

MARITIME CULTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAJAU SETTLEMENT – A CASE STUDY OF SAMA BAHARI VILLAGE, WAKATOBI ISLANDS

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Diterima (received): 01 Mei 2020

Disetujui (accepted): 17 Juli 2020

ABSTRACT

The Bajau as a group of indigenous ‘sea nomad’ considered as the representatives of the maritime community, who have a unique way of dwelling, kept close to the shore by erecting houses on stilts. This research is to reveal the composition principles of the Bajau settlement with its unique “on the sea” environment in Sama Bahari village, Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi province, and to correlate maritime culture to their dwelling for the local genius identification in a spatial context. Their habit regarding maritime was defined to the term of space, such as the existing facilities on the environment and their land plot to support seafaring activities. The structure of constructed house and infrastructure were built to support their way of moving and their need to survive in the condition of the maritime realm.

Keywords: *the composition principles, the Bajau settlement on the sea, maritime culture*

A. INTRODUCTION

Along with the Moken of Burma, Thailand, and the Orang Suku Laut of eastern Sumatera and Malaysia, the Bajau represent a group of indigenous maritime peoples collectively termed “sea nomads” who have recorded across Southeast Asia since the 16th century (Sopher, 1965). The marginalized condition of the Bajau as a part of indigenous people did not make them leave their tradition as maritime people but made them keep close to the sea and do seafaring activities. The only thing that has changed from them is settled and being together as a community. They left their nomadic life for centuries to erect houses in shallows or coastal area. More and more Bajau people have settled along the seashores of the Indonesian archipelago. The villages on stilts have become a common feature of the coasts of Sulawesi, Kalimantan Barat, Nusa Tenggara Timur, and Halmahera. This change in lifestyle has brought environmental issues to the forefront. Traditionally, the Bajau lived on boats. Gradually, temporary constructions were built on flat reefs where a Fisher family would camp for several weeks. Ultimately, more permanent settlements in the form of houses on stilts were also built (Djohani, 1995b).

WWF Indonesia revealed on its official website regarding the spread of Bajau community that following the existence of the coral triangle. The habit of Bajau people to keep close to the sea and do seafaring activities matches to the maritime wealth of this coral triangle area where home to over 600 square kilometers of

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some of the most biologically diverse reef complexes and numerous other habitats. The presence of the Bajau in this area could become a blessing or lesson, a blessing for their unique culture that enrich cultural wealth of Indonesia, and the lesson that Bajau still has been one of the low educated community who probably can ruin the maritime wealth of its surrounding. This research aims to define maritime culture as Indonesia's origin by using the Bajau as the representative of maritime people regarding dwelling.

B. METHOD

The chosen area of this study determined in the region of Sulawesi Island because of the bigger percentage of Bajau population and the availability of references among the Bajau community in eastern Indonesia. Sama Bahari village is one sample spot of Bajau settlement in the modern era that left boat-dwelling to be together in community and settled. The village consists of for administrative area: Sampela, Pagana, Dikatutuang, and Wanda, with area 18.6 Ha, recorded population 1,782 people, and have constructed houses of 326 units that occupied for 429 households.

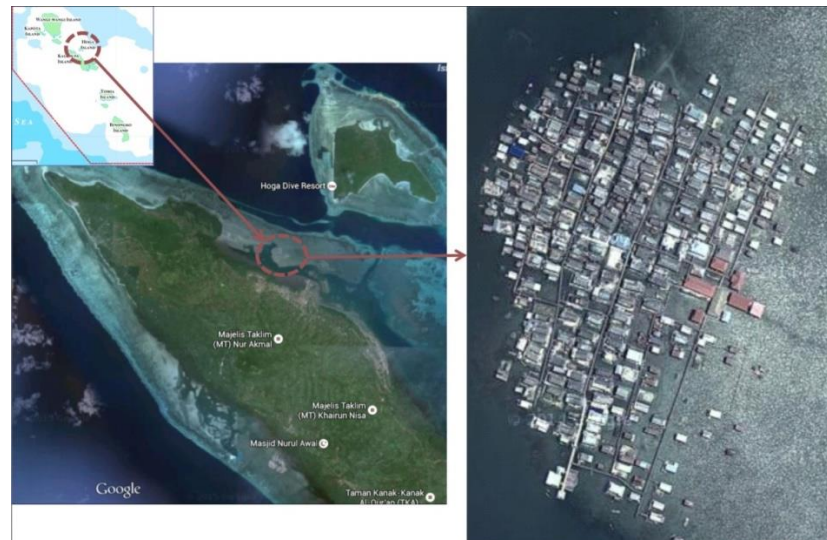


Figure 1. Google image showing the extent of Sama Bahari village
Source: (Google Maps, accessed on October 24th, 2014)

1. Secondary Data Collection

For the first stage of this research, data regarding the Bajau people in the viewpoint of anthropology and history were collected from the internet and printed material. Most of the data about the Bajau in number either official from government or field survey based also gotten from online sources.

2. Field Data Collection in Wakatobi District

The survey was done in the central-southern part of Wakatobi archipelago, Sama Bahari village, which lies between Kaledupa island and Hoga island in June 21st to June 30th, 2015. Based on previous work by undergraduate students of Universitas Indonesia in 2013, the site was chosen because of its unique location and furthermore the originality the Bajau still could found. The village stands on

shallows and has quite a distance to the coastal area or mainland and even though the cultural encounter does exist, it does not dominate.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In Sama Bahari village, there are 326 observed houses and 33 units of them had been interviewed. The observation held regarding rules that constructed the settlement, consist of the function of space both in the house and environmental area, the factors that influence building laying position, the effects of infrastructure development for inhabitants, and factors in determining social status. The interview was gained to know the habit of inhabitant and the relation between their home and environment, the age of the house and impact of government interfere (such as development), and the changing of lifestyle they feel before and after the development.



Figure 2. The Bajau Settlement in Sama Bahari Village

C. Results and Discussion

The settlement is a product of culture and the cultural values become a consideration for residential design, one of them is the value of family structure involved in the spread of houses in the settlement. This value also presents a shared space that is semi-public and can enhance the unity, security, and mutual assistance of society. The Bajau communities were also seen as a principal focus of enforcement due to their high dependence on marine resources and the perception that they often employ destructive fishing practices.

Living as sea nomads for centuries has formed the character of the Bajau as the people of the sea. Most of the Bajau community's spot in eastern Indonesia placed their habitat on the coastal or maritime realm where close to the land. After starting their lifestyle as a dweller, the habits had gradually begun to change, some persist, but not a few of them encounter with the modernization of

surrounding land-based people. This situation indirectly affects their spatial characteristics although in several parts the origin of Bajau culture still founded. As many kinds of literature mentioned regarding the Bajau, certainly the Marine as their place of life could not be separated. Maritime realm had been landing and source of income for Indonesian people as an archipelagic country inhabitant. Seafaring, fishing, trading, and other marine activities were done from ancient times to the early modern Indonesia age.

Sama Bahari village is a typical built environment made by the Bajau, which constructed on the shallows. Every settlement has both differences and similarities to the others and same history and beliefs influence these conditions. The village that built gradually between two islands, Hoga island, and Kaledupa island, always having unpredictable relation to the life of land people. As former sea nomads, the Bajau had been influenced in the term of lifestyle by their surrounding community.

David Mead and Myung-young Lee, who mapped the location of Bajau communities in Sulawesi Island, in their article, noted that Salem, Nelwan, and Andersen (2003) agree with Donohue (1999) concerning the Bajau communities reported for the Tukang Besi Islands. The only discrepancies they encountered concern the names of the three Bajau-speaking villages on Kaledupa Island.

The word to use as the name of the Bajau community or village in this research determined by the recent official name in the Indonesian language. Around the Kaledupa island (part of Wakatobi Islands/Wakatobi archipelago), it was spotted 3 Bajau communities that constructed the village on the shallows; Mantigola, Sama Bahari (well-known as Sampela by local people), and Lohoa.

There are many speculations regarding the history of the Bajau in this area. Based on the interview of people at chosen field of study, Sama Bahari village, they admitted that their ancestors came from Mantigola, but because of the dwindling of sea resources and the increasing competition among them, they found other potential spot and moved to Sampela, where recently developing and known as Sama Bahari village. Whereas, according to the statement of a local inhabitant of Sama Bahari village, Lohoa could be said as the youngest village of these three, and the condition of houses and infrastructure there are not as good as in both Mantigola and Sama Bahari.

The word Sama Bahari comes from ‘Sama’ means Bajau and ‘Bahari’ means the sea. Sama Bahari was originally a stopover place (Papongkatan) of the Bajau people from across the Bajau village in southeast Sulawesi. As well-known that Bajau community is a sea nomad at that time, the name of Sama Bahari is the name of the newly conceived during the regional growth that given by Nasir (head of government in the district Kaledupa and a community leader of Bajau Sampela).

Sama Bahari formerly called Sampela and the place named Pagana, but Sampela later becomes more popular and then used by the people. Sampela has been inhabited permanently by the Bajau community since the 1950's. In the DI / TII era, the Bajau of 1958 Sampela many scattered to several areas in Southeast Sulawesi and outer Southeast Sulawesi. Sampela formerly belonged to Buranga administrative region, in 1959 Sampela sign as Ambeua administrative region village, thus, in 1976 become part of Laulua village and Laulua village changing

the status in the year 1997, at the same time Sampela bloom and changed the name to Sama Bahari village.

Maritime Culture and the Bajau

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The Bajau and other sea nomads have one similarity, they live a maritime way of life. As Lenhart (1997) revealed regarding the Orang Suku Laut, the sea, and littoral shore are their living space, which distinguishes them from a fisherman who go to sea to earn their living but return home to land again. The spatial behavior of the Orang Suku Laut is migratory and is related to a particular mode of earning a livelihood, namely hunting and gathering products of the sea and coasts. As hunter-gatherers, they follow the natural resources, some of which are mobile too, like fish that appear seasonally at different places.

Fish and other marine resources provide the basis for Bajau nutritional needs, predominantly involving low-technology line-and-net fishing from dugout canoes over reef flats, but also targeting offshore pelagic stocks in calm weather along with manual collection (“gleaning”) of invertebrates and other species at low tide (Akimichi and Supriadi, 1996). Mangrove is also accessed to harvest wood for fuel while larger branches along with broken coral fragments are used for house construction (Clifton and Major, 2012).

The Bajau fishers alter their practices on complex diel or lunar cycles reflecting know patterns of fish movement, spawning, and aggregation while the change in preferred species and habitats also occur in tandem with longer term seasonal variations (Sather, 1997). In the process, they generated great wealth by providing maritime commodities to facilitate trade, formed a naval force to secure and protect sea lanes that were absolutely vital to the development of maritime Southeast Asia, and served as “integrating information-carriers” connecting subsidiary chiefs with a developing peasantry. Those roles were central to the larger-scale integration of an increasingly centralized politics that shaped and developed maritime Southeast Asia (Benjamin, 1986:16).

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The Bajau community's life since the ancestors are prescribed well pattern; they believe that the sea is universal and not owned by anyone, so it is not surprising that the Bajau often encounter each other in various regions of Indonesia. The patterns that have been used by the Bajau community to find food in Sama Bahari village are divided into four namely:

1. *Palilibu*; means that fished in the seas around the village or island and back the same day to then sell their catch or exchange it for food (barter), is done individually or in groups.
2. *Pongka*; means looking for locations of coral reefs where still have many stocks to be arrested or be retrieved, it takes time around 7-10 days to be in that location thus returned to sell them to the boss or the place where they take the costs, this activity is usually done in groups.
3. *Sakai*; usually done for months in an area that has a lot of sea resources of Indonesian territory, sometimes cross borders of other countries to pursue more results such as shark, Lola, and other marine products that can be sold in a nearby area (not around the Sama Bahari village) or purchaser of sea products, this is done in groups.
4. *Lama*; means a pattern wander in areas that has many marine natural resources and there are companies in the area that housed the fishery and most of the laborers who carry fishing vessels such as Riau, Kalimantan, Maluku, and Kupang.

Tabel 1. The Inhabitant and The Occupation 2010

No	Occupation	Population
1.	Fisherman	744
2.	Trader	4
3.	Government Officer	2
4.	Farmer	1
5.	Carpenter	7
6.	Handicraft Maker	5
Total		763

Source: The Government of Sama Bahari Village

The term of maritime culture implementation to the hardware aspect such as settlement is not easy to understand. This research went on the approach of the possibility of defining maritime habit of the Bajau and its form to the real life. In gaining that context, a literature review regarding maritime culture and field survey to find the relationship was done. Based on Stražičić (1996),

'... only a country with developed maritime activities can be considered as a maritime country. This is based on three key maritime activities: the shipping industry, shipbuilding, and sea ports. In a wider sense, maritime affairs also include all other activities that are connected to the use of the sea, whether this is tied to a sea-faring vessels or as a source of natural resources.'

From the statement above, Stražičić, who wrote his research titled 'Croatia as Maritime Country,' underlined word was done to emphasize the requirement

keywords to call a place as implemented maritime culture. The explanation below tried to relate to country scale to village scale. Thus, the relationship between maritime culture and dwelling could be defined as following:

1. Shipping industry; refers to area for making boat

In defining the existence of shipping industry, the field survey was done, and the result was the finding of the area for building the boat in some houses of the settlement. As maritime people, the needs of boat or water transportation tools are certain. Beside as fisherman, some inhabitants work as boat maker and their activity can be easily seen.



Figure 3. Area for Making the Boat

2. Shipbuilding; refers to area for making and maintenance the boat

Every house in Sama Bahari village has their boat or canoe. As a seafarer, these transportation tools have been a basic needs. For some houses, or for expert boat houses, they provide a place or space to maintain or to fix the damaged boat. The location for that purpose may vary according to the house owner. The picture below shows inhabitant who uses the space between his upper house and the ground to maintain the boat.



Figure 4. Area for Maintaining the Boat

3. Sea ports; refers to the existence of space to anchor the boat in the area

Sama Bahari village keeps developing, besides has already had ports at the northern and southern area that functioned as a passenger terminal, the villagers have their port surrounding their house. This condition could be

realistic because they move by boat, so they need space to anchor the boat or canoe. As revealed in chapter 2, based on field survey by Universitas Indonesia's students, there many ways of the Bajau people to anchor their boat. It might be tied, put under the house, put against, under the house and put against, placed on the wooden barrier, and hang under the house.



Figure 5. The Way of the Bajau to anchor the Boat in Sama Bahari Village

4. Seafaring; refers to the existence of facilities to support seafaring activities
In this village, the inhabitants not only do fishing but also cultivating marine algae, trading, and transport valuable sea product. They need facilities to support all of that. Unlike common fisherman who come to sea for fishing and then back to their home, most of the Bajau activities are done in the maritime realm. They just visit the land for clean water and trading. The Bajau people cannot be separated with seafaring, they do seafaring activities around their house, even there are some event or culture to catch fish and other marine resources at the faraway place, their home is still on the sea. The picture above shows Sama Bahari village community in doing marine algae cultivation. They can do it in the area surround their house, thus, they dry it on the bridge, or their land utilizes space between the flat reefs and the upper house.

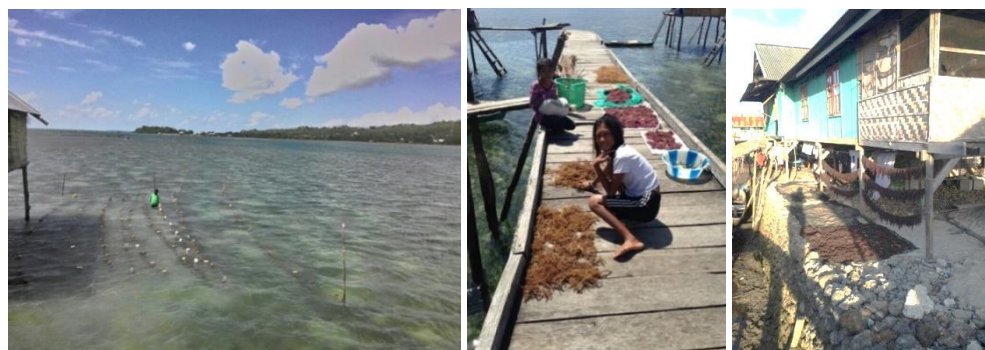


Figure 6. Marine Algae Cultivation Activites in Sama Bahari Village

5. Source of natural resources; refers to the existence of food source

Many Sama Bahari village's inhabitants admit that their ancestors come from Montigola village (another Bajau village on eastern Kaledupa island), but due to competition for food and the dwindling of sea resources, they moved to Sampela, which nowadays known as Sama Bahari village. The incredibly rich marine environment of the Tukang Besi archipelago explains in part the existence of Sama settlements in that area. In addition to the four major low-lying islands of Wangi-Wangi (also known as Wanci), Kaledupa, Tomea, and Binongko, the archipelago is home to over 600 square kilometers of some of the most biologically diverse reef complexes in Indonesia and numerous other habitats ideally suited for an astonishing variety of marine life. Mangrove forests line several of the islands, offering shelter as well as several coastal freshwater springs, and massive reef systems such as the Kapota, Kaledupa, Koromaha, and Tomea atolls are within a day's sail given the right winds. Likewise, the relatively predictable weather patterns, shallow seas, abundant access points to deeper waters, and large varieties of fish, trepang, sea turtle, and other marine species make the archipelago an ideal home-space for Sama peoples. Now home to five Sama villages (Mola, Sampela, Motingola, La Hoa, and La Manggau), the generous living conditions and abundant resources of the Tukang Besi seascape would have been a principal reason for initial Sama exploration and settlement in the area (Nolde, 2009). The existence of sea varieties supports the Bajau life in the spot, which in this case refers to Sama Bahari village. This situation has fit up the maritime lifestyle of the Bajau that they can get food from their environment.

D. CONCLUSION

Sama Bahari village was constructed under the influence of maritime culture as the Bajau's lifestyle and livelihood. Houses and infrastructures were also built by their knowledge of marine science and habits from previous life as boat-dwellers. After started as house-dweller, the Bajau cannot leave their habit as sea people. From choosing land plot to live on until determining the neighborhood, they still affected from their previous lifestyle. Surrounding environment also made to suit and to support their job as a seafarer. Sama Bahari village was constructed based on the condition of nature, surrounding environment, and the habit of the inhabitant.

The Bajau who usually lives nomadic, keeps moving by boat with all family in and not belong to a group, had incredibly changed to something new in recent centuries. Their habit regarding maritime was defined to the term of space, such as the existing facilities on the environment and their land plot to support seafaring activities, the structure of constructed house and infrastructure that built to support their way of moving and their need to survive in the condition of the maritime realm. The neighborhood blocks of Bajau made by the principle of kinship as should they still live in boat-dwelling, never be apart with their family, even a house could be occupied by more than two householders.

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