

**CHANGES IN CUSTOMARY MARINE LAW
IN THE ERA OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY:
THE UTILIZATION OF *ROPPONG* (TRADITIONAL FLOATING
FISHING DEVICES) IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE
SPERMONDE ISLANDS, MAKASSAR STRAIT, INDONESIA**

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This presentation focuses on the customary ethnic Mandarese law governing marine resources in the Makassar Straits, Indonesia, called *aturang parropongang*. This unwritten law has traditionally regulated the installation and utilization of *roppong* or *ropo* (rafts as floating fishing devices). Fishermen in the Mandar area have utilized *roppong* for hundreds of years based on *aturang parropongang*, and it is a part of life for the fishermen living along the coast of Mandar Bay, as well as for those who immigrated to other regions and made use of *roppong* there. However, the introduction of Law no.22/1999, later Law no.32/2004, has changed the rules governing natural marine resources. The law stipulates that each district government has the authority to manage natural resources within the marine area four miles from the coast toward the open sea or island waters. This stipulation has had a big impact on the perspectives of the district government and the fishermen living within the district. They have started to claim the stipulated marine area as their own. Consequently, a negative sense of possession (*rasa memiliki*) has emerged. As a result, Mandarese fishermen from one district have had difficulty using *roppong* in the marine areas of other districts that they had previously used, because the fishermen in the other districts have firmly opposed the installation in the name of regional autonomy. The situation has become tense, sometimes resulting in conflict, especially in the northern part of the Spermonde Islands, where the borders of the districts are not clear.

Therefore, this study examined how aware Mandarese fishermen are of the stipulations of Regional Autonomy, how *aturang parropongang* has adapted to the change in the government concept of marine area management, and what kind of conflict has arisen over the use of space at sea, which is closely related to the installation and utilization of *roppong*. This research used field observations carried out from 2001 to 2006 in the Makassar Strait (location of *roppong*) and in several fishing villages in West Sulawesi Province (Majene and Polewali Mandar Regency) and in South Sulawesi Province (Pinrang and Pangkep Regency).

Keywords: Marine management, Mandar fishermen, Traditional floating fishing devices, Regional autonomy, Makassar Strait