

The domination of ethnic immigrants on the Indonesian border of Malaysia (sectors controlled by Bugis ethnic group on Sebatik Island)

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Abstract: The study aims to explain the sectors controlled by Bugis ethnicity as migrants on the Sebatik Island in the Indonesia-Malaysia border in the dynamics of border communities that utilize two regions of the country as a source for living everyday life. By using an ethnographic approach, this study found that Bugis ethnic as immigrant ethnicity controlled the economic, political and cultural arena. Bugis ethnic groups are able to master these sectors because they are supported by various factors, first, they have high adaptability to new environments. Second, having a strong work ethic as a migrant. Third, the ability to take advantage of every opportunity, especially the economy (business) as the main target for migrating. Fourth, always uphold the philosophy of *Siri* and *Pesse* as a foothold in living overseas. Fifth, always maintain good relations with families in the area of origin (South Sulawesi).

Keywords: Bugis ethnic, migrants, Indonesia-Malaysia border, Sebatik Island, economy, politics, and culture.

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I. PRELIMINARY

This study originated from a phenomenon in the Indonesia-Malaysia border that has a diversity of characteristics of the population, both native and migrant. Eilenberg & Wadley's (2009) study, for example, using the ethnographic method, saw that ethnic Iban whose population occupies the regions of Sarawak and Sabah (Malaysia), Brunei Darussalam in the border region of West Kalimantan conducts cross-border processes in daily life. Eilenberg found that the Iban ethnic group used their ethnic identity as Sarawak residents to get jobs as workers who were paid a salary. Eilenberg looks at the relationship between cross-border labor migration, ethnicity, identity and citizenship and how they affect issues with politics and economic change in Indonesia. According to him, a border is an ambiguous place where various people and ideas meet often bring new things (unusual and even illegal actions) and become an extremely complex arena of social and cultural exchange even though each country has attempted to exercise control by implementing a number of strict regulations.

The Klanarong Study (2012), using social network theory, outlines the social networks of Thai illegal migrants who are Thai Malay migrants from the borders of the provinces of Southern Thailand (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun, and Songkla) who work in Malaysian food stores. The findings of this study are the expansion of the social network of migrants from the southern border of Thailand who work in food stores in Malaysia due to several factors, including: first, the existence of ties of kinship, friendship, a similarity in language and religion among Malay Muslim descendants. Secondly, the existence of marriages between Thai and Malaysian citizens. Usually, migrants who work in food stores are single women (single or widowed) who are married to their Malaysian customers, then after marriage open their own food store on behalf of their husbands. The success of this marriage model then inspired many other migrants to migrate and hoped to be able to marry Malaysian citizens. The role of social networks to be a source of information at least has an effect on the three stages of migration, namely pre-migration, migration, and post-migration.

In the context of this study, it will be elaborated on the dominance of immigrant ethnic groups (Bugis ethnic) by explaining the sectors which are controlled on the Sebatik island of the Indonesia-Malaysia border. Sebatik Island's population consists of various ethnicities and most of them are migrants from various parts of Indonesia. There are four major ethnic groups that inhabit this island, namely the Tidung ethnic group known as

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the natives, as well as the Javanese, Timorese, and Bugis ethnic groups as immigrants who interact with each other in their daily lives².

In its development, the Bugis as immigrants later became the majority in terms of numbers. This is inseparable from the early history of their arrival to Sebatik Island. According to one source, the migration of Bugis from South Sulawesi to Sebatik Island was estimated to occur in 1967 and was the opening of the first path for the emergence of Bugis settlements on Sebatik Island. Their profession is very diverse, garden workers (coconut, cocoa, bananas, etc.), fishermen and most are traders, especially cross-border traders. This year also began construction of the Border Crossing Post and the application of the Malaysian government policy to provide identity cards for Sebatik Island residents who wish to become Malaysian citizens (Rudiatin, 2012: 122).

Another source said that in 1968 migrants from South Sulawesi led by Haji Beddu Rahim set foot on Sebatik Island carrying a family of 30 people by Phinisi boat and two Soppe boats (a type of Bugis boat), then cleared the land and settled on the Pancang River. Arrival of Bugis migrants after the arrival of Beddu Rahim Hajj group inhabited many other areas on Sebatik Island, such as the Sungai Nyamuk area, Tanjung Aru, Bajo River and Taewan River (Puryanti and Husain, 2016: 53). Over time, Sungai Nyamuk became the most developed area compared to other regions and became an area with a majority of Bugis residents.

Interestingly, among the many immigrant ethnicities on Sebatik Island (Java, Timor, and others), Bugis are able to master almost all aspects of the life of border communities. The Bugis ethnic group is not only the majority in terms of numbers but also a community that has a strategic role in the life of the border community on Sebatik Island. Even more dominant than the original ethnic group, namely Tidung. The ability to make and use networks, both on Sebatik Island and Nunukan (Indonesia), and in Tawau (Malaysia) and its surroundings allows them to establish relationships not only with Indonesians but also with Malaysian citizens, some of whom are Bugis migrants.

II. METHOD

This study uses the ethnographic method with the aim of understanding the sectors controlled by Bugis ethnic groups on Sebatik Island and indicating their domination as immigrant communities. In this case, Geertz (1992: vi) suggests that to approach social events is not just looking for a causal relationship, but rather trying to understand the meaning in depth and comprehensively (thick). Field data collection was taken through participant-observation and in-depth interviews.

The involved observations were carried out on several immigrant ethnicities who had been domiciled on Sebatik Island, such as Bugis and Javanese ethnic communities (Sebatik Tengah, Sebatik Timur, and Sebatik Utara), as well as ethnic Timorese (Sebatik Tengah). In-depth interviews were conducted with a number of Bugis and Javanese informants in order to obtain data in accordance with the study objectives. Informants were interviewed spontaneously at their activities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To show the domination of Bugis ethnicity as migrants on Sebatik Island, the following will be elaborated in the sectors that are mastered, so that they become superior and dominate the life of the border community with all its dynamics.

• Economy

The Bugis ethnic group has a strong tendency to always seek better economic opportunities, wherever and whenever it seems to be a characteristic that remains inherent in the Bugis. So strong is the economic motive in every mobility carried out by the Bugis, giving the impression that the role of money or wealth is what determines a person's fate and status. The Bugis even risk their Siri when they migrate, they feel embarrassed if they cannot go home to show evidence of their success in overseas "(Lenggono et.al., 2012: 139).

Cross-border trade activities are carried out by most Bugis people who already have a network in Tawau. Saleh (2010: 56) found that the process of marketing the results of Sebatik Island plantations, for example, was departed through the pier of the village of Aji Kuning. After arriving in Tawau, the goods were unloaded at the dock and immediately taken by the owner. The transaction process does not go through a complicated and very fluid mechanism because usually the sale and purchase agreement has been agreed before the goods are sent.

²These four major ethnic groups each represent their place of origin. The Tidung ethnic group represents a diverse ethnic group from the East / North Kalimantan Plain (Tidung, Dayak, Banjar, and Kutai). The Bugis ethnic group represents diverse ethnic groups from South Sulawesi, West Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi (Bugis, Makassar, Toraja, Mandar, Buton and Muna). Javanese ethnicity represents ethnic groups from East Java, Central Java, and West Java (Javanese and Sundanese), and ethnic Timorese represent ethnic groups from East Nusa Tenggara (Timor and Flores).

Procedures like this have become a habit in the port of Tawau because there has been a bond of mutual trust (social trust). This bond is the main capital in the relationship between them.

Another finding by Saleh (2015: 42), that merchants market their products to Tawau with each having their own relations or better known as *toke*. To expedite the trade relationship, tokens usually help traders in terms of capital if the trader needs an injection of funds. One of the objectives of *toke* is to provide capital assistance to traders who become their customers is none other than an effort so that the traders who become their relations do not move to another store. Because if this happens, then the risk of loss is certain in the business.

The use of the network as the main basis in carrying out the trading strategy can also be seen in Rudiati's research (2012: 17), which looks at the economic network of border communities in Sebatik Island Aji Kuning. The economic network implies ethnicity as a basis for building trade networks and division of labor through ethnic identity as a gateway to border trade networks. By identifying themselves with one particular ethnic group, a market actor will gain access to resources and market opportunities and information. Network stability must be maintained by all members regarding various risks and capital sharing needs and market opportunities. People in the network will always coordinate in an effort to maintain the integrity of the network.

Stretching the economy on Sebatik Island cannot be separated from the work of Bugis entrepreneurs who dominate the mastery of economic resources by utilizing long-established and established networks. The main foundation in building this network is closely related to ethnicity, culture, and kinship. The formation of business networks with various businesses is a real form of the market strategy developed by Bugis ethnicity. In addition, they also took advantage of kinship relationships in establishing business relations, both those living in Sabah-Malaysia and Nunukan. Thus, coordination and communication are always interwoven even though they are limited by distance.

Bugis entrepreneurs run businesses with various types of businesses, including property (shop houses), hotels, supermarkets, palm oil, and others. Based on the results of an interview with WD³, it was concluded that shop ownership, for example, by Haji Herman (Haji Andeng) had a lot of shop houses rented out and sold located in a shopping center near the Queen hotel on Sungai Nyamuk which also belonged to him. The construction of centralized shophouses was intentionally carried out by Haji Herman with the intention of being able to become a trading center for goods on Sebatik Island, so that people who wanted to buy their needs did not need to go to several locations, just come to the place.

In addition to the shophouse business, Haji Herman also has the largest supermarket on Sebatik Island which is named Kebalen Jaya. This supermarket markets goods from Tawau-Malaysia and Surabaya. Based on the observations of researchers, staple goods from Malaysia are still being sold in these supermarkets, such as milo, condensed milk, soya milk, pure milk (bear cap milk), rice, cooking oil, sugar, wheat flour, and large gas cylinders. These items are usually purchased using *ringgit*, while other items imported from Surabaya are purchased with *rupiah*.

From the results of interviews with SD⁴, it was revealed that other shopkeepers, namely Haji Andi Kasim who is also the owner of City Hotels in Sungai Pancang and at the same time as Chair of the Association of Palm Oil Growers (Apkasi) Sebatik. Other entrepreneurs who also have a stake in the economy of the Sebatik Island community, namely Haji Momo and Haji Ali. Aside from being an oil palm businessman, he is an MA hotel owner. Because of the ownership of these businesses, not if Haji Herman, Haji Andi Kasim, and Haji Ali became a figure well known to the Sebatik Island community.

Bugis business culture in terms of network utilization has similarities in almost all of their overseas regions. This can be seen from the following writings, for example, Mansyur's (2016) article which describes the migration and economic network of the Bugis people in the Southern and Eastern Borneo District of Seasonality in 1930-1942, shows that because of the economic motive as a destination for migration by Bugis migrants. They tried to survive in the midst of the economic depression that was happening at that time by "creating" an economic adaptation strategy by forming a Bugis *pongawa* fishery network in the early 1930s. In terms of agriculture, they farmed coconut to copra and in the marine sector. by developing a community boat business to serve sea transportation.

Lenggono et al. (2012: 140) in his writings on local economic awakening in the Mahakam Delta in shrimp farming activities through the role of *pongawa* for example, the shrimp boom in 1998/1999 was strongly supported by the ability of Bugis migrants to utilize the informal network of local shrimp aquaculture production and trade in shrimp at the level regionally and internationally, so that its business is growing rapidly and is able to compete with "outside players". They then "conquered" the downstream industry sector until its marketing distribution. In this case, the success of *Pongawa* Bugis in the aquaculture business cannot be

³Interview on March 3, 2017.

⁴Interview on March 1, 2017.

separated from their ability to manage commodities that are traded sustainably, as well as their shrewdness in producing themselves and trading commodities that are market-oriented and profitable.

Lenggono's (2012) writing looks at the "Bugis trading network" and the agrarian control pattern in the Nunukan-Tawau border region. The economic success of many Bugis migrants in this area is due to their ability to exploit the momentum of the control of neglected agrarian resources through small-scale agricultural activities. This ability is very much supported by "informal networks" of Bugis people in Bugis cultural ties in their trade relations and framed by the philosophy of Siri 'and passe'.

• Politics

The political installation of Sebatik Island, in fact, is very much dominated by Bugis, and cannot be matched by other ethnic groups. This domination is actually inseparable from the ability of political elites/actors to play their role as figures who are able to influence the community. The role and political work of the elites according to the views of researchers is very much determined by the extent to which they are able to instill their influence in the midst of changing community life.

In mastering political positions such as members of the Nunukan DPRD, the management of political parties, and the position of majority village head held by Bugis people. Therefore, political dynamics are highly dependent and centralized on Bugis figures and elites who have the ability to material resources and support (legitimacy) of the majority Bugis community on Sebatik Island. It is very rare to find figures or political elites from other ethnicities. Even if there are, only community leaders who are their ethnic representation on Sebatik Island, but do not have the resources to participate in the political arena in Sebatik Island.

Based on the search of researchers, elites in political institutions, such as political parties, are mostly held by Bugis ethnic groups. One of the most obvious examples is from 25 members of the Nunukan DPRD in 2014-2019, 6 (six) of whom came from Sebatik District Electoral District (Sebatik Barat District, Sebatik District, Sebatik Timur District, Sebatik Utara District, and Sebatik Tengah District). There are three names which are candidates with number 1 from each party, namely Hajjah Nursan (Gerindra) who is also the Chairperson of the DPC, Fery (Democrat), and Haji Abd. Hafid Achmad (Hanura). Three old faces who were re-appointed as members of the Nunukan DPRD were Hajjah Nursan (Gerindra), Burhanuddin (PKS), and Lukman (Golkar), while Fery (Democrat), three new faces each. Rasyid (Gerindra), and Abd. Hafid Achmad (Hanura). Abd Hafid Achmad is a former Nunukan regent for two periods (2001-2011) who at the time was a cadre of the Crescent Star Party (kaltim.tribunnews.com, accessed on July 24, 2017).

Hajjah Nursan's work from Wajo Regency in South Sulawesi as a politician who succeeded in becoming a member of the Nunukan DPRD for two consecutive periods plus five other DPRD members from South Sulawesi showed the fact that Bugis have dominated politics, even though there are various ethnic groups who also contribute to Sebatik Island, but as previously mentioned that the soul of the struggle and expansion of the Bugis overseas is very difficult to defeat.

Politically, the election of the people's representatives in Sebatik District II in the 2014 legislative elections with Bugis ethnic background can be seen as a political phenomenon that utilizes the capital⁵ owned in political contestation. As previously explained that Bugis is the majority ethnic group on Sebatik Island, automatically the representatives of the people as the representatives of Sebatik citizens are indeed those who understand the Sebatik condition, which is mostly Bugis ethnic.

In the village-level political context, out of the 19 definitive village heads, 15 were Bugis, 2 Tidung, 1 Lombok, and 1 Sundanese. In villages where the majority of the Bugis population will tend to choose village

⁵According to Bourdieu, capital serves as a social relation in an exchange system that represents itself as something rare, which is worth seeking in certain social forms. This type of capital consists of economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Economic capital, which is a resource that can be a means of production and financial. This capital is easily converted into other forms of capital (Haryatmoko, 2012). Economic capital includes the means of production (machinery, land and labor), material (income and things), and money. All types of capital are used for all purposes and are passed down from generation to generation. Cultural capital, which is the overall intellectual qualifications that can be produced through formal education or family inheritance, such as the ability to present themselves in public, ownership of high-value cultural objects, certain knowledge and expertise, results of formal education, certificates (degree), and others other. Social capital is a network of relationships as a resource to determine social position (Fauzi, 2007). Symbolic capital, which is capital that produces symbolic power. Symbolic power will come into contact with symbols of power, such as positions, luxury cars, offices, prestige, titles, high status, and famous families. Quoting Haryatmoko, (2012), symbolic capital is all forms of recognition by groups both institutionally and non-institutionally (Halim, 2014: 109-110).

chiefs from Bugis ethnic groups, and villages where the majority of Tidung occupation also tend to choose village heads from Tidung ethnic groups. For example, the head of the Liang Bunyu and Setabu Sebatik Barat villages who were ethnic Tidung were also elected in villages with a majority of the ethnic Tidung population. Moreover, Setabu village was the first village that was opened by the Tidung ethnic group, then developed into the surrounding areas such as Liang Bunyu and Binalawan.

The domination by Bugis ethnic as the elected village head of 19 existing village heads, 11 of whom were elected in the simultaneous⁶ Pilkades held on 18 October 2017 in Nunukan district. The eleven village heads who were elected and sworn in, 9 of them are Bugis and the rest are ethnic non-Bugis. Points that can be drawn in the case of the 2017 village head election simultaneously in 11 Sebatik Island villages that aside from ethnic similarity factors that influence the level of electability of someone, like and dislike turned out to be one of the factors that refer to the community in choosing the village head who will lead them next year.

The above description proves that the Bugis in Sebatik Island in addition to having an economic orientation, also have a desire to channel political orientation in the form of direct involvement in official political institutions as a means of gaining power. In the understanding of researchers, if Bugis people who have succeeded overseas are both economically and politically, they will directly improve their social status. In fact, relatives in the hometown will also be seen by the community as a successful family, because they have relatives who succeed in elevating their dignity and overseas.

For Bugis migrants who are successful in overseas political careers, they will always be a reference and example for families in their hometowns to motivate their children. In the view of society, overseas success has a very different meaning than achieving success in your own village. Successful migrants certainly have a motivation and hard work in reaching expectations, so they are able to compete even though they are far from relatives.

From the description above, it can be understood that the domination of Bugis ethnic in economics and politics can be understood as mastery of various sectors. Quoting Like (2013: 42), the meaning and form of domination that develops in the community is present in a very varied form, for example in the form of a bureaucratic system, market law, cultural forms that impose, science, ideology, and even philosophy. In the context of Sebatik Island, the domination of Bugis ethnic in the form of market (economic) law becomes very real which coincides with politics in people's lives.

• Culture

Discussions about culture in this study focused more on the use of everyday language by the Sebatik Island community. Language is one of the binding factors that greatly influence ethnicity. On Sebatik Island, the Bugis ethnic group not only controls the economic and political arena as described above, but there are also other sectors that are used as other means to support economic and political domination, namely culture (in terms of the use of everyday language).

Citing Wittgenstein (1953) that language is a tool used by humans to coordinate their actions in the context of social relations. Language as a tool means stating that we are related to language. Language is an action and instruction for action. Language in the context of social use can be temporarily stabilized for practical purposes (Barker, 2013: 93). Language and culture are practices that contain human behavior (Ratna, 2008: 119).

Language as space where symbols are produced and disseminated, Gramsci is not seen as a dominant instrument of power that is passively accepted. Conversely, the language totally forms a space where a language war or symbol war takes place, infighting over public acceptance of ideological ideas championed. In an effort to fight for public acceptance, the power of language and symbols have a very central role rather than the power of weapons. What is crucial is not only the dominant system of ideas or beliefs but how the whole social process is governed by the meanings of dominant values (Piliang, 2005: 199).

In the context of the Sebatik Island community, because the population of Sebatik Island is dominated by Bugis, automatically the language that is widely used in daily interaction is Bugis (Saleh, 2015: 36). Bugis language is widely used in public spaces, such as markets, ports, docks, terminals, and others. The same thing was stated by Ghofur (2016: 239), that because the majority of the population in Sebatik Island is Bugis ethnic migrants, the culture and customs of the people are inseparable from Bugis culture and color various dimensions

⁶The names of the village heads appointed by the Nunukan Regent on October 31, 2017, from the Pilkades results on October 18, 2017, are: H. Firman (Balansiku-Sebatik village), Padlan (Sei Manurung-Sebatik village), Abi Gurdi (Padaidi-Sebatik village), Hairul (Bambangan-Sebatik Barat village), Mardin (Sungai Limau-Sebatik Tengah village), Agussalim (Maspul-Sebatik Tengah village), Cecep S (Bukit Harapan-Sebatik Tengah village), H. Hamzah (Tanjung Harapan-Sebatik Timur village), Syaharuddin SE (Bukit Aru Indah-Sebatik Timur village), Hambali (Seberang-Sebatik Utara village), and Abd. Rahman (North Lapri-Sebatik village).

of social life. Even Bugis culture is very influential in every social interaction with residents in the Tawau-Malaysia region.

The dominance of the use of Bugis as a Mother language (first language) on Sebatik Island certainly has implications for the use of a second language (Indonesian) which is known as interference⁷. For non-Bugis ethnic migrants who have just visited Sebatik or Tawau-Malaysia Island, do not be surprised if you find people who use Indonesian, but are very thick with their dialects or slang. The same conditions seem to occur in almost all areas where the population is dominated by Bugis migrants. Although they still try to use Indonesian as a unifying language, the Bugis still find it difficult to eliminate the Bugis language itself in the use of Indonesian as a common language.

The dialect and the Bugis dialect in the language context on Sebatik Island actually have various variations, such as Bugis Wajo, Bone, Pinrang, Sidenreng Rappang, Barru, Soppeng, and others, each of which has its own characteristics. Although diverse, it is not difficult to understand each other. For example, the Bone people will understand what is meant by the Pinrang people, whereas the Pinrang people understand the purpose of the Bone in communication using the Bugis language, as well as others. So that, among them, there is still effective communication, because one another understands the intent of the context of the conversation.

• Factors that Support Bugis Ethnic Domination on Sebatik Island

Bugis migrants control economic, political and cultural resources so that they are dominant in the life of Sebatik Island people. Bugis migrants as one of the ethnic groups on the Sebatik Island in the Indonesia-Malaysia border have shown their existence on Sebatik Island. This mastery further confirms that Bugis ethnicity is indeed a group that has a large role in the dynamics of border communities. The nature of being a Bugis (self) is increasingly evident in the presence of other ethnic groups (native and newcomers) as the giver of meaning for their existence. This is supported by their ability to utilize the sources of power they have. Sources of power can be obtained through wealth, social status, formal position, organization, history, population, and so on (Anshoriy, 2008: 21).

Borrowing the term Jeffries (1980) about the concept of the class which in his opinion involves a combination of economic, work and education ties (Sunarto, 2004: 93), so in this context, Bugis ethnicity is categorized as a social class that controls the three combinations. Therefore, it is not wrong if Bugis ethnic group is considered as an ethnic group which is the main support for the development of Sebatik Island as one of the outermost islands on the Indonesian border with Malaysia.

Several factors that support the success of Bugis ethnicity in controlling the contestation in the three sectors (economic, political, and cultural) of Sebatik Island include, first, having high adaptability to new environments. Second, having a strong work ethic as a migrant. Third, the ability to take advantage of every opportunity, especially the economy (business) as the main target for migrating. Fourth, always uphold the philosophy of *Siri* and *Pesse* as a foothold in living overseas. Fifth, always maintain good relations with families in the area of origin (South Sulawesi).

This is in accordance with the view of Lenggono et al. (2012: 141) that the application of virtue values possessed by Bugis people, such as courage, adherence to religious teachings and business acumen are the main driving elements in the development of the socio-economic and political life of Bugis overseas. These virtue values are essentially positively correlated with the implementation of Bugis philosophy which is their guide to living overseas.

IV. CONCLUSION

The ability of the Bugis ethnic group to master economics, politics, and culture (language) on Sebatik Island is actually very much supported by their ability to utilize all the potential and networks they have, both internally Bugis and with other ethnic groups of border residents. This network is utilized in the Sabah-Malaysia region, especially the Tawau area which is the main supporting area for the development of Sebatik Island due to the high mobility of citizens in carrying out economic activities.

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⁷Interference is the use of the first language elements into the second language used when communicating. The cause of the interference because the language that was first mastered was the mother language or the first language of the second language that was used by speakers of two languages (Saharuddin, 2016: 69).

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