

THE CHARACTER OF MARITIME NATION IN FACING THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The distinctive mark of maritime nation is the greatness in sailing and building the maritime civilization. The creativity and innovative through the perseverance, are the attached characters in the behavior of maritime nation. From the track record, the people who live in this archipelago have shown their ability as maritime nation in opening the new rooms for life that have global nature and developing the maritime culture. The globalization in history of civilization occurred in the regions which connected by the peoples of Austronesia/Malay/Indonesia through the ocean. The exploration ability lies on this archipelago. A lot of people count on their life on the sea. The character components of nation maritime in this Archipelago are indicated with the openness, tolerant, and adaptive in accepting and responding the global challenge. The numerous metaphors of archipelago people relates with the sea. The strong maritime nation should also be able to build the great maritime state.

Key words: *maritime, archipelago, maritime nation, maritime culture.*

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Introduction

Folklore in North Sulawesi told about a poor young men who want to propose a girl. When he was asked by the girl's parent, what he would like to give as the gift, the young man answered: "I am still young, I don't have anything precious, but I have a large "fishpond", with many fish that would not run out". The fishpond in this story refers to the "Sea" (Lapian, "Perebutan Samudera", *Prisma*, No. 11, November 1984).

Why the young men stake his life on the sea? Certainly, the sea brings much freedom rather than the land. For our nation, the sea dominates two-third of all territory. The ocean, we take it for granted, with its all potencies that will never deplete. Generally, the sea has abundant natural resources such as mineral and gas. If we compare, the fish is easier to get rather than food material from the land that should be processed, whether in agriculture or plantation. Principally, the sea is an open room of life as the common heritage and grace from the God, which means the sea is the resource of life for the mankind, but certainly for those who have ability and courage.

The life in this Archipelago cannot be separated from the sea. Various idioms or metaphors in the aspect of life use many expressions from the sea. It is not only utilize in the classical song to show that our ancestor was great sailor, but also the expression of *jangan lupa daratan* (literally, don't forget your origin)" indeed indicates that the Archipelago population attached with the sea. Therefore, we should not only give priority to the shore, but also the sea, now the time to expressed *jangan lupa lautan* (don't forget the sea) It is very common that in every advice for

the wedding couple, has some expression such as "*semoga bahtera hidup kalian berdua sampai kepada pulau idaman* (May your vessel of life reach the island of your dream)". When a marriage is built, we walk through all the difficulties and troubles in life, then the advice "*berakirakit ke hulu berenang ke tepian* (don't give up to achieve the goal)". And if we face the problem, there is another expression "*angin berputar ombak bersambung* (something hard to resolve)". This proverb is relevant with such problem. The people of Sangihe in North Sulawesi have motto "*somahe kei kehage*" which means "The wave is life challenge".

Only by stating several statements, the people of Archipelago have the world view character which related to the sea. In term of anthropology, the world view of a society is formed by its situation or cultural environment, especially from the believe system. In such context, culture becomes the structure and the significance of individual or group behavior in the social interaction.

The geographical aspect become the affecting factor or at least may determine the life. Because the determination disregards the sea geographical character, so we have to reorient the perspective towards the sea by using it for the people's prosperity. The problem is this enormous natural resources exactly profited by the foreign fisherman, the illegal fishing. Is the (only) reason because the lack of ability (technology) so that the utilization of sea resource is very minimum. Also the obstacle in guarding the sovereignty and such resource, for example, the disappearance of our island, whether naturally or taken by neighbor country (the case of Sipadan and Ligitan).

So the question, quoted from the Kenya famous writer, Ngugi Thiong 'O, "the

question is this: from what base do we look at the world?" With the foundation of geo-cultural, the Indonesian people absolutely depend on the sea as the biggest part of its geographic condition.

The three problems which become the source of conflict and war are the energy, food, and water. Commonly, the future global challenge of world nations shall take place at the sea. The shifting of American power to the Pacific, not merely because the overwhelmed situation in Afghanistan and the recalled of their soldier in Iraq, but also the new emerging force of China in this region. Recently, new tension rises on the East China Sea due to the claim of island between Japan and South Korea. The South China Sea claimed by the China make the situation more complicated, because China deals with other country which also claim their sea territory such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Philippine. In this region lie the Spratley islands that own outstanding gas reserve. Even Indonesia is not the claimant country, but the spillover of the tension will affect Natuna Island. As we know, in this sea territory has a huge gas potential and also the fishery.

Every country shall not compromise their sovereignty with any parties whomsoever and whosoever. It will be defended with all cost because one of the crucial tasks of a country is to protect their nation safety. The threat of a country's sovereignty, like Indonesia Archipelago, is no longer conventional. The paradigm of threat has been changed to the non-conventional or modern such as the illegal fishing, human trafficking, and terrorism to cyber-crime or cyber war.

The threat of war becoming uncertain and unpredictable or it has asymmetric war character. The cross position between two oceans and two continents make Indonesia

territory becoming vulnerable of foreign threat as mentioned earlier. The military force, TNI, with estimate 350 thousand personnel is not enough to protect the sovereignty and the territorial unity of Unified State of Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Therefore, it is needed to build the reserve and supportive force on TNI main power, which is realizing the National Defense from all citizen as stipulated in the Constitution of 1945 Article 27 (3) "Every citizen should participate in defending their country".

The non-conventional threat is also come in the form of the small island disappearances due to the global warming. The tsunami caused by the volcanic eruption and earthquake, is also a threat for our geographic condition. If the front small islands is sunk, it will affect our outer sea border. We have 10 direct sea borders: India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Philippine, East Timor, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Palau. While, the land border only engage with the three neighbor countries, Malaysia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea.

We should able to overcome the threat as a challenge and transform it to become our advantage. In the few next times, the sea trade traffic will gain bigger volume. The Malacca Strait shall be more crowded, which is the third busiest sea traffic in the world. Our islands give the sail opportunity by the opening of 3 ALKI: Malacca Strait, Sunda Strait, Lombok Strait, and Wetar Strait. But the question is how strong our armada fleet to guard it. Which harbors are ready to serve the vessels that need facilities in their sail route?

Maritime State – Nation of Sea

For me, it is not prominent to debate whether Indonesia is a maritime or archipelago nation. Both maritime or

archipelago substantially has the same meaning. Professor Lopian, a scholar that describing both etymologies discovered that there was no crucial differentiation between both terms. How it's possible that two different terms have the same meaning?

In his speech of the Inauguration of Adjunct Professor in Indonesia University on 1992, titled "The History of Archipelago is The Maritime History", Prof. Lopian explained that the Nusantara (Archipelago) is derived from two words "*nusa*" means "*pulau* (island)" which referred to the island of "Jawa (Java)" and "*antara*" means "*yang lainnya* (the other)" or other islands besides Java. The connector between islands is the sea. The word of "*bahari* (maritime)" which adopted from Arab, that has three meanings: "*dahulu kala, baheula* (the past)"; "*elok sekali* (very elegant)", which reflected the glorious moment (such as Sriwijaya and Majapahit); and the last is about the "*laut* (sea)". When the words arranged, the sentence would be "an elegant life and the glorious moment on the sea at the past".

The question is why the elegant and glorious time only occurred during the past. How about the present and future? This is the challenge for Indonesia, certainly not to bring back the past, but to face the future challenge through the maritime character. In the relation of the appellation, the maritim is for the maritime state and bahari suit for the maritime people. As been described above, the meaning of bahari clearly shows the historic and tradition description as the source of culture. While the word of maritim more suitable for the state due to its hardware nature.

Maritime Reorientation

At the one of the TV show related with the scenery of the sea. The presenter of Kepulauan Seribu expedition said that "we just leave the island behind and heading to the City". There was nothing wrong about the sentence. The problem lies on the perspective of reality. Is this our strong reflection that our worlds view derived from the land perspective? In such context, simply it can be explained that the "sea" is the "island behind" then opposite, the "front" is the land. Something "behind" is generally waived.

Certainly, this is unequal description to see the fact that the geography of Indonesia covers land and sea, or soil and water. In fact, the sea or water has more extensive territory rather than the land or soil, this why it's called "Tanah Air (which is soil and water, Homeland)". We can see on how the founding fathers formulated the concept of name for the nation. The political document and nation culture are the treaty which can be read as the assembly of idea, formulation and concept regarding the independence nation referred to as Indonesia that discussed with the full commitment and high integrity in the meeting of "Independence Preparation Effort Investigation Body (BPUPKI)" on 1945.

The perspective of Muhammad Yamin in BPUPKI meeting was clearly stated that the territorial sovereignty should be maintained by the principle of sphere to the outside and sphere to the inside. So this is the right perspective concerning the nation territorial unity. However, the challenge and obstacle shall always come and potentially to torn apart the region. The geographical condition of Indonesia makes this archipelago prone to menace,

so it must be supported by effective facility and infrastructure of transportation.

With the consideration of the archipelago condition, the Dutch colonial government launched the pacification policy or *Pax Nerlandica* that conducted by building and operating the vessels of KPM (*Koninkelijke Paketvaart Maatschappij*). The Dutch-Indies colonial government apparently realized the importance of transportation for a country with archipelago characteristic. Hence, KPM wanted to show that “*Empire is a matter of Transportation*”.

In the two previous decades, at the Youth Declaration on 1928, these statements together with Indonesia Raya anthem become the pillar of Indonesia unity from the aspect of geopolitics and nationhood. As we know, there was deleted stanza. Probably, it was too long, especially when it sings at the ceremony. Currently, the Indonesia Raya still has a long verse.

The third stanza “*S’lamatlah rayatnya// S’lamatlah putranya//Pulaunya, lautnya Semua... (Save the people//Save the son// The Island, the sea, All...)*” “*Majulah negerinya//Majulah Pandunya//Untuk Indonesia Raya// (Rise the Nation//Rise the Leader//For Indonesia Raya//)*”.

Enterprising Spirit

When we discussed about the productivity (economy) of a nation, then the enterprising spirit is realized through the ability, courage and perseverance. The structural and cultural of maritime society encourage the individual or group to explore the sea and diaspora.

In the Archipelago maritime history, there are several maritime tribes that have explored many regions. From the current territorial perspective, the regions

lie from the Micronesia islands at east to the Madagascar and South Africa even to Ghana, at west. Among the maritime societies in Indonesia are Bugis-Buton-Makassar (BBM), they have proved as explorer and have diaspora ability. Thus, the exploring and dispersing activity of Archipelago peoples are already stated before the CNN has the icon “*go beyond borders*”.

The literature and study have been conducted by either foreign or local scholars regarding the description of the Bugis-Makassar peoples who explored and dispersed. Mattulada, Edward Pulinggomang, Pelras are the known expert. If the acronym of BBM has to be exposed then it should explain the Butonese (People of Buton). The Butonese maritime is examined among others by Schoorl (1984), Southon (1995), Rusdiansyah (2009) and Zuhdi (1999; 2010).

Butonese is not the name for one specific tribe, but a territory where was bound through political unification of the Butonese Sultan empire, which currently almost covers all the region of South East Sulawesi Province. The Sultan Empire called as Wolio, was founded around the 14th century and ended at 1960. This territory was including the Buton islands, Muna, Kabaena, Wakatobi which is the acronym of Wangi-Wangi, Kaledupa, Tomea, Binongko (previously named as Tukang Besi Islands) and several other small islands. Generally, the peoples of this region have orientation and livelihood at sea.

Structurally, whether the sultan political system or its society give essential opportunity for the Buton islands activities to engage and live at sea. The geographical condition as structural platform is seen very clear. While from the cultural aspect

use the oral and local tradition in revealing the Butonese maritime custom, such as “kabanti” (the singing verse). The Butonese Empire had a basic philosophy, the boat “barata”. One of the kabanti subjects, there is kabanti called “Kanturuna Mohelana” (The Guidance of Sail). At Wakatobi islands, there is “kabanci” with the variation of local character which is the illustration of local maritime. Even if we analyze further, the discover that the core or origin of tough sailors or known as the Butonese were came from this island from this islands.

Conclusion

The question mark for this nation lies on how to explain the major discrepancy between the marine potential with the low income from the maritime sector. The more concrete is the phenomenon of poverty which almost dispersed equally at the coastal and island community that depends on the sea resources. How the cultural strategy can explain and give direction for making Indonesia prevail at sea both security and prosperity. Is the methodologist set can be explained properly only by structural and cultural approaches? A structural approach in the frame of structure theory (Giddens) which shows the structural and agency interaction, expected to answer the above question. However, the structural and cultural frames still needed to analyze it further.

The structural and cultural approaches are not quite enough to explain the phenomenon and problem of maritime in Indonesia. The structural approach show stronger agency, as can be seen in the role of BBM. The maritime culture should be develop because the setback of the national maritime. For that reason, it is need to remapping the potential of cultural value with the perspective of socio-historic.

At that point, the right policy can be formulated to building the nation, which achieves glory at sea with the orientation concept of Homeland.

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