1. **Encouraging the Participation of Archival Institutions**

**in Protecting and Preserving the Traditional Knowledge:**

**a Reflection on the Indonesian Case**

**Key words**: Protecting, Preserving, Traditional Knowledge, National Asset, Community Archives

**Introduction**

A megadiverse country is a concept that is often used to described Indonesia. As an archipelago, Indonesia is located in Southeast Asia, flanked by two oceans, the Indian and the Pacific as well as two continents, Australia and Asia. This position makes Indonesia a country that is the home of various ethnic and cultural interactions.1

The 2010 census reflected these conditions showing that Indonesia is inhabited by approximately 1,340 tribes.2 The Javanese tribe is the largest with a total of 95.2 million people or 40.2 percent of the population. It is followed by the Sunda tribe with 36.7 million people or 15.5 percent. The third position is occupied by the Batak tribe with a total of 8.5 million people or 3.6 percent. The fourth position is attributed to the tribe coming from Sulawesi with 7.6 million people or 3.22 percent. While in fifth position is the Madura tribe, with 7.1 million people, or 3.03 percent. These demographics can be seen in Table 1, below.

**Table 1**

**Statistics of Five Largest Ethnic Groups in Indonesia**3

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Ethnic Groups** | **Amount** | **Percentage** |
| 1. | Javanese | 95,217,022 | 40.22 |
| 2. | Sundanese | 36,701,670 | 15.5 |
| 3. | Bataknese | 8,466,969 | 3.58 |
| 4. | From Celebes (Many variance) | 7,634,262 | 3.22 |
| 5. | Maduranese | 7,179,356 | 3.03 |

While refering to this table, it is only logical to see that the languages spoken in Indonesia are also diverse with about 746 local languages.4 Although the “official” language used is *Bahasa Indonesia* which is also known as the “language of unity”, yet as many as 79.5 per cent of the population of Indonesia speaks their own local language as a colloquial language.5 This shows that although there is a national language, it does not supercede the existence of local languages. Another interesting fact is that Indonesia also has an abundant biodiversity. Out of 5,131,100 biodiversity recorded in the world 15.3 percent is in Indonesia.6

With such a context it is not surprising that Genome Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore (GRTKF) have been a massive discussion in the last ten years in Indonesia. This condition is in line with the urgent global trend to continuously dialogue issues on protection and preservation and has been a part of the GRTKF since circa 1990.7 One of the discussions is about how to protect and preserve the GRTKF through the archiving of traditional knowledge.

Some countries are rapidly responsive in developing archiving methods including New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. Unlike the conditions in Indonesia, the development of discussions on GRTKF issues and archiving methods in Indonesia are not as massive as on the global level. At least until now, the Indonesian National Archives (ANRI) has not discussed the issue of GRTKF in a systematic way, even though ANRI lists ensuring the safety of national assets as one of its aims where one of the national assets is in the cultural form. This goal is stated in the Law on Records and Archives Administration Number 43, 2009. So far, ANRI's role in the issue of traditional knowledge is still limited as the institution that holds some of the recognition certificates given by UNESCO over Indonesia Oral and Intangible Cultural Traditions.

This description indicates that in spite of the policy framework reflected in one of the objectives of the Indonesian national archival system, it is to ensure the safety of national assets in the form of culture. However, the active role of archival institutions (particularly ANRI) that are more intensive have not been able to manifest themselves in empirical reality. This study elaborates on the problems of traditional knowledge and archives in their interests to encourage the active participation of archival institutions (in particular, ANRI) in the protection and preservation of traditional knowledge in Indonesia.

**Research Question**

Based on the description in the introduction, the issues to be elaborated in this research can be formulated in the following question:

“How do archival institutions in Indonesia deal with traditional knowledge protection and preservation issues?”

**Conceptual Framework**

**Archives, Archival Institutions, and Community Archive**

Archives are evidence of an event or activity recorded in a tangible form that makes it possible to be retrieved.8 Substantively, the word ‘archive’ in addition to being an object of stored recorded media, also contains the meaning as an institution. Institutions in the sense of the archive as a system of values and norms that are interrelated regarding the management of the archive. In addition, archives are also an organization of archival institutions. Archival institutions in this research are understood as state institutions. Archival institutions as state institutions in the Indonesian archival system are the national archives, the municipal archive (province and district) and the university archives.

Discussing the archives without exploring the concept of archiving is not a complete discussion. Archiving can be defined as the activities performed after the creation of a document or archive that is then filed or collected in a particular system.9 People who have expertise and professionals in archive management are called archivists. In its development ordinary citizens (non-professionals) emerged who have a deep interest to participate voluntarily in the management of community archives or archive management activities conducted by archival institutions; David Ferriero called these people ‘citizen archivists’.10

Citizen archivist, are not only individuals, but are also institutionalized in the community archives. The community archives is a set of members of society who are independent, manage the archive of their communities without having a relationship directly with the state. Community archives are a form of archival awareness at the grassroots level. The community archive is a collection of archives or evidence that enables citizens to share the importance of their community and how communities are built. They preserve past and present records, processed in such a way as to develop awareness, interests and also activities in the wider community context.11

**Traditional Knowledge as National Asset**

According to Stephen A. Hansen (2003), traditional knowledge is information agreed upon by a group of people, based on experience and adaptation to local culture and the environment, developed over time, and continues to grow. This knowledge is used to defend the society, culture and genetic resources needed for the survival of the community.12

While in the context of Indonesia, in Article 1 Sub-Article (1) of the Draft of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expression Act, the state defines traditional knowledge as a public knowledge gained as a result of real experience in interacting with the environment.

Substantively, all the various definitions of traditional knowledge have some of the following core contents: a group of communities considered and considered themselves as traditional communities, collective, oral-based and transmitted through oral, cross-generational, and contextual methods.13

As detailed by WIPO, a number of traditional knowledge types can be seen in Table 2, below:

**Table 2.**

**Forms of Traditional Knowledge**14

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * spirituality, spiritual knowledge, ethics and moral values; | * names, stories, traditions, songs in oral narratives; | * indigenous peoples ancestral remains, human genetic materials, |
| * social institutions (kinship, political, traditional justice); | * land and sea and air; | * scientific, agricultural, technical and ecological knowledge, and the skills required to implement this knowledge (including that pertaining to resource use practices and systems of classification, medicine) |
| * games and sports, | * traditional resource management including traditional conservation measures; | * cultural environmental resources |
| * dances, ceremonies and ritual performances and practices; | * all material objects and moveable cultural property; | * all sites of cultural significance and immovable cultural property and their associated knowledge; |
| * music; | * language; | * all traditional knowledge and expressions of indigenous cultures held in ex situ collections; |

From this description it is not surprising that traditional knowledge is also positioned as a national asset, especially for developing countries, because it has relationships with how sources of income, food, health in a particular community context are protected, nurtured and managed for a much broader interest.15

Within the Indonesian legal framework, traditional knowledge is also conceptualized as a part of national identity and a national asset that should be developed, protected, promoted, preserved, and utilized; this message is listed in point (d) of the Draft of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions Act.

In the Article 3 Sub-Article (g), the Law on Record and Archives Administration Number 43, 2009, national assets are defined as the property of the state and society, both economically, socially, culturally, and other aspects of life that are subject to archives such as the list of state assets and proof of ownership protected and safeguarded.

**Research Methods**

This research is a preliminary research from a study that is planned to be done in 2018. This research was conducted using qualitative methods with literature review and interview as data collecting methods. In this research the discussion is limited to the concept of traditional knowledges in Indonesia.

**Archival Institutions in Indonesia and Traditional Knowledge Issue: The Unconnected Connections**

In Indonesia, the public is given the opportunity to participate in developing the archival field. Community participation in the field of archives, including the terms of the rescue and preserved of archives. Regardless, community participation is not yet optimally explored on the empirical level, particularly regarding volunteer communities or community archives that manage their archives.

The involvement of the public (read: citizen) was brought up with the consideration that the objective of the archival system could not be achieved in a plenary but only with the public’s involvement. One of the objectives of the archival system contained in the Law on Records and Archives Administration is the rescue and preserved of national assets. In relation to that, the national asset archive program was rolled out. However, the discussion of the issue of traditional knowledge and the role of public participation as an element that needs to be strengthened has not been explored thoroughly.

The issue of traditional knowledge in a general context is part of the GRTKF issue. The GRTKF issue is tied to the issue of national asset protection as stated in the Draft of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expression Act.

The position of ANRI in the issue of GRTKF can be tracked via a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) organized by the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs on 2014, incidentally the author was commissioned by ANRI to attend the FGD. Attended by various government agencies, one of the issues that rose is to make ANRI the manager of the database. However, the idea was not agreed upon because the lack of trust in ANRI's ability to manage the database.

This lack of trust related to the limited role of ANRI itself on this issue. The limited activeness of ANRI on this issue can be seen, up to this time its role is still limited to store certificate of recognition of Intangible World Heritage Culture from UNESCO such as: Wayang (2003), Keris (2005), Batik (2009), and Angklung (2010), which in 2011 was submitted by the Ministry of Tourism.16 Then, in 2016, the "collections" of this certificate grew with the submission of Certificates on Saman (Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2011), Certificate on Noken (Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2012), Certificate of Cultural Landscape of Bali Province (World Heritage, 2012), Certificate In Babad Diponegoro (Memory of the World, 2013) and the Certificate in Nagarakertagama (Memory of the World, 2013) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016.17

The lack of public trust in the ANRI’s ability can be tracked from the discourse about archival rolled in Indonesia. Broadly there are two dominant archival discourses in Indonesia, a technical administrative discourse and an historical discourse.18 The technical administrative discourse is the identification of the archives with the clerical activities. Meanwhile, the historical discourse perceives archives only dealing with the past. These dominant discourses contribute to the formation of public perception on the archival field. That is why the public trust for ANRI on the context of GRTKF (traditional knowledge) issue has not been strongly developed.

As previously discussed, ANRI has had the concept of “national asset” which is one of the national assets in the form of culture as stated in the Law on Records and Archives Administration Number 43, 2009. But, there is no connectivity between the concept of “national assets” with the concept of GRTKF itself. This can be seen in how the concept is translated into a program at the empirical level. At the empirical level, "national asset" protection is translated into the National Asset Archive Management Program which was rolled out in 2017. Based on the author's analysis of the Speech Opening of the Director General of ANRI at the Event of Coordination Meeting of the National Asset Archive Management held in Belitung, the concept of National Asset Archive in this program is formulated into two areas: first, all the treasures of the archives that are saved is a national asset, and second, the form of the archives of national assets; for example, the archives of the Belitung island, the archives of the boundaries of the island and the region of Belitung, the archives about the potential of tourism in Belitung, the archives of the deployment of manpower from Mainland China to Mine Tin on Billiton, the archives of the assimilation of Chinese with the Native of Belitung, and the archives about the cultural synthesis in Belitung.19 From this analysis, the concept of “the national asset archives” is still general and not sharply defined. Whereas, if the concept of “the national asset archives” contextualized by the concept of GRTKF, it will be able to sharpen the concept precisely. So the concept, especially in the form of culture, can be more measured explicitly.

The differences between the concept before and after contextualization can be seen in Table 3, below:

Table 3.

**Contextualization of the National Asset Archives Concept**

**with Traditional Knowledge Issue**

| **Pre-Contextualization** | | **Post- Contextualization** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Concept** | National Asset Archives Concept | **Concept** | National Asset Archives Concept |
| **Subject** | * the archives of the Belitung island; * the archives of the boundaries of the island and the region of Belitung; * The archives about the potential of tourism in Belitung; * the archives of the deployment of manpower from Mainland China to Mine Tin on Billiton; | **Form** | Culture |
| **Subform** | Traditional Knowledge |
| **Subject** |  |
| Traditional medicine | Archives of Jamu Recipe20 |
| Names, stories, traditions, songs in oral narratives; | Archives of Nandong Smong Oral Tradition21 |

Table 3 shows how the categorization of the national asset archives prior to being contextualized with the issue of traditional knowledge is still general. Meanwhile, after the contextualization of the concept of national asset archives is much clearer.

In fact, the argument that archival institutions can be proactive equally embedded in both the Law on Records and Archives Administration and also on the Draft of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions Act. The problem is that the lack of connectivity between the "spirit" contained in both policies so that the formulation of concrete programs in ANRI or other archival institutions in Indonesia about the case of protection and preservation of national assets especially in the form of culture is still too general and abstract.

**An Alternative Way: Socio-Cultural Community Archives Movement in Indonesia**

A grassroots movement has been formed as a response to the perception that the state is ignorant about the protection and preservation of cultural archives. That is the reason why citizen initiatives arise in the form of community archives. One of the most active community archives is the Indonesia Visual Art Archive (IVAA) located in Yogyakarta. Over the course of time, some of these community archives were established including the Jaringan Arsip Budaya Nusantara (JABN) (Nusantara Culture Archives Network) in 2011. The JABN has six members including the Tikar Foundation, Jakarta Arts Council, East Nusa Tenggara Museum, Studio Audio Visual Puskat, Dayakology Institute, and the Indonesia Visual Art Archive (IVAA). Each of these organizations has been active in archiving work since 2010. The consolidation comes from an awareness of the various obstacles they face. In 2007, the devastating fire of the Dayakology Institute led to the destruction of transcripts and research documents. At the NTT Museum, half of the collection is still stored in the warehouse because of limited showroom space. Because of these conditions, the idea of establishing the JABN came about in the hopes that a consolidated pattern of cooperation could overcome the obstacles.22

The JABN focuses on two things, the work of archiving and the dissemination of information about the archives they preserve. It provides greater opportunities for cultural archives to be accessible to the public at large, and also have a goal to increase public awareness about the importance of the archives. To strengthen the position of the movement, the IVAA published a book entitled *Arsipelago: Kerja Arsip & Pengarsipan Seni Budaya di Indonesia* (Archivelago: Archives Work and Archiving Art and Culture in Indonesia) in 2014. Through this book, they would like to affirm that the work of the archive is a political work. This means the community archives movement (JABN) wants to break the perception that has been hardened in public about the work of archiving. Archiving work during this time has been seen as a technical exercise only collecting and classifying correspondences letters and ancient documents. Archival work is a political work because it is concerned with claims, access, and knowledge.23 Interestingly, the state’s main discourse on archival work is still dominated by administrative and historical technical discourses. Meanwhile, through a new movement, the JABN wants to enliven the discussion of the archival field in Indonesia by rebranding the face of the archives as something related to politics, culture, and society. Archival work is part of the strategy, resistance, and resilience of individuals and communities.24 The author calls it a sociological discourse.25

The case of the JABN is interesting because the movement is consolidated in the community archive which is engaged in the same breath in the issue of archiving cultural archives. According to the author, the JABN is a consolidated community archive and it is also evidenced that the community, even with all its obstacles, is still able to consistently grow to protect and preserve the archives of culture independently.

The potential energy of community archives has not been explored by archival institutions, especially ANRI. This potential energy could basically optimize the achievement of the objective of organizing the archival system itself. The problem is, the trust of the community against the state has not been built in plenary and vice versa.

**Constructing the Possibility Collaboration Between Archival Institutions and Community Archives**

As previously discussed, public trust in archival institutions (especially ANRI) is not strong enough. This condition is caused by the dominance of the technical administrative and historical discourses. This means archival institutions (especially ANRI) need to encourage the enrichment of archival discourse, and the most relevant one is sociological discourse. Archival institutions can dispute perceptions that have already hardened in the public mind by disseminating this sociological discourse. Besides this, the archival institutions need to prove that they have theoretical frameworks, policies, and methodologies to be able to engage the issue of traditional knowledge.

 Consequently, archival institutions must begin to explore this issue of traditional knowledge. An important point of archiving in this issue of knowledge is when such traditional knowledge is documented. As confirmed by Informant Z, who is also one of the conceptors of the Law on Records and Archives Administration, traditional knowledge relates to local wisdom that is usually "orally recorded", and it becomes archived when it documented.26 In this case, documenting traditional knowledge can be done as well as oral history methods, as it does to fill the void of a certain story or data in the context of history.27

The relationship between traditional knowledge and archiving is so complex. However, much research has been done. The archival theoretical framework may refer to the concept of tribal archives or indigenous archives and other similar concepts.28 Others issues that need to be elaborated also relate to legal aspects such as copyright, trademarks, geographical indication and domain names, risk management strategies, and dispute resolutions.29 This theoretical and legal framework is important because archival issues in traditional knowledge mainly concern two things: protection, and preservation. Protection includes the legal logic that the documentation and archiving of traditional knowledge is a method to protect it from illegal use or exploitation.30 Meanwhile, preservation is all about preserving the traditional knowledge from extinction and sharing it with future generations.31

Another important thing is to construct strong relationships with community archives. Because logically the community archive has socio-cultural ties with the cultural community itself. So they could do more effective work. As explained before, if there is any cooperation between community archives, such as IVAA with ANRI, it is not yet very intensive.

The next step is to make efforts to develop the community archives in order to grow as incorporated in the JABN. Other strategic steps that can be done are to provide space for the community archive exhibit the archive collection, to participate in archivist empowerment programs, and keep in mind the national level awards program for the community archives that actually fulfill the objectives of the Indonesia national archival system, especially protecting the national assets in the cultural form.

**Conclusions**

Based on previous description and analysis, it could be concluded that Indonesia already has a policy framework that enables the active role of archival institutions in the protection and preservation of traditional knowledge, but it has not been running optimally. Under such circumstances, the community archive incorporated in the JABN turns out to play an active role in the protection and preservation of archive culture despite facing many obstacles. This case is real evidence about the participation of the community in the protection and preservation of cultural archives. Furthermore, it is important for archival institutions, especially ANRI to grow community archives as much as possible throughout society. This is a rational step that can be taken so that the protection and preservation of traditional knowledge can be optimized through a synergy between the state (archival institutions) and society (community archives).

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**Summary**

The issues about protecting and preserving traditional knowledge have long been an international debate. International archival communities welcomed this issue by bringing up the role of archives in order to protect traditional knowledge. Archival communities in countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, paid special attention to the issue of traditional knowledge. It is the implications of their cultural context as the countries inhabited by indigenous groups. In contrast, issues about the archiving of traditional knowledge in Indonesia have not been popular. Even though Indonesia is a country inhabited by approximately 1,340 indigenous groups, the archival community in Indonesia does not intensively deal with this issue. The involvement of archival institutions in Indonesia on the issue of traditional knowledge is still limited as the institution that store four documents entitled the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity awarded by Unesco, *Wayang* (2003), *Keris* (2005), *Batik* (2009), and *Angklung* (2010). Actually, the objectives of organizing the archives in Indonesia is to ensure the safety of national assets which are in the form of culture, but until now there has been no comprehensive program related to it. This condition is much different with archival institutions, for example, in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They take a very active role in protecting and preserving traditional knowledge through the method of archiving. Using qualitative methods through literature review and interview, this paper argues that in order to play a role in the protection and preservation of traditional knowledge, archival institutions in Indonesia cannot be optimized without developing community archives in each cultural community throughout’ Indonesia.