



## The dynamics of spatial utilization and tenurial conflict in conservation area of Moyo Island, West Nusa Tenggara

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**Abstract.** *Much has been studied about the agrarian issue and its conflicts in Indonesia, but few of them have been explored in the context of small islands designated as conservation areas. To extend the issue, this research aims to analyze the dynamics of spatial utilization and tenurial conflict in the conservation area of Moyo Island, West Nusa Tenggara. Based on qualitative methods, the data was gathered through observation, in-depth interviews with 20 key informants, and secondary sources. This research found that spatial utilization practices on Moyo Island are problematic, which has triggered a conflict. Due to a lack of control by the local government, forest areas have been openly and collectively encroached on by the local community to become agricultural land. Meanwhile, extensive fishing practices and tourism activities are threatening the long-term viability of coral reefs in coastal areas. These difficulties overlap with tenurial conflicts between local communities and the Nature Conservation Agency of West Nusa Tenggara regarding land boundaries as well as the problem among local people and the private sector purchasing and selling property under the table. All in all, this research offers policy recommendations to resolve those problems in the conservation area of Moyo Island.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Society and its land have a complex and unique connection. They attach social and cultural values to their land, except for the economic considerations (Novenanto 2015). In another sense, the land gives resources for not just food security and livelihood sustainability but also social life and cultural practices. As a result, restricting, preventing, and excluding people from their land will lead to resistance, which will also contribute to tenurial conflicts (Anugrah 2020; Hall *et al.* 2011; Yusuf and Syafriat 2019).

In Indonesia, agrarian conflicts that are triggered by the restrictions and prevention of access to land remain to continue. There are 279 conflicts throughout the archipelago (KPA 2020), including the sectors of plantation (87 cases), infrastructure (83 cases), property (46 cases), mining (24 cases), forestry (20 cases), and others (3 cases). The spread of land conflict is not a new case whether in Indonesia or elsewhere. Historically, agrarian conflicts in Indonesia have spread to almost all provinces, especially since the end of the New Order regime in 1998 (Peluso *et al.* 2012). Social and political developments in the post-reform era, which were

defined by the decentralization of central power to the local level of governance, also contributed to the rise in violence (Hadiz 2010).

In the context of forestry, conflict not only creates social instability but also has a negative impact on environmental aspects. However, there is still debate in this regard whether forest destruction is caused by social conflict or vice versa. In certain conditions and levels, these things can be true because social conflict has its complexity depending on the local context (Markum *et al.* 2015). Considering this, it becomes relevant to conduct a study on social conflict in the forestry area to explore its complexities. It is hoped that this study will not only provide an evidence base related to tenure conflicts from the central region of Indonesia (West Nusa Tenggara) but also as an experience in identifying appropriate conflict resolutions.

Conflicts in forestry, in the context of contemporary Indonesia, are more concerned with issues of tenurial. Previous studies have shown that several factors that cause conflicts in the forestry sector are overlapping claims and regulatory ambiguity over the area (Ambarwati *et al.* 2018; Mutolib *et al.* 2017; Riggs *et al.* 2016; Yasmi *et al.* 2009), granting concessions to corporate actors for the sake of capital (Safitri *et al.* 2011; Syafi 2016), and denial of the existence of local communities and indigenous peoples living in forest areas (Afiff and Lowe 2007; Dhialulhaq and McCarthy 2020; Muur 2018). The actions of one party (both on the part of the state, corporations, and communities) claiming forest boundaries—which is the main cause of tenurial conflicts—are often driven by overlapping forest policies in Indonesia (Suradireja *et al.* 2018).

Although there are many studies regarding agrarian conflicts in Indonesia, similar studies in the context of small island communities are limited. Therefore, to enrich the discussion in the study of social conflicts in forestry, this article would like to explore the dynamics of spatial use conflicts in the conservation area of Moyo Island, which is a small island in West Nusa Tenggara Province. This study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What are the actual land use practices in the Moyo conservation area?; (2) What are the typologies and patterns of conflicts that are driven by these land use practices ?; and (3) What kind of policies are relevant to be applied to resolve the tenure conflicts?.

## **METHOD**

### **Time and Location**

This research was conducted based on qualitative research procedures. The research is carried out between April and May 2017. The locations for data collection were in five villages (see Figure 1), namely Labuhan Aji Village and Sebotok Village (Moyo Island), Ai Bari Village (Sumbawa Regency), Labuhan Kenanga Village (Bima Regency), and Nanga Miro Village (Dompus Regency). These locations were chosen considering that the three other villages adjacent to Moyo Island are villages that overlap in terms of utilization of the coastal area.

### **Data collection**

The data in this research were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with 20 key informants ranging from village government officials, fishers, farmers, tourism actors, civil servants, youth groups, and women. These informants were chosen considering that they were the potential to provide in-depth information about spatial utilization and the conflict that occurred between various parties on Moyo Island. Furthermore, the authors supplement the field data using secondary sources such as previous scientific studies, archives (reports, yearbooks of local and national statistics), and mass media (online and offline) related to the case. Triangulation procedures were utilized in parallel using the outcomes of observations, in-depth interviews, and secondary sources to ensure the data's validity. Triangulation is used to determine consistency and, at the same time, inconsistencies or biases in data acquired by researchers. The research was conducted through five stages of activity: research design preparation, in-depth interviews, compilation and analysis of data, preparation of reports, and dissemination of research results.

**Data analysis**

The data in this research is analyzed using reduction and interpretation. This is the process of researchers classifying material into numerous components, categories, or specific topics and then interpreting the results (Creswell 2014). Interview transcripts, field notes, and visual elements (such as images or photos) are used to categorize information. The analysis is limited to aspects of the land use issue and a series of conflict episodes on Moyo Island.

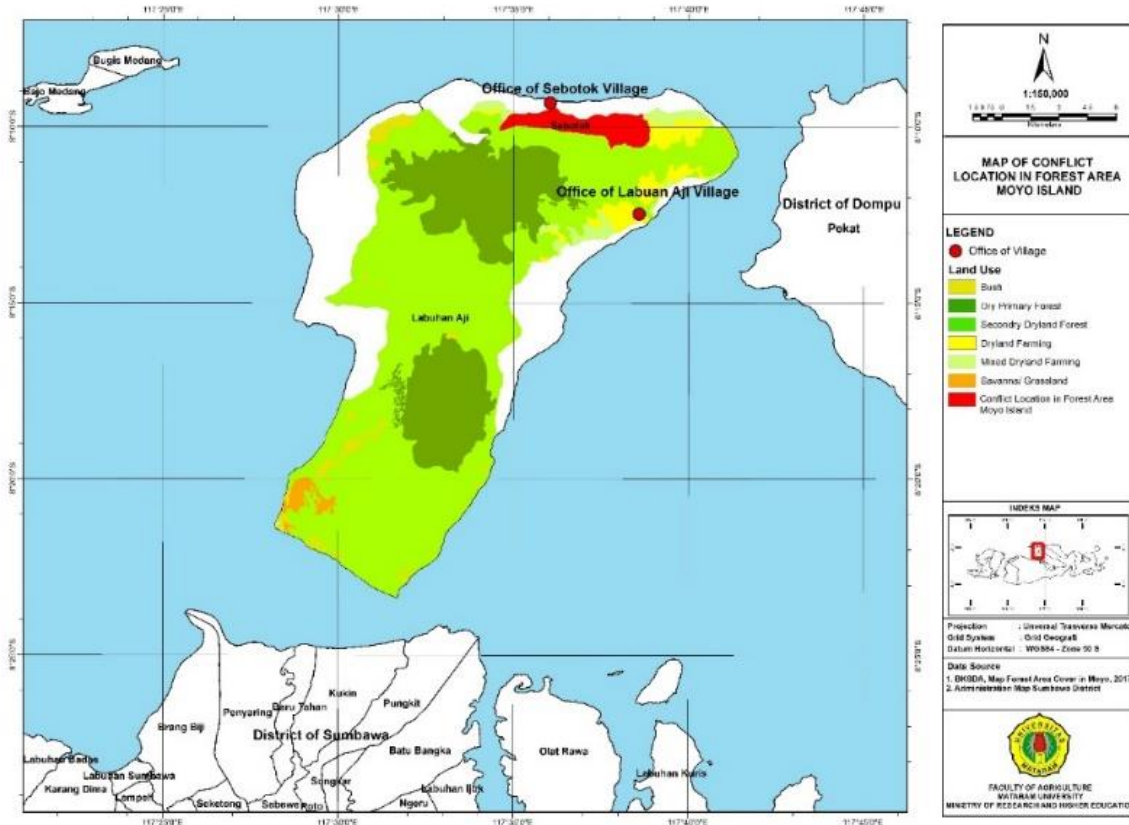


Figure 1 Location of research, Moyo Island, West Nusa Tenggara Province

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Characteristics of Moyo Island**

Administratively, Moyo Island is divided into two villages: Labuhan Aji Village (south) and Sebotok Village (north). Moyo Island is adjacent to Ai Bari Village in Sumbawa Regency. Moyo is located near the uninhabited island of Satonda and is connected to people in Labuhan Kenanga Village in Bima District and Nanga Miro Village in Dompu District. The Moyo Island is home to 1333 households, and the majority of them have ties to the Bugis and Selayar for at least three generations. Despite its proximity to the Sumbawa District, the island has a small population of native Sumbawa people (Samawa). The Samawa, Lomboknese, and Javanese make up around 5% of the population, with most of them descended through Bima or Makassar marriages.

In terms of the economic sector, farmers and fishermen are the most prevalent occupations on the island, while some people also earn money through small businesses and tourism services. Yet, just a few of them work in local government as civil servants. Local inhabitants, on the other hand, are supported by side companies and do not rely just on one source of income. Farmers rely on more than just farm products; they also rely on cattle, honey searchers, and fishers in their leisure time. Fishermen have a similar situation in the sense that they are also active in farming and animal husbandry. Sources of income on the mainland come from agricultural businesses on owned land and forest area land.

Agricultural production in villages in and around Moyo Island (see Table 1) has a similar character, namely the cultivation of cashew commodities. Types of cashew plants have fairly diverse productivity. It depends on the intensity of management carried out by farmers, generally in the range of 700–1.000 kg/ha/year. The farmers also cultivate several types of crops as additional economic income, including coconut, mango, lebui, upland rice, srikaya, corn, and sesame. In addition, most of the farmers also own livestock, such as cows or goats. If farmers cultivate cashews and other mixed crops while raising livestock, then for every 1 ha unit of land they own, the farmer's income is between Rp15,9 million–Rp23,2 million/year. Farmers' land area is between 1–2 ha, so it can be projected that farmers' income from agricultural products is higher than that amount. Meanwhile, in terms of fishery activities (fishermen), their income ranges from Rp10,8 million–28,4 million/year. This fisherman's income is obtained by going to sea for a duration of 6 months.

Tabel 1 The main livelihoods of the people in/and around Moyo Island

| Sector      | Commodity                 | Productivity                 | Value (IDR/year)     | Description  |
|-------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Agriculture | Cashew                    | 700–1.000 kg/ha              | 11,2–16 million/ha   | Managed land range 1-2 ha; for owned land; and 1-2 ha of forest land |
|             | Upland rice, lebui, honey | Harvest once a year          | 1,7–2,2 million /ha  | Some are self-consumed   |
|             | Cattle                    | Give birth 1 time/year       | 5–7 million/head     | Ownership of 1–2 livestock   |
|             | Goat                      | Give birth 1 time/year       | 0,5–1,5 million/head | Ownership of 2–5 livestock   |
| Marine      | Net                       | 4–6 months effective at sea  | 30.000–80.000/day    | Profit-sharing system  |
|             | Fishing rod, spear        | 4–6 months effective working | 30.000–80.000/day    | Gain range 3–15 kg/day   |

Source: Primary data 2017

According to the social aspect, the village administration and the apparatus (village-sub-village-Neighborhood unit–Community unit) plays a key role in the community. The village institution provides a service administrative but also as a mediator of conflicts and a facilitator of religious rituals. Village officials, hamlet heads, and neighborhood and community heads are thus the dominant actors on this island. It reveals that the village head and its apparatus have a dominant position in the social structure. The concentration of authorities in the local elite, and especially in the village head, both culturally and structurally, is not a special case in Indonesia but a historical process throughout Southeast Asia: the consolidation of the village as an administrative unit took place simultaneously with the increasing authority of the village head which was accommodated by the Village Law no. 6 of 2014 (White 2017); while people believed that the other social institutions (official organizations, such as the Fishermen's Group, Peasant Group, and Partners of the Forest Security Police (MPP), is significant for the community as well.

### **Spatial Utilization in the Moyo Island: Forest and Coastal Area**

Given Moyo Island's position as a conservation area, supporting sustainable environmental management is an essential agenda. By Decree of the Minister of Forestry No.308/Kpts-II/1986 dated September 29, 1986, Moyo Island was declared as a conservation area for the Buru Park and Marine Nature Tourism Park, with an area of 22.250 ha Buru Park and 6.000 ha Marine Nature Park. The Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Center of West Nusa Tenggara, manages the region. However, as previously said, a number of issues have been discovered, including 1) forest land usage, 2) coastal areas, and 3) land tenure for tourism (see table 2).

Table 2 Spatial utilization on Moyo Island

| <b>Aspect</b> | <b>Issues</b>   | <b>Location</b>               | <b>Description</b>  |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Forest area   | Encroachment of forest area on Moyo Island (approximately 1.500 ha)   | Sebotok and Labuhan Aji       | Encroachment continues (at Arung Santek and Lepa Luang in Lab Aji)  |
|               | Hunting of wildlife (e.g deer, and birds) by communities and poachers | Sebotok and Labuhan Aji       | Hunting exceeds the carrying capacity of animals  |
|               | Honey hunt  | Sebotok and Labuhan Aji       | Ignoring sustainable management   |
| Coastal area  | Fishing using nets in coral reef areas                                | Moyo and Satonda island       | Destroying the beauty of coral reefs  |
|               | Fishing using spears and potassium (injection)                        | Idem                          | Damage corals and marine life   |
|               | Boat and boat mooring activities at the pier                          | Labuhan Aji, Sebotok, Satonda | Anchor mooring and fuel spills can damage corals  |
|               | Turtle egg retrieval  | Satonda and Moyo island       | There are green turtles in the waters of Moyo and Satonda   |
| Land tenure   | Buying and selling coastal land, triggers encroachment                | Sebotok, Labuhan Aji          | Most of the area (with the status of Other Use Area or owned land) along the coast of Moyo Island has been sold |

Source: Primary Data 2017

Land use in the forestry sector may be defined as an activity that involves managing a forest area to get environmental, social, and economic advantages while maintaining the forest's primary purpose. The utilization of forest lands as part of natural resource management is mandated by Article 33 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, which aspires for the development of the Indonesian people. Furthermore, the provision is governed by Article 23 of the Forestry Law (Law No. 41 of 1999). As a result, the community is permitted to optimally collect and utilize forest products, both wood, and non-timber, for the benefit of welfare as long as the forest's sustainability is maintained as well.

Forest resources are significant to the Moyo population, particularly those who live in Labuhan Aji Village and Sebotok Village. Non-timber forest products (HBK) such as honey, tourism services, and water are among the advantages that forests bring to communities. Residents of Sebotok Village and Labuhan Aji Village, on the other hand, have turned the woodland area into agricultural land. Locals use forest areas for agricultural fields, with cashew, Lebu, sesame, and upland rice as the main crops. Locals who become farmers spend a significant amount of time on the community-owned and forest-area property. Farmers are already engaged in activities such as cultivating the soil, planting, fertilizing plants, managing pests, and collecting produce during particular months. They are also seeking honey during this season, in addition to being active in the crops.

Questioning the issue of forest encroachment, in particular, is currently being carried out with an open model, in the sense that people have entered the forest area no longer secretly but explicitly in a collective. The act of encroachment by the community is a logical implication due to the government's insufficient control and protection of forest areas. On Moyo Island, the community is estimated to have encroached on roughly 1.400 hectares of territory. The approximate location of encroachment is in the north and south of Moyo Island (the detail can be seen in Figure 2 below).

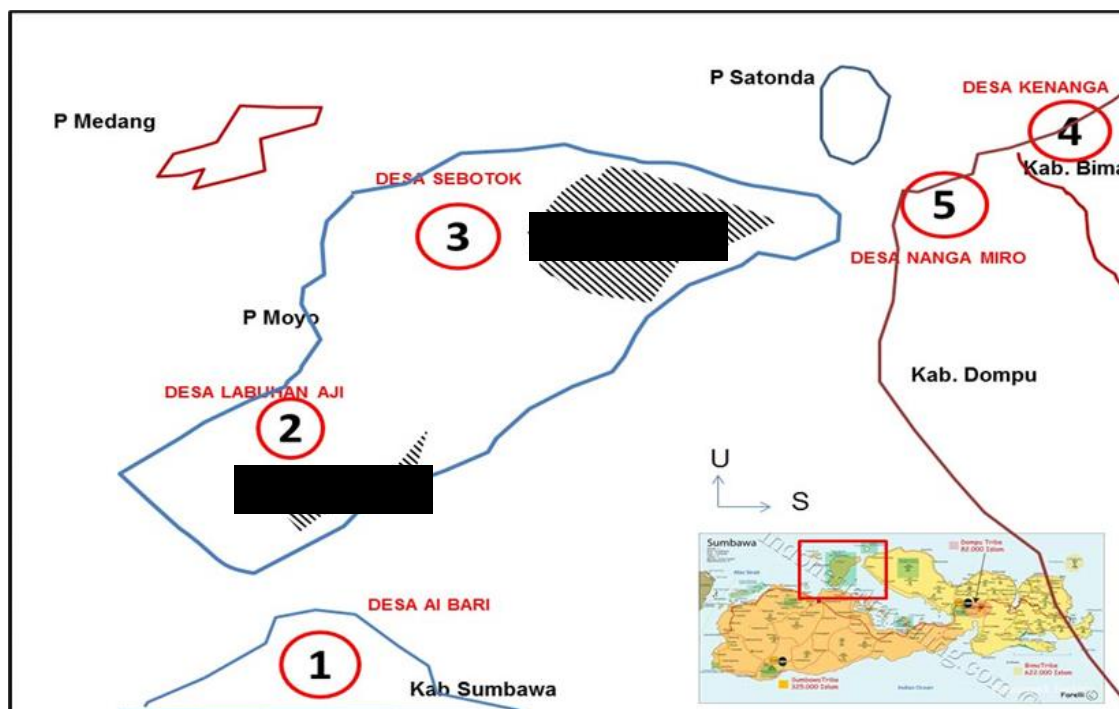


Figure 2 Encroachment of Moyo Island forest area

Furthermore, the utilization of Moyo Island's coastal territories causes environmental issues. Apart from catching, fishing, and shooting fish, the local population also provides transportation (sampans) to the islands of Moyo and Satonda, as well as diving. As a result, there are negative consequences, such as the degradation of coral reefs in the area. Fishing activities that are not ecologically friendly continue to be practiced, together with increased mobility of boats and tourism transport vessels along the coast, posing a danger to coral reef sustainability. It is undeniable that tourism has a significant contribution to the economic aspect, especially for the small island in Indonesia. With limited agricultural land and few alternative sources of revenue, tourism plays an essential role in helping small islands grow their economies (Kinseng *et al.* 2018; McElroy 2006). However, like a double edge sword, it was found that tourism also contributed to triggering environmental damage as was the case on Moyo Island (Budilestari *et al.* 2014; Kurniawan *et al.* 2016).

According to Bachtiar (2004), the majority of coral reef cover in West Nusa Tenggara Province showed poor condition (52,94%), while a small portion was classified as good (8,82%). In this case, the Moyo Island area is included in the good category (Edrus *et al.* 2010). However, since 2010 it is estimated that there has been a gradual decline in coral reef diversity by 3–5% per year. This was caused by four factors: bombardment of fish, use of fish poison, coral bleaching due to El Nino, and anchor removal. Damage to coral reefs has an impact on reducing fish diversity and population, seawater quality, and community economic income (Hermansyah and Febriani 2020).

In describing how the dynamics of spatial use in the conservation area of Moyo Island, the access theory formulated by Jesse Ribot and Peluso (2003, 2020) may be useful in this regard. In their seminal and most comprehensive review in the journal *Rural Sociology*, Ribot and Peluso (2003) conceptualized access as the ability to take advantage of a resource—as opposed to property, which is defined as the right to benefit from that resource. So far, ownership is often associated with legal aspects and social recognition of a person and his resources. However, in this case, the people who live near the conservation area do not have ownership rights to the area, considering that based on legal rights, Moyo Island is under the jurisdiction and authority of the West Nusa Tenggara Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA NTB). Nevertheless, the community can still access and benefit from it: such as by hunting animals and taking honey to plant agricultural crops. Thus, without having the right to ownership, there are still possibilities for obtaining benefits from the resource without having to legally own it.

In Ribot and Peluso's (2003) terms, the community's actions are called structural and relational access mechanisms. What is meant by structural and relational mechanisms relates to how technology, capital, markets, knowledge, authority, social identity, and social relations can shape and influence actors' access to resources. Furthermore, Ribot and Peluso (2003) explain that access to technology emphasizes the use of methods, tools, or knowledge. Then access to capital emphasizes the financial ability of one party to access or maintain a resource. Market access is described as the ability to utilize resources in many ways that are influenced by the access of certain parties to the market. Access to markets requires access to capital, authority, and social relations. In this case, the strategy used by the community in accessing the area is done by consolidating collective power through encroachment in groups. In another sense, aspects related to social relations and identity as a local community become a precondition for the practice of using areas outside of formal legal mechanisms to become possible.

### **Tenurial Conflict**

Conflicts are usually generated by a conflict of interest between two or more parties who are in disagreement with one other (Kriesberg and Dayton 2012). Meanwhile, conflict escalation happens when each party concerned becomes increasingly interested in the situation (Fringka 2017; Prayogo 2007). According to Rachmawan (2016), when there are acts of threats and intimidation, as well as the use of violence and repression by those in power, the pattern of conflict escalation reaches its peak. Land area borders are a source of conflict on Moyo Island, whether it's a vertical dispute between the government and the community or a horizontal conflict between the business sector and the community.

Conflicts related to land and natural resources are generally referred to as tenurial conflicts. Tenurial conflicts occur when related actors have differing understandings and interpretations of their rights to land and forest resources (Safitri *et al.* 2011). Conflicts in forest areas involve various stakeholders: The government generally has an interest in securing state forests; the community has an interest in fulfilling their social and economic needs; while the private sector has an interest in profit and capital. On the island of Moyo, the details of the conflict are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Conflict identification

| Form of Conflict                           | Causes                                 | Actor   | Case   | Location                      |
|--|--|---|--------|-------------------------------|
| Intimidation and use of violence           | Differences in setting land boundaries | Local community and government (BKSDA, Police, TNI) | 3 case | Sebotok Village               |
| Intimidation and destruction of facilities | Land sale and purchase transactions    | Local community and private sector                  | 1 case | Stema and Labuhan Aji village |
| Contention                                 | Coastal resource access disputes       | Fishermen – BKSDA; among fishermen                  | 1 case | Satonda and Moyo Island       |

Source: Primary Data, 2017

According to the local community, the mapping procedure carried out by the Nature Conservation Agency of West Nusa Tenggara Province (BKSDA NTB) in 1980, 1990, and 1993 was the initial source of conflict. Border mapping began in 1980 with a stone boundary *pal*, followed by wood *pal* in 1990, and concrete *pal* in 1993. The contention begins as the 3rd mapping has shifted to land owned by residents. Most people first assumed that the goal of this mapping was to construct a ring road. As a result, the homeowners granted their permission to the BKSDA to measure their property in the hopes that the value of the community's land would grow if the region became a highway. However, in practice, the BKSDA's measurement becomes the forest area's boundary rather than the ring road as the community understands it. They then requested that the borders be reset to line A, which was the original boundary line. As a result of the locals' dismay and unhappiness, encroachment has occurred, with the encroached site now reaching line B and even entering *pal* boundary B (see Figure 3).

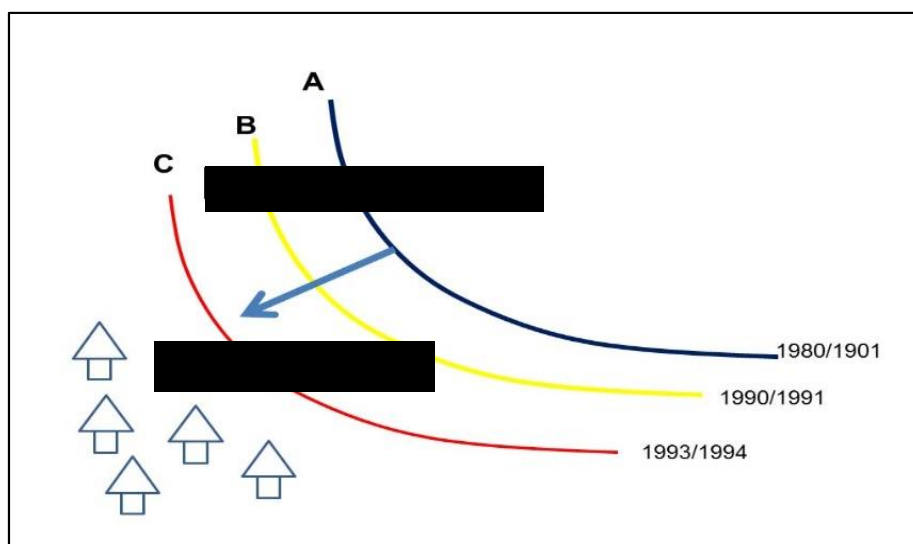


Figure 3 Causes of disputes over forest area boundaries

BKSDA officials operated under threat and tension throughout the conflict, making the mission of monitoring and safeguarding forest areas in the Sebotok Village region difficult. Local inhabitants, on the one hand, are looking forward to the conflict resolution process. While, on the other hand, according to interviews with forest security officers, they hope that conflict resolution can be achieved. So far, there has been no conflict on the coastal aspect as has occurred in forest areas, but conflict regarding the use of access to fishing



sometimes occurs between fishermen themselves horizontally. Meanwhile, a conflict arose between the community and BKSDA security over access to coastal areas on Satonda Island, which the community claimed had limited access. The disagreement, however, did not develop into repression or bloodshed. Through collaboration with stakeholders—among the BKSDA, local communities, and Koramil—coastal security can be carried out properly.

The potential conflicts that need to be anticipated in the foreseeable future are related to coastal land transactions, utilization of access to coastal resources, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Conflicts between the community and the private sector in the sale and purchase of land in the Stema Hamlet, Labuhan Aji Village, have the potential to reoccur as long as the land transaction mechanism on Moyo Island is not clearly regulated. The involvement of various parties in the sale and purchase of underhand land causes confusion regarding (1) the buyer's identity because the person who buys it frequently hides in anonymity, either at the buyer's request or disguised by the broker; and (2) land price-fixing, because it was alleged that the community and brokers had a significant price difference; and (3) ambiguous brokerage actors, due to the involvement of multiple parties in the transaction, including the claimed involvement of government authorities. On the one hand, the selling of land along the coast has the effect of making people landless. People's incapacity to handle money from sales, on the other hand, might lead to bankruptcy. It is projected that this situation may encourage landless people to encroach further on Moyo Island's forest area.

Last, the people of Moyo hope that the authorities will make a serious attempt in the foreseeable future to deal with the issues—both in terms of land use and tenurial conflict—in the island immediately. People believe that if a strategy exists to analyze the status area for becoming a National Park, it will have a significant impact on the community's livelihood in the future. This is because the community is aware that there are a variety of potential resources owned by local residents, both in terms of agriculture, animal husbandry, tourism, and fishing. The community will profit if these resources are developed appropriately and in accordance with a sustainable paradigm. In another sense, designating the Moyo Island region as a National Park is preferable since it would allow for greater natural resource management, community economic development, and more effective resolution of current issues.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, spatial utilization patterns on Moyo Island, both forest and coastal areas are problematic. Forest areas are being openly and collectively encroached upon by local populations to become agricultural fields due to a lack of control and security by the local authorities. In coastal areas, the long-term viability of coral reefs is threatened due to unsustainable fishing practices and massive tourism activities indicated by rising boat mobility.

These things are also intertwined with the issue of tenurial conflicts between the local community and the government regarding the boundaries of forest areas. Cases of conflict that are neglected, on the other hand, might lead to more massive forest encroachment while also creating disharmonious relations amongst related actors. Other conflicts arise as a result of the community and private sector purchasing and selling land under the table, which has the potential to reoccur as long as the land transaction mechanism on Moyo Island is unregulated.

All in all, learning from the case of Moyo Island, this research offers practical recommendations for relevant stakeholders to deal with the problem of land use and tenurial conflicts on this small island: (1) Encouraging conflict resolution regarding land area boundaries; (2) strengthening capacity and community organization in land and coastal management to make it more sustainable; (3) regulating the protection zone and community use of coastal resources; (4) improving monitoring and use of coastal areas through multi-stakeholder collaboration; and (5) optimizing community-based tourism management, including infrastructure provision and determination; (6) Formulation of spatial planning policies on Moyo Island and marine conservation areas through block arrangement (block of conservation, protection, and utilization).

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