

## **Autonomy Dispute: Between Glitter of Gold and Conservation (Case Study on Traditional Gold Mining in Kaili Custom Community at Poboya, Palu)**

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**Abstract:** The presence of conflict involving the custom community, the government and the corporation are caused by a different understanding of seeing the natural resources. This different understanding has caused a different management and utilization of natural resources. It often leads to a conflict of interest among the government, corporation and local community. According to the macro perspective, this research actually aims to explore the questions about the management conflict of Poboya HRD, actors involved in getting access and control of HRD, the group that get impacts of benefits and loss from the relation between the existing authority and custom people's representatives in the middle of it. In giving direction and clarity of methodology in this research, multi-paradigms that is critical paradigm and constructive paradigm are used. To overcome the conflict, the researcher looked at Marx, views on class conflict and the presence of opposing actions: Dahrendorf's views on domination of the government power towards public domain and Randall Collin's views on the control of a group of people on resources. By using the conflict perspectives coated with ecology-politic perspective, this research shows that the conflict happening in Poboya is a dispute among the actors of different ideologies. Those who act on behalf of "custom", together with a number of local ORNOP (ecopopulism) build community power to dominate and get an access to HRD in Poboya. This cannot be separated from the presence of a group of ideologists and custom community and "shared authority" in the local political elites due to double interests. On the other hand, the custom community which should have become the final "shelter" for natural resource conservation has in fact, become involved in the dispute itself. If this did not manage well, Poboya would be trapped in "natural resources curse": a country that is rich in natural resources (gold) but its people live in poverty.

**Key words:** Conflict, authority, custom community, people's mining, perspective, opposing

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Lately, usurpation conflict of the privileges to the management and utilization of natural resources becomes more prominent. Based on the record of the National Land Affairs Agency (BPN), up to 2008 at least 7.491 conflicts (Prudensius Maring). While the data of March 23rd, 2001 from KPA shows that around Indonesia have occurred about 1.500 disputes and structural conflicts which covers approximately 2.136.603 ha of land area and leads <236.761 families became victims. From the KPA records, there are 571 cases of conflicts between state and people. Meanwhile survey results of ARD Inc., (2004) indicate that since, March 2002-February, 2003 has documented 845 conflicts. In other words, it has been occurred more than two conflicts a day.

Concurrently through the conflicts occurred the shifting pattern of relationship between indigenous

people and government. The shifting patterns of characters of the relationship occurred from the harmonious relationship-domination into relationship are conflictual. It is characterized by the stronger of tensions between indigenous people and government, even encroaching upon the private sector (corporations).

If it is traced, the causes of the conflicts are quite varied but in some places show that the conflict between local communities and government or local community and corporate happened because of injustice or inequality (Dody, 2008; Yudhartana, 2006; Prayogo, 2008) lack of clarity about ownership rights (property rights) (Firmansyah, 2004; Antoro, 2010) and interests (Widya, 2007; Jansen, 2010). Injustice or inequality control of natural resources factors can be viewed from the position of indigenous peoples who depend on natural resource-based land (forest, plantation) systematically weakened while the large scale of private sector

(corporate) specialized in industrial estates, Forestry and mining are getting stronger due to the support of the state (government).

The emergence of inequality is not in spite of the differences in understanding over natural resources. For the state, the wealth of natural resources and the environment are still interpreted in economics and politics (McCarthy, 2000) where the natural resources is seen as an important asset in the implementation of national development so that in the name of development to achieve the target of economic growth development, the exploitation of natural resources that carried out on a massive scale is considered as common thing. The cognition is not only inflict ecological damage but also caused implications of socio-cultural that deprived indigenous peoples from their hometown. Therefore, it is aroused the spirit of resistance of indigenous peoples to the country and private sector (corporate).

Poboya by having potential of natural resources (gold) became an arena of conflict interests between actors such as countries, corporations, local communities and ideological groups (NGOs). But the fight that they “play” is false. The presence of the actors conflict do not cause physical impact (apparent conflict) or overthrow each other. Stakeholders conflicted only show their existence and interests where the state comes through formal rules that binded. The area should not be touched because it is in a conservation area of Tahura. Despite the fact that countries apply double standards since the ban was only for local residents (traditional miners) but it is not to the private sector (corporations). They actually got protection from the government to carry out exploration. Similarly, the presence of NGOs that express the aspirations of local communities, eventhough is not free of interest.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Based on the research problem and previous research purposes, the paradigm used is not a single but it is multiple paradigms such as critical theory and theory of constructivism. Both are equally the variant of anti-positivistic. The paradigm of critical theory (subjectivism) can be used to unload the problem of relationship power and contestation actors underlying patterns of domination, utilization and ownership of natural resource in Poboya. Whereas the constructivism (interpretivism) used to photograph how indigenous peoples construct their nature and environment, so that, they can represent themselves and take benefits in current of the battles over access vortex of natural resources.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Dynamics gold mining at Poboya:** Initially the mining activities were done by the community in Poboya merely as side job. Everyday, local community is farming and cultivating an unirrigated field. Mining process were done by the community was still very traditional by using crude equipment such as trays that made of wood and shaped like a gutter. However, the traditional mining process has shifted. The mining was more complex, using drum machines and mashed. It involves a lot of people through the different way of working. Based on the structure and chain of production, it has formed real polarizations of labor at each stage of production.

Today, the existence of gold mines in Poboya has become an attraction for many people to come to Poboya, not only in Palu and surroundings but also from various regions outside of Central Sulawesi such as South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, Gorontalo, North Maluku Halmahera even from Java. It is estimated that more than 10 thousand people who came to Poboya for the venture as a miner. It is certainly influence structural change, culture and social order of Poboya. Different structure and culture as well as the competition between indigenous peoples and migrants can certainly cause conflicts and social tension as sociologically argued that:

“Membership in the same group and the proximity of social status encourage social associations, so, the higher degree of heterogeneity or inequality of a society, the greater obstacles that arise for the relations of social relationships among members or the social integration”.

Additionally because of the heterogeneity above, the conflict in Poboya continue because there are many people worked in the same space and not evenly distributed but instead narrowed to the one activity where the profits of each parties is uneven. In the condition, highly opportunity for conflict occurred, Suliman as expressed in the “rationality and irrationality of violence in sub-Saharan Africa 1999 states that “many people doing the same thing so, that the level of structural differentiation of the country’s economy is extremely slow. The small degree of differentiation that cause the limited opportunities for publics to perform a profitable activity outside the field of agriculture and animal husbandry as well as many people doing the same thing.”

**Configuring forest resource conflict at Poboya:** Poboya has a long record of natural resource conflicts. It has been confronted through the issue of conflict. The potential for conflict is huge occurred among the government and local

communities, the government and company (CPM) or the company and the community. First, the conflicts of government and local community occurred with government as protector of natural resource use policy instruments released by the Minister of Forestry Mail No. 461/KPTs-II1995 that establish areas for conservation Poboya Forest Park (Tahura) which had previously been inhabited and used by indigenous peoples, so that the access rights of local communities become disconnected. Second, the conflict of governments and local communities occurred when governments as agents of development involving the private sector (corporations).

The government's desire to make the area as Tahura stated in proposal letter to the Governor of Central Sulawesi Decree No. 239/591IX/1987 concerning the proposed construction Forest Park (Tahura) and Decree Number: 522.5 / 2835 / Ro.BKLH dated July 13rd, 1988 about the acceleration of the development process of Tahura.

Based on the proposal of the Regional Government and central government through Ministry of Forestry Republic of Indonesia to follow up Decision Letter No. 461/KPTs-2/1995 which establish Poboya and surrounding as Forest Park (Tahura) in Palu. Then, it confirmed as Tahura of Central Sulawesi by Minister of Forestry Decree No.24/KPTs-2/1999. Government policy provides Poboya as part of Tahura that left unresolved problems until now.

Moreover, conflicts occurred among the custom Community of Poboya, the government and the company during the CPM's because of one of domination factors where their needs are not obtain a place as expectations, their perception of property rights and the right to live on their land. Also where they perceive as their ancestral land that must be acquired and maintained. Meanwhile in government's view, custom communities of Poboya can threaten the integrity of area Forest Park (Tahura). As a result of these two conflicting needs to create the conditions and situations conflict which put them subordinated by power and tyranny of government. Thus, creating poverty and suffering to the Community "custom" of Poboya.

Need fulfillment can be understood as physical, economic, social and cultural fulfillment as well as environmental perceived as something worthwhile. The need itself may be assessed as a requirement that is really important. Instead it can be happen when the perceived needs someone denied by another person or group. Sources of self-sufficiency can be different. If the perception of both sides of the fulfillment is limited then conflicts can be occurred. It can be concluded that the perception of fulfillment can not be seen as a perception but its a reality. From these ideas, basically custom

community of Poboya are able to survive until now to conflict with governments and corporations because they perceive that Poboya is the place of their life to provide their living needs of land according to the abilities, skills and knowledges that they have.

The occurrence of conflicts among the custom community, government and corporate also caused by the presence of obstacles in form of access to the natural resources at Poboya that recently known to be rich with minerals. They put the government as a barrier; instead, the government puts them as a part that would inhibit the process of rescue and preservation of biodiversity in the area of Forest Park (Tahura).

Therefore, something that actually happened in Poboya, firstly is conflict of value. The conflicts among the government, custom community and private sectors are because of differences in the value of natural resources. The government intends to make Poboya and surrounding as a conservation area of the Forest Park while the area has actually been accessed by indigenous peoples for hundreds of years and across generations. When the local government take measurements and then cross the garden of the community, actually produced resentment but because of the circumstances at the time (New Order Regime) is notoriously repressive so that they are not immediately revolt.

Secondly is a structural conflict. Conflicts between government and custom community occurred when the central government confirmed to the Forest Park (Tahura) by the Minister of Forestry No. 461/KPTs-2/ 1995 and No. 24/KPTs-2/1999. However, at the same time the government used the authority to grant natural resource for companies such as granting permission to change the ownership of resources of common property into state property or private property so that indirectly affect the economy of local communities Poboya.

Thirdly is conflict of interest. Conflict occurs when the local government published Decree No. 180/345/ Bureau of Legal-G.ST/2009. An integrated regulating mining without Permission (PETI) in Central Sulawesi. The Decree gives legitimacy to the security personnel to curb mining without Permission (PETI) which is managed by the community. From that moment, the conflict continues until now, especially after some of NGOs provide reinforcement to the indigenous peoples. Together with the custom community, they refused curbing on mining community. Even the Green NGOs actively supported enforcement efforts in Poboya instead turned against the policies of curbing because it considered that such efforts are no longer in eyewear to make arrangement on Poboya mine but more reduced by powerful interests which the desire asset security PT. Bumi Resources (Around People, 3/2010). Poboya has a long record of natural resource conflicts. Long before the bustle about the gold mine as

at present, Poboya have been confronted with the issue of conflict. The conflicts is occurred among the government and local community as well as local community and the corporation. In general, there are some stages of conflicts. First, pre-conflict is the conflict between the government and society occurred around 1987 where the government is willing or planning Poboya and surrounding as an area of protection/conservation of Forest Park (Tahura). Second, confrontation is the conflict began in the period 1987-1995 when performed of tillage where governments unilaterally claims land that is owned and managed by the community belong to the country. Whereas it is an indigenous land, the land of the birth place emotionally fused with nature their environment.

The third is crisis. Post-inauguration Tahura Palu in 1995, the conflict continues at periode 1995-1999 when the government curbing as a consequence status of Tahura as a conservation area which should be free from all human activities and close all public access to the resources in that area. The climax is in 1997-1998 when the government plans to relocate residents in the area of Tahura. The conflict between governments and indigenous peoples of Poboya subsided after their Perwali to 6 and 7 of 2010 as a solution to legalize the mining managed by community at Poboya. The last is post-conflict. Relationships began to recover. The government postpones the curbing plan and lead to the discussion of local regulations on mining.

### CONCLUSION

Conflict in Poboya is a virtual conflict, caused by policy of the country that dominate society at Poboya that are so damaging, particularly related to the determination of Tahura where plantation society which has managed hereditary or cross-generational unilaterally claimed by governments as a country land. Conflict continued with the transition of the Tahura issue to the issue of mining and involves many actors with different interests.

The exploitation of natural resources at Poboya indefinitely and without control shows the relation between economic power and political power. Poboya merely became a stage where each of the actors plays different roles. The government as a representation of the country that busy pretending to make the rules to save Poboya from the resource degradation but they never do the real action to protect Poboya from the capitalist expansion. In fact they actually a part of the perpetrators of the damage of natural resources itself. So that the exploitation of natural resources continues flowing and difficult unstopable. Similarly to the presence of some of NGOs-L which is not free from its own interests. They gave reinforcement to the local communities. By labeling indigenous people, they are able to seize the power to

access resources at Poboya even more from the efforts of Mining Unlicensed (PETI) justification (legitimate).

The involvement of custom community in mining activities that "harmful" is something that unusually. The power of tribal councils in Poboya through Ali Djalaluddin and supported by local NGO who give reinforcement to the community. They contributed to the occurrence of conflicts and natural resource degradation in Poboya. Indigenous community was only a symbol used by external groups to bid on interest in Poboya, while the local communities were the victims of the conflict of interests.

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