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**National and international standardization of geographical names:
names collection, office treatment, national authorities, features
beyond a single sovereignty and international cooperation**

The Role of Geographical Name Standardization in Maintaining cultural identity in Indonesia

Submitted by Indonesia**

Summary

      Indonesia is one of the largest archipelagic and culturally diverse countries. The cultural identity of Indonesia is maintained by many means, and geographical names are crucial among those. Many places are rich in history, culture, and wisdom, and that richness is embedded in the names they bear. The standardization of geographical names plays a crucial role in keeping that intact. As modernization and globalization have taken their toll on many place names, it is necessary to raise awareness of the importance of original names and their underlying properties. The specific care Indonesia takes to maintain its identity, as reflected in its culture and values, by standardizing its geographical names will be described in the full paper.

Introduction

Indonesia is one of the largest archipelagic countries with diverse characteristics. With territory more than 5000 km from west to east and stretches over three time zones. It encompasses 1.9 million km2 of land and more than 6 million km2 of its territorial (including the territorial sea, contiguous zone, and exclusive economic zone. Composed of some 17,500 islands, of which 16,771 island names have been verified. Inhabited by more than 270 million people, Indonesia is the 4th most populous country in the world. The communities range from rural hunter-gatherers to a modern urban elite. Ethnically it is also highly diverse, with more than 300 tribes and 700 local languages. These diversities are treasures and need to be preserved. Geographical names are no exception, as they represent the cultural identity of Indonesia.

Indonesia's Modernization, Globalization and Cultural Identity

After its independence in 1945, Indonesia entered several eras to adapt from colonized into a fully sovereign nation. The adaptation process, although not straightforward, prevailed and lasted until nowadays. One aspect of adaptation was the commitment to acknowledge Sumpah Pemuda's (The Youth Pledge) three ideals: one motherland, one nation, and uphold *Bahasa Indonesia* as the language of unity. As a nation with multi-languages and multi-ethnicity, the last ideals regarding language - directly or indirectly- affected the usage of many native languages in general.

Moreover, entering the age of globalization, the existence of native language and culture become more vulnerable. The global village effect and the exchanges between cultures are inevitable. The phenomenons, in some cases, developed into an imminent threat to the cultural crisis of a community. On a larger scale, it is a threat to national identity as well. The uncontrolled usage of a foreign language to name a place started to eliminate the original/native one. The use of non-native terms and names mainly occurs in an urban area, as the interaction between cultures usually occurs. Eventually, with the development of information and communication technology, the practice starts to emerge in the distance, away from the urban areas.

Preserving the geographical name in its native form becomes an urgent task. Many aspects of the original geographical name were still undocumented, and proper measures need to be taken to prevent the loss of this precious information. One of the clear examples was in the Balaroa case, in the unfortunate disaster that struck north of Palu on September 28th, 2018. The 7.5 magnitude earthquake caused vast and enormous destruction. One particular area that affected the most is the Balaroa neighborhood. About 1,700 houses were swallowed due to the liquefaction. Surprisingly there is a forgotten fact, before the 1970s, Balaroa was not a residential area, and the original name was Lonjo. The word "Lonjo" means 'a muddy ground'. The name was originated from the term "Nalonjo," which means 'drowning in the mud.' In the past, people avoided inhabiting Lonjo because they were aware that the place was dangerous. Unfortunately, as time goes by, the story behind the name Lonjo is slowly forgotten, as the name changed into Balaroa.

The Process of Geographical Name Standardization

Geographical name is subject to several regulations, as it is intertwined with many government interests. There are at least ten regulations in Indonesia that directly state geographical names in its content. The level of regulations varies from National Law down to the local government regulation. However, as geographical name holds a vital role in many aspects of national interests (such as preserving the local language, national sovereignty, and identity in international society), the urgency to have a more specific legal base for geographical standardization is inevitable.

After two years of the constitution process, the government signed the regulation on geographical name standardization in January 2021. The newly enacted government regulation contains comprehensive details regarding the standardization of the geographical name. The regulation

encompasses all the standardization processes, started from data acquisition, data gathering, verification, and publication of the standardized name in the form of a national gazetteer (see figure 1).
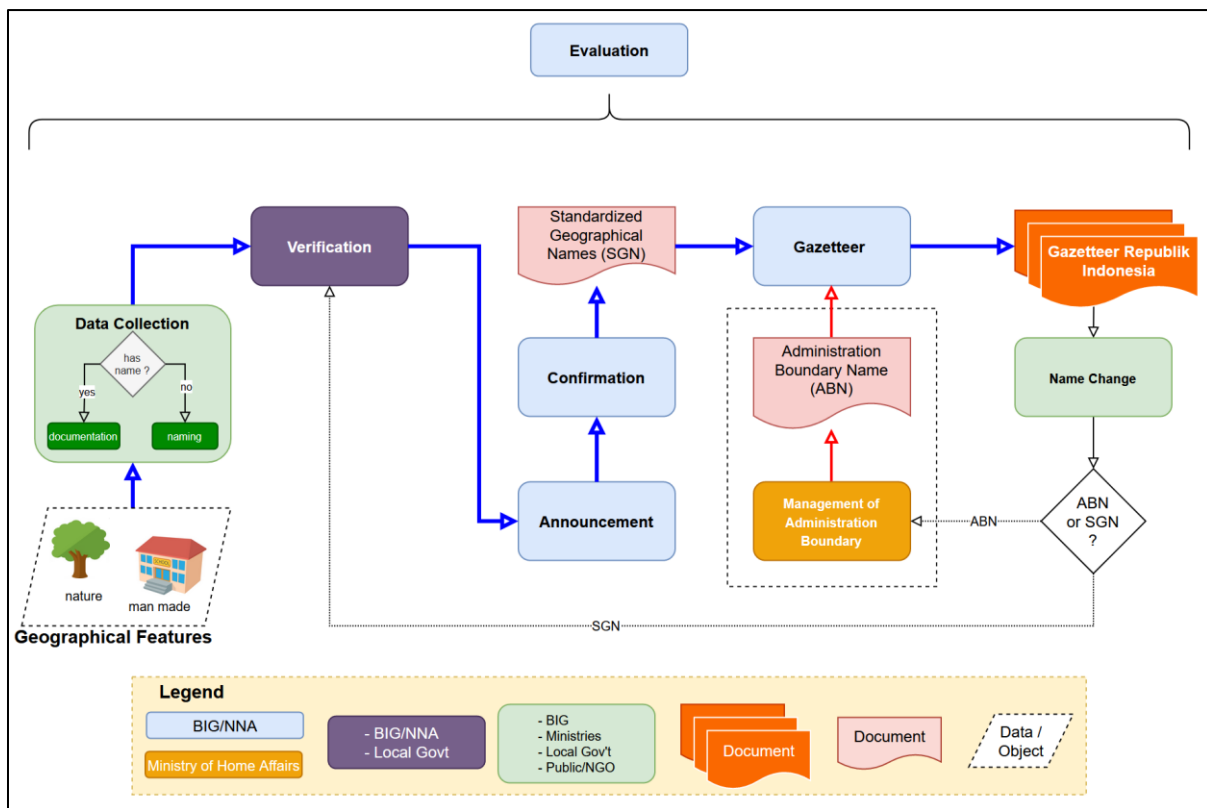

Figure 1. The Geographical Name Standardization According to Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021

BIG (*Badan Informasi Geospasial* - Geospatial Information Agency) as National Names Authority (NNA) coordinates the standardization with the ministries/agencies, provincial government, and regional government. Borrowing the spirit of "no one left behind," the process of standardization has also now become an inclusive activity. The new regulation stated that everyone could put their effort into the process of geographical name standardization. Consequently, any individuals, community, or non-governmental organization are welcome to contribute in the form of crowdsourcing or participatory mapping.

The regulation also encompasses the technical part regarding the tool to perform the standardization. It states that the Government has to provide the official instrument for standardization. Projected as the end-to-end solution, BIG developed SINAR (*Sistem Informasi Nama Rupabumi* - Geographical Name Information System) as the official tool to incorporate all standardization processes. SINAR's platform is flexible to accommodates the development in the method, standard, or technology. The current version of SINAR consists of two main parts: web and mobile platforms. The mobile platform mainly functions as a handy tool for data acquisition, with the capability to digitize features (point, line, or area), live tracking, taking object's pictures, perform simple analysis, including recording sound to preserve pronunciation. The data acquired by the mobile application automatically streamlined to the centralized database. The web platform continues the authentication of collected objects. The authenticator can access all the survey data (coordinate, name, pronunciation, history, pictures, etc.) to decide the object status/approval.

Cultural Identity Preservation Through Geographical Name Standardization

Various characteristics of the geographical name have a direct or indirect connection with cultural identity preservation. Association of a place name to a particular subject or nature is not uncommon. Some of the place names become "brand" for a specific term or qualities. Other help emphasizes the properties of an entity.

Many precious pieces of information are embedded in the geographical name. Such as history and the properties of a particular area that is instilled in its name. There is one specific place named "Dago" in Bandung, West Java. The "dago" itself is a Sundanese word that means "wait or stop." According to historical documents, the area was the ambush point for a bandit to rob a passerby. It was also the habitat for wildlife animals such as the Javan tiger and rhino. These conditions became the main reason people have to "wait" (dago) for others and walk in a group on their way to the city.

In Yogyakarta, people characterize geographical features using the Javanese (or Indonesian) language to describe their shape, function, appearance, location, or respect for specific figures, events, and hope. For example, Tugu Golong Gilig. Golong (in Javanese) means spherical, and Gillig means cylinder. It means a cylindrical monument with a circle above. It was built by the King symbolizing the spirit of unity of the people. In this case, we can appreciate the Javanese's cultural perspective in their naming practice and understand each geographical feature's philosophy.

Geographical names can also represent the richness of local's folklore. In West Papua, there is an archipelago called Raja Ampat. Raja means king, and Ampat means four. The legend tells us a woman found seven eggs, of which four eggs hatched and became the four princes. These princes were separated and became the kings in Waigeo, Salawati, Misool Timur, and Misool Barat (name of the main islands in Raja Ampat).

From an economic viewpoint, the usage of standardized geographical names is advantageous to promote cultural identification. For example, Batik Pekalongan. Pekalongan is the name of a city and acknowledged for its intricate Batik (the art of decorating cloth using wax and dye). People are often calling this destination 'Batik city.' Indeed, UNESCO identified Pekalongan as the 'Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts.' When a Batik is a mere 'batik' cloth without the 'pekalongan' attribute, it would be just ordinary Batik. As it is labeled 'Batik Pekalongan,' it would increase economic values and consumer's desire to buy it.

Standardized geographical names can also be used as supplementary data in international relations and diplomacy. For instance, in 2017, Indonesia launched the official national map. The map featured Indonesia's maritime boundary with the neighboring countries. It replaced *Laut Cina Selatan* (South China Sea) name in the Indonesian territory with *Laut Natuna Utara* (North Natuna Sea). Indonesia took this action to define its borders and to secure the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Conclusion

The geographical name exists typically referring to natural and cultural conditions at the time it was coined. It is a reflection of the interplay between humans and nature through different periods. Thus, standardization of geographical names protects and preserves sacred values embedded in history and culture in a rapidly changing society.

With the support from government regulation, BIG performs its obligation as NNA to standardize the geographical name. The use of a uniform system in standardization is expected to provide a secure, robust, and streamlined end-to-end solution. It also ensures data consistency throughout standardization while simultaneously offer an easy-to-use experience for users.

The geographical name standardization is one of the practical efforts to maintain the nation's interests. Cultural identity is one of many aspects that are preserved in the process. By the inclusive approach and openness to the contribution, BIG expects to engage citizens in conserving their place name and empowering communities to be actively involved in guarding their cultural uniqueness.

The group of experts is invited to express its view on the technical paper.