



Human's-Planet Connection in Maluku, Indonesia: Ecology Anthropology Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The degrading natural environment in the modern era requires both traditional and modern strategies for sustainable natural resource management. The relationship between humans and nature in Maluku relies on local wisdom. Meanwhile, Maluku's environmental management is based on the knowledge of local wisdom. Sasi is a form of local wisdom allowing Moluccans to relate to nature. This study aims to examine the existence of sasi and analyse it as an environmental management strategy based on Maluku local wisdom. This study is qualitative research with an ecological anthropological perspective. This study is library research using qualitative methods. In this research, the author dealt with only text or numerical data directly, not with knowledge from the field or eyewitnesses in the form of events, people, or other objects. Text criticism can be executed as a form of library study and thus the technique of reading texts (books, articles, and documents) is a fundamental part of this research, especially in collecting library data from books, scientific journals, and many other sources of information. This research shows that sasi is a very effective strategy that continues to be used today. Furthermore, the existence of sasi is still enforced in Maluku in various ways as an environmental management strategy based on local culture.

Keywords: *Human; Planet; Ecology Anthropology*

1. INTRODUCTION

An expert in the field of ecological anthropology from Durham University UK, Veronica Strang stated "As global environmental problems become more pressing, it is clear that, while the majority of the challenges we face are framed in terms of 'climate' or 'ecology.' Their causes are anthropogenic—caused by human activity. This highlights the critical importance of comprehending 'why people do what they do concerning the environment' [1].

Many agricultural lands have been turned into industrial estates. Therefore, carbon dioxide levels cause the climate system, coral reefs, and Antarctic ice sheets to be at risk. The government in each region has succeeded in implementing concrete strategic policies ensuring a sustainable earth system as a practical goal. The Kyoto Protocol and subsequent targets have repeatedly failed to be met. Without effective action to guarantee the sustainability of the global ecological system, our time on this planet can be counted [2]. Based on Strang's quote, there is a question arising, namely, "What do humans do?" Furthermore, Moran emphasized, "Why do they do that?" The answer is simply as the questions, namely to fulfil peoples' needs. However, that

doesn't mean that the fulfilment of life's needs then makes us act as we please on this planet, regardless of how long-term we are and our relationship with nature that grants us everything.

Moreover, Steffen emphasized that the earth is currently operating in a no-analog state. In terms of key environmental parameters, the Earth system has recently moved well outside the range of natural variability exhibited over at least the last half million years. The nature of changes is now occurring simultaneously in the Earth system. Their magnitudes and rates of change are unprecedented [3].

Meanwhile in Indonesia, the government recognizes local wisdom as a conservation effort as stated in Law number 32 article 1 paragraph 30 of 2009 concerning Environmental Protection and Management, namely "Local wisdom is noble values applied in the life of the community for, among others, protecting and managing the environment sustainably." Regarding this issue, the people of Maluku as a part of Indonesia, still adhere to local wisdom inherited by their ancestors as a guide in carrying out their lives. In addition, local wisdom is also a value system in the order of social, cultural, economic,

and environmental life living amid traditional communities or local communities.

2. METHOD

This study is library research using qualitative methods. In this research, the author dealt with only text or numerical data directly, not with knowledge from the field or eyewitnesses in the form of events, people, or other objects. Text criticism can be executed as a form of library study and thus the technique of reading texts (books, articles, and documents) is a fundamental part of this research. Library data are ready to use so researchers do not need to go anywhere except dealing directly with sources already available in the library. The library data are not limited by space and time. In library research, the researchers deal with static information that will not change because they are "dead" data stored in written records (text, numbers, images, tape recordings, or films) [4]. Subsequently, the data were analysed using the content analysis method.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Maluku is one of the archipelagic provinces in Indonesia. Based on the data taken from the Government Bureau, Maluku Province has nine regencies and two cities with 118 sub-districts and 1,233 villages/urban villages consisting of 1,198 villages and 35 urban villages. The population is 1,848,923 and the population growth rate is 1.83%. The total area of the Maluku islands is 46,914.03 km² consisting of about 92.4% ocean and 7.6% land. Meanwhile, the number of islands is 1,412 and the length of the coastline is 10,662 Km [5]. Hence, Maluku Province is dubbed the Province of a Thousand Islands surrounded by the sea. Maluku has 19 outermost small islands regulated in the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia of 2017 number 15.

From the above explanation, we can see that as an archipelago, Maluku has so many cultures supporting the survival of the local community socially, politically, economically, and culturally and all of them are *interconnected*. To carry out all these aspects of life, the Moluccans have a close relationship with the environment also building attitudes and patterns of behaviour as well as the way of thinking of the Moluccans in general, in this case, especially about the environment. Among the many local knowledge of Moluccans, some are related to the environment, such as *Sasi*, *Pamali* (Something forbidden to say and do), *Bameti*, *Balobe*, *Nanaku*, *Nahas*, *Tanila*, and many others. In this study, the author only limits *Sasi*.

Sasi has very flexible space for review. *Sasi* allows any researcher to be academically creative in terms of all aspects enabling them to produce different research results. Many researchers have investigated *sasi*. Aarce Tehipiory concluded that environmental management with various customary rules benefits and maintains the value of harmony with nature. Irene Novaczek, et al examined sea *sasi* in Central Maluku and Ambon Island. Their research results showed that the existing *sasi* scattered in the region have differences regarding the ritual of land and sea *sasi*. Ingivild Herkes concluded that overall, *sasi* is to improve or maintain the welfare of society rooted in customs or the concept of the unity of humans with nature consistent with the modern concept of sustainable use. Pannel studied *sasi* from an economic point of view. Luang concluded that the practice of *sasi* in Luang Island is detrimental to the community. Ratumanan and his colleagues in the Babar Island inferred that almost all of the *sasi* in the Babar Islands are useful for the natural environment and resource preservation simultaneously. The study conducted by Zulfikar Judge and Marissa Nurizka on sea *sasi* in Eti Village found that the impact of customary law regulations and positive law is that indigenous peoples can obtain satisfactory *marine* products because as long as the *sasi* is closed, all marine products are prohibited from being taken until the *sasi* is opened. Furthermore, with these regulations, natural resources and the environment can be well maintained. From the above research results, the author sees that *sasi* is indeed in great demand for research and is one of the media in protecting the environment as well as natural resources viewed from the aspect of Ecology Anthropology.

Sasi is a term used in almost all areas in Central Maluku. In the Southwest Regency, *sasi* is known in some terms. People in Kisar Island call *sasi* as *Lu Ira* (*Woirata*) and *Hewere* (*Meher*), *Nyertuyarna* in Romang Island, *Hgera Lai* in Luang and Sermata Island, *Ner'ti* in Babar and Wetang Islands, *Weira* in Masela Island, *Hgere* in Moa, *Swere* in *Leti*, and *Sweri* in Tanimbar [6].

The environmental preservation for Moluccans has been carried out for a long time. This is evidenced by one of the cultures of the Moluccans prohibiting the taking of certain potential products with or without damaging the environment. The prohibition of the taking of these potential results by the Moluccans is known as *sasi*. *Sasi* is a traditional community institution in Maluku to maintain certain potential results while protecting the natural environment. If *sasi* is implemented, the community is prohibited from taking natural products [6]–[14]. *Sasi* has various types as listed in table 1.

Table 1 Classification of *Sasi* in Maluku

No	Sasi based on Zone/Guidance	Sasi based on Organizing	Types of Natural Resources Prohibited to be Taken	Executor/Coordinator
1	Sea Sasi/ Sea Guidance/ Lao	Custom Sasi	Fish, Sea cucumber, Laga Stone, and lola	1. Traditional institutions
2	Land Sasi/ Land Petuanan/ Dara	Church Sasi	Fruits and some types of food crops	(Kewang) and without kewang 2. Pastor

Table 1 presents the classification of *sasi* based on zones or regions/*petuanan*. From the side of the zone or area/*petuanan*, *sasi* is also divided into sea *sasi* and land *sasi*. In the terminology of the Central Moluccans, *petuanan* refers to one of the spaces or zones in the universe in which the Moluccans live. *Petuanan* is not only for space on land or forest but also for waters along the coast in front of it to the white water boundary where we can see the seabed [15]. Based on the history before the entry of the invaders into Maluku, all Moluccans settled in mountainous areas. The traditional governmental structure in Central Maluku has a traditional position called the *kewang* whose job is to guard the *petuanan* and uncultivated lands (*Ewang*). After the entry of the invaders, the people in the mountains slowly occupied the coastal areas. Thus, what happened in mountainous areas was automatically carried over to the coastal areas [15]. So, if we talk about *petuanan* on land, it is also in the sea. This relates to the cosmology of the Moluccans about *ka lao* (to the sea) and *ka dara* (to the land). If we talk about land, it will not be separated from the sea. These two components are related to each other.

Regarding organization, *sasi* consists of the custom *sasi* and the church *sasi*. The custom *sasi* is coordinated by *Kewang* together with *Pamarenta Desa* (Village Government) and the church. There is a cooperative relationship between *Pamarentah Desa* and the church. There are several findings in this study. First, *sasi* in its implementation, has differences among villages in Maluku, both in terms of custom *sasi* and church *sasi*. Second, the types of natural resources used are also different. Third, not all *sasi* are coordinated by the *Kewang* because the traditional governance structure of each village in Maluku has a traditional *Kewang* position. Fourth, the time for the implementation of *sasi* also differs from village to village in Maluku. For example, in Luang Island, *sasi* is carried out and controlled by the village head. In the traditional governmental structure, the *Kewang* does not exist. In addition, in the implementation of *sasi*, there is cooperation with the church. The natural resources discussed here are sea cucumbers. Meanwhile, *sasi* is not applied to Lola and Laga stone; they are only forbidden to take. *Sasi* is conducted every two or three years. Meanwhile in Tanimbar, for example, *sasi* is applied to lola and Laga stone. In Haruku Village, *sasi* is controlled by the

Kewang; the natural resource of *sasi* is fish; the implementation of *sasi* is once a year.

3.2. Discussion

The study of the environment is the concern of anthropology ecology. As a scientific discipline studying humans in all their aspects, anthropology ecology also pays attention to environmental problems in which humans live. A multilineal evolutionary anthropologist from America, Julian Stewart is the initiator of anthropology ecology. He argued that the environment or ecosystem is a determining factor in the development of human culture since humans are part of the environment in which they live. The ecosystem here means the physical environment and the various organisms living in it [16].

The Moluccans are one of the indigenous peoples who still adhere to customs and traditions so that cultural values have a very deep meaning. The strength of these traditional values supports people unable to reject various heritages of knowledge and belief in culture from their ancestors. The community can only adjust to diverse rules regarding culture including the order of customary life. Meanwhile, *sasi* in Maluku is much more effective as a norm or rule than other written rules. Although *sasi* is not written down as a societal norm, some people will obey it. This is closely related to the trust issue. Trust is an individuals' subjective view that an object or event has its characteristics. Culture plays a significant role in building trust in society. Beliefs and values are believed to contribute to protecting the environment while preserving natural resources in the context of anthropology ecology. *Sasi* is defined as a rule binding the behavior of the Moluccans as local wisdom; a value believed and studied traditionally from generation to generation. Not only regulates the collection of marine products, but *Sasi* also regulates the fishing gear that can be used to take *lompa* fish. In catching fish, there are special rules for the type of mesh. Usually, mesh nets that look like mosquito nets are prohibited. In line with the Steward stating that these aspects are called the core of culture in which the livelihood system and technology are the two most significant elements of culture and that determine the development of a society [16].

According to Steward, environment and culture cannot be seen separately, but are the result of a proceeding mixture through a two-way communication relationship between the environment, humans, and their culture. In other words, ecological processes have a law of reciprocity. Culture and the environment have unique and different properties. Both of them stand alone or are not static finished products. In other words, both have a big role and influence each other meaning that the environment impacts culture and human behavior. Moran emphasized that every society has a philosophical or mythological explanation of nature and the place where humans live in it [2]. As a strategy as well as a philosophy of the Moluccans in preserving the environment based on local wisdom, *sasi* is beneficial for the ecosystem, the Moluccans' welfare, and social order.

The above explanation shows that environmental anthropology concerns marine life [1] as a natural resource that should be protected and is interested in the conservation of resources, including animals, which have long been essential in many societies as totem animals [17]. This means that anthropologically, environmental issues will always be of concern to anthropologists as stated early in this paper.

4. CONCLUSION

Sasi has a positive impact on maintaining the availability of natural resources. If custom *sasi* does not exist, there will be massive exploitation that can disrupt the availability of natural resources. *Sasi* was established to enable the community to manage marine and plantation products wisely, and distribute the results fairly following the regulations that have been made. Furthermore, the goal is also to maintain a balance between nature, humans, and the spiritual world because those who violate the *sasi* rules will receive spiritual and community sanctions. *Sasi* relies on community knowledge about the time or period of resource harvesting so that it does not interfere with people's life cycle so that the community obtains good and maximum results. The purpose of using custom *sasi* is to enable people to take and manage marine products wisely.

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