



## Rethinking the Green Economy in Flores: A Dialectical Approach between Deep Ecology of Spinozism and *Barong Wae* Tradition of the Manggaraian People

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**Abstract:** In recent years, Flores has become a frontier due to government policies that exploit living space, culture, and the rights of local communities. It represents the irony of the government's policy called the Green Economy as a model of development that emphasizes common prosperity without destroying the environment and culture. This research aims to respond further to this issue by proposing a dialectic between the deep ecology of Spinozism and the Barong Wae ritual of the Manggaraian people. The method used in this research is a dialectic approach of the Principle of Expression (critical study of literature) and the Principle of Differentiation (interview key informants). This research indicates that the normative concept of the green economy is inadequate for the sustainability of local communities in Flores. It requires a radical transformation in the human paradigm of nature, creating a green cognitive, followed by green affective, and green psychomotor. The dialectic between the deep ecology of Spinoza and the Barong Wae ritual can encourage this radical paradigm by providing some key concepts, including the intrinsic values of all entities, biosphere egalitarianism, self-realization, and ecological communitarianism. It can be concluded that talking about the green economy is not only about pro-people and pro-profit, but especially pro-ecology.

**Keywords:** Deep Ecology, Spinozism, Barong Wae, Green Economy, Ecological Communitarianism

### Introduction

Scientists have warned that climate change, biodiversity loss, changes in atmospheric composition, land degradation, water scarcity, and pollution are caused by the massive exploitation of natural resources.<sup>1</sup> The scarcity of natural resources and global economic inequality is an issue of great

<sup>1</sup> Katherine Calvin et al., "IPCC, 2023: Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (Eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland," First (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), July 25, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647>.

concern today. As a response, three decades ago, postindustrial economic discourse discovered a theory called the Green Economy. The green economy is a global concept of economic equality, collective prosperity, and sustainable development, by minimizing environmental damage.<sup>2</sup> A green economy contains five main principles, namely increasing social and economic welfare for the entire community, equality between generations, economic development based on ecological concern, increasing consumption and sustainable production, and developing a strong and accountable system.<sup>3</sup> In Indonesia, this concept is translated into a sustainable economy, including creating new jobs, internalizing environmental costs, and reducing poverty. Its orientation is for Indonesia to get out of the “middle-income trap”, and to become a welfare state by the vision of a golden Indonesia in 2045 and the vision of being free of carbon emissions in Indonesia in 2060.<sup>4</sup>

However, development practices in Indonesia are opposite to the principles and goals of the green economy. In recent years, Indonesia's islands, including Flores, have been transformed into a frontier. Here, “frontier” refers to a conflict zone where valuable resources are contested, with the state supporting corporations and extractive industries.<sup>5</sup> Robbins states that resource exploitation causes marginalization, degradation, control, hegemony, conflict, exclusion, and identity crisis issues.<sup>6</sup> These activities turn areas into zones of privilege, war, and death, with increased sales of extracted products fueling the conflict. Top-down and paternalistic development projects that are indifferent towards local wisdom in the fields of energy, mining, and tourism have triggered environmental destruction, exploitation of local communities' living spaces, and increased socio-economic inequality along with the accumulation of wealth by the elites.<sup>7</sup> Flores is now controlled by a new kind of colonialism.

The following cases demonstrate the government's anti-green economy policy in Flores: The conversion of 400 hectares of forest for tourism threatens the wells and the living space of Bowosie local communities; the geothermal project policy in Kampung Sano, West Manggarai, damages the ecosystem and culture of indigenous community; the policy of building a cement factory in East Luwuk Manggarai undermines the environment and the wells of local communities; the policy of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) to transform the Komodo National Park from conservation area into a tourism, thereby threatening the existence of indigenous community in Komodo Island; and the policy of building the Lambo reservoir that covered 617 hectares of land of three traditional communities in Rendu village, Nagekeo Regency, including gardens, traditional ritual sites, and cemeteries. Forest Watch Indonesia adds to the data of massive deforestation in Flores. In 2000, Flores Island had 567,232 hectares

<sup>2</sup> Omolade Adeleke and Mbonigaba Josue, “Poverty and Green Economy in South Africa: What Is the Nexus?,” ed. Christian Nsiah, *Cogent Economics & Finance* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 1646847, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322039.2019.1646847>.

<sup>3</sup> Mohamad Heri Hidayattuloh, Azis Nur Bambang, and Amirudin Amirudin, “The Green Economy Concept as Development Strategy of Cempaka Tourism Village toward Sustainable Tourism Development,” *The Indonesian Journal of Planning and Development* 5, no. 1 (February 29, 2020): 30–37, <https://doi.org/10.14710/ijpd.5.1.30-37>.

<sup>4</sup> Muhkamat Anwar, “Green Economy Sebagai Strategi Dalam Menangani Masalah Ekonomi Dan Multilateral,” *Jurnal Pajak dan Keuangan Negara (PKN)* 4, no. 1S (December 17, 2022): 343–56, <https://doi.org/10.31092/jpkn.v4i1S.1905>.

<sup>5</sup> Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2013): 11–40.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Robbins, *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, Third Edition, Critical Introductions to Geography (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Max Regus, “Tambang Dan Perlawanan Rakyat: Studi Kasus Tambang Di Manggarai, NTT,” *Masyarakat Jurnal Sosiologi* 16, no. 1 (January 31, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.7454/MJS.v16i1.1201>.

of primary forest. In 2017, only 185,927 hectares remained. Deforestation is triggered by infrastructure development, including National Strategic Projects. Moreover, the accumulation of wealth and exploitation of natural resources have imprisoned Flores in poverty for a long time.<sup>8</sup> Why does the green economy not have a significant impact on the sustainability of local communities in Flores?

The latest studies on the green economy focused their analysis on the growth of market economies and collective prosperity while avoiding ecological damage. Several studies show how the Green Economy has a significant long-term impact on sustainable development, especially sharing clean energy, reducing CO2 emissions, increasing the human development index, life expectancy, and access to electricity.<sup>9</sup> Other studies show how the green economy can be a tourism strategy to overcome excess consumption, waste, population, and socio-economic inequality; or how the impact of the digital economy or Information Technology on economic growth, CO2 emissions, and income distribution.<sup>10</sup>

Although these studies are important in providing the theory of the relationship between global economic projects and the ecological crisis, they do not provide answers to why development practices in Indonesia are contrary to green economy theory. In addition, these studies still map the green economy as a normative view of the relationship between the economy and nature, so that it does not inspire radical changes in the human paradigm about nature, which is a pivotal element of green economy theory and practice.<sup>11</sup> As a result, these studies cannot reveal the ethical flaws of the normative green economy concept, not only in its aims but also in its anthropocentric moral assumption, namely that nature must be repaired for human welfare, because if nature is damaged, humans are threatened. Therefore, those studies fail to read the complexity of social actor relationships, power structures, and cultural paradigms as some key variables of the green economy concept.<sup>12</sup>

To bridge this theoretical gap, this research will take a different route, namely promoting a dialectic between the concepts of deep ecology, Spinozism, and the *Barong Wae* tradition of the Manggaraian people. This research proposes that the ontology of the relationship between nature and humans needs to be cleansed from the traditional anthropocentric paradigm that is rooted in the modern Cartesian view of the dualism of mind and matter, body and soul, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. The dialectic will encourage radical change at the paradigmatic level, deepening the concept of the green economy and providing the ethical foundation of the green economy project in Flores.

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<sup>8</sup> Emilianus Yakob Sese Tolo, "Akumulasi Melalui Perampasan Dan Kemiskinan Di Flores," *Masyarakat Jurnal Sosiologi* 21, no. 2 (July 25, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.7454/MJS.v21i2.1062>.

<sup>9</sup> Adeleke and Josue, "Poverty and Green Economy in South Africa."

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Imansyah et al., "The Impacts of Digital Economy on Green Economy: The Indonesian Miyazawa Model," *Polish Journal of Environmental Studies* 32, no. 2 (March 14, 2023): 1609–19, <https://doi.org/10.15244/pjoes/159123>.

<sup>11</sup> Alex Guilherme, "Metaphysics as a Basis for Deep Ecology: An Equiry into Spinoza's System," *The Trumpeter* 27, no. 3 (2011): 60–78.

<sup>12</sup> Vitaly Ivlev and Marina Ivleva, "Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Green Economy," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Contemporary Education, Social Sciences and Ecological Studies (CESSES 2018)* (Proceedings of the International Conference on Contemporary Education, Social Sciences and Ecological Studies (CESSES 2018), Moscow, Russia: Atlantis Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.2991/cesses-18.2018.192>.

Deep ecology is concerned with how a person understands nature, experiences the world, and acts.<sup>13</sup> For the proponents of deep ecology, the root of the ecological crisis is a wrong view of human existence and nature. They base their argument on Spinoza's metaphysics of substance, including its three key components: intrinsic value that is everything in nature has value in itself, and the value does not depend on its benefit for humans; biosphere egalitarianism namely the view that all entities in nature, whether they are microbes, cells, animals, forests, humans, etc., have equal value, and exist in the interconnectivity with various components; *Conatus* (self-realization), namely the view that all natural entities strive to maintain their existence and realize their goals.<sup>14</sup> Based on Spinoza's metaphysics of substance, deep ecology proposes the idea of a unifying process that everything on the planet Earth, including humans, is truly an inseparable part of the other components. Therefore, this research finds that the interconnectivity of various modifications of substance and ecological communitarianism is a profound idea of Spinoza's metaphysics for deep ecology.

Furthermore, the *Barong Wae* ritual expresses such interconnectivity and absolute unity between *mbaru gendang* (traditional house), *Lingko* (dry farm land), and *Mori Kraeng* (Creator of all creatures). Some studies indicate that *Barong Wae* is a traditional ritual of Manggarai people to respect water as a source of life, honor the guardian spirits who protect the wells and trees, and worship *Mori Kraeng* as a creator.<sup>15</sup> However, different from these studies, this research holds the view that *Barong Wae* contains a metaphysical ontology about aspects of a single unfolding reality. Furthermore, this research proposes that more than just respect for nature, *Barong Wae* is a form of human recognition of the water or nature as a subject with intrinsic value and rights, but remains part of the human community.

This research used a dialectical method that is commonly used in philosophical investigation and has been employed since Socrates or Hegel to cover and bridge the gap and discrepancy of understandings, constructing a synthesis as a result. By using this method, this research struggles to generate a synthesis of literary studies of Spinoza's works, especially *Ethics Demonstrated Geometric Order*, and field observation and key informant interviews to explore the complexity, heterogeneity, and uniqueness of *Barong Wae* rite. This method is used for some reasons: First, the main problem of the research is how to produce an alternative paradigm of the green economy by comparing the two perspectives. Second, this research aims to reconstruct a holistic paradigm as an answer to the main issue. Third, this research combines a critical-logical study of Spinoza's metaphysics and an interview with some key informants on the meaning of *Barong Wae*. The sources of primary data about the *Barong Wae* ritual were members of the Manggarai speech community represented by seven key informants: Fransiskus Bustan; Romo Inosensius Sutam (a Catholic priest - *Romo* is the Indonesian equivalent of

<sup>13</sup> Johan Dahlbeck and Moa De Lucia Dahlbeck, "The Moral Fallibility of Spinoza's Exemplars: Exploring the Educational Value of Imperfect Models of Human Behavior," *Ethics and Education* 15, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 260–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2020.1731106>.

<sup>14</sup> Sebastian Bender, "Spinoza on the Essences of Singular Things," *Ergo an Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 0 (April 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.2266>.

<sup>15</sup> Erna Mena Niman et al., "KEARIFAN LOKAL DAN UPAYA PELESTARIAN LINGKUNGAN AIR: STUDI ETNOGRAFI MASYARAKAT ADAT MANGGARAI, FLORES, NUSA TENGGARA TIMUR," *Paradigma: Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 13, no. 1 (April 30, 2023): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.17510/paradigma.v13i1.1160>.

“Father”); Romo Wilbrodus Andrea Bisa, OFM; Huber Bogos; Moses Jemparu; Belasius Amin; and Gabriel Gaos.

### Deep Ecology and Spinoza's Metaphysics

Aldo Leopold in *The Land Ethics* explains that the space of ethics needs to be expanded from interpersonal and social relations to individual relations with the environment, which is called land ethics. For Leopold, land ethics is a rational ethics that evolved from two perspectives. First, a paradigm shift regarding the status of land or the environment from human property to an autonomous entity. It means that the relationship between humans and the environment is not a subject-object or power relationship, but rather a mutual symbiosis. Second, an extension of the meaning of community as an individual's attachment to a social group to an ecosystem. In other words, land ethics enlarged the scope of the community to include non-human components such as soil, water, plants, or collectively, land.<sup>16</sup> The land ethic controls humans' ambition to exploit the environment, inviting humans to cooperate rather than compete.

Land ethics has become a stepping stone for global environmental ethics. However, Leopold didn't answer successfully why the non-human entity must be understood as autonomous and being together in a community with humans. To fill the gap, the proponents of Deep ecology rethought the metaphysics of Spinoza. Deep ecology is a term coined by the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, in a talk in Bucharest.<sup>17</sup> According to Naess, deep ecology is an ecosophy, both a philosophy and an environmental movement, which holds that all creatures have intrinsic value that cannot be manipulated and that humans must reorganize their lives based on this principle. Naess distinguishes between deep ecology and shallow ecology. Shallow ecology is a movement against climate change, pollution, global warming, and natural resource overexploitation, not for the good of the planet's ecosystem, but for the human interest in developed countries' health and welfare.

Shallow ecology is “shallow” not only in its goals but also in its moral assumption, namely that nature must be improved for the sake of human welfare, because if nature is damaged, the human population is threatened. This view is not ecological but anthropocentric because humans become the benchmark of other creatures. According to Naess, the approach of shallow ecology to the environmental crisis is too normative and, therefore, unable to change the human paradigm towards the environment.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, deep ecology proposes deeper paradigms and attitudes towards nature, exploring some key principles, including the principles of diversity, complexity, autonomy, decentralization, and egalitarianism.

Naess provides three main principles of deep ecology. First, deep ecology rejects the human-in-environment image, the view that human beings exist at the core of reality. In contrast, deep ecology recognizes the equal, intrinsic, and constitutive relationship between humans and nature, which means

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<sup>16</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949).

<sup>17</sup> Arne Naess, “Environmental Ethics and Spinoza's Ethics. Comments on Genevieve Lloyd's Article,” *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (1980): 313–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00201748008601911>.

<sup>18</sup> Arne Naess, “The Deep Ecology Movement,” in *Problems of International Justice*, by Steven Luper-foy, ed. Steven Luper-foy, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 144–48, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429303111-9>.

that nature and humans are not two separate entities but one and interdependent. Without nature, human beings cannot survive, but deep ecology objects to the opposite: without humans, nature does not exist. From a deep ecology perspective, nature can survive even if there are no human beings. Nature is more primordial than human beings.

Second, deep ecology develops the principle of biosphere egalitarianism, namely, recognizing the other forms of life. Naess claims that every attempt to objectify nature will make human beings alienated from themselves because nature and humans have an intrinsic unity. This principle was developed based on Spinoza's metaphysics of substance.<sup>19</sup> According to Spinoza, there is only one substance: *Deus sive Natura* (God or nature). Everything is a modification of that substance. Nothing can exist outside of that substance, which means that the diversity and complexity of creations originate from this single substance, and therefore, all things in the world are equal. Naess develops this metaphysics into the principle of biospheric egalitarianism, namely the view that all entities in nature, whether they are microbes, cells, animals, forests, humans, etc., have equal value. Biospheric egalitarianism is concerned with the rights of other species independent of their interactions with humans.

Third, deep ecology emphasizes the principles of diversity and symbiosis that recognize the uniqueness of other entities and support the growth of new forms of life. This principle understands the struggle of life as the ability to cooperate with other biosphere components, not the ability to kill and damage; it is not "Either you or I," but "Live and let live".<sup>20</sup> Naess developed this principle from Spinoza's metaphysics of *conatus* (self-realization), namely the internal ability of each entity to maintain its existence. *Conatus* becomes a source of self-realization and the foundation of the intrinsic value of every creation. In other words, *conatus* is the *elan vital* (power of life) and the right of every component of the biosphere to exist, grow, and reach its goals.

These principles were developed based on Spinoza's metaphysics of inner substance in *Ethics*. Spinoza (1632-1677) was a Dutch modern philosopher, influenced by the rationalism of Descartes. With the idea that all entities are modes of a single substance, God or Nature, Spinoza's monism underlies deep ecology's claim that everything has intrinsic value, so that modern anthropocentrism, which separates subject and object as in Cartesian dualism, must be rejected. God or Nature here has two meanings. The first is ontological, namely that nature is understood to be immanent, complete, and equivalent to God. Contrary to the mechanistic view of early modern philosophy, which saw nature as passive, inert, and inferior to humans, the identification of Nature with God replaces the value of the integrity and sacredness of nature. The second is ethical, namely that intellectual love for God is intellectual love for nature. So, the rational action in *Ethics* is identified as compassion for the environment. For Spinoza, "the rational is the ecological".<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Naess, "The Deep Ecology Movement," in *Problems of International Justice*, by Steven Luper-foy, ed. Steven Luper-Foy, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 144–48, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429303111-9>.

<sup>20</sup> Naufal Kurniawan, Sindi Kania, and Widya Indah Sari, "Ecotheology in Review of Theory of Deep Ecology Arne Naess" 02, no. 01 (2023).

<sup>21</sup> Helen Kopnina et al., "Anthropocentrism: More than Just a Misunderstood Problem," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 31, no. 1 (February 2018): 109–27, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-018-9711-1>.

According to Spinoza, substance is “what is in itself, and conceived through itself.” It means a substance is an independent and isolated reality. The substance is not caused by something else. Spinoza mentioned it *cause sui*, “a self-caused cause.” Rather, everything is a modification of substance. Different from substance, attribute is “what is perceived by the mind as the essence of a substance.” An attribute is the essence or an idea (Plato) that is perceived through the human intellect. Mind and body for Spinoza are not substances (against Descartes) but two kinds of attributes. While the mode is “the way the substance is expressed.” Mode is dependent, plural, and limited. Without substance, the mode does not exist and cannot be known. Humans, water, rocks, trees, animals, etc., are modes. The metaphysics of substance is the foundation of deep ecology's argument that the sustainability of every entity on planet Earth, including humans, depends on its relationship with the biosphere system as a whole.<sup>22</sup>

The main point of Spinoza's metaphysics is the theory that there is only one substance that exists, namely God or Nature, and everything is a modification of that substance. Spinoza solved the problem of dualism in Cartesian philosophy regarding two substances, namely *res cogitans* (mind, subjectivity) and *res extensa* (body, matter). For Spinoza, *res cogitans* and *res extensa* are not substances but attributes. The world is a single substance with these two attributes. From the perspective of *res cogitans*, we call it God, and from the perspective of *res extensa*, we call it nature. Spinoza also explained that substance manifests itself in two forms, namely as an active force called *natura naturans* (nature as producer) and as a creation called *natura naturata* (nature as produced).<sup>23</sup> If reality is an integrated system, and all entities are modifications of substance, then the ontological consequence is that every entity has intrinsic value, so they are egalitarian and connected. That principle is called the “logical monism of Spinoza”, namely, the doctrine that the world as a whole is a single substance so that logically no parts can exist alone. Naess calls this “ecological holism of Spinoza”, namely, an ethical position that considers the entire ecosystem of planet Earth.

The proponents of deep ecology also emphasize Spinoza's argument that because everything is a modification of substance, a substance “has no preference for modification”. Logically, if a substance has a certain preference for modes, then there are modes with high and low preferences. As a consequence, the idea of substance will be trapped in traditional anthropocentrism. Humans will be understood as a superior mode to other entities. On the other hand, if a substance has no preferences, the argument of intrinsic value and biosphere egalitarianism becomes logical. For Spinoza, human society is not superior to nature, and individuals are not divine beings, but merely a mode of God, similar to amoebas, fleas, caterpillars, or frogs. Spinoza rejects modern anthropocentrism, proving the fragility of humans in the universe in his words: “We are but clay in the hands of the potter.”<sup>24</sup>

A substance also does not have a preference for value because, for Spinoza, value is something that only exists from the perspective of modification. A mode gives value to another mode as something that can increase its capacity and *conatus*. Humans, for example, value food or water because these modes

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<sup>22</sup> Benedictus de Spinoza and Dagobert D. Runes, *The Ethics of Spinoza: The Road to Inner Freedom* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> Yitzhak Melamed, *The Building Blocks of Spinoza's Metaphysics*, ed. Michael Della Rocca, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195335828.013.006>.

<sup>24</sup> Spinoza and Runes, *The Ethics of Spinoza*.

are useful for their sustainability. Under a similar view, a virus, for example, COVID-19, might value humans as useful for their self-realization and sustainability. Therefore, Žizek is right that for humans, COVID-19 is a virus, but for nature, COVID-19 is an anti-virus against a virus called a human being.<sup>25</sup> According to the proponents of deep ecology, the statement that viruses, bacteria, or diseases are dangerous is only an understanding from a human perspective. However, from the viewpoint of a substance, viruses, bacteria, and diseases exist for certain rational reasons.

For Spinoza, every event on the planet is good insofar as it is the result of logical provision. That is, every entity tends to defend itself. Something is called evil only if it is caused by external coercion, which means restricting its *conatus*. Confining a wild lion in a cage is evil because it prevents the lion's *conatus* from living in its original habitat.<sup>26</sup> Just as slavery is evil because it restricts individual *conatus* to being free. Someone can only acknowledge this argument if they perceive it from the perspective of a substance as a whole and single reality. Spinoza argued that someone who understands everything *sub specie aeternitatis* will become wise because he/she can see all parts of reality as a whole.

However, the proponents of deep ecology cannot well answer some criticisms. If every entity on the planet Earth has a *conatus* and is connected to the other, then what happens if one *conatus* fights against another? Does it make sense that a wise man let a virus destroy his body because a virus has its *conatus* that must be respected? Wouldn't a selfish *conatus* system that wars against another selfish *conatus* destroy the ecosystem? Proponents of deep ecology argued that every entity on earth exists for specific, rational aims. Nothing that exists is useless. Microorganisms such as microbes, viruses, amoebas, or small entities such as snails, caterpillars, etc., play a role in the development of nature, and without them, natural development would stop. However, this argument presupposes that the universe has its particular *telos*. But for Spinoza, the universe does not have *telos*.

We argue that *conatus* needs to be placed within the principle of interconnectivity because, for Spinoza, a mode cannot be understood without substance as a whole. It means that *conatus* is impossible to negate interconnectivity because if so, the development of nature will stop. For example, if all humans are selfish, then nature is on its way to extinction. Natural extinction also means human extinction because humans depend on nature. Interconnectivity effort as a whole will limit selfish *conatus* like humans from exploiting the environment. It is important to note that for Spinoza, intellectual love (wisdom) is very useful for solving an ethical dilemma between limiting needs and exploiting nature. For example, faced with a dilemma between destroying forests and cutting trees for paper mills, humans can decide on the wisest action, such as cutting wood in another place far from springs or replacing wood with other materials.

For Spinoza, human beings are selfish entities because every human fights to defend themselves and their goals. However, if so, there will be war and slavery, and they would threaten the self-realization or *conatus* of an individual. So, for Spinoza, every individual must learn to live together as one community. In a community, each individual helps the other to realize their self-realization. Under a

<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World* (New York (N.Y.): Polity press, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> Guilherme, "Metaphysics as a Basis for Deep Ecology: An Enquiry into Spinoza's System."



similar logic, we can imagine the interconnection of humans with other entities on this planet. Humans need to change their paradigm that only by learning to live together with other entities, planet Earth will remain developing, which helps human self-realization and the life of future generations. This is the meaning of ecological communitarianism and a metaphysics of the relationship between parts and a whole, which is called the principle of interconnectivity.<sup>27</sup>

Because the mode is interconnected to the planet system as a whole, every human action that destroys the smallest mode on the planet endangers human existence.<sup>28</sup> For example, if humans destroy an ecosystem, the biodiversity will decrease, and some animal and plant species will become extinct. As a result, humans do not know these extinct species, such as the chemical compounds of the species that can function as new and effective medicines for human diseases. Thus, all modes on the planet (humans, animals, water, trees, land) are interrelated, and since none can exist alone without the others, each modification of substance has equal value, regardless of whether it is useful to humans or not.

### The Ecological Meaning of *Barong Wae*

Every rite in the Manggaraian culture expresses respect for nature and its guardian spirits. *Barong Wae* is one of the annual traditional rituals of the Manggaraian people, which is an integral part of the *Penti* ritual. *Penti* is a celebration of thanksgiving in the Kampong in Manggarai during the harvesting season.<sup>29</sup> However, according to Moses Jemparu, *Penti* is different from *Hang Rani*. *Hang Rani* is a thanksgiving held for the first or new harvest, while the essence of *Penti* is a prayer and hope of the farmers, asking God and Mother Nature at the beginning of the new planting season for an abundant harvest. In the context of *Penti*, *Barong Wae* is understood as a dry land farming ritual. Here, *Barong Wae* is closely related to economic and social well-being. *Barong Wae* expresses the belief of local people that water has an important role in human life, so it must be respected and maintained.

The term *Barong Wae* comes from two local words of the Manggaraian language: *baro* or *barong*, which means “to inform”, and *wae*, which means “water.” In this context, “to inform” here also carries the meaning of “to invite.”<sup>30</sup> However, it is not the physical water that is informed and invited, but the guardian spirit of the well. According to Romo Inosensius Sutam:

"In the Manggaraian culture, every place within the *wengke mose* (life circle), such as the *wae bate teku* (well), *natas labar* (village courtyard), and *compang dari* (traditional altar), is believed to have a guardian spirit called *naga*. There are different types of *naga*, such as *naga tana* (guardian of the land), *naga wae* (guardian of the well), and *naga beo* (guardian of the village), among others. The local Manggaraian people believe that these guardians are appointed by God to protect the water, the well, and the surrounding forest. They also hold the belief that these guardian spirits are like brothers to humans."

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<sup>27</sup> Eccy De Jonge, *Spinoza and Deep Ecology: Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism*, Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Philosophy (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Greta Baessato, "SPINOZISM AND DEEP ECOLOGY," n.d.

<sup>29</sup> Niman et al., "KEARIFAN LOKAL DAN UPAYA PELESTARIAN LINGKUNGAN AIR."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

According to Hubert Bogos, the *Barong Wae* ritual is carried out by selected villagers chosen by the *Tu'a Gendang*, the traditional leader of the *adat* village. At the well, they perform a ceremony called *Takung Naga Wae*, which honors the guardian spirit believed to protect the well. Passed down through generations, there is a belief that a mysterious spirit named *Naga Wae* looks after the well. During the ritual, a key figure, often a spokesperson, uses special magical words called *Torok* to thank *Naga Wae* for guarding the well during the previous planting and harvesting season, and to ask for continued protection for the upcoming season.

Belasius Amin, one of the ritual spokesmen from Kampong Latung-Cibal Barat, explained that the Manggaraian people describe their bond with *Naga Wae* through a metaphor: “*Ca saung ri'i toe ita tau*”, which means that humans and the guardian spirit are like brothers living side by side, even though the guardian is unseen. This reflects the Manggaraian community's traditional wisdom about the deep connection between humans, nature, and spiritual beings. Their ancestors passed down a belief in this cosmic relationship, which carries an ecological message: people must respect and protect natural places like wells, forests, trees, and land, as these are seen as the homes of the guardians. This idea is also expressed in the *Torok Cepa*, a part of the *Barong Wae* ritual, as mentioned by Amin:

“*Denge kole lite ase kae, ata lami wae. Bantang cama elor neki ce tana lino tite. Ite ata poli keting le morin agu ngaran kudut lamin wae ho'o, landing ca salang ri'i toe ita tau dite ho'o.*”  
 “Hear us, our brother, the spirit who guards this well. We share the same world with you. You were entrusted by God to watch over this well. Even though you are invisible to us, we believe you are always near.”

The understanding of nature as a brother expresses the idea of biosphere egalitarianism in *Barong Wae*. Biosphere egalitarianism is the view that humans and nature have an equal position because just like humans, nature has its independent rights called environmental rights. However, the philosophy regarding the relationship between humans and nature in the *Barong Wae* ritual is more radical. In *Barong Wae*, the local people of Manggarai view nature as an older, bigger, and stronger brother. In other words, they see nature as the macrocosm and human beings are the microcosm. It shows that the philosophy of nature of the Manggaraian people is closer to cosmocentrism.

According to Romo Sutam, in the *Barong Wae* ritual, water is seen as more than just a physical substance. It is a living force. It represents both the essence of life and the human soul. Through this ritual, the villagers seek not only the abundance of water but also spiritual wholeness and vitality. While water is biologically essential, the Manggaraian communities view it symbolically as a life-giving spirit. For them, life without water is unimaginable. In Manggaraian culture, water stands as a powerful symbol of many life aspects. The phrase “*darah weki*”, meaning life, literally refers to water. When a child is born, they are referred to as “*wae diong*” or “whose child,” and the word “*wing*” (meaning descendant or birth) comes from the terminology “*wae inung*”, which means fresh water. These expressions tie water closely to both the beginning and the end of life, reinforcing the belief that water is the true source of

existence. The *Barong Wae* ritual, therefore, reflects a deep philosophical understanding that water holds life-giving power, even before the physical human body comes into being.

According to Frans Bustan, the history of the *Barong Wae* tradition is closely related to four key pillars of the Manggaraian culture, namely *natas bate labar*, *mbaru gendang*, *compang dari*, and *lingko* (dry land farm). In short, they are the ways of human existence in the world. Although *Barong Wae* aims to honor the guardian spirit, the culmination of the rite is God, the creator of all creatures, so *Torok Tae* (adat prayer) in the *Barong Wae* ritual always begins with the phrase “*Denge lite Mori'n agu Ngara'n*” (Hear us God the Owner and the Ruler). So, *Barong Wae* does not only represent the ecological but also the transcendental harmony with God. In *Barong Wae*, the villagers and the farmers beseech God that Mother Earth be willing to fertilize the land, grow seeds, and provide abundant foodstuff. For Bapak Belasius Amin, the prayer was delivered in the spirit “*pujut mu'u caka cangkem*,” meaning a prayer with deep humility, because local people of Manggarai realize that humans are nothing without water, lands, forests, mountains, and so forth. It was also stated by Romo Sutam:

“The Manggaraian villagers in their kampongs perform the *Barong Wae* ritual as a form of prayer, asking for strength and unity to face the *caling walis celung ntaung* (the changing of seasons). This prayer is offered not only at the well during the *Barong Wae* ceremony but also at the *compang dari* (traditional altar) and during the *penti* ritual held in the traditional house.”

However, transcendental harmony should naturally lead to ecological balance. Within this understanding, the *Barong Wae* ritual can be seen as a form of ecological repentance; a way to repair the damaged relationship between humans and nature. During the ritual, people bring their vulnerabilities and acknowledge their social and environmental wrongdoings to be spiritually cleansed. This is captured in the metaphor: “*Kudut waci sangged saki, cala manga ba weki ata toe nepi, gauk ata toe nau*,” which means purifying all impurities and nurturing good character. Essentially, *Barong Wae* reflects the deep connection between personal, social, and environmental ethics. Bustan explains that restoring these ethical foundations is key to achieving full reconciliation between people and the natural world. Simply put, *Barong Wae* reminds the community not to harm wells or the environment. If someone does, it is believed that the guardian spirit will be unhappy and angry.<sup>31</sup> The local belief in *nangki* (a kind of mystical punishment) reinforces this. Bustan notes further that *nangki* serves as a form of cultural guidance, grounded in traditional wisdom, to encourage environmental responsibility.

The main expression as the basic idea of the *Barong Wae* is the local metaphor: “*Mboas Wae Oang, Kembus Wae Teku*”. This metaphorical expression is also known as ecosophy and ecological hymn, which means “abundance of water throughout the year including during the dry season.” It appears in the *Torok Manuk* part of the *Barong Wae* ritual, as spoken by one of the spokespersons of *Barong Wae* ritual, Gabriel Gaos:

<sup>31</sup> Jilis A. J.; Verheijen S.V.D., *Manggarai Dan Wujud Tertinggi : Oleh : Jilis A.J. Verheijen S.V.D. ; Diterjemahkan Oleh : Alex Beding Dan Marcel Beding* (LIPI - RUL, 1991), //10.170.10.3%2Findex.php%3Fp%3Dshow\_detail%26id%3D4220.

*“Denge le meu ase kae ata lamin wae. Tegi dami, neka koe manga benang retang, neka manga po'eng oret. Poro kembus koe wae tekku, mboas wae woang. Ngong neka wa'a koes ata balas tai, boto manga lasang one bara, katu koe ata ceos kudut nenti one weki kudut uwa koe masi dami manusia.”*

“Listen to us, our brother, the spirit who guards the well. We humbly ask for your kindness. May the water flow freely, bringing freshness to our lives so that we may thrive and prosper.”

The local people of Manggarai believe that no entity on earth can exist in isolation. The indigenous community of Manggarai sees themselves, their lives, their rituals, and daily activities in a total relationship with nature and the highest being called *Mori Kraeng*. According to Moses Jemparu, the *Barong Wae* represents the fact of a network of human life with other entities. Romo Sutam added that this relationship is based on human dependence on nature, although nature does not always depend on humans. Humans would not be able to live without water, trees, and other entities, even though water, trees, land, and other entities would still exist without humans.

In the *Barong Wae* ritual, the indigenous communities in Manggarai also recognize the equality between humans and nature. Equality here can be understood as a cosmic balance. A cosmic balance is a key philosophy in the cosmology of the Manggaraian people. According to Bustan, the idea of cosmic balance appears in various metaphorical expressions such as *“tela galang pe'ang, dila api one”* (The manger is open outside, the fire flames inside). In that metaphorical expression, there is an orientational harmony through the binary opposition between the words *“peang”* (outside) and *“one”* (inside). In the *Barong Wae* ritual, the idea of balance is formulated in the metaphorical expression *“Kembus wae tekku, mboas wae woang.”* The words *“kembus”* and *“mboas”* have syntactic and semantic parallelism. *Kembus* and *mboas* have the same meaning: the abundance of water. The sounds *“-us (kemb-us)”* and *“-as (mbo-as)”* in the metaphor represent the sound of abundant water. For Bustan, this metaphorical expression also contains phonological parallelism in the linking of the words *“kembus-tekku”* and *“mboas-woang”*. This syntactic, semantic, and phonological parallelism expresses the idea of ecological and social harmony in the *Barong Wae* ritual.

Bogos shared another metaphor from the *Barong Wae* ritual, namely *“Temek wa, mbau eta”*, meaning “the well below, the shade above.” This reflects the local understanding that wells and trees (or forests) are deeply connected. Without forests, there can be no wells, and without water, trees cannot survive. Romo Sutam explains that, for the Manggaraian people, the bond between water and trees is like the bond between the human soul and body. Trees represent the human body, while water symbolizes the soul. Clean, flowing water nourishes the trees just as the soul sustains the body. The hymn *“kembus wae tekku mboas wae woang”* is rooted in the belief of *temek wa mbau eta*. In essence, *Barong Wae* is grounded in the idea that a tree reflects the human soul. As a result, life, fertility, and the prosperity of the Manggaraian people socially, economically, and spiritually are all described through natural elements like trees, water, mountains, and land. All informants agree that during the *Barong Wae* ritual, especially in dry seasons, villagers pray for abundance. Flowing water signifies renewal of life itself, of the community's well-being, and of the environment.

### A Dialectic Approach: Rethinking the Green Economy in Flores

NTT is one of the poorest provinces in Indonesia. Even though the government claims that the poverty rate has decreased by 0.09% to 19.96% in 2023, the number of poor people in NTT has increased by 9.5 thousand people to 1.14 million people in 2023. The pie of economic development is enjoyed by a few elites. Meanwhile, more than 1.32 million farmers and 1.8 million informal workers live in poverty. This economic inequality is an impact of “accumulation by dispossession,” which takes place systematically in some places in NTT, especially on Flores Island. The phrase “accumulation by dispossession” was coined by the Marxist geographer David Harvey to describe the process of capital accumulation among a small number of economic and political elites. According to Tolo, accumulation by dispossession means the cost that is needed to reach the goals of capitalist projects in the economy.<sup>32</sup> One of the costs of accumulation by dispossession in Flores is the environmental damage. So, under capital accumulation, the neoliberal economic system creates a tragedy that Marx called a “metabolic rift.” It refers to the neglect of ecological values through excessive extraction of natural resources and the neglect of social justice through the exploitation of the living spaces of vulnerable people.

The green economy is proposed as a solution. The key concept of the green economy is the idea that the environment is a “natural capital” or “ecosystem service” that must be cared for. Based on this concept, it can be concluded that biodiversity contributes to human well-being by providing valuable resources for economic development. It aims to prevent the growing environmental risks, ecological scarcities, and social inequalities. The goal can be reached by maintaining environmental stability as a natural asset. The green economy understands ecological stability under the logic of “ecosystem services,” where nature is seen as the main capital for economic justice and human prosperity. Natural assets such as forests, lakes, fertile lands, and rivers are valuable at the ecosystem level. It is crucial to maintain the stability of the water cycle and its benefits for agriculture and households, the carbon cycle, climate mitigation, soil fertility, crop production, local microclimates for comfortable habitats, fisheries for human protein needs, and so on. All of these are the pivotal elements of a green economy.<sup>33</sup>

However, this concept is very normative and anthropocentric because it places nature as an object of human interests. This normative and anthropocentric nature makes it difficult to generate a radical paradigm in understanding nature. So the dialectic of deep ecology of Spinozism and the *Barong Wae* offers a different paradigm. We have seen that there is a close relationship between the three basic principles of deep ecology, namely the intrinsic value of each entity, biosphere egalitarianism, and self-realization (conatus). Devall and Sessions explain: “The intuition of biocentric equality is that all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to achieve their forms of unfolding and self-

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<sup>32</sup> Tolo, “Akumulasi Melalui Perampasan Dan Kemiskinan Di Flores.”

<sup>33</sup> Ayman Abdalmajeed Alsmadi and Marwan Alzoubi, “Green Economy: Bibliometric Analysis Approach,” *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy* 12, no. 2 (March 20, 2022): 282–89, <https://doi.org/10.32479/ijeep.12758>.

realization within the larger Self-Realization. This basic intuition is that all organisms and entities in the ecosphere, as parts of the interrelated whole, are equal in intrinsic value.”<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the thought of intrinsic value from Spinoza's metaphysics, for the Manggaraian people, nature has intrinsic value. Even the Manggaraian people understand nature as greater than human beings. It is expressed in the *Barong Wae*, where the villagers honor the guardian spirit of the well. For the Manggaraian people, whatever exists, since it exists, has its intrinsic value. It is expressed in some activities amid nature, such as opening the new garden. According to Romo Sutam, all activities of the local people of Manggarai that are directly related to nature have rituals. It means that the Manggaraian people don't just respect nature as a brother, but are more radical: nature is greater than humans. It was expressed in the local language as pronounced by Romo Sutam: “*Eme mata aku, bom mata ite, landing eme mata ite mata bo aku*” (If I die, you [nature] don't. But, if you die, so do I). This statement expresses the belief of the local people that nature does not need humans to survive, but humans always need nature to survive. Everything that humans eat does not need humans. So, it can be concluded that the relationship between humans and nature is asymmetrical-dialogical.

This asymmetrical-dialogical relation can also be found in the metaphysics of Spinoza. For Spinoza, as described by Naess, “nature is part of us,” not “we are part of nature.” “The river is part of me”. The word “me” here is “the greater self, the ecological self” (Self with an “S”), which means our existence goes beyond our body, recognizing our dependence on the environment and identifying ourselves with nature. Nature is part of me, so if nature is damaged, it means that a part of me is damaged. It identifies the intrinsic unity between nature and humans. However, Naess argues that this relationship is not symmetrical: If the river is destroyed, then I am damaged, but if I am destroyed, nothing much happens to the river. Therefore, it is not “we are part of nature,” but rather “nature is part of us.”<sup>35</sup>

The metaphysical foundation of this argument is the notion of *conatus*. The idea of *conatus* is implicitly contained in the thinking of the Manggaraian people as expressed in the local language mentioned by Bogos: “*Eme wakak betong asa, manga wake nipu tae*” [When a bamboo is uprooted, the root will grow a new shoot]. It means that for the Manggaraian people, trees and other natural entities can defend themselves, survive, grow, and move towards their *telos*.

However, according to Bustan, different from Spinoza's concept of *conatus*, in the *Barong Wae* ritual, the self-realization of all entities in the material world does not grow out from their strength, but from the supreme power, *Mori Kraeng*. P. Verheijen SVD has named this belief “implicit monotheism”.<sup>36</sup> It means, as mentioned by Bustan, that the creator of the universe is *Mori'n agu Ngara'n*, one God, where the suffix ‘n is in the word *mori'n* and *ngara'n* means the ownership and the source of power, so that the Manggaraian people recognize the oneness of God. So, in the *Barong Wae*, the villagers pray to *Mori'n agu Ngara'n* through the guardian spirit and the ancestors. For the Manggaraian people, although nature and its guardian spirits are the older and stronger brothers, they are God's creatures like humans. It is seemingly different from Spinoza's panentheism, which views God and nature as the same substance.

<sup>34</sup> Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, Nachdr. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Smith, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Guilherme, “Metaphysics as a Basis for Deep Ecology: An Enquiry into Spinoza's System.”

<sup>36</sup> Verheijen S. V.D., *Manggarai Dan Wujud Tertinggi*.

However, the ethical implications of these two views are the same, namely rejecting modern anthropocentrism, which perceives humans as the single ruler and the culmination of the universe.

According to Sutam, the *Barong Wae* ritual also represents the belief of the local people that nature has intrinsic goodness because it is essentially good. Based on this perspective, the ancestors of the Manggaraian community have generated an ecological local wisdom, namely “Don’t take too much from nature, that’s all,” and taking it with great respect and honor to Mother Earth. The respect is expressed, for example, in the ritual “*nggum wa pu’u*”, namely the ritual of asking permission from God and the guardian spirit to cut a tree for a good purpose.

This research also found that the *Barong Wae* rite contains the concept of ecological communitarianism as found in deep ecology. Romo Sutam argues that the Manggaraian people are familiar with the symbols of circles and spider webs, such as *lingko*, the formation of adat kampongs, houses, etc., which symbolize the ecological *communio*. In the Manggaraian culture and thinking, the giant spider web illustrates the close relationship between humans and various components of the ecosystem on planet Earth. The shape of the traditional house of the Manggaraian people imitates the trees or mountains, to symbolize unity with the environment. According to Romo Sutam, unity is also expressed in the local term “*poco pene*”, a mythological mountain, namely the highest *poco* (mountain), the source of fresh and clean water for human interest. If there is a community, then there must be a relation.

To understand the relationship between Spinozism, deep ecology, the *Barong Wae* ritual, and the green economy in Flores, we need to understand the concept of *Lingko* (dry land farming). There are some metaphorical expressions of plant growth fertility used by the Manggaraian people to express the idea of economic welfare, such as: “*Saung bembang nggereta, waker caler nggerwa*” [‘The leaves grow widely upwards, the roots grow strongly downwards’], “*Cing nggersili, wela ngger pe’ang*” [‘Sprouting downwards, flowering outwards’], “*tewar wua, wecak wela*” [scattering fruits, scattering flowers].<sup>37</sup> There are some indicators of household economic welfare according to the traditional cognitive map of Manggarai speech community, including having meals three times a day as expressed in the metaphoric expression: “*Cumang hang gula, remong hang leso, haeng hang mane*” [Having breakfast, having lunch, having dinner], the availability of corn and rice food stuff as expressed in the metaphoric expression: “*Latung peno mbaru, woja peno ca’o*” [The house is full of corn, the storehouse is full of rice], the availability of vegetables in the farmlands as expressed in a metaphoric phrase: “*Cing nggersili, wela ngger pe’ang*”, and the availability of pigs and chickens raised as expressed in metaphoric expression: “*Res baling lele, ras baling racap*.” [Chickens cackle around the armpit, chickens crackle around the side].<sup>38</sup>

In the theory of green economy, there is a principle of harmonious circulation, which means that everything is useful for others. Water is a main part of economic prosperity, so the *Barong Wae* rite is

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<sup>37</sup> Sebastianus Fernandez et al., “CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PLANT GROWTH FERTILITY AS SYMBOLS OF HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC WELFARE IN MANGGARAI LANGUAGE,” *Education and Culture* 4, no. 1 (2024).

<sup>38</sup> Fransiskus Bustan, Agustinus Semiun, and Yohanis Samuel Sarong, “THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF MANGGARAI SPEECH COMMUNITY ON HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC WELFARE,” 2019.

integrated with *Penti* as a dry land farming rite. In *Penti*, the farmers chant prayers at the start of the planting season. *Lingko* becomes the *axis mundi* because in *Lingko*, all aspects of life, including religious, social, cultural, economic, and even justice, meet one another. According to Romo Sutam, in *lingko*, the perspective of the Manggaraian people about the green economy is very clear: there is a concept of economic prosperity, there is a common good, and there is social justice.”

Romo Sutam shared key insights into the meaning of *Lingko* from the perspective of the Manggaraian community. First, *Lingko* is seen as a symbol of the human body, representing people’s existence in time and space. During the *Tente Teno* ritual, where a living tree is planted at the center of the *Lingko*, it is believed that a cosmic union takes place between God and Mother Earth. Humans are not part of this sacred union, but simply ask to receive a portion of its blessings. Second, the various rituals involved in creating a *Lingko* all reflect an ecological mindset, emphasizing respect for nature. Third, these ceremonies, performed when opening a *Lingko*, serve as a way for humans to ask permission from God and Mother Earth to cultivate the land for their survival and that of future generations. This wisdom, passed down by the Manggaraians’ ancestors, includes the rule that a *Lingko* should only be farmed for three years. Using the land beyond the limits is seen as overuse, an act of exploitation, and a violation of nature.

In that context, Romo Sutam explained further that the traditional process of working a *Lingko* reflects the Manggaraian people’s deep respect for the land—what can be understood as their “land ethic.” In the first year, the stage is called *Uma Rana*, where the forest is cleared and transformed into a farmland. In the second year, the land is known as *Lokang Kolang*, as it is still considered *kolang* (hot), meaning fertile and productive. By the third year, the stage is referred to as *Lokang Ces*, when the soil begins to lose its fertility, prompting farmers to reduce their activities on the land. After this, comes *Lokang Renggong*, where cultivation must stop altogether, as the soil is believed to have been already exhausted and further farming would be seen as harming nature. Finally, the land enters the stage of *Lokang Ledo One Puar*, where it is left to regenerate and return to its original forested state. This reforestation phase is marked by a ritual called “*reba molas kole haju agu wase*” (trees and vines sprouted), where the community asks the Creator, *Mori Kraeng*, to allow the trees and plants that were once cut down to sprout and grow again.

According to Romo Sutam, the stages of working the *Lingko* reflect the local wisdom of the Manggaraian people, which contributes meaningfully to the ideas of social justice and environmental responsibility, which are the key principles in the concept of a green economy. According to the Manggaraian tradition, during the *Uma Rana* and *Lokang Kolang* phases, there is a social custom called *ngende*, where those who experience crop failure can ask for food or rice from those who had a successful harvest. However, in the *Lokang Ces* stage, when harvests start to decline, sharing food becomes more than just charity; it turns into a moral duty. Helping those who are struggling, including the poor, widows, orphans, and others in need, is no longer based on request, but is rooted in the ethical responsibility to care for one another. In some traditional kampongs in Cibal, for example, people still believe that failing to fulfill this obligation means a person is no longer considered a true member of the community. Another reason behind this practice is the belief that life, like the circular shape of the *Lingko*, moves in cycles.



Nature distributes its gifts fairly, so while someone may thrive this year, they could struggle in the next year. This cyclical view of life teaches that sharing is essential to ensure no one is left hungry.

During the *Lokang Renggong* stage, there is a traditional belief that if a child, a poor person, a widow, or someone who is hungry passes by an abandoned field and finds food, they are allowed to take it without asking, because at that point, whatever grows on the land no longer belongs to anyone. However, in the *Lokang Ledo One Puar* stage, when the *Lingko* has been fully returned to nature, humans are no longer permitted to take anything from it. At this point, according to the Manggaraian wisdom, the land is left entirely to nature, and all non-human creatures, i.e. animals and other living beings, have the full rights to get benefits from what the land provides.

The stages of working the *Lingko* reflect deep local wisdom about the concept of justice. At the start, during the opening of the *Lingko*, a key principle is followed: “*pati ca arit, wike ca iret*”, meaning fair and equal distribution. This principle ensures that each family or clan within the traditional village receives the same portion of land. In the stages of *Uma Rana*, *Lokang Kolang*, and *Lokang Ces*, the focus is on distributive justice, meaning ensuring fairness among people regarding how resources and responsibilities are shared. However, in the later stages of *Lokang Renggong* and *Lokang Ledo One Puar*, the focus shifts to ecological justice, which extends beyond human-centered fairness to include all beings in nature. The fifth stage, *Lokang Ledo One Puar*, represents what can be seen as absolute natural justice, where the rights of non-human life forms to the land are fully acknowledged and respected. This research concludes that the justice expressed in this final stage is a form of ecological justice, emphasizing that human rights are inseparable from the rights of the environment.

However, in the everyday lives of the Manggaraian people, the *Barong Wae* ritual has largely become a formal tradition that lacks real meaning or impact. The chant “*kembus wae tekku mboas wae woang*”, which once held deep ecological significance, no longer influences how people view or treat the environment. Romo Andre, OFM, points out that many traditional ecological hymns have lost their value, as the community has grown indifferent to their messages. One example is the *ngkiong* hymn, which warns against harming the environment. The *ngkiong* is a bird once known for its sweet song, now believed to be extinct due to habitat destruction caused by humans. According to Romo Andre, the Manggaraians’ ancestors believed that the *ngkiong*’s call signaled the changing seasons and served as a reminder of the human connection to the cosmos. The *ngkiong* hymn carries a powerful message: “*Neka tapa satar, boto mata kaka. Senget runing ngkiong, neka poka puar boto mora usang. Senget runing ngkiong, mai teti wai kudut weri haju, kudut mora ronco agu osang momang.*” [Don’t burn the bushes, or animals will die. Listen to the song of the *ngkiong*: don’t cut down the forest, or the rain will stop. Listen to the song of the *ngkiong*: let’s plant trees to protect ourselves from disaster].

In response to the message of the *ngkiong*, there must be a balance between belief (orthodoxy) and action (orthopraxy), between ritual formality and real-world impact. In this sense, rituals like *Barong Wae* should lead to tangible environmental actions. The act of caring for nature should come first, with the ritual serving as a celebration of that commitment. What’s needed is not just *Barong Wae*, but an *eco-Barong Wae*, meaning a version of the ritual that reflects a renewed understanding of its purpose. *Eco-*

*Barong Wae* emphasizes that the ritual should be reinterpreted to inspire real conservation efforts and promote ecological awareness in daily life.

In that context, according to Romo Andre, the *Barong Wae* ritual can encourage three pivotal ecological movements called the “3R Scheme”: Rethink, Restructure, and Redistribute. First, *rethinking* means reflecting deeply on humans' relation with the environment and humans' existence in the universe. Rethinking can generate a change of paradigm on nature, from an anthropocentric paradigm to an eco-centric one. Second, *restructuring* means reorganizing the relationship with the environment. Rethinking must be followed by real ecological movements to revitalize the relationship between humans and nature. Planting trees, cleaning up the rubbish, not cutting down the forest haphazardly, rejecting the geothermal and extractive industries projects, and the like, are some examples of practical ecological movement. Third, *redistributing* means sharing new understanding and movements toward ecology with other people, so it can be a collective ecological movement. Redistribution can make the value of *Barong Wae* become an ecological ethic in public policies. The 3R Scheme can be developed into some green habits, including the green cognitive, the green affective, and the green psychomotor. They are important to generate a green environment. So, based on the dialectic between the deep ecology of Spinoza and *Barong Wae* tradition, it can be concluded that when we talk about the green economy, we are not just talking about pro-people and pro-profit, but especially pro-ecology.

## Conclusion

This research has shown that the normative concept of the green economy is inadequate for the sustainability of local communities in Flores. Overcoming this problem, this research advocates the paradigmatic change in understanding our relation to the environment, from an anthropocentric paradigm to an eco-centric one. To reach this goal, this research takes a dialectical approach between the deep ecology of Spinozism and the *Barong Wae* tradition of the Manggaraian people. This research has indicated that although there are differences in several things, in general both deep ecology and the *Barong Wae* ritual have an ecological and holistic view with several main principles, namely the intrinsic value of each entity, the egalitarianism of the biosphere, self-realization of each entity on the planet (*conatus*), and ecological communitarianism. *Barong Wae* ritual places humans as a microcosm before nature as a macrocosm.

A dialectical approach between the deep ecology dialectic of Spinozism and *Barong Wae* can change the concept of the green economy in Flores. With this radical paradigm, the idea of a green economy as an economy that is oriented to environmental sustainability can be realized. In other words, both deep ecology Spinozism and the *Barong Wae* ritual can encourage the idea of social welfare in Flores, which supports human rights, especially the rights of the poor and the environment.

However, to expand the philosophical perspective on deep ecology and *Barong Wae* rite, a theological analysis should be exercised, since *Barong Wae* also reflects the cultural beliefs of the Manggaraian people about the close relationship between *Mori Kraeng* (God) and life on Earth. Strengthening the theological point of view on this issue, we therefore recommend that the next research

should consider Pope Francis' perspective on integral ecology in his second encyclical: *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. Francis rejects the centrality of human beings in the structure of creation by reinterpreting the story of Creation in a new way. By quoting the Catholic Catechism, Francis said that every creature has its goodness, perfection, and uniqueness, and thus, humans must respect their beings beyond their benefits. Contrary to anthropocentric interpretations of the creation story in the Bible, Francis proposes an eco-centric paradigm in which the story is taken to symbolize the interconnectedness of all creation and the authentic relationship between humans and nature, based on the principles of justice, equality, fraternity, loyalty, and respect.

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