

## WETLAND ENVIRONMENT DETERRITORIALIZATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLITICAL ECOLOGY IN BANJAR REGENCY

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### ABSTRACT

Conflict of land conversion (deterritorialization) is an ecological crisis that continues to reproduce in the capitalist economy's domination space and goes hand in hand with the use of the pretext of industrialization and massive scale state political policies. Banjar Regency is geographically located in a strategic area between the cities of Banjarmasin and Banjarbaru. So that it functions as a buffer zone and a center for settlement development and economic activity. This study aims to discover the concept of territorialization of wetlands that exist in the community and respond to the dynamics of the expansion of land conversion (deterritorialization of the wetland environment), whether carried out by corporations, the government, or by the community itself through the tendency of policies that are mechanistic pragmatic. This research uses a qualitative approach, which is considered the most capable of accommodating the dialectical analysis of subjectivity-objectivity accompanied by critical analysis to uncover the problem of deterritorialization of the wetland environment of political ecology in Banjar Regency. Data collection using literature studies and field data collection through FGD, interviews, and observations using the live-in model. It is hoped that the analysis of this research will be able to provide novelty to a philosophical perspective on natural resource management, particularly concerning the environmental functions of wetlands, including swamps and peat areas. Stakeholders and actors engaged in related sectors are also expected to unravel the unequal power relations between actors based on the paradigm of justice and sustainability, accompanied by efforts to overcome various systemic obstacles, anthropocentric obstacles, and local government "bureaucratic dysfunction," which will be elaborated, comprehensively in this research.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict of land conversion (deterritorialization) is an ecological crisis that continues to be reproduced in the dominating space of the capitalistic economy and goes hand in hand by using the pretext of industrialization and massive scale of state political policies—ultimately shaping the constantly changing environmental landscape, including the wetland environment. Wetland areas, including swamps and peat areas as the lungs of the world, on the one hand, have been heavily converted with concrete buildings, industrial forests, and monoculture crop bases (Goldblatt, 2015). Unbalanced relations to be carried out continuously in the context of the use of natural resources, including the agrarian objects & wetland environment that are closest to the people in South Kalimantan, especially people in rural areas who live subsistently, including those in Banjar Regency. Most of the Banjar regency functions as a buffer zone because it is geographically located in a strategic location between the city of Banjarmasin and the city of Banjarbaru. However, high accessibility has made Banjar Regency one of the centers for developing urban settlements and the center of economic activities, such as producers of agricultural products, trade and services (nature tourism and culinary tourism), industrial areas (small and medium industries), and so on. (Krisnaningtyas & Trimarmanti, 2014).

Hence, it faces the consequence of ignoring social and transcendental relations between humans and nature. The negligence is ironically carried out systematically through local government policies and governance. The political policy of regulating and converting wetlands is carried out through “enclosure” to “discipline” the community, which is often synonymous with the framework of pragmatic political interests. The concept of "licensing" related to the use of natural resources is also interwoven in this domination relationship, which will only lead to the achievement of the ruling class's political interests and degrade the role and interests of the community (Rahmadian, 2019).

With population growth and development and high economic activities in Banjar Regency, it has triggered changes in land use caused by an increase in land requirements for industrial activities, trade in services, and housing. Land use in accordance with its designation can preserve the environment and prevent environmental quality degradation, while land use that neglect the environment preservation can be disastrous not only for the environment but also human life (Krisnaningtyas & Trimarmanti, 2014).

In the end, it is logical that the inequality in the use of the environment will result in a massive disaster. The cost of regional and central government policies reconstruction must be paid handsomely, and the general public will be the one who have to bear the consequences. Flood disaster cases in Banjar Regency, including the worst flood in South Kalimantan, based on the data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the area of natural forest in the Barito Watershed in South

Kalimantan has decreased by 62.8%. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry stated that the decline in natural forest area in the Barito watershed, an area that experienced floods in South Kalimantan, occurred during the period 1990-2019 (BPS, 2019; BBC, 2020). Between 2010 and 2020, there was a decrease in the area of primary forest by 13,000 hectares, secondary forest by 116,000 hectares, rice fields and shrubs of 146,000 hectares and 47,000 hectares, respectively. The reduction in forest areas in Kalimantan is supported by a study conducted by researchers from the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in 2017 using Landsat satellite imagery data between 1973-2015. The study states that forest and land cover in South Kalimantan, including in Banjar Regency, has significantly reduced due to deforestation (CIFOR, 2020; BPS, 2020). For this reason, Ministry of Environment and Forestry recommends local governments to accelerate and focus on forest and land rehabilitation activities in areas that caused the flooding.

Topographically, Banjar Regency consists of land and mountains which altitude varies between 0 - 1,878 meters from sea level. The low location of Banjar Regency causes water flow on the ground is disturbed. Some areas are always inundated (29.93%) and 0.58% of said area are periodically inundated (BPS Kabupaten Banjar, 2020; Bappelitbang Kab. Banjar 2019-2020), on the other hand, deterritorialize the wetland environment in Banjar Regency happened very massively. Many of the Peatlands and Kertak Hanyar have shifted their function from agricultural areas to areas of the trade and services sector, including the transition to new residential areas. This is also increasingly concerned with the planned issue of the development of the Peat Raya area as a new division (Head of Planning, Control and Evaluation of Bappelitbang of Banjar Regency, 2020; BPS, 2019; BPS 2020).

This condition indicates that the current meaning of development that the government wants to achieve through central and regional government policies has not been able to touch the subordinated layers of society. The concept of "development and environmental management" is still embedded in the agenda characteristics of the interests of political power and corporations alone. Indications of the expansion of environmental deterritorialization accompanied by the removal of community lands in recent years also show a tendency for environmental governance to favor political interests and commercial objectives, which are expected to support the country's economy. This condition continues to be the basic logic of justification for tendentious political policies that continue to encourage the expansion of environmental deterritorialisation. Meanwhile, there has not been much discussion about deterritorialization of the wetland environment based on a political ecological perspective and its impact on the sociocultural conditions of society. In the study of political ecology and governance, deterritorialization of the wetland environment has not been widely discussed, even though its potential and benefits are very high. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the

dynamics of deterritorialization of the wetland environment based on a political ecological perspective and its impact on the sociocultural conditions of society.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This research was developed using a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is considered the most suitable method in accommodating a dialectical analysis of subjectivity-objectivity accompanied by a critical analysis to uncover the problem of deterritorialization of the wetland environment in the perspective of political ecology in Banjar Regency. This research is a field research with live-in observation instruments, FGD and in-depth interviews, collaborated with literature studies to examine and understand deterritorialization of the wetland environment from a political ecological perspective.

The interesting part of this research is that the ecological-political perspective is present as an alternative paradigm in formulating affirmative resource management with environmental conditions. The political ecology perspective also assesses the local ecological situation, where environmental changes (ecological change) color the hue or state of an area. In this perspective, investigations and proofs of social phenomena are carried out more constructively where a reflective, inter-subject approach, and contemplation of meaning are particularly important in their position in obtaining the true meaning of a fact. Even so, the study also provides a free space in the efforts to investigate the causes and consequences that arise because of the political-economic decisions taken by the powerful authorities in the study area. To support this, the data collection of this study will use the live-in method for a certain period at the research location.

The research team collected field data according to field instruments. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). In making observations, the author observes all things related to the socio-cultural aspects of the community at the research location. In the interview instrument, the type of interview used is semi-structured, which collaborates between the interview guides that have been made with open-ended questions. Open-ended questions must be relevant to the list of themes / topics so that the discussion with key informants can be directed. In the interview, it is necessary to do probing, or deepening information.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a process of collecting systematic data and information on a specific problem that is extremely specific through group discussions. FGDs make it easy to establish openness, trust and understand the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of the informants, so that there will be intensive discussions and are not rigid in discussing specific issues related to conflict. The FGD also provided information quickly and constructively from participants with different backgrounds and experiences, and provided important, interesting, even unexpected information that emerged during the discussion process. This FGD is the final part of the data

collection process. It is conducted after the observation and in-depth interviews have been completed. In order to comprehensively and accurately record the socio-cultural context at the research location, the above instruments are supported by the live-in method. The live-in method is an attempt by the researcher to build a close relationship with the informant, the close relationship in question is a limited relationship between the researcher and the informant or does not extend to cooperative relationships on other matters. This method is used to obtain objective and in-depth information obtained when informants feel safe and comfortable.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This study basically focuses on the subject of a political ecology perspective as an alternative paradigm in natural resource management. The dominant paradigm that has developed in natural resource management is developmentism and neoliberalism which are very economic-centric. In the view of the two paradigms, natural resources are treated as consumptive objects in achieving the ratio of economic growth and development. This has led to the existence of excessive exploration and exploitative behavior in exploiting the earth's wealth to be used maximally for economic interests. The implication that arises then is the destruction of the natural environment ecosystem structure which is followed by the presence of natural disasters (Jati, 2016).

Faris Rahmadian's research which examined the Political Economy Analysis of Oil Palm Plantation Expansion: Actors and Deteritorialization. This research was conducted qualitatively in research locations that represent the dynamics of the expansion of oil palm plantations in Indonesia, in the Kembang Janggut Regency, Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan. This study aims to analyze the relationship between actors in the licensing process for oil palm plantation expansion and conceptualize ideas to respond to the economic-political dynamics in the process of oil palm plantation expansion. The next research is a journal article written by Li TM entitled *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. This research states that the government still tends to use the same approach and perspective in viewing humans at one level, and directing individual or community behavior in the name of "improving their livelihoods".

These studies do not explain power relations and the relationship between political, economic and environmental interests. In fact, natural resources continue to be a commodity "incorporation" on a large scale, including in South Kalimantan, by the power relationship that occurs simultaneously between the authorities and entrepreneurs. Political ecology perspective is very important because land is the basic basis of human life and livelihood. In this context, the component that becomes the main focus is how the dynamics of the relationship between actors (subject / stakeholder in the environmental sector) in the utilization of wetland environmental objects (swamps and peatlands). In the specific issue of land use change and environmental function, discussions related to differences in interests in the context of "development" and "use" then become important and become interesting to discuss.

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