

RE-ESTABLISHING ECOLOGICAL RELATIONS IN THE WORLDVIEW OF MENTAWAI INDIGENOUS RELIGION

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Abstract

Indigenous religion studies, particularly Arat Sabulungan in Mentawai, are dominated by the world religion paradigm, resulting in biased representations labeled "primitive," "animistic," or "syncretic." This paradigmatic bias not only hinders productive studies of indigenous religion but also obscures the ecological wisdom within their worldview. Amid the global ecological crisis, a new perspective on human-nature relations is needed, one that transcends the anthropocentric view that currently dominates religious discourse. This study aims to explore the worldview of the Mentawai indigenous religion regarding ecological relations and reconstruct ecological understanding from the perspective of the indigenous religion paradigm, specifically examining how rituals in Arat Sabulungan manifest the intersubjective relations between humans, nature, and spiritual entities. The study employs a humanistic approach, incorporating in-depth observations of Arat Sabulungan practices, with a focus on three main rituals: the *sikerei* healing ritual, the construction of *uma*, and the raising of pigs. Data are analyzed through the framework of the indigenous religion paradigm and the concept of worldview. Arat Sabulungan offers an understanding of intersubjective relations, different from the hierarchical relations of the world religion paradigm. Humans, nature, and spiritual entities are viewed as subjects possessing agency and consciousness. Healing rituals, the construction of *uma*, and the raising of pigs demonstrate a profound ecological awareness that manifests the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. Epistemologically, this research offers an alternative paradigm for the study of indigenous religion. Theoretically, it enriches discussions of the role of religion in the ecological crisis by offering a cosmocentric perspective. Practically, the ecological awareness of Arat Sabulungan can inspire collective efforts to address the contemporary ecological crisis.

Keywords: *Arat Sabulungan, indigenous religion, intersubjective relations, ecological worldview, Mentawai.*

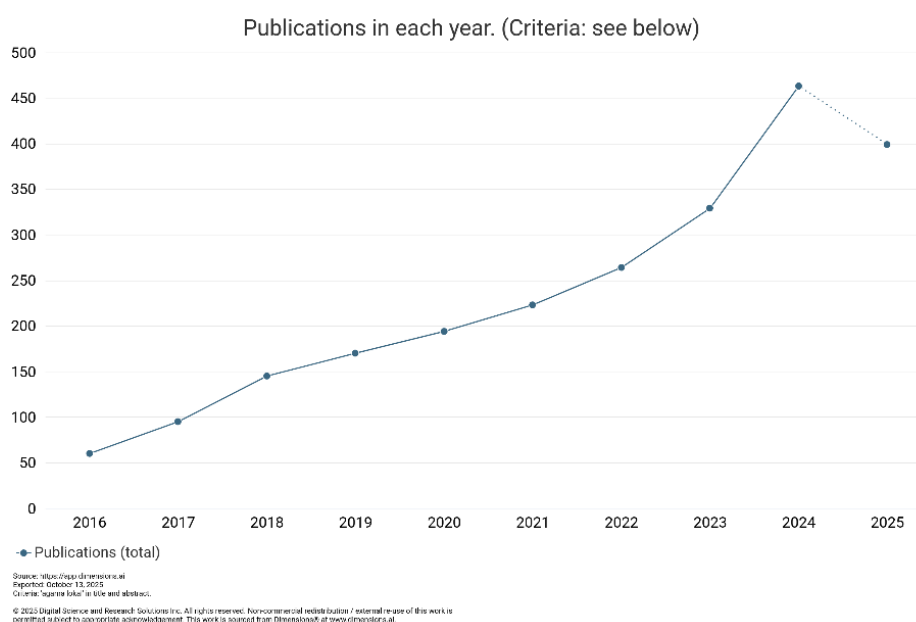
Introduction

From the 19th century to the present, the conceptual framework of religious studies has been constructed based on the world religion paradigm (Maarif et al., 2016). For example, in the West, Christianity has served as a prototype for other religions, as it is considered to fulfill the requirements for discussing religions (Bell, 2006). In the Indonesian context, unlike the West, where Christianity is considered a prototype, Islam has been used as a prototype because it is considered to fulfill the criteria of monotheism, a prophet, and a holy book (Ali-Fauzi et al., 2017). The impact of the world religion paradigm on religious studies extends beyond the construction of religions themselves, but also to political policy, socio-religious aspects, and religious education. The Indonesian government's recognition and provision of services to only six religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism) is a consequence of this world religion paradigm.

Several academics focused on indigenous religion studies, such as Carey, 1998; Cox, 2007; Harvey, 2000 have argued that the world religion paradigm continues to dominate religious studies, preventing the development of indigenous religion studies. Several academics agree that

the world religion paradigm, with all its limitations, is incompatible with the application of the world religion paradigm as a basis for describing a religion. This is because the world religion paradigm is considered inaccurate in understanding the diversity of religious teachings and practices, including within world religions themselves (Geaves, 2005). Despite the controversy surrounding this concept, the world religion paradigm continues to be used as a teaching material for religion by academics today.

The study of indigenous religion in Indonesia began to attract academic attention following the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 concerning adherents, beliefs, and the inclusion of the religion column on National Identity Cards (Heraningtyas, 2020). From 2016 to 2025, the development of indigenous religion studies in Indonesia can be seen in diagram 1 below:



(Source: Processed from the Dimensions.ai Database, 2025)

Diagram 1. Indigenous Religion Study 2016-2025

Research on "Indigenous Religion" has experienced significant development, particularly in Indonesia. According to dimension.ai, there are 2,480 articles discussing indigenous religion, focusing on various issues. Diagram 1 illustrates the evolution of publications using the keyword "local religion." Publications related to indigenous religion have increased year after year. In 2016, the number of publications discussing indigenous religion remained relatively small, with fewer than 100 publications per year. From 2017 to 2021, there was a steady increase, indicating that the issue of indigenous religion is beginning to gain attention among researchers and academics. The number of publications continued to rise until 2024, reaching over 450 titles. This indicates a growing interest in the study of indigenous religion and a heightened awareness of the importance of preserving indigenous religious knowledge and practices within the context of Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape.

In the Western world, the study of indigenous religion has been developing for quite some time. Many studies of indigenous religion have not been given the space to express their views within the paradigm of local religion itself, resulting in representations of indigenous religion being characterized as "primitive" (Maarif et al., 2016). A similar situation occurs in Indonesia. Several early studies on indigenous religions in Indonesia continue to reflect the dominance of the world religion paradigm, which often views indigenous religions in a negative light. They are labeled as old-fashioned, animistic, dynamic, and even considered to deviate from the truth of "official" religion (Hernawan et al., 2020; Rafii, 2022; Wahyuni, 2024; Wulandari, 2017; Yuniarto,

2021). Furthermore, in practice, indigenous religions are often described as profane culture rather than sacred.

This study aims to expand the body of knowledge by presenting a novel perspective that differs from previous research. To date, most studies on Arat Sabulungan have tended to adopt a perspective rooted in world religions. As a result, Mentawai practices and rituals are often interpreted in a biased manner, labeled as idolatrous, primitive, and old-fashioned. This research attempts to examine them from the perspective of indigenous people. This approach is expected to provide a more contextual understanding of Arat Sabulungan, as understood by the Mentawai people themselves in establishing relationships between humans, nature, and spirituality.

On the other hand, the current ecological crisis is a result of human egoism, legitimized by religious teachings regarding the human-nature relationship within the paradigm of world religions. Regarding this, several scholars, such as White (1967) and Toynbee (1972), argue that religious understandings of human supremacy over non-humans, particularly Judeo-Christian views, are the fundamental mental causes of current environmental problems. White and Toynbee's views are refuted by scholars such as Cobb (1972, 1994, 2007) and Nasr (1976, 1993, 1996), who argue that religious and spiritual traditions can play a positive role in reforming human attitudes and behavior toward the environment. The debate among scholars regarding environmental issues from a religious perspective is relevant and deserves continued discussion. The complexity of environmental problems cannot be resolved through a unilateral approach; instead, it requires collaboration across all sectors and disciplines, particularly among religious institutions and communities. Simply put, the scientific community, national governments, and international organizations cannot ignore the role of religion in achieving environmental sustainability.

In recent decades, the ecological crisis has become a pressing global issue. Climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss (Taufik et al., 2024) threaten not only the lives of flora and fauna but also humans, who are integral to the ecosystem itself (Faturohman et al., 2024). Addressing this phenomenon requires collective efforts to adapt to climate change and conserve natural resources. The Mentawai people also have their own way of addressing this issue. In the Mentawai traditional belief system, nature is not viewed as a resource but as a sacred entity with a spirit and consciousness. This relationship exemplifies a reciprocal ecological awareness between humans and nature, where humans protect nature as nature protects humans (Wahyuni et al., 2025).

This article aims to explore the worldviews of indigenous religions regarding ecological relationships. This exploration is useful for reconstructing ecological relationships from the perspective of indigenous religions, particularly the indigenous religion of the Mentawai people. This article is also based on the assumption that the worldviews of indigenous religions regarding ecological relationships can provide innovative solutions to rebuild ecological relationships to maintain ecological balance.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative case study approach to explore the Mentawai indigenous religious worldview regarding ecological relations within the framework of the indigenous religion paradigm. The case study was chosen to gain a deep contextual understanding of the dynamic relationship between local religiosity, ecological practices, and external pressures that influence ecological sustainability in Mentawai. The research location includes the Mentawai Islands, specifically areas that still actively maintain the practice of Arat Sabulungan. The research was conducted in 2024, focusing on ritual practices that manifest the intersubjective relationship between humans, nature, and spiritual entities.

Result And Discussion

Indigenous Religions Paradigm Of Ecological Relations

Sam Gill, a scholar specializing in the study of indigenous religions, presents several approaches (Gill 1982:1). First, the humanistic approach. Understanding religious studies requires in-depth observation of the object of study, particularly indigenous religions, which will describe the historical significance and daily experiences of adherents. Second, the interdisciplinary approach. Indigenous religions have attracted significant attention from various disciplines, including history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and theology. The relationship between indigenous religions and various aspects of life, including economics, politics, social life, and culture, is complex. Therefore, understanding this complex relationship requires an interdisciplinary approach. Third, the cross-cultural approach addresses the previously discussed problematic paradigms of world religions, encompassing the classifications and concepts within these paradigms, such as the sacred/profane dichotomy, spirituality, and transcendence. These three approaches are expected to generate new insights into indigenous religions, as is also found in world religions. The approach used in the study of indigenous religions is not limited to the three previous approaches but requires an understanding of local religions within the framework of a worldview.

For some academics, such as Robert Redfield (1952), Irving Hallowell (1960/2010), and Kenneth Morrison (2000), worldview serves as a perspective in studying the cosmos or universe. A worldview is a description of the nature and characteristics of an individual that differs from those of the individual themselves. A worldview is an explanation of the concept of the universe, a rationale used by humans to reflect on questions such as who we are, where we come from, and where we belong (besides ourselves). It details the relationship established with something other than us that works together to maintain the balance of the universe (Redfield, 1952, p. 30).

While the perspective of world religions still influences many studies of indigenous religions in Indonesia, several academics attempt to understand indigenous religions from the perspective of these traditions. As Maarif et al. (2012, 2016, 2017) have observed, they examine the role of indigenous religion in shaping culture, social life, and relationships, not only among humans but also among non-humans within specific communities.

Ecological relationships within the world religion paradigm comprise three components: the supernatural (including God, spirits, gods, and the like), culture (encompassing humans), and nature (encompassing all aspects of the natural world, including animals, plants, celestial bodies, and so on). These three parts are interconnected and positioned according to their hierarchy. The first level is occupied by the supernatural, followed by the second level by culture, and the final level by nature. Naturally, this hierarchical relationship pattern also influences the relationship between these three parts. This understanding arises because, in the world religion perspective, the "subject" is often identified with humans. The assumption is that only humans possess subjective abilities and agency, whereas "nature" is often portrayed as an object lacking these qualities.

The Arat Sabulungan Ritual And Intersubjective Relations In Mentawai

Based on field findings, several Mentawai rituals represent intersubjective practices. These include, First, the *sikerei* Healing Ritual. The Mentawai people employ two healing techniques: the *sikerei* and the *siaggai laggek*. The healing process is generally carried out through ritual ceremonies, usually performed by the *sikerei*. *Sikerei* is a healer with the ability to connect with the supernatural world. According to the *sikerei*, illness in humans arises from disturbances in the soul caused by evil spirits (*ketcat* or *sanitu*). Therefore, the healing process must be carried out by the *sikerei* using a series of rituals. The treatment begins with a song, also known as *uray*, recited by the *sikerei* to summon the soul of the afflicted person back into the body.

Furthermore, the *uray* is sung to summon the spirits to understand the cause of the illness, thus facilitating the *sikerei* in administering appropriate medicine. The *Sikerei* uses several

classifications of plants as medicine to cure illnesses, including: *simasingin* (fragrant), *simamiang* (fishy), *simasak* (urine), and *simabutek* (rotten). The healing ritual performed by the *sikerei* is not only considered a traditional healing process but also a practical way for the Mentawai people to maintain intersubjective relations.

Second, the construction of the *uma*. The *uma* is a traditional Mentawai house that is always discussed when studying Arat Sabulungan. The *uma* is described as a large, long, stilt-like house (Nur, 2019). The place, which always serves as a medium for intimate communication between Mentawai adherents of Arat Sabulungan and indigenous spirits (supernatural), is known as the *uma* (Wahyuni et al., 2024; Derung et al., 2022). The *uma* is a symbol or identity for adherents of the Arat Sabulungan faith and can be built with permission from the indigenous spirits. The *uma* built by the Mentawai people is occupied by five to seven families who are descendants of a *rimata* or *sikerei*. Besides serving as a residence, the *uma* also functions as a venue for social activities, including traditional ceremonies, meeting halls, celebrations, and meetings (Kusbiantoro et al., 2016).

For adherents of Arat Sabulungan, everything that is processed and sourced from nature must first undergo several rituals, including the construction of an *uma*. The ritual performed before building a *uma* is called *Lia bubuk uma*. The purpose is to prevent various misfortunes during the construction process and to foster a good relationship between the *Uma*'s inhabitants and the various natural resources, such as wood, leaves, soil, and other necessities, which are believed to have spirits (Derung et al., 2022). The Mentawai people highly care for and respect the forest (Wahyuni et al., 2023). Besides fulfilling their daily needs, the forest is also considered a spiritual place believed to be guarded by spirits. Therefore, any activity undertaken by the Mentawai people in the area requires prior permission.

Building a *uma* requires several rituals. First, the *magri simaeruk* and *magri sikatai*. *Magri simaeruka* is the act of collecting *pameruk* leaves, which are used to purify the body of the *uma* and its inhabitants, and to ensure their safety. The ritual is performed using water infused with flowers and several leaves, collected in a bamboo container, and offered to the ancestors and good spirits (*saukkeui*), also known as *nenenei*. Meanwhile, *magri sikatai* involves collecting leaves from the forest to exorcise evil spirits within the *uma* and its inhabitants (Derung et al., 2022). Second, *pasibitbit uma*. This ritual is performed at night, led by a *sikerei*. Before beginning the exorcism ritual, the *sikerei* prepares all the necessary ritual supplies and then places the ailelepet around the neck while reciting a mantra. Some of the leaves for *magri simaeruk* are spread out on a *seggeijet* (wooden) tree placed in front of the *uma*'s entrance. This is where the *saukkeui* begins. Third, *Lajo Simagre*. This part of the ritual begins with a chant to the spirits performed by the *sikerei*.

Additionally, three residents of the *uma* are positioned in one corner of the room, where they will beat the *gajeumak* (drum) with three different pitches. At the same time, in beating the *gajeumak*, six *sikerei* have formed a circular position in the center of the *uma*, after the *sikerei* begin dancing and stomping their feet on the wooden floor, in order give strength to the *sikerei* (Derung et al., 2022). Fourth, *lia bubuk* is a ritual of respect is performed for indigenous spirits, as they are believed to protect them. Therefore, the *lia bubuk* ritual is performed as a form of appreciation to the spirits of power, especially the rulers of the forest. Furthermore, the *lia bubuk* ritual purifies the *uma* because the roof of the *uma* has been replaced, aiming to neutralize external energy emanating from the new roof so it does not harm the *uma*'s inhabitants (Derung et al., 2022).

All stages of the ritual in building an *uma* represent the Mentawai people's efforts to maintain intersubjective relations. This practice suggests that a balanced life is not only built through relationships with humans, but also through recognizing and respecting the roles of all living and spiritual entities that are part of the universe.

Third, pigs are considered important animals to the Mentawai people, as they are used in traditional ceremonies, as dowry payments, as a substitute for fines, in trade, and as gifts

(Kasman, 2015; Tulus, 2012). The reason pigs are used in many rituals, also known as magical mediators or *gaud*, is that spirits highly favor them. Furthermore, pigs are considered to hold the highest status among other animals. Pigs used in certain ceremonies and rituals are obtained through hunting or breeding. Pig farming differs from raising animals such as cows, goats, and chickens, which are commonly practiced outside the Mentawai region. The Mentawai people must perform several rituals when raising pigs, including reciting *gaut* (mantras) and observing *kekei* (prohibitions). Failure to recite the *gaut* or violate the *kekei* can lead to failure in pig farming (Kasman, 2015).

Beginner pig farmers in the Mentawai community must go through several processes. First, they must go through the *sapou sainak* process. The *sapou sainak* is the pig farmer's residence, situated in a strategic location near a water source and sago, which serves as the pigs' primary food source. During the period from *pasinggu* to *pasibukak*, the pig owner must stay with the pig in the *sapou* to tame it and establish a close relationship with it. Second, *pasinggu sainak* is the process of taming the pig carried out by the pig owner. In other words, the pig is confined in a pen for several weeks. The length of time required for *pasinggu sainak* depends on the pig itself. If the pig is relatively easy to tame, it only takes about a week.

Conversely, if the pig is difficult to tame, it can take up to three weeks. During the confinement process, the pig owner always beats the pig with a bell to help the pig recognize the sound of the bell. Third, *pasibukak* is the process of removing the pig from the pen. This must be done at 6:00 PM to prevent the newly released pig from wandering away. Pigs released from the pen may not return for several reasons, including the pig owner failing to follow the rules of *kekei* and *gaut*. Therefore, when a pig is released from its pen, it is highly likely that it will not return home. Fourth, *sipubalut*. After the pig has been released from its pen for a sufficient period, the pig's owner will call it and feed it the next day. The first meal after being released from the pen must be special, not just the usual sago. Rather, it should be shrimp and fish provided by the pig's owner. This is called *sipubalut* (Kasman, 2015).

The ongoing pig-raising ritual reflects the Mentawai people's ecological and spiritual awareness in understanding the relationships between creatures. Humans are not positioned as "masters" or "rulers" over animals, but as part of a life that depends on each other. Therefore, the pig-raising ritual becomes a practical part of maintaining intersubjective relations.

The Indigenous Religion Paradigm As An Analytical Alternative In Understanding Mentawai Ecology

Many studies on Arat Sabulungan have been conducted in recent decades, but most remain trapped by the bias of the world religion paradigm. Derung et al. (2022) explain that Arat Sabulungan is a form of to theism that persists in the era of globalization. However, Derung tends to view Arat Sabulungan as a primitive belief system that worships spirits or objects such as animals, plants, and celestial bodies. This worship is observed through several rituals, including the gathering of pameruk leaves (*magri simaeruk*), *pasibitbit uma* (a specific ritual), *lajo simagre* (another specific ritual), and *lia bubuk* (a distinct ritual). This perspective reflects a classical evolutionist approach that places indigenous religion at a "primitive" level in the hierarchy of religious development.

A study by Wirman et al. (2021) assesses that the application of Arat Sabulungan values, worldviews, rules, and teachings in the Mentawai Islamic community constitutes a form of syncretism. This view is problematic because it assumes that "pure" religion (in this case, Islam) has been "contaminated" by local practices, without recognizing that such integration is a legitimate process of identity negotiation for the community. Unlike Wirman, Singh et al. (2021) examine the relationship between animist practices practiced by Arat Sabulungan adherents and lesser spirits, as opposed to greater spirits with greater power. This relationship is evident in the healing practices of *sikerei*, although this study still employs the terminology "animism," which is also a product of the world religion paradigm.

Other studies, such as Hammons (2016), Delfi (2017), Irwandi et al. (2022), Irwandi & Delfi (2022), Kurniawan (2019), Nelmaya & Deswalantri (2021), and Mulia (2021), assess several important elements of Arat Sabulungan, such as pigs and tattoos, as well as the integration of religious values with Mentawai culture, as forms of cultural acculturation. The use of concepts such as "primitive," "syncretism," "animism," and "acculturation" in these studies demonstrates the dominance of the world religion paradigm, which tends to position Arat Sabulungan as "the other" requiring explanation using Western categories. As a result, studies of local religions are unproductive, and Arat Sabulungan is often stigmatized as polytheistic, primitive, infidel, and even considered a deviant practice.

However, alternative efforts are beginning to utilize local religious paradigms. Hanani & Nelmaya's (2022) study views the relationship between humans, spirits, and nature in Arat Sabulungan as equal and interdependent, driven by the theological values held by Arat Sabulungan adherents. This approach is closer to an indigenous worldview, which does not place humans at the center or apex of the cosmological hierarchy.

This article expands Hanani & Nelmaya's perspective by using the indigenous religions paradigm to understand ecological relations in Arat Sabulungan. In contrast to the world religion paradigm, which understands ecological relations hierarchically, with the supernatural at the top, culture (humans) in the middle, and nature (nature) at the bottom. The indigenous religion paradigm offers an understanding of intersubjective relations. In this view, humans, nature, and spiritual entities are not viewed in a subject-object relationship, but as subjects possessing agency, consciousness, and the ability to communicate with one another.

The findings of this study indicate that rituals in Arat Sabulungan, such as the sikerei healing ritual, the construction of *uma*, and the raising of pigs, are not merely "primitive" or "animistic" practices, but rather manifestations of a profound ecological and spiritual awareness. The healing rituals aim not only to cure physical ailments but also to restore balance in the relationship between humans, spirits, and nature. The construction of *uma*, along with its series of rituals, demonstrates respect for natural resources, which are considered to have souls and require permission before use. Pig care through the rituals of *pasinggu*, *pasibukak*, and *sipubalut* reflects a relationship between subjects in which humans are positioned not as "masters" or "rulers" over animals, but as interdependent members of a shared life.

This intersubjective relationship aligns with the concept of "worldview" proposed by Redfield (1952), Hallowell (1960/2010), and Morrison (2000), where a worldview is an explanation of the universe and the relationship one establishes with something other than oneself that collaborates to maintain cosmic balance. In the context of Arat Sabulungan, this worldview posits that humans, nature, and spirits exist in a state of equality and interdependence, rather than in an exploitative hierarchy.

These findings also contribute to the ongoing debate about the role of religion in addressing the ecological crisis. Suppose White (1967) and Jeanine Bee (1972) argued that the anthropocentric view of the Judeo-Christian tradition is the mental root of environmental problems. Therefore, Arat Sabulungan offers an alternative through a cosmocentric perspective that positions humans as an integral part of the ecosystem, not as its rulers or exploiters. This aligns with the arguments of Cobb (1972, 1994, 2007) and Nasr (1976, 1993, 1996), who suggest that religious and spiritual traditions can play a positive role in reforming human attitudes and behaviors toward the environment.

In the context of the increasingly pressing global ecological crisis (climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss), the lessons from the Arat Sabulungan worldview are highly relevant. The reciprocal ecological awareness between humans and nature, as practiced by the Mentawai people, can inspire collective efforts to adapt to climate change and conserve natural resources. The intersubjective relations established through the Arat Sabulungan rituals demonstrate that a balanced life is not only built through interpersonal relationships, but also through recognizing and respecting the role of all living and spiritual

entities that are part of the universe.

Thus, this study not only critiques the dominant world religion paradigm in the study of indigenous religions but also offers an epistemological alternative through the indigenous religion paradigm. This approach enables a more contextual and authentic understanding of Arat Sabulungan, while also fostering a dialogue about the contributions of indigenous religions to addressing global ecological challenges. Future research is needed to explore the practices of other indigenous religions in Indonesia that also have the potential to build sustainable ecological relationships.

Conclusion

This research finds that Arat Sabulungan has a worldview that is fundamentally different from the world religion paradigm in understanding ecological relations. Unlike world religion paradigm, which understands ecological relations hierarchically, the supernatural at the top, culture (humans) in the middle, and nature (nature) at the bottom, Arat Sabulungan offers an understanding of intersubjective relations, in which humans, nature, and spiritual entities are viewed as subjects possessing agency, awareness, and the ability to communicate with each other. Rituals in Arat Sabulungan, such as the sikerei healing ritual, the construction of *uma* (*magri simaeruk*, *magri sikatai*, *pasibitbit uma*, *lajo simagre*, and *lia bubuk*), and the raising of pigs (*pasiunggu sainak*, *pasibukak*, and *sipubalut*), are manifestations of deep ecological and spiritual awareness, not merely "primitive" or "animistic" practices as often labeled by studies using the world religion paradigm.

This research makes three important contributions. First, epistemologically, it offers an alternative paradigm in the indigenous religions studies through an indigenous religions paradigm approach that allows for a more contextual and authentic understanding, transcending biased terminologies such as "primitive," "animism," and "syncretism." Second, theoretically, it enriches discussions on the role of religion in the global ecological crisis by demonstrating that Arat Sabulungan offers a cosmocentric view that positions humans as an integral part of the ecosystem, offering an alternative to the anthropocentric view criticized as the root of environmental problems. Third, practically, it demonstrates that the reciprocal ecological awareness within Arat Sabulungan can inspire collective efforts to address contemporary ecological crises, including climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.

This study has several limitations. First, the focus is limited to three types of rituals, thus failing to encompass the full complexity of practices within Arat Sabulungan, such as hunting rituals, sago farming, tattooing, and other traditional celebrations. Second, the study fails to thoroughly explore the dynamics of intersubjective relations within the context of modernization, Islamization, and Christianization that have occurred in the Mentawai Islands, as well as how contemporary Arat Sabulungan adherents negotiate their identities. Third, this study has not yet conducted a comparison with other indigenous religions in Indonesia or the Asia-Pacific region, which may share similar worldviews and practices of ecological relations.

Based on these limitations, several recommendations for future research can be proposed. First, further research should explore other ritual practices within Arat Sabulungan to gain a more comprehensive understanding of intersubjective relations. Second, more in-depth ethnographic research is needed to understand the dynamics of transformation and identity negotiation among contemporary Arat Sabulungan adherents amidst the pressures of modernization and religious conversion. Third, comparative studies with other indigenous religions in Indonesia and the Asia-Pacific region could identify common patterns within indigenous religion paradigms as well as the unique characteristics of each tradition. Fourth, participatory action research could explore the integration of traditional ecological knowledge into environmental conservation and climate change adaptation programs. Fifth, further theoretical studies are needed to develop a more systematic conceptual framework for the indigenous religion paradigm in the indigenous religion studies in Indonesia.

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