

THE IGNORANCE OF INDIGENEOUS PROPERTY RIGHTS THROUGH THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM IN INDONESIA

Pengabaian Hak-Hak Penduduk Lokal Melalui Program Transmigrasi di Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Berdasarkan pertimbangan ketimpangan distribusi penduduk antara pulau Jawa, kebijakan kependudukan Indonesia memusatkan perhatian kepada pemerataan penduduk dengan penerapan kebijakan transmigrasi. Kebijakan transmigrasi di Indonesia bukan hanya mengenai kebijakan kependudukan, akan tetapi juga menjadi bagian dari strategi untuk modernisasi ekonomi dan pengenalan pasar perkebunan di luar pulau Jawa. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisa dampak kebijakan transmigrasi terhadap lingkungan dan penduduk lokal. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif dengan berusaha menggambarkan dampak dari kebijakan pemerataan penduduk di Indonesia. Berdasarkan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dampak ekologi yang muncul dari kebijakan transmigrasi ini adalah deforestasi dan memberikan kontribusi besar terhadap hilangnya kawasan hutan. Selain itu, kebijakan kependudukan ini memberikan dampak terhadap penduduk lokal. Konflik sosial yang paling sering terjadi antara penduduk lokal dengan para transmigran adalah marginalisasi dan hilangnya budaya penduduk lokal, persaingan dalam aspek bisnis serta kepedulian yang kurang dari pihak pemerintah terhadap penduduk lokal.

Kata kunci: *transmigrasi; kebijakan kependudukan; hak; penduduk lokal.*

ABSTRACT

Based on consideration of the inequality of population distribution between the island of Java, Indonesia's population policy focused on the equal distribution of the population with the application of transmigration policies. Transmigration policy in Indonesia is not only about population policy, but also is part of a strategy for economic modernization and the introduction of plantation markets outside Java. The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of transmigration policies on the environment and local residents. This research is a descriptive study by trying to describe the impact of the population equalization policy in Indonesia. Based on this research shows that the ecological impact arising from this transmigration policy is deforestation and contributes greatly to the loss of forest areas. In addition, this population policy has an impact on the

local population. The most common social conflict between local residents and transmigrants is the marginalization and loss of local culture, competition in business aspects and lack of concern from the government for local residents.

Keywords: *transmigration; population policy; rights; local residents.*

INTRODUCTION

The highly concentrated populations in mainland of Indonesia, such as in Java, prompted the Indonesian government to implement its transmigration policy in Suharto's era. The aims of this policy was to redistribute population from the very densities cities, e.g. Jakarta to the low population density areas, such as in Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua and also to improve the welfare of the transmigrates.

This policy has succeeded to move millions people from Java island to the outer islands. However, in terms of reducing the population density in Java, as the main objective of this policy, had not been achieved. Even many problems have arisen since the implementation of the transmigration policy. These include severe environmental degradation and ethnic conflict between transmigrants and indigenous people, of the areas where they have been settled.

Therefore it is vital that consideration be given to the impacts of the transmigration policy on the environmental problems and indigenous host communities were properly addressed. This essay will examine issues relating to the implementation of transmigration policy in Indonesia, either on environmental issues or social issues. Based on the surveys undertaken by Suratman and Guinness (1977), cited by Fearnside (1997), found that most of the

transmigrants didn't have knowledge and experience in farming at all. Another factor was even though the transmigrants had experience in cultivation before, the condition of the land in the new location differed with their previous land. This condition had given a big contribution in agricultural failure or even environmental degradation.

The transmigration policy has also created social problems in terms of social gap between the transmigrants and the local people. Based on the policy, every transmigrant received great attention and some facilities from the government, such as land for agriculture and housing. Whereas the local people had never received such facilities from the government, even there were not income effects of the transmigration policy for the local population (Fasbender and Erbe, 1990). Besides that, Fasbender and Erbe (1990) stated that the transmigrants didn't want to socialize with the local people and even didn't understand the local culture. As a result, the local people felt had competitors regarding space, resources and boundaries.

In this case, my argument is the immaturity of the transmigration policy is a main cause of those problems, regarding suitability between the transmigrants and their new environment, either with local cultures or agricultural land. This present study is concerned with the linkages between demographic, environment and social factor.

The analysis focuses first to explore the historical of the transmigration policy, seeking the reasons why this policy implemented by the Indonesian government and followed by the impacts of this policy in the environment, economic and the social aspects. Then, to support the analysis, I describe the theoretical framework of human resettlement and indigenous property rights, focusing the consequences of resettlements to the indigenous people. Finally, I discuss issues of indigenous property rights regarding the implementation of the transmigration policy and the core problems of the conflict between the indigenous people and the transmigrants.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a descriptive analysis. The process starts with collecting qualitative data in some libraries and searching in internet at the beginning of the research project and continues through the writing process. The diversity of data collection methods used enriched the research it self.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Transmigration history in Indonesia

a. Indonesian Population Pressure

Indonesia is faced with considerable population pressure and regional disparity between land and population. As the fourth most populous nation in the world, its population of over 200 million is spread across an arc of 3,000 miles encompassing some 17,000 islands (BPS, 2014). Hoey (2003) stated

that more than 100 million or more than 60 percent of Indonesians are located on the island of Java, which constitutes only 7 percent of the total land area of the archipelago.

Even though the structure of the soil in Java Island was mostly excellent soil, it can not support the numerous numbers of populations who live on this island. Even, this condition creates some problems, such as environmental degradation, small agricultural holdings and increasing numbers of landless people (World Bank, 1994). As a consequence was an expansion of agricultural land through exceeding the minimum allowable level of deforestation.

In contrast, the number of natural resources and the availability of the land are very large and abundant in the outer island, such as Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Further more, the number of population in the outer island is much lower than in the inner island, and through the consistency of its less population density, people in the rural areas have higher income from the agricultural productions.

Based on the consideration of the imbalance in population distribution between the inner islands of Java, Bali and Madura, Indonesia's population policy has focused on redistribution by implementing transmigration policy.

b. Transmigration as a solution

Originally, transmigration, one of the largest land resettlement programs in the world, initiated firstly by the Dutch colonial during the early 20th century known as "kolonisatie or colonization" (World Bank, 1994 in De Koninck,

2006). According to Jones (1979) cited by Fearnside (1994), in the first transmigration project in the 1905-1931 period 27,338 people were moved, an average of only 1013 per year. The reason of its policy in this period was improving the standard of living of the Javanese by resettle them in the outer islands (Adhiati and Bobsien, 2001). In fact, LPEM (1978) argued that the main aim for the colonial government was providing an adequate labor force for Dutch estates and other enterprises outside Java, particularly in Sumatera as a long run objective.

The following period, Budiardjo (1986) stated that Soekarno, Indonesia's founding president, have moved 48 million people over a period of 35 years. According to Fearnside (1994), as Soekarno resisted to family planning, he prefers to move the rural people as a solution to the overcrowding of Java's rural areas.

The transmigration policy continued in the Suharto's period by focusing the attention to this policy in every five year-development plans (Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun) (Elmhirst, 1999). The main objective of this policy in the Suharto's era was not only for the achievement of a more balanced and equal distribution, but also for the supply of the labour that needed for the development projects regarding the increase of natural production (Fasbender and Erbe, 1990:33). Besides these objectives, Elmhirst (1999) argued that the policy's aim was also to promote national unity. During this period, the transmigration policy was focused to support economic growth of nation by

achieving self-sufficiency in rice production.

Kebschull (1984) cited by Fasbender and Erbe (1990) argued that the Indonesian government considered transmigration as a tool of developing new agricultural land for food production on the outer islands since Indonesia had become one of the largest rice importers in the year of 1960th.

The consequences of transmigration Policy

The positive results achieved during the implementation of the transmigration policy, in terms of settling millions of people, contributing significantly to the development of the outer island and increasing living of standard of the transmigrates in a certain extent. More over foreign technical and financial aid, such as World Bank, had greatly contributed to the successful for the programme. However, disappointing results found in the location of the project regarding the extensive damage to the environment, poverty and even conflict between the transmigrates and the local people.

a. Ecological effect

The most obvious ecological effect of the transmigration policy was deforestation. Besides timber industry, mining and oil extraction, the transmigration programme has contributed to the loss of forest area. Fasbender and Erbe (1990:188) argued that between 203,000 and 338,000 ha of forest area have been used for the transmigration and 6-14% of them was the conversion to the agricultural uses.

The deforestation is a dilemma for the Indonesian government between alleviating population pressure, economic utilization and ecological preservation. As far as ecological preservation concerned, the sustainable methods of the cultivation should be developed. The Environmental Defense Fund cited by Fasbender and Erbe (1990:192) suggested to concentrate on the secondary forest and rehabilitation of alang-alang rather than focused on the primary forest in the selection process of the transmigration sites.

b. Economic effect

The main objective of the transmigration policy for increasing the standard of living of the settlers had been achieved in several period of transmigration. Based on the socioeconomic survey undertaken by the Bank- supported project, the income levels of the settlers had increased in the period of 1990th for the third period of the transmigration. The income generated from two different sources, on-farm activities and off-farm activities. Most of the settlers in the transmigration I and III benefited from tree crops. In transmigration I, for example, the settlers have had average annual income from the tree crops ranging between US\$1,490 - 2,065 (World Bank, 1994).

Because of the poor condition of the most of the settlers' land, most of the transmigrates' families being forced to seek off-farm employment. Besides the condition of the soil, the lack of experience of the settlers in land cultivation has motivated them to find a job in off-farm activities, such as trading

and woodworking (Anonym, 2018). Present oriented was a trigger for the settlers to do a job outside the settlement. It is far more attractive for them to work for cash income in the short run rather than preparing and cultivating their own land for the future prospective.

c. Social effect

National integration and unity is one of the goals of the transmigration programme. This policy has triggered the conflict between the migrants, who were mostly Javanese, and the local people. According to Elmhirst (2000) cited by O'Connor (2004) the migrants have brought the change the governance system into the Javanese system of governance and have born in the local, people's mind that transmigration is a form of cultural imperialism.

The existence of the migrants in the local inhabitants areas have also create conflict between the transmigrants and the indigenous people. Confrontations have arisen between the transmigrants and the indigenous population who have resented the arrival of newcomers leading to violent clashes and hundreds of deaths (Linthwaite, 2016). This happen because of there was a not clear boundary between the transmigration areas and indigenous people land. Further more, The local residents felt that the transmigrates not only steal their land, but also steal their job opportunities in the industrial plantations (O'Connor, 2004).

Based on the condition above, it can be assumed that the core conflict between the indigenous people and the migrants is economic competition.

Besides that, the cultural difference has created ethnic conflict, because a large number of people in the settlements area were from one ethnic group and develop its own cultural heritages and language (Elmhirst, 1999). This caused a majority and minority relation, and the displacement of the local people that have made them as an outsider in their own land.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The increasing population pressures and cultural displacement associated with the transmigration programme have led to environmental degradation and ethnic conflicts throughout transmigrant areas. The settlement has contributed to the lost of forest areas for agriculture, housing and infrastructures. Besides that, the programme has contributed to socio-cultural destruction among the indigenous people and ethnic conflict between indigenous people and the settlers. Transmigration has been pursued as a way of promoting a nationalist vision and narrative of territory and culture through deliberate community building in the name of development and progress.

Furthermore, the government of Indonesia makes no secret of its intention of hastening the demise of tribal cultures and languages and replacing them with the dominant Indonesian ones. Poor planning, especially the lack of environmental impact surveys degradation of local resources and disputes over land ownership all marred the implementation of the transmigration programme. Highly recommended by the

Indonesian government to maintain the existing culture.

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