

**LUANG ISLAND: COASTAL ECOLOGY SYSTEM
IN OUTERMOST SMALL ISLANDS (ESCAOSD), MALUKU-INDONESIA**

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Abstract

Coastal communities and their ecology are inseparable units, connected to one another. The Luang Island community is one of the coastal communities on the outermost islands in Indonesia-Maluku Province-Southwest Maluku Regency. Understanding the ecological system of the people of Luang Island is inseparable from how they live their daily lives, which then accumulates into knowledge, habits as well as patterns to regulate their life order through a long historical process of interaction with nature. This knowledge and habits depend on the geographical environment in which they live, in other words, the natural environment also influences the way they act and think. This pattern then plays a role in realizing the harmonization of their lives, to create unique social and cultural conditions which then become their spirit. This spirit can be seen in their daily lives. This study uses ethnographic research with an ecological anthropological approach. Data was collected through literature study techniques, interviews, FGDs, and participatory observation. The data analysis technique used in this research is ethnoecology. The results of this study indicate that the influence between community relations and nature on Luang Island is reflected in the use of everyday language in communication, the ability to express sea areas based on local knowledge, and presenting natural elements into the social culture of the people of Luang Island. The

results of this study are useful for ecological studies in the outermost small islands in Indonesia and as a comparison among the forty-eight archipelagic countries in the world, both tropical and non-tropical.

Keywords: Luang Island, Coastal Area, Ecological System and Outermost Small Islands

Discipline: cultural anthropology

Absztrakt

LUANG-SZIGET: PARTI ÖKOLÓGIAI RENDSZER A LEGKÜLSŐ KIS SZIGETEKEN (ESCAOSD), MALUKU-INDONÉZIA

A tengerparti közösségek és ökológiájuk elválaszthatatlan egységet alkotnak és kapcsolatban állnak egymással. Luang-sziget közössége, az Indonézia-Maluku tartomány délnyugat-malukui kormányzóságának legkülső szigetein található tengerparti közösségeinek egyike. A Luang-szigeten lakók ökológiai rendszerének megértése elválaszthatatlan attól, ahogyan élnek mindennapi életüket, amely aztán a természettel való kölcsönhatás hosszú történelmi folyamatán keresztül tudássá, szokásokká és életrendjüket szabályozó mintákká halmozódik fel. Ezek az ismeretek és szokások attól a földrajzi környezettől függenek, amelyben élnek, más szóval a természeti környezet is befolyásolja a viselkedésüket és gondolkodásukat. Ez a minta azután szerepet játszik életük harmonizációjának megvalósításában, egyedi társadalmi és kulturális feltételek megteremtésében, amelyek aztán szellemiségükké válnak. Ez a szellemiség a mindennapi életükben is megmutatkozik. A tanulmány ökológiai antropológiai megközelítésű etnográfiai kutatást alkalmaz. Az adatgyűjtés irodalomkutatási technikákkal, interjúkkal, fókuszcsoportos megbeszélésekkel (FGD) és részvételi megfigyeléssel történt. A kutatás során etnoökológiai adatelemzési technika alkalmazására került sor. A tanulmány eredményei rámutatnak arra, hogy a Luang-szigeten a közösségi kapcsolatok és a természet közötti hatás tükröződik a mindennapi nyelv használatában, a kommunikációban, a tengeri területek helyi tudáson alapuló kifejezésének képességében és a természeti elemek megjelenítésében a Luang-szigeti emberek társadalmi kultúrájában. E tanulmány eredményei hasznosak az Indonézia legkülső kis szigeteinek ökológiai vizsgálataihoz, valamint a világ negyvennyolc - trópusi és nem trópusi - szigetországának összehasonlításához.

Kulcsszavak: Luang-szigetek, Part menti területek, Ökológiai szisztéma és külső kis szigetek

Diszciplína: kulturális antropológia

Introduction

Ecologically, the coastal areas of the outermost small islands in the tropics and sub-tropics are strongly associated with coral reefs, seagrass beds (Bates et al., 2014), and mangrove forests (Burt et al., 2009), which can support ecosystem sustainability. Sea and the lives of its people (McCarthy et al., 2001). According to international agreements, the coastal area is defined as the transitional area between the sea and the land, towards the land covering areas that are still affected by the

splashing of seawater or tides, and towards the sea covering the continental shelf (Burkett et al., 2001; Cao & Wong, 2007; Ruddle & Satria, 2010). In this area, there are species that use corals, seagrasses, and mangroves as their habitat for economically important fish such as groupers, Napoleons, giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*), sea cucumbers, oysters, and others so that commodities like this can be said to be small island specific commodities and high economic value. The main characteristic of this commodity is that it has dispersal characteristics

that depend on coral reefs and seagrasses so that the sustainability of its stocks is influenced by the health of corals and seagrasses (Balai Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Pesisir & Laut Padang & Direktorat Jenderal Pengelolaan Ruang Laut, 2018; Dinas Kelautan Dan Perikanan Provinsi Maluku, 2021; Hutubessy & Mosse, 2021; Utomo, 2010). Regarding the management of the coastal environment, the Government of Indonesia recognizes local wisdom as a conservation effort contained in Law number 32 article 1 paragraph 30 of 2009 concerning the protection and management of ecology based on local wisdom, arguing that local wisdom is the noble values that apply in the governance of community life to protect and manage the environment in a sustainable manner.

Indonesia is one of the archipelagic countries and occupies the first position as the largest archipelagic country in the world with a total area of 5,180,053 km² (Akimoto, 2001; Bernadie, 2003; Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan Republik Indonesia, 2017; Kementerian KKP Republik Indonesia, 2021; Mohammad et al., 2016). The sea area is larger than the land area. According to calculations by the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) and the Center for Hydrography and Oceanography (Pushidros) of the Indonesian Navy, the sea area is 3,157,483 km² and the land area is 1,922,570 km². It was recorded at the United Nations Group of Expert Geological Names meeting in 2022 that Indonesia has 17,504 islands and the outermost small islands totaling 111 and 34 provinces (Malik et al., 2019; Marewa & Parinussa, 2020; Oegroseno, 2009; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2017).

The 111 outermost small islands are bordered by ten countries both land and sea (Newman, 2012; Paasi et al., 2022; Purwanto & Mangku, 2016; Smith et al., 2016; Villa et al., 1992). The population of Indonesia recorded by the Directorate General of Occupation and Civil Registry of the

Republic of Indonesia in 2022 is 275,361,267 people (BPS, 2022).

The coastal areas of the outermost small islands in Indonesia have high potential for natural resources and environmental services and can be used as the basic capital for implementing Indonesia's future development. This area provides productive natural resources such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove forests, fisheries, and conservation areas. Small islands also provide high environmental services because of their natural beauty which can drive the marine tourism industry. On the other hand, the utilization of the potential of small islands is still not optimal due to government attention and policies so far that are more land oriented.

The study of coastal communities and the ecology of the outermost small islands from an ecological anthropology point of view is still limited. This is understandable due to the long distances and limited means of transportation to and from the islands as well as the availability of academic data. Research in this place is mostly carried out from the perspective of geopolitics, fisheries, and surveys on the health of marine ecosystems and the presence of marine biota. Likewise, research on Luang Island is still very minimal academically. There are several previous researchers/writers such as Müller Wismar (1914) regarding the beliefs of people in the Babar Archipelago including Luang Island, Taber and Kathy (1989) the study of phonology and morphology on Luang Island, Pannel (1978) study of Hygera Lai from the point of view of ecology and economics, De Jonge and Van Dijk (1995) on the spread of language and culture from Luang Island to other islands in Southwest Maluku, Karuna, and Serpara examine the local wisdom of Luang Island as a support for learning (2022), Indonesia-World Ecology Institute conducted a survey of the marine ecosystem of Luang Island (2015-2017).

Related to this, the authors examine the people of Luang Island holistically (history, social, culture, ecology, and language) using an ecological anthropology approach, ethnographic methods, and data analysis techniques adapted to the three major questions in the main research. Thus, it will produce academic work that is comprehensive and scientifically justifiable. However, in this paper, the author only discusses one part of how the relationship between the Luang people as a coastal community builds a relationship with nature as a system, which is interdependent and influences one another.

Research Questions and Objectives

The question in this research is how the relationship between the Luang people and nature and nature influences their culture? The purpose of this research is to explore the characteristics of human-environment interaction on Luang Island in Maluku Province-Indonesia. This study will be one of the analyzes to answer the main questions in the third part of the study on Luang Island about the extent to which nature influences the culture of the people of Luang Island. The answer to this question requires an exploration of how the determinism of the natural environment plays into the lives of the Luang people. Therefore, interpreting this we see the representation of natural elements in the socio-cultural life of the Luang people as a result of the reciprocal relationship between the two.

Informant Retrieval Framework

The sampling technique in this study was based on non-probability sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Kumar, 2019; Sugiyono, 2013). This technique does not provide equal opportunities for members of the Luang Island population to be selected as informants. This study used snowball sampling and incidental sampling. This snowball sampling

technique can make it easier for researchers in the data collection process on Luang Island to obtain informants because they get recommendations from previous or key informants (Harreveld et al., 2016; Robinson, 2014; Sedgwick, 2013). In addition, for incidental sampling researchers have the freedom to determine samples based on coincidence (Goodman, 1961; Patton, 2015), so that in the research process on Luang Island, researchers can take samples other than those based on snowball sampling, from anyone they meet without prior planning (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Handcock & Gile, 2011). The samples in this study included village officials, traditional leaders, church priests, fishermen, teachers, youth leaders, and women leaders.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Time of Research

In this study, researchers used an ecology anthropology approach with a descriptive qualitative method. The aim is to understand the relationship between the people of Luang Island and their ecosystem. With this method, researchers can describe how nature influences the culture of the people of Luang Island. Data collection techniques used in this study are; literature study (Hagen-Zanker, 2008; Tuegeh et al., 2021; Walliman, 2015) researchers search for and collect literature related to ecology anthropology, ecology of Luang Island, history, the social, and culture of Luang Island and Indonesian bathymetry maps through journals, articles, research reports, and books.

The interviews conducted to collect data on Luang Island were face-to-face in-depth interviews (Ary et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Dawson, 2009; Kumar, 2019; Patton, 2015). This interview is open or unstructured, in which the researcher only prepares a few questions and interview guidelines. This model interview helps researchers to explore more detailed information or data about

every social and cultural component of the Luang people that relate to one another as a system that has a function in maintaining the balance and order of the ecosystem on Luang Island. It also helps researchers to understand how the (Mousalimas, 1990; Sekowski, 2022; U Müller, 2003) mentality (Mousalimas, 1990; Sekowski, 2022; U Müller, 2003) of the Luang people drives how they act and respond to the environment in which they live (Cooley, 2009; Pritchard, 1970). Related to this, James Baldwin (1897) emphasized that without studying the mental processes of individuals or a social group we cannot understand what lies behind their actions. Thus, how the Luang people think and perceive their world is the main thing that needs to be considered in this study. In the interview process, the researcher uses a recording device and takes notes, this aims to avoid data distortion (Harrevelde et al., 2016; Milles & Huberman, 1994; Tolley et al., 2016; Vander Stoep & Johnson, 2008).

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a discussion (Hennink, 2014) facilitated among community groups on the topic being researched. FGDs were used to explore the collective understanding and various perspectives of the Luang people on how they Luang people map the sea area. Group discussions go beyond gathering information about individual knowledge or opinions, supporting the validity of data collected by other observational methods, gathering high-quality information on specific topics quickly, and assisting in the identification of key informants for interviewing how they relate to nature and resource use in the sea. To find out about the area of distribution of types of marine resources, areas of shallow sea areas for activities, as well as boundaries between shallow areas and deep-sea areas based on the knowledge of the Luang people.

Observation is carried out with a commitment to connecting with the body and mind to engage with what the Luang people are doing and find out why,

experience the activity firsthand, feel (Walliman, 2019) what the event is like, record the researcher own perceptions (Spradley, 1980) and the views of local people (Boas, 1911). Observation activities in research on Luang Island proceeded according to the situation in the field, sometimes researchers conducted observations together with interview activities or also under separate circumstances (Ellen, 1984; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; Reeves et al., 2008). The author made direct observations in the field regarding what was seen and heard, and verbal/oral material was recorded (Black & Champion, 1995; Suwartono, 2014).

Observations were made on the daily life of the people of Luang Island with the aim of seeing their activities, what they do, and how they behave in the sea as the center of their activities. Not closed other public spaces can also be observed, church buildings, state attributes, and others to see the presence of natural elements in church ornaments or state attributes. Regarding language, because they use the local language, the writer tries to be directly involved in daily conversations and build conversations starting with the family where the writer lives and also other communities with the help of translators, the writer is involved with them in fishing activities in the deep sea, visiting sacred areas in several surrounding small islands and shallow areas to calculate the area of shallow areas, directly observing the mapping of sea areas according to their knowledge. This participatory observation also aims to confirm the data that has been obtained through literature studies, interviews, and FGDs.

After all the data has been collected, the next step is for the researcher to carry out an analysis using the ethnoecological analysis method. Ethnoecology ethnoscience is both a theory and an analytical tool used in the study of ecological anthropology (Barnard & Spencer, 2010). This technique helps the authors to identify and analyze the implicit cultural rules that underlie the behavior of

the Luang people in acting related to the environment. This research takes place in July-August 2022.

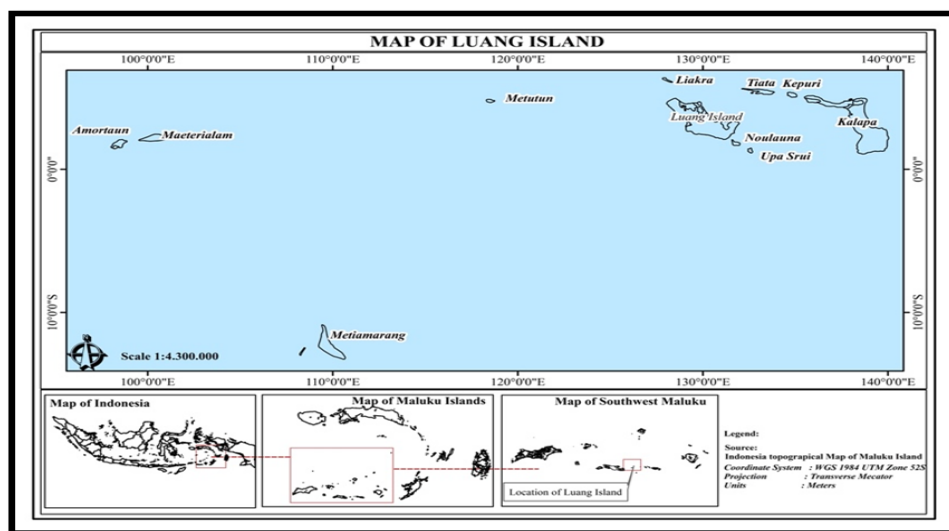
Research Results and Interpretation

Geography and Ecology of Luang Island Related to the results of this study, first in this section the author will describe the ecology of Luang Island and then explain how the relationship between the Luang people and their natural environment. As explained in the introduction, studies on remote and isolated islands are rarely carried out, including in the field of ecology anthropology of Luang Island in Southwest Maluku Regency, Maluku, Indonesia. The culture of the people of Luang Island, which is a means of connecting them and their environment, has not been studied scientifically outside of research by Pannel 1997, an Australian researcher because of its remote location. Luang Island is one of the outermost small islands in Indonesia.

Why is it called that?

Because the Small Outer-most Islands (PPKT) are small islands with an area of ≤ 2000 km² and have geographic coordinate base points connecting the archipelagic sea baselines in accordance with the law international and national. PPKT is also designated as KSNT (Certain National Strategic Areas), namely areas related to state sovereignty, environmental control, and/or world heritage sites, whose development is prioritized for national interests. This means that PPKT requires special management so that its position as a border area of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) has sovereignty, maintains environmental sustainability and natural resources contained therein, and provides maximum benefits for the welfare of society (Alihar, 2018; Malik et al., 2019; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2017) Administratively Luang Island is in Maluku Province, Southwest Maluku Regency. Luang Island is adjacent to Timor Leste in the west and the Australian continent (Karuna & Serpara, 2021; Kissiya & Biczó, 2022; Malik et al., 2019; Pannell, 1997) in the south. See figure 1.

Figure 1. Map of Luang Island Source: authors (August 2022)



Luang Island consists of two villages, West Luang and East Luang. Luang Island has eleven small islands around it including Liakra Island, Tia-ta, Kepuri, Kelapa, Nowlauna, Upasrui, Metutun, Upasrui, Wekenau, Amortaun, Metrialam, and Metiamarang. These islands are in the possession of Luang Island. Only three of the eleven small islands are inhabited. Every Sunday after Sunday worship, some Luang people go to the islands. They stayed there for six days and returned on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. On these islands, the Luang people usually catch fish, make salted fish and farm seaweed. The total area of Luang Island is 622 km² with a population of 1,994 people (BPS Kabupaten Maluku Barat Daya, 2022; BPS Provinsi Maluku, 2022). See table 1.

In general, the mainland of Luang Island has rocky soil structures and dry soil types. So for farming or making plantations, it is not optimal, it can even be said that it is not suitable. Approaching the area of the mountain peaks and mountain bodies there are several gardens or *Lutur*. *Lutur* is a garden area surrounded by a stone fence about half a meter high. Made in the form of a square or circle. The purpose of making this stone fence is to prevent animals from coming into damage or eating the plants in the *lutur* circle.

According to the interview, *lutur* is also related to the history and a connection with a myth on Luang Island regarding traditional fish farming on the coast. The results of the author's observations, in the *lutur* are only visible a few cassava trees, and

wild grasses dominate this area. The plants in this *lutur* area seem reluctant to thrive, as the traditional saying goes that "life doesn't want to die, it does not want to live". They must fight the hardness of the rocks and soil in the region to fight for food for their growth.

When compared with the forests on Seram Island, the difference is very much. Seram Island's land is very fertile, and all plants grow well and do not even require special care for long- and short-lived plants. Most of the land area, both at the top of the mountain and the circle of the mountain body, looks brownish-red grass. Grow tall coli trees with lush leaves and fruit. The fruit of the koli tree is eaten by the Luang people and processed into palm wine. There are also cactus plants that thrive among the rocks, the roots of large and small trees stuck firmly between the large rocks as if they do not want to let go of their coils. There are several deer seen roaming the body of the mountain. While on the coast there are many coconut trees, which are used by the Luang people for their daily life. In almost all circles at the foot of the mountain, there are several plants that thrive in gaps in the arrangement of small stones and look like bonsai plants that are stunted and have left. Meanwhile, within the village environment, there are several types of tropical tree plants that can be consumed by the Luang people such as breadfruit trees, ompa trees, and tamarind trees. Apart from these plants, the native also raises several domestic animals such as pigs, goats, chickens, and ducks.

Tabel 1. Total Population on Luang Island. Source: BPS Kabupaten Maluku Barat Daya & BPS Provinsi Maluku, 2022

No	Nama Desa	Penduduk		
		Laki-laki	Perempuan	Jumlah
1	Luang Barat	423	408	831
2	Luang Timur	587	576	1.163
Total		1010	984	1.994

As it is well known, the eastern part of Indonesia is the region with the richest and most diverse coral reefs in the world (Veron, 1993). Southwest Maluku Regency is included in the world's coral reef triangle line, Luang Island is automatically in the world's coral triangle line because it is close to Timor Leste and borders Australia. It is not surprising, then, that Luang Island has the second-largest coral reef area in Indonesia (Pannell, 1997) and large seagrass areas with a coral displacement rate of 90% when compared to other areas in Indonesia (Dinas Kelautan Dan Perikanan Provinsi Maluku, 2021; Estradivari et al., 2015, 2016; Soleman & Noer, 2017; Wagey & Z, 2008).

This condition strongly supports the abundance of biological resources on Luang Island and synergizes with the culture of the local community in managing their environment in traditional ways based on local ecological knowledge that they have until now (Estradivari et al., 2015; Hutubessy & Mosse, 2021; Kissiya, 2021; Leha et al., 2020).

In addition, the position of Luang Island is very strategic because it is in the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Channel (ALKIIB)(Kissiya & Biczó, 2022b). Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI) are sea lanes that are determined as a channel for the implementation of the right of archipelagic sea lanes passage based on the international law of the sea conventions. This channel is a shipping and flight channel that can be used by foreign ships or aircraft over the sea to carry out peaceful shipping and flights in the normal way (Tamami & Siswanto, 2021).

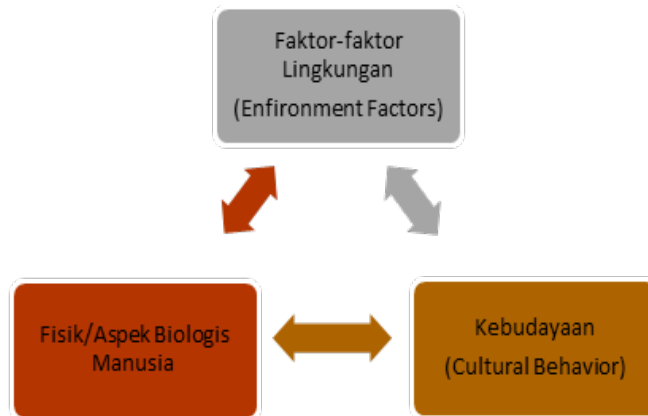
The designation of ALKI is intended so that international shipping and flights can be carried out continuously, directly, and as quickly as possible and not be hindered by Indonesian waters and air space. ALKI is set to connect two free waters, namely the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. All foreign ships and aircraft wishing to pass north or south must go through ALKI (Oppenheim, 1952; Kissiya, 2020; Parthiana, 2014).

Luang People's Interaction with Their Natural Web

The dynamics of human life require patterns of interaction and adaptation to the surrounding natural environment. From the perspective of deep ecology, humans are not objects that are separate from this world or isolated, but as a fundamentally connected and interdependent network of phenomena (Capra, 1997; Deval, 2007; Naess, 1973; Naess & Snyder, 1995). Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic values of all living things and views humans only as a special part of the network of life. The basic philosophy of deep ecology is called Naess as ecosophy which means the wisdom of managing life in harmony with nature as a household in a broad sense. In this sense, the environment is not just a science but a wisdom, a way of life, and a pattern of living in harmony with nature. Thus, humans are not the only center of the universe or anthropocentric system (Capra, 2004; Capra et al., 1993; Naess, 2010). The question is how humans relate to nature, especially the people on Luang Island. Do these interactions influence each other and to what extent do they represent nature in their lives? Adaptation of the Luang people is key (Bennet, 1976, 2017; Orlove, 1980; Rappaport, 1968) establishing relationships with the environment. In adapting the Luang people have the capacity to learn and anticipate (Bennet, 2017), adjust to change, systemic relationships, and interdependence between components (Kottak, 1999; Pinkosky, 2008; Vadya & Rappaport, 1968) to be able to live their lives. Meanwhile, culture is a bridge for the Luang people in establishing this relationship. The relationship between humans, environment, and culture are three factors that are intertwined internally. See figure 2.

To understand the social and cultural dynamics of a society, it is necessary to pay attention to how the historical journey (Biczó, 2004, 2019a, 2019b), mental and geographical or the environment of the society in which they live (U Müller, 2003).

Figure 2: Human Relations, Environment and Culture. Source: Authors Februari 2023



There is hardly any experience or knowledge that is not historical. In the course of this history, there have been processes of assimilation and acculturation both intentionally and unintentionally. Likewise, for the Luang people, to understand the dynamics of the relationship between them and their natural environment need to look at history, mentality and what factors are the background of their relationship with the surrounding environment. The knowledge they possess is an accumulation of the results of interaction and adaptation through a long historical process that has been passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors until now, of course, accompanied by a strong mentality. The mentality is the deepest layer of individual cognition that forms social group cognition in acting and viewing the social world (Mousalimas, 1990).

The results of the interaction between the Luang people and nature can be seen through the presence of natural elements in socio-cultural life, this is found in several oral traditions through myths about the sea and the destruction of islands by sailfish or Upasrui. Presenting sea animals as symbols in the Matoa culture, Hygera Lai rituals that

aim to protect marine resources, Pamali, Bameti, the tradition of collecting marine resources at low tide using traditional technology. Apart from that, maritime concepts are also used as patterns in village spatial planning. Their closeness to nature can also be found in understanding and using natural signs as a guide. Such as using the direction of the stars, moon, and wind as a compass in sailing activities, fishing at sea, and doing other work. In addition, they also have the ability to map the sea area. These relationships have existed since their ancestors and the results of this have shaped their social culture. In this section, the authors will does not explain everything mentioned above. In this part, it will be explained how natural elements are presented in the cultural life of the people of Luang Island, such as a boat as a symbol in mapping village plans, mapping marine areas, and naming them according to their knowledge. Representation of marine biota as an attribute in supporting life such as in church, and terms used in daily conversation that refer to natural elements.

Anthropology also goes to sea (Strang, 2009), boats are a means of sea transportation for coastal communities (Hans, 1993; Horridge, 1981; Lapijan,

2017; Sopher, 1965). It has been explained at the beginning of this paper that the Luang people are sea people and depend on the sea for their lives. The author can also call it the sea tribe because they carry out all their life activities at sea and function boats as a means of mobilization, this refers to the opinion of Indonesian maritime expert Lopian about the characteristics of sea people (Bernadie, 2003; Hall, 2019; Marsetyo, 2018; Nontji, 2007).

Therefore, talking about the sea, definitely talk about the transportation used by them. The boat is a very important means of transportation, not only as a means of transportation but also as a symbol for the Luang people in arranging the location of their homes within the village environment. The boat has more meaning than just a maritime vehicle, it is used as a symbol. In general, the representation of a boat as a symbol can be divided into two categories.

First, the boat is used as a guide in general spatial planning.

Second, as a vehicle for expression to convey messages. The two villages on Luang Island are likened to a boat. Referring to the symbolic direction of sailing is divided into three zones,

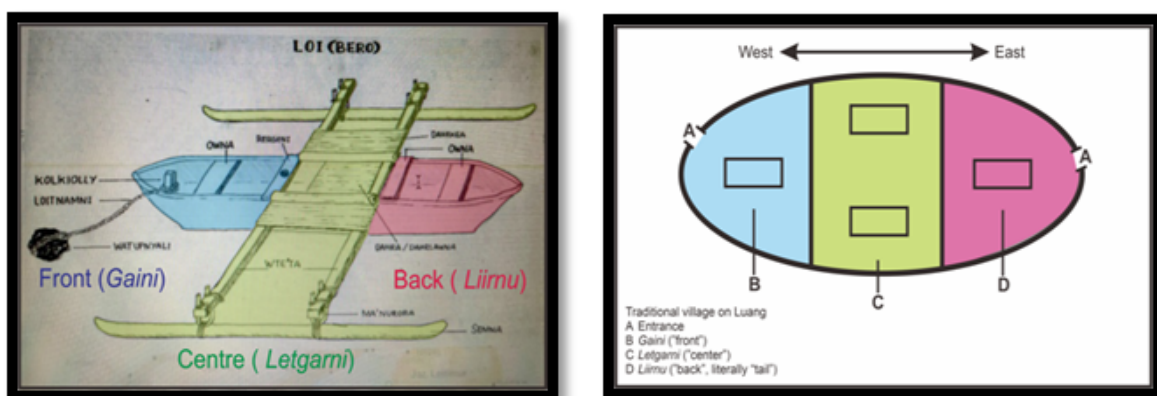
front or (*gaini*) middle (*latgarni*), and rear or stern (*liirnu*).

The ship's crew is made up of members from four families, each of which has its own residence. These houses were built according to the four cardinal directions. The pattern of the four cardinal directions on this compass governs how the arrangement and layout of the village plan on Luang Island. Members of two families always inhabit the central region and the other two families inhabit the fore and aft zones (de Jonge & van Dijk, 1995; Kissiya & Biczó, 2022a). See figure 3.

The boat and the sea are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. Where there is a sea there must be a boat and where there is a boat there must be a sea. Talking about the sea on Luang Island, according to the author, refers to two things: first, the sea as a place that contains water that tastes salty and has its own ecosystem, and second, as a place or public space that has meaning (Carr et al., 1992).

Why is that? The sea is not just an unreal and inactive storage space, but a real room (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986; Hakim et al., 2009), active and participates in controlling and forming awareness (Kusno, 2000) of the Luang people's social culture.

Figure 3: House Plan Based on Boat. Source: Kalvin Karuna (2012) dan de Jonge (1995)



The sea also forms the collective memory of the Luang people as “sea people”. As sea people, of course, they really know and understand the existence of their sea. It is not surprising that they have a knowledge system regarding the mapping of sea areas based on the level of seawater depth. Here the depth of the seawater is measured by the anatomy of the body according to their knowledge. The Luang people divide the depth of *meti*/shallow seawater into three parts namely, *met kerna*, *met etla torni*, and *metlolaitnebelni*.

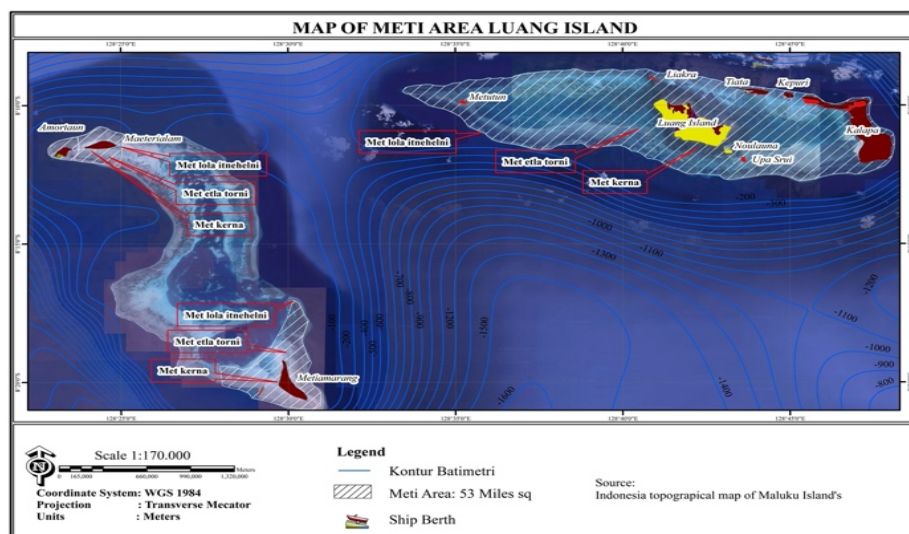
Met Kerna (dry meti), the condition of the sea water receding to the size of an ankle. Under these circumstances, a white sand dune will appear in the middle of the ocean and there are small holes filled with water and marine life. This condition allows the Luang people to carry out activities to collect fish and other marine biotas. They also usually walk from one island to another. Except from and to Metiaralam Island and Amartaoun Island, because there is a deep ravine between the two islands. *Met etla torni*, seawater conditions in this area are in size from feet to knees. In this condition, seawater like this seagrass meadow area can still be seen, as fish and other marine biotas. *Met lolaitnebelni*, according

to the knowledge of the Luang people, the condition of the sea water receding at this level is the boundary between the shallow and deep-sea areas.

They usually fish and work on agar cultivation. The measure of the depth of the water in this shallow area starts from the feet of the waist. The reason why they use the anatomy of the human body as a measure of the depth of this shallow area or *meti*. The author has not found a reason for this. In the next research, the author will explore this in more depth.

The tidal conditions on Luang Island are very different from other islands in Maluku. Luang Island has a very wide area of shallow or *meti*. The total shallow area of Luang Island is 53 miles (85,295.232 km²). In general, tides in various regions can be distinguished into four types tipe (Ben Elghali et al., 2007). The types of tides that occur on Luang Island are included in the type of mixed tides with a single daily inclination. This type of tide is a type of tide that occurs in one day, there is one high and one low tide, but sometimes there are two highs or two lows (Estradivari et al., 2015, 2017). See figure 4.

Figure 4: Marine Area Mapping Based on Shallowness Level. Source: Authors Agustus 2022



The Luang people see the sea as a cosmic unity. The concept of cosmic unity cannot be separated from the mythology that frames the Luang people's concept of thinking. They believe that the cosmos consists of two parts called "up/sky/north/air" and "under/earth/south/sea/soil, each of which has rulers in the form of humans and shells (*Tridacna Gigas*) (Jacobsen, 1896; van Hoeyvell, 2014; van Klinken, 2001). The God of heaven is symbolized by a man "brave, dashing and mighty". The God of the earth is shown in the form of a shell (*Tridacna Gigas*) which is identified with women. For the Luang people, this earth goddess is a symbol of the source of all fertility. Horizontally, the relationship between "up/sky/north/air", and "under/earth/south/sea/soil" is a cosmic unit that builds their respective identities. Vertically, according to the original beliefs of the Luang people, the formation of the world and the birth of humans is the result of a meeting between two elements, namely the sky, which is male, and the earth, which is female.

In the maritime tradition of the Luang people, the front of the boat is usually decorated with shells (*Tridacna Gigas*) and fish figures (Jacobsen, 1896; Müller, 1914). Fish and shellfish are symbols of the marine wealth they have. They believe that fish bring good luck, fertility, change, health, and

feelings into their lives. In addition, they also associate fish with the water element which means stability, balance, and peace of mind. We can find respect for these two marine biotas on the altars of the two churches on Luang Island. See figure 7.

In daily conversations, researchers see that the Luang people unconsciously use natural elements, both land, and sea, in communicating. With these taxonomies, we can find out how the Luang people know about the world around them.

They interpret the physical environment as they are in it. It is from here that we can see the ways in which the Luang people understand and think about events and objects in their world. This shows us how the relationship between human thought processes and the physical and ideational aspects of culture.

This subfield of anthropology is rooted in Boasian cultural relativism, influenced by the anthropological linguistics pioneered by Conklin, and closely aligned with the psychological investigation of cognitive processes.

It emerged as a separate field of study in 1950, when ethnographers sought to find the native point of view, adopting an emic approach from anthropology (Conklin, 2007; do Couto, 2014; Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006; Frake, 1968; Haugen, 1972 ; Sapir, 1912)

Figure 5: Church Altar in the form of Napoleon Fish, Grouper Fish and *Tridacna Gigas*. Source: Authors. (Juli 2022)



These taxonomies have more than one meaning or are referred to in linguistic anthropology as metaphors (Holland & Quinn, 1987; Quinn & Strauss, 1998). Metaphors are tools that guide our perception of the environment and our interactions with it (Bastardas-Boada, 2017; Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006; Haarmann, 1986; Sapir, 1912). Likewise, the Luang people, indeed are not aware that the words or the taxonomies of the language they use in communicating are representations of natural elements. But researchers while in the field see that through involvement in their daily life conversations and direct observations. See table 2.

The table above shows an example of local words or terms used by the Luang people in communicating. The word "puri" is an infinitive word that in its true sense refers to one of the small islands around Luang Island which is named "Kepuri/Kpuri Island" and is short in size. The term "Puri" also has many meanings depending on the context of their conversation. The term "puri" is used by the Luang people to express something short, clear, brief, and don't talk too much, or "too long". The term "puri" which is used daily by the Luang people can be the same as other

communities but has a different meaning. "Puri" for the Ambonese means "fish puri" a small fish, for the Javanese "puri" is one of the rooms in the palace. For those who are Hindus "puri" refers to a place of worship "house of worship". Thus, the local terms and various concepts that refer to environmental classifications, existing in a community, are basically the best way to understand their environmental knowledge system (Haarmann, 1986; Haugen, 1972; Trampe, 1990).

Conclusion

The people's closeness to the natural environment, especially the marine environment in which they live, is an undeniable socio-cultural fact. The relationship that exists between them is not just a meaningless life. The environment for them is not a mechanical machine that is only moved for their interests and not an empty, homogeneous, and eutopian space (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986), but on the contrary a space that is truly imbued with quantity and quality. They regard nature as the space of primary perception, the space of their dreams and desires in it with qualities that appear to be intrinsic to all its contents.

Table 2. Word/Expressions Luang Dialect/Languages. Source: Analyses by author according to research result, (Juli-Agustus 2022)

Language/Dialect and meaning	Word/Expression 1	Word/Expression 2	Word/Expression 3
Luang	Puri	Mlyolanekwa' la <i>purinekwa</i>	Bicarasingkat dan jelas
Melayu Ambon	The name of a type of fish	Puri Fish	Tiny fish
Indonesia	Istana atauKeraton	Salah satu ruangan di dalamistana	RumahPemujaan agama Hindu
English	Kepuri Island	Just talk <i>puri</i>	Just talk clear
Really Meaning	Kepuri Island	Name of an Island	One of the islands around Luang Island which is shorter than the other islands around it
Metafora/Compare	Short, concise, and clear	Do not talk to much	To be simple, clear, concise and short

The results of this study indicate that the exploration of the meaning of the Luang people in building relationships with nature appears in dimensions; self-insight, the meaning of life, changing attitudes, self-commitment, directed activities, and social support. Exploring the meaning of life through these dimensions makes them tend to maintain respect for nature as a life-giving source. The concept of respect here is a responsibility, which will only be meaningful if they are able to manage and protect the earth and place the earth not as an object but as a partner in the sustainability of their lives and the sustainability of natural life.

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