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Subaltern and Network Strategy Towards Fishermen Community in Aru Islands District

Nuraida Kabungam*
Post Graduate Department of Sociology
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
nuraidakabungam@gmail.com

Andi Agustang
Department of Sociology
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
andiagustang@unm.ac.id

Arin Adam
Department of Sociology
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
arinadam@gmail.com

Abstract— The fishermen community in Aru Islands district is a subaltern group that lives by relying on fishing products income. However, when encountered with a condition where the income declines due to the government's policy, then what should be done by subalterns while they do not have the voice to speak, what strategies should they use to get out of the existing problems and crisis. According to Spivak subaltern is a marginal group that has always been the object of a dominant and powerful class (both from within and outside groups). This study employs a qualitative research method with a constructive paradigm where the researcher tries to reconstruct social dialectics that occurs in subaltern of Aru fishermen with a case study approach. The results of the study reveal that the conditions experienced by subaltern groups in fishermen community in Aru Islands district have limited aspiration forum for stakeholders in voicing subaltern interests, injustice in fishing equipment distribution, and lack of skills as well as access to economic assistance are the root of the causes of poverty of subaltern group. It is in line with Spivak's opinion that the relations which exist between subalterns and intellectuals such as the "master servant" relation of the voice of the subaltern cannot be sought because the oppressed cannot speak. Therefore, an intellectual cannot claim and romanticize his ability to seek the voices of subaltern groups, such claim are precisely like colonialists because he generalizes (homogenizes) the diversity of subaltern groups and ultimately constitute an "epistemological violence" against groups - subaltern groups.

Keywords: subaltern, fishermen, network strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

The natural potential of the Aru Islands district, called Minapitulu, with the production of fishery products both capture and aquaculture in 2017, reached 140,056,00 tons with a production value of 4,530,568,075,000,00 [1]. However, the welfare of fishermen is still being questioned because the welfare of fishermen is extremely minimal and identical to poverty. Most of the Aru Islands district population with a poverty line of 352,151 with a total of 25,37 thousand people are poor (BPS Aru Islands district, 2018) [2]. Maluku is the fourth poorest area with a percentage of 19.26% as well as the BPS of Aru Islands district in 2017 where Aru Islands district ranked fifth poor with a percentage of 27.13% of the total existing population of 51,690 people. This raises the question of why the community is far from prosperous while they have great natural potential of the sea.

It appears that the well-known natural wealth of Aru Islands district does not bring prosperity to the fishermen community themselves [3]. This is due to the limitations of fishing gear as well as the presence of a large capacity fishing fleets, which causes small and traditional fishermen have difficulties in terms of fishing yields. This small fisherman is what the writer's call the subaltern group where the subalterns are always trapped by the decisions of the stakeholders in every policy making regarding fishing fleets which originate from West Java. This is in line with Spivak's opinion that the subaltern is a marginal group that has always been the object of a dominant and powerful class (both from within and outside groups). This is what Spivak means by the term subaltern. It refers to the conditions experienced by subaltern groups that exist within the fishing community group of Aru Islands district.

Under these conditions, what needs to be done by subaltern groups in order to get out of the existing pressure? The result of this study indicates that the fishermen subaltern group of Aru Islands district utilize one of the strategies in order to survive within the existing economic pressures. Based on the aforementioned background, the problem statement of this paper is: Subaltern and Network Strategy toward Fishermen Community in Aru Islands District. This paper has one main problem, namely: How do subaltern fishermen in Aru Islands district utilize the network strategy as one of the strategies to get out of the existing economic pressure?

II. METHODOLOGY

The paradigm used in this study is paradigm interpretive and constructive that viewing the social reality as something the holistic / whole, complex, dynamic full meaning and symptom relationships interactive (Reciproska). The research is conducted on a natural object is a growing object of what it is not manipulated by researchers and the presence of researchers does not affect the dynamics that exist in the object[4].

In this study the researcher uses a constructive paradigm because researcher will see social dialectics that occur between subaltern and agent in the field, both in the pattern of sharing the results occurring between the owner capital and owner of motor jukung as well as between the owner of motor jukung and subaltern, and how well the social dialectic is intermensioned between activities fishing production in the

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Nuraida Kubangun*
Post Graduate Department of Sociology
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
nuraidakubangun@gmail.com

Andi Agustang
Department of Sosiologi
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
andi.agustang@unm.ac.id

14 Arlin Adam
Department of Sosiologi
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
arlinadam@gmail.com

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customary area of waterplays owned by the elite custom in the regency of the malanun ans, schema researchers can reject it and describe for what is found in the field.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Besides the oppressed subaltern class, they also do not have access to the elite and tend to be ignored. According to Spivak, subaltern is a stressed subject. Subaltern has two characteristics, namely the emphasis and inside of it discrimination mechanism works. It is important from Spivak's opinion that subaltern cannot understand its existence and is unable to voice its aspirations. The subalterns do not have the space to voice their conditions so they need intellectuals as their "representatives".

It is also reflected in the subaltern social relations of the fishermen in Aru Islands district. They have high solidarity in fighting for their destiny. They tried to appoint one of the intellectuals who was expected to voice their aspirations about the stakeholders' policies who did not take side with them, the policies of the government that did not implemented equally for them, the implementation of the customary rights of the sea by the indigenous elite, which incriminated them. However, they always fight for the common interest not only for the personal interests of the fishermen themselves, but also pay attention to the future of the Aru sea in the future whenever the large fishing fleets come with the local government's blessing to collect sea products without regard to coral reefs and other marine biota in the long run. A symbol of togetherness for the same fights in improving a better life for the future.

Based on the Oxford English Dictionary, the term subaltern has three different meanings: conventionally it is understood as a synonym of subordinate, but it can also mean a lower working class in the army, or a special example of universal propositions in philosophical logic. The term subaltern was originally used and introduced by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci as groups in society that were the subject of the hegemony of the ruling classes through his research on Italian village peasants and the history of subaltern rebellions in South Asia during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Gramsci uses the terms subaltern interchangeably with 'subordinate' and 'instrumental' to describe 'non-hegemonic groups or classes'. Initially, it was difficult to understand the systematic difference between the way Gramsci used the words subaltern and subordinate. Some thought Gramsci used the term to code words to present terms that were more popular than the term Proletarian Marxists. However, as it develops, the choice of the word subaltern seems to be more appropriate in interpreting subordinates as rural farmers in southern Italy whose social and political awareness is limited and their political unity is weak.

Subaltern is very different from the industrial proletariat because it does not have a collective awareness yet on economic and political oppression as a class. The initial phase of the Indian nationalist movement is an example of a subaltern study approach which continually opposes the

bourgeois nationalist historical elitism, which originates from the British colonial ideology. What was overlooked by elite historiography according to Ranajit Guha was 'people's politics' or the Indian political sphere at the time where important actors formed the subalterns of the working population in cities and villages, namely 'the people'; however, that did not mean that subaltern studies were automatically equated with the people. Responding to that, Spivak in "scattered speculations on the subaltern and the popular", asserting subaltern is the name of the space of difference. Although at the beginning Guha said that the words 'people' and 'subaltern' interchangeable, but that is not a substantive point for Spivak because crucially "subaltern is a position without identity".

As subaltern studies develop, in principle they are concerned with research on social and political practices of groups who are unable to represent themselves as classes or social groups in elite (state) historiography and other important matters that need to be stressed that subaltern studies cannot be released with the various ideas and concepts that shape them, namely postcolonial and identity politics [5].

Spivak uses the term subaltern to refer to parties or groups who are oppressed from other, more powerful groups. The term subaltern was originally used by Antonio Gramsci to refer to "inferior groups", namely groups in society that are the subject of the hegemony of the ruling classes. This group consists of workers, farmers, poor people, and other groups who are oppressed or controlled by other groups Ashcroft, et al (1998); Mcleod, (2010) in Martono (2016: 100).

The term subaltern was first adopted by Ranajit Guha, an Indian historian, to rewrite Indian history [6][7]. Guha gives a more interesting explanation than Gramsci's about subaltern because he provides something new and a clear framework for explaining "Who is the friend. Who is the opponent". Guha's new perspective lies in his explanation of the dichotomy of oppression which is not only carried out by "outside groups" but also by "inner groups" oppression not only in "colonial-anticolonial", "labor-employer", "civil-military", but also occurs in "elit-subaltern". Spivak uses the term subaltern in his article entitled, Can the Subaltern Speak? He has deepened and clarified Guha's ideas – farmers, workers, women, poor classes, and other groups who do not have access to "hegemonic" power as a subaltern class.

The subaltern concept originated from an article that brought up the tragic story of her grandmother's sister (Bhuvanewari Bhaduri) who hung herself in North Calcutta in 1926 when she was around 16-17 years old. This hanging was motivated by his inability to carry out the task of political assassination entrusted to him. For Spivak this is evidence of an inability to speak, and instead chose suicide [8][9].

Eric Hobsbawm and E.P. Thompson utilize the term subaltern as a name for the general attributes of

subordination in South Asian society expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in other ways. Crucially, historians of the subaltern study attempt to emphasize that the concept of subaltern marks the social demographic differences between the elite and others in South Asia [10][11].

But what happens when the prominent "intellectual" who is appointed by subalterns in order to convey their aspirations is denying a consensus that is made together, so what more reality will the subalterns face besides remaining silent and powerless in a downturn. It is confirmed by Spivak that the voice of subaltern groups could not be sought because they could not speak. Intellectuals do not come to seek the voice but must be present as "representatives" of subaltern groups. Quoting Gramsci according to Spivak, intellectuals must be accompanied by "intellectual pessimism and optimism of the will": Philosophical scepticism in restoring the agency of subaltern groups accompanied by a political commitment that shows their marginalized position.

This means that any of external effort to improve their condition by giving them the ability to speak collectively will face a number of problems; First, logocentric assumptions about cultural solidarity among heterogenous societies. Second, reliance on Western intellectuals to speak on behalf of subaltern conditions rather than letting them speak on behalf of themselves. Spivak then asserted that by regaining collective cultural identity, subalterns would return to subordinate positions in society.

Based on the results of the research, there are some important aspects that the writer see and are crucial that have been done by subaltern as one of the efforts to survive the strategy to get out of the existing problems. Edi Suharto argues that coping strategies in dealing with non-economic shocks and pressures, there is also a method adopted by the patriarch, the intended strategy is: Network Strategy [12].

According to Edi Suharto, a network strategy is a survival strategy that is conducted by establishing relationships, both formal and informal with their social and institutional environment; for instance, by borrowing money from neighbors and others [13][14]. Borrowing for business capital or daily needs is a choice that must be lived by the family. The strategies conducted are as follows:

- 1) Efforts to obtain fishery assistance from relevant agencies in relation with fishing equipment and fishermen's insurance cards but obtain them unevenly. There are fishermen who obtain assistance in the forms of longboats, cool boxes, and there are also those who receive training which is conducted annually or bi to tri-yearly, but fishermen have yet to use and utilize it maximally.
- 2) The following strategy used by motor owners is to open kube-kube coop with the aim of helping subalterns to get out of economic difficulties, but it does not run smoothly.

- 3) The efforts to obtain loan assistance from BUMN such as banks, but the funds are insufficient and even if the fund is granted, there are complaints from fishermen that the affairs are too complicated.
- 4) Demonstrating the government to accept their demands concerning the presence of porsine vessels with more capacity both in terms of fishing gear and lighting, but it did not get response by the local government.
- 5) There are community leaders who are appointed by fishermen to fight for their voices to the local government but as a mandate carrier from the fishermen community, they cannot carry it out properly. There are indications that the figures they hoped to fight for their mandate turned against them with evidence that they are negotiating with stakeholders without a fisherman accompanying them.
- 6) The efforts of the fishermen to prevent the existence of the porsine ship are expected to destroy the coral clumps in Aru Islands district which results in the demise of other unneeded marine habitats and sea pollution because the dead fish are thrown out to the sea until they rotted and polluted the sea.

The aspects stated above are a social strategy that has been conducted by the fishermen in Aru Islands district hoping that all their efforts and hard work will worth it and satisfy various parties involved in it.

According to Michel Foucault; Power is a sophisticated strategy model in a particular society formed from fragmented micro-powers [15]. Power is related to strategy and does not belong to certain people through certain agreements. Power is in every person because power is more related to what is the strategy for power. Power is not property but strategy. Power is related to practice strategies in a scope where there are many positions that are strategically related to each other and are constantly undergoing shifts. Power is not understood and practiced as a possession but power as a means to dominate globally from one class to another class. The network strategy conducted by the subalterns will work if it is supported by stakeholders in Aru Islands district because whatever they do but the stakeholders do not take an action through power, the strategies they carry out will not succeed.

Subaltern in Aru Islands district is a hetrogenic community originating from various regions in Indonesia but they are always together in fighting for what is a common concern about local government policies that result in the survival of marine life in Aru Islands. They want to show a collective culture that is in them, whether they remain in a subordinate condition or will experience a change towards a better condition.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conditions experienced by subaltern groups of fishermen community in Aru Islands district have limitations on the aspiration space for stakeholders in voicing subaltern interests. Injustice in the distribution of

fishing equipment and limited skills and access to economic assistance are the root of poverty in subaltern groups. This is reinforced by the opinion of Edi Suharto (2009), which stated that network strategy is a survival strategy that is carried out by establishing relationships, both formal and informal with their social environment and institutional environment. This is in line with Spivak's opinion that the relations that exist between subalterns and intellectuals such as the "master servant" relation of the voice of the subalterns cannot be sought because the oppressed cannot speak. Therefore, an intellectual cannot claim and romanticize their ability to seek the voices of subaltern groups. Claims like this are more like colonial because it generates (homogenizes) the diversity of subaltern groups and it is an "epistemological violence" against subaltern groups eventually.

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