

Geo-political and geo-cultural epistemologies of the Nomadic society in the global south

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the profound nomadic communities' dimension of Sea Nomad in Southeast Asia and Land Nomad in West Africa in the past and present. It highlights their geo-political and geo-cultural epistemologies to their complex and dynamic interaction with terrestrial communities. Their epistemologies are relevant to understanding the wider context of historical and contemporary issues in the global South mobility. Since the decolonisation of the Western colonised territories and the industrial restructuring in Western countries, the Global South countries were experiencing the so called "development program". The Western reason to implement the development program is to improve the life quality of the people who are living in impoverish condition due to the limitation of knowledge capitals to utilise the resources for developing the nation. The development program believed as the key to advance the nation in the post-colonial states of the Global South. In reality this program consists of concepts, theories and its implementation to reinstall the power of Global North in the Global South by the post-colonial states through any means of indirect control. The valorisations of development by the post-colonial states in West Africa and Southeast Asia have brought the consequences of the Global South knowledge extermination or epistemicide. Within this situation, this study questioning on how the nomad people in Southeast Asia and West Africa are using their epistemology in struggling over the states domination through their geo-political and geo-cultural knowledge which are incompatible to each other.

Keywords:

Nomadic society, southeast Asia,
western Africa, geopolitical and
geocultural epistemologies

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1. Introduction

Modern sociology and anthropology use the term 'nomads' to describe a group of people or community which differ very much from the people who are living permanently and working in modern environments. The meaning of nomads has never been entirely clear as the definition is influenced by modern bias. Anthropologists have differentiated between nomads and nomadism. Nomads are a group of people who live in constant mobility raising livestock on natural pastures. Nomads lived in times when settlements were few, roads limited, and communication over long

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distances rare; nomads were seen to be the carriers of news, goods and resources from other communities [35].

The word “nomad” is equal to “pastoralism”, and originates from a Greek term meaning “to pasture”. “Pastoralism” in turn derives from the Latin term pastor and refers to raising livestock. The land nomads mostly live in marginal areas like deserts, steppes, and tundra where mobility becomes a logical and efficient strategy for harvesting scarce resources that are spread unevenly across the terrain [33]. Meanwhile the sea nomads live in the sea which is not too far from the coastal areas.



Fig. 1. Left is Fulani Herdsman in Nigeria (Photo by Daniel, www.informationng.com). Right is Bajau Laut (Photo by Timothy Allen, Getty Image)

Nomadism refers to a way of life for raising livestock on natural pastures as pastoralism and the element of constant mobility as “nomadism” [38]. Nomadism does not entail wandering worthlessly. Instead, the culture is highly professional, defined and calculated, aimed at achieving targeted objectives and goals. Nomads are specialists at utilising and maximising the environmental resources for their survival. Thus, they have developed familiarity and culture to manage the environmental resources as well as having at least a measure of political privilege [38]. Their knowledge regarding resources shows their idea about geo-cultural epistemology, which is important to protect their geographical area through cultural ideas that they have from generation to generation. The knowledge about seasons that influences their concept on geo-political areas and geo-cultural ideas can be seen from the sea nomads in Southeast Asia.

They have their own category of seasons based on wind calculations by which divided the year into four seasons. The first season is the North Winds (Angin Utara) that influence the climate from October through January. The second season is the East Winds (Angin Timur) that influence the climate from February through May. The third season is the South Winds (Angin Selatan) which influence the climate from June through August, and the fourth season is the West Winds (Angin Barat) that influence the climate in September. The knowledge about seasons helps to predict the right time for sailing or fishing. During the North and West winds, they do not sail and fish due to heavy rain or the monsoon season (October through January). The hottest season is usually at the end of the East Winds and during the South Winds.

This knowledge has become the nomads’ strategy to access the resources they require to sustain their livelihood such as land, water and good environment [12]. Nomads are usually a mobile group of people or community moving from one place to another. The nomadic community

in the postcolonial states of Southeast Asia and West Africa from the middle half of the 20th century to early 21st century that still remained experiences socio-political marginalisation. To some extent, the powers of the modern post-colonial states are still trying to control them as they cannot be controlled by the state politically. The states have attempted to subjugate them for political and development purposes such as educating them as members of modern society. In this situation, the state forces them to be educated and the nomads constantly refused this as they have their own epistemology for their life, which is quite different from the modern people.

Nomadic communities actually have their own geo-political and geo-cultural concepts which are totally opposites of modern ideas. For example the sea nomad societies in Southeast Asia are categorised into three groups: (1) the Sama-Bajau roaming in the seas of the Philippines, Borneo, and Eastern Indonesia, (2) the Moken, roaming in the region of Margui Archipelago nearby Myanmar and Southwestern Thailand, and (3) the Orang Laut, roaming in the region of Thai, Malay Peninsula, and Sumatra Indonesia [4, 9, 25, 39, 43]. Very often they cross the border of the country because they have their own roaming "territory" which is not based on the concept of the modern state territory. Before the colonial times, there were no strict territorial boundaries in Southeast Asia, so the nomads historically roamed around within the social network they had created in the region. But after the colonial government set up the boundaries of their colonial state territories, the conflict between the nomads and the state began.

The land nomads in Africa also show their geo-political and geo-cultural epistemologies based on their existing environmental condition. The land nomads in Africa constitute approximately six per cent of the inhabitants and are set up in 21 African nations which include; Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Chad, Mauritania, Algeria, Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia [26]. Before the colonial times, they were roaming across countries. They were predominantly pastoralists, migrant fishermen and hunter-food gatherers. They are further categorised under:

- Nomadic pastoralists- those who live and derive most of their nourishment and earnings from domestic livestock. They do not have homes of residence and are continually on the move exploring grasslands for their animals.
- Agro-pastoralists are those that incorporate harvest farming with livestock. They live in semi-permanent settlements and only the male members travel in exploration of grassland and water; the womenfolk and kids remain in the ranch, nurturing goats and sheep and cultivating the land.
- Transhuman pastoralists; this category have a stable household zone and travel further on a consistent path [26].

The nomads in Nigeria are categorised into: the first nomadic pastoralists, estimated to be 6.5 million in population and the migrant fishermen, estimated to be 2.8 million in population respectively. The first group of pastoralists are further categorised into four: the Fulani pastoralists estimated to be 5.3 million in population, the Koyam 32,000, the Badawi 20,000, and the Dark Buzzu 15,000 respectively.

The nomadic Fulani pastoralists are spread in 31 states of the Nigerian federation whereas, the other three categories of pastoralists are found in the Borno grasslands and the coasts of Lake Chad. More so, one third of the nomadic population are children of school age as at 1988, the nomads covered a population of approximately nine per cent of the nation's total population of 158.4 million [44]. In 2003, the population count that is widely cited by the UN's Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO) is that there are between 100 and 200 million pastoralists worldwide (as cited in Dyer [13])

However, the Fulani nomads in Nigeria are the custodians of about 90% of the nation's livestock population. The livestock sub-sector accounts for 3.2% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product GDP [1]. Globally, in a concept note prepared by the AU and OCHA-PCI on the continental policy framework quotes of UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2005 figures indicate that:

The continent has 235 million cattle, 472 million goats, 21 million pigs and 1.3 billion poultry, all valued at US\$65 billion" Based on 2005 statistics, the briefing stated that of the 314 million poor people who lived on less than \$1 a day in Africa, half were highly dependent upon livestock for their livelihoods, 80 percent of whom were in pastoral areas [21].

2. The Orang Laut: Sea Nomads in Southeast Asia

The term "Nusantara" documented in the *Negarakertagama* book canto xii – xiv is a historical record of the Majapahit kingdom written in 1365 by Mpu Prapanca. The book discovered in Lombok and Bali shows that the word "Nusantara" was used by the Majapahit to identify the archipelagos outside Java [34]. *Negarakertagama* explained that "Nusantara" consisted of islands and seas that are connected to each other. The concept of Nusantara as geopolitical knowledge here shows not the idea of non-centralised territories defined by the superior kingdom but rather showing the idea of political-economy networks of the archipelagic states in Southeast Asia before colonial power came to the region.

This region was connected by maritime traders who were commonly called as Orang Laut that had economic collaborations with local kingdoms in the region. Their role was very significant because they mastered the navigation system and had good connection with the local rulers and social capital in most of the harbours in Southeast Asia [28]. Nusantara is their epistemology as they were sailing the nine seas that consists of Laut Melayu or Selat Melaka (Malacca Strait), Laut China Selatan (South China Sea), Laut Jawa (Java Sea), Laut Sulawesi (Celebes Sea), Laut Maluku (Molucas Sea), Laut Banda (Banda Sea), Laut Seram (Seram Sea), Laut Sulu (Sulu Sea), and Laut Flores (Flores Sea) for trading purposes as well as the political diplomacy of the Orang Laut with the rulers of the islands in the Malay world [28]. Orang Laut sails throughout Southeast Asia, they roam the seas in the area of Sama, Ubian in Sabah (Malaysia); the Bajau from Wakatobi (Indonesia), Orang Laut of Tawi-Tawi and Simunul (Philippines) who also lived in Sabah, Bokara, Lahad Datu, Semporna, and Sandakan. Tambus sailed from the Riau Archipelago to Johor and Malacca.

The inter-island relationship here is the basic idea of their geopolitical construction which refers to Nusantara. Based on this, I believe that the term "Nusantara" originated from the idea of the sea nomads in Southeast Asia.

Their roles in this region were very significant historically, especially in networking economic activities of the existing kingdoms in the islands of Southeast Asia. They also connected the insular region with Mainland Asia [6,9]. The maritime traders brought cultural products such as clothes, gamelan, keris, and some other agricultural and mining products from one island to another; that was how the songket, gamelan and keris were disseminated throughout the Southeast Asian archipelago. They also brought people for slavery or people who wanted to have better chances in life on the other islands [6]. In the early 19th century, slavery was abolished and this had stimulated the legalisation of migrant workers by the colonial governments in the region. However, trafficking illegal immigrants from the Dutch colonial territory into Singapore remained.

Since before colonial powers came to the region, trading activities and the mobility of immigrants not only influenced the economic conditions but it also connected people throughout this region as well as helped to widen the use of Malay as the lingua franca throughout Nusantara. Besides disseminating cultural products and language, the network also function to spread Hinduism and Buddhism since the 4th century up to the 14th century, and Islam from the 14th century up to the 20th century.

The role of the sea people overall in the political and economic system of the Malay kingdom in Southeast Asia was historically important. Historians such as Wolters [49], Andaya and Andaya [4] and Andaya [6] suggested that Orang Laut were involved in economic activities between the existing kingdoms in the region. They also carry important roles in communicating with interisland rulers and people, as well as involve in political activities of the various local kings in the region as well. The sea people play an important role for the strength of the naval force and building relationships of the small kingdom with the hegemonic forces like Srivijaya and Majapahit [4,6,49]. There is a special relationship between the Kingdom of Johor and the sea people [4,6]. Orang Laut served to transport envoys and royal missives, in the naval force and patrol the kingdom's water territory, protect trading ships from competitors, and other functions needed by the kingdom [5].

From the mutual relationships of Orang Laut and the kingdoms during the hegemony of Srivijaya and Majapahit, it seems that Orang Laut did not have any negative impressions. Even their social status as a sea power was highly respected as they also called them "Datu", which is the same social status with local gentries who ruled the coastal area or hinterland. Each of these social categories had their own community based on the geographical location.

The Orang Laut mastered the sea areas, Orang Pesisir (Coastal People) controlled the coastal zones, and Orang Darek/Darat (Hinterland People) ruled the agricultural sectors of the hinterland. Those three terms remain in existence until now. The terms based on geography also show their political economy power; the Orang Laut produce sea foods and goods such as pearls, seaweed, fish, and shells of turtles for the market of Chinese merchants. The sea people also barter or trade with the hunter lands for Orang Pesisir, who then barter/trade with agricultural products. This political economy network has connected those societies at the regional level and into the global economic system [28].

The Orang Laut as sea nomads have sailed throughout the Nusantara region since long before the colonial and post-colonial states of Southeast Asia. They sail in the region connecting the agricultural kingdoms in the area now known as Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, Singapore, and Vietnam. There are some groups of Orang Laut that sail in Burma's seas which is often called Moken and in Thailand called Urak Lawoik (Urak = Orang, Lawoik = Laut) [6]. This term sounds very similar with the term Urang Lauik in the Minang language in West Sumatra which shows that the language exchanged historically. In the regions of Sulawesi and Sulu, people are often referred to as Bajau Laut (Bajau = Berjauh/Distanced) to mention Orang Laut. In the territory of Indonesia, they are also sea nomads roaming around Riau Islands, Sulawesi and Flores.

Before the 19th century, Orang Laut travelled from Riau Lingga to the Northern area, some of them then headed to Kallang River and finally settled in Singapore and Johor. They were also sailing in the Straits of Malacca to the West coast of Thailand, and around Sabah and Kudat (Malaysia). In Thailand, the Urak Lawoik area is in Phuket and Adang Island. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the Orang Laut population spreads out to southern Philippines from Banguingui, Samal, Tabawan and Tawi Tawi.

Historian geneticists and phylogeographers believe that the Orang Laut came from Yunnan, who then went down via the Mekong and Irrawady River to the South China Sea and then travel

around the Nusantara or Southeast Asia [19,24]. Solheim [41] argued that the sea people were the ancestors of the Malay people in the Nusantara region. They suggested that the Orang Laut played an important role in the spread of the Austric languages (Austronesian and Austroasiatic), therefore contributing in many similarities of language in the Malay Nusantara, particularly in the archipelago. In this respect, Solheim [41] argues that they originated from the Malay Archipelago rather than from the North of mainland Asia down to the South. His hypothesis remains debatable. He argues that pre-Austroasiatic languages were developed in the mainland of Southeast Asia to Sumatra.

Meanwhile, pre-Austronesian was developed in Eastern Indonesia and Southern Philippines. They were connected to each other through economic and political activities. The Orang Laut created links between the Western and Eastern parts of Nusantara islands in the region. In this context, the Sea People call this region "Nusantao" (people of the island homeland) [41]. This term was in line with Negarakertagama's book on the Majapahit era.

It is important to consider that Nusantara was a knowledge constructed on political economy and culture that functions as geo-political and geo-cultural knowledge that connected the Southeast Asian region up to the 16th century [28]. In the present Malay dialect, the term Nusantara is known as Dunia Melayu Nusantara (Nusantara Malay World) that consists of the Malay speaking countries.

The role and social status of the Orang Laut showed that they were "the rulers of the sea" rather than just nomads. They were guarding the sea trade routes in Southeast Asia in ancient times. They collaborated with the "rulers of the land" of the hegemonic Kingdoms of Srivijaya and Majapahit, as well as other Malay rulers in Peninsular, Borneo/Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Sulu for economic and political purposes [28]. They also helped the kings in special events relating to sea rituals; they also had access to international trades from China, India and the Middle East before the Europeans came to Southeast Asia [6]. This access was very important not only for them but also for the kings in the region. This was the kind of relationship maintained by these parties involved in sea life until the colonial powers came to Southeast Asia.

The economic and political connection bridged by the Orang Laut shows that Nusantara was the beginning of a geopolitical and geo-cultural concept developed by Orang Laut in relation to the existing kingdoms. The geo-political and geo-cultural knowledge here helped the political imagination of the people within this region, especially the relationship between islands which became the framework of political thinking about the archipelago. The Orang Laut had connected themselves with the hinterland people (Orang Darat) and (Orang Pesisir) coastal people with political imaginations based on trading and agricultural sector [28].

Apart from contributing to the Nusantara social relation of production and cultural traits, they also contributed to knowledge on naval navigation. They have the ability of political diplomacy which enabled them to easily communicate with the rulers of the islands, especially to enable them to stay over in the coastal areas of the islands [28]. Importantly, their role as liaison of the inter-island markets also influenced the economic life of the region.

Politically, the sea nomads had free spaces that were not controlled by the rulers of the hinterland or Coast. Their relationship with the kingdoms were basically based on political interests that gave benefits to both sides, by which many historians interpreted that the social status of the Orang Laut were as respected as the nobles of islands [28]. This can be seen from the attempts to control the Orang Laut by the kingdoms in the region, but they failed. For example, the Sukhothai Kingdom that once ruled Kedah in the 18th century had tried to control them by converting them to Buddhism.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Malay Kingdom in Kedah also tried to control them by converting them to Islam. This showed us that they were not fully under the kings' control politically. The British and Netherlands East Indies authorities also attempted to control the Orang Laut by converting them to Christianity. However, all of these attempts were unsuccessful as only a few of them embraced those religions. This conversion usually happened through marriage, and then they moved to live on the islands for farming and remain to function as Orang Laut social capitals. Most of the Orang Laut who did not want to be controlled by the kingdoms remained and continued with their spiritual traditions of ancestor worship and the worship of the spirit of nature [6].

3. Fulani: The Nomads in Nigeria

The circumstance in Nigeria was the same as anywhere else in West Africa. Here the Fulani entered a zone more settled than other West African zones. At the time of their entry, in the mid fifteenth century, numerous Fulani settled as priests in Hausa city-states, for example, Kano, Katsina, and Zaria. Others settled among the nearby groups within the sixteenth and seventeenth hundreds. By the seventeenth century, the Hausa states had started to pick up their freedom from different outside rulers, with Gobir turning into the overwhelming Hausa state [46].

The urban society of the Hausa was attractive to numerous Fulani people. These towns or settled Fulani people working as clerics, instructors, innovators, and judges and in numerous different ways occupied top positions inside the Hausa states. Before long, they received the Hausa dialect. In spite of the fact that Hausa traditions have a strong impact on the Town Fulani, they did not separate the Cattle or Savannah Fulani (these ties was shown to be valuable when their strict adherence to Islamic learning and practice drove them to join the jihads boiling over crosswise over West Africa). They shared their grievances with those of their relatives. Under the administration of the remarkable Fulani Islamic cleric, Shehu Usman dan Fodio, the Fulani propelled a jihad in 1804. By 1810, all the Hausa states had been defeated [46].

By the 1840s, the impact of Islamisation and the Fulani development were felt all over a great part of West Africa. New political units were made, a reformist Islamic movement that tried to dispense with practice was encouraged, and thus collective and social changes occurred in the wake of these progressions. Proficiency for instance, has to be for all and more generally scattered and new focuses of exchange or business, for example, Kano, rose in this period.

The colonialist acknowledged the administrative structure of the Fulani Hausa states and utilised it in their establishments of indirect rules in northern Nigeria. Reynolds (cited in Usman [48]) confirmed that the British utilised the arrangement of power and organisation, which in the long run turned into the model for the arrangement of indirect rule. Emirates that was renamed Native Authorities were used by the British as the essential units of close and local organisation. The hierarchy of leadership of the Native Authorities was Sarki, the emir and his region heads, Hakimai, alongside the town heads, Dagatai and title holders as "masu sarauta" and additionally local power workers as "maai'kata", religious researchers as "ulaama" or "malamai" or "ardos", judges as "alkalai" and the neighbourhood police a "sva'n doka".

Fulani culture is noticeable in patterns of language and thought and the form of activities and behaviour and it is transmitted through symbols, artefacts, rituals, heroes, and values. The culture of a society is the "glue that holds its members together through a common language, dressing, food, religion, beliefs, aspirations and challenges. It is a set of learned behaviour pattern so deeply rooted" which can be acted out in "unconscious and involuntary" ways [27]. Indeed culture shapes the meanings people make of their lives and define how people experience movement through the course of their lives [27].

The fundamental component to the culture of the Fulani group is a moral code of behaviour known as pulaaku literally meaning "the Fulani paths which all members are socialised to" and which supports them to uphold their identity across boundaries and social change. In essence, what makes a person a Fulani is known as pulaaku, which Riesman categorised into four basic codes of belief. Pulaaku or the Fulani paths are Munyal, Hakkiilo, Semteende, and Sagata:

- Munyal means a combination of strength and courage in difficult, different and embarrassing situations.
- Hakkiilo, means intelligence, foresight and common sense. It also includes carefulness and sharpness in the organisation of day to day activities and social interaction with others.
- Semteende/gacce could be defined as lack of restraint and self-control in social dealings, and weakness in confronting hardship and commonly explained as shame. When someone behaves disgracefully, Fulbe say o sempti, meaning they are not ashamed of themselves, or alternatively, "o walaa semteende" in other words "o wala gacce", meaning they have no sense of shame. In pre-colonial times, loss of cattle was shameful. What it means is that a Fulani is not man enough to shield his herd and consequently not courageous enough to catch some back. In the contemporary time, the idea could be related to the herdsman's inability to protect the herds as exposed to environmental challenges is regarded as shameful.
- Sagata: means courage and hard work, It is frequently used to commend a person for their gallantry accomplishments [36]

One of Oppong's [32] Fulani interviewees asserted that "There are Fulani who have never been to school and if they have pulaaku, they are not illiterate". By implication, he pointed that pulaaku as the moral and principal code of the Fulani is enlightening and educative in its own form. It imparts talents that are equal to those learnt in the formal state school in a different form [32].

However to summarise the moral code of Munyal: Patience, self-control, discipline, prudence. Gacce/Semteende: Modesty, respect for others, enemies included. Hakkiillo: Wisdom, forethought, personal responsibility, hospitality, and finally Sagata/ Tiinaade: Courage and hard work [36]. Therefore, a Fulani nomad must be socialised and informed of the proper social behaviour constrictions on behaviour and norms.

4. The Orang Laut Construction on Geo-Political and Geo-Cultural

The Orang Laut social capitals functioned in networking in the Nusantara region not only through the interisland political economy connection but also through the spread of cultural element materials and non-materials. This is the reason why there are so many similarities in the non-material and material culture of Southeast Asia.

Their cultural practice and understanding of nature and their spiritual ideas can be found in the coastal and hinterland traditions. Their believe system emphasises similar ideas of harmonious integration between human-spiritual-nature as the trilogy of knowledge. For example, the tradition of sea offering such as offering the spirit boat to the spirit of the sea were practiced by most kingdoms in the Nusantara region. The trilogy knowledge of human-spiritual-nature is principally very similar with the idea of habluminanas, habluminallah, habluminallam, therefore this tradition remain existent in the Malay Archipelagos, even syncretised with the Abrahamic religions including Islam [28].

The geo-political network of Nusantara formed by the sea people since the early kingdoms up to the 16th century was actually the basic knowledge of Nusantara regionalism at that time [28].

The involvement of Orang Laut in joint security with the kingdoms in securing the global trade route in Malay Archipelago with China, India and Arabs were instrumental in shaping the regional economy and politics. It was not only a knowledge about geo-political, but geo-cultural as well. But this knowledge had been exterminated by the Western concept of Southeast Asia, which means that the region is located in the South of China as the potential geo-political influence of the Communist ideology, and on the East of India as historically influenced by the Indic culture.

The function of geopolitical and geo-cultural knowledge in the context of regional political economic system remains important because it shows the idea of economic exchange using the same currency standardised through gold value. Nowadays, the currency standardisation is using the US dollar. The role of Orang Laut in the networking process is through their mobility in the region and they have contributed to the construction of Nusantara regionalism. The network they constructed has become the social and cultural capitals of the people in the region. This network is maintained by the Orang Laut who already settled down in the island and resumed their life as people of the sea in cooperation with the various kingdoms at that time. They sailed throughout the Nusantara trading commerce commodities from one port to another. They left their knowledge on sea-trade routes to the succeeding generation who finally met with the European traders and their naval forces in the region in the 15th century [28].

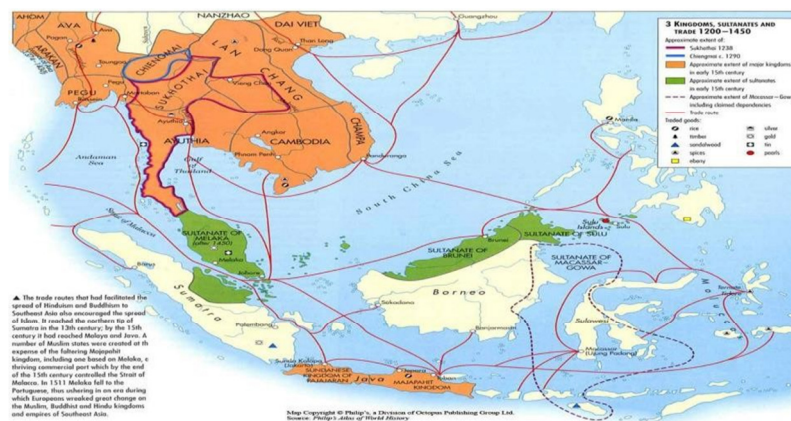


Fig. 2. The Map of Nusantara Network in 13th-15th Century ,
 Courtesy of Philip's Atlas of World History edited by Patrick K.
 O'Brien [31]

The map above shows the red line of the sea-trade route and the main commodities traded by maritime traders in the 12th to the 15th century Nusantara. The main ports in the Nusantara region consist of Aceh, Kedah, Pasai, Perlak, Siak, Melaka, Jambi, Banten, Betawi, Makassar, Ternate, Ambon, Brunei, Semarang, Palembang, Johor, Phuket, Champ, Ayuthaya, Manila, etc. The Orang Laut traded various commodities throughout the Nusantara region. Camphor (kapur barus) from Barus Sumatra traded to the Middle East for mummification. Sandalwood from Srivijaya (Sumatra) and Sumba (East Nusa Tenggara) for Hindu ritual incense. Gold commodity mined in Sumatra (Srivijaya) and Melaka was traded in Mainland Asia. There was also tin mined in Melaka as well as Sukothai (Thailand). Then, pearl from Sulu Sea traded to China, and ebony from Mindanau. Rice was traded from Java (Majapahit and Pajajaran), Champ, Sukothai, Manila, Cambodia, Ava (Myanmar) to other islands in the region. Rice as a commodity was politically important because it supplies food to the kingdoms in the region. This trading had helped to build the political economy network between Srivijaya and Majapahit, the two main kingdoms and their vassal states. The role

of Orang Laut in building this network was very important because they were the people who mastered the navigation system and had the social capital throughout the region.

Based on the trading routes as seen on the map, there were also possibilities of people mobility due to slavery and other forms of interisland mobility. From this horizontal mobility came the diaspora of Bugis-Mandarese-Makassar people throughout the Southeast Asian region such as Ayuthaya, Betawi, Java, Johor-Riau, Melaka and some other important ports in the region. This situation was maintained by the Buginese, Mandarese, and Makassarese who were famous in sea navigation as Orang Laut to control their water and its connection with the rulers of the ports in the region [28].

Tome Pires mentioned that there was some Malay rulers' prince who married with the daughters of Orang Laut. This shows that some Malay rulers were descendants of Orang Laut from the maternal lines [6]. The notes of the Dutch colonial government also pointed out that many of the Orang Laut who led the Malay rulers trading ships as captain, retained their power over the Orang Laut community [6].

There were also some evidence that the Orang Laut were adopted by the Malay kings as blood brothers and sisters. They were adopted to reinforce the naval army of the kingdoms. This indicates that the Kings of Malacca did not rule the Orang Laut directly, but gave them important positions through marriages so that they have same blood lines. In this collaboration, the Orang Laut did not pay tribute to the kings but rather shared commissions with the kings on the basis of agreements [6]. To a great extent, this was the strategy of the Orang Laut as well as the kings in the region to gain mutual benefits economically as well as gaining social capital.

The pattern of political collaboration between the king and the Orang Laut showed two kinds of geo-political and geo-cultural ideas. The first involved the king's territories that were based on the islands, and the second is the Orang Laut territories based in the sea. However, the concept of territory here does not have a fixed political boundary. The king's territories were limited to the islands and its population while the Orang Laut territory is borderless and networked [28]. The mutual collaboration between the kings and Orang Laut showed that the kings in the Nusantara were aware of their political limitations as rulers of tiny islands and populations and they had no control on the sea.

The Orang Laut ruled the seas of the Nusantara, but not the lands, therefore they had to share political benefits and balance with them. Indeed, it was political knowledge and strategy developed by the king and the Orang Laut in giving the meaning of Nusantara as archipelagic region. This idea was fully appreciated as their political economy and maintained by marriage or blood brotherhood with the kings' family. The kings were not only collaborating with one group of Orang Laut, but rather having collaborations with other groups as well [6]. It is important for the kings because this shows that the leadership of the Orang Laut in the region were never fully united but rather in constant competition among them.

In this context, the geo-cultural aspect of the king's move was to maintain the power balance of the sea nomad competition. The capability of the king in creating coalition with some groups of sea nomad leaders was not only to determine the strength of their naval forces but also to maintain the power balance in the region [28].

The political economy of Nusantara was "ancient regionalism" which lasted for hundred years until the colonial powers came into the region. It had become a part of the cultural strategy of the people in Nusantara to maintain multiculturalism. Mutual relationships and tolerance functioned as social ties that maintained the interconnectedness of the Nusantara people during that period. For example, the conversion from animism or Hinduism to Islam due to the marriage of Orang Laut's

daughters with the Malay princes was never seen as loss of faith [6]. I believe that this situation rather functioned as a social capital investment with the islands rulers [28].

Since the European economic power aid interests in the growth of the Nusantara region, the economic competition became very tense. In the 16th century, when the Portuguese economic power entered the Straits of Malacca they anchored their power in the Southeast Asian region in ports such as Melaka, Betawi, Gowa, Ambon, and Jepara. Portuguese occupation of the important ports in the region led to the beginning of conflicts between the local rulers and the Portuguese [37]. The main reasons were not only the competition in political economy domination but also because of the religious rivalry between Muslim rulers and the Christian Portuguese.

To a significant extent, the idea of regionalism by the Muslim kingdoms was to help the Sultan of Malacca inherit from the previous Hindu-Buddha kingdoms in the region. Although the coming of Portuguese naval forces was well accepted by Sultan Mahmud Syah of Malacca, it ended up as a conflict that involved some rulers in the region such as the Sultanate of Demak, Johor, Aceh as well as China. The political economic competition finally involved the Dutch colonial rule following their invasion of Malacca in the 17th century. The occupation of Melaka, which was an important port that connected mainland Asia and Southeast Asian kingdoms by the Portuguese, then by the Dutch, contributed to the decline in the economic power of the Nusantara kingdoms. The straits finally became very hostile and caused a disturbance in the trading lane with warfare for several years [37].

The Orang Laut's trading connections of intra-Nusantara and extra regional areas reached China, India and even travelled to Egypt to trade camphor (kapur barus) for mummification was disturbed by the war in the Straits of Malacca. To a great extent, this influenced the economic condition of the Nusantara kingdoms. This rich region was finally dominated by the European colonial power beginning in the 18th century, and consequently, the concept of Nusantara as a geo-political area began to change.

The invention of steam engines in this century had tremendously empowered the European naval forces to such an extent that the naval power of the Nusantara kingdoms and their Orang Laut could not compete with their technology. These Nusantara kingdoms gradually lost their influence in the sea trade because the colonial power increasingly dominated the region due to the modernisation of their naval forces. Some kingdoms pragmatically joined the colonial powers for economic purposes and had to face the divide and rule strategy.

Groups of Orang Laut were divided during colonial times. Those who had marriage relations with the kings moved inland for farming, and those who still survived as Orang Laut continued their struggle at sea as free sea nomads that challenge the rulers. Some other groups fully joined the sultans in the region as sailors in trading ships. In this kind of political situation, the Orang Laut finally became marginalised socio-culturally, economically, and politically. This made them operate only in the narrow straits like in Riau Archipelagos, Southern Philippine Islands, Sabah, and the islands around Maluku and Sulawesi until now [28].

The diminishing power of the Orang Laut in the region became worse in the 19th century. The failure to collaborate with the Orang Laut made the kings in the region team up with the European colonial powers (Spain, British, and the Netherlands) for the sake of economic interest and to save their kingdoms. During this century, the kingdoms economy was focused more on agricultural commodities rather than sea trading. The sea trading was dominated by the colonial powers and this had weakened the power of the Orang Laut significantly. They lost their collaborative power or social capital and thus were unable to rival the colonial powers.

Since then, the Orang Laut communities only operated in the narrow straits and the sea as their previous economic resources slowly became limited. Due to this, they had to resist the existing

power by becoming pirates. They created horizontal rhizomic networks for clandestine purposes. This form of resistance had become their traditional strategy against the dominant powers until now. This action eventually gave rise to a negative view towards the Orang Laut. As a consequence of this situation, the concept of Nusantara as geopolitics faded and its meaning in the Southeast Asian region slowly and surely became a myth of the Nusantara [28].

5. Geo-Political and Geo-Cultural Construction of the Fulani

The geopolitical and geo-cultural construct of the Fulani nomads in West Africa would not be clear without understanding their origin, culture, migration system, herding system and the social network of the Fulani nomadic group. As for the nomadic culture of the Fulani, Imre [20] affirmed that:

For centuries, the nomadic Fulani was the principal controller of the savannah and the grass land. His movement, his collective discipline manifested in the combatant status, his ample access to protein and to livestock that were useful for his struggle, prepared him to be superior to the agriculturalists who are grouped inside or at the edge of the forest.

The decision to move or migrate is centred on the male heads of households. It arises with info gathered from pathfinders and sedentary kins on travelling routes, geography, weather and farmers or sedentary neighbours. However, men herders collect info on pastures and water sources and proceed with the resolutions in discussion with the household heads and the pathfinders. Men discuss and determine whenever to camp and where to leave their animals to graze [15,40]. This movement follows both dry and wet seasons and the movement involves nomadic tribes and families wandering long distances for grazing places. For the period of transit, they cross local, state, national, and international borders [15] Routes were discovered and followed based on previous acquired info as well as knowledge. Some routes were followed on one occasion while others were followed more frequently [48].

Adewale [33] related this situation of decision-making to that of the Fulani pastoralists, "who believes that mobility is as calming as the breath of spring." It is an activity they derive pleasure from The movement pattern as observed by Iro [22] is that the first thing they do in the morning, on the day of their moving, the Fulani would load the household implements on the backs of the pack bulls. The old, the kids, the disabled persons, and the sick animals with a chance of recovery ride on the bull's back, thus, begins an eight-kilometre-hour foot journey [22]. The cane, sign language, and verbal commands are the skills a Fulani would display in driving the herds to the new camp. Throughout the migration, the Fulani train their animals to lie, slow, swim, sleep, or stand still [11].



Fig. 3. The Roaming Region of Fulani in West Africa, Source: Courtesy of Philip's Atlas of World History edited by Patrick K. O'Brien [31]

Iro [22] asserted that the Fulani have raised their livestock for a relatively long period of time having established a grouping structure that endures the test of time, weather, social change and government intervention. The extent and moving tendencies of the Fulani can be predicted [22]. However, there is an opinion that nomadic lifestyle is unfavourable to youngsters' development. The postulation is made on a faulty basis that kids need to stay in one place in order to develop effectively physically, socially, mentally and emotionally [33]. Children learn the method and techniques in herding livestock and become experts in order to survive in a pastoralist nomadic culture, from cradle through manhood [29]. They took periods to study about animals including their body marks. That would help them to identify their animals or livestock. The nomadic herdsmen and other kids or youngsters understand the livestock or lost animal hoof prints to identify them from another group of nomadic community.

Furthermore, they have the skills to identify hoof prints of their livestock, and identify whether an animal is from one location or another, from high land or low land or lost or tolling animal from one group of nomadic community or the other [30]. The nomadic herdsmen and their kids understand livestock hoof prints with virtual accurateness just as the forensic experts could identify fingerprints. This is exactly the knowledge that youngsters must acquire to become skilled herdsmen and assist in the sustenance of the household [29].

Herding is a challenging job and contrary to common conviction, it is not the joy of the Fulani, but rather, they herd not as a matter of superiority but as obligation. The ideal Fulani cattle herd size is between 80 and 100. With a majority of female over male at a ratio of 4:1, the Fulani keeps stable and useful species composition that is made up of 'beefers, milkers, breeders, carriers, and stock beautifiers'. Cattle belonging to specific household members are customarily herded together but with male household members assuming automatic rights to all cattle, it becomes challenging to decide cattle ownership by female family members. The poor among the Fulani are men owning fewer than twenty cows whereas women owning six cows are measured as rich. Women, however, possess most of the minor ruminants and all of the poultry [22].

The kids in the nomadic community learn the knowledge of livestock, which is a vital socioeconomic activity for the survival of the community. Thus, they need to have knowledge of space and atmosphere which is critical in livestock husbandry. The rational approach that the nomads use to adapt to the harsh ecological instabilities [12] rests on the folks' knowledge of space, environment, and the universe [29].

In the study of nomadic community, the Turkana nomadic pastoralists also share similar knowledge on weather and perfect rainfall forecasts, which are vital for the survival of livestock and humans [10]. Droughts and disasters such as epidemics are known by the nomads, as they are always coming up with measures (evil or good) to ensure readiness so that the community is safe. The fundamental technique of understanding the universe and climatic arrays is the knowledge of the monthly calendar that the Turkana used to monitor the rainfall patterns and prepare their grazing cycle and patterns for their livestock. The kids in this nomadic pastoralist community also begin to acquire their knowledge from the cradle right up to adulthood [29].

Riesman [22] mentioned that the months of October to December denoted the end of the rainy season and beginning of the dry season. At this instant, the herding period increases with the southward movement of the herds along tributaries and stream basins. The months of January to February is the cold period that is regarded as extended grazing hours, herd splitting, and further recurrent visits to steady water sources. Hence, there is an increase of the southward movement of the herds. The months of March and April are normally the hardest for the Fulani herdsmen and their cattle as this is the hottest period in the grazing schedule. At this time, they herd their cattle merely in the evenings and nights [22].

The months of May and June mark the end of the dry season and plants begin to appear. These months also mark the commencement of the northward movement of cattle herds. This time up to September marks the peak of the rainy season, cattle breeding, milk production and shorter grazing hours whereas cattle herding corresponds significantly with arable crop production [7].

Pastoral society is so infused with links and associations that non-associated persons are often considered outsiders. The social capital is so global that it becomes difficult to see it, particularly if we search for it from the experience of modern society where associations stick out in a social background of poorly connected individuals and nuclear families [23]. Furthermore, Krätli [23] asserted that networking is a deliberate, planned livelihood strategy among nomadic Fulani. All they had to do was to go through their own social networks until they found some common link with the people they were visiting. People seemed to have mastered this practice to the highest degree. Encounters between people who had never met before were quickly driven towards the recognition of some kind of common link; when not directly through a common relative or in-law, at least through the powerful interconnecting systems of age sets and generation sets.

6. Marginalization of Nomadic Community: The Epistemicide

The marginalisation of the nomadic community in Southeast Asia and Western Africa has made them live in relatively uncontrolled regions. They tend to avoid any control from the government as they have already developed their own culture of resistance against state domination. This kind of power relation to a great extent helps to develop the socio-cultural gap between the nomadic and modern communities. The nomads are viewed by the modern society as people living in poverty, and left behind culturally.

The Fulani nomadic pastoralist community give a lot of emphasis on the social network as an important aspect of their existence.

In the context of the Orang Laut, marginalisation was due to the implementation of the territorial concept by the colonial power. The Portuguese and Dutch colonial powers used different principles in determining sea territories. The Portuguese used the principal of *mare clausum* or closed sea by which Portuguese would have the opportunity to monopolise the sea route. Meanwhile, the Dutch used the concept of *mare liberum* or free sea, which means there was no territorial boundary at the sea. The concept of *Mare liberum* was from Hugo Grotius [18] that regards the sea as an international territory that all nations were free to use it for seafaring activities.

This idea was contested by the Portuguese monopoly of the sea trade in the East Indies in the early 17th century and the Dutch East Indies capture of the Santa Catarina ship belonging to the Portuguese in the Singapore sea in 1603. The dispute over the principal of *mare clausum* and *mare liberum* marked the start of the Dutch-Portuguese war that finally ended the Portuguese monopoly on trade in the East Indies [8]. The Dutch East Indies Company finally dominated the sea trade in Southeast Asia. This domination was later challenged by the British colonial power, and then finally led both of them to agree that the sea boundary had to be three miles from the coastal line on the basis of the distance of the cannon range to protect the island.

This principle finally defined the sea territory in Southeast Asia, which also limited the movement of the Orang Laut and their economic resources. This in turn caused them to live in poverty and marginalized them socio-politically. Since then, the Orang Laut were considered negatively by the colonial and post-colonial powers in Southeast Asia because they often crossed the colonial areas and territories in the region.

Negative points of view about the sea people appear in the context of 'modern governmentality' where the colonial government would like to take control over the Orang Laut island people residing in their territory. However, the Orang Laut remained fastidious to any form of government control be it the colonial or the postcolonial government. Since then, views regarding the Orang Laut become increasingly negative. As a result, they were considered by the colonial Government as "uncivilised savages", pirates, criminals because they had committed crimes or pillaged ships on the straits around Southeast Asia.

To the Orang Laut, the sea in the Nusantara was traditionally their area of power. Looking through the perspective of the Orang Laut, their actions against the colonial domination is a struggle over their sovereignty. But, their struggle has never been appreciated by the people who have modern governmentality. In the past, the kingdoms in the region considered the Orang Laut as the protector of the sea. Some of them were the rulers' son-in-law, who were also heroes of the kingdoms because they managed to protect their merchant ships.

The awareness of the territory was actually constructed through a number of treaties with the colonial governments. For example, the treaty of 1857—which was signed by the Netherlands colonial Government—agreed that 472 islands in Riau Lingga were the territory of the Lingga Sultan. In 1864, the number of islands noted by the Netherlands colonial government increased after the colonial government recognised that some of the islands in the South China Sea belonged to the Sultan of Riau Lingga [6].

The mapping of a Nusantara Archipelago since the mid-1500s by cartographers helped to build up the image about the territory. For the local kingdoms, this cartographic system was a new imagination on the concept of political territory. For the colonial power, it was an imagination on the expansion of power, particularly the limitation of the local kingdoms' power. From here, we can say that politically, the mapping helped the imagination of the sultans to build over the geographical boundaries of their vassals which in the past was determined by the people rather the allegiance to a geographical territory to pay tribute rather than geographical territory [28].

Politically, territorialism ignored the non-territorialist idea of the Orang Laut. This situation affected the political relationship between the Orang Laut and the Malay rulers that was previously in harmony before the arrival of the colonial powers. But then, after the territories were determined by the colonial governments, especially after they discovered the new knowledge regarding geographical territories, I would argue that the Malays from the land felt that they have a much higher social status than the Orang Laut because they realised that their territory covered the territory of the Orang Laut. This meant that the Orang Laut had to be subdued under the king's control because the Orang Laut did not have any specific territory. However, the Orang Laut refused to be subjected by the king, a situation worsened by the Malay rulers consideration of the Orang Laut as criminals or wild savages because they refused to be controlled, albeit their having similar social ranks such as datu, panglima, and penghulu.

Their later relationship with the Sultan made the sea people feel excluded as they preferred to move independently rather than collaborated with the government. The treaties between local kingdoms with colonial government limited the movement of the Orang Laut, who did not recognise the concept of territory. Meanwhile, the authority (colonial and local kingdoms) used the framework of colonial thinking on the fixed territories.

With the concept of territory, the Orang Laut, was considered as the people of Malay Kingdoms within colonial control. Two opposing perspectives here stimulated clashes between both sides at any time because each had legal consequences to the parties. In addition, the Orang Laut were also disappointed with both sides because they were the important people of the Malay kingdom's naval force as noted by Andaya [6] notes. However, since the signing of the treaties, they were

categorized as wild savages. The political relationships between the Kingdoms and the Orang Laut changed and their raids on the kingdoms' trading ships were considered as criminal acts. As a result, many Orang Laut were caught because they committed crimes. The Orang Laut felt betrayed by the king and by the people of the land so they ended up building their own world while continuously putting up strong resistance against colonial governmentality practiced by the kingdoms and colonial governments.

Economically, the Orang Laut experienced economic and civilisation crises. They did not have any capital to build up their civilisation. Moreover, the collaboration between the Orang Laut and the kingdoms in the Nusantara archipelago faded with the coming of the colonial powers and finally they became politically marginalised and lost their water space after the colonial powers began to dominate the sea trade [28]. However, from the mid-19th to the 20th century, the sea people managed to find ways to penetrate the colonial territory, which was highly guarded. The Orang Laut were able to enter the Islands through narrow straits to the territory of the Malay kingdoms and colonial government in the Malay Peninsula, Riau, Singapore, Sulu, and Sulawesi [45].

An effort by the Orang Laut to survive is by practicing the act of resistance against the existing rulers. They adopted this strategy because they still have the network, albeit their geopolitical knowledge of the Nusantara had already been broken apart because the colonial powers had constructed the idea of territorialisation like the Dutch East India Company, British Malay, and French in Indochina. Moreover, the Orang Laut also had an independent mind that made them refuse being controlled by the colonial powers.

In addition to the issue of territorial awareness, the difference in religious beliefs increasingly separated the Orang Laut (Animism/Dynamism) from the people of the land (i.e. Muslims). People living in the coastal zone were strengthening their Islamic religion and civilisation due to the influence of Muslim traders from the Arab world.

The Islamic culture began to spread as a form of solidarity amongst the Malay societies living in Southeast Asia. The economic expansion of Muslim traders into the upland region influenced the process of conversion from the existing religions to Islam. Within the concept of modern governmentality, the Orang Laut that had obtained the label as pirates and unbelievers (kafir), then had to be subdued by the modern concept of governmentality. However, the Orang Laut did not want to be subdued by modern governmentality, so the people that had dominated the governmentality discourse categorised them as "wild savages". The attempt to record Orang Laut as the population of the kingdom's territory met with difficulties and it lasted until the 21st century. As a group who felt that they were betrayed in a relationship, it was difficult for the Orang Laut to align themselves with the people of the land. However, the state authority continued to conduct their control over the Orang Laut to reduce their everyday resistance [28].

7. Conclusion

Nomadic societies in Southeast Asia (the Orang Laut) and in West Africa (the Fulani) have their own knowledge on geo-politics and geo-culture. This knowledge had been constructed as their way of life especially in building up the rhizomic horizontal network in the region. The social structure of the nomadic society is very much based on social capital as they operate its structure horizontally, non-territorially, and based on the rhizomic network. On the other hand, the modern states' character is vertical, territorialism, and domination through control. This shows that the ideas of territory between the state and the nomadic community idea are totally opposite. The modern epistemology of development does not have that understanding on the nomadic epistemology due to the states desire to control the nomadic communities in the framework of governmentality. To a

great extent, there is an attempt of epistemicide at the nomadic epistemologies through application of various development theories.

Based on the evidence provided by the two nomadic societies in Southeast Asia and Western Africa, we can see the operations of the geo-political and geo-cultural epistemologies which are very wise in dealing with the natural environment as their geographical roaming territories and their idea of the trilogy of human-spiritual-nature in their concept of geo-political and geo-cultural existence shows the importance of knowledge in the development perspective.

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