

INTERSPECIES KINSHIP OF *LIURAN*: RETHINKING MARSHALL SAHLINS' MUTUALITY OF BEING



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Abstract

The anthropological discussions regarding the concept of mutuality of being by Marshal Sahlins have focused on the idea that kinship only occurs between humans through certain rituals or traditions. This idea is limited in considering non-human species that also potentially form interspecies kinship. Through a multispecies ethnographic approach, this article discusses interspecies kinship in the context of joint agricultural care without exchanging exact amount of payment (*liuran*) by female farmers in Kampung Laut District, Cilacap Regency, Indonesia. In this study, the data were collected through participant observation techniques and in-depth interviews with four female farmers as key informants who have been involved in *liuran* for years. The findings showed that the interspecies kinship between female farmers and rice and garden crops is like mother and child because there has been an emotional-ecological bond in the process of caring for sedimentation farming over decades, primarily through taboo practices. The process of caring for rice and garden plants together also forms a socio-economic support system among female farmers, which helps strengthen their interspecies kinship. Considering non-human species as part of the family members places them in an equal relationship with humans in contributing to the sustainability of living ecosystems.

Abstrak

Diskusi antropologi mengenai konsep mutuality of being oleh Marshal Sahlins selama ini berfokus pada gagasan bahwa pertalian sosial hanya dapat terjadi di antara manusia melalui ritual atau tradisi tertentu. Gagasan ini terbatas dalam mempertimbangkan spesies non-manusia yang juga berpotensi membentuk pertalian sosial interspesies. Melalui pendekatan etnografi multispecies, tulisan ini membahas pertalian sosial interspesies yang hadir dalam konteks perawatan pertanian secara bersama tanpa pertukaran uang dengan nominal tertentu (liuran) oleh para petani perempuan di Kecamatan Kampung Laut, Kabupaten Cilacap, Indonesia. Dalam penelitian ini, data dikumpulkan melalui teknik observasi partisipan dan wawancara mendalam dengan empat orang petani perempuan sebagai informan kunci yang terlibat dalam liuran selama belasan tahun. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pertalian sosial interspesies antara petani perempuan dengan padi dan tanaman kebun adalah selayaknya ibu dan anak karena ada ikatan emosional-ekologis dalam proses merawat pertanian sedimentasi selama belasan tahun, khususnya melalui praktik tabu. Proses merawat padi dan tanaman kebun bersama juga membentuk sistem dukungan sosial-ekonomi di antara petani perempuan yang turut memperkuat pertalian sosial interspesies mereka dengan padi dan tanaman kebun. Menganggap spesies non-manusia sebagai bagian dari keluarga menempatkan mereka pada relasi yang setara dengan manusia dalam berkontribusi bagi keberlangsungan ekosistem kehidupan.

INTRODUCTION

Humans and non-human entities form an interconnected living system. Humans with their culture and non-human entities that exist as part of the natural environment



are not separated ontologically and epistemologically. The nature/culture dichotomization that developed in Cartesian philosophy does not apply in the anthropogenic situations, which occurs due to the inequality of humans' role (culture) over species and other abiotic entities (nature) (Serpell, 1996, p. 55). Humans are too lulled into thinking that their kind is a superior entity and capable of exploiting other entities for profit.

Basically, humans are not the only entities capable of determining actions for themselves and other entities, but the natural environment can also speak and act on itself. The natural environment exists in the same ecosystem as humans, so humans need to be aware of rethinking their position and attachment to the natural environment, like animal behaviorists and interspecies researchers who emphasize the need to rethink the boundaries between species (McIntyre – Mills, 2021).

Attention to the relationship between humans and non – humans, especially plants, is essential for reviewing the importance of interspecies relationships. Several studies involve observations and analyses of plants and their position in human living systems, for example, daily practices and relationships between herbal plants, Rastafari *bossiedokters* (bush doctors), and *kruiemanne* (herbalists) in Matzikama City. The herbal plants in Matzikama have had roles that have changed over time along with relationships with bush doctors and herbalists (Nathen, 2018). There is also Buddhist medicine and the value of attention between local people and plants in postsocialist Siberia. These are specific ways local people care for and select certain plants for medicinal and other purposes. They also practice a particular form of attention to interact with plants, which has implications for their knowledge and choice of specific plants for physical and mental health treatment (Chudakova, 2017).

These studies show that the natural environment helps shape the fabric of life together with humans. Unfortunately, the approach in anthropological studies so far tends to focus on humans as the center of the ego in the studies of social relationships and kinship. Marshall Sahlins proposes the concept of *mutuality of being* as a bond between one person and another that grows through sharing the same experiences, suffering and feelings, "*meaningfully and emotionally, relatives live each other's lives and die each other's death.*" (Sahlins, 2013). Through the concept of *mutuality of being*, someone can become a relative of another person through sharing the same name or the same food to help each other survive.

This concept can be expanded to involve other natural environmental entities because they have their own intelligence and ability to live through a sense of self. For example, parrots can express themselves through sound; domestic dogs, cats, and horses can read human body movements; primates recognize the natural surroundings through signs; and dolphins use sound to connect with their flock (Meijer, 2019, p. 10). Not only living creatures, abiotic entities also have a sense of self that requires them to maintain or change the molecular structure they contain. This sense of self is mutually present in an ecosystem that forms life together. It becomes relevant when humans and dogs are present in a natural environment that requires each of them to express their respective abilities to create a mutualistic situation (Haraway, 2003, p. 22, 2013, p. 15). This is the moment when the kinship between humans and animals and the natural environment is visible.

Fuentes argues that it is important to broaden the human sense to think about and involve the interdependence of the natural environment as a kinship between species. Fuentes presents an expansion of the scope of Belmont's respect for humans by

involving other animals because he believes that we live in this world based on biological and logical ties. Fuentes means biological bonds are something that we naturally get when we are born, but the way these bonds work in our lives is something that we choose, construct, and develop as a logical bond with other species that accompany us in life (Fuentes, 2020).

In a further discussion of thinking about interspecies relationships, Nagel once discussed that species-specific consciousness is more than just a brain function and cannot be reduced to a rigid role like a machine. For him, it is important to think of species consciousness in relation to respect for personal experience. He means that individuals are all species of living creatures and abiotic entities that have specific experiences of themselves and their surroundings (Nagel, 2006, p. 186). They have an awareness of it and humans must realize and appreciate it even though they cannot understand the personal experience. It is similar to humans, who depend on humans and other species to operate social functions to survive; animals and plants also depend on their species and other species to obtain food, provide oxygen, and live. It is a form of reciprocal altruism that applies to all living creatures (McIntyre – Mills, 2021, p. 176).

Multispecies is an approach in post-human anthropology studies that involves the presence, awareness, and ability of species and abiotic entities to explain life in an ecosystem. Multispecies view humans, animals, plants, and abiotic entities as unique elements on earth with their altruism to form a complex fabric of life. The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of the relationship between species, specifically between viruses and humans, which not only has medical effects but also creates social, economic, and political effects. The COVID-19 virus infects the human body because these two species cannot adapt to the conditions of their respective species to live together (Sanjatmiko & Hardiah, 2022). This non-conformity is also a moment of awareness for humans in which certain conditions that threaten the survival of one species can have negative consequences for other species because of the disruption of inter-species connections in a web of living system (McIntyre – Mills, 2021).

Local communities in specific regions or beliefs are accustomed to involving the natural environment and abiotic entities as part of the social and kin system. For example, they identify the land as "our mother" and have traditions and totems that merge interspecies categories (Romm & Lethole, 2021). In other words, the lives of local communities who interact closely with the natural environment tend to build social ties and produce multispecies kinship terms as an effort to harmonize protection with other entities in the natural environment.

In a case study of women in the agricultural and garden ecosystem in Kampung Laut District, female farmers also express their love for the plants they care for through the *liuran* system. *Liuran* is a mechanism for managing rice fields and gardens jointly and alternately by farmers without exchanging money as labor compensation. This phenomenon is interesting because it involves rice and domestic plants of garden ecosystems in the emergence of interspecies kinship. Besides, typologies such as caring and exchanged affection also emerge. Philippe Descola discussed social relationships with non-human species in the typology of protection, namely that plants (or animals) become dependent on and involved in human collectives through the processes of reproduction, nurturing, and survival (Descola, 2012).

Through this background, the article attempts to challenge Sahlins' concept of *mutuality of being* in the context of explaining social relationships involving non-human species. This paper argues that non-human species play a role in forming social

relationships with humans as mutual relationship, which is called *mutuality with other beings*. Non-human species are no longer passive objects but can respond to personal experiences when interacting with humans.

This study uses a multispecies ethnographic approach to collect data, describe, and analyze the phenomenon (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010; van Dooren et al., 2016). A multispecies ethnographic approach allows researchers to understand the lives of non-human species that have long been marginalized in relation to humans. This approach also places non-human species on an equal footing. This multispecies ethnographic approach involves paying attention to the lives of entities other than humans so that researchers gain a holistic understanding of the experiences, ways of life, and bio-cultural relationships between humans, non-human species, and the environment in creating a shared ecology.

The data collection process in this research involved participant observation and in-depth interviews. Participant observation was carried out by being involved in *liuran* activities in the rice fields and chatting with the female farmers in rice field huts, gardens, and house terraces during January 2019. In-depth interviews were conducted with four key informants, namely female farmers who participated in *liuran* in rice fields and gardens. They are Yana, Wati, Warni, and Ana, who have always been doing *liuran* together for years. They were chosen as key informants because they had private rice fields and had experienced various dynamics of farming in sedimentary rice fields and gardens that were vulnerable to sea tides for years. Through this experience, they can discuss the ecological character of rice and garden plants, the non-human subjects discussed in this article.

The research location in this article is in Kampung Laut District, Cilacap Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Kampung Laut was once a large body of water in the Segara Anakan Lagoon area but has undergone massive sedimentation since the 1960s. Kampung Laut turned into land of sedimentation due to Segara Anakan Lagoon experiencing mud deposition from the rivers surrounding and emptying into Segara Anakan, namely the Citanduy River, Cibereum River, Cikonde River, and Cimeneng River, also from the volcanic mud of Mount Galunggung and agricultural extensification from the green revolution program in the upstream area (Sanjatmiko, 2016, p. 25). These landscape changes also change life patterns and interactions between humans and other entities in the Kampung Laut ecosystem.

WOMEN ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND IN KAMPUNG LAUT

Since sedimentation has become more massive and changed the seascape of Kampung Laut into land, there is the potential to develop emergent land into productive agricultural land. A social foundation from Cilacap called Bina Sejahtera Social Foundation (YSBS) built embankments and roads and managed *trukah* land in 1970s. Since the water embankment functions to prevent seawater from entering the rice field, Kampung Laut experienced extraordinary rice harvest during 1980–1990s (Mulyadi, 2013, p. 47).

Yana, a local female farmer from Kampung Laut, said that when she married her husband, who is also a local from Kampung Laut, in the 1980s, she got access to manage the *trukah* inherited from her parents and in-laws who were fishermen. Fishermen's fishing areas are getting narrow due to sedimentation, forcing fishermen to inherit or sell the wetlands if they cannot manage it into productive land.

Yana used the moment of agricultural extensification in the 1980s in Kampung Laut to empower the sedimentation of rice fields by building small embankments to prevent salt water from entering the areas during the daily tides. Together with her husband and several neighbors who are her relatives, she managed the rice fields using the *pronoto mongso* calendar so that they can live, grow, and produce rice according to the daily cycle of rain and tides. Since she was the first woman to own a rice field in Lempong Pucung Hamlet of Kampung Laut, this was the first time *liuran* was practiced by women in that village.

The moment of agricultural success in Kampung Laut encouraged other women to buy their own land and rice fields with the funds of their children who worked as migrants. For instance, Warni, a female farmer, has a plot of land and *trukah* rice field as a gift from her eldest child who works in Singapore and Hong Kong. On the other hand, women who do not have access to land or rice fields usually participate in agricultural and plantation activities through the *liuran* or *maro* system.

THE *LIURAN* SYSTEM

The rice field and garden management system in Kampung Laut consists of two types, namely, by *liuran* and payment. Both systems require farmers to work communally to care for rice fields and gardens for a certain period or planting phase. Different from payment, which exchanges farmers' labor for a certain amount of money (daily wage of IDR 60,000 for male workers and IDR 50,000 for female workers), the *liuran* system does not use money as a substitute for the services of farmers' labor in managing rice fields or gardens.

Liuran in Kampung Laut takes place by inviting female and male farmers by the rice field owner's house who want to farm or clean the rice fields or gardens from weeds. When the planting season comes in the rainy season (usually at the end to the middle of the year), the female farmers have prepared farming equipment, such as rice seeds, sickles, and hoes, then inform fellow farmers that there will be *liuran* in a farmer's rice field.

On the day of *liuran*, the female farmers gather in the rice field hut at 7 AM and then start managing the rice fields after some of other female farmers come. *Liuran* can begin by planting seeds, cleaning weeds (*ngerambet*), spraying pesticides until midnight, and continuing after lunch break until 4 PM. It takes four days for five female farmers to clean one hectare of rice field. After the rice field is clean of weeds, male farmers who operate the tractor carry out the plowing phase. Yana is the only farmer in the hamlet with her tractor, so they borrowed Yana's tractor when they were working in other farmers' fields.

"Yes, we only have to borrow it from Mrs. Yana because she has it. She also participates in our *liuran*, that is okay. Later we will use her tractor, the rice field owner will pay for the petrol, and then my husband or another male farmer will operate the tractor. That is how we are. If there are items here, we will use it together. It will be useful for us too." (Warni. Interview, 2019)

While resting in the rice field hut, Warni, who was also taking part in the *liuran* at that time, said that inviting farmers to do *liuran* in private rice fields was easier than asking them in rice fields with *maro* status. It happens because when the rice fields have *maro* status, farmers are not accessible to manage the rice due to the economic ties

surrounding the management status of the rice fields. In a private rice field, the female farmer is not forced by the rice field owner to work hard every day because they want to fulfill a shared moral responsibility for the rice welfare.



Picture 1. Portrait of female farmers taking a short break of *liuran* in a rice field hut

The moment of resting and having lunch in the hut is an opportunity for female farmers to exchange stories. After being involved in conversations in the hut for ten days of *liuran*, the researcher identified that some of their conversation topics were about the condition of seawater entering the rice fields, plans for the next *liuran*, prices of fertilizers and pesticides, and a little of household financial conditions. When there are female farmers who are sad due to the failure of rice growth, or their finances are in trouble, other female farmers provide support by lending them money or labor to manage their rice fields until they have a successful harvest.

Their freedom to exchange stories and provide support is based on similar socio – economic experiences amidst the uncertainty of sedimentation livability, and farming activities carried out together almost every day. The feelings female farmers feel from working together in caring for rice fields and gardens are the emergence of a sense of joy, mutual trust, and mutual support for the work life of fellow female farmers. Meeting fellow female farmers is also entertainment for a female farmer named Wati. For her, *liuran* is a means of exchanging stories and thoughts with other female farmers,

"For example, today we are working in Mrs. Mariyem's (rice field). We are going out together and laughing in the rice field. We talk about many stories, but the most important thing is not talking about other people. Since we are fellow female farmers who take turns, that is what I support and feel." (Wati. Interview, 2019)

Based on this experience of living in the same socio – economic landscape and standing in a similar moral ecology responsibility, fellow farmers who participate in the *liuran* will take turns on every *liuran* invitation voluntarily. They exchange labor to look after the rice fields or gardens together without any amount of expected money.

The Taboo when Doing *Liuran* in the Rice Field

Attention to non – human species as subjects is an integral part of *liuran*. In this way, the treatment of rice towards sea water threat in the rice fields must also be given great attention to respect their existence. Female farmers who often interact with them in the rice fields experience many incidents and interpret them as taboo. One example is that husband and wife farmers tending rice are not allowed to fight because it affects the growth of the rice. As a foster child, paddy seems unhappy to see his parents fight. Yana said,

"If you are a farmer, you should not squabble over or argue between husband and wife when working. If we dispute, the rice will become like a sick person, feeling feverish like caring for a child. For example, as a mother taking care of a child, why do I always make such a fuss with my husband? In the end, it turns out to be like that to my grandson. She/he is crying like that, *sumeng* (tantrums)." (Yana. Interview, 2019)

Apart from not being allowed to quarrel between husband and wife, when caring for rice, you are also not allowed to eat by walking in the middle of the rice fields. Eating is only permitted in the hut during breaks from working in the rice fields. Caring for rice that lives alongside lush forests is also a challenge for farmers because some humans or animals see the rice far beyond the farmer's vision. Wati is a female farmer who has experience meeting other species in the Nusakambangan forest. She said,

"There are lots of forests; we do not see them, but they see us. That is why when we plant rice, it is as if we... I feel like the ones who planted it, are already safe, but it turns out people are walking while eating, which has an effect. Even though they are looking, we are not, and if someone is eating while walking.. Well, at night, it finally hits... especially when the rice is expanding and turning yellow; we must be careful." (Wati. Interview, 2019)

If farmers or someone brings small children during the day, they play and laugh in the middle of the rice fields, and then animals, such as wild boars and tigers, will be coming at night. Moreover, when the rice is "fat" (filled with rice), the function of the hut in the middle of the rice field is as a place to wait for the rice when it is yellow and monitor it from these taboos.

***Liuran* on Garden of Nusakambangan Hill**

Nusakambangan Hill is adjacent to Lempong Pucung Hamlet. At its feet lie sedimentary rice fields managed by female and male farmers. Apart from being planted with hardwood trees such as teak (*Tectona grandis*), Nusakambangan Hill is also cultivated with *Albasia* (*Albizia chinensis*, or *albis*o in local term) by the residents of Kampung Laut. *Albasia* is a production alternative if rice production goes poorly due to climate change.



Picture 2. Yana is planting ginger seedlings in *Albasia*'s garden.

Several families in Kampung Laut have albizia trees in cubic units which are planted on state-owned forest land. In between Albasia trees, female farmers plant chilies (*Capsicum annum*), ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*, or *kapol* in local terms), galangal (*Alpinia galanga*), and herbal plants. These plants function as a stock of raw materials for household cooking or are distributed to other women who have helped with the rituals or guests who come.

The effectiveness of land use and long-term food shortages also explain why female farmers grow domestic crops. Yana shared her perception about planting domestic plants in the Albasia garden that she cares for,

"Compared to buying them, if you grow them yourself, they are delicious, so at least you do not have to think about anything else." (Yana. Interview, 2019)

Planting domestic plants and herbs as intercrops for albizia is also carried out by *liuran*. When the rice fields have been cultivated or cleaned, female farmers who have albizia trees in the Nusakambangan forest will invite other female farmers to plant between the trees (intercropping) that they call as mountain gardens. The steps of *liuran* in the intercropping are cleaning the land around the albizia trees from weeds, loosening the soil with a hoe or small knife, and then planting the necessary domestic plant seeds.

For example, on January 25, 2019, Ani, the owner of the intercropping land, planned to plant ginger and clean the weeds around existing crops.



Picture 3. Ani is cleaning the weeds around the albizia trees using a small knife.

There are four female farmers involved in *liuran* on Ani's garden. The female farmers each departed from their homes at 7 AM, hiking through the forest for 20 minutes to the albizia garden, which would be planted with intercropping crops. Even though the female farmers walk alone, they can identify certain farmers' albizia gardens through their familiarity with the characteristics of the plants, the thickness of the leaves, and the position of the trees. When one female farmer arrived at the garden, she will be waiting for each other until all the female farmers were present. The garden owner usually brings plant seeds from home to plant in the garden, while other female farmers bring their sickles, knives, buckets, and lunch. During their break from *liuran* at 12 AM, female farmers also exchange stories about their agricultural concerns, how to care for garden plants well, and other things they have yet to be told in the rice field huts.

"We should be careful about the treatment of chilies, turmeric, cardamom, and ginger, too. We must calm our hearts and minds so that the seeds planted are happy and will grow well. They are also living creatures like us, so they must be treated like we do humans: think well... speak good things. Hopefully, the results will be good. Yes, as we said yesterday, plants are children because we prepare the seeds, we plant them in the womb of the earth, and we take care of them as their mothers, too." (Ani. Interview, 2019)

Rice and garden plants as "children" for female farmers in Kampung Laut are communal awareness that also builds social ties between women. They have the same multispecies awareness, the same experience of nurturing multispecies in the same ecosystem, and the same affectional needs as women. These are the similarities that indirectly bind them in a form of kinship based on multispecies interactions with plants. It is what is called mutuality with other beings.

NO LONGER *MUTUALITY OF BEING*, BUT *MUTUALITY WITH OTHER BEING*

Marshall Sahlins presents the concept of *mutuality of being*, which is a bond between one person and another that grows through sharing the same experiences, suffering and feelings, or sharing the same name or the same food to help each other survive. (Sahlins, 2013, p. IX) Sahlins' basic principle regarding the concept of kinship is that it is not only determined by genetic and legal links but also social norms and cultural values. Through this concept, he argues that even someone who is not legally bound can become a relative if both parties agree and identify their relationship as relatives or family, through the process of sharing the same social norms and cultural values. It is on the basis that Sahlins views kinship as cultural and not natural.

The issue of "being" in the context of relatives discussed by Sahlins seems to be based on aspects of participation and the determination of symbolic thought, which can only be carried out and exchanged between humans (Sahlins, 2013, pp. 31–32). For him, it is relevant because there are symbols, meanings and symbol–based actions that are mutually agreed upon and expressed jointly by humans. Symbols and actions that are exchanged and shared constitute mutuality (Stasch, 2009, p. 137). "Mutuality" for Sahlins refers to the quality of relationships between individuals who participate and share life and exchange as they are. This mutuality is present in a shared experience by fellow beings (joint beings) (Shryock, 2013).

It becomes problematic because Sahlins does not consider the existence and role of non–human species in helping humans to form symbols and actions. As he describes, Chimpanzees produce and exchange signs that can only be understood by the reasoning of their species and they are incapable of participating symbolically with other entities (Sahlins, 2013, p. 41). In other words, "being" does not include animals, plants, and abiotic entities. Robbins (2013) criticizes that Sahlins does not involve intersubjectivity in the concept (Robbins, 2013).

In another description, Sahlins mentions "*the transmission of life-capacities among persons*," which implies contact with the natural environment and other species (Sahlins, 2013, p. 29), but he does not say it explicitly. He still emphasizes this context for humans. Basically, life capacity is a broad concept involving the natural and social environment which are interconnected and transmit life capacity to humans, animals, plants, microbes, and other abiotic factors. It is one point of explanation of interspecies connectivity that Sahlins does not specifically explain when discussing kinship. Robbins

offers the involvement of shared responsibility and mutual susceptibility as an alternative in understanding the mutuality of being in kinship (Robbins, 2013).

This study attempts to rethink the scope of "being" in interspecies mutuality through a multispecies approach in the context of *liuran*. The findings showed that the interaction of female farmers with agricultural and garden ecosystems creates a space for multispecies relationships through caring practices between female farmers and rice and garden plants. The *liuran* system allows female farmers to express affection, love, and care for the plants they consider as a child.

In this context, emergent land farming is a "bloom-space" because it offers an affective space that is shaped differently or seems to be an imagination of affection in the real world (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010). The imagination of affection from different entities and having a relationship from each entity's unique identity is a form of analogy proposed by Descola (2012). In other words, the affection given by rice in land farming is not painful like affection with humans so that the emotions exchanged in the relationship between female farmers and rice are an authentic form of intimacy imagined by the farmer.

The term "child" spoken by female farmers regarding rice and garden plants is a fundamental form of the emergence of kinship between species. The female farmers value the rice and garden plants as their children due to nurturing activities and experiences as women, so the plants cared for with attention are also associated with kin (Haraway, 2003, pp. 16–17). The kinship relationship between female farmers and rice and garden plants blooming through *liuran* involves the process of thinking, feeling, and doing together by planting, cleaning weeds, expelling rice from seawater, and practicing taboos. Practicing local knowledge, such as taboos, is a form of caring concern among female farmers towards plant species they consider as part of the family.

This kin relation positions female farmers and plants to share a place to live and support life. Female farmers provide care and protection for rice from seawater and weeds, and then rice plants and gardens give the farmers ecological contributions, food functions and social capital. Looking at the co-residence, co-presence, and substantial sharing presented by Sahlins, this does not only occur among humans but also between species (Sahlins, 2013, p. 68). Sahlins should involve other species that participate in forming a life together (co-living) with humans.

As Haraway mentions, the multispecies approach is as an active story from a technology of worlding, "*Stories are means to ways of living*" that allow human to pay attention to other beings in the ecosystem that creates life reciprocally (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010, p. 12). This explanation makes us aware that discussions around mutuality should also consider the process of forming the meaning of life between species. "Mutuality" is not just participation between humans, who are considered the only creatures whose thoughts can be valid, but also how the presence of natural environmental entities around humans forms thought. The phenomenon of affective interaction, protection, and care between female farmer and plants in agricultural and plantation ecosystems further strengthens the fact that multispecies mutuality can occur.

The significant things for humans expressed in plants are part of their cosmology, as well as plants and abiotic entities reveal themselves as they are. In another sense, when plants do not match particular human actions or certain situations in the abiotic environment, a natural response of the plants will emerge. Through observation and experience, humans respond to this matter through certain actions to keep plants alive, for example, through taboo practices and social ties with other women to support each

other. Ultimately, *mutuality of being* no longer applies only to fellow humans, but also to species and the natural environment as mutuality with other beings.

CONCLUSION

The *liuran* system becomes an interesting case for studying multispecies interactions between humans and non-human species on Earth. When humans have intensive contact with certain species, particular ecological-emotional experiences will be created as the basis for the emergence of interspecies kinship. This article shows how the interaction of female farmers with rice species and garden plants in *liuran* can emerge the conception of "children" for non-human species through the nurturing role of women and the operation of cultural values in the form of taboos in farming and gardening.

Through these findings, Marshal Sahlins' conception of the mutuality of being needs to be expanded in scope. This article argues that the significant "being" on earth is not only human but also plant, animal, and abiotic entities. In this position, mutuality does not mean that humans share shelter, viability, and emotional attachment with fellow humans, but also non-human species. Humans are present in the world because other species and entities are also in the same living space. From this position, mutuality based on the awareness that other species and entities are also "present together" potentially dissolves the human superiority and mistreatment of other species, and strives for balance in the ecosystem.

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Interview

- Ani. Interview with Female farmer, January 26, 2019
- Warni. Interview with Female farmer, January 19, 2019
- Wati. Interview with Female farmer, January 20, 2019
- Yana. Interview with Female farmer, January 21, 2019