The Negative Stigma Against the Bajo Tribe and its Impact on Local Culture: Study of the Bajo Tribe in Bungin Village of South Konawe

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Abstract

This study aims to examine and analyze the negative stigma of Bajo tribe and its impact on the existence of the local culture of Bajo tribe. Data collection techniques are conducted through in-depth interviews, document studies and focused discussions. Data analysis is done through data reduction, data presentation and conclusion. The results show that the Bajo tribe is still regarded as an underdeveloped tribe, always viewed as a wild, unruly, rough, stubborn and introvert. Bajo tribe is also viewed as part of society that is still paternalistic and pragmatic, alienated, isolated, and left behind, has a low civilization that must be initiated with various empowerment programs. Bajo tribe is often also imaged as a prototype of willful society, because they reject development, even in the past Bajo tribe in Bungin was once accused of being the next generation of Darul Islam / Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI / TII). The bias of negative imagery results the change in mentality and cultural values of the local Bajo tribe into marginal positions. The mentality of Bajo society is now transformed into a consumptive society and false capitalism. Currently, there are many local wisdom of Bajo tribe who experienced weakening, even the oral tradition began to experience extinction. While the older generation who understand the culture of Bajo also diminish due to the age factor, and many younger generations of Bajo who no longer know and understand the local culture of Bajo, due to the weakness of inheritance system and cultural transformation of the older generation to the younger generation.

Keywords: negative stigma, cultural marginalization, Bajo tribe

1. Introduction

Bajo tribe or commonly known also as Orang Bajau, or Orang Laut or Sama-Bajo is coastal community of marine or maritime culture (aqua culture). Its maritime characteristics can be identified primarily in their environmental management model of settlements over marine waters, livelihoods as traditional fishermen, knowledge systems, technology, economic systems and social organization of Bajo tribe centered on the utilization of marine and coastal resources. The Bajo tribe views the sea as the source of life, which plays an important role in their economy (Bahtiar & Basri, 2011). While Kazufumi and Lapian (1997) call Bajo tribe as Suku Laut which has high mobility level. The Bajo tribe always lives in coastal areas or on marine waters with livelihood activities as traditional fishermen.

The study of Bajo tribe and its cultural problem has been done by several researchers, such as Saat (2003) stated the problem of Bajo tribe that exist in Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia is relatively the same which is always viewed by tribe or other society as tribe having low civilization. This perception causes the Bajo or Sama-Bajau tribe to be alienated from other societies. Further, Mansur (2016) reviewed the issues in Sama Laut diaspora and the consequences in Sabah Malaysia. The results show that the Bajo or Sama-Bajau is the lowest income groups as a result of low human resources or low level of formal education they have. As a result of Bajo tribe even though they have become part of the urban population, and changing their culture by adopting the culture of urban society, it is still categorized as group of Sama Dilaut which is identical with poverty and backwardness. Meanwhile, Ismail et al. (2015) study shows that Bajo culture change is caused by Bajo social mobility, acculturation with other culture, government intervention and Islamization influence.
In Indonesian context, the study of cultural change of Bajo community done by Basri et al. (2011) which shows that the Bajo community has potential local culture as a catalyst for the empowerment of Bajo society, but the local culture is not functioning optimally and even tends to be abandoned by the Bajo tribe itself. Another study was also conducted by Suryanegara et al. (2015) which focused on social changes of Bajo tribe in Wakatobi. The results of this study indicate that there have been social and cultural changes in the life of Bajo tribe with indicators: (1) the existence of customs has begun to decrease, (2) the reorientation of view of life, where many Bajo youths no longer aspire to be a sailor like his ancestors, but began to aspire to be a civil servant or office employee, (3) consumptive lifestyle has penetrated in the family of Bajo society.

Similarly to the findings of Baskara and Astuti (2011), that Bajo tribe known as sea tribe because they live in the sea. The sea is their main source of life, has a set of rules called pamali. As in other cultures, pamali of Bajo tribe is an ethical system, which acts as a set of rules that must be obeyed in their lives. The ethical system of Bajo tribe is a kind of "taboo" system, which contains restrictions or things that should not be done. Although in practice today, Pamali traditions of Bajo tribe experience a shift, because there are some Bajo tribe people who sometimes ignore the socio-cultural system of Bajo tribe.

The results of the study of Wianti et al. (2012) show that the culture of Bajo tribe has undergone a change marked by the emergence of hybridization capitalism in the Bajo tribe. This hybridization capitalism justifies that the Bajo tribe is heading to the economy of capitalism through: (1) the relations of social production, (2) economic expansion, (3) maximization profit, (4) individualism-profit. Baskara (2011) conducted study of the Islamic identity of Bajo tribe found that the entry of Islam has changed the traditional beliefs of Bajo tribe from belief to the god of the sea known as Mbo Ma Dilao, a belief in God Almighty (Papu Allah Ta'al'a). While the results of Kasmawati (2017) study of defence of maritime ecolexicone of Bajo tribe in Kolakaasi shows that 48.75% of Bajo youth no longer know their marine ecolexics. The results of the above study further clarify that the universal cultural elements of Bajo tribe are undergoing changes, including the Bajo tribe who settled in Bungin village, Konawe Selatan, Southeast Sulawesi.

2. Research Method

This research was conducted in Bungin Village of South Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia which was held for three months. Subjects who became the main informants in this study were traditional elders, youth leaders, and ordinary citizens who were recruited at randomly, and other residents outside the community of Bajo as a comparison of data, such as business owners or other capital owners. Data collection techniques were carried out through: (1) observation involved in cultural aspects of Bajo tribe, (2) in-depth interviews to Bajo figures, religious leaders, traditional leaders, youth leaders and other Bajo residents in Bungin about ideas, experiences, knowledge of informants on matters relating to local wisdom, Bajo's maritime activities, and their relationship with the outside world, (3) conducting document studies, especially documents relating to the Bajo culture.

Data analysis was done descriptively-qualitative, through four steps, namely (1) arranging the units of all data collected from the interview, observation, literature study and focus group discussion divided one by one, collected according to its class, then done data reduction in order to eliminate Less relevant data, create abstractions and arrange data units; (2) categorize data so that the process of categorization and data grouping can be better; (3) arranging relationships between categories, comparing categories of data with others, and interpreting the meanings of each relationship; and (4) provide interpretations and relationship between data categories that have been grouped so that can be found meaning and conclusion.

In order for the research work to take place as planned, this research uses some technical means of research as an instrument, ie data cards and interview guidelines. The data cards are used for recording, categorizing, and classifying data, while interview guides are used as referrers during interviews. In addition, it is also necessary to use the camera to get photos and record the results of observations and recording devices to record the results of interviews.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Negative Stigma towards the Existence of Bajo Tribe

The Bajo tribe in Bungin Village has settled life by making the sea water as its residential area. They live in that place with simplicity and peace. All houses in the village are stilts house, roofs are generally made of woven sago leaves, crawled walls (woven bamboo stems that have been split) and without equipped with adequate household furniture. Although there are some homes that are roofed with zinc and aluminum, but the walls are mostly made of sago leaves and tree bark. The community is also always the victim of the moneylenders under
the guise of cooperatives, the middlemen who always put on with the price of fish and cooperative actors who provide loans with high interest.

However, the ethnic communities still have the capital to serve as a new resource that can be created to improve their standard of living. The capital is local wisdom, both social and cultural and economics that can be created as a catalyst to empower them. The Bajo society has a set of local wisdom values inherited from generation to generation or knowledge gained from their interaction with nature (sea). The value of local wisdom is a cultural element of Bajo society that is steady and has the power of immunity to the changes that occur in their life order as well as acting as control and direction for the culture of the Bajo tribe.

As an expression as well as an entry point, in understanding that the Bajo tribe has a device of local wisdom that is so high among them can be observed in the teachings of their philosophy of life which states that "Papu manang'ita lino bake isi-isina, kita naja manusiana mamikiria bhatingga kolena mangelolana" (God has given this world with all its contents to humans, we have to think and manage it well and wisely). In the Bajo tribe's view, this philosophy implies that the Bajo tribe will never experience starve or poverty because of its infinite seas with all the potential and richness of the resources contained within it are the source of life, gardens, and yard of their home. In working to explore the results of nature, the Bajo tribe holds four principles of self, namely self-awareness, self-control, self-regard, and self-confidence.

The Bajo tribe is livelihoods as traditional fisherman recognize that the resources provided by the sea are limited in number and at some point will be exhausted or reduced. Therefore, they are very careful in managing marine resources. Their guidelines for managing marine resources are the ethical teachings of the Bajo who claim that they eat before they are hungry and finish before they are full. This ethic implies that tribe should not be greedy, including in the collection of marine products. The Bajo tribe should not collect seafood excessively because it will destroy marine ecology. They catch fish and collect other marine products should not be excessive, just enough to fulfill the needs of the family.

In the level of practical skills, the Bajo community in Bungin Village also has a line of skills or special skills in managing seafood. The Bajo tribes have expertise in drying fish through salting, fumigation, and boil techniques. The dried fish are usually stored as alternative to fulfill their needs during the famine or bright moon and the waves or big winds. In addition, the Bajo community in Bungin Village has skills in making shrimp paste and skillful in the plait business. In fact, some housewives have skill in making cakes from seafood such as seaweed cake.

The subsistence economic system still firmly attached to the life of Bajo society has given rise or created a subsistence ethic. The subsistence ethics are created as Bajo tribe responses to their lives close to the line of subsistence crises, including poverty and backwardness. This is where the Bajo society lays the foundation of subsistence ethics on the basis of consideration of the principle of prioritizing safety and reducing risk. The actualization of the ethics is to diversify the work, forming a pattern of cooperation called rarambanga (social network of Bajo tribe), which is a form of cooperation or help in various aspects of life, whether related to the production process or the exploitation of marine resources as well as in social activities involving family or household, friends and neighbors network. The social network of Bajo tribe is built on the principle of sikaada (mutual acceptance of circumstances), sippatapa (mutual trust) and situlutulu (help each other).

The above description shows that the Bajo community has a set of local wisdom stored in its social and cultural system. These findings reinforce the findings of Taena et al. (2016) and Basri et al. (2017). According to Taena et al. (2016) states that local wisdom can be found in any community in the world, while Basri et al. (2017) states that each community group has its own traditional culture and local wisdom that characterizes the uniqueness of the community. Further, Basri (2010) states that the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe is embodied in religious belief systems and religious ties in their transcendental relationship with the power of Mbo Ma Dilao, the conception and expression of life and the nature of life, their purpose, their orientation, their knowledge and the framework of their interpretation of the sea world. However, local wisdom is not functioning optimally. Because behind the phenomenon there is a struggle of interests or extreme ideologies are neatly structured, namely the imaging politics that continue to position the Bajo tribe as a group of marginal society, which still must be initiated continuously (Basri et al., 2011).

The government both central and local always positioned the Bajo tribe as an isolated society that has not been civilized so they must be initiated. The government began to relocate them who settled in the sea, small islands, and remote to the nearest land. The ideology of the government is to make Bajo or Bajau tribe as a peasant society. The government expected the Bajo tribe work as farmers to improve their lives because they are very backward and underdeveloped, compared with other communities in Southeast Sulawesi. Infrastructure development was built in the form of semi-permanent housing, the provision of land for farming, along with all
The government sees the Bajo as a primitive society that continues to be initiated.

The governmental imagery of Bajo tribe, if examined in the perspective of postcolonial theory (Ratna, 2005) is loaded with political interests to control, view, and place the Bajo in an inferior position. In Gramsci's perspective, such imaging politics are full of interests to dominate and hegemony, (Hendarto, 1999; Simon, 1999). The negative political bias against the Bajo tribe has made the Bajo personality as a marine tribe wasted, maritime symbols and rituals and cultural treasures no longer as a practice. The everyday life of Bajo society becomes distorted by the ideology of modern development. The local wisdom of the Bajo tribe is eroded by the power of Indonesianization which adopts the values of modernism, which in the end Bajo society becomes a transitional society. As a land tribe, the Bajo tribe is only able to show its identity as a subsistence farmer. The seasonal farming system is becoming the community powerless.

The Bajo tribe currently lives in Bungin village, before settling in the village, they have been relocated by the government to the mainland of Kendari. The incident occurred approximately in 1982/83. Based on the narrative of indigenous Bajo tribe in Bungin, they were still nomadic at sea. The local government, along with police and soldiers asked to leave the sea and sought new settlements on land or on the beach. The relocation effort of the Bajo tribe is intended to facilitate the process of empowering them. In such way, the government seeks the development of Bajo society, although in the end the program does not produce maximum results. Almost all people who were resettled leave their homes and return to the sea. According to Bajo tribe, they can not survive in a new place (land), so they split left his house and find the location of new settlements in the sea. It strongly influenced by their mentality as a cultured society of the sea. Their maritime philosophy is clearly stated that "fish can not live on the land, as the coconut can not grow in the sea, it only grow on the seafront".

The Bajo's maritime philosophy is in line with the habitus concept of Hoed (2008) that every society has its own identity and unique characteristics, among them characterized by its habitus. The Bajo people as aqua culture society, they are more suitable to live in water territorial or coastal area, not on land. Hoed (2008) argues that ideally community development should take into account the basic knowledge of indigenous people historically, socio-culturally and how knowledge forms experience.

Bourdieu conception suggests that the frame of mind of building Bajo society should be based on their socio-cultural values or habitus as marine tribe. However, the government is trying to sterilize the Bajo tribe from its cultural roots through the relocation program from sea to the land. In fact, after the failure of the relocation program, the government stigmatized the Bajo community as a stubborn prototype, unruly for refusing development, suspected of being an anti-government group, even accused of being the next generation of Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI / TII). In addition, the Bajo people remain targeted as development targets as they are part of alienated, isolated, and lagging communities.

The failure of Bajo community development by the government has been caused by the development design that does not consider the Bajo habitus factor. Borrowing Budiman thought (1996) such a model of development is a model of development that is paradigmatic to the modernist and favorable to the owners of capital, and unwilling to learn from traditional societies. In Zubaedi's perspective (2007) states that the development tend to be mechanistic and reductionistic.

### 3.2 The Marginalization of Local Culture of Bajo Tribe

The Bajo community development program is viewed in a bottom-up manner through a centralized policy with an emphasis on economic. The bias of building process is to shift the mentality and local values of the Bajo tribe into marginal positions. The local values contained in the social and cultural system of the Bajo tribe are not used as the support of development, but only positioned as stories and memories of the past that are deemed no longer capable of dialogue with the reality. Established values have undergone a change and even lead to psychological unrest and identity crisis among Bajo society. The happiness of the Bajo tribe has been mitigated through the realization of infrastructure in the form of housing, land for gardening, the fulfillment of foodstuffs from the government, the availability of primary health care, and the availability of schools for Bajo children. The comfort in the cradle of the waves of seawater while catching fish has become a museum of mirages of the past.

However, ironically is their knowledge of the good, living cosmology that keeps the natural ecosystem, the agreed social identity as the basis of the presence or the unique characteristic, polished and then brought to the public as a symbolic wealth and the spectacle of modernity in order to profit in the framework of local tourism development. Local government officials are of the view that the existence of the Bajo tribe can enrich the potential of maritime tourism. The uniqueness of Bajo village and community culture is believed to be increasingly adding to the tourist attraction of the coast and sea. This reality is in line with Budiman's thesis.
(1997) that current wisdom and indigenous cultures or local cultures are merely a "souvenir" of development, tourism investment and projects to attract local revenue budgets due to the consequences of regional autonomy.

The modification project of the Bajo tribe appears to be quite successful, marked by the flow of tourists, both local and foreign countries who come to visit the Bajo tribe, including Bungin Village. Borrowing Baltes' thought (2004) of the government's ambiguity towards the Bajo tribe, is a reflection that the government does not see tolerance and cultural plurality as part of the wisdom of ways of thinking and behaving. However, a protection that tries to put within the framework of "domination over or domination by" and ultimately falls into the textualization of local values and knowledge. That means textualization is a means of muzzing local wisdom into a narrative or a culturally diverse story. In this context, Bajo society is always positioned as a party that is always dominated, while the government is the dominating party. The weak position of the Bajo tribe resulted in sagging, even the loss of some of their local culture.

The ideal attitude that must be taken, both by the government and society related to the diminution of local wisdom of Bajo tribe is to reposition the position of local wisdom in development. Local wisdom of Bajo tribe if excavated and created into social practices in the dynamics of life will give birth to the mentality of building. Following Koentjaraningrat's thought (1994) this cultural practice will undoubtedly embody the achievement of nationhood as the spirit of work, responsibility, the attainment of future happiness that is nourished by a local mentality that can ultimately become a positive dynamic of the community's thinking system. In the early dictum if Bajo community development is based on local wisdom, the values of local wisdom should be formulated as practical knowledge of the reality of life which takes into account the limits of how to act and manage wisely. It able to create a social space that provides dialectic of local knowledge present as a communication framework to formulate a better life experience side between the policy measures and benefits gained for the Bajo tribe life. It is intended that the active involvement of localized knowledge is not based on the will of the government in search of local subjects to legitimize economic development and modernity or simply to grant them a special space and false recognition of the knowledge which became the historical heritage of the Bajo tribe.

The search for local cultural identity should originate from the community's treasury as part of the diversity of the nation laid out in a cultural framework rather than the imitation of the development ideology. That the value presented is the deepest representation of how local knowledge speaks within the framework of recognizing their construction process of fundamental reality of life. The discussion of local wisdom does not depart from the state process to try to act more friendly to indigenous people as an instrument to apply the process of uniformity of development from the perspective of the local tribe or to make the identity distinguish as attribution. However, local wisdom becomes the third space medium as the original habitus which is realized by the way of the local culture works. Local wisdom is formulated dialectically for the strengthening nation in critical and practical analysis. Therefore, the conception of wisdom is focused on a social transformation approach that seeks to liberate the epistemology of its knowledge from the perspective of imperialism.

The local wisdom of the Bajo tribe does not have to be modified by the state into the most common view, but it allows the local culture of the Bajo tribe to affirm its representation, while the state or government simply mediates the cultural process that requires the wisdom of multiculturalism. What is important is how the local wisdom establishing a cultural strategy to seek community representation from a series of social change responses in search of elements of common good, not a single standardization of development achievement.

4. Conclusion

The negative stigma addressed to the Bajo tribe is still regarded as an underdeveloped tribe, always seen as an unruly (wild society), rough, hard and introvert because of the selective attitude of associating. The Bajo tribe is also seen as a part of paternalistic and pragmatic society, possessing a low civilization that must be initiated with various empowerment programs by relocating Bajo settlements from sea to land, even though the relocation program ends in failure. After the failure of the settlement program from sea to land, the government gave stigma to the society of Bajo as prototype of stubborn society, for refusing development, suspected as anti-government group, even in the past Bajo tribe in Bungin have been accused as the next generation of Darul Islam / Indonesian Islamic Army (DI / TII). In addition, the Bajo community is still targeted as development target because it is considered of alienated, isolated, and lagging communities.

The bias of negative imagery results in a change in the mentality and local values of the Bajo tribe into marginal positions. The mentality of Bajo society is now transformed into a consumptive society mentality and false capitalism. Currently, there are many local wisdom Bajo tribe who experienced weakening, even some Bajo oral tradition began to experience extinction. While the older generation who understand the culture of Bajo also diminish due to the age factor, and many younger generations of Bajo who no longer know and understand the
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