

Traditional Fishermen in The Context of Modernization: A Case Study in Holimombo Jaya Village, Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province

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Abstract. This study analyzes the existence of traditional fishermen in the context of modernization in Holimombo Jaya Village, Pasarwajo District, Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The aims of this study is to answer a key question, whether modernization has caused a cultural lag in traditional fishermen; or have they succeeded in innovating and adapting to the values of modernity so that they still exist and achieve sustainable progress? Using the historical method through four stages of work, namely: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The results show that modernization has brought significant changes in the socio-economic life of the fishing community of Holimombo Jaya. There is no patron-client relationship as is often found in fishing communities in Indonesia. All fishermen have their own fishing gear, operated by themselves without involving a third party. In this way, income becomes evenly distributed so that fishermen are able to get out from absolute poverty trap. They reject the use of fishing gear that has the potential to damage environmental sustainability and the balance of the fishery ecosystem. They also prioritize the interests of consumers by using only ice in fish preservation. They refuse the use of preservatives that endanger health such as formalin and borax.

Keywords: Fishermen, traditional, modernization, holimombo jaya, buton regency

1 Introduction

Holimombo Jaya Village is a fishing settlement on the east coast of southern Buton Island. It is one of 24 villages in the administrative area of Pasarwajo District, Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. It is inhabited by two Ciacia[1] sub-ethnic groups, namely Holimombo as natives and Burangasi sub-ethnic as immigrants. The current objective condition is that the Burangasi ethnic group is the majority group compared to Holimombo. Although different in terms of culture and language, these two ethnic groups live side by side peacefully and mingle without social barriers.

The soil is arid, containing rocks and lime so it is not suitable for food crop farming. Its area is about 2.65 Km². Meanwhile, the population in 2020 has reached 1,598 people, with a density of 603 people per km². [2] Due to its small and barren area and the majority of land ownership is in the hands of the Holimombo people, about 80% of the population of this village depend on the marine sector as fishermen. Fishing activities become the main job after shipping and inter-island trade - which was once victorious - began to enter a gloomy period in the second half of the 1990s [3]. Since then the people in this village who work as sailors have slowly switched professions to become fishermen and catching fish.

2 Research Methods

The most important problem related to modernization in traditional fishing communities is the occurrence of cultural clashes between modern versus traditional culture. This cultural clash usually gives rise to cultural lag in traditional societies because they are unable to compete with modern culture. To be able to continue to exist, traditional societies have no other choice but to innovate to answer the existing challenges. Through gradual innovation and adaptation, it will be seen how the community has developed from a simple stage to a more advanced stage as it is now.

Based on this perspective, the method used in this study is the historical method. The historical method is considered suitable for photographing the process of modernization which takes place in stages, starting from the initial stages to progressively more advanced stages. The historical method has four stages of work, namely: heuristic (data collection), source criticism, analysis, and historiography. There are four stages in the historical methodology, namely: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography [4]. Heuristics with regard to data collection; criticism relates to the validity of a source, interpretation relates to the analysis of the

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relationship of meaning between facts, while historiography deals with reports of research results.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Holimombo Jaya Village in Historical Flash

The forerunner of Holimombo Jaya Village started from Belo Village which in the structure of the Sultanate of Buton is part of *Kadhie* Holimombo[5]. Before becoming a village area, Belo is just a stopover for fishermen who want to go to sea or who return from fishing to share their catch fish. Until the first half of the 20th century, Belo was not a permanent settlement. The Holimombo people, who own the territory's authority, prefer to live inland – inside their fortress, about 2 km from the coast – to avoid pirates [6].

After the safety of the sea began to recover, there had been several Holimombo people settled in this place. Among of them was the La Madaebu family, which was then followed by others, such as La Hinda family, La Dusamaa family and La Runaa family.

Around 1955, internal conflicts occurred in the Holimombo community which were triggered by differences in interpretations in the implementation of Islamic religious rituals. The parties involved in this conflict are groups who want to maintain the customary order and ancestral traditions versus the reformers who want to destroy traditions that are considered contrary to Islam. The physical clashes between the two groups are inevitable. The reformer group which is a minority group was eliminated and then settled in Belo. However, the seeds of conflict still exist and occasionally appear even though it is limited to individuals. To avoid this, in the late of 1960s until early 1970s, about 80% of the reformer groups living in Belo fled to West Seram and built a new village in the northern part of the Huamoal Peninsula called *Kampung* Melati. That is why until now the people of Melati village are known as religious people.

In the late of 1960s and 1970s, the Buton District Government launched the Village Resettlement Program[7]. Through this program, settlements that are considered remote are moved to places that are easily accessible to ease the span of government control. On the basis of that policy, around 1972 the Buton Regency Government moved around 50 Burangasi family from South Buton to settle in Belo village. Since that time, Belo village has become more and more crowded, mainly because it is also supported by the existence of pioneering road infrastructure (called *Kalologi*) which was carried out by former PKI members in order to "safeguard" them towards the 1971 General Election.

Since the Ambon conflict occurred in 1999, there has been a massive exodus of Butonese from Maluku to Buton Regency area. Many refugees were accommodated and later became residents of Belo. The number is quite large, almost equal to the residents of Belo village. Since that time Belo's population has increased almost doubled so that administratively it has fulfilled the requirements to form a separate village. On that basis, in 2004 *Kampung* Belo was expanded from

Holimombo Village to become a separate village which was named Holimombo Jaya Village

3.2 Fishing Activity in Holimombo Jaya Before Modernization

The residents of Holimombo Jaya Village have a strong maritime tradition. They have a culture that is close to the sea, are good at making boats, become actors in inter-island shipping[8], and have fishing skills. However, until the late 1990s fishing had not become their main occupation. They still prefer to be sailor and inter-island traders because they are considered more profitable than to be a fishermen. They sailed from west to east or vice versa according to the change of monsoon winds and traded various types of commodities, especially copra, marine products and agricultural products. They profit from the trade and occasionally earn income from the rental of goods and passengers (*fracks*) between islands and between ports. However, along with the increasingly gloomy inter-island shipping since the early of 1990s[3], the population began to turn their attention to the fishing activity.

Fishing activity has actually been done for a long time. However, until the 1990s, it was still a part-time job and was still carried out with using simple technology. The boat used is relatively small, only made of a piece of wood that has been scraped inside, called *koli-koli*. The *koli-koli* are moved by paddles or sails. There are no fishermen who use the machine. Therefore, the fishing area is still limited to the coast and only uses simple fishing gear.

The fishing gear used at that time was as follows:

3.2.1 . Net.

Until 1974 still using nets knitted from hemp yarn. Later in 1975, La Usuraa, a Holimombo fisherman, pioneered the manufacture of nets woven from white string. It turned out to be more practical and the catch was much more than a net knitted from hemp yarn. Therefore, La Usuraa's trail was followed by other fishermen. The nets are usually stocked in waters where fish are believed to be present. Flock of fish is then driven into the net using wooden sticks named *kaciki*. After the fish is caught, the net is then lifted. After the fish are removed from the net, the net is ready to be stocked again in the following areas.

3.2.2 Bubu.

Bubu is a form of traditional fishing gear. *Bubu* is a kind of fish trap. Made of woven bamboo slats in a rectangular shape with a door that is curved from top to bottom. There are various sizes of traps, ranging from small sizes of 50 x 75 cm to jumbo sizes of 200 x 300 cm. Small traps are usually installed in coral crevices to catch fish that live in shallow seas, such as *katamba*, grouper, red snapper, *baronang*, *sunu* and so on. While the large size traps are usually installed in the deep sea using a float made of bamboo assemblies. The target is large pelagic fish such as tuna, *kuew*, and so on.

3.2.3 Arrow

An arrow is a simple fishing tool made of three material elements, namely wood as the handle, iron for the arrowhead, and rubber for the thrower. Arrows are only used by a limited number of people, who have diving skills, and the skills to aim at targets precisely and accurately. Therefore, not all fishermen use arrows as fishing gear. Arrows are usually used in shallow water at a depth of between 1 and 5 meters. The targets are not only fish, but also squid, octopus and lobster.

3.2.4 Spear (*surampa*).

The spear consists of 2 parts, namely the stalk made of small bamboo and the spearhead consisting of 3 or 5 pieces of pointed iron that are assembled into a spear. Usually used at night by using a *strongking* lamp as a light. Spears are usually used while carrying a lamp, walking up the cliffs at low tide to spear fish hiding in coral crevices. It is also common for spearmen to stand on a paddle boat. The spear holder stands at the front while observing and selecting the fish to be speared. The types of fish that are caught are *katamba*, red snapper, *baronang*, squid, octopus and so on.

3.2.5 Fishing rod.

Fishing rods are used to catch various types of fish, both in shallow and deep seas. The bait used is adjusted to the type of fish to be caught. The most common baits used are kolumang, worms, small shrimp, squid meat, and octopus. This type of bait is usually used for fishing in shallow seas. Meanwhile, deep sea fishing with pelagic fish targets usually baits made of chicken feathers, goat hair, and various colors of silk thread. Bait is designed in such a way as to attract fish that are the targets.

Fishing using traditional technology is relatively small and only for household consumption. The rest is sold to neighbors, to local villagers or to traditional markets. With relatively small catches, practically traditional fishermen from Holimombo Jaya at that time could be said to be living in absolute poverty. They do not have access to various resources; so that they are not only poor in food and health, but also suffer from ignorance, illiteracy, mental poverty, poor knowledge, and poor skills. Later, after modernization in fishing, they will rise up and get out of the trap of absolute poverty.

3.3 Modernization in Fishing Activity

Modernization in fishing activity in Holimombo Jaya Village is marked by the use of motors as the main tool to move the boat. Although the motorization of fishing boats has actually occurred in several places in Buton since the 1980s – which was part of the policy of Buton Regent Zainal Arifin Sugianto – however, fishermen in Holimombo Jaya are still reluctant to use motors for their boats. Besides being constrained by capital constraints for purchasing engines and repairing boats, it is also based on the assumption that fish will move away if they hear the sound of a motor. Therefore, up to

several years since the motorization policy was introduced, none of the fishermen in Holimombo Jaya Village have used motors for their boats.

Later, after the fishermen of Kondowa Village (neighboring villages) used motor pioneered by La Simu, the fishermen of Holimombo Jaya Village were inspired and started using motor as well. The first person to use motor in Holimombo Jaya Village was La Alira. The type of engine used is a Honda brand ketinting which was purchased in Baubau for 250,000 rupiah. The use of the motor turned out to be much more efficient and it was proven that the fish did not move away as originally assumed.

Entering the decade of the 2000s, more and more Holimombo Jaya fishermen are using engine. Along with that, various innovations were carried out to increase productivity in fishing, including in terms of boat building, fishing methods, fish preservation, expansion of market access, and access to new capital resources,

3.3.1 Innovation in Boat Building

Innovation in boat-building was marked by the start of making boats from larger planks, replacing *koli-koli* boats made of dredged logs. The boards used are made of high-quality wood which is resistant to sea water and hot sun. The wood was purchased from Wolowa District, which is about 17 Km from Holimombo Jaya Village. The boat from the arrangement of the boards is called the *body*. The size is larger than *koli-koli*, about 100 x 700 Cm. The engine used is no longer tinted, but a diesel engine with a larger capacity from various types of brands such as Jiangdong, Yanmar, Mitsubishi, Dafeng, Honda and so on. By using boats and large-capacity engines, the fishing area will be even further out to Wakatobi Waters area, around the Batutas Island, and even Flores Sea waters.

Recently, the manufacture of wooden boats has been faced with the problem of scarcity of wood [9] due to the local government's policy that requires an official permit to cut wood even on private land. To overcome this, the fishermen of Holimombo Jaya began to learn the technique of making boats made of fiberglass. The basic ingredients, such as resin oil, talc, catalyst, and roving, are relatively easy to obtain in Baubau City and in Pasarwajo. The first person who succeeded in making a boat out of fiberglass was La Madi in 2010. The success of La Madi was then followed by other fishermen so that the use of boats made of fiberglass became common among fishermen in Holimombo Jaya. Boats made of fiber have advantages over wooden boats, including: lighter weight, easy maintenance, and not quickly weathered by seawater or hot sun. Until now about 90% of fishermen in Holimombo Jaya Village have used boats made of fiberglass.

3.3.2 Innovation in Fishing Techniques

Innovations in fishing techniques are developing along with boat-building innovations and the high market demand for fresh fish. There are three important

innovations in fishing techniques. *First*, fishing using FAD media. FADs are made from bamboo assemblies which are then anchored at a distance of about 20 km from the beach. FADs are equipped with supporting equipment, including coconut leaves which are submerged at a depth of 10 meters for fish protection. FADs are also equipped with small huts for shelter. To make it easier to find FADs at night, markers made of cloth or sounds are installed. But lately markers are no longer needed after fishermen have used GPS (Global Positioning System).

Flocks of scad and mackerel that gather around FADs are caught using hanging nets. While large fish are caught using fishing rods with certain types of bait. Fishermen usually set up their nets at 01.00, then wait, and then pick them up at 05.00. In one set of nets, fishermen can get about 200-400 kg of mackerel and kite fish.

Second, the innovation of tuna fishing, which previously was only fished in waters near the coast. Since the use of large capacity engines and boats, tuna fishing began to be carried out on the high seas. Previously, the bait used was only chicken feathers, goat hair or cloth fiber, since the 2000s various innovations have been made in the form of baits in tuna fishing. Initially used live fish but often ambushed by sharks until the fishing line breaks. Therefore, created types of bait from rubber, plastic, or aluminum. Bait is shaped like flying fish, anchovies, mackerel, or squid and shrimp. To outwit the tuna, the bait is hung using a kite so that the bait can move up and down or surf over the surface of the water according to the rhythm of the kite's ups and downs. Such bait movement attracts the attention of the tuna herd. The tuna that catches the bait is then pulled to the surface and then transported into the boat. In a day, tuna fishermen can catch 2-4 adult tuna weighing between 75 to 120 kg per head.

Third, innovation in reef fishing. Reef fishing has been known for a long time. But only done on the near coast. After the use of large motorized boats, the reef fishing area began to shift to more distant waters. In fact, since the late 2000s, it has begun to reach a wide expanse of coral to the west of the Wakatobi Islands. Although the location is far away, about 60-70 km away, fishing in this area is very attractive because the fish potential is quite large and has high economic value. Usually, fishermen are on the reef between 2 to 3 days. In addition to bringing lunch and cooking utensils, fishermen also bring ice and cork boxes to keep their catches fresh. Once at sea, fishermen spend about 40 liters of diesel fuel purchased from retailers for Rp. 240,000. In one go at sea, fishermen can get about 250 to 400 kg of fish of various types such as *katamba*, *sunu*, red snapper, with selling prices between 2.5 to 3 million rupiah.

3.3.3 Fish Preservation and Market Network Expansion

At the first time, the fish was preserved using salt and then dried in the sun's heat called *kagarai*. Another way is smoked over coals called *katapai*. However, fish preserved by salting or smoking have a low selling

value. Along with the emergence of seafood restaurants and the opening of fresh fish export routes, the demand for fresh fish is also getting higher. This is an opportunity as well as a challenge for Holimombo Jaya fishermen. When PLN electricity began to reach Holimombo Jaya Village in the late of 2000s, households that had used PLN electricity began to produce ice using household refrigerators. This ice is then used to maintain the freshness of the fish in the Styrofoam (cork box) so that it can last for some time. Interestingly, there are no fishermen who are interested to using formalin or borax in fish preservation, although they were easily obtained at chemical stores. The reason they do not use chemical preservatives is because it can damage health, reduce the quality and taste of fish, and can destroy consumer's trust. And this has become a collective agreement that is firmly held by the fishermen.

With using ice, the fish caught, do not have to be marketed on the same day. Fish can be stored and wait until the amount is new enough to be marketed. If in the early 2000s fishermen only depended on traditional markets, since the end of 2000s there have been many market choices. In addition to the existing traditional markets, fishermen can also market their catches to fish exporter company Trico Fisherindo, to wet fish collectors in Dongkala, or to market their own fish outside the Pasarwajo area, such as to Rongi Market in South Buton, Karya Baru Market and Wameo Market. in Baubau City, and even taken by ferry to Buton Tengah on the mainland of Muna Island. Meanwhile, tuna is sold to tuna collectors in Dongkala or in Baubau. Recently, there have also been fishermen who use social media to promote their caught fish so that market access becomes wider and reaches various layers of consumers in a faster time.

3.3.4 Wider and Easier Access to New Capital Resources

At first, fishermen obtained capital for boat construction and buying machinery by working as clove pickers in Maluku, or working as construction workers on road and building projects in Buton Regency area. However, this is considered too long, while fishermen need faster working capital. With the emergence of financial institutions such as banks, especially BRI and cooperatives with all the facilities provided, fishermen began to use existing financial institutions as sources of capital in fishing activity. They can apply for a loan at any time which can be disbursed in less than a week and then paid in installments.

3.4 Patterns of Working Relationships

What is interesting about the social structure of fishermen in Holimombo Jaya Village is the different pattern of working relationships with fishermen in other places. There is no pattern of patron-client relationship [10]. If in several places there is a social stratification in the pattern of *punggawa-sawi* [11] relations, then such a relationship pattern is not found in the fishing community of Holimombo Jaya Village. There fishermen work independently and become owners of all the means of production (boats, machines, nets, fishing rods, and other supporting equipment). The

various fishing equipment owned are operated by individual fishermen. All risks of losses that arise and so the profits obtained are the responsibility and rights of the fishermen themselves.

The division of labor and social relations occurs only between fishermen and their wives, not with third parties. The division of labor between husband and wife is very clear even though it is not written. The wife prepares provisions and necessities for fishermen when they want to go to sea. When the fisherman returns from the sea, the next task is taken over by the wife. It is the wife who takes the fish out of the net, sorts the fish, puts the fish and ice in the cork box, and the wife also brings the fish to the market, to the hands of consumers. The wife also acts as a financial manager who makes details of monthly financial usage. While the husband after the sea immediately rest to restore stamina. However, there are types of work that are usually carried out jointly by husband and wife, including patching torn nets or preparing fishing rods and baits to be used in the next fishing cycle.

Thus, there is no exploitation in fishing activities in Holimombo Jaya Village. No contrasting strata were found in the socio-economic life of fishermen. Holimombo Jaya fishermen are independent individuals, manage working hours, and are the sole owners of all fishing gear they operate. That way the fishermen in Holimombo Jaya Village are not co-opted by third parties, both socially, economically, and mentally. There were no fishermen who had the status of laborers who had to obey the "master" of the fishing equipment owner. They are all masters, owners of the means of production, so all the results obtained belong to them absolutely and are not shared with third parties.

3.5 Impact of Modernization on Fishermen's Lives

The ability of fishermen in Holimombo Jaya Village to adapt to developments in fishing technology has had a broad impact on improving their standard of living. No cultural lag [12] was found. They managed to get out of the general pattern of exploitative patron-client relationship traps. Because there is no exploitative relationship, the income distribution becomes more even and this is the key to prosperity for the fishermen of Holimombo Jaya Village. Their level of prosperity can be measured from the range of their income between 7 to 12 million rupiah a month. In addition, it can also be seen in property ownership in the form of permanent houses equivalent to type 54 or more, luxurious household furniture, motorized vehicles, communication tools, and so on. In addition, many of their children are educated at several universities in big cities, both in Sulawesi and in Java.

4 Conclusion

The adaptability of Holimombo Jaya fishermen to technology can be used as a lesson for the development of fishing communities in Indonesia. The absence of exploitative patron-client relationships has led to a more

even distribution of income among fishing communities. Meanwhile, the division of labor between husband and wife is also a good example to build harmony in fishermen's families. The role of wives in marketing the fish caught by their husbands has placed them in a strategic position as the main control holder of family finances.

An interesting fact is that fishermen in this village are not interested in using fishing gear with high suction power, such as tiger trawls. They choose to stick to their old fishing gear and are only given a touch of technology and innovation so that they remain efficient and effective. Thus, the sustainability of marine resources and the fisheries environment can be maintained.

Another interesting finding is in terms of fish preservation. Fish are only preserved using ice in Styrofoam (cork boxes). There was no use of hazardous materials for health to preserve fish, such as formalin and borax. Thus, efforts to prosper fishermen occur without having to disrupt the environmental sustainability of marine biota and fish populations, as well as maintaining public health.

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