

Paradox Between Sustainable Development Goals 13 & 16: The Eco-Terrorism Phenomenon

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to discover whether SDGs function to preserve nature in the context of eco-terrorism. The research question or problems in the research are why SDG is considered a paradox against the phenomenon of eco-terrorism and whether anarchy movement is necessary to preserve nature. This research used a qualitative descriptive approach with the library collecting technique. Based on the analysis, there are two findings in the research. First, SDGs may not be an absolute guideline in all countries. Second, anarchy movements are not supposed to be used in the environmental conservation movement. SDGs have global scaled guidelines where these guidelines may be implemented according to several countries' policies. However, it is possible that these guidelines would be against or not in accordance with the policies in other countries. The implementation of SDGs could as well give negative effects. For example, the project of establishment to deal with poverty would impact the forest negatively. Furthermore, not all countries are ready with resources to implement SDGs. For anarchy movements, the long-term plan would not be effective because the people and government could react negatively to something too extreme such as violence and illegal conduct. Instead, collaborative movements are effective and positive because the actions can be measured and many sides can partake to solve the problems in harmony. Based on the analysis, it can be said that the implementation of SDGs must adjust local policies and anarchy movements may not be the best solution to consider by countries to preserve nature.

Keywords: *Sustainable Development Goals, Eco-Terrorism, Paradox*

INTRODUCTION

The paradox between Sustainable Development Goals 13 & 16 can be seen from the aims of each initiative. For SDG 13 of Climate action, it aims on fighting against climate change and its causes (Filho et al., 2023). It puts emphasis on the necessity of survival to climate-related dangers and the integration of climate be calculated into national regulations. For SDG 16 of Peace, Justice, and Strong institutions, it focuses on promoting peaceful and holistic societies, gives access to justical for the whole, and make accountable and effective institutions at the whole levels (Milton, 2020). However, when each initiative becomes more extreme, then the phenomenon of eco-terrorism would emerge and become intense. From the side of SDGs 13, when it takes actions too intense and extreme, then the oppositions who heavily need on resources and other parts of the nature would rise and fight back because they cannot survive and feel the actions are unfair and unjust. This side or group could be from ethnic groups in villages or rural areas where the people do their living from only the nature. Meanwhile, from the side of SDGs 16, when the activists feel frustated with the static results, then they would try to do anarchy such as vandalising, sabotating public services, and do

violence uncontrollably. This side or group usually comes from social activists or groups that are full knowledge of social media and social issues. Both sides may cause eco-terrorism where the conflict of interest happens and urge certain groups to take actions in order to show that the struggle or fight exist.

The case of eco-terrorism might occur more often in the western countries. For example, The first organization, Earth Fiirst, promoted eco-terrorism by tree spiking in the Pacific Northwest as well as oppose actions such as dam construction, road building in wilderness areas, and old-growth logging (Chalecki, 2002). The eco-terrorist called Earth Liberation Army (ELA) in Canada burned down a wildlife muesum and gave damage to a huntning lodge in Biritish Colombbia. It was considered as “Earth Liberation” becasuse they were tired of the exploitation by the government to the nature (Hirschhoefer & Mudde, 2014). Thus, each side of SDGs would have its own eco-terrorism to make their aims come true. Another case that is new can be seen from the area of Puncak Bogor where the government has been trying to discipline and maket he area more natural. However, the local people already complaint because they depended heavily on the income from their food business around the area. Finally, they tried to sue a bigger restaurant and come to the government office to protested. From the paradox, it can be seen that the intensity of actions from both side could damage and hurt. As a result, endless conflicts may happen and could end up in a bigger issue. Each example below represents the use of violence and force to achieve or reach what is considered as a mission or goal although the loss of others can also affect them indirectly.

METHODS

This research is included in the type of descriptive research, which aims to objectively describe a phenomenon, provide understanding, and describe the occurrence of the phenomenon, how it emerged, and who is involved. In this context, this research aims to explain why the SDGs are considered a paradox when viewed through the lens of eco-terrorism, and whether anarchy movements are necessary for environmental preservation. Furthermore, the data used in this research comes from secondary data, which have been collected and processed from previous studies and are ready for use by third parties (Purba, 2012). This research used data collection techniques through literature studied, which is an effort to obtain data or information relevant to the topic or problem being studied. This data or information is obtained through various literature, such as books, scientific journals, research reports, and others. Lastly, the data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative, meaning that this research does not rely on numerical or statistical data. So the results of this qualitative research can not be measured with number, but are interpreted descriptively to answer the research questions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

SDGs Considered as A Paradox?

Sustainable Development Goal's or SDG's have 17 components that aim to prosper and harmonize life between humans and their aspects of life. The 17 point Sustainable Development Goal itself is based on five basic foundations, which are; (1) Human focused on poverty, food resources, and gender equality (2) Planet: includes environmental protection of both oceans and land, waste minimization and sustainable natural resources such as water and energy that are managed wisely, (3) Well-being: oriented towards the welfare of humanity towards access to quality education, good physical and mental health and access to clean water and sanitation, (4) Peace: encompasses peace and justice for the whole nation and supports the rule of law, (5) Partnerships: focuses on national and international cooperation aimed at achieving alignment of sustainable development goals. (Handrian & Andry, 2020). The 17 goals of Sustainable Development Goal's the objectives aimed at the environment is SDGs number 13 “Climate Action” and SDGs number 14 “Life on Land”. Both SDGs focus on the environment and ecosystems, however, because the SDGs have a domino effect, when one component is pointed out, it will still relate to the other components. Some environmental issues are also discussed in other points such as in number 14 “Life Bellow Water” and in number 12 “Responsible Production and Consumption”.

Since the SDGs were issued in 2015 which replacing the Millennium Development Goal's (MDGs) all countries in the world are working to achieve Sustainable Development Goals which is targeted by 2030. However, there are also many countries that have difficulties in implementing the SDGs, both in developed and developing countries. In developing countries, besides the lack of proper tools and technology, social conditions are also a challenge to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, Similar to Indonesia, to realize a good and sustainable environment in the future Indonesia must find an environmentally friendly source of electrical energy that is affordable and reliable for its citizens., but this seems difficult to realize due to the high population growth which results in high demand (Wirjawan, 2024). As well as in developed countries, the implementation of SDGs is not as straight forward as the theory. The steps to realize the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals have also encountered a paradox in their implementation, such as the implementation of SDGs 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 11 Suitable Cities and Communities which prioritize development and facilities that support the progress of industry, the economy and building for housing will be a paradox if correlated with SDGs that discuss climate and the environment, where the development of industry and infrastructure will ruin the existence of nature and have an impact on environmental pollution to global warming caused by industrial waste or glass buildings that cause carbon emissions and global warming.

The paradox phenomenon can be noticed in SDGs 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure in target 9.2 concerning the development of significant industrialization to support the economy, This phenomenon seems to be paradoxical with SDG 15 Life on Land in target 15.2 regarding significant efforts of reforestation and reforestation and efforts to stop deforestation. (Departement of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations, n.d.). Massive industrial development certainly supports the economic spirit because it is capable of providing many jobs, but this development requires a lot of land in urban areas to land in the mountainous forest plains that will be eroded to make significant industrial development. Moreover, massive housing development will also consume a lot of green land for development purposes, It is undeniable that this will happen considering the increasing densification of vacant and urban areas. This development acceleration is certainly not in line with the goals and targets of SDGs 15.2, where the goal of ending deforestation and the reforestation movements are hampered by massive industrial and residential development.



Picture 1: Deforestation to build a factory

Source: Detik.com

The paradox of SDGs received a lot of different reactions from people around the world, especially environmental activists who condemn any form of ecological destruction using protests or campaigns that are anarchist in nature; often called eco-terrorism. Eco-terrorism can be defined as every destructive action that environmental activists do to further their goal of increasing ecological sustainability awareness for the future (Chalecki, 2002). Usually, the destructive action takes form in the destruction of things and property that is considered as ruining the environment. The existence of eco-terrorism is a reaction to Sustainable Development Goals that still have paradoxes in their implementation. In America for example, between 1980 and 1999, there were at least 100 cases of eco-terrorism that resulted in \$42,8 Million of damages (Nilson & Burke, 2002). Among environmentalist groups, two that are known to be destructive are the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front (ALF). They think that their actions are a result of the failure of the government in the management of their system of law and bureaucracy that should prevent any form of ecological destruction. Therefore, they view destructive actions as a form of wake-up call for the government to take ecological sustainability more seriously (Hakiki & Nasution, 2022). Both ELF and

ALF have done destructive actions to raise the issue of ecological sustainability. One of them was the burning of an escalator at Guadalajara, Mexico in 2009 that is done by ELF. Another was the vandalism of a Benneton perfume shop in 2018. It needs to be noted that the destructive action as a call for action can harm economic growth, which is against the 8th SDGs “Decent Work and Economic Growth”.

Another destructive action by an environmentalist group happened to Lionel Messi’s house in Ibiza, Spain. Lionel Messi’s house was the target of vandalism by an environmentalist group called “Futuro Vegetal”. Lionel Messi, as the world’s number one footballer, too can’t escape the eco-terrorism attack at his own home. This incident happened on August 6th 2024.



Picture 2: Messi’s house at Ibiza after vandalized

Source: The Daily Beast

The members of Futuro Vegetal sprayed red and black paint on the wall of Messi’s home then they stood and took photos holding a banner inscribed “Help the Planet, Eat the Rich, Abolish the Police”. As reported by The Economic Times, the reasons for Futuro Vegetal's action are that they consider Lionel Messi’s house as illegal and uncertified, and they believe rich people must play a role and have responsibility regarding the ongoing climate and environmental crisis. The Futuro Vegetal also claimed that Messi’s mansion contributes to a number of carbon emission which have impact on the climate and environmental crisis (The Economic Times, 2024).

Another recent eco-terrorism action by the environmentalist group Just Stop Oil (JSO) involved vandalism against a private jet allegedly owned by Taylor Swift. In June 2024, they posted on X that they had vandalized a private jet belonging to Taylor Swift. This action was taken because the private jet of Taylor Swift was believed to emit significantly more carbon dioxide than average, and in 2022, Taylor Swift was listed as one of the top CO2 emitters among celebrities (Beritasatu, 2024). The action was also aimed at pressuring the government to end fossil fuel production by 2030. However, their action was misdirected, as the private jet was not owned by Taylor Swift. Before vandalizing the private jet, they had also vandalized Stonehenge in western England, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (AFP, 2024). From these eco-terrorism cases, it can be seen that the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also have a domino effect. The actions of Futuro Vegetal or Just Stop Oil serve as a drive towards climate and environmental sustainability, correlating with SDG 13 Climate Action, but become paradoxical because their actions are counterproductive, leading to other problems.

Anarchy Movement to Preserve Nature

Anarchy is a sentence that comes from the Greek language, namely (Anarchos) which means without government (IDN Times, 2017). It can be interpreted as anarchy, namely actions carried out without control or without clear regulations. However, the media often uses the term anarchy to describe a demonstration that resulted in the destruction of several public facilities. Anarchism should not be allowed to behave in social life, but what if anarchism occurs and is carried out when we want to voice environmental issues. Voicing or showing action to care about the environment is a good thing, but choosing the method of voicing this issue must also be appropriate. The aim of forming environmental activists is to maintain an environment from the behavior of people who do not care about the world's living ecosystem.

In another sense, anarchy also leads to the absence of government, regulations and laws in governing a country (IDN Times, 2017). So anarchy can also be said to be a situation where the country does not have regulations or good governance and the country is also in a state of chaos. There is also another view which states that anarchism is different from terrorism, this statement was written by Seno Gumira. He explained that the concept of anarchism itself is a political movement that demands the abolition of the state, replacing all forms of government power with open alliances, group or individual cooperation (IDN Times, 2017). Meanwhile, eco-terrorism is an act of violence aimed at stopping activities that could threaten environmental sustainability. So the potential for eco-terrorism to occur in anarchy is also quite large. However, judging from the good intentions intended by environmental activists, acts of anarchy and eco-terrorism should not occur, because in their implementation the goal of the activists is to create a comfortable environment without interference from the things that cause the climate crisis. How is it possible that a group of people who want climate and environmental stability actually destroy facilities which cause damage to the environment? However, if something happens there must be a cause and a reason, the activists carrying out this act of eco-terrorism also definitely have a root problem that makes them have to carry out this act of eco-terrorism.

There are many possibilities that could cause this to happen. The basic possibility that environmental activists carry out acts of eco-terrorism is that they feel that they are not being heard, their demonstration efforts in voicing environmental issues seem to be in vain because as each day goes by the condition of the environment around them becomes increasingly worse. Finally, they carry out acts of destruction of goods or objects which make environmental conditions worse. One of the cases that was discovered was the graffiti on the house of world footballer Lionel Messi, who was affected by vandalism by environmental activists, which was because the land used as a

house by Lionel Messi was illegal land. Activists painted Lionel Messi's house using black and red paint (CNN, 2024). This action cannot be justified, because it will not solve the problem, but the behavior of environmental activists does not reflect being an environmental lover. It's as if they are also polluting the environment with their actions by scribbling on buildings or even the house of a soccer athlete. Their actions do not fulfill their main goal as climate activists, in fact they have the potential to harm and even damage the environment in the area around the house.

From the case that occurred at Lionel Messi's house, it can be seen that any form of anarchism, no matter how small, will still have a negative impact on the surrounding environment. This is certainly contrary to efforts to preserve the environment. When we are faced with an environmental problem, anarchism is not the only way that can be used to voice our protest. Carrying out anarchism as a form of protest is the same as eliminating the initial goal of trying to protect the environment. How can environmental problems that were originally intended to be resolved be increasingly impacted by the actions of anarchism. The factors that cause environmental activists to choose anarchism are dissatisfaction with the government in resolving existing problems, the occurrence of a truly urgent environmental crisis, environmental destruction by a number of individuals only for their personal interests, and peaceful methods are considered less successful in resolving problems (Izak, 2022).

When the environment is under threat, of course anyone who sees it will be moved to do something that can protect it. They, especially extremists who care about the environment, try to do things that are claimed as a form of protecting the environment. This is certainly very dangerous because they think what they are doing is right. In any case, anarchism is still not justified. The activities of environmental activists that threaten humans or anything around them are not appropriate to be normalized. There are still many ways that can be done to prevent, maintain, or resolve environmental problems. Some ways that can be done are strengthening environmental security, mediating with parties involved if environmental problems occur, providing space for dialogue between the government, companies, and the community regarding environmental maintenance, educating the community about environmental issues, introducing non-violent environmental activist activities, and making firm and fair policies in environmental maintenance because basically the environment is a shared responsibility. Environmental activists should be able to persuade the community in peaceful ways, not provoke the community to commit anarchy as a form of protest.

Given the increasing number of eco-terrorism cases each year, the public is expected to be able to sort out information well and not exaggerate environmental issues that occur. Anarchist actions will only give a negative image to environmental activists. Likewise with other consequences that will be obtained, anarchist actions could receive a harsher legal response from the government. Radical views in efforts to protect the environment have given birth to environmental terrorist groups. They also claim to legitimize the truth of these actions to gain support and participation from certain populations (Burke, 2002). In fact, the impact of these activities is clearly detrimental to their own group. It

is not easy to change anarchist actions into more beneficial constructive actions. All parties from the government to the community must be able to work together to maintain a balance between development and environmental preservation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research above, it can be concluded that in implementing SDGs there are various paradoxes, especially when associated with environmental issues. There is a contradiction in realizing 13 and SDGs 16. Although both SDGs have good goals to address climate change, as well as promote peace and justice. However, the realization of both SDGs can become paradoxical if one goal is applied extremely or excessively and without considering other aspects. In achieving SDGs 13, activist consider that protecting the environment is something that must be done, even using extreme actions. The extreme actions or destruction carried out aim to achieve SDGs 13 and to be heard by the government. However, this contradicts with SDGs 16, which advocates for peaceful and inclusive society.

The phenomenon of eco-terrorism reflects the dissatisfaction or sense of injustice experienced by the activist. The anarchic method used has more negative impacts that harm parties and do not solve the main problem. The destruction carried out by anarchist groups indicates that conservation efforts or environmental actions can actually trigger social tensions. This shows how extreme actions in order to fight for the environment can cause conflict. Therefore, in achieving the goals of the SDGs, each country may adopt different methods and approaches depending on its national policies. It must be adjusted to the situations and conditions, as each country has different circumstances and problems. Besides that, it is necessary for the government and related institutions to provide a space for discussion or dialogue with activist to convey their protest in a better way, such as policy advocacy through government regulations and policies. Furthermore, there should be firm and fair law enforcement in dealing with anarchy acts. Through these measure, its hoped that it can minimize the anarchy acts by activist

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