

## **The Religious Approach Prevents Threat of Environmental Damage**

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### **Abstract**

*Protection against the threat of damage to the natural environment, is more often faced with the creation of laws and regulations to prevent it. However, the rules made are more defeated by economic factors, domestic and world market needs. Likewise, the protection and management of the environment and natural resources relies heavily on economic factors as the main motive which subordinates norms and ethical factors. Many environmental experts are of the opinion that practical and technical measures to protect and manage the environment and natural resources that only rely on scientific and technological assistance are not the right solution. Then various solutions are offered to prevent environmental damage, including through the theory of adaptation. Another offer is through a religious teaching approach because the assumption is that through the argument of the holy book, excessive exploitation of nature and damage to the environment due to human actions can be prevented and is an important alternative. This research will discuss whether a religious approach can be effective in avoiding damage to the surrounding natural environment or not using a literature review technique. The results show that the verses and hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad actually invite mankind to listen, think, and be grateful for God's creation by utilizing nature, the environment and protecting the environment. Hence, the conclusion is religious approach can contribute to regional development in the era of regional autonomy freedom in facing environmental preservation in the midst of a very sharp and ruthless global capitalism. Even though the dominant form of this knowledge in modern society is not religious, but religion legitimizes social institutions and orders by giving them ontological status. Thus, the Ulama Fatwa in dealing with environmental damage is an important step to maintain a better life.*

**Keywords : Religious Approach , Environment, Natural Damage.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the illustration of environmental damage, it is described about a German anthropologist named Moszowski in 1903 traveling. He told me that he had been walking for three full days, but as far as the eye could see, he only saw green trees and that was all. There is absolutely no difference and absolutely no free scenery. The feeling of boredom had started to emerge but, it seemed the forest still didn't want to reveal its boundaries.

An anthropologist who has examined the island of Irian (formerly Papua) and parts of Sumatra, now has to add a footnote to the story of his expedition, which seems to be just part of the past. The wilderness as he described in parts of Sumatra (Riau) at the beginning of the 20th century, is now starting to disappear.

In Central Aceh around the Lauser mountains, as far as the eye can see, the green has changed to brown. The local people said that when they saw it in the early 1970s, the green of the mountains looked thick so you couldn't see the activity of living things up there, but when in the early 1980s, South Korean investors who were given permission by the Jakarta government to manage forests in Central Aceh, Various types of trees were transported so that from a distance you can see the bare forest that can be seen today. On the other hand, until now the security forces have been working together with local government officials to compete to plunder forest products on a small scale, which does not go beyond Korean investors who have received permission from the Jakarta administration. Since then, there have been frequent

landslides that have buried the homes and gardens of local residents. The problem that can be raised in environmental development and preventing natural exploitation so as to damage the environment is whether a religious approach can be effective in avoiding damage to the surrounding natural environment. This working paper attempts to provide an explanation. (Republika, 15 November 1999, dan 15 Desember 1999)

## RESEARCH METHODS

This paper was prepared using a literature review technique regarding environmental damage that can be prevented and controlled with a religious approach using the Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2011) technique, namely data condensation , data display , and conclusion drawing. Result: The religious approach is considered the most effective way and is expected to be able to prevent natural exploitation and environmental damage which will lead to social disasters. Conclusion: religious arguments with scientific delivery is a way that needs to be developed to prevent bigger disasters from happening due to human actions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Bringing Up Resistance

Homer-Dixon, an environmental expert in a structural-conflict perspective, feels his thoughts apprehensive. He predicts that in half a century there will be drastic damage to natural resources. The expanse of fertile land which is currently the foundation of agricultural production in the next few decades will become unproductive again.

At the same time, the forests will become increasingly barren and the lives of various kinds of animals will be disrupted. Generations to come will inherit the degradation of rivers, springs and the decline in the quantity and quality of flora and fauna. If such conditions occur, such environmental –scarcities (decreasing environmental conditions) are not impossible to give rise to prolonged political conflicts that cannot be easily resolved.

Homer-Dixon's prediction is that the groups of people who suffer the most from such conditions are groups of people who are classified as poor or have low incomes. They do not have the strength to avoid suffering as a result of water scarcity, forest destruction and narrowing of productive land. In such conditions social conflict will arise when there is no longer a balance between the amount needed and what is obtained.

Both Moszowski's record and Homer-Dixon's statement have become an undeniable fact. Exploration of agricultural products and exploitation of forests in various regions in Indonesia has not only caused damage in various places but also created resistance by the surrounding communities against the government or policy makers. This resistance was not only caused by environmental damage but also because of the government's penetration of the people who gave concessions to the owners of capital to extract natural wealth found in a place that apparently only belonged to a group of people while the people around them were still in poverty.

Such conditions can lead to complex problems that lead to social conflict. In other words, the correlation between humans and the environment has its own consequences, especially when faced with an economic political system that is not in favor of society and the environment, with such strong domestic and foreign capital owners coupled with strong country penetration into other countries. like Indonesia, which is equipped with global capitalism that grips the world.

### **Homer-Dixon hypothesis.**

Homer-Dixon provides three hypotheses about the occurrence of conflicts caused by environmental damage. In the third hypothesis, he stated that an increasingly severe environmental scarcity would simultaneously increase economic losses ( economic deprivation ) and would disrupt the existence of social institutions which in turn would create an unstable situation. According to him, such conditions actually create more social unrest than climate change or damage to the ozone layer.

Cases in several Regions.

In several cases in Indonesia, the Homer-Dixon hypothesis is interesting because in some areas where natural resources and forests are exploited, conflicts often occur between communities and local governments and capital owners who are backed up by central officials . This is due to the occurrence of natural damage and inequality of people's income. On the other hand, there is a magical belief in the community towards an exploration site which is considered sacred to certain places which cannot be violated, but which have been damaged due to natural exploration and forest exploitation. This can be seen for example to the Amungmei tribe in the interior of Irian who oppose PT Freeport Indonesia and the Indonesian government because their nature is plundered and destroyed. Likewise with the Sakai tribe in Riau who used to fight silently by hiding and running into the forest which resulted in the Sakai tribe becoming inferior (low self-esteem) because their lives have been depressed for decades.

In a bigger perspective, demands for independence and the formation of a federal state, as happened some time ago, such as what was done in the provinces of Aceh, Riau, and East Kalimantan; and Papua is a manifestation of a form of damage to the natural environment after being exploited, but the local people do not enjoy the welfare of the very rich nature they have but it has been damaged.

In the notes of Tabrani Rab, a leader of the Sakai tribe and the initiator of sovereign Riau, stated that the heaviest pressure experienced by the tribe occurred when people found out that the Sakai tribe was swimming in a sea of oil. It began when in March 1924 a team of United States oil prospectors from the Standard Oil Company of California discovered oil over their territory. The findings were then followed by production starting in May 1952 at the Minas oil field under the Caltex flag (California Texas). Since then the Sakai tribe has suffered for a long time because their land has been exploited while those who enjoy the results of outsiders, while the Sakai people do not get welfare, are instead being chased by government officials.

Many more examples exist in other parts of the archipelago. By reason of the land aspect, the central government uses the idea of the state's right to control as the highest authority over land, water and natural resources (the 1945 Constitution is tricked by the authorities) and then exploits the land, nature and forests at will.

### **Regional Development and Interest Theory**

This description can explain to us that adhering to a centralized system of government and the lack of political will from the central government over the authority of regional governments to handle their affairs even though there has been Law Number 5 of 1979 concerning regional autonomy has resulted in a lot of damage to the natural environment and forests in the regions caused central government policies implemented in the regions in the name of the 1945 Constitution on natural wealth.

The rolling of the Reformation era gave its own consequences in the running of the wheels of government. One of them is the demand for power over the regions in managing natural resources and demanding their rights which have been neglected by the central government.

In order to accommodate this demand, a new autonomy law was born, namely Law

Number 22/1999 concerning regional autonomy. This was reinforced by the MPR-RI's stipulation regarding the GBHN in chapter IV which contains policy directions, in letter G concerning Regional Development. In one of the points it states that regional development is to achieve balance finance between the center and the regions in an equitable manner by prioritizing the interests of the wider region through decentralization of permits and investment and management of natural resources.

The existence of this law seems to raise concerns at the level of its implementation when it is related to nature and forest sustainability. The argument is quite reasonable. If during the government before the reform era the implementation of the government system was very centralized which caused the regional government to only be an extension of the central government and natural resources and forests were damaged because the central hand exploited natural resources in the regions, then there were concerns about the regional autonomy system, environmental damage. will get worse. This is because nature and forests must be the main source of regional income.

On the other hand, regional autonomy can lead to a new authoritarian attitude, namely the transfer of power from the center to the regions or it also means the transfer of power from the central emperor in Jakarta to the minor kings in the regions. In this context, there will also be competition between regions by depleting forests and their contents, as happened in the Philippines. Moreover, if the hands of Capitalism enter the autonomous regions in an extreme manner which of course are never in sync with natural resources because capitalism demands enormous exploitation. Meanwhile, in terms of profits, actually capitalism is far more profitable than the regions.

For example, the production of wood charcoal in Lampung can provide this picture. The production of wood charcoal is one of Lampung's main export commodities and is strongly suspected of having the potential to damage forest areas, especially if the orientation is towards market interests (capitalism).

The potential for damage is that to produce high-quality wood charcoal, the best types of wood, such as gelam wood, are needed. What's worse, the process of making wood into charcoal requires a lot of wood. From here, there is concern that the damage will appear. In fact, to obtain quality wood such as gelam wood is currently relatively difficult, because most of it can only be obtained in protected forest areas. Likewise, to rehabilitate forest areas damaged by high exploitation requires a relatively long time.

Concerns about regional autonomy that local authorities will tend to bring to an authoritarian form so that it will have a high impact on environmental damage, are actually related to the factor of interest. In sociology there is a theory called the theory of interests. This theory assumes that the behavior of all members of society is rational. They do not question whether the actors are aware of their interests or not. Interest theory studies situations from an external view, and does not focus its attention on people's consciousness. This theory also does not question whether the condition is classified as purely rational or only artificial. In this theory people are considered to behave solely to fulfill their interests, which are based on rational calculations, not on the basis of feelings, although of course there are still moral considerations. When the analysis of interest theory is used to understand institutions, such as companies or political organizations, interest theory assumes that as a form of action coming from these institutions is beneficial.

The theory of interests seems very close to an apathetic acceptance of the status quo , there is no commitment to it. If chaos becomes a choice to accept the status quo, this acceptance can be said to be an interest as well. Such conditions have lasted a long time until the era of rolling reforms.

If during the reign of the Old Order followed by the New Order which was very corrupt, the

control of natural resources was controlled by the central government and entrepreneurs through the hands of local people, then in this regional autonomy, regional authorities are very free to control their interests.

In that context, through this theory of interest, an overview can be given of concerns about the threat of regional autonomy to environmental damage, or in other words, in analyzing the tendencies of local authorities, the theory of interest finds its place. Thus, what happened then was the emergence of a conflict of interest between the local government bureaucracy and the rulers on the one hand and the community and traditional elders on the other.

The interest of the local government bureaucracy is how it can develop its region and be able to compete with other regions through original income (PAD), most of which are in the form of forest or natural products. While the interests of entrepreneurs are capitalist tendencies, namely to get as much profit as possible.

On the other hand, the interests of the people, most of whom are subsistence farmers, are the only source of income, namely nature or forests. Meanwhile, people in a traditional climate still recognize land or forests as customary customary rights which have magical meanings and respect natural wisdoms.

The conflict is predicted to be sharp because both parties feel that they are the legitimate owners of the area and if initially the central government is used as a common enemy , which must be fought together, for example during the election of regional leaders, local people want local sons to be their leaders, as well when people demand regional improvements to the central government, they can share feelings against the central government, then that time is no longer. Because what is being faced is a conflict of interest between the autonomous regional government and its people.

#### **Solutions to environmental damage**

A solution to avoid environmental damage as feared by local rulers, as small kings in the area requires thought to prevent it. If in a centralized system the local government can avoid accusations by its people for damaging the environment, then when regional autonomy has been implemented, the local government can no longer avoid criticism and accusations of damaging the environment if a policy is directed in that direction.

To avoid such a situation, namely the conflict between society and the government, Emile Durkheim, a classic social scientist, offers a way out in the form of creating a collective consciousness as the basis of a social order. Because here Durkheim emphasizes cooperation that reflects moral consensus as a fundamental social process, because this collective consciousness has a commonality in the totality of beliefs and sentiments and shared norms that exist in the average citizen of the same society.

If someone violates the collective consciousness, legal instruments will provide action. The reason is because the perpetrator has damaged the basis of social order. Within this framework also punishment does not reflect rational considerations because it is a reflection of collective anger.

At this level, between the local/regional government and representatives of the people or the community at the same time a moral consensus is needed in protecting and preserving the environment. Thus the fear of the authoritarian attitude of the ruler as a small king in the area can be avoided through collective awareness.

Another interesting study from Durkheim on environmental preservation can be seen from his analysis of the social function of religion in his classic work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* by taking research based on the religious practices of the Australian Aborigines.

Durkheim identified a totemic principle in the interplay of religious beliefs and practices with ethnic character. When tribal members seclude themselves and worship totemic objects such as a certain species of snake or the sun, they worship a sacred symbol that represents the

origins and identity of their own people. The liturgical events in which the totem is used effectively become a means of celebrating the existence of the tribe, and of binding individuals into a common social project.

Durkheim argues that the ritual and doctrinal distinction between the sacred and the profane, plays a vital social function in balancing the inherent tensions of any society between structure and counter structure, order, and chaos, morality and the deviations of organized tribes, and scattered hunters or hunters. community and individual.

The focus of Durkheim's sociology of religion is on the function that religion plays in bridging tensions and in generating social solidarity, maintaining the continuity of society when faced with challenges that threaten its survival either from other tribes, people who deviate or rebel from within the tribe itself or from disasters. natural.

Religion, according to him, unites the members of a society through a general symbolic description of their position in the cosmos, history, and their purpose in the order of things. Religion also sacred power or relationships that are built in the tribe. Therefore, religion is a source of social and moral order, binding the members of society into a common social project, a set of values, and a common social goal.

The role of religion plays an important role in the preservation of nature and harmony in society. Durkheim's offer is also a concern in environmental ecological issues.

In contrast to Durkheim, Malinowski, a functionalist sees order and the possibility of environmental preservation by looking at society functionally. According to him is the idea that society is seen as a functional totality, all customs and practices must be understood in the totality of their context and explained by looking at their function for the members of that society. In his opinion, it is completely inappropriate to use the evolutionist notion of survivals to explain everything. Everything that was done by residents or residents must be explained by looking at their role at that time, even there are habits that appear to be leftovers from the previous period must have one function, and that function is the real explanation for the existence of these customs.

Malinowski explains religion and science through a functionalist theory of human needs. According to him, religion provides a psychological boost in the face of death. Religion often serves to bind society together. On the other hand , magic provides psychological assurance in facing the uncertainties of the world.

An example of this can be seen in the highly predictable fishing activity in the lake, and the Trobriands did it without using magic. While fishing on the high seas is dangerous and highly unpredictable, here magical rituals are performed at every step in ensuring a safe and successful voyage.

From the two places of activity. Malinowski distinguishes between magic and religion in terms of their goals, which are very different. Magic is meant to produce some specific effect, better crop yields or recovery from illness. While religious practices are carried out because they are usually done or because at that time it is appropriate to do such as ceremonies and rituals of life crises.

Malinowski's theory is reminiscent of the whaling community in Lamalera waters, East Nusa Tenggara. Local wisdom, as revealed by Malinowski, is reflected in the Lamalera people when they hunt whales. Before carrying out the hunt they hold a ceremony first so that they are given safety. Fish are considered part of their life background. They hunt fish not to hurt but for survival. So the ceremony was carried out with the belief that hunting is a religious order and the fish being hunted should not be hunted as much as possible because it is only to fulfill life. If this provision is not heeded, then the safety of the hunter is at stake in the wild high seas. Therefore, in the whaling community they really care about the harmony of society and the preservation of the environment.

In another part, Homer-Dixon provides an adaptation solution as the answer. He thought that adaptation could reduce suffering. In his description, he divides adaptation into two categories. First, people continue to utilize the natural resources around them, but in a more careful manner in the sense that they still provide employment opportunities for the poor or those who only have limited access. In this context, good policies are formulated regarding the exploitation of natural resources so that they do not cause a heavy burden on the natural resources they own. The Regional Government can then sell these products on regional and international markets to obtain other natural resources that they do not have. In this way, the source of regional income is not burdened solely on other natural resources. In this adaptation, sufficient time is needed to implement it, especially if a region has no other alternative to develop its territory besides relying on forest and natural products.

### **Religious Legitimacy**

Creation Myths in environmental preservation as in traditional societies have penetrated into ethnic areas. Likewise, environmental education from the basic level needs to be redeveloped. In the context of religion, sermons about the environment are an important part of its preservation and it is very effective in reminding people that religion teaches about preservation as stated in verses of holy books such as the Al-Qur'an.

Ulama's fatwas on preventing environmental damage are a part that was compiled to respond to the growing concern about environmental conditions in Indonesia. One of the reasons is the weak alignment of many parties towards efforts to preserve the environment. These various cases of environmental damage are rooted in irresponsible human behavior towards the environment, due to over-exploitation of natural resources. As a result of this behavior, it triggers environmental damage, especially in the form of degradation of land, water and air which are resources that function as a support for human, animal and plant life. What is needed is a change in behavior and an ethical lifestyle.

The postulates of religion (Islam) have very clear views and concepts regarding the protection and management of the environment and natural resources, because humans as God's representatives on earth are ordered not only to prevent this deviant behavior (nahii munkaar), but also to carry out behaviors that are good ( amr ma'ruuf ).

The basic interest of Ulama (Islamic) attention to the environment and natural resources is to increase awareness of Muslims as the nation's greatest potential, on the importance of protecting and managing the environment and natural resources in accordance with religious teachings. In addition to providing religious guidance, Ulama have the responsibility to provide guidance to the people in social life in line with the developments and challenges of the times. Fatwa Ulama as one of the manifestations of the responsibility of the clergy in responding to the phenomenon of social life. Because humans as God's representatives on earth ( khalifah fi alardl ) have the mandate and responsibility to prosper the earth and its contents;

The rules of religious law (Fiqh) provide legitimacy for environmental fatwas as stated here, "religious law completely depends on the causes, whether the law exists or does not exist ( al-hukmu yaduru ma'a'illatifiManifestation wa 'adaman )". This rule of fiqh requires a legal expert ( faqih ) to see the rational reasons for a legal product. On the other hand, the following fiqh rules, "Avoiding damage must take precedence over taking steps to benefit" ( dar` al-mafasid muqaddam 'ala jalb al-mashalih ).

The legitimacy of the verses of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad to protect the environment is stated in the letter Arrum verse 41:

It has been seen that damage on land and in the sea is caused by the actions of human hands. So that Allah may feel for them some of the (results of) their actions, so that they return (to the right path)."

In the Annahl letters verses 14 and 15 are God's instructions and commands to be

compassionate with His creation.

"And it is Allah who subjected the sea (to you) so that you can eat from it fresh meat (fish) and you take out of the sea the jewelry that you wear and you see the ark sailing on it and so that you seek (profit) from His grace and so that you are grateful . And He planted mountains in the earth so that the earth would not shake with you (and He created) rivers and roads so that you may get guidance.

Likewise with the letter Al A'raf verse 56

And do not do damage on the face of the earth after (Allah) has repaired it and pray to Him with fear (it will not be accepted) and hope (it will be granted). Indeed, God's mercy is very close to those who do good.

Eat and drink the sustenance (given) by God, and do not wander on the face of the earth doing mischief. (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:60)

And do not harm people in their rights and do not run rampant on the face of the earth by causing damage. (QS al-Shuara' [26]:183)

On the authority of Ibn Abbas, he said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

"Muslims are united in three things: water, grazing pastures, and fire". (HR. Muslim)

"We have seen destruction on land and in the sea caused by the actions of human hands, so that God may make them feel part of (the consequences of) their actions, so that they return (to the right path). (QS. Al-Rum [30:41) "... And do not cast yourselves into destruction..." (QS al-Baqarah [2]: 195)

## CONCLUSION

These verses and hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad actually invite mankind to listen, think, and be grateful for God's creation by utilizing nature, the environment and protecting it. Because in environmental ecology what is needed is the same as what was mandated by God, namely, how to preserve , how to protect , and how to use . all of which require technology. Even so, if the technology has been mastered, the next problem is the problem of human morality. This is where education about the environment must begin early.

However, this solution can contribute to regional development in the era of regional autonomy freedom in facing environmental preservation in the midst of a very sharp and ruthless global capitalism which tends to destroy the natural environment with camouflage of love for the environment such as the emergence of green peace activities funded by developed countries or capitalists who destroy countries across the sea which are rich in natural resources but seem to voice environmental interests. It's the same as cigarette advertisements wrapped in words, "smoking can cause cancer" and so on. It's as if they care about health even though they have sold their cigarettes.

The Ulama Fatwa regarding avoiding environmental damage is actually an implementation of government laws. However, the fundamental difference is that the Ulama Fatwa provides moral sanctions to Muslims, and promises to give rewards to people in the future to people who believe in the truth of their religion. This is a form of the effectiveness of the regulations even though they are practiced.

In another context, as emphasized by Peter Berger that science is not as effective as religion in justifying and maintaining social practice and order. The dominant form of this knowledge in modern society is not religious but scientific. Religion legitimizes social institutions and orders by giving them ontological status. Thus the Ulama Fatwa in dealing with environmental damage is an important step to maintain a better life.

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