

# Identifying the Causes of Tourism Conflict Development: The Case of Sipin Lake, Jambi City

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## ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this paper is to reveal the causes of conflict in the progress of Sipin Lake tourism development. The area of ± 161 ha was designated as a tourism area based on the regional spatial plan of Jambi city. Later, the construction stages faced a conflict of interest among the actors. The data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and various resources government documents, and research results, are proceed through systematically coding to find the meaning of cases. The finding of this study identifies the conflict caused by the non-participatory planning regional development process, the differences of orientation among the stakeholders involved and weak tourism management.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Causes, Management, Tourism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Studies related to tourism conflicts have little concern from researchers in several countries with quite diverse perspectives. In a socio-political context, research on tourism conflicts illustrates that state intervention through a patron-client system deliberately created impacts market forces has an impact on conflicts between commercial fishers and small-scale fishermen that damage lake management and sustainability of the resources in it. As a resolution, conservation policies were taken by banning commercial fishing and returning to small-scale fishing [1]. The study of the causes of conflict outlines ongoing disputes among interest groups, the relationships associated with the development process and shows how differences in perceptions become embedded. Structures dominated by power relations lead to conflict and emphasise the need for collaborative networks in tourism dev the institutional structure influences tourism governance, its conditions and dynamics impact institutional function, conflict creation and mitigation [2], [3].

Turning to the Indonesian context, the occurrence of land conflicts in tourism areas is caused by errors in decision making, weak law enforcement, social jealousy, lack of protection of rights for indigenous people, and law enforcement officials' arrogance where the resolution uses a non-litigation approach [4]. Meanwhile, the complexity of the interconnection between actors and the dynamics of tourism conflicts initiated by the ownership claims and empowerment that continued to expand and increase to obtain management rights leading to the involvement of many actors [5]. Another often-overlooked dimension of cultural conflict is the conflict of tourists versus tourists, thus it is important to raise awareness tourists and to educate them in reducing conflicts with hosts and fellow tourists [6].

Although the articles above discuss tourism conflicts from various aspect, studies on the causes of dispute in tourism object development projects have hardly received significant attention from previous researchers. Therefore, this paper specifically discusses the causes of competition in the development of tourism areas by

choosing Sipin lake which was built in 2017. This study is essential to be carried out to identify problems in tourism management so that it can be used as a material for decision making in conflict resolution. The area of ±161 ha has been the concern of the Jambi city government since 2013, however the construction process only started in 2017 with the construction of a jogging track, parking area, bridge, toilet and other supporting facilities.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper uses a case study research method to identify the causes of conflict in the development of the Sipin lake area. This method is used to explore the initial conditions of the area which was used as an argument by the Jambi city government to designate this area as a tourist area, through a search of various backgrounds it can be known the cause of the conflict. In addition, different information regarding the dynamics of the development of several parts to support the function of the lake were also explored. Different data are obtained from various sources of information conducted through interviews with government agencies, communities and third parties which carry out development. The data collected is sorted to map the main themes to be presented in this paper, then the research findings are compared with previous studies to show significant novelty.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Initial Condition and Initiation of Development of Sipin Lake

Before the function of the Sipin lake area was changed to a tourist area, this area was a slum area because it was used as a place of activity both for the economic purpose and for other activities that had an impact on polluting water and slum areas. Generally, people living in the Legok sub-district, Sipin lake sub-district are economically dependent on the lake so they use the lake as a place for fish farming, fishing and catching fish as a source of income. In addition, the lake is also used as a waste disposal site by residents, then topographically, this lake is a centre for water disposal from office areas, businesses and residential areas so that various wastes will flow into the lake. As a result, this area is polluted from fishing activities, garbage disposal and waste shipments from the community's business activity center.

The physical condition of the lake raises environmental problems that require a solution that not only solves the problem but also explores the tourism potential of the Jambi city icon because this area has local history and wisdom. Based on environmental arguments, policy engineering was carried out through the initiation of the determination of the Legok area as a slum area which at the same time responded to the regulation of the Minister of PUPR Number

14/PRT/M/2018 regarding the improvement slum housing quality. The city without slums (*literally, kota tanpa kumuh, Kotaku*) program is one of the strategic efforts of the Directorate General of Human Settlements of the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing to improve access to infrastructure and basic services in urban slums and to prevent the emergence of new slums to increase liveable, productive, and affordable urban settlements. The arrangement of this area is carried out through several programs to improve the quality of the environment and prevent slum settlements, such as physical activities in the form of road construction and public open spaces (POS), non-physical, namely housing and settlement control and supervision programs, programs to improve the people's economy, and programs to change the paradigm and prevention of slum areas. This policy is considered strategic because it solves environmental problems as well as a way to gradually develop new tourist destinations by involving many stakeholders in its implementation.

The Ministry of PUPR carried out the initial stage of development by dredging the shores of the lake along the 1600m which was carried out without permission from the community with the assumption that the land beside the lake belonged to the government. However, there are economic interests of the surrounding community that were ignored by the government from the start, where for the residents of Sipin Lake, especially Legok, it is a place for fish cultivation with cages, catching fish with fishing tackle and trapping fish with Rebo tools. This unannounced dredging has disrupted community fishing activities, damaged fishing gear, both Tangkul and fish cages. Plus, the noise caused by the sound of the engine and the ground falling into the water keeps fish away from the area.

### 3.2. Top-down approach

From the brief description above, there are several aspects that trigger conflict at the development stage of Sipin lake as a leading tourist destination in Jambi City. The policy initiated by the city government in response to the Minister's regulation on controlling slum areas considered as the right time to develop the latest tourism icon. The fact that government's initiative places the community as an object in a policy considered as a top-down approach in policy development. One thing that cannot be ignored is that society is bound by all aspects of social, economic and cultural life, thus they cannot be an object of the policy in first place. The top-down policies tend to ignore values in society, which at the end will eventually result in derivative conflicts. The top-down refers to a decision-making process that converges from institutional to public [7]. The top-down policy is ideal for policies made by the center, such as the policy on structuring the Legok slum area which is based on a ministerial regulation. Later in the mid-1970s studies showed that top-down approaches failed to consider that

a hierarchical chain of command and well-defined policy objectives are not enough to guarantee successful implementation [8].

Public consultation is a form of implementation of a participatory process in which Project Affected People (PAPs) are involved in the process of structuring the area. The activity process starts from the initiation of the program and the proposal of tiered activities, which involve elements of the Jambi City government apparatus, task forces of housing and residential, Subdistricts, Villages, and community institutions at the activity location. Supporting consultants such as City Coordinators and Facilitators play a role in facilitating planning and implementation. The community admitted that there had been a meeting with the contractor before the dredging was carried out. This is in accordance with the Land Acquisition and Resettlement Action Plan's document which states that the socialization process has been carried out since February 2019. In general, residents are agreed to the area planning plan, but they demand for clarity regarding the rights and obligations of residents if affected by the project. There is no clarity on how the dredging technique is carried out, when and the risks of dredging for fish farming communities. At the meeting it was also not explained how to compensate for damaged fishing gear. Actually, the community did not reject the dredging activity, but the community only asked for compensation and a solution for the loss of their livelihood.

At the end, a non-participatory policy was ignoring the most basic condition of society, the economic aspect. Most of the top-down policies were failed because they did not engage the community in development projects [9]. There have been many different approaches to policy implementation, but many agree that successful schemes are characterized by the involvement of local people [10]. Meanwhile, the nature of the top-down policy considers the community as the object of the policy, thus ignoring the values that live and are inherent in society. The Legok people rely on Sipin lake as a source of income from various types of work. People who have large capital, have even more than one fish cage. Fish cage activities produce waste that damages the environment, so that in the effort to develop tourism areas, cage activities are closed. Potential conflicts are not only caused by the elimination of economic activities, the potential for new economic activities also creates conflicts of interest. Parking area and food courts are new economic potentials that are ultimately contested by the community. Differences in power and bargaining power add to the dynamics in the conflict map. In addition, in the design of its development, the lakeside area will be used as a fairly wide pedestrian location. The land is privately owned by the community, which is then purchased and carried out by the government for eviction.

Top-down policies that lack socialization and listen to the needs and desires of the community become potential conflicts at the next stage of program implementation. Community involvement is fundamental and tourism governance is still a challenge in many countries. This means that development is no longer carried out in a top-down manner, because the development paradigm has evolved into a participatory approach [11], [12]. Tourism has been credited with increasing interaction between different groups residing within a community, but it can also increase competition, hostility, and jealousy. Conflict was mentioned in the initial study and characterized as a "platform warning", which includes disputes between stakeholders over interests, values and goals. Involving multiple stakeholders in a participatory process of consensus building and partnership formation [13].

### **3.3. The Weak of Tourism Management**

The construction of facilities to support tourism involves various actors from provincial and city government agencies, the private sector and community groups. Among the actors involved have certain interests, both institutional and individual, so that the management of the area becomes complex. The power and resources of the actors are not balanced so that there is a tendency for the strong to dominate the weak. The power imbalance among stakeholders is a problem in governance, in this context it is an imbalance of power and power between actors or institutions [14]. The tug-of-war between the provincial government and the Jambi City government, and in cross-sectoral coordination there is a sectoral ego between the regional apparatus, both city and provincial governments. The status of Sipin lake is actually a polemic between the provincial government and the city government, the two government agencies making claims to each other in development.

The development of the area designated as an integrated area between tourism activities and culture opens up a space of economic struggle through the activity of providing tourism services. The absence of government institutions that regulate the pattern of community participation is a major factor in the emergence of efforts to take part in the development of tourism objects. They fight each other to get a strategic place, the fish farming group is forced to shift to a place that is free from water game activities. Tourism activities, in the process, create space for the creation of struggles in obtaining sources of income. At least the struggle for resources occurs between community groups who make the lake as their main source of income and alternative income. Horizontal conflict occurs between the community that providing traditional boat services and commercial boat service providers for lake tour activities, the two groups are competing for passengers, which leads to conflict. Commercial boats are capable of carrying large numbers of passengers, so traditional boats lose a lot of customers.

### 3.4 Losses and Evictions of Economic Activities

Conflicts began to arise in the early stages of the construction of gabions and pedestrian paths for which the compensation process was not completed. The amount of compensation varies depending on the area and type of building or land affected. Compensation is given in stages and borne by the City Government through Jambi city regional revenue and expenditure budget funds. Then, there were indications of negligence in the compensation process, there were residents who did not receive compensation. The conflict arose as a result of the resistance carried out by the community because their land was evicted without compensation. Besides that, about 60 old tombs that are hundreds of years old were seized by the construction implementers, resulting in the anger of the heirs' families. The settlement of this case has reached the stage of the court process but has not yet found a bright spot.

The community of cage businesses felt that there was a difference in the treatment of the evictions carried out by the Jambi city government for their economic activities. The replacement of money for cages is well appreciated by the community, but the loss of economic activity that has been occupied for years is something else which needs to be taken into account seriously. Furthermore, the eviction of fish cage activities was carried out on the basis of claims of environmental pollution caused by fish cage activities. Reports of poor water quality caused cage activities to be closed. In fact, around the Sipin lake sub-region which has now become a tourist area, there are many economic activities that generate waste such as printing businesses, offices, hospital waste, and also restaurants that are right on the edge of the lake. Thus, the assumption that emerged later was that the reason for the eviction was because the cages did not support the 'beautiful and beautiful' tourism development paradigm promoted by the City Government. In this case, the Jambi City Government needs to prioritize government ethics in conceptualizing the arrangement of slum areas into tourist areas.

A study of the potential loss of economic resources, namely the eviction of people's businesses and fish cages. Conflicts keep popping up adding new cases, while old cases are not resolved so the problem is getting more complex. Around 500 fish cages in the designated tourism area were moved with the promise of compensation, but the compensation was not in accordance with the agreed price and some were even not given compensation. In addition, to support tourism activities, the government limits the activities of fish farming on the grounds that it can pollute the environment. Instead, the community turned to providing boat tours around the lake area, some of them actually became unemployed because they did not have enough capital. This unilateral policy raises resistance from the community, such as continuing to carry out

fish farming activities, even though they have received compensation.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The research shows that the planned development of the Sipin lake area into an integrated tourist attraction with economic and cultural activities causes conflict at least due to several factors. Community involvement is not prioritized, as a result this creates unfavourable feedback for contributions to policy formulation to minimize conflict. Likewise, with the regional development process, the development process is carried out using a top-down approach. In addition, the implementation of the construction of various facilities causes losses for the people who depend on the economy for their lives by the existence of the lake.

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