



SPATIAL AND RITUAL SYSTEMS IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG GOD, HUMANS AND NATURE IN THE CUSTOMARY HOUSE OF SAPO SALIANAN KALUPPINI

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Abstract: This study examines how the spatial and social systems of Sapo Salianan/Sapo Battoa, the customary house of the Kaluppini community, mediate relationships among God, humans, and nature through access regulation, social roles, customary prohibitions, and ritual practices. Qualitative architectural ethnography was employed using participant observation, in-depth interviews, spatial documentation, and documentary analysis. The data were analyzed thematically and through a spatial-cultural framework by relating spatial hierarchy to actors, access, behavioral rules, and ritual functions. The findings demonstrate that Sapo Salianan is not merely a container for customary activities but a socio-spatial regulatory system that connects cosmological values with everyday practice. Vertically, *sullu' bola*, *kale bola*, and *baroko' bola* establish gradations of sacredness and authority. Horizontally, five *lontang* in the *kale bola* spatialise the positions of customary leaders, religious authorities, village leaders, and distinguished people. *Batu mapaccing*, *posi bola*, *patta*, and *enda* further show that sacred boundaries are constituted not only by physical elements but also by permission, accompaniment, prohibitions, and ritual conditions. Thirteen rituals documented in *Sapo Salianan* periodically activate the house for deliberation, ritual preparation, prayer, transition, and the regulation of customary prohibitions. The study proposes the concept of Cosmological–Spatial–Social Mediation, formulated as space, access, role, behavior, ritual, and cosmological value. This concept extends vernacular architecture research from formal and symbolic readings toward understanding space as a socio-cultural infrastructure through which community values are reproduced.

Keywords: *Sapo Salianan*; vernacular architecture; sacred space; ritual; social relations; cosmology; Kaluppini; customary prohibition; architectural ethnography.

INTRODUCTION:

Vernacular architecture is the product of a reciprocal relationship among building form, local knowledge, social practice and the environment in which a community lives. In contemporary architectural scholarship, vernacular buildings are no longer understood merely as physical artefacts, but also as part of a cultural system that contains activities, values, rules, and social relations. The development of vernacular architecture research shows growing attention to cultural sustainability, spatial use, community identity, and the link between architectural configuration and the practices of community life. Zong et al (2025), though a systematic review of vernacular architecture research, demonstrates the importance of the cultural dimension in architectural sustainability.



However, an understanding of how cultural values operate through the mechanisms of spatial use and social relations still requires further elaboration [1].

At the same time, research on traditional houses in Indonesia shows that the meaning of space is related to activity, value, hierarchy, movement, and social structure and not only to architectural form [2][3] [4].

In the context of South Celebes, research on traditional houses and traditional areas has revealed the relationship between spatial configuration, cultural identity and social structure. Studies of Tana Toraja and Mamasa show that settlement configuration continues to record social structure even though the forms of social institutions have changed [5]. A comparative study of South Sulawesi traditional houses also shows that house form is shaped by responses to nature, community values and culture [6]. Vernacular space therefore needs to be read as a configuration that connects material, activity, rules and values.

Kaluppini in Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi, is one important context of developing such a study. The customary house *Sapo Salianan*, known as *Sapo Batua*, has been examined through research on the meaning of spatial order and on the communal spatial patterns of Kaluppini [7], [8]. These earlier studies provide an important basis of understanding the relationship between space and Kaluppini culture. However, based on the previous research used in this manuscript, full explanation is still needed of how spatial hierarchy is translated into the division of user, access rules, authority, *pemali* (customary prohibitions), and ritual activation within the customary house.

This research gap is important because the field data in this study show that the sacredness of the space of *Sapo Salianan* is not related only to the form, position, or function of space. Sacredness is also related to who is permitted to access a space, under what conditions access is granted, who grants permission, which actions are allowed, and how these rules change in the context of ritual. Sacred space therefore needs to be understood as a socio-spatial condition formed through the relationship among physical elements, actors, rules, and ritual activities.

This study limits its object of inquiry to the customary *Sapo Salianan* in Kaluppini, Enrekang. The *Betteng Banua* area (the customary area), *Sapo Lalan*, the Customary Mosque, and *Datte-Datte* (a communal space of the community that shifts function into sacred space during customary sequences) are used only as context when ritual activities related to *Sapo Salianan* take place outside the house. This limitation is applied so that the analysis focuses on the spatial system and the socio-ritual system that operate through the space of the customary house.

Based on this background, the study addresses the main question: how do the spatial system and the socio-ritual system of the customary house *Sapo Salianan* mediate the relationship among God, humans, and nature through the activities and rituals of the Kaluppini community? This question is elaborated into three questions: (1) how is the spatial hierarchy of *Sapo Salianan* formed; (2) how does spatial organization regulate actors, access, authority, and



behavior; and (3) how do rituals activate the meaning of space and reproduce cosmological values? The study uses a proposition rather than a statistical hypothesis: the more strongly a space is placed within the hierarchy of sacredness, the more specific the access rules, social roles, and behaviors attached to it; rituals then reactivate these relationships.

The scientific contribution of this study is the development of the concept of Cosmological-Spatial- Social Mediation. This concept regards space as a mediator between cosmological values and social structure through the relationship among space, access, role, behavior, ritual, and cosmological value. With this framework, the study does not stop stating that the elements of the house carry symbolic meaning, but seeks to explain how that meaning works as a socio-spatial mechanism that can be observed through the practice of spatial use

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Space as a Socio-Spatial System

Studies of the meaning of space in traditional architecture place setting, activity, and value as a single analytical unit [2]. Studies of the meaning of space in traditional architecture place setting, activity, and value as a single analytical unit [3]. Syntactic approaches also show that spatial configuration is related to movement patterns and social structure [4], [9]. These studies provide a basis for reading space as a relational structure.

In the context of Indonesian traditional houses, spatial dividers can become markers of culture, territoriality, and functional change [10], [11]. Studies of social sustainability in traditional settlements also show that cultural sustainability cannot be separated from social structure and community practice [12]. From this perspective, the physical elements of *Sapo Salianan* need to be read together with the rules of use, the actors, and ritual practice.

Sacred Space, Ritual, And Cultural Sustainability

Sacred space is not always identical to a formal place of worship. Sacredness can be formed through history, ritual, symbolism, memory, rules, and authority. Recent studies of traditional houses and sacred space in Indonesia show that cultural practice can maintain the meaning of space even when buildings undergo change [13]. Research on Nias further shows that the continuity of traditional houses depends on the customs of the community, on techniques, materials, and the relationship with the landscape[14]. Conservation should therefore not attend only to the material aspects of the building, but also to the knowledge and practices that give space its meaning.

This study is built on that perspective but shifts the unit of analysis from “meaningful space” towards the mechanisms through which space regulates social relations and ritual practice. The focus of the research is therefore directed at the links among spatial hierarchy, access, role, behavioural regulation, ritual activation, and cosmological value.


Table 1. State Of The Art, Gap, And Research Position

Study	Object	Focus	Method	Main findings	Limitation/gap
Zulkarnain AS et al. (2022a)	<i>Sapo Battoa/Salianan</i>	Meaning of spatial order	Architectural-cultural study	Spatial order carries cultural meaning	Does not yet explain the access-role- <i>pemali</i> mechanism
Zulkarnain AS et al. (2022b)	Kaluppini area	Communal spatial patterns	Field study	Spatial patterns are related to communal life	Analysis not centered on Sapo Salianan
Heryati et al. (2021)	Jaton house	Meaning of space	Observation-interview	Setting, activity, and value are interrelated	Does not discuss the ordering of ritual authority
Tarigan et al. (2022)	Javanese house	Symbolic meaning	Observation-interview	Vertical/horizontal relations form meaning	Does not examine access regulation through <i>pemali</i>
Asriana & Khidmat (2024)	Kampung house	Spatial configuration	Spatial syntax	Structured spatial and movement patterns	Cosmological relations are not the focus
Zong et al. (2025)	Global vernacular	State of research	Systematic review	Culture is important for sustainability	User perspective and social mechanisms are still lacking

The position of this study is therefore not based on a claim that Sapo Salianan has never been researched. Rather, this study addresses a more specific gap: earlier research has revealed cultural meaning and spatial meaning, whereas this study explains how spatial hierarchy is translated into the regulation of access, the differentiation of authority, behavioural rules, and ritual activation. In this way, the study connects the meaning of space, vernacular architecture, ritual, and social structure within a single analytical mechanism.

A broader comparative literature further strengthens the position of this study. Studies of Towani Tolotang, Bali, Aceh, and other Indonesian traditions show that the meaning of space is embedded in social practice, ritual, symbolism, territoriality, and cultural sustainability [15][18]. Research on vernacular settlements also links traditional spatial systems with environmental relationships, local wisdom, identity, and resilience [19][22]. Studies of traditional houses in South Sulawesi and the surrounding cultural regions provide additional comparative grounding [6], [23], [24]. Research focusing more specifically on sacred space, safety, customary regulation, and vernacular heritage further shows that the relationship between built form and cultural values is maintained through social and ritual practice carried out repeatedly [13], [25][28]. This study therefore positions *Sapo Salianan* as a case that allows the mechanism linking spatial hierarchy, social authority, access, behavioural regulation, and ritual activation to be explained explicitly.

Additional comparisons are also relevant to the interpretation of Sapo Salianan. Research on Javanese vernacular houses shows how environmental strategies can be embedded in inherited spatial knowledge, while recent studies of the *Kajang* customary house affirm the



importance of culturally constructed meanings of space that continue to be maintained in South Sulawesi [29], [30]. Research on vernacular communities further shows that the formation, continuity, and transformation of villages cannot be separated from collective identity and customary institutions [31], [32].

METHODOLOGY:

Approach And Research Location

The study uses a qualitative approach with the method of architectural ethnography. This approach was chosen because the research seeks to understand space from the emic perspective of the community while also reading architectural configuration analytically. Hariyanto et al. (2021) show that architectural ethnography is effective for connecting community perspectives with studies of the built environment [33]. The research location is the customary house *Sapo Salianan* in Kaluppini, Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The *Betteng Banua* area, *Sapo Lalan*, the Customary Mosque, and *Datte-Datte* are used as context when the ritual sequences related to *Sapo Salianan* take place outside the house.

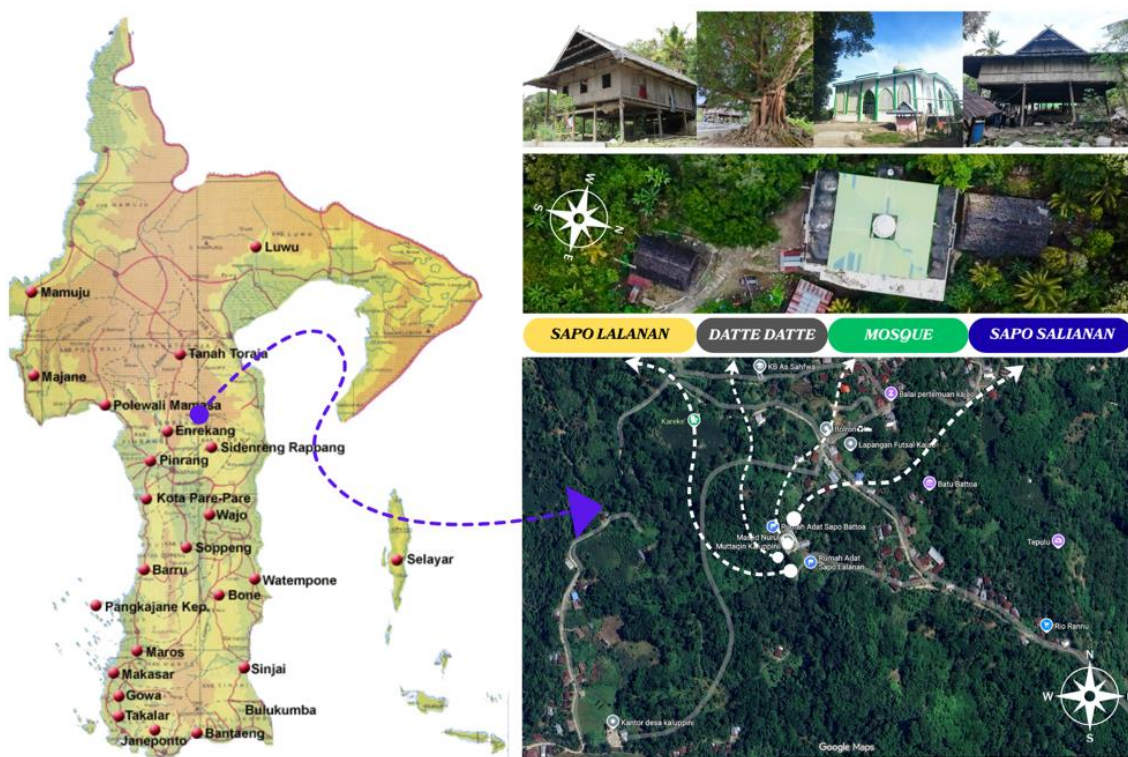


Figure 1. Research Location

Sources and Types of Data

Primary data were obtained through spatial observation, participant observation, in-depth interviews, visual documentation, spatial mapping, and records of ritual activities. Secondary data were obtained from earlier research on *Sapo Salianan* and Kaluppini, from available customary documents, and from relevant scholarly literature.



Architectural observation covered the vertical structure of *sullu' bola* (the under-house space), *kale bola* (the body of the house), and *baroko' bola* (the roof of the house); the elements batu *mapaccing* (a sanctified area marked by the presence of a large stone), *posi bola* (the main post), and *patta* (the tie beams between the posts of the customary house); the division into five *lontang* (rooms); and the patterns of access and spatial use during rituals. Social observation recorded the actors, the sequence of activities, positions, authority, prohibitions, and conditions of access.

Informants and Data Collection Technique

Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge of and direct involvement in the customary and ritual system, comprising *ada'ta* (custodians with authority over customary activities), *syara'* (custodians with authority over religious activities), ritual practitioners, and community members. *Snowball sampling* was used to reach informants referred by the initial informants because of their specialized knowledge. Semi-structured interviews were directed at five themes: the meaning of space, the users of space, access rules, ritual, and the relationship of space to the values of God–humans–nature.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis was carried out in four stages. First, data reduction and the coding of spatial elements, actors, access, rules, activities, and rituals. Second, grouping the codes into the themes of spatial hierarchy, the spatialization of authority, sacred boundaries, behavioral regulation, and ritual activation. Third, constructing a matrix of space, actors, access, and ritual. Fourth, interpreting the mechanism of cosmological relations through the chain of space, access, role, behavior, ritual, and cosmological value. The validity of the data was maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, visual documentation, and member checking with key informants. This approach follows the principles of architectural ethnography, which place the experience of the community and the reading of space as two sides of the analysis.

Limitations and Generalization

This study does not aim to produce statistical generalization. The generalization offered is analytical, namely the possible use of the concepts found here to read other cases of vernacular architecture that have a strong relationship between spatial hierarchy, ritual, and social structure. The transferability of the concept still depends on the compatibility of cultural context, social system, and ritual practice in the comparative cases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Vertical Spatial Structure: Sacredness as Hierarchy

Sapo Salianan is divided vertically into *sullu' bola*, *kale bola*, and *baroko' bola*. Observation data show that *sullu' bola* consists of 32 *pakke'dekan* posts (house posts), 32 *pela'pi* stones (stone bases for the house posts), one *enda* (stairway), four *patta*, batu *mapaccing*, and *posi bola*. Unlike the tendency of the under-house space in traditional houses across the Indonesian archipelago to serve as a profane area, the *sullu' bola Sapo Salianan*



instead contains sanctified elements and *pemali* rules. The position ‘below’ is therefore not identical to a ‘low’ position in the hierarchy of values.

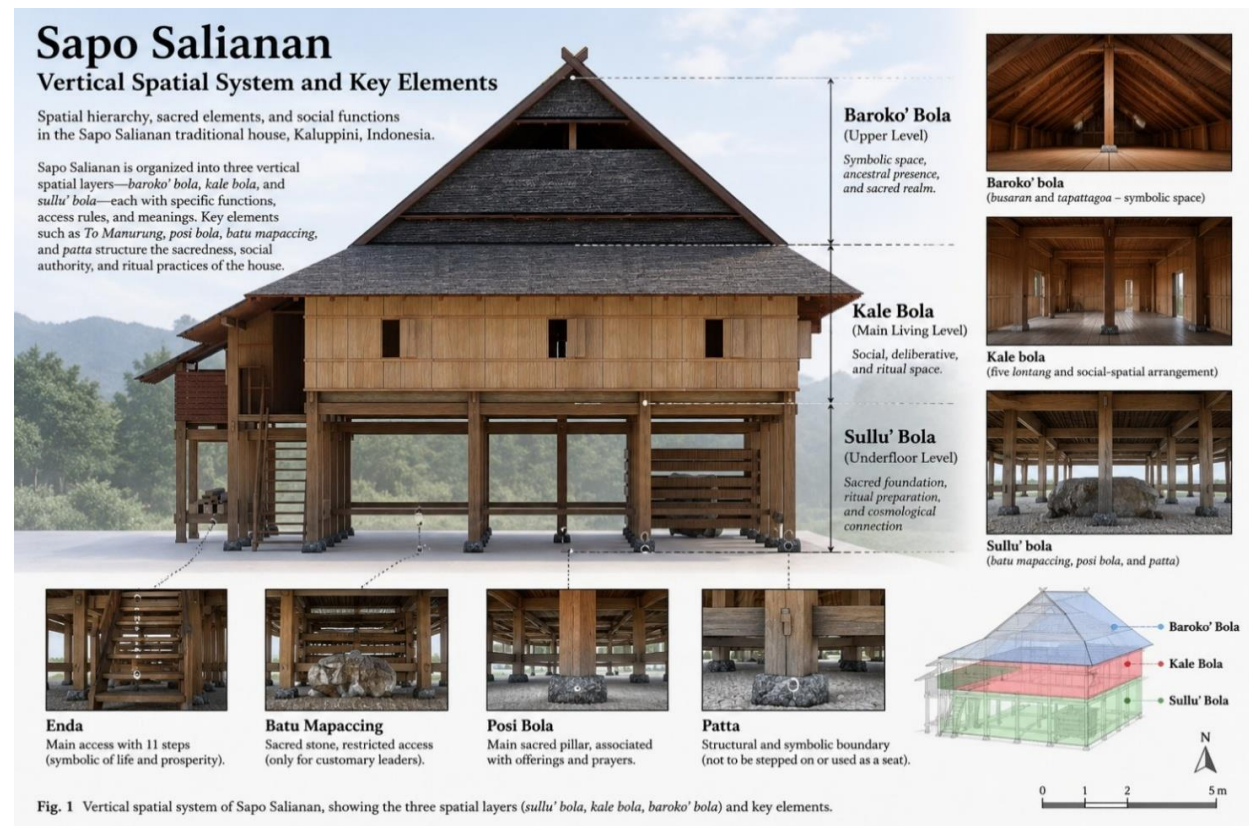


Figure 2. The Vertical Spatial System Sapo Salianan

Batu mapaccing is a large, sanctified stone bounded by wooden boards. Vertically, its position is aligned with the *To Manurung* space in the *kale bola*. Access to it is restricted to customary custodians, and during *Maccera To Manurung/Pangewaran* it is given a marker of yellow coconut fronds. These data show that sacredness is expressed not only by material, but through a combination of location, boundary, actors, and ritual conditions. *Posi bola* is likewise a sanctified main post. On ordinary days, community access requires permission and the accompaniment of customary custodians, whereas during major rituals community members may place offerings or convey their hopes to the Creator. Access is therefore conditional.

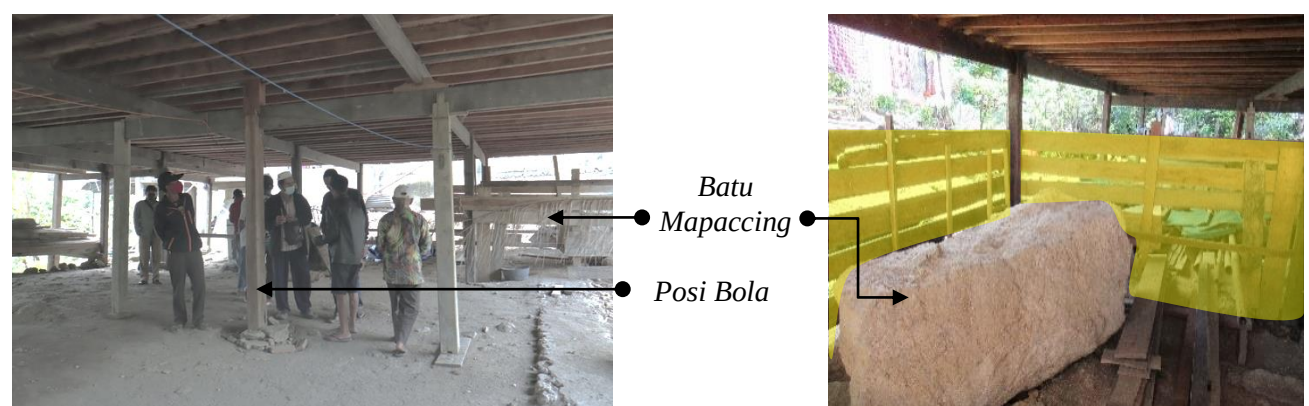


Figure 3. Batu mapaccing and Posi Bola



Figure 4. *Patta and Enda Sapo Salianan*

Patta are structural tie beams between the posts that at the same time form the sacred-profane boundary. The prohibition against sitting or leaning on them shows that a construction element works as a behavioral norm. *Enda* consists of 11 steps and is public access to the house. However, open physical access does not mean that social access is entirely free, because there are *pemali* to be observed before entering the house; among them, entering the house of *Sapo Salianan* is prohibited for anyone who had sexual intercourse the previous night, for women who are menstruating, and for those who have consumed peanuts and sweet potatoes. This finding produces an important distinction between physical accessibility and social admissibility: a person may physically reach a space but does not necessarily hold the social legitimacy to use it.

Horizontal Structure: Space as the Spatialization of Authority

Kale bola is divided into five *lontang*. *Lontang 1* is the space symbolizing *To Manurung* and holds the highest degree of sacredness. *Lontang 2* is designated for the *adat'ta* custodians; *lontang 3* for the *syara'* custodians; *lontang 4* for the village head and the heads of small hamlets; while *lontang 5* or *kandawari* is for nobles/descendants of the king or guests who hold a special position in government. *Tambing* (the lowest floor, level with the door) is used by the general community during certain activities.

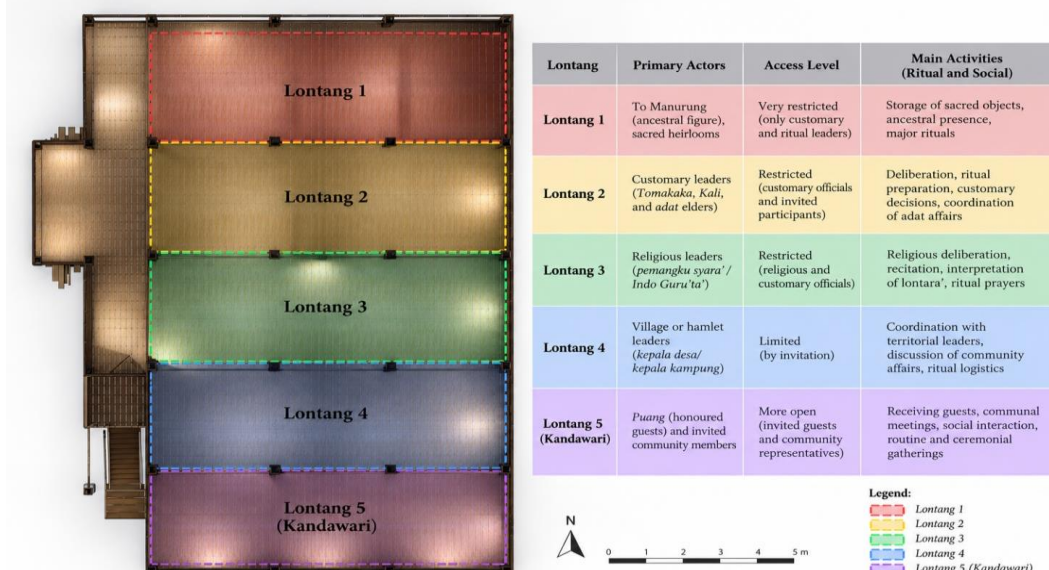


Figure 5. The Horizontal Spatial System of *Kale Bola Sapo Salianan*



This division shows that space does not only group activities, but also groups authority. Social position is translated into spatial position. The boundary between *lontang* is marked by *patta*, which also carries behavioral rules. *Posi bola* stands between the space of the *ada'ta* custodians and that of the *syara'* custodians and can therefore be read as a connecting element and at the same time a boundary marker. Spatial organization thus maintains the differentiation of authority without erasing the relationship among the custodians.

This finding extends the reading of *Sapo Salianan* in earlier research. Where previous studies emphasized the meaning of spatial order, the new data shows a more specific mechanism: spatial hierarchy works through assignment of users, controlled access, behavioral rules, and ritual activation. In the terms of this study, the house undergoes a spatialization of authority, social authority is made legible through who occupies a particular space, who may enter, and what actions may be performed.

Thirteen Rituals and the Function of Sapo Salianan as a Ritual Governance Space

Sapo Salianan is the oldest customary house of the Kaluppini community, estimated to be almost 100 years old or more. The building functions as the centre for the performance of various customary ceremonies determined by the customary body *Tau Appa* (four principal customary custodians), particularly the *Tomakaka* (the highest leader of the customary custodians) and *Kali* (the highest leader of the religious custodians). Thirteen customary rituals are performed in this customary house, both as preparatory sequences for the main ceremony at *Datte-Datte* and as rituals that take place entirely within *Sapo Salianan*. Besides its customary function, *Sapo Salianan* also becomes a space for certain religious activities. This linkage of customary and religious functions forms a unified ritual institution that strengthens the relationship of humans with God, among humans, and with nature. These three relationships become the basis for the meaning of ritual in the life of the Kaluppini community.

1. Pangewaran

Sapo Salianan becomes the *tempat tudang sipulung*, that is, the deliberation of the customary custodians to prepare the *pangewaran* at *Datte-Datte*. The discussion covers the main requirements of the ceremony, such as buffalo and rice. This ritual emphasises the relationship of humans with God, accompanied by the strengthening of relationships among humans and with nature.

2. Ma'pasare Muharram

This ritual welcoming the beginning of Muharram becomes a space for annual reflection on the safety of the community and the customary territory. Through open deliberation, the reading of *lontara'*, and communal prayer, the community evaluates experience and formulates hopes for the future. This ritual strengthens the relationship of humans with God, among humans, and with nature.



3. *Ma'damulu' Sapo Salianan*

The commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) held at Sapo Salianan has aims and ceremonial requirements like those of *damulu'* (the commemoration of the Prophet's birth) at the Customary Mosque. The difference lies in the place, the time, and those who conduct it, namely the *Tomakaka* and the *Kali* together with the customary body. Its main meaning is the strengthening of harmony among humans, of the relationship with God, and with nature.

4. *Massipulung Massima' Tanah*

This ritual takes the form of deliberation and communal prayer to prepare *massima' tana*, that is, the request for permission from God before beginning the cultivation of the rice fields. Deliberation is conducted first until agreement is reached and is then followed by prayer. Its dominant function is to strengthen harmony among humans.

5. *Massipulung Ma'paratu Ta'ka'*

This ritual is a meeting of the customary custodians to prepare for and to attend *ma'paratu ta'ka'*, that is, the harvest festival that forms part of the *pangewaran* sequence. The activity is led by the *Tomakaka* and the *Kali* together with the customary body, with an emphasis on togetherness and the strengthening of relationships among humans.

6. *Massipulung Damulu' Banua*

This meeting ritual at *Sapo Salianan* is held to prepare *ma'damulu' Banua* at the Customary Mosque. Its activities comprise deliberation and prayer to ask for health, protection, and the smooth conduct of the ceremony. This ritual strengthens the relationships among humans, between humans and God, and with nature.

7. *Nala Kake'deran Messuun di Bamba*

This ritual is a preparatory prayer before the customary custodians depart for Bamba, the sacred grove to the north of *Sapo Salianan*, to carry out *ma'pemali*. Led by the *Tomakaka* and the *Kali*, this ritual affirms the relationship of humans with God, among humans, and with nature.

8. *Massumbajang Kalla*

This religious ritual is performed as a form of replacement or redemption for the prayers missed during the year. Led by the *Tomakaka* and the *Kali*, the ritual takes place at *Sapo Salianan* and may also be held in other villages or hamlets because of the high level of community participation. Its main meaning is the relationship of humans with God, accompanied by the strengthening of social relationships and of the relationship with nature.

9. *Nala Kake'deran Botting Pangewaran*

This prayer ritual is performed before the customary custodians walk to *Datte-Datte* to take part in the *pangewaran*. After praying, they pair up according to the customary structure of *Tau Appa* and continue the customary procession. This ritual *emphasises* the strengthening of harmony among humans, of the relationship with God, and with nature.



10. *Nala Kake'deran Inja Mangatta'*

This ritual is a preparatory prayer before the performance of *mangatta'* at *Datte-Datte*, that is, the ritual of escorting illness out of the village. Its purpose is to ask for health and safety for the community and for the customary custodians. This ritual carries the meaning of the relationship of humans with God, among humans, and with nature.

11. *Nala Kake'deran Inja Ma'rodo'*

This ritual is the preparatory prayer before the performance of the traditional dance *ma'rodo'* to welcome government officials or important customary figures. This dance carries historical meaning as a symbol of the victory of the King of Enrekang. The ritual strengthens respect, social bonds, and the relationship of humans with God and with nature.

12. *Mappalessa' Indan Timuh*

This ritual is the fulfilment of the obligation to pay a vow for community members who have previously performed *pangolo peta'da damban* at the Customary Mosque. It is led by the customary custodians, particularly the *Tomakaka* and the *Kali* together with their body. This ritual strengthens the relationship of humans with God, among humans, and with nature.

13. *Ma'pasoro'/Ma'palesso' Pemali*

This ritual aims to end or to lift the *pemali* norms enforced during the ceremonial sequence. After the period of prohibition has ended, the *Tomakaka* and the *Kali* together with the customary body determine its revocation. This ritual reaffirms the relationship of humans with God, among humans, and with nature.

The thirteen rituals at *Sapo Salianan* show that this customary house is not merely a venue for the performance of ceremonies, but a space that integrates the customary, religious, and social systems. Through deliberation, prayer, ceremonial preparation, and the enforcement of customary norms, *Sapo Salianan* reproduces the values of harmony and of balance in the relationship of humans with God, with one another, and with nature.

Sapo Salianan as a Socio-Spatial Regulatory System

When the physical and ritual findings are read together, *Sapo Salianan* can be understood as a ritual governance space. The term does not mean that the house is a government office, but that space becomes the infrastructure in which decisions, legitimacy, the division of roles, access rules, and the performance of rituals are coordinated. This structure explains why small elements such as *patta* or *posi bola* carry social consequences greater than their constructional function.

The mechanism can be formulated as follows: spatial elements form a hierarchy; the hierarchy restricts access; access identifies roles; roles determine behavior; behavior is repeated and legitimated through ritual; ritual reproduces cosmological values. This model explains a two-way relationship. Values are not only expressed by space but are reproduced using space. Conversely, social rules do not reside only in abstract norms, but become observable through spatial organization.



This finding also clarifies the relationship between customs and religion. The presence of customary custodians and *syara'* custodians within the spatial organization does not indicate an absolute separation. The data show a differentiation of authority placed side by side within one system. Integration should therefore not be read as the fusion of all functions, but as a *coexistence of differentiated authorities*. Space maintains the distinction of roles while at the same time providing a meeting point for collective activities.

The God- Human- Nature Relationship as a Outcome of Spatial Meditation

The relationship with God appears above all through sacred space, prayer, offerings, ritual, and rules of purity. *Batu mapacking* and *posi bola* show that the spiritual relationship is translated into access rules. In other words, spirituality has spatial consequences that can be observed.

Relationships among humans emerge through the division of space according to role, deliberation, the reception of dignitaries, collective work, and ritual coordination. The five *lontang* show that social structure does not merely stand outside architecture but is embedded in the spatial order. *Sapo Salianan* becomes the place where customary authority, religious authority, and the community meet under different rules.

The human–nature relationship is most clearly visible in *Massipulung Massima' Tanah* and in the ritual sequences that connect the house with agricultural activity. In this context, nature is treated as part of moral and ritual decisions. The study does not, however, conclude that *Sapo Salianan* physically produces a particular ecological performance. The more defensible claim is that the house functions as a socio-ritual mediator connecting community decisions with actions towards the land and the agricultural cycle.

These three relationships converge in ritual. Ritual turns cosmological values into practice; space provides the structure for practice; and social structure determines who is responsible. The God–human–nature relationship is therefore not three functions standing on their own, but three dimensions bound together through the spatial and ritual system.

The Cosmological- Spatial- Social Mediation Model

Based on the synthesis of the findings, the study proposes the Cosmological–Spatial–Social Mediation model. This model consists of six stages: (1) Space-elements and spatial hierarchy; (2) Access-permission, boundaries, and conditions of entry; (3) Role-the division of actors and authority; (4) Behavior-rules of action and *pemali*; (5) Ritual-periodic activation and transition; and (6) Cosmological Value-the strengthening of the relationship among God, humans, and nature.

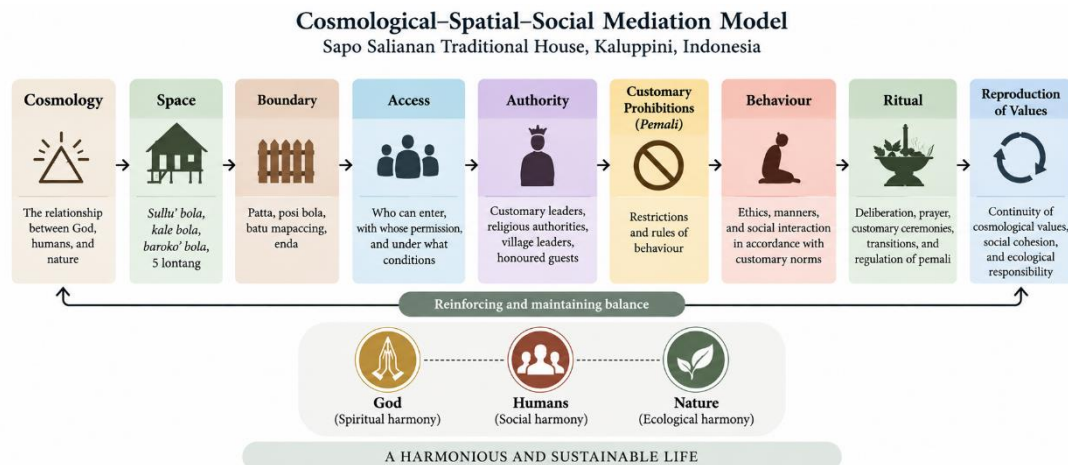


Figure 6. The *Cosmological–Spatial–Social Mediation Model*

The model offers two contributions. Theoretically, it bridges studies of the meaning of space with studies of social structure and ritual. Methodologically, it provides a unit of analysis that can be replicated in other traditional houses: for each space, researchers can ask who its users are, how access is determined, who holds authority, which rules apply, which rituals activate it, and which values are reproduced.

The model also warns that conservation should not focus on form alone. If *patta*, *posi bola*, the division of *lontang*, or the rules of *pemali* are removed from understanding, what is lost is not merely a physical element, but the social mechanism that keeps the house meaningful. This is in line with recent literature that locates the sustainability of vernacular architecture in cultural continuity and community practice, and not in material preservation alone [1], [14].

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the customary house *Sapo Salianan/Sapo Battoa* is a spatial system and a social system working simultaneously. The vertical hierarchy of *sullu' bola*, *kale bola*, and *baroko' bola*, together with the horizontal organization of the five *lontang*, regulates not only the function of space, but also maps sacredness, actors, access, and authority. *Batu mapaccing*, *posi bola*, *patta*, and *enda* show that spatial boundaries can be realized through a combination of physical elements, behavioral rules, permission, and ritual conditions.

The thirteen rituals that take place at *Sapo Salianan* show that the house functions as a ritual governance space. *Ma'pasare Muharram* demonstrates a deliberative function; *Massipulung Massima' Tanah* demonstrates mediation among deliberation, prayer, and action towards the land; *Nala Kake'daran Botting Pangewaran* demonstrates a transitional function; while *Ma'pasoro'/Ma'palesso' Pemali* demonstrates the temporal-spatial character of customary rules. These findings support the proposition that the higher the position of a space in the hierarchy of sacredness, the more specific the access rules, authority, and behavior attached to it.



The main contribution of the study is the concept of Cosmological–Spatial–Social Mediation: Space → Access → Role → Behavior → Ritual → Cosmological value. This concept positions architecture as an active mediator that translates cosmological values into observable social relations. The God–human–nature relationship in *Sapo Salianan* is therefore present not only as a symbol, but is realized through spatial practice, rules, authority, and ritual. The relationship with nature is understood primarily as a socio-ritual relationship with the land and with agricultural activity, and not as a claim about the ecological performance of the building.

In practical terms, the documentation and conservation of *Sapo Salianan* need to maintain three layers at once: the physical configuration, the socio-spatial rules, and the ritual calendar. Further research may test the proposed model on Sapo Lalanan or on other traditional houses in South Sulawesi to determine the extent to which the mechanism of spatial–social–cosmological mediation is contextual or can be compared across cultures.

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