

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Names are an important part of human society. Names are a human universal, no anthropologist has found a human culture that does not use personal name in some form or another (Bramwell 2016). A name is the first gift from a parent to a child, and as such, names usually carry a meaning of gift or blessing, such as in English “John” meaning “God is gracious” from Hebrew “יְהוָה” or “Yōhānān”. A name is part of someone’s identity, a signifier for the signified that is their own self, so much consideration goes into naming someone due to its significance and meaningfulness. Some names are perceived as socially acceptable, like “Kevin” or “Abraham”, and some names are perceived as bad, like “Hitler”. Because of the vast cultural differences of humanity, certain societies would have different taboos and socially acceptable names compared to other cultures.

The study of names is called Onomastics, where it is broadly split into two fields, toponomastics or toponymy, the study of place-names, and anthroponomastics or anthroponymy, the study of human-names. Onomastics can also be categorized in depending on where the names occur. Literary onomastics studies names in literature, while socio-onomastics studies names in a given society. Socio-onomastics is the study of names in relation to society, where it is defined by Ainiala et al. (2016) as

taking into consideration the social and situational fields in which the names occur. It primarily includes the investigation of their use and variation. Names are a product of culture and society, and are affected by culture and society (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016), therefore, how people perceive and subsequently give names is affected by the culture and society that they inhabit (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016).

In all world cultures, personal names, also known as anthroponyms, are part of the language used by their communities (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016). According to Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom (2016), personal names are not just isolated, separate elements in a language or its nomenclature, rather that these personal names are a part of and always form an anthroponymic system that includes several different sub-systems. An example of these sub-systems include the first name system and surname system of the European languages or the clan name system of some African languages (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016). Because of the universality of names and the naming of people, the anthroponymic systems from different cultures—that is, the system of human names—have the resemblance of one another in many respects. Because the giving of names to people is a universal fact across cultures, the name-giver is usually well defined: it could be the child's mother, father, or another individual. Additionally, names are usually given according to certain, established practices, not at all given arbitrarily (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016) .

Names serve a function where it is used in a community to distinguish individuals from each other to facilitate communication (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016). Names also help in the community's need to often classify people as belonging to various social groups, such as members of immediate families, kins and clans (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016). For example, Mr Jones belongs to the Jones family and kin. Therefore, a name can be said to have 2 key functions: Identification, to distinguish between people, and Classification, to classify people as belonging to or as member of a social group (Ainiala, Minna, and Sjöblom 2016).

Cultural heritages are abundant in Indonesia, where names are also used to classify people as belonging to members of different communities, like Javanese names, Sundanese names, and Bataknesse names. Just as previously mentioned, it is also within the function of classification of names to classify Javanese people by their Javanese names, Sundanese people by their Sundanese names, and Bataknesse people by their Bataknesse names.

Indonesia is a multicultural country comprising many ethnic groups, such as the Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, Bataknesse, and many more. Not counting the cultural differences between the individual cultures like the Minangkabau or the Sundanese people, historically, Indonesia has a cultural heritage of the Hindu-Buddhist (Rani 2010), Melayu merchants (Lian 2001), Islamic (Makin 2016), Chinese (Ngo 2017), and even colonial Dutch Influences, and in the more modern age, Anglophone media also broadcasts their cultural influences into the zeitgeist.

Most Indonesian names have a Sanskrit origin, borrowed into Javanese, like Chandra, Aditya, Sri, and Dewi (Williams 2003), or an Arabic-derived name like Muhammad, Rahman, Siti, or Nurul (Aribowo and Herawati 2016). The Javanese ethnic group is the biggest, and is spread across the Indonesian islands, with some of them also migrating to the capital, Jakarta in search for better economic opportunities, which also attract migrants from the other islands, making Jakarta a unique melting pot where cultures from different islands are able to mingle. This causes Jakarta to be a multi-ethnic city, almost resembling a miniature picture of Indonesia itself.

The study is done in the Special Capital Region of Jakarta because of its position as Indonesia's National capital, as well as being Indonesia's economic, governmental, and social center that can represent the cultural conditions of Indonesia due to its population comprising multiple ethnic groups from across the Indonesian archipelago (Na'im and Syaputra 2011). Jakarta is a sprawling metropolis that many people call home. It contains simultaneously skyscrapers that dominate the horizon, and low-lying villages, almost mirroring the economic disparity between the upper and lower classes. The allure of Jakarta as a centralized economic, cultural, and social core of the country attracts people of multiple cultural backgrounds. The people of Jakarta can be said to be immersed in two cultures in a concept termed "biculturalism" where individuals identify with two distinct cultures (Cila 2018), their heritage culture, i.e. Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Ambonese, Minahasa, etc, and their mainstream culture, in this case the Jakartan urban culture. The varied cultural

identity is caused by people immigrating to Jakarta because of the prospects of work and economic prosperity (Iriany et al. 2019). As citizens of Jakarta with immigrant backgrounds, some of them practice “pulang kampung” (returning home), also known as mudik (Iriany et al. 2019) where they return to their hometowns, usually to homes of their parents or grandparents, and use their wealth gained from the city in the villages, effectively making it a transfer of capital from the city to the villages (Iriany et al. 2019). This practice also highlights the fact that Jakartans, while living in Jakarta, belong not only to the culture of the Jakarta, but also their hometowns, meaning two people in Jakarta may come from different hometowns, let alone ethnic groups or other backgrounds. Because of this, there is hardly anything that can be called a true “Jakartan name”, as the names in Jakarta all come from somewhere else, and construct an identity unique to specific cultural groups in Indonesia. The multiple cultural backgrounds of Jakartan citizens is also reflected in their names, where as a muslim-majority city in a muslim-majority country, many Islamic names can be found, comprising their own category of names (Rony 1970).

Indonesian naming systems do not conform entirely to the western system of names where a person have a given name as a first name and a surname as a last name, as some Indonesian may reserve the first name as a title like in the name “R.A. Kartini” or “S.M. Abidin” (Rony 1970). It can also refer to the name-bearer’s birth order like “Ketut” and “Nyoman”, or as simply as some sort of modifying morpheme that is not necessarily what the name-bearer uses as a byname in daily activities like

“Muhammad” or “Siti” (Rony 1970). Some Indonesians may also not have a proper surname or a family name as a last name, because some cultures like the Javanese have historically been mononymic (Uhlenbeck 1969). The same thing can also be said about the last names, where it can be used to refer not only to family names, but also clan names, place names, paternal names, and honorific names (Rony 1970).

While there has been some research on Javanese names (Uhlenbeck 1969) (Widodo 2013) (Aribowo and Herawati 2016), on names that occur in people of Javanese ethnicity, and a research on Sundanese names (Susi et al. 2020), there is a lack of research on what names are popular among Jakartan citizens or even any study regarding popular names in Jakartan citizens. Moreover, there is a lack of onomastic research done using official statistical data of names taken from official governmental organizations in Jakarta. The multicultural landscape of Jakarta would certainly make for an interesting force behind the name-giving practices that would also reflect the cultural makeup of the city, i.e. names from a more populous ethnic group or identity being more popular than names from a less populous ethnic group or identity.

The study of names is a very interesting field of research where not much has been studied in the context of Indonesian names, however, there are still some studies that uses onomastic approach in their analysis and is related to this study. First is a study by Girma (2020) titled *Black Names, Immigrant Names: Navigating Race and Ethnicity Through Personal Names* explores how a new generation of Ethiopian-

American immigrant parents attach relevance to names, their various connotations, and modes of immigrant incorporation into the dominant host society. The author highlights the creative ways that these immigrants use to navigate their racialized immigrant identity alongside their fellow Black African-Americans as a distinct identity, evident in how they have an aversion to stereotypical African-American names like “Deshawn” or “Shanequa”, preferring to use naming patterns typical of their ethnic origins that are short or easily pronounced or use biblical names to emphasize their Christianity. Another study by Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq (2016) titled *A Sociolinguistic Study of Choosing Names for Newborn Children in Jordan* explores what factors contribute to choosing names for newborn children in Jordan. The study found that historical events, religion, and social factors all contribute to how parents named their children in Jordan during the 70s, 80s and 90s, and 2000-2014. It also found that television programmes affected how parents name their children, as fans are more likely to name their children after a popular television program that they enjoy. A third study by Robustova (2016) titled *Anthroponymic System of Malaysia: Name Popularity and Culture Shift* studied the names of Malaysian name-giving tendencies, and found that most boys names are of Arabic origin, indicating a strong presence of Islam as the religious majority in the country. On the other hand, they also found that girl’s names had a more varied cultural background, where the name and the name bearer does not come from the same cultural origin. This was a sign of cultural development towards a more individualistic naming practice that emphasizes uniqueness.

The similarities of the previous studies include how names are tied to identity, how choosing names constructs an identity, and how names are perceived depending on their sociocultural context. The studies mentioned also uses quantitative approach using some form of onomastic analysis by collecting a set of names and categorizing them according to their chosen variables, with Girma (2020) categorizing the names based on linguistic origin, Al-Qawasmi & Al-Haq (2016) categorizing the names into those that relate to historical events, religion, and social factors, and Robustova (2016) categorizing the names that modern parents chose for their children under the categories of religion, retro, nature, fashion, places, celebrity, music, colours, names of Latin and Greek origin, folklore, and modern (western) names.

The first study inspects naming conventions from a first-generation Ethiopian-American immigrant group trying to assimilate to the white-majority country and preserve their Ethiopian cultural values while still being distinct from the pre-existing black African-American population. The second study shows how historical events, religion, and social factors are taken into consideration when choosing names for newborn children. While both of the first two studies revolve around names as a part of socio-cultural identity, neither uses the onomastics theory by Ainala. The third study is most similar to the purposes and cultural context of the demographics of this thesis; it inspects the Malaysian cultural sphere from the perspective of socio-onomastics using the theory by Ainala (2016), and reveals a strong Islamic presence

in the country's naming tendencies in how the names are mostly dominated by Arabic names.

An onomastic analysis of Indonesian names, especially in the multi-cultural context of Jakarta, is novel research area where very little study has been done, so the writer seeks to draw from previous studies of similar fields to fill this research gap by using their methodology in analyzing the name-data, albeit with adjustments that was caused by the current situation of the CoVid-19 pandemic (CDC 2020).

1.2 Statements of Problems

Based on the background of study, the writer formulates the problems as follows:

1. What are the 30 most popular first names for boys and 30 most popular first names for girls in Indonesian children from the years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020?
2. What cultural identities do the 30 most popular first names for boys and girls construct based on their etymology?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discover what the 60 most popular first names, 30 boys' names and 30 girls' names, that occurred in Indonesian children from 2017 to 2020 are and what cultural identities do the 30 most popular first names for boys and girls construct based on their etymology.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study about the etymology of popular Jakartan names has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study is expected to contribute to the fields of onomastics or etymology, owing to its main aim in exploring the factors that drove certain names to achieve popularity in the 2017-2020. Additionally, the study can also reveal how the popularity of certain names reflect historical events and cultural sentiments present at the time, and how those events and sentiments affect the popularity of certain names.

Practically, the study can be used as a reference for popular Indonesian names or for research that needs data of popular Indonesian names. Because there is a lack of onomastics study of Indonesian names, it may help in bring into view the field of onomastics to the general public. It may also help in furthering interest on etymology as it is how the cultural identities in each name is deduced.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The study is focused on names collected from the Jakarta Provincial DISPENDUKAPIL (Dinas Kependudukan dan Catatan Sipil/ Department of Population and Civil Registration). The names are then sorted to show 60 of the most popular names in a given year, defined by the number of people with that name, each 30 boys' names and 30 girls' names, limiting the analysis to those 60 names from the

registered Jakarta citizens. The rest of the names from the data will not be considered for analysis, although some names may be used as a comparison or example.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Onomastics : the field of study revolving around names
(Ainiala and Östman 2017).

Anthroponomastics : a subdiscipline of onomastics focusing on
personal names (Ainiala and Östman 2017).

Cultural identity of names : the cultural identity to which a name belongs to
or constructs (Rymes 1999).