



Policy Model of Lake Toba Preservation by Parmalim Community

¹Tengku Irmayani, ²Muryanto Amin, ³Evi Novida Ginting

^{1, 2, 3}Department of Political Sciences, FISIP University of Sumatera Utara, Jl.

Abstract: The study describes how to analyze and create a policy model in the preservation of Lake Toba based on the values of local wisdom by the Parmalim community. Parmalim religion is the religion of Batak people since a long time ago that teaches the concept of '*Ugasan*' which means the balance life between man and nature, where a man can cultivate the nature and protect it from the damage. The study used a qualitative approach and data collection techniques through in-depth interviews and observation. The study site in Desa Hutatinggi, Kecamatan Laguboti, Kabupaten Toba Samosir where the majority of Parmalim Community lived there and also in the villages of Parmalim communities around the Lake Toba. Results from this study are that there are some living habits by Parmalim Community in preserving the nature as selective logging, replant the trees and preserve the purity of the water, especially Lake Toba (*Marpangir*) as part of the rituals of their faith. The results also explain that the habit of conserving nature is still run by the community Parmalim although generally do not have the support of the people around them, especially from governments. Based on the research results, it is suggested to create a policy model for local authorities to preserve Lake Toba based on Parmalim's local wisdom so local wisdom and Lake Toba can be maintained.

Keywords: Policy Model, Local Wisdom, Preservation of Lake Toba, Parmalim

1. Introduction

Natural disasters caused by environmental damage such as floods, landslides, drought even smoke become rampant nowadays. One of the causes of environmental damage is human understanding of nature that more anthropocentric, which means that people feel has complete power over the management of natural resources. Various environmental damage caused by development and advancement of technology becomes the justification for such damage (Dewi, 2014).

Lake Toba region is one example of areas that have suffered environmental damage. Forest area around this region is now diminishing due to illegal logging activity and land conversion. Not only in forest areas, Lake Toba area which is also a tourist area also suffered damage resulting from pollution of factory waste and piles of trash from the surrounding community and the tourist.

Environmental degradation surely gives direct impact on humans nearby. Various attempts of some parties, particularly local governments have actually been done, but the results are not optimal. Local governments rely solely on unilateral policy in preserving the Lake Toba, but until now, their programs rarely involve the local community, although local communities around Lake Toba is the most affected by the damage. Batak people who believe the Malim Religion are the one of the local community that can be involved. They are communities that historically lived around the Lake Toba and has the concept and culture of preserving the environment.

Parmalim is the name for the people who believe the Malim religion which is the original religion of Batak Toba and a continuation of the old religion in the land of Batak. Parmalim is similar to the Samin tribe in Mountains Kendeng of Central Java, Kejawen religion in Java and Badui tribe in Banten province. There are some ancestors from Batak is considered as religious leaders of Malim religion such as Raja Uti, Simarimbulubosi, and Singamangaraja (Situmorang, 2004). Singamangaraja is known as one of the national heroes of Indonesia against Dutch colonialism (Hirosue, 2005).

The majority of Parmalim people lived as farmers and certainly very depend on rivers, forests, and lakes, and when those resources are broken it will be detrimental to their own communities. Nonetheless, the Parmalim is a traditional society which can be said friendly to nature. It can be seen from their beliefs that contain religious values which are a noble and virtuous character. Human beings living in harmony with each other and the moral value between people and nature and the spirituality relation of man with his God called the "*Debata Mulajadi Nabolon*" is referred to the ruler of the whole universe. As a belief, Parmalim people are taught three concepts about human relationships, namely:

- a. *Ugamo*, which manage the relation between human with his God (*Debata Mulajadi Nabolon*) that shown through ritual or worship.
- b. *Ugari*, which regulate human relationships with other human beings that must be demonstrated in affection and uphold the moral values.
- c. *Ugasan*, namely the relationship of man to nature or the neighborhood indicated by the necessity to preserve natural resources.

In addition to worship, the God, and foster good relationships with fellow human beings, Parmalim people also required to be close to the nature; because everything comes from nature and human life depends on nature created by *Debata Mulajadi Na Bolon*. *Debata Mulajadi Na Bolon* said: " I have given you every plant on the whole earth and every tree that will be food, and to every beast of the earth, both that fly in the air and that creeps on the earth, every living thing give every green plant for food" (EH Tambunan 1982; 39). Besides that, Batak tribe also considers that thanks to the herbs that take nutrients from the soil and work it into fruits and vegetables humans can eat and live on this earth. So, Batak tribe considers that people should take care of nature and be grateful for it and these plants since with the help of it humans can live sustainably (Gultom, 1992).

In the view of Parmalim society, there are beliefs about the continuation of human life depends on the nature around humans so Parmalim life is inseparable from nature where humans live, so nature must be maintained. In every human birth, the main thing to be introduced to the human is water, where the water is an important thing as a source of life prior to recognizing all the thing in the earth. So, in Parmalim life there is customary to be executed is *martutu aek* (heading to the water source) where at the time of giving the name to the newborn child, the child must first be introduced to the water that is the source of life before the child know another life, water was also introduced as the brother of the body from the start until its maintenance of the circulation of blood in his body. (Gultom, 1992)

Based on the belief that taught to the Parmalim people, it can be said that they have the faith that has been taught for a long time to preserve the nature. Thus it can be said that the Parmalim people have the wisdom in preserving the environment. Local wisdom is already in the public life since ancient times until today, local knowledge is a positive behavior of man in relationship with each other, nature and the surrounding environment that can be derived from the values of religion, tradition, advice ancestors or local culture, which woke up naturally in a community to adapt to the surrounding environment. This behavior evolved into a culture in an area and will thrive for generations. In other words, local knowledge is another name of culture itself, which is a system of meaning and is the way of life of a community.

Therefore, it is important to study and preserve local wisdom developed in the community. But over time the existence of local wisdom increasingly marginalized by the influx of various technologies and social problems facing society such as population growth increases. Such circumstances make people leave the local wisdom that has been passed down for generations. The mindset of the community began to change with the dissipation of the local wisdom of holistic mindset to a mechanical mindset. People no longer think about the balance of nature and the environment in managing natural resources and the environment.

This study aims to understand the local wisdom of Parmalim community in preserving the environment. Also, the ultimate objective is to create a policy model that can be used for the government to preserve the environment based on Parmalim's local wisdom.

2. Literature Review

Adat Law society existence is recognized by the state which reads "The State recognizes and respects units of indigenous communities and their traditional rights." Furthermore, this provision also imposes limits as a condition for

the recognition and respect for Adat Law Society is still alive and in accordance with the developments that took place continuously. A wealth of knowledge of indigenous people in Indonesia has been growing in the long term in line with the development of human civilization. The development process led to many traditional knowledge and values resulting from the process of adaptation to the environment. In accordance with basic human needs, a form of traditional knowledge is a knowledge that develops in land use, either as a residence or a place to look for or producing food. In relation to the utilization, use, and management of natural resources and the environment, indigenous peoples have with their local knowledge (indigenous knowledge), with a holding power of Adat law, spiritual abilities, and religion espoused, wiser than other people. Local knowledge is known as the local wisdom growth and development in society as knowledge derived from one generation to the next generations that as part of the adaptation to the environment.

In other words, local knowledge is another name of culture itself, which is a system of meaning and is the way of life of a community. The forms of local wisdom in the community may be in the form of values, norms, beliefs, and special rules. The form of local wisdom created variety functions. The function of the local wisdom includes (1) the conservation and preservation of natural resources; (2) developing human resources; (3) the development of culture and science; and (4) instructions on advice, trust, literature, and abstinence.

The study of the relationship between Adat Law, a part of the indigenous communities and the conservation of nature described by Popi Tuhulele explains the social and cultural life of Maluku people which is inseparable from the Adat law used in efforts to manage natural resources to meet their needs as well as conservation efforts on biological resources and ecosystems. One of the forms of management and protection of the environment by the indigenous people in Maluku was *sasi*. *Sasi* as customary structures containing a binding legal force for indigenous peoples such as the implementation of *sasi* contains provisions regulating the ban as well as the ability for the community in environmental management and protection. Legal enforceability in the *sasi* knows time restriction based on the type of natural resources which regulates. Indigenous peoples in Maluku living small islands and in coastal areas have a system of '*sasi*' or a ban on harvesting or taken from nature (at sea or on land) certain natural resource for a certain time. *Sasi* as a safeguard in order to maintain the quality of population and natural resources. The prohibition of harvesting prematurely, there will be an increase in the population of natural resources.

Study on local wisdom and nature were also presented by Gunggung Senoaji (2003: 121) regarding the Baduy community who believe that they are the people who first created as filler world and resides in the center of the earth. Every Baduy people's behavior should be guided by the great-grandfather who had been prescribed in the form *Pikukuh Karuhun*. Someone have no right and power to violate and change the order of life who have been there and already applies to the next. *Pikukuhitu* must be obeyed by the Baduy and the outside community who are visiting Baduy. The provisions that include: no entry forbidden forest (*Leuweung Kolot*) for cutting down trees, open fields or take other forest products. Prohibited indiscriminate cutting down of plant species, such as fruit trees, and certain types. Prohibited use of chemical technologies, for example, using fertilizer and pest eradication of disease and poisoning the fish. Farming must be in accordance with the provisions of customs.

3. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study as a research strategy (Yin, 2009). The data obtained which are in the form of written document and the results of in-depth interviews with seven informants and observations, and will be analyzed using qualitative analysis of typology technique (Bogdan & Steven, 1993; Lofland, 1971). This research uses two data collection techniques. First, the use of documentation to examine the existing data, either in the form of policy documents, papers, journals, or books of previous research results that are relevant to environment preservation based on local wisdom. Second, in-depth interviews. The data are also described and analyzed through the technique of in-depth interviews with seven informants from the leaders of Parmalim community that lived in different places surrounding the Lake Toba and also from the local government especially Environmental Agency in Toba Samosir regency.

4. Result and discussion

The values of local wisdom by the Parmalim society is the pattern of environmental protection in the Area of Lake Toba starting from a basic concept of the balance between of human life and environment. That can be seen from a

practice of the public generally does not prohibit human to process or take something from nature that can be used for human life, but as we have already taken from nature, it must be planted or returned to nature. several activities to preserve the environment conducted by the Society Parmalim can be explained as follows:

1. The concept of the balance between human life and nature

Generally, Parmalim people do not prohibit human to process or take something from nature that can be used for human life. This can be exemplified by the permissibility of man to cut trees in the forest to meet the needs of human beings like to build a house. A man may take from nature, but nature still must be preserved. In Parmalim believe there is a saying "Martombur Partabahan Malomak Parsalamal", meaning that cutting down trees not cut down completely, must leave the stems can sprout again. Parmalim society still runs this tradition and provide sanctions for those who do not.

2. The habit of planting trees when the old man died

There is a belief in Parmalim people when their parents died, it is compulsory for their daughter to plant banyan tree and the boys are required to plant bintatar trees around their parents' grave. It can be seen the number of trees around the grave of Parmalim people. From this habit and also shown in point 1, can be expected to keep the number of trees around Lake Toba, can keep the Lake Toba from a reduction in water discharge.

3. Keep a rice seed when the harvest

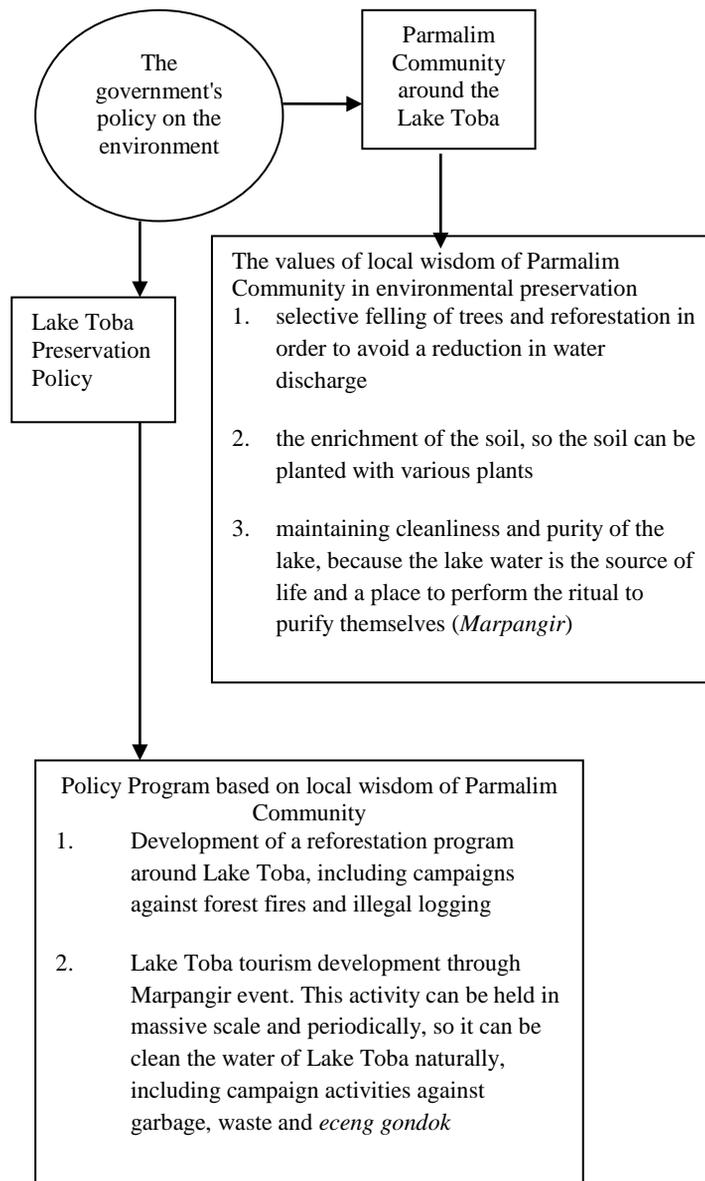
Parmalim community is obliged to keep the grain that is still young when the crops to be prepared rice seeds in the coming growing season. Besides that, Parmalim community also has a habit of sowing the seeds from the fruit has been eaten in any vacant lot they met, with the hope that one day will grow trees from seeds they distribute.

4. Preserving water

Parmalim community, especially around Lake Toba, been taught to maintain the cleanliness of the water of Lake Toba. It can be seen from their obligation not to litter. Also, Parmalim people in Binangalom village, Lumbanjulu Tobasa on the edge of Lake Toba encourage people not to bathe and wash around the lake, they bathe and wash in the bathroom which is already provided in their homes. It is intended that soap and detergent do not pollute the lake water. Parmalim community also has the values in the preservation and cleanliness of water resources; it is called Marpangir. In the tradition of Marpangir, people are required to shower using holy water source, so that communities maintain water supplies in order to stay clean and pure. The water also has its myths for people Parmalim, in the case of the original creation of man, that sanctity should be maintained. Therefore, if this culture (Marpangir) can be developed in Lake Toba, people will naturally maintain the cleanliness of Lake Toba.

Based on the explanation above, it can be made a policy model that can be developed in Lake Toba based on local wisdom possessed by the Parmalim community. Where the government can involve communities in the preservation of Lake Toba Parmalim because the community has been have values that conform with what the agenda of the governments in the preservation of Lake Toba.

Preservation policy scheme of Lake Toba based on local wisdom by Parmalim community can be illustrated as follow:



5. Conclusion

Parmalim community is a community that embraces Malim religion, which is one of the traditional beliefs that exist in Indonesia. Basically, Malim religion is the religion of the Batak tribe who had been taught long ago and still survive to this day. Parmalim communities have the local wisdom in preserving nature is a part of the rituals of their faith. It can be seen from the concept of life balance between man and nature in their daily lives. Some things can be exemplified as their habit of planting trees, not cutting down trees carelessly, keeping water sources do not pollute the water and not littering. But their efforts to preserve the natural until now they can just do it because their numbers were few and scattered in some areas so that they do not have the strength to support the preservation of nature as a whole. Local government can involve the community Parmalim to jointly preserve the environment of the lake Toba as this can assist the government and at the same time to retain the local knowledge that exists in society.

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