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Gypsy from the Oriental: Bajo Ethnic in the Sulawesi Sea

ABSTRACT: *The Bajo is a greatest maritime community in Indonesia archipelago. The community is not only known as a nomad tribe upon the boat, but as an ethnic without settlement habit geographically. However, her existence as an ethnic cannot be denied, especially from socio-cultural aspect. It is caused by a fact that the Bajo ethnic has a language, custom, trust system, kinship, and cultural values as basic for her social live. In maritime world of Indonesia, as a link that related to political and economic powers in Nusantara, the Bajo's role and existence cannot be ignored. Her function even is equated with another maritime ethnic such as Bugis, Makassar, Buton, Mandar, and Malays. The main difference to another groups is her cultural exclusive, namely the Bajo ethnic did not play a crucial role in a culture spread as Islamization. The Bajo did not have an active role in the establishment of political control by ruling elite, locally as well as regionally. Her living that limited to her role as fisher and supplier of maritime products for economically traditional and domestic markets confers a special character for the community. Her apathy toward political polarization and her refusal to participate in domestic political constellation motivates her to avoid any reason to open conflict. This attitude makes the Bajo to be known as a loving-peace group with her subsistence and conflict avoiding. With her nomad live style, the Bajo can be termed as a subsistence Gypsy from the Oriental.*

KEY WORDS: *Bajo ethnic, maritime community, nomad tribe, fisher and supplier of maritime products, loving-peace group, and Gypsy from the Oriental.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1882, the Dutch colonial regime ordered a research on some native local communities that had a nomad living style as the maritime adventurers. The background of such decision was a potential of pirate escalation against Dutch civil and economic shipping in some seas and straits in Netherlands India (Indonesia now). The result of research showed that any collective name was related to the pirate activities, namely Bajo (*TNAG*, 1883:102). From this research result published in *TNAG* (*Tijdschrift van Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*), researcher calls all tribes who live at the sea as the Bajo.

Based on a such result, a new understanding on this community outstood among Dutch high officials and public in Netherlands India. This understanding grew into a collective memory about the Bajo's existence and their activities that previously identified with a traditional maritime world in *Nusantara* (Malay archipelago). This identification had a more special character and limited to a local group, although in a form of a collective unit that spread.

Compared with a collective memory that directed toward another maritime community like Bugis, Makassar, Aceh, and even Java in the past time, which had any affiliation with

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some political centers, the identification with Bajo community with her maritime background was more limited to social, economy, and cultural aspects (van Hasselt & Schwartz, 1898:48). The evident of general identification is a fact that the Bajo community is found also in South China sea waters and Riau archipelago. Because of her dominant and majority, according to one of Tujuh Islands in Riau is called as Bajo island.

It raises an interesting theme for a study on Bajo community in Netherlands India in the past. Given in colonial archives, this community was found more in eastern *Nusantara* than elders; and the research is focused to the water around Sulawesi island. The spatial term is based on a consideration that in colonial era, this region was a maritime centre in eastern Indonesia. Therefore, based on strategic consideration, many Bajo people lived here.

To realize a short, but deep and objective history reconstruction, historic sources and method is a prime condition. The main information is got mainly from some articles of the contemporaneous journals and previous studies. A great hindrance for it is a fact that no single document was found that related to Bajo. Thus, data that found was spread in some articles and studies.

THE ORIGIN OF BAJO TRIBE

According to anthropology-history research, Bajo tribe origins from Sulu islands in South Philippines archipelago. With a group of islands that dominated by water as background, the tribe has more relations with a maritime potential in her original region for her primary living spaces, than her relation with Sulu mainland. Over her relation, Bajo tribe experienced some effect and was formed by nature that identified with a maritime. Therefore, since early, Bajo community was formed as a maritime group or sailor community with mobile, dynamic, and democracy in her characters.

Although having Bajo as a collective term, the community was indeed consisted of two great groups based on their origins: north and south Bajo. North Bajo tribe populated Cagayan island, as a part of Mindanao islands;

and south Bajo groups lived in Zamboanga island and around. They were under *Sultans* of Sulu. They were known as *Sultans'* subordinate and experienced a migration at the time of Sulu's expansion to abroad. As the sultanate tried to expand her power to North Borneo in 19th century, the Bajo people followed and they migrated from South Philippine to North Borneo, a region that captured by *Sultan* of Sulu (Miller, 2007:3).¹

In a maritime region between Mindanao and North Borneo, Bajo sailors' activity was made and with her extensive knowledge about the region and guaranteed by her loyalty to a dominant political power. The Bajo established an informal sphere of influence on maritime living in a region between Borneo and Mindanao islands (Sather, 1997:29).²

As main actor in economic and maritime activities in this region, the Bajo was a symbol of Sulu's culture influence in *Nusantara* (Malay archipelago), mainly in areas dominated by her existence, namely North Borneo (Sabah now). Slowly, the Bajo spread over her local interaction to eastern Borneo, with any political interaction with some local rulers. Sulu's dominant culture identity in 13th – 16th century, and her prime function in maritime economic activities, facilitated the Bajo to make any contact and relation with local people (Warren, 2007:69).³ Islam, as a common identity in Sultanate of Sulu that spread with a conversion process of this religious in *Nusantara* at that time, gave an easy and cooperative way for Sulu sailors to be welcomed by Malays rulers in eastern Borneo (Magenda, 2010:20).⁴

¹In Marx T. Miller's research, it was found that in North Kalimantan, the Bajo community has an interaction with local people, that known as *Mapun* tribe. However, beside living and integrating into the social community in North Kalimantan as a dominant element, majority of Bajo often returns to her ancestor land in South Philippine (Miller, 2007).

²From her main base in Idahan, the Bajo often sailed in South Philippine sea to Sabah. They brought some forest products as candle, honey, and birdnest to Idaman; and took rice and sagoo to Tidong. The products were sold in capital of Sulu Sultanate. From there, they often sailed with slaves and another import products as their loading.

³This phenomenon is proven by the relation between the Bajo sailors and people of Sandakan, Sabahan, and another towns as long as the coastline. Their object was same, namely tripart trade.

⁴Trade partners of Sulu for 16th – 17th centuries were Bulungan, Sibuko, Sembakung, and Berau. These towns and

The spread of Bajo was taken place from northern to eastern Borneo, as one of her socio-economic and cultural interaction with another ethnics in Indonesia. With the Bajo's influence, eastern Borneo was a location of another ethnic's influence that having a same social identity with the Bajo, namely Bugis and Makassar. As a local power that based on her maritime potential, the Bugis and the Makassar sailors were local maritime rulers in the region around their original places, namely South Celebes. Over her economic relation by maritime trade, the Bugis and the Makassar migrated and built their diaspora in some islands, included in east coast of Borneo (Lancon, 2004:173).⁵

Local political constellation, that be marked by the growth of native traditional kingdoms, motivated some local ruling elite to search any outside allies with the aim to support her position and then her competition in economy. The Bugis and the Makassar were ready to offer themselves and their aid to Moslem Malays ruler in eastern Borneo,⁶ more than the Bajo (Knaap & Sutherland, 2004:14). However, it didn't mean that the Bajo could be ignored in socio-economic dynamic and development in eastern Borneo area, although compared with both (Bugis and Makassar), her political role was not so great. It is assumed that Bajo's tradition and commonality that differed from the Bugis and the Makassar was a reason for her lesser political role.

If the Bugis and the Makassar were successful in integrating land and maritime interaction, as building a maritime base and their strong bargaining position for local polarization, the Bajo remained her existence

trade centers came in the coastline and estuary of rivers. All local rulers paid tribute, that like as a compulsory delivery of local products in a certain number toward *Sultan* of Sulu. Their merchant boats were known as *Tausug* boat. After eastern Kalimantan, Sulu received supply of product from Sulawesi, Mollucas, and even from Flores.

⁵The first Bugis settlement in eastern Kalimantan was Bulungan, a kingdom of Islamic Malay-Dayak in east coast of Kalimantan that welcomed seven Bugis families. Then, for 17th century, they spread to Kutai, Pasir, and Tarakan.

⁶It was clear from the Bugis participation in political conflict in Kutai and Pasir, two Malay main powers in eastern Kalimantan for 17th century. From that participation, a nobleman from South Sulawesi named *Arung Singkang* established himself successfully as a ruler there. Although *Arung Singkang* returned to Makassar in 1735, his successor inherited his authority and influence in eastern Kalimantan.

that limited to maritime area. As a result, her potential was more maritime power than political power that developed into a dynasty structure as the Bugis and the Makassar migrants (Boomgaard ed., 2008).

Although not intervening into local politic dynamic, the impression of Bajo sailors in political competition remained. As a result of her old commonality that brought from her original place, as a part of her maritime activities, the Bajo's military and political role was prominent in maritime pirate. As some maritime nations in the past, like the Bugis, Mandar, and Makassar, pirate activity was regarded as an integral part of maritime live style and assumed as a legal activity that made by local rulers. In this case, the Bajo played an important role, that known in colonial rappers as pirates of Mangindanao and South Philippines (Eklof, 2006:41).⁷

As the Mandar pirates dominated northern Makassar strait and the Bugis ruled the middle, meanwhile the Makassar established her control in the water around south end of Celebes (Buddingh, 1843:423),⁸ the Bajo spread over the strait. Ironically, they never had any hostile action each and another or an open conflict among the pirate tribes. Religious, tradition, and interest sameness supported the Bajo to make any interaction and cooperative action with another sailor and pirate group, both on land and at sea.

This interaction was taking place very close and became growing into the collaboration between two parties. The growth of Makassar in the early seventeenth century, as the major airports and maritime dominant political force in South Sulawesi, has changed the balance of power and structures of domination throughout the eastern archipelago. The

⁷Indeed, term of "Bajau" has a connotation as an adventurer or migrant, like the "Gypsy" in Europe with her caravan. Name of their tribe is *Tausug*, that known with their boat fleet as pirate in Sulu sea, because they were subordinates to *Sultan* of Sulu. From there, the maritime *Gypsy* of the maritime *Bajau* comes. .

⁸In the early 17th century, three original regions of the tribe, namely Mandar in north, Bugis in Bone region and around, and Makassar, were under control and influence of Gowa Sultanate. After Bongaya Agreement in 1667, Goa Sultanate released her power. Bugis region in Bone was Dutch Company's ally, meanwhile Mandar region recognized the sovereignty of Dutch East-India Company or VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) on 10 October 1674, after kings of Mandar in seven rivers received it.

capital city of Goa Sultanate and the largest fleet base in Indonesia in that time has attracted a lot of maritime economic actors to come and trade at the port of Gowa (van Merle, 1901:933). Among those who come in and have an interest in the dynamics of the center of the maritime world is the Bajo tribe.

The interaction between the Bajo in eastern and northern Borneo and the Makassar made the Makassar Strait to be a main transportation and communication route for them. As a result, the ethnic called at some places in western Celebes to Makassar and its surrounding. With the political development, namely Goa's expansion to northern and eastern of South Celebes, the Bajo followed her maritime route. This group spread with Goa's influence expansion that covered almost all Celebes water. However, as Makassar was under control of VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) in 1669 and Goa's influence decreased drastically, the Bajo avoided Dutch's monopoly over the former Goa's political and economic sphere in South Celebes, and spread to region outside Celebes, mainly eastward (Bisht & Bankoti, 2004:79).

From above mentioned development, it is assumed that the Bajo existence can be divided into two periods. The first is before Makassar's fall to VOC in 1669; and the second is after the time. Although there was no political patron or dominant structure pillar that covered her existence, the Bajo remained to become exist in Celebes water. Almost in every island in this region, the Bajo was found. But, there was any great change in the community that left her old tradition. It was shown in her role from active pirate into trading and fishing community in a new maritime structure of Celebes since 18th century (Scholten & Rietbergen eds., 2004).

THE BAJO IN CELEBES WATERS

The fall of Goa in 1669 was a new era of dynamic structure development in Celebes especially and eastern Indonesia generally. The event marked the end of dominant political and economic Sultanate of Goa since two centuries, and raised some new local political units. The new structure was marked by two phenomena, namely the local

political oligarchy that supported by some new ruling centers; and local community groups that spread over the waters outside Makassar. From both, there is a new fact that united them, some new political and economic centers with each sphere of influence.

VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company)'s policy that established a monopoly, as successor of Goa, that centered in Makassar was not successful. Since the late 18th century, VOC's monopoly did not well. Some outsiders sailed and traded to and from Makassar with their products uncontrollable by Company's officials. So, do with some local groups under Goa's influence that remained to play a crucial role for the port. They could show their existence and it cannot be denied that VOC needed them to support her dominant position in Makassar and its surrounding under the VOC control (Knaap & Sutherland, 2004:21).⁹

One of groups is the Bajo that since before 1669 had established her existence and contributed for the growth of Makassar. Under VOC domination, the Bajo as fisher group supplied some main maritime products such as sea cucumber and shells. With her traditional *praus* (sailboats) and expert as well as experience in sailing, the Bajo fishers knew where the product was found and they got a great number that being adequate to supply for public. Even with her relation to original place, the Bajo contributed to make Sulu's participation into the trading system in eastern Indonesia (Sutherland, 2000:465).¹⁰

The spread of Bajo after 1669 was more limited to the former Goa's region. Political event in Makassar, that marked by conflict between VOC and Sultanate of Goa, did not bring many effect on her existence and activities. In some regions, that supplied

⁹Because VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) made Makassar for her commercial interest with the trade centers in Southeast Asia like Cambodia, Manila (the Philippines), and Siam (Thailand), the VOC could not control all merchant tonnage absolutely in this port. Consequently, the VOC let the local peddlars, included the Makassar peddlars, to continue their old activities, except a ban for them to sail to Mollucas islands that worried by VOC to threat her monopoly on spice products there.

¹⁰Among them was the Bajo fishers' supply for *tripang* (sea cucumber) product of Speermonde islands for Makassar and four thousand *picools* of *tripang* from Sultanate of Sulu to Makassar.

some products for Makassar's trade under Goa before, the Bajo continued her function under VOC domination. VOC's ruler could not control her activities effectively and applied her monopoly strictly over all trading activities in her new region, included to control the Bajo. As long as East Nusa Tenggara coastline, that under Makassar before and controlled by VOC after, the Bajo fishers' activities remained.¹¹ Makassar's role as a main trading port in eastern Indonesia, although changing of ruler, remained to be a regional economic centre. As a result, relation between the Bajo that populated there and adventured around Celebes continued.¹²

Economic dynamic in Makassar for 18th – 19th centuries, that marked with a various trader ethnics' visitation and activities, showed a special role mixture that played by each group. The Chinese traders did not only visit as the middlemen, but also brought some product inseparable to their role. If before 17th century, they were famous with their country's products such as porcelains and ceramics, since the Peking ruler's new policy the Chinese traders functioned as middlemen and brought some product from outside countries of China to trading cities in Southeast Asia, such as opium.¹³

¹¹Eastern Nusa Tenggara was an object of influence competition between three great powers: VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company), Portuguese, and Gowa. Each had own symbol related to their religion and, then, economic interest and military power. Local product like *sandal*-wood, honey, candle, and horse was a prime commodity from this region. After that, the Arabian and Chinese traders, that had no political affiliation and did not use their military power, participated in increasing the region's interest for economic potential. See, for further information, I Gde Parimartha (2008:72).

¹²The Dutch also needed their existence. In Eastern Nusa Tenggara (Little Sunda islands), local rulers needed the Bajo fishers' existence as a community that supplied any contribution for them. Different from the Bugis, Bajo was not recruited as an army or a power for supporting local rulers, but as an economic power. In VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) archive of 1725, the Bajo is known to origine from Makassar, so that they often were identified with Makassar or the Bajo-Makassar people. See, for further information, James J. Fox (1977:463).

¹³Since long time, the Chinese traders presented themselves as a neutral toward whoever that participated in any commercial activity. Different from the Europeans and Moor (Moslem), the Chinese had never showed a hostility although Ming dynasty's policy refused to open any commercial relation with abroad by her people without the emperor's license. As Gowa began to conflict with VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-India Company) in 1664, some

For local maritime traders, included some fishers that played a role in trading system, local products remained to be a prime offer. Their dependence on local product, maritime, and inland, motivated them to search some new products. As a typical product's productivity couldn't be increased, as unrenovable maritime product, they took an alternative to make a maritime nomad and adventure. Therefore, this group was found to spread as long as the waters depended on the local productivity. One of them was the Bajo.

Almost every place in Celebes waters was visited by the sailors group, but their affiliations to trading centers in eastern Indonesia and mainly to Makassar continued although there were some political disturbances in South Celebes for 19th century. As Dutch regime in Batavia devoted her attention to make an annihilation maritime operation against pirate in Celebes after 1860, the Bajo did not participate as a military target. For example, in Togean island that in 1880s was known as pirate nest around Tomini gulf, the Bajo's existence continued untouchable and the Bajo remained to function. Although in the late 19th century, the Dutch tried to limit her mobility for avoiding the Bajo's participation in pirate activities, the Dutch's action had no great effect on the Bajo's position in the region (Lowe, 2003:113).¹⁴

However, the Bajo's historical existence in Celebes had been occurred before political local domination as Sultanate of Goa established herself. With her experience and capability, the Bajo not only appeared as local fishers but also as the middle traders though limited to some maritime products. In 16th century, her existence in some trading ports of Java as an economic center at that time was known. The Bajo that coming from Celebes brought some maritime products with her *praus* (sailboats) to offer as a barter

Chinese traders were used and presented themselves to Sultan Hasanuddin as a middleman in his negotiation with VOC. See, for further, Heather Sutherland (2004:99).

¹⁴Although colonial regime took a repressive action on maritime activities of local people, with her patrol and to build some lighthouses as in Togean island that they aneexed from king of Banawa in Donggala, the action was not effective in breaking the Bajo, compared with the British policy in North Kalimantan that forbid strictly any nomad live style in maritime region.

commodity. It is assumed that the Bajo has had many activities in Celebes and dominated in the waters.¹⁵

Even in the waters around Buton island and southwest Celebes and Banggai islands in East Celebes, the Bajo's existence as long as the coastline and some small islands was not prevented by local rulers; that in the early 20th century were regarded as self-government (*zelfbestuur*) by the Dutch. Although the Buton and the Banggai were included in maritime community, that depended their life on maritime products, there was never an open competition between the Bajo and them that supported by local rulers. Even the Bajo was welcomed and recognized as part of demographic composition and political subordinate to local ruler. It proved not only her role and contribution, but also local elite's dependent on them (Vagelli, 2011).¹⁶

In Buton, the Bajo's existence showed an interesting phenomenon. The fisher group populated some small islands and the coastline. With some Bugis and another South Celebes migrants, they built a settlement. In the late 19th century, their settlement was a strong location side by side with another ethnic's settlements. Her settlement was known as *Kampung Bajo*, that located near *Kampung Wajo* is a community of South Celebes.¹⁷ No documents from the past of Buton Sultanate mentioned that the Bajo had a political role and function, but limited as a fisher group and maritime product supplier for a market in Baubau (Ligtvoet, 1978:6).¹⁸

¹⁵Tome Pires, in *Summa Oriental*, wrote that the Bajo came from Makassar to trade in some places in Jawa with their local products. It was caused by geography factor; namely location of Eastern Nusa Tenggara, especially her north coast in maritime trade route from Bali and Sumbawa to Mollucas, centers of product with her main commodity for regional trade at that time. See, for further information, Ian Caldwell (1995:411).

¹⁶In Banggai, for example, even local ruler gave any permission to the Bajo fishers to build a settlement like villages and under their chief's control, the local people depend their maritime products on the Bajo community as long as the coastline.

¹⁷Reference of place with settlers identification, especially the Bajo tribe, is not found only in Buton but also in another place. In East Nusa Tenggara, there is a place that called as *Labuhan Bajo* that referring to the Bajo settlement in this port. Meanwhile, in Bone it is known as a place that called *Bajoe* as a reference of the Bajo's existence there. See, for further information, Robert Harrison Barness (1996:69).

¹⁸Baubau is a port and commercial town in Buton island, not as capital of Buton Sultanate, namely Boliyo that located in the

Although to keep her position for participating in practical political competition among local elites, the Bajo did not refuse as she was persuaded and involved in political constellation. In the late 16th century, a son of Goa's king took a Bajo girl as his wife, that regarded as an outsider according Goa's custom, because Bajo's common law was not recognized in Makassar. Because the marriage could not be avoided, between Goa ruler and some Bajo traditional leaders agreed that since the time Bajo's common law would be respected and applied in Makassar for their benefit. In return, the Bajo was compulsory to deliver some maritime products routinely every year to Goa's king (Reid, 1999:112).¹⁹

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE BAJO

The Bajo that lives in a tribal group (ethnic group) still populates some small islands and coastlines. They build some houses with a part of pillars plugged in inland and a part of them at sea, even some houses at the sea (*bidok*). According to some informants, their reason to live at sea is: the Bajo fishes easily, better living at sea than in inland, having no ground heritage, and feeling insecure inland because of no settlement. After that, they have hereditary legacy of opinion about maritime as their living space.²⁰

The Bajos have insecure feeling because they were often disturbed by some people inland in the past that challenged them.

middle of island near a hill. The Bajo settlement in Baubau, and not in the capital, referred their orientation to economic interest more than political one.

¹⁹In waters of Malay peninsula, the Bajo's participation in a political local was found in the early 16th century, as political constellation in the region was determined by a maritime fleet. As the Bugis that built her diaspora successfully and established her local political control, the Bajo sailors were persuaded by local Malay ruler, namely *Laksamana Pasai*. The *Laksamana Pasai* forced the Bajo to participate in Pasai's fleet in fighting against Sultanate of Malaka in 1440 with a threat of returning to Makassar if they refused it.

²⁰In Southern Sumatra, in 10th century, as kingdom of Srivijaya established her domination as a maritime and political power, the Bajo also was found there. Although it needs any proof of its justness, a local rapport mentioned that the Bajo lived in some small boats, particularly for a common people; meanwhile their elite stayed at a large boat and called as *vinta*. It is interesting to note here that some Bajos landed or stayed for a while inland and to make any activity as hunting and selecting some forest products, that for time being. No one farmed any ground or made any activity for a long time inland. See, for further information, Robert Dick Read (2008:97).

Therefore, they left inland for the sea and lived as a maritime nomad. The opinion raises some value perception that sea is a world of full free and secure against challenge.

The Bajo community has no landownership heritage because her ancestor did not live inland, but at the coastline or in stage house (*bidok*) in *prau* (boat) form on the water. Because of its tradition, the Bajo depend her live on the sea. The Bajo adaptation to the water nature has been formed so that she is hard to adapt herself toward the inland nature.

Therefore, the Bajo regards the sea's function as a most important factor in her life with the following reasons: (1) the sea brings her an enjoyment of live; (2) the sea as a source of income; (3) the sea as a way of communication; (4) the sea as a recreation facility; and (5) the sea as God's blessing (Stacey, 2007:31).²¹

The above mentioned reasons prove that the only place for earning a living is sea. Not only as a fisher, the sea for the Bajo gives an enjoyment of live because she can be protected against outside threats over the sea. The Bajo lived freely at the sea as an enjoyment of live. Beside it, the sea functions as a way of communication from her home to abroad in the sake of sailing with her *prauws* (boats) for fishing, trading, or bartering her marine products to another places (Djohani, 1997:124).

Although the Bajo lives and searches income at the sea, but in fact her basic needs (food, fashion, and freshwater) are got from inland. Her basic foods are rice, sago, and maize. For getting them, the Bajo barter her fish products or buys them. The Bajo gets money indirectly from the buyers, but from middleman or *pongawa* (capital owner) that taking their fish.²²

The Bajo fishers' operational region is called as *todangnge*. The term is taken from

²¹The Bajo always has an opinion that sea is a source of live. It means that sea is not only their source of income over her products, but also as a living space for the Bajo, individually as well as collectively.

²²Although must make a business with middlement, the Bajo did not feel any loss because she regarded that it lasted for a short time. It is based on a fact that the Bajo cannot continue her live style inland, in waiting the harvest for months. Meanwhile, sea supplies some products for the Bajo every time. See, for further information, Djoko Pramono (2005:132).

the old Bugis language, *toddang-tojang*. *Toddang* means the bottom of the foot, and *tojang* is waters. The term shows a meaning of deep waters, namely old blue colored waters with distance of 5 – 7 miles from the coastline.

The sailing from Bajo's coastline to *todangnge* with a motorboat or a sailboat lasts for 1-2 hours. The fisher awakens in early morning to adapt toward the tide. About four o'clock in the afternoon, the Bajo returned to the coast. The most productive location is *todangnge* waters, that getting some famous names among the fishers: *La Makkapuape*, *La Matio*, *La Pesalu*, *La Masia*, and *La Paborong*.

The waters region is facilitated because there is a meeting of currents in Bone gulf. The meeting is supported by a time changing between crescent and full moon. So, it does with the changing between full moon and crescent. The south current comes into Bone gulf northward, moreover if it lasts with the tide. The flow of current is dammed in north around Malili, then spreading to Kolaka's coast and Palopo's coast. If flow velocity is coupled with the fluctuation of water, it will be a meeting of currents. In this meeting, the Bajo makes of use them for fishing (Tomascik, 1997).

Beside operating in *todangnge*, the Bajo fishes in cluster of corals. Cluster of corals is a potential location for Bajo to dive to 5-20 meters with a distance of 3-5 miles from the coast. The cluster has an area name. Coral for the Bajo is called as *sappa*, and the Bajo called it for a potential cluster, like: *Torebo Mandarek*, *Samoa*, *Samobalu*, *Tondak Maloang*, *La Singa*, *La Karena*, *Langebongene*, and *Lanambasar*. In Belopa, for example, the potential clusters are *Marasangu*, *Banginan*, *Matahak*, *Balusuh*, *Marengkik*, and *Batuang*. In Kolaka, the potential clusters are *Joangge*, *Koko*, *Tampea Island*, and *La Bosinang*.

The Bajo thinks that such cluster is a heritage from her ancestor. Because the Bajo likes a free live style, its meaning is not so absolute, that another person is not forbidden to fish in the location. The Bajo thinks that someone's effort is depended on *dale* (sustenance). It is supported by a perception that in the cluster, there is found *pangngonroang sappa* (coral guard) that had a

close relation to the Bajo for a long time.

Among the location names in *todangnge* and the cluster of corals, there are the sacred and forbidden ones, namely *La Masia* and *Samoa*. In both locations, it is often found a *sulili* (whirlpool). Both locations are regarded as brothers, *La Masia* as old one and *Samoa* as young one, for the spirits of sea guardians living. If passing the locations, the fisher is forbidden to speak arrogantly, to tell another's ill, and to quarrel. *Sulili* in *Samoa* is harder than in *La Masia*, because it often sinks the passing *prauw* (boat).

Dry season is a season for fishing for six months. The first three months are regarded as a productive. The season is called as *turona* (season for fish appears). The production in this season is more than in rainy season. At least the operation lasts for eight months and *turona* season lasts only three months. Out this season, the fishers rest or only fish as long as coastline for a basic need.

Data of maritime production for every season in village of Bajo cannot be got surely because there is no register. Marketing of products is divided into two. Firstly, for a fisher that bounded to *Ponggawa* (capital owner) organization, her product is sold by *Ponggawa*. Secondly, a fisher that fishing by himself can sell his product directly to the market or to *Pappalele* (middleman).

Sea for the Bajo is not seen only as an economy aspect, or only having biological resources for the economic benefit. Sea is also a sacred and mysterious region that has to be respected. The Bajo believes seriously that it hides some magic powers in the form of supernatural beings. The spirits from wind are controlled by king of wind; coral and types of fish is controlled by maritime occupant. If man is angry and wastes the sea, god of sea will punish him (Brown, 1996:176).²³

Stretch of sea (*tasi maloang*) is marked with a tense condition always. The condition is mirrored in myth that passed down from generation to generation in the Bajo community. Among them, there is culture

knowledge as a certain trust, a term and taboo (*pemali*) that respected and control their behavior. Some trusts about concept of sea are following here:

Firstly, myth of Prophet Hidere. Prophet Hidere is known as a prophet that lives in water and in land, manifests himself at the water with a green turban. At present, he is regarded as living there and manifest in everywhere. The story is believed seriously by sailors that sail with *Lambo* and *Pinisi*.

Secondly, myth of Sawerigading. The fishers know Sawerigading origins from Luwu (Ware), Batara Lattu's son, as a crown prince who adventures around at the sea. About 9th century, Sawerigading has a big *prauw* (boat), that upon there were seven busy markets. Sawerigading sailed from Luwu for adventuring. Finally, his *prauw* was stranded and sunk in Bira. Related with his *prauw*'s sink, people of Bira made a *prauw* for him in a form of *jakka-jakka* (like comb) that developed as *Pinisi* now (Lieermoy, 1854:366).

Thus, people of Bira, Ara, and Lemo-lemo, with their nearby locations, have an expertise to make boats. In this story, it is found a poem as follows:

*Panre patang ngaina Bira
Pasingkolo to Araya
Panggalasuna to Lemo-lemoya*

Translation:

Expert in creating is people of Bira
Expert in working is people of Ara
Expert in finishing is people of Lemo-lemo.

The poem above means any classification of three professional expertises that owned by three population, namely making a framework of boat from Bira, wooden hoe from Ara, and wooden planks for boat from Lemo-lemo. The three are mixed in making a boat that guaranteed her power (Sather, 1997).

People of Bajo believe that in some places there are found the supernatural guards. So, it is a trust about the spirits. The places are related to the spirits: (1) *Cella waramparang*, namely surface of water stretch with red colored water; (2) Sea ghost or the spirit of a dead in sea that manifests to disturb a boat.

²³In Bajo, mixture marriage is found between the Bajo and the Bugis. It has an effect on the Bajo cultural orientation that moving from maritime culture to mainland culture, although Bajo is a port.

The spirit manifest in rainy that coupled with flash and appears as fireflies in the end of sail pole. They come in the darkness as the moon shines dimly; (3) *Taka'dewata*, namely a coral at the sea that moving always, often harming the sailing sailor. If the coral does not destroy or harm a sailor, there is a candle moving roundly near a boat at the sea; and (4) *Taka'bekkeng*, namely a coral that circular at the bottom of the sea. Sailors often find a circular stone as an anchor. When they go, an anchor is taken but its eye clamped by *taka'bekkeng* so tight, that unmovable from the location. In this condition, the captain must light and open the clamp with some prayers or magic power (Hamid & Bale, 1986:72).

CONCLUSION ²⁴

The Bajo is a greatest maritime community in Indonesia archipelago. The community is not only known as a nomad tribe upon the boat, but as an ethnic without settlement habit geographically. However, the Bajo's existence as an ethnic cannot be denied, especially from socio-cultural aspect. It is caused by a fact that the ethnic has a language, custom, trust system, kinship, and cultural values as basic for her social live.

Although origin from outside Indonesia historically, the Bajo has been integrated and made a part of cultural and social diversity of Indonesia over her history. In maritime world of Indonesia, as a link that related to political and economic powers in *Nusantara* (Malay archipelago), the Bajo's role and existence cannot be ignored. Her function even is equated with another maritime ethnic such as Bugis, Makassar, Buton, Mandar, and Malays. The main difference to another groups is her cultural exclusive, namely the Bajo did not play a crucial role in a culture spread as the process of Islamization. The Bajo did not have an active role in the establishment of political control by ruling elite, locally as well as regionally.

The Bajo's living that limited to her role as fisher and supplier of maritime products

for economically traditional and domestic markets confers a special character for the community. The Bajo's apathy toward political polarization and her refusal to participate in domestic political constellation motivates her to avoid any reason to open conflict. This attitude makes the Bajo to be known as a loving-peace group with her subsistence and conflict avoiding. With her nomad live style, the Bajo can be termed as subsistence "Gypsy from the Oriental".

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²⁴The article is a report of co-research of the combined team between the UNHAS (Hasanuddin University) in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia and the UMS (Malaysia University of Sabah) in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia that be made in the late of 2013.

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