the month of Syawal), Rajja (born in the month of Rajab), Sabang (born in the month of Sa'ban), Saffara (born in the month of Shafar), and others. Also unique are those who were born by chance when the father was cutting down Oro (a type of bamboo), so he then named him "Oro" or was sharpening bamboo (*Parring* in Selayar language), so his son was named *"Parring"*. Even more unique is the fact that a baby is born just after the mother has washed the dishes in the kitchen (in *Sonrong*, the name of the dishwashing area in Selayar), hence the name Sonrong (Ahmadin, 2017).

One interesting thing related to the name is that there is a habit of most Selayar people in the past to write the birth time of their child on the inside of the house that is difficult to reach so that other people do not erase it. Usually written on the upper wall or the living room of the house in a fairly high place. This habit is one way to make documents or notes in a simple (traditional) form but is very effective in helping to remember the date, month, and year of birth.

Forms of Social Construction and Space Consciousness

The basic form of social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 2016) with the background of the Selayar people's eclectic attitude in choosing a name, can be perceived as an effort to form an identity, both in the form of maintaining the old social status and an effort to search and then socialize it. Referring to Erikson's view, the process of forming the social identity (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004) of the

Selayar people takes place slowly in a series of long time processes. Erikson patterns social identity into two types, namely personal identity and ego identity. The first identity is based on a series of life experiences experienced by a person and he remains as the same person. Meanwhile, the second identity is more of a person's success in finding a concept of self-confidence and pride (Stanculescu, 2012). The cultural name on the one hand reflects the inheritance of social identity which is considered a cultural necessity, especially for the descendants of the nobility and on the other hand means strengthening identity (Gorvine, Karam, & Eovaldi, 2008) as a differentiator between oneself or one's group and other people or other social groups.

This social identity theory can also be found in the thoughts of Tajfel and Turner which is an inseparable part of Talcott Parson's self-concept as something that comes from the group to which the person belongs (Carter, 2010). What is the self-concept of the Selayar people in their social interactions (Ahmadin, 2022), it can be traced historically that the Selayar people like other communities in South Sulawesi are very thick with respect for social status (Rege, 2008) in relation to nobility (Asch, 2011). Thus, the perception of the importance of social status with a noble dimension is formed among the community and even institutionalized. The basic assumption is to be an element of social differentiation between themselves and others. In addition, having a good and meaningful name is one of the supporting elements for a person's confidence to appear in public spaces (Gehl, 2007). This means that the name is also a source of pride and can trigger a person's enthusiasm to mingle with many people in various activities or events.

The motive for choosing a name in relation to symbols of nobility reflected through names that use terms from valuable objects can be perceived as a form of spatial awareness (Ishikawa, 2021) of the Selayar people. Based on the statement of one of the research informants, that someone has a name that symbolizes glory is a moral burden that is carried so that all behavior and actions must reflect glory (Chappell, 2011). They will be ashamed if they behave or act in a way that violates the ethics or norms (Therborn, 2002) that apply in the local community. Even more than that, the moral burden carried is also related to the reputation of the extended family (Cox & Fafchamps, 2007), so ideally they should protect it.

Socio-Cultural Implications

The social implications of the Selayar community's tendency to regard names not only as prayers and best wishes, but also as symbols of glory, are positive on the one

hand and negative on the other. *Firstly*, sociologically, the symbol of glory juxtaposed with one's name functions as a social control mechanism (Likki & Staerklé, 2014) that polarizes one's attitudes and actions in society (Cooper, Kelly, & Weaver, 2001). It is also a marker or measure for ideal behavior that is used as a measure to judge a person. For example, if someone behaves politely, speaks softly, has great responsibility, and other positive things related to personality traits, then other people will say that it is natural because he is indeed a descendant of noblemen. Conversely, if there is someone who commits actions or deeds that deviate from the prevailing norms even though he is of noble descent, then other people will say that it is useless for him to be of honorable descent because it does not match his personality.

Secondly, certain names that symbolize a person's nobility (Romaniello & Lipp, 2016), either because of their high social status (Rege, 2008) or good character, are usually speculative and fabricated. Someone who wants to be considered a child of noble descent, then gives a name like the name that signifies the nobility. As a result, the names that characterize nobility (Jayaraman, 2005) have become so commonly used among the Selayar community (Razak et al., 2020) that it is difficult to distinguish between them. On the other hand, there is an apologetic attitude among many people that giving names that symbolize nobility (Gibson, 2021) is the best hope for their children according to their names. This is also legitimized by many people's perception that names are prayers (Souag, 2015) for their owners.

CONCLUSION

The eclectic attitude of Selayar people in choosing their children's names is driven by two main factors. *First*, social construction, namely: (1) an action that arises from the awareness of the Selayar people themselves as subjects to an external situation where they consider the name to have its own meaning and social status, (2) an action to achieve a certain goal related to the tendency to want to maintain the title of family nobility (3), the results of assessment and evaluation of their actions where the call of their name becomes a source of pride and has a noble value in the eyes of others, and (4) based on the moral principle that a name is symbolically an important element that determines a person's social position in society. Second, awareness that refers to the basic assumption that space is a social product based on values, encourages a person to choose a name with the consideration that the name is part of the socialization of self and family. In public spaces, especially in rural areas (kampung), names characterized by

noble descent affect the treatment and acts of respect of others to them. This is where the practice of seizing space or creating a kind of hegemony by someone in order to gain social and cultural influence occurs.

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