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Political Ecology Perspective: Analysis of Deforestation

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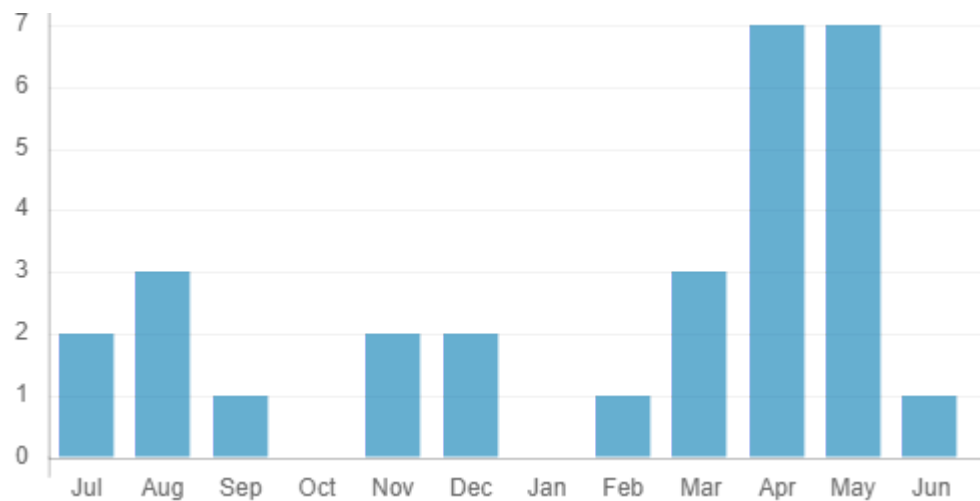
Keywords: Political Ecology Perspective, Deforestation, Banjar Regency

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze deforestation in Banjar Regency, South of Kalimantan based on a Political Ecology Perspective. The background of the research is that environmental damage is an implication of the socio-political aspect, namely that environmental change is not neutral, but is a form of environment politicization that involves many actors at the local, regional, and global levels. Through this justification, changes in the forest environment in Banjar Regency are relevant for research. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The research results show that deforestation in Banjar Regency is a condition that does not occur due to natural phenomena, but is caused by socio-political factors and involves

various actors with various interests. These actors include community groups who are resistant to government policies, environmental groups that have political participation in environmental issues, oligarchic groups who are close to the authorities, and the government itself which has an economic interest orientation in managing the forest environment. Political system back and forth between input and output. Based on the results of existing research, the uniqueness that can be found is that the community is not only an actor affected by the environmental change but also an environmental change actor, besides that the environmental care groups in their political demands are the presence of a religiosity approach in forest management.

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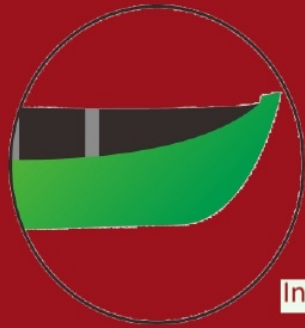
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Political Ecology Perspective: Analysis of Deforestation

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Abstract—This paper aims to analyze deforestation in Banjar Regency, South of Kalimantan based on a Political Ecology Perspective. The background of the research is that environmental damage is an implication of the socio-political aspect, namely that environmental change is not neutral, but is a form of environment politicization that involves many actors at the local, regional, and global levels. Through this justification, changes in the forest environment in Banjar Regency are relevant for research. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The research results show that deforestation in Banjar Regency is a condition that does not occur due to natural phenomena, but is caused by socio-political factors and involves various actors with various interests. These actors include community groups who are resistant to government policies, environmental groups that have political participation in environmental issues, oligarchic groups who are close to the authorities, and the government itself which has an economic interest orientation in managing the forest environment. Political system back and forth between input and output. Based on the results of existing research, the uniqueness that can be found is that the community is not only an actor affected by the environmental change but also an environmental change actor, besides that the environmental care groups in their political demands are the presence of a religiosity approach in forest management.

I. INTRODUCTION

The basic assumption of political ecology is that environmental change is not neutral but rather a form of politicized environment that involves many actors at the local, regional, and global levels (Bryant 2005). Further explanation regarding political ecology in general, political ecology focuses on political explanations of environmental change and damage (Forsyth: 2003). Socio-political aspects are considered to be related to environmental changes. Peters and Pierre (2004), define politicization as “politicization may also mean that public servants begin to take on tasks that formerly (and formally) might have been considered to be political.” Meanwhile, Martini (2010), defines politicization as making or trying to make something according to its interests. Meanwhile, Richard M. Ebelin as quoted Erdogan (2004), stated that: “Politicization can be defined as that now pervasive tendency for making all questions political questions, all issues, political issues, all values political values, and all decisions political decisions.”

In a political system, there is always a continuous flow from input to output and back and forth. The input consists of demands and supports that come from the environment. According to Gabriel A. Almond input has several functions. Input functions are political socialization and recruitment, articulation of interests, association of interests, political communication. Decision makers and political actors will consider the inputs and the reactions of the policies made. The information is collected and produces an output. The output function is to make rules, apply rules, and decide the rules. In this system, it is also explained that pressure is not only from outside but also comes from within the system itself. Regarding environmental issues, Bryant and Bailey (2001), explained that the politicized environment is a form of actor-oriented environmental problems (Actor Oriented - AO). The actor approach examines the interests, characteristics and actions of actors in political and ecological conflicts.

Massive deforestation occurs in Banjar Regency. Deforestation is the process of removing natural forest by logging for timber

or changing the use of forest land to non-forest (Shafitri et al, 2018). In Banjar Regency there was a reduction in forest area of 32,209.24 hectares over 10 years. The area that is experiencing deforestation is on the east side of Banjar Regency which is one of the production forest areas (Ramdhoni, et al: 2019). The continued impact of deforestation is flooding. In 2021 Banjar Regency is the most flood-affected area in South Kalimantan, especially in the last 50 (fifty) years.

The environmental issue discussed in this study is deforestation. From the perspective of forestry science, deforestation is defined as a situation where forest cover is lost and its attributes have implications for the loss of the structure and function of the forest itself. This meaning is strengthened by the definition of deforestation as outlined in the Regulation of the Minister of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia No. P.30/MenhutII/2009 concerning Procedures for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) which explicitly states that deforestation is a permanent change from a forested area in a non-forested area caused by human activities.

Based on the existing explanation, deforestation in Banjar Regency needs to be studied using a political ecology perspective. This study is able to provide an explanation of the other side of the phenomenon of environmental change, by reviewing the socio-political aspects. The research location in Banjar Regency is a location that deserves to be appointed, especially since deforestation has caused a follow-up impact in the form of a very wide flood disaster.

II.LITERATUR REVIEW

The review of previous research conducted by researchers, the first is a study that discusses Rawa Pening in Semarang Regency in the perspective of environmental politics. In this review, Rawa Pening is part of a more complex system, which involves socio-political actors. Within this framework, development aimed at Rawa Pening must inevitably involve values that are believed by local communities, so that Rawa Pening is no longer seen only as a water reservoir, but also as a space for public policy discourse that involves the community, the state and of course the ecosystem itself. The second research review relates to the ecological perspective of Limboto Lake management policies (Hasim: 2018).

The results of this study indicate that the management policy of Lake Limboto is oriented towards environmental politics. The political ecology, policy for the management of the Limboto lake has not been constructed in an integrated manner in the context of institutions, substances, and regulations. Based on the review of the two studies, strengthening research on the analysis of deforestation in Banjar Regency based on a political ecology perspective is relevant to be carried out. In addition, the discussion of political ecology for the study of environmental change in Kalimantan is still very minimal, even though the potential for natural resources is very high and is experiencing degradation on various sides. Therefore, it is important to conduct research on socio-political aspects in the context of deforestation in Banjar Regency.

III.RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is research that uses in-depth analysis, namely the process and meaning (subject's perspective) are more detailed in qualitative research. This method is used with consideration of relevance to the research material, where the research conducted is descriptive in nature, that is, it describes the reality of the events being studied, making it easier for the authors to obtain objective data in order to know and understand environmental politics in the context of deforestation.

IV.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the study of environmental politics, it is explained that social, economic and political aspects have implications for forest management. Based on the description of the research results, it can be observed several things related to deforestation in Banjar Regency and the politicization of the environment that occurs in it. In the political process system according to Gabriel Almont, there is a continuous flow from input to output and back and forth. Inputs consist of demands and supports that come from the external environment of the government. This input is in the form of interest articulation, interest set, and political communication. The following is a description of the facts based on the theoretical framework of environmental politics in the context of deforestation in Banjar Regency.

Deforestation in Socio-political Studies

In the analysis of Greenberg & Park (1994) it is explained that what needs to be studied related to social and community issues from ecosystems is the history of the ecosystem itself, the economic system, human geography (human relations with nature) and also the ongoing development. This shows that the discussion related to environmental problems cannot be separated from the relationship between the community environment itself.

The population of Banjar Regency consists of the Banjar Tribe. Banjar people know the expression *gawi manuntung* which means that someone in doing something must be able to finish it well (Makkie and Seman: 1994). Based on the results of interviews with cultural observers in Banjar Regency, it was explained that there are four Banjar cultural values, namely cultural values in human relations with God, in human relations with humans, in human relationships with oneself or relating to human activities as the form of self-development, and the value of Banjar Culture in human relations with nature (Istiqomah and Setyobudihono: 2017). More specifically, cultural values, namely the relationship between humans and nature, explained that with the environment, humans must be able to adapt, or known as *can crew* (Istiqomah and Setyobudihono: 2017). This advice is usually given in order to adapt to the customs (Makkie and Seman: 1996). This is intended so that humans themselves can be comfortable in living life, namely living in peace with nature (Istiqomah and Setyobudihono: 2017).

Based on human and environmental, cultural values, the pattern of community adjustment to the environment has an impact on forest sustainability in Banjar Regency. Based on the results of interviews with the community, it is known that the socio-cultural aspects, in particular, community activities affected forest fires in Banjar Regency. Dominant factors include habits, clearing of agricultural land, accidental activities such as burning garbage or when looking for firewood, and lack of public awareness of the dangers of forest fires. In addition, related to community interactions with nature, it is known that community participation in the implementation of Forest Management Unit policies is relatively low. This is reflected in the lack of community motivation to fulfill biological, social needs, to be recognized by other communities, as well as to preserve nature (Hafizianor and Mokhamad: 2017).

This low community participation occurs in various forms of society, both in the form of support from non-governmental organizations, support from community leaders (Hafizianor and Mokhamad: 2017). In addition to low community participation in forest management, the Social Acceptance Index on the results of forest area demarcation in the Banjar Regency Forest Management Unit area is categorized as moderate (Hafizianor and Mokhamad: 2017). According to the local community, the Banjar Forest Management Unit is not yet clear regarding the delimitation of forest areas. Most of the villagers claim the area managed so far as property rights with the force of law at the village level (village head seal), while legally, the forest area managed by the community is included in the Industrial Plantation Forest management area.

According to the results of interviews with community leaders in Banjar Regency, it was explained that the socio-political process in Banjar Regency had implemented oligarchy in the environment and was in the comfort zone in producing environmental policies. This comfort zone is based on the economy, and is carried out in a pragmatic way of development-based economic interests, development-based sectoral, administrative normative, without holistic supervision. This oligarchic system is close to the local government and has easy access to convey its interests, and in this condition tends to be difficult to change because it has gone on for a long time.

In addition to these community groups, there are also NGOs (Community Social Institutions) who care about nature conservation in Banjar Regency. These groups include the MaMFus Association (Society Concerning the River) (Green Community Forum which is engaged in reforestation by planting trees, WALHI (Indonesian Forum for the Environment) which is focusing on spatial emergencies in South Kalimantan and ecological disasters, and the Melingai Community (Community Melingai). Protecting the River), and Eco Mosque.

This community group is part of the community that also provides input or demands to local governments to restore the natural functions, including forest and river ecosystems. Environmental sustainability groups actively submit demands to the Regional Government. In accordance with the explanation environmental organization activist MaMFus, explained that demands have been submitted to the local government by letter to make environmental improvements and offer a community-based Environmental Restoration Movement Program and scientific regiusitas. It was only based on interests with a view to the Regent of Banjar, but these aspirations did not get a response from the local government. The religious culture of the Banjar community influences the substance of the community's political voice in environmental management.

Based on the existing description, it can be explained that society is divided into 3 (three) categories in the socio-political aspect. The first group is a group of ordinary people who contribute to deforestation in Banjar Regency. The relationship

between nature and the community around the forest area shows that there is a form of adjustment to nature in the form of using the forest to support its survival. This utilization is not accompanied by an awareness that the forest is a sensitive part of the environment, if it is continuously used in massive quantities without considering the function of the forest, it will cause damage. In addition, the integration of local governments and communities is also minimal, even though it aims to invite people to have awareness to be aware of territorial boundaries in forest utilization. The second category is the oligarchic group that has closeness to the ruler. However, in addition to the social conditions of the community, there are social groups who care about the environment, by embracing other communities and providing input to the local government to restore the function of natural resources in Banjar Regency.

Deforestation in Political Economy Studies

In the study of environmental politics, the political economy aspect has an influence. The rate of deforestation in Banjar Regency does not just happen, but is an implication of the policy of accelerating long-term national economic growth. This began with the enactment of Law Number 1 of 1967 concerning Foreign Investment. Following the Law on Foreign Investment, the May 6, 1986 Package of Deregulation was also enacted, loosening permits for imports of goods, supporting capital, and the use of foreign workers. This deregulation is specifically for export-oriented investment or opening a business in the region. This package was then reaffirmed in the June 1987 Package and the December 1987 Package. Similarly, the Government Regulation No. 20 of 1994 concerning share ownership in companies established for foreign investment. This Government Regulation stipulates provisions for guaranteeing the continuity of foreign investment in the form of the establishment of a foreign investment company in the form of a Limited Liability Company in Indonesia.

Over the years, foreign investment has taken priority over domestic investment (Muzdalifah: 2020). Since the enactment of Law no. 25 of 2007 concerning Investment to replace the Foreign Investment Law no. 1 of 1967 and the Domestic Investment Law No. 6 of 1968, this change also influenced the regulation of forest and land management in Indonesia. Permits to manage forest areas in Indonesia by the private sector are increasing, including in forest areas in Banjar Regency, forest area exploration activities are also getting higher.

Forest fires occur systematically. The burning is carried out by companies holding forest concession permits. Based on data from the Ministry of Forestry and the Environment, companies holding forest concession permits in addition to local companies are also foreign investment companies. Foreign investment company is a company whose capital is foreign investment or merger with domestic capital. The flow of foreign capital to Indonesia in the 1960s was practically non-existent, and has strengthened since the enactment of Law no. 1 of 1967 concerning foreign investment, Packages of May 6, 1986 and Pakto 1993, PP No. 20 of 1994. Through this flow of foreign capital, Indonesia received economic income, particularly from the forest management sector.

The achievement of the interests of accelerating national economic growth is further strengthened through changes in forest management authority. Based on Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, it is explained that forestry affairs are the authority of the Central Government and Provincial Governments. This is different from the previous one, where forest management in Appendix Point BB page 116 explains that the authority of the Provincial Region is to assist forestry planning, which can be in the form of proposals for technical considerations for forestry planning.

More specifically, these authorities include the implementation of forest governance in the Forest Management Unit and the implementation of the FMU management plan. This provision is different from the previous one, namely that the district government also has the authority to manage forests in its territory. Prior to the enactment of Law No.23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and Government Regulation No.18 of 2016 concerning Regional Apparatuses, each Forest Management Unit area unit (especially KPHL and KPHP) was handled by a regional institution established by the provincial government for the Forest Management Unit area unit. Across districts and by district/city governments for Forest Management Unit area units within districts/cities.

The change of authority in the Law is a step to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of regional government administration, namely by considering aspects of the relationship between the Central Government and regions, and between regions, regional potentials and diversity, as well as opportunities and challenges of global competition in the unified system of state governance. (Decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia)

Through the existing descriptions, it can be understood that the current rate of deforestation does not just happen, but is correlated with the orientation of the interests of accelerating national economic growth. This is facilitated by policies that provide wider opportunities and legal guarantees to investors, both domestic and foreign. This support for capitalism includes

the forest management sector for massive economic interests and developing businesses in various regions. In addition, the change of authority in forest management to be under the central government and provincial governments is an efficient strategy of the government to increase government control so that forest management is in synergy with national economic interests.

Deforestation in Environmental Political Studies

Based on the previous explanation, environmental changes in the form of deforestation in Banjar Regency do not occur naturally, but are the result of environmental politicization involving many actors, both local, regional, and global actors with various interests. The politicization of the environment that occurs involves many actors who are connected in the political process with alternating currents between inputs and outputs. The actors come from different circles with different interests.

Based on the socio-political aspects of environmental change, the following is an explanation. Local actors involved include the community, environmental care groups, and oligarchic groups. This ordinary community group is not only a group affected by environmental changes, but also as perpetrators of forest fires in Banjar Regency. This is done by clearing land for agriculture for economic purposes, and being resistant to forest management policies. The second actor is a group that cares about the environment, which generally voices environmental improvements, including restoring forest functions so that they are not exploited for economic purposes. Some of these environmental care groups recommend environmental improvement programs based on religiosity, actively making demands of the local government. In the political system in Banjar Regency, it is controlled by a very strong oligarchic system, influencing, proposing, and including business interests in governance, including forest management.

The national interest is the perception of the national economy, which from time to time this orientation is increasingly massive. Natural resources in the form of forests are commodities that produce high economic value, and become national mega projects. In this condition, the division of roles between the government and the private sector, both domestic and foreign, is increasing. In addition, for strategic forest management, forest management is centralized, ie all planning is under the authority of the central government. The Provincial Government acts as the executor of the planning. The district government only manages urban forests, and loses the authority to manage forests that fall within its territory.

Through this explanation, it can be observed that in the current political environment, the central government plays a strategic role. This is shown through the orientation of economic growth policies that rely on domestic and foreign capital flows. Next is the provincial government, which is the implementing party that has a significant role in granting forest management permits. In local politics the grip of the oligarchs is so strong to include their business interests. Next is the social group that is anti-government policy.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that deforestation in Banjar Regency is closely related to the political orientation of the environment. In this orientation, it involves many actors with various interests, so that forest management policies do not focus on maintaining forest functions. The actors involved include elements of the community around the forest area in Banjar Regency, environmental care groups, oligarchic groups, businessmen, and the government itself. Community groups in this case are not only affected by forest damage, but also as groups that are resistant to forest conservation policies, as well as part of the perpetrators of forest fires.

The next actor is an environmental care group that actively raises public awareness to protect forests and makes demands of the government to restore forest functions with a religiosity approach. The next actor is an oligarchic group that is close to the ruler. These actors together with the government formulate forest management policies or programs on the basis of regional development. The next actor is a group of businessmen who grant broad concessions in forest concessions and carry out forest fires. The next is the government actor itself, with the complexity of the actors and interests that exist, the government in this case does not formulate policies that are oriented towards maintaining the existence of forests, but rather a combination of interests in accelerating national economic growth, accommodating business groups, and oligarchs.

Natural resources in the form of forests are commodities that produce high economic value, and become national mega projects. In this condition, the division of roles between the government and the private sector, both domestic and foreign, is increasing. In addition, for strategic forest management, forest management is centralized, ie all planning is under the authority of the central government. The Provincial Government acts as the executor of the planning. The district government only manages urban forests, and loses the authority to manage forests that fall within its territory.

Through this explanation, it can be observed that in the current political environment, the central government plays a strategic role. This is shown through the orientation of economic growth policies that rely on domestic and foreign capital flows. Next is the provincial government, which is the implementing party that has a significant role in granting forest management permits. In local politics the grip of the oligarchs is so strong to include their business interests.

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