

LAND THEOLOGY: INTRIGUE VIEW OF LAND ACCORDING TO THE CULTURE OF THE TOBA BATAK PEOPLE IN ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION

Johnson P. Robinsar Siregar¹, Teddi Paul Sihombing², Ro Sininta Hutabarat³
STT Paulus Medan, Indonesia¹
STFT Jakarta, Indonesia²
STT Renatus Pematangsiantar, Indonesia³
Email: robsireg009@gmail.com, teddi_paul@ymail.com, rosi.hutabarat@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The study aims to provide a critical understanding of the views of Toba Batak culture to examine the issue of ecological damage. The study discusses a qualitative approach with literature studies. The results show land theology provides an explanation of the understanding of the value of land intrigue according to the Culture of the Toba Batak People that their ancestors valued the land so much that the land was his own identity. The value of land restriction understood by the ancestors of the Toba Batak people departs from the totalitarian understanding that microcosmic and macrocosmic connections explain how humans relate to God, humans to their environment and humans to humans. The relationship is arranged in a value system that makes the land so identical to itself that the ancestors of the Toba Batak people call that the land is surnamed. From this relationship then born philosophy as an ideal that became the purpose of the life of the Toba Batak community in its development so that the value and meaning of the land became lost. The Toba Batak community then as understood anthropomism made land as an instrument for achieving economic value. Land is no longer viewed from its intrinsic value in the cultural value of the Toba Batak people, causing ecological crises and conflicts. Therefore, if the Toba Batak community was born from a culture inherited from ancestors to the present. Thus loving Culture becomes concrete evidence of loving the land.

KEYWORDS land theology; land intrigue value; Toba Batak community; ecology



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INTRODUCTION

Understanding land for the Toba Batak community is space or *space* as the fulfillment of human needs horizontally and vertically. The two functions of land are interconnected both microcosmically and macrocosmically which underlie the understanding of the Toba Batak people in their totalitarian lives. Therefore, land is not only a land of production and a place of residence or human settlement. ([Lumbantobing, 2018](#); [Simanjuntak, 2015](#)). Land spatial planning has been inherited by the ancestors of the Toba Batak community as land utilization for agriculture, cultivation, grazing, villages and others ([KSPPM, 2021](#)). The ecological view of the Toba Batak community according to Naipospos explains that Batak culture has known the model of the relationship between humans and the Creator, humans with humans, and humans with their environment. The land is known as "*tano ojahan, tano ondolan, ojahan ni saluhut nasa na adong*". Land is the environment for all human, plant, animal and aquatic processes. The symbol of land fertility is called "*Boraspati ni tano*" ([Naipospos, 2007](#)).

The understanding of land according to the views of the Toba Batak people comes from the meaning and meaning of life as an important element found in their cultural value system ([Simanjuntak, 2015](#)), land is a reflection of the social status of the Toba Batak people ([Pasaribu & Simamora, 2022](#)). Land for the Toba Batak community is understood in accordance with the values, norms and rules that apply in the form of customs ([Firmando, 2021](#)) which are regulated in a complete mechanism and legitimized for their existence as common property and part of their identity symbol ([Simanjuntak, 2015](#); [Sinaga, n.d.](#)). The strong connection makes the Toba Batak community have in their minds implicitly a desire to achieve ideals which are often known as "*hamoraon (wealth), hagabeon (offspring), hasangapon (honor)*" ([Simanjuntak, 2015](#)) this is the purpose of life for the Toba Batak community ([Firmando, 2021](#)). According to *Simanjuntak, this view is a philosophy of life (way of life) which is often said by lulu anak lulu tano with the understanding of looking for children, looking for land that symbolizes clan extremism as a land owner* ([Simanjuntak, 2015](#)).

In order to realize the goals or ideals of *hamoraon, hasangapon, and hagabeon*, land becomes a supporting facility that absolutely must be owned, controlled and managed ([Simanjuntak, 2015](#)). Efforts to actualize this philosophy make land values high so that their wealth is categorized as their status to people who have wealth, have power and honor ([Firmando, 2021](#)). In addition to increasing wealth, land, especially inheritance land, also has other functions and values, namely as a symbol of status (self-esteem), as a symbol of inherited identity, and contains economic value. Differences in the value and function of land for the Toba Batak community cause land conflicts between the Toba Batak community ([Sinaga, n.d.](#)). In addition to land conflicts, the exploitation of natural resources, in this case, land has caused an environmental crisis hit caused by understanding the meaning of land in the philosophy of the Batak Toba people. In order to achieve this philosophy, tillage is only viewed in terms of achieving philosophy in order to achieve economic value. Land becomes the center of production that meets the needs of achieving ideals or life goals so that it ignores the value of land restrictions.

People cultivate land only to pursue maximum results with excessive use of chemical fertilizers ([KSPPM, 2021](#)). Various efforts to increase agricultural productivity such as intensification and diversification so that the use of chemical fertilizers continues to be used without regard to the limits of land capabilities ([Napitu, 2021](#)).

Departing from the understandings of the Toba Batak people, it can be said that the concept of land according to the Toba Batak culture as a philosophy and make it a goal or ideal that is inherited as an identity. The understanding of land illustrates how the relationship of the Toba Batak people with nature, especially the land. Land is understood socially, economically, ecologically and religiously. This article will discuss how the understanding of the Toba Batak community ecotheologically, especially regarding the philosophy of the Toba Batak community which is the cause of ecological crisis in terms of ecotheology. The study aims to provide a critical understanding of the views of Toba Batak culture to examine the issue of ecological damage.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with literature studies. This study aims to discuss Land Theology and the meaning of land restrictions according to Toba Batak culture in ecological conservation. This study will identify factors that influence the understanding of land value according to Toba Batak culture and provide recommendations to improve that understanding.

Data was collected through a literature study that included sources such as books, journals, articles, and other documents related to Land Theology and Toba Batak culture. The collected data was then analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques to identify the concept of Land Theology and the meaning of land delimitation according to Toba Batak culture.

This research is expected to contribute to the understanding of land value according to Toba Batak culture and provide recommendations to improve this understanding in the context of ecological conservation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Land Theology

In the first chapter of Genesis it is written that the word translated in Indonesian with land Hebrew '*erests*' has the meaning of earth, universe, land, country and afterlife. Earth or land or country is God's creation which is the place of residence and survival of living things ([Sipahutar, 2019](#)). Peter affirmed that the land for the Israelites was a space for them to live. The absence of land means the loss of the source of life and also the loss of actualization as God's chosen nation ([Aman, 2013](#)). Volschenk elaborates on Brueggemann's view that the understanding of the land of Israel has two dimensions: Biblical and Theological ([Williams, 2018](#)). Christop Barth explains that, as Von Rad explains, the promised land or heritage land was central to the Israelite faith. Von Rad explains that God is the owner or source of land for the nation of Israel, which is the theological basis

that forms the understanding of the faith of the Israelites, which consists of testimony of God's deeds, especially grace to the land. Theology is based on ownership of land derived from the God of Israel. This point of belief became the *credo* or recognition for the nation of Israel (Lux, 2008). For the land, the Hebrew Scriptures use the term: "*adham*". This term is mentioned more often and more comprehensively. It shows the whole earth (Gen. 11:1), the earth as contrasting with the heavens (Eccl. 5:1), and the cosmos, which is regarded as the opposite of heaven (Isa. 1:2; Gen. 1:1). The term also refers to the land as a whole (Ex. 8:12; U1. 11:25), primarily as territory (2 Sam. 24:8), and as a region with political boundaries (Deut. 1:5).12). It is connected to roots and reflects the land from which humans were taken or formed and to which humans will return (Isaac, 2014). The land was considered as "*warisan*", a term that refers to the responsibility of the actual owner rather than land rights (Heiberg, 1998). In the Bible, the story of the creation of man describes the relationship between man and nature. God formed man from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7), and God also formed all the animals of the forest and all the birds of the air from the ground (Gen. 2:19). In Hebrew, humans are called "*adam*", which has the same root as the Hebrew word for land *adamah*, which means brownish-red color indicating the color of human skin and the color of the land. In Latin, humans are called *hom*, which also has the same root as the Hebrew word for land, *humus*. The land is described as the earth having three relationships with man: man was created from the ground (Genesis 2:7; 3:19, 23), man must live from clearing the earth (Genesis 3:23), and they will surely return to the land (Genesis 3:19) (Borrong, 1999).

The Value of Land Restrictions According to the Ancestors of the Toba Batak People

The ancestral understanding of the Toba Batak people is that soil fertility is obtained from blessings handed down by gods who are shaped or resemble a lizard. These lizards live and live in the soil. This understanding then gave rise to the understanding that this god of soil fertility was called later *Boraspati ni Tano*. *Boras Pati Nitano* is a benevolent earth god as the personification of the ruler of the earth. The ancestors of the Toba Batak community were agrarian people who lived from the land. *Boras pati ni tano* is a personification of the earth's "power" that protects the earth like *huma* (rice fields) (Sinaga, 2014). According to Robin that the understanding of Toba Batak ancestors is as reported by a book by Dr. George Alexander Wilken (1891) entitled *De Hagedis is Het Volksgeloof Der Malayo-Polynesiërs*. Wilken further explained that there were two gods worshipped by ancestors Toba Batak community with the name *boras Starch* is *Boras Pati ni Bagas* (*Boras Pati House*) and *Boras Pati ni Tano* (*Boras Pati ni Tanah*). These two gods are guardian spirits, guardians of the land who make the harvest from rice fields abundant (Ch.Robin, 2021). The ancestors of the people highly valued *boras pati ni tano*, so if they did not appreciate *boraspati ni tano*, they tended to damage the fertility of the land, because it was a symbol of Batak spirituality (Naipospos, 2007). Naipospos explained that *boras pati ni tano* is a sign of soil fertility that serves to meet the threshold of human ability to care for their plants to thrive. One can only provide potluck macronutrients to meet the basic needs of plants at the

beginning of growth, but "*boraspati ni tano*" is given by the land to meet macro and micronutrients. The Batak people always tell Nagapadohaniaji about their intentions when cultivating the land by saying, "I don't want to destroy the land that you uphold Nagapadohaniaji, but I want to use it for daily living needs (or for other needs such as cemeteries and residential buildings)." After that being said so, the first grafting or dredging is carried out. Agricultural activities are usually left a few days before the actual tillage is carried out. In the first step of the tillage process, it is also always done by bringing "*itak gurgur*" rice flour, with the aim of obtaining the blessing of Mulajadi Nabolon, which is understood by Nagapadohaniaji and answered by *boraspati ni tano*. *Itak gurgur* symbolizes offerings, and *gurgur* means that all the results of work will flourish. Respect for land has long been part of the ancestral life of the Toba Batak people which is carried out in the *pangungkapon taon partanoon* ritual. This ritual is a request and gratitude to Mulajadi Nabolon as the supreme god. When land grafting to cultivate land in the form of rice fields to grow rice or other crops is carried out. When the first graft is done it results in the lives of plants or animal lives contained in the ground to die. The ancestors of the Toba Batak people believed that humans as creatures who have a strong relationship with other created nature do not want to get karma later. In this ritual, the ancestors of the community offered prayers: *Ompung Mulajadi Na Bolon, Debata Natolu, Natolu Suhu Natolu harajaon Debata Ba-taraguru, Debata Sori Debata Balabulan marsomba mardaulat hami tu ho marhite tim-pul ni daupa dohot pangurason-on, nunga adat dohot uhum di hami sian Siboru Deak-parujar ikkon mangula do hami asa mangan. Mangido ma hami da Ompung, aut adonggilok gilok dohot duhut na agoan hosa hinorhon ni hudali nami, sotung marsapata iOmpung dibahen ho tu hami, ai narata do nahuparsinta hami, rata ni suan-suanan nahu-suan hami. Mangido ma hami da Ompung, asa tu lubangna ma bahen satua, tu asarnama bahen ampodik sinur ma bahen pinahan nami, gabe ma nang naniula, horas ma hamijolma. Sahat husombahon hami pelean puji-pujian on tu ho, sahat gabe ma hami sahathoras pasu-pasu Mu"*.

The translation:

O God Almighty, make Na Bolon, Debata Nan Tiga, the three manifestations of the power of Bataragurumu, Debata Sori, and Debata Balabulan. We bow down to you and beg that if our hoes kill grass or other animals, it should not become karma for us. Greenery is the ideal of our agriculture. We beg Your presence, make all the animals into their holes and the birds return to their cages, fertilize and breed our pets, abundant in our crops and safe we men. After we offer our offerings and prayers, may we all be happy for your blessings ([Rajamarpodang, 1992](#)).

Every year, at the beginning of the first year, the *partanoon year ceremony* is performed on a large scale with the sound of sabangunan music traditionals. The *tonggo-tonggo* prayer indicates that the punishment for animals that may die, the process of hoeing by a hoe or grass rotting from being trampled will not apply. We also see their prayers that animals that might damage their farms, whether mammals, slithering, or winged, do not damage their crops. With God's blessing, their agricultural crops will multiply and the harvest will be plentiful.

If the ancestors of the Toba Batak people understood the land as something that is microcosm and in it there is the presence of macrocosm so that it affects totalitarian patterns of thinking, behaving and acting throughout their lives ([Lumbantobing, 2018](#)). However, Lumbantobing further explained that the ancestors of the Toba Batak people did not know the land as part of maintaining the environmental ecosystem as it is today. There are indeed differences in land, for example, there is *tano na niulang or gasgas* (land that left fallow), land that is no longer cultivated. There is *tano tarulang* (abandoned land)— land that is left fallow for a short period of time intended for crop rotation, land that is left fallow for a short period of time intended for crop rotation. The ancestral practice of the Toba Batak community in cultivating the land by using compost from livestock manure processed from *panakalan* (holes) and other materials such as *paet-paet flowers, sobuan, sirabun* (furnace ash). *These mischiefs* are made in the yard around the community's house, in the field if the field or rice field is far from the house which is done by working together ([KSPPM, 2021](#)). However, this practice is no longer implemented or has disappeared from the Toba Batak community. In addition to composting materials, there are no more Toba Batak people who now use manufactured chemical fertilizers. Although the cost for manufactured chemical fertilizers is expensive, the public view is that the results are more so that their income is higher ([KSPPM, 2021](#)). With the philosophy of *hamoraon, hagabeon, hasangapon* gives rise to materialism and pragmatism because these demands are increasingly complex with a consumptive lifestyle. Violations of cultural values, religion and legal norms make the Toba Batak community legal. Cultural values are degraded so everything is calculated with economic rewards. The exploitation of land and other natural resources is inevitable in order to achieve the philosophical values of *hamoraon, hagabeon and hasangapon* ([Napitu, 2021](#)).

The Land Loses Intrinsic Value

Human relations with the environment have an intrinsic value as the core of the biosphere web or the field of intrinsic relationships ([Naess, 1973](#)). The intrinsic value of nature is important as the value contained in it in order to maintain relationships as entities ([Lan et al., 2022](#)). Intrinsic value is the objective value that an object has on itself which lies in an interpretation that is also assessed both ethically and meta-ethically ([O'Neill, 1992](#)). The intrinsic value of nature is built on the history of people's collective thought ([Piccolo, 2017](#)). The intrinsic value of soil raises the idea that it is purely an effort to protect the environment ([Palmer, 2009](#)). God's creatures have intrinsic value that is nonviolent ([Aman, 2013](#)). Nature is not only beneficial for human interests instrumentally but has value for its own sake, which is intrinsic ([Singgih, 2021](#)). Leopold as described Sonny that when man values the land it means that man has understood the land is therefore for that humans must respect the land (integrity, stability and beauty of the community). Leopold's view that criticizes anthropocentrism is that humans become the center as the only thing of value, humans are one member of a biotic community that is interdependent and related to each other ([Keraf, 2010](#)). If humans believe that land has intrinsic value, that value is free from humans or human presence as a subject of judgment ([Deane-Drummond, 2016](#)). Singgih further explained Deane-

Drummond's view that land is a living organism, not an inanimate object ([Singgih, 2021](#)). Borrong from the point of view of environmental ethics is known as superficial ecology that emphasizes nature for the benefit of humans or anthropomorphism. Ecology in emphasizing nature as creation is a whole of life that supports each other so that all elements have meaning and meaning ([Borrong, 1999](#)).

The view of anthropomorphism is rational and mechanistic which aims to meet human needs. This perspective in Christian theology as in Lynn T. White Jr.'s Thesis observes environmental damage caused by the applications of religious understanding ([Singgih, 2020](#)). The view of anthropomorphism that emphasizes that man is superior and honorable compared to other created beings because man is the only free and rational being as understood by Thomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant. In the beginning, the desire only to meet basic human needs developed into a desire to dominate lifestyles and lifestyles that focus on fulfilling greed lust ([Masinambow et al., 2021](#)). However, over time, the spiritual aspect of the land as belonging to God was lost and replaced by the view of materialism. This idea comes from the interpretation of Genesis 1:26–29, which shows that humans are rulers who must rule over and utilize nature ([Jonar, 2020](#)).

Borrong conveyed the view that anthropomorphism causes humans to sacrifice ecology for their interests. Human beings are more concerned with economic value. Humans with their ability to create technology are able to turn the natural environment into an artificial environment as an attitude of economic wants. Land loses its intricate value because its instrument value is higher as a material or object exploited by humans. Humans with their capacity have transformed the land as part of a natural ecosystem into an artificial or artificial ecosystem or technosphere ecosystem (the result of technology). Artificial ecosystems lose the intrinsic value of land, meaning land fertility is no longer important. The use of energy assistance in the form of chemical fertilizers to increase land fertility to achieve abundant results. Because of economics, humans sacrifice ecology. Humans do not realize that economics and ecology come from the same root word *oikos* and as *the same place of residence (oikumene) and as a source of life (oikonomia)* ([Borrong, 1999](#)). By mastering science and technology, humans can transform the universe into something that can be used to meet the needs of human life. For the benefit of humans, nature is treated like a slave and used as a machine ([Zedadra et al., 2019](#)).

When the ancestors of the Toba Batak people had their views on the land, it seemed that this understanding was born from life experiences that had a close relationship with nature. Nature is an inseparable part of life from its own entity so that land designates as its identity. Understanding or perspective of a community about nature and humans as inseparable entities ([Aman, 2013](#)). Traditional humans strive to maintain and maintain the harmony of their lives with nature without imposing their will on nature ([Borrong, 1999](#)). The ancestral love of the Toba Batak people for nature can be seen in the love for the Toba Batak culture itself ([Saragih et al., 2020](#)). A complex socio-ecological system connects human society and the natural environment. Many interactions and feedback that occur between different users and different landscapes show this relationship ([Scholte et al., 2015](#)). The ancestors of the Toba Batak people passed on the form of culture as a complexity

of activity is the establishment of human interaction arising from cultural values that are lived in order to adapt to the natural environment arranged in the social system. The social system arranges man's relationship with God, regulates man's relationship with nature, regulates man's relationship with man. The loss of the social system in the form of human interaction with God, man with nature and man with man is more due to the imposition of the will to implement cultural values in the period of development with the presence of modern civilization ([Rajamarpodang, 1992](#)).

CONCLUSION

The Toba Batak community which since its ancestors as an agrarian society lives by cultivating the land by farming, farming and others. The Toba Batak people made land so valuable that the philosophy of *hamoraon*, *hagabeon*, *hasangapon* and also *lulu anak lulu tano* was born as a way of life to achieve their life goals and the most valuable thing is that land is an intrinsic identity showing a clan that is not just an identity. If the Toba Batak people really love the Toba Batak Culture, then the Toba Batak people should also love the land (intricancy value) or ecology. Because the a society departs from the culture inherited from ancestors to the present. Thus loving Culture then concrete evidence of its love of the land or its ecology. The value of people's lives departs from the culture inherited from ancestors to the present. Thus loving culture then concrete evidence of its love of the land or its ecology. The value of the philosophy of life born from the context of the ancestral culture of the Toba Batak community, the Toba Batak community should not ignore or even eliminate these values for the achievement of life goals with materialism value orientation, ignore the value of land intrigue (anthropomism) so that the land becomes a victim which then has an impact on ecological damage. If the ancestors of the Toba Batak community greatly appreciated the value of land intrigues through their religious practices, then the Toba Batak people today should have a broad view that land also has the right so that future generations get a healthy land inheritance so that the children and grandchildren of today's community have the right to live healthy and continue their lives.

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