



The Sangihe Community's Maritime Traditions: Protecting the Sea as a Sacred Space

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Abstract. Maritime traditions, in terms of local knowledge of marine space, are well-known among the Sangihe ethnic community for their maritime culture. The marine environment and its components are inseparable from the Sangihe people, serving as their source of livelihood. Therefore, it is believed that the sea is protected by the ruler of nature or the ruler of the sea. The relationship between humans and the sea for the Sangihe-Talaud people is interdependent, requiring both parties to maintain harmony and balance. This marine area is closely linked to natural knowledge and fishing techniques, using both traditional and modern methods. Furthermore, they believe in the marine environment through the traditional masundeng belief system and mainstream religious beliefs. They also convey various ways of dealing with natural conditions. The sea is viewed as a sacred space or territory, and they refer to it as mateling. Furthermore, other natural objects, especially those seen high in the sky, such as the stars and the moon, are believed to influence human behavior and can detect good and bad, or predict good and bad weather, the best times for fishing, bad times, danger, wind direction, and other omens. The spatial structure of the sea is known as the concept or term "tagharoa," which translates as "the open sea" and also refers to the sea as a whole. Fishermen must follow the rhythms of nature to fish, using traditional boats that must adapt to natural conditions. The traditional knowledge of the Sangihe people has fostered a tradition of preserving and maintaining the sea for sustainable use.

Keywords: Maritime Traditions, Sangihe Ethnic Group, Protecting the Sea.

1 Introduction

The popularity of the Sangihe people in maritime activities can be traced to the importance of the sea for them, which has encouraged the development of the *sasahara* tradition, an oral tradition known as the language of the sea. Furthermore, other maritime traditions foster the Sangihe people's identity with the sea. According to their beliefs, marine life serves as a medium of communication with nature, reflecting the adaptation of human behavior to the marine environment to maintain balance between the two. This local wisdom of Indonesia's maritime communities explains the connection between humans and the marine environment.

Several articles on the Sangihe people in the context of their traditions regarding the sea. Ulaen et al. (2012), in their research on Marore Island, explained that the maritime traditions of the Sangihe ethnic group include the *batiang* tradition, a calendrical knowledge that utilizes the position and location of the moon and stars to indicate the seasons, as well as knowledge of the cardinal directions and maps of the earth used in their maritime activities. Pristiwanto (2016) describes the maritime traditions of the Talaud people related to traditional boats, focusing on the preservation of the *londe* tradition and the pump boat tradition, which was adopted from Philippine technology.

Researchers in Sumolang (2019) initially conducted fieldwork in the Marore Islands community and described the adaptation of the Sangihe fishing community, who developed a uniquely resilient seafaring tradition, facing extreme natural conditions. Located in a region of small islands frequently hit by Pacific storms, with narrow plains surrounding volcanoes, and the presence of underwater volcanoes. Several faults through the Sangihe Islands' underwater channels frequently cause earthquakes. Several volcanic eruptions have led to the relocation of Sangihe residents. The local interpretation of the term "Sangihe," which means "crying," may reflect an emotional response to their environmental conditions.

However, from a positive perspective, the superiority of the Sangihe people's maritime traditions, resulting from their cultural adaptations, is undeniable. Large vessels for trade and passenger transport on domestic and international voyages are often led or crewed by individuals from Sangihe. This paper aims to explore the maritime traditions of the Sangihe people regarding concepts and activities in the maritime space. The concept of maritime space in the maritime traditions of the Sangihe ethnic group, which is an integral part of their lives, is currently undergoing transformation due to societal developments that influence activities in the maritime space. This exploration enriches the community's traditional knowledge regarding the concept of maritime space as an aspect of local wisdom that must be promoted and preserved to impact the well-being of the community itself.

Understanding the maritime culture of the Sangihe people is crucial, as it can serve as social capital for the Indonesian archipelago in realizing a global maritime axis. Sumolang (2018) describes the customs of the Talaud tribe, often considered part of the Sangihe people's customs, by analyzing their maritime space within an ethnoecological framework. He emphasized that Talaud has its own maritime territory strictly regulated by customary practices in the form of *Eha*, or prohibitions. Certain locations are managed, and after several months, they are opened for collective harvesting or fishing.

Meanwhile, within the zoning policy implemented by the government, these locations can be adjusted to accommodate conservation and cultivation zones. Local maritime wisdom can be facilitated through collaborative policies in marine spatial planning that align the interests of the government and local communities; however, if not implemented through substantial procedures and agreement processes, this can threaten the sustainability of existing local wisdom.

This article is based on a report on the results of field research using a qualitative approach through observation, interviews, and document study. It was conducted in several locations in Sangihe Regency, namely Matutuang Island, Salurang Village, and Tahuna. It explores the Sangihe people's maritime traditions, which are deeply connected to marine life and view the sea as sacred, necessitating the maintenance of its harmony. Few studies specifically address this issue, although maritime traditions have been highlighted in several articles. Research on spatiality based on local community knowledge is still limited. Consequently, spatial studies within community traditions are crucial for integrating local interests with state interests in marine resource management.

2. Ocean Space From a Local Perspective

In the past, as reported by Brilman (1938), almost no month went by without a major earthquake. This water area is quite complex, characterized by the presence of deep basins; for example, to the north is Mindanao Island, with a maximum depth of 10,830 m, the deepest ocean basin in the world. Surrounding it are the Sulawesi and Maluku Basins in the Molucca Sea, along with secondary basins such as the Morotai Basin (3,890 m). The open sea conditions around the Talaud Islands pose a potential risk for maritime accidents. Southerly winds blow between July and August, while westerly and northerly winds occur from November to February. Both wind seasons are usually strong, producing large and dangerous waves that threaten maritime activities.

The recordings of sea conditions in Sangihe and Talaud presented above show that the sea in this region is always turbulent with high waves caused by winds from the west, south, and north. The area is home to several small islands. This natural phenomenon drives the Sangihe people to continuously adapt, adjust, and overcome these conditions. Therefore, the sea is highly complex in their knowledge and beliefs. The marine space encompasses all living organisms within it, including fish, coral reefs, and marine plants. Beyond humans, maritime activities include fishing, ceremonies, communication with the sea, understanding wind direction, navigation, and observing the stars, moon, islands, and more.

The Sangihe Talaud Islands are part of the global Coral Triangle. The Coral Triangle is the most diverse and biologically complex marine ecosystem in the world. This region encompasses parts of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. The Coral Triangle is also home to more than 600 species of reef-building corals (75% of which are known to science), 3,000 species of coral reef fish (40% of the world's total coral reef species), 6 of the world's 7 marine turtle species, and three-quarters of the world's mollusks, or bony marine animals, such as sea cucumbers, oysters, jellyfish, and squid.

The archipelago, with its marine area accounting for 95 percent of the total area, makes the fisheries subsector a key driver of development in the Sangihe Islands Regency. The pelagic catch potential is greatest, followed by skipjack tuna, mackerel, and tuna. Bottom-dwelling fish include red snapper, grouper, kurisi, and swordfish. The Dagho Fishing Port, located in Tamako District, once produced 20 tons of ice per day. However, it has been discontinued due to damage. The catch is transported to the Pasar Towo'e Fish Landing Base in Tahuna. This includes fishermen from outlying islands such as Tatoareng District, Nusa Tabukan, and the Marore Islands. Some fish buyers from Manado and Bitung come directly to purchase fish or have their own suppliers from Sangihe.

The Sangihe people's local knowledge of their marine resources includes designated fishing grounds: Sanghe, Inahe, and Elie. Sanghe is a marine area where coral reefs (nyare) develop, providing a home for coral reef fish, also known as stonefish, and serving as a spawning ground for fish. Inahe is the waters bordering Sanghe and Elie. Inahe is typically used for catching bottom-dwelling fish such as snapper, large grouper, and others. Elie is the fishing ground furthest from land or the open sea, where skipjack tuna, shark, and other species can be caught.

The term tagharoa also means the open sea or the sea as a whole, also called panthalusso. In the Sasahara language, it is called badoa. The sea in everyday life is called laude or sasi, referring to saltwater. Waves that break on the shore are called lua, waves that break on the sea surface are bentare. Large waves breaking in the vast ocean are belade. Birorong are waves that do not break in the sea between boba (deep sea) and elise (shallow sea). High tide is called lanabe, while low tide is called sahe. Ocean currents are called selihe, and corals are called husso, russo, himang, and napong.

Lapian (2009) also states that Laude refers to the sea as a whole with the sasahara terms boba and taghaloang. Sasi is limited to the seawater at the surface, using the Sasahara Badoa language. The seabed is generally called ellie; the white seabed is known as bendase; the shallow seabed, which can still be reached with a rope to measure its depth, is called benna; and the seabed beyond the reef, which is no longer visible, is called inahe.

The sea is a primary source of household economic resources, which are scarce on land. The most valuable areas include the Napo and Nyare areas, where the vast expanse of sea is known as Sasi, Tagarora, and other terms. The coast is called Aping, and there are also mangrove areas or Posi-Posi, although these are no longer present in Matutuang. Islands are called Banua. Potential fishing grounds include Nyare, a series of coral reefs connected to an island. Napo, a group of coral reefs separated by islands, form their own coral islands. Nyare and Napo are habitats for reef and bottom fish, such as saramia and goropa.

Understanding the sea and its components, such as coral reefs, is known as napo. Many locations are frequented by fishermen. These locations are home to various species of reef fish, such as goropa (grouper), snapper, sahamia, sawaba, sulitau, mahuaala, dolosi, and others. The mangrove area known as Pahepa serves as a habitat for fish that lay their eggs under the roots of the pahepa. Fish species inhabiting this area include behang, bee, kumbiha, buana, gar, dedabahhe, bebaghau, kemboha, and pentol.

The shallow water area is known as saghe or nyare, which is home to various fish species such as kuhapu, luku, Aung, kuhamu, memeha, kekal, kalang-kalang, takabimbing, kaliwembang, Ira, menihe, kekitung, sabiong, teh, bakuluang, sahera, and others. In the napo area around Matutuang Island, there are widespread distributions in various locations. Although the archipelago in Marore District appears to consist of only a few islands, the napo, which are also islands, are scattered throughout. Therefore, at low tide, the row of islands that make up the napo will be clearly visible and in considerable numbers. Around Matutuang, there are several napo (landscapes) that serve as livelihoods for the community, including napo mitung (meaning "black"), located in the northern part of Matutuang; napo tanggurume, tarumea, and tongengdolohe in Mamanuk; and napo bawoileise or ehise, located between Mamanuk and Merore islands.

In addition, there are napo Bawarangi, which leads to the Philippines, and napo Dumare, which leads to Tahuna, where Batu Island and millions of seabirds inhabit the area. Dumare Island, known as "rock island," is home to millions of birds, both endemic and migratory, while the surrounding sea offers habitat for the large saramia fish, as do napo leading to Talaud. Marine space, a broad component of the Matutuang Island community's thinking, faces its own challenges and is currently undergoing significant ecological change.

As previously mentioned, the seas in the Matutuang border area have historically been a region of small islands with limited infrastructure and subject to prolonged periods of extreme weather. The strategies employed by fishermen continue to innovate, becoming an integral part of their fishing traditions. Understanding ocean behavior is crucial for Matutuang fishermen; as fishermen, they are trained to understand fishing locations, nyare (traveling nets), napo (traveling nets), wind direction, ocean currents, fish locations, fishing techniques, and optimal fishing times. Matutuang fishermen must possess these skills to exploit the ocean's riches and face the challenges they continually face.

Understanding marine ecosystems is crucial for the Sangihe-Talaud community, which constantly interacts with the sea for their survival. This is especially true for the Sanger people, who are equipped with maritime knowledge and skills from an early age. This is possible because fishing is one of their primary livelihoods. The maritime knowledge and sailing practices of the Bowongbaru community are a legacy of Sangihe and Talaud traditions.

Ulaen *et al.* (2012) also wrote that the supporters of maritime traditions in North Nusa, in addition to samaq, samehe, and sailors, also include boat builders. Maritime tradition adherents classified as samehe, or professional fishermen, with tonaseng, or fishermen who lead fishing groups, possess at least some knowledge passed down through generations. This basic knowledge includes an understanding of the marine environment around their home island and the ability to interpret natural signs through cloud patterns, wave movements and ripples, both in calm and rough conditions, and ocean currents and eddies. Mastery of this basic knowledge is a crucial asset in making decisions regarding when to go to sea, techniques for avoiding currents and waves, utilizing and avoiding eddies, and strategies for countering the current.

A person considered a *tonaseng* is sometimes believed to possess supernatural knowledge, such as mastery of spells to exorcise sea spirits, spells to summon schools of fish, and so on. Some individuals acknowledge this belief, while others reject it. The *Tonaseng* group, which rejects claims of supernatural knowledge, asserts that their knowledge is inherited, such as knowledge of the *batiang* (the zodiac) or zodiac signs passed down from their ancestors. The position of the moon and stars at any given time serves as an indicator of the presence of fish, as well as the times when fish feed or migrate.

Knowledge of the flora and fauna related to marine activities is crucial for fishermen, foragers, and boat builders. This knowledge includes the types of wood used for boats and their equipment, such as masts, oars, and the like. Bark fibers are spun into fishing line, sail rope, oar lines, and bait. Fruits and roots are used as fish poison.

2.1. The Corners of the Earth

The sixteen wind directions in the Satal people's nautical traditions are used according to the wind seasons that dominate weather and climate change. These directions are also associated with the community's belief that each direction is connected to the ruler of nature.

There are four cardinal directions that, according to custom, tradition, and culture, are used because they are related to social rituals and spiritual ceremonies, which are integrated into the traditional ceremony of inviting the *banua* or *menahulending* (purifying an area or village). These four cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West. It is believed that these cardinal directions contain forces that govern human life, so that all prayers offered will bring blessings for prosperity, such as fertile crops, abundant seafood, and protection from disease outbreaks. (Makassar, 1980)

Furthermore, the four cardinal directions are referred to according to ritual tradition as follows: 1) North - *Sawenahe* = *Mamenongkati* (ritual language), 2) East - *Daki* = *Sebangeng* (pointing to the direction of sunrise), 3) South - *Timuhe* = *Matawola* (gray eyes, difficulty rowing), and 4) West - *Bahe* = *Sedapeng* (pointing to the direction of sunset).

God is believed to reside at the four cardinal points, thus having the authority to radiate His power in all directions where humans live. Therefore, the term "wind" in the *Sasahara* language is "*Ongose*," which refers to the wind that can be felt at any time in human habitation. *Timbowo* winds occur at certain times according to the east wind season (*daki*). *Timbowo* winds are used to develop sails when sailing or returning to land. There are three wind seasons that consistently blow every year: the north wind from December to February, the south wind from June to September, and the west wind from October to early December.

2.2. Cosmology of the Sangihe People

Sea space is integrated with celestial objects. In the understanding of the Sangihe people, the configuration and position of celestial objects at a given time influence the existence of marine space, including optimal conditions for fishing by fishermen and the seasonality of certain fish species. Stars are believed to guide their lives in carrying out various activities both on land and at sea.

It begins with a full moon or waxing moon and lasts for 14 days. The moonset, new moon, or dark moon lasts for 14 days. Calculations and naming are based on the shape, size, and rotation of celestial bodies, which vary each night. This calendar is called *batiang*, which indicates time, season, good days, bad days, direction, and so on. Over time, the Sangihe people have adopted a modern calendar system.

The following are the names of the months according to traditional Sangihe knowledge: *Kahumata*: begins with the new moon (crescent moon), the second night is calculated as: (a) *kahumata humotong* (b) *kahumata karuane* (c) *kahumata katellune*. *Harese'* (a) *harese' humotong/ sehang ngu harese'* (b) *harese' karuane/batange ngu harese'* (c) *harese' katellune/ likud du harese'*. *Lettu* (a) *lettu humotong/sehang ngu lettu* (b) *lettu karuane/batange ngu lettu* (c) *lettu katellune/ likud du lettu*. *Awang*: the lonely moon *Pangumpia*: (a) *pangumpia humotong/ sehang ngu pangumpia* (b) *pangumpia karuane/batange ngu pangumpia*. *Umpause* or fourteenth month. *Limangu*, or full moon. *Tebbing*: The moon the following night is the full moon, the moon that has a larger size.

Since the *tebbing* moon and the following night, the moon is getting smaller. The following night, the new moon appears and starts again with *kamumata* and so on. In the calculation and naming of months, the months differ only in the beginning of the calculation; The new moon begins with *kamumata*, while the new moon begins with *sai'*. The Sangir people believe and adhere to the inauspicious or taboo time for planting during the *harese'* period. *Harese'* refers to the three-day waxing or full moon.

During the *harese'* period, if one plants, the crops will rot and the harvest will be small or fail. This is because during the *harese'* period, all types of animals leave their habitats. Therefore, *harese'* is often called the "hot month." However, the *harese'* period, whether the *harese'* moonrise or the waning moon, is the optimal time to cut wood for building houses and boats.

For fishermen, the optimal time to lower their boats or set sail is during the *harese'* period, because during this period all types of animals appear, and many fish are close to the surface. On other days, fishermen can go to sea, but the yields will not be comparable to those obtained during the *harese'* period. In the context of astrology, there are two animals that in certain positions are believed by the Sangir ethnic group to be related to their lives. The two stars are *hiabe'* 'seven star,' and *daluhe'* 'shining star that usually appears before the morning star.' Fishermen will not carry out activities at sea several days before and after the rising of the *Hiabe'* star and several days after the setting of *Hiabe'* because of strong and unstable ocean currents. There is also the *Polaris* star located 4° – 5° to the north called *Bituing Punge* and *Bituing Kadademahe* or the *Morning Star* as a time indicator and direction indicator for fishing and sailor communities, becoming the basis of their lives.

3. Activities in The Sea (*Melaude, Medaseng*)

3.1. Fishing

The original tradition of the Sangihe Talaud people when going out to sea or traveling is *medaseng*, which is the activity of going out to sea while temporarily staying near fishing areas. Starting from *Medaseng*, these locations often developed into permanent settlements for Sangihe fishermen. This factor has led to the spread of the

Sangihe diaspora in various locations. They migrated to the southern Philippines, with thousands occupying the islands of Balut, Saranggani, General Santos, and Davao. In the Talaud region, they settled in Bowongbaru and Salibabu. Villages in Talaud have developed into centers of marine fishing. Meanwhile, others headed to the coasts of Minahasa, Halmahera, and Gorontalo, Banggai, Buol, and so on.

The primary marine activity for the Sangihe-Talaud people is fishing, while for the Matutuang people, the dominant activities are catching gorango, bottom fish, and bajubi. Fishing in Sangihe terminology is called *menawage*, which includes catching gorango, *memeha* or catching *saramia* fish, and catching other bottom fish, *bajubi*.

The primary priority in their utilization of marine space is fishing, not fish farming or seaweed cultivation. Fishing equipment and techniques in the Sangihe-Talaud region have evolved from traditional methods to the use of modern tools and techniques. A 1927 report from the King of Tabukan to the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies describes that agricultural work was carried out by slaves, while marine exploration, such as fishing, was practiced and favored by the nobility. Because fish were abundant in the past, fishing was highly successful, providing sufficient household needs. The ancients possessed the ability to calculate time and identify locations along the coast where fish were abundant; this knowledge was based on the study of the moon and stars.

Fishing boats or sampans are called *pangku* for one person, *londe* for two or three, and *tumbilung* for up to five. *Londe*, *tumbilung*, and *pelang* boats are used for trawling. Voyages to Talaud, Manado, and Ternate use *kora-kora* boats. Fishing in Sangihe in the past, as noted by Brillman (1938), involved fishing methods using lines and trawls, both in the open sea and near the coast. For the first method, individuals agreed on sufficiently large boats, capable of accommodating several people. During the day, individuals sometimes dived deep to target large fish using a type of firearm; many others meticulously searched along the coast for fish with skillfully balanced and strong nets, shaped like expanding circles, with edges weighted with lead, which quickly sank and trapped the fish.

Equipment designed for fishing varied widely. Some fishing gear includes the *landra*, or floating trawl, and the *kalasey*, made of bamboo, for conventional fishing, and the *sasile*, used for shrimp fishing. Fishing equipment includes nylon line or rope, hemp rope, *pekkeng*, or fishhooks, *timbeha*, or *larung*, made of tin or iron, *ladung*, or stone as weights, and *bawuhunang*, or spindles, for the line. Other fishing gear includes arrows or *jubi*, and *sahempang*, or spears made of palm skin with bamboo handles.

The Sanger community traditionally fishes using trawls, which can catch yellowtail, mackerel, tuna, skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, and other fish. The boats they use are trawlers or *dorohe*. These boats typically use oars for propulsion, but now more often use outboard motors. To catch flying fish, or *Antoni*, another type of trawl is called the *landra*, which is also used for reef fish.

Fishing using lines and hooks in fishing areas far from shore is called "*melaude*," a term that also refers to all fishing activities. Fishing gear includes a *pan-dihe*, a device used to herd schools of fish.

Fishing with a rod and line uses a *Nanoru* fishing rod, which is categorized as a hand line, and a *Tonda* fishing rod or *Bawalude* fishing rod, which is categorized as

a roll line with artificial bait. Soma Landra, or Paonode, is a tool for catching flying fish, *Cypsilurus Olegoleptis* Blkr. Soma Bodo is categorized as a fixed gillnet. Soma Tagaho, also known as ledane or anklets, is a fishing boat used to operate this gear (pelang).

Another technique for catching fish is the Igi (trapping device). Fishing gear in the trap category known as 'igi' includes various types, including tumpina, ula, bebbihe, tumbeka, somba, pahato, and others. Commonly known as 'igi', the tumpina is a small tool used to catch small fish among coral reefs. Ula is a small tool used to catch shrimp. The size of the somba and pahato is comparable to other types of igi, and they are used for larger fish and in deep waters. The Bagan net boat is a type of lift net operated in coastal waters at night, utilizing light to attract fish.

3.2. Fishing in Bad Weather

In urgent situations, traditional fishing patterns and the use of yards and plantations emerge, or ancient methods generally abandoned by most Sangihe communities. Juel (45), a fisherman from Matutuang Island, was interviewed after having just finished catching fish using the mangali method while swimming, similar to bajubi, a fishing technique developed by the Matutuang people and a common practice for fishing in bad weather. Juel uses only wood and a string tied to a plastic bottle, such as a mineral water bottle. The fish are cut and placed inside the bottle.

The fishermen wear goggles and cast the line and bait. They fish while swimming. This technique involves no expense. Fishermen catch fish in bad weather using a sea archery technique known as bajubi. They shoot fish among the coral using a jubi, a bow designed to resemble a rifle, made of wood shaped like a rifle, and a metal arrow tied to a string connected to the rifle. The weapon is ready to fire by pulling the trigger. Bajubi often catches parrotfish, bobara, and goropa. Fishing occurs only on the island's outskirts in the numerous nyare (small fishing ponds) surrounding the island. If they don't use a jubi, they use a spear to spear fish from the surface.

Several women fish off the shore using simple fishing rods made of bamboo or wood, equipped with line, bait, and a small weight. Residents take advantage of the island's location when facing high waves. When the wind blows from the west, the Sarasuge area is calm and peaceful. The Sarasuge nyare has a hol area or puddle that serves as a gathering place for fish. When a southerly wind blows, the Bangka and Tambangan areas are shaded; there is also extensive land. If the northerly wind persists, the calmer areas for fishing are around the docks or in front of residential areas.

Children also fish along the shore and in nyare, as observed by researchers who accompanied two fishermen's children fishing in the Sarasuge area and Parampuang Beach at Tonggemusara, using kolongam and tarantaming fish as bait. They also searched for bia-bia, or freshwater shellfish, attached to the shore rocks, which are edible and can be used as bait. Children participate in dancing while helping their parents after school and playing. Matutuang children are learning to fish, swim, row boats, and identify food sources.

3.3. Boats (*Sakaeng*)

The expertise in creating or designing various types of boats has been practiced since ancient times. Some of the vessels used for sea transportation on the shipping routes of the Philippines, Talaud, Manado, Bitung, and Halmahera are traditionally manufactured by the Sangihe people. Boats are an essential means of connecting the various islands in the Sangihe Archipelago. Without boats, the Sangihe economy would suffer. Every coastal village has a boat-building expert. This activity has become part of Sangihe tradition. From the boat-building tradition, the ancient ritual of *menondo sakaeng*, or lowering the boat, emerged.

Sangihe has various types of boats; in the Sangir language, a boat is called *Sakaeng*, while in the ancient language it is called *Pato*. These types of boats include the *Sikuti*, *Tumbilung*, *Dorehe*, *Sope*, *Bininta*, *Konteng*, *Giope*, *Pamo*, *Bolotu*, *Senta*, *Lambutem*, *Dampala*, *Pelang*, *Londe*, *Korakora*, *Balaso*, *Tonda*, *Niune*, and *Panku/Pantu*. Not to mention the names of boats known in the Sasahara language: *malimbatangeng*, *bangka*, *paro*, and *dalukang*.

The Sasahara language is a Sangihe language used specifically by sailors while sailing and also serves as a literary language. Among the many boat names, we can identify several lexical borrowings from foreign cultures, such as *sope* and *lambuti*, known in Bugis and Makassar as *soppe* and *lamboh*. Similarly, *panku*, *bangka*, and *bininta* resemble *Panco* and *Vinta* from the Southern Philippines (Sangil). *Bangka* is actually a term for a boat widely known in Austronesian languages (such as *mangkas*, *wangkang*, and others). In the Sasalili language, the snake, colloquially called *Tempu* (in Old Katoang), is called *hamu*, meaning root, while wild animals are called *Yupung*, meaning ancestor. (Kausen, 2005).

Hickson (1889) noted, "On the way back to the ship, we participated in a thrilling and exciting competition." Lunch, provided for us by a company agent, arrived from *Talisse* in one of the double canoes known to the natives as *londe*. This boat, along with two whalers and a "Flying Fish," crossed the reef while hoisting the sails almost simultaneously. The Malay sails are square, two meters long, and are hoisted by halyards attached to the main corners of the top yard. Two ropes tied to the pier and the starboard end of the top yard are quickly made for forked wooden mooring pins attached to the outriggers. In sailing, the rope on the winding side serves as the mainsheet and is quickly operated, keeping the sail perpendicular to the mast, while the other rope acts as a tack to maintain the vessel's stability.

Lapian (2009) explains that the boat technology of the Sangihe Talaud has developed a highly advanced maritime culture in keeping with its environment. For boat types, they introduced no fewer than 19 names: *Dorehe*, *Sope*, *Konteng*, *Giope*, *Pamo*, *Bolotu*, *Senta*, *Sikuti*, *Lambute*, *Dampala*, *Pelang*, *Tumbilung*, *Londe*, *Bininta*, *Korakora*, *Balaso*, *Tonda*, *Niune*, and *Panku*. Among these names, names in the Sasahara language, such as *malimbatangeng*, *bangka*, *pato*, and *dalukang*, are not yet included. These boat names indicate external influences, such as '*dorehe*' and '*kora kora*,' known in North Maluku (Ternate: *rorehe* and *kobrakora*). '*Bininta*' resembles '*binta(k)*' or '*vinta*' in the Southern Philippines, while popular etymology in Sangihe states that the term '*bininta*' is derived from the English '*ninta*,' which means 'narrow.'

Lapian stated that in other areas of North Sulawesi, maritime culture was not as developed as in the Sangihe and Talaud Islands. The types of boats found show significant variation, particularly in the shape of the outriggers. The oldest Sangihe boats are the bininta or tumbilung, followed by the kora-kora, konteng, londe, and bolotu, including boats used for rowing competitions. Sangihe boats were used for fishing, sailing between islands near and far, as war fleets, as royal vehicles, as royal escort boats, as combat boats, as mining boats (bolotu), and as racing boats, especially when the kora-kora boats were unable to dock at shore.

- **Londe Boat.**

The londe is a type of boat equipped with two large bamboo outriggers attached to the sides of the boat. These outriggers are called sahemang and are connected by a wooden beam called bahateng. Boat of the Rainbow. The Pelang boat is a large outrigger boat. The Pelang is an adaptation of the londe.

- **Bininta Boat**

Grafland, in the book "Minahasa Masa Lalu dan Masa Kini" (Minahasa Masa Lalu dan Masa Kini) (translated by Jost Kulit), notes that in 1800, Sangihe boats were already docked at Manado harbor, named Kora-kora and Tumbilung. The Tumbilung boat is similar to the bininta, but the Tumbilung uses three bahateng. The bininta boat was used by people in ancient times for various purposes. As a means of inter-island transportation, it served as a formidable warship due to its similar bow and stern. The Bininta boat features important features such as the Naga Snake installed at the front, rear, and center, which hold religious significance for ancestors.

The bininta symbolizes unity, prosperity, and defense. The pamo boat is an adaptation of the konteng. A pamo boat is a large boat without outriggers. The components of this boat include the uling (the part that controls the boat's direction at the rear, usually with a propeller), the uling holder, the tahuxala (keel or hull), the seats, the kilu, the sengo (sail), the baweso (supporting rope), the palalaheng (mast), the penga (the rear mast that supports the wood and sail), and the alang (alang). The bolotu or wolotu boat is a type of mortar boat made from large pieces of wood, such as jackfruit, that are hollowed out or shaped according to the desired boat design. Large boats are called pelo.

- **Pamboat (Pumpboat)**

A pumpboat, also known as a katir boat, is a type of boat equipped with sema-sema and used to operate fishing gear, both for bottom and pelagic fishing. Pumpboats serve as a means of transportation for both individuals and goods. The Pamboat, favored by fishermen from Sangihe and Talaud, boasts the ability to sail even in adverse weather conditions. When facing waves and storms, the pumpboat maintains its balance using sema-sema made of strong and durable bamboo.

4. Sacred and Balanced

The marine environment and its components are integral elements for the Sangihe people. Nature is viewed as the essence of life that provides vitality; therefore, it is believed that the sea is protected by the ruler of nature or the ruler of the sea. Thus, events occurring in nature directly impact humans, and conversely, human actions also influence the dynamics of nature. If humans engage in harmful actions, it is believed

that natural disasters can occur; therefore, every event that occurs in the ocean is related to human behavior. The relationship between humans and the sea for the Sangihe-Talaut people is interdependent, so both must maintain harmony and balance.

The Sangihe fishermen approach these marine waters with knowledge of nature and sound fishing techniques, using both traditional and modern methods. They also approach them with faith in the marine environment through an understanding of forces beyond human comprehension.

Therefore, rituals have been developed in accordance with traditional Masundeng beliefs, as well as Christian and Islamic beliefs. In addition to religious rituals, it is also believed that there are various taboos or *palli* (privileges) in dealing with natural conditions. Viewed as sacred spaces or territories, they are referred to as *mateling*. Therefore, various fishing techniques and the simple equipment used are linked to traditional spatial understandings, beliefs in the rulers of the sea, and efforts to maintain ecosystem balance. Other natural objects, especially those visible in the sky, such as the stars and the moon, are believed to influence human behavior and can detect, signal, or predict certain events. These include indications of good weather, bad weather, optimal fishing times, inopportune times, potential dangers, compass directions, and other indications.

Beliefs in natural phenomena and fishing practices have undergone transformation among some fishermen, where technological changes due to modernization and differences with religious teachings have often led to belief in natural signs being considered contrary to religious doctrine. However, others are still able to understand this through theological contextualization and community beliefs. Therefore, in rituals such as *Tulude*, religious figures, in this case priests, are involved in leading the ceremony.

The Sangihe people understand that their marine territory, rich in bottomfish, reef fish, pelagic fish, and sharks, is a resource they possess to cope with often challenging and hostile sea conditions. The small island of Matutuang, located in Marore District, is considered a gift from God Almighty. The strong religious beliefs held by the residents are reflected in their intense religious activities on the island. Religious leaders consistently explain that the island and its surrounding sea are a gift from God and should be used wisely to prevent conflict.

It is believed that if the sea is not used wisely and conflicts persist, the "blessing" will not be bestowed by the Almighty. Therefore, before setting out to sea, it is taboo for them to have disagreements with friends, neighbors, and family. The majority of the population is Christian, with community development held weekly, even daily, such as morning prayers. The congregation's skill level is very high. "Because these islands constantly face significant challenges due to climate, weather, and inadequate infrastructure, as the outermost islands, they continually rely on faith, prayer, and hope in their God." It is believed that as a small and isolated island, improper actions can have negative consequences for individuals and the community. A small number of fishing communities remain bound by the beliefs passed down from their ancestors, maintaining their belief in the spirits that govern the sea, in addition to their religious practices.

The use of marine resources is inseparable from the belief that the sea was created and controlled by Almighty God. Every week, a pastor prays for God's blessings

so that the congregation, mostly fishermen, can fish at sea. While their activities are primarily carried out at the Daseng site, the regular weekly worship service is still held. Therefore, a place of worship was built on Mamanuk Island for those who are unable to return home. On these worship days, no fishermen are at sea. Except for emergencies, such as transporting individuals with serious illnesses to medical facilities, no sea travel is permitted.

The Sangihe people view nature as a partner, because if it is damaged, it will become angry, causing hardship in life. Since the Sangihe people live on islands surrounded by vast oceans, they are vulnerable to disasters. However, they also believe that nature is good and a source of livelihood. It provides food, air to breathe, tranquility, and beauty. Behind nature lies its creator or ruler, namely God.

The Sangihe people's maritime traditions regard their marine environment as sacred territory. Before setting out to sea, fishermen are forbidden from arguing with their partners; if such an argument occurs, they must postpone the voyage to resolve the dispute. Travel with a positive spirit and a harmonious family, in the hope of a safe journey and a bountiful catch. Furthermore, avoid statements that may seem condescending or joking, such as "If there's a fish, I'll ask for the tail or the head." Obtaining a fishing boat for use on a voyage must begin with a prayer, even if it's only a few words or sentences.

Prayer to the Almighty, known as *mau ruata*, along with mastery of the sea in all activities, are efforts to avoid accidents and disasters at sea and to secure a bountiful catch. Furthermore, the Sangihe fishermen do this to integrate with the natural environment that has been their habitat since birth, and to follow traditions passed down from their ancestors. They adapt to the marine environment, thus displaying courage in the waters. This is because it is part of their lives, a source of livelihood, and it is believed that the sea is alive and its power influences humans.

Natural resources are valued through traditional use and are believed to have causal relationships; positive interactions with nature produce good things, while negative interactions result in accidents or misfortune. Given the limited resources and the wild natural conditions, the Sangihe people have developed simple, environmentally friendly marine utilization patterns and fishing techniques integrated with rituals. The ocean is viewed as possessing a more dominant life force, while mountains possess majestic heights; within the sea resides an entity called *Tagaroa*, or sea god. The term used for the vast ocean is *tagaroang*. *Tagaroang* symbolizes the ocean, and more than that, it represents a sacred area, not simply a location teeming with marine life and other creatures.

Therefore, the Sangihe people regard the sea as a source of life that must be carefully preserved. *Makaampo Madonsa* (76 years old), a resident of *Tahuna*, stated that his parents often reminded him to be careful when setting foot on coral and to avoid it whenever possible. They also forbade him from prying open coral unless it had fallen off or died. Marine equipment is made through a series of rituals, such as the construction of a traditional *londe* boat, a sacred, beautiful, and time-consuming process, unlike the instantaneous construction of a *pelang* boat. The process of building this boat is quite complex. It is built towering upwards, symbolizing the direction and purpose of

the voyage to the Almighty, extending upwards to reach God. The *londe* boat is meticulously designed and produces an aesthetically pleasing form.

Behind the process and beauty of the *londe* boat's form, there are values that reflect the relationship between humans and the environment, their relationship with God, and the interaction between people to build harmonious and positive relationships. The relationship with the ruler of nature is approached through beautiful art, as an expression of respect and love for God the Creator.

Beliefs are held to mitigate extreme sea weather and to pray for a good fishing harvest. They build stacked rock formations on the shore. These arranged stones are called *dokore*, and can be found in several coastal locations where they are neatly arranged. Although many people no longer practice them, religious beliefs remain strong, so some rituals traditionally performed according to Sangihe tradition are not performed. The *Tulude* ceremony, a New Year celebration that seeks blessings from the Almighty, is now performed according to Christian procedures.

4.1. Wise Marine Management Traditions

Several marine management traditions in Sangihe are implemented wisely to utilize marine resources sustainably. They develop a marine resource utilization system by ensuring their availability. Furthermore, marine produce is distributed to the entire community, while also holding thanksgiving ceremonies to the Creator of heaven and earth. This is common along the coast of the Sangihe Islands, despite experiencing degradation due to social changes in Sangihe society caused by modernization, changes in the landscape, and economic pressures.

Salurang Village historically served as the center of the early Sangihe kingdom, known as the *Tampunganglawo* Kingdom. Despite experiencing rapid change, this village maintains its traditional fishing traditions, passed down through generations. One example is the tradition of catching *lombo* fish. Yaya (46 years old), the District Secretary of the Salurang District, explained that the *lombo* fishing tradition is held annually, involving dozens of boats, each carrying one to two people. They are led by a *tonaseng*, or leader, who is also a traditional figure, who directs the participants to the fish ready to be caught. The catch is brought ashore for a communal thanksgiving ceremony and is then shared.

The *melombo* ceremony is collaboratively planned in advance by community leaders, government officials, and community leaders. *Melombo* is carried out collectively, from the preparation stage to the closing ceremony, which takes the form of a community thanksgiving, reflecting the values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and the avoidance of conflict between residents. The *lombo* celebration is attended by most of the village community, while others go out to sea and some wait on the shore. It begins with the striking of the *tetengkoren* (traditional fishing rods) at the edge of the beach on both sides. The first strike indicates preparation for the *melombo* ceremony. On the second strike, dozens, even hundreds, of boats plunge into the sea.

Three *melombo* participants follow the *tonaseng* (traditional fishing group), circling to observe the fishing area, taking the lead position. They direct participants to the locations of the fish schools they observe. The *tonaseng* communicates through gestures indicating their desired objectives. Meanwhile, the participants, or fishermen,

take their positions at their designated locations. The next signal or code from the tonaseng, after finding a clear fishing area, is to cast or cast the net. After casting the small nets, the tonaseng return to the beach or land. Then, in the afternoon, around 2:00-3:00 PM, the tonaseng returns to sea to direct the lombo fishermen in locating un-reached fish schools and immediately instructs them to return to land.

The nets, or soma, used for this fishing are small and owned by each boat; the nets are cast simultaneously upon the tonaseng's command. The target fish species are found in the fishing zone adjacent to the kanal village. The fish are collected at specific times, which are seasonal.

On Makalehi Island, Para Island, and several other locations, the seke-maneke tradition fosters harmony with the marine environment. The seke is a simple fishing tool with distinctive characteristics. A bamboo pole (Bambusae) with a height of only ninety-five centimeters and a length of approximately thirty-five meters of woven bamboo (pandihe), which is then released into the coral reef at a depth of eight to ten meters, can catch malalugis (*Decapterus macrasoma*) and dolosi/tahumang/losui fish, a type of fish with a yellow tail.

This tradition has been neglected for several years, due to the pressures of modernization and social dynamics. However, since 2025, a group of local residents has been working to revive it and attract tourists. Within this seke maneke, the Eha/pelie custom is a traditional Sengi practice involving the collection of agricultural and marine resources at the right time for harvest. Before fishing in the sea, the fishing grounds must first be managed or protected, a practice known as conservation. Local residents are reluctant to violate this custom, believing that violating this custom will have negative consequences for themselves, their families, and their village.

Fundamentally, the eha/pelie activity is a preliminary step before the Maneke activity. During Maneke, rotation takes place, with a daily schedule assigned to each Maneke group and adhered to by all groups. Similarly, the fish distribution method is aimed at all people on the islands, regardless of whether they are involved in fishing or not.

Seke is a traditional fishing gear made from fine bamboo with a diameter of 2-3 centimeters, cut to lengths of half a fathom, or about 80-90 centimeters. The bamboo poles are tied together individually with rattan, forming a fence-like structure 30 fathoms long, or about 50 meters. The number of rattan used to tie the bamboo poles is usually seven strands, arranged parallel. Therefore, the structure resembles a strong fence, and at both ends of the bamboo are tied coconut leaves that function as a "net" called pandihe. Each unit of traditional seke fishing gear consists of a pandihe, a patoka, a bag-shaped net for catching fish, several bamboo poles called tatelide or usu, a pamotype boat, a kengkang-type canoe to transport the pandihe, and several londe-type canoes. The number of individuals involved in operating this tool ranges from 30 to 40 people, consisting of men, women, adults, and children. The activity of fishing using seke is called maneke, and the group of fishermen who carry it out is called mananeke.

The Maneke tradition, which involves collective fishing using a fishing gear called seke, was previously found throughout almost the entire North Nusa Tenggara region, particularly on small islands in the far north, such as Bukide Island and Manipa Island, as well as on the eastern and southern tip of Sengi Island, including Bebalang

Island, Kahakitang Island, Para Island, and Makalehi Island west of Siau Island. The following presentation is based on field visits to two islands: Kahakitang Island, located at the southern tip of Tatoareng District in the Sangihe Islands Regency, and Makalehi Island in the Sitaro Islands Regency.

Local wisdom emerging in the village of Mulengen Tagulandang relates to the management of skipjack tuna resources entering Mulengen village waters. Skipjack tuna fishing began with the use of fishing rods and nets, typically used for small pelagic fish, by a respected community leader in skipjack tuna resource management since 1950. This fishing gear was simple and reflected adaptations to local water conditions. It was reintroduced in 1980.

Over time, the village community formed three fishing groups. These three groups play a crucial role in the skipjack tuna fishery. Each fishing group in Mulengen village has traditionally established and adhered to fishing area boundaries determined by mutual agreement. This territorial division not only regulates their operations but also prevents conflict between groups over the use of marine resources. Ecologically, this clear territorial division also serves as a mechanism for sustainable fish resource management, as each group assumes responsibility for maintaining the sustainability of the ecosystem within its territory. This reflects the application of local wisdom rooted in the values of togetherness, mutual cooperation, and respect for the balance of the marine environment.

4.2. Sasahara Sea Language

In marine activities, a sea language, or sasahara, has been developed as a form of respect for the sea's rulers, as well as for celebrating on the beach/sea during Tulude and other traditional ceremonies. It is believed that failing to respect or carry out activities at sea can lead to disaster. For this group, the sea is a sacred territory, known as mateling, where this sacredness is believed to be governed by a supreme sea ruler and other sea spirits. Therefore, it is important to maintain harmony with the marine environment to prevent disaster or misfortune while at sea due to the anger of spirits or nature. Some sources state that in the past, their parents were still familiar with the sea language, or sasahara, using different terms for objects at sea than those used on land.

This language serves to protect the rulers or sea spirits and serves as a code of etiquette for communicating between humans at sea. In addition to sasahara, there are also mantras or prayers that must be recited to the sea's rulers to ensure an abundant catch and ward off negative influences. While at sea, fishermen sometimes recite literature in the form of poetry and sacred chants, called sasambo. In interacting with the marine environment, the Satal people have unique methods for building harmonious relationships and maintaining balance between humans and nature. They developed communication with nature in a language called sasahara. Sasahara, or maritime language, has long been used by the Sangihe Talaud people to navigate the diverse conditions of the marine environment, which can be both good and bad, and can even endanger sailors. Sasahara serves as a communication tool believed by Sangihe fishermen regarding the marine environment.

Brilman (1938) relates that elders in Sangihe Talaud master Sasahara, a secret language used at sea to deceive evil spirits about sailors' plans, and historically used in

poetry. This language is rich in forms, containing numerous narratives, riddles, heroic songs, celebrations, prayers, and mantras passed down orally without written or printed documentation. Furthermore, the emergence of sasahara aims to prevent dominant forces from interfering with the implementation of a plan, so efforts are made to conceal these plans by using a special language. This language is particularly used at sea, resulting in the emergence of a sea language called "sasahara." A characteristic of this language is that objects are not directly named, but rather are described through descriptions or by mentioning certain qualities. A dog is known as "the barker," a goat as "the bleater," a bird as "the kite," and a cat as "the scratcher," while individuals who speak in this way are not understood by the spirits. (Brilman, 1938) One Sangihe proverb is "pantuhu makasalentiho, somahe kaikehage," which means that one must navigate the currents and often face storms. It means being able to overcome all of life's difficulties, like facing a storm at sea. Efforts to overcome natural conditions, whether friendly or hostile, are carried out through strategies for dealing with the sea.

In this regard, the Sanger people developed the Sasahara language, a special language used at sea as a method to calm the sea while at sea. They desire to respect the ruler of the sea, speaking politely in maritime areas. They believe that the sea is governed by Mawendo, which requires adherence to *pele* (taboos) and *mateling* (sea sanctity), which must be expressed in polite language, leading to the development of the Sasahara language. For example, in the Sangihe language, the north direction is called "sawenahe" when on land, while at sea it is called "mamenongkati." A boat is known as a *sakaeng*, but at sea, the term used is *pato*. Among the general public, the outrigger is known as *sema-sema*, while at sea, the term used is *sahemang*.

The Sangihe ethnic belief system recognizes the names of the rulers of the universe, namely the spirits of the ocean, referred to as *taghaloang* or *ompung*. There is a natural creator spirit, *Ghenggonang Langi*, believed to be the Almighty. The spirit that dominates the plains, islands, and mountains is called *Adi Tinggi*. There is a spirit that causes disasters such as wind, rain, lightning, fire, and natural disasters.

5. Spatial and Cultural Changes

On the other hand, changes in maritime traditions are occurring in various communities. According to Sunandar (Macpal, 2021), poverty in the Sangihe region is the result of structural factors (the state) that make Sangihe a border area. Furthermore, policies to modernize fishermen as an effort to reduce poverty have actually resulted in the loss of many local traditions, including dual livelihoods. Modernization of fishermen also results in the loss of culture in terms of knowledge and language. The government implemented a policy of modernizing fishermen through the Blue Revolution, which had a negative impact on the maritime sector in Sangihe.

Modernizing boats with engines directly addressed the poverty that was a problem for fishermen. This, in turn, further exacerbated their poverty. The loss of fishing traditions raises concerns about the potential loss of one cultural element, the Sasahara language. The loss of the Sasahara language will also lead to the loss of other Sangihe cultures that are only inherited or practiced through the use of Sasahara.

Marine environmental damage has also led to the loss of the Sangihe people's fishing traditions, starting from overfishing and the use of destructive modern tools.

The use of bombs and anesthetics in fishing has damaged many coral reefs. Furthermore, artisanal gold mining and the Teruyama mining company on Sangihe Besar Island in the south have caused marine pollution, leading to the discontinuation of the Malombo tradition in the Salurang area due to the decline in the fish targeted for this traditional catch.

Indrawasih (Indrawasih, 2017). Currently, local wisdom faces challenges and threats of degradation that could potentially lead to extinction. This relates to local wisdom regarding marine resource management in Central Maluku and Buton, which are rich in maritime culture. Local wisdom in marine natural resource management faces the threat of extinction due to the weakening role of customary institutions.

Revitalization of customary institutions is needed to strengthen local wisdom in marine resource management, so that endangered maritime cultures can be revived. Traditional marine resource management practices (ombo) in Wasuemba Village have undergone changes. While previously rich in local wisdom regarding environmental preservation and significant socio-cultural functions, this has now been relaxed, shifting to more commercial exploitation patterns, and tending to prioritize economic functions.

6. Conclusion

The marine environment and its components are integral elements for the Sangihe people. Nature is viewed as the essence of life that ensures sustainability, thus it is believed that the sea is protected by the rulers of nature or the rulers of the sea. Thus, events in nature directly impact humans, and conversely, human actions also influence natural fluctuations. If humans engage in harmful actions, it is believed that natural disasters can occur; therefore, every event in the marine realm is related to human behavior. The relationship between humans and the sea for the Sangihe-Talaud people is always interdependent, requiring both to maintain harmony and balance.

For the Sangihe people, the marine space is a unified Sangihe ethnic culture, reflected in their cultural artifacts, which consist of sanghe (the sea near coral reefs), inahe (the middle sea inhabited by bottom-dwelling fish), and elie (the distant sea, home to pelagic fish). Tagaroa (vast ocean), Pahepa (mangrove), Banua (island), Aping (beach), Batiang (celestial body), and others. Man-made objects found in the sea, such as boats or fishing gear. In terms of relationships and interactions, there are sasahara, or human communication with the marine environment, and pamali, which are taboos related to activities at sea.

Due to the sacredness of marine space, its resources must be protected by not damaging it and maintaining a harmonious relationship with the sea and its components. As batiang (traditional customs), with its associated taboos, medaseng and laude refer to the activities of utilizing marine resources. Furthermore, at the cultural level, there is harmony, sacredness, and simplicity. The third unity of this cultural manifestation is the maritime traditions of the Sangihe people, which are currently facing modernism and environmental changes that have the potential to degrade these traditions.

Acknowledgements. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who assisted in the writing and research of this article, including informants in the Sangihe Islands and those who contributed their insights into the Sangihe people's fishing traditions.

Disclosure of Interests. All authors had no conflicts of interest during the writing process, including presentation and publication. Each author contributed according to their respective areas of expertise. Anthropology examines the Sangihe people's fishing traditions; Linguistics examines the use of local terms; and Politics and Government examines aspects of societal development and policy.

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