

Man and his pursuits of subsistence and sustainability: An Anthropological perspective

(Commentary on the discussion on Marine Protected Area and sustainability in the Kuroshio region)

Joshua Rovie L. Daclan

Laboratory of Human Health and Medical Science
Graduate School of Kuroshio Science, Kochi University

The influx of technological advances in the field of agriculture has brought changes in contemporary and inter

nation society such as the Kuroshio region. These changes may have been accounted from the increasing necessity for food production and varieties of agricultural produce. In Thomas Robert Malthus's "Essays on the Principle of Population" (1872), the aforesaid advances may be correlated with the increasing demand for food security with the increasing number of population. Albeit the natural resources are produced arithmetically, the population inherently grows exponentially, and thus disequilibrium occurs. As this phenomenon persists, man continuously endeavors to be innovative in ways he obtains and distributes that natural resources, the environment he is situated in, has been endowed with. This endeavor is realized to meet society's subsistence amidst the limited resources that nature could provide. Similarly there are ecological limitations to human potential (Eriksen, 2001:43). In addition to the increasing population growth, several factors may be contributory to the emergence of advances in the fields of agriculture and fisheries, one of which is the conduciveness of the environment in the propagation of resources apt to meet man's subsistence and his survival.

The limitation of the environment to produce adequately and man's innovative pursuits may be deemed inversely proportional. Montesquieu posited that the main cause of Europe's technological and scientific advances was the harsh climate which required the inhabitants to be inventive and sharp-witted to survive. This thesis, however may be deemed flawed as this posits "climatic determinism" and the assertion of such may be a faux pas in the perspective of Anthropology; for there is no simple link between ecological conditions and social organization (Eriksen, 2001: 193). Thus subsistence and survival are none but minute concepts relative to the magnanimity for of the issues encompassing society, man and his pursuits advances and subsequently his endeavors to manufacture life's meanings associated with those pursuits. As Dr. Eufrazio Abaya, Anthropology professor at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, posited (quoting Clifford Geertz), "Man is more than walking proteins", thus amidst the struggles to meet one's subsistence through innovative and scientific pursuits is the impetus for man to find meanings and eventually build social organizations from the which these meanings may be significantly realized and magnified through the interaction of the people who may persevere to uphold such meanings in the organization, or which these pursuits may be derived from, carried on to, or may be exploited. In parlance humans are biological entities with certain unquestionably innate needs but there are "always" socially created means of satisfying these needs on a sustainable manner (Eriksen, 2001: 40).

References

- Eriksen, T. H. (2001). *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (2nd ed.). European Union: TJ International.
- Malthus, T. R. (1872). *An Essay on the Principle of Population Or a View of Its Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness, an Inquiry Into Our Prospects Respecting the Future Removal Or Mitigation of the Evils which it Occasions* by Rev. TR Malthus. Reeves and Turner.