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CONFLICT POTENTIALS IN COMMUNITIES AROUND NATIONAL PARK FORESTS

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ABSTRACT

The cultural value system of the Petalangan society that settles in Pelalawan regency, Riau, is traditionally, nature-oriented. Each tribe owns their own forest and land. The ownership, utilization, and maintenance of the forest and land are well-regulated by the local custom, reflected in several of their customs. The forests not only serve as a resource to fulfill their needs, but also as a model and the core of their life philosophy. Concepts about life, nature, time, work, and the relationship between one and another have been changed and eroded by industrialization. Forests, as the center of cultural orientation, have changed into an economical meaning. The presence of national authority over the ownership and governance of the forest and land rights have brought many changes to the meaning of forests for the Petalangan society. Various interests have turned the forests' from a highly-valued cultural property into a source of conflicts between the government, the industry and the society, be that native or immigrants. Furthermore, the social functions expressed in formal rules, such as national law or regulations, are already eroded by the advancement of individual functions of land and forest owners. All these conditions work together and bear the potential of creating a social conflict. Cases of local conflicts then appear, which pit the government, with the interest to preserve the forest as a national park area, against the local residents, who are not willing to let go of their forest and land. The analysis in search of the conflicts' sources, and the trialz, to apply the approach of Talcott Parsons' functionalism, is hoped to explain more of the differences of what really happen in the ownership and governance of forest and land rights in the Pelalawan region. Land and forests clearing by large companies cannot be denied as the largest source of conflict. The single cultural value has changed and creates community diversity with economic-oriented interests, which later will slowly erode the forest and land significances as the cultural value orientation of the Petalangan society.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of society and culture leads to a typical phenomenon, namely conflicts, social changes, and the behavior patterns formed in the process. Limited natural resources, in this case the forests as a source of life, have led to constant social conflicts. This study initiates an explanation of the behavior patterns that contain the elements of trust and networking, established in a society in a state of inequality.

Communities, who were initially friendly to nature, slowly began to turn into its arch enemy. Social structure, which originally governs the harmonious life between man and the environment, gradually faded and changed into economic values which gave birth to rivalries and prolonged conflicts and often coincide with cultural differences. Structural differentiation emerges as a result of inequality in economic and political access, thereby causing social inequality. A state of inequalities of opportunity in a society has a great potential to give rise to conflicts.

Industrialization results in widespread economic interests in various dimensions of life. Such is what happens in the Petalangan community. At first, they interpret the forests they live in as the orientation of their cultural values. Industrialization, however, has changed this way of life: nowadays, the forests' meaning have slowly turned into nothing more than an economic value. This has resulted in the destruction of the forests themselves as well as in the emergence of inter-community conflict triggered by the presence of economic inequalities.

FORESTS AS PART OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Mankind has always been developing their minds and their ability to make a choice among various alternative behaviors in order to survive and reach their utmost potential. These behaviors will be repeated and passed on to other individuals in the society and eventually from one generation to the next. This process is long-standing and persistent so that it becomes a collective behavior pattern, a system of behavior, rules, and customs that must be complied with.

Society, with its collective nature, is understood as a relatively independent group of people that has lived together long enough in a certain place, have a similar culture, and do most activities as a group. This independent nature of society, in accordance to Talcott Parsons' statement (Johnson: 1986, Ritzer: 1988), is a self-subsistent social system with a lifespan more than the lifetime of an individual that obtains new members through biological reproductions and socializes with the younger generations. Another society criteria cited by Marion Levy (Johnson: 1986) is that, apart from self-subsistence, societies are also capable to last longer than the lifetime of an individual and have a loyalty to a main behavior system. Thus, in developing a society, the importance of territorial boundaries as identity boundaries as well as a long time to live together cannot be ignored in order to create a culture.

Understanding the process of establishing, fostering, nurturing, and sustaining a society or community is related to the concept of culture. Kornblum (Poloma: 1999) states that repetitive behavior patterns that created the relationships among individuals and groups is called a social structure, which is expressed in the sentence: "The recurring patterns of behavior that create relationships among individuals and groups within a society." Social structure is built upon the values that are considered important in society. The whole pattern of behavior, its underlying values, and the

comprehensiveness of things that help people reach a better life is referred to as culture. Thus, it can be said that the core of a community is its culture, which is expressed as an organizational unit of mankind, consisting of the way of thinking, ideas, and perspective, that is manifested in activities, actions, and behaviors, and complemented by objects created on purpose.

The Petalangan community, one of the indigenous tribes in Riau province residing in Pangkalan Kuras, Bunut, Langgam, and Kuala Kampar districts, has lived in lands inherited from generations to generations, called *hutan tanah wilayat* or *tanah wilayat* (land and forest) in local tongue, in the regencies of Pelalawan and Kampar. Each of the tribes has its own land and forest. The ownership, utilization, and presevation of these land forests is organized carefully through local customs, as reflected in the variety of customary expressions.

The following is an excerpt of Tennas Effendy's 1997 book *Bujang Tan Domang: Sastra Lisan Orang Petalangan* (Bujang Tan Domang, an Oral Literature of the Petalangan People), which describes how behavior patterns become a collective and repetitive behavior system that eventually turn into rules and customs, and in turn, give birth to culture. These behavior patterns are immortalized through the inheritance of values and will govern the entire life of the community.

> ".....According to tradition, land rights are determined by the *tombo* or *terombo* of the respective tribes. It is based on this *tombo* that the kings of the old Pelalawan kingdom affirmed their rights of ownership, control, utilization, and conservation of forest land. They do this by giving a Forest Land Certificate to each and every tribe heads to which the land belongs. At the time of the kingdom of yore, the Petalangan community resides within the kingdom and acknowledges its king as their king. In addition to containing the origins and owners of these lands, a *tombo* also contains guidance and advice filled with the community's noble values that are passed through generations through oral literature.

> After Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, many fundamental changes took place, including the provisions regarding the forest lands ownership and control, village expansions, the ever-expanding development, and others. These changes also affected the life of the Petalangan community to some extent. Changes in the structure of government shifted the role of the tribal heads from formal leaders of the community to village heads appointed officially by the government. Provisions over the ownership of forest lands, which used to refer to a king's appointment or to a local *tombo*, now needed other requirements in line with applicable laws and regulations. Whereas the Petalangan community still held firmly to local customs that the forest lands, due to inheritance, still belonged to them, the village heads, as a local representative of the government, consider the forest lands that are not equipped with official papers as state property.

> The expansion of villages leads to the emergence of new villages in existing forest lands, so that the forest lands were divided into several of the new villages. One example of this is the Monti Raja forest land which has been divided into three villages: Betung, Kesuma, and Talau. In addition, the pace of development, particularly in the

agriculture sector, has led large plantation estates to grab the forest lands and utilized them for their own profit.

This turn of events naturally lead to problems in the life of the Petalangan community, especially in aspects related to land rights. It is hard for them to accept that they are no longer recognized as the true owners of the forest lands just because they cannot bring forward the necessary formal requirements. The result is a fight between the community and the village heads for the ownership, control, and utilization of the forest lands. The problems may take a turn for the worse when the forest lands are opened and their control rights changed hands, for example to large private estates.

Tribe heads, as well as leaders, elders, and guardian of traditions, would then be regarded as dissidents. As long as the problems can be solved consultation and consensus, it will not grow and spread. However, not everything can be solved easily with no protracted after-effects, especially if the case is being exploited by third parties who seek personal gains.

Things like this occured over and over again incessantly, resulting in more parties trying to take advantage of the situation, even those coming from the Petalangan community itself. Gradually, the community felt more and more neglected. The *tombo*, originally held high as the proof of forest lands ownerships, are becoming more and more ignored and deemed not admissible as proof of land rights. Not a few even degrade the *tombo* and see it as nothing more than a myth from the past that will have no meaning in the present and the future other than a source of obstacles for the development and advancement of the nation. Only *tombo* related to health treatments is still used by healers and village midwives.

The loss of forest lands for the Petalangan community does not only mean the lost of livelihoods. More fundamentally, it means the loss of cultural resources, roots of tradition and cultural activity, source of pride and dignity, and even identity. This is because, in their traditional beliefs, nature is a symbol of themselves and where they get all the materials they wil need for a ritual treatment and other things.

This is what outsiders, especially forest encroachers, barely understand. People who do not explore the Petalangan culture would often think that forest lands are only useful when they are turned into gardens, fields, and those of other economic interests, whereas for Petalangan society, the forest lands are not only a resource to fulfill needs in the physical aspects of life, but also those of life's spiritual sides as well. They even made the forest lands as examples, source of philosophy, and moral benchmark in their lives. They have certain customary provisions to preserve the natural environment, something they have proven succesful for hundreds of years.

The Petalangan people's tradition of shifting cultivation is often made as scapegoat as it is deemed destructive to the forests land and the habitat. In fact, this assumption cannot be further from the truth. Forthe Petalangan people, the shifting cultivation areas are set up according to their custom, so that the shifts are never out of a pre-determined bound.

They move withing the area for every five to 10 years. Areas devoted to farming are referred to as cultivated soil. Each member of the society are prohibited to set up farms outside of the area, and any form of offense will be punished in accordance with local customary law.

Thus, it is clear that the Petalangan community does not do damage to the forest lands. They divide the forest lands into four areas: the village land (for settlements), the hamlet land (for gardening and reserve settlements), cultivated soil (where the shifting cultivation takes place), and prohibited jungle (divided into two: one part contains trees where bees can make their hives and the other as reserve forests where various flora and fauna resides). The existence of customary provisions governing the use of forest lands indicates that the people are very concerned about the preservation of their environment and will not damage, let alone exterminate, the forests.

Apart from consuming their forest lands, the opening of large farming estates surrounding the villages of Petalangan people have also led to the sharp increase of populations, especially that of foreigners coming into the area to fill in jobs in the big estates. A cultural contact between the migrant and the local people takes place, which gradually affects the life of the Petalangan people. The cultural richness of the variety of values brought in by the outsiders will lead to the indigenous people to be more open and learn to appreciate differences. However, the loss of most of the forest lands, which leads to the loss of culture and cultural activities, will weaken the position of forest-oriented local culture. In turn, this condition will be very detrimental to the attempts to preserve the forests along with its entire ecosystem.

Based on this explanation about the Petalangan society and their forest lands, it is clear that the forest is the orientation of cultural values and is part of behavior patterns which becomes the benchmark in the life of all members of the community.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE SHIFT IN THE FORESTS' MEANING

A highly productive country may be in the process of becoming poorer if, for example, all the developments that yield the high productivity never pay any attention to the environmental impact. The environment becomes increasingly damaged, the natural resources ever more depleted, nature's slow rehabilitation speed cannot ever keep up with the speed of the destruction of natural resources. This condition will gradually decrease the quality of human life. Oftentimes, rapid development process does not have an adequate environmental conservation ability. Development becomes an unsustainable process. Therefore, environmental factors must be considered as important benchmarks for the success of development so that the rankings of development among countries in the world can be more objective. (Arief Budiman: 1997)

Industrialization gives birth to social change and affects land ownership and control pattern, as well as the intensity of land transactions, employment pattern, and agricultural income in rural areas. Article 6 of the 1960 Agrarian Law (UUPA) stipulates that "all land rights has a social function", which contains an important

statement about land rights in the underlying conception of positive land regulations that must be taken for granted.

The implementation of social function on all the land under the authority of the state has slowly been eroded by the forces of industrialization and has been blurred by land utilizations for industrial purposes (Yusriadi: 2010). The emergence of new social values that are different from the old ones espoused in the UUPA has led to a change in land ownership from its old social functions to a new individual functions. Land ownership is then only oriented towards its individual rights and its legal obilgations as a social function, as stated by the UUPA, has almost disappeared. The economic dimension of land becomes more imminent, marked by the sharp increase of land prices and views that land is an object of speculations or a trade commodity based on the individual interests of gaining personal benefits.

As is outlined by Tennas Effendy, much has changed since Indonesia's independence in 1945, such as the change in the political administration structure of the Pelalawan kingdom that incorporated itself into the then newly-established nation state. From that point on, structure of values based on law and formal rules is deemed more important than local customs. Industrialization is inevitable and its impacts reverberated through numerous aspects in human life. Values of individualism and economy slowly affect a society's outlook on life. The entry of companies holding forest concessions is instrumental to the changes taking place in the area. Due in part to the necessity to establish conservations for elephants and tigers, the state, as the highest authority, limits the expansion of industrial farms by protecting forests in almost all regions in Indonesia. Numerous conservation areas for various kinds of flora and fauna are then established and is back by laws.

National Parks are nature conservation areas with their own native ecosystems, managed by a zoning system utilized for the purpose of research, science, education, culture, tourism, and recreation (Article 1 point 14 of the 1990 Law on Conservation of Natural Resources and Their Ecosystem (UU 5/1990)). Nature conservation areas are places with certain characteristics, both on land and in the waters, which serve as life's support system to preserve a biodiversity of plants and animals and to sustainably utilize natural resources and ecosystems (the law's article 1 point 13).

Understanding the phenomena of social changes in Sociology is quite complicated, as there are several different underlying perspectives. Some experts highlighted the process of social changes, while others choose to focus more on the changes in social structures which become the changes' parameters. Some scholars argue that social change is observed on measurable phenomena, such as social mobility (labor) and population composition. Others define social change as an important change in the behavior patterns and social interaction systems, including changes in norms, values, and cultural phenomena.

Social change can be explained by using the theory of Talcott Parsons (Poloma: 1999, Johnson: 1986, Ritzer: 1988). Societies have a variety of institutions related to and dependent on each other. Parsons uses the concept of system in explaining this inter-agency coordination. In order to keep society running, a number of functional imperatives must be met. Economic institutions runs the function of environmental adaptation, the government is in charge of achieving common objectives, and legal and religious institutions carry out the function of integration. Family and educational institutions perform the function of maintenance.

There have been changes in the cultural value orientation in the Petalangan society, namely the change of mental conceptions on things deemed valuable in life. According to anthropologists Florence and Clyde Kluckhohn (Koentjaraningrat: 1985), the conceptions are related to the orientation of values of life, works, time, nature, and human relationships. In accordance with Parsons' patterned variables, the Petalangan society's value orientataion has changed from collective orientation to self orientation, from particularism to universalism .

CONFLICT POTENTIALS IN COMMUNITIES

The scarcity of land coupled with every man's needs to fulfill his or her needs has given rise to rivalries among community members. Environmental changes result in social conflicts. Encroachment is a phenomenon that emerges because people can no longer find a friendly environment that can yield many products. Social inequality and environmental change combine into a single phenomenon, inseparable from each other.

Two factors that greatly affect the success of community development are income distribution and environmental sustainability, both of which are closely related to each other. If there are too much gap between the rich and the poor, the people concerned may become politically vulnerable. The poor will tend to reject the status quo because they want to improve themselves and change the situation (Dahrendorf : 1986). This is in line with Robert King Merton's statement about the emergence of social anomie conditions. Conditions of inequality in a society will potentially create acts of non-conformity, onw of which is rebellion against the existing structure (Merton : 1981).

Searches of facts and data about the phenomena of social conflicts in the Riau province provide an understanding that the conflicts are not conflicts of high intensity as they occur spontaneously and sporadically in various regions. However, the conflicts can also be seen as potential high-intensity conflicts as there are accumulations of an opposition against the dominant, which resulted in a contradictory behavior of a transfer of hate from the industry to the national and local government, or vice versa (Liliweri : 2009, Al qadrie: 2003).

One example of a dispute with long-lasting impacts on all parties involved is the case of forest expansion which involves the government and local communities in Pelalawan in 2011. The province's office of National Unity and Community Protection (Kesbanglinmas) reported that a rally was held by the Kusuma village's Farmers' Union in front of the Pelalawan regent office on Tuesday, September 13, 2011, at 11:30 a.m. Some 2,300 were deployed on the rally. Kusuma village is located in the regency's Pangkalan Kuras district. The protesters' demands include:

"......1) The revokation of Forestry Minister decree Nb: SK/663/Menhut-II/2009 on changes in the function of a part of limited production forest in the 44,492-hectare Tesso Nilo Forest into a national park as an expansion of the Tesso Nilo National Park. ....2) The rejection of a plan to expand the Tesso Nilo National Park to include the customary lands belonging to Pebatinan Batin Hitam Sei Medang, on the grounds that the land has been managed by the descendants of Batin Medan, both from the local communities and from outside."

On July 19, 2006, the Forestry Minister issued a ministerial decree number P.54 establishing Riau as a conservation center for Sumatran elephant. The regulation is expected to solve the human-elephant conflict in Riau. In reality, however, the Tesso Nilo National Park, which was expected to help solve the conflict, is yet to be free from the numerous problems that threaten the region's integrity, especially as the elephants' habitat. Illegal logging, encroachment, and land burning still occurs in the area. The Tesso Nilo Forest is one block of lowland forest remaining on Sumatra.

The September 2011 rally was done because residents rejected the expansion and seek to revoke the agreement signed by the regent in the previous month. The expansion of protected forest will reduce the community's arable land and the community's land rights which is protected by the local customs. This phenomenon represents a socioeconomic inequality experience by the local people and implies a phenomenon of inequality between the communities.

In the situation of anomie, groups will appear with plans to improve themselves by changing the conditions. Therefore, social forces will be forces under the following circumstances: gap between the rich and the poor, discord in the military force, ineffective formal legal mechanisms, and organized poor. All this will result in the emergence of a political turmoil, which in turn can destruct all developments achieved over the years, which will also slow down the process of further development. (Arief Budiman: 1995, Suwarsono, Alvin: 1991)

CONCLUSION

Functionalist analysis suggests that there is change in the adaptation system of the Petalangan society. Adaptation is a system's necessity to ensure that the environment has what it needs and to distribute the resources to the system. The system must be able to adjust to the environment and to its external demands. It is required for all members of the society to have the material means to be able to make ends meet and support activities. Without the means, then ideas, no matter how good they are, can never be realized. Economy system must fulfill the need t adapt. External demands full of rivalry has driven the Petalangan people to change their economy system.

Political system defines the main purpose of a system and determines its priorities among the goals it must achieve. The change in political administration structure form tribes to villages has also change the goal attainment in the Petalangan community. Apart from that, a system must be able to govern the relations among its components. In order to do so, some pre-requisites, namely the suitability of all parts of a system to ensure its functionality, must be met. The function of integration is fulfilled by legal and religious system, which must be able to govern the relations of the three other important functions. The change from customary law-oriented to positive law-oriented in regulating the function of integration has caused some unrest, as not all components of the system are ready to accept these changes. Even the encroachers use this for their own advantage.

A system must complement, maintain, and improve the individuals' motivation as well as the cultural patterns that give rise to the motivation. This is a prerequisite that refer to the way to ensure action continuity in the system in line with

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norms and regulations. This latent pattern maintenance function is met through a cultural system, which is mostly run by families and education.

Social structures that govern all forms of diversity and competition must be able to maintain social cohesion (Hikmat : 2006, Rukminto : 2008). Important values and norms are those that govern the differences and social disparities. Man must learn to deal with differences of interests among themselves, control limits, so that environmental change does not result in social conflicts. These values must be able to transform conflicts and rivalries into cooperation and social cohesion.