

BLUE GRABBING AMIDST THE APPLICATION OF BLUE ECONOMY: THE CASE OF INDONESIA

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Abstract

Over the past decades, the roles of the ocean have become more crucial. Apart from its increasing roles in environmental dynamics, the ocean has been a new global economic frontier. This makes international communities have introduced blue economy, as a new paradigm that integrates the principles of social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic growth, to steward the ocean. Nonetheless, the ocean is also threatened by the practices of blue grabbing. By utilizing document analysis method, this study aims to investigate to what extent blue economy is applied in Indonesia and how the practices of blue grabbing form a barrier to the application of blue economy in this country. Moreover, this study aims to discuss the policy implication of this issue. It is revealed that in the case of Indonesia, blue economy has preceded to a better design of policies in governing the ocean. Yet, a threat in the form of blue grabbing, which is mostly disguised by the narratives of providing incentives for investment and recovering the environmental destruction, still exists in this country. Policy implications of this issue, therefore, include engaging more small actors into policy-making processes, preparing job transition for those impacted by marine and coastal development plans, and mainstreaming population policy into the blue economy.

Keywords: blue grabbing, blue economy, Indonesia, policy implications.

PERAMPASAN BIRU DI TENGAH PENGAPLIKASIAN EKONOMI BIRU: KASUS INDONESIA

Abstrak

Selama beberapa dekade terakhir, peran laut semakin krusial. Selain peran yang semakin meningkat dalam dinamika lingkungan, laut juga telah menjadi area potensi ekonomi global yang baru. Hal ini membuat komunitas internasional telah mengadopsi ekonomi biru, sebagai paradigma baru yang mengintegrasikan prinsip inklusi sosial, kelestarian lingkungan, dan pertumbuhan ekonomi, dalam mengelola laut. Meski demikian, laut juga terancam praktek perampasan biru. Dengan menggunakan metode dokumen analisis, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana ekonomi biru diterapkan di Indonesia dan bagaimana praktik perampasan biru membentuk penghalang dalam penerapan ekonomi biru di negara ini. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk membahas implikasi kebijakan dari isu tersebut. Ditemukan bahwa dalam kasus Indonesia, ekonomi biru telah mengarahkan desain kebijakan yang lebih baik dalam mengelola laut. Namun, ancaman berupa perampasan biru, dimana umumnya dikemas oleh narasi berupa penyediaan insentif bagi investasi dan perbaikan kerusakan

lingkungan, masih ada di negeri ini. Implikasi kebijakan dari isu ini, dengan demikian, meliputi pelibatan lebih banyak aktor kecil ke dalam proses pembuatan kebijakan, persiapan transisi pekerjaan bagi mereka yang terkena dampak rencana pembangunan laut dan pesisir, dan pengarusutamaan kebijakan kependudukan ke dalam ekonomi biru.

Kata Kunci: perampasan biru, ekonomi biru, Indonesia, implikasi kebijakan.

Introduction

The ocean has performed essential roles in supporting human beings (Techera & Winter, 2019). In the contemporary context, the ocean has converted into a new global economic frontier due to significant contributions that it provides, and abundant potencies that it contains (Barbesgaard, 2015; Pauli, 2010). The OECD's reports noted that prior to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the contribution of marine economy to the world's GDP is projected to double to USD 3 trillion in 2030 and ocean-related jobs through fishing, aquaculture, coastal and marine tourism, and research activities is also expected to rise to 40 million by 2030 (2020).

Aside from being essential for the economy, marine ecosystem services are also prominent for global environmental dynamics, such as regulating climate through providing oxygen, absorbing heat and locking up carbon dioxide; and protecting the adverse impacts of climate change. The fifth assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) revealed that the ocean absorbs 93 percent of the heat accumulating in the atmosphere and its ecosystems protect the coastal areas from various climate events, such as storms and sea-level rises (2014, p. 417). Hopkinson, Cai and Hu also found that the amount of carbon locked up by vegetated coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrasses, and intertidal marshes, is equal to that of all

terrestrial forests (2012, p. 186). Such contributions indicate that the ocean is important in many ways for the existence of human societies and other living things on the planet earth.

Despite having immense roles, the ocean is increasingly regarded as a threatened area as a result of overexploitation, pollution, declining biodiversity, and climate change (OECD, 2020, p. 2). Huge pressure from human activities shaped by rising population growth and population density, excessive consumption behaviour, and mismanagement of the ocean is the main culprit (Crist et al., 2017). The high population growth combined with the excessive patterns boosts the demand for resources and living space, which increases the rapid occupation of the coastal zones and the extraction of marine resources. This is exacerbated by less solid ocean management. Illegal and excessive fishing practices cause the marine ecosystem balance to be dangerous. Offshore gas and oil exploration, shipping, and human-produced waste accelerate pollution levels in the ocean to run out of control. Meanwhile, extreme climate change also fosters sea-level rises, ocean warming and ocean acidification which cause habitat losses in the ocean. With all these points in mind, it is obvious that the marine service is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it promises larger economies of scale

for humans. On the other hand, it creates incentives for humans to escalate stressors on the marine environment. This, therefore, suggests that designing a new, integrated approach followed by bold actions is highly required in stewarding the ocean. Without that way, the ocean might be used excessively and uncontrolled, leading to its destruction.

In response to the vital role played by the ocean and risks threatening it, there is a growing concern around the world to introduce blue economy into the ocean governance. Over the last decade, international communities have introduced blue economy as a new paradigm to steward the ocean since it becomes a new global economic frontier (Barbesgaard, 2015; Pauli, 2010). This paradigm offers a set of principles for countries in the world in promoting economic efficiency, as well as preserving social equity and ecological sustainability simultaneously when utilizing the ocean.

Indonesia is one of the countries in the world that has also applied this paradigm. Applying blue economy is of the utmost importance as Indonesia being one of the countries in the world with the largest marine areas and longest coastal lines. Its ocean has a substantial contribution to support environmental aspects and the output of goods and services produced in the Indonesian economy recently and contains a huge potency to be developed onward.

Yet, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed when stewarding the ocean. One of which is blue grabbing. This paper, therefore, aims to discuss to what extent blue economy is applied in Indonesia and how the practices of blue grabbing form a barrier to the application of blue economy in this country. A broader

understanding of this issue along with its policy implications is essential for the government and related stakeholders to minimize or prevent the practices of it so that the implementation of the blue economy in Indonesia could deliver equal economic, social, and ecological benefits for all.

Literature Review

Blue economy is a new paradigm in the ocean governance over the past decade and has its origins in the broader 'green' movement (EIU, 2015, p. 5). In the literature, this term has been used synonymously with others such as, 'oceans economy' (Smith-Godfrey, 2016) and 'blue growth' (Doerr, 2016). The term of the blue economy was first introduced by Professor Gunter Pauli in 1994 but has increasingly lifted since the Rio +20 conference, in Brazil on 20-22 June 2012 (UN, 2014). According to the EIU, blue economy refers to "a sustainable ocean economy emerges when economic activity is in balance with the long-term capacity of ocean ecosystems to support this activity and remain resilient and healthy" (2015, p. 7). In a similar vein, FAO defines blue growth as "the sustainable growth and development emanating from economic activities in the oceans, wetlands and coastal zones, that minimize environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of living aquatic resources, and maximize economic and social benefits" (FAO, 2015, p. 8). It is also highlighted that blue economy shares the same desired outcome with that of the green economy which aim to gain "the improvement of human wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UN, 2014, p. 2). It can be claimed, therefore, blue economy

seeks to offer a new paradigm in governing the ocean through which balancing the economic growth together with improving social equity and ecological sustainability.

To date, it has been documented that global organizations, economies, and nations have been mainstreaming blue economy into policy tools – including roadmaps, strategic frameworks, and action plans – to sustainably manage the world’s ocean. For instance, aside from its financial supports, the European Union has introduced the Blue Growth Strategy in 2012, followed by the Blue Economy Innovation Plan in 2014 as the guidance for its members to design and implement policies related to the marine environment (Wenhai et al., 2019). Similarly, in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 14, “conserve and sustainability use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, the UN has put a goal of the sustainable use of the ocean that needs to be gained – which therefore translated into national policies – by its members (Spalding, 2016). Meanwhile, by using four lenses – oceans as natural capital; oceans as livelihoods; oceans as good business; oceans as drivers of innovation – Voyer et al. point out that Australia has mainstreamed blue economy into existing plans, activities, and programs (2018). These also mean that as functions of the oceans are much more complex and the oceans are now increasingly seen as threatened places, the blue economy has been embedded into strategic policies of governmental entities globally to harness new growth and improve wellbeings and more sustainable use of the oceans.

While the blue economy having been argued as a new paradigm to balance socio-economic growth and environmental protection of countries around the world for

over a decade now, there are several barriers that still exist – which therefore need to be addressed – in the implementation of this new paradigm. One of them is blue grabbing. In the literature, ‘blue grabbing’ has been used synonymously to ‘ocean grabbing’ (Bennett et al., 2015). According to Benjaminsen and Bryceson (2012, p. 350), the notion of blue grabbing refers to “the combination of dispossession of previous users and capital accumulation by some powerful actors”. Meanwhile, Pedersen et al. define ocean grabbing as “the capturing of control by powerful economic actors of crucial decision-making around fisheries, including the power to decide how and for what purposes marine resources are used, conserved and managed now and in the future” (2014, p. 3). These definitions, therefore, highlight that there are various practices conducted by big actors in the ocean that marginalize the access and right of small actors in this area. That is, apart from its vital roles in promoting economic, social, and ecological fronts of countries, the ocean also shapes competitions and conflicts among involved actors to dominate access and control in it which generally result in the marginalizing of powerless actors (Brent et al., 2020).

There are three main narratives paving the way to the practices of blue grabbing around the globe (Pedersen et al., 2014, p. 19). First is raising food security. This narrative emerges as the growing concern of food insecurity globally following the pressure of population growth which is projected to reach at least 9 billion by mid-century. This indicates that a roughly 70 percent increase in food production will be needed to meet its demand in 2050 (Crist, Mora and Engelman, 2017; OECD, 2020). Blue economy, a paradigm that sustains

biodiversity and human wellbeing, is seen to be the solution for countries to solve the problem of food insecurity. By optimizing the areas of the ocean, food production could be increased so that the demand for food could always be met. The second narrative is protecting the environment. As discussed above, marine ecosystem services are vital for global environmental dynamics (IPCC 2014). This is due to the ocean providing oxygen, absorb heat, and lock up carbon dioxide. Other than that, the coastal areas can protect humans from the adverse impacts of climate change. However, due to the ocean being increasingly threatened by various risks created by humans, such as pollution, overfishing, biodiversity losses, and so on, it is therefore essential to reallocate the access, use and control of the ocean to address the problems. The third main narrative of blue grabbing is providing incentives for large-scale investment. This discourse grows as the involvement of various actors, in particular through the market-based mechanism, is seen to be important in accelerating the progress of the blue economy. An enabling environment for investors might attract a huge number of funding to optimize potencies that are contained by the ocean. These narratives, thus, provide justifications for powerful actors to grab the ocean in various means and forms. This also means that the powerful actors commonly hide behind the rationales of ‘development’, ‘conservation’ or ‘environmental management’ to compete with small actors that lead to the practices of ocean grabbing (Bennett et al., 2015, p. 63).

To assess practices constituted as blue grabbing, Bennett, Govan and Satterfield employ a tentative framework consisting of three considerations – quality of governance, human security and livelihood,

and social-ecological wellbeing – and its measures (2015). They also asserted five means behind the practices of blue grabbing, as the result of competitions and conflicts of related actors in the ocean (2015, p. 62). These include single-use of enclosure of spaces; multiple-use enclosure of space; changing property regime; changing resource-allocation regime; and changing resource use regime. Meanwhile, the practices take place in many forms, such as the creation of a marine reserve for conservation and tourist enclave, reduction in small-scale fishing zones, post-disaster disposition of lands from previous owners, and many more.

These means and practices have been recorded in many setting in the world. In Tanzania, it has been found that the practices of marine conservation resulted in the dispossession of land and resources from previous, local users, to new, more powerful actors including rent-seeking state officials, transnational conservation organizations, tourism companies, and the State Treasury (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012). The disposition of the coastal areas takes the form of increased restrictions on local resource use which is justified by the narratives of environmental degradation. The restriction is paving the way for more powerful actors to accumulate capital through which state officials collect fees from the ground rent, conservation organizations receive funding from donors for the conservation agenda, and tourism operators run their business for accumulating profit. Contrarily, small actors are the losers since the access and control of the areas being significantly restricted for them.

Another case of blue grabbing can be seen in New Brunswick, Canada. It is stated that on the one hand, blue economy, a new

practice in marine management, has offered a new mechanism for managing marine areas efficiently (Lewis & Tietenberg, 2019). As common-pool resources, uncontrolled marine extraction might lead to the tragedy of the common. In the absence of clear rights arrangements, every individual or group might exploit the ocean as much as possible for their own purposes. Thus, the mechanisms in the blue economy, such as zoning of fishing and catch quotas, are seen to be the best solution to minimize this problem. However, these mechanisms can also reinforce the practices of blue grabbing. In the case of New Brunswick, Canada, it was found that the privatization of spaces in the ocean has had an impact on the marginalization of small-scale fisheries (Knott & Neis, 2017). Due to limited capital to enter and remain in the market, small-scale producers and their communities are controlled by large global companies that are vertically integrated.

These cases show that the implementation of the blue economy might be contra-productive and tends to raise other issues in the ocean, including blue grabbing. These also call for a systematic inquiry in Indonesia – one of the countries with the largest sea area.

Methodology

This study employed document analysis. Document analysis is a qualitative research method that is used to systematically review or evaluate documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) materials, in order to draw meaning, acquire understanding, and develop empirical knowledge in social enquiries, in particular qualitative case studies (Bowen, 2009; Yin Robert, 1994). The documents used in this study included published reports, books,

journal articles, and media outputs. Meanwhile, the systematic steps conducted in the process of discovering insights relevant to the research problem in this study consisted of finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data contained in the documents (Bowen, 2009, p. 28).

Blue Economy and Blue Grabbing in the Case of Indonesia

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world, with two-thirds of the territory of this country is the ocean. This country covers about 1,916,862 km² of land-area, which is spread over 16,056 islands and 5.8 million km² of sea-area, including 2.55 million km² of Exclusive Economic Zone (Statistics Indonesia, 2019). Its ocean contains tremendous living and non-living resources. For instance, the total number of aquatic species in this country's ocean is 16,500 or equal to 27.2 percent of all flora and fauna species in the world (Sari and Muslimah, 2020, p. 2). Meanwhile, the total area of mangrove forests in Indonesia is 4,357,463.90 hectares or around 26-29 percent of the global mangrove forest cover (Hamilton & Casey, 2016). These abundant resources make potential fisheries production in Indonesia could reach 65 million tons per year and up to 30 percent of the world's fishery product needs could be supplied by this country (BKPM, 2018). The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has also documented that the economic activities in marine sectors in this country have contributed 20 percent of its GDP (EIU, 2015). With all these points in mind, it is evident that the ocean is of the utmost importance for Indonesia. Nonetheless, similar with most countries, the marine environment in Indonesia is also pressured,

in particular by the risks of climate change, illegal fishing and overfishing, and marine debris issue, especially plastic waste (Sari & Muslimah, 2020). This imposes an obligation for the Indonesian government and related stakeholders to protect the ocean while utilizing the abundant marine resources through the blue economy.

Blue economy has been acknowledged in Indonesia, together with its emergence in the Rio +20 conference. In the conference, the former President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, delivered his speech under the title of “Moving towards sustainability: together we must create the future we want” and emphasised that blue economy – a new, sustainable approach in governing the ocean – is prominent for countries, including Indonesia (Rani & Cahyasari, 2015). This is because the blue economy is considered as a model that can assist national marine economic development integrated with mainland economic activities. It can also be employed to promote the principles of social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic growth simultaneously.

Indonesia continues to show its commitment through the collaboration with international communities in mainstreaming and developing blue economy. Following the Rio +20 conference, Indonesia has been involved in various conferences or summits discussing the blue economy, such as the 2013 Asia Conference on Ocean, Food Security and Blue Growth in Bali, the First Blue Economy Summit of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in 2013 in Abu Dhabi, the 8th World Blue Economy Conference in 2013 in Madrid, and the Global Ocean Action Summit in 2014 in the Hague (Rani and Cahyasari, 2015, p. 1919).

Indonesia is also the member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) which is “a dynamic inter-governmental organization aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region through its 22 Member States and 10 Dialogue Partners” (IORA, 2020). This organization was established in 1997 with one of its special focus areas is the blue economy. In the period 2015 to 2017, Indonesia became the IORA chair. During its chairmanship, Indonesia hosted the Second Ministerial Blue Economy Conference on Financing the Blue Economy on 8-10 May 2017 in Jakarta and succeeded to strengthen blue economy implementation through the Jakarta Declaration, mainly covering the issue of financing blue economy (IORA, 2017). All these involvements reveal that Indonesia has shown concerns and concrete efforts among global actors in developing blue economy.

To display its commitment within its territory, various regulation followed by key policies has been issued in Indonesia. For instance, through Law Number 32 of 2014 on Marine, article 14, it is issued that “State government and local government in accordance with the authority conduct marine management for the greatest prosperity of the people through the utilisation and development of marine resources with the blue economic principles”. This article also means that Indonesia places great interest in the blue economy and involves various actors, including at the local levels, to utilise the blue economy as the model in the development. Another prominent regulation is the Presidential Regulation No. 16 of 2017 concerning Indonesian Ocean Policy which was signed by the current President, Joko Widodo, on February 20, 2017 which

serves as the guidelines for ocean policies in Indonesia. The stipulation of such regulations implies that Indonesia has been acknowledging the important role of the blue economy in improving its policy and institutional capacity in governing the ocean.

Many maritime-related policies and programs across different levels of government integrating three pillars of the blue economy – growth, equity, and sustainability – in the ocean development in Indonesia have also been conducted. As an example, in order to boost domestic and foreign investment, the government simplifies licensing services for investors (IEBN, 2017, p. 33). Furthermore, to promote sustainability at the ocean, some of the key policies conducted at the national level are the banning on trade of undersized and berried crustaceans, the banning on using seine net and trawls, the banning on fishing in tuna breeding and spawning ground, and the banning on destructive fishing methods (Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, n.d.). At the local level, many local governments also conduct notable policies. The recent examples are the development of community-based waste management and alternative livelihood programs in Semarang; mangrove rehabilitation, conservation and ecotourism in a 168-hectare area in Tangerang; and coastal forest rehabilitation, urban greening and city park development in Surabaya (PEMSEA, 2020, p. 13). Meanwhile, to protect and empower traditional, small-scale fishermen and their communities, the government provide “insurance programs, ship assistance, fishing gear, means of cold chain systems, training, counselling,

science and technology innovation, and also build Integrated Marine and Fisheries Center on the outer islands, and establish cooperation to access capital, including providing alternatives in the transfer program of ‘*cantrang*’ fishing gear¹” (Ayu, 2018, p. 112).

Despite having shown various efforts to promote the blue economy in the Indonesian marine area, there is a ‘homework’ for the government and related stakeholders to be finished. Similar to most countries, the grabbing of resources and spaces in the ocean is also the case in this country. Blue grabbing occurs primarily through policies and practices that restrict, enclose, or otherwise privatize the access and control of resources and spaces in the marine and coastal areas from traditional, small-scale fishers and coastal communities (Kamim, 2020, p. 109). It is also claimed that the enclosure of resources and spaces in the case of Indonesia is commonly led by the rationales of providing incentives for investment – particularly ports, tourism, mining, capital-intensive large-scale aquaculture and reclamation projects – and recovering the environmental destruction (Josse et al., 2018). With the availability of access and control in the ocean, investors might be encouraged to do business so that the economy of Indonesia might be growing faster, and more jobs might be created. The projects are also believed to have an impact on environmental recovery. By establishing marine spatial planning, as an example, the tragedy of the commons would be minimalized. That is, with the restriction of the ocean spaces as the common-property areas combined with the banning of

¹ An active fishing gear that can reach the seabed, when operated.

destructive fishing methods, an efficient sustained yield might be implemented.

There is a piece of evidence to suggest that sound narratives have been developed to justify the projects. For instance, by utilizing the tentative framework of Bennett, Govan and Satterfield (2015), Kamim (2020) examined the reclamation project spreads across regions in Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Bali, Manado, Banten, Madura, and Ternate. In Bali, it is reported that investors insisted that transferring ownership of the coastal areas to their hands would address the problems of garbage around mangrove forests and abrasion on Pudut Island because they would use 'advanced technology' to fix the environmental degradation. Meanwhile, in Jakarta, it is also claimed that the reclamation project in North Jakarta which will be assigned for the expansion of the recreational park of Dunia Fantasi covering an area of \pm 35 hectares and Taman Impian Ancol Timur covering an area of \pm 120 hectares, and the development of the Prophet Muhammad museum, would expand the tourism market (KIARA, 2020). This, therefore, would increase job opportunities and promote domestic economic growth. Moreover, these projects are also believed to improve the environmental recovery as the mud sediment at the North Jakarta coastal area created by annual floods would be dredged to be used in such projects.

Nevertheless, it also found that among marine and coastal development plans, many of them often result in contra-productive results. Instead of expanding job opportunities for the greater numbers and addressing environmental issues, these projects often pay little attention to adverse environmental impacts and excluding small actors from the development processes.

Even, in some cases, the projects also increased the scale of the conflict between the actors involved. In Jakarta Bay, for example, Koto found that the reclamation project creates shoreline shifts, blocks river estuaries, hampers water purification, worsens pollution, and changes water systems from rivers to the ocean (2012). Meanwhile, in Manado, it is reported that the project leads to the losses of the fishing area of the small fishermen as well as the moorings of the boats and the uprooting of the bonds of living space and the identity of coastal communities with the ocean (Piri, 2020). This is also the case in North Kalimantan (Josse et al., 2018). Coal mining and oil exploration produce excessive pollution that destroys the fishing grounds of traditional fishermen. The projects also increase the tension within communities, often resulting in open conflicts.

A way forward

Up to this point, it is evident that the ocean is an area having an important role in supporting human beings globally. But, along with the implementation of blue economy, the ocean has been converted into an area where competitions among and conflicts of interests of various actors that intersect often occur in the form of blue grabbing. These have been marked with unequal powers among actors, in which those with fewer powers cannot get sufficient control and access to the ocean. On the contrary, those having more powers can easily access and control the ocean to maximize their utilities. Thus, the central role of the government and related stakeholders in ocean governance is to ensure that there are only a few or even no one 'left behind'. Everyone should equally get access and control to the ocean and gain

equal economic, social, and environmental benefits produced by it. In the case of Indonesia, there are three policy implications that need to be done suggested in this study.

First is involving more small actors into policy-making processes. One of the main issues that are indicated to foster the practice of blue grabbing is the lack of involvement of small actors in the decision-making processes. Small-scale fishermen are actors who really depend on their livelihoods from resources and spaces in the ocean so that their life might be hit extremely hard when the resources and spaces are restricted or taken from them. In many cases, representatives of small-scale fishers are given a marginal role. As occurs in the case of North Kalimantan, “there is neither participation by, nor consultation of, local communities in the decision-making process” (Josse et al., 2018, p. 14). They also noted that the *Rembug Rakyat Laut* (Ocean’s People Conference), a counter-summit of the 2018 Our Ocean Conference was conducted to raise the voices of traditional, small fishers. Thus, more engagement of small actors in policy-making processes is crucial. In that way, a win-win solution in allocating the marine and coastal resources and spaces might be gained for all. In this regards, production might be increased without losing more biodiversity. Meanwhile, more actors, in particular the small one, might also have the willingness to stay at the ocean market.

Another recommendation is preparing job transition. This needs to be done when the government is unable to avoid the construction of the projects. With reduced access to and control over resources and spaces in the ocean as a consequence of the development of the projects, such as reclamation and conservation, and the

limited ability of small actors, in particular the traditional, small scale fishermen, to remain in the marine market, the government needs to identify and prepare properly what jobs that could accommodate them after shifting from previous jobs. Recycling waste or processing fish production waste to be animal foods, for example, could be the alternative jobs for the former fishermen who are affected by the projects. These jobs would fend the former fishermen and produce zero waste in the marine and coastal areas simultaneously. In doing so, in advance, the government needs to prepare adequate supporting infrastructure as well as technology and information and needs to transfer skills and knowledge to them. With all these aspects in hand, the fishermen would prepare to shift to and remain at the new jobs because they could have low production costs and sell their products or services at competitive prices.

The third is mainstreaming population policy into the blue economy. The current policy mix conducted by the government, indeed, is expected to make the implementation of the blue economy in Indonesia more robust. However, these policies tend to resolve the symptoms of the existing problem. Thus, the government also needs to consider integrating the population factor in addressing the blue grabbing issue. With a relatively high population growth rate, Indonesia’s population would continue to increase to be 321 million by the end of this century (UN, 2019). As a result, the burden on the ocean – as a new front for energy and protein – would also escalate (Crist et al., 2017). In other words, the carrying capacity of the marine and coastal environment in the future would be more pressured than before. This is exacerbated by the limited

government's fiscal space to ensure inclusive growth for all. Therefore, to minimize the practices of blue grabbing, including the increasing conflicts over access and control over the ocean between small and large actors, the government needs to solve its main problem which is the rapid population growth. By controlling the population growth – assuming other aspects have been handled properly – environmental burdens at the ocean would be lowered. Controlled population growth might balance the demand for resources and living space at the ocean. Likewise, the government would have more fiscal spaces to increase the capacity of more small fishermen so that they could compete with big actors in the ocean. This makes the competition for resources and spaces in the ocean, which often results in the marginalization of small fishermen, reduced in the future.

Conclusion

Blue economy has been suggested as a new paradigm to steward the ocean since it has recently become a new global economic frontier. Nonetheless, it has been recorded globally that the threats of blue

grabbing have risen amid the implementation of this new paradigm. The case of Indonesia confirms that the acknowledgement of the blue economy paradigm has led to a better design of policies in governing the ocean. It has also been found, however, that despite the blue economy having been employed to promote economic, social, and ecological benefits for all, a threat in the form of blue grabbing still exists in this country. Some actors in the ocean are still left behind due to their small powers when confronting with the other, having more power. It is therefore essential for the government and related stakeholders to put more efforts in addressing the threat by means of engaging more small actors into policy-making processes, preparing job transition for those impacted by marine and coastal development plans, and mainstreaming population policy into the blue economy. In those ways, everyone involved in the ocean might equally get opportunities to access and control the ocean and to further obtain equal economic, social, and environmental benefits generated by the ocean.

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