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Community in Speed Space: Media Information About Ulumbu PLTP Geothermal

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ABSTRACT

Digitalization has caused the images of time and space to blur. The rapid flow of mediated information causes confusion and a lack of humanitarian awareness. This paper explains the reality of the Poco Leok case in the construction and expansion of the PLTP Ulumbu. Using Dromology theory by Paul Virilio in "Speed and Politics" with a qualitative approach. The Poco Leok case is often based on media narratives that state that the expansion of the PLTP Ulumbu is for the benefit of common welfare, but in reality, the expansion of the PLTP Ulumbu sacrifices and torments the people through land-greedy investments with iron fist regimes, domination of power, and neglect of people's voices in the public sphere. The media in the PLTP Ulumbu case succeeded in polarizing the community based on their interests and making the community the subject of receiving geothermal potential that must be managed.

Keyword: Digital, Dromology, and Reality

ABSTRAK

Digitalisasi menyebabkan berbagai citra ruang dan waktu semakin kabur. Dengan arus informasi yang termediasi begitu cepat menyebabkan kebingungan serta kurangnya kesadaran kemanusiaan. Tulisan ini menjelaskan realitas kasus Poco Leok dalam pembangunan dan Perluasan PLTP Ulumbu. Menggunakan teori Dromology oleh Paul Virilio “Speed and Politics” dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Kasus Poco leok seringkali berdasarkan narasi media yang menyatakan bahwa perluasan PLTP Ulumbu untuk kepentingan kesejahteraan bersama, namun secara realita, perluasan PLTP Ulumbu mengorbankan dan menyengsarakan rakyat melalui investasi rakus lahan dengan rezim tangan besi, dominasi kekuasaan, dan pengabaian suara rakyat dalam ruang publik. Media dalam kasus PLTP Ulumbu berhasil membentuk polarisasi masyarakat berdasarkan kepentingan mereka dan menjadikan masyarakat subyek penerimaan potensi geothermal yang harus dikelola.

Kata Kunci: Digital, Dromology, dan Realitas

1. Introduction

Human life today has become very fast in getting information wherever the individual is. Space and time are penetrated by digitalization by bringing various information with a rapid flow which Virilio called dromospheric space or speed space that blurs the physical boundaries in the space (in Nugroho, 2020). In this case, people can receive any information without being limited by space and time quickly. Various information is received by the public in a fraction of a second regarding problems at home and abroad. However, the information obtained by the community has not been able to guarantee its validity, because according to Virilio digitalization produces images that are fleeting and quickly disappear so as to produce

mediated reality. Through mediated reality can result in confusion, crisis of human consciousness, and crisis of intelligence due to human passivity in interpreting.

The concept of Community in Speed Space refers to a concept that describes how modern communities interact, communicate, and shape their identities through fast-paced and globally connected digital spaces. The term "speed space" refers to the fast and ever-evolving digital information environment, where information can spread rapidly through various social media platforms, websites, and other online communication channels. In a scientific context, the concept of "community in speed space" considers how information and communication technologies affect community dynamics, including ways of communication, information exchange, and collective identity formation. Modern communities are no longer limited by geographical boundaries, but can form and thrive in digital spaces that allow individuals to connect and interact regardless of distance.

A similar phenomenon, namely geothermal problems on the island of Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. Various information about geothermal on the island of Flores, NTT is milling around on various news platforms, be it geothermal potential, geothermal projects, or polemics faced in the implementation of the project. News media such as kompas, money.kompas, antaranews, katadata, and other news platforms. In the news media, Flores Island is declared a geothermal strategic island with geothermal potential of almost 1,000,000 MW and reserves of 402.5 MW, so the government has a target in 2025 to utilize geothermal potential to be used as environmentally friendly renewable energy, namely Geothermal Power Plants (PLTP). Through the news media, the information received by the public becomes so fast that it merges into one in time and space but also merges with the image built in the discourse in the news. The news narrates the potential points of geothermal and renewable energy so well that with this information, people only accept the good side of the news without examining more deeply and become passive individuals in interpreting the information they get.

The discourse built in digitally disseminated news actually has interests that are also built by them. The apathy of the community to examine more deeply the information will have an impact on the truth and dissemination of further information. Because the individual does not know the truth that is happening on the ground, but with the information circulating through the platform, it has the potential to build false perceptions through information disseminated through the media. Because in the news media, the information shared is not all in accordance with the actual reality.

2. Method

This paper uses a qualitative approach using the theory of Dromology by Paul Virilio. Speed and Politics is Virilio's first work published in 1977, as an effort by Virilio to see changes in society that occur so quickly as light, both in transportation, computerization, telecommunications, and information exchange (Hauer, 2013). Virilio through his writings realizes that contemporary society is very dependent on the speed at which information and communication technology is used in everyday life. Because of this awareness, Virilio discusses the impact of speed in the contemporary world in his various works. Virilio sees that real

space has been diluted, individualized, and humans are increasingly dependent on spatially transmitted digital which has consequences for the collapse of space and time, because everything has been made simple and instant and merged into one in real space (Wade, 2015).

The instantaneous digital speed is connected through the global internet circuit and spreads rapidly without space and time boundaries between individual societies and things in the form of information. But often this information raises anxiety, because the media that produces and disseminates the news raises discourses from the perception of the media that cannot be ascertained to have validity or not (Nugroho, 2020). And through the speed expressed by Virilio, it is able to unite visible reality with fleeting images. The source in this paper is secondary data taken by the second source from the first source (Rianse, 2009). The secondary data used to complement this paper is in the form of journals and information from news media without year limits by reviewing all news related to the geothermal potential of PTLP Ulumbu.

3. Result and Discussion

Indonesia is located on the ring of fire in an active region in Asia Pacific, making it the world's largest geothermal producer after the US. Kompas quoted a statement from the Ministry of Energy Resources and Minerals (ESDM) that, until 2021 there are 23,766 GW or 23,766 MW of geothermal potential in Indonesia spread along volcanic routes from the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Papua. Through this great geothermal potential, it is able to bring Indonesia to become a country with environmentally friendly renewable energy potential, namely Geothermal Power Plants (PLTP). However, such a large energy source, structurally stated that until now it has not been well optimized due to obstacles to the application of renewable energy on an investment scale. In 2018, Indonesia only attracted investment of USD 0.8 billion, whereas to achieve the application of renewable energy requires investment with a capacity of USD 16 billion every year, starting from 2015 to 2030 (Roman Vakulchuk, 2020).

Although still experiencing obstacles in terms of investment, the government in this case is the Directorate General of New Renewable Energy and Energy Conversion (EBTKE), has an EBT target of 23% in 2025 and will realize the President's target for net zero emissions by 2060 (EBTKE, 2023). Pertamina also through the CEO of Pertamina Geothermal Energy, Ahmad Yuniarto, also supported the government's steps in discussions at the COP-27 Indonesia Pavilion located in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. In the discussion in 2022, Yuniarto revealed that Pertamina will support the government to achieve the targets that have been initiated, namely, net zero emissions in 2060 by means of decarbonization and green business, one of which is developing geothermal capacity.

This large project seems to get a lot of support and based on the latest data from the Directorate of Geothermal Energy, Directorate General of New Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation, it is recorded that until now geothermal resources have been utilized amounting to 1,948.5 MW consisting of 13 Geothermal Power Plants spread across 11 Geothermal Working Areas, namely 2 PLTP in North Sumatra, 1 PLTP in Lampung, 6 PLTP in West Java, 1 PLTP in Central Java, 1 PLTP in North Sulawesi, and 2 PLTP in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). This PLTP is managed by PLN, Pertamina Geothermal Energy, PT Geo Dipa

Energy, PT Star Energy Geothermal, and Sarulla Operation Ltd (Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, 2018). NTT Province, especially Flores island, according to Wahidin as General Manager of PT PLN UIP Nusa Tenggara, has geothermal potential of nearly 1,000,000 MW and reserves of 402.5 MW (voi.id). With such great potential and also with the enactment of Law No. 2268 K / 30 / MEM / 2017 increasingly gives power for management parties to manage these geothermal resources.

News through the media that is very well narrated through exposure to the huge geothermal potential and also the narrative built by the government to provide electricity with renewable energy that is environmentally friendly instead of using coal, is an interesting narrative. In the space of speed that Virilio described, information with this interesting narrative will attract the attention of the public and if not followed further by the community, will become information that leads individuals to a narrative built for the benefit of the government itself. Because reality has melted into fleeting images and into mediated reality. Individual society, if not active in representing the news it gets, will only plunge individuals into narratives built on the interests of news producers. Because according to Virilio, the news presented does not guarantee the validity of the field.

In digital narratives through news platforms, geothermal potentials that have not been used and must be utilized, especially on Flores Island, NTT. This potential requires the support of many parties to realize its utilization. NTT as a disadvantaged province is also a discourse that is often built with various infrastructure problems and other shortcomings, including electricity. So through geothermal, the narrative built is able to provide access to electricity for all people in NTT.

The reality of the field encountered by the author is that the people of NTT, especially the island of Flores have met their electricity needs well, but until now PLN together with the local government continue to move in various ways to ensure the expansion of PLTP, especially PLTP Ulumbu. The intensification of the expansion of the Ulumbu PLTP stated by the government as a form of fulfillment of electricity on the island of Flores as a whole needs to be studied specifically. With the drilling and exploration of geothermal resources and the number of power plants, it is actually detrimental to the country itself because it will only experience polemics over electricity oversupply which will then burden the finances of PT PLN (Kompas). If electricity oversupply, the community must switch to greater electricity to reduce losses for PT PLN.

Interestingly, in 2021, PLN NTT donated free electricity to 1,899 households during 2021 (ANTARA). In the news, it is narrated that the electricity donation by PLN NTT is a form of assistance to underprivileged families in order to increase the national electrification ratio to realize equitable energy. But all of that is just a sweetening discourse from the government and PLN to succeed the interests that are being carried out. PT PLN through this movement is only to increase or divert the community's electricity to a larger power, at least 900 VA in order to be able to reduce the losses that occur to them, because the community's switch to higher electricity will also encourage people to purchase higher electricity. However, the people of NTT that year were happy with the assistance and the information in the news received a good response digitally. In fact, if the community as users of digitalization actively reviews the news, the public will not immediately accept positively and try to compare each news narrative. However, space and time have merged between reality, media, and society, making people immediately take information for granted,

passive in interpreting information, and increasingly turn off people's consciousness and thinking. Therefore, often people receive digital information as a whole in the reality of media that is built by the interests of producers and is different from the actual situation.

In addition to the interests that are carried out through assistance and narrated well, the ambition of the government and the managing universities for PLTP raises the author's opinion about the political economic interests behind the PLTP project because everything will lead to business and profits. Since the beginning of this mega project requires a very large investment and it is known that this mega project was funded by the Bank of Germany, KfW amounting to EUR 150 million (2.6 trillion) after PLN signed a loan agreement for the Ulumbu Geothermal Power Plant (PLTP) unit 5 and Mataloko PLTP unit 2-3 geothermal projects (IDN Financials, 2018). Between the Indonesian Solar Energy Association (AESI) and the Bundesverband Solarwirtschaft (BSW) and the Association of Rooftop Solar Electricity Users (PPLSA) and Bundesverband Solarwirtschaft (BSW) have an MoU, the two countries have deeper ties related to bilateral economic agreements, especially related to renewable energy (EBTKE, 2018). A country cannot afford to pour huge funds without considering the calculation of the benefits it will get, and neither can Germany.

Not only the interests of the German state, in the issue of the Ulumbu PLTP, sectorally played by several parties with their respective interests. On December 1, 2022, through Decree No HK/417/2022, the Regent of Manggarai determined the geothermal location of Poco Leok (NTTMedia Express). In some media, it was not explained specifically about the determination of this decree and only focused on the circulation of the decree which triggered public anger over the arbitrary actions of the Regent of Manggarai. Virilio also sees the importance behind media producers and this is also reflected in the case of the decree on the determination of geothermal locations in Poco Leok, where no media has written about the decree. However, some media revealed a new contravention, related to the non-involvement of Wabup Manggarai in the determination of the Ulumbu PLTP expansion decree (VoxNTT). This cannot be ascertained because quoting Wabup's statement that he was never involved in the decree is true or not. However, the image built in the discourse by Vox NTT is a form of discourse war and discourse that is able to provide a perception for the public who see this news that, structurally in the Manggarai Regency government has failed to carry out its roles, especially the relationship between the chairman and deputy. Through this narrative will bring up many new views in society with other speculations for groups of digital users who actively see the news, but for passive digital groups, this will only be ignored. With this digital instant, it also makes people no longer care about the problems around them which also have long-term effects on life.

Similarly, when the digital community is passive in interpreting news, many problems and discordant voices from the public will not be heard by the public at any time. The Poco Leok community has carried out various actions, discussions, and various activities as a form of rejection of the domination of the Manggarai Regency Government over their land and has also been reported by several media, but until now many have not seen the case. The digital society is busy with fun things rather than thinking about people's problems. In addition, since the beginning the community has accepted the positive side of the geothermal project without being critically studied or comparing in simple or in-depth studies so that this case is not so visible to the community. The media succeeded in building media reality well in geothermal projects, especially in the

Ulumbu PLTP which stated that with the presence of the Ulumbu PLTP since 2006 it succeeded in illuminating 4 villages on the island of Flores and in 2012 succeeded in illuminating other districts on the island of Flores (Detik Finance).

However, the image built by the media is not entirely true, even now there are still some problems related to electricity and also people are not oriented towards electricity if their land will be used for the expansion of PLTP which will eventually take away their agricultural land and clean water sources (Mongabay). Therefore, the community always takes several actions as a form of rejection to the Regency Government of the geothermal determination decree in Poco Leok. The first step taken by the Poco Leok community was to dialogue with the Regent of Manggarai Herybertus GL Nabit. In the dialogue, Herybertus GL Nabit heard all parties, both contra and pro parties and promised to discuss the matter with PLN (Floresa Tribun News). This is what Floresa represents digitally, but all statements are images built only by the Regent of Manggarai. Field reality shows, until now the Regent of Manggarai continues to side with PLN and continues to want to continue to expand the construction of the Ulumbu PLTP based on the decree determining the geothermal location in Poco Leok. Herybertus GL Nabit did not realize the dialogue he heard in the public space built by the community and district government. Public space is given but public space remains under the domination of oligarchic power.

Unfortunately, often news about the actions of people who defend their rights even though it is well narrated by the media gets a lot of criticism. People who protest against it are considered a waste of time and useless, even though only in that way can discordant voices in the midst of hubbub try to be heard. This happens because the digital society from the beginning follows cases without being actively interpreted to foster critical thinking power which then forms its own polarization built by the media. So that the digital community receiving information has different perceptions.

4. Conclusion

Speed in the digital space allows digital users to get a variety of information but in that information is often filled with biased narratives of reality. With the speed of this digital era, there is more and more information and the digital user community is bombarded with a lot of information and from the amount of information, there is a lot of information whose validity is unknown. Although the validity is unknown, the digital user community cannot stop its dependence on digital because digital without limited space and time is able to provide various information.

Through digital, people can find out about the huge geothermal potential and can also find out about mega projects that can provide environmentally friendly electricity. Not only the geothermal potential and mega projects of PLN, the digital community can also find out the case of the Ulumbu PLTP in Poco Leok without the need to go to Poco Leok. However, every narrative in the discourse constructed by media producers basically has its own importance as stated by Virilio. There are many images built into the narrative of the discourse whose reality has been mediated.

The digital community in seeing the Poco Leok case is often based on media narratives that state that the expansion of the Ulumbu PLTP is in the interest of common welfare, but in reality the expansion of the

Ulumbu PLTP sacrifices and mistreats the people through greedy investment in land with an iron fist regime, domination of power, and neglect of people's voices in public spaces. The media in the case of the Ulumbu PLTP succeeded in forming a polarization of society that ignored and accepted that from the beginning geothermal potential must be managed. Literally, every potential must be cultivated but it does not mean at the expense of the people. In the space of digital speed that makes information shoot quickly like light should be balanced with reason, build awareness that the media has interests and biases about reality, build awareness and habits of critical thinking in receiving every information, and always try to make comparisons, because there is no guarantee of the validity of a news.

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