The Ecological Politics of the Belu Community in Preserving Nature and Supporting Sustainable Development

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Abstract. Political ecology is the relation between ecologically rooted social science and the principles of political economy and the reality of environment exploration. It aims to represent an alternative to apolitical ecology. The field synthesizes the central questions asked by the social sciences and ethics about the relations between human society and its bio-cultural-political complexity, and a significantly humanized nature. This article discourses the phenomenon on environment reality in Belu community, East Nusa Tenggara Province - Indonesia, especially the local community in Belu in relation with the environment. Research methods use phenomenological analyzes and literature review. Finding research that the local indigenous or community in Belu is doing political ecological to counter capitalism, strengthening indigenous local values, supporting sustainable development and protecting ecological justice. This finding can give inspiring to the local people in Indonesia and the other side of the world to take action to protect the environment and supporting sustainable development concept.

1. Introduction
Belu community in East Nusa Tenggara Province is an area directly adjacent to the state of Timor Leste. During the regime before President Joko Widodo currently, the Belu Regency area has not achieved significant development progress. However, currently President Joko Widodo has a vision to develop Indonesia from outside and especially from the border areas. So, Belu Regency is certainly one of the areas included in the development program. This phenomenon is both interesting and challenging.
On the one hand, the vision of developing Indonesia from the border can develop economic life on the border of Indonesia and Timor Leste. But on the other hand, it can have a negative impact on natural wealth and environmental exploration in Belu Regency. Therefore, this paper wants to show the ecological politics of the Belu people in protecting nature from the co-optation of capitalists and rulers in order to conserve nature and support sustainable development. Ecological politics is an alternative action to influence development policies and economic policies to protect the goodness of nature itself. Ecological politics against apolitical matters of ecological reality itself.[1]

2. Method
The method applied in this research is a qualitative method with a phenomenological analysis approach linked to the context of the local community in Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province,
Indonesia. The phenomenological method is a method adopted by means of text analysis and transcendental reduction to obtain a valid final conclusion.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The threat of the capitalist economic power in belu regency

Like it or not, today the capitalist system [2] dominate the global economic network and even reaching local areas in Belu Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. In order to pursue the target of the business based on considerations of economic logic alias rationality profit (profit thinking), many employers already eyeing a fascination with nature and natural resources contained in Belu. Several entrepreneurs from the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta already have an agenda to carry out development in Belu Regency. Information and communication technology has certainly helped accelerate this process. Thus, it can be predicted that there will not be exploration and exploitation in Belu district to developing a regional business in order to pursue the purpose of the final profit.

When the phenomenon of capitalism expansion large scale happens, it is certain that the victims are the local community and the natural ecosystem itself. [3] Potential of eviction to local area in Belu will be happened to accommodate the interests of the capitalists of course unavoidable. At this point, the local indigenous people of Belu are certainly vulnerable to co-optation from capitalists who do not pay attention to the value of local wisdom. What is feared is if the concepts and approaches to development are not inclusive, but rather exclusive.

When the destruction of the local indigenous it lasts and continues to happen, then the wealth of culture in local indigenous Belu which will be endangered or even destroyed. It is usually the forest area that is the most affected.

As an assumption, one of the most tragic facts is the phenomenon of forest clearing the development of new industrial sites or modern business centers belonging to the capitalists, which of course also enjoyed by modern industrial society. [4] This has great potential to enrich deforestation activities forests and places in Belu Regency and its surroundings. [5] This is something to watch out for.

As a comparison to the global context, deforestation continues to increase every year. Data following shows that every year deforestation occurs against nature, especially forest areas.[6] Between 1980-1990, the average deforestation rate for forest areas ranged from 20 to 30 billion acres per year. Even the phenomenon of deforestation with a range of numbers is reported to continue to happen since 2000. Until 2005, deforestation carried out on 18 billion per year of tropical forests around the world. This shows that acts of deforestation continue to occur on our planet which seriously threatens natural forest areas, biodiversity, and the reality of natural ecology as a whole. Everything was done in order to fulfill the ambitions of the hegemonic capitalist human (homo economicus) oriented materialism by way of clicking the exploitation of nature without regard to the value of local knowledge.

Along with the decreasing number of forest areas, there is a reduction in the diversity of living things and natural plant species. Nature which crystallizes in itself wisdom and natural wealth beyond measure to be sacrificed so easily for the purposes of capitalism and the logic of economic progress of the ruling elite. Forest wealth is taken and depleted to become the raw material for the operation of industrial machines owned by large companies or capital owners. In the name of demands to fulfill capitalist interests, it seems that forest areas including in Belu Regency will continue to be objects of exploitation that never recognize the word ‘finished’.

Local indigenous of natural ecological wisdom is considered only as an instrumental tool for the benefit of the owners of capital. Natural wisdom (local values) loses in the arena of hegemonic struggle against the power of materialism or the owners of material capital. Measures of quality value are inferior to quantitative-materialistic measures. Value loses against price. Quantitative economic prices are more important than the value of local philosophical wisdom. Capitalist modernization and globalization prevailed everywhere in the world over traditional values of the locality. Capitalist economic colonization occurred in many local indigenous areas around the world, including in the
Belu Regency area. This is what is called the new neocolonialism of the local indigenous nature in our times.

Many cases of injustice towards local indigenous nature continue to occur in various parts of the world. The most concrete case is shown by Shrader and Frechette who show the exploitation of shell oil on the land area of indigenous people in Nigeria, Africa which causes 1,000 Ogoni people died and 30,000 people was homeless, suffering from oil pollution and gas inhalation, poisonous; meanwhile the suffering of indigenous people in Urarina (Amazona-Brasil) whose houses were destroyed due to the impact of oil drilling; and 25% of American natives died and 63% others suffered from deadly cancer caused by uranium radiation by the exploiting company called Kerr-McGee Corporation.[7] This seriously threatens the sustainability of local indigenous in the context of justice for natural ecology. The only way to counter this threat is through environmental political action based on the local wisdom of Belu district.

3.2. Local indigenous as the ecological political basis of the Belu community

Local indigenous whose existence is threatened by capitalist power whose monopoly aims to co-opt natural resources contained in it is a field/area of human existence, including indigenous groups in Belu Regency. The people of Belu Regency live in a world circle called local indigenous. He made local indigenous realms as life projects and teleological actions that determine the essence of his existence throughout life. He sees the reality of local indigenous nature as an invitation to think and act wisely in preserving it. The invitation to act wisely there was pursued politically.

Aristotle (Greek classical philosopher) said that the goal of politics is to find in what way a person can achieve happiness in his life.[8] The political path is chosen as the right way, strategy to create goodness for natural realities and also the interests of local communities themselves. It is at this point that the political way establishes itself as a method for the people of Belu Regency in fighting for goodness and justice for the natural environment. The goal of human politics in Belu Regency is to create happiness for themselves and others and especially for the good of nature itself so that it is not co-opted.

Apart from thinking for the common good, the people of Belu Regency also manifest this thought by taking political action. McIntyre claims that political behavior is a serious action taken by a group of humans as an agent to express the beliefs, rationality and life background of the agent or subject concerned.[9] The political action of the people of Belu Regency is oriented to protect and preserve the local indigenous nature around them. This is an action or political attitude that cannot be avoided (conditio sine qua non). Political action is a must in the context of efforts to preserve the local indigenous nature of the environment. By taking this political action, the people of Belu Regency show their concern and ethical commitment to the goodness of nature. Through thought and political action, he indicated option (option) and apologetic (defense) radical on the environment of natural dignity as moral subjects. Apart from the local indigenous, the people of Belu Regency find it difficult or even unable to actualize their political dimensions ideally as they should. So it can be claimed that outside the local indigenous context, the people of Belu Regency do not exist.

By taking political actions, the people of Belu Regency must be rational in controlling their political actions to care for, protect and preserve nature. This means that the actions of the people (actors) of Belu Regency are not spontaneous or irrational actions based on emotional impulses alone. The Belu people act consciously and reflected in a mature and rational manner. In and through the actions of the Society of Belu district not only acts as an actor, but also at the same time they act as a writer (author) for the history of his life for the good of nature itself. [10] In their actions, the people of Belu Regency affirm and position themselves as actors of action as well as writers of stories or narratives about the history of natural life itself towards their ideal good in the future.

Action as a political actor is not an empty self-direction or an act of self-giving in a fatal direction. However, the role and environmental politics of the people of Belu Regency are directly in a frame of ecological teleological dynamics towards the good of nature. He plans his actions and writings by using all local indigenous resources that exist around his own world. Thus, the people of Belu Regency create history for all other living entities in nature. He lives the spirituality of ecological ethical politics for the sustainability of all existing entities, both biotic and abiotic elements in nature.
3.3. The ecological politics of belu communities to strengthen local indigenous

The people of Belu Regency are not resigned to their fate. They are not the typology agents who get complacent as a human being. They continue to struggle politically to continue to provide awareness or awareness to members of the local indigenous Belu community to always be vigilant and self-aware. In the sense that they are intellectual instructors who exist in every local indigenous community that exists in various groups of the Belu community. They are prophets who keep on voicing loudly to maintain and preserve the local indigenous Belu that exist on the borders of Indonesia and Timor Leste. Not only that, they even the sound of other people who do not speak (Voice of the Voiceless) due to the limitations of certain psychological fear of threatened or does not quite have the initiative to conduct a political struggle to preserve nature and local indigenous locals.

Thus, it is not wrong if it is claimed that Community Belu regency role as individuals educator in the realm of local indigenous to preserve nature. They are a group of educators or non-formal educators without titles who teach about the meaning of life based on local indigenous values to other members of traditional communities who may not know how to fight politically to protect and maintain their local indigenous wealth in order to care for nature. In a traditional society that is far from the touch of formal education or a touch of scientific thought or technological progress, the people of Belu Regency continue to play a central-classical role as an inspiration for other community members in caring for nature with a simple way of life.

The thoughts, actions and political attitudes carried out by the Belu Regency community remain relevant in the local indigenous social life referred to. They become subjects that inspire and give fighting spirit to others to remain proud and happy in their original atmosphere, as it is in the harmonious relationship between humans and the natural environment.

The people of Belu Regency are aware of their noble duty to continue to act in realizing the empowerment of local communities and indigenous communities around themselves. They empower other groups not to pursue the idea of high growth in economic numbers or to pursue cheap prestigious ambitions, but to empower the local community, the oikos, where they live to appreciate and respect the local wisdom crystallized in the local indigenous wealth of Belu Regency alone. They continue to show a caring attitude towards the natural environment by continuing to stand on their own local indigenous heritage.

3.4. The ecological politics of the belu community supports sustainable development

The people of Belu Regency are a special, specific and unique area or domain. In the district of Belu, there are individuals of ecological human that politicized the environment to support the natural goodness. They care for nature by living a simple way of life in relation to nature.

The environmental politics of the Belu Regency community should not be thought about only partially, but the role of the Belu community needs to be understood in a holistic-integrative manner. The politics of the environment, which is locality, appears to be able to spiritually form a network of life energies that perpetuates the cosmic evolution of the earth in a mysterious and sacred intrinsic relationship. This means that local indigenous-based environmental politics in Belu Regency has actually contributed greatly and strengthened the context of a global natural evolution towards its sustainability in the future. So that, the local indigenous environmental politics of the Belu community can form an order of global indigenous integration which has a big influence to sustain the evolution of this universe to continue.

This is truly an extraordinary natural force that works unintentionally, unconsciously, without engineering or manipulation to continue the torch flame of the evolution of the universe towards its sustainable future horizon. Concretely, cross-border collaborations (frontiers) of ethnicity, religion, race, nation, and state are needed to form a ’common force’ to strive to maintain the ecological goodness of nature based on the local indigenous values of each region. The values of ecological local wisdom in each region including Belu Regency can support the big concept of sustainable development to save humanity and the earth in the future.
4. Conclusion
It has been discussed about the ecological politics of the people of Belu Regency in preserving nature and supporting sustainable development. The ecological politics of the Belu people are carried out as a cultural strategy to care for nature from the threat of damage and also from the target of co-optation of capitalists who do not have a vision of sustainable inclusive development. The ecological politics of the Belu people with their simple way of life with nature and their daily actions that are environmentally friendly is a valuable contribution to environmental protection and of course an important support for sustainable development as well as better preservation of nature. The government and capitalists are reminded to pay attention to environmental aspects in a development approach based on the local wisdom of the local community and also the interests of ecological sustainability in the future.

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