

ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ECOLOGICAL BEHAVIOR

by Raja Oloan Tumanggor

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ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ECOLOGICAL BEHAVIOR

Raja Oloan Tumanggor^{1*}, Agoes Dariyo² & Slamet Subekti³

¹Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta
Email: rajat@fpsi.untar.ac.id

²Faculty of Psychology, Tarumanagara University, Jakarta
Email: agoesd@fpsi.untar.ac.id

³Department of History, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Diponegoro University, Semarang

*Corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

The problem of environmental pollution that occurs today cannot be separated from human behavior in dealing with the natural (ecological) environment. In environmental ethics theory, there are three main streams that underlie human ecological behavior, namely human-centered behavior (anthropocentrism), centered on living things (biocentrism) and environment-centered (ecocentrism). Anthropocentrism holds that human interests are the highest in relation to the universe. While biocentrism views humans as part of living things and have interdependence with each other. So nature has value in itself. Meanwhile, ecocentrism places the entire ecological community as the center of ethics. In the view of ecocentrism all living and non-living things are related to each other. By using descriptive qualitative methods through the literature (library) will be explored what arguments underlie each of these streams and their impact on human behavior on the environment. Then see what are the weaknesses of each stream and the efforts that must be made to improve human ecological behavior in the future.

Keywords: Ethical foundation, ecology, behavior

1. PREFACE

Various problems in the environmental field such as air, water and soil pollution cannot be separated from human behavior itself.[1] Humans think that everything on this earth can be used for their own needs. As a result they exploit the wealth of the universe to improve their welfare. However, overexploitation of nature actually results in the destruction and destruction of the universe. If the universe is damaged and destroyed, of course it will result in the destruction of humans themselves.

According to the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) measurement in 2018, Indonesia has a value of 46.92, which is 133 out of 180 countries. This indicates that Indonesia's environmental quality is relatively low compared to other Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, etc.[2] So, according to Naes, to overcome the problem of environmental damage, it is necessary to change the perspective on the environment through changes in new lifestyles or patterns. This means that it is necessary to change human behavior towards the environment (ecological behavior). Ecological behavior is an individual's effort to maintain the environment and minimize activities that can have a negative impact on the environment.[3]

To be able to make changes in ecological behavior cannot be separated from one's concept and understanding of the environment itself. This understanding is also related to the ethical foundation that a person holds for his environment. In environmental ethics theory, there are three major schools of thought in viewing the environment, namely those that place humans as the center of the universe (anthropocentrism), those that view living things as having value in

themselves (biocentrism) and those that view the entire ecological community, both biotic and abiotic, as the most important element in environmental ethics (ecocentrism).

The question to be answered is what is the ethical basis that underlies human ecological behavior? For this reason, the definition of ecological behavior will first be explained. Then described what is meant by ethics and environmental ethics (ecological) as well as various theories of ecological ethics. From these various theories of environmental ethics, we want to analyze which schools of ecological ethics need to be developed so that qualified and responsible ecological behavior can be formed.

This view of ecological ethics becomes the basis for humans in regulating and managing their ecological behavior. Thus, this study aims to explore the ethical foundations that need to be considered in ecological behavior.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses a descriptive qualitative method by analyzing the literature on environmental ethics theories, especially ecological behavior. First, the basic understanding of ecological behavior from an etymological and historical perspective is explored. Then traced various dominant theories in environmental ethics. The existence of various environmental ethical theories such as anthropocentric, biocentric and ecocentric arises because of different perspectives and bases on the environment (universe).

After analyzing the notion of ecological behavior from the historical aspect and its theoretical background, the similarities and differences between each environmental ethics theory are sought. By exploring the ethical basis of ecological behavior, people will be helped to more easily change their behavior towards the environment in accordance with environmental ethics theory centered on life and the universe.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of ecological behavior

Researchers use various terms to describe human behavior towards their natural environment. Dunlap & Van Liere, for example, use the term environmental behavior. While Hiner et al. used responsible environmental behavior. Stern uses environmentally significant behavior, while Kaiser & Fuhrer[4] popularizes ecological behavior. In this study, the author uses the term ecological behavior because the term ecological is closer to behavior, while environmental usually refers to attitude. [5]

Ecological behavior is an individual's effort to maintain the environment and minimize activities that can have a negative impact on the environment.[6] The ecological behavior includes behavior to minimize waste, environmentally friendly mobility and transportation, recycling, social behavior that cares about the environment, and efficient use of energy. The factors that influence ecological behavior are recognized to be quite diverse, complex and not always consistent between individuals.[7] According to Scannel & Gifford [8] ecological behavior can depend on knowledge about the environment, values, attitudes, perceived locus of control, personal and social norms, extrinsic motivation, age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, religion, and geographic area. . Meanwhile, according to Putra [9] there are two factors that influence ecological behavior, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors

include knowledge, attitudes and values. Meanwhile, external factors include economic status and available infrastructure.

To explain how ecological behavior operates, it is worth paying attention to Kollmus and Agyeman's [10] model of ecological behavior as a theoretical framework. First, Kollmus and Agyeman analyze the factors that have positive and negative influences on ecological behavior. These factors include demographics, internal factors (motivation, knowledge, awareness, values, attitudes, emotions, locus of control, responsibilities, and priorities) and external factors (institutions, economy, social and culture). Second, all of these factors combine to explain the complexity of the things that make up ecological behavior. These various factors influence each other to form ecological behavior.

One of the internal factors that influence ecological behavior is a person's values and morals, including ecological ethics.

Ecological ethics

Before discussing the notion of ecological ethics, it is necessary to first explain the meaning of ethics. Ethics is etymologically derived from the Greek *ethos* (plural *ta etha*) which means customs or habits. In this context, ethics is related to a good way of life. So from principle ethics is understood as a teaching that contains rules about how humans should live. While ecology is etymologically derived from the Greek *oikos* (house or habitat) and *logos* (science). So ecology is a branch of biology that deals with the relationship between living things and other living things and the surrounding environment. In the context of environmental science, ecology is also understood as a basic science to understand relationships in the environment.[11] From the explanation of ethics and ecology, then ecological ethics is understood as an ethical school that reviews how the principles that must be held or adhered to by humans in managing the law/interaction with the universe (the environment).

There are various theories of ecological ethics that develop in philosophical discourse. First, anthropocentrism ethics is an ecological ethic that views humans as the center of the universe system. Humans and their interests are seen as the highest value. Everything else has meaning insofar as it serves human interests. Therefore, nature is seen as an object and a means of achieving and fulfilling human needs.

Anthropocentrism is a theory of environmental ethics that sees humans as the center of the universe system. Humans and their interests are considered to be the most decisive in the order of ecosystems and in the policies taken in relation to nature, either directly or indirectly. Humans and their interests are of the highest value. Only humans have value and get attention. Everything else in this universe will only get value and attention insofar as it supports human interests. Therefore, nature is seen only as an object, a tool and a means to fulfill human needs and interests. Nature is a tool for the achievement of human goals. Nature has no value in itself.

Anthropocentrism is also seen as a philosophical theory which says that moral values and principles only apply to humans, and that human needs and interests have the highest and most important value. For anthropocentrism theory, ethics only applies to humans. Therefore, all demands regarding the need for human moral obligations and responsibilities towards the environment are considered as excessive, irrelevant and inappropriate demands. Even if such a claim makes sense, it is only in an indirect sense, namely as the fulfillment of human moral obligations and responsibilities towards others. This means that human moral obligations and

responsibilities towards the environment are in the interest of fellow human beings. Obligations and responsibilities towards nature are only the embodiment of moral obligations and responsibilities towards fellow human beings. It is not an embodiment of human moral obligations and responsibilities towards nature itself.[12]

Besides being anthropocentric, this ethic is very instrumentalistic, in the sense that the pattern of human and natural relations is seen only in instrumental relations. Nature is considered as a tool for human interests. Even if humans have a caring attitude towards nature, it is solely done to ensure the needs of human life, not because of the consideration that nature has value in itself so it deserves to be protected. Conversely, if nature itself is not useful for human interests, nature will be ignored. In that sense, anthropocentrism is also referred to as teleological ethics because it bases moral considerations on the consequences of these actions for human interests. A good policy and action in relation to the environment will be considered good if it has a beneficial impact on human interests. Conservation, for example, is only taken seriously to the extent that it can be proven to have a beneficial impact on human interests, especially economic interests.[13]

This kind of theory is also selfish, because it only prioritizes human interests. The interests of other living beings, as well as the universe as a whole, do not become human moral considerations. Even if it gets moral considerations, once again, those considerations are selfish: for the sake of human interests.

Because of its instrumentalistic and egoistic characteristics, this theory is considered a shallow and narrow environmental ethic. Compared to the other two theories, biocentrism and ecocentrism, this ethic is too narrow and shallow in looking at the whole ecosystem, including humans and their place in the universe.

So far, the theory has been accused of being one of the causes of the environmental crisis we are experiencing today. The environmental crisis is considered to occur because of human behavior which is influenced by an anthropocentric perspective. This anthropocentric perspective causes humans to exploit and deplete the universe in order to fulfill their interests and needs, without paying enough attention to the preservation of nature.

This pattern of exploitative, destructive and unconcerned behavior towards nature is considered rooted in a perspective that only cares about human interests. This perspective gives birth to greedy and greedy attitudes and behaviors that cause humans to take all their needs from nature without considering its sustainability, because nature is seen only for the benefit of humans. Humans can do anything to nature, as long as it doesn't harm human interests.

Anthropocentrism is an ethical theory that is quite controversial and has caused heated debates among many philosophers to this day. On the one hand, anthropocentrism is accused of being the root cause of the environmental crisis until now. On the other hand, anthropocentrism is also defended, firstly, because the validity of the argument is difficult to dispute, and because of this, it is not anthropocentrism itself that is wrong, but excessive anthropocentrism. Second, anthropocentrism offers an environmental ethic that has a strong appeal to encourage humans to protect the environment.

In relation to the environmental ethics it offers, there are several weaknesses that need to be mentioned here. First, this ethical model ignores environmental issues that do not directly touch human interests. So, humans, for example, will continue to throw waste into rivers or cut down

trees to meet their needs as long as there are no certain humans who are negatively affected. Second, human interests are always changing and in varying degrees. Consequently, as far as human interests are concerned, nature will be seriously considered from a moral point of view. On the other hand, as far as human interests are not concerned, it will be ignored.

Second, the ethics of biocentrism. According to the view of biocentrism, it is not true that only humans have values. Nature also has value, apart from human interests. According to this theory, every life and living thing has value and value in itself, so that it deserves treatment, consideration and moral care. Nature also needs to be treated morally, regardless of whether she is of value to humans or not. Because it is valuable in itself, life must be protected. Just like humans, the same principle applies to living things. So the land and the earth in itself have moral value because it provides many benefits for life. So all living things in this universe have moral values, both human and non-human. Ethics applies not only to humans, but also to every biotic community. [14]

Biocentrism is a view that places nature as having value in itself, independent of human interests. Thus, biocentrism rejects the theory of anthropocentrism which states that only humans have value in themselves. The theory of biocentrism holds that living things are not just humans. There are many things and kinds of living things that have life. However, the complicated thing about biocentrism is in the way humans respond to the question: "what is life?" . The view of biocentrism bases morality on the nobility of life, whether in humans or in living creatures. Because what is the center of attention and wants to be defended in this theory is life, then morally applies the principle that every life on this earth has the same moral value, so it must be protected and saved.

Therefore, the life of every living creature deserves to be taken seriously in every moral decision and action, even apart from the consideration of profit and loss for human interests. Environmental ethics Biocentrism is an environmental ethic that emphasizes life as a moral standard. The interest in life must be used as a moral standard. So that it is not only humans and animals that must be morally respected but also plants. Therefore, plants and animals can be morally harmed and/or benefited in the process of struggle for their own lives, such as growing and reproducing.

Biocentrism emphasizes the obligation to nature stems from the consideration that life is something of value, both human life and other species on this earth. The moral principles or commands that apply here can be written as follows: "It is a morally good thing that we maintain and promote life, on the other hand, it is bad if we destroy life".

Biocentrism sees nature and all its contents as having value and value in themselves. Nature has value precisely because there is life in it. Obligations to nature do not have to be related to obligations to fellow human beings. Obligations and responsibilities towards nature are solely based on the moral consideration that all species in the universe have value on the basis that they have their own life, which must be respected and protected.

Biocentrism views humans as biological beings who are the same as other biological creatures. Humans are seen as just one part of the whole life on earth, and not the center of the entire universe. So, biologically, humans are no different from other living things.

Humans can use nature for their own purposes, but they are still bound by the responsibility not to sacrifice the integrity, stability and beauty of other living things. Moral actors are humans because they have the ability to act morally, in the form of reason and freedom. So only humans bear the moral obligation and responsibility for their choices and actions. On the other hand, moral subjects are creatures that can be treated well or badly, and that means all living things, including humans. Thus all moral actors are also moral subjects, but not all moral subjects are moral actors, where moral actors have obligations and responsibilities towards them.

The theory of biocentrism must be well understood, especially regarding human life and other living things on this earth. This theory gives equal weight and moral considerations to all living things. Here it is demanded that nature and all life contained in it must be included in moral considerations and concerns. Humans do not sacrifice other lives for granted on the basis of the understanding that nature and everything in it has no value in itself. Biocentrism glorifies the value of life that exists in creation, so that the moral community can no longer be limited to the human sphere. Includes nature as a creation as a living community (biotic community).

The essence of biocentrism is that every creation has intrinsic value and its existence has moral relevance. Every creation (living being) deserves moral concern and responsibility because life is the essence of moral concern. The prevailing moral principle is "to maintain and maintain life is morally good, while destroying and destroying life is morally evil"[15]

Third, the ethic of ecocentrism, which focuses ethics on ecological communities, both living and non-living. According to ecocentrism, living things and abiotic objects are related to each other. So the moral responsibility is not only on living things, but on all ecological realities. One version of ecocentrism is deep ecology introduced by the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, who argues that the new ethic is no longer centered on humans, but on all living things. What is emphasized is that humans are no longer the center of the moral world. So the center of deep ecology is all species including non-human species. Through deep ecology which is centered on the long term, a practical ethic will be developed as a movement.

Ecocentrism is a continuation of the environmental ethical theory of biocentrism (this theory considers every life and living thing to have value and worth in itself). In addition, ecocentrism is often confused with biocentrism, because there are many similarities between the two theories. Both of these theories break the perspective of anthropocentrism (the theory of environmental ethics that views humans as the center of the universe system) which limits the application of ethics to the human community. Both extend ethical applicability to include the wider community. In biocentrism, ethics is extended to include the biocentrism community.

Meanwhile, in ecocentrism, ethics is extended to include the entire ecological community. So different from biocentrism which only focuses ethics on biocentrism, on life as a whole, ecocentrism actually focuses ethics on the entire ecological community, both living and non-living. Ecologically, living things and other abiotic objects are related to each other.

There are several principles adopted by Deep Ecology, including biospheric egalitarianism – in principle, namely the recognition that all organisms and living things are members of the same status of a related whole so that they have the same dignity. This acknowledgment shows respect for all ways and forms of life in the universe. This involves an acknowledgment and respect for the “equal right to life and development”, which applies not only to all living things but also to non-living things.

With this principle at the same time want to say that the value of an object in the universe is not only related to human needs or interests. This principle refers to the recognition that everything in the universe should be valued because it has value in itself. Humans are only one form of life which, in principle, has the same position in the ecological order as all other forms of life. That all forms of life have their own uniqueness, including humans, actually enrich life and it is not intended that one is higher and of value so that it dominates the other.[16]

Ethical foundations of ecological behavior

In this section, we will look at the impact of the principles of ecological ethics on ecological behavior. The first is anthropocentrism ethics. This ethical theory is egoistic which emphasizes human needs and is instrumentalistic in character. This kind of ethics is indeed too narrow and shallow in looking at the whole universe. Anthropocentric theory is accused of being the cause of all environmental crises. The anthropocentric human perspective makes humans exploit the universe. Humans become greedy and greedy in managing nature. Humans are understood as rulers over nature and can do anything to the universe.

The ethics of anthropocentrism is a Western worldview that originated from Aristotle to modern philosophers. There are two fundamental faults with this school. First, humans are understood as social beings and develop thanks to interactions with their social communities. Humans are not seen as ecological creatures, whose identity is also determined by the universe. Second, ethics applies only to the human community. Only humans are seen as moral actors, namely those who can act morally based on reason and free will.

The weakness of the anthropocentrism ethical perspective is corrected by biocentrism ethics and ecocentrism ethics. For biocentrism and ecocentrism, humans are not only seen as social beings, but also biological and ecological creatures. Humans can develop as whole beings, not only in social communities, but also in ecological communities. It means a creature whose life depends on all other life in this universe.

Biocentrism and ecocentrism broaden the ethical understanding that considers biotic and ecological communities as moral communities. Ethics applies to all living things. Moral demands apply to all ecological communities. Humans are required to have moral obligations and responsibilities towards all living things in the universe. So the concept of natural rights becomes commonplace. Biologically and ecologically all life and entities on earth have the same moral status and must be respected and protected.

Second, the ethics of biocentrism. Because life is the center of attention and is defended by biocentrism, then morally the principle applies that every life on this earth has the same moral value, so it must be protected. Every creature, both human and non-human, has the same moral values. Biocentrism is also known as a life-centered environmental ethic. One of the ethical figures of biocentrism is Albert Schweitzer who argues that a truly moral person is one who submits to the urge to help life.

The basic beliefs of biocentrism are (1) humans are members of the community of life on earth, (2) the human species along with other species are interdependent parts. (3) all organisms are the center of life which has its own purpose. (4) humans in themselves are not superior to other living things.

Third, the ethics of ecocentrism. As a continuation of biocentrism, people often equate biocentrism with ecocentrism. Both of these theories break the perspective of anthropocentrism which limits the application of ethics only to the human community. Deep ecology as a version of ecocentrism is also known as ecosophy. Ecosophy is understood as the wisdom of regulating life in harmony with nature as a household in a broad sense. In the perspective of ecosophy, the environment is not just a science, but a wisdom, a way of life that is in harmony with nature. In addition, deep ecology as ecosophy is also seen as a normative theory, because it provides certain norms for human behavior in dealing with nature.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There are various ethical foundations of ecological behavior, ranging from anthropocentrism, biocentrism to ecocentrism. Each stream has its own advantages and disadvantages. What is clear is that the flow of anthropocentrism which focuses on human interests is corrected by ecocentrism which sees that the moral foundation of human ecological behavior is the natural environment itself. This means that environmental care is not just an activity for the welfare and interests of humans, but it becomes wisdom and a way of life that is in harmony with nature for the good of nature itself. This study and ethical reflection of ecological behavior is actually not just a discourse, but needs to be realized in everyday practical behavior. For further research, it is necessary to do quantitatively, for example which ethical basis is more dominant in influencing the ecological behavior of certain community groups.

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