

Negotiating Spaces in East Kalimantan Women Regional Dormitory in Makassar

Muhaiminatul Ajriani
Universitas Muslim Maros
ryaniemmy@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana mahasiswa yang tinggal di asrama putri (selanjutnya disebut asrama) menegosiasikan ruang dengan mengeksaminasi aturan asrama putri dalam mengelola perilaku anggotanya. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Asrama Putri Kalimantan di Makassar. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan mentriangulasikan antara metode observasi partisipasi, wawancara formal dan percakapan informal dengan anggota asrama.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa setiap orang yang menempati asrama bertanggung jawab untuk menjaga nama baik asrama. Oleh karena itu, aturan ketat dibuat dan dipertahankan dari satu generasi ke generasi lainnya untuk mengatur kehidupan para anggota asrama. Keanggotaan asrama diklasifikasikan atas junior, senior dan alumni. Ada batas yang jelas di antara ketiganya dan ini berdampak pada bagaimana mereka berurusan dengan ruang di asrama. Untuk mencapai posisi senior, seseorang harus melalui sejumlah proses. Aturannya tidak hanya mengatur penghuninya, tetapi juga para tamu, terutama tamu laki-laki. Ada tiga kategori kamar berdasarkan gender: ruang publik (yaitu halaman depan, halaman samping, garasi, ruang tamu), ruang semi-pribadi (yaitu toilet, ruang makan, ruang aula, halaman belakang) dan ruang pribadi (yaitu kamar tidur, ruang tv). Tamu laki-laki memiliki akses terbatas ke ruang asrama. Mereka hanya dapat memiliki akses ke ruang publik dan ruang semi-privat, sementara tamu perempuan memiliki hak istimewa untuk mengakses seluruh ruang seperti halnya anggota asrama. Namun, mereka harus berperilaku sesuai dengan kategori keanggotaan temannya di asrama. Selain itu, ruang juga dibagi menjadi dua menurut jenis aktivitas: ruang aktivitas bebas (yaitu ruang TV) dan ruang aktivitas terbatas (yaitu kamar tidur dan semua ruang semi-privat dan publik). Meskipun aturan ketat, Aturan ini dapat dinegosiasikan.

Kata Kunci: *Asrama, Warga, Junior, Senior, Aturan, Ruang.*

Introduction

According to constructivism theory, agents (people) have the ability to act freely within the confines of the structure, and their perception of their environment, including the structure, and their interaction with each other affect to their behavior, which then form the structure (Mansbach and Rafferty 2012:49). Human behavior is always changing, depending on

changes in norms and values that govern a group.

In reference to this theory, the reality does not manifest itself in a rough shape, but must be filtered first through how a person sees something (Morissan 2009:107). Individuals create meaning through reviews their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in (Kim 2006:3). In the

context of *asrama* (dormitory), it consists of a group of students who have the same identity, since they are all from East Kalimantan and join the regional organization. Koenjaraningrat states that a unity of man (the group) has additional features, namely the organization and system leadership, and always looks individuals in times that are repeatedly assembled and later break up again (Koentjaraningrat 2009:125).

Space not only have geographic value, but also a socio-political, economic, cultural, textual, and metaphorical significance that psychophysically influences the citizens who live in it. There is a strong connection between power and spaces. According to Lefebvre (2009:170-171), space is not neutral and objective. It is a social product reflecting social relations, politics and ideology of power. Castell argues that "space is not a 'reflection of society', it is society" (1983:4): spatial forms "express and perform the interest of the dominant class" (1983:4), leaving outside "peripheralized and oppressed" subjects, such as "exploited workers, tyrannized people, dominated women" (Soja 1989:74).

There are indirect evidence for the success of the apparent intentions for social cohesion and solidarity. In a study of dropout rates in various types of student housing, Heiweil found that students in private rooms and boarding houses felt more isolated and had a higher dropout rate than comparable students living in dormitories, fraternities and sororities, coops, and apartments (Heilweil 1973:385). This is different from the lifestyle of member of dormitories who tend to be negative as Moghaddam (2017:2016) said that living conditions in a dormitory may put a person at risk for unhealthy behaviors and cause health problems such as depression. The conditions include living far from hometown, lack of appropriate welfare facilities and adequate sanitation, living with the people from different cultures, and high costs.

Livebre argues that the space is a subject, that is a member of a social group and can also be constructed in social (Livebre 1991:7). Whilst the original concept of the public/ private binary can be valuable as an "illustrative analytical construct" (Buckimham 2006:3). Another aspect of gendered spaces appears in the binary of public-private, and the attributive characters of each of those spaces, in connection to the gender of their respective users (Nakhal 2015:6).

This study focused on space negotiation. How do women live and negotiate spaces in a regional dormitory (*asrama daerah*) in Makassar? I discovered that regulations which divide the spaces by the category of membership, gender and activities, which all in connection with public and private divisions, can be negotiated. Slater argues that public and private are seen as different realms of experience and value, spatially and temporally separated and optimized by different sort of people and roles (Slater 1998:7). In this sense, we can understand that the gendered quality of space is not innocent, but necessarily created by the system and thus driving our bodies as well as our minds and tastes (Nakhal 2015:7).

Research Methods

This study is based on my fieldwork conducted in Makassar between September and October 2016. There are three *asrama* of East Kalimantan, two *asrama* for male (*asrama putra*) and one for female (*asrama putri*), and they are members of the AMKT (*Asrama Mahasiswa Kalimantan Timur*) Mulawarman, the regional organization of East Kalimantan. I decided to do my study in Kalimantan Women's Dormitory since I was interested in the issue of women and how spaces is negotiated, in this context the space in the *asrama* where students' during their study which are full of fun, problems, and the question, as Freud said "women are a mystery" (Saptari 1997:vi), especially in spaces or places that are closed to

men. I, as a woman and as a researcher, I feel more free to uncover women world where access for men is limited.

I had the privilege to occupy one of the rooms in the *asrama*. By staying in, I can observe, discuss, and take part in almost every day activities and interaction in the *asrama* on a daily basis. In addition, I also enjoy some jointly activities, such as barbeque party along with members of the *asrama putra*, leisure walk at Losari Beach and participate in fundraising to finance the annual *asrama* activities (i.e. *asrama* birthday party and social working, through food bazaar, secondhand clothes, etc). In gain information from various level, from chit-chat to interview and to a more formal interview. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2009:495-499), a researcher must be more intimate with the variety of data collection methods because it will minimize the biases and this is one of the ways to appreciate the strengths and the weaknesses of each method.

I interviewed seven occupants which vary on the basis hierarchical membership (senior, junior and alumni). Three junior occupants, three senior occupants and one alumni, age between 19 and 24 years. I use the word *warga* for the occupant as this term is commonly used to address their type of membership in the *asrama*.

No.	Name	Hierarchical Membership	Age
1.	Tenri	Junior Occupant	20
2.	Riska	Junior Occupant	19
3.	Inna	Junior Occupant	19
4	Bunga	Senior Occupant	22
5	Orchid	Senior Occupant	21
6	Kasma	Senior Occupant	21
7	Mawar	Alumni	24

Sharing food was one of my strategies in the participant observation I liked the most because from which we ate together, shared stories and made jokes. I finally decided not to have formal

interview in the beginning as I thought this would intervene my already “getting close” relationship, physically and socially in our everyday life in the *asrama* (see Emerson et al. 1995:1).

The process of data analysis was started from reading the entire data from the transcription of the interviews and fieldnotes. This was continued by identifying the emerged themes, such as types of rules in the *asrama*, sanctions, *asrama* and its spaces, hierarchy and space, gendered spaces and the status of *asrama* occupants. The final step was to classify and narrate data in the form of an article.

I obtained a research permit first from the local authorities, and then from the *asrama*. In the beginning, I was told a number of stories related to the life in the *asrama* from simple to a more complicated story. Thus, I decided to use *nama samaran* (pseudonym) in order to protect their identity and the confidentiality of the information.

Rules and Spaces in the Asrama

To regulate the life of the occupants of the *asrama*, rules are established. There are written rules for *piket* (picket), *surat peringatan* (warning letter) and *lobi-lobi* (see discussion below). There are also unwritten rules for spaces categories on the basis hierarchy, gender dan activities. These are aimed to maintain not only the reputation of the *asrama* and the regional government since *asrama* belongs to and is subsidized by the government, but also the reputation of the occupants. The discussion in this section is divided into three: it will start by exploring membership and hierarchy in the *asrama*. This is followed by discussing how spaces are divided based on gender. Finally, it examines spaces in terms of proper activities.

Membership and hierarchy

Asrama putri, which is one of the *asrama* East Kalimantan for university students who are

studying in Makassar, is financed by the government of East Kalimantan. The members in the *asrama* are called *warga* and the internal structure of the *asrama* are classified into *calon warga penginap* (prospective occupant), *warga penginap* (occupant), and *warga tetap* (permanent occupant). When one is graduated her status is changed from *warga* to alumni.

The occupants in this *asrama* consists of 11 *warga* and an alumni, consisting of three *calon warga penginap*, two *warga penginap*, and six *warga tetap*. The first two categories of *warga* are considered as junior occupants, the last one is senior occupants. The more senior the status of the occupant, the more power they have to control the juniors, and the more respect they get from the juniors. Everybody expects to be a *warga tetap*. But, before being a *warga tetap*, one has to get through the steps. The first step is to go through the process as a *calon warga penginap* for six months, then undergo the process as *warga penginap* for approximately another six months, before they are accepted as *warga tetap*.

Calon warga penginap are the busiest occupants in the *asrama*. As new residents, they have to be active in all *asrama* activities, such as picket (*piket*), social work (*kerja bakti*), *asrama* birthday party (*ulang tahun asrama*) and evening hours (*jam malam*) and at the same time they struggle with their academic activities. This is the period when they are in a state of uncertainty about whether or not they want stay or leave the *asrama*. Riska (19 years), a junior occupant, for example, stated that in the early period living in the *asrama*, she wanted to get out from the *asrama*, she felt that she wants to cry all the time, as she is a student in the the Faculty of Pharmacy, and at the same time staying in the *asrama* with all the responsibilities. For her, accommodating both the academic and *asrama* tasks at the same time is too much. Some said that one of the very heavy tasks for *warga*, especially *calon warga penginap* of the *asrama* is *piket*. This is

because *piket* consists of lots of tasks, including *piket harian* (daily picket), *piket Kamis* (Thursday picket), *piket Minggu* (Sunday picket), *piket parit* (drain picket) and these take lots of their energy.

Piket harian, which includes sweeping (in the front and the back yards), mopping the floor, wiping tables and chairs, and boiling water and cooking rice, is done in every day basis either in the morning or in the afternoon. Each *warga* will have their turn once a week. *Piket harian* takes two to three hours to complete.

Piket Kamis is on Thursdays, once a week. This consists of cleaning the garage, the toilet and the fridge and washing wipe clothes. Occupants who do not get used to do such works back home feel these are too much. Riska (19 years) complained about how she has to deal with these overloaded responsibilities through various *piket*, while she is also busy with her study. As a result, Riska rarely have time to rest.

Piket Minggu is carried out every Sunday by all *warga* (*kerja bakti*). They clean certain rooms depending on which room needs to be cleaned, including the side yard, the hall room by cleaning the windows, sweeping and mopping the floor. *Piket Kamis* and *piket Minggu* take one to two hours to complete.

Piket parit is conducted once a year. This *piket* can only be done by *calon warga penginap* after three-months living in the *asrama*, after all initiation process is completed. They should brush drain and back yard which are located between the bathroom and the bedrooms, and the most difficult and disgusting tasks related to this is to scrape moss and mud that had stucked for about a year. Bunga (22 years)—a senior occupant— commented that she doesn't mind to do all the *piket*, except *piket parit*, since she got injured as a result. *Piket parit* take two to three hours per day for three consecutive days.

Some said that although *piket* is hard, they do not want to leave the *asrama* because they have been through a long the process of initiation, as Mawar (24 years)—an alumni—said “I’ve been through inauguration night, spending the night at Clarion Hotel (*bermalam di Clarion*), a four star hotel in Makassar, so I feel pity if I have to leave after going all through”. In this context, however, the phrase “bermalam di Clarion” is an analogy for three nights sleeping at the hall room, three to four days after the inauguration ritual (see below).

During my fieldwork, I was ambivalent about whether or not taking a part in the *piket*. In fact, the *pengurus* did not schedule me to be part of the picket. On the one hand, participating in the *piket* schedule is an opportunity to get lots of data. On the other hand, I were grateful not to be included because I could not imagine how tired I was if I was scheduled to do so during my stay in the *asrama*.

Once a *piket* is done by a junior, she has to ask a senior occupant to review what she has done (*pemeriksaan piket*). Only if the senior approves, the *piket* is fully completed. Otherwise, she must do it again until she gets a senior approval. When a junior is often late or not doing *piket* without apparent reason, then she will “get a star” (*dapat bintang*), which means that she gets a punishment to clean twice as much in the next schedule.

To become familiar with the rules in the *asrama*, *calon warga penginap* cannot go home or stay in other places in the first three months. In addition, they have to contribute at least an item for the need of the *asrama* specified by a senior, such as knife, broom, garbage basket. In addition, they have to do a number of tasks, such as to get involved in the social work (*kerja bakti*), to manage birthday party of the *asrama*, etc.

For the *kerja bakti*, all juniors of AMKT Mulawarman work hand-in-hand, including with those who are from *asrama putra*. This

event is held in a poor village decided by the manager of this regional organisation. For *asrama’s* birthday party, they invite occupants of *asrama putra* and neighboring dormitories as their guests.

As new occupants, there are some rituals in the initiation process, an internal activity that involved the occupants of the *asrama*, that they have to pass through. It is preceded by asking biographical data and signatures of all the occupant of the *asrama* before attending the inauguration night (*malam perkenalan*). This is aimed to introduce and to test the memory of the new occupants on who are living in the *asrama*. *Calon warga penginap* dress according to the theme of the inauguration night, determined by their senior occupants, such as *centil* (coquettish), punk, etc. In this ritual, all occupants of the *asrama* gather together in the living room, new *warga* introduce themselves and describe all the biodata of the occupants, which approximately takes up to two hours/person, depending on the behaviour of *calon warga penginap* before the initiation ritual takes place.

Inauguration night is a dramatic night because seniors play various characters during the ritual, such as antagonist, protagonist. Some juniors cried because how she is treated by the seniors. *Malam perkenalan* commonly lasts at around two o’clock in the morning. Three or four days after *malam perkenalan*, *calon warga penginap* spend the night at Clarion (*bermalam di Clarion*). The inauguration night is aimed to mentally train the *calon warga penginap*, to establish close relationship among all new members and between senior occupants and the new comers. This ritual is a nightmare for the juniors, whilst it is an entertainment night for the seniors.

All members of the *asrama* have to start from *calon warga penginap* to *warga penginap*, before being a *warga tetap*. The commonly required period for a *calon warga penginap* to be a *warga penginap* is approximately six

months. After being accepted as a *warga penginap*, then she gets the *asrama* key of her own. To become a *warga tetap*, one has to undergo another process for another six months from which she is observed by the seniors in terms of her obedience towards the rules of the *asrama*. In addition, she has to present a subject that is relevant and useful for the occupants of the *asrama* on the basis of her major, such as how to establish relationship with other *warga* of the *asrama*, how to deal with stress, how to manage spaces in the *asrama*. The decision whether or not a *calon warga penginap* is entitled to be a *warga tetap* is based on the review of their seniors, marked in the form of a decree (*surat keputusan*), commonly less than six months, depending on her obedience. Otherwise, she has to get through along an additional process for up to three months.

During my stay in the *asrama*, I was informed that this year some *warga penginap* have disobeyed their seniors. In this context, when a *warga penginap* disobeys the rule in the *asrama*, all *warga penginap* have to be responsible, and therefore *surat keputusan* for all the *warga penginap* will likely to be delayed. In such a condition, *lobi-lobi* (emergency meeting) is conducted by the *pengurus asrama* (i.e. the manager) in order to “give a lesson” to the one who violates the rules.

This meeting is conducted in one of the bedrooms, attended only by the *pengurus* of the *asrama*. In the case of Tenri (20 years), a *warga penginap* who violates the rules several times, was commented by Orchid (21 years), a senior occupant, that she has warned Tenri for what she had done, that is, she is always spending the night in someone else’s room), but Tenri didn’t care. *Surat Peringatan 1* (SP1) was issued as the result of *lobi-lobi* (see the explanation below). Issuing SP1 to Tenri is expected to change her behavior and also give a lesson to other *warga*, especially juniors.

All *warga* can stay in their room as long as they want, but they can only stay in others’ room up to 10 minutes. These regulations are commonly violated by junior occupants. One of the seniors—Bunga (22 years), a senior occupant—stated that hiding in another junior room is a very common violation in the *asrama*. She confirmed that juniors are more comfortable to deal with other juniors. Seniors usually assess the behaviour of the junior, and convey their assessment in a meeting and juniors will be reprimanded for their behaviour. This is why juniors and seniors are hard to get close to each other. To get close and to familiarize between seniors and juniors, *warga tetap* must share a room with a *calon warga penginap*. In fact, I observed that most seniors have their own private rooms instead, and therefore sharing is absent. Seniors can choose whether or not they want to share their rooms with juniors, but this is not the case in the reverse.

The *lobi-lobi* is commonly resulted in a decision to issue a warning letter (*surat peringatan*, SP) in steps. Thus, there is SP1 (first warning letter), SP2 (second warning letter), and SP3 (third warning letter). What is the consequence of each step? When SP1 is issued, one has to clean the bathroom 16 times during a month; when SP2 is issued, one has to undergo *piket harian*, both in the morning and in the afternoon on a daily basis for two month; and when SP3 is issued, it means one is disqualified from the *asrama*. However, I found out that in the history of the *asrama*, SP2 has never been issued. It is common, when an occupant has got through SP1 and she is still making mistakes or violating the rules, it goes directly to SP3, without undergoing the SP2. This is because the punishment in the SP2 stage is too heavy, so that the occupants prefer to leave the *asrama*.

Although the *asrama* has strict rules, many of the rules can be negotiated by informing *warga* and/or ask permission to the

pengurus and mentioning the word *tabe'* (a Bugis word for excusing), which can be used in different situation. For example, the evening hours for the *asrama* is 10 pm. Thus, guests—especially male guests—have to leave. So, when someone still has her male guest, she has to say loudly (to all occupants) at the door which connect between the living room and the private spaces, saying: “*Tabe', masih ada tamuku*” (Sorry, I still have a guest). Furthermore, if a *warga* wants to advance or delay the *piket* she has to ask permission to the *pengurus* with a clear reason and further say: “*tabe'* I advance or delay the *piket*”.

In addition, every body has to be at the *asrama* before 10 pm. When one is late, she has to knock every body’s door, and say “*tabe'*”, as an excuse for coming late. Bunga (22 years)—a senior occupant—expressed her disagreement about this rule. She said that such rule is not necessary, knocking everybody’s door in the middle of others’ time off is more about disturbing others than informing all *warga* that she is in. For her, informing one of the *pengurus asrama* is good enough. When confirming this to the head of the *asrama*, she explained that knocking the door is a way to tell the occupants that everybody is already in, so they don’t have to worry about.

The highest level of *warga* in the *asrama* is *warga tetap*. They are the ones who are entitled to be the the managers of the *asrama* (*pengurus asrama*). This consists of a *ketua* (head of the *asrama*), *sekertaris* (secretary), *bendahara* (treasurer), *inventaris* (the manager of inventory items) and *tata tertib/tatib* (the order). *Ketua* is someone who leads and control all of the occupants, manages the external relations of the *asrama*, chairs meetings, dan solves the problem of the *asrama*. A *sekertaris* administrates and files the *asrama’s* archives and documents. *Bendahara* manages the financial matters of the *asrama*. An *inventaris* deals with listing and maintaining *asrama* items (which mostly come from local government).

Tatib is someone who controls the cleanliness and the security of the *asrama* (see the Structure of the *Asrama* in **Chart 1** below).

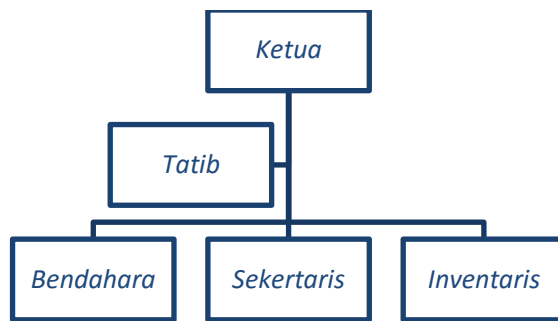


Chart 1. The Structure of the *Asrama*

Despite the existence of all the positions, the most significant position in the *asrama* is the one who deals with the code of conduct (*tata tertib*, here after referred to *tatib*). *Tatib* is someone who is considered a respected person and who has more experience in dealing with the internal life of the *asrama*. She is usually a *warga* who had served the *asrama* in the previous year. Her duty is to control and to manage the implementation of the rule in the *asrama*, such as the behavior of the *warga*, *piket schedule*, *lobi-lobi*. She also has the exclusive authority to issue the warning letter (*surat peringatan*, SP) even without *lobi-lobi*. Orchid (21 years)—a *tatib*—expressed how a *tatib* has a powerfull role in the *asrama*. A *tatib* can issue an SP without a notice and/or without the consent of the *pengurus asrama*.

In addition, an alumni, who used to be an occupant, has a special role in the *asrama*. Though, she is already graduated and permanently left the *asrama*, and is no longer a *warga*, she can visit and stay in the *asrama* at any time as long as there is a room to share with. An alumni is treated in a more respect manner than senior occupants and she is not bounded by any rule of the *asrama*. During my stay in the *asrama*, there was an alumni who has stayed in the *asrama* for about five months, by sharing a room with one of the *warga tetap*. This shows how an alumni has a privilege to

stay in the *asrama*. Despite the fact that she has no room in the *asrama* and does not get involved in the decision making, she is consulted before the decision is made by the *pengurus asrama*. This is in accordance with her role as an advisor to all occupants of the *asrama*.

Thus, the status of *warga* has significantly influence how one should do and behave which is in accordance with the internal rules of the *asrama*. Step from one status to another

depends on the obedience of the rules, though they can be negotiable.

Division of Spaces and Gender

Space has always been political and strategic (Lefebvre 2009:170). Spaces in the *asrama* is divided into 3 types in connection with gender, namely public space, private space and semi-private space (see the Layout of the *Asrama* below in **Figure 1** below).

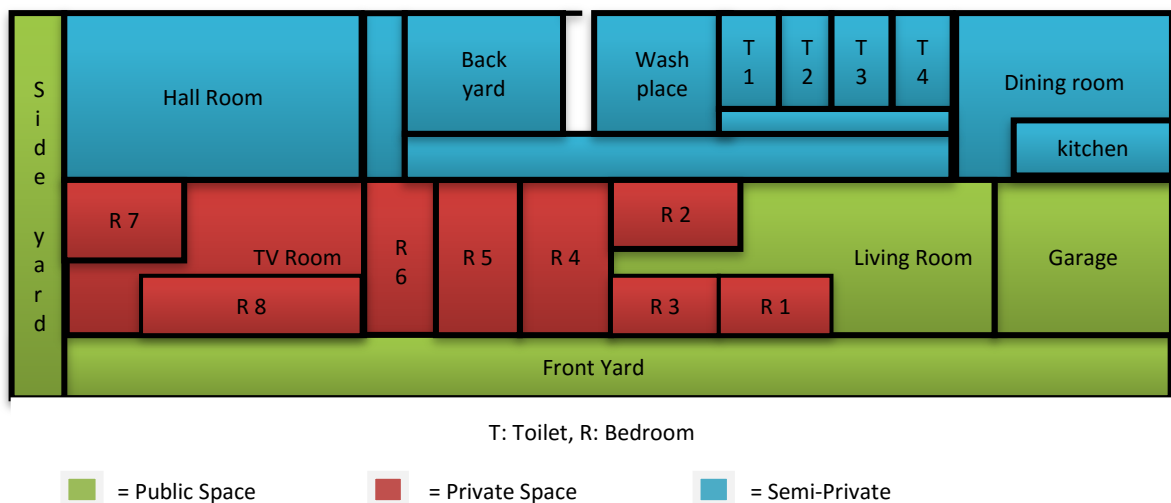


Figure 1. The Layout of the *Asrama*

Public spaces are spaces where guests suppose to be, particularly male guests and without saying *tabe'*, but of course with the consent of the occupants and greetings before stepping in. These spaces include living room, garage and front yard.

Private spaces are spaces that are forbidden for male to get in. These comprise bedrooms (see **Figure 2**) and TV room (see **Figure 3**). While semi-private spaces are spaces where men have to ask *pengurus'* permission and/or say "*tabe*" first before stepping in. These spaces are toilet, dining room and hall room. Despite the fact that evening hours is up to 10 pm, Bunga (22 years), a senior occupant, confirmed that male guests can stay over 10 pm in the living room, and an occupant who has male guest has to say loudly: "*tabe'* I still have a

guest". Private spaces are also spaces where occupants feel free and comfortable to wear any kind of dress without feeling shame and fear of being seen by the opposite sex. Other than these spaces, they should fully dress in case there is a male guest who passes public and semi-private spaces.



Figure 2. Bedroom



Figure 3. TV Room

Semi-private spaces are the spaces where male guests can only get in if there is an urgent need, preceded by saying “*tabe*”, such as when a male guest is intended to use the toilet, or to pass the kitchen. When a male guest intends to eat in the dining room (see Figure 4 below) invited by the occupants, he has to ask permission from a *pengurus asrama* before saying *tabe*. But, he has to leave as soon as it is done. Mawar (22 years)—an alumni—commented on this by saying that it is better for male guests to just be in the living room. It is easier for him because he does not have to say *tabe* anytime he enters semi-private rooms (Mawar, 20 September 2016), and, of course, it is also easier for the occupants of the *asrama*. Another Semi-private space is hall room, which is commonly used to gather all members of AMKT Mulawarman (both male and female) when they have a regional meeting or party.



Figure 4. Dining Room

A member of *asrama putra* complained about the rules in the *asrama putri* which limit the access of male guests and that they have to say *tabe*. He is often scolded by the occupants when he steps in without saying *tabe*. Bunga (22 years), a senior occupant, confirmed that when a male guest visits without any notice (i.e. saying *tabe*), it upsets her.

All occupants agreed upon the limited access for male guests in the *asrama*. This is because they need their own privacy even when they are in the public spaces, such as living room. Almost every day during my fieldwork in the *asrama*, there were male guests who visit the *asrama*. When male guests visit the *asrama*, the occupants have to dress decently. They are not allowed to wear short pants, tight and sleeveless clothes. Orchid (21 years)—a senior—said that “when a male is not around, we can freely wear anything we want in the *asrama*, except in the living room, the public space”. She, for example, sometimes wear a tanktop. When a male visits, every body escapes from the living room. In addition, Mawar (24 years), an alumni, explained that she and other occupants usually wear sexy clothes in the *asrama*. Therefore, it is better for male guests to be just up to the living room because when male guests visit, this will intervene their freedom (see the living room in Figure 5).



Figure 5. Living Room

I felt strange in the beginning, when a male guest visited because I observed the occupants closed the door and window curtains (see

Figure 6) that connect between living room and semi-private rooms in the *asrama*.



Figure 6. The Connecting Door and Window

When there is a male guest in the living room and an occupant, who does not fully dress and wants to go to her room located across the living room, she will say “*tabe*”. This is, then, responded by the male guest by closing his eyes or turning his face, a code that someone can pass by.

But, in an emergency condition, male guests can spend the night in the *asrama*. For example, when Risna’s father missed his flight. He was allowed to stay overnight in the *asrama* after lobbying with the *pengurus asrama*. He slept in Risna’s room while her roommate moved to another *warga*’s room.

In contrast, female guests have free access in all spaces in the *asrama*. However, they have to behave according to the type of membership of their friend. For instance, if an occupant is a *warga penginap*, her female guest has to behave according to the rule of *warga penginap* as well.

It indicates that the rules in the *asrama* has clearly designated that gender plays an important role in managing “what gender can be in what spaces”. Therefore, spaces in the *asrama* is gendered, though it is open for negotiation.

Different Space, Different Activities

Spaces in the *asrama* is not only divided on the basis of hierarchy and gender, but also activities. Bunga (22 years), a senior occupant, explained that the spaces in the *asrama* should be utilized in accordance with its function. For example, eating in the dining room and sleeping in the bedroom. In other words, one must do things in proper place. Otherwise, one is not regarded inpolite as well as violating the *asrama*’s rule.

There are two categories on the basis of activities in the *asrama*: limited activity space and free activity space. Limited activity space is divided into two: the spaces where occupants are not allow to do certain activities. But in some spaces, this rules can be negotiated with the word *tabe*’.

Bedrooms and back yard are spaces where the occupants are not allowed to bring or eat a heavy meal even though *tabe*’ is applied. All heavy meal must be placed in the dining room and supposed to be eaten there. When someone eats a heavy meal in the bedroom, she will be strongly admonished, and when such violation is repeated, SP1 is issued.

However, one can eat in other rooms, such as living room, front yard or hall room, only if the word *tabe*’ is mentioned. For example, when someone intends to eat in the hall room, she has to say “*tabe*’, I eat in the living room”. However, this is not necessary when they have a party in the hall room. Kasma (21 years)—the head of the *asrama*—confirmed that they do not have to ask permission, because everybody knows that a party is taken place.

Another rule is related to what to bring in certain spaces. For instance, one day I was admonished by Inna (19 years)—a junior occupant—because I brought a towel to the dining room. She commented that towel is supposed to be used in the toilet or bedroom. Bringing towel in other rooms is not just regarded as inpolite, but also violating the rule. Again, an exception is possible when one say:

"*tabe'*, I bring towel or use towel". But, these rule can't be negotiated in the front yard and side yard. Otherwise, they will be sanctioned, which is similar to the sanction of someone who eats in a bedroom or in back yard.

In the *asrama*, there is only one free activity space, that is, TV Room. The occupants are free to do whatever they like without being limited by the rules. They usually use this room to gather together, to chat, to eat, to nap, to do assignments, etc. But, TV room is a private room, so male cannot step in.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Although the *asrama* is funded by the government, it does not intervene the internal rules of the *asrama*, all are created by the occupants of the *asrama*. The occupants, however, have to maintain the good name of the *asrama*, the government of East Kalimantan, and the occupants themselves.

Every day life in the *asrama* shows that there is a clear hierarchy between junior, senior, and alumni. Juniors are expected to always obey the rules, while seniors are expected to control juniors' behavior. While *calon warga penginap* (CWP) and *warga penginap* (WP) are categorized as juniors, *warga tetap* (WT) is identical with seniors. How long one can transfer from one status to another and whether or not one can be a *warga tetap*, it depends on their obedience to the rules of the *asrama*. The more senior the occupants, the more power they to control their juniors, the more respect the juniors to their seniors.

The division of room is hierarchical. The more senior they are, the more opportunity they have to get their own private room. Alumnweis not a *warga* of the *asrama*, but she is respected by *warga* and is consulted by the *pengurus* before making any decision. Despite they used to be a senior of the *asrama*, she must share room with other junior because of her non-*warga* status.

The *asrama* spaces divided into three categories on the basis of gender, and they are: public, private and semi-private spaces. While male guest can only enter public space and semi-private space, female guests can access any of the room. In the latter case, rules are not only applied, but are also synchronized with the *warga's* status (i.e. *warga penginap* or *warga tetap*). Spaces are also divided by activities: limited activity space and free activity space. In the limited activity spaces, the occupants have to obey certain activities in the former space, while in the free activity space they are not bound by any rules. In spite of the strict rules in the *asrama*, unless violation is repeated numbers of time, there is always a space for negotiation, and the word *tabe'* plays a significant role, as a sign of respect and consent.

Other dormitories that have cleanliness problems, which are experienced by almost all regional dormitories in Makassar, should be modeled after the cleaning picket time sharing system in the *asrama* Kalimantan Timur which is tightly controlled by the *pengurus asrama*. But the seniority system that occurs in this *asrama* should be avoided because seniors tend to be more powerful and never be the wrong one. Such circumstances not only influence junior's health, particularly their mental health. Most juniors are reluctant to express their feelings, very obedient to their seniors despite neglecting their personal rights, as a result.

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