

# Rituals and Spells: A Guide to Life at Sea for the Fishing Community of Soreang, Takalar Regency in the Millennial Era

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**Abstract**— The modernized ethics and technology, associated with fishing gear, tends to influence the life pattern of fishermen in various aspects. However, it is different for those in Soreang, Takalar Regency, which amid modernization still maintains the ancestral heritage of fishing activities such as spells or seaward rituals. This research, therefore, aims to analyze the concept and belief of spells or rituals of the Soreang Fishermen community as a guide to making a living at sea in the era millennial. This is a phenomenological research that used a sociological approach to describe the activities of fishermen in accordance with their local beliefs. Data were collected through field observations and by analyzing the various relevant documents in the fishing community. The results showed that the concept of spell beliefs and rituals remained a driving force for the fishing community in carrying out seagoing activities until the millennial era.

**Keywords:** *Ritual, Spell, Fisherman, Soreang*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fishing communities are often interpreted as groups of people or individuals or certain groups in the community whose main livelihood is fishing [1]–[5]. From this description, it can be concluded that what is meant by a fishing community is a group of people or certain individuals from a community and has a specific place of residence and has a main job as a fisherman at sea [5]–[7].

Most of the Soreang people in Galesong Utara sub-district work as fishermen. Many of their daily activities are spent at sea catching fish. One of the fishing systems carried out by Soreang fishermen is commonly called rompong. but along with technological developments, it has also brought changes to fishing gear as part of the blue revolutionary movement [8]. This blue revolution is recognized as having brought many changes and even developments in the maritime community, especially in North Galesong, Takalar Regency. This revolution is not inseparable from the role of government which encourages maritime communities to use technology in fishing.

Amid the modernization of fishing gear, Soreang did not necessarily leave the old pattern behind the fishing system it was doing. Moreover, fishermen want to go out to sea to look for fish, they must have performed the ritual beforehand [9]. there are sacred spells for Soreang fishermen to be held firm and believed to be able to bring in a lot of catch and are still considered relevant today. Soreang

fishing communities interpret the spell not only as a ritual, but merely words that have no meaning. A fisherman does not dare go to catch fish when he sees the boat is not beautiful to the eye. as a layman who witnessed an event like this, naturally consider it normal and unnecessary.

The religious identity of Soreang fishermen is actually a form of inseparable blend of belief in Islam and their original belief, namely belief in each place having a watchman, represented as the Prophet Khaidir (ruler of the sea) Noah (ruler of the boat) and several other designations. The combination of these two beliefs produced a religious life system that was quite interesting to look at and certainly unique compared to those in other places. as unique as their lives as sea people who always start something with readings in local languages Makassar. The process of forming a religious identity that mixes Islamic beliefs with local cultures and beliefs, but through a long historical process, through a process of negotiation by producing an Islamic identity with local beliefs, so that a religion is formed Soreang fishermen are quite unique. in this case, longstanding activities were not ignored but were supplemented by Islamic teachings into their customary teachings as a guide in running their lives. if the identity is always in the process of forming continuously and never permanent, then the process of forming the Soreang fishermen's religious identity develops along with the times.

## II. METHOD

This study uses phenomenological studies using a sociological approach to get a picture of the social reality that occurs in the lives of fishing communities in carrying out their activities as fishermen. according to Husserl's researchers in the phenomenological view of trying to understand the meaning of events and their links to people who are in certain situations [10]. In this understanding, researchers observe in the field with an understanding that the activities of the perpetrators or the investigated actor is a social reality or empirical reality that cannot be engineered by researchers, but is presented as it is [11].

In this study qualitative data obtained from a broad description of various phenomena that are closely related to religion and belief as continuously reproduced as a part of the fishermen's equipment to carry out their activities in the social processes that occur in the fishing community. Qualitative data is designed to find what can be studied and analyzed from a variety of observed phenomena, particularly

the phenomenon of the behavior of the faithful fishing community as a basis for action and effort. The researcher seeks to investigate and respond to exploration, as well as raise descriptive questions about the causes of religious beliefs and rituals that are continuously reproduced in the Soreang fishing community. the main data collection techniques in this study are observation and analysis of various documents that are considered relevant to this research

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Conception of Soreang Fisherman's Trust

The people of South Sulawesi, before the advent of religion, had embraced a belief called animism and dynamism that had taken root in life. in practice requires incense and incantations as a medium to communicate prayers in carrying out activities of daily life. the meaning of the spell has a fairly broad understanding as [12] explains that the spell is the words or words that can bring magical power. in this case, the spell that is often chanted by a retainer of a boat from a fisherman is a spell of salvation and hope, which is a spell to avoid danger and a spell that contains hope in order to get abundant fortune [13].

when viewed in terms of how to do it, in general there are spells that are spoken and some are not spoken. spells are chanted through the throat, meaning spells that are conveyed by voice. The results of research in the field that all the above types of spells are often used by the skipper (boat owner) and *sanro biseang* (boat shaman) are utterance spells during ceremonies and spells using whispers. besides that there are spells that can only be chanted in the heart, consisting of (a) Silent spell, in the form of illiterate spells (b) Inner spell, which is chanted in the mind when mediating with the creator [14].

the second spell in the heart is often used by the fishing community in Soreang, especially before leaving. It was found at the research site that many boats lit their lights for quite a long time along with their engines. then there was the skipper (boat owner) who was thought to be the person who was carrying the boat that was on fire was still looking at his boat, strongly suspected, that he was reciting an incantation before boarding his boat. then not long after the skipper (boat owner) boarded the boat then the boat immediately left for the fishing area in the middle of the sea.

The levels of Soreang fishing spells obtained by researchers are the initial level, the intermediate level and the highest level. in this case, each level has negative and positive consequences according to him[15] Every fisherman uses reading based on his level, according to the expected catches that will be obtained, in this case if they are unable to get more fish then use the next level of reading and reading. each fisherman has a final reading that has a different risk which they call a (hot) mine. For the highest level it is included in black reading (black magic). the risk that will be experienced by fishermen when using black reads will result in one of his family will die. Daeng Naba took the example of one of the fishermen who used black reading at the highest level and the child who was born immediately died.

In the belief of Soreang fishermen, it is assumed that everything that will be done must always be believed in

order to get satisfying results. All activities carried out begin by seeing what is happening around their home. arriving before leaving is an expression understood as an effort to build a good premonition. If before leaving for the fishing location, we must first convince ourselves that what we will do will succeed. according to [15] before leaving for the sea, he always had a spell that actually originated from habit.

In preparing yourself first by building a hunch with the spells that are owned, namely *sa'ra tallu* (triple sound) that comes from the breath that is *sanro'* (shaman), *iloro'* (taste of taste) and the voice that comes from God. then need to know these signs, before leaving for sea we must listen those signs.so before leaving there was a feeling that I would get an abundant fortune in the future, first I just saw the boat from afar, there were signs, if it was okay, I immediately departed. But don't let there be no inkling at all because there won't be any fish later. so a hunch is important. All fishermen here must have it. Not just anyone becomes a skipper, there must be spells (using them) [15].

The signs as revealed above while reciting the spell continue to be reproduced by the Soreang fishing community, so the boat is considered human, if it looks beautiful then departs it is certain the number of captured will be abundant. according to Koentjaraningrat, that all ceremonies originating from hunches consist of various kinds of ceremonies that are daily, seasonal or sometimes each ceremony consists of a combination of various ceremonial elements, such as; pray, prostrate, offer, sacrifice, eat together ,dancing and singing [16]. Every time hunches and spells before leaving are always actualized in the daily lives of fishermen in Soreang.

[17] As *sanro* (shaman) fishermen have a habit before reciting spells, then first breathe to make it easier to move to another realm. this process is actually very sacred because there could be victims if this process is wrong, he said, because it is related with Sufism. further according to him if we want to see the boat is actually like humans, who have bones and so on. Before leaving the boat through various sacred events with various spells in it. according to [15] before the boat went to sea the courtiers and mustards and members of the community held an "*acceraturungeng*" (sacrifice a child) event by slaughtering cattle / buffalo. in the process of cutting buffalo, if a large sound means a good sign, surely the fishermen who do the event will get abundant fortune. Usually fishermen will get a hunch to get good or bad results.

the spells that are recited before departing contain more related to safety, respect and asking for sustenance. Both Maknun, Daeng Naba and Karaeng Sese actually have almost the same reading, especially the appreciation of the Prophet Khaidir, Noah and asking for sustenance. in this case, spells should not be read by people who do not have the skills and experience. A spell doesn't have any strength if it's just read it. To use spells, of course spells must be turned on first. in living the spell it takes strength in the form of intention, trust and concentration [18]. Thus, the position of the spell tradition is believed to be a savior, a bearer of fortune and respect.

### B. *The Ritual Power of Fishermen in Finding Sustenance in the Ocean*

Every activity related to the sea carried out by Soreang fishermen is never free from spells, starting from them before leaving until getting fortune and returning to the land. Soreang fishing communities looking for sustenance in the ocean require preparation not just *rengge* (fishing gear) but spells are needed as a medium to summon fish. [4] elaborated, that in fishing communities, the power to get sustenance is influenced by the interaction with the natural environment so as to form behavioral patterns that respond to environmental influences.

Thus the economic culture of fishermen will greatly affect work ethics. Besides originating from human thought, work ethic norms also originate from religious teachings embraced by the community. Religious teachings are believed to be able to shape and influence the work ethics of its adherents. ethics can apply and be adhered to in general after going through a long process of adaptation, often even a process of reinterpretation from one generation to the next so as to form a value contained in work ethics. (Nadjib, 2016). the work ethic that continues to be produced by Soreang fishermen is more about spells and technology. religious teachings that continue to develop in Soreang do not necessarily immediately eliminate the traditional sides as elsewhere but are continuously reproduced as part of their lives.

from the spell above it is clear, that the earlier reading was directed to the ruler of the sea (*Prophet Khaidir*) asking that given ease in catching fish. After that to the boat ruler (*Noah*). In this case, the chant is recited by the courtier before the gillnets are cast into the sea. in this case that the creator or owner of all sustenance is Allah, but that distributes that sustenance to humans is the prophets and angels. Thus, humans must ask through the prophets and angels. the realization of Islam in the spell is seen in the use of the terms prophets and *Allah Ta'ala* (the ruler).

In catching the prayer is also based on the concept of value called *nipisarakki* (felt) dialogued that the lowering and installing the fishing gear are each of His Majesty Ali and the Prophet Muhammad. the spell in terms of fishing is one type of indigenous knowledge possessed by every courtier. This knowledge is a definite pattern in arranging activities, especially in the effort to collect fish to be obtained, spell knowledge is a mandatory requirement that must be possessed by a retainer [19].

As for the other spell when installing the net described by [13] is closely related to religious rituals that have become obligations that must be fulfilled. This ritual is an inseparable part of the process of fishing in the sea. after arriving at the designated location, the courtier together with mustard is preparing to install a fishing gear (*pakkaja*). While installing the fishing gear, the mustard was silent, the courtier recited the spell or prayer.

in expressing prayers based on a concept or value called *nipisaraki* (felt) analogous" that lowering and installing fishing gear is each Bagenda Ali *ampanaungi*/bring down (lower to the sea). "His Majesty Ali lowered" and the prophet Muhammad *antannangi* (pu up) "Prophet Muhammad put up" and which dispels and enters fishis each *jibraelek* (Angel Gabriel) and Alla Taala (the ruler), as revealed in the *jibraelek angngembai* ((shepherd) clause

'*Jibraelek*' (Angel Gabriel) and Alla Taala *ampatamai*' (include) Allah Taala enters. this kind of reading is a kind of original knowledge, in this case they believe that by using that knowledge, they will succeed in getting the fortune as expected. likewise, they will feel confident that with the power of knowledge they are able to tame nature and avoid the dangers that will abound.

Everything that is obtained on earth because of the blessings and gifts that have been outlined by the Almighty, humans can only try and pray. In fishing communities, in addition to trying, they pray through spells that are in accordance with religious teachings.

In the thesis of [20] through his essay "*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*", found a link between the ethos of European society and the values of the teachings of Calvinism, through his method interpretation Weber sees the processor interanalizing religious values objectified through the economic spirit of society. Observe Weber's thesis, the meaning of the power of religion will appear increasingly clear as spiritual motivation can be an impetus in all aspects of life [21]

## IV. CONCLUSION

The religious identity of Soreang fishermen is actually a form of inseparable blend of belief in Islam and their original beliefs, namely the belief that every place has a watcher or a ruler. the combination of these two beliefs results in a continuous system of religious life and is reproduced as part of the life of the Soreang fishing community. rituals and spells then become a belief that is considered to be there every time when going down to sea because it is believed to be a savior shield from the swift waves of the sea and at the same time as a means to get sustenance with a lot of catch.

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