

# Political Economy Communication Perspective: The 'Relationship' Between Capitalism and Illegal Logging in Riau, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to explain the 'relationship' between capitalism and illegal logging in Riau. The relationship is built on the character of the essence of capitalism that 'greed'. The immediate implication of this character produces cultural issues of illegal logging. To examine and dissect this phenomenon is used Political Economy Communications perspective. This perspective is constructed by a shortage of Political Economy that cannot explain the phenomenon of communication actors policy makers and businessmen who support illegal logging. While the Political Communication can not understand economic phenomena [rentier or reward] relationship between the actors and the policy-makers cause of illegal logging. This paper uses a qualitative approach based on the study of documents. Data was analyzed using descriptive qualitative. Therefore, this paper is an analytical to provide input on the relationship between capitalism as an ideology and illegal logging as activity [behavior] actors involved in it. Results of the discussion paper indicates that: [i] Capitalism has a significant correlation and causality to damage the forest environment. The relationship is built on the character of the essence of capitalism that 'greed'. The immediate implication of this character generates a culture of illegal logging. Then the illegal logging that is what led to the emergence of the season in Riau. Among them, the flood season, smog and erratic weather and air temperature heats up the all representation of Riau future. [ii]. Philosophical statement 'Riau forest is our home' as to support the efforts of law enforcement actors in Riau, so earnest muzzle of illegal logging. Spirit 'Riau forest is our home' is a symbol of the struggle of law enforcement actors [police, Judiciary and Justice] suppress the crime of illegal logging in Riau simultaneously. The parable illegal logging is a common enemy lists society is another language in real fight 'Riau forest belongs to all'. The essence of this paper is to emphasize the importance of the perspective of Political-Economy-Communications in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of Capitalism and Illegal Logging relationship as brainstorming in reducing environmental damage forests in Riau.

**Keywords:** Communication, Capitalism, Economy, Illegal Logging and Politics

## Introduction

Unfortunately, forest damage in Indonesia is in critical condition. Indonesia lost at least 1,1 hectares or 2% of its forest every year. Meanwhile ministry of forestry said that today this country just has 130 million hectares and 42 million hectares among them were cut where illegal logging is one of the biggest threat of natural forest existence in Indonesia (Walhi, 2007). This paper will review the argument, which produces proposition that capitalism has causative relationship on illegal logging culture in Riau.

Illegal logging can be defined a set of violation of regulation that causes forest resources exploitation beyond its limit. It started from wood production phase, for example cutting step, wood transporting and log wood as the product (raw material), till the phase of process and marketing. This includes using corrupt ways to get access to forestry and authority violations, such tax hindrances as a part of that illegal logging process. (Hariyadi, 2008). In addition, inconsistency policy in wood cutting management, the involvement of state actors and including the capital owners, different perspective between central government and local government as part of ugly face of illegal logging.

Some problems appear in the relationship between capitalism and illegal logging in Riau. First, forestry sector cannot be separated from political tendency and was used as cash cow for ruling party. Secondly, forest is seen from aspect that how many trees can be cut. Third, Riau becomes the biggest exporter of CPO and pulp&paper in Indonesia. Next, government tends to let conflict happen and the decrease of environmental quality that trigger new problems. Fifth, the governor did not ever make statement so far to show his position in responding natural resources conflict in Riau and finally, decisions that made tend to be wrong caused by the failure of getting right information to make policy (SKEPI, 2007).

Today, forest in Riau experiencing worst degradation especially in the area of peat forest meanwhile Indonesia was accused as the fastest forest destroyer country in the world (Walhi, 2007). This country was the third carbon emission contributor in the world while Riau has 56,1% of total peat swam forest in Indonesia (18,586 hectares) and it would justify phrase that solving Riau problems means solving Indonesia problems and indicated that Riau represented Indonesia. (Walhi, 2007). So, this paper would to analyze the relationship between capitalism and illegal logging in Riau as systemic and patterned ideology. Next, it would also analyze social communication on forest resources because of illegal logging.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This theoretical background explains the relationship between capitalism and illegal logging and the perspective of political-economy-communication used to see this phenomenon in Riau.

#### **Political Economy**

Political Economy is effective perspective to handle encountered problems in this paper. This approach is understood to analyze political processes in relation with economy or political economy is the systematic study of about the relationship between economic process and political process [Didik Rachbini, 2006].

In the period of new order, Budiman in Didik Rachbini [2006] said that Soeharto's rent seeking bureaucratic authoritarian country as Rent Seeking Bureaucratic Country. In this model, a group of businessmen is the winner. In one hand, State Elites using their bureaucratic power gave privilege to businessmen whether they were from private sector or state owned firm's directors. On the other hand, those elites asked fees for their efforts or rent seeking. The government elites those have bureaucratic authorities hired their positions to satisfy the interests of particular group of businessmen. They became production tools in producing capital accumulation for individual interests through rent seeking system.

In illegal logging, political economy is used as tool to analyze who gets profit and loss because of capitalism and forestry policy (logging). The profit and loss can be known from the revision of economic policy in political market, where in one hand legislative power together with executive power as producer and bureaucrats as the sellers. On the other hand, the activists who take benefits from forestry policy that use market to expand forestry business by exploiting natural resources deliberately [Didik Rachbini, 2006]. Based on this argument so political economy is used to understand economic profit if the logging gets the protection through forestry policy which successfully regulated. And then the actors individually or collectively earn profits from those policies.

#### **Political Communication**

Political communication is communication process that takes place in one political system. Therefore, political system is essential ingredient in democracy. Communication determines character and quality of democracy in one community [Eko Hari, 2010]. Next, in political communication creates relationship pattern of take and give that means how political elites used their power to society and in reverse the society responds and accept political elites interests. This relationship pattern depends on the ideology that underlying political system in a country. If the ideology is democratic so the communication would be democratic too [Dedy Mulyana, 2011].

Political communication explanation shows that phenomenon of capitalism as an ideology and illegal logging have causative relationship intensively. Nevertheless, this perspective does not yet portrays economic motive (rent seeking) as profits resulted from a product of forestry policy. The implication from intensive and causative relationship is not yet identified.

#### **Political Economy Communication**

Economy-Politic-Communication perspective used to answer capitalism and illegal logging phenomenon. This effort is the bridge to understand economy and communication phenomenon. This phenomenon is the answer in

perspective between capitalism as economic based ideology and communication as interaction base among actors from forestry policy maker and policy user in illegal logging. And then economy-politic-communication perspective is needed to understand this relationship. This integrated perspective to solve the weakness on effort to understand capitalism and ideology phenomenon that merely viewed from separate perspective; political economy or political communication that cannot explain it optimally. Moreover, the reality supports this integrated perspective in order to understand the relationship between illegal logging and capitalism comprehensively.

Concerning power structure, economy and communication development simultaneously, there is no difference between the era of new order and reform period in terms of centralized forestry policies. This study shows that policy still exist and the figure below will help to see the scheme of economy-politic-communication perspective.

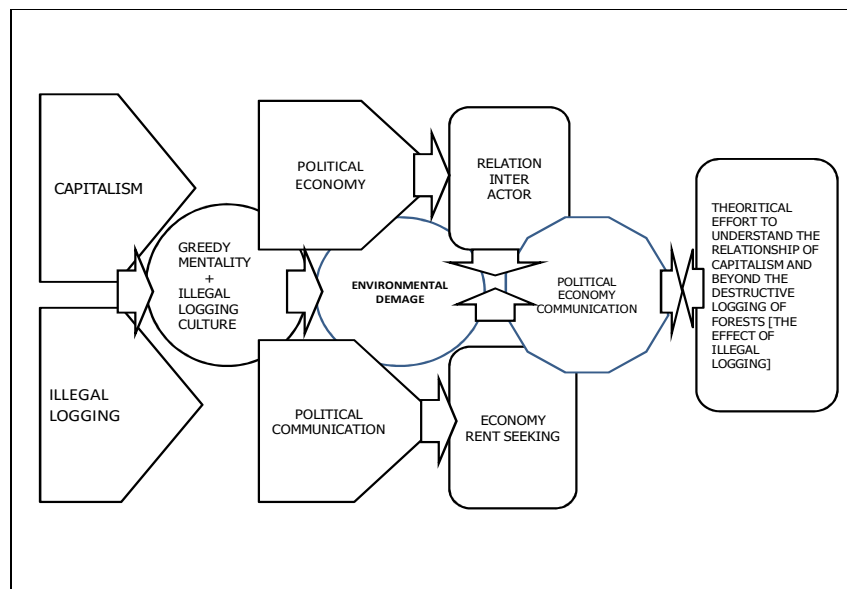


Figure 1: Relationship Political-Economic-Communication

Based on literature review, some issues are discussed to answer several things in this paper. First, capitalism and illegal logging is the phenomenon from interaction process between political economy and political communication. Secondly, integrated perspective is needed from political economy and political communication to understand this phenomenon. Next, limited scope of political economy perspective to understand capitalism and illegal logging phenomenon. And the fourth, this perspective is the alternative to bridge between normative and empirical discussion of new phenomenon as a character, ideology and culture that produce greed is the underlying element in a way of thinking that in turn causes ecological disaster in the future eventually.

### Method

This study uses a qualitative approach based on the study of documents. While the study used qualitative paradigm to analyze the relationship between capitalism as an ideology and illegal logging as an activity of actor's behavior involved inside based on descriptive qualitative research. Data was analyzed using descriptive qualitative.

### Capitalism And Illegal Logging An Ambiguous

#### Ambiguous Capitalism

Fukuyama (2001) said that the history of capitalism still alive and exist despite history ends, which showing the victory of capitalism and liberal democracy while its ideological base is arrogant greed and capitalist is behind it. Meanwhile, Stiglitz (2011), said the essence of capitalism in the form of greed which support capital owner to keep destroying nature without considering the effect of ecological damage.

The victory of capitalist west is ambiguous character in relation with free market capitalism and the capitalism practice in Indonesia, including Riau. The collaboration between policy maker and rent seekers through decision letter that enable capital owner to exploit forest that shows on going ambiguous [paradox] process of capitalism. Next, the question is how big or none of profit that earned by big companies that operate in forest resources that also enjoyed by Riau people at the same time while negative implications due to illegal logging by those big companies always happen. Next, the figure below can help to understand the dialectical process of capitalism as thought that created greedy character. Marxism that as though contested with capitalism as two opposite pole

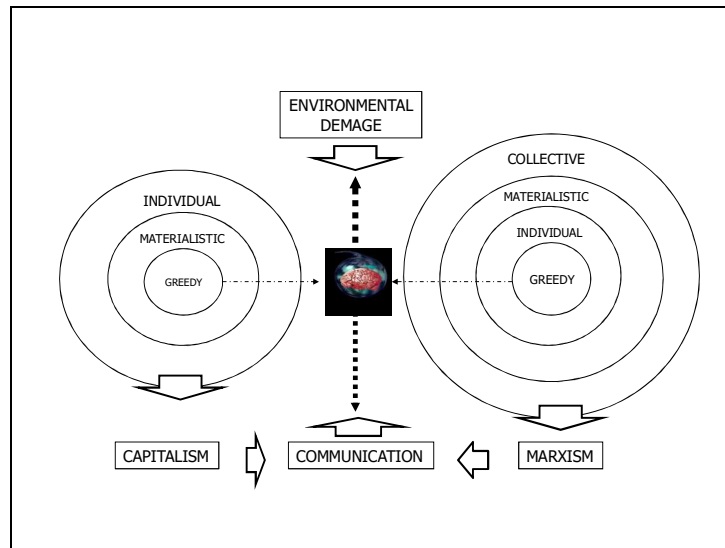


Figure 2: Dialectics Political-Economy-Communication

In turn, some understand that Marxism is antithesis from capitalism but in fact, figure 2 and figure 3 show that this ideology is not different from capitalism or essentially Marxism is derived from capitalism. In other words, Marxism genetically is the child of capitalism.

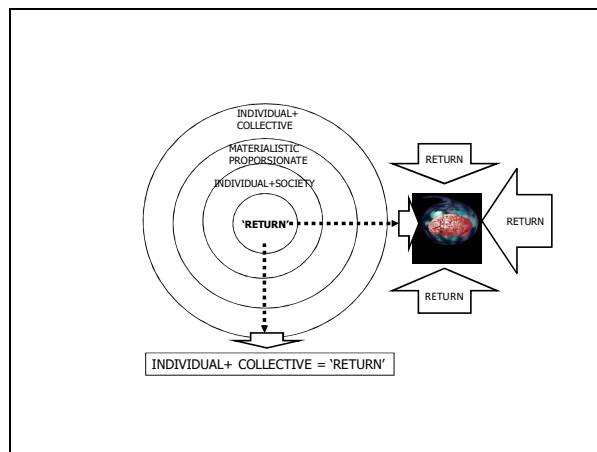


Figure 3: Dialectic of Return to Home

Consequently, the product from paradox ambiguous capitalism for Riau people is flood and smoke haze every year due to illegal logging. Ideally, it could be minimized because it threatens daily lives as negative product of capitalism. Riau people live in polluted environment while the wealth of forest resources cannot be enjoyed by them. Nevertheless, it also has negative correlation with the rent seekers those live in Riau, for instance, this capitalist make their holiday in Singapore and Malaysia for example, and the smoke haze will chase them. Consequently, the negative product of illegal logging also hit the capitalist.

### **Illegal Logging and Systemic Crimes**

Learn from previous explanation to minimize bad effect from illegal logging. This crime can be viewed from systemic-structural approach. The forest damage has not happened just in Riau but Indonesia as whole and part of structural crime that has taken place for long time. Since new order era with centralistic authoritarian, the practice of illegal logging has been protected through *illegal-formal policy*. Ideally, reform order should be used by reformists to re arrange forest in Indonesia that has been destroyed by illegal logging.

Riau as province with endowment factor of forest resources has the same situation with other region in Indonesia due to destruction behavior in exploiting forest. Therefore, it is time to build awareness of society about the danger of illegal logging that lead to jeopardize human lives for the coming years, especially in Riau. This effort for example can be started by good intention from lawmakers to stop systemic-structural illegal logging

In the perspective systemic-structural, the power Regional Police of Riau [Polda Riau] as lawmakers is under control by National police (Polri), in other words regional police is dependent on national police. In this case, structural crime pattern that used power or position to produce decision letter that in turn enable illegal logging takes place is highly dependent on the support from the chief of national police (Kapolri) as the top leader from chief of regional police [Kapolda]. In fact, the support from chief of national police depends on the president's commitment. So, mutual commitment from president and chief of national police is crucial to fight against illegal logging as part of systemic crime.

### **Communication and Environmental Policy: Forest is Our Home**

It is important to involve society as social control to minimize the negative effect from illegal logging. Moreover, society is the party that has suffered more than others because of illegal logging. The level of forest damage in Riau should make us worried. It is estimated that with the speed of forest damage about 160 thousand hectares each year, the rest of forest in Riau will around 6% [Walhi, 2007].

Based on data from Ministry of forestry till 2006, there was 25% or 2,4 million hectares in critical condition and without efforts, Riau would not have forest. This situation also happened at national where 59 million hectares of 120 million hectares in hardly damage while other source said that 2,7 millions hectares have been owned by particular party and only 1,6 million hectares of forest have been permitted to be exploited [Walhi, 2007].

Meanwhile report from Greenpeace at the end of 2007 said that forest exploitation in Riau Province has considerably contributed on carbon dioxide emission from Indonesia. Most of Peat lands save the carbon while the land opened so the carbon dioxide went to the air that cause climate change [Walhi, 2007]. In reverse, "Forest is Ours Home" avoids society from experiencing four seasons; rainy, dry, flood and smoke haze as happened in the past that need to rearranged. The forest damage that has been happening in Peninsula of Kampar [ a region in Riau] as a case study that warn us how important "forest is ours home" to protect forest in Indonesia.

### **Conclusion**

[Capitalism has significant and causative relationship with the forest damage. It was built by greed as the essence character of capitalism. It caused illegal logging as direct implication. And then the illegal logging produced flood, smoke haze, climate change and higher temperature and possibly these conditions becoming Riau portrays in the future. [ii]. Statement of forest is ours home is effort to support lawmakers to keep fighting illegal logging and simultaneously the spirit of this fight is the symbol for saving forest and put illegal logging is common enemy for all elements of society.

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