



*Perspective Article*

# Living with the Sea: Everyday Rhythms, Social Space, and Cultural Meaning in Sangihe Island Communities

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## Abstract

Island communities in the Sangihe archipelago organize their social life through everyday practices that are inseparable from the surrounding maritime environment. This article examines how daily rhythms, shared social spaces, and cultural meanings shape collective life in Sangihe from a sociological perspective. Rather than focusing on economic productivity or formal governance, the article emphasizes lived experience as the foundation of social organization. By approaching island society through ordinary practices, the article highlights how social cohesion is produced through repetition, proximity, and shared understanding. Time, space, and routine interaction are treated not as background conditions but as active elements in shaping social relations. This perspective contributes to broader discussions on society and culture by demonstrating how island communities sustain continuity and adapt to change through everyday life. It positions Sangihe as an example of how social order in Global South Island contexts is grounded in lived maritime experience.

**Keywords:** island society; everyday life; social space; maritime culture; Sangihe Islands.

## 1. Introduction

Life in island communities unfolds through a close and continuous relationship with the surrounding environment. In the Sangihe Islands, the sea is not merely a geographical feature or an economic resource; it functions as a central reference point through which social life is organized, interpreted, and given meaning. Daily routines, patterns of interaction, and shared expectations are shaped by maritime conditions that are experienced collectively rather than individually, embedding environmental rhythms directly into social life. The sea thus becomes a social medium that structures how people move, interact, and orient themselves within the community [1][2].

Sociological discussions of island societies often privilege structural factors such as livelihoods, governance arrangements, or environmental vulnerability. While these perspectives offer important insights, they may overlook how social life is continuously reproduced through mundane, repetitive practices that give coherence to everyday existence. In Sangihe, social order is not primarily imposed through formal institutions or explicit regulation, but sustained through shared rhythms, habitual interaction, and mutual recognition. These everyday practices function as subtle yet powerful mechanisms through which norms are reinforced and collective life is stabilized [3][4].

This article examines Sangihe island communities through the lens of everyday life

sociology, shifting attention from formal structures to lived experience. By focusing on rhythms of time, social space, and cultural meaning, it seeks to illuminate how collective life is enacted, perceived, and maintained in a maritime island context. Such an approach highlights everyday life as a key analytical site where continuity, adaptation, and social cohesion are negotiated, offering a culturally grounded understanding of island society within the broader landscape of Global South social studies [5][6].

## **2. The Sea as a Framework of Everyday Time**

Time in Sangihe is experienced less as an abstract measurement and more as a lived rhythm shaped by environmental cues. Tides, weather patterns, and cycles of daylight provide temporal markers that guide daily activities and social interaction. Rather than relying on standardized clock time, community members orient their routines around the changing conditions of the sea, allowing natural rhythms to define when people depart, return, gather, and rest. Time, in this sense, is not external to social life but embedded within everyday experience [7].

This temporal organization creates a shared sense of timing across the community. Individual routines align with collective expectations, producing a form of social synchronization that links personal activity with communal life. Such synchronization fosters predictability and mutual awareness, as community members come to anticipate one another's presence and availability. Social coordination emerges organically, reducing the need for formal scheduling or explicit instruction [8].

From a sociological perspective, these shared temporal rhythms function as a subtle form of social regulation. They organize behavior through repetition and expectation rather than through rules or authority. Time operates as a social resource that structures interaction, reinforces cohesion, and sustains social order in island communities, demonstrating how temporal experience is central to the organization of everyday life [9].

## **3. Social Space and Everyday Interaction**

Social space in Sangihe island communities is defined by openness and constant proximity. Coastal paths, village yards, and communal areas operate as everyday social arenas where interaction occurs naturally and repeatedly. These spaces are not designed as formal meeting places; instead, they acquire social meaning through habitual use and shared recognition, becoming integral to the rhythm of daily life [10].

Frequent, low-intensity interactions within these shared spaces play a crucial role in sustaining social relationships. Brief conversations, greetings, and moments of shared observation allow individuals to remain socially connected without the need for deliberate planning. Through repeated encounters, familiarity is built gradually, reinforcing trust and a sense of belonging grounded in everyday presence [11].

The permeability between private and public space increases social visibility and collective awareness. Actions are easily observed, and behavior is subtly shaped by the expectation of being seen by others. Norms are maintained through mutual recognition rather than formal enforcement, illustrating how spatial arrangements function as mechanisms of social regulation that reinforce cohesion and accountability within the community [12].

## **4. Cultural Meaning in Ordinary Practices**

Cultural meaning in Sangihe island communities is embedded in ordinary practices rather than articulated through formal narratives or explicit doctrines. Values such as cooperation, restraint, and respect for natural forces are expressed through routine actions that structure daily life. These meanings are learned through participation and observation, allowing individuals to internalize cultural expectations without formal instruction [13].

The sea occupies a central place in collective understanding as a presence that shapes moral

orientation and social behavior. Engagement with maritime conditions fosters attentiveness, humility, and acceptance of uncertainty. Rather than seeking control over nature, everyday practices reflect an ethic of adaptation, where human action is guided by responsiveness to environmental rhythms [14].

By grounding meaning in ordinary practice, culture functions as a practical framework for social life. It shapes interpretation, guides behavior, and informs social judgment in subtle ways. Cultural continuity is sustained through repetition and shared experience, demonstrating how meaning is produced and maintained through everyday interaction rather than symbolic abstraction [15].

## **5. Everyday Life, Continuity, and Adaptation**

Everyday life in Sangihe island communities demonstrates a strong sense of continuity shaped by routine practices and shared expectations. Daily activities are organized in ways that preserve familiar rhythms, allowing social life to remain stable despite external change. Continuity is experienced not as rigidity but as a sense of order grounded in repetition and collective habit [16].

Adaptation occurs through gradual adjustment rather than abrupt transformation. New influences whether technological, social, or economic are interpreted and incorporated within existing patterns of everyday life. Community members negotiate change through interaction, discussion, and shared practice, ensuring that new elements do not disrupt social coherence [17].

This process highlights everyday life as a critical site where continuity and adaptation intersect. Social resilience emerges from the capacity to absorb change into lived routines rather than resist it outright. By embedding adaptation within ordinary practices, island communities sustain social stability while remaining responsive to evolving conditions [18].

## **6. Discussion**

The analysis of everyday rhythms, social space, and ordinary practices highlights how social order in Sangihe island communities is produced through lived experience rather than formal structures. Time, space, and routine interaction function as interdependent elements that sustain collective life. This perspective challenges structural approaches that prioritize institutions or economic relations by demonstrating how social cohesion is continuously enacted in everyday contexts [19].

Viewing island society through everyday life sociology reveals how power and regulation operate subtly through shared expectations and mutual awareness. Temporal synchronization, spatial proximity, and culturally embedded practices guide behavior without explicit enforcement. Social norms are maintained through observation and participation, suggesting that social control in island communities relies more on relational mechanisms than formal authority [20].

These insights have broader implications for the study of society and culture in island and peripheral contexts. They underscore the importance of examining ordinary practices as sites where continuity, adaptation, and meaning are negotiated. For cultural and sociological inquiry, this approach foregrounds everyday life as a critical analytical lens for understanding how communities sustain resilience and social order within changing environments [21].

## **7. Conclusion**

This article examines island life in the Sangihe Islands by foregrounding everyday rhythms, social space, and ordinary practices as the foundations of social organization. By focusing on lived experience, it demonstrates that social order in island communities is not primarily sustained through formal institutions or explicit regulation, but through shared temporal patterns, spatial proximity, and culturally embedded routines. Everyday life emerges as the central arena where social cohesion is produced and maintained.

The analysis shows that continuity and adaptation are not opposing forces, but

interconnected processes negotiated through daily practice. Island communities sustain stability by integrating change into familiar rhythms and social expectations. Time, space, and cultural meaning operate together as subtle mechanisms of coordination, allowing communities to remain resilient without rigid structures or centralized control.

For studies of society and culture, particularly within Global South and island contexts, this perspective underscores the importance of attending to ordinary practices as sites of meaning and social regulation. By treating everyday life as an analytical lens, the article contributes to broader sociological discussions on how communities live with uncertainty, sustain collective life, and reproduce social order through lived experience rather than formal design.

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