

# Globalization and Indigenous People Adaptation: *Sasi as Social Institution in Maluku*

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Keywords: globalization, indigenous people, *sasi*, sustainability

Abstract: Globalisation integrates goods, services, people, capital and information. As a result, the economic, social and political institutions formed by globalisation become homogenous. The ultimate goal of globalisation is equitable welfare and distribution of wealth. Unfortunately, not all parties benefit from globalisation. Globalisation gives rise to a lame distribution and many groups become more vulnerable. One of these disadvantaged groups is indigenous people. Indigenous societies have developed their own economic, social and political institutions. They also have magical religious ties to the areas where they live. Therefore, indigenous people are threatened when the seas and forests that they occupy are exploited because of industry needs. However, in some areas, these indigenous societies have succeeded in developing a social order that fortifies them from outside influences and in certain cases, they managed to keep nature more sustainable. In Indonesia, the practice is known as *sasi*. The people of Maluku practice *sasi* in the management of sustainable natural resources. *Sasi* is considered to be a successful way to conserve natural resources. The problem raised in this research is how the local community, through their social institutions, can adapt in the globalisation situation. The other question is, what kind of situation is needed for the local social order to run?

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Globalisation overcomes the obstacles of space and time. Globalisation also integrates goods, services, people and capital. Along with commercialisation and exploitation of resources; the intensity of the exchange of goods, services, capital and people increases. This situation results in globalisation being considered the cause of the deteriorating environmental situation. Changing forests to industrial areas and destroying forests marginalises the traditional communities living around the forest. Cases that have afflicted the Indian indigenous peoples around the Amazon forest include the Kayapo tribe due to the commercialisation of non-timber forest products and the Sarayaku tribe due to the exploitation of oil mines. The inclusion of corporations in the use of Brazilian nuts as a raw material for beauty products has provoked the Kayapo tribe into conflict over the management of Brazilian nut forest products. The Sarayaku tribe in Ecuador must leave the forest due to forest clearing,

due to mining exploitation. Another example is what is happening to the traditional fishermen in Nauru. The presence of many phosphate-mining companies from Australia has deteriorated the quality of the environment. Coastal areas are becoming polluted so the catches are reduced. For indigenous people, the land is a part of their history and lifestyle. Therefore, being uprooted makes traditional communities unable to survive.

Indigenous people also develop their individual social institution as part of their existence. In Maluku, Indonesia, the social institutions developed and practiced by the indigenous peoples are legally recognised. It called as *sasi*. For reasons of conservation and local conflict resolution, *sasi* is used. *Sasi* is used in conjunction with applicable laws and regulations from the central and regional governments. As a result, *sasi* can be a tool to protect the marine area and to help marine products become sustainable. The existence of *sasi* has been praised by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Susi Pudjiastuti, in the statement that the

practice of *sasi* carried out by the Moluccan community should be imitated and implemented by other regions so then the quality of the catches can be maintained (Kompas October 23, 2017).

Departing from these situations, the research question posed is how local communities - through the social institutions that are owned - can adapt to globalisation. What kind of situation is needed so then the ideal condition can be created? The research found that applying the co-management model and expanding the function of *sasi* into a conservation function allows for adaptation to the effects of globalisation. Co-management and conservation makes resource management expandable by involving more parties, including NGOs that have not been involved in the practice of *sasi*. In addition, efforts to enforce the *sasi* laws also have a wide range. *Sasi* has, so far, only affected indigenous people who believe in *sasi*. Outside society does not have to obey *sasi*. As a result, the *sasi* law becomes weak when faced with the mass commercialisation of resources. By expanding its conservation function, compliance with the *sasi* law is binding for all people in the region, both indigenous and migrant.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

This research focused on globalisation and *sasi* as the social capital in indigenous communities. This research study used a descriptive research methodology as an attempt to explain and interpret the particular phenomenon, problem and/or behaviour focused on. In this study the author's aim was to explain how the local communities, through local social institutions, can adapt in a situation of globalisation that is detrimental to the local communities. The social institutions that are referred to here are *sasi*, which is a part of the Moluccan community, Indonesia.

In this study, data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained from the laws and public official statements. The secondary data was obtained through a literature review, namely by collecting the data relevant to the issues discussed in the literature such as books, journals, and news in the media.

The data analysis technique used in this study was qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis emphasises the interpretation of the data and of the statements obtained from the secondary and primary sources, which are then associated with the theories, concepts and prepositions determined by the

researcher. The qualitative analysis consisted of three activities that flow simultaneously, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing or verification.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Globalisation is seen of as an economic phenomenon that results in an increase in the movement of commodities, money, capital and information. Globalisation leads to a situation of integration. Global integration brings in many opportunities but on the other hand, it also carries risks. Integration also means rising inequality, shifting power, and cultural uniformity. Social, political and economic harmonisation can raise the level of persecution against indigenous groups. Indigenous people who have different social, economic and political practices are considered to be misfits in the situation of globalisation. As a result, they are marginalised and harmed by globalisation. For example, negotiations between the government and companies, multilateral institutions and investor countries sometimes involves few or no indigenous people who often live where industrial operations will take place. The presence of investors results in land ownership by large corporations and super rich individuals. As a result, the land use follows the wishes of the interests of investors. The government, in the name of development, then serves the needs of the investors and many of these needs marginalises the interests of indigenous people.

Indigenous groups who are in a marginal position sometimes experience worsening conditions in this situation. Not only in relation to changes in the environment of the region in which they live, but also changes in their food sources and changes in the community culture. An indigenous community is defined as the people who inhabit the land associated with their ancestral heritage. Their custom and values are different from the national community. Lenzerini (2007) defines a group as an indigenous group when: (1) there is a historical connection that connects the pre-invasion society with the conservation of a particular system of government; (2) they have a subjective parameter that is identified as the identification of an indigenous community and the acceptance of that person as a member of the community. The UN defines indigenous communities as peoples and nations who have a historic continuity in their territory and who consider themselves to be distinct from other sectors of society. They practice their

own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems. Indigenous people are a vulnerable group because they are tied to nature by a magical religious relationship. Based on the understanding of ILO No. 169, indigenous people have the following characteristics:

- They identify themselves with certain groups;
- They have a relationship that is tied to their ancestral land and natural resources;
- They have different social, economic, political and cultural institutions;
- The land was acquired before the colonial period;
- They experienced a period of conquest or colonisation and
- They have a different language.

The indigenous community is become marginalised because of the things that are considered "different".

Globalisation results in inequality, especially for indigenous people. The World Inequality Report 2018 data notes that 1% of the world's population has 27% of the world's wealth. In North America and Western Europe, 1% of the population contributes to 28% of the total growth. In India and China, the same wealth of 1% of the population accounts for 18% of the total growth. India is said to have experienced extreme inequality, with an average national growth of 223%, but the growth experienced by the poor population is only 107%; half below the national average. The Middle East region has the highest inequality of 61%, followed by the Latin American region with 55%, North America with 47% and Western Europe with 37%. The causes of inequality are to do with contemporary capitalism, the legacy of slavery, and racial cleavage. Globalisation, through its international institutions, drives the growth of private capital. Private capital is growing rapidly, and on the contrary, the public capital is getting lower. Meanwhile, the 2016 data showed that the level of inequality in Indonesia was the sixth largest in the world after Russia, Denmark, India, the United States, and Thailand. The wealth of the four richest people in Indonesia (all of whom are men) was equal to 100 million average-income people. The number of poor people in Indonesia is still large at 93 million people, equivalent to 36% of the total population (Oxfam, 2017).

On the other hand, indigenous people have developed their own social institutions. For example in coastal communities, their particular social institution is used to regulate the use of resources in the sea and coastal areas. Regulated areas are usually

controlled by indigenous groups or families that apply prohibitions such as when and how resources are accessed, used and distributed (Colding & Folke, 2001). Social institutions function as a form of environmental management (Colding & Folke, 2001; Cinner & Aswani, 2007). The aim for this prohibition is that the existing resources can be utilised together and distributed evenly into one community. In Indonesia, this practice can be found in many parts of Eastern Indonesia, especially Maluku. The practice is called *sasi*.

*Sasi* is carried out by forming a team selected by mutual agreement. *Sasi* is translated as "traditional", "community-based" or "indigenous" (Pannell 1997). *Sasi* is a local system related to the management and utilisation of natural resources, both on land and at sea, known throughout Maluku. *Sasi* functions as the prohibition of taking certain natural resources from certain areas and in a certain period of time. This is to ensure that there is a better harvest. The philosophy of *sasi* is a way of managing natural resources at sea and on land in order to improve the welfare of the community and the reforestation / conservation of nature. This system is applied to *sasi*-sea, *sasi*-river, land, forest and coastal areas. The *sasi* law is a customary law relating to the prohibition of taking either forest products or sea products within a certain period of time as determined by custom and supervised by the elders (*sasi* adat), government (*sasi* negeri), or church (*sasi* gereja) (Pannell, 1997).

People have practiced *sasi* for a long time. Historically, this closure is a temporary and limited control based on social, economic and cultural grounds (Foale et al, 2011). *Sasi* is carried out as an effort to honour the death of the indigenous elders, protecting the sacred sites, welcoming the need for Christmas celebrations, and paying for schools. Currently, *sasi* is starting to be abandoned due to commercialisation and industrialisation. The large number of migrants also affects *sasi*. Its legal strength only affects local people. Due to globalisation, local people are not the only ones who have access to the resources. Henley (2008) revealed that exploitation is also carried out by local residents because their work is incorporated into the global industry chain with the appropriate use of resources.

For this reason, if *sasi* is maintained, then it is necessary to expand the scope of its functions. These functions can involve many actors and it should be recognised by the international community as a method of conservation. *Sasi* can be used to strengthen conservation, such as control of fishing grounds and making an effort to secure future

supplies (Thorburn, 2000; Cohen & Foale, 2013). The most appropriate model is co-management. Co-management is a hybrid model of different social institutions. This hybrid model has been widely applied in many places (Aswani & Ruddle, 2013). One instance is Solomon Island. They applied a hybrid model to manage their coastal ecosystems. The hybrid system is between environmental and fishery laws, and the customary laws of the indigenous peoples (Lane, 2006). Govan (2009) identified 100 co-managed marine areas that have applied the hybrid model. Although coastal area governance is covered under the law, coastal communities can make claims for the adoption of customary institutions or certain social groups related to the management of resources in the region (Cribb & Ford, 2009, Harkes & Novaczek, 2003, Phillips, 2003).

The co-management model also involves NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations). NGOs act to provide advice and methods of management and conservation, and they also facilitate advocacy in the local government. In addition, local communities are not just involved in their activities but they are involved in the policy making process and how governance is carried out (Walton, 2010). Furthermore, Walton (2010) suggested that there are three things that can be done in conservation:

- Promoting advocacy by involving all parties;
- Promoting equity by involving local perspectives;
- Promoting reflection to be able to identify which parties are in need of being defended.

Recommendations for using co-management (Evans et al, 2011; Cinner et al, 2012) have also been expressed by Cohen & Steenbergen (2015). They revealed the use of a hybrid model that combines local practices, science-based management, and conservation. This means that relying on only local practices such as *sasi* is not enough. *Sasi* is used to strengthen the indigenous people's legitimacy and to ensure that there is the equitable distribution of resources to the local population. When the *sasi* period was opened up, the harvest period was only brief and only to be to meet the needs of the community. Environmental management interventions can be a formal foundation for practice. Therefore, *sasi* is not enough. The objective of the session also needs to be expanded so then people outside of the local community adhere to this practice. Nevertheless, using an ordinary conservation model is less than ideal. The conflict between the conservation area manager and the

surrounding population is one of the problems that can arise. Community management is considered to be better than usual conservation models (Porter-Bolland et al, 2012; Vergara-Asenjo & Potvin, 2014). Co-management can offer other solutions. Co-management combines the role of the government as a regulator and the local community as the resource users (Cundill et al, 2013; Carlson & Berkes, 2005).

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Globalisation has a negative impact on indigenous people. Globalisation intensifies capital, resulting in resource exploitation in many places including the places that are still inhabited by indigenous people. Indigenous people are often displaced from where they live as a result. Apart from this, an impact of industrialisation is where the lives of the indigenous people become polluted. As a result, their needs and livelihood is threatened. In order for the indigenous community to not be threatened, it is necessary to campaign for the use of existing social institutions.

*Sasi* is a social practice carried out in Maluku. *Sasi* was originally used for social, economic and political reasons by the local communities such as for church construction, Christmas celebrations, paying for schools and respecting the death of the indigenous elders. Gradually, this situation has begun to be abandoned and the indigenous people are unable to control the behaviour of working migrants. Therefore, in order to face the challenges brought in by globalisation, *Sasi* can be expanded to have a conservation function. The conservation function will expand the involvement of many parties. The conservation function allows *Sasi* to be a co-management. Co-management combines government rules, modern management and local practices. So far, *sasi* has combined the church, adat and local government. There needs to be additional actors, namely NGOs. NGOs are suitable partners because NGOs have knowledge of management best practices and conservation experience. In addition, NGOs have the ability to advocate for the practice of *sasi* to be formally recognised and institutionalised. This way, *sasi* can change its shape to become more modern. This form of *sasi* can then be seen of as a new form of conservation model and an adaptive behaviour of the local communities against the effects of globalisation and climate change.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article was created as part of the Higher Education Basic Research (Penelitian Unggulan Dasar Perguruan Tinggi-PDUPT), which was funded by the Ministry of Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in the 2018 budget year. Authors would like to thank the Research and Innovation Institute (Lembaga Penelitian dan Inovasi Universitas Airlangga) for its assistance.

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