



Living on Boundaries:

The Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut, Indonesia

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Papa mulene asal na same likak Tidung petu na mamia anak datuk na ma rungai. Atoe na sukar pore ka petu lo ma sangang mangga ko mannang ne pamannung, anak datuk narungai. Inggak tasenesene mia aka ne malak ore mandi patabakan ne ia ne inu lahak Bajoé. Sikarah itu pasingga anne dadi pakam pongan daha kaan. Ngapah sama manditu sama Banggai.

Once there was the village Tidung where we looked for the lost child of the grandfather. The parents of the child felt confused by looking here and there, in the afternoon and in the night. 'Where is your place?'; the place of the lost child of the grandfather. By accident, it had happened that it had stranded there; that it had stranded in the village Bajoé. Now the place that we visited is already our village. Do not think the people here are Banggai people.

(Song sang by an older Orang Bajo woman from Tinakin Laut)

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Acknowledgements

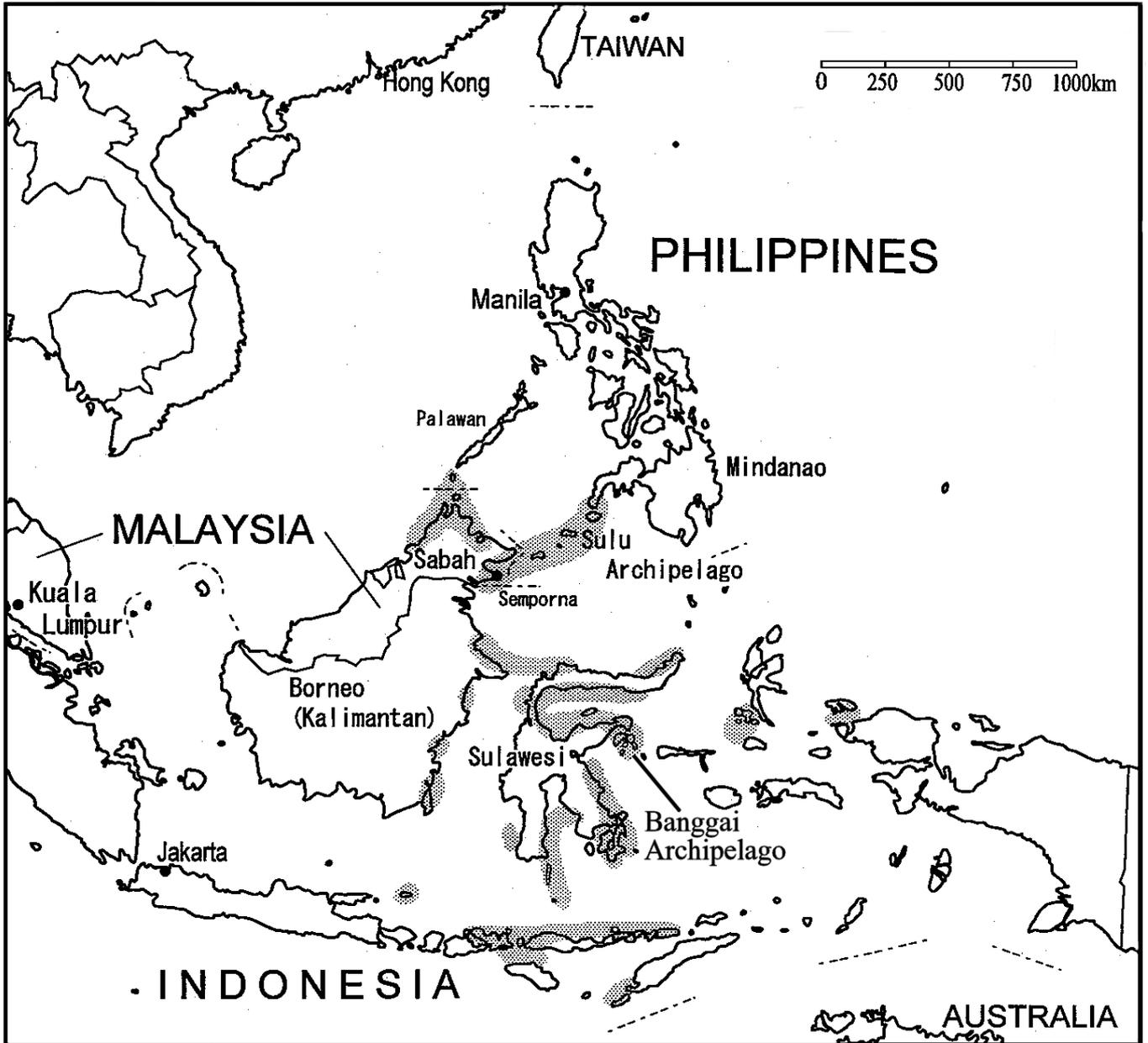
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Maps

Map 1: Distribution of Orang Bajo settlements in Southeast Asia

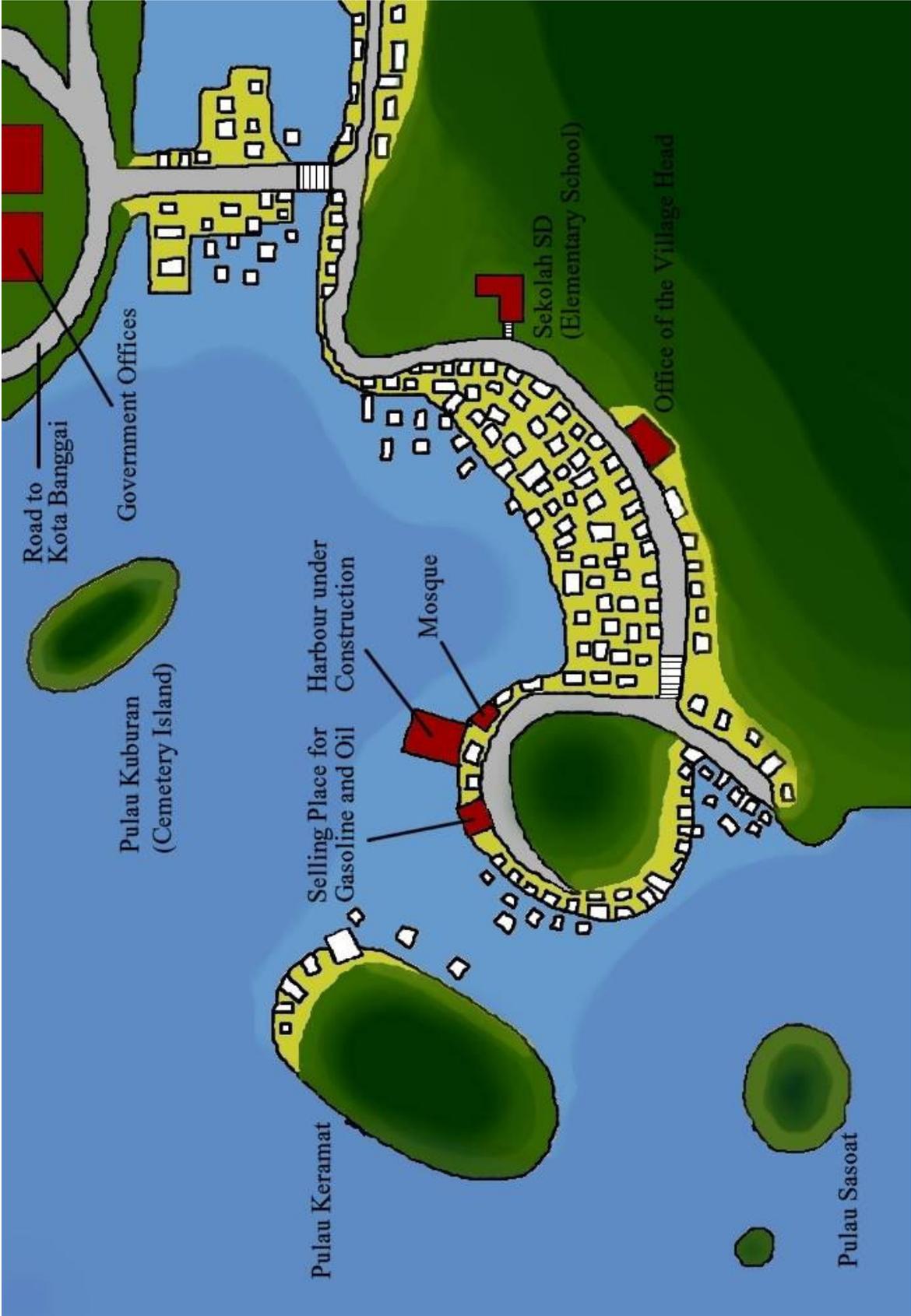


Source: Nagatsu 2001 (Adjusted)

Map 2: Sulawesi and the Banggai Archipelago



Map 3: The village of Tinakin Laut in 2008



1 Introduction

For centuries, groups of sea nomads have lived on the seas surrounding Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. One of these groups, and by far the most widespread in the region, are the Orang Bajo. In the past, the Orang Bajo sea nomads lived together in small groups on boats. The sea for them was the place where they felt home. The Orang Bajo were very experienced fishermen, sailors, boat makers and divers. For their subsistence they were completely dependent on the sea. They identified themselves as people of the sea and called others the people of the land. Their communities were very egalitarian and had very low levels of stratification. They were often seen by others as a pariah people. The low status assigned to the Orang Bajo was mainly based on their boat-living and animistic beliefs (Warren 1980). It is said that the Orang Bajo are still being assigned a low status by the people that surround them (Lenhart 1997).

Especially from the 1950s the lives of the Orang Bajo changed rapidly under sedentarisation processes, technological changes, further incorporation into cash economies and further Islamisation. It is estimated that nowadays there are still 467,000 Orang Bajo living in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines (Saat 2003). Only around 10,000 of them continue to live as sea nomads (Hockings 1993). Despite processes of sedentarisation most of the current Orang Bajo continue to be very much connected to the sea. They still depend on fishing for their livelihoods. They have not abandoned all their relationships with the sea and also have not completely adapted themselves to the communities of the main land. The lives of many sedentary Orang Bajo seem to be located on boundaries.

The concept of boundaries is very closely related to that of identity. In order to distinguish 'the self' from 'the other' and the 'in-group' from the 'out-group', social boundaries have to be created. These boundaries define the personal and group distinctiveness (Barth 1969; Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 2002). Within the social sciences, boundaries are often seen as being located on the edges of societies and communities. In the case of the sedentary Orang Bajo however, these boundaries seem to be very central both in everyday life and for the construction of the Orang Bajo identity. It is this unique use of boundaries that I wish to describe here by answering the following question: what role do boundaries play in the construction of the cultural identity of the Orang Bajo?

The research has taken place in the village of Tinakin Laut that is located in the Banggai archipelago. The Banggai archipelago is located east of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.¹ There are about 1500 people living in Tinakin Laut and almost all of them are Orang Bajo. The Orang Bajo in Tinakin Laut

¹ See the section 'Maps' for the exact location of Tinakin Laut and a map of the village

originate from sea nomads. For the majority of the population, fishing still forms the main source of income.

In line with the anthropological tradition, the research has been qualitative in nature, focusing on the nature of things rather than on the scope of things. The approach has been ethnographical, meaning that fieldwork and participant observation have been used to describe how people live. Fieldwork has been conducted in February, March and April of 2008.

In what follows, I will first address the the research questions, goals, methods, techniques and ethics. After this, the context of the research will be discussed. This discussion includes descriptions of the Orang Bajo as an ethnic group and descriptions of the research location. After that, a theoretical framework will be presented which includes the following concepts: 'identities and boundaries', 'fishing communities and identities' and 'environments, places and their meanings'. These theoretical concepts will be used when describing and analyzing the actual empirical research findings. These findings have been divided into four chapters. The first empirical chapter is called 'The Boundary between Land and Sea'. In this chapter, fishing, housing and other ways through which the Orang Bajo are connected to land and sea will be discussed. The second empirical chapter is called 'The Boundary between Animism and Islam'. This chapter focuses on the use of animistic and Islamic beliefs and practices. The third empirical chapter is called 'The Poverty Boundary' and here attention will be paid to signs of poverty, causes of poverty and coping strategies. The last empirical chapter is called 'Orang Bajo Identity'. This chapter serves both to illustrate what this identity looks like as well as to illustrate how this identity is connected to boundaries. In the final chapter, the research questions will be answered and connections will be made between the theoretical framework and the empirical research findings. Several appendices have been included containing a glossary of local terms, pictures, a reflection on the conducted fieldwork and a summary of the research findings.

2 The Research

The central research question is what role boundaries play in the construction of the cultural identity of the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut. In order to answer this question, three other questions need to be answered first.

- What role do boundaries play in the lives of the Orang Bajo and what do these boundaries look like?
- How do the Orang Bajo construct their cultural identity and what does this identity look like?
- What are the relationships between these boundaries and this identity?

In 1996 an article was published named '*Research on Bajau Communities: Maritime People in Southeast Asia*'. In its prospects for future studies it is stated that more research should be done on the Orang Bajo/Bajau and that this research should focus on the following subjects:

- social change among Orang Bajo communities after 1970,
- the social and economic history of the Orang Bajo and
- the Orang Bajo ethno-science about maritime environments and resources (Lapian and Nagatsu 1996).

Furthermore, the study states that the Orang Bajo should be given more opportunities to participate in scientific efforts. It will become clear that within the research, attention has been paid to all of the above subjects, thereby serving the scientific community interested in the Orang Bajo. The results of the research are relevant for those interested in the Orang Bajo, maritime anthropology, sedentarisation processes and identities. For those interested, the results of the research could contribute to a greater understanding for the position of the Orang Bajo within Indonesian society and the matters and problems relevant for them.

There were several reasons why the village of Tinakin Laut was chosen as a research location. The first reason is that almost all of the inhabitants of the village are Orang Bajo. Secondly, the local population is already very much connected to the land but also still very much connected to the sea. Furthermore, with the exception of one linguistic study on one of the remote islands of the archipelago, no social scientific research had yet been conducted in the Banggai archipelago. No anthropological articles or books have been published on the Banggai region. One social

geographical report has been published about the region and its focus is on the maritime environment, fish trade, livelihoods and sustainability. The report is called 'The Indonesian Ornamental Fish Trade: Case Studies and Options for Improving Livelihoods While Promoting Sustainability in Banggai and Banyuwangi'. This report formed part of the EC-PREP program² and was published in 2004 .

A variety of techniques have been used to collect data. Anthropological and sociological studies have been used in the development of the research design and in the analysis of the research data. Its main subjects included the Orang Bajo, identities, boundaries, maritime anthropology, fishing communities, environments and housing. Participant observation has been used as the main technique while doing fieldwork. Talking with the local population has been done in both an informal and formal manner. Formal conversations included open, semi-structured and structured interviews. Several group interviews have been conducted as well. A survey was held among the children of the local elementary school. Taking pictures offered the unique opportunity to transform the focus of my observations directly into data. Talking about these pictures with the local population has offered some additional insights. Pictures have been included in the appendices and will be referred to regularly in what follows.

By using multiple techniques, triangulation could take place. When contradictions were found within the data, for example a person said one thing but was observed doing something else, the observations were counted heavier. When opinions were not uniform, they often were not; attention has been paid to representing as many views as possible within the limits of this research. Discussing data with the local population has increased the reliability and validity of the data. Part of the data-analysis consisted out of coding the raw data with the use of a computer program. The process of doing research has been reflected upon.³

Attention has been paid to the ethics of the research. The secretary of the Banggai Kepulauan district and the village head of Tinakin Laut have given official permission for the research. News travels very fast within the village and within no-time all the inhabitants knew that I was there to conduct research about the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut and that the research was part of my education. When conducting interviews, I would always tell people what the aim of the interview was. When pictures have been taken of people, they have always been asked for permission. During

² The goals of the EC-PREP research program were to improve the cooperation between the European Commission and the 'UK Department for International Development' and to increase the effects of development aid donated by the European Commission on poverty reduction strategies. The program is no longer in place.

³ See Appendix 3

the fieldwork period, I have shown many local people my notebooks, pictures and drawings to give them an idea of what I was working on. Aliases have been used for all the local people mentioned here, and the local population has been informed in advance that their real names would not be used.

I have always tried to be honest and open in my communication with other people with one exception. I have told the local population that I was married while I am not. I thought this would be safer for a woman going to a remote location on her own. Secondly, it would be difficult to explain to the local population why I had not been married yet and did not have any children yet at the age of 27. I have done my best to give fair rewards to people who have spent their time and efforts helping me with the research.

3 Context

3.1 The People: Orang Bajo

Linguistic evidence indicates that the Proto-Sama-Bajau speaking ancestors of the current Orang Bajo originate from the Philippines and from there on, spread to Malaysia and Indonesia. According to Saat, since the Orang Bajo were so mobile, geographic location could not be used by others as a determinant of Orang Bajo identity. Instead the Orang Bajo language became the main method of identification (Saat 2003).

The Orang Bajo speak languages from the Sama-Bajau language family. However, not all Sama-Bajau speakers are Orang Bajo. Of all Sama-Bajau speakers only a relatively small part consists out of former and current sea nomads. Alternative names used for the Orang Bajo include: Bajau Laut, Badjaw, Luwa'an, Pala'au, Sama, Sama Dilaut and Trijene' (Hockings 1993). In Indonesia all Sama-Bajau speakers are called Orang Bajau or Orang Bajo, also those who do not have a maritime history (Hockings 1993). The local population uses the following names for their identity: *Orang Bajo*, *Suku Bajo*, *Orang Sama* and *Suku Sama*. *Orang* in this context means people and *suku* can mean people, ethnic group, tribe or clan. Older people sometimes use the word *Bajoé* instead of *Bajo*. *Sama* means 'the same' or 'equal'. Because the local population mostly uses the term Orang Bajo, I will use this term as well. The Orang Bajo language is called *Bahasa Sama*. (*Bahasa*: language)

The research population often indicated that they had ancestors who used to live on the sea and that they saw themselves as belonging to a group of former sea nomads. The Orang Bajo living on boats and having mainly a subsistence lifestyle, have never been completely independent from the land and the people from the land. They were always engaged in trade with land-dwellers, exchanging maritime goods for freshwater and food from the land (Warren 1983). "*It was to this sphere of relations that Bajau interaction with other groups has been strictly limited.*" (Warren 1983: 37) Stratifications seem to have been next to non-existing among the Orang Bajo of the past.

The internal structure of Bajau society was probably close to a perfect example of a non-stratified system as a sociologist could hope to find. Even the universal principles of differential status and privilege (age, sex and personal characteristics) ... were inconsiderable. Authority was not the basis of relations between parent and child, husband and wife, or one Bajau and another. (Warren 1983: 53)

A low level of stratification was accompanied by a low level of formal organization and high levels of flexibility and reciprocity (Warren: 1983).

In the past, the Orang Bajo have been negatively stereotyped by the people that they came in contact with.

By their neighbours, Bajau were identified with two negatively-valued characteristics: their boat-dwelling, nomadic way of life and their animistic beliefs and practices. Poverty, uncleanness, moral pollution and naiveté or lack of intelligence are associated traits typically attached to subsistence people on the wrong side of a Great Tradition. (Warren 1983: 77)

In recent decades, sedentarisation processes, technological changes, further incorporation into cash economies and further Islamisation have changed the lives of the Orang Bajo considerably. These changes can not be pinpointed to one particular date since they took place, and are still taking place, over long periods of time. Hockings says about the sedentarisation processes in Indonesia:

In Indonesia change has been equally rapid since independence. Here Bajau communities have been under official pressure to abandon boat-nomadism and nearly all are now shore-based, living in coastal villages, characteristically dependent on fishing, trade, and other maritime pursuits for their livelihood. (Hockings 1993: 31)

Technological changes had considerable implications for the lives of the Orang Bajo living on land and sea. Outboard engines raised mobility and increased fishing efficiency but also made the Orang Bajo more dependent on cash economies. From now on cash would be needed to pay for engines, gasoline and oil. *"Obviously each new technological improvement had the effect of increasing investment in equipment and drawing the Bajau further and further outside a subsistence economy and beyond self-reliance."* (Warren 1983: 39) This increased dependency influenced the social structures within Orang Bajo communities. According to Warren, the following quote, made by an Orang Bajo, was representative for the situation in an Orang Bajo community in Sabah, Malaysia in the 1960's.

Our custom before was different - like fools. We fished before, we were like children ... Now we are grown up. Our old way was fishing, now we make money – you must work with the idea that each person takes care of himself (mag kenia-kenia⁴). In the old days

⁴ *mag kenia-kenia*: to each his own, every man for himself

we didn't have that idea, we fished together. (Warren 1980: 233, footnote not in the original)

Warren further states that more and more, 'formal rationality' has replaced 'substantive rationality'⁵ (Warren 1980). The Orang Bajo were not passively undergoing all the changes mentioned. *"In the Bajau case, structural constraints interacted with conscious rules and choices to produce change. The means and ends of Bajau social organization have undergone transformation that is indeed "a mixed reality" both willed and unwilled."* (Warren 1980: 237)

In 2000 it was estimated that the total amount of Orang Bajo in the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia was at least 467,000 (Saat 2003). Mead and Lee estimate that in 2007 there were 36,000 Orang Bajo living in Central Sulawesi (which includes the Banggai archipelago) (Mead & Lee 2007). Processes of sedentarisation have led to the majority of the Orang Bajo living on the land. Among the Orang Bajo there are those who still live permanently on boats, those who partially live nomadic lives on the sea and partially sedentary lives on the land, those who live near the coast in either stilt houses or regular houses and those who live more land inwards. The Orang Bajo continue to depend mainly on fishing for their livelihoods.

Lenhart states that the Orang Bajo continue to be seen by others as primitive and backward people (Lenhart 1993). In the EC-PREP report an Orang Bajo man from the Banggai archipelago was quoted saying that the Orang Bajo were "*masyarakat yang dibuang*" (people who were cast aside) (EC-PREP Project 2004: 221). According to Saat, most of the current Orang Bajo still lag behind in terms of education and economic standing and many of them could be said to be poor. This is said to be true especially for those living in the southern Philippines and the Eastern parts of Indonesia (Saat 2003).

3.2 Location: Tinakin Laut

Tinakin Laut is located on Pulau Banggai (Banggai Island) which forms part of the Banggai archipelago. The Banggai archipelago is divided into two districts. The first district is called Banggai and the city of Luwuk on the mainland of Sulawesi is its capital. The second district is called Banggai

⁵ "Formal rationality" refers to the evaluation of production means and procedures by using the criterion of economic profitability. "Substantive rationality" refers to the judging of production means and procedures by using social values and ethical values such as egalitarianism and social justice.

Kepulauan (Banggai Archipelago/Islands) and it consists out of 123 islands (Hardoyo 2008). The village of Tinakin Laut is located in the Banggai Kepulauan district. Until June 2008, the capital of Banggai Kepulauan was Kota Banggai (Banggai City), located on Pulau Banggai. The village of Tinakin Laut is located just about three kilometres from Kota Banggai.

No written information is available on the early history of the village. It is generally believed that the village was founded in the early 20th century. It was said by the local population that the first houses in the village were stilt houses and that they were inhabited by former Orang Bajo sea nomads. In these times, land was hardly available in the village. It was due to two earthquakes (one around 1930 and one in 2000) and the active reclamation of land, that land later became available.

The grounds surrounding the village consist mainly out of steep limestone rock formations. On the steep hills that surround the village, a shallow natural layer of fertile soil covers the limestone. On these hills green vegetation grows. Within the village there is no arable land. The amount of available flat land that is suitable for building houses is very limited. This makes that prices of land are relatively high and that houses are located close together.

The seawaters in the village are quite shallow, with a maximum depth of about fifteen metres. The seawater itself is clear but there is usually a lot of waste floating in it. A small river named Bobolon meets the sea in an estuary just outside of the village.

The biggest part of the village is located on the "mainland" of Pulau Banggai. Four small islands are located within the premises of the village. Two of them are uninhabited and one of them, Pulau Kuburan (Cemetery Island) is only being used as a cemetery. The last small island, Pulau Keramat (Holy Island) is inhabited. On the top of Pulau Keramat, an old *makam* (burial place) is located. As will become clear later on, this *makam* has special meaning for the local population.

The following facilities are present in the village: a main road that has partially been paved and partially consists out of loose limestone, a kindergarten school, an elementary school, a mosque, an office of the maritime police which is unmanned most of the times, an office of the village head, three small shops, about 20 small kiosks, one furniture workshop, one fish processing business, one business that makes and sells ice, one storage place and selling point for oil and gasoline and two cemeteries. There is no general physician living in the village but there are four nurses and four *dukuns*⁶ (medicine men/magic doctors). The local government's district offices are located just

⁶ Within the Indonesian language an extra 's' is not used to indicate a plural noun. A plural noun is usually formed by using the singular twice. So in this case, one magic doctor would be indicated with *dukun* and multiple magic doctors would be indicated with *dukun-dukun*. In order to increase the readability, the English 'plural-s' will be applied to Indonesian terms.

outside of the village. That is, they were during the fieldwork period. In June 2008 the city of Salakan, on the island Peleng, became the new capital of the Banggai Kepulauan district.⁷

Kota Banggai, the former capital of the district, is located a few kilometres from the village and people from Tinakin Laut often use the facilities located there. In Kota Banggai there are many shops, a mosque, a church, two markets, a hospital, a police station, a harbour, a guesthouse, pharmacies, doctors, schools etc. In contrast to what is happening in the Poso region (mainland Central Sulawesi), there are in the Banggai region no conflicts between Muslims and Christians.

In the EC-PREP report it is estimated that in 2003 there were about 1300 people living in Tinakin Laut. The report also states about the village, that in 2003 there were about 300 households, that the population density was about 900 people per square kilometre and that the village had a land area of 1.42 km², making Tinakin Laut the village with the highest population density of any other village in the Banggai region (EC-PREP Project 2004). The village head estimated that in 2008 the village had about 1600 inhabitants and that there were about 400 houses, about 40 of them stilt houses.

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Tinakin Laut are Orang Bajo. There are also a few Orang Banggai, Orang Bugis, Orang Buton, Orang Java, Orang Gorontalo and Orang Belantak who live in the village. Except for two Christians, the population of the village is completely Islamic. According to the local population there are many Orang Bajo living in the Banggai archipelago. It was said that there are Orang Bajo living in the villages of Mongsongan, Lababo and Matanga and on the islands of Jodoh, Toropot and Belutang.

In 2003, over 80 percent of the household in Tinakin Laut were depended on fishing for their main source of income (EC-PREP Project 2004). The EC-PREP report mentions that other employment resulted only in small and irregular additional incomes (EC-PREP Project 2004). The Banggai archipelago is a relatively poor area within Central Sulawesi. Central Sulawesi is considered to be a poor area within Indonesia. According to the EC-PREP report, half of the population of the Banggai archipelago lives below the Indonesian poverty line and 32 percent lives just above this poverty line. Tinakin Laut is said to have the highest poverty incidence of any village in the Banggai region (EC-PREP Project 2004).

⁷ According to The Jakarta Post the relocation of the capital has led to tensions and protests on Pulau Banggai (Sangadji 2008)

4 Main Concepts

Before discussing the empirical data, some relevant concepts need to be addressed. The concepts of identity and boundaries are of importance because they form part of the central research question. The anthropological views on fishing communities and their collective identities need to be discussed because the research population forms a fishing community. Environments, places and meanings are of importance as well because identities and boundaries have spatial aspects and because places of land and sea will be discussed in the empirical chapters.

4.1 Identities and Boundaries

Within the social sciences many types of identities have been defined. They include social identity, cultural identity, ethnic identity, gender identity, national identity, religious identity etcetera. All variables that can define 'the self' in contrast to 'the other', or the 'in-group' in contrast to the 'out-group', can be used to construct identities.

Within the research the focus has been on cultural identities. A cultural identity is a type of collective identity that is based on a real or imagined common culture. A collective identity serves to distinguish the 'in-group' from the 'out-group'. Culture could be defined as that what is being felt, thought, expressed, done and made within a certain group of people who feel connected to each other and that makes it possible for the members of this group to create shared meanings about the group and its surroundings.

By using the concept of cultural identity I do not wish to deny that other types of identities are of equal importance to the research population. People will always have and use multiple identities. An Orang Bajo woman can for example see herself as an Orang Bajo, a strong person, a mother, a member of a family, an inhabitant of a village, a Muslim and an Indonesian. Donnan and Wilson state that much of the research that has focused on cultural boundaries has led to uncritical views of homogeneity within ethnic groups (Donnan and Wilson 1994). That is why special attention has been paid to identity differentiations within the research group such as differences in personal characters, differences between young and old people and gender differences. By looking at the ways the cultural identity of the Orang Bajo has changed over time, attention has also been paid to the fact that identities are not static.

The construction of collective identities always takes place in a setting that includes relationships with others (Barth 1969). According to Warren the negative stereotyping by others, resulted in the

Orang Bajo emphasising counter-values among themselves (Warren 1980). When a collective identity is perceived to be negatively evaluated by others it can have the effect of strengthening group cohesion (Ellemers et al. 2002). Warren states that the Orang Bajo of the past emphasised equality among each other in order to resist the negative image that others had of them (Warren 1980). It will become clear that the local population still uses notions of equality to construct their identity.

Identities are not static and are being influenced by contexts. Nagatsu affirms that the Orang Bajo identity is indeed situational: "... *the Sama Dilaut are manipulating and portraying their ethnic identity flexibly in accordance with circumstances.*" (Nagatsu 2001: 226) Nagatsu further states that state politics too have influenced the Orang Bajo identity. "*As a result of various political influences upon national or ethnic identity formation in each of the above-mentioned three nation-states [the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia], the Sama/Bajau are changing their ethnic identifications.*" (Nagatsu, 2001: 213-214)

Because people strive to create meaningful and valuable identities, they will try to use meaningful and valuable elements to construct them. This means that by looking at what elements are used to construct identities one can get an idea of what is important to people.

The concept of boundaries is very closely related to that of identity. In order to distinguish 'the self' from 'the other', or the 'in-group' from the 'out-group', boundaries have to be created (Barth 1969; Ellemers et al. 2002). Boundaries are not only being drawn between groups but also within groups. When boundaries are used to create distinctions between people they become social boundaries.

Among scholars the words 'border' and 'boundary' are sometimes used interchangeably. There is however a clear distinction between the two. The Cambridge Dictionary defines a boundary as "*a real or imagined line that marks the edge or limit of something*" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2009). The same dictionary defines a border as "*the line that divides one country from another*" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2009). So when talking about identities, it is the word boundary that is more applicable than the word border. As will become clear in what follows, boundaries are of importance to the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut both in their daily lives and for the construction of their cultural identity. Boundaries play a role as well in the image that others have of them.

Since the boundaries that surround communities are of such importance here, three further concepts need to be described: 'border communities', 'frontier communities' and 'boundary centred communities'. Borders are the lines that divide one country from another. 'Border communities' are groups of people that live on borders or in the vicinity of borders (Donnan and Wilson 1994). Since the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut do not live on or near the borders between nation-states, the concept of 'border communities' is not applicable.

The concept of 'frontier communities' is another term used within social anthropology. The Cambridge Dictionary defines a frontier as "*a border between two countries, or (especially in the past in the United States) a border between cultivated land where people live and wild land*" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2009). The concept of frontiers was introduced by Frederic Turner who used it to refer to the zones where American colonial settlers came into contact with the American native population. Later the concept has been broadened and it is now also being used for places where previously distinct societies and economies come into contact with each other and whereby one group is clearly more powerful than the other (Rösler and Wendl 1999). Kopytoff defines frontiers as: "*...an area which, on the one hand, is beyond control of regional metropolises and, on the other, is weakly enough controlled by its present occupants that outsiders from the metropolises can move into it with the realistic hope of achieving an autonomous political existence. The frontier presents to outsiders an "institution vacuum" that makes it open to the possibility of constructing in it a new society.*" (Kopytoff 1999: 33) It is clear that the concept of 'frontier communities' also can not be applied to the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut. First of all, there are no colonizers in the Banggai archipelago. Secondly, at the moment, the Banggai archipelago is not the place where previously distinct societies come into contact with each other. Thirdly, the Banggai archipelago is not beyond the control of regional metropolises and there is no institutional vacuum. In fact, the Banggai archipelago is located quite centrally within Indonesia and until recently the local government's district offices were located just outside of the village of Tinakin Laut.

So both the concept of 'border communities' as well as the concept of 'frontier communities' can not be applied to the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut. It is for these reasons that I propose to introduce a new term to describe communities such as the Orang Bajo community of Tinakin Laut: 'boundary centred communities'. Within the concept of 'boundary centred communities':

- a boundary is defined as a real or imagined line or zone that marks the edge or limit of something. This means that boundaries can exist for example in between different views, beliefs, modes of existence and income levels. These boundaries can have a spatial element when they are located in between types of places. (In the case of the Orang Bajo in between land and sea.) 'Boundary centred communities' can be located on, or in the close vicinity of, borders between nation-states but do not necessarily have to be.
- it is recognized that for some groups, their identities can be best described by the central role that boundaries play in the construction of their identities.

- it is important to notice that, what forms a boundary or is marginal for one community, can form the centre for another community and vice versa⁸.
- communities can be defined in a positive way. Yes, they do not belong to A or to B but they could best be described as C. (In the case of the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut they live for example no longer on boats (A) and many of them do not live in regular houses on the land (B) but what is typical for the housing of this community is the stilt house (C).)
- it is recognized that boundaries often form a continuum between A and B.
- it is recognized that the living on boundaries can be a conscious choice.
- attention is paid to the fact that these boundary centred communities are likely to be overlooked by for example governments. This is because these communities are often located on the margins of societies

4.2 Fishing Communities and Identities

In the past, anthropologists have wondered whether maritime anthropology should be treated as a separate subject within anthropology. It is said that fishing communities only resemble each other in their physical environments (seas, rivers and lakes) and their livelihoods (fishing). There are however more resemblances. According to Smith, within fishing communities there are relatively little physical and communicative connections with other communities, populations tend to be relatively small and there are relatively little local political developments. Acheson states: "*In summary, fishing poses some very unusual constraints and problems. Marine adaptations are one of the most extreme achieved by man.*" (Acheson 1981: 277) These constraints and problems will be discussed when talking about the high levels of dependency, insecurity and risks that surround the fishing of the local population. Fishing communities are unique in its nature and therefore form a context suitable for both creating and evaluating anthropological theories and concepts.

⁸ Cohen gives in the book 'Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values' an example of the fact that what is marginal or peripheral for one party, can be central for another, when he talks about violence against women. "*Thus, across the lines of gender or caste or religion, what to one party is 'violence', to another party is 'appropriate discipline' or is simply not noticed; what seems peripheral to those at the putative political and economic centre is central to those on the putative periphery, and so on;*" (Cohen 2000:2)

For maritime fishing communities, fishing and the sea often play an important role in the construction of their cultural identities. In the article 'Defining Fishing Communities', Clay and Olson state that among fishing communities there often is "...*the frequent persistence of a sense of a cultural connection to fishing through changes from small-boat to large-boat, family to industrial, commercial to recreational fishing and even to fishing-related tourism that involves little actual fishing activity.*" (Clay and Olson 2007: 35) Taylor illustrates this when he talks about a salmon fishing community in Teelin, rural Ireland. "*Although not of great economic importance to most Teelin families, the salmon pursuit is the subject of considerable cultural attention, providing a source of communal and personal identity.*" (Taylor 1981: 774) Taylor also states:

...among the various things that Teeliners now do, economic and otherwise, the salmon fishery is the only activity that generates interactive settings critical to the expression and precise definition of communal boundaries. The fishery also provides a "theme" that lends an overall coherence to local culture and serves to distinguish the Teelin world view from that of surrounding settlements, and an "idiom" or common language of values, rules, and speech for the expression of community ideology and relations. (Taylor 1981: 775)

In what follows it will become clear that for the Orang Bajo too, fishing and the sea play an important role in the construction of their cultural identities.

4.3 Environments, Places and Meanings

Environments that surround people are either natural or constructed. Rapoport's book 'The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach' deals with constructed environments, but many of the statements made in this book are also applicable to the natural environment. According to Rapoport, people will always ascribe meanings to their environments. "...*the environment is not a random assemblage of things and people any more than a culture is a random assemblage of behaviors or beliefs. Both are guided by schemata that act as templates, as it were, organizing both people's lives and the settings for their lives.*" (Rapoport 1982: 178) The more intensive a place is used by people the more it gains meaning. Lowe says about the Togeian seawaters in Sulawesi: "*To people with an orientation towards the land, landlubbers as it were, these*

waters are empty. To Sama fishers, with their intimate knowledge of the Togeian waters, however, the coral reefs and shoals, and even the mid-ocean depths under the water's surface are 'intimately known and precisely inventoried' home spaces." (Lowe 2003: 116) It will become clear that for the research population too the sea is a meaningful place.

Meanings ascribed to the environment can play a role in the construction of identities. "...the meaning aspects of the environment are critical and central, so that the physical environment – clothes, furnishings, buildings, gardens, streets, neighborhoods, and so on- is used in the presentation of self, in establishing group identity, and in the enculturation of children." (Rapoport 1982: 15) Again this is true for the natural environment as well. Sather states that, at least until recently, the Orang Bajo have defined themselves as people of the sea, and others as people of the land (Sather 1997). It will become clear that for the local population too, the sea is used to construct identities. This using of the sea to construct social boundaries is not limited to the Orang Bajo. Greverus states for example that the sea is used by people to create the 'South Pacific identity' and the 'Mediterranean identity' (Greverus 1999). Not only actual places but types of places as well can be used to construct identities. In the case of the Orang Bajo the land and sea as a type of place are used to construct identities.

Warren states that the ecological segregation of the Orang Bajo contributed to their pariah status (Warren 1980). At the same time however this segregation helped the Orang Bajo to create a positive image of themselves (Warren 1980).

As an "enclosed" people whose interaction with superordinate groups was strictly proscribed in the earlier period, an inward looking focus and separate ecological base enabled the Bajau to insulate themselves against the full force of an imposed negative identity by ignoring, rationalizing or minimizing the subordinating mode of consciousness. At the same time they emphasized counter-values among themselves - such as their shared relationships, equality and unique ties to the sea. The material basis for this positive identity was the shared and egalitarian relations of subsistence production. (Warren 1980: 231)

Especially after the 1950s, more and more Orang Bajo became sedentary. Both Saat and Warren state that this sedentarisation, this changing of place, had a positive effect on the way the Orang Bajo were viewed by others. (Saat 2003; Warren 1983) "*Success in establishing permanent settlements eases the negative perception others have of them. Through adopting a sedentary mode of life, Sama-Bajau are considered to have proven themselves capable of creating and advancing material culture, and are thus worthy of being considered cultural equals.*" (Saat 2003: 7) It will become clear

that for the research population too, living on the land is related to status. Lenhart says about the moving of the Orang Bajo from sea to land: "*Growing sedentarism of the Orang Suku Laut and strong pressures to assimilate to the wider society will lead to the abolition of some features still constituting their ethnic identity and to the search for new definitions of identity. Probably, these will be more or less adapted to outside definitions*". (Lenhart 1993: 28) As we shall see, for the research population, living on the land is indeed being accompanied by adaptations to the lifestyles of the people living on the land.

5 The Boundary between Land and Sea

The main point that I wish to make throughout the following chapters is that for the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut, boundaries are central in daily life as well as for the construction of the Orang Bajo identity. This chapter serves to show that one of these boundaries is the boundary between land and sea. The local population is connected both to land and sea in a variety of ways. It are these connections that will be described here.

5.1 Fishing and Its Connections with Land and Sea

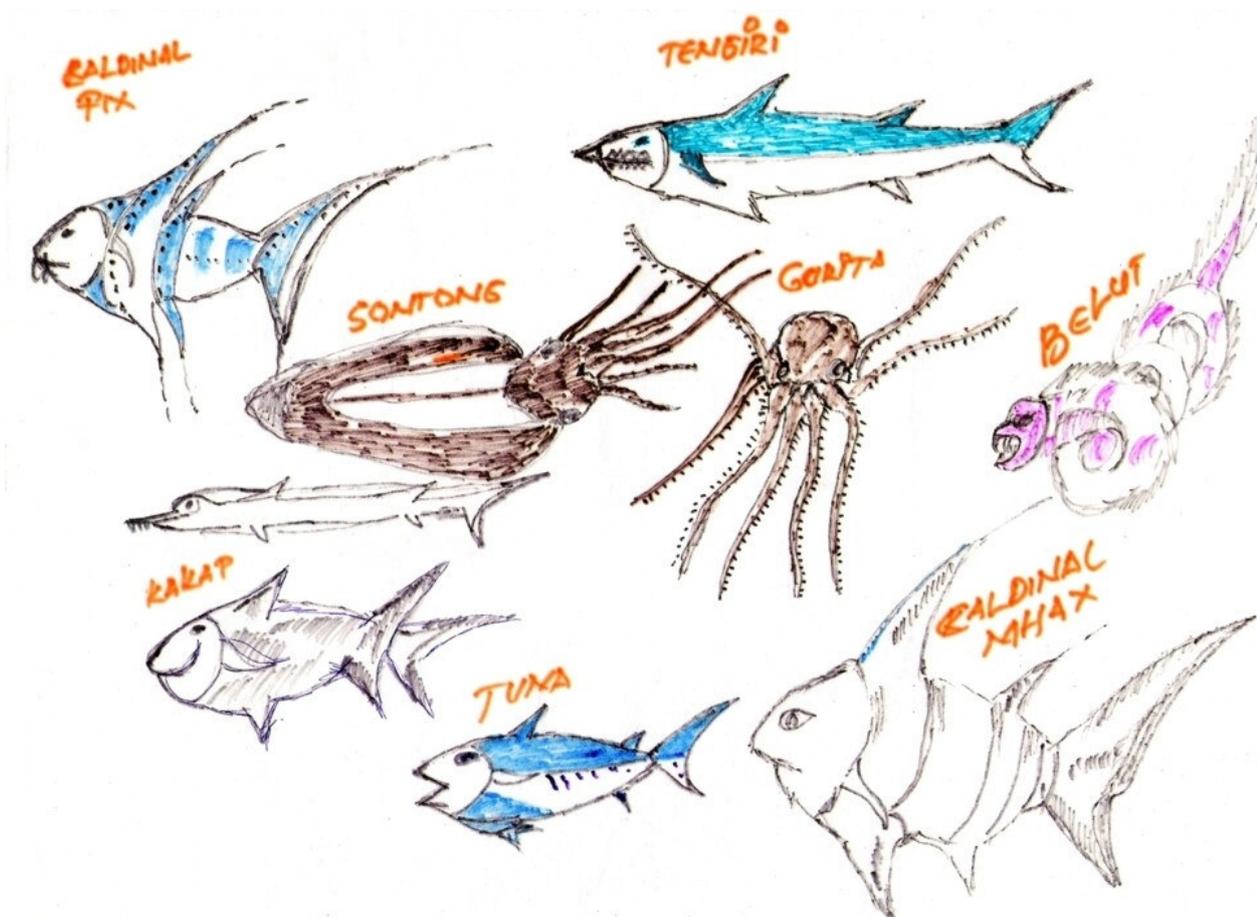
This section serves two purposes. Its first purpose is to describe the nature of Orang Bajo fishing. This fishing needs to be described because it is very important for the local population. The fishing of the local population will be described by looking at fishing techniques, fishing necessities, the economy of fishing, social aspects of fishing and the dependencies, insecurities and risks that surround fishing. The second purpose of this section is to show that the fishing of the local population is connected to both land and sea and that by making a living from fishing, the local population constantly crosses the boundary between land and sea.

It should be kept in mind when looking at the fishing of the Orang Bajo that fishing on the sea is not as different from other modes of subsistence on the land as is often perceived. The fishing of the Orang Bajo has often been misunderstood. *"The Orang Laut, who are often regarded as hunters-gatherers of the sea, are thought to forage for rather than produce their food. They are almost never seen as owners of resources. These perceptions assume a passive relationship between huntersgatherers and the physical world."* (Chou 1997: 611) According to Chou, this image is incorrect because the Orang Bajo in fact manage their resources (Chou 1997). Orang Bajo fishing should be seen as a food production activity because of the use of labour investments, the use of modification of the natural environment, the use of delayed return systems of harvest and consumption and the use of intellectual technology (Chou 1997). This intellectual technology, according to Chou *"...is that which forms the platform of the Orang Laut's invaluable knowledge of the biodiversity of the maritime world, how maritime species reproduce, the best ways of approaching and appropriating different species and methods of labor co-operation or formation of working partnerships best suited for gleaning successful harvests from the sea."* (Chou 1997: 612)

5.1.1 Fishing Skills and Techniques

Many men, women and children in the village have knowledge about things related to fishing such as fishing techniques, types of fish, the making of fishing tools, boats, sailing, navigation and weather conditions. During the research several activities were observed that show how skilled the Orang Bajo are. One young man made a drawing of different types of fish. (See figure 1) The amount of details in the drawing shows that he is very familiar with these fish. Many local fishermen are able to stand up straight in a sailing boat when there are high waves, without losing their balance. One man was observed navigating his boat and cutting *durians*⁹ at the same time. The skills and expertise of the local population is also shown by the variety of fishing techniques that are being used. People in Tinakin Laut mainly use lines, nets and explosives to fish. For all fishing methods things from the land are needed.

Figure 1: Drawing Made by a Local Man



⁹ *Durian*: a local type of fruit. It is covered with spines, is green from the outside and white from the inside. It grows in trees, has an unpleasant smell and is very much liked by the local population

Line Fishing

Many fishermen fish with lines¹⁰. There are at least two types of methods. With the first method only one hook is used. With the second method, multiple hooks are used. The first method is used relatively close to the village; ranging from within the village itself to a few hours sailing away. The following descriptions from the field serve to get a sense of what fishing with lines is like.

Line fishing with a single hook

Ananta and Nain are fishing in a large *perahu*¹¹. The following things are present in the boat: an oar, a box with hooks, a plastic scoop that can be used to remove water from the boat, three sets of fishing gear, a bottle of oil for the engine and two *malalugis*¹² fish for bait. The two men sail about two kilometres out of the coast. When they have stopped the engine, Nain throws out the line until the lead fishing weight hits the bottom of the ocean about 20 metres below. He puts his hands on the line to feel if a fish is eating the bait. It takes about fifteen minutes before he catches the first fish. After that, Ananta also starts fishing. When no fish has been caught for a while they sail to a place a bit farther away. Ananta and Nain do not talk to each other a lot. Sometimes nothing is said for minutes at a time. What is being said is mostly about the fishing itself: 'Could you pass me those hooks' or 'Let's try it over there'. Without looking, you can hear what the other person is doing: taking in the line, putting the line back on the reel, throwing out the bait, catching a fish or almost catching a fish. When a fish is almost caught but escapes, the men make excited and disapproving sounds.

Not many fishermen are out here today but when the men see a boat that they recognize they sail towards it to have some social talk and discuss the catch. One of the other fishermen gives me a fish.¹³ This fish is supposedly very naughty. His teeth are said to be so sharp that when he nibbles on the line he breaks it; causing the bait, the hook and the weight to be lost.

Once caught, fish are not actively being killed. The men will take the hook out of the

¹⁰ See Appendix 2, picture 1

¹¹ The Orang Bajo mainly use two types of boats. Both types are being called a *perahu*. The first type is the *perahu kecil* (small *perahu*), the second one is the *perahu besar* (big *perahu*).

¹² *Malalugis*: a local type of fish often used for bait. Is also often being smoked and sold on the fish market in Kota Banggai.

¹³ See Appendix 2, picture 2

fish, put it on the wooden bottom of the boat and leave it to die. One fish keeps on jumping and turning on the bottom of the boat for about 15 minutes. Every time the fish moves, Nain says with a smiling face: “*kuat sekali*” (very strong). (Extract from research fieldnotes)

Line fishing with multiple hooks

Nikki and Zul are fishing with the method called *pancing raweh*.¹⁴ (See figure 2 on the following page) They have spend 50,000 Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) on bait and 50,000 IDR on oil. They are fishing with a big *perahu*. The following things are present on the boat: a bottle of freshwater, a jerry can, *senoleh*¹⁵, clove cigarettes, two lighters, a sarong, bait, ice, a polystyrene foam box, a knife, lead fishing weights, a wooden reel with a thick line, spare hooks, a jerry can with oil, two rocks, ropes, two oars, a flagpole with flag, three buoys and one fishing line with over 70 large hooks.

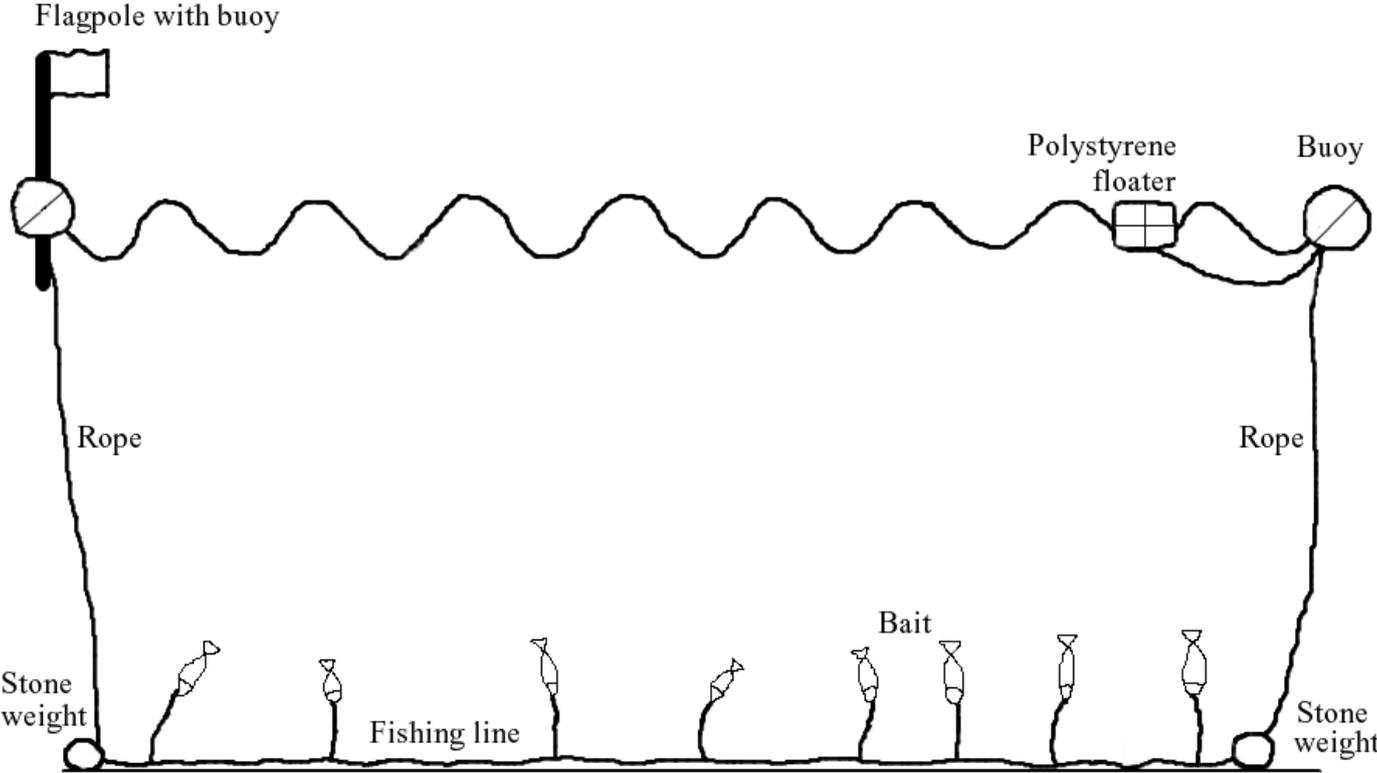
After sailing for two hours, Nikki and Zul stop at an island. It is very hot and they want to cool off by washing themselves at a small waterfall. After this, they sail to the open ocean and put out the lines for the first time. They wait for about one hour. During that time they rest in the burning sun and sing songs about love and about the sea. Then they take in the line again. Almost all the bait has been eaten but no fish have been caught.

The sun is already setting down when they put out the lines for the second time. In the dark they wait again for one hour and while lying down on the bottom of the *perahu* they sing the *Azaan* and other verses from the Qur’an. It is already dark by now. When the lines are taken in again, it becomes clear that only two animals have been caught. The first is a poisonous snake of about two metres. Nikki takes one of the oars and starts to hit the snake on the head. When it is dead he takes the hook out of its mouth and throws the snake back into the sea. The other animal caught is a fish that will sell for about 10,000 IDR at the market in Kota Banggai. This amount will not cover the expenses made. Although the catch has been disappointing the atmosphere has remained positive. Nikki and Zul continue to make jokes and sing. They smile to each other when big waves make the boat move up and down. (Extract from research fieldnotes)

¹⁴ See Appendix 2, picture 3

¹⁵ *Senoleh*: a local food that looks like flower

Figure 2: The *Pancing Raweh* Fishing Method



Nets

When fishing with nets, fishermen do not stay away longer than one day. Fishing with nets is done within the village but also farther away. The type of fish being caught, depends on the type of net that is used. Usually the fish that have been caught with nets are smaller than the ones caught using explosives. Exceptions do occur. During the fieldwork period one of the local fishermen did catch a dolphin.¹⁶ Unlike with other methods, women sometimes are involved in fishing with nets. Sometimes husband and wife fish with nets together¹⁷. Nets are usually bought in Kota Banggai.

¹⁶ See Appendix 2, picture 4
¹⁷ See Appendix 2, picture 5

Explosives

Fishing with explosives is illegal in the whole of Indonesia. Despite this, explosives are being used on a large scale in the Banggai region and the effects on the natural environment are disastrous.

Almost all the people in the village know that explosives are being used and it is a public secret. The majority of the fishermen in Tinakin Laut does not use explosives. People in Tinakin Laut do know that the method is illegal and that people can go to jail for it. They also know that explosives harm the environment, though it is not clear if they are aware of the precise effects. Explosives are always made in the privacy of the home. They are made out of glass bottles, artificial fertilizer, matches, small light bulbs, wire and plastic. Fishing with explosives is done only by males and it is only males who make the explosives.

When fishing with lines or nets, fishermen will stay out on the sea for longer than a day. When people fish with explosives, they are often gone for several days, with an average of four days. Fishing with explosives is done far away around other islands of the Banggai archipelago. When fishing takes longer than a day, fish needs to be kept cool so that it does not rot. Fish is kept cool by putting it in big white polystyrene foam boxes that have been filled with ice.

By looking at the fish that has been caught, one can see if explosives have been used to catch it. When caught with explosives the fish are often damaged. When fishing with explosives, bigger fish tend to be caught than when using other methods. Even when fishing with explosives, one can never be sure of a big catch. The fish caught with explosives is either sold to local traders or directly to consumers on the fish market in Kota Banggai. A lot of the fish that is sold to traders ends up on the international market.

Live Fish Trade, Fish Farming and Growing Seaweed

The Banggai archipelago is home to the endangered indigenous Banggai Cardinal fish. These are a popular fish for the ornamental live fish trade. Some local people catch live Banggai Cardinal fish. There are also people in the village who farm fish. With fish farming, fish are usually being caught when they are still small and are then being placed in nets. People will regularly feed the fish. Once the fish have grown to an acceptable size they are sold. In the village of Matanga, located on Pulau Banggai as well, many people make a livelihood by growing, processing and selling seaweed. This is not being done in Tinakin Laut.

Large Scale Fishing

Despite the environmental degradation of the seas in the archipelago, large scale fishing still takes place and there is apparently enough fish left to make it profitable. The Orang Bajo themselves mostly fish on a small scale, providing for their own families. For them fishing is not something that will bring great fortunes but a way to survive. Only a few locals do participate in large scale fishing. Large scale fishing in the village is mainly connected to the Darma-boat.

In between other smaller boats lays the Darma-boat. This wooden vessel is over fifteen metres long. Here fish is collected from the local fishermen. These fish are often big and have mostly been caught with explosives. On the boat itself there are several spaces below deck that have been filled with ice. On the Darma-boat fish is being sorted, washed and weighed and put into the compartments below deck. There are about thirty king squids, huge tuna like fish that are up to two and a half metres long, and several other species. From a nearby boat, over 200 octopuses are being thrown onto the deck, boxes at a time. There are about ten men and two women working on the boat. They all live in the village. The women wear blue plastic suits, boots and hand gloves. One woman keeps track of the amount of fish that is being loaded onto the boat.

From the Darma-boat fish is exported to the Philippines, Korea, Singapore and Australia. The owner of the boat is no Orang Bajo. He lives somewhere on the mainland of Central Sulawesi. People say that they are happy that the Darma-boat operates in the village because it provides them with an income. (Extract from research fieldnotes)

5.1.2 Boats

The Orang Bajo mainly use two types of boats. Both are called a *perahu*. The first type is the *perahu kecil* (small *perahu*), the second one is the *perahu besar* (big *perahu*). *Perahus* are made out of wood. The use of *perahus* is seen as typical for the Orang Bajo. A *perahu* is a highly appreciated possession. People tend to be careful with it since it provides them with an income and because it is often the only means of transportation available. According to the local population, many people know how to make *perahus* but prefer to buy them because of the amount of work involved in making them. Both small and big *perahus* are completely made by hand. *Perahus* are regularly being put on the land to check if they are in a good condition and to repair them if necessary. Once in a while every

perahu is treated with fire to keep it waterproof. This is being done by burning the wood to a certain extent with the use of bundled palm leaves that have been set on fire¹⁸.

Small *perahus* are canoe like boats that are made out of a single piece of untreated wood. They can be up to about four meters long but smaller versions do also exist. They tend to lay deep in the water. Especially the older small *perahus* are often not completely waterproof. While being on the water, a plastic tool is used to scoop water out of the boat. Because no engines are used on these small *perahus*, people always use a *busei* (oar) to get around. The smaller *perahus* are used for small distances: for fishing close to the village, for getting freshwater at the nearby river or for bringing children to school.

Big *perahus* tends to be wider and longer. They can be up to about seven meters long. Both outboard and inboard motors are used for these boats that run either on gas or on oil. These boats are made out of several pieces of woods.¹⁹ They are mainly being used for longer distances: for fishing far away from the village and for visiting Kota Banggai and villages across the archipelago. The big *perahus* often have been painted. The colours of the sea are popular colours for these boats. They have often been painted in blue and green shades. One time I asked a man who was making a big *perahu* if he planned on painting it. He said he would like to paint it in "durian-green" but did not have the money to buy paint. For that he needed to go fishing first. At the back of a big *perahu*, there where the engine is, the wood often has been carved into figures. Here, extra attention has often been paid to the painting.²⁰

5.1.3 Other Fishing Necessities

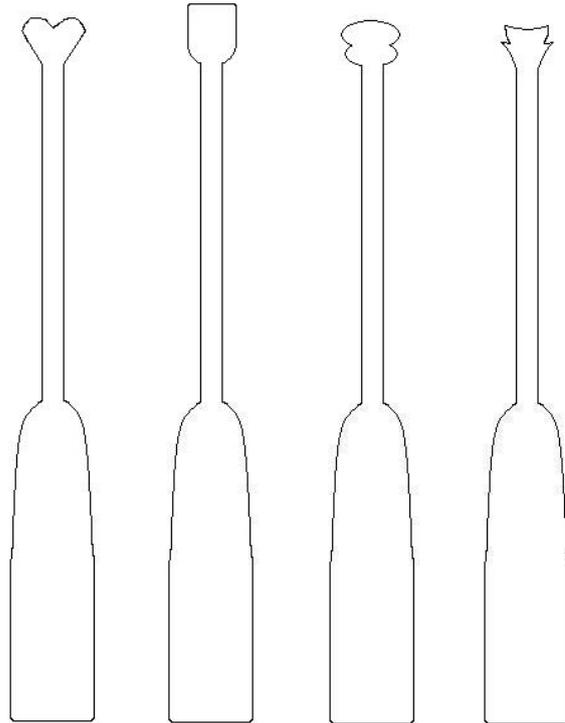
The Indonesian word for oar is *dayung*. The *Bahasa Sama* name is *busei*. A *busei* is always made out of wood. Before engines were available, Orang Bajo always used a *busei* to sail. *Buseis* tend to be about one and a half meters long. Almost all of the families in the village make their own *buseis* and it is always men who make them. As can be seen in figure 3 on the following page, the back of the *busei* is usually carved into a particular shape. This is handy because it shows who owns a certain *busei*.

¹⁸ See Appendix 2, picture 6

¹⁹ See Appendix 2, picture 7

²⁰ See Appendix 2, picture 8 and 9

Figure 3: Different *Buseis* (Oars)



Since the Orang Bajo have been involved in cash economies they have become more dependent on the land, even for fishing. Because they are now using engines on their boats, gasoline and oil have to be bought from suppliers that are located on the land. When using engines one can fish further from the home. When fishing far away, the fish needs to be stored cool and ice is then needed as well.

5.1.4 Selling Fish

Fishing is also connected to the land because fish is sold to people living on the land and traded for products from the land. The village head said that the people in Tinakin Laut work very hard but that profits from selling fish are often low and costs often high. During the fieldwork period I asked two fishermen who had fished together, about the profits from their last fishing trip where they had used explosives to fish. (See table 1 on the following page)

Fishing does not always result in a profit. Sometimes the costs are higher than the revenues. Costs and revenues are influenced by many factors which will be discussed later on. Some people in the village raise their revenues from fishing by processing the fish before selling it. This way the fish

Table 1: Profits from Fishing with Explosives

Costs (in IDR)		Revenues (in IDR)	
Gasoline	150,000	Selling price for one kilo of fish	13,000
Ice	10,000	Amount of kilos caught	41
Matches	30,000		
Artificial fertilizer	200,000		
Small light bulbs	10,000		
Total costs	400,000	Total revenues	533,000
Total Profit (in IDR) 533,000 – 400,000 = 133,000			

gets added value. People process fish by smoking it above wooden fires, by salting it and by drying it in the sun. This is mostly done by women.²¹ Most people in the village will only sell fresh fish.

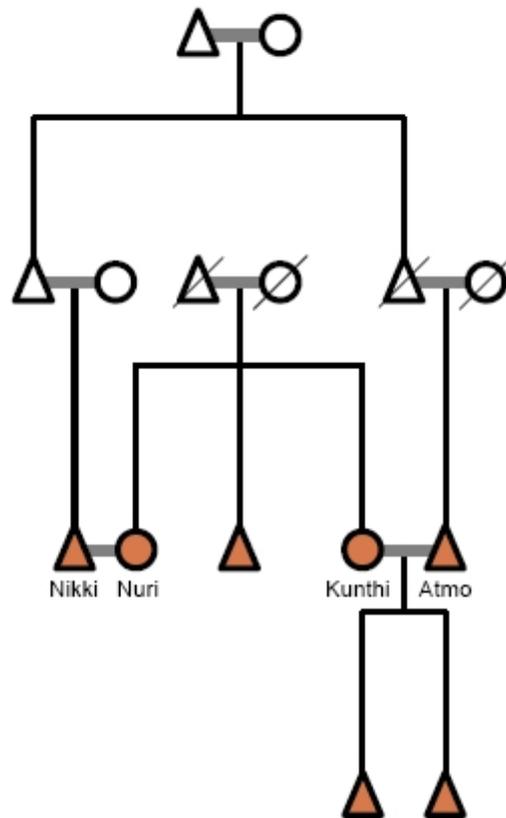
When men fish together, costs and revenues are being divided. In the case of three people fishing together with nets, the costs are first deducted from the revenues. The amount left is then divided by four. The person who owns the boat and the nets will get two shares; the other two fishermen will get one share each.

In general, the profits from fishing are spend on the people forming one household. A household can be defined as a group of people that dwell under the same roof and share common activities and goals (Yanagisako 1979). Among the local population multiple households sometimes live in one house. Figure 4 and 5 on the following pages show examples of how profits from fishing are being spend.

When fishermen return home from a fishing trip, some fish is set apart to be consumed by the household itself. Often some fish is given away to others as well. Most of the time, the fish left is sold on the Pasar Baru (new market) in Kota Banggai. This is the biggest fresh-food market on Pulau Banggai. Conveniently located only about two kilometres from the village, the Pasar Baru can be reached by the road or by sea. Usually the people of the village visit it by *perahu*. Both men and women sell fish on the market. Sometimes husband and wife sell fish together. Fish is mainly being sold in the early morning when the market starts but continues until around four o’ clock in the afternoon. The market is open every day. Fish is either sold directly to the end-user or to retailers. When sold directly to end-users, fish is displayed on tarps on the ground or on wooden tables. The fish is kept fresh by packing it in ice and by pouring cold freshwater over it. Many types of fish are sold on the market. Here, one can buy for example: squid, octopuses, *malalugas*, tunas, rays and

²¹ See Appendix 2, picture 10 and 11

Figure 4: The House of Atmo (individuals living in this house have been assigned an orange colour)



Nikki and Atmo are the only ones earning money from fishing. When Nikki earns money from fishing, he spends it on himself and his wife and sometimes on his relatives living in another village. When Atmo earns money from fishing, he spends it on all the people living in the house. (See the following page for another example of how profits from fishing are being spend)

groupers. The smallest fish are about two centimetres long and the biggest ones are up to two metres long. Not only fresh fish, but dried and salted fish as well are sold. A lot of the bigger fish have been caught with explosives. Prices are negotiable and depend on many factors which will be discussed in the next section. The profits from selling fish are often used to buy other goods available on the market. These goods include rice, fruits, vegetables, eggs and clothes. The Orang Bajo hardly ever buy fish themselves.

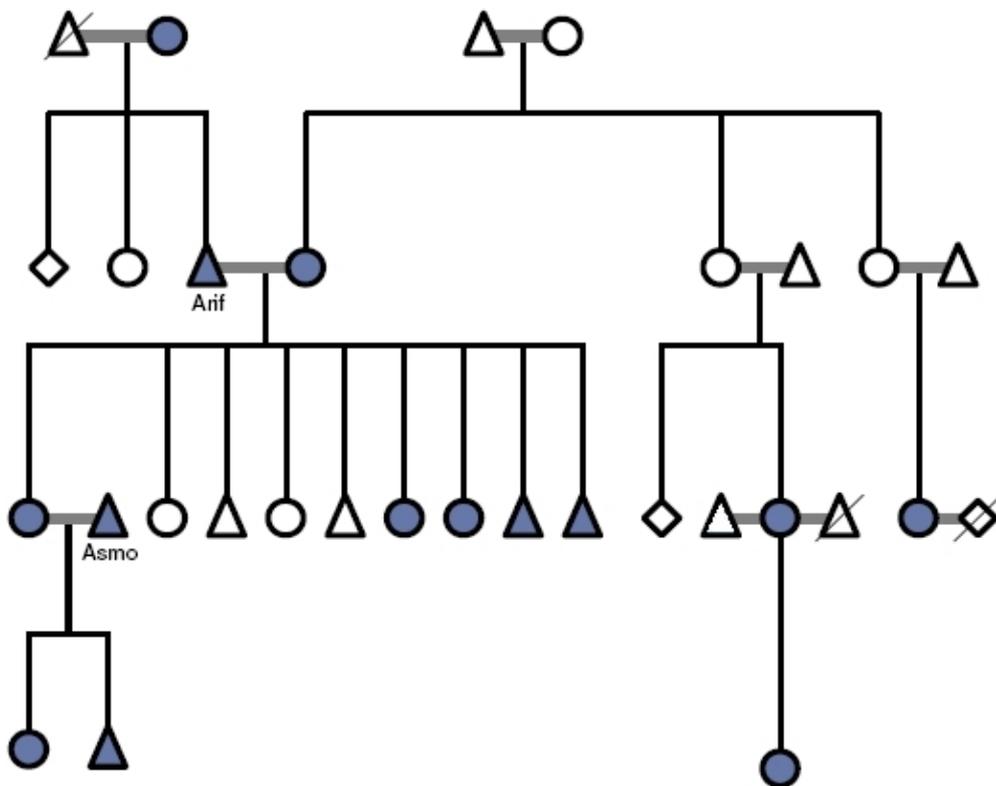
5.1.5 Dependency, Insecurity and Risks

In order to understand the nature of Orang Bajo fishing it is important to realize that is surrounded

by dependencies, insecurities and risks. Insecurity results from being dependent on factors beyond one's control. Risks occur when these factors can negatively affect a person. The majorities of the households in the village are completely dependent on fishing for their livelihoods. One informant said that when profits from fishing are low, people often have to borrow money from others. Fishing does not provide a steady income. Fishing, by its very nature, brings about great insecurities.

The insecurities that surround fishing can be caused by personal, social, economical, political, and natural factors. They can be caused by factors from the land and from the sea. One of the personal factors that influence fishing is health. During the fieldwork period one local fisherman got malaria. While he was sick he could not go fishing and his family had difficulties getting enough food. In order to fish one needs to have a boat, bait and fishing equipment. As we have seen, engines, oil, gas and ice are also often needed. It is not only the personal financial situation that determines whether these things are available. One time during the field period, the boat from the mainland of Sulawesi

Figure 5: The House of Arif (individuals living in this house have been assigned a blue colour)



In the house of Arif the only ones making profits from fishing are Arif and Asmo. When Asmo earns a profit from fishing, he spends it on himself, his wife and his children. When Arif earns a profit he spends it on all the people living in the house

that delivers gasoline to Kota Banggai had not arrived. For a period of a few days gasoline could not be bought on Pulau Banggai.

Economical factors also influence fishing. Fish is sold on the Pasar Baru where the economical laws of supply and demand apply. These laws influence the costs as well. The prices of gasoline, oil, ice and artificial fertilizer (used for making explosives) vary. Central and local governments can decide to change fishing regulations and this can influence fishing as well.

Nature influences fishing in many ways. Environmental degradation negatively influences the chances of catching fish. When it storms and waves are high, the selling prices of fish are higher and fishing is more difficult and sometimes even impossible. This is why men who have planned on going fishing, always keep a close eye on the weather conditions. It is said that during a full moon fishing is more difficult because fish, trying to avoid the bright moonlight, will not come to the surface.

The sea can be a dangerous place. Pregnant women are often advised by their husbands to stay ashore because of the dangerous sea. Just sailing can be dangerous. High waves can make boats sink and fishermen drown. When there is a lot of wind and rain, fishermen run the risk of getting acute bronchitis. Fishing with hooks and lines can be dangerous when a big fish is being caught. The sharp lines can cause injuries to the hands. High temperatures and the sun can cause hyperthermia and headaches. The most dangerous method of fishing is the one where one uses explosives. Accidents are rare but can be lethal. Fishing with explosives is also risqué because it is illegal and in the unlikely event that one gets arrested by the marine police, one can be put in jail. During the fieldwork period I did not hear about people who had been arrested.

Scuba diving is not being done on a large scale, but those who do dive are exposed to risks. Several men said that they had been scuba diving at more than 50 metres. One man was suffering from pain in his joints due to decompression sickness. He said that he was afraid to go diving again but that he would very much like to since he enjoyed seeing the big fish underwater. It was said that one man from the village had died while scuba diving.

Dangerous creatures form another risk for those at sea. A woman said that the Orang Bajo are afraid of big fish and sharks because they can bite people. People will avoid swimming on certain locations because of the big fish swimming there. The seawaters surrounding the Pasar Baru are shallow and muddy. These waters are considered to be dangerous by both the people from Tinakin Laut as well as by others. Snakes, alligators and an anaconda are said to swim in these waters. Fishermen often wear metal or silver bracelets around their wrists or ankles. It is believed that these bracelets, because of the sunlight they reflect in the water, scare away big fish. Other dangerous sea creatures include poisonous snakes and sea urchins. Indirectly the sea poses dangers to the local

population because it often does not provide families enough money for decent housing and healthcare.

One time I asked a woman if she was worried about her husband if he went fishing. She said that she would be more worried if he would not be fishing because then the family would not have any income. So because people need to fish for their livelihoods risks need to be taken.

5.1.6 Social Fishing

Another characteristic of Orang Bajo fishing is that it has social aspects. Fishing with one hook can be done easily solitary, but when using other methods, more people are often needed. That is why men often fish together. A fishing partner can be someone living in the same house or a relative or friend living in another house. When fishing close to the village, fishermen often sail to other fishers to have some social talk. When fishing with explosives, appointments with other fishermen are made in advance to go fish together. When fishing with explosives, fishermen are usually gone for several days at a time. They then often cook, eat and sleep together on islands far away from the village. The people of the village often know who went fishing with whom, what methods are being used and how much fish people caught the last time they went fishing.

5.2 Living on Land and Sea

It is not only the fishing of the local population that is related to the boundary between land and sea. This section serves to show that the housing of the local population is also related to this boundary. A house can be described by its physical characteristics as well by the meanings that the residents give to it. In 'Habits of the Home: Spatial Hegemony and the structuration of House and Society in Brazil', Robben says the following about the house: "*House and society constitute a dynamic complex in which changes in one are mirrored yet transformed in the other*" (Robben 1989: 572). This means that the house itself and the meanings attached to the house, can tell something about the society in which the house is located. In what follows it will become clear that the housing of the local population is indeed very representative for their society.

5.2.1 Living on Boats

The housing of the Orang Bajo has changed a lot over time. The direction has been to move away from the sea and towards the land. Not only for their fishing but for their housing too the Orang Bajo have become more dependent on and connected to the land. The living on boats has already been completely abandoned in the Banggai region. Only on rare occasions do some of the local fishermen spend a few days on boats, but this is only done when no housing is available. It was said by the local population that earlier generations lived on *perahus*. These *perahus* were said to have simple huts built on top of them. People would say about the Orang Bajo of the past that they did not have engines on their boats and that they always needed to row if they wanted to go somewhere. An old woman said that the Orang Bajo of the past, cooked, ate, washed and slept on *perahus* and did not like the land. One young man said that the Orang Bajo of the past lived on boats because on the land they were being harassed by the Japanese.

The local population gave several explanations for why the Orang Bajo eventually started to live on the land. Living on boats is seen as something from the past. It was said that the Orang Bajo had already become modern. A young woman said that her father used to live on a boat close to an island located far away from Tinakin Laut. When he married and had gotten children, he wanted to live on the land. The young woman also said that living on a boat was good for men but not for women because it was very hard for women to run a household without freshwater being available. Another informant said that living in a house was much better because on the sea one constantly had to deal with dangers such as high waves and storms. One man said that if whole families nowadays would continue to live on boats they would already be "*setengah mati*" (half dead) because there would not be enough food available. There were also people who said that the Orang Bajo of the past did not have knowledge yet about housing or that they were tired of always living on boats and wanted to rest on the land.

It is not clear when exactly the Orang Bajo started to live in houses in Tinakin Laut. It is likely that the sedentarisation took place over a period of multiple years. A former head of the local elementary school said that the first houses were built around 1905. According to a local medicine man, the first houses in Tinakin Laut were built around 1920. It was said that these houses were stilt houses and that most of the people who built these houses used to live in big *perahus*.

5.2.2 The *Wabaroh* (the Simple House)

Where before, the living in *perahus* was seen as typical for the Orang Bajo, it is currently the living in a *wabaroh* that is said to be typical. The word *wabaroh* is a *Bahasa Sama* word. It was said during a group interview that it translates into *Bahasa Indonesia* with the word *pondok*. In the dictionary the word *pondok* is said to mean: a small simple house, kiosk, small shelter, hut, cottage or roughly made house (Hawkins 2004). About eighty percent of the houses in Tinakin Laut are *wabarohs*. According to the local population there are two basic types of *wabarohs*. The first type is a stilt house on the sea; the second type is a house on the land. There are also houses that are a combination of these types.²² A survey²³ among a class from the local primary school revealed that out of 33 children, 20 lived in houses that stood completely on the land, 11 lived in houses that stood halfway on the land and halfway on the sea and two children lived in a house located completely on the sea.

Wabarohs are never located more than about 30 metres from the sea. The basic shape of the *wabaroh* is square or rectangular. They never have multiple floors. The walls are always made either out of wood or out of palm leaves. When the *wabaroh* is small it consists out of just one room. When it is big enough it consists out of separate rooms. The wood that is used to build the outside walls of the *wabaroh* often has a grey colour because it has been weathered by sun and sea. *Wabarohs* are seldom painted. The roofs are made out of palm leaves or metal plates and have a pointed shape. A *wabaroh* has windows with shutters but without glass. Almost every *wabaroh* has its own deck, either attached to the house or close to the house. The deck is seen as part of the house. Decks are always made out of wood and rests on stilts. Washing lines, fishing nets and boxes filled with freshwater are often present on the deck. Cooking is either done within the house, on the deck or close to the house. In one case, there was a separate stilt house that served as the kitchen. Cooking is done with wood. Cooking fires are made on the ground or on a wooden construction.

²² See Appendix 2, picture 12-15

²³ A total of 33 children were included in the survey. Approximately half of them were girls and half of them were boys. 30 of them said that they were Orang Bajo. The children's age ranged from about nine until thirteen years old. According to the village head, about 90 percent of the children in the village attend primary school. The ten percent that does not attend primary school does not do so because their parents do not have enough money for it. The fact that about ten percent of the poorest children in the village do not attend school might have influenced the survey results

5.2.3 The *Wabaroh pakai Benteh* (the Stilt House)

According to the village head, of the more than 400 houses located in the village more than 40 are stilt houses. Up to this day, new stilt houses are still being built. In *Bahasa Sama* there is no special word for a stilt house. One speaks of a *wabaroh pakai benteh* (a *wabaroh* with stilts) or of a *wabaroh di laut* (a *wabaroh* on sea). The stilts that these houses are built on are named *benteh* in *Bahasa Sama* but *tiang* in *Bahasa Indonesia*. The bigger stilts are always made out of coconut palms²⁴. The smaller ones are made out of all kind of woods. *Wabarohs pakai benteh* are located relatively close to the land, at the most about 20 metres from the land. Stilt houses that stand close together and close to the land, are often connected to each other and the land by small walking bridges. Sometimes nets are located under the house to grow fish in.²⁵ Life in stilt houses mainly takes place on the wooden floors since there often is hardly any furniture present. People will eat, talk and sleep on the floor. When one looks through the spaces in between the wooden planks one can see the seawater and the fish swimming in it.

Living in a *wabaroh pakai benteh* offers some advantages in comparison to houses located on the land. A *perahu* can approach the stilt house at a close range, there are fewer animals and vermin within these houses, due to the constant ocean breeze these houses tend to be cooler and living conditions are more hygienically because waste can be dumped directly into the sea. Furthermore, stilt houses are generally located higher above the seawater than houses on the land, offering advantages when tides are unusually high.

Living in a *wabaroh pakai benteh* has, in the views of the local population, many disadvantages as well. It has physical limitations. It is for example impossible to put a concrete floor in it, something that is often being done with houses on the land. Every five to six years the stilts have to be replaced. This costs time, effort and money. When a stilt house is not connected to the main land by walking bridges, people always have to use a *perahu* to go somewhere. Safety is also a concern for people living in a stilt house. An older woman said that she was afraid of storms and high waves because the stilt houses were easy to get damaged.

One particular event aggravated the concerns about safety. "*An earthquake triggering a tsunami hit Central Sulawesi Province on May 4, leaving 41 dead, 228 injured and 10,500 families homeless in the districts of Luwuk and the Banggai/Peleng islands.*" (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2000) Due to this earthquake a lot of stilt houses were destroyed in the village and a few people died. Since the earthquake, people have been more hesitant to live in stilt houses. The earthquake caused landslides. Rocks from the hills that surround the village fell into the

²⁴ See Appendix 2, picture 16

²⁵ See Appendix 2, picture 17

ocean, creating new land. These factors caused the people who at the time lived in stilt houses to build new houses on the newly available land.

Almost all of the informants living in a stilt house said that if they had the choice they would prefer to live on the land instead. So why do so many people continue to live in stilt houses on the sea? Housing on the land is expensive mainly because of the limited availability of land within the village, even after the earthquake. This is due to the natural environment that consists mainly out of steep rock formations. Since land prices are relatively high it is the poorest people who live in stilt houses.

The local population has found the following solution for the lack of available land. They make new land by placing rocks from the surrounding mountains into the ocean. This process of land reclamation continues up to this day. People who live in stilt houses sometimes fill the spaces between the floors of the house and the bottom of the sea with stones, thereby transforming the *wabaroh* on sea into a *wabaroh* on land²⁶. Sometimes land is only being placed under parts of the stilt house, making the house stand partially on the land and partially still on the sea. Governmental laws state that the newly created land beneath the stilt house belongs to the person that owns the house. New land is also being created because of the yearly period of high tides. During this period seawater levels can be up to about fifty centimetres higher than usual, sometimes causing water to enter houses. That is why land is also being added under and around houses that are already located on the land.

5.2.4 The Ideal House

People are sometimes embarrassed to be living in a *wabaroh*. The *wabaroh* is seen as a type of housing for the poor people. The ideal house is located on the land, has been made out of stone, has painted walls, multiple floors, a metal roof, running water and central electricity. The ideal house is a status symbol, showing that the people living in it are doing well financially. One of these "ideal houses" in the village is owned by a non-Orang Bajo couple from Ujung Pandang, Sulawesi.²⁷ The husband earns a living by trading fish. He buys the fish from the local fishermen.

The Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut nowadays prefer to live on the land. Desires do however not only point towards the land but to the sea as well. Living in close proximity to the sea is said to be important. A young fisherman said: "*We can not live far from the sea because the sea is our living*". He

²⁶ See Appendix 2, picture 18

²⁷ See Appendix 2, picture 19

also stated that if the Orang Bajo lived far away from the sea they did not have any place close to the house where they could put their boats. "*Our boats would be stolen*", he said. The Orang Bajo not only need to live close to the sea because their livelihoods depend on it, they also like to live close to the sea. One informant said "*Suku Orang Bajo suka tinggal dekat air laut*" (the Orang Bajo people love to live close to the waters from the sea). An older woman said that real Orang Bajo could not live on the land.

5.2.5 Fishing and Its Effects on Housing

Both fishing and housing are connected to the boundary between land and sea. Fishing and housing are connected to each other as well. Almost all the people living in *wabarohs* depend on fishing for their livelihoods. Being dependent on fishing for a livelihood influences the actual house, the activities that are performed in the house and the social organizations within in the house. Since the people who live in *wabarohs* are often poor, they try to save labour costs by building and maintaining the house themselves. Costs are also saved by using natural materials like wood and palm tree leaves as much as possible. Because little money is being earned with fishing, certain things, such as running water, are often absent. Because people fish, fishing necessities are often present in and around the house. As stated earlier, the dependency on fishing for a livelihood is one of the reasons that *wabarohs* are located on or close to the sea. The fact that almost every household living in a *wabaroh* owns one or more *perahus* also shows the dependency on the sea. The dependency on the sea is also shown by the fact that almost every *wabaroh* has a deck and that these decks are used intensively.

In and around the house a lot of fishing related activities are being performed. These include: cooking fish, eating fish, filing boat propellers, sharpening knives, repairing boats, engines and nets, making boats, telling stories about the sea etcetera. Fishing also effects the social organizations within the house. Because of the insecurities that surround fishing, social organizations need to be flexible. These flexibilities will be further discussed in the chapter called 'the Poverty Boundary'.

One example was found of how the house and fishing can be symbolically connected to each other. A woman said "*The Orang Bajo say that it is not good for fishing and for the rezeki if a man is out on the sea and there is ribut in his house*" (*Rezeki*: luck, good fortune, gift from god. *Ribut*: noise, busyness, unrest). She said that if there would be too much *ribut* the *rezeki* would disappear. She also said that when the family did not have a TV yet, it was often quieter in the house and that in those days her husband used to catch more fish.

5.3 Other Connections with the Sea

The Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut are not only connected to the sea through their fishing and housing. This section will show that the local population is also connected to the sea through their perceived common history and through the telling of stories about the past. This shared history and these stories that have been passed on from generation to generation are seen as typical for the Orang Bajo. People are also connected to the sea because they love the sea. Loving the sea is also seen as an Orang Bajo characteristic.

5.3.1 A Shared History and Stories about the Past

All the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut feel that they have a shared history of being former sea nomads and that this connects them to the sea. Some of the informants remember their parents telling them about how they used to live on the sea in *perahus*. In the village, stories about the common history of the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut are known and told. In these stories, land and sea often play a role. Stories about how the Orang Bajo originate from Johor, Malaysia, are widespread among the Orang Bajo (Warren 1980). An older woman from the village told a variant on this origin myth. The story tells of the granddaughter of the first Orang Bajo man.

One day, the granddaughter was searching for *bia-bia* (a type of black shellfish). Then it started to storm. The child could not get away and started to sing. She went under water and drifted away. The foam of the sea surrounded her body and she was in the middle of the foam. She stranded at a Bugis²⁸ village.

The story further tells that this girl ended up marrying the son of a Buginese sultan and that they got a child and that this child sang in *Bahasa Sama*. It further tells that the husband of the woman often asked her where she was from, but that she could not answer him because she did not speak his language.

At first she could not speak *Bahasa Bugis* but when she had lived with the Orang Bugis already for a long time she had learned to speak it. One day the husband asked her

²⁸ The Buginese are the culturally dominant ethnic group in Sulawesi, Indonesia. Their language belongs to the Austronesian language family. Traditionally their economies were mainly based on rice cultivation and inter-island trade. (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online 2009)

again: 'Where are you originally from?' This time the woman answered: 'I am originally an *Orang Bajoe*'. Then her husband said: 'From now on this village will no longer be a Buginese village but a Bajoé village'.

The story further tells of how the grandfather of the lost girl tried to look for her for a long time and of how he eventually found her when she had already grown up.

On several occasions during the fieldwork period people mentioned that the Orang Bajo and the Orang Bugis are *saudarabs* (siblings). One of the local *dukuns* told the following story about the origins of the Orang Bajo.

Waktu dulu (the first time/a long time ago) there were a husband and a wife. The man was an Orang Bugis and the woman was an Orang Bajo. They got a child and that child cried in *Bahasa Sama*. This child was the first real Orang Bajo and it lived in a *wabarah pakai benteh*. These people have already died a long time ago and they were Indonesians. The language that the child cried in is called *Bahasa Sama* because all Orang Bajo are *sama* (equal).

The Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut also tell stories about the history of the village. An older woman sang the following song.

Once there was the village Tidung where we looked for the lost child of the grandfather. The parents of the child felt confused by looking here and there, in the afternoon and in the night. 'Where is your place?'; the place of the lost child of the grandfather. By accident, it had happened that it had stranded there; that it had stranded in the village Bajoé. Now the place that we visited is already our village. Do not think the people here are Banggai people.

This story seems to combine the Johor myth with the Banggai archipelago. The story shows that at least some Orang Bajo do not wish to be seen as being the same as other people from the Banggai region. The woman who sang this song also said that the Orang Banggai often called the Orang Bajo *orang terdampar* (stranded people). She said that this was in fact incorrect because only the lost child had stranded and not all the Orang Bajo.

Stories about the origins of the village of Tinakin Laut are often closely related to Pulau Keramat which forms part of the village. An old *makam* (burial place) is located on top of this island. A young man called Dian, told the following story about the early days of Tinakin Laut. The story is said to have taken place over 50 years ago.

The people of Tinakin Laut are originally from Salabangka²⁹, South-Sulawesi. Dians grandmother was one of the first inhabitants of Tinakin Laut. At the time, she did not want to settle on Pulau Keramat because there were many bad spirits over there. In those days, Tinakin Laut only consisted of forest and Kota Banggai was not big yet. In Kota Banggai there was a king. This king only appeared to people as a cat. He could speak and write. He spoke in *Bahasa Lontar* and wrote in Arabic. This king instructed Dians grandmother to go live on Pulau Keramat, so she went to live there.

In those days the *makam* on Pulau Keramat was already there. In the *makam* a cousin of the Banggai king is buried. When this cousin was still alive he had already expressed that he would like to be buried on Pulau Keramat. This man did not have red blood, but white blood and lived in the palace of the Banggai king. When the cousin died, all the water around Pulau Keramat rose to the top of the island and then returned again to a normal level. This only happened to the water surrounding Pulau Keramat. Other waters remained untouched.

There seems to be little consensus on who exactly is buried on the island. Some people say that it is a Banggai king, others that it is the cousin of a Banggai king, others that it is an Orang Bajo king and still others that it is an Orang Mandar.

5.3.2 Loving the Sea

The local population often mentioned the connections between the Orang Bajo and the sea as being typical for their identity. People would say: '*Orang Bajo suka laut*' (The Orang Bajo love the sea). As we have seen, people like to live close to the sea. While sailing on the sea, a woman said that she enjoyed looking at the water much more than looking at the land. Although being surrounded by the sea almost constantly, people still like to spend the day on the beach when looking for recreation. Several young women were very enthusiastic about visiting a beach called Pasar Putih

²⁹ See the section 'Maps' for the location of Salabangka

(the white beach). They very much appreciated the waterfalls, sandy beaches, clear seawaters, waves and amount of fish present there.

Children love the sea as well. By processes of enculturation, knowledge, skills and views related to the sea are being passed on to children. For the children of Tinakin Laut, the sea forms a very important playground. During any day one can find groups of children playing there. Often children play together in groups consisting out of mixed genders and age groups. Older children often look after the younger ones.

One of the children's favourite things to do is swimming.³⁰ The sea is never far away and the range of games that can be played in the sea seems to be endless. Games include looking for shellfish, diving to the bottom of the sea, diving from decks and boats, jumping of each others backs and holding swimming contests. During the fieldwork period I did not see any parent teaching its child how to swim. It is likely that children learn this from their peers. Usually at the age of four, children can already swim. Children who spend a lot of time swimming in the sea, often have relatively dark skins and their hair has often been bleached by the sun and by the salt from the sea.

Not only are the children of the village excellent swimmers, they also know rowing and fishing. Sometimes groups of children will take a small *perahu* and sail between the stilt houses. Children from about four years old are already able to row a small *perahu* by themselves.³¹ Sometimes children will make miniature boats out of polystyrene foam to play with on the water. When children fish, they usually fish using a line with a single hook. Fishing for them is a game but when they catch a lot of fish they are contributing to the family meals as well.

Children know the dangers of the sea very well. They know about the places surrounding the village where there are many dangerous fish and they avoid these places. They also know how to avoid poisonous sea snakes and sea urchins. When they catch a poisonous fish, they will first kill it by smacking it to a hard surface before taking the hook out. It almost never happens that a child drowns. If a child is found unconscious in the water, the following procedure is said to be followed. The child is taken out of the water and held upside-down above a fire. After that, brown sugar is placed into the child's mouth. It is said that if the child chews on the sugar it is still alive and that if it does not react to the sugar it has already died.

Children know their direct environments and the people around them very well. When I would show children pictures of the village, they would instantly know where the picture was taken and who was on the picture. When I showed some children pictures of the back of two big *perahus* even the five year olds knew whose boat it was.

³⁰ See Appendix 2, picture 20 and 21

³¹ See Appendix 2, picture 22

Since swimming, rowing and fishing are such popular activities one would expect that children want to be fishermen when they grow up. The earlier mentioned survey showed that this is not the case.

Table 2: Local Elementary School Survey Results

Question	Results		Times that no answer was given
My father fishes	Yes 27	No 6	0
My mother fishes	Yes 0	No 33	0
When I am grown up I want to be a fisherman/woman	Yes 0	No 32	1

For girls this might seem logical since their mothers do not fish but boys too do not want to become fishermen even though their fathers fish. The EC PREP report offers an additional explanation for the fact that girls are reluctant to be involved in fishing.

The girls do not help much, they are ashamed to go to sea as traditional Bajau women did, and some still do, even for the seaweed farming. They also do not help their mothers in selling fish. They are afraid their friends will laugh at them and that, with their skins darkened by the sun it will be hard to find or retain a partner. (EC PREP Project 2004: 220)

5.4 Other Connections with the Land

Not only fishing and housing are related to the land. The Orang Bajo have never lived as an isolated tribe without any connections to the land or the people from the land (Warren 1983). Nowadays they continue to depend on the land for many things such as freshwater, goods, alternative professions, education, information and the burying of the dead.

5.4.1 Freshwater

Many people in the village are not connected to the running water system because they do not have the money to pay for it. The main alternative for these people is to get freshwater at a nearby

stream called Bobolon. People who get water from this stream visit it daily. This is usually done by women and with small *perahus*, but men also visit the stream and big *perahus* are also used.

The Bobolon stream is located about 15 minutes sailing away from the village. It meets the sea in an estuary just outside of the village. It has a maximum width of about six metres and is filled with rocks and rapids. Its shores consist out of dense vegetation. Its waters are shallow, clear and relatively cold. These waters are considered to be very clean and fresh. When visiting the river, water is put into plastic boxes and jerry cans. This is done at the point where rapids and rocks prevent boats from going further up the river. The water from the river is used for drinking, cooking and washing. People also use the stream to wash their bodies and clothes. Sometimes the running water system in the village does not work. In that case, all people in the village use freshwater from the Bobolon stream.³²

5.4.2 Goods

The people of the village use many things from the land. In Tinakin Laut there are no people who make a living from agriculture or livestock production. So, except for fish, all food needs to be bought. It is usually the profits from fishing that are used to buy other foods such as fruit and rice. People also need the land for wood. Wood is used for cooking, to build houses and to make *perahus*. Wood can be bought in the villages surrounding Kota Banggai. When no money is available, people chop wood in the forests surrounding the village. People will also use wood that has been washed ashore. Other goods from the land that are used include cooking utensils, clothing, furniture, books and so on.

5.4.3 Alternative Professions

The majority of the local population depends on fishing for a livelihood. In Tinakin Laut, the land does not offer working opportunities through agriculture or livestock production. Hardly any rice-cultivation takes place in the Banggai region. There are however other ways of making a living from the land. According to the village head, about 30 percent of the working part of the local population works as a limestone miner.³³ Limestone is only being extracted with the use of simple tools such as picks, hammers and shovels. It is being sold to wholesalers. The limestone is used mainly for the

³² See Appendix 2, picture 23-25

³³ See Appendix 2, picture 26

construction of roads. The local population also uses it for the reclamation of land and for raising existing land surfaces. The mountains and rocks are officially owned by the Indonesian government but no one objects to the use of it by the local population. In practice, the stones are owned by the person who excavates them. In contrast to fishing, it is mainly women who extract the limestone. A lot of women miners have husbands who fish. One fisherman said that the men working as miners do so because they do not possess a *perahu*. The work is very heavy and often takes place under the burning sun. People who do this work include adolescents, adults and the elderly. According to an informant one cubic metre of limestone will sell for about 30,000 IDR if the stones are small and for about 50,000 IDR if the stones are bigger.

The land offers other ways of earning a living as well. In the village there are for example shop owners, merchants, policemen, teachers, nurses and *ojek*-drivers. An *ojek* is a type of scooter that serves as a taxi. It is only a few people who have such jobs.

5.4.4 Education and Information

The local population is also connected to the land because children are attending school. In the past, the mobility of the Orang Bajo prevented their children from going to school. Now that the Orang Bajo are more connected to the land and the economies of the land, education has become important. Although this is not always possible, the ideal for families is to send their children to school. The school system used in the Banggai archipelago is the same as it is for the rest of Indonesia. As can be seen in table 3, pre-primary and primary education is available within Tinakin Laut

Table 3: Available School Levels

Indonesian name	English name	Age group	Location
TK	Kindergarten (Pre-primary Education)	± 5 - 7	Tinakin Laut
SD	Elementary School (Primary Education)	± 7 - 14	Tinakin Laut
SMP	Middle School (Secondary Education)	± 14 - 16	Kota Banggai, Bobolon village
SMA	High School (Secondary Education)	± 16+	Kota Banggai, Bobolon village
Universitas	University (Tertiary Education)	± 17+	Mainland Sulawesi, separate courses in Kota Banggai

The local population is also connected to the land through the use of information from the land. The village of Tinakin Laut, and in fact the whole Banggai region, has limited connections to global information networks. In the Banggai region there is no internet available and there are no cinemas or public libraries. One non-Orang Bajo woman from Kota Banggai said that she had studied in Jakarta for a while. Now that she was living in Kota Banggai again, she was very dissatisfied about the lack of available information and opportunities to learn and develop herself.

Despite these limitations, the Orang Bajo have become more connected to global scapes since they started to live on the land. Two of these scapes, the mediascape and the ideoscape can be seen to influence the local population. Education and television are two ways through which the local population receives information from outside the Banggai region.

Watching television is very popular. In fact, in many houses where no central electricity or running water is available, even in houses where the roof is not waterproof, people do have a TV that runs on a generator. Potter and others mention that this is also the case among poor households in Trinidad in the Caribbean (Potter, Binns, Elliott, Smith 2004). In the evening, people often visit each other's houses to watch television together. Very popular to watch are Indonesian soaps.

The images from television are one of the factors contributing to the beauty ideal of looking "Western". One mother in the village loved to dress her children up in gowns, sunglasses and wigs because it made them look like Western movie stars. An older woman said that when the Orang Bajo were still living on the sea they used to be black like apes. A local *dukun* often said: "*Orang Bajo hitam tapi manis*" (The Orang Bajo are black but sweet). Here black was seen as a negative characteristic and sweet as a positive characteristic with sexual connotations. He always laughed while saying this. Women in the village often use facial masks and crèmes to make their skins look whiter³⁴. For men, skin colour can also be an issue. On two occasions during the fieldwork period it happened that men made jokes about another male, stating that he was originally from Africa because his skin was black and his hair was curled. The Orang Bajo, spending a lot of time out in the sun, generally do have darker skins than non-Orang Bajo people. This is true especially for children who swim a lot in the sea and for men who fish a lot. The ideal of having a white skin does not only exist for the Orang Bajo in Tinakin Laut but for the majority of the Indonesians.

5.4.5 Burying the Dead

When the Orang Bajo were still living on boats they already buried their dead on the land (Hockings

³⁴ See Appendix 2, picture 27

1993; Sather 1997). This was done mainly on islands (Hockings 1993). During the fieldwork period an older woman said that the Orang Bajo from the past did not like the land and that the land was only used to bury the dead. The local population still uses the land to bury people. There are two cemeteries in the village of Tinakin Laut. One is located up in the mountains and the other one is located on an island called Pulau Kuburan³⁵.

5.5 Chapter Conclusion

For the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut, the boundary between land and sea is important in daily life and for the construction of the Orang Bajo identity. Both the fishing and housing of the local population are connected to the boundary between land and sea. Fishing and housing are connected to each other as well because fishing influences the actual house, the activities that are performed in the house and the social organizations within in the house.

The majority of the people from Tinakin Laut depend on fishing for a livelihood. Fishing, a typical sea-related activity, is also very much related to the land. Over time, the trend within the local community has been to move away from the sea and towards the land. Since the Orang Bajo have been involved in cash economies, they have become more dependent on the land, even for fishing. Nowadays money is needed to pay for engines, gasoline, oil, ice and explosives. Fish is no longer just being caught for subsistence; a surplus needs to be caught to cover the costs of participating in cash economies. The moving away from the sea and towards the land is also shown by the fact that the current generation of children in the village of Tinakin Laut does not seem to be motivated at all anymore to become fishermen. By now using explosives to fish, people are destroying the very environment that they depend upon for their livelihoods and that forms part of their identity.

The housing of the local population is related to the boundary between land and sea as well. Here too the trend has been to move away from the sea and towards the land. In the Banggai region, the living in *perahus* has already been completely abandoned by the Orang Bajo. Nowadays, living in *perahus* is seen as old-fashioned and very impractical. The current ideal is to live on the land. At the same time people want to live close to the sea. The vast majority of the local population now lives in *wabarohs* located on the boundary between land and sea. It is this living on the boundary that is now seen as being typical for the Orang Bajo. For the local population, their housing is representative for

³⁵ See the section "Maps" for the exact location of this island. See Appendix 2, picture 28, for an image of this island

their community and identity.

The Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut are not only connected to land and sea through their fishing and housing. In addition to their fishing and housing they are connected to the sea through their shared history of being sea nomads and through their stories about the past in which the sea often plays a role. They are further connected to the land through their dependency on the land for many things such as freshwater, goods, alternative professions, education, information, and the burying of the dead.

In this chapter several things have been mentioned that are seen as typical for the Orang Bajo. They include: making a living by fishing, making and using *perahus*, living in a *wabaroh* on the land or in a *wabaroh pakai benteh* on the sea, having a shared history of being former sea nomads, telling stories about the past, loving the sea and having a dark skin colour. All these characteristics are related to the boundary between land and sea. It has already been explained why fishing, *perahus* and *wabarohs* are related to this boundary. Having a shared history of being former sea nomads is also related to this boundary because this history still plays an important role in the now sedentary local community. The telling of stories about the past is related to this boundary because within these stories both land and sea often play a role. Loving the sea is related to the boundary between land and sea because it shows that for the sedentary local population the sea is still very important. Having a dark skin colour is related to the boundary between land and sea because it is the fishing on the sea and swimming in the sea that causes the Orang Bajo to be darker than other people and it are the ideals from the land that make that skin colour has become an issue. In the following chapters more Orang Bajo characteristics will be mentioned that are related to boundaries.

In the theoretical discussion about environments, places and meanings it was stated that people will always ascribe meanings to their environments and that the more intensive a place is used, the more it gains meaning. For the local population, the natural environment of the sea is very important. They spend a lot of time on the sea and know the seas very well. The sea is used to make a living and to construct the Orang Bajo identity. All these factors contribute to the sea having lots of meanings. These meanings are constructed and shared collectively by for example performing activities such as fishing, rowing, swimming, by using special terms and by telling stories. The sea is seen as both a source of good and bad things. The sea provides a living and opportunities for recreation but being dependent on the sea for a living is surrounded by insecurities and risks.

Now that the boundary between land and sea has been discussed it is time to take a look at the next boundary that is relevant in the lives of the local population: the boundary between animism and Islam.

6 The Boundary between Animism and Islam

The people of Indonesia have a long history of incorporating different religions into their lives. The Indonesian government officially recognizes six different religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. This is not to say that other religions do not exist in Indonesia. Many Indonesians still hold animistic beliefs and often incorporate these beliefs into the officially recognized religions.

The Orang Bajo often had difficulties being accepted as Muslims and were often in a religious marginal position. (Hockings 1993; Sather 1997; Warren 1983) Hockings states that the overt Islamisation of the Orang Bajo coincided with their sedentarisation (Hockings 1993). It was only when the Orang Bajo started to live on the land, that they were able to build their own mosques. The majority of the current Orang Bajo define themselves as Muslims. The people surrounding the Orang Bajo still often associate them with animistic beliefs.

The local population stressed time and time again that they are Muslims. The religious domain in Tinakin Laut does not only consist out of Islamic elements. Animism and magic are important as well. Tylor states that the essential source of religion is formed by '*the belief in spiritual beings*' (Tylor 1871). Tylor further states that animism includes the belief in souls of individual creatures that can continue to exist after death and the belief in spirits that can influence the material world (Tylor 1871). As we shall see, both aspects of animism are present among the local population. I will use Kottaks definition of magic as "*...supernatural techniques intended to accomplish specific aims*" (Kottak 2004: 583).

This chapter serves to show that religious life in Tinakin Laut is located on the boundary between animism and Islam. The local population often uses Islamic and animistic elements concurrently. The use of Islamic, non-Islamic and animistic practices and beliefs will be discussed in the context of several themes that are relevant for the local population. These themes include: the rituals related to birth, marriage and death, the enchanted sea, spirits, magic, medicine men and the burial place called the *makam*. In a separate section extra attention will be paid to the importance of the Islam for the local population.

6.1 Birth, Marriage and Death

The rituals and beliefs related to birth are mainly Islamic. According to one of the local *dukuns*, the reading of a *doa*³⁶ can help to prevent complications when a child is born. When a baby is sleeping a small Qur'an and mirror are often placed close to its head. It is said that the mirror will chase away the devil because when the devil sees his own ugly image reflected in the mirror he will be scared away. According to the research population, using a mirror this way is an Islamic tradition. One ritual that is related to birth is not Islamic. When a child is about three days old it is washed in the water of the sea. After that, it is washed in freshwater. It was said that this ritual is typical for the Orang Bajo and that it is only the Orang Bajo who perform this ritual.

During the fieldwork period two weddings were attended. In both cases an Orang Bajo married a non-Orang Bajo. With both weddings only Indonesian Islamic traditions were used. The marriages were performed by Imams and praying formed part of the ceremony. People described the rituals that take place when a person dies. All these rituals are Islamic and include: reading from the Qur'an, praying, washing the deceased and wrapping the person in a white cloth and burying the person with his or her head faced towards Mecca.

6.2 The Enchanted Sea

Among the local population there are many rituals and beliefs in which fishing and the sea play a role. The following Islamic rituals and beliefs are connected to fishing and the sea. People will read an Islamic *doa* when a new boat is being put in the water for the first time. Before fishing one can do the *sholat*³⁷ or dedicate the fishing to Allah by saying "*bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahiem*" (in the name of Allah: the Beneficent, the Merciful). This phrase is also used when entering an unsteady *perahu* or encountering big waves. Fishermen, while waiting for the fish to take the bait, sometimes sing verses from the Qur'an. When rituals are concerned with fishing its main goal is often to positively influence *rezeki*. *Rezeki* is an Islamic concept and it means luck, good fortune and gift from god. Among the local population *rezeki* is also used in non-Islamic settings.

There are also many animistic rituals and beliefs that are related to fishing and the sea. To stimulate the *rezeki* of fishing one can throw fruit into the sea or place fruit at the *makam*. One of the

³⁶ A *doa* is a prayer or request to Allah for help or protection. It is an Islamic term.

³⁷ *Sholat* is the Indonesian word for the Islamic ritual prayer. The Arabic word for this prayer is *salat*.

local *dukuns* said that these practices were not approved of by Allah. On one occasion a woman was holding a chicken in her hands. I was stroking the chicken and she said that she would cut its throat later on. Her family had just bought a new engine for their big *perahu*. She planned on putting the blood of the chicken on the engine so that it would work well and would not break.

As stated earlier, making a living by fishing is surrounded by insecurities. Supernatural explanations are used to make sense of these insecurities. Several people said that until 2005 squid were copious at a certain fishing ground close to the village and that this squid was being caught and sold by the local fishermen in huge quantities. On one day, all these squid had suddenly disappeared from the sea. Trying to explain this disappearance, it was said that the squid had probably fled to other parts of the sea because they had seen a spirit. People in the village still try to locate the place where the squid are living now, but until this day no one has been able to do so.

According to the Orang Bajo other supernatural creatures, besides spirits, do live in the sea as well. People talked about sea mermaids that had been caught with nets around the island of Pulau Jodoh, located several hours sailing away from the village. People were able to talk about mermaids in great detail. According to a local *dukun*, they were black, had breasts and hands and fed on sea grass. The mermaids were categorized as being creatures somewhere in between animals and humans. This is why people are very reluctant to eat them. It is believed that the tears of mermaids will stimulate sales and these tears are therefore very expensive.

Dangerous sea monsters are also said to live in the sea. It was said that one could not pronounce the name of a certain sea monster at sea because this would cause high and perilous waves. It was said that the sea monster had many names but that only older people and *dukuns* knew these names.

The sea is believed to have many healing properties. When having malaria, being seasick or “feeling hot inside”, drinking seawater is believed to serve as a medicine. Swimming in the sea is also seen as being healthy and is recommended for people suffering from malaria. One woman said that the chances of drowning in freshwater are bigger than of drowning in seawater because seawater acts as a medicine.

Besides the sea itself, products from the sea are considered to have healing properties as well. The greatest experts on these natural medicines are the local *dukuns*. A local *dukun* said that both land and sea provide many kinds of medicines. He and others described one disease whereby ones stomach gets bigger and bigger. This can result in the patient dying. The local treatment for this disease consists out of grinding the bone of a squid and mixing it with lemon. Patients need to rub this mixture onto the stomach everyday. The therapy further consists out of drinking seawater each day and swimming in the sea a lot. When a fish has been caught that has a smaller fish in its

stomach, these smaller fish are used as a medicine against stomach problems. Certain corals were also said to have healing properties. According to one of the local *dukuns* these medicines are not only used by the Orang Bajo but by the Orang Bugis as well. Some products from the sea are believed to be harmful. It was said for example that eating the heads of large fish can make a person dumb.

6.3 Spirits

Although it is believed within the Islamic traditions that spirits or ghosts do exist, being involved with spirits is not approved of by the Islam. The local population does believe in spirits. Spirits are divided into at least three groups: ancestors, good spirits and bad spirits. Generally, people are not able to mention all their ancestors. Neither do they identify themselves as belonging to a particular clan with the same ancestors. On one occasion, an older Orang Bajo woman refused to tell the complete origin myth of the Orang Bajo. She said that if she would tell the whole story, the ancestors would become angry and create a storm. The woman said that although she did sometimes forget things because of her age, she did know the whole story. The old woman said that she also knew the names of all the *orang tua dulu* (the old people from the past/the ancestors) but that pronouncing these names would also cause the ancestors to become angry.

Bad spirits are being referred to with *satan-satan* (satans) or *hantu buruk* (bad ghost). People believe that bad spirits are especially active after the *maghrib*³⁸. Places one should avoid after the *maghrib* because of the risks associated with bad spirits, are the river Bobolon and burial places. There are also certain islands in the region that are said to be inhabited by bad spirits. It is said that there are bad spirits on Pulau Sekita because a pregnant woman ever died on that island. The presence of bad spirits is thus believed to be related to particular times and places. In addition to this it is believed that spirits can become angry when their surroundings are dirty or when their surroundings are too noisy or busy.

According to the local population good spirits exist as well. A good spirit is called a *jin-Islam* (an Islamic spirit) or a *hantu bagus* (good ghost). A young woman said that she and her siblings ever saw the spirit of her diseased mother. According to the woman, her mother was seen while praying and crying and did not talk to her children. Some people said that their house was protected by a good spirit.

³⁸ The *maghrib* is the fourth out of the five daily Islamic prayers and is being performed around sunset

The local population differentiates between the spirits of the sea and the spirits of the land. It is said that a spirit of a person that has died on the land will stay on the land until judgement day. A spirit of a person that has died in a river, or close to a river, is said to be located near that river. Spirits located in the sea are said to be spirits of people who drowned in the sea or fishermen who got lost at sea. It is believed that the spirits of the sea are usually located on the bottom of the sea but that if they are angry they will rise to the surface.

6.4 Magic

Within the Islamic tradition the use of magic is not allowed. However, the line between magic and Islamic perceptions and activities is not that clear. If we use Kottak's definition of magic as being "...*supernatural techniques intended to accomplish specific aims*", many Islamic practices could be defined as being magical (Kottak 2004). The local population differentiates between black and white magic. It is said about black magic that it is being performed to have negative effects on others and that it is forbidden by Allah. As mentioned earlier, a local *dukun* considered the throwing of fruits into the sea, to increase the amount of fish being caught, to be black magic. He said the practice could result in seasickness.

A woman called Nuri said that she had ever been the victim of black magic. According to her, some Orang Bugis had ever taken a picture of her and had then burned that picture above a fire. This had caused Nuri to feel very hot and had burned her skin. The Orang Bugis were also said to have taken a lock of hair from her. They had then used a thread to attach this hair to a living fish and had put this fish back into the sea, causing Nuri to constantly wanting to swim and dive. Nuri said that the black magic had disappeared when two of the *dukuns* in the village had made a small incision in her head, allowing for the bad influences to leave her body.

6.5 *Dukuns* (Medicine Men)

There are four *dukuns* in the village of Tinakin Laut and one of them is a woman. The main function of a *dukun* is to heal people. When feeling sick, people will often first attend a *dukun*, before attending a professional doctor. It is said that sickness can be caused by black magic but also by

other factors. *Dukuns* use both Islamic and non-Islamic techniques to heal people. The techniques *dukuns* use to heal people include: making and prescribing medicines, touching and massaging people, giving dietary advice and praying and whispering Islamic and non-Islamic texts. *Dukuns* are considered to be specialists in the use of white magic and in getting rid of black magic. *Dukun* "patients" include men, women and children. *Dukuns* do not fulfil their functions full time. One of the local *dukuns* for example, usually fishes during the day and receives "patients" in the evening. *Dukuns* do not use fixed prices. They are being paid either with money or with goods. According to one *dukun*, the amount of money or goods expected to be paid, depends on what people can afford. The use of *dukuns* is not limited to the Orang Bajo, the Orang Bugis for example also have *dukuns*.

Dukuns in Tinakin Laut do not only have a function to treat illnesses, they also have a social function. They are seen as wise people with a great deal of knowledge and people often turn to them for advice. It was said that, in contrast to most other people, *dukuns* knew the names of a certain sea monster and were able to tell the old stories about the Orang Bajo. *Dukuns* are also considered to be useful in spiritual matters. They perform for example rituals to commemorate the death. It seemed to me that the *dukuns* of Tinakin Laut had rather extrovert personalities as compared to others. They interact with people a lot, tell stories and often make jokes.

6.6 The *Makam* (the Burial Place)

As mentioned before, being involved with spirits and magic is not allowed according to Islamic teachings. One place in the village is very much connected to spirits and magic. On the top of Pulau Keramat an old burial place is located. Local people call this place the *makam*.³⁹ The *makam* itself consists out of several graves. These graves are not marked by gravestones but they are surrounded by low stone walls. Over one of the graves, people have constructed a shelter made out of wooden poles and metal panels. Under this shelter, a stone has been placed. Against this stone, a wooden lath has been placed. A white cloth has been placed over the stone and the lath. Other interpretations do exist but it is generally believed that a former Banggai king, his wife and their two children were buried at the *makam* about 100 years ago. The place is seen as being spiritual and magical. It is said that the spirits of the people buried here can heal diseases. It is also said that it is dangerous when visiting the village of Tinakin Laut for the first time, to not visit the *makam* first. It is further believed that the island of Pulau Keramat should be kept peaceful and clean in order not to

³⁹ See Appendix 2, picture 29

disturb or anger the spirits of the *Makam*. The people of Tinakin Laut sometimes visit the *makam* to pay their respects to the ones buried there. When visiting the *makam* local people will pray to Allah and make offerings such as flowers, *durians* and bottles of freshwater.

6.7 Other Islamic Rituals and Believes

It has become clear that animistic and other non-Islamic elements play a role in performing rituals, in believes about the sea, in the believe in spirits, in the use of magic and traditional healing methods and in the believes about the *makam*. It is important though to stress that the local population does not only say it is Islamic but that the Islam can be observed to form an important part of daily life. Many people pray, visit the local mosque or read the Qur'an on a regular basis. The local mosque is visited by a lot of people especially on religious holy days. It is said that almost all the people in the village participate in the *ramadan*. Houses are often decorated with Islamic posters or paintings. People often have a Qur'an, prayer rugs and prayer beads in their houses.

Often when people make a statement, for example 'I will go there tomorrow', they will add the Arabic phrase *Insyah Allah* to it. This phrase could be translated with 'God willing' or 'if it is God's will'. Another Arabic phrase often used is *Bismi'llah ir-Rahman ir-Rahiem* (in the name of God; the merciful; the compassionate). This phrase is used when starting an activity that is perceived to need God's blessing. Even poor people will often give away *zakat* (Islamic alms).

Another Islamic tradition being used within the village is that of circumcision. It was said that both boys and girls are circumcised. With girls this only consists out of making a very small cut or prick. Girls are generally being circumcised around the age of two or three and boys around the age of five. Sometimes events are explained in Islamic ways. During the fieldwork period, people said that they had seen a pulsating star in the night sky. A woman said that this has caused trepidation among the local population because they thought that judgement day had arrived.

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

The second boundary that is important in the daily lives of the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut and that is being used by the Orang Bajo to construct their cultural identity is the boundary between animism

and Islam. The religious believes and rituals of the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut are related to boundaries in several ways. First of all, the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut say about themselves that they are *Orang Islam* (Islamic people). In reality both animism and Islam form part of the religious lives of the local population. Furthermore, people surrounding the Orang Bajo consider the Orang Bajo to be animistic and not truly Islamic, thereby drawing lines between themselves and the Orang Bajo.

In addition to this, the religious believes and rituals of the Orang Bajo are also related to the boundary between land and sea. For the local population the sea is important and has a lot of meanings. It is therefore logical that the sea also plays a role in religious believes and practices. Through religious believes and practices the sea is being interpreted as a magical place and a place of both healing and danger. The boundary between animism and Islam is also connected to the boundary between land and sea because the sedentarisation on the land played a role in the further Islamisation of the Orang Bajo. Furthermore, within rituals and believes both the land and the sea often play a role. It has been already said that this is true as well for the old stories that are being told among the local population. This combined use of elements from the sea and the land in rituals, believes and stories is illustrated in table 4 on the following page.

Table 4: Examples of Rituals, Beliefs and Stories Where Both Land and Sea Play a Role

	Sea Element	Land Element
The ritual of washing an Orang Bajo baby in the water of the sea and then in freshwater when its three days old	Seawater is used	Freshwater is used
The believe that throwing fruit into the sea will stimulate fishing	Is said to increase the amount of fish being caught	Fruits grows on the land
The believe that putting chicken blood on a new boat engine will stimulate the engine to work well	Is said to stimulate the working of a boat engine	Chicken live on the land
The believe that the sea itself and medicines from the sea can heal malaria	The sea can heal	Malaria is caused by mosquitoes that live on the land
The believe in spirits	The spirits of people who have died on the sea will stay on or in the sea	The spirits of people who have died on the land will stay on the land
Believes about sea monsters	Mentioning their names while being on sea is dangerous	Mentioning their names while being on the land is not dangerous
The origin myth of the Orang Bajo	The child goes missing at sea while looking for shellfish	The child is found living in a village on the land
The story about the <i>makam</i>	The water of the sea rose when people were buried at the <i>makam</i>	Important people have been buried on the land

Now that it has become clear that the boundary between land and sea and the boundary between animism and Islam play a central role in the lives of the local population it is time to take a look a third boundary: the poverty boundary.

7 The Poverty Boundary

The third boundary that plays a role in the daily lives of the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut and that is being used by the Orang Bajo to construct their cultural identity is the poverty boundary. Poverty is related to boundaries because it is used by people to create social stratifications (the poor versus the rich). Furthermore, the poor often find themselves in a marginal position and on the boundaries of societies.

A single definition of the concept of poverty can not be given since poverty is always multidimensional (Narayan et al. 1999; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1997). Because poverty is experienced by different people in different ways, the subject of poverty will be discussed using the subjective approach, meaning that the emphasis will be on the views of the local population and on how they experience poverty. The 1997 Human Development Report of the UNDP states that poverty can be defined in three different ways.

- To be poor is to have an income below the poverty line
- To be poor is to not have the “...*material requirements for minimally acceptable fulfilment of human needs, including food*” (UNDP 1997: 16)
- To be poor is to be in absence of “*some basic capabilities to function*” (UNDP 1997: 16).
“*Functionings refer to the various valuable things a person can do or be, such as living long, being healthy, being well nourished, mixing well with others in the community and so on.*”
(UNDP 1997: 16)

The subject of ‘not having enough money’ will be discussed but establishing actual income levels has not been part of the research. Attention will be paid to (the lack of) ‘material requirements’ and the (lack of) ‘basic capabilities to function’.

During the fieldwork period, many things indicated that the Orang Bajo are relatively poor and that they see themselves as poor people. People would often say that the Orang Bajo are *orang miskin* (poor people). Poverty was often talked about by the research population. Many people, among whom the village head, defined poverty as being the main problem for the people living in Tinakin Laut. One couple said that they appreciated the fact that the research was about the Orang Bajo because they liked the fact that attention was being paid to poor people. The village head said that most people in the village are poor and that even he had troubles making a decent income. These observations made by the village head correspond with the findings of the EC-PREP report that in

2003, 75 percent of the local population lived below the Indonesian poverty line and that the village had the highest poverty incidence of any village in the Banggai region (EC-PREP Project 2004). (See table 5)

Table 5: Poverty Levels for Tinakin Laut in 2003⁴⁰

Poverty level	Percentage of households
Below the poverty line	75
On the poverty line	18
Reasonably well off/ average	6
Well off or better	1

(Source: EC-PREP Project 2004)

The EC-PREP report states that the high level of poverty is almost certainly related to the dominance of fishing activities and lack of land-based resources since fishing villages across Sulawesi typically have a higher poverty level than farming villages (EC-PREP Project 2004).

To understand what role poverty plays in the lives of the local population and what this poverty looks like, the following things will be described: signs and causes of poverty and poverty coping strategies.

7.1 Signs and Causes of Poverty

Poverty creates poverty. When being poor, a person has fewer chances and opportunities for development, this then causes poverty to persist or aggravate, resulting again in having less chances and opportunities for development and so on. This is why signs and causes of poverty often overlap each other. Because of this, signs and causes of poverty will not be discussed separately. Instead they will be discussed together in the context of particular themes. These themes include: a lack of money, living conditions within the house, food, health, education and dependencies and insecurities.

⁴⁰ The EC-PREP report defines a household as being positioned below the poverty line if it is not able to provide the basic requirements of clothing, food and shelter. The four indicators used to measure this are: all family members eat a nutritious meal at least twice a day on a regular basis, all family members have different sets of clothes for home, school or work or social events, the floor of the house that the family members live in is in a good condition, if a family member is ill he or she is able to make use modern health care.

7.1.1 A Lack of Money

Within the Banggai archipelago, a low level of economic activities results in a very limited amount of available paid jobs. This is partly being caused by a lack of government support and investments. On Pulau Banggai there are little facilities available. Even in Kota Banggai there is no hotel, no internet access, no university and no cinema or library. The roads on Pulau Banggai are often in a poor condition. The local mobile phone network only covers part of the archipelago and reception is often bad. As mentioned earlier, within the village of Tinakin Laut there is only a very limited amount of facilities. The village head said that the village of Tinakin Laut does not receive any government funding. The government only provides education fees for children with exceptional talents and school results. The local government has not put in place a garbage collection system or sewage system in the village. In Tinakin Laut there is not one project or program in place that actually reduces poverty.

Poverty itself also creates a lack of money. For people who have little money, it is difficult to invest in assets that create money. During the fieldwork period, a man wanted to buy his own *perahu* so that he could earn money by selling fish but he did not have enough money to buy it. For poor people it often takes a lot of time to run the household. Among poor families in Tinakin Laut, women often spend the majority of the day taking care of the household and the children. This means that poor women with children often do not have the time to perform extra income generating activities. For richer people, daily tasks take less time because they can make use of running water, electrical devices and so on.

Yet another cause for a lack of money is environmental degradation. Almost all of the coral in the vicinity of the village is dead. During the research period I did not see one place in the whole of the Banggai archipelago where corals were still in a good condition. The local population often expressed that there used to be more fish in the sea in the past and that fishing had become more difficult and less profitable over the years. Because there are hardly any healthy fishing waters anymore in the vicinity of the village, fishermen are forced to go fish farther away. Local fishermen now fish around the islands of Jodoh, Badi, Sekita, Toropot and Belutang.

In principle the seas of Indonesia are the property of the Indonesian government who allows fishing under certain conditions. Fishing with explosives or trolley boats is illegal in the Banggai region. Fishermen who are not from the Banggai region need permission from the government to fish in the region. It was said that foreign fishermen are not allowed at all to fish in the Banggai region. Due to a lack of governmental capacity *none* of these laws are being enforced effectively. The Banggai maritime police are supposed to enforce the law but in practice the chances of getting

caught for breaking the law are very low.

The local population blames the decreased amount of fish mainly on large-scale fishing by outsiders and the fishing with large nets and explosives. The local population is especially dissatisfied about the fact that large Japanese and Kendari⁴¹ fishing boats operate in the region and take away “their” fish. Water pollution was also said to contribute to the problem. An older local man said that the use of boat engines caused oil pollution. One informant said “*Ikan sudah lari ke laut yang bersih*” (the fish have already run/fled to cleaner seas).

It was said that corals were still healthy around a certain island located several hours sailing away from the village. Supposedly there is a lot of fish in the waters surrounding this island and this is why some of the fishermen from the village like to fish there with explosives. Fishing with explosives forms part of a cycle. Because less fish is available, people feel that they need to use explosives in order to catch enough fish to make a living. Fishing with explosives causes such environmental damage that there is less available fish. This then causes people to fish with explosives and so on.

The need for money becomes very clear when the large ferry called Sinabung visits Kota Banggai. This ferry sails on a regular basis in between Jakarta and Manado and always docks at Kota Banggai as well. When the local population sees that this ferry is approaching Kota Banggai, many villagers will take their small and big *perahus* and sail towards the boat.⁴² From the Sinabung ferry, people then start to throw money towards the people in the *perahus*. The people of the village will then dive, jump, swim and use fishing nets to catch the money and are very enthusiastic when money has been caught. According to a girl from the village, it are only the Orang Bajo who participate in this event.

Of course, the lack of income and money does not only lead to such festive events but to serious deprivations as well. Hardly anyone in the village has a bank or savings account. Because many people have no savings or a regular income, the insecure profits made from fishing often directly determine the amount of money available. This in turn means that people tend to live day by day and that long term financial planning is often impossible. The poor say that they often worry whether there is enough money to pay for food, gasoline and oil, school fees, medicines and so on.

⁴¹ The town of Kendari is located in South-East Sulawesi. See the section “Maps” for the exact location of this town.

⁴² See Appendix 2, picture 30

7.1.2 Living Conditions within the House

A lack of money and government support influence the living conditions within houses. It was said that in 2003 almost half of the houses in Tinakin Laut were considered to be unsuitable for living according to official criteria⁴³ (EC-PREP Project 2004). There are many people in the village who are dissatisfied about their housing. Some people are ashamed of their houses. People complain about the absence of things such as: furniture, electrical devices, running water etc. They are irritated when things in the house are broken or no longer functioning. The following description shows that this can be quite a lot.

Atmo and his relatives live in a *wabaroh* that is located on the land. There are four adults and three children living in the house. The two adult women living in the house say about their *wabaroh*: "*wabaroh ini sudah rusak*" (this *wabaroh* is already broken). The house is divided into a living room, a kitchen and two bedrooms. There is no central electricity, gas or running water available in the house. The house is not connected to a sewer. Since there is no toilet available, people usually urinate in a corner in the kitchen. The metal roof is leaking and when it rains at night this often causes the inhabitants to be cold. The floor of the living room is made out of concrete but there are several holes and cracks in this concrete. Part of the floor is covered by a plastic tarp that is broken as well. Several window shutters can not be closed properly anymore. There are holes in the front door and the back door is missing. The roof and walls of the kitchen are made out of palm leaves and leak as well. Cooking is done with wood.⁴⁴ There is only one bed available in the house and most of the inhabitants sleep on the floor. The family owns three mattresses and all of them are broken, often causing the filling to spread throughout the house. The following animals are often present in the house: lice, fleas, flies, ants, mosquitoes, poisonous centipedes, cockroaches, lizards, mice, rats, cats and chicken.

The two women living in the house are sisters and they have inherited the house from their parents. Their parents died when they were still children. It makes them especially sad that they do not have the money to make repairs to the house because they see it as their duty to take care of the house. Despite this, one of these sister said that she did not understand how their neighbours could spend their money on their

⁴³ The EC-PREP report does not define these official criteria

⁴⁴ See Appendix 2, picture 31

house, while many of their children were not attending school. She felt that this money should be spend on the children's education. (Extract from field notes)

In the village there is no wage collection system whatsoever. The majority of the waste is being dumped into the sea but people also dump waste on the land. When it is perceived that the waste on the land causes too much of a bad smell and attracts too much vermin, people will collect and burn it.

In many houses in the village there is no clean running water or adequate sanitation available. The EC-PREP report mentions that in 2003, in only four percent of the houses, proper toilets were available (EC-PREP Project 2004). In the stilt houses, a hole in the floor often serves as a toilet. In *wabarohs* on land people will use a designated place in the close vicinity of the house. There are two reasons why people do not have running water. They either do not have the money to pay for it, or in the case of Pulau Keramat, the necessary infrastructure is absent. When no running water is available, freshwater is either bought from other people that do have running water or more commonly, it is taken at the Bobolon river.

In the EC-PREP report it is estimated that in 2003, central electricity was not available in 31 percent of the houses (EC-PREP Project 2004). There are again two reasons for not having electricity. People either do not have the money to pay for it or the infrastructure is missing. When central electricity is not available, people often use generators. To save costs, these generators are often only used in the evening. The way that stilt houses are located, makes it very difficult to create the infrastructure necessary to connect these houses to running water systems, central electricity and sewers.

While running sweet water is often not available, there are times when seawater is more than abundant within the house. During certain times of the year, the sea's high tides tend to be higher than normal and this then causes floods.⁴⁵ These periods last for about a week and can occur several times a year. During these periods, seawater levels can be up to about 50 centimetres higher than normal. The seawater surrounding the village is dirty and there is often a lot of waste flowing in it. During periods of extreme high tides, this water often enters houses. When this happens, people spend a lot of time trying to move things to higher places, removing the water from the house and cleaning up the house and its surroundings.

⁴⁵ See Appendix 2, picture 32

7.1.3 Food

Within many poor households, people worry daily whether there is enough food to eat. In houses where the main income comes from fishing, the actual catch of that day or that week often determines how much food is available. In one particular household it happened that the male breadwinner got malaria and was not able to go fishing for two weeks. This had an effect on the diet of the whole household in that less fish and no rice and *durians* were eaten during that period. When fish has just been sold on the market, women often go buy food immediately. Since there are no farmers within the village, for all foods except for fish, money is needed. Within poor households the seasons also influence the amount and types of food available. The fieldwork has been conducted during the wet season but it was said that during the dry season food is more expensive. One woman even said that during the dry season "*orang sudah setengah mati*" (people are already half death).

Within poor households people almost never eat meat and vegetables, since these are more expensive than other foods. Rice is perceived as being important. One man said that people need to eat rice in order to live. Rice is more expensive than the more traditional *kasbi* (cassava) and when people do not have enough money to buy rice, they will eat *kasbi* instead. Another product that is relatively expensive is milk. One woman said that she had no money to buy milk for her three year old daughter. Some mothers in the village breastfeed their children for a relatively long time, up to four years. Although diets often seemed insufficient, in general the people of the village are very strong and active.

7.1.4 Health

A lack of money, a lack of government support, a lack of proper food and poor living conditions have a negative effect on the health of the local population. There are in Tinakin Laut no general physicians who live in the village or have a practice within the village. In the village there is no hospital, clinic or pharmacy. In nearby Kota Banggai these facilities are present. The fact that these facilities are present does not mean that they can be used by everybody. At least the majority of the local population has no health insurance. The poor often do not have enough money to pay for medical bills. People try to avoid medical costs by either not seeking help at all or by visiting a *dukun* instead of a conventional doctor. A woman said that she did not know what had caused the death of her father because at the time, no money had been available to visit a doctor. On one occasion a young male was suffering from malaria for days already and had heavy fevers but had not visited a

doctor yet. His family said that they did not have enough money to go see a doctor. Sometimes circumcisions are not being performed by professionals because of a lack of money. During the fieldwork period a woman gave birth to her son without the presence of a midwife, nurse or doctor because she and her family could not pay for it. According to the general physician living just outside of the village, there is a system in place whereby the poor are entitled to receive free healthcare. The physician estimated that only about one in a hundred people in the village make use of this arrangement.

A female general physician that lives close to the village affirmed that in general people in Tinakin Laut are healthy. Still, there were cases of people who have lost many siblings or children. In one case, three siblings said that three of their brothers and sisters had already died at an early age. In another case, two brothers not older than forty, said that they had already lost five of their siblings. The general physician, who lives outside of the village but has clients among the local population, identified the following major health problems for the village. Diarrhoea is one of the main death causes. According the general physician diarrhoea is being caused by the drinking of dirty water, the swimming in dirty waters, the eating of bad food and a lack of proper hygiene. The general physician said that the seawaters surrounding the village and the water of the Bobolon river are dirty and form health risks. Another major health problem is malaria. Often malaria can be treated with medicines but sometimes patients do die from it. The majority of the local population does not use mosquito nets or repellents. When sick, both traditional and conventional medicines are used to treat malaria. Bronchitis forms another major health problem. According to the female general physician, acute bronchitis is often being caused by bad weather conditions during fishing. Chronic bronchitis is mainly being caused by smoking. In Tinakin Laut a lot of men, and some women as well, smoke cigarettes. The EC-PREP report states that in 2003, 93 percent of the households used wood for cooking (EC-PREP Project 2004). People who cook with wood often do this within the house and this is known to cause air pollution and to negatively affect the respiratory system. As mentioned earlier, fishing can cause health problems such as injuries and hyperthermia.

7.1.5 Education

The term 'poverty cycle' is used when poverty continues to cause poverty over generations. In Tinakin Laut poverty is passed on to children when poor parents do not have the money to send their children to school. These children then have smaller chances of getting a well-paid job when they have grown up. When people were asked why some children did not attend school, they

answered that this was due to a lack of money. It may not only be poverty that causes children not to go to school. Two female informants said that men generally do not appreciate it when a woman goes to school while already being married and already having children. One woman said that men expect their wives to take care of the household and the children.

Due to a lack of reliable data, it is difficult to assess the exact levels of educational enrolment for Tinakin Laut. As can be seen in table 6, the primary and secondary enrolment rates mentioned by the village head, are lower than the Indonesian average. Whatever the exact levels of education enrolment, there are children in Tinakin Laut that do not attend school. A woman said about the children living in the house next to hers, that they were naughty, did not go to school and could not read. One time during fishing, I asked a young man if he would write down the local term for a certain fishing method. He told me that that would not be possible since he could not write. In 2006 the adult illiteracy rate⁴⁶ for the whole of Indonesia was 9 percent (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2008). There are no reasons to believe that this figure is lower for Tinakin Laut. The EC-PREP report states that in 2003, 31 percent of the household heads had not attended primary education (EC-PREP Project 2004). This makes it likely that a considerable amount of adults in Tinakin Laut is illiterate.

Table 6: Educational Enrolment Levels

Level of Education	Enrolment for the whole of Indonesia, 2006, GER ¹	Enrolment for Tinakin Laut, 2003, according the EC-PREP report ²	Enrolment for Tinakin Laut, 2008, according to the village head
Primary education	114 %	100 %	90 %
Secondary education	64 %	70, 5 %	50 %
Tertiary education	17 %	No data	No data

¹Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) 2008. GER is the number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for that level of education

²Source: EC-PREP Project 2004

It has already been said that children do not aspire to become fishermen anymore. Both boys and girls dream of becoming doctors, teachers and lawyers. These ideals of having a high-status job on the land make it even more important for the children of Tinakin Laut to finish their education. Currently, almost all the young people in Tinakin Laut lack the education for these professions.

⁴⁶ Adult illiteracy rate: percentage of the population of 15 years and older than can not read and write

7.1.6 Dependencies, Insecurities and Risks

The dependencies, insecurities and risks connected to fishing have already been discussed but these concepts apply to much more than fishing alone. It has already been stated that being dependent on factors beyond one's control often creates insecurities and risks. One of the things that people are dependent upon is the natural environment. For the poor, if it rains at night they might be cold, when tides are unusually high they need to work hard, when a *perahu* floats away they can not transport themselves anymore, if it storms the roof of the house might be blown away and when waters are polluted people can get sick. As we have seen, for the poor, food is less available during the dry season. The 2000 earthquake caused many people to lose their house and some people lost their lives. The houses hit hardest were the stilt houses, belonging to the poorest people of the population. For the poor, it was harder to build new houses especially since the only help they received consisted out of a one time food handout.

People are also dependent on their social environment. Some types of fishing cannot be done alone, people might need to borrow money from others or make use of a *dukun's* offer to provide free alternative healthcare. Service deliveries such as electricity and running water tend to be very unreliable. The economy also influences the levels of poverty in the village. The village head stated that profits from selling fish and limestone rocks are low and that costs had risen during recent years. Politics also influence village life. According to the village head, the government in Jakarta provides provinces with budgets and the provinces in turn assess the requests made by village heads and mayors for funds. The village head said that the village of Tinakin Laut does not receive any financial support from the government.

7.2 Coping Strategies

It must be understood that the local population does not passively undergo poverty. The Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut use a wide range of poverty coping strategies. In some cases these coping strategies can also be interpreted as signs of poverty. This is the case for example with saving costs. Saving costs can alleviate poverty but at the same time it is the poor who need to save costs in order to survive. In what follows, the following poverty coping strategies will be discussed: saving costs, working hard and being strong, flexibility, reciprocity, influencing good fortune and having a positive attitude.

7.2.1 Saving Costs

One of the main poverty coping strategies of the local population is saving costs. Costs can be saved relatively easily by buying less luxury goods. In many cases more money needs to be saved however. People will then also save on education, healthcare, housing and food. People have become very creative in saving costs. Stranded flip-flops for example are used to create floaters for fishing nets. People use stranded wood for the house and for cooking. Children and adults sometimes collect and sell metal and plastic waste.

7.2.2 Working Hard and Being Strong

The local population did not only say about the Orang Bajo that they are poor people but also that they are strong and work hard. Being strong and working hard are both signs of poverty as well as coping strategies. The poor often need to work hard and make many hours in order to earn enough money to make a living. One man said that the people of the village were already *setengah mati* (half dead) because they worked so hard. A general physician who lives outside of the village, said about the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut that they were strong people. During the research the local population was often seen to be very strong. Many daily chores are done by hand. Men and women over fifty years old are able to work in the burning sun for hours, performing hard labour. Old grandmas are able to still climb rock formations and chop wood.⁴⁷ Much of the food that is eaten would cause other people to be sick but the local population is already resistant against many bacteria. Many people can walk on the hard limestone without shoes and without damaging their feet. When a local woman gave birth to her baby she did not scream or complain once.

It has already been stated that having a dark skin colour is seen as a characteristic of the Orang Bajo. Having a dark skin is related to poverty because the poor often spend a lot of time working outside in the sun.

7.2.3 Flexibility

Being flexible can save costs because it enables people to adapt to changing circumstances. The high level of flexibility is typical for the way the Orang Bajo live. Warren states that the

⁴⁷ See Appendix 2, picture 33

organizational structures of Orang Bajo societies tend to be flexible, loose and informal (Warren 1983). During the fieldwork period, flexibility was observed in a number of areas that include religion, fishing, kinship systems, types of housing, household compositions and living arrangements and marriages.

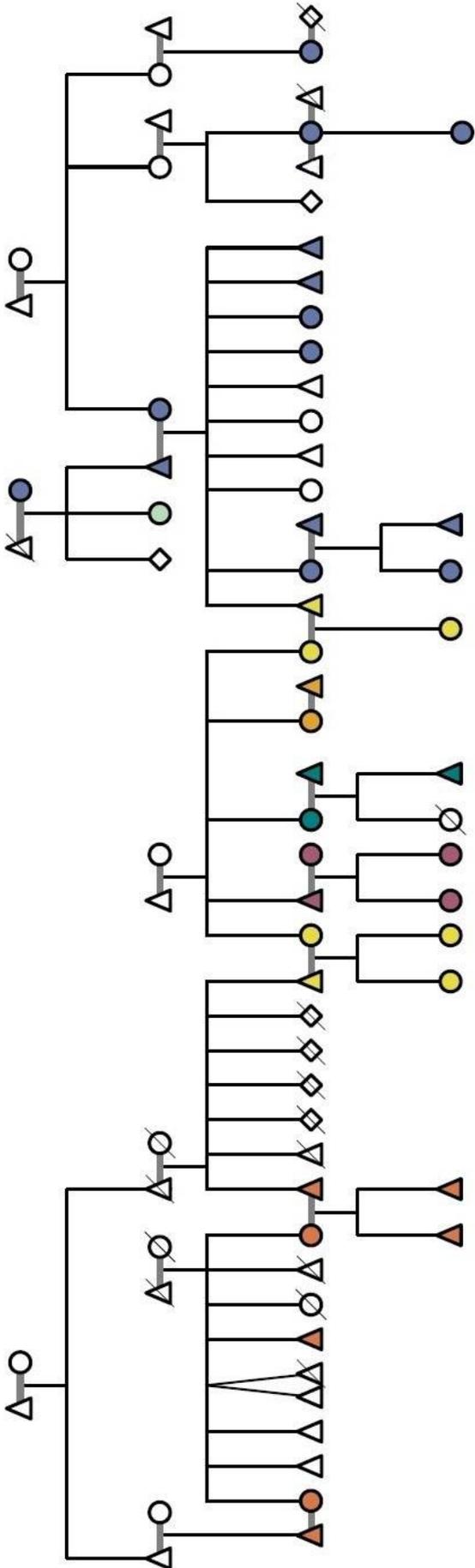
People are flexible in their religion in that they use both animism and Islam to construct their religious domains. As we have seen, they are also very flexible in their fishing. The fishermen of the village use a wide range of fishing techniques. Fishing techniques differ not only between fishermen. Individual fishermen often use different techniques. Some fishermen do not only use legal but illegal techniques as well. Depending on the techniques being used, people will fish by themselves, with a partner or in small groups. Fishing can last as short as half an hour or as long as several days. Fishing is being done in front of the house but also very far away. Sometimes fishermen will temporarily move to another village if they think that fishing conditions are better over there. Fishermen are so flexible that they will temporarily refer to other income generating activities when these are considered to be more profitable. During the fieldwork period a private investor had planned on constructing a small harbour in the village. Lots of wood would be needed to construct the harbours' jetties. Several fishermen from the village worked in nearby forests for a few days, chopping wood and selling it to the project's investor.

Kinships are traced in a flexible way as well. Warren states that the Orang Bajo kinship system is cognatic, bilateral and ego-focussed (Warren 1983). This is true also for the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut. Bilateral cognatic kinship systems allow for greater complexities and wider variations, and thus flexibility, than other kinship systems.

As mentioned earlier, the local population uses many different types of housing. People live in stone houses, in wooden houses, in houses located on the land, in houses located partially on the land and in stilt houses located on the sea. They are so flexible in that they will sometimes turn a stilt house into a land-based house by filling up the spaces under the stilt house with limestone.

Among the local population a remarkable level of variations can be found in household compositions and living arrangements. Figure 6 on the following page, shows that people living in one house can form a nuclear family or an extended family. According to Warren, nuclear family arrangements are characteristics for the households of the nomadic Orang Bajo, and extended families are more common among sedentary Orang Bajo (Warren 1983). In Tinakin Laut both nuclear as well as extended families are common. It has already been said that the fact that people live in one house does not necessarily mean that they also form one household or corporate unit. There is a tendency among the local population to keep the nuclear family as a corporate unit.

Figure 6: Genogram of Families in Tinakin Laut and Their Living Arrangements (people living together in one house have been assigned the same colour)



There are variations as well in the amount of people that live in one house. As can be seen in figure 6, sometimes only two people live in one house but there are also houses where there are 14 people living together. According to the local population, the amount of people that live in one house is being influenced by the level of poverty. Generally, poor people live together with more people. They do so because it saves the costs of building separate houses and because it allows for resources to be shared. Existing data about the average amount of people living in one house varies. It was estimated in the EC-PREP report that in 2003 the average amount of people living in one house was around 4.3 (EC-PREP Project 2004). According to the village head, this number was around 4. The survey conducted among the children of the local elementary school resulted in an average of 6.1.⁴⁸

Living arrangements and household composition are also flexible in that people sometimes live temporarily somewhere else. There was one couple in Tinakin Laut that often lived temporarily with their relatives in the village of Matanga. Children sometimes temporarily live in the house of family members. Often when children fall asleep in the house of other people they spend the night over there. As mentioned earlier, when men go fishing for several days, they often temporarily live, eat and sleep together.

Generally speaking, the man is the head of the household. When referring to a house, it is often the name of a male household head that is being used. Here people are flexible as well because when male household heads are gone fishing for several days, women are in charge of the household.

Flexibilities also take place within marriages. Marriages between different ethnic groups take place. In the village of Tinakin Laut there are for example marriages between Orang Bajo and Orang Bugis. Sometimes women are flexible in choosing a partner. One woman said that Orang Bajo women like to marry ugly men. With "ugly men" she was referring to men whose skin colour is very dark and whose hair is bleached by the sun and salt from the sea. She said that these things indicate that a man spends a lot of time fishing on the sea. This is seen as a positive thing because it means that he is probably able to provide an income with fishing.

Generally, people will live in the house of their parents until they get married. Once a couple is married there are no strict rules about where they have to live. The ideal is neolocality. Since a considerable amount of money is needed to buy or build a new house, this option is not available for all newlyweds. When there is not enough money available, couples will live patrilocal or matrilocal.

⁴⁸ The fact that about ten percent of the poorest children in the village do not attend school might have influenced this figure. The fact that some of the children who participated in the survey might be living together in one house has not been taken into account when calculating the average number of people living in one house. The average is therefore valid for the "unit" child and not for the "unit" house.

Whether a couple goes to live with the parents of the husband or the wife depends on whose parents are still alive and on the space available in the house.

Polygyny and polyandry are not tolerated and practised in Tinakin Laut. For both men and women it is possible to divorce, re-marry and have children with new partners. These practices commonly take place and are generally accepted.

From what has been discussed it can be concluded that the Orang Bajo are flexible in many ways. The use of all these flexibilities forms a poverty coping strategy because it allows people to adapt to (changing) circumstances. Temporarily living somewhere else or sharing the house with a lot of people can save costs, being allowed to re-marry offers people the opportunity to form new corporate units and marrying an “ugly” man can guarantee that an income will be provided.

7.2.4 Reciprocity

When receiving goods or services, reciprocity functions as a poverty coping strategy because it allows people to make use of things they do not own. When giving goods or services, reciprocity functions as a poverty coping strategy because people can expect to receive something back at a later time. Sharing things is an efficient way to cope with scarcity. Within societies, reciprocity does not only have practical functions (the actual exchange of goods and services) but social functions as well. According to Chou, reciprocity among the Orang Bajo communities of the Riau archipelago functions to create and evaluate trust between people and to increase social stability (Chou 1997). Warren states about a sedentary Orang Bajo community in Sabah, Malaysia, that general reciprocity was still very important in the maintenance of communal ties in 1964 (Warren 1980).

Among the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut both generalized as well as balanced reciprocity take place.⁴⁹ General reciprocity takes place between people closely connected to each other. It takes place for example between parents and children and between siblings. Within the village balanced reciprocity takes place frequently and between many different people. Food is often shared with others. During the fieldwork period a wedding took place in the village. Already days before the actual wedding, many people were involved in the preparations for the festivities. Several days before the wedding a group of men had helped to slaughter a cow and women had collected plates

⁴⁹ Generalized reciprocity can be defined as the exchange of goods or services between social equals whereby the person who gives something does not expect something concrete or immediate in return (Kottak 2004). Balanced reciprocity can be defined as the exchange of goods or services between people whereby the person who gives something does expect something to be given in return (Kottak 2004).

and cooking utensils. Two days before the wedding, people already started cooking. Over fifty men and women, young and old, helped with the preparation of the food.⁵⁰ When I asked a woman why she was prepared to help with the cooking she answered that people who helped others could expect to receive help in return when they needed it.

Reciprocity does have its limits. Several poor people said that they did not receive help from their relatives and neighbours because these people were poor themselves. A woman said that when she was still a child and her parents had just died, she and her siblings had returned to the village after fishing, to discover that another family had moved in to their house. Because of this, the children had had to live in their *perahu* for a while. The woman also said that after her parents had died, she had visited her aunts and uncles who lived on another island. She and her siblings did not have any income and she had asked her aunts and uncles for some money. The amount she received had just been enough to cover the costs she had made to visit them.

7.2.5 Influencing *Rezeki* (Good Fortune)

It is believed among the local population that the amount of *rezeki* that a person receives can be influenced by how a person acts. The local population makes use of positive strategies (doing things that will increase the amount of *rezeki*) and negative strategies (not doing things that will decrease the amount of *rezeki*). Rituals can serve to increase the total amount of *rezeki* that surrounds a person but rituals are also used to increase the amount of *rezeki* needed for particular activities. These activities are often related to fishing. People feel that they need *rezeki* in order for boat engines to work properly, to catch big amounts of fish and to receive a good price for their fish. Trying to increase the amount of *rezeki* forms a poverty coping strategy because, from an emic point of view, it can provide people with the things they need.

7.2.6 A Positive Attitude

Despite the fact that many people in the village are relatively poor they tend to be very positive. People often make jokes and smile and laugh a lot. People will amuse themselves with singing or dancing or by telling each other stories. Generally, the people of Tinakin Laut have an appreciation for small things and enjoy nature a lot. When two men had invested their scarce money in gasoline,

⁵⁰ See Appendix 2, picture 34

bait and ice only to find that they had caught no fish at all, they only needed a few minutes to deal with the disappointment after which they already started to sing and make jokes again. Harsh realities and poignant sorrow sometimes need to be put into perspective, so that people can cope with them. The local population uses exaggeration and irony to put things into perspective. People would say for example that they worked so hard that they were already *setengah mati* (half dead) When houses were flooded people would say that they did no longer have to leave the house anymore in order to fish.

7.3 Chapter Conclusion

The third boundary on which many lives of the local population are located and that is being used by the Orang Bajo to construct their cultural identity is the poverty boundary. Poverty can be defined as having an income level below the poverty line, as not having the material requirements needed for the fulfilment of basic human needs and as being in absence of basic capabilities to function (UNDP 1997). For many poor people in Tinakin Laut poverty means all of these things. Furthermore, in Tinakin Laut poverty is both absolute and relative. It is absolute because it causes people to live below the minimum standards of living. It is relative because the local people are poor in comparison to the people that surround them. For the Orang Bajo, relative poverty has become a bigger issue since they started to live on the land. It was then, that their contacts with others became more frequent and intense and that differences between them and others became more evident.

For the local population, poverty plays a role in many areas of daily life such as housing, food, health, education and the availability of money. Poverty also influences daily life because it increases the levels of dependency, insecurity and risks. The local population deals with poverty by using a variety of poverty coping strategies. These strategies undoubtedly help to alleviate poverty. Sometimes these strategies are effective in alleviating poverty on the short term but have negative effects on the long term. This can happen for example when people fish with explosives, do not send their children to school or postpone consulting a doctor.

People would often say that the Orang Bajo are poor people. It was also being said about the Orang Bajo that they are strong and work hard. Being strong and working hard are both signs of poverty and poverty coping strategies. It was further said that the Orang Bajo have a dark skin colour.

Having a dark skin colour is also related to poverty because the poor often spend a lot of time working outside in the sun.

Ellemers et al. state that the most important function of group identities is to create distinctions between different groups. People prefer their group to be positively distinct from others but when this is not possible they will use negative characteristics to define themselves (Ellemers et al. 2002). Peoples in Tinakin Laut are often dissatisfied or even ashamed about being poor, living in sober *wabarohs*, working hard and having a dark skin colour. Despite being dissatisfied about them, these things are being used to construct the Orang Bajo identity.

It has become clear that the boundary between land and sea, the boundary between animism and Islam and the poverty boundary play a central role in the lives of the local population and are used to construct the Orang Bajo identity. Now that these boundaries have been described it is time to further elaborate on the Orang Bajo identity.

8 Orang Bajo Identity

Many aspects of the Orang Bajo identity have already been addressed while discussing the different boundaries. In order to understand what the Orang Bajo identity looks like several more aspects need to be considered. It is important to know how the Orang Bajo identity is acquired and how it is being past on. The fact that people would often say that it is the older people who know most about the Orang Bajo identity is significant and needs to be discussed further as well. It is important too to take a look at all the Orang Bajo characteristics that have been defined by the local population. Since social boundaries are also drawn within communities, the differentiations and stratifications that have been created within the local community will be discussed as well. It has already been stated that the construction of collective identities always takes place in a setting that includes relationships with others (Barth 1969). This is why the relationships between the local population and the people that surround them will also be addressed in what follows.

8.1 Acquiring the Identity

During a group interview with at least 15 local men, the following things were said about acquiring the Orang Bajo identity. Whether a person is an Orang Bajo depends on the identity of the father. When only the father is an Orang Bajo, the child is said to be an Orang Bajo as well. When only the mother is an Orang Bajo, the child is said not to be an Orang Bajo. When a child has two Orang Bajo parents it is seen as being completely Orang Bajo. The Orang Bajo identity can not be acquired by marrying an Orang Bajo. When being born an Orang Bajo it is not possible to ever loose this identity.

8.2 "Ask the Older People"

When asked about the Orang Bajo identity or about stories or myths about the Orang Bajo, people would often say: 'ask the older people'. Sometimes people would say that these questions could be answered by a *dukun* or by the village head. During a group interview, questions about the Orang Bajo identity were answered mostly by the older men. When the younger men said something, they

often asked the older men if they were correct. During a group interview with five local women, it was only after stressing that I really wanted to hear their opinions, that they made statements about the Orang Bajo identity. They did not consider themselves knowledgeable enough to talk about the subject. When interviewing older people they were indeed often able to tell stories about the history of the Orang Bajo.

8.3 Characteristics

The following characteristics were mentioned by the research population as being typical for the Orang Bajo.

- Having a shared history of being former sea nomads
- Making and using *perahus*
- Making a living by fishing
- Loving the sea
- Living in a *wabaroh* on land or in a *wabaroh pakai benteh*
- Being Islamic
- Performing particular rituals and telling particular stories
- Being poor
- Working hard
- Being strong
- Having a dark skin colour

All these characteristics have already been discussed and are related to the boundary between land and sea, the boundary between animism and Islam and the poverty boundary. Three more characteristics were mentioned by the local population that are not related to boundaries themselves. They are however also being used to construct the Orang Bajo identity and to draw boundaries between the Orang Bajo and others.

Speaking *Bahasa Sama* was seen as being typical for the Orang Bajo. Saat states that in the past, the Orang Bajo were identified by others through their use of *Bahasa Sama* (Saat 2003). According to Mead and Lee, the *Bahasa Sama* spoken by the Orang Bajo from Sulawesi, the Molluccas and the Lesser Sunda Islands, forms a single language with lexical similarity scores of at least 90% (Mead

and Lea 2007). Most of the time, people in the village will speak *Bahasa Sama* among each other. As we have seen, within the stories about the history of the Orang Bajo, *Bahasa Sama* often plays an important role. Children attending the local elementary school are allowed to speak *Bahasa Sama* until the third grade, after which they are obligated to speak and write in *Bahasa Indonesia*. The Indonesian language is already so much incorporated into daily life that some people thought of certain words as being *Bahasa Sama* while they were actually Indonesian. A group of women said for example that the *Bahasa Sama* word for toilet was *kakus* and the *Bahasa Sama* word for floor *dasar*. Both these words are in fact Indonesian. This means that the *Bahasa Indonesia* from the land has started to replace the *Bahasa Sama* that was spoken by the Orang Bajo living on the sea.

The local population does not only use the term *sama* to refer to their language (*Bahasa Sama*) but also to refer to their ethnicity (*Orang/Suku Sama*: equal people or the same people). Being *sama* was said to be typical for the Orang Bajo. The last characteristic mentioned by the local population was the eating of certain foods. It was said that the Orang Bajo like *durians*. One woman said that only the Orang Bajo eat *kasbi*.⁵¹

8.4 Stratifications and Differentiations

Warren states that hardly any stratifications existed within the Orang Bajo communities of the past (Warren 1983). The Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut still emphasise this equality by stating that they are *sama*. Despite this, stratifications and differentiations have been constructed within the research population.

8.4.1 Orang Bajo Asli (Real Orang Bajo)

At times, the local population uses the word *asli* when describing the Orang Bajo identity. When using the term, people will say: *Orang/Suku + Bajo/Sama + asli*. The term can mean real, authentic, genuine, original, indigenous or pure-blooded. There is no consensus among the local population what it exactly means to be *asli*. Sometimes the term is used to refer to the Orang Bajo of the past who used to live as sea nomads in *perahus*. According to other informants Orang Bajo *asli* were those who lived in a *wabaroh pakai benteh*. One informant said: '*Orang Bajo asli tidak bisa tinggal di*

⁵¹ See Appendix 2, picture 35

darat' (real Orang Bajo can not live on the land). Still others said that all the Orang Bajo living in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines are called Orang Bajo but that Orang Bajo *asli* are either born in Kendari, Sulawesi, or have (grand) parents who are born there. Some people said that to be an Orang Bajo *asli* both parents need to be an Orang Bajo.

8.4.2 Living on the Water versus Living on the Land

Saat states that among the Orang Bajo, those who live as sea nomads are assigned the lowest status (Saat 2003). Both Saat and Warren state that sedentarisation had a positive effect on the way the Orang Bajo were viewed by others (Saat 2003; Warren 1983). The local population does differentiate between living on the land and living on the sea as well. Living on boats is seen as old-fashioned and living in houses is seen as modern. Furthermore, the ideal house is said to be located on the land and it is said about the people that live in stilt houses that they are poor.

8.4.3 Differences in Wealth

The ideal in the village is to be rich. A relatively expensive stone house on the land increases ones status. Donating *zakat* can also increase a person's status. Both boys and girls dream of later having well-paid and high-status jobs. There are poor people who are ashamed of the fact that they are poor. Wealth and the status assigned to wealth, play a role especially during official social events. During a wedding reception the richer the people were, the prettier their clothes. The high status of the relatively rich families of the bride and the groom was emphasized by the quantity and the quality of the food present at the reception. Even before the wedding, the people in the village already knew, and would talk about, how much money had been spent on the food. They even knew what price had been paid for the cow and chickens.

8.4.4 Gendered Divisions

Not surprisingly, there are many social differences as well as similarities between women and men. I will first sum up the differences. The Orang Bajo identity depends on the identity of the father, not on the identity of the mother. There are also differences in the performance of activities. Fishing is done mostly by men. Making *perahus* is seen as a typical male activity. It is mostly women who

process, cook and sell fish. Selling limestone for a living is mostly done by women whose husbands are fishermen. It is mostly women who take care of the household and the children and do household chores such as doing the dishes and the laundry. A local man said that ever since the Orang Bajo lived on the land, men would go out of the house to search for money and food and women would stay in the house to take care of the household.

On average, men in the village marry at the age of 20 and women at the age of 17 or 18. There are however cases of girls getting married on a much earlier age and this is sometimes being frowned upon by the local population. For girls, circumcisions take place at an earlier age than for boys. When getting married, people will exchange bridewealths but no dowries. It is not considered to be appropriate for women to leave the shoulders or upper-legs uncovered. On special occasions stricter dressing codes apply to women. Most of the women wore long skirts or dresses and headscarves during a wedding reception.⁵² During that reception women would sit in front and the men would sit behind them. During two group interviews where both men and women were present, the men did most of the talking.

Among the local population there are not only gender differences but many similarities as well. As mentioned before, the kinship system used is bilateral. Especially among the poorer people of the village, women and men dress very similar. Both men and women often wear flip-flops, shorts, sarongs and t-shirts. In Tinakin Laut relatively few women wear headscarves. Sometimes the crossing of gender boundaries is accepted. People would for example react very relaxed on the presence of transvestites. On one occasion a group of young boys had decided to wear make-up and their parents were not at all upset by this. Both men and women can become *dukuns*. Women who have the time for it will often have their own small business, selling things. It is not only women who have close relationships with their children. Many fathers spend quite some time with their children, playing with them and comforting and hugging them. Husband and wife will often make decisions together. As can be seen in table 7 on the following page, many activities are being performed by both women and men. As mentioned earlier, although the man is often seen as the head of the household, it is women who are in charge when men have gone fishing.

⁵² See Appendix 2, picture 36

Table 7: Activities and Gender

Activity	Performed by men?	Performed by women?
Fishing close to the village	Yes	Yes
Fishing far away	Yes	No
Fishing with explosives	Yes	No
Selling fish	Yes	Yes
Making boats	Yes	No
Making oars	Yes	No
Repairing nets	Yes	No
Creating explosives	Yes	No
Working as a limestone miner	Yes	Yes
Being a <i>dukun</i>	Yes	Yes
Washing clothes	Only if no women are present	Yes
Cooking	Only if no women are present	Yes
Sweeping the floor	Seldom	Yes
Doing the dishes	No	Yes
Getting freshwater at the river	Yes	Yes
Removing lice from each others heads	No	Yes
Sewing clothes	No	Yes
Singing	Yes	Yes
Playing with children	Yes	Yes
Chopping wood	Yes	Yes

8.4.5 Pulau Keramat as an Alternative Identity

Pulau Keramat is quite small and has only 32 inhabitants. It is located just about 30 metres away from the centre of the village. Despite this close proximity to the rest of the village, the inhabitants of Pulau Keramat do use the island to construct their identity. It has already been said that the island is seen as a special place because of the *makam* that is located there. It is said that because of the presence of the spirits of the *makam* the island should be kept clean, peaceful and safe. A young woman living on the island said that her father used to be upset when intoxicated people from Kota Banggai would visit the island, because they disturbed the peace, made noise and could anger the *makam* spirits. Some people in the village like to drink the locally brewed *Tikus* that has a high percentage of alcohol. The inhabitants of the island would say about the people living on the “mainland” that they were often drunk and naughty. The inhabitants of Pulau Keramat call the part of the village that is located on the “mainland” of Pulau Banggai the *sebelah* (the side). What the inhabitants of Pulau Keramat call the *sebelah*, actually includes the centre of the village. One man living on Pulau Keramat said that in contrast to the *sebelah*, the island was clean and safe.

Pulau Keramat can only be reached by *perahu*. One woman said that there had ever been plans to create a walking bridge between the “mainland” and the island but that the inhabitants of Pulau

Keramat did not wish to cooperate because they feared that intoxicated youngsters would then come to the island. According to a local *dukun* living on the island, others had wanted to go live on the island as well but the people of the island had not given them permission.

During the fieldwork period there were four houses located on the island and two stilt houses located very close to the island. The people living in these houses seem to form a small community. They know each other very well and often help each other. People borrow things from each other and work together to keep the island clean. Children sometimes spend the night in their neighbour's house. In the evening people often watch television together.

8.5 Others

In the existing literature on the Orang Bajo it is said time and time again that the Orang Bajo have always been assigned a low status (Lenhart 1993; Lenhart 1997; Warren 1983). There are indications that this low status also has been assigned to the local population. As mentioned earlier, one local woman said that the people of Pulau Banggai would often call them *orang terdampar* (stranded people). When I visited a neighbouring village, one man said about the Orang Bajo: '*satan-satan*'. A woman from Tinakin Laut later said that the man had probably said this because he belonged to a group of people living in the mountains. She said about these people that they did not like the Orang Bajo because they did not like people who live close to the sea. The village head said that some people would discriminate against the Orang Bajo but that this did not happen very often. If people would discriminate against the Orang Bajo they would talk negatively about the relationships between the Orang Bajo and the sea. The village head said that these people talked like this because they were not used to living close to the sea, because they were scared and because they could not swim.

Most of the time, the people in Tinakin Laut would say that there are no problems between them and other people. They would often mention that Orang Bajo and the Orang Bugis are siblings. The few people in Kota Banggai that I spoke with about the Orang Bajo just said that they were people who fished a lot and that they were people of the sea.

There are quite some similarities between the customs of the Orang Bajo and others. One man said that if people lived in a *wabaroh* and used *perahus*, they were probably Orang Bajo. In Kota Banggai and in neighbouring villages there are however quite some non-Orang Bajo who also live in *wabarohs* and use *perahus*. It was said that certain habits and the use of particular medicines were

common both for the Orang Bajo and the Orang Bugis. Some people said about the living in *wabarohs*, the use of *perahus* and the eating of *kasbi*, that other groups of people would also do that but that the Orang Bajo were the first to do it and that it originally belonged to the Orang Bajo.

8.6 Chapter Conclusion

The following things can be concluded about the Orang Bajo identity. The identity is acquired at birth and once acquired, people can not lose this identity. While the way that the Orang Bajo identity is acquired is quite static, its use is instrumental and situational. Within Barth's instrumental approach of ethnicity it is said that ethnicities are constructed through the continuous negotiating of social boundaries between groups (Barth 1969). This means that ethnic identities change over time. This is true as well for the cultural identity of the Orang Bajo.

The fact that older people are seen as being more knowledgeable on the Orang Bajo identity than young people, indicates that this identity is changing and that there is a difference between old and new ways of living. This is in line with the observation that the local population is moving away from living as sea nomads and towards living as land dwellers. The boundary between old and new too plays a role in the lives of the local population.

There are more indications that for the construction of the Orang Bajo identity, social boundaries are continuously being negotiated. By stating that they are *Orang/Suku Sama* the local population does try to strengthen group cohesion and to resist the negative image that others have of them. Furthermore, it was said about living in *wabarohs*, the use of *perahus* and the eating of *kasbi*, that other groups of people would also do that but that the Orang Bajo were the first to do it and that it originally belonged to the Orang Bajo. By stating this, the local population makes it possible to continue to draw boundaries between them and others, even if actual practices are not distinct.

The majority of the characteristics mentioned by the local population as being typical for the Orang Bajo identity are related to boundaries. Although not all the characteristics mentioned are related to boundaries themselves, they are all used to draw boundaries between the Orang Bajo and other people. Boundaries are drawn within the Tinakin Laut community as well. Social boundaries have been created between those who are *asli* and those who are not, between those who live on the sea and those who live on the land, between those who are rich and those who are poor, between men and women and between those who live on the "mainland" and those who live on Pulau Keramat. McAllister describes how in the village called Bajo, Central Sulawesi, the Orang Bajo who have

adopted a more agrarian lifestyle have assumed a superordinate position over the Orang Bajo that still fish for a living. McAllister even talks about the emergence of an Orang Bajo elite in the Bajo village (McAllister 1996). In Tinakin Laut too there are differences in status between those that make a living from fishing and those who are involved in other professions.

As mentioned earlier, the Orang Bajo from the past did not passively undergo changes. *"In the Bajau case, structural constraints interacted with conscious rules and choices to produce change. The means and ends of Bajau social organization have undergone transformation that is indeed "a mixed reality" both willed and unwilled."* (Warren 1980: 237) This is true as well for the current Orang Bajo. It is important to realize that the current lives of the Orang Bajo are not just located on boundaries because of external factors but also because the Orang Bajo choose to live on these boundaries.

External factors that contribute to the living on boundaries include:

- the physical environment (people can not live on the land because land suitable for housing is very limited)
- environmental degradation (contributes to their poverty)
- the economy (low profits and high costs contribute to their poverty)
- views from others that that the Orang Bajo are people of the sea (makes it difficult for the Orang Bajo to define themselves as people of the land)

As mentioned earlier, the poverty boundary plays a role in the lives of the local population even though the local population tries very hard to move away from poverty. In the case of the boundary between animism and Islam however, people actively maintain this boundary by using animistic and Islamic elements concurrently.

People also actively maintain the boundary between land and sea. People stated that they do not only live close to the sea because they need to for their livelihoods, but also because they like to live close to the sea. People choose to tell stories where the sea plays a role. Children who live on the land choose to spend their time swimming in the sea. People choose to define "real" Orang Bajo as those who live on boats or in stilt houses. At the same time people prefer to live on the land, choose to create new land, choose to not go back to the living on boats, choose to adopt views from the land and choose to use elements from the land in their stories and rituals.

In Tinakin Laut, land suitable for housing is very limited but even when this land is available, the Orang Bajo often choose to live in stilt houses. This is true for example for the Orang Bajo living on the Togian islands, Sulawesi. (Nash 2007, documentary 'Wild Tribe: Reef Gypsies', British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC))

9 Conclusions

Among the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut the trend has been to move away from living as sea nomads and towards living as people from the mainland. In the last century, the living on land has largely replaced the living on the sea, the living in houses has replaced the living on boats, fishing within the context of cash economies has largely replaced subsistence fishing, formal rationality has largely replaced substantive rationality, *Bahasa Indonesia* (*Bahasa*: language) has started to replace *Bahasa Sama* (*Sama*: the same or equal), more and more the Islam is replacing animism and children no longer aspire to become fishermen anymore. When being asked about the Orang Bajo identity or about stories or myths about the Orang Bajo, people would often say: 'ask the older people'. The younger generation has started to forget the old stories and myths about the Orang Bajo. Information from the land increasingly shapes the views of the local population.

Still, the Orang Bajo are very much connected to the sea. They spend a lot of time on the sea and know the sea very well. They love the sea and tell stories about the sea. For children the sea is their favourite playground. The sea provides a living and opportunities for recreation but being dependent on the sea for a living is surrounded by insecurities and risks. The sea is a place danger and of healing. The sea is used to construct the Orang Bajo identity.

The Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut have not abandoned all their relationships with the sea and also have not completely adapted themselves to the communities of the main land. They are currently living on boundaries.

The first boundary that is important in the daily lives of the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut and that is being used by the Orang Bajo to construct their cultural identity is the boundary between land and sea. Part of the reason why the lives of the local population are located on the boundary between land and sea is that people actively create and maintain their connections with both land and sea. Both the fishing and housing of the local population are connected to this boundary. Since the Orang Bajo have been involved in cash economies, they have become more dependent on the land, even for fishing. The housing of the local population is related to the boundary between land and sea as well. Here too, the trend has been to move away from the sea and towards the land. The living on *perahus* (type of boat) has already been completely abandoned and is seen as old-fashioned and impractical. It is the living in *wabarohs* (simple houses) on the physical boundary between land and sea that is now seen as typical for the Orang Bajo.

The Orang Bajo are connected to land and sea in many ways. In addition to their fishing and housing they are connected to the sea through their shared history of being sea nomads and

through their stories about the past in which the sea often plays a role. They are further connected to the land through their dependency on the land for many things such as freshwater, goods, alternative professions, education, information and the burying of the dead.

It has become clear that the following Orang Bajo characteristics are related to the boundary between land and sea: making a living by fishing, making and using *perahus*, living in a *wabaroh*, having a shared history of being former sea nomads, telling stories about the past, loving the sea and having a dark skin colour.

The second boundary that is important in the daily lives of the local population and that is being used by the Orang Bajo to construct their cultural identity is the boundary between animism and Islam. The religious beliefs and rituals of the local population are related to boundaries in several ways. First of all, the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut say about themselves that they are *Orang Islam* (Islamic people). In reality both animism and Islam form part of the religious lives of the local population. Furthermore, people surrounding the Orang Bajo consider the Orang Bajo to be animistic and not truly Islamic, thereby drawing lines between themselves and the Orang Bajo. In addition to this, the religious beliefs and rituals of the Orang Bajo are also related to the boundary between land and sea because the sedentarisation on the land played a role in the further Islamisation of the Orang Bajo, because within religious rituals and beliefs both the land and the sea often play a role and because through beliefs and practices the sea is being interpreted as a place of magic, healing and danger. People actively maintain the boundary between animism and Islam by using animistic and Islamic elements concurrently.

The third boundary that is relevant in the daily lives of the local population and that is being used by the Orang Bajo to construct their cultural identity is the poverty boundary. Poverty forms a boundary because it is used by people to create social stratifications (the poor versus the rich) and because the poor are often in a marginal position. The poverty boundary plays a role in the lives of the local population even though the local population tries very hard to move away from poverty.

In Tinakin Laut poverty is both absolute and relative. It is absolute because it causes people to live below the minimum standards of living. It is relative because the local population is poor in comparison to the people that surround them. For the Orang Bajo, relative poverty has become a bigger issue since they started to live on the land. For the local population, poverty plays a role in many areas of daily such as: housing, food, health and education. Poverty also influences daily life because it increases the levels of dependency, insecurities and risks. The local population deals with poverty by using a variety of poverty coping strategies. Sometimes these strategies are effective in alleviating poverty on the short term but have negative effects on the long term.

During the fieldwork period people often said that the Orang Bajo are poor people. The local population also said about the Orang Bajo that they work hard and are strong. Working hard and being strong are both signs of poverty and poverty coping strategies.

For the local population the boundary between land and sea, the boundary between animism and Islam and the poverty boundary play a central role in daily life and are used to construct the Orang Bajo identity. The Orang Bajo identity is changing and there are differences between old and new ways of living. This means that the boundary between old and new too plays a role in the lives of the local population. Boundaries also play a role because they are used to create stratifications within the community. The concept of 'boundary centred communities' can be used to describe communities where boundaries play a central role in daily life and in the construction of collective identities. Within the concept it is recognized that what forms a boundary or is marginal for one community, can form the centre for another community and vice versa.⁵³

The Orang Bajo identity is located on boundaries, partially because there are no alternatives available and partially because the Orang Bajo choose to construct their identity and live their lives that way. Factors that prevent the local population from moving away from boundaries include the physical environment, environmental degradation, the economy and the views from others on the Orang Bajo. Trying to deal with limitations, the Orang Bajo have become very creative and flexible. They are creative and flexible in the following ways. The boundaries that are marginal for others play for them a central role. They have adapted themselves to the main land without losing the ability to define their identity as unique. To increase the level of distinctiveness, they will use negative things such as poverty to define themselves. To strengthen group cohesion and to resist the negative image that others have of them, the Orang Bajo emphasise that they are equals among each other. The Orang Bajo are also creative and flexible in that they are able to define customs, that are also common among others, as unique for them, by stating that they were the first to use them. The Orang Bajo are furthermore creative and flexible in their fishing, housing, religion, kinship system, living arrangements and marriages.

The following recommendations can be made for further research. This research has been limited in its scope. The research population included only the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut. Further research on other Orang Bajo communities in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines could establish whether the research findings presented here, also apply to other Orang Bajo communities. Within

⁵³ See the chapter 'Main Concepts' for a more detailed description of the term 'boundary centred communities'.

the research, attention has been paid to the emic views of the local population on the way their lives have changed over time. It would be interesting to conduct research among the local population over the course of several years to get a clearer image of how life is changing in the village. Further research is needed to see what other communities could be described as 'boundary centred communities'. Further research is also needed to fully understand what these boundaries look like, why they exist and what it means for people to live on these boundaries.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Local Terms

<i>asli</i>	real, authentic, genuine, original, indigenous, pure-blooded
<i>bahasa</i>	language
<i>Banggai Kepulauan</i>	Banggai Archipelago/Islands. Mostly used to refer to the Banggai Archipelago district
<i>benteh</i>	pole/stilt (<i>Bahasa Sama</i> word)
<i>bia-bia</i>	a type of black shellfish
<i>Bobolon</i>	freshwater river located close to Tinakin Laut
<i>busei</i>	oar
<i>darat</i>	land
<i>doa</i>	prayer or request to Allah for help or protection (Islamic term)
<i>dukun</i>	medicine man, magic doctor
<i>durian</i>	a local type of fruit
<i>hantu bagus</i>	good ghost
<i>hantu buruk</i>	bad ghost
<i>jin-Islam</i>	Islamic spirit
<i>kasbi</i>	cassava
<i>Kota Banggai</i>	Banggai City
<i>laut</i>	sea
<i>maghrib</i>	the fourth out of the five daily Islamic prayers
<i>makam</i>	burial place
<i>ojek</i>	scooter taxi
<i>orang</i>	person, people
<i>orang miskin</i>	poor people
<i>orang terdampar</i>	stranded people
<i>orang tua dulu</i>	the old people from the past, the ancestors
<i>pancing raweh</i>	form of line fishing where multiple hooks are used
<i>Pasar Baru</i>	literally: new market (located in Kota Banggai)
<i>Pasir Putih</i>	literally: white beach (beach located close to the village of Tinakin Laut)
<i>perahu</i>	means boat in <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> . The local population uses the word to refer to their wooden boats
<i>perahu besar</i>	big wooden boat made out of several pieces of wood. Always used with an engine
<i>perahu kecil</i>	small wooden canoe like boat made out of one piece of wood
<i>Pulau Banggai</i>	Banggai Island
<i>Pulau Keramat</i>	Holy Island (located within the premises of Tinakin Laut)
<i>Pulau Kuburan</i>	Cemetery Island (located within the premises of Tinakin Laut)
<i>rezeki</i>	luck, good fortune and gift from god (Islamic term)
<i>ribut</i>	noise, busyness, unrest
<i>sama</i>	the same, equal. Also used to refer to the Orang Bajo (<i>Orang Sama</i>) and to refer to the Orang Bajo language (<i>Bahasa Sama</i>)
<i>satan-satan</i>	satans, bad ghosts
<i>saudarah(s)</i>	siblings
<i>sebelah</i>	the side
<i>senoleh</i>	a local food that looks like flower
<i>setengah mati</i>	half dead
<i>sholat</i>	the Indonesian word for the Islamic ritual prayer. The Arabic word for this prayer is salat.

<i>suku</i>	people, ethnic group, tribe or clan
<i>tiang</i>	pole/stilt (Indonesian word)
<i>Tikus</i>	literally: mouse (locally brewed beverage that has a high percentage of alcohol)
<i>wabaroh</i>	<i>Bahasa Sama</i> word that can be translated with the Indonesian word <i>pondok</i> , meaning: a small simple house, kiosk, small shelter, hut, cottage or roughly made house
<i>wabaroh di darat</i>	a wabaroh on land
<i>wabaroh di laut</i>	a wabaroh on sea, a stilt house
<i>wabaroh pakai benteh</i>	a wabaroh with poles/stilts
<i>waktu dulu</i>	the first time/a long time ago
<i>zakat</i>	alms (Islamic term)

Appendix 2: Pictures



Picture 1: Two baby whitetip sharks that have been caught with line fishing



Picture 2: A local fisherman with the fish he has just caught.



Picture 3: Nikki and Zul fishing far away from the village, using the *pancing raweh* method



Picture 4: Children from Pulau Keramat standing by a dead dolphin that has been caught with a net



Picture 5: Husband and wife fishing together with a net



Picture 6: "Burning" the surface of a big *perahu* using palm leaves in order to make the wood waterproof



Picture 7: A man working on a *perahu besar* using a machete.



Picture 8: The decorated back of a *perahu besar*



Picture 9: The decorated back of a *perahu besar*



Picture 10: A woman from the village slicing up dolphin meat and laying it in the sun to dry



Picture 11: Salted fish on the back of an old *perahu*, laid in the sun to dry



Picture 12: Housing in Tinakin Laut



Picture 13: Children in front of a *wabaroh di darat*



Picture 14: A typical stilt house



Picture 15: Children playing in front of their house that is located partially on the land and partially on the sea



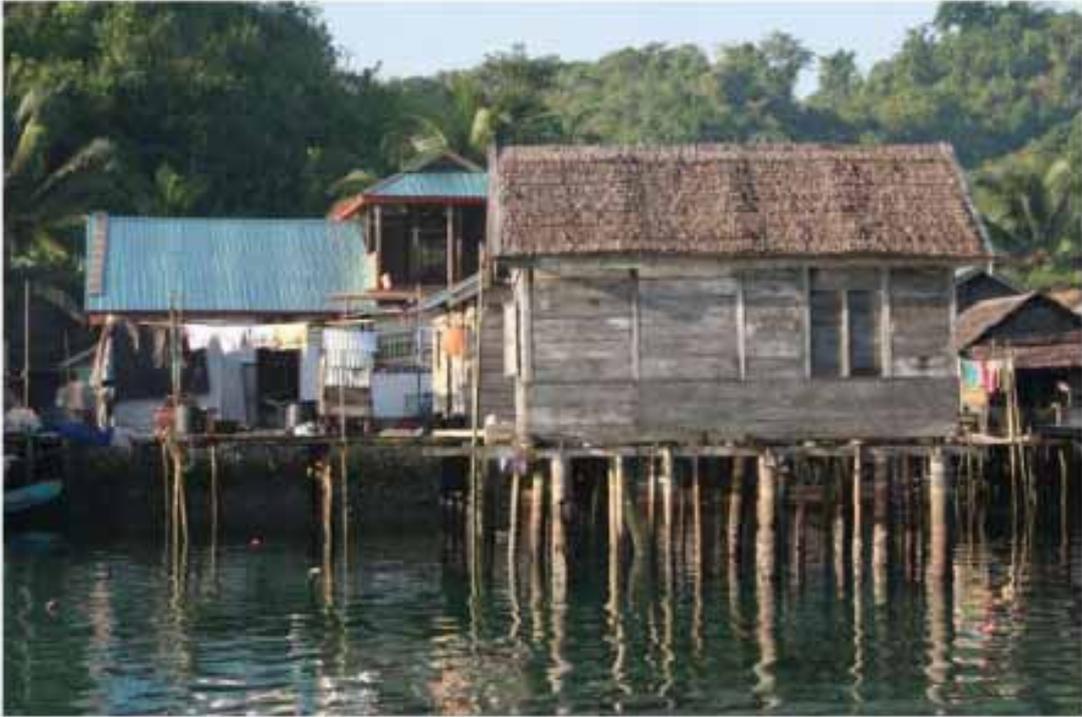
Picture 16: A *benteh* made from a coconut palm



Picture 17: A boy in his *wabaroh pakai benteh*. Under the stilt house a net has been placed to farm fish in.



Picture 18: A man placing limestone rocks and sand under his *wabaroh pakai benteh*



Picture 19: In the front stands a *wabaroh pakai benteh*. In the back an "ideal house" is being build.



Picture 20: Children enjoying the sea



Picture 21: A girl diving into the sea



Picture 22: A young girl rowing on her own in a *perahu kecil*



Picture 23: Men washing their clothes and bodies at the Bobolon stream



Picture 24: Men washing their bodies at the Bobolon stream



Picture 25: Fresh water from the Bobolon stream has been put into jerrycans and buckets to be taken back to the village



Picture 26: A woman extracting limestone from the hills that surround the village



Picture 27: Two women. One of them has put a natural substance on her face that has a cooling and whitening effect.



Picture 28: Pulau Kuburan



Picture 29: The *Makam* at Pulau Keramat



Picture 30: A woman from the village in her *perahu* and the the Sinabung ferry in Kota Banggai



Picture 31: A typical kitchen of a poor family. On the left side fresh water is being stored. Cooking is being done on the wooden structure at the back with the use of firewood



Picture 32: Flooding



Picture 33: A young girl and an older woman



Picture 34: Communal cooking for a wedding reception



Picture 35: A woman preparing *kasbi*



Picture 36: A wedding reception

Appendix 3: Reflections

Spending almost three months conducting fieldwork in Tinakin Laut has been quite an experience. I have to say that I was pretty nervous, after having spent months preparing for the research, to actually enter the community. I remember myself sitting in the village, looking over the ocean and thinking: 'What if these people are not going to like me and do not want to be part of this research?' I should not have feared. From the first day, the local population has been incredibly kind, supportive and cooperative. They told me their stories and allowed me to be part of their daily lives. They would even make suggestions on how to improve the research: 'write down this story', 'take a picture of that' and so on.

Actual living among the local population has been very valuable for the research. It allowed me to learn what village life looks like during the day, at night and in the early morning. Living together with the Orang Bajo gave me the opportunity to spend almost all of my time with them and this has led to more data than I could have hoped for. I have tried to participate in as many activities as I could. I went fishing, sailed in *perahus*, went swimming with children, helped with the preparations of a wedding, cooked on wood and found out that I am incredibly bad in chopping wood. Often I did not understand things and did not know the simplest things about life in Tinakin Laut. This confronted me with the fact that I was indeed an outsider and it helped to avoid the risk of "going native".

There were things that I found difficult to handle while doing fieldwork. I found it difficult to see that so many people were so poor and that there was nothing that I could do about it. Another difficulty was that at times I was utterly frustrated about my living conditions. Especially at night, when I could not sleep because of the heat, when I was itchy over my whole body because of the salty sweat that irritated my mosquito bites, when I heard the rats move through the room and saw the cockroaches walking over the mosquito net and was feeling quite dirty, I did not appreciate being a fieldworker at all. It made me very much appreciate the air-conditioning, the nice food, the baths and showers and clean white sheets when I was back in a hotel in Ujung Pandang. Boy what luxury!

Some interesting challenges also presented themselves while trying to formulate the research findings. In the initial research design, the focus was on the housing of the research population and the living on the boundary between land and sea. It was not until all data had been coded that I realized that other boundaries as well play an important role in the lives of the local population. While writing about poverty, the difficulties I had to differentiate between the causes and signs of poverty showed how complex and multidimensional poverty can be. While trying to formulate the research findings it became clear that I found it difficult to find a balance between expatiating and focussing on the essence of the story.

What I will remember most from being in Tinakin Laut is the kindness of the Orang Bajo and the fun I had swimming, fishing, enjoying nature, taking pictures and observing daily life. What I will remember most from doing research and writing down the research findings is how exciting it has been to design my own research, to adapt this design to the local circumstances, to actually see the things I had only read about and to find out what story I exactly wanted to tell.

Appendix 4: Summary

In the past, the Orang Bajo sea nomads lived together in small groups on boats on the seas surrounding Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. For their subsistence they were completely dependent on the sea. They identified themselves as people of the sea and called others the people of the land. Especially from the 1950s, the lives of the Orang Bajo changed rapidly under sedentarisation processes, technological changes, further incorporation into cash economies and further Islamisation. Nowadays the majority of the Orang Bajo live on the land. The majority of the sedentary Orang Bajo have not abandoned all their relationships with the sea and also have not completely adapted themselves to the communities of the main land. Their lives are located on boundaries.

Within the social sciences, boundaries are often seen as being located on the edges of societies and communities. For the sedentary Orang Bajo however, boundaries seem to be located at the centre of their communities. A boundary can be defined as a real or imagined line or zone that marks the edge or limit of something. The concept of boundaries is very closely related to that of identity. In order to distinguish 'the self' from 'the other' and the 'in-group' from the 'out-group', social boundaries have to be created. The aim of this study has been to describe what role boundaries play in the construction of the cultural identity of the Orang Bajo.

The village of Tinakin Laut was chosen as the location to conduct anthropological fieldwork. The village of Tinakin Laut is located on the island of Banggai, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. There are approximately 1500 people living in the village and the majority of them are Orang Bajo. In Tinakin Laut, fishing forms the main source of income.

By analysing the empirical data, conclusions could be drawn about the nature and use of boundaries in Tinakin Laut. It has become clear that for the Orang Bajo boundaries are central in daily life and are used to construct the Orang Bajo identity. The majority of the characteristics that were said to be typical for the Orang Bajo identity are related to boundaries.

The first boundary that is relevant for the Orang Bajo of Tinakin Laut, is the boundary between land and sea. Both the fishing and housing of the local population are connected to this boundary. For fishing, things from the land are needed and fishing connects the local population to cash economies on the land. The housing of the local population is related to the boundary between land and sea as well. The living on boats has already been completely abandoned. It is the living in a *wabarohs* (simple houses) on the physical boundary between land and sea that is now seen as typical for the Orang Bajo.

The Orang Bajo are connected to land and sea in many ways. In addition to their fishing and housing, they are connected to the sea through their shared history of being sea nomads and through their stories about the past in which the sea often plays a role. They are further connected to the land through their dependency on the land for many things such as freshwater, goods, alternative professions, education, information and the burying of the dead.

The Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut say about themselves that they are Islamic people. In the religious lives of the local population, animistic and Islamic elements are used concurrently. The local religious landscape is located on the boundary between animism and Islam. This boundary too is relevant for the local population.

The third boundary that is relevant for the local population is the poverty boundary. Poverty forms a boundary because it is used by people to create social stratifications (the poor versus the rich) and because the poor are often in a marginal position. During the fieldwork period, people often said

that the Orang Bajo are poor people. Poverty forms a big problem in the village and for the local population, poverty plays a role in many areas of daily life.

In Tinakin Laut, the boundary between land and sea, the boundary between animism and Islam and the poverty boundary play a central role in daily life and are used to construct the Orang Bajo identity. Among the Orang Bajo from Tinakin Laut the trend has been to move away from living as sea nomads and towards living as people from the mainland. The Orang Bajo identity is changing and there are differences between old and new ways of living. This means that the boundary between old and new too plays a role in the lives of the local population. Boundaries also play a role because they are used to create stratifications within the community.

The Orang Bajo identity is located on boundaries, partially because there are no alternatives available and partially because the Orang Bajo choose to construct their identity and live their lives that way. Factors that prevent the local population from moving away from boundaries include the physical environment, environmental degradation, the economy and the views from others on the Orang Bajo. Trying to deal with limitations, the Orang Bajo have become very creative and flexible.

The concept of 'boundary centred communities' can be used to describe communities where boundaries play a central role in daily life and in the construction of collective identities. Within the concept it is recognized that what forms a boundary or is marginal for one community, can form the centre for another community and vice versa.

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