Towards sustainable cultural landscape: A challenge in developing ecomuseum in Minahasa Region

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Abstract. Recently, numbers of ecomuseums are developed around the world, particularly in Europe and Asia. Notably in Indonesia, ecomuseums are provided in various forms, covering large areas to small areas, and isolated sites in order to reach sustainable cultural landscape. This by means protecting the natural resources and cultural heritage. Minahasa region has considerable potential to develop ecomuseum model, encouraging community’s local sustainable development. The purpose of this paper is analyzing the potential aspects of ecomuseum in selected rural villages in Minahasa, include; Leilem, Pulutan, Watumea and Kayu Uwi, as case studies. Current development at these villages are evaluated by comparing the local community involvement with the basic principles of ecomuseum concepts, by exploring local community involvement. A qualitative methods was carried out, such in-depth survey between April and September 2017. Field observations include several activities; documentation, also interviewing local participants for their perspective on the ecomuseum developments. In order to reach sustainable landscape development in the region, Ecomuseum is also pivotal and practical model as functional tools for protecting the cultural heritage and developing of local areas. This research proves that Minahasa has got many cultural heritage sources, which are using productively for local sustainable development. The villages are samples of natural and cultural heritage areas of Minahasa for a sustainable cultural landscape development in the region.

Keywords: Ecomuseum, Minahasa, local community, cultural landscape, sustainable

1. Introduction

The concept of sustainable cultural landscape development is now widely accepted as a means of protecting natural resources and cultural heritage [20, 21]. Ecomuseum is one of approach towards sustainability, in relation to cultural tourism [9]. Indonesia possesses considerable potential ecomuseum ecological models to encourage sustainable local development. There were no ecomuseums developed in the North Sulawesi Province, so the aim of this paper was to explore the potential for concept
development at the provincial level and at self-identified demonstration sites. Ecomuseums are locally-driven, place-based organizations that encourage sustainable community development, based on *in situ* heritage conservation and interpretation.

This paper examines the ecomuseum model from Minahasan perspective and illustrating how an ecomuseum compares to a park, a heritage district, a traditional museum, other shape of cultural preservation.

1.1. Understanding of Ecomuseum

Ecomuseum is identified as a dynamic way in which a community preserves, interprets, and manages its heritage for a sustainable local development. An ecomuseum grows from below, rather than being imposed from above: it begins with people, not with objects. Its philosophy and practice are based on the intimate relationship between local people and their heritage. Thus, an ecomuseum is “a place where people live which is interpreted (or represented) in the manner of a museum, where traditional museums, natural areas, and historic sites are an integral part of it [3,7]. Ecomuseum represents a relevant phenomenon for the local community development. The ecomuseum model was developed first in France in the early 1970s, with aimed to foster holistic interpretations of cultural heritage, combining tangible objects, sites, and built structures with the aspects of traditions, practices, and customs associated with intangible or living heritage”. The ecomuseum model then was broadened to include natural heritage, including local flora and fauna, important wildlife habitats and geomorphology sites [3, 6, 7]. Ecomuseums provide local people with an inclusive process for rescuing fragments of heritage – such as a vernacular building, a redundant factory, a woodland habitat or an intangible heritage - from loss or destruction, and ultimately lead to the development of a tangible expression of their sense of place, a means of celebrating their heritage [4].

Ecomuseum preserves and interprets heritage assets, also work to apply this knowledge to address local development issues, with a focus on sustainability[8, 20]. Ultimately, ecomuseums provide a valuable conduit between the heritage community, the private sector, and elected officials. Ecomuseums matter because it focus on sustainable forms of community development [9, 20, 21, 22]. There are many factors which communities contribute and respond to globalized economies, changing and chaotic environments, and a host of societal changes, while heritage is an important consideration, since the community need to appreciate the history of their communities and landscapes, if they are going to understand their potential for adaptation [20].

2. The Case of Minahasa Region

Cultural landscapes of Minahasa, represent an important part of the cultural landscape and ethnographic heritage of a community, both at the local and at the regional level. The sustainability of the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of traditional agrarian practices mostly is based on the use of the traditional landscape and of the environment as resources. The living rural landscapes present high potential for the maintenance of the environmental stability and for the sustainable development of a given territory. In particular, the natural and cultural landscape of Minahasa presents many traits of outstanding relevance at the environmental, aesthetic and historical levels. The area bears a great value and potential for local sustainable development not only for its ecologic, historic and cultural significance, but also in respect of its broader territorial context and of the socio-culture and historical identity of the local population.

3. Objectives and Methodology

In this paper the Cultural Landscape of the Minahasans is examined to reposition their cultural attributes in Indonesian Cultural Heritage schemes, by viewing ancient cultures and social, economic, environmental and spiritual systems as interdependent. This approach thereupon can make a valuable contribution to better understanding landscapes as to their incorporation into regional development.

This research was conducted in Indonesia in the Minahasa Region, North Sulawesi Province. Minahasa is a region on the north-eastern peninsula of the Sulawesi Island (formerly called Celebes Island). The inhabitants are called ‘Suku Minahasa’ or the Minahasa Ethnic group 1, 2, 11, 23]. The
Minahasa has a significant cultural inheritance which is currently being researched for scientific and educational purposes. However, Minahasan cultural landscape, ecological landscapes or either Indigenous architecture is rarely investigated. Bibliographic survey and field research were primarily done relevant to socio-economic and cultural aspects of Minahasa region inhabitants. This research was qualitative study-based, and involved observing and collecting data and exploring the bodies of knowledge relevant to local traditions and wisdoms on the management of the Minahasan landscapes. Multi-methods were used against the framing of cultural landscape dimensions, and included participant phenomenon observation, in-depth interviews, group discussions and survey strategies. An ethno-archaeological approach was used to analyze and compare local knowledge and land-relationships developed by Minahasan people to curate their unique characteristics as well as ensuring adoption their cultural, social and economic values. This study relied on survey research methods, key informant field interviews, and examination of environmental variables such as varieties of crops and plants. Primary data collection has been taken during the 5 months fieldwork in April-September 2017. Data collection methods included interview, and participant phenomenon observation of which the latter was based upon observing human-land interactions. The researcher was involved as a participant observer. [16]. The site selection-criteria was based upon bio-cultural characteristic. To seek variability between people and nature, the researcher invited participant individuals living in settlements located in the Minahasa highland that offer a diversity of features. Qualitative data was obtained during the fieldwork sessions. An in-depth interview and group discussions was applied to 22 respondents, that were selected using purposive sampling and snowball techniques [8, 18]. Interviews were divided into different classifications of elderly (9 respondents), head of village (3 respondents), and cultural subjects (6 respondents). Consistent interview questions were applied to all respondents and key informants to gain local knowledge, perceptions, connections and interactions with the landscapes and places. Four factors that are considered important in establishing the trustworthiness of findings are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability [8, 16].

Figure 1. Map of Sulawesi and Map of Research Locations

Figure 2. Research methodology Scheme

In contrast to phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnographic, or narrative studies that are based upon specific methodological frameworks can emerge from distinctive disciplinary traditions [8]. In transferring data into research results, various methods are attained to make it understandable. The processes of the analysis started with the transcription, description and inscription documentary data, interview and field notes. This paper profound the tangible and intangible cultural landscape values of
Minahansans from four aspects: (1) traditional Biocultural knowledge, (2) cultural and art, (3) social traditions, and (4) Settlement characteristics, (5) cultural materials/artifacts and, (6) Historical Significant.

4. Results

4.1 The Context of Minahasa: People and Their Land

The Minahasa regency is distinguished by two lowland areas encompassing the northwest to the southeast side of the Sulawesi Island peninsula. These lowlands divide Minahasa into four parts, with the Central Minahasa as its historical heartland (Figure 1). The region presents an interesting case study to this current discussion. The region has a patchy landscape and environment consisting of mountainous and hilly terrain, dominated by an agricultural landscape and a lake ecosystem in the heartland [15, 24, 25]. Specifically, the local ethnic groups, who have inhabited the region for generations, represent one of the oldest regional ethnic groups in Indonesia whom were originally identified during the Portuguese and Dutch colonization and missionaries periods [11, 14, 17]. Historically, the Minahasa ethnic groups have been progressively integrated or assimilated into the greater Indonesian population, and after European colonization experienced an extensive Westernization of their socio-cultural systems. Other studies about Indonesian culture claim that the Minahasans have become less traditional compared to other Indonesian ethnic community groups, resulting in a major adoption of Christianity and the loss of Indigenous cultures in contemporary Minahasa [2, 11, 12, 15, 21, 25]. In a contemporary context, the Minahasan people are today re-engaging with their cultural traditions, with their traditions of life and meaning. Cultural values that links their past with their present and give insights into what their ancestors undertook in the past are rekindling the remaining tangible and intangible Minahasan cultural heritage including their occupation sites or places, where Minahasans continue to live and use the natural resources, and sites that represent substantial natural landscapes (for example, Lake Tondano, rivers and spring water sites, remain burial grounds and sites, and cultural artefacts) (Table 1).

| No | Villages (Wanua) | Landform | Natural Resources | Selection Criteria of Cultural Landscape Potentials |
|----|-----------------|----------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Pulutan - Romboken | Lakesides - Hills | Clay and Agriculture | Traditiona l Music and dance, Social Traditions in death and wedding, “Sarikat/Clan gathering, thanksgiving” | Highland village between two hills, Historic stone, Traditional Houses | Village History, Folk story/ narrative |
| 2  | Watumea | Lakesides | Lake/fishery, Agriculture | Landscape narratives and dance, Social Traditions in death and wedding, Clan Gathering, thanksgiving | Village at the edge of rural lake, The oldest church building in Minahasa, Traditional Houses | Village History, Folk story/ narrative |
| 3  | Leilem | Hills | Wooden furnitures, Geother-mal, agriculture | Kolintang music and dance, Social Traditions in death and wedding, Clan Gathering, thanksgiving | Highland village surrounded by hills, Traditional Houses | Village History, Folk story/ narrative |
Discussions and debates with the Minahasa community about land involve environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and their history in being able to comprehend the historical and contemporary interplay between their people and their environment [10, 24, 25]. Landscapes studies in the Minahasa region can reveal multi-diverse local wisdoms and traditions. This is because the Minahasan people’s worldview has changed overtime, which the use of landscape retains their ultimate expression in the earliest pre-histories before European colonialization. Over the last few years a massive development has occurred across much of this landscape, aided by Indonesian policy, resulting in many Minahasan people parcelling up their farmland and selling it for development. The value of Minahasa landscape is accordingly possess now more economic values than cultural and emotional values. This shift prompts any to ask about balance; how can the historic and cultural values of Minahasans be conserved while at the same time allowing the community evolve into the future. Such were denied in the past, resulting in the fact that the cultural dimensions of the Minahasa were not integrated into the regional development strategies. There are some records of development failures that were due to ignorance of the cultural potentials and barriers. Such ignorance led to the implementation of development projects which often distorted cultural knowledge and also created an attitude of rejection towards further development planning. In managing the Minahasan’s land and environment, local traditional knowledge is seen as a link to their Indigenous thoughts that converts knowledge of their spiritual insights into sustainable living concepts. The word ‘knowledge’ is applied to Minahasan Indigenous understandings of nature, interpretation of natural processes, knowledge of resources and so forth. In the following analysis, evidence of the substantive properties of this Indigenous knowledge are applied to Minahasan resource management, in particular agricultural or farming practices, hunting and gathering, and ethno botanical plant usage. Evidence of Biocultural knowledge of selected village show that the Minahasans are continuing to exploit their natural resources according to their cultural rules [23, 24]. Through biological adaptation and adoption of local knowledge derived from their ancestors, the Minahasans continue to use the landscape and the forest in sustainable ways. What is considered as spirit of the land is reflected through the lessons learned from Minahasan’s traditional agricultural practices, thoughts, and from their mediation of different cultures (traditional and modern) based upon self-experience. The knowledge of the Minahasans has been gained through in-depth interviews with elders in the case study area are presented in this paper as examples. The majority of the Pulutan community rely on exploiting “land” that contains clay at upper layer structure that can be found around the village environment to make ceramics or other types of objects. The Pulutan community manage their production in traditional and semi-traditional ways. The respondents inherited the tradition of ceramic making from their families, and also have their own knowledge and experience, ranging from 10 to 45 years. Watumea community sustain their everyday life and rely on the lake and agriculture, particularly cloves and, red beans and corns. Community in Lailem Raya for years has been producing wooden furnitures/meuble and agriculture in sustaining community’s life. Community of KayuUwi possesses their traditional agriculture and social cultural traditions.

4.2 The Ecomuseum Model
Basically, the ecomuseum model is characterized by the community participation in facing the current socio-economic challenges. The key elements of ecomuseum are the collection, human activities (material culture and trades), the environment (geographical and ecological sense), and the community (Figure 2). The Ecomuseum Models for Minahasa Region is consists of four elements (Figure 3) and the proposed of ecomuseum model has three strategies; Community Participation, Local Enhancement
and In-Situ Conservation (Open Air Museum), whilst the actions of those strategies are constructing platform for public-private collaboration, initiating tourism community empowerment and legally defining cultural landscape towards sustainable regional development and sustainable landscape development (Figure 4).

5. Discussion

The discussion gives an overview on how Cultural Landscape can be sounded in Cultural Heritage Conservation scheme, as there have been a lot of recent debate and research about issues pertinent to an ethnic community in Indonesia, including Minahasan people. While this is not the first research inquiry about this people, the majority of this research to date has been concentrated on socio-cultural and environmental issues. In this kind of research, ideas, beliefs and theories about the social world as what social sciences are based upon are applied into practical realities of human environment in cultural landscape realm. Therefore, communities’ based eco-museum should be utilized in any planning and development that concerns their living environment in order to conserve their living culture and natural resources. The discussion summarizes and provides description and understanding on past cultural attributes to the present and the positive roles of local knowledge of Minahasans and the important of historical information in informing conservation planning and management strategies for an Ecomuseum concept. This research finding recommends and assists Minahasans community to continue their traditional cultural knowledge and build their positive roles, subject to their strong connection to the Minahasa land as their “home land”, as for recognition to self-identity and in maintaining the local traditions and its values. Moreover, the value of cultural landscape knowledge of the Minahasans reflects their relationship to the current environment characteristics. The cultural attributes is more attuned to the Minahasans’ living quality than Western or Indonesian generic concepts. From a holistic perspective, environmental knowledge benefits the locals and could be recommended for developing Ecomuseum and integration into local/state (and potentially national) place and landscape planning initiatives both in schemes and plans (rural or urban).

6. Conclusion

The challenge of increased population and development through modern and global influences in the Minahasa region will continue and will occupy more landscape spaces around and within Minahasan living places. These influences lead to landscape change and threaten to bring about the disappearance of local traditions amongst the community. Therefore, conserving the Minahasan landscape and their traditional ethnoecological knowledge through Ecomuseum are necessary for the Minahasans to sustain...
their land and environment. This research recommends both local and regional government in terms of reaching sustainable landscape development, which the opportunity of environmental knowledge may help to achieve a sustainable development in which many natural resources have been cultivated and used in a sustainable way for thousands of years. The skills and techniques of local communities provide valuable information to the global community and can be a useful model for environmental policies. The international community has recognized this close and traditional dependence of the indigenous and local communities on biological resources in the preamble, and more concretely. There is a growing international awareness of the links between cultural diversity and natural diversity, and the vulnerability of both outside processes. For future the Safeguarding of the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Landscape heritage it would be recommended to legally bound by the Convention to designate and empower organisations to document intangible cultural heritage and create inventories thereof, and also to encourage the presentation, preservation, protection, and transmission of intangible cultural heritage by working closely and cooperatively with the relevant communities. Reconnection to land will provide a reconnection to Spirit; rejoining a long-time cultural history with the land that made it. The landscape formed the relationships, language, dance, music and symbols which held a people’s identity for millennia and still holds it despite recent disconnection arising from violent European land acquisition, displacement policies and language loss. The Spirit of the land is there in both tangible and intangible cultural heritage but it is the intangible which remains the conduit for that reconnection.

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