



Green Economic and Local Wisdom toward Sustainable Development in West Papua, Indonesia

Julius Ary Mollet^{1*}, Akbar Silo²
^{1,2} Cenderawasih University, Indonesia

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Abstract

Sustainable development is currently being implemented globally in response to the need for global societies to ensure a balance of development between economic and environmental issues (such as forests) and local communities. Local governments have committed to managing their forests for development in accordance with green economic principles. In addition, the adat community also has a significant role in promoting local wisdom in managing natural resources in Papua. This article attempts to investigate the role of green economic programs on development in the Papuan's local communities. The study found that the political, traditional structural system adopted local wisdom on the patterns of agricultural farming in the Papuan community. The study found that the green economy program is the alternative solution for developing the local community due to the economic benefit to Indigenous people and the lack of damage to Papua's natural resources.

Keywords: *Green Economics, Local Wisdom, Sustainable Development, West Papua*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, sustainable development may be needed to ensure long-term development to manage their natural resources. The notion of sustainable development refers to considering harmonious development between current needs and the future. In other words, development should promote the issues of the economy, the environment, and social inclusion. Sustainable development has an important role in tackling global warming issues by not over-exploiting natural resources to boost economic growth. Therefore, progress towards sustainable green economy policy development has been promoted to minimize the effect of climate change.

Indonesia (including West Papua) is the largest archipelago, abundant in natural resources that spur economic growth. Economic success, however, has come at a high environmental cost. Rapid land-use change and reliance on fossil energy make Indonesia one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters. Deforestation and pollution are putting pressure on its megadiverse ecosystems. In the context of West Papua, as reported by [Conservation International \(2019\)](#), forests cover around 90% of the land with areas that remain unexplored. The forests in some areas of West Papua have been cleared for oil palm plantations. Of course, the existence of many multinational companies as well as domestic firms affects the environment in Papua. Massive exploitation of natural resources by the multinational companies may lead to environmental damage.

West Papua has committed to implementing sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the province's development by signing "the Manokwari Declaration" together with West Papua province in 2018. Based on the declaration, both provinces are obligated to protect their environment during development. Concerning SDGs, Papua Barat province has declared it as a "Conservation Province" (Provinsi Konservasi).

The role of cultural values (adat) toward natural resources in the Papuan community is

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Corresponding author's email: Julius.mollet@gmail.com

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relatively strong. Papuan community respects the forest because they believe that "forest is our mother". This point of view can be translated as local wisdom because the forest provides everything for the livelihood of the Papuan. Therefore, they should respect and not destroy the forest by exploiting the forest. Therefore, this local wisdom helps Papua protect its natural resources.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the issues and challenges for implementing the green economy program to promote development in Papua, especially examining the pattern of agricultural development, cultural values, political structure of Papuan communities, and economic, social and environmental aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Currently, the world is facing many challenges, especially in terms of how to continue to develop and find the balance between human needs and environmental protection, all while considering the future generation. Significant challenges occur because both developed and less developed countries are expanding their economic activity hand in hand with the growing global population and addressing environmental issues. Therefore, green economy growth is the point at which these two challenges cross paths, and it is about maximizing the opportunities to address both economic and environmental issues at the same time (OECD, 2011b).

According to the UNEP (2012), the green economy program is an approach that enhances the population's well-being and social equity while reducing environmental hazards and ecological scarcity. In other words, its focus is on low-carbon, efficient and clean production and inclusive consumption and outcomes based on sharing, circularity, collaboration, solidarity, resilience, opportunity, and interdependence (Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), 2019).

Todaro and Smith (2015) point out that development aims to increase prosperity levels, improve peoples' self-esteem, and increase people's freedom to choose various goods and services. In many developing countries, development is often influenced by governance and social, economic, political, and cultural factors.

Recently, the government demanded to promote sustainable development to manage their resources for development, which considers the issues of economic growth, the environment, and the community's needs. The government has to shift their strategy of development from the classical developmentalism perspective, which merely emphasizes, economic growth based on five linear stages Rostow (1962) argued that development should follow five steps consisting of 1) traditional society, 2) preconditions for self-sustaining growth; 3) Take-off; 4) drive to maturity; and 5) the stage of high mass consumption. However, the notion of development is currently more complex, which is not a linear stage, as Rostow argued, but rather infusing other factors associated with many interrelated factors from inside and outside.

Another important factor for the development process in LDCs is cultural values. The role of culture and development has become the attention of social sciences scholars who come across new elements, instruments and ideas that increasingly emphasize development, promoting a global and integral understanding (Maraña, 2010). To what extent culture affects development is becoming debated, especially related to how it contributed to developing their culture in developing countries. The debate has come from Rostow's theory of stage of development or 'modernization theory', which argues that developing countries can develop economically if the countries remove traditional ways and adopt modern economic institutions, technologies and cultural values that emphasize savings and productive investments (Iyaji & Goment, 2011). Rostow (1961) argued that traditional cultural values and social institutions in developing countries hamper economic activities. It is partly due to a "lack of a strong work ethic" as well as more consumption today than investment in the future.

Moreover, [Giddens \(2006\)](#) points out that economic underdevelopment in many developing countries was due to their cultural practices. Meanwhile, several factors, including cultural values, were hampering development. [Francis and Hezel \(2009\)](#) propose that the success of national economies depends on cultural factors; where they believe that cultural values important factors, such as thrift, hard work, tenacity, honesty and tolerance, contribute to the development progress.

In the case of the cultural role in development, it is argued that cultural background often constrains and/or supports development, which has occurred in Indonesia, especially in Papua. Papua is included in the regions that have major challenges for development. Development in Papua has slow progress or is even considered stagnant compared to the other regions in Indonesia.

The region of West Papua faces many challenges in terms of development. Every governor of West Papua has attempted to provide policy for the region's development. Therefore, local development strategies have been developed by governors of West Papua, as pointed out by [Mollet \(2011\)](#). Governor Busiri Suryowinoto (1980–1982) emphasized the development of Irian Jaya (Currently Papua) to promote law and order where the precondition for development was associated with security, where safety was a priority strategy for development in Irian Jaya. Isaak Hindom (1982–1988) had a strategy for boosting the economy of Irian Jaya by exploiting Papua's natural resources to attract private timber companies from Jakarta, who enjoyed concessions from the local government to exploit the forest in West Papua. Barnabas Suebu (1988–1992) promoted strategies for development divided by sector and on different spatial scales, which required synchronization programs among local government departments.

The next governor was Yacob Pattipy (1992–1998), who focused on the agricultural sector by using an intensification approach adopted from Java and the Indonesian government's transmigrant program, which mobilized populations to flow from crowded to sparsely populated areas. Freddy Numberi (1999–2000) was the Papuan governor who promoted the development of local government human resources. He had many bureaucrats at the provincial and regency levels who studied in universities in West Papua or outside under his program. The next governor was J. P. Salossa (2000–2005). He introduced four program priorities for developing Papua: education, health, local economy and infrastructure, using special autonomy funds. Then Barnabas Suebu (2006-2011) focused on village development by giving approximately US \$ 10,000 for each. Lukas Enemebe was the governor of Papua from 2014-2019 and 2019-2024. In the first period, the governor introduced "Gerbang Mas" and developed it based on adat (tradition) ([Bappeda Provinsi Papua, 2019](#)).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in West Papua in the Jayapura, Jayawujaya and Nabire regencies. The reason for the selection of the northern region is their achievement in implementing the green economy growth programs supported by UKAID and the Asia Foundation. In the Jayapura regency, the districts Nimboran and Kemtuk were selected for the research; meanwhile, Piramit and Asologaima were selected for the Jayawijaya regency. Then, West Nabire and Teluk Kimi districts were chosen from the Nabire regency. The total number of respondents in this study was 154 respondents. As the study was conducted in remote rural villages of the study districts, arrangements were made to conduct focus group discussions (FGDs) at places that had easy access to participants.

Furthermore, to gather the data from FGDs, interviews were conducted with the participants in Indonesian, and the data collected consisted of demographic, social, and economic data. To conduct the interview, there were a few qualified researchers comprised of both male and female moderators. The moderators facilitating the FGDs were research assistants trained and experienced in social science research techniques and were fluent in the local languages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Papua has a diversity of cultures because it has many indigenous tribes. As [Mansoben \(1995\)](#) pointed out, Papua has 240 tribal groups in the highlands and the coastal lowland areas. Papuan tribes respect adat (traditional values) in their daily activities. Historically, the concept of adat, introduced by President Soekarno, describes the cultural connection uniting the ethics and values of the many and various Indonesian groups. From the West Papuan communities' perspective, adat means community harmony, family prosperity, environmental preservation and land ownership organization ([Howard et al., 2002](#)). Community harmony means harmony at all levels of Papuan life. If there is a conflict between families within a tribe, a tribal chief or Kepala Suku, according to adat, has the crucial role of gathering indigenous community members to meet and discuss ways of reducing the tension and restoring peace between the families within a tribe. Moreover, adat can also determine the way Indigenous communities manage their land, allocate resources, divide labour between men and women, schedule the harvest, perform marriage rites, mediate disputes, and pay compensation for crime ([Howard et al., 2002](#)).

The Papuan community has been long growing crops and staples using the traditional method, which is considered "the local wisdom" where the Papuan communities believe that the forests are like a "mother" because the forest provides all the Papuan community needs for living, such as yielding crops, hunting and for their life. This means that the pattern of agricultural development in Papua has adopted the issue of conservation, which has become important in protecting the environment and has also become a tourist attraction by exploring the nature of forests and the sea of Papua.

Papua societies always respect the forest, which has an important role in their lives, especially for Indigenous people, in managing agriculture. Traditional methods of farming adopted eco-friendly practices, considering environmental issues, where forests were not exploited too much. Therefore, this method is similar to the green economy, where in implementing the agriculture sector, besides focusing on the economy, the issue of the environment becomes important for sustainable agricultural development.

The study found that Indigenous people argued that traditional farming methods helped conserve forests in Papua and supported green economic programs in the three regions. For example, in the district of Niboran (Jayapura regency), the indigenous people plant cocoa close to other plant varieties. The reason for planting the cocoa with other varieties of trees is to protect the cocoa from the sun and heavy rain. It means that besides the indigenous people planting cocoa, they also conserved the Papuan forest. This method was also adopted in Jayawijaya, where the farmers plant coffee using traditional methods, such as the coffee trees surrounded by other plant varieties.

The green economy program in Papua has an impact on income generation for indigenous Papua. Increasing the income of the Indigenous people leads to improved welfare among Papua and improves social conditions such as better access to education and health services for young people. In this case, the interviewer asked the respondents about their income from involvement in Papua's green economic growth program. For example, in Nimboran District (Jayapura), the green economy was improving the income generation of the indigenous people. Before implementing the green economic program, cocoa production dropped due to many cocoa plants being affected by the disease.

Since the Indigenous people were involved in the Green Economic Program supported by donor agencies (UKAid), the production of cocoa increased dramatically because the Green Economic Program provided a high variety of disease-resistant cocoa plants. As a result, the quality of cocoa beans in Nimboran was high, and the indigenous people were able to export the cocoa to Japan. Working with suppliers and improving the quality of products through green economics provides techniques and information regarding the market for delivering the product, leading to

cocoa production still having an international market. In addition, based on interviews with respondents in Nimboran, they spent their income on basic needs, education, and health services. The indigenous people also owned their motorcycles from cocoa harvest by selling their cocoa production.

As mentioned previously, the green economic program could support tourist development. Besides, the green economy emphasizes sustainable development by promoting agricultural development. It also has an opportunity to be involved in tourism development in Papua. Papua has interesting places (forests, beaches, and mountains). Papuan cultural background and festivals attract tourists from domestic and overseas. For example, Jayawijaya Regency has the "Baliem War Festival", which tourists often visit regularly in the festival. In Jayapura, the regency also has "Danau Sentani Festiva", which attracts many tourists. Meanwhile, Nabire Regency has beautiful beaches and seas with white sand that attract tourists to snorkel and see beautiful coral reefs in Mapia island in Nabire.

The green economy program mentioned previously promotes Indigenous people's economic supported tourism development in the three regions. Many tourists want to buy local products that are unique in Papua. As reported from the interview in Wamena during "the Baliem Festival," the local people were able to sell organic coffee in Wamena. Mahaila, in Jayapura regency, the indigenous people sold cocoa and diversified cocoa bean products in Districts Kemptuck dan Nimboran. Meanwhile, in Nabire regency, many women were able to sell chokes and cake from sago.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides insight into the local contexts related to development and cultural values by implementing green economic programs in the Jayapura, Jayawijaya and Nabire regencies. Therefore, several conclusions can be drawn from the findings. Firstly, the way of living in the Papua communities has been strongly influenced by traditional political structures, categorized into Big Man, Ondoafi, Kingdom and Mixed system. Secondly, in relation to the pattern of conventional farming in the three selected regions of Papua, the study found that the majority of Papuan communities adopted traditional farming methods that support the conservation of the Papuan forests, such as local wisdom. This means that the Indigenous people prohibit damaging their forest where they have to carefully manage it and consider the next generation. This is related to the objectives of green economic programs that focus on sustainable development in the agricultural sector and also give Indigenous people an opportunity for tourism development in Papua. Thirdly, green economic programs have an economic and social impact on indigenous people. This is done through involvement in green economic programs for planting agricultural commodities such as cocoa, coffee, and sago. These programs help indigenous people increase their income, which could support the cost of living, their kids' education, and access to health services. This study also found that a small percentage of the respondents believe that there was no change to their income through implementing green economic programs. Fourthly, implementing the green economic programs supported tourism development in the regions of Jayapura, Jayawijaya and Nabire. A significant number of respondents strongly believed that green economic programs in the agriculture sector, especially planting cocoa, coffee and sago, economically add value to the agricultural production that could be delivered to tourists who prefer organic agricultural products.

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