

From Local Values to Universal Values: A Review to the Philosophical Values of Sasi Culture that Integrated with Moral Education for the Young Generation

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A B S T R A C T

This study endeavors to investigate the philosophical values inherent in the Sasi culture and to explore methodologies for integrating these values into character education for the younger generation. Sasi encompasses not only customary regulations and sanctions governing the management of natural resources but also embodies philosophical principles that significantly influence the character development of village communities. The advent of modernization has precipitated substantial transformations within community life, resulting in a discernible shift (deconstruction) in both the existence and the values associated with Sasi. Traditional elders, possessing a profound understanding of Sasi culture, are motivated to preserve and transmit these values to younger generations, recognizing that the philosophical tenets embedded within Sasi represent a legacy of ancestral wisdom that has been interwoven with character education in village life since time immemorial. The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative descriptive, encompassing literature reviews as well as unstructured data collection through interviews, observations, and interactive engagement. The findings indicate that the philosophical values intrinsic to the Sasi tradition are interpreted as noble principles that serve as foundational elements for the character formation of village communities. These values of local wisdom are actively nurtured and imparted by parents to the younger generation, as they are perceived to possess enduring relevance and universal applicability across diverse contexts.

KATA KUNCI

Pendidikan Moral, Kearifan Lokal, Filsafat, Sasi, Generasi Muda

A B S T R A K

Penelitian ini berupaya menyelidiki nilai-nilai filosofis yang melekat dalam budaya Sasi dan mengeksplorasi metodologi untuk mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai tersebut ke dalam pendidikan karakter bagi generasi muda. Sasi tidak hanya mencakup peraturan dan sanksi adat yang mengatur pengelolaan sumber daya alam, tetapi juga mewujudkan prinsip-prinsip filosofis yang secara signifikan memengaruhi pengembangan karakter masyarakat desa. Modernisasi telah memicu transformasi substansial dalam kehidupan masyarakat, yang mengakibatkan pergeseran nyata (dekonstruksi) baik dalam keberadaan maupun nilai-nilai yang terkait dengan Sasi. Para tetua adat, yang memiliki pemahaman mendalam tentang budaya Sasi, termotivasi untuk melestarikan dan mewariskan nilai-nilai ini kepada generasi muda, menyadari bahwa prinsip-prinsip filosofis yang tertanam dalam Sasi merupakan warisan kearifan leluhur yang telah terjalin dengan pendidikan karakter dalam kehidupan desa sejak dahulu kala. Metodologi penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif, yang mencakup tinjauan pustaka serta pengumpulan data tidak terstruktur melalui wawancara, observasi, dan interaksi interaktif. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai filosofis yang intrinsik dalam tradisi Sasi dimaknai sebagai prinsip-prinsip luhur yang menjadi elemen dasar pembentukan karakter masyarakat desa. Nilai-nilai kearifan lokal ini secara aktif dipupuk dan ditanamkan oleh orang tua kepada generasi muda, karena dianggap memiliki relevansi yang abadi dan dapat diterapkan secara universal di berbagai konteks.

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1. Introduction

Globalization is a process of integration between nations that initially occurred due to economic factors and has been going on for centuries [1]. Along with advances in information technology and transportation, modern globalization has escalated and taken place massively [2]. This has given rise to interdependence in

investment activities, human migration, political views, climate change, socio-culture, and natural resources. This phenomenon is an inevitability that drives rapid change throughout the world, including in Indonesia. The things that are greatly affected by modern globalization are changes in people's views due to economic, social, and cultural pressures [3].

In essence, changes due to globalization provide new nuances in people's perspectives, thus influencing tastes and lifestyles [4]. Global economic pressure has an impact on Maluku. The people of Maluku who live in the label of the 8th poorest province in Indonesia are not immune from this. Poverty has an impact on the quality of life of the people of Maluku. The process of cultural infiltration changes the perspective of some people about how to have new desires and hopes which in turn will erode the socio-cultural system and local wisdom in society [5]. Economic pressures spread to the socio-cultural order. This encourages people to change their social and cultural behavior. Rural communities in Maluku are a group of people affected by this change [6].

One of the local wisdoms that is starting to lag behind due to the modernization process is Sasi. Sasi is not only related to customary rules and sanctions in the management of natural resources, but also has philosophical values that shape the character of village communities [7]. Scientific studies on Sasi culture have been conducted by several previous researchers, namely in conducting research in the framework of the National Geomatics Seminar at Pattimura University by mapping two traditional villages (countries) in Maluku along with the boundaries of the traditional countries implementing Sasi and what natural resources are regulated by Sasi in the two countries [8].

Customary law is considered a law that can enrich the national legal system [9]. Sasi Humah Koin examines the contextual ecotheological meaning for the Fena Waikose community, Buru Island, in their efforts to protect forest areas from deforestation [10]. Sasi research concerns the regulation of Sasi customary law, how the community should maintain it, and the position of Sasi customary law in national law [11]. This research discusses the application of Sasi Law in the Negeri Lima community in Maluku and how Islamic law views this [12]. Meanwhile, another author's opinion on Sasi, from an ecotheological perspective, is that the church must be involved in protecting and preserving nature to overcome ecological crises and natural disasters [13]. Furthermore, this research examines the Customary Sasi practiced by the Rumahsoal Island community, West Seram. The research focuses on the forms of symbols or signs used during the closing and opening of Sasi and their meaning. Violations of these symbols will be subject to customary sanctions in force in the village [14].

Sasi has a positive impact, namely protecting natural resources from over-exploitation. Sasi has legal value because it regulates society to behave wisely towards nature and share the results fairly. One of the nature conservation efforts carried out by the Maluku people since ancient times is called Sasi, namely the prohibition of taking natural and marine products for a

certain time limit and without causing environmental damage [15]. This researcher examines how the community perceives coconut Sasi and how they behave in implementing this Sasi [16]. On the other hand, the independent digital media Green Network Asia, presents a research article stating that Sasi Laut can help the sustainable use of marine resources, provide an opportunity for aquatic ecosystems to recover, and ensure that future generations can still feel its impact [17].

The above studies are divided into several research variables, namely: the existence of the Sasi culture itself, public perception of the Sasi culture, laws or sanctions and their implementation, consensus in society on nature conservation and food security, prominent local natural resources, and spiritual variables related to the religion of the local community. However, if examined in detail, the contents of each variable narrow down to one main theme, namely natural resource conservation. The purpose of this study is to examine the philosophical values contained in the Sasi culture as a variable that is different from previous studies. This research is important because it has never been discussed in previous studies. This is because the philosophical values contained therein are the legacy of the wisdom of the ancestors and have been integrated with moral education in the lives of the Maluku community since ancient times. The reality of modernization in people's lives has brought about significant changes so that Sasi began to experience a shift (deconstruction) in both its existence and its values. Traditional elders who understand the Sasi culture better want to maintain and pass it on to the younger generation. These local wisdom values are endeavored to continue to exist and are taught by parents to the younger generation because they are believed to be relevant to any situation and are universal.

2. Research Method

The research method used is qualitative descriptive research. The data collection technique obtained in the literature study is through scientific journals, books, and YouTube video documentation studies covering the Sasi-breaking ceremony. Data was also collected through unstructured interviews, observations, and interactions in the study. Interviews were conducted with three key informants or primary data sources: local congregation leaders, village leaders, and village kewang (customary police). The data obtained from various journals show a research gap in this paper. On the other hand, several journals and books provide information that supports the variables and theoretical basis for this writing. The data obtained in the field used a purposive sampling technique where unstructured interviews were conducted with community leaders, traditional leaders, and religious leaders closely related to the research variables.

The three informants came from Haruku Village, Central Maluku Regency. This village is famous for Sasi Ikan Lompa and nature conservation and has received the Kalpataru award from the government. The interview results were converted verbatim and analyzed to find the core of the problem. Their experience and involvement with the government, community organizations, and foundations in Maluku, as well as traditional figures from various villages in Central Maluku for years, are the reasons why they were chosen as informants to support the variables in this study. In addition, observations were also conducted during interactions with the local community. All data collected from interviews, observations, and interactions with the community were reviewed using reduction techniques.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Modern Globalization and Its Influence

The connected world makes everything connected easily and quickly. Globalization is nothing new because it started centuries ago. This phenomenon entered a new phase called modern globalization, which began in the 19th century when European ships explored the oceans to discover new continents. The expansion was limited to finding new land and opening new economic and trade routes. Thus, there was an interaction between immigrants and native residents of new areas, which resulted in integration. Integration involves language, social life, and the culture of these two groups. Although it still seemed simple at that time, this created assimilation in society, which had positive and negative impacts. The positive impact is forming a new culture that encourages societal acceptance and tolerance. The negative effect is the local community's loss of traditions and identity.

Modern globalization in the 20th century brought faster and more significant changes in all aspects due to technological, information, and transportation advances. This encouraged interdependence in investment activities, human migration, political views, climate change, socio-culture, and natural resources. This phenomenon is an inevitability that drives rapid change throughout the world, including in Indonesia. Changes in people's views due to economic, social, and cultural pressures are greatly affected by modern globalization. The integration of the world economy due to globalization creates a double effect (multiplier effects). Developed countries with the availability of qualified human resources and technology are able to drive economic progress. However, the opposite can happen in developing countries like Indonesia, where people with low incomes are at the majority level [18].

Indonesia's dependence on investment countries impacts the national economic sector. How the government sets development regulations also determines whether a province's economy advances. In

addition, human migration, such as transmigration programs from cities to villages, causes imbalance. So far, indigenous people have experienced pressure due to massive exploitation and planned and structured human displacement. As a result, Indigenous people are affected in multiple sectors, namely social, ecological, economic, and cultural [19]. If state exploitation in the name of development is carried out on customary land, as often happens in Eastern Indonesia, this will affect indigenous communities in rural areas.

3.2. Poverty and Eroded Values

Maluku Province has been one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia for decades. The latest data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS) as of March 2024 shows that Maluku currently ranks 8th in the poorest provinces, after all the provinces in Papua and East Nusa Tenggara [20]. The latest data from the Maluku Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded that the number of poor people in rural areas as of March 2023 was 258,280 people. This number decreased by approximately 2.07% from 256,210 people in March 2024.

Poverty is a complex and challenging issue in developing countries like Indonesia. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word "poverty" is defined as follows: "A state of poverty; a state of the population or a portion of the population that can only meet the essential needs of food, clothing, and shelter to maintain a minimum standard of living" [21]. Meanwhile, the United Nations defines the word "poverty" as follows: "Poverty involves more than simply a lack of income and productive resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood" [22].

The people of Maluku are at the center of modern globalization, so whether they realize it or not, their mindsets are beginning to change. This change has not occurred rapidly, but rather slowly, consistently, and sporadically from cities to villages over the past few decades. This shift in mindset influences behavior and actions. Rapidly developing information technology and transportation are among the driving factors behind this societal change. However, the underlying reason for this behavioral change is the hope and dream of progress and escaping the slump caused by economic pressures.

Meanwhile, the migration of people from outside to certain villages or regions is prioritized because they are connected to the management of state-owned plantations. Companies with foreign assets and employing foreigners also have a significant impact on remote areas. Although their customary lands or forests are exploited, indigenous communities in rural areas lack the human resources there. This creates a gap due to imbalance and injustice. People are beginning to leave small towns and urbanize to large cities, while

the rest of the population is Rural communities seek the same changes in small towns. Meanwhile, rural communities unable to move to or settle in cities due to financial constraints prefer to change jobs. Some farmers and fishermen choose to take other jobs or become unemployed in nearby cities. Although there is a strong relationship between production levels and poverty within a community, a community's economic structure has a greater influence on poverty levels [23].

These changes impact the social and cultural structure of the community. This is experienced by the majority of Maluku residents living in rural areas. The values of good living within the community are beginning to erode due to external and internal factors. Rural communities in Maluku have a moral compass in the form of local wisdom, which is based on social structures and has been established for a long time. Local wisdom, an integral part of Maluku's life, is beginning to lose its meaning. People have developed different mindsets for assessing and sorting everything, including views on local wisdom.

Norms of life have been established long ago, and through various difficulties, because they must be mutually agreed upon to regulate community life. As time progresses, these norms are seen by some as obstacles in achieving their goals [24]. Modern globalization causes poverty and economic pressure, which in turn leads to changes in social and cultural structures. Ultimately, this will lead to the displacement of local wisdom and the moral and life values it embodies.

3.3. Sasi Culture and Moral Values in Society

As long as humans exist, culture will continue to exist. The scope of culture includes language, music, dance, food, customs, and traditions, which are products of local wisdom. These things were born from deep thought and very wise considerations from the ancestors when dealing with problems that occur in the community. Local wisdom called Sasi is a cultural entity of the Maluku community. Sasi is an act of nature conservation and community food security that is passed down from generation to generation with the aim of giving nature a chance to recover and ensuring that there is no food shortage due to excessive harvesting [25].

The following briefly explains the rituals before and during the opening of Sasi. The most famous Sasi is Sasi from the Haruku traditional village (Pelasona Nanuroko), Central Maluku Regency. On the night before Sasi is opened, the head of the kewang (forest/sea/local customary guard) will lead the village purification ritual. Bundles of dry coconut fronds are burned in the baileo traditional house or front of the house of the king of Haruku. The burned fronds must be paraded around the village to signify purification. While the purification ritual is taking place, the rules

and sanctions are read to all citizens of the country (country, village, or hamlet) in the language of tana (local language or the native language of ancestors).

Towards morning, the spiritual leader (local priest) leads the Sasi opening service. After that, the tifa and tahuri (conch wind instruments) are played to signify that Sasi has officially opened. The sign is placed in a prohibited area so that residents are not allowed to enter at all. Meanwhile, the sign that allows residents to enter is installed in a permitted place. During the closing of Sasi, people are allowed to cast nets in permitted places. But if there are two or three people who have problems because of the catch, then the open area will be closed by the kewang for an indefinite period or will be opened at the opening of the next Sasi. This is to avoid commotion among the village community. Sasi has a substantive legal value, namely a temporary prohibition on not taking forest or marine products at certain times. Sasi has customary moral sanctions, namely a prohibition not to participate when opening Sasi for a specified period, paying with cash, and cursing sanctions in the form of illness or death. This happens because of the ancestral oath to Upu Lanite for people who violate [26].

Sasi is not limited to environmental conservation, customary rules, and sanctions that must be adhered to at the opening of a Sasi. It also regulates the community's way of life at its closing. Several rules govern community behavior as normative values. These values have a much deeper philosophical meaning than what appears on the surface and shape the community's character. This has been the case since ancestral times and has been passed down through generations within the community. The values embodied in Sasi culture include:

- a) Respect for Upu Lanite (meaning God).
- b) Respect for Nature.
- c) Respect for elders (including traditional elders, kings/village leaders, soa leaders, and kewang).
- d) Respect for ancestral heritage.
- e) Obedience.
- f) Politeness and order.
- g) Responsibility.
- h) Patience and self-control.
- i) Honesty.
- j) Justice.
- k) Family.
- l) Sharing.
- m) Gratitude.

Local wisdom has the potential to be studied, preserved, and maintained for future generations, especially the noble values it contains, which are passed down to address problems in community life. Triyanto states that culture is patterned human behavior [27]. Local wisdom can encompass attitudes, outlooks on life, values, and the ability of a community to manage its spiritual and physical environment, which impacts the resilience and growth of the community in the area where the community is located. Wissang further states that this makes local wisdom a creative response to local geographic-geopolitical, historical, and situational problems, manifested through the instilling of cultural values and character in future generations [28].

This research provides a conceptualization of the diverse and broad scope of local wisdom, making it difficult to define. The study cites the notion that "the sum of cultural characteristics shared by most communities as a result of their early life experiences." Every form of behavior, way of acting, and mindset shapes customs and habits within a society based on past experiences [29]. Cultural richness, which touches on life's values, is a key asset in building national life amidst the development of science and technology [30].

The Sasi culture emerged from a mutual agreement among ancestors in the past to address emerging societal problems. The community voluntarily implements regulations and sanctions at the opening and closing of the Sasi. These regulations are read by the head of the kewang (who can be interpreted as a traditional police officer who oversees the forest, gardens, sea, and local village) and are repeated each time the Sasi is opened. This serves to remind villagers that they are directly connected to nature but also must maintain and implement the customs of community life. When conducting interviews, observations, and interactions with the village community, several examples of regulations and sanctions were found that were implemented during the closing of Sasi, such as:

- a) They are not allowed to say inappropriate words and must respect their elders.
- b) They must inform the garden owner if they take coconuts to drink the water because of an urgent situation, namely thirst.
- c) They cannot do agricultural activities or fish on Sundays.
- d) They are not allowed to cut down trees in the forest, in the garden or in the swamp without permission from the kewang or the landowner.
- e) They are not allowed to disturb the lompa fish, take young fruits in the forest or in the garden.

- f) Children are not allowed to make noise or be noisy at night, especially on Saturday nights.

Some rules and sanctions were implemented during the Sasi opening period because everything was written in a book held by the village head.

Here, philosophical values of life are applied in village society and carried out voluntarily. After many changes in the social and cultural structure of Maluku society in general and rural society in particular, some people are no longer of this order of wisdom and character. In fact, there are several villages in Maluku that no longer practice the Sasi tradition (Based on interviews Village Head).

This is quite concerning because the loss of the Maluku cultural entity from several villages has brought about changes in the perspective of the young generation of Maluku. The results of interviews with the king of Haruku and observations for several months in Ambon found that the current young generation is changing their way of speaking, dressing, and behaving by following other cultures. The previous generation consisted of people who had been "touched" by modernization outside the village, so they did not continue their original culture and philosophical values with the next generation. The advancement of information technology has also "worsened" this situation.

The Sasi tradition is one of the many indigenous customs of Maluku that have very good wisdom values. These values have enabled the strata of Maluku society to run in a balanced and orderly manner for centuries. If these moral values erode over time, then internal improvement must be made in the rural community. The local government is also expected to be able to take this responsibility by being involved in education for the young generation of Maluku.

3.4. Moral Education for the Young Generation

Several traditional villages in Maluku are starting to abandon the Sasi tradition, which indicates that the moral values contained therein are starting to disappear slowly. As a result, the young generation of Maluku will not know that they once had a great tradition, and their character will be weakened along with the progress of the times. Maluku provincial government understood the economic potential of Sasi because they enjoyed the results when this culture was known to the central government. Ironically, the local government did not try to strengthen the economic sector and bring Sasi to the level of a cultural festival. As a result, the existence of Sasi is considered commonplace, and several traditional villages have abandoned it. This affects the strengths and weaknesses of the character of the Maluku people. In the book it says that "weak character is a sign of a weak nation" [31]. Elders who understand Sasi culture better want to maintain it and pass it on to the younger generation. This is because

the philosophical values contained therein are the legacy of the ancestors' wisdom and have been integrated with moral education in the lives of village communities since ancient times.

There are indications that these positive values have begun to be eroded by modernization and have lost their meaning. Based on an interview with Reverend Richard Maail, it seems that what is taught to be obeyed when opening and closing Sasi is no longer strictly prohibited laws. For example, in the regulations during the closing of Sasi, speedboats are not allowed to enter the Larissa Kayeli River estuary with engines. The driver must push the speedboat with long wood or bamboo because the engine propeller will damage the sand sediment and the brackish water ecosystem, where the Lompa fish (*Trissina Baelama*) gather. But in recent years, this regulation has not been implemented, so the river estuary is murky, damaging the estuary ecosystem and affecting the entry of Lompa fish from the sea. When the Sasi culture wants to be preserved, and its moral values are to be maintained and passed on to the younger generation of the village, the traditional elders face several internal obstacles, namely:

- a) The younger generation increasingly chooses to leave the village due to economic and social pressures.
- b) The development of the era that makes the younger generation not respect the heritage of their ancestors and local customs.
- c) The decreasing number of traditional elders and senior village kewang due to age factors.
- d) Parents of the older generation who also understand customs are less able to "influence" their children to maintain the Sasi culture and its philosophical values.

However, the village government, traditional elders, senior kewang, religious leaders, and the community who still respect the Sasi culture try to fight for its existence and moral values. Religious leaders who lead the village community feel responsible for providing appeals and advice through church meetings. They are directed to understand that they are responsible for managing nature as written in the holy book. They are directed to maintain spiritual values aligning with moral education. So far, the two have not contradicted each other.

As the head of the state government (village), King Ferdinandus has a futuristic view of taking Sasi culture to the next level and making it widely known in Indonesia and globally. So Sasi can be an example of ancient local wisdom with economic value and positive values that help shape the character of the village community. As the head of the senior village kewang, Mr. Eliza Kissya passed on his "knowledge" to his son,

Cliff, so they have the same views. He has been invited to various forums and has written about his experiences in several books about Sasi culture, its laws, life values, and concerns about changes in the times that affect the mindset of the Maluku people in general and his village community in particular.

In addition to managing the sea and land Sasi, he also founded the Kewang house, a place of learning for the village's young generation in the form of a library and a place to keep the almost extinct Maleo bird. The goal is for the young generation to continue to respect the Sasi culture and its philosophical values, hoping that this culture will be passed on to the next generation. Character education is a process of transferring good moral values that aim to form good behavior. The process of transferring these good values occurs in the family (informally), at school (formally), and in the community (non-formally) [32]. This means that continuing the good philosophical values of the Sasi culture is the responsibility of every Maluku family, the responsibility of the government through education, and the responsibility of rural indigenous communities in Maluku.

4. Conclusion

Although this research is limited by time and place, the sorting of information obtained through several journals and books strengthens the theory that a custom can be lost and eroded by time due to the development of the times as one of the ancient local wisdom entities, the philosophical values contained in the Sasi culture have indeed become part of moral education and shape the character of the Maluku people in general. When it reaches the culmination point where the erosion of moral values is increasingly massive, there is no other way to maintain this culture and teach it to the next generation. Times may change, but the values of goodness will not change. Humans will continue to demand good treatment and true moral integrity everywhere. Technological advances have a major role in deconstructing local wisdom and its positive values. The family has the first and foremost role in maintaining it. Education in schools and the collective awareness of the Maluku people who will bring the Sasi culture back and its philosophical values will be maintained.

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