



The Dynamics of Conflict, Asymmetric Access, and Governance Transparency in Bima's Annual Public Land Leasing Policy

Yuli Yanti Daaris*

Program Studi Ilmu Pemerintahan, Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan membedah ketegangan relasi antarpemangku kepentingan dalam implementasi kebijakan penyewaan tahunan atas tanah eks jaminan aparat desa di Kabupaten Bima, sebagai strategi optimalisasi Pendapatan Asli Daerah (PAD) yang justru memunculkan kompleksitas sosial, politik, dan ekologis. Dengan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dan metode pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam terhadap berbagai aktor pemerintah, warga lokal, peserta lelang, dan tokoh masyarakat penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa implementasi kebijakan sarat dengan praktik nontransparan, konflik kepentingan, serta ketimpangan akses terhadap sumber daya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa proses pelelangan tanah kerap diwarnai oleh kecurigaan adanya manipulasi pemenang lelang yang tidak berdasarkan penawaran tertinggi, memperparah ketimpangan ekonomi dan ketidakpercayaan publik terhadap pemerintah daerah. Ironisnya, meskipun kebijakan ini dirancang untuk membuka akses pertanian bagi masyarakat miskin, kenyataan di lapangan menunjukkan bahwa kelompok bermodal besar justru mendominasi manfaat ekonomi. Lebih jauh, pendek praktik sewa jangka pendek mendorong eksploitasi lahan secara tidak berkelanjutan, mengakibatkan degradasi tanah dan ketidakterjaminan keberlangsungan pangan lokal. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya reformulasi kebijakan berbasis prinsip keadilan distributif, penguatan mekanisme pengawasan, dan pelibatan aktif masyarakat dalam proses perumusan dan evaluasi kebijakan. Hasilnya tidak hanya menyoroti urgensi tata kelola tanah publik yang adil dan akuntabel, tetapi juga menawarkan refleksi teoritis mengenai bagaimana konflik sumber daya lokal mencerminkan ketidakseimbangan kekuasaan dalam ranah kebijakan publik di Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to critically examine the tensions embedded within stakeholder relations in the implementation of the annual leasing policy of former collateral land previously held by village officials in Bima Regency—an initiative intended to optimize Local Own-Source Revenue (PAD), yet one that has instead given rise to complex social, political, and ecological ramifications. Employing a qualitative case study approach and in-depth interviews with key actors including government officials, local residents, auction participants, and community leaders this research reveals that the policy's execution is fraught with non-transparent practices, conflicts of interest, and structural inequities in access to resources. Findings indicate that the land auction process is frequently marred by suspicions of winner manipulation, where the highest bids are overlooked, thereby exacerbating economic disparities and eroding public trust in local governance. Paradoxically, although the policy was conceived to enhance agricultural access for the underprivileged, empirical evidence suggests that economically dominant groups disproportionately reap its benefits. Furthermore, the short-term leasing model incentivizes unsustainable land use, contributing to soil degradation and undermining long-term local food security. This study underscores the critical need for policy reformulation grounded in principles of distributive justice, the strengthening of oversight mechanisms, and the inclusive engagement of communities in policy design and evaluation processes. Ultimately, the study not only highlights the urgency of establishing

*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: yulidaaris0101@gmail.com (Yuli Yanti Daaris)

1. INTRODUCTION

The annual land leasing policy for reserved development land in Bima Regency represents a localized governmental initiative aimed at managing parcels of former collateral land previously allocated to village officials that have reverted to public ownership ([Alting, 2011](#)); ([Hanum, 2017](#)). While the policy aspires to enhance Local Own-Source Revenue (PAD), its implementation reveals a web of latent complexities involving power relations, conflicting interests, and entrenched social inequalities ([Deininger, 2004](#)); ([Daudelin, 2003](#)); ([Onguny & Gillies, 2019](#)). This study delves into the tensions between actors in the policy's implementation process, exposing not only the bureaucratic landscape of local governance but also the unfolding of contemporary agrarian politics at the village level ([Wirawan et al., 2021](#)).

The policy, which mandates the annual auction of ex-collateral land each October, ostensibly seeks to repurpose idle lands into productive economic and social assets ([Wondimu & Gebresenbet, 2018](#)). Yet, in practice, a number of structural issues have emerged including a lack of transparency, asymmetries in information dissemination, procedural manipulation, and unilateral control by actors embedded in local power networks ([Gebeyehu Admasu, 2015](#)). These challenges not only result in inequitable access to land resources but also fuel both horizontal conflicts among citizens and vertical tensions between communities and the regional government ([Deininger & Binswanger, 1999](#)); ([Wang et al., 2018](#)).

This research is grounded in the recognition that agrarian conflicts in Indonesia are not confined to large-scale plantations or extractive industries; rather, they also manifest in micro-level contexts such as the management of former collateral lands in rural settings ([Otieno & Oluoch-Kosura, 2019](#)). Under this leasing regulation, the Bima Regency Government attempts to reclaim land once entrusted to village officials as tenure-based collateral, and reallocate it to the public via annual auction mechanisms ([Anas et al., 2019](#)).

However, field findings indicate that these auctions are often compromised by opaque procedures and deficient accountability. Strong indications point to manipulative practices whereby the highest bidder is not always declared the winner ([Gebeyehu Admasu, 2015](#)). Instead, auction winners frequently consist of individuals with structural proximity to the auction committee or local authorities ([Janvry et al., 2011](#)); ([Adenuga et al., 2021](#)). This fuels widespread perceptions of injustice and has become a source of both latent and overt conflict within the community ([Myyrä, 2009](#)).

On the other hand, the policy does generate positive outcomes, particularly for landless farmers, by offering opportunities to access cultivable land. Nonetheless, such access remains uneven and tends to favor those with greater socio-economic capital. This is where the policy's paradox becomes evident: its socio-economic objectives are systematically undermined by oligarchic implementation practices.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach through a case study method. The fieldwork was conducted in selected villages within Bima Regency such as Woro, Rabakodo, and Monggo which serve as the loci of the annual auction policy for former collateral land. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, auction committee members, auction participants, and local community leaders. In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted participatory observations during various stages of the auction process and undertook a critical review of policy documents and archival records issued by the local government. Thematic data analysis was carried out using a

combination of public policy theory, resource conflict theory, and agrarian political economy. By employing methodological and source triangulation, the study endeavors to construct a robust and comprehensive narrative that captures the underlying tensions embedded in the implementation of the land leasing policy.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Non-Transparent Auction Mechanisms

The findings reveal that the annual land auction procedures administered by the regency-level committee fail to fully uphold the principles of fairness and procedural justice. Notably, the cases in Monggo and Rabakodo villages serve as compelling illustrations where the highest nominal bidders were defeated by those offering significantly lower bids. Such irregularities have raised strong suspicions of orchestration and favoritism in the selection of winners. Interviews with auction participants and community figures reinforced these suspicions, citing the presence of “backroom dealings” involving certain committee members and actors with entrenched networks among local elites.

Actor Tensions: Government vs. Community

Conflicts surrounding the policy emerge not merely from economic competition, but from deeply embedded power imbalances. The local government assumes a dominant role as both regulator and gatekeeper of land access, while the local populace particularly smallholder farmers occupies a passive role, dependent on top-down decisions. This asymmetry is exacerbated by the absence of participatory mechanisms in decision-making processes, resulting in minimal community engagement and ownership. Consequently, the policy suffers from a lack of social legitimacy.

Socio-Economic Inequality

Although theoretically framed as an instrument to enhance social welfare through the equitable redistribution of productive land, in practice, the benefits of the policy accrue only to a narrow segment of society. Those with privileged access to information, government networks, and sufficient capital are more likely to profit. In contrast, poor farmers who manage to win the auction frequently struggle to fulfill the financial obligations required for land management. High rental costs, compounded by initial investment demands, impose a significant burden, often resulting in financial losses rather than gains.

Privatization of Public Assets

The study also uncovers instances of private appropriation of former collateral lands, which are supposed to be publicly managed assets. In Woro village, for example, a 15-hectare parcel has not been subjected to auction since 2013 and has instead been privately occupied by a lawyer with strong ties to the local asset bureaucracy. Such practices not only undermine potential revenue for the local government but also reflect a broader deterioration in good governance. The findings point to a distortion of public asset management driven by power asymmetries and reveal the institutional fragility of internal oversight mechanisms.

Impacts on Agricultural Land Preservation

The annual leasing of development-reserved land has also had implications for the sustainability of agricultural lands in Bima. On one hand, the policy allows for the reclamation of idle land for productive use. On the other, the short-term, profit-oriented cultivation practices

by tenants contribute to land degradation and pose a threat to local food security. Many leaseholders prioritize immediate returns without adhering to sustainable farming methods raising serious environmental concerns and underscoring the need for a comprehensive and enforceable land-use policy by the local government.

Proposed Reforms and Theoretical Implications

This study puts forth a series of recommendations that reflect the urgent need for structural reform in the management of former collateral lands. First, full transparency in the auction process must be ensured, including public disclosure of auction listings, assessment criteria, and results open to public scrutiny. Second, active community participation should be institutionalized through village deliberative forums and collaborative monitoring systems. Third, the government must provide critical infrastructure such as roads and irrigation systems to ensure the land is not a financial liability but a genuinely productive asset. Fourth, accessible financing schemes and incentive programs are essential to support small-scale farmers in cultivating the leased lands effectively.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the discourse on public policy, particularly in conflict-prone, information-asymmetric local contexts. The empirical findings affirm the necessity of contextualized policy studies that foreground local dynamics, power structures, and social relations as essential components in analyzing policy implementation

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the annual leasing policy for former collateral lands previously held by village officials in Bima Regency reveals a complex and multidimensional policy irony. On the one hand, the policy was conceived to enhance Local Own-Source Revenue (PAD) and to provide landless communities with access to agricultural resources. On the other hand, its execution has opened a wide avenue for practices that undermine the very principles of social justice, transparency, and sustainability.

The auction process, which should ideally be transparent and equitable, is marred by loopholes that allow for manipulation as evidenced by cases where the highest bidders were unjustly disqualified and by instances of private appropriation of public lands. Information asymmetry, the dominance of well-capitalized actors, and weak institutional oversight have collectively skewed the policy's benefits toward local elites with privileged access to power and informal networks. Furthermore, tensions among stakeholders including government actors, smallholder farmers, village authorities, and local entrepreneurs reflect an accumulation of latent conflict rooted in asymmetrical power relations.

Ambiguities in procedural norms and the lack of meaningful community participation have exacerbated the problem, generating frustration, social envy, and even horizontal conflicts among citizens. Beyond its social implications, the policy also poses serious ecological threats: extractive, short-term agricultural practices driven by profit maximization have accelerated soil degradation and the erosion of land fertility.

Without comprehensive policy reform encompassing governance restructuring, institutional capacity building, the protection of vulnerable groups, and the enforcement of strict environmental conservation regulations the policy risks becoming a generator of systemic inequality and conflict in the future. This is not merely a matter of land redistribution; it is a question of social justice and the future of public resource governance in Indonesia's peripheral regions

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