

THE DYNAMICS OF MAKASSAR CULTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL LIFE

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Abstract

The cultural dynamics in Makassar and their implications for national life. Makassar, as one of Indonesia's cultural centers, boasts a diverse cultural landscape reflecting the interaction of various ethnic groups, such as the Bugis, Makassar, Toraja, and Mandar communities. This study employs a qualitative approach, including literature review, field observations, and in-depth interviews, to identify cultural aspects that play a role in shaping identity and social solidarity. The research findings indicate that traditions, education, and cultural interactions significantly contribute to strengthening national life. Therefore, preserving Makassar's culture is essential in maintaining local identity and enriching Indonesia's cultural diversity as a whole.

Keywords: Makassar Culture, National Life, Traditions, Cultural Diversity, Cultural Preservation.

A. INTRODUCTION

Culture is a reflection of a nation's identity, encompassing traditions, customs, language, arts, and values that shape the way of life of a community. As Geertz (1973) emphasized, culture serves as a set of symbolic frameworks that give meaning to human actions and interactions. In Indonesia, known for its rich cultural diversity, each region has unique characteristics that define it. Makassar, as the capital city of South Sulawesi Province and one of the largest cities in Indonesia, exemplifies a dynamic and diverse cultural landscape. This city not only has a long history, from the era of the Gowa and Tallo kingdoms to its role as a center of modern trade and education, but it also reflects a vibrant interaction between tradition and modernity.

The cultural phenomena in Makassar are clearly visible in various aspects of its society. A prominent example is the celebration of cultural festivals, such as the Makassar Cultural Festival. This event not only celebrates local cultural heritage but also serves to strengthen the sense of unity among a society with diverse ethnic backgrounds. On the other hand, Makassar has become a hub of migration and cultural convergence, where people from various ethnic groups, including Bugis, Makassar, Toraja, and Mandar, live side by side and influence each other. The synergy of these interactions illustrates Indonesia's cultural mosaic, where differences are celebrated as a source of strength (Rahman, 2020).

The daily life of Makassar's people is also influenced by strong local culture. For instance, the renowned Makassar cuisine, such as Coto Makassar and Pisang Epe, is more than just food; it

reflects the traditions and values of the community. Culinary traditions often serve as living artifacts of culture, preserving historical values and practices within modern societies (Yanti, 2019). The people of Makassar highly value communal cooperation, as seen in various aspects of life, including the organization of traditional events and shared celebrations. This shows that cultural values can serve as a foundation for building strong social solidarity, which is crucial for national life.

However, the cultural dynamics in Makassar also face challenges, especially in the rapidly growing era of globalization. The influence of foreign cultures through media, technology, and fast-paced information flows can lead to changes in the community's lifestyle. Globalization poses both challenges and opportunities for cultural preservation, requiring communities to innovate without losing their cultural essence (Smith, 2001). Nevertheless, the people of Makassar have shown an extraordinary ability to adapt, preserving traditions while integrating modern elements into their lives. This process creates space for cultural innovation that aligns with contemporary developments, while still maintaining the uniqueness of the local identity.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to understand the cultural dynamics in Makassar and its implications for national life. Qualitative research is particularly effective in exploring complex cultural phenomena and understanding the interplay between local traditions and broader societal impacts (Creswell, 2014). The methods used include literature review, collecting, and analyzing various sources related to Makassar culture. Field observations were conducted on cultural activities such as festivals and traditional ceremonies, as these methods provide nuanced insights into cultural practices and the perspectives of community members (Sugiyono, 2017), alongside in-depth interviews with key informants, including community leaders and youth representatives.

The collected data were thematically analyzed to identify emerging patterns and themes, as thematic analysis enables researchers to systematically identify and interpret patterns within qualitative data, particularly in cultural studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the relationship between Makassar's culture and national identity. The research findings will be discussed within the broader context of Indonesian culture, providing recommendations for the preservation and development of local culture in response to globalization. This is essential as local cultures in Indonesia, including Makassar, must be preserved and adapted to counteract the homogenizing effects of globalization (Rahman, 2020).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Cultural Diversity in Makassar

Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi, is known for its highly heterogeneous society. South Sulawesi is home to four major ethnic groups: Bugis, Makassar, Mandar, and Toraja. Historically, South Sulawesi had three major kingdoms: Bone, Gowa, and Luwu. Each of these kingdoms influenced the lives of the people in South Sulawesi; people of noble descent traditionally occupied the highest social strata. In the past, individuals with royal or noble lineage held a privileged position in society, especially in Makassar. However, over time, this social structure has gradually shifted (Rochmawati, 2017).

The people of Makassar value certain cultural principles that shape their daily lives and interactions. One significant concept is *Siri'* (self-respect or honor), which the Makassarese hold in high regard. This principle is a core aspect of their identity, guiding them in every action. *Siri'* is so essential that the Makassarese would defend it at any cost, even with their lives. This is captured in a saying that translates roughly as, "One can live because of shame, but without it, one is as worthless as a lifeless body."

Makassarese culture also includes *Siri' Na Pacce*, where *Siri'* represents self-respect, and *Pacce* (or *Pesse* in Bugis) conveys empathy or shared pain for others. The people of Makassar highly value empathy, ensuring that they are always supportive and compassionate, particularly when someone is facing hardship.

Unique to Makassar is the *Phinisi*, a traditional type of boat recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2017.

Historical Development and Preservation Makassar's history is deeply intertwined with colonial influence, leaving behind a wealth of historical buildings and structures, such as government offices, schools, houses of worship, hospitals, and military facilities. Urban development and modernization have impacted Makassar's historical heritage, leading to the need to preserve and promote the city's identity through tangible and intangible cultural resources (Asmunandar, 2020).

Tangible cultural resources in Makassar include old buildings that allow for an interpretation of historical lifestyles, social aspects, religious beliefs, and political structures. These old buildings serve as cultural symbols and inspire a sense of unity and identity among the people. To preserve the unique cultural values of Makassar, there is a need to promote understanding of intangible cultural elements, including arts, social organizations, and language, all of which contribute to strengthening the local cultural identity and, by extension, national identity.

Role of Education and Cultural Heritage Cultural resources, both tangible and intangible, serve as educational media to understand past lifestyles and shape the future. Early education about Makassar's history can instill a sense of ownership and encourage people to participate in preserving cultural resources. This educational approach helps to nurture nationalism and a sense of cultural identity within the Makassar community, allowing modernization to proceed without undermining traditional values.

Protecting and preserving these cultural resources is essential for building a cultured society. Makassar's cultural heritage, particularly in historical areas, should be safeguarded by regulations such as local government decrees that control land use and maintain the existence of the old town area. For intangible cultural preservation, reviving art studios and traditional cultural performances can provide knowledge about Makassar's diverse heritage and its longstanding multi-ethnic composition (Asmunandar, 2020).

Government and Community Support All these preservation efforts depend heavily on the seriousness of the local government in implementing cultural policies. Without full support from the authorities, these efforts may be in vain. Equally important is the role of the South Sulawesi community, especially the people of Makassar, who are the true custodians of cultural resources.

2. The Role of Tradition in Social Life

Traditions in Makassar, particularly those rooted in the Bugis and Makassar ethnicities, hold a deeply significant role in the social lives of the community. Key aspects of this role include:

a. Strengthening Cultural Identity

Traditions like Angngaru and Assuro Maca serve to reinforce the cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar people. Angngaru, for instance, is a sacred oath pronounced by an individual to the king or leader, symbolizing loyalty and dedication to both the leader and the community. This tradition not only connects individuals to their historical and cultural roots but also fosters a collective sense of pride.

b. Social and Community Rites

Traditions such as Assuro Maca involve communal rituals where people gather to pray and share food in gratitude for blessings and harvests. These gatherings strengthen bonds within the community and provide positive social interactions. They also honor ancestors and offer prayers, cultivating mutual respect and a sense of heritage within the community.

c. Teaching Social Values

Through these traditions, social values like cooperation, gratitude, and respect for ancestors are passed down to younger generations. Traditions such as Mappere and Mappadandang not only celebrate the harvest but also instill the importance of teamwork and appreciation for the creator. In this way, tradition acts as an informal educational tool that shapes the character of individuals in society.

d. Adaptation to Change

The people of Makassar show resilience in adapting traditions to modern times. Although many traditions are religious or agrarian in nature, modern elements are often incorporated without compromising their original essence. This cultural flexibility allows the community to stay relevant in a contemporary world.

e. Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Traditions in Makassar play an essential role in preserving local cultural heritage. Through practices such as Mapacci (a wedding ceremony) and Mabbaca Doang (prayer recitation), the community not only celebrates important moments but also ensures that cultural values remain alive and are passed down to future generations (Rahim, 2017).

3. Cultural Interaction and Globalization

Cultural interaction in Makassar within the context of globalization reflects a complex dynamic, where local culture interacts with strong global influences. Here are three main aspects of this interaction:

a. The Influence of Global Media on Local Culture

Globalization in media has introduced various foreign cultures, such as Korean popular culture, which significantly influences teenagers in Makassar. Studies indicate that these adolescents tend to adopt elements from these foreign cultures, sometimes neglecting their own local culture. This shift is evident from the rising interest in Korean music and films, which contribute to changing values and cultural identity among youth in the city (Fadilah et al., 2023). Social media and digital platforms play a crucial role in accelerating this process, providing wider access to global content (Ayatullah et al., 2024).

b. Positive and Negative Impacts of Globalization

Globalization brings diverse effects on local culture in Makassar. On one hand, positive impacts include greater openness to other cultures and enrichment of local culture through interactions with new elements. On the other hand, there are significant negative impacts, such as the marginalization of local culture and the erosion of traditional identity. Society increasingly prefers a modern lifestyle influenced by foreign norms, which can threaten the preservation of traditional values (Andika, 2021).

c. The Role of Youth in Cultural Preservation

The younger generation plays a crucial role in shaping the direction of this cultural interaction. Although influenced by global culture, there are efforts to preserve and revive local culture through education and community activities. Research indicates that youth involvement in cultural activities can help maintain the presence of local culture even amid strong globalization currents (Ayatullah et al., 2024).

4. Education and Cultural Preservation

Education and cultural preservation in Makassar play a vital role in maintaining local cultural identity and passing on the values of local wisdom to future generations. In this context, education serves not only as a tool for knowledge transfer but also as a means to internalize and preserve the existing culture.

a. Education as a Means of Cultural Preservation

Education in Makassar integrates local cultural values into the curriculum and daily practices. The local wisdom of the Makassar people, such as the principle of *Siri'*, which emphasizes dignity and honor, inspires informal education. These values are indirectly taught through family and community interactions, where parents serve as role models in applying cultural values in everyday life.

b. Role of the Department of Culture

The Makassar City Department of Culture is responsible for formulating policies that support cultural preservation. Through various programs, such as capacity building and cultural festivals, the department strives to maintain cultural heritage and introduce Makassar culture to a broader audience. One of their missions is to create facilities that support cultural preservation, including developing museums that can serve as information and educational centers for local culture.

c. Local Wisdom in Economic Education

Local wisdom also plays a role in informal economic education. The Makassar community uses traditional values to manage family finances, where informal economic education naturally occurs in everyday life. This process is unscheduled and often incidental, making social interactions within the family environment crucial for preserving these values (Yani M., et al., 2021).

5. Implications of Culture for National Life

The cultural implications of Makassar on national life are highly significant, particularly through local values that emphasize *Siri'* (a sense of honor) and *Pacce* (compassion). These values not only shape individual character but also strengthen social cohesion within the community. In a national context, *Siri'*, meaning "shame" in terms of self-respect, and *Pacce*, meaning "compassion" or empathy, promote mutual respect and dignity among individuals—principles essential in building an inclusive national identity. However, the challenges of globalization and the influx of foreign cultures risk diluting these values, potentially leading to behavioral changes among younger generations. Thus, education and the preservation of local culture are crucial to maintaining the integrity of Indonesia's national identity, including in Makassar, so it remains relevant amid the currents of change (Yani M., et al., 2021).

D. CONCLUSION

The cultural dynamics of Makassar reflect the richness and diversity that characterize Indonesian society as a whole. Through preserved traditions, cross-cultural interactions, and preservation efforts, Makassar's culture becomes not only a local identity but also a contributor to the formation of a harmonious national life. The importance of cultural diversity in strengthening national unity cannot be overlooked, especially amid globalization, which increasingly blurs local cultural boundaries.

By involving the community, education, and policies that support cultural preservation, Makassar can serve as an example for other regions in efforts to maintain cultural identity in the modern era. Culture is not merely a legacy of the past but a source of inspiration that drives innovation and creativity in daily life. Through the reinforcement of cultural values, future generations are expected to continue the struggle to preserve cultural heritage while adapting to the times.

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