

## Social Change in the Bajo Community in Binanga Sombaiya Village, Selayar Islands Regency, Indonesia

Sofyan Kaepa<sup>1</sup>, Tasrifin Tahara<sup>2</sup>, Wahyu Chandra<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Department of Anthropology,  
Faculty of Social and Political Science, Hasanuddin University  
Perintis Kemerdekaan Street Km 10, Makassar 90245, Indonesia.  
Corresponding Author: [wahyuch@yahoo.com](mailto:wahyuch@yahoo.com)

Received: 15 December 2024; Revised: 23 February 2025; Accepted: 25 February 2025

Copyright © 2025 The Author



This is an open-access article  
under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) License

**How to cite (APA):** Kaepa, S., Tahara, T., & Chandra, W. (2025). Social change in the Bajo community in Binanga Sombaiya Village, Selayar Islands Regency, Indonesia. *ETNOREFLIKA: Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya*, 14(1), 27-43. <https://doi.org/10.33772/etnoreflika.v14i1.2888>.

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to discover the social changes in the Bajo fishing community in Bajo Hamlet, Binanga Sombaiya Village, as well as the factors that cause these changes. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, conducted on June 12 – June 19, 2024, in Bajo Hamlet, Binanga Sombaiya Village, Bontosikuyu District, Selayar Islands Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The informants from this study are the community, community leaders, the younger generation, and village government officials, with 10 informants. The study results show several social changes in Binanga Sombaiya Village, such as changes in the way of going to sea and the use of fishing gear, changes related to identity and self-perspective, and changes in lifestyle and settlement patterns. Several factors that triggered these changes were modernization, changing religious beliefs, climate change, and the intensity of interaction with other tribes.

**Keywords:** bajo, social change, identity, climate change

### INTRODUCTION

The Bajo people are known as a maritime community, and most of their activities are carried out at sea. They live scattered in various regions in Indonesia, generally in coastal areas. In some places, residential areas even jut out into the sea, and some have built residential areas on the mainland, although they are still counted as coastal areas.

Bajo, Bajau, or Sama Bajo is one of the tribes in Indonesia that spread to various parts of the country (Tahara, 2013). They live and spread across multiple archipelago regions, even in some countries of the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, and even to Africa Madagascar (Hajuan & Marzuki, 2022). In Indonesia,

they are known to live in Riau, North Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, Southeast Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, and North Maluku (Rahim et al., 2018), with an estimated population of around 90,000–150,000 people (Fitriana & Stacey, 2012).

The Bajo people are known as reliable seafarers, sailing from one water to another with a lifestyle that develops according to their nature and environment, entirely dependent on the marine environment (Kazufumi, 2017). Although known as sea lovers, the Bajo people are also often found polluting and destroying the aquatic environment, thus having an impact on economic, social, and cultural aspects of life. This can be seen from the character of the Bajo tribe, which is still minimal, especially the mindset. Most of these problem conditions do not have a solution to overcome them (Hajuan & Marzuki, 2022).

In the past, the Bajo people moved in groups to explore the ocean by traditional boats. The sedentary lifestyle is suspected because they feel exploited and suspected by other tribes around them (Rusba et al., 2018). The stereotypes attached to this society encourage acculturation with cultural elements in mainland societies (Purnama et al., 2023).

The Bajo people's identity construction is still overshadowed by the idealism of culture and perspective that considers the land people to have a higher civilization and culture than the Bajo people as a sea tribe. Ernest and Breuilly (2008) confirm the existence of high culture. It is suspected that it is an effort to distinguish itself from other groups. Outside of highly cultured communities, individuals are often placed in the periphery of a country, excluded from the center for reasons of descent or class (Tahara, 2013).

The Bajo people are also known to have many traditions, both related to the sea and the life cycle. A popular sea tradition, for example, in Selayar Regency, is a burden in the form of group trips to the sea in a certain period, days, and even months. *Bebangi*, which means 'overnight,' is sometimes also called *bangi-bangi*. Around the Banggai area, Central Sulawesi, this tradition is called *bapongka*. Most likely, the spread of the Bajo people to several coastal areas in various archipelago regions originated from the tradition of *bebangi* and *bapongka*. As social changes occurred and more and more Bajo people settled on the mainland, this tradition began to experience many shifts in meaning, purpose, and way. Some of the factors of these changes will be one of the parts that will be examined in this study.

The Bajo people are also known for their traditions, as seen in several rituals. Old beliefs dominate these rituals, although they have developed and received influence from Islam, their religion. Some rituals still refer to animist beliefs, but Islam influences some.

Talking about the Bajo people cannot be understood as a single entity. Although the main character as a society or sea tribe is still firmly attached, they also transform and are influenced by the region and society in which they live. This change occurs naturally as a process of cultural acculturation and because of social construction due to the intensity of meetings and marriage paths. Another causative factor is the modernization and the entry of fundamentalist

Islamic teachings that reject everything that is considered contrary to Islamic teachings or polytheists.

The Bajo religious identity is clearly expressed in three important events: first, in the ritual of life cycle events; second, in traditional or customary rituals; and third, in the celebration of Islamic holy days. Rituals of life cycle events include birth, circumcision, marriage, and death. When a baby is born, they will cut the baby's umbilical cord while saying: 'Kuluabalahu' or 'Kulubalau,' which resembles the Qur'anic verse 'Qulhuallahu' (Ahad) (Baskara et al., 2014).

Many studies have been conducted on the Bajo people in various regions (Tahara, 2013, 2017) who researches the Bajo people in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, stated that in the process of interacting with community groups around their settlement in Wakatobi, the Bajo people are often stereotyped as a group of robbers, ignorant people, and have physical characteristics that are different from other communities. They have been neglected in the development process carried out by the central government and local governments. As a marginalized group, the Bajo people build group awareness by carrying out movements that build negotiations on various political events at the local level.

Other research conducted by Baskara et al. (2014) examines the religiosity of the Bajo people associated with their Islamic identity. Then there is also Salipu (2000), who researched the transformation of Bajo settlements in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. Hamzah, Mukhtar, and Gafaruddin (2019) researched the modernization of Bajo fishing gear in West Muna Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. Regarding identity, research on the Bajo people was carried out by Haerulloh et al. (2021) on Postnomadic Island. Then there is also research conducted by Nurlaili (2012) related to the adaptation strategy of Bajo fishermen to face climate change in Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Regarding local wisdom, research on the Bajo people was carried out by Basri (2018).

Although many studies related to the Bajo people have been conducted, these studies are limited to one specific theme with various regions. In contrast, the Bajo people themselves have their uniqueness when associated with their domicile area. Each region has its complexity, which makes the theme of research on the Bajo people an interesting thing to study and update according to the times. We hope this research can complement the literature related to the Bajo people, especially on identity and social change.

Society is something dynamic and ever-changing, defined as social change. According to Sumardjan (1986), social change is any change in social institutions that affects its social system, including values, attitudes, and behavior patterns among social groups. Moore (1970) defines social change as a significant change in social structure, which can come from the endogenous or exogenous of any institution, bringing about changes in other institutions, which in turn makes further adaptations in the field of original change. Social change is always marked by a relationship between each individual and his or her group or between individuals and other groups around them (Saleh, 2019).

The study of social change, the core of sociology, began around the 14th century. Ibn Khaldun, an Islamic thinker in the field of social science, first

introduced the concept of social change. Khaldun stated that societies have historically moved from nomadic to sedentary states (Martono, 2012).

According to Soekanto (1986), several factors that affect social change are the increase or decrease in the population and discoveries. New inventions as the cause of change can be distinguished into several meanings: discovery and invention. Discovery is the discovery of new cultural elements, either tools or ideas created by humans. After discovery, the public will recognize, accept, and even apply this invention, which is called an invention. Another factor is community conflicts that often occur due to differences between individual and group interests. Other factors that cause social changes in the fishing community, according to Rustan, Surya, and Nasution (2019), are the intensity of interaction with mainland communities, changes in education levels, patterns of life (kinship system, housing patterns, language, religious similarity, the existence of needs, and the existence of forms of social interaction (cooperation, accommodation, assimilation).

This accentuation occurs for all attitudes, beliefs and values, affective reactions, behavioral norms, speech styles, and other traits that are believed to correlate with relevant intergroup categorizations. A consequence of the social comparison process is the selective application of the recognition effect, especially for the dimension that will produce self-improving results for oneself. Specifically, one's self-esteem is enhanced by evaluating the group and the outer groups on dimensions that cause the inner group to be judged positively and the outer group to be judged negatively (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Fishermen are people or communities living along the coast whose lives depend on the sea. They are very persistent and familiar with life in the harsh sea. According to Acheson (1988), the fishing community consists of individuals directly involved in fishing as their main livelihood. They deeply understand the marine environment and rely on traditional fishing gear and boats.

Their dependence on the sea's natural resources is enormous, and their lives follow the rhythm of nature. They depend on fisheries as their primary source of livelihood. They live on the coast and live with patterns influenced by the seasons and fish catches. Environmental challenges often influence their lives, and they use traditional technologies in fishing activities. Socially, they have a simple structure (Dahuri, 2010).

Their knowledge is generally relatively low and still traditional, especially their understanding of marine ecology. Fishermen have lived in the sea for generations and are accustomed to dealing with the harshness of life at sea.

The poverty of the fishing community is factually everywhere. It is caused not only by internal factors in its production mechanism but also by external circumstances created in its environment. Traditions and traditional institutions are not always considered good and able to maintain the existence of the poor's lives. Both can plunge or further immerse the poor in absolute poverty (Humaedi, 2017).

The fishing community's helplessness in the reality of economic life affects not only the fishermen who are members of business groups but also the lives of the peripheral (traditional) fishermen who try to be independent (Dahuri, 2010).

Generally, fishing communities have different characteristics from other communities. According to Mubyarto (1986), fishermen in our country are a very backward group regarding economic welfare compared to farmer groups. Poor people in agricultural villages still have ample space to move even during the famine season, but this is not the case with fishermen, who usually cannot find another way but to risk their lives at sea.

Geographically, a fishing community is a community that lives, grows, and develops in coastal areas, namely a transitional area between land and sea. The fishing community consists of social categories that form a social unity as a system. They also have a value system and cultural symbols to reference their daily behavior. They generally live on the coast and settle in coastal areas by forming a fishing community.

On the other hand, sociologically, the characteristics of the fishing community are different from those of the farming community, along with the difference in the characteristics of the resources faced. Farming communities face controlled resources, namely land management, to produce a commodity with relatively predictable output. These characteristics are entirely different from those of fishermen.

According to Satria (2015)), fishermen face resources that are still open access. The characteristics of resources like this cause fishermen to move around to get maximum results, which means the risk element is very high. The condition of these risky resources causes fishermen to have a complex, firm, and open character (Kusnadi, 2002).

Fishing communities have a distinctive way of life, different from farmers or urban communities because the marine environment influences them. Their culture develops through interaction with marine natural resources and is reflected in social structures that meet the needs of daily life. As a group living in coastal areas, fishermen exploit, manage, and utilize common coastal and aquatic resources, which are the basis of their livelihoods. These activities are highly influenced by seasons, vulnerable to ecosystem damage, and affected by social and economic changes (Nuryanto & Haryono, 2017). This condition has become part of the fisherman's life routine and is a long-standing life choice. Work as a fisherman is inherited from generation to generation, including equipment, fishing methods, time, and knowledge of the location and signs of fish.

According to Kusnadi (2002), from the perspective of socio-economic stratification, the fishing community is not a homogeneous society. Fishing communities are formed by diverse social groups interacting with the economic resources available in coastal areas.

This research aims to discover several social changes that occur in the Bajo community in Selayar Regency, both in terms of identity and tradition, including the tradition of going to sea and religious and customary traditions. This research can enhance understanding of the Bajo community and help the government make informed policies, ensuring that intervention programs for the Bajo or fishing communities are more effective.

## **METHOD**

This research is descriptive qualitative research, referring to the guidelines provided by Creswell (2012), which describes social changes in the Bajo community. It was conducted from June 12 to June 19, 2024, in Bajo Hamlet, Binanga Sombaiya Village, Bontosikuyu District, Selayar Islands Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

The informants from this study are the community, community leaders, the younger generation, and village government officials, with as many informants actively involved in interviews as 10 people.

The data sources used in this study include (1) Primary data, data obtained directly from the object to be researched, in this case, the informant, and the situation at the research location. (2) Secondary data is obtained from certain institutions, such as government agencies, the private sector, and community organizations, that are generally related to quantity data (usually numerical data) or documents from related agencies.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overview**

#### ***Bajo People in Bajo Hamlet, Binanga Sombaiya Village***

Binanga Sombaiya is the name of a village in Bontosikuyu District, Selayar Islands Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Binanga Sombaiya comes from two syllables: 'Binanga' and 'Somba'. Binanga means river, while Somba can be interpreted as an offering to 'gaukang' or one of the sacred royal apparatuses. Binanga Sombaiya Village has a land area of 29.82 km, consisting of highlands in the form of forests and lowland areas bordering the sea.

This village is at an altitude of  $\pm 0 - 400$  m above sea level so that it can be categorized as lowland to highland topography. Binanga Sombaiya has four hamlets: Ujung Loe, Bahorea, Binanga Benteng, and Bajo. In the north, Binanga Sombaiya Village is bordered by Layolo Village, in the South, by Lantibongan Village, and in the East and West, by the Flores Sea.

Flat areas are generally located in the area to the west, while sloping to hilly areas are generally located in the middle to the east. Rainfall ranges from 500 to 1000 mm per year, with the most rainfall for 17 days, the altitude from sea level from 0-400 m, the average temperature is 29°- 32° C. Binanga Sombaiya Village has two growing seasons, namely the Western planting season (rain) which usually falls from October to March, and the eastern season which usually falls from April to September.

Regarding the source of livelihood, most residents work as farmers and fishermen. Those who rely on the capture fisheries sector as their main livelihood are villagers who live along the coast. Two hundred three residents work as farmers, while 150 fishermen and 42 traders. The rest are retirees, laborers, nurses, and those with other informal jobs.

Bajo Hamlet, where people from the Bajo tribe live, has a population of 389 people with 110 families. Most of the population, as many as 250 people and 90 heads of families, are Bajo tribes, while the rest come from the Bugis and Selayar

tribes. Most of the Bajo people in this area work as fishermen. Apart from cultural factors, the Bajo people in this hamlet also do not have enough land for farming because the hamlet's location is flanked by hilly and coastal areas with soil conditions unsuitable for agricultural land. One of the plants they can develop is coconuts that grow in the yards of houses and along the coast.

### ***History of the Bajo People in Bajo Hamlet***

The Bajo people who currently inhabit Bajo Hamlet are moving from Guang and Malimbu Islands, which are located not far from Bajo Hamlet; it can be seen clearly from the mainland coast of Bajo Hamlet; it may only take about 10 minutes to reach it by a small fisherman's boat. Bajo Hamlet itself is also known as Kayu Panda to distinguish it from the Bajo people in Appatanah Village, not far from the location of this hamlet is located,

A village elder said the Bajo people have settled on both islands for centuries, which are marked by old cemeteries, especially on Malimbu Island. Another evidence of the presence of the Bajo people on the two islands can be seen from the beaches of the two islands, which are full of fragments of hardened chemicals. It is said that in the past, residents used broken shells for reclamation, preventing abrasion of the island's land.

In 1982, the people on both islands, who numbered about 50 families, relocated to the mainland, where the hamlet is now. Apart from the local transmigration program, the relocation was also triggered by a large fire that occurred on Malimbu Island, which burned down residents' houses. When the relocation was carried out, the government prepared assistance in the form of land and house buildings for each head of the family, plus fulfilling living needs for a year. The area of the location given by the government is estimated to be around 200 m<sup>2</sup>.

The two islands, Guang and Malimbu, are now uninhabited; several fishermen's huts are resting places when the wind is strong. On these two islands, there are also tombs of the ancestors of the Bajo people. These two islands are one of the tourist destinations in Selayar Islands Regency. In addition to clean white sand and beautiful underwater nature, Guang Island has relatively high cliffs where tourists can see the underwater beauty from a height. Residents usually use small wooden boats with 4-5 people, including the driver, to reach the two islands.

Before settling on the islands of Guam and Malimbu, the Bajo people in Bajo Hamlet are believed to be immigrants from Bajoe Village in Bone Regency, estimated to have come around the 1600s. The current generation is the fifth to seventh generation. One of the Bajo figures named Condo (84 years old), born on Guang Island, is the 5th generation of Bajo people in the village. Condo is a direct descendant of one of the village founders, Supu. Supu has one of the children named Baji. Baji has a child named Tinabo, while Tinabo has a child named Tikko. Tikko, who is married to Salama, gave birth to Condo.

Several other sources tell the presence of the Bajo people on Guang Island, which is related to the early story of the spread of the Bajo people to various coastal areas. It is said that in the past, the daughter of King Bajo, who

lived in Bajoe Village, had disappeared for three days. The King then ordered all the villagers to spread out in search of the princess with the threat of being killed if he failed. Because they could not find and repatriate the princess, these searchers dared not return to their hometown. Finally, they became nomads. The King of Gowa later found the princess, who married her to one of his sons. From this comes the story of the connection between the King of Gowa and the Bajo people (Abrams & Hogg, 1988).

### ***Social Changes of the Bajo People in Bajo Hamlet, Binanga Sombaiya Village***

#### ***Changes in the way of going to sea and the use of fishing gear***

The main livelihood of the traditional Bajo people is fishing and hunting fish, sea cucumbers, and other marine life. They use traditional techniques that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, along with modernization and reduction of marine products due to overfishing and environmental changes, some members of the Bajo community began to look for jobs outside the fisheries sector. In addition, the increasing use of more modern fishing gear has changed how they work. Even so, Bajo fishermen still face challenges due to limited access to the global market, which is often unfair.

One of the traditions of the Bajo people in the Selayar Islands, especially in Binanga Sombaiya Village, is a tradition of going to sea for days, weeks, or even months with small groups, usually from family relatives, which are termed *bebangi* or *bangi-bangi*. *Bebangi* itself can be interpreted as 'overnight', which shows that for *bebangi*, it does take longer. Around the waters of Banggai, Central Sulawesi, *bebangi* is termed *bapongka*. There are differences in pronunciation, but they have the same meaning in both terms. Both *bebangi* and *bapongka* are usually done when the catch of fish around their waters begins to decrease, so they must go to sea in a farther place. Some informants stated that the farthest journey for this burden could reach Maluku, Papua, Nusa Tenggara, and Kalimantan, and some even reach the Indonesian border with Australia.

When doing *bebangi*, they will stop at the islands they find along the way, to find a comfortable bed, to find logistics for consumption purposes on the next trip, or to interact with the local people they meet. If they want to look for fish in the water, they will ask for permission from residents around the island. In return for granting the permit, the Bajo people will share the catch or share a few percent of the profits from constructing the mosque or the local government and customs. It differs from sea cucumber finders, who look for land to find a location to process sea cucumber catches so they do not rot during the trip.

In the current context, starting when Covid-19 occurred in 2020, the practice of *bebangi* was done differently. The fishermen, usually capitalized by large financiers who catch sea cucumbers, carry their burdens to the Australian border in the Nusa Tenggara region. However, their journey to carry out baggage no longer uses wooden boats or fiber across the vast ocean. Their boats are still included but transported using larger boats, while fishermen travel to the *bebangi* site using large boats with regular passengers. The boat will only be lowered when it has arrived at the agreed location.



Regarding the use of fishing gear, the Bajo people have adaptive abilities to the surrounding environmental conditions. The exchange of knowledge at sea may be typical for marine peoples, but the Bajo people have better abilities in this adaptation process. This process can be interpreted positively or negatively. When there was a trend of using octopus fishing gear using fishing gear called pocong or pocong-pocong, the Bajo people very well adopted this new technology. So far, they have been catching octopus using spears, which has the potential to damage coral reefs. Bad adoption can also occur, such as in the use of bombs and drugs, which are beginning to be rampant, and the perpetrators are accused of the Bajo people.

In addition, the modernization of fishing equipment, such as outboard motors and more sophisticated fishing gear, has changed how Bajo fishermen work in Binanga Sombaiya Village. If they previously relied on traditional sailboats with limited range, technology allows them to go further at sea, increasing their catch and income. However, (Hamzah et al., 2008) said these advances also increase operational costs, such as fuel and equipment maintenance, ultimately making fishermen more dependent on technology and capital.

### ***Changes in identity and self-perspective***

In social identity theory and identity theory, the self is reflexive because it can be considered an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in a certain way in relation to social categories or other classifications. This process is called self-categorization in social identity theory (Hogg & Turner, 1987). In identity theory, it is called identification (McCall, 2003). Through the process of categorization or self-identification, identity is formed.

According to Abrams and Hogg (1988), social identity is a person's knowledge of belonging to a social category or group. A social group is a set of individuals who share a common social identity or view themselves as members of the same social category. Through social comparison, similar people are categorized on their own and labeled in groups. People who are different from themselves are categorized as an outgoing group. In early work, social identity included emotional, evaluative, and other psychological correlations of group classification (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Researchers then often separate the self-categorization component from the self-esteem (evaluative) and commitment (psychological) components to investigate the relationship between them empirically (Ellemers et al., 1999).

The two important processes in forming social identity, namely self-categorization and social comparison, produce different consequences (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). The consequence of self-categorization is the accentuation of perceived similarities between the self and other group members and the accentuation of perceived differences between the self-member and the members of the outer group.

This accentuation occurs for all attitudes, beliefs and values, affective reactions, behavioral norms, speech styles, and other traits that are believed to correlate with relevant intergroup categorizations. A consequence of the social comparison process is the selective application of the recognition effect,

especially for the dimension that will produce self-improving results for oneself. Specifically, one's self-esteem is enhanced by evaluating the group and the outer groups on dimensions that cause the inner group to be judged positively and the outer group to be judged negatively (Stets & Burke, 2000).

The ambiguity of self-identity as a Bajo person occurs in Binanga Sombaiya Village. Some residents looked confused when asked about their identity as Bajo people. They only understood that their lineage came from the ancestors of the Bajo, who came from far across the ocean, but only to that extent. Their relationship with the Bajo people on the islands around the Selayar Islands seems to be severed, and they cannot communicate well using the Bajo language.

Most of the Bajo people in Binanga Sombaiya Village are also not fluent in Bajo or only understand but cannot pronounce it. The Bajo language is increasingly urged by other languages, namely Selayar and Malay or Indonesian. This tendency is not typical of the Bajo people in Binanga Sombaiya Village but also covers other Bajo settlements in Selayar (Rusmini et al., 2021) who analyzed the differences in Bajo vocabulary in Rajuni Village and Tarupa Village, Takabonerate District, Selayar Islands Regency, found that the community slowly abandoned the Bajo language in communicating. Although some community members still have a passive mastery of the Bajo language, they are less dominant in Indonesian and Selayar. Adults or parents predominantly use Bajo, while younger generations often use Indonesian and can no longer speak Bajo.

Other changes occur when rituals are implemented or related to taboos, such as when going to sea or while at sea. This knowledge is only known to a handful of parents, and their numbers are starting to be limited. Rituals such as sea lung are also not carried out because they are considered contrary to the teachings of Islam.

### ***Changes in lifestyle***

Modernization has spread well into society's niches to remote areas and is increasing along with better access to information. Each region is connected instantly, and each culture is connected intensely until it finally causes a change in the lifestyle of the fishing community.

Modernization, interaction with the outside community, and technological developments influence changes in the lifestyle and consumption patterns of the Bajo people. The Bajo people, who used to depend on communality and cooperation, are now starting to lead a more individualistic lifestyle, especially among fishermen who use modern technology.

Previously, they often worked together in groups and shared catches, but now their orientation tends to increase personal income. This change also impacts the social structure of the community, where the sense of solidarity between members begins to decrease.

The entry of modern technology and culture has changed the lifestyle of the Bajo people, especially the younger generation. They are more exposed to urban lifestyles and social media, which affect their dress, language, entertainment, and communication preferences. Local customs and traditions began to shift, and the Bajo language was used less frequently, especially among

young people who began to adopt national or foreign languages in their daily interactions.

Changes in consumption patterns can be seen from the increasing consumption of goods previously not part of the Bajo people's lives, such as instant food, packaged drinks, and electronic equipment. Incoming technology also increases reliance on imported goods that are not produced locally. This changed the consumption pattern that was previously simple and dependent on local resources to be more oriented toward commercial products (Adhuri, 2013)

### ***Changes in settlement patterns***

When talking about the Bajo people, what comes to people's minds are people who live around the beach, with most of the houses jutting towards the sea. Boats for the Bajo Tribe are like houses and are a valuable primary need. All activities are carried out on the boat, ranging from eating, sleeping, religious rituals, playing for children, and even giving birth, sometimes on the boat (Kasmini & Mursalim, 2023).

In the past, the Bajo people only lived around the beach during certain seasons when the waters were calm enough to repair their boats and fishing gear. During this stopover period, they also carried out social activities such as weddings, circumcisions, funerals, and other traditional ceremonies. However, over time, they now tend to settle permanently in coastal areas and surrounding waters. This trend also occurs in Binanga Sombaiya Village.

The two islands they had previously settled, Guang and Malimbu, were originally probably only temporary stopovers, which were later turned into permanent settlements. The occurrence of fire disasters and government policies that then made them move to the current settlement area with the conditions of the new settlement are much different. Although residents' houses can still be found around the beach, the distance is far from the coastline, no longer jutting into the sea. Domestic activities are also no longer widely carried out around the coast or the sea. One of the reasons is that when they were relocated to the hamlet, it was complete with the model of the building they occupied, in the form of a house on stilts or a house with stone walls. Residential areas distant from the coast do not reduce their activity at sea. They seem to have imitated the settlement model of locals or immigrants from other tribes.

## **Factors Triggering Change**

### ***Modernization***

Modernization impacts the lives of the fishing community, both positively and negatively. The positive impact is an increase in the fishing community's income. Meanwhile, the negative impact includes reducing the fisherman's workforce (Nur et al., 2020). This also happened to the Bajo community in Binanga Sombaiya Village. Modernization includes fishing methods, lifestyles, and interaction patterns.

Modernization brings significant social changes to the lives of Bajo fishermen, including changes in economic aspects, lifestyles, and value systems. Here are some of the main impacts on economic changes and livelihoods. As

explained by Hamzah, Mukhtar, and Gafaruddin (2019), technological modernization in the fisheries sector, such as using modern motorboats and fishing gear, has increased the productivity of fishermen. This also affects the income of Bajo fishermen, who previously only used traditional boats. However, this modernization can also increase dependence on technology and operational costs, creating an economic gap between fishermen who can afford modern equipment and those who cannot.

Modernization often shifts traditional lifestyles and local wisdom passed down from generation to generation. For example, new technologies tend to reduce traditional rituals or ordinances performed before going to sea. In addition, interaction with the outside community through the modernization of communication affects the Bajo language and culture, reducing the use of indigenous languages and customs (Kasmini & Mursalim, 2023). In addition, modernization has brought about changes in the social structure of the Bajo people in Binanga Sombaiya village, which was initially close to the community undergoing changes in social structure, such as a shift from communal life to a more individualist life. With modernization, relationships and solidarity between fishermen sometimes become more tense because they focus on improving individuals in achieving maximum catches (Hamzah et al., 2008).

### **Changing Religious Beliefs**

Although the Bajo people are generally Muslims, their Islam has been syncretic with the old belief of appreciation for the Duata ruler of the sea (Baskara et al., 2014). This old belief that combines Islam with animism is found in several locations where the Bajo people are located, usually in the form of sea rituals, celebrating religious holidays, life cycle rituals, and death rituals.

In several readings, when going to sea to be given safety, it also combines Islamic teachings with pronunciation using the local language. This thing in Bajo Hamlet is becoming rare, especially since several parents who understand these rituals have died and do not inherit them, or their descendants no longer want to pass them on. A Bajo resident stated that he began to abandon many rituals and traditions because they were contrary to Islamic teachings. After all, he gave awards or offered prayers to entities other than Allah SWT, the god for the adherents of Islam.

"Many rituals are not carried out anymore because they contradict religious teachings. Reading outside of prayer in Islam is also no longer done because asking for something other than Allah SWT is a polytheistic act that is forbidden by religion. Taboos are also no longer heeded. If you want to survive or get much catch, pray to Allah SWT. There is no need to burn incense or release offerings into the sea (larung)". (DH (37 years old), interview July 5, 2024).

DH admitted to knowing this through readings, lectures by scholars in mosques, or social media.

### **Climate Change**

Climate change in coastal and sea areas, where the sea is where fishermen work, also dramatically affects the fishermen's economy. The erratic season makes it difficult for fishermen to find fish, which decreases their income. Weather

uncertainty also affects fishing productivity and operational costs for going to sea. Fishermen's mistakes in choosing the time to go to sea can be detrimental and even often take lives (Karim et al., 2022)

Bertrand et al. (2020) said climate change impacts the fisheries sector in three aspects. First, there are changes in the physical and chemical conditions of the waters, such as rising temperatures, rising sea levels, stratification, decreasing dissolved oxygen levels, and ocean acidification. Second, it affects the biological conditions of the ocean, including the spread of disease, changes in distribution, and the number of species. Third, it impacts socio-economic conditions, for example, the disruption of fishing activities and the reduction of catch productivity.

Climate change confronts fishermen with two choices: fishing in distant areas with costly consequences; the other option is to catch fish using destructive fishing gear, although practical, such as bombs and anesthetics, although most often using fish bombs. This changes the character of the people who used to care and reward the sea to the opposite. Even though it is damaging, the demand to catch fish increases as the fishermen's dependents increase, such as debts to retainers and online loans. With all its uncertainties, climate change makes fishermen look for alternative jobs, such as farming, becoming laborers, and other menial jobs expected to provide them with additional income.

### **Intensity of Interaction with Other Tribes**

The Bajo people who live in Selayar, especially in Bajo Hamlet, interact highly with other tribes, especially Selayar and Bugis. It can be obtained from associations and at school for the younger generation. The young generation of Bajo in Bajo Hamlet who studied up to high school is already relatively high. Several young people drop out of school generally because they must go to sea with relatives or friends.

A young man, ND (25 years old), said that children who drop out of school generally must go to sea at night, which can last until morning. This is what makes it difficult for them when they must get up early to go to school. The school is considered a place of blending that can glue children from different cultures. At school, they exchange knowledge and culture and finally create a new self, which is no longer intact but formed from many cultures.

Cultural encounters between these tribes can also occur at sea and in the market when they are active. The Bajo people are known as friendly and easily interact with other tribes. They do not hesitate to imitate things considered good from other cultures. This can be seen from the use of pocong-pocong fishing gear that they learned from other cultures. The closest thing to everyday life, as explained earlier, is language.

In Bajo Hamlet, most of the younger generation cannot speak Bajo and are more fluent in Selayar or Bugis. The higher the intensity of the interaction, the more significant and faster the change. This also happens regarding their understanding of Islam, which is changing and no longer following the ancestral culture that is considered contrary to religious teachings. The understanding and awareness did not just appear. Still, the result of a long and demanding dialectic,

which eventually changed the perspective of the Bajo people, was far different from their predecessors or ancestors.

This interaction occurs not only in real space but also in cyberspace, various information channels, and social media. Social media interaction can be more expansive, especially with better internet access. They are no longer limited to physical space but pass through even the most secret rooms.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Bajo people, known as the sea tribe, settled in many areas of the archipelago and even in several neighboring countries, such as Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam, Thailand, and others. With the diversity of the settlement area, reading about the Bajo people is not a single thing. Each region has its characteristics, cultures, problems, and complexities, as in Bajo Hamlet, Binanga Sombaiya Village, and Selayar Islands Regency. In this area, many social changes occur, such as changes in the way of going to sea and the use of fishing gear, changes related to identity and self-perspective, changes in lifestyle, and changes in settlement patterns. Several factors that triggered these changes were modernization, changing religious beliefs, climate change, and the intensity of interaction with other tribes.

## **REFERENCES**

- Abrams, D., & Hogg, M. A. (1988). *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203135457>
- Adhuri, D. S. (2013). *Selling the Sea: A study of conflict over marine tenure in Kei Islands, Eastern Indonesia*. ANU Press. <https://doi.org/10.22459/SSFP.02.2013>
- Baskara, B., Suryo, D., & Abdullah, I. (2014). The Construction and Contestation of Islamic Identity of the Bajo People in Wakatobi Islands, South East Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Humaniora*, 26(1). <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.v26i1.4698>
- Basri, L. O. A. (2018). Multiculturalism in the local wisdom of Bajo Tribe. *Asian Culture and History*; Vol. 10, No. 1; 2018, 10(1), 71–75. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ach.v10n1p71>
- Bertrand, A., Lengaigne, M., Takahashi, K., Avadi, A., Poulain, F., & Harrod, C. (2020). El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) effects on fisheries and aquaculture—food & Agriculture Org.
- Creswell, J. (2012). *Research design: Pendekatan kualitatif, kuantitatif, dan mixed*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Dahuri, R. (2010). *Pembangunan pertanian berkelanjutan: dalam perspektif ekonomi, sosial dan ekologi*. Agrimedia Volume 4 No.1, Februari 2010.
- Ellemers, N., Kortekaas, P., & Ouwerkerk, J. W. (1999). Self-categorization, commitment to the group, and group self-esteem are related but distinct aspects of social identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 29(2-3),

- 371–389. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-0992\(199903/05\)29:2/3<371::AID-EJSP932>3.0.CO;2-U](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(199903/05)29:2/3<371::AID-EJSP932>3.0.CO;2-U)
- Fitriana, R., & Stacey, N. (2012). The role of women in the fishery sector of Pantar Island, Indonesia. *Asian Fisheries Science Special Issue*, 25, 159–175. <https://doi.org/https://www.asianfisheriessociety.org/publication/abstract.php?id=37>
- Haerulloh, A. A., Nurrohmah, S. L., Alim, M., & Ampera, T. (2021). Identitas Budaya dan Sejarah Suku Bajo Di Bajo Pulau Pascanomaden. *Metahumaniora*, 11(1), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.24198/metahumaniora.v11i1.32115>
- Hajuan, M. A., & Marzuki, M. (2022). Establishment of environmental care character based on local wisdom of the Bajo tribe in Bajo Village, South Halmahera Regency, Indonesia. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 7(5). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejsss.v7i5.1295>
- Hamzah, A., Mukhtar, A., & Gafaruddin, A. (2019). Modernisasi alat tangkap pada nelayan Bajo: Sebuah studi pada nelayan suku Bajo di desa Latawe Kabupaten Muna Barat Provinsi Sulawesi Tenggara. *Buletin Penelitian Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian Fakultas Pertanian Universitas Haluoleo*, 21(1), 30–35. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.33772/bpsosek.v21i1.5905>
- Hamzah, A., Pandjaitan, N. K., & Prasodjo, N. W. (2008). Respon Komunitas Nelayan terhadap Modernisasi Perikanan (Studi Kasus Nelayan Suku Bajo di Desa Lagasa, Kabupaten Muna, Propinsi Sulawesi Tenggara). *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan*, 2(2). DOI:<https://doi.org/10.22500/sodality.v2i2.5885>
- Hogg, M. A., & Turner, J. C. (1987). Intergroup behavior, self-stereotyping, and the salience of social categories. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 26(4), 325–340. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1987.tb00795.x>
- Humaedi, M. A. (2017). Kemiskinan nelayan: Studi kasus penyebab eksternal dan upaya revitalisasi tradisi pengentasannya di Kaliori, Rembang, Jawa Tengah. *Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi Kelautan Dan Perikanan*, 7(2), 193–206. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.15578/jsekp.v7i2.5685>
- Karim, M., Harsindhi, C. J., & Atsari, A. (2022). Nelayan Tradisional Menghadapi Perubahan Iklim (D. K. Alka, Ed.). Penerbit : Kesatuan Nelayan Tradisional Indonesia.
- Kasmini, N., & Mursalim, M. (2023). Perilaku Komunikasi Suku Bajo dalam Berinteraksi dengan Suku Bugis di Dusun Bajoe Kabupaten Bone. *KAREBA: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 13–28. <https://doi.org/journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/kareba>
- Kazufumi, N. (2017). Maritime diaspora and creolization: Genealogy of the Sama-Bajau in insular Southeast Asia. *Senri Ethnological Studies*, 95, 35–64. <https://doi.org/10.15021/00008578>
- Kusnadi. (2002). Akar Kemiskinan Nelayan. Penerbit LKIS Yogyakarta.
- Martono, N. (2012). Sosiologi perubahan sosial: Perspektif klasik, modern, posmodern, dan poskolonial. RajaGrafindo Persada Jakarta.

- McCall, G. J. (2003). The me and the not-me: Positive and negative poles of identity. *Advances in Identity Theory and Research*, 11–25. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-9188-1\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-9188-1_2)
- Moore, W. E. (1970). A reconsideration of theories of social change. In *Readings in social evolution and development* (pp. 123–139). Elsevier.
- Mubyarto. (1986). *Nelayan dan Kemiskinan Studi Ekonomi di Dua Pantai*. CV Rajawali Press.
- Nur, R. H., Najamuddin, N., & Ridha, M. R. (2020). Perubahan pola kehidupan masyarakat nelayan Desa Galesong Baru pasca modernisasi, 1980-2015. *Jurnal Pattingalloang*, 7(2), 133–145. <https://doi.org/10.26858/jp.v7i2.13724>
- Nurlaili. (2012). Strategi Adaptasi Nelayan Bajo Menghadapi Perubahan Iklim: Studi Nelayan Bajo di Kabupaten Sikka, Flores, Nusa Tenggara Timur. *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya*, Volume 14 No. 3 Tahun 2012, 14(3), 599–623. <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v14i3.107>
- Nuryanto, N., & Haryono, H. (2017). Pemberdayaan masyarakat nelayan pesisir pantai utara Jawa Tengah melalui koperasi nelayan dan e-commerce. *Jurnal Sains Dan Teknologi Maritim*, 18(1), 49–63.
- Purnama, A. O. D. A. A., Yusuf, A. M., Amelia, L., & Ibrahim, M. (2023). Rituals in the acculturation of Islam and local traditions of the Bajo Tribe in Gorontalo. *ETNOSIA: Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia*, 8(2), 302–313. <https://doi.org/10.31947/etnosia.v8i2.32207>
- Rahim, M., Basri, A., & Fauzi, H. (2018). Typology of Bajo Tribe Settlement in North Maluku. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 213(1), 12028. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/213/1/012028>
- Rusba, N., Farid, M., & Tahara, T. (2018). Komunikasi Antar Orang Bajau Dan Orang Buton Dalam Upaya Membangun Hubungan Yang Harmonis Di Kabupaten Buton Tengah. *KAREBA: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 7–15.
- Rusmini, Hambali, & Rosdiana. (2021). Analisis Perbedaan Pengucapan Bahasa Bajo di Desa Rajuni dan Desa Tarupa Kecamatan Takabonerate Kabupaten Kepulauan Selayar. *Jurnal Konsepsi*, 10(2), 59–67. <https://doi.org/p3i.my.id/index.php/konsepsi>
- Rustan, R., Surya, B., & Nasution, M. A. (2019). Adaptasi dan perubahan sosial kehidupan suku Bajo (Studi kasus suku Bajo Kelurahan Bajoe Kecamatan Tanete Riattang Timur Kabupaten Bone). *Urban and Regional Studies Journal*, 1(1), 31–37. <https://journal.unibos.ac.id/ursj/article/view/60>
- Saleh, N. A. (2019). Perubahan Sosial Budaya Komunitas Nelayan Pesisir: Dari Nelayan ke Petani Rumput Laut (Studi Kasus Budi Daya Rumput Laut di Kelurahan Pakbiringa, Kabupaten Jeneponto). *Walasuji*, 10(2), 233–250. <https://doi.org/10.36869/wjsb.v10i2.17>
- Salipu, A. (2000). *Transformasi Permukiman Suku Bajo di Kelurahan Bajoe, Kota Administratif Watampone*. Institut Teknologi Sepuluh November Surabaya.
- Satria, A. (2015). *Pengantar sosiologi masyarakat pesisir*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Soekanto, S. (1986). *Sosiologi: suatu pengantar*. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 224–237. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2695870>



- Sumardjan, S. (1986). Perubahan sosial di Yogyakarta. YIIS.
- Tahara, T. (2013). Kebangkitan Identitas Orang Bajo di Kepulauan Wakatobi. *Antropologi Indonesia* Vol. 34 No.1 2013, 34, 41–55. DOI:10.7454/ai.v34i1.3196
- Tahara, T. (2017). From sea, people become land people. The resurrection of Bajonese identity in the Wakatobi Islands. *International Science Conference of Sea Gypsy*.
- Turner, J. C., & Reynolds, K. J. (2003). The social identity perspective in intergroup relations: Theories, themes, and controversies. *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes*, 133–152. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1002/9780470693421.ch7>