



**THE CONFLICT OF FOREST MANAGEMENT IN KINIPAN:  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, COLLECTIVE ETHICS,  
AND ECO-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to investigate the eco-theological ethical review of the conflict over a customary forest in Kinipan. The method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The study results show that the customary forest conflict in Kinipan is caused by differences in perspectives between the Kinipan community and external parties (government and company) on the utilization of the forest. The Kinipan community regards the forest as a source of livelihood, cultural sustainability, and happiness, while external parties consider the forest an economic resource. From an ethical perspective, this conflict can be seen as a clash between the collective ethics of the Kinipan community and the individualistic ethics of the external parties. From a theological perspective, this conflict can be seen as a clash between the belief of the Kinipan community in human responsibility to care for nature as a form of obedience to God and the belief of external parties that formal legal power is a source of legitimacy for forest utilization.*

**Keywords:** *ethics, eco-theological, conflict, customary forest, Kinipan*

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, Kinipan, the capital of Batangkawa sub-district, Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, has been frequently covered in national news due to a long-standing conflict between its residents, the government, and palm oil company related to the ownership claim and deforestation in the area. The Kinipan community accuses the government-supported company in Lamandau District has seized their rights over the forest that has been their living space and livelihood source. On the other hand, the company claims that they have the right to manage the forest in accordance with the permit given by the government. This conflict has drained the energy and emotions of the Kinipan community.

Kinipan is a village inhabited by the Dayak Tomun community. According to the data from the Lamandau District Central Bureau of Statistics in 2022, the population of Kinipan village is 637 people, consisting of 320 males and 317 females.<sup>1</sup> Out of this number, 620 people (97%) are Protestant Christians (576 members of the Kalimantan Evangelical Church congregation and 44 members of the Indonesian Bethel Church congregation), 5 people are Catholic, 10 people are Muslims, and 2 people are Hindu Kaharingan followers.<sup>2</sup>

The land opening in the Kinipan forest area and its surroundings by plantation company was conducted with the permission of the Lamandau Regency Government, namely the location permit number Ek.525.26/15/SK-IUVU2012 dated January 30, 2012, and Lamandau Regent Decree number

188.45/479DCIMUK/2014. However, according to residents, all processes, including permits, were conducted without involving the Kinipan community, even though the Customary Territory Registration Agency (Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat, or BRWA) has determined that the forest belongs to the indigenous customary law of the community of *Laman* (meaning Village) Kinipan. The Kinipan community has a customary territory certificate as proof of ownership.<sup>3</sup>

The Kinipan community has made various efforts to defend their rights. The efforts include to dialogue with involving company, hold demonstrations, and deliver direct complaints to the Regent and Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) Lamandau, the Governor of Central Kalimantan, KLHK, the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), and the President's Staff Office. Some responses were obtained. On August 2, 2019, the President's Staff Office scheduled a coordination meeting between the *Laman* Kinipan Customary Law Community and the Governor of Central Kalimantan, the Regent of Lamandau, relevant provincial and district offices, as well as the Directorates General from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, to discuss the Kinipan customary forest dispute. However, the coordination meeting was not attended by the Governor of Central Kalimantan and the Regent of Lamandau, resulting in no solution to the problem.<sup>4</sup>

The Kinipan community seeks to protect the forests that have become their home and an integral part of their identity. They have observed that management practices demonstrated by similar plantation companies in other regions prioritize economic profit over

<sup>1</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Lamandau, *Kecamatan Batangkawa Dalam Angka (Batangkawa Subdistrict in Figures 2022)* (Nanga Bulik: BPS Kabupaten Lamandau, 2022), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Hawilla Norenza, "Laporan Praktik Pelayanan Gerejawi" (Banjarmasin: Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Gereja Kalimantan Evangelis, 2022), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Apriska Widiangela, Ika Putri Rahayu, dan Lailatul Komaria, "Analisis Yuridis Problematika Pengakuan Masyarakat Hukum Adat Laman Kinipan," *Jurnal Hukum Lex Generalis* Vol.2. No.3 (Maret 2021): 214.

<sup>4</sup> Widiangela, Rahayu, dan Komaria, 215–16.

justice for the local community and the environment. Therefore, their resistance is part of a wider effort to promote alternative and socially and ecologically just management practices for nature and the environment, as opposed to exploitative practices. The findings and thesis of this research statement are that the values of protecting nature and simple lifestyles adopted by the Kinipan community align with Christian values, especially regarding ecological responsibility.

Several previous studies have been conducted on the issue of customary forest conflict in Kinipan. Among them are the following: Fifink Praiseda Alviolita conducted a study entitled "*Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat Terhadap Perbuatan Kriminalisasi Dalam Mempertahankan Tanah Ulayat*" (Protection of Rights of Customary Law Community in Defending Their Communal Land against Criminalization). This research discusses cases of criminalization by authorities against communities defending their traditional rights to communal land. The research method used in this study was normative legal analysis by examining principles and regulations related to human rights protection, especially the rights of communities under customary law.<sup>5</sup>

Apriska Widiangela, Ika Putri Rahayu, and Lailatul Komaria conducted a study entitled "*Analisis Yuridis Problematika Pengakuan Masyarakat Hukum Adat Laman Kinipan*," (Legal Analysis on the Problematics of the Laman Kinipan's Indigenous Community Recognition). This research also discusses the conflict between the Kinipan community and external parties related to the prolonged opening of Kinipan's customary forest using a normative legal analysis approach and a conceptual approach to regulations. The

article recommends that the Lamandau Regency Government recognizes the existence of Laman Kinipan and the customary law community, and reviews the permits issued to PT SML.<sup>6</sup>

Muhammad Zaid Khoirudin, Desi Erawati, and Syamsuri conducted a study entitled "*Resolusi Konflik Masyarakat Kalimantan Tengah dengan Perusahaan Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit: Analisis Teori Hegemoni*" (Resolution of Conflict between Central Kalimantan Communities and Palm Oil Plantation Companies: Hegemony Theory Analysis). The article discusses the impact of the rapid development of palm oil plantations in Central Kalimantan on the local community. It highlights land conflicts between the communities and plantation companies, which have had positive and negative effects. The companies usually win the disputes, with only 29% being won by the communities. Using Gramsci's theory, the article maps this phenomenon as hegemony, using a specific social class against another.<sup>7</sup>

Although these studies provide adequate descriptions of the conflict events, they have yet to examine the ethical and eco-theological considerations related to the conflict. We expect this study to provide additional insights into the customary forest conflict in Kinipan and offer recommendations to address the problem.

This study evaluates the conflict over the customary forest in Kinipan using prevailing ethical and theological standards. The ethical review adopts both deontological and teleological

<sup>5</sup> Fifink Praiseda Alviolita, "Perlindungan Hak Masyarakat Hukum Adat terhadap Perbuatan Kriminalisasi dalam Mempertahankan Tanah Ulayat," *Juris Humanity: Jurnal Riset dan Kajian Hukum Hak Asasi Manusia* 1, no. 1 (2022): 69–77.

<sup>6</sup> Widiangela, Rahayu, dan Komaria, "Analisis Yuridis Problematika Pengakuan Masyarakat Hukum Adat Laman Kinipan."

<sup>7</sup> Khoirudin, Muhamad Zaid, Desi Erawati, and Syamsuri Syamsuri. "Hegemoni Perusahaan Perkebunan Kelapa Sawit Terhadap Masyarakat Kalimantan Tengah Dalam Penyelesaian Sengketa Lahan." *Proceedings of Palangka Raya International and National Conference on Islamic Studies (PINCIS)*. Vol. 1. No. 1. 2021.

approaches. Deontology and teleology are two mainstream ethical theories that have dominated Western philosophical thought for the past three centuries. Deontology, or morality based on rules and obligations, exists in the tradition of the philosophical work of Immanuel Kant. In contrast, teleology, or morality based on the consequences of the action exists in the tradition of the philosophical work of Jeremy Bentham.<sup>8</sup> Deontology talks about the imperative properties inherent in an action. Teleology talks about the implications of an action demanded of a person.<sup>9</sup>

In theology, the theory employed is the eco-theology theory. Eco-theology is the study of the relationship between Christianity and the environment. Eco-theology combines ecology and theology, specifically focusing on the theological reflection of the global environmental condition threatened with destruction due to human actions. Therefore, eco-theology strives to influence human attitudes towards the environment or environmental ethics. Eco-theology addresses the environmental crisis using biblical foundations.<sup>10</sup> Through a responsible theological approach, eco-theology recognizes that non-human creations are also part of God's work, not objects of human exploitation. They have intrinsic value and contribute to life on this planet. Eco-theology encourages Christianity to adopt a similar view and

shows how to apply it in various aspects of life.<sup>11</sup>

## METHOD

We used qualitative research, following Bogdan and Biklen's methods.<sup>12</sup> The researchers functioned as the primary instrument by directly gathering data from the research location while maintaining its natural setting. The research results are descriptive, with the data analyzed inductively and meaning as a crucial factor.

The field research data collection process utilized in-depth interviews with informants chosen purposefully based on the researcher's data needs and considerations.<sup>13</sup> The informants comprised village officials, local environmental activists, and ordinary citizens, selected using snowballing techniques.<sup>14</sup> The study had five informants, sufficient to collect comprehensive data on the conflict in the Kinipan forest and its significance and function for the Kinipan people.

For data analysis, we adopted Miles and Huberman's approach for qualitative data analysis, involving data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification.<sup>15</sup> We analyzed the data using content analysis (analysis of the content or meaning of the data obtained from the respondents), interpretation (translating the data obtained from the respondents), and generalization

<sup>8</sup> Aimee E. Smith, Natalina Zlatevska, dan Rafi M. M. I. Chowdhury, "A Meta-Analytical Assessment of the Effect of Deontological Evaluations and Teleological Evaluations on Ethical Judgments/Intentions," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 7 Januari 2023, 2, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05311-x>.

<sup>9</sup> M. Natsir Asnawi, "Interrelation of Ethics, Law, and Justice," dalam *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Business Law and Local Wisdom in Tourism (ICBLT 2022)*, ed. oleh I Nyoman Putu Budiarta dkk. (Paris: Atlantis Press SARL, 2023), 341, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-93-0\\_40](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-93-0_40).

<sup>10</sup> Yornan Masinambow dan Yuansari Octaviana Kansil, "Kajian Mengenai Ekoteologi dari Perspektif Keugaharian," *Shamayim: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 1, no. 2 (5 Mei 2021): 125, <https://doi.org/10.51615/sha.v1i2.20>.

<sup>11</sup> Elia Maggang, "Menampakkan Corak Biru Kekristenan Indonesia: Sebuah Perspektif Ekoteologi," *Indonesian Journal of Theology* 7, no. 2 (30 Desember 2019): 167, <https://doi.org/10.46567/ijt.v7i2.149>.

<sup>12</sup> R. C. Bogdan dan S. K. Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1992), 29–32.

<sup>13</sup> Andreas B. Subagyo, *Pengantar Riset Kuantitatif termasuk Teologi dan Keagamaan* (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 2004), 228–32.

<sup>14</sup> Suwardi Endraswara, *Metode, Teori, Teknik Penelitian Kebudayaan: Ideologi, Epistemologi, dan Aplikasi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Widyatama, 2006), 203.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew B. Miles dan A. Michael Huberman, *Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber Tentang Metode-Metode Baru* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1992), 16–18.

(forming general conclusions from the data obtained from the respondents). We analyzed opinions, knowledge, experiences, and other aspects and presented them meaningfully. We also verified the data by re-checking necessary data for confirmation to reduce the possibility of misconceptions.

## RESULT

The forest in Kinipan is a dense tropical forest. Based on observations made by the authors on October 29-30, 2022, the environment around Kinipan village is still well-preserved. Large trees emerge within a 3-5-kilometer radius, interspersed with several local farms. The Urauan River, Kinipan River, and small rivers that flow into the Batangkawa River still appear clear. Guste, a 49-year-old female pastor of the Evangelical Church of Kalimantan, who is also a prominent figure in the Kinipan community, stated that the remaining forest around the Kinipan village is still relatively large. There are still large ironwood trees. Bangkirai and other large trees are still present.<sup>16</sup> Everything seems harmonious. However, upon closer inspection, significant problems haunting the community become evident.

Riswan, a 32-year-old male who serves as the Head of the Governance Section in Kinipan, acknowledged that, as depicted on the land map, the remaining original forest is only in Delang and Batangkawa (the Kinipan area). Outside, these areas have become plantation areas.<sup>17</sup> Riswan's statement is in line with Ating's statement. Ating, a 62-year-old male who serves as the Chairman of the Kinipan Village Representative Body (BPD), said that only the Batangkawa and Delang areas still have natural forests. To the east, north, west, and south, they have

become palm oil plantations.<sup>18</sup>

Ating stated that the company has encroached on several forest areas in Kinipan.<sup>19</sup> The company have also engaged in exploitative practices by consuming the economic resources in the forests and land, such as felling many trees and processing them into building materials with high market value. All these actions have resulted in a conflict with the Kinipan community.<sup>20</sup>

Guste stated that the Kinipan community did not intend to oppose anyone. "However, because they were constantly oppressed, they eventually fought back, really fought back, using every means available."<sup>21</sup> The community's persistent resistance has temporarily halted deforestation activities in the area. The latest encouraging development is that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) has helped provide legal protection through the conservation forest status for Kinipan. However, the status that can be granted is only "protected forest" because becoming a customary forest requires the approval of the Regent. Approval is difficult because the Kinipan conflict with the company also involves the local government.<sup>22</sup>

The Kinipan community has received extensive support from environmental organizations, including legal aid and advocacy assistance in their struggle against the palm oil company and local government. The support comes from around 70-80 NGOs, such as the Red Army of West Kalimantan, the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) of Central Kalimantan, the Environmental Life Movement (Walhi) of Central Kalimantan, Save Our Borneo, and various community-based organizations from both local and international

<sup>16</sup> Guste, Interview by authors in Kinipan, 28 Oktober 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Riswan, Interview by authors in Kinipan, 29 Oktober 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Ating, Interview by authors in Kinipan, 29 Oktober 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Ating.

<sup>20</sup> Guste, Interview by authors in Kinipan.

<sup>21</sup> Guste.

<sup>22</sup> Riswan, Interview by authors in Kinipan.

contexts.<sup>23</sup>

The presence of these resources and powers does not necessarily make the problems faced by the Kinipan community easy. In addition to the uncertainty of forest safety, the community is currently facing a situation where the Lamandau government has isolated them from development. The lack of electricity, unpaved roads, and limited communication facilities, such as telephone and internet signals, has led them to conclude that the government is retaliating against their resistance by boycotting development in the area. Ating stated that the regent openly expressed his reluctance to develop Kinipan, despite it being the district's capital. However, according to Ating, for the people of Kinipan, this is the risk of their consistency. They have decided to accept their current situation and continue living their lives as they are.<sup>24</sup> Stefanus Isa, a 48-year-old male who serves as the Head of Community Welfare Affairs (KAUR KESRA) in Kinipan, supports Ating's statement: "We are accustomed to a simple life like this, and even if we fall behind economically, we see it as a risk of our struggle."<sup>25</sup>

Willem Hengky, a 43-year-old male who serves as the Head of Kinipan Village, stated that the Kinipan community also desires economic progress and good public facilities, but if all of these must be obtained by following the will of parties that seek exploitative forest management, then they will still reject it because it contradicts their way of life.<sup>26</sup>

The Kinipan community uphold principles of "ba'a'angaran". *Ba'a'angaran* can simply be interpreted as proportional, balanced, humble, moderate, sufficient, appropriate,

reasonable, or just right. The implications of these principles are evident, among other things, in their livelihood. The principles of *ba'a'angaran* are reflected in their proverb "*malapm tikus notas, siakng manu' mansil*" (the night belongs to mice, the day belongs to chickens), which means that life should roll according to the rhythm of nature: work during the day and sleep at night, without pursuing livelihood to the extent of forgetting time and sacrificing health. Although wealth is good and necessary for life, "*roga' ruruh, jurukng puakng, dimakan habis, dipakai buruk*" (valuable jars will eventually break, rice barns will eventually become empty, everything that is eaten will eventually be finished, everything that is used will eventually wear out), which means that all wealth is essentially fleeting, and will eventually deteriorate, be exhausted, and become obsolete. Therefore, a balanced life is considered the wisest lifestyle. Awareness of the fleeting nature of wealth and the importance of the *ba'a'angaran* attitude also brings ethics into the search for wealth. "*Jangan jorak jahai, natakan makatn antah konyang ka porut, makai antah halap ka kulit*" (do not be greedy and malicious in seeking livelihood, because it will bring curses and shame, you will not be satisfied, and even expensive clothing will not make you look good and noble). According to them, "*mansia hidup dikandung pati*" (as long as humans are alive, they are within the customary order), therefore living in harmony with customs is the best way of life.<sup>27</sup>

The *ba'a'angaran* principles also have implications for their attitude towards nature in the form of a non-arbitrary attitude towards nature. They believe that "*tanah bahiang batu bagana*" (the land has ancestors, the stones have occupants), which means that all of nature contains sacred entities that must be respected by humans.

<sup>23</sup> Riswan.

<sup>24</sup> Ating, Interview by authors in Kinipan.

<sup>25</sup> Stefanus Isa, Interview by authors in Kinipan, 29 Oktober 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Willem Hengky, Interview by authors in Kinipan, 22 Oktober 2022.

<sup>27</sup> Hengky.

Therefore, in the relationship between humans and nature, the wise attitude that must be maintained is *ba'a'angaran*, "*ular jangan mati, pamopah jangan patah*" (the snake should not die, the stick should not break), which means that one should function as wisely and proportional so that life can proceed smoothly. Even for the sake of livelihood or self-defense, cruel and exploitative behavior should be avoided.<sup>28</sup>

Several findings were obtained in further interviews to explore the Kinipan people's understanding of the function and meaning of forests. According to Ating,<sup>29</sup> the forest is their home and provides everything they need, including food, oxygen, and a place to shelter and rest. While it may seem simple, these things are precious to the Kinipan people. Furthermore, some Kinipan populations are elderly or have low education levels, and companies may not hire them as employees. If the forest is converted to a palm oil plantation, these people will be the most threatened regarding their livelihoods.

According to the beliefs of the Kinipan people, nature is regarded as a subject akin to humans, and cruelty towards nature will result in commensurate punishment for humans. For instance, Ating, a member of the Kinipan community, stated that since 2018, fruit trees around Simpang Sulung have stopped bearing fruit, leading the community to contemplate whether God and nature are weary of human behavior, such as the flattening of hills, deforestation, and displacement of animals to create palm oil plantations. This lack of fruit is considered nature's way of cursing the community. It is worth noting that these beliefs of the Kinipan community are rooted in their culture and have a significant impact on their relationship with nature.<sup>30</sup>

For the Kinipan people, the forest is also a source of happiness. Ating explained that their happiness comes from finding things to eat, catching fish, and having access to drinking water from the river. They reject palm oil plantations and function as if they do not want to progress or change because if a company comes, the river will become murky, and the water will be unhealthy to drink. Additionally, many people in the area spend most of their lives in the forest, where they feel comfortable.<sup>31</sup>

The Kinipan community firmly holds the principles of social justice and sustainable environmental management. Their rejection of palm oil companies entering their region is not due to anti-economic, developmental, or progressive sentiments. According to Hengky, they are open to any investment if it is environmentally friendly. He states that the concept of the Kinipan community is about sustainability. If an investment does not harm the forest, they are willing to accept and utilize it for the betterment of the community.<sup>32</sup> Ating made a similar statement, emphasizing that the community does not oppose economic development but opposes the destruction of its unique relationship with the environment.<sup>33</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Research findings indicate that there are at least three causes of the conflict. Firstly, the conflict arises from differences in views on ownership and control of the forest. The Kinipan community considers the forest their property based on traditional management practices. They also possess customary land certificates as proof of ownership issued by the Indigenous Territory Registration Agency. On the other hand, external parties, namely the company and the regional government of Lamandau

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<sup>28</sup> Hengky.

<sup>29</sup> Ating, Interview by authors in Kinipan.

<sup>30</sup> Ating.

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<sup>31</sup> Ating.

<sup>32</sup> Hengky, Interview by authors in Kinipan.

<sup>33</sup> Ating, Interview by authors in Kinipan.

Regency, consider the use rights and other permits issued by the government as a legitimate source of legitimacy for the right to control and use the forest.

Secondly, the conflict in Kinipan involves a clash between the collective ethics of indigenous communities, who consider nature and humans as equal subjects, and the anthropocentric ethics of external parties, particularly corporations, who prioritize the utilization of nature for economic advancement.<sup>34</sup> The different views of both parties regarding the use of the forest demonstrate this clash. The conflict is a clash between two opposing ethical viewpoints - one that values the interconnection and equality of nature and humans and another that places human interests at the center. The Kinipan community desires traditional or modern management of the forest while ensuring protection against any exploitation that could harm the environment. On the other hand, external parties aim to fully utilize the forest for economic development, in this case, by converting it into a palm plantation.<sup>35</sup> The Indonesian government, particularly the central government, has good commitments towards the environment. This is evident from the numerous regulations established to balance economic activities with environmental sustainability. Among them, the government requires companies to identify areas of high conservation value (HCV) in their permit locations, where good forests, protected flora and endemic fauna biodiversity exist, which must be allocated as mandatory HCV to be protected. Regarding the welfare of local communities, the government has implemented policies such as the legalization of community assets through the Agrarian Reform Objectives and Social Forestry programs. Through both

programs, community lands have official legal foundations, and communities are granted legal access to manage forest areas in their region.<sup>36</sup> However, the implementation of government regulations is still considered insufficient by some parties. This is evident from violations committed by corporations but not sanctioned. Specifically, for the Kinipan area, according to the NGO Save Our Borneo, corporate practices in the Kinipan forest and indigenous territories are highly contradictory to sustainable principles and No Deforestation policies. Corporations also fail to adhere to the principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which they should implement.<sup>37</sup>

Based on the description above, when viewed from an ethical perspective, there are violations of basic ethical principles in the conflict between the company and the Kinipan community. Firstly, the rights of the Kinipan community to their traditional forests and land have been given to the plantation company through arbitrarily issued documents using legal power. It violates principles of justice and fair policies, where everyone should have equal rights to own and use natural resources. Law No. 5 of 1960 affirms that the control and utilization of land, water, and air must be carried out based on the principles of justice and prosperity to develop a just and prosperous society.<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, the top-down

<sup>34</sup> SGH, "PT SML: Kami Bantu Tingkatkan Ekonomi Masyarakat," *Tabengan* (blog), 9 September 2020, <https://www.tabengan.co.id/bacaberita/42278/pt-sml-kami-bantu-tingkatkan-ekonomi-masyarakat/>.

<sup>35</sup> SGH.

<sup>36</sup> PPID, "Pemerintah Mediasi Perselisihan Masyarakat Desa Kinipan Dan Perusahaan Besar Swasta," 2020, <http://ppid.menlhk.go.id/berita/siaran-pers/5611/pemerintah-mediasi-perselisihan-masyarakat-desa-kinipan-dan-perusahaan-besar-swasta>.

<sup>37</sup> infomedia, "Selamatkan Hutan Kinipan! Stop Deforestasi Oleh PT SML," *Save Our Borneo* (blog), 11 November 2020, <https://saveourborneo.org/selamatkan-hutan-kinipan-stop-deforestasi-oleh-pt-sml/>.

<sup>38</sup> Nadila Utami Putri, Nizam Zakka Arrizal, dan Fayza Ilhafa, "Jaminan Keadilan bagi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara," *Seminar Nasional Hukum Dan Pancasila Vol. 1, 4 Juli 2022* 1 (2022): 123.



development approach employed by the company and government ignores the needs and aspirations of the Kinipan community, violating the principles of community participation and involvement in the development process. Community participation refers to the active involvement of local community members in self-development, decision-making processes, and the preservation and protection of their environment.<sup>39</sup> Politically, community participation is the embodiment of democratization.<sup>40</sup> This top-down approach also ignores human rights and the rights of others.

Thirdly, the unilateral action of the Lamandau Regency government in giving land which is the living space of the Kinipan people to corporations has made the community feel oppressed and unrepresented. As a result, there has been a decline in the community's welfare, marked by stress, sadness, anger, rebellious behavior, and even violent behavior. Such an approach to development does not consider the holistic well-being of the community. It goes against the principles of humanity and well-being, which should be the primary goal in any development process.

Fourthly, the actions taken by the plantation company, such as deforestation and exploitation of the environment, demonstrate a disregard for the local community and surrounding environment. It violates environmental ethics principles emphasizing social and environmental responsibility.

To find a solution to this conflict, it is important to consider ethical principles, which is justice and fair

policies. The principle of justice requires that everyone be treated fairly and equally under the law and society, with equal distribution of resources and power, equal treatment in court, and protection of human rights. Fair policies ensure that the principles of justice are applied in social and political practices, with distributive justice and the protection of human rights as the basis for forming fair policies. These values must be upheld in everyday life and actions, with justice being the primary goal in every action and policy.<sup>41</sup> In this context, justice refers to the control and utilization of land, water, and air based on the principles of justice and prosperity for developing a just and prosperous society as intended by Law No. 5 of 1960. This justice is the application of the principles of social justice formulated in the fifth precept of Pancasila.<sup>42</sup>

The state must ensure that using land and natural resources is fair and beneficial to all members of society, including indigenous peoples and those who depend on land for their livelihoods. In inland and natural resource management, the government must implement the principles of participatory decision-making, transparency, and accountability to fulfill all stakeholders' needs and aspirations. The provision that the state controls natural wealth in the form of Earth and water, as stated in Article 33 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, must align with the principle of justice, which requires all individuals to be treated fairly and equally in society and law. This legislation must have clear boundaries so that the state does not dominate land property rights over

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<sup>39</sup>Hasan Basri, Hasiun Budi, dan Alwin Teniro, "Partisipasi Masyarakat dalam Merumuskan Kebijakan pada Musrenbang Kampung (Community Participation in Formulating Policy on Village Musrenbang)," *Jurnal Kebijakan Publik* 13, no. 1 (2022): 26, <http://dx.doi.org/10.31258/jkp.v13i1.7997>.

<sup>40</sup> Andy Tonggo Michael Sihombing dan Ricky Banke, "Politik Hukum Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Simantek* 7, no. 1 (13 Februari 2023): 10.

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<sup>41</sup> Abu Huraerah, Rudi Martiawan, dan Yaya Mulyana, "Ketidakadilan Bagi Masyarakat Miskin Dalam Aksesibilitas Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional di Kota Bandung," *JISPO: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 9, no. 1 (Juni 2019): 460, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jispo.v9i1.5709>.

<sup>42</sup> Putri, Arrizal, dan Ilhafa, "Jaminan Keadilan bagi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara," 123.

customary and individual land rights, thus providing opportunities for the state to act arbitrarily and potentially violate people's rights (layout and individual) to land.

Fair treatment towards fellow humans should also be applied to nature.<sup>43</sup> This statement means that the management of forests in Kinipan should prioritize community interests and the environment.

Secondly, community participation and involvement principles are essential in the development process. Communities should be engaged and actively participate in the development projects that affect them. The interests and perspectives of the community should be considered and represented in the planning and implementation of development projects. As mentioned above, community participation or public participation is a political part of realizing democratization.

Thirdly, the principles of humanity and well-being require that every action and development process prioritize humans' well-being and quality of life. These principles aim to improve the quality of life and well-being of all people, primarily those poor and marginalized, and to ensure that every action and development process does not harm or endanger humans. The Kinipan community can decide about their land and resources, free from external influence and coercion, including the right to reject proposals for oil palm plantations if they would destroy their forests and undermine their well-being. The right to well-being (Human Rights Law Number 39 of 1999 Articles 36-42) is relevant to the discussed rights.

Another essential aspect that needs to be considered is environmental ethics. The Kinipan community has a strong cultural relationship with their forest.

They feel deeply connected to the forest around them as fellow subjects. The Kinipan people's view of the environment should be respected and supported.

From a Christian eco-theological perspective, the view of the Kinipan community's collective ethics on forests, as described above, has many similarities with Christian theological views on the environment. Of course, there are some unique concepts in Christian theology that are not found in Kinipan culture. The following is an explanation of Christian teachings regarding the environment and some continuity with the collective ethics of the Kinipan people.

Firstly, nature belongs to God. This is one of the unique aspects of Christian teachings regarding the environment that is not found in the Kinipan collective ethics. Unlike Kinipan collective ethics, which does not clearly express the relationship between the environment and God the Creator, Christian theology emphasizes this relationship. Genesis 1-2 of the Bible tells the story of God creating the heavens, the Earth, and everything in it, including humans. This story emphasizes that God is the creator and owner of all God's works.<sup>44</sup> Because nature, including the Kinipan forest, is God's creation, it must be understood as God's property, just as humans understand themselves. Therefore, since nature belongs to God, humans must not destroy it. Thus, the paradigm that nature is merely an object for humans needs to be corrected.

Secondly, other creations are equal to humans and interconnected with them. The idea of equality and interconnectedness between humans and other beings is an intriguing aspect that emerges from a comparison between the collective ethics of the Kinipan people and Christian eco-theology. Both perspectives recognize the inherent value

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<sup>43</sup> Marthinus Ngabalin, "Ekoteologi: Tinjauan Teologi Terhadap Keselamatan Lingkungan Hidup," *CARAKA: Jurnal Teologi Biblika dan Praktika* 1, no. 2 (September 28, 2020): 12, <https://doi.org/10.46348/car.v1i2.22>.

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<sup>44</sup> Ngabalin, 12.

of all creatures and the importance of recognizing their relationships and interdependence within ecosystems.

According to the Christian eco-theology perspective, humans were created along with the entire universe in the creation story. This narrative shows the interdependence and unity between humans and their living environment. Humans are part of creation and supported by other creations, while on the other hand, humans are responsible for ruling and caring for the Earth. Humans cannot survive without nature. Therefore, human life and the preservation of nature should no longer be seen as separate things but as two aspects that depend on each other. Just as nature depends on humans, humans depend on nature, and both depend on God.<sup>45</sup> Equality in this relationship is essential and needs to be maintained to prevent human abuse of their power over the living environment.<sup>46</sup>

Thirdly, according to Christian eco-theology, Christ is the center of all creation, and his incarnation and salvation are inseparable from the redemption of the natural world. Christ is the only source of life for all creation.<sup>47</sup> Just as Christ loves and redeem humankind; He also loves and redeem all creation (Col. 1:20). Therefore, humans must be friendly with and love the universe as fellow creations.<sup>48</sup> Christians are called to love and care for the universe as fellow creations, recognizing that all things are interconnected and dependent upon each

other. This includes not only humanity but also the natural world, which is also loved and redeemed by Christ. This emphasis on the cosmic significance of Christ's redemptive work is a distinctive feature of Christian theology that sets it apart from the collective ethics of the Kinipan people.

Fourthly, God's mandate to humans is to maintain and care for all of God's creations. In practical reality, the responsibility to care for and protect the environment is also a strong emphasis in the collective ethics of the Kinipan people. However, these different responsibilities are more influenced by the concept of the unity of life with nature than direct orders from an authoritative supernatural figure like God. In Christian eco-theology, the obligation to protect and care for the environment is not only because the action is good but also because it is God's commandment. Genesis 1:26 -28 describes humans as the image and likeness of God: then God gives the mandate to care for all of God's creations. This text shows that God is the creator and owner of all God's works. At the same time, humans are placed as the managers and guardians of these creations, as explained in Genesis 2:15. From the beginning, the text warns of the substantial value of salvation, as humans have a responsibility to maintain and develop the Earth and its contents.<sup>49</sup> In other words, humans must function as environmental guardians and be responsible for maintaining the balance of God's creations.

The Hebrew word for "subdue" in Genesis 1:28 comes from *kabas*, which means "to stamp,"<sup>50</sup> or "to conquer a

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<sup>45</sup> J.B Banawiratma, *10 Agenda Pastoral Transformatif* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2002), 124.

<sup>46</sup> Sudirman Porobaten, "Implementasi Pengajaran Ekoteologi Pada Jemaat GMIM Imanuel Buntong," *Da'at: Jurnal Teologi Kristen* 4 No. 1 (23 Maret 2023): 9, <https://doi.org/10.51667/djtk.v2i1.390>.

<sup>47</sup> Tenny, Johana Ruadjanna Tangirerung, dan Stephanus Ammai Bungaran, "Menuju Teologi Sungai: Kajian Ekoteologi terhadap Pencemaran Sungai Sa'dan di Toraja," *Epigraphe: Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan Kristiani* 6, no. 2 (30 November 2022): 252, <https://doi.org/10.33991/epigraphe.v6i2.392>.

<sup>48</sup> Masinambow dan Kansil, "Kajian Mengenai Ekoteologi dari Perspektif Keugaharian," 126.

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<sup>49</sup> Agustin Soewitomo Putri, "Penyelamatan Bumi dan Isinya dalam Pandangan Ekoteologi: Sebuah Analisis Biblikal," *Angelion: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen* 1, no. 2 (4 Januari 2021): 171-72, <https://doi.org/10.38189/jan.v1i2.76>.

<sup>50</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Rev. ed., 9. impr (London: SCM, 1972), 60.

territory<sup>51</sup> while "dominion" in Genesis 1:26 comes from *radah*, which means "to tread, trample" (e.g., the wine press),<sup>52</sup> or "to trample until it is crushed (for example, Joel 3:13)".<sup>53</sup> However, the harsh connotations of these two words do not justify the exploitation of nature, because in the context of the Bible at that time, subduing and ruling were in harmony with nature before the fall of humanity, and there was no element of human greed to exploit nature.<sup>54</sup>

The word *radah* in this context should be understood differently because humans as creatures are the same as all other creations and have the duty to preserve all creations, not as rulers who act authoritatively and exploit nature for personal gain. The word *radah* or "dominion" should be interpreted more accurately as cultivating and managing creation with responsibility for protection and care. Humans are not the center of attention but are part of an interconnected and interdependent ecosystem. Therefore, the responsibility of humans as caretakers and managers of the environment must be carried out by considering the interests and balance of all of God's creation.<sup>55</sup>

The power given to humans does not place them above other creatures but gives them a special role in it.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, dominion is more appropriately interpreted as cultivating and managing creation with

responsibility for protection and care.<sup>57</sup> The responsibility of humans as caretakers and managers of the environment must be carried out by considering the interests and balance of all of God's creations.<sup>58</sup>

The community in Kinipan shows responsibility in managing nature by managing the environment wisely and protecting the forest from those who do not consider its sustainability. They demonstrate their responsibility by courageously fighting to ensure the sustainability of the forest around them. They only conflict with businesses and the government because they prioritize preserving the forest. They recognize that the company's management practices prioritize economic gain over the welfare of residents and the environment. Their conflict with these parties is part of their efforts to push them away from exploitative practices. They seek an alternative, socially and ecologically just management of nature and the environment.

Fifthly, living lightly and generously. Living lightly and generously is a concept that is shared between Christianity and the collective ethics of the Kinipan people. However, the application of this concept is slightly different in Christianity, as it is seen as a manifestation of faith in Christ. Christians view their responsibility to maintain and develop the sustainability of creation as a duty that is rooted in their faith. Within the framework of the Christian faith, humans have a responsibility to maintain and develop the sustainability of creation for its continued existence. By doing so, humans demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>59</sup> One form of fulfilling this responsibility to maintain the environment's sustainability is practicing simple living or living lightly and

<sup>51</sup> J.A. Telnoni, *Tafsir Alkitab Kontekstual-Oikumenis, Kejadian Pasal 1–11* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017), 64.

<sup>52</sup> Rad, Genesis, 60.

<sup>53</sup> Telnoni, *Tafsir Alkitab Kontekstual-Oikumenis, Kejadian Pasal 1–11*, 64.

<sup>54</sup> Youngky Karman, *Bunga Rampai Teologi Perjanjian Lama: Dari Kanon sampai Doa, cet. 5* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2007), 51.

<sup>55</sup> Putri, "Penyelamatan Bumi dan Isinya dalam Pandangan Ekoteologi," 174.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2010), 35.

<sup>57</sup> Putri, "Penyelamatan Bumi dan Isinya dalam Pandangan Ekoteologi," 174.

<sup>58</sup> Putri, 169.

<sup>59</sup> Tenny, Tangirerung, dan Bungaran, "Menuju Teologi Sungai," 252.

generously. This practice entails a simple and environmentally friendly lifestyle, free from excessive desire for material possessions, reduced consumption and energy conservation, avoidance of natural resource waste, and refraining from behavior that harms the environment. It also involves promoting environmentally friendly actions such as recycling, choosing eco-friendly products, providing donations, and participating in social activities that benefit the environment and society.

In the context of Kinipan, this simple and environmentally friendly lifestyle is reflected in the practice of *ba'a'angaran* living. As discussed above, in their *ba'a'angaran* way of life, they avoid greedy and wicked behavior when seeking livelihoods and wealth, as such behavior is believed to bring curses and shame. Of course, not all Kinipan people currently adopt this lifestyle. Some individuals are willing to act as agents of the company, using persuasion, incitement, and division within the Kinipan community for their own economic interests. Nevertheless, the contemporary reality does not diminish the fact that a simple and environmentally friendly way of life is deeply embedded in their culture.

In theological discourse in Indonesia, this type of living practice is known as the *ugahari* lifestyle. *Ugahari*, or spiritual living, is a way of life in which people acknowledge that God's grace is sufficient for all of God's creations. Thus, people are encouraged to practice self-control and live simply with an attitude of sufficiency and a willingness to share with others so that everyone can celebrate the life given to them. The *ugahari* way of life, like the *ba'a'angaran* way of life, does not mean impoverishing oneself but living in gratitude and simplicity, feeling content with what one has and avoiding greed. Jesus Christ lived a similar type of life, so much so that He did not even have a pillow to rest His head (see Matthew

8:20; Luke 9:58).<sup>60</sup>

Sallie McFague, one of the American Christian Feminist Theologians, stated that such a practice of lifestyle limitation embodies a "customised" theology of restraint or "enoughness".<sup>61</sup> McFague believes that this is the root theology in the early Christian radical discipleship, and it is important to accommodate this in shaping contemporary Christians who can imagine, construct, and live "abundant" lives in a vastly different way; one that is opposed to oppression and leads to liberation, both human and environmental.<sup>62</sup>

Hesron Sihombing, an Indonesian theologian and a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Denver/Iliff Joint Ph.D. in Religious Studies, calls this type of practice a sacramental economy, a principle of sharing as an ecological community in which humans voluntarily sacrifice for the Earth and the poor. This voluntary sacrifice is an act of following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, who was the first to offer voluntary sacrifice by dying on the cross to redeem and inclusively embrace all of creation.<sup>63</sup> The voluntary sacrifice is a call to let go of a rough and excessive (mis)consumption lifestyle. It is an anagogic imagination to return to the primordial economy, which invites humanity into unity and participation with and to see all creatures as part of God's garden.<sup>64</sup> The voluntary sacrifice, like the *ba'a'angaran* way of life or *ugahari* living, means living lightly, cleanly, and aerodynamically, taking life as it is, a way of life that is not only

<sup>60</sup>Masinambow dan Kansil, "Kajian Mengenai Ekoteologi dari Perspektif Keugaharian," 126.

<sup>61</sup> Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 33.

<sup>62</sup> McFague, 35.

<sup>63</sup> Hesron Sihombing, "Capitalism and the Ecological Crisis: The Spirituality of Voluntary Sacrifice," *International Journal of Public Theology* 15, no. 3 (27 Oktober 2021): 345, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-01530003>.

<sup>64</sup> Sihombing, 346–47.

oriented towards human well-being, but primarily towards life in its fullness (life-oriented).

The Kinipan community has practiced voluntary sacrifice through their simple and nature-oriented *ba'a'angaran* way of life, and through their courage to reject plantations even if it means facing risks and difficulties. They have chosen to accept hardship and live as it is. They accurately reflect what Sihombing calls the spirituality of voluntary sacrifice by setting aside individualism for the community, trying to fight against structural economic giants with their capacity, and influencing political policies, environmental regulations, and providing alternative economies from within their circle.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The conflict over forest management in Kinipan highlights ethical concerns regarding human rights and environmental protection. The indigenous community of Kinipan has suffered economic, social, cultural, and psychological losses because of land grabbing by companies authorized by the government, and the unsustainable use of forests. This research identifies indications of ethical violations and human rights abuses, as well as neglect of environmental protection.

From a Christian theological perspective, this conflict underscores the issue of human responsibility towards God's creation. In Christian theology, human beings are regarded as leaders and stewards of God's creation. However, the unsustainable use of forests and disregard for indigenous peoples' rights demonstrates that humans are not effectively fulfilling their roles as leaders and stewards of God's creation.

The research findings suggest that development policies granting rights to private entities to establish plantations in

Kinipan are not appropriate for affected communities. Therefore, the Lamandau Government, Central Kalimantan Provincial Government, and the Central Government must reconsider their development approaches. These findings provide initial data for further research on environmentally conscious economic development models that accommodate local wisdom values.

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<sup>65</sup> Sihombing, 347.

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