



**La Dunifa**

Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University, Baubau, Indonesia

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# СООБЩЕНИЯ

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## **CURRENT TRENDS IN NAME-GIVING PRACTICES OF THE BUTON PEOPLE: THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON THE ANTHROPNOMY OF SOUTHEAST SULAWESI**

The present paper deals with the current trends in name-giving among the Buton people, one of indigenous ethnicities of Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The traditional anthroponymic pattern of the Buton is typologically peculiar; it consists of an etymologically obscure element denoting the gender of the person, a marker of the noble status (upon the case), and a gender-neutral given name. Unfortunately, the indigenous given names, as well as the use of the traditional anthroponymic pattern have been in decline for decades, to the extent that they may get obliterated very soon. This study aims to identify (1) the degree of extinction of Buton personal names, (2) the most common borrowed personal names adopted by Buton people, and (3) the reasons of the decay of traditional naming practices as they are comprehended by people themselves. To this aim, a series of in-depth interviews and a quantitative analysis of official data retrieved from the Civil Registry and Population Bureau of the Buton Regency covering the period from 1997 to 2016 were carried out. The study found that the process of extinction of traditional names has drastically accelerated over the last twenty years and, as of today, has reached dangerous level. From 2012 to 2016, of 5,331 newborns, only 28 received traditional names. The interviews show that the Buton people consider traditional names to be inferior, awkward, out of date. They increasingly tend to adopt Arabic and Javanese personal names as well as names of Western origin that they regard to be more prestigious. This xenocentric trend in name-giving practices can be explained by the impact of globalization and, as for Arabic names, by the increasing significance of the religious factor.

**Key words:** Celebic languages, Buton (Butung), anthroponymy, anthroponymic pattern, identity, cultural heritage, globalization, xenocentrism, anthropological linguistics.

## 1. Introduction

This paper is aimed to analyse the current naming practices among the Butonese people, also known as Buton, Butuni, Butung or Wolio, one of 300 ethnic groups and tribes that populate Indonesia. This ethnicity constitutes a regency in Buton island, Southeast Sulawesi, and inhabit an area of about 2,488 km<sup>2</sup>. The total population of this regency, according to the 2017 national population census, is 312,502 people. In everyday communication, alongside the Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian national language), Buton people use three regional languages, namely Cia-cia, Pancana, and Wolio<sup>1</sup>.

Like other ethnic groups, Buton is a cultural community with deep-rooted traditions reflected also in the local naming practices. The native Buton tribe has unique personal names. It is characteristic, for example, that Buton personal names (BPN) include an element denoting the gender: *La* for a man and *Wa* for a woman. These two gender elements have no reliable etymologies and are semantically obscure for modern speakers of the three regional languages.

In Buton culture, there is a rigid social stratification between the nobility and the common people. Those who come from a noble family add to their name a nobility marker *Ode* which is placed after the gender element. Thus, the noble people's names consist of three parts: a gender element, a social status/caste marker, and a given name; e.g., *La Ode Rompone*, *La Ode Salega*, *La Ode Timounte*, *La Ode Turambana*, etc. (male names), and *Wa Ode Posambure*, *Wa Ode Tumbleka*, *Wa Ode Kamboy*, *Wa Ode Sadara*, etc. (female names). The names of common people consist of two parts: a gender element and a given name; e.g., *La Nturege*, *La Kalolly*, *La Kontesa*, *La Wigara*, *La Sisirimbone*, etc. (male names), and *Wa Angkekene*, *Wa Haiki*, *Wa Sampuroa*, *Wa Kampere*, *Wa Burense*, etc. (female names).

At first glance, the first part of the names looks like a given name (first name), and the last part appears as a surname (family name), which is commonly used in other cultures; however, these names are different. The real given name for Buton people is the second (for common people) or the third (for noble people) part of the name. Accordingly, in everyday life, since *La* and *Wa* are only gender elements, Buton people never call each other simply by *La* or *Wa*.

The given names of Buton are gender-neutral or androgynous (*epicene*) and may refer to both men and women, e.g., *La Rinta* (a man), *Wa Rinta* (a woman), *La Gurunci* (a man), *Wa Gurunci* (a woman), *La Kontesa* (a man), *Wa Kontesa*

<sup>1</sup> Cia-Cia and Pancana belong to the Muna-Buton group of languages while Wolio is part of the Wotu-Wolio languages. All three major regional languages belong to the Celebic sub-group of the Malayo-Polynesian languages, Austronesian language family, and have many similarities in terms of vocabulary and structure.

(a woman), *Wa Ode Konteresi* (a woman), *La Ode Konteresi* (a man), *Wa Ode Kakesana* (a woman), *La Ode Kakesana* (a man), etc.

However, nowadays this naming tradition remains a vague trace of the past. The globalization era has made the world so open, breaking down the barriers, and building bridges of understanding and communication among cultures. This should be largely taken positively, but on the other hand, this cultural blending endangers social and cultural minorities, which may be unable to preserve their identity. On the one hand, in the era of globalization, as stated by Eze [2014, 140], “people no longer see each other as strange bedfellows, but as individuals with common feelings, common understanding and common world view, which has resulted in the increase of human knowledge, better education, and advancement in science and technology.” On the other hand, Inglehart and Baker [2000] have long stated that modernization is a Western invention, a process that involves cultural and technological assimilation of non-western societies to the detriment of their traditional ethnicity and identity. The cultural homogenization is associated with the reduction in cultural diversity and the erosion of minor local cultures under the impact of global cultural industries affecting both material and non-material cultural phenomena [cf. Kirby, 2000; O’Connor, 2006; Ervin & Smith, 2008, etc.].

The Buton society, as part of this process, also shares the benefits of globalization as well as its negative effects. The impact of information and communication technology has made Buton people abandon their original system of personal names inherited from their ancestors and adopt the naming practices of other cultures that they consider more prestigious; the phenomenon is known as xenocentrism. As a result, the BPN have begun to be abandoned gradually and replaced by international names. The replacement of BPN with the names coming from other cultures is a growing and much supported tendency. This observation is based on the author’s twenty-year experience of teaching in various schools in the Buton Regency; it shows that the names of Arabs, the names of Western people, and the names from other domestic cultures are getting more and more prevalent among Buton people. In official documents (e.g., birth certificates, identity cards, diplomas, passports, driving licenses, etc.), the names such as *Agnes*, *Jessica*, *Anwar*, *Jonathan*, *Akbar*, *Ahmad*, *Mansour*, *Luisa*, *Abdullah*, *Chris*, *John*, etc. are commonly used. The native Buton people with BPN are very rare to find.

The present paper takes the viewpoint of anthropological linguistics discussing the personal name issue [cf. Bruck & Bodenhorn, 2006; Aksholokova, 2014]. This study addresses the following three goals:

- 1) measuring the degree of extinction of the native Buton personal names in the last two decades;
- 2) denoting the most popular personal names the Buton people prefer to replace their own personal names with;
- 3) studying the reasons for the decay of traditional naming practices as they are comprehended by the people.

## 2. Research Methodology

The main source of data reflecting the degree of extinction of BPN were the documents from Civil Registry and Population Bureau of the Buton Regency containing the names of people born from 1997 to 2017. A careful scrutiny was also conducted to reveal the most dominant names adopted and used as the substitution of BPN. An in-depth interview was also taken with 150 respondents coming from seven districts of the Buton Regency. The interviewees were people of the native Buton tribe (excluding immigrants and couples of mixed marriages). The course of the interview particularly led the respondents to elaborate on reasons why they abandon BPN in naming their children in favour of international names.

The results of the interview were analyzed qualitatively following the algorithm proposed by Miles and Huberman [1994, 10–11]. The analysis consisted of three steps: (1) data reduction: process of selecting, focusing, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcription; (2) data display: organizing data to categories; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification.

## 3. Findings

Table 1 below presents the number of children born in the Buton Regency during last two decades, having BPNs and names adopted from other cultures or non-BPNs accordingly. The table shows that the use of BPNs from year to year tends to decrease drastically. Overall, between 1997 and 2016, from 5,331 born babies there were 494 (9.27%) who still use the BPNs. Between 1997 and 2001, from 1,222 born babies there were 290 (23.73%) using BPNs. It was further identified that between 2002 and 2006, only 114 (0.84%) out of 1,386 born babies would be given a BPN.

Then, between 2007 and 2011, only 62 (0.44%) from the total number of 1391 new-borns were getting a BPN. This number is even more shrinking between 2012 to 2016, where from 1,370 born babies there were only 28 (0.20%) with a BPN.

Having carefully analyzed the international names adopted and used in substitution of BPNs, it was found that the most dominant names adopted are Arabic personal names (APNs) followed by Javanese personal names (JPNs)<sup>2</sup>, and Western personal names (WPNs)<sup>3</sup>. As shown in Table 1, overall, between 1997 and 2016 there were 3,132 (58.75%) of the birth rate with an APN, 1,111 (20.84%) with a JPN, and 601 (11.27%) with a WPN. Between 1997 and 2001, from 1,222 birth rate there were

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<sup>2</sup> The Javanese people is one of largest ethnic groups in Indonesia. There is a significant number of population of Javanese descent in most provinces of Indonesia. The Javanese language (one of the Malayo-Polynesian languages closely related to the indigenous regional languages of Buton Island) is spoken by about 68 million people in Indonesia.

<sup>3</sup> WPNs can be of different origins and are isolated as a group based solely on the fact that they are associated with the western culture, i.e. western books, films, pop music etc.

729 (59.66%) with an APN, 134 (10.98%) with a JPN, and 69 (5.65%) with a WPN. Between 2002 and 2006, at the birth rate of 1,386, it was identified that 642 (47.63%) of the babies got an APN, 444 (32.93%) were given a JPN, and 148 (10.97%) received WPNs. Next, between 2007 and 2011, from 1,391 birth rate there were 865 (62.19%) persons with APNs, 294 (21.14%) with JPNs, and 170 (12.22%) with WPNs. Between 2012 and 2016, from 1,370 birth rate there were 896 (65.40%) with an APN, 239 (17.44%) with a JPN, and 214 (15.62%) with a WPN.

Table 1

**The number of new-borns in the Buton Regency with BPN and adopted personal names in the period from 1997 to 2016**

Year	Number of babies born <sup>4</sup>	Personal names used			
		BPNs	Adopted names		
			APNs	JPNs	WPNs
1997	244	74	121	30	19
1998	230	50	151	22	7
1999	237	68	148	15	6
2000	251	55	138	40	18
2001	260	43	171	27	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>290 (23.73%)</b>	<b>729 (59.65%)</b>	<b>134 (10.97%)</b>	<b>69 (5.65%)</b>
2002	256	33	94	98	31
2003	269	19	129	96	25
2004	271	22	170	61	20
2005	276	19	150	90	17
2006	276	21	99	99	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>114 (8.46%)</b>	<b>642 (47.63%)</b>	<b>444 (32.93%)</b>	<b>148 (10.97%)</b>
2007	269	14	162	72	21
2008	270	13	199	40	18
2009	280	17	140	65	58
2010	282	11	163	77	31
2011	290	7	201	40	42

<sup>4</sup> The figures of birth rate from 1997 to 2016 was taken from the Central-Bureau of Statistics of the Buton Regency, 2017.

End of table 1

Year	Number of babies born <sup>4</sup>	Personal names used			
		BPNs	Adopted names		
			APNs	JPNs	WPNs
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,391</b>	<b>62</b> <b>(4.47%)</b>	<b>865</b> <b>(62.19%)</b>	<b>294</b> <b>(21.14%)</b>	<b>170</b> <b>(12.22%)</b>
2012	244	7	151	40	47
2013	258	6	187	39	30
2014	288	5	184	46	53
2015	279	4	173	63	39
2016	301	6	201	51	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>28</b> <b>(2.04%)</b>	<b>896</b> <b>(65.40%)</b>	<b>239</b> <b>(17.44%)</b>	<b>214</b> <b>(15.62%)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,331</b>	<b>494</b> <b>(9.27%)</b>	<b>3,132</b> <b>(58.75%)</b>	<b>1,111</b> <b>(20.84%)</b>	<b>601</b> <b>(11.27%)</b>

These data suggest that tendency to adopt personal names from other cultures is inversely proportional to the use of BPNs. It points to the depreciation rate of the use of BPNs that goes so drastically because of the use of adopted names. Considering the available data, it can be predicted that in the next 10 years, the BPNs will be completely extinct.

Arabic masculine names which are commonly adopted include: *Amiruddin, Jalaluddin, Ichwanuddin, Amirullah, Abdullah, Syaifullah, Aminullah, Anwar, Azam, Bashar, Fauzan, Hakim, Hassan, Husain, Ali, Ja'far, Umar, Utsman, Abdurrachman, Hamid*, etc. Between 1997 and 2001 masculine Arab names with the element *-uddin* were adopted more dominantly. The most popular feminine names of Arabic origin include: *Aminah, Lutfiyah, Fatin, Habibah, Ilmirah, Khanza, Fadillah, Fathinah, Hafizah, Ilma, Ihza, Jamilah, Marjan, Mawadah, Nabila, Nurfadilah, Nuraini*, etc.

It was also found out that some Buton people tend to mix APNs with the BPN gender elements and to create hybrid names like *La Abdullah, La Ode Abdul Hassan, La Ode Muhammad Akbar, Wa Ode Faradibah, Wa Aminah, Wa Ode Altafunissa*, and many others. Evidently, *La* and *Wa* are retained in BPN because the last element of the anthroponymic pattern (given names) is epicene, whereas APN like *Abdul Hassan* and *Muhammad Akbar* are exclusively masculine and *Aminah, Faradibah* and *Altafunissa* can be only feminine, which makes the addition of *La* to *Abdul Hassan* and *Wa* to *Faradibah* redundant. However, the practice of creating mixed names is now expanding and reflects the tendency towards the adaptation of the traditional anthroponymic pattern to the shift in name-giving fashion.

Another interesting phenomenon is “uddinization,” i.e. the creation of new names with the element *-uddin* or *-udin* imitating traditional Arab names (cf. *Shalahuddin*, *Jalaluddin*, etc.), e.g. *Sapiuddin*, *Hansiuddin*, *Sanudin*, *Kariudin*, *Hamiluddin*, etc. The etymology of such names with the element *-uddin*, created by the Buton people, can be traced neither to Arabic, nor to Bahasa Indonesia, it also cannot adhere to any regional language of the area. It is clear that in creating such names the name-givers are ignorant of the fact that in Arabic names the element *-uddin* means ‘religion’ (*Jalaluddin* means ‘the greatness of religion,’ *Amiruddin* means ‘religious leader,’ etc.), and that other Arabic given names also have appellative counterparts and thus have a clear meaning, e.g. *Ahmad* ‘commendable,’ *Anwar* ‘shining,’ *Fauzan* ‘victory,’ *Aminah* ‘trustworthy,’ *Fatih* ‘beautiful,’ *Habibah* ‘beloved,’ etc.

JPNs are easily recognizable by the prefix *su-*, cf. the most commonly adopted male names: *Sumitro*, *Suwardi*, *Sugeng*, *Suhadi*, *Subandi*, *Supandi*, *Suwito*, *Sumadi*, *Supardi*, etc. The most common female JPNs are *Susiani*, *Sumarni*, *Sutini*, *Sumira*, *Sutima*, *Sutina*, *Suti*, *Sukemi*, *Sukati*, etc. JPNs generally consist of only one word and function as given names. However, the Buton people also tend to mix BPNs with JPNs. The mixed forms containing the BPN gender element and a Javanese given name can be illustrated by such hybrid names as *La Sumitro*, *Wa Ode Susanti*, *La Ode Sunardi*, etc.

The predominant masculine WPNs adopted include *John*, *Jack*, *Levi*, *Daniel*, *Bobby*, *Alek*, *Jonathan*, *Martin*, *Mark*, *Jim*, *Jackson*, *Toby*, and many other (male names). The most widely used feminine WPNs are *Sarah*, *Mary*, *Angelina*, *Lana*, *Jessica*, *Agnes*, *Jesse*, etc. The Buton people also tend to mix the BPN gender elements and WPNs, which produces hybrid names like *La Ode John Cena*, *Wa Ode Mary Edwar*, *La Martin*, *La Ode Karel Mark*, *Wa Ode Diana*, etc.

The results of the interviews conducted with 150 interviewees and focusing on their attitude to BPN can be summarized in the following points:

1. BPNs are out of date: the Buton people feel that giving BPNs to children imposes them with oppressive and restrictive ties to the past, as they are old-fashioned. BPNs are only suitable for people of ancient times. Those times have passed, and naturally all its features should go into history, including the naming traditions.

2. BPNs seem strange and not prestigious: both parents and children feel that the BPNs are less favorable and even awkward. Whereas international names seem likeable, as these associate with presenters and celebrities, and these are now the names that are commonly used by people in general.

3. The Buton people feel shy, inferior, and not confident to use a BPN. Children having a BPN would feel inferior. Therefore, children who entered school under a BPN would later urge their parents or ask their school teachers to address to them by a “better” substitute name. So, when they enter elementary school, they would already have new names adopted from other cultures.



#### 4. Discussion

The rich culture and heritage of the Buton tribe is almost no longer portrayed through the naming tradition, making the culture vulnerable to get assimilated, and reflecting the strong influence of other cultures. Cultural homogenization makes a significant impact on this process, since, as stated by Clarke [2008], cultural homogenization occurs because of the inability of the local culture to defend itself against the more pronounced and domineering influences. On the inside, this is a long-term process of cultural deprivation on a national scale: pressured by the “successful” social models of the western culture, minority communities tend to feel inferior, hence questioning their traditional lifestyles. Along with that, traditional local patterns are devaluated in favour of the mainstream ones, which are gradually adopted.

What Eze [2014] states about African peoples — rejecting their old customs and tradition, as ugly and savage, instead becoming very receptive to the cultures, languages, music, and artistic creations of the outer world — is just the same what the Buton people have done to their own culture, as it is reflected in the decline of the traditional BPNs. The trend to adopt cultural elements (including personal names) from different parts of the world, which are deemed to be more refined, advanced, and most beautiful, is merely based on beliefs that their native personal names (BPNs) as a cultural heritage is inferior and personal names coming from outside are better and prestigious. Clearly, there is a kind of prestige associated with using/adopting the names of a foreign culture.

Kent and Burnight, who coined the term “xenocentrism,” stated that cultural contacts may produce one of three attitudes: “the familiar ethnocentric view in which one’s own culture is preferred; xenocentric view in which a cultural other than one’s own is preferred, the reverse of the first; and cultural relativism, wherein each culture is evaluated in terms of its own circumstances and values” [Kent & Burnight, 1951, 256]. Xenocentrism causes a crisis of identity in any culture, as its subjects get eager to imitate foreign world’s view and lifestyles at the expense of their uniqueness.

Xenocentrism can easily explain the adoption of WPNs and JPNs, however, the popularity of Arabic names is due to the religion that the Buton people confess. The Buton people first adopted Islam in the 15<sup>th</sup> century [Abidin & Macknight, 1974, 165] and, as of today, identify themselves almost exclusively as Muslims. Religion plays a significant role in the formation of cultural norms and beliefs in a society. Sharing the same faith ensures that people abide the same codes of behavior, adopt the same rituals, and use the same language, resulting in a common identity grounded in same symbolic universe [Aldashev & Platteau, 2014, 588, 606].

However, it was also found that the Buton people tend to conserve the old anthroponymic pattern modifying it by introducing APNs, JPNs, and WPNs as its elements. This conservative trend is probably due to the fact that the traditional BPNs could serve as social markers helping differentiate between noble and common

people, the function which cannot be fulfilled by names coming from other cultures. The conservation of the elements *La*, *Wa*, and *Ode* that are now largely mixed with exogenous names means that the old social stratification is still relevant for Butonese society.

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**СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ТЕНДЕНЦИИ  
В ПРАКТИКЕ ИМЯНАРЕЧЕНИЯ НАРОДА БУТОН:  
ВЛИЯНИЕ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ  
НА АНТРОПОНИМИЮ ЮГО-ВОСТОЧНОГО СУЛАВЕСИ**

В статье обсуждаются актуальные тенденции в практике имянаречения у народа бутон (бутунг), одного из автохтонных этносов индонезийской провинции Юго-Восточный Сулавеси. Традиционная антропонимическая формула народа бутон типологически своеобразна, она состоит из этимологически непрозрачного компонента, указывающего на пол носителя имени, маркера аристократического происхождения (если таковое имеется) и гендерно нейтрального личного имени. К сожалению, аборигенные имена, а равно и традиционная антропонимическая формула за последние десятилетия стремительно выходят из употребления, до такой степени, что очень скоро могут оказаться полностью утраченными. Настоящее исследование нацелено на выявление: 1) количественных параметров, указывающих на степень угасания традиционных моделей имянаречения, 2) наиболее часто используемых заимствованных имен и 3) причин отказа от традиционных имен, как они понимаются самими представителями народа бутон. Для решения этих задач была проведена серия глубинных интервью с носителями культуры бутон, а также количественный анализ данных, относящихся к периоду 1997–2016 гг., полученных в Бюро регистрации актов гражданского состояния округа Бутон. Исследование показало, что за последние двадцать лет процесс отказа от традиционных имен существенно ускорился и достиг опасного уровня. В период с 2012 по 2016 г. из 5 331 новорожденных только 28 получили традиционные имена. Результаты интервью показывают, что люди воспринимают традиционные имена как странные, несовременные и менее престижные. В качестве субститутов традиционных имен наибольшее предпочтение отдается арабским и яванским именам, а также именам западного происхождения, воспринимающимся как более современные и престижные. Подобный ксеноцентризм применительно к практикам имянаречения может быть объяснен влиянием глобализации и, что особенно существенно в случае с арабскими именами, все возрастающей значимостью религиозного фактора.

**К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а:** сулавесийские языки, народ бутон (бутунг), антропонимия, антропонимическая формула, идентичность, культурное наследие, глобализация, ксеноцентризм, антропологическая лингвистика.

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