

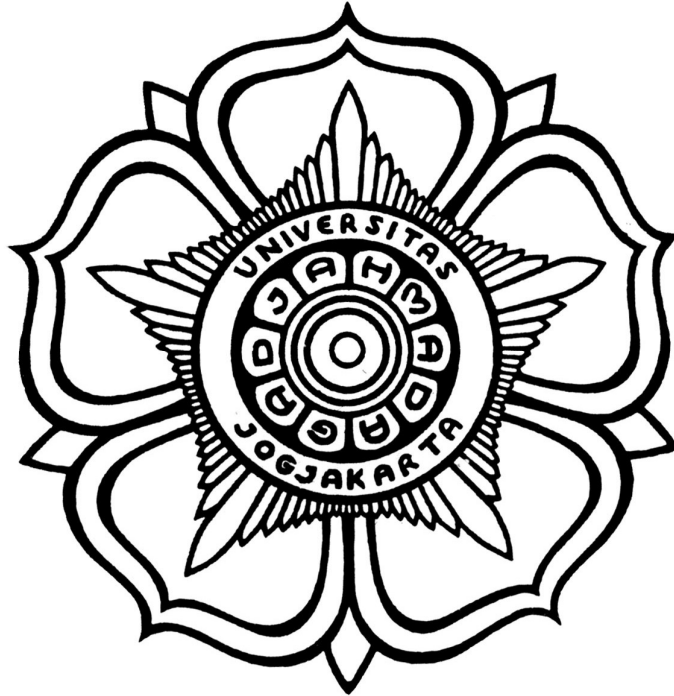


CONTESTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN KOMODO ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK, INDONESIA
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CONTESTING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN KOMODO ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK, INDONESIA



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ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|--|
| KNP | Komodo National Park |
| KONTRAS | <i>Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan</i> Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence |
| PKHA | <i>Perlindungan Hutan dan Konservasi Alam</i> Indonesian National Park Authority |
| PNK | Putri Naga Komodo (PT.) |
| REPELITA | <i>Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun</i> Fiver Year Development Plans |
| TNC | The Nature Conservancy |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization |
| WHC | World Heritage Convention |



LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Figure 1 map of Komodo National Park..... | 19 |
| Figure 2 Results of resource use monitoring program in Komodo National Park in 1997 and 1998 | 40 |



LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Table 1 Sustainability Positions | 11 |
| Table 2 Development of Accommodation 2011-2017 | 26 |
| Table 3 Actors and Their Sustainable Positions | 31 |
| Table 4 Raised Issues in the Management of KNP | 33 |



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| ACRONYMS | 2 |
| LIST OF FIGURES | 3 |
| LIST OF TABLES | 4 |
| ABSTRACT | 6 |
| CHAPTER I | 7 |
| 1.1. Background | 7 |
| 1.2. Research question | 9 |
| 1.3. Theoretical framework | 9 |
| 1.4. Main argument | 13 |
| 1.5. Research methods | 14 |
| CHAPTER II | 16 |
| 2.1. Distribution of power | 16 |
| 2.1.1. The Management | 16 |
| 2.1.2. The business enterprises | 20 |
| 2.1.3. The grassroots | 21 |
| 2.2. Development activities | 23 |
| 2.2.1. The management | 23 |
| 2.2.2. The business enterprises | 26 |
| 2.2.3. The grassroots | 27 |
| CHAPTER III | 33 |
| 3.1. Economic intersubjectivities | 34 |
| 3.2. Environmental intersubjectivities | 36 |
| 3.2.1. Fishing activities | 36 |
| 3.2.2. The flow of tourists | 37 |
| 3.2.3. Mining activities | 37 |
| 3.3. Social intersubjectivities | 38 |
| 3.3.1. The issue with zoning policy | 39 |
| 3.3.2. The issue with the declining of public spaces | 40 |
| 3.4. The question on the sustainability of the politics | 41 |
| CHAPTER IV | 44 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 47 |

ABSTRACT

Komodo National Park (KNP) of Indonesia arguably is one of the famous tourist destination in the country. From the tourism industry itself, it generally generates billions of rupiahs annually; the number makes the region become a gold mine. Nevertheless, KNP is also located in a unique region of *Wallacea*, which makes the region vast with biodiversity. The battle of interests between the tourism industry and environmental conservation, therefore, is unavoidable; it is not uncommon to see headlines in mass media highlight the environmental damages caused by overflowing and overcrowding visitors, yet the development of new infrastructure is kept being pushed every year by the government.

On the other hand, while those major ideas collide with each other, simultaneously they disenfranchise another people: the locals. Throughout the history of KNP, it has been the main criticisms; most of the time, the tourism development and environmental protection claim the locals as their sacrifice. Together, they contest the idea what “sustainability”; one tries to make the economy sustainable, one tries to preserve the nature, and one tries to survive the daily life. In a nutshell, each of them have their own understanding of how to manage KNP, which arguably are influenced by their identities.

In this research, therefore, the author aims to explain the phenomena in KNP through the lens of constructivism on identities. Specifically, the concept of “Sustainability Positions” by Turner will be the main guideline. The concept itself divides the term sustainability in the spectrum of “very weak” to “very strong”. The result: most of the actors who are in favor of development would likely fall into the “very weak – weak” spectrum, while environmental conservationists will fall into the other spectrum. However, being in the different spectrums will not ensure conflict to happen; in fact, one of the most significant cooperation between The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the government functioned for several years despite different interests. Similarly, being in the same spectrum will not guarantee cooperation as it will be seen in the conflicts between the locals and the government. In the end, the analysis will show whether merely taking the economic development and environmental conservation is enough to ensure the sustainability in the National Park’s management.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Komodo National Park (KNP) of Indonesia, indisputably, is a famous destination to be visited. Indeed, the region is well-known for its marvelous scenery and the famous Komodo dragon; it is inevitable tourists all over are attracted to see the endemic species in its natural habitat. On paper, the National Park is a commercial success. In fact, the revenue gathered from January to April 2018 had reached 9.4 billion rupiahs (CNN Indonesia, 2018); and surely, the number is subject to growth. Looking back the 2009-2015 visitor statistic, the numbers of incoming visitors showed a quite steady increasing pattern – even though in certain years it declined for a moment, the following year would still exceed the number before the decline (Balai Taman Nasional Komodo, 2016). This promising figures rationally will call for the regional development to accommodate and improve tourism industry. And recently, the incumbent president of 2014-2019 period, Joko Widodo, has planned to put the national park as the top priority of tourist destination through the “10 New Balis” program (Chan, 2017). With this plan set in motion, better infrastructures, new resorts and hotels and new tour operators appearing are to be expected.

However, the region is more than just a sightseeing place; KNP is a part of islands that form the province East Nusa Tenggara, which means it is also a part of the *Wallacea* – a biogeographical term for a group of islands separated by deep-water straits from the Asian and Australian continental shelves. This group is the home of many endemic species – which explains the Komodo dragon, and the national park itself hosts the vast biodiversity. In other words, it holds prominent environmental and scientific values and numbers of international actors has taken interest. The importance of environmental conservation, therefore, is calling for attention.

This brings to the cooperation with *The Nature Conservancy* (TNC); a private company that shaped the early formation of the National Park. Funded by American government, TNC aimed to preserve the biodiversity of Komodo Islands and the population of the endangered Komodo itself. In doing that, they worked together with the national and local government,



rules and prohibition that are arguably would help to “heal” the environment from years of mankind natural resources exploitation (Michael, 2001). This idea surely beneficial at some point. For example, in the early 2000s, illegal fishing was booming and nowadays the commercialization of the region brings not only revenue, but some common problems; there have been some reports that urge the KNP management to face and to resolve the mounting trash and environmental degradation left by tourists (Makur, 2017). The new management tries to maintain the population of both the land and the marine fauna by altering the interaction with humans; for instance, by regulating the visitation to the natural habitat of komodo. Inherently, the taken actions could be considered as the criticisms toward the human invasion, caused by tourism and commercialization.

From those points of view, disagreement clearly can be seen and the idea how to manage the tourism industry in the most sustainable way is also being contested. On one hand, the government, as the lawful ruler of every natural resources in its territory, sees that the management should ensure the sustainability of the industry; economic wheels should be maintained for a long period of time. Meanwhile, for organizations such as TNC would prioritize sustaining the environment to preserve the unique biodiversity of Komodo Islands. On the surface, it is a classic example of market versus environment; two dominant views on how the environment should be treated in the context of development. Indeed, this debate has been going on for a long time – and it has not showed any sign of stopping. Nevertheless, by only focusing on the dominant views, it alienates some parties that are discreetly affected. And arguably, this occurs inside the national park.

Despite the best efforts from both sides, they have been prioritizing their interests and, looking at the current conditions, unsuccessfully accommodating others’ concerns; and one of them is the local residents. For instance, even before the official establishment as a national park, the locals had had the close relationship with the nature; they had been cohabiting peacefully with the Komodos and depending on the resources provided by the nature and the sea. Yet, when the region obtained the national and international attentions, they started to be left out from the inner circle (Somerpes & Afioma, 2016). “Privatization” of the land and the sea for conservation effort and business enterprises has led to inaccessibility of the resources they’ve depended on for a very long time. This eventually caused the recent illegal fishing and shark poaching – mostly done by people from Labuan Bajo, and underdeveloped local community. The incentive from the government to increase local revenue also has not impacted



significantly to them or other people in the Manggarai region; the number of poverty is still high (Yuniar, 2018) – despite the annual earned revenue and subsidy from the government.

In a nutshell, the politics inside KNP is a complex matter; actors have their own interests and the ideal ways to manage the tourism or the regional development in a tourist destination. And this situation has been going for decades, which also shows that consensus has not been on the table. In this scenario, it is safe to say that understanding each perspectives is crucial to achieve and get the best outcomes. This research, therefore, aims to map out actors' actions and behaviors through their exercise of power. And since each actors have their own understandings and preference, analyzing the identity of each actors is paramount for this research. In the end, a description that tells how the concepts of “sustainable tourism” are shaped within the actors themselves could be drawn and a clear map of how the actors interacting with their own identity could be pictured.

1.2. Research question

Seeing the contestation of ideas and competition among actors on the proper way of managing the tourism industry which have been going for a certain period of time, it is important to ask how such occurrence happened in the first place and how each actor struggles for their own interest. To obtain the most compelling analysis, therefore, the research question would be: *how have the politics of managing sustainable tourism in National Park of Komodo Islands been shaped?*

1.3. Theoretical framework

In the study of tourism and its sustainability, consensus on the definition of *sustainable tourism* is rare; there are numerous of understandings, depending on which field of study the perspective is based on. This sector-specific approaches will inevitably result in narrow interpretations that come with their own limitations and potential difficulties. Moreover, tourism itself is an “unclear” industry characterized by numbers of direct and indirect connections with other sectors, interests, and activities (Cater, 1995). Arguably, to create the sustainability, relying on one perspective would not be enough since there are too many



interrelated aspects inside; especially when it comes to the development issue. In order to be as compelling as possible, the method to implement the sustainability in the industry, therefore, should be holistic; it should be closely integrated with all other activities conducted inside the region (McKercher, 1993, p. 14). Advancing developmental state of one region while simultaneously increasing economic growth, ensuring its resilience and maintaining natural resources could be said as a pretty tall order; yet, only prioritizing one aspect can jeopardize the others.

The lack of consensus could be traced back to the fact that in the tourism industry, actors are originated from various backgrounds; often, they represent different *norms* and *identities*, which inevitably shape their *interest* and make them to pursue different goals. When it comes to this, therefore, a constructivist approach is needed. Kratochwil proposed the idea of norms and identities as the center of analysis as a criticism towards positivist approach that disregards the normative character of politics (Kratochwil, 1989). Originally, Kratochwil explain that the change in the international system is determined by the alteration of beliefs and identities of domestic actors, consequently altering the rules and norms that are constitutive of their political practices (Koslowski & Kratochwil, 1994). Through that practices, interest is defined; since the definition of what the actor “wants” and “needs” has already set by the identity and norms – its origins (Klotz & Lynch, 2007). In this case, this approach could be applied in analyzing the politics in Komodo National Park. Although this phenomenon occur inside a nation’s territory, it is not exclusively a domestic issue. Ever since the national park was established as a conservation area internationally, there have been numerous stakeholders. Therefore, the significant involvement of local people marks the existence of three major groups of players that act on different interests – which could be translated into various identities and norms.

Different attitudes and identities create the emerging of the question of the “sustainability”: should tourism be sustainable, or contribute to the idea of sustainable development instead? It could be argued that most of the specific interpretations adhere to the former idea – the goal is to sustain (or to maintain) each approaches’ interests. In the end, it is possible to see the results contradict the intended objectives – thus, not completely sustainable. However, if the latter becomes the main focus, tourism will be sustainable due to the fact that sustainable development aims to find the balance and achieve equity in accessing natural resources for the welfare of the human being, and distribution of the costs and benefits (social,



economic and environmental) that follow the utilization of resources (Fox, 1994). The industry there is developed and maintained in such manner until it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) (Butler, 1999, p. 29).

When tourism is utilized as a developmental tool, it is not recommended to adhere the traditional understanding of economic development since it is too narrow to accommodate an industry with a vast amount of interrelated participants and issues. More importantly, the term of sustainable tourism cannot be interpreted solely from one specific perspective since there are too many variations which sometimes can contradict each other. To grasp the essence of sustainable tourism, therefore, it is important to analyze and create better understanding from the point of view of the each principal related actors. A research using identity and norms could offer alternative point of view in the discussion of sustainable tourism. With approach that tries to comprehend from almost all angles, common ground, cooperation or compromise might be achieved in the politics of this issue. Eventually, it is possible to select the sustainable tourism approach that is suitable and more supporting in the developmental process of an area.

In order to draw clear guideline of how to achieve the sustainability in tourism, first, the concept of sustainable development should be clarified. Turner, et al., (1993) classifies the development approaches into 4 categories, ranging from ‘very weak’ to ‘very strong’ in the context of sustainability position. These stand points set the knowledge of what’s appropriate. For instance, in the ‘weak’ spectrum, the nature of anthropocentric justifies the act to maximize the commodification of natural resources. Meanwhile in the ‘strong’ side, environmental preservation is prioritized. Nevertheless, the ‘intensity’ becomes the main catalyst in this categorization; each position has their own measurement of how much they will prioritize their core ideologies. That being said, this what makes the actors distinctive one to another.

Table 1 Sustainability Positions

| Sustainability position | Defining Characteristics |
|-------------------------|---|
| Very weak | anthropocentric and utilitarian; growth orientated and resource exploitative; natural resources utilized at economically optimal rates through unfettered free markets operating to satisfy |



| | |
|-------------|--|
| | individual consumer choice; infinite substitution possible between natural and human-made capital; continued well-being assured through economic growth and technical innovation. |
| Weak | anthropocentric and utilitarian; resource conservationist; growth is managed and modified; concern for distribution of development costs and benefits through intra- and intergenerational equity; rejection of infinite substitution between natural and human-made capital with recognition of some aspects of the natural world as critical capital (e.g., ozone layer, some natural ecosystems); human-made plus natural capital constant or rising through time; decoupling of negative environmental impacts from economic growth. |
| Strong | (eco)systems perspective; resource preservationist; recognizes primary value of maintaining the functional integrity of ecosystems over and above secondary value through resource utilization; interests of the collective given more weight than those of the individual consumer; adherence to intra- and intergenerational equity; decoupling important but alongside a belief in a steady state economy as a consequence of following the constant natural assets rule; zero economic and human population growth. |
| Very strong | bioethical and eco-centric; resource preservationist to the point where utilization of natural resources is minimized; nature's rights or intrinsic value in nature encompassing non-human living organisms and even abiotic elements under a literal interpretation of Gaianism; anti-economic growth and for reduced human population. |

Source: (Hunter, 2002), adapted from (Turner, et al., 1993).

In most cases, the models of sustainable tourism are not universal; one might be more or less suitable from the other to be implemented in one region. Arguably, this happens due to holism principle; it should include affected aspects and actors as wide as possible. Because of



that, economic growth via tourism development will often conflict with environmental preservation; it is difficult to have the ‘win-win’ situation – where tourism development results in both wealth creation and environmental amelioration, without ‘trading-off’ one for another for certain period of time (Cater, 1995). However, actors commonly will try to gain their interests and implement their allegedly suitable point of view of sustainable tourism. In reality, it might be easier to implement the strong sustainable position attitude in developed countries since economic growth has become least of the concern of the tourism. On the other hand, it would be hard to accomplish the same thing in the developing countries since it's common to see local communities still struggling by the lack of proper infrastructures and basic needs (such as clean and hygienic food and drink) and the trade-offs are unavoidable. In such case, tourism would likely to act conventionally; it can attract numbers of visitors, stimulate the growth of proper infrastructures, and create the market that can be utilized by local communities with direct contribution to the local revenue (Wahab, 1997). In deciding which guideline actors should adhere to, thus, it is important to assess the background and situation of the region.

1.4. Main argument

Creating sustainability in the development process is indeed not an easy task, especially in such ambiguous industry like tourism. Arguably, since KNP is significant, it attracts attention from the national government (who mostly represents the idea of increasing economic growth), international communities of environmentalist (such as UNESCO, Western mass media, etc.) and the local people who have been living in the region for a long time and depended on its resources. Not only should the involved actors tackle the classic issues such as the environment and resources management, but due to the unique trait of tourism, they are required to regard all of the entangled aspects in the industry. Looking at the various ideas of sustainable development and different attitudes in the management that follow, the politics would be filled with a competition of different interests.

The competition specifically takes place in the interactions of actors in tackling several issues; the obvious examples, the economic development and the environment. In few occasions, actors would cooperate with each other, commonly due to the similar goals or similar identities. Nevertheless, KNP is not unfamiliar with conflict; in fact, the frequent clash inside the national park that has been occurring is the main reason why its politics is intriguing. To get the better understanding of it, therefore, establishing the point of intersubjectivity – the



collision point of ideas, is vital. This could be done by analyzing the emerging issue from the narration of the park's development throughout the times; from there, actor's point of view on the specific point could be revealed. And regarding Turner's concepts, although they imply the most common case would be cooperation between actors from the same spectrum and conflict would happen due cross-spectrum interaction, how actors perceive act on an issue could possibly ensure cooperation or the opposite.

1.5. Research methods

This is a qualitative research. To make the analysis as coherent and cohesive as possible, therefore, the data will be extracted previous related and/or similar researches. Actors will be divided in to three main groups: *The Management*, *The Business Enterprises* and *The Grassroots*. Documents such as reports, local and national newspaper articles (such as *Kompas*, *Pos Kupang*, etc.) and facts and figures and so forth should give the clear depiction of the management situation, as well as which point of view each actor see through in setting their own understanding of sustainable tourism. Inclusion of videos and documentaries would also be considered in conducting this research, especially when it comes to understanding the lesser exposed actors such as the locals who live in the small islands. Furthermore, due to the fact various actors range from state to non-state, in domestic and international realm, there would be some legal basis involved. For instance, as a state, Indonesian government looks after the Law No. 5 on Conservation of Natural Resources and Its Ecosystem with other supporting regulations; on the other side, the international actors (non-state and state actors) would likely to adhere to *1972 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* as the legal guidance in dealing with World Heritage site. Since the term of sustainable tourism can be seen as highly subjective, therefore, the process of data collection will attempt to be inclusive and representative as possible.

Since it is important to see the process and progress of managing sustainable tourism in the region, therefore the data should at least range for several years. In this research, the time period will be taken generally from 1990 to the end of 2018. This interval is chosen with the assumption that it could give the various circumstances throughout the time. There are significant historical (and to some extends, political) occurrences which could have different attitudes and policies regarding the region of the national park. The most obvious one is the establishment of the region as the World Heritage Site in 1991. And more importantly, in 1995, the management of the national park was officially intervened by international actors – TNC



or *The Nature Conservancy*, to specific, that arguably, started the alienation of local people from the decision-making process and led to other problems mentioned in the background section (Pannell, 2013). In this period also, a significant political event occurred; the 1998 reformation of the government would affect the politics of the management. The data collection mainly stops at 2018 time period, despite the fact that new discoveries emerge constantly, to keep the result of the analysis less vague. And since the debate in this matter has existed for a long time and not showed any sign of stopping, thus analyzing the conditions over 18 years is deemed sufficient.

CHAPTER II

ACTORS' IDENTITIES, AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. Distribution of power

Every actors in the politics of KNP have their own responsibilities and authority; matters that justify their existence in the house affairs of the National Park. By knowing those aspects, it could describe their identity and what interest they represent. In this section, therefore, the analysis would be focused on establishing each actors' tasks and given privileges. Acknowledging the fact that these actors came from different backgrounds, they will be categorized into specific sub-sections based on their general purposes: *the management*, *the business enterprises*, and *the grassroots*.

2.1.1. The Management

This group includes any actors that can influence the decision-making process legally and usually operate in, but not limited to, the governmental level. The main feature that differentiates them from other stakeholders is the authority to make legal products and policy legitimately – the civil societies can also affect decision-making, yet they don't have the authority to do the latter thus they do not fall into this category.

2.1.1.1. International governance and community

UNESCO becomes one of the stakeholders due to their program of World Heritage Site that's given to KNP in 1991 and the Man and the Biosphere in 1996. The organization gave KNP the status of World Heritage due its unique natural and cultural heritage¹. Previously, in 1977, a group of scholars was appointed certain tasks to determine the state of the region by the organization, which resulted in the ideology of restricting or eliminating the impact of humans on the environment (Hitchcock, 1993); a focused natural science studies. Nevertheless, the international organization acknowledges the social and anthropology aspect inside the region. By establishing it as a World Heritage Site, it aims to promote sustainable development that equally improves both environment and human livelihood. And to achieve that, UNESCO acts as a beneficial financial support². This idea is further strengthened by the Man and the

¹ The protection of both aspects is the basic manifesto of the convention (UNESCO, 1972)– of which the status is based on

² In the early development of the management, the approved budget reached 119,500 USD (UNESCO WHC, 1995).



Biosphere program that seek the balance between nature and human beings (Man and The Biosphere Indonesia, n.d.); both aspects should advance simultaneously.

Other prominent international actor would be *The Nature Conservancy* (TNC), a private environmental company. In 1995, the organization, with its multi-million dollar portfolio of purchased assets, joint hand with *Indonesian National Park Authority*, PKHA, to manage the park (Michael, 2001). TNC was assigned to directly handle the infrastructure and daily operations issues. It designed a 25-years masterplan to protect the biodiversity of Komodo and to replenish the surrounding fishing ground, by reducing the threats of ‘incompatible activities’ (PKA & TNC, 2000). These ‘incompatible activities’ refers to the destructive fishing methods and environmentally irresponsible lifestyle of the local people. Nevertheless, it also emphasizes the control over the human population by restricting immigration and land use; and at the same time, creating exclusive zones where fishing activities are allowed or prohibited (PKA & TNC, 2000, p. 11). According to the company’s observation, the human population in the region is deemed as exceeding the carrying capacity of the area; and with the low education level and poverty in the region, environmental conservation would be the least concern of the locals. Furthermore, it also explains how human activities have brought the undesirable change to the region, whereas the region with such unique biodiversity and endemic species should be turned back to its natural state – in other words, being preserved. Tourism would only be utilized to fund the conservation effort, but not necessarily become the main priority.

In the stance of sustainability and its relation to sustainable tourism, it can be seen that UNESCO and TNC have a different point of views. For one, UNESCO's philosophy aspire to promote economic growth and development that sustain the environment. And regarding tourism, it is seen as an effective tool since it would raise the awareness of nature and the culture inside KNP; also, the generated revenue could ameliorate the living condition of the local residents. Meanwhile, TNC stands for the preservation of nature. Through their observation, the human population had inherently changed the initial natural order; limiting, if not reducing, the number of the population therefore is seen as a viable option. Tourism revenue is used to fund the effort of keeping the environment pristine from the destructive human activities. In Turner's terms, TNC adopts the strong sustainability positions – leaning to the very strong, due to its environmental preservation stance; UNESCO falls into the weak sustainability positions for their environmental conservationism.



2.1.1.2. Central governance by national government

The national government originally intended to use tourism as a tool for obtaining national revenue and strengthening the Rupiah's monetary position in the global market; the industry had been used as a development strategy in Repelita V (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun – Five Year Development Plans*) to increase the foreign exchange earnings (Booth, 1990). Thus, KNP rose to the spotlight. Nevertheless, due to attention and pressure from the international community, utilization of resources inside KNP therefore should be governed in such flexible way; through the Law No. 5 1990, the government of Indonesia emphasizes the importance of preserving the environment and its ecosystem; although it does not close the possibility of resources extraction³. More importantly, the operational cost of the conservation is quite high. Facing this reality, it enabled the government's 1990s pursuit of consolidating governance, by opening up management processes to stakeholder involvement; an effort to raise support from various parties, such as local civil societies or foreign international organizations, to fund the conservation effort (Djohani, 2009)

It could be seen that government main task is to ensure both environmental conservation and economic activities can be done inside KNP through legal aspect; The institution became the highest and legitimate authority in giving power to all of the involved actors. The national government eventually is not able to weigh on one side due to multiple pressures. For instance, the revenue generated by KNP barely covered the conservation cost⁴. Financial support from international cooperation somehow eases the burden of the government informing the proper management of the National Park; the joint venture with TNC aided the process even further. The consequences: the mandate for conservation should be executed simultaneously with the economic incentives. For this reasons and duality, the national government stands in the *weak* sustainable position.

2.1.1.3. Local governance

2.1.1.3.1. The Park's management

At the lowest governance level, there are two prominent actors with direct authority in daily operation of KNP: the Komodo National Park Authority and PNK. The collaboration between Indonesian government and TNC formed into the Park Authority. One of the tangible product of this cooperation is the 25-years of masterplan, which contains the new zoning policy

³ As long as the practice is done with sustainable methods (Law no.5, 1990).

⁴ A study measured the mean of 1990-1991 and 1994-1995 budgets and compared it to the revenue from entrance fees of the same period, and came out with the number of 6.9% (Walpole, et al., 2001)



and licensing policy. The new zoning policy mostly emphasizes on the enlargement of conservation zone, which left several acres to be utilized for extractive economic activities as it can be seen on the Figure 1⁵. This where PT. Putri Naga Komodo (PNK) had a major role.

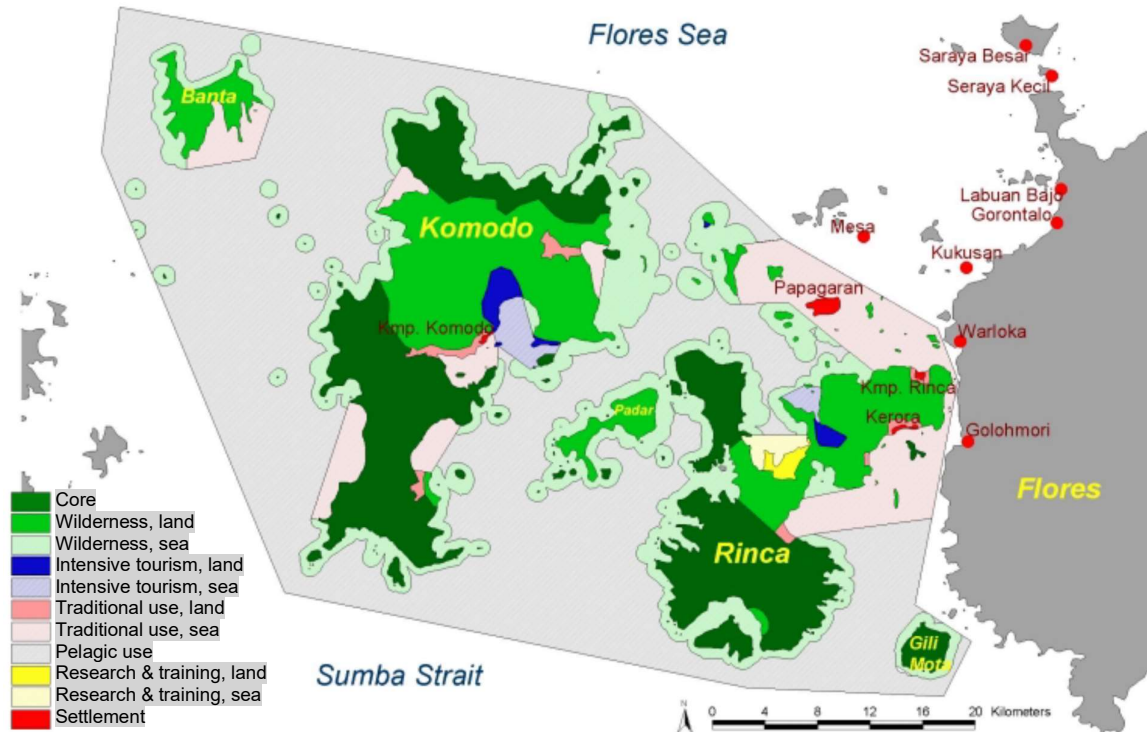


Figure 1 map of Komodo National Park

PNK was formed in 2002 based on the cooperation between TNC and a company, owned by a naturalized Indonesian business man; the ownership was shared 60% for TNC-Park Authority and around 40% by the business man. The main purpose: to manage the financial affair of KNP. PNK had the authority to regulate the ticketing; furthermore, it also regulated the special permission for the tourism activities. To enter the National Park, visitors had to pay US\$15, which directly went to the Conservation Fund, and additional US\$2 that went to Komodo National Park Authority; when tourists wanted to do activities such as hiking or diving, they would be charged additional fees (Gallegos, et al., 2005). The distinctive assignments and responsibilities are intended to achieve efficiency, which is deemed as lack in the previous management.

⁵ For the tourism and wilderness zones, although human activities are allowed, it requires special permits (PKA & TNC, 2000, pp. 44-48)



2.1.1.3.2. The regional government

The regional government acts as the legal representative of the central government; which means, the National Park is dependent on its policies. Especially after the political reformation in 1998, the national government has become decentralized, which gives the local government more autonomy in managing their home affair. And in 2004, as the response to the event, District of West Manggarai was formed to reduce the workload of the Governor of East Nusa Tenggara. Similar to the superior the authority, the district government generally upholds the same values in the Law no. 5. Yet, with the newly acquired independence, the region has the legitimate power to control the available natural resources. And for a few years, there had not been specific regulation on tourism aspects; it was purely seen as a mere regular industry and business until an official regulation came out ratified on 2017: the *2017 District Regulation No. 2 on Regional Tourism System*. Later on the next section, it could be seen how the government have shifted from *weak* to *very weak* sustainable position back and forth.

2.1.2. The business enterprises

As the name suggest, the group includes all of the actors, outside the management, that utilize tourism industry as their source of revenue. Inherently, they have the same responsibilities and rights, regulated by the government policy. Due to that, to understand their identity, it is crucial to see the exercise of their given power. Therefore, in this section, the discussion will be limited to defining what actors fall into the category and their identity will be further elaborated with their behavior in exercising the power in the 2.2 section.

2.1.2.1. High-end hospitality services

Inherently, anyone has the rights to own a business enterprise; as long as they can survive through the unpredictability of the tourism industry. The early fundamental regulation would be the *2005 District Regulation No. 12 on Industrial Business License and Registration*. There's no explicit policies that tell what should be done; only several points that prohibit any form of business enterprise to exceed the agreed environmental carrying capacity⁶. What makes the distinction of high-end hospitality services would be its capital. The Law states that business with the capital under IDR 5.000.000 is under no obligation to obtain the license; greater than that, business should own the registration notice, and for the one that has capital more than IDR 200.000.000 is required to have the license. Other than licensing matters, the

⁶ Point 5 and 12 District Law no. 12, 2005 (Pemerintah Daerah Kabupaten Manggarai Barat, 2005).



hospitality service is an open and free market where the actor survivability is determined by its assets and resources.

2.1.2.2. Tour and diving operators

The tours and diving operators can be divided into two subgroups based on their base of operation: the local and non-local. The latter refers to the operators that came outside the national park; usually they come from the neighboring region such as Bali and most of the time, their excursions are full-day activities. The other one refers to the locally owned or based operators. Similar to the hospitality services, they are regulated by the same law. Nevertheless, tour operators' operation would closely intertwined with the zoning policy due to their nature of business – more than the resorts and hotels. This factor will later influence their business conduct in daily basis – more on section 2.2.

2.1.2.3. Mining companies

Mining companies do not operate directly inside KNP; however, their existence inevitably affects the protected areas. For several years, mining exploration had been treated as usual business; they were able to run in the region of District Manggarai, as long as they had the license of which rights of publication was held by the district head. The practice has recently stopped by the publication of 2017 District Law No. 9 on the *Revocation of 2014 District Law on Management of Local Mining Activities* which gave back the rights to the provincial government (Law No. 9, 2017). Nowadays, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for mining companies to acquire the license to operate near the protected areas. However, back when the practice was allowed, it created some unrest in the region. It is safe to say the unrest pushed the district head to revoke the rights.

2.1.3. The grassroots

This group refers to the lowest level in the hierarchy of management. Stakeholders in this group usually become mere subjects of management policy, and rarely have the direct and legal control over the decision-making.

2.1.3.1. The residents

Inside the politics of KNP, the term "residents" does not refer to a single specific group; although it is safe to assume that they share the same citizenships, Indonesian, most of the time. From the previous chapter, it can be concluded that there are three major factions: non-park residents, migrant residents, and the locally-born residents. The basic differentiating factor



would be, of course, the residential status. Specifically, the non-park residents should come from the surrounding of National Park or even outside East Nusa Tenggara; they would rarely have the permanent establishment to stay and to live inside the region. Migrant residents, however, have settled inside the Park and usually have their livelihood depended on its resources. Lastly, locally-born residents refer to the inhabitants of the rural islands such as the Komodo, Padar, and Rinca Islands. Creating distinction among those three groups is important due to the fact that they have different intake and understanding of sustainability in the tourism industry.

Nevertheless, on the legal basis, they have the same rights and responsibilities. Before the District Law No. 2, residents were governed under the same commercial polices; although most of the time, their capital did not fulfill the minimum criteria for acquiring the mandatory registration, which means they were exempted from the mandatory taxes, fees, etc. for opening business – this especially applies to the locally-born residents. However, talking about commercial activities, the residents are also involved in the fisheries and souvenir business that require extraction of natural resources. For that reason, they are required to oblige the 2005 *District Law No. 28 on Utilization of Fisheries Tools and Instruments*. The law itself regulates and sets the code of conduct for the fisheries industry; remembering that KNP is a protected areas, the policies revolves around the prohibition of certain methods and materials that could endanger the fish stocks and coral reefs, beside encouraging the fishermen to use more “sustainable” approach (Law No. 28, 2005). And since the practice has been the livelihood of most of the residents from a very long time, the regulation inevitably changes their live dynamics.

That would arguably, in some cases, become problematic. As it can be seen, the regulation was published and effectively taken place in 2004. Counting that its enforcement had started few years prior, it was a radical change for the residents; they had to change the way of living that had been done for decades. In the section 2.2, it will be revealed how the process was rocky and somehow it’s set the foundation of current situation.

2.1.3.2. Civil societies and NGOs

Most of the civil societies and NGOs move around their basic tasks of environmental, social, advocacy and human rights; for instance, small scale NGOs are active in the educational field to raise awareness on the environmental issue (Kimmek, 2013). On the other hand, one of



the most influential actor would be the Catholic Church with its advocacy for social justice – a cause that “adjacent to the manifesto of the Church” (Felisiani, 2017). The Church has been actively involved in the development throughout the East Nusa Tenggara – which includes the District and the National Park, as a part of its missions (Borgias, 2015); the institution could be regarded as the first party that would feel the effect of poverty faced by the residents, compared to other involved actors. Most of the time, their involvement revolves around social works such as providing health services and education with supporting infrastructures in small scale (schools, clinics, etc.). In most recent cases, these actors are aiding the residents in the midst of political war. As for the Church, the institution often gathered significant support from various sources due to its influence; it even contributed significantly in the election of the new district head – among other things. With this kind of power, the Church has inevitably become a prominent force in the politics of KNP.

2.2. Development activities

The politics of KNP is fundamentally shaped by the exercise of power from the involved actors. As it can be seen from the section above, each stakeholders have different ideas and even responsibilities on conducting what is called as sustainable tourism in the context of development. In this section, the analysis would be focused on how they implement their goals in their actions, which often become the foundation of interaction among them; whether it's cooperation or conflict.

2.2.1. The management

2.2.1.1. International and national governance

The influence of international community can be seen in the funding aspect; both UNESCO and TNC are the biggest donators in developing KNP. Back in the early formation of the national park – and its establishment as a World Heritage Site, UNESCO approved 119,500 USD as the starting budget for reforming the park's management (UNESCO WHC, 1995). This arguably is what enabled the government's 1990s pursuit of consolidating governance, by opening up management processes to stakeholder involvement; an effort to raise support from various parties, such as local civil societies or foreign international organizations, to fund the conservation effort (Djohani, 2009). Since the situation had been a struggle, surely seeking external support would be a logical step.

The consolidation brought TNC to the management; the justification for the cooperation: ‘no or poor park management’ that derived from a ‘lack of government funds’ (Pannell, 2013). National government and TNC worked hand in hand; it would ease the burden of the government and TNC could implement their environmental preservation principles. In other places, TNC’s modus operandi is to privatize the region since it would be easier for them to execute their plan. However, KNP is not mere a biodiverse sanctuary, other resources such as precious minerals and oils are available near the territory. Moreover, according to Law No. 5, all of the floras and faunas are considered as natural resources thus they are solely owned by the government; in other words, privatization is out of the discussion and thus TNC had to come up with another strategy to co-manage the National Park (Dhume, 2002): the 25 Years Masterplan.

2.2.1.2. The park governance

The 25 Years Masterplan is a form of co-management, proposed by TNC, to protect the biodiversity of Komodo and to replenish the surrounding fishing ground, by reducing the threats of the incompatible activities. At the same time, it also emphasizes the control over the human population by restricting immigration and land use; and at the same time, creating exclusive zones where fishing activities are allowed or prohibited (PKA & TNC, 2000, p. 11). Although the plan itself was officially adopted in 2000, the park rangers had been practicing few years prior when TNC’s presence was newly established. And with the foundation of PNK in 2002, TNC had tackled some of lingering issues and somehow, achieved their conservation goals.

There are two major issues according to the Park management: exceeding human population and activities, and ticketing⁷. With the new regulation, Park Authority was able to reduce the problem; moreover, with the new fees, they could also support the conservation effort better. The rangers were also vigorous in enforcing the zoning policy; more manpower and facilities could be provided due to the new financial support. In the end, a success story was also reported through the increase of fishing stocks and the rejuvenated coral reefs – which was really welcomed by the diving operators; for those foreign visitors, KNP looked well-managed (Cochrane, 2013, p. 135). On the surface, both Park Authority and PNK had the same visions, yet different sustainable positions. The latter can be categorized in the *weak* position

⁷ For the latter, previous studies indicate that there were too many entry points where travelers could pass through without paying the retribution fee; hence, another source of leakage (Walpole & Goodwin, 2000, p. 570)



due to its economic nature – conservation is important, so is tourism industry; while the former falls into the *strong* position due to its disfavor towards the anthropology aspects.

However, the credibility of TNC and PNK became doubted at the end of their contract to manage the National Park in 2012. Looking back to the time when PNK was founded, the corporation was indeed intended to deal with the National Park's financial situation. Nevertheless, in 2010, two non-governmental organizations accused the PNK of money laundering the obtained revenue from entry tickets (Kenaru, 2011). PNK allegedly had embezzled the money since 2006; the money never went to the government, neither to the local residents. Although the corporation's excuse was because the money was used purely for the conservation effort, they immediately stopped the operation when the government introduced a new regulation. The funds that settled in the bank account, therefore, was questioned.

Moreover, in 2015, an island called Mawang Island was suddenly revealed as owned by the naturalized Malaysian citizen, who also owns the shares of PNK (Utami, 2015). Despite the doubt on the legitimacy of the ownership, the Alam Kukul (the alleged shell company) had placed its mark on the island. This, of course, begs the question of the practice conducted by the government, PNK, and TNC. What becomes the main irony is that in 2006, when the clash between locals and government happened, the district head clearly stated that everyone does not have the rights of ownership, only rights of using; yet, the case of Mawang Island states the opposite.

2.2.1.3. Local governance

The District of West Manggarai have experienced behavioral shift throughout the times – although never crossed to the *strong* spectrum. In the early years, the government acknowledged the importance of the conservation inside KNP by constructing the District Law to protect the marine and land resources. However, the loose end would be the mining concession. In 2006, the District government gave a permit to a Chinese mining company for gold exploration, in an area near of Labuan Bajo called Batu Gosok (Erb, 2011) – despite its status as a protected areas. The justification: everyone has the rights to utilize the land, yet the state is still the sole owner. Therefore, it is within the jurisdiction of the government to allocate the so-called “barren” land to be used in certain way. Only in 2009, when the project had started to show the impacts, investigation was finally conducted; it was reported that tourist were



reluctant to stay in the area, which added more urgency after the significant environmental damages (Kompas.com, 2009).

The decision was not popular, especially among the residents, with numerous protests that followed. This led to the election of Agustinus Dula as the new Head District, ruling out his former first-in-command, Fidelis Paranda; Dula had promised to give back the rights to grant mining concession to the governor of East Nusa Tenggara, which was indeed delivered later (McBeth, 2018). The action was further strengthened by the 2017 Law No. 9 which completely eliminates the mining activities from being handled in the District’s affair. However, this issue is not the only problem happened in the new district. As it can be seen, the government was not shy in embracing its commercial nature. This reflects on the rapid big-scale development of hotels and resorts – which would not be possible without the permission from the District government. Although it is supposed to represent the national government, the District of West Manggarai chooses to adhere to the *very weak* sustainable position; increasing the region’s revenue in vast amount is likely still the priority.

2.2.2. The business enterprises

Business and commercial sector can be generally seen as thriving in KNP. This can be seen from the rapid growth of accommodation and other hospitality services; in 2010, there were three 4-stars hotels and thirty seven small accommodations and few nightclubs for entertainment, while in 2006 the region only had one small accommodation (Burhani, 2010) – furthermore, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number has kept increasing throughout the years after that – as it can be seen from the Table 2. The data also reflects the increase in visitor numbers. High demand for places to stay marks that KNP is indeed a popular destination in the tourism market.

Table 2 Development of Accommodation 2011-2017

| Akomodasi Hotel | Perkembangan Akomodasi Hotel | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Jumlah Hotel | 39 | 42 | 48 | 56 | 60 | 64 | 76 |
| Jumlah Kamar | 583 | 766 | 853 | 914 | 994 | 1030 | 1191 |
| Jumlah Tempat Tidur | 963 | 1354 | 1383 | 1435 | 1540 | 1697 | 2262 |

Source: (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Manggarai Barat, 2018)



High number of visitors also means higher demand for tourist activities; which, makes becoming tourist and diving operator good business opportunities. As it has been mentioned before, the pristine and well-managed nature is very welcomed by actors that are involved in this line of work; seeing they implement environmental principles in their operation, therefore, would not be an uncommon thing. For instance, the local dive operators would often participate in regular beach cleanups and some educational activities in schools to increase the awareness of environmental cause; the actions also can take form from being involved in the construction of marine life sanctuary, to giving reusable water container to the clients they're bringing in daily practices (Kimmek, 2013). Similar behavior is also shown by the non-local operators; although it is limited to generating revenue (for supporting the conservation effort) or taking precautions in interacting with nature. In brief, declining the aesthetic and quality of nature means declining in their revenue.

2.2.3. The grassroots

2.2.3.1. The residents

Despite the advertised benefits of tourism and environmental conservation, the residents become the ones that feel the most of the negative impacts, among other significant changes in their life. The first tourist boom happened circa 1980s when the region was first established as a national park and nature sanctuary; the development of Labuan Bajo increased rapidly. Infrastructures such as better roads, airports, and telecommunication started to pop out, making access to the region becomes far easier and simultaneously, the previously well-known neighboring tourist destination, Ruteng, became less visited. In the early 1980s, Ruteng, which had been more popular with the tourist, enjoyed the prosperity due to its role as the transit point to other destinations, including Labuan Bajo; the region was more developed compared to Labuan Bajo since it already had an airport and roads leading to those destinations to accommodate the tourists. Yet, due to the national park's popularity, most of the resources and investments provided by the local and national government, along with various investors were focused on Labuan Bajo, which eventually becomes one of the main reason why tourism to Ruteng almost disappears (Erb, 2000, p. 142).

Arguably, it even changed the work ethics and the interactions of the locals with the nature at that time. For instance, the young generations started to “work for leisure” by shifting their interest to the tourism industry. Small tourist operators proliferated due to the promising



revenue from the tourists. And this trend was not only popular with the newcomers, some of the old residents altered their daily jobs to tourism by providing the service as a part-time job. This, in the long run, creates the dependency on the industry that's fragile⁸. The locals also started to 'work' cooperatively with the park rangers by selling their goats and other livestock to the Park, which eventually led to the Komodo as a part of the tourist attraction (Sitorus, 2011). Previously, the locals – or specifically called *Ata Modo*, would spare their hunts or fish catch to the Komodo, a tradition that derives from their legend that says Ata Modo and the Komodo are related through the same ancestors, a twin siblings; a tradition that had kept the coexistence of humans and the nature (Ellis, 1998). With the takeover by tourism, many of them shifted to the industry for quick cash.

This led to the decreasing number of traditional local fishermen as the young generations were more attracted to the tourism industry, and the ones who migrated to the region did not contribute to the regeneration process. However, the vacuum of power over marine resources did not occur as the more modern fishing industry started to establish itself in the region; surely, with the abundance of marine faunas has its own attraction. The friction with the fishermen started from the issue of destructive fishing methods using dynamites, cyanide and compressors, which usually used by the non-Park inhabitants – or the new residents (Sitorus, 2011). As for the older ones, their traditional fishing methods do not affect the sedentary marine ecosystem. Nevertheless, in talking about the conservation, these industries are seen as the main cause of environmental degradation. The direct interaction with nature, conducted by both industries is deemed harmful.

The notion of “well-managed” national park, turns out, came with a price. The new zoning enforcement had limited their fishing grounds where they had been depended on for generations. Often, the fishermen clashed with the patrols and in some occasions, it went violent. In 1998, there had been eight deaths and three disappearances; however, this fact was swept under the rug until the next fatal shooting in 2002. In this case, both reports from the enforcement and the witnesses/survivors are contradicting each other. In the official report, the conflict happened when the patrols caught fishermen with illegal equipment and they were being hostile when the rangers tried to apprehend them. On the other hands, the alleged fishermen said they faced brutality, even held hostage due to the fact that they didn't bring any illegal equipment. This incident sparked public outrage and brought down investigation –

⁸ The 1998 political crisis also affected the region created ripples in the local economy (Erb, 2000)



followed by numbers of protests, initiated by NGOs such as Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan, better known as KontraS (*Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence*) (Down to Earth, 2003). Through this, the factual practice to achieve that “well-managed” look was uncovered one by one.

The attitude from the government did not produce a success story either. The relaxed policies on commercial sector turns out only greatly benefit certain parties. Specifically, locals obtained the revenue only by direct interaction with the tourists, which usually fall into the category of low-income visitors such as backpackers and independent travelers (Erb, 2005)⁹. Besides, the area outside Labuan Bajo was very underdeveloped, only those type of visitors were willing to spend days in such remotes areas. The rapid development in KNP for tourism has reached to the point where it becomes over-privatized.

Generally speaking, the tourism industry of the region did not generate the desired result. Even before the intervention from TNC, the industry had not been economically beneficial for the native residents. Walpole and Goodwin's conclusion states that locally-born residents participated less in developing-urban sectors due to their lack of contact with tourists; the aftermath, only non-residents benefited the most and only 1% of direct tourism revenue was received by people living within the park (Walpole & Goodwin, 2001); the authors' previous study had also found out that small percentage of the residents owned businesses, the rest was fall under the ownership of non-locals or foreigners (Goodwin, et al., 1997). Furthermore, major political instabilities happened in Indonesia throughout the early 2000s; which means, KNP had to face low season for quite long. For instance, the aftermath of 1998 political unrest was still in effect; the growth of visitors was slow for several years ever since. This also worsened by the several bombings in Bali throughout the decade. The locals, therefore, had to face the difficulty as well due to the habit of being depended on the tourism industry. Low demands became the main issue of souvenirs vendors and tour operators.

Yet, since the regeneration of fishermen had not been as progressive as it used to be, lots of them had difficulty in going back to fishing; they lacked the skills and facilities, an aftermath of the work ethics shifting. The vendors who run small businesses with little capital took the biggest toll; they got into the business by selling all of their fishing equipment. When the crisis hit, they inevitably faced difficulty since it was quite expensive to buy new boats and

⁹ High-income travelers usually opt for tour package with packed schedule that sometimes prohibits them from interacting with street vendors or family-owned businesses



fishing gears. The money obtained from selling souvenirs apparently could not cover the cost due to high rent and fierce competition in the market (Lasso & Dahles, 2018); thus, on daily basis, the main goal was to survive, hard to save up or to invest for advancing their businesses. And the zoning system only put more complication in the process – not only for the fishing activities but also for the souvenir making since the new park regulation limits the access to the resources such as seaweed locusts, sea shells and even woods.

2.2.3.2. The Catholic Church

The motivation for the Church's involvement is to combat the social and economic injustices since the poverty level in the overall West Manggarai in 2010 was still around 20%; it even reached 20% in 2006 (Databoks.co.id, 2016). The first significant involvement would be the 2010 local election where they backed up Agustinus Dula due to his promise regarding the mining issues. In fact, the institution has been really active in rejecting mining companies throughout East Nusa Tenggara, since they're seen as the primary cause of the poverty among the region's residents. The intervention started around 2009 when a mining company created environmental hazards that threatened a village (Floresa.co, 2015). The role was quite significant, it is even reported that few influential figures in the central national government, such as Setya Novanto, had accused the Church of protecting local NGOs that blocked potential mining investors (Suara Pembaruan, 2015).

The same effort can also be seen in the effort to conserve the environment surrounding KNP. Responding to the gold exploration in Batu Gosok, the Church published official statement that condemned the activity.

“Mankind must be saved, so does other living beings, because the purpose of creating everything in this world is to praise and glorify God with all the beauty and integrity of their existence, and not with the damage and destruction that come about – Bishop Mgr. Hubertus Leteng of Ruteng Diocese (Suara Pembaruan, 2010).”

As for the privatization issue, the same idea is also inherently implemented; although the argument is more underlined on the public access. Pede Beach has been a place where public can gather for various occasions; constructing private resorts mean restricting the people for some illusive promises of economic welfare. The Ruteng Diocese efforts include sending its



representation in some public demonstrations – such as the 2017 protest (Felisiani, 2017). However, according to some reports, the Diocese has been trying to negotiate with the government, both local and provincial; few official letters has been sent for reasoning the cause (Chen, 2016). In general, environmental conservation is indeed an important thing, yet it is not merely for the sake of preserving it. The Catholic Church believes that the relation between human and nature should be balance; it cannot weigh on one side. Due to this reason, the institution can be seen as standing in the *weak* sustainability position

Table 3 Actors and Their Sustainable Positions

| Category | Level | Actor | Authority | Sustainability Position |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Management | International governance and community | UNESCO | Encouraging development effort | Weak |
| | | | Encouraging scholar and research activities | |
| | | | Raising/giving funds | |
| | | The Nature Conservancy | Co-managing the National Park | Strong |
| | | | Funding the operation | |
| | | | Conserving the environment | |
| | Central governance | National government | Establishing the fundamental guideline of any activities related to KNP | Weak |
| | | | Regulating the funds for KNP | |
| | Local governance | District of West Manggarai | Managing the region of West Manggarai | Very Weak to Weak |
| | | Parks Authority | Managing the National Park | Strong to Very Strong |
| Overseeing the operation | | | | |
| Putri Naga Komodo | Handling the Park's finance | Weak | | |
| Business enterprises | Local operation and occupation | High-end hospitality service | Providing the hospitality services such as hotels and resorts | Weak |
| | | Tours and diving operators | Providing the hospitality services such as guided tours and diving | Weak to Strong |
| | Raising the awareness of people regarding the environment | | | |
| | Local operation and occupation | Mining companies | Conducting mining exploration and operation | Very weak |



| | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|---|-----------|
| The grassroots | Non-park residents | Opening small businesses; getting involved in tourism and fishing industry | Very weak |
| | Migrant residents | | Weak |
| | Locally-born residents | Extracting the marine and land resources, guided by their traditional methods | Weak |
| | NGOs | Supporting the people's causes (environmental, social, and economic); education | Strong |
| | Catholic Church | Supporting the social and economic justice for the residents (advocacy) | Weak |

Source: Author.

CHAPTER III

INTERSUBJECTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

From the previous explanation, there are few key subjects of debates where the intersubjectivity appears. There are four main fields where the actors interact, intentionally or unintentionally, with each other: economic, environmental aspects, social aspects and to some extent, political aspects. Table 4 below serves as the summary of the occurring events. In each aspect, there are several raised issues with various actors involved; the interaction happens inside them. In this chapter, intersubjectivity will be explained, along with its role in dealing with the issues and shaping the politics inside KNP.

Table 4 Raised Issues in the Management of KNP

| Sustainable Aspects | Issues | Actors | Sustainability Position |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Economic aspects | Conservation funding | TNC - Park Authority | Strong |
| | | PNK | Very Weak |
| | | District and Provincial Government | Very Weak |
| | Livelihood shift | The residents | Weak |
| | | TNC - Park Authority | Strong |
| | | Fierce competition in the tourism industry | The residents |
| Environmental aspects | Damaging fishing activities | District and Provincial Government | Very Weak |
| | | TNC - Park Authority | Strong to Very Strong |
| | | The residents | Very Weak |
| | Trash from tourism activities | TNC - Park Authority | Strong |
| | | PNK | Very Weak |
| | | Accommodation services | Weak |
| | | Diving operators | Strong |
| | Mining activities | District and Provincial Government | Very Weak |
| | | The residents | Weak |
| The Church | | Weak | |
| Social aspect | Privatization of public spaces | District and Provincial Government | Very Weak |
| | | The residents | Weak |



| | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Marginalizing zoning policy | The Church | Weak |
| | | TNC - Park Authority | Strong |
| Political aspect | Corruption | The residents | Weak |
| | | PNK | Very Weak |
| | Representation in decision-making | District and Provincial Government | Very Weak |
| | | TNC - Park Authority | Strong |
| | | PNK | Very Weak |
| | | The residents | Weak |
| | District and Provincial Government | Very Weak | |

Source: author.

3.1. Economic intersubjectivities

TNC- Park Authority, District and Provincial Government, and the residents are the major actors that contest the concept of sustainability in the case of economy. For instance, in Turner’s terms, TNC prioritizes maintaining the functional integrity of ecosystems over the extraction of the resources. Tourism, therefore, is only utilized to merely fund the conservation effort, not as a form of the capitalization of nature. In other locations, the almost-total autonomy of the corporation allows them to increase the entrance fee to the point where the revenue can sustain the conservation operation nearly independently¹⁰. Nevertheless, as it has been established before, the law in Indonesia prohibits TNC from obtaining total autonomy; control over KNP, therefore, should be shared with the national government.

Although fundamentally KNP is under the protection of the Law No.5, the government cannot neglect the significant profits generated by the National Park. Due to this reason, the government, mostly the provincial and the regional, utilizes KNP as a source of revenue to fund the regional development effort; tourism becomes a method to achieve a sustainable economy. The managed and modified development and growth reflect the weak sustainable position adopted by the government. For instance, in the early era of KNP, the government tried to integrate the local community by modifying the local customs; the Rangers bought the residents' livestock thus it reduced the hunting and fishing activities (Pannell, 2013, p. 55). The central government also has been known for their enthusiastic campaigns for promoting the tourism of KNP – which often weigh more on the economic side. For example, the 2013 *Sail Komodo*; the allocated budget for preparation (by building various better infrastructures)

¹⁰ In fact, it has been the company’s strategy from the beginning of its formation (Moseley & Mullen, 2014) – which also has been criticized over decades for neglecting the social and cultural aspects.



reached IDR 3.7 trillion (Erb, 2015). It could be said that the government has also acknowledged the fact that the economy inside the region is heavily depended on the capacity of nature. Since the pre-national park economic activities (such as agriculture and fisheries) are deemed as environmentally exhausting, tourism is used to balance between commodification and conservation of natural resources.

The similar understanding inherently is also adopted by the locally-born residents; their culture perceives the Komodo as their distant relatives, which means they have to take care of the species since any harm done to the Komodo will affect the human too (Pannell, 2013, p. 55). Nevertheless, the introduction of tourism in the region has changed their practice of living. The formation of the National Park attracted some of them to put their hands on the new business opportunity. When TNC entered the management with their program to eliminate the "destructive" economic activities, the pressure to be a part of the tourism industry became bigger. Some of them had to sell their fishing equipment as the capital to open a business that accommodates tourism, usually in the form of souvenir vending (Lasso & Dahles, 2018); which turns out, was not enough to alleviate them from lingering poverty that they had to endure. In the grassroots level, the struggle is limited to living the daily life; a complete shift from natural resource extraction to fully adapt to tourism is almost impossible since both industries barely support their living. Tourism, in this case, is understood as the mean to achieve a sustainable economy when their past grounds of livelihood are limited.

The concept of sustainability in the economic sense, therefore, is contested between the sustainability of the economy and the sustainability of the source of the economic activities. For the Park's management, generating revenue is not as essential as preventing human interference with nature. Nevertheless, the concept could not be applied to the locals and the government, considering the development of the region now and then. The locals had been depended heavily on fishery and the shifting to tourism was rather quick; they could not found the suitable method that can sustain their income. As for the government, KNP is seen as one of the most viable sources of income to fund the development process. Remembering that poverty level in West Manggarai – or the general East Nusa Tenggara, is still a concerning issue, developing the National Park as a sustainable revenue generator by juggling between nature conservation and attracting tourists and visitors, therefore, is the most logical option. Yet, since TNC needed the support from the government and the company had set and put some effort in reeducating the locals to align with their vision, the situation remains at the status quo.

3.2. Environmental intersubjectivities

While in dealing with economic concerns actors can often compromise with each other, conflicts and frictions frequently happen when "sustainability" is related to the environment. There are three major issues raised in this topic: fishing activities, the effect of massive tourist flow, and the mining activities that taken place close to the National Park. Although they were taken place at the same location, those issues are not the cause or consequence of each other. Thus, it is often to see the fights inside of each issue happened simultaneously.

3.2.1. Fishing activities

One of the main and initial issues brought by TNC is destructive fishing activities. The activities were usually done by the non-residents who fished with sophisticated equipment (Sitorus, 2011) did happen; in the early 1990s, it is recorded that the fishing activities had caused massive reef damage and killing a considerable amount of marine life as the collateral damage (Goodwin, et al., 1997). However, looking at the fact that sometimes-violent confrontation also happened to the traditional fishermen, TNC and Park Authority came close to become a *very strong* sustainability position adherent. Moreover, in the Master Plan, initially proposed the prohibition of migration to the National Park and utilization of incentives for emigration from the area (PKA & TNC, 2000, p. 19); a step that perfectly aligns with the principle of reducing the human population.

On the other hand, the local traditional fishermen had tried to use their traditional method; despite in the early era of KNP, various parties had been trying to eliminate the activities. Remembering the fact that their livelihood had sustained the residents' lives for a long period of time, surely their understanding of 'sustainability' would be closely related to the continuation of their lives; almost the opposite of what TNC adheres to. Looking at the company's behavior, it is clear to see that "sustainability" is understood as the continuous life of nature and ecosystem, of which relation is fragile to the destruction caused by human activities. Meanwhile, the locals treat the resources extraction as a mean to support their life; some consider it as a mere commodity, some use it to survive another day. These two perspectives could be regarded as polar opposite since often, actors stand on both ends of the spectrum. Thus, in this case, it would not be unusual to see the intersubjectivity causing violent conflicts.



3.2.2. The flow of tourists

In the first chapter, a brief example of how mass tourism has impacted the environment depicts the feared effect of bringing visitors to the area. Nevertheless, especially for Park's Authority, the tourism industry is the only viable option to fund their conservation effort. In the Master Plan, TNC had somehow prepared for the inevitable consequence through the zoning policy. As can be seen from Figure 1 and in the previous chapter, the new policy allows commercial activities in several areas. Moreover, the plan is also focused on the development and improvement of human capital through education and training (PKA & TNC, 2000), to prepare the inhabitants for altering their livelihoods to be more eco-friendly. By doing such thing, the Park's Authority has acknowledged the potential of KNP to be a high-demanded tourist destination and thus, such policies are the first defense against the feared consequences of mass tourism. In this situation, the Park's Management is still holding on to the idea of sustaining the environment.

The similar belief is shared with the diving operators. Since their business is heavily depended on the sustainability of the environment and the visitors, educating their clients is a priority. Action such as providing reusable water container really helps the conservation effort; their occasional campaign to the schools also contributes significantly. Nevertheless, they are not merely limited to proactive actions. With their participation in the beach cleanups and corals, transplantation shows their commitment to the sustainability of the environment (Klimmek, 2013, p. 32). The agreeable cooperation between diving operators and Park's Authority, therefore, is shaped; in fact, the former stated explicitly their welcome towards the policies since they produced healthy and rejuvenated corals, which undeniably beneficial for their business. With the ever-increasing tourism in KNP, diving operators (and also, the tour operators) act as the grassroots preventive troops.

3.2.3. Mining activities

Comparing to the two previous issues, any mining activities did not (or do not) take place inside the National Park; yet, it still contributes to its politics; its impacts became relevant when it happened close to the National Park. The friction among the locals, the District government, and the mining company reflect the intersubjectivity in the *weak* side of Turner's sustainability positions. In this current situation, the locals are standing in the weak position due to their dependency on natural resources and simultaneously, its sustainability; whereas



the government and the mining company stand at the end of the spectrum. Despite all parties uphold the economic activities, the extremity of the latter that become the cause of the conflict.

Based on the statement by the Head of West Manggarai District that emphasized on the “freedom of land utilization” (Erb, 2011), it is clear to see that for the government, the management of the resources is given to the market. The mining company won the “rights” to utilize the land on their favor; an idea that is disfavored by the locals and the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church itself condemns the principle of total anthropocentrism since it often affects the environment negatively¹¹; thus, the mining exploration is seen as doing more harm than good, because of the negative environmental consequences weights more than the promised economic benefits. Another raised point is the unequal wealth and power distribution caused by the anthropocentrism; mining activity not only failed in alleviating the poverty, but it also reduced the welfare of the people due to its effects to the clean water sources and surrounding forest (Makur, 2011). Moreover, the locals had already been under pressure from KNP, thus more environmental damages mean fewer sources for their income. These two distinctive ideas on how nature should be treated could be argued as the foundation of the conflict among those actors.

This eventually set several protests in motion; although initially the protests mostly revolved around the mining issue, eventually it sparked the demonstrations on behalf of other problems circa the early 2010s up until now. From this situation, it is safe to say that there's a lingering dissatisfaction of the people towards the government's decisions.

3.3. Social intersubjectivities

There are two major points of intersubjectivity in the social aspects: the zoning policy and the commercial policy. These policies are intended to separate the economic activities from the protected zone; yet, they generally resulted in the same things: eviction and alienation of the locals. Moreover, despite the ever increasing budget for the National Park, both central government and the Park's Management failed to resolute the conflict with the locals (Iksan, 2016, p. 33). In this section, it could be seen how this phenomenon came to be and how it causes the unusual even in the social movement.

¹¹Kompendium Ajaran Sosial Gereja (The Holy See Press Office, n.d.)



3.3.1. The issue with zoning policy

The emerged protests and the participation of unusual actor like the Church reflect, not only the people's frustration but also the fact that the management has not been socially sustainable. In Turner's terms, it is a debate of intra- and intergenerational equity, where both weak and strong emphasize with slightly different understandings. From the strong sustainability position, ensuring the equity between the current generation and the future generation is a must; what exists nowadays should be able to be enjoyed by the future generation. The weak sustainability position almost has the same understanding; yet, the idea adopts the "trade-offs" principle (Cater, 1995) where controlled development and economic activities are justified for the sake of future generation. In the context of natural resources extraction, therefore, the weak allow it with a certain level of control, while the strong prefers a very limited practice to none. Arguably, this intersubjectivity is the cause of friction in the social aspect.

The execution of the *strong's* principle can be seen in the zoning policy made by TNC and enforced by Park's Authority. With the majority of the area is designated to be conserved, it shows the effort to ensure that the same condition would last for years. Looking at Figure 1, only a few acres are left for the traditional economic activities and vast areas are limited to pelagic use; for the tourism itself, it is concentrated in specific areas. Considering the era before the National Park was formed, it was quite a significant change for the locals who used to fish and hunt in the now-regulated areas. Inherently, the steps taken by Park's Authority undeniably produced positive effect looking at positive reviews from the tourist. Nevertheless, the issue of sustainability rose from the cost of that achievement.

The violence that followed caused social unsustainability. In general pictures, the pressure for the locals to shift their livelihood swiftly was massive and somehow, coercive. The residents that relied on hunting and fishing for decades had to change their habit in mere a decade. Figure 2 shows, between 1997 and 1998, the locally-born residents who worked as fishermen were not much and their catch was never exceeding the people from outside the National Park. Nevertheless, the controversial enforcement action was applied to all of the fishermen and led to the point where the zoning policy was seen as marginalizing the already-disenfranchised locally-born residents. The resources inside the National Park were successfully conserved and guaranteed for the future generation; yet, somehow it costed the past generation where economic development was still needed. The combat towards unlawful extraction activities collaterally damaged the on-going growth of the community.

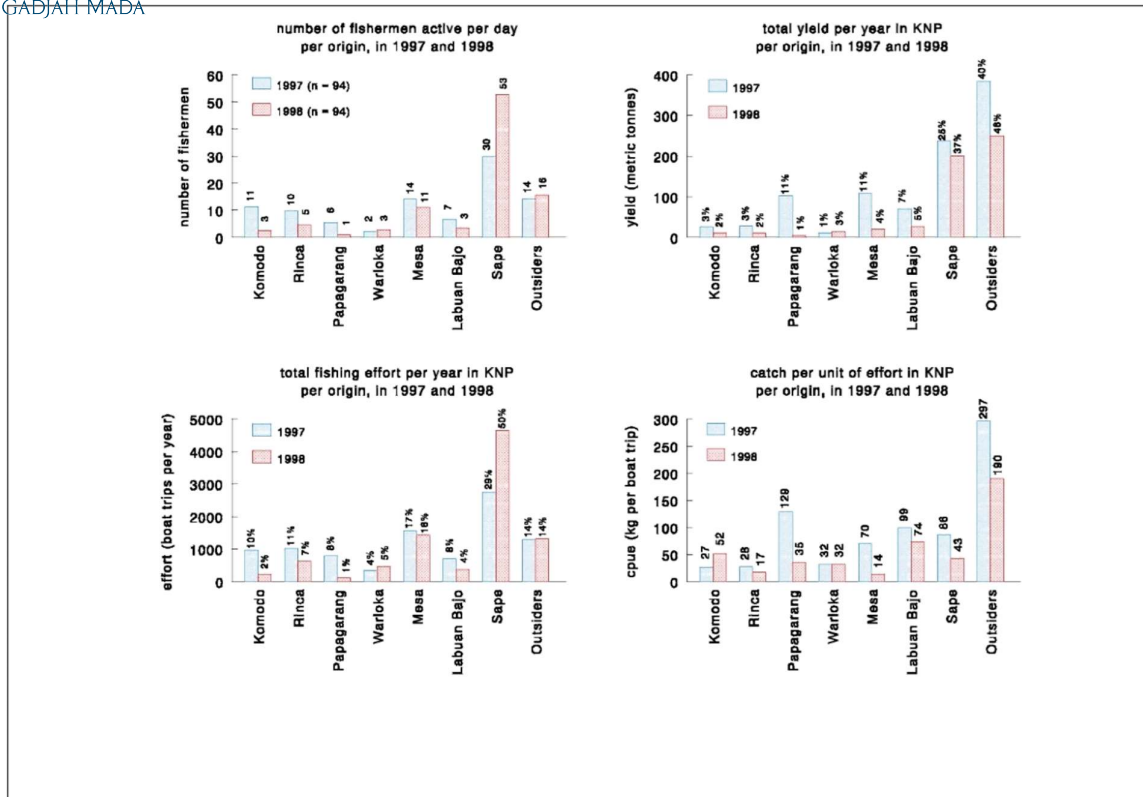


Figure 2 Results of resource use monitoring program in Komodo National Park in 1997 and 1998¹²

3.3.2. The issue with the declining of public spaces

If the *weak* sustainably position tries to balance economic development and environmental conservation, the *very weak* position takes the first aspect to the extreme; natural resources should be utilized to satisfy individual consumer choice through free market and they are exchangeable to achieve the continued well-being through economic and technical innovation (Turner, et al., 1993). In the context of social sustainability, this attitude has led to the monopolization of available space to accommodate commercial and business sector. The government has been nothing but encouraging tourism industry to develop and invite more tourists – only recently, the new provincial government is considering to close the National Park for rejuvenating the region (Halim, 2019). With the annual revenue often exceeding billion of rupiahs, the economic benefits are too significant to be eliminated anytime soon.

¹² showing the differences in fishing characteristics between the villages: number of fishers (top, left), total yield (top, right), fishing effort (bottom, left).

Source: (PKA & TNC, 2000)



Although in some cases a rapid regional developmental rate is very much welcome, it cannot be applied to what occurs in KNP. Looking at the data in Table 2, it could be said that the business flourishes at a speed where the locals could not compete. The protest of Pede Beach is preceded by people and the Church's dissatisfaction towards the government decisions that keep allowing non-local private businesses to exclusively utilize the land area in the already-limited commercial zone. From this point of view, the people are forced to compete in the free market without even starting point; the less developed background and poverty surely play an important part in this phenomenon. In the end, Pede Beach becomes the leftover and the remaining unclaimed land.

The disagreement towards the government's very weak behavior could be seen more in the argument of the Church that emphasizes on the importance of equal wealth distribution:

"Pede Beach is a green space for all people from different backgrounds. It isn't only for the rich. So let's save this beach for the sake of harmony." – Bishop Hubertus Leteng of Ruteng (UCA News, 2016)

The privatization of the land by high-end accommodation services is seen as an obstacle for the people's livelihood. Moreover, the practice also reduces the opportunity for them to compete in the free market; they not only need to work harder but also the chance to enter the competition declines. And taking the behavior of Park's Authority into the discussion, the pressure for the residents becomes heavier. The concept of the free market has already been rejected in the strong spectrum, although in practice, it is still much needed. Meanwhile, at the end of the weak spectrum, the market is potentially dominated by strong players – something that people around and inside the National Park are not.

3.4. The question on the sustainability of the politics

Up until this point, the narrative generally pictures the actors from the Management level act proactively, meanwhile the grassroots usually act reactively; numbers of protests and criticisms towards the government and the Park's Authority could be regarded as a sign of exclusivity in the decision-making process. In fact, this happens frequently in the tourism management of developing countries; often the rights to participate of the people are usually given by the First World, which includes some Supranational Government, INGOs, or International/Transnational Companies and Corporations (Mowforth & Munt, 1998, pp. 238-240). Generally, the plan for environmentally sustainable comes from the perspective of the



project planner, thus, its execution is sometimes seen as an appropriation of the land for specific actors' agenda. The consequences:

A range of difficulties, such as conflicting interests and the existence of local power bases and élites... serve to complicate and confound the good intentions of First World planners (Mowforth & Munt, 1998, p. 240).

In talking about KNP, the empirical evidence of this notion can be seen from the resistance of the residents throughout the years. Public opinions gathered by SUNSPIRIT expressed the disfavor towards the Management to the point where every action was seen as violating their rights as the occupants of the area (Somperes & Afioma, 2016). It has also been mentioned that any attempt of mediation ended too soon before the middle ground was achieved (Cochrane, 2013). Although disagreement, in general, is impossible to be avoided, the severity in the case of KNP could reflect the inefficiency of the strategy to integrate the locals in the management. And furthermore, it did not prevent the emergence of local elites.

The exclusive management somehow creates a cover for some clandestine transaction. This would explain the controversy of PT. Alam Kul-kul's claim of Mawang Island. Of course, this caught many parties, including the government, off guard. What's unsettling about this claim is that it surfaced around 2013, just after the contract with TNC ended; due to similar ownership of the company and PNK, it can be concluded that the company had been planning the claim when it was working in the management. Furthermore, the District Government could not entirely be excused from this matter; the claim was legal, which means at some point, there was a lobbying process from the business enterprise that had not been made public (Tuname, 2016). And just in 2018, another company has been reported of in the process of building private-owned rest area in Rinca Island (Ambo, 2018). Inevitably, this indicates that the management of the National Park is still far from being completely inclusive and transparent.

The control by central government were loose due to the decentralization policy¹³. Only in the recent years, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry has published a ministerial regulation to form a new management body that answers directly to the Ministry¹⁴. Empirically observing, this step could be considered as a step to tighten the managerial process, considering that the budget for KNP has been increasing throughout the years yet the issues with the locals

¹³ Which is regulated on the 2014 Law No. 23 on Regional Governance, that aims to reduce the micromanagement by the central government thus would achieve the desired efficiency.

¹⁴ Peraturan Menteri Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan Republik Indonesia No. P.7/Menlhk/Setjen/OTL/0/1/2016 tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja Unit Pelaksana Teknis Taman Nasional



persist¹⁵. This policy arguably changes the management dynamics; after previously only active in the large scale operation – such as international promotion. Nowadays, the regional and central government could communicate swiftly regarding KNP (for instance, the 2019 plan for closing the National Park). Yet, the question whether it would change the power relation with the locals remains to be seen for the next few years.

Although this factor is not explicitly mentioned by Turner's models of sustainable positions, it is a good complementary to the concept since being in the same spectrum does not guarantee harmonious cooperation – additionally, the issue of corruption and collusion in the West Manggarai District are too significant to be not included in the discussion. The lack of public participation could also explain why the narrative implicitly depicts *people versus others*; cooperation both from the strong spectrum and very weak position rarely happen with the general public which raises the question of sustainability in the politics itself. In the end, it shows the point that in order to achieve more sustainable tourism, the involvement of every stakeholder is essential.

¹⁵ As it has been stated in the Iksan (2016).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

From the beginning, KNP has been contested by numbers of actors who undeniably have their own identities and ideas; intersubjectivity is unavoidable. In the big picture, the National Park becomes the muddling ground of three concerns: development of the community, the economic development of the region and the environment. The latter is mostly the main priority of the international community. The unique biodiversity which includes several endemic species motivates numbers of environmental INGOs; and also transnational company such as TNC. Famous as one of the prominent environmentalist with extensive merits, TNC aims to restore and later preserve the environment that had been damaged by irresponsible resources extraction done by humans. With that in mind, the company's intervention in the National Park's management, therefore, is justified.

However, the company's idea does not completely align with the developmental agenda which is a priority for a developing country like Indonesia. In the governmental level, the Indonesian government still has to put the development of the residents inside the National Park into their concern since the process should be done sustainably due to its environmental aspect; the invitation to TNC is even based on the premise that the company would handle the conservation agenda while the government could focus on the economy. For this reason, some sets of policy are made to shift the livelihood of the locals from the resource extraction to service providing in the tourism industry. Due to this, the development of proper infrastructure to accommodate tourism is started.

The first intersubjectivity emerges in using the tourism industry. For the TNC and Park's Management, the industry is merely used to substitute the extraction activity and to fund the conservation effort while the government is more emphasizing tourism as the main revenue generator. In this case, the Park's Management enforces their conservation agenda by limiting extraction activities such as hunting, fishing and wood gathering, with the assumption that the well-maintained environment would attract more visitors; this idea is shared with some business enterprises that interact directly with the nature such as tours and diving operators. On the government's side, the nature and the aesthetic values of KNP and its surrounding are seen as commodities. Thus, it is quite often to see encouragement from the government for the business sector to invest in the region and to see numbers of campaigns for attracting tourists.



Nevertheless, seeing actors stand in different point of views, the relationship among them is maintained as a status quo; both government and Park's Management (and their followers) need each other.

The more conflictual intersubjectivity emerges when it's related to the grassroots. For instance, regarding tourism, the grassroots often oppose the ideas from the Park's Management and the government. The effort to change the resident's livelihood is seen as disadvantaging since it requires a significant amount of capital – which is often rare to have in the region with high number of poverty; the ever flowing of investors and unpredictability of the industry make some difficulties for the locals to stay afloat and maintaining their business. The ones who stay in the extraction sector also have to face the clash with Park's Management that in some cases, become violent. The enforcement of the environmental agenda inevitably limits the numbers of allowed resources extraction. Thus, it could be argued that the locals are stuck in the limbo between their old and limited livelihoods, and the new and fierce industry.

Disagreement emerges correspondingly in understanding the economic development; actions taken by the government are frequently followed by some environmental consequences – something that the residents are still depended on. The conflict between total anthropocentrism and balanced development can be seen in two prominent issues: the mining exploration and the privatization of land inside KNP. The Province of East Nusa Tenggara is indeed rich with valuable minerals such as gold; thus building mining industry will benefit the region economically. However, this idea is seen as unsustainable and irresponsible by the residents and the Church since it has been linked to the environmental degradations that affect the welfare of the people such as polluted water source and deforestation. As for the development of tourism inside KNP, it has reached the point where the process reduces available public spaces; which also means reducing the livelihood of the people and preventing the equal distribution of wealth.

Up until this point, it can be seen how intersubjectivity of principles among actors has become the bases of interaction. Yet, it is clear to see that the conflictual interaction only takes place when the grassroots are involved; despite the fact that the weak sustainable position adopted by them acknowledges some points from the very weak sustainable position adopted by the government (provincial and regional) and the strong sustainable position adopted by Park's Management. Thus, a question is raised in the aspect of decision-making; and several reports have backed up the doubt. For example, many of them describe that the consolidation



efforts ended too soon, therefore they did not produce any significant impact; moreover, some studies also criticize the method used by TNC that has been proved as neglecting the socio and cultural aspects in other operations (Moseley & Mullen, 2014). On the government side, the exclusion of grassroots can also be seen from the controversies surrounding the mining concessions and land privatizations that are legally prohibited yet still happened. With these occurrences as the empirical evidence, it could be said that most of the frictions happen due to the grassroots' frustration towards 'disenfranchising' political system.

In conclusion, the politics of KNP has been shaped by intersubjectivity emerged from different identities and ideas of actors. In some cases, the different point of views does not guarantee severe frictions; in fact, the relations between Park's Management and the government can be seen as an interdependency since both actors focus on different tasks that, at some extent, benefit each other. On the other hand, coming from the same spectrum also does not guarantee cooperation as it can be seen from the relations between the grassroots and the government. The concept of sustainability is indeed contested; nevertheless, it does not prevent any attempt of achieving understanding. In the case of Komodo National Park, the exclusion of the people and the neglect of social and cultural aspects could be seen as the fundamental issues. Sustainability of the economy and the environment is imminent; yet, the problem surrounding the sustainability of the anthropogenic aspects remains to be solved.



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