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Ecology of Political Communication of Acehese People towards 2024 Local Election

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ABSTRACT

The local election is a political and democratic tool owned by the community after Indonesia's reformation. Aceh and its regencies and cities will carry out the local election in 2022. The central government's policy to postpone the implementation of the local election in 2024 has created a polemic in the community. Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to determine the problems that arise in political communication among the community against the central government's unilateral policy in delaying the implementation of the local election. The approach used was qualitative by using observation and interview techniques. The results of this study are: The Acehese are disappointed with the central government's intervention in the form of a policy of postponing the local election, based on the justification that Aceh has the local regulation, that is called 2006 Aceh Government Law, where Aceh has independence in managing its household. Furthermore, the communication built by the Central Government is coercive communication, ignoring comprehensive communication from the community. With the ecological influence of the local election postponement policy and communication built by the central government, the people ignore the government's advice to keep the environment more conservative and ignore the fight against Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

Scientists have coined and elaborated the term political forests to make a political-ecology argument – namely, that forests today have been produced through politics. Political acts creating forests include territorializing actions, reservation of forest species, and warfare. In this chapter, we focused on how states make political forests, but the making of political forests has also contributed to the making of states insofar as states to are defined by territorial control over land, people, and space (Lund, 2011) – an example of what Jasanoff (2004) calls the 'co-production of science and society. In the process, the making of political forests and states has profoundly affected the lives and livelihoods of millions of people across Southeast Asia and beyond. It is not surprising, then, that this has been an important focus of political-ecology research (Lund and Jasanoff in Bryan, 2015).

Both political forests and nation-states remain open-ended and incomplete projects. Many Southeast Asian forests are still used by farmers, usually without legal sanction, although new surveillance technologies make it increasingly difficult for them to hide practices that are illegal in postcolonial political forests. Under these conditions, new challenges to forest–farm boundaries have emerged, often framed in the scientific and disciplining language of agroforestry and community forestry (Bryan, 2015). The most important issue is that how to address the relationship between ecology, politics, and communication which lead to the local election as a form of politics.

The local election is one of the elements of democracy, in which the election the people can express their political desires in the coming period. People know who they will vote for from the executive and legislative candidates from the area

where they live. The development of Indonesia's democracy has greatly improved, strengthened by the governance of electoral laws and others. This has been running gradually from the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono regime. Thirty-two years, democracy has not become better. The history of this nation cannot be simply forgotten, many democracy fighters have become victims of state violence against them, in the end, the hope of political freedom can be enjoyed by the whole nation. The local election is a very important instrument in the administration of regional government based on the principles of democracy in the region because this is where the manifestation of the people as the holder of sovereignty determines state policy (Yusdianto, 2010).

During the last few years, after Indonesia's reformation, elections have taken place according to a predetermined time. In the second term of President Jokowi, the elections that should have been held in 2022, was postponed to 2024. This decision to postpone can only be accepted unilaterally by the State, but the community does not all understands the government's considerations. The public sees the state's interest in maintaining and strengthening power in this matter. Political actors have hidden interests and some have benefited from postponing elections. On the other hand, citizens are forced to accept the delay, on the other hand, political actors and parties continue to strengthen the basis for power.

The postponement of the election provides a narrow space in the management of public services; many policies should be made for the smooth administration and bureaucracy at the local level. The waiting process from the task-implementing official to the final elected official hampered the existing system. It is clear that task executors cannot fully implement strategic policies, which will affect the accountability process. This poses a risk for temporary officials in power in the regions who lead until new officials are inaugurated in the regions. It means that the highest power to regulate state government rests with the people. Through the local election, the people can choose who will be their leaders and representatives, in the process of channeling aspirations, which in turn determines the future direction of a country. Maswadi Rauf also mentioned that there are four reasons why direct local elections need to be held: first, to develop the

region, second, to grow local leadership, third, to increase public accountability and government transparency, and fourth, to have a strong people's legitimacy process (Suyanto, 2016).

Communication is an alternative that can be built. The government should at least involve representative communication among the people. It does not necessarily bind the people to the rules through their power, even before the rules are made, there have been communication steps that have been built with the community, which should in some regions carry out post-conflict local elections in their regions. Consensus, it is impossible for the people to be involved in communication, but representatively, certain representatives can be involved as a means of the government to channel the government's wishes for the 2024 election. Communication that is not built from the beginning will lead to many unwanted prejudices. As the author mentioned above, the postponement of the election is the desire of the ruling parties to strengthen their strategy and maintain their power.

The discourse on postponing the election in fact does not see a massive people's resistance to the State, because the rules that have been made must be obeyed. More than that, there is an impact that the State does not think about, there is an outlet for society from what they cannot accept, the people vent this rejection on their other behavior. Environmental example. In the process of holding elections according to the schedule, there should be people's expectations of a timely election. There are various expectations, such as increasing the local economy, lots of social assistance funds that can help the people's economy, capital loans. But when delays occur, this hope makes people think practically. Like the disappointment of the people they will vote for, it turns out that they can be elected in 2024.

Delaying economic aid that they should be ready to receive before 2024, they can carry out negative economic activities, such as felling trees in remote areas, illegal logging to help their daily economy. So that this activity leads to a direct impact on the environment. From the explanation above, the author is interested to address ecology, communication, and election delays as a phenomenon that cannot be ignored.

METHODS

This research was conducted in Lhokseumawe City and North Aceh with a qualitative approach. Based on research in the field, where researchers have conducted observations, literature studies, and in-depth interviews using question forms and voice records as research instruments. Furthermore, the data were analyzed descriptively. The approach used in this research is an approach to ecology, communication science, and local elections. This research is qualitative, therefore the purpose of this research is to make a systematic, factual, and accurate description, picture, or painting of facts, characteristics, and relationships between phenomenon under investigation (Nazir, 1999).

In this context, the author emphasizes research based on existing facts or phenomena related to ecology and political communication, so that what is produced or recorded is in the form of exposure as it is. The approach used is also a little historiographical study, which is a way of writing, presenting, or reporting the results of historical research that has been carried out (Abdurahman, 2007). However, researchers are more dominant in using the ecological, communication, and election settlement approach. The resulting theories are usually referred to as communication theory. Meanwhile, humanistic approaches are also widely applied in research on issues of interpersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, mass communication, and others (Sikumbang, 2017: 18).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The field of Third World political ecology originated in the early 1970s at a time when human-environmental interaction was coming under close public and scholarly scrutiny, especially in the First World. A paper by Wolf (1972) is seen as one of the earliest works in what would eventually become Third World political ecology, but no 'classic' work marked the advent of the field. Rather, it developed slowly in light of research developments in other fields, especially cultural ecology, and radical development geography. Indeed, until the publication of Watts (1983a), Blaikie (1985), Bunker (1985), and Hecht (1985) the field could scarcely be said to have existed at all. There are several reasons for the slow development of Third World political ecology in the 1970s. To begin with,

the term 'political ecology' had strongly negative connotations for many on the political left during that decade as a result of its association with the work of Ehrlich (1968), Hardin (1968), Heilbroner (1974), and Ophuls (1977). These 'eco-doomsayers' predicted that the world faced imminent social and environmental catastrophe due to runaway population growth (Third World) and consumption levels (First World) (Bailey, Sinead, and Raymond L. Bryant, 1997).

Marxist theory of production grounded on the potentials and conditions of Nature: productive rationality that accounts for the incorporation of natural processes in the general conditions of production and the construction of environmental rationality based upon the principles of eco-technological-cultural productivity, ecological resiliency, territorial rights, and environmental justice. Whereas Marxism offers a historical, economic, and social perspective on the study of environmental problems and a theoretical paradigm that can be reworked in a way to incorporate the environment into the productive process, critical environmentalism offers Marxism knowledge as well as political and ethical principles to assess and judge the socio-environmental and ecological conditions to build sustainable production practices and livelihoods, and sustainable world order. Beyond the effort to unearth an underlying ecological ground from the natural dialectic of orthodox Marxism and the appropriation of a balanced ecology from collective workers, historical materialism needs to be renewed from the principles of the ontology of life and the existential conditions of the Peoples from the Earth (Leff, 2021). Political ecology does not only link politics and environmental knowledge, and what is more important is to link it with issues of social human vulnerability (epistemology of social justice).

Disappointment is most severe when experienced by an influential figure and surrounded by figures who have been disappointed, including highly educated people. In the condition of feeling the disappointment of a character that experiences it, it will be worse if the people around him add more words or words that suppress and corner him. A deep and protracted disappointment will negatively affect the soul and mind. Usually, disappointment will be vented to the people around, their own family, and the surrounding community.

Disappointment will give birth to a sense of revenge and hatred towards those who have created a sense of disappointment in those around them. Hate and revenge become the forerunner of rebellion within a person, so that disappointment is vented to the person who caused it.

The environment is the most important part of the place where humans live. The environment cannot be separated from life; a healthy environment can also make a good contribution to humans. There are still people on earth where certain people are limited in their environment, for example, the land is smaller than the sea area. Countries whose seas are the wider ones are usually very concerned about their land environment. For example, Singapore is so strong in protecting its land, because it only has a small amount of land. Politics is the dominant element that can regulate ecology, the result of a political decision is a form of policy, where policy becomes a common rule if has been agreed upon by the State in its implementation. Politics that has a mandate of power is contained in an authority for the leadership of the State to bind its citizens in a rule so that all without exception submit and obey under these rules.

Environmental regulations are one of the political products that must be guarded by the government, as a bulwark of the life of the State. A peaceful country is a country that protects its natural environment. It is not surprising if seen in many European countries; almost all of their care and prepare so large a budget for environmental conservation. They know the cost of environmental destruction if not protected wisely. In other words, Western Europe is aware of its small geographical size of sovereignty and its limited environment, to make state regulations for all citizens to protect environmental limitations. In contrast to a country with a large land area, such as Indonesia. Indonesia believes that its environment will not be reduced even if it is not protected because what is the case with Europe, with the reason that the earth it has is wide. This understanding has an impact not only on ignorance of the environment but also on other social arrangements, politics, and communication, for example, politics do not lead to the right policies.

The politics of power, which has given the authority to produce policies, often leads to

unilateral gains, where the people only accept whatever rules or policies are imposed on them. There are consequences of sanctions if anyone violates the unilateral rule. It is the same as the environment that the State must pay attention to regarding its development, but the benefits of nature conservation are less than political conservation, so environmental conservation is best. The assumption factor is that the environment is not connected with synchronous politics and policies because it is caused by one-way communication. There is no one-way communication, namely communication from the government to the community, the community does not have the opportunity to convey the contents of the communication to the State. So what stands out are coercive communication, coercive orders, and coercive obedience. If someone raises a voice that does not agree with one-way communication, the government will record the citizen as a communication barrier.

A concrete case of political communication in the form of power is the political policy of the authorities, namely the postponement of the election in 2024. The policy that the Acehnese perceive as a unilateral decision. The community has never been invited to contribute to the challenges and hopes of postponing the post-conflict local election. It is not as simple as the government thinks from the impact postponement of the post-conflict local election. The community has calculated and planned the political price of the post-conflict local election. The political price in question is their hope that if their chosen leader wins, both the executive and the legislature can assist in the allocation and provision of economic assistance. The existence of funds needed by the community to accelerate recovery income and economy during the time of covid. The postponement of the Regional Head General Election has presented its own challenges for the people. Especially in looking for a living income as a more practical alternative. Supposedly if the local elections were held in 2022, citizens would feel quickly helped by the policies of the regional heads they chose to win. The delay caused residents to think more simply, namely looking for and cutting down trees in the rain massively as an alternative to support survival. It is proven that every rainy season floods hit various areas; this is an accumulation of forest looting by the people, not supported by proper reforestation planning. The state is not aware

that the impact of everything that destroys the environment is from unilateral communication and forced communication, from the politics of power that produces regulatory products that are only enjoyed unilaterally by the state without considering the voice of the people.

As a consequence of the postponement of the post-conflict local election, the environment has become an easy target for the community to be looted and cut down, as a choice of many other options to support livelihood income as a means of survival. The reality is that there is no direct response from the community against the State; on the other hand, the community thinks to revive their family by looking for wood and cutting as much as possible to live. They are aware that criticizing the State does not benefit them; they can even create new problems, choosing a way of life from the forest as a solution.

The postponement of the post-conflict local election does not solve the political problem but opens up another problem for the state, namely the destruction of forests where Aceh is one of the cases compared to other similar cases in the archipelago, especially areas that have experienced post-conflict local election delays. This analysis, as the author described above, from communication that is not built, leads to policies that are not accepted by the people, to be accepted by government policies, supported by forced communication to force people to accept the rules that have been decided. Political communication strengthened by coercion leads to new problems such as environmental damage. Aceh has a 2006 law that regulates Acehnese households as local government. So that the Acehnese people rely on the law as a frame for the implementation of the local post-conflict local election on time.

CONCLUSION

Ecological politics cannot be magnified properly if the politics of communication and politics of policy are not considered by the government. When the politics of rules are forced on the community, such as postponing the Regional Head General Election, new problems will arise within the country itself. The postponement of the post-conflict local election sooner or later will have a negative impact on the policy. In a practical and short period of time, the government can enjoy the

success of its regulations by postponing the post-conflict local election, but the latent problems of this regulation continue to emerge like a simmering fire. Floods are getting worse, forests are getting looted and ecological damage is increasing. The social phenomenon that the writer examines can be overcome if communication, policy, and politics are combined to see what social prices are faced by the community and the impact of a policy made by the government. The combination of these three aspects can save the country's ecology.

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