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Criminalization of Community-based Ecotourism (CBET) in Indonesia: The Cases of Pari Island, Kepulauan Seribu

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ABSTRACT

Several residents of Pari Island in Thousand Islands, Jakarta, Indonesia, in separate cases, were arrested, detained, tried, and declared guilty of extortion with violence and land grabbing. Allegedly, these cases are related to the ongoing tenurial conflicts between the islanders and PT. Bumi Pari Asri, which claim legal ownership of 90% of the land on the Island and intends to develop upscale tourism resorts there. In fact, Pari islanders, with their own initiatives and funds, have developed, operated, and managed tourism attractions and facilities on their islands. Employing a socio-legal approach by examining how legal and policy stipulations are implemented in their social-cultural and political-economic contexts, this article seeks to investigate, examine, and assess the potential impacts of the criminal indictments to the practices of community-based ecotourism (CBET) in Pari Island, to determine whether they constitute criminalization to the practices. It is discovered from the examination that Indonesian legal and policy frameworks in fact encourage and protect (CBET), and that the practices of the Pari islanders are indeed a perfect example of CBET as advocated by the frameworks, while the criminal cases are fundamentally criminalization to the practices that potentially discourage CBET not only in Pari Island but also throughout Indonesia.

Keywords: community-based ecotourism, criminalization, Pari Island, Seribu Archipelago

ABSTRACT

Beberapa penduduk Pulau Pari di Kepulauan Seribu, Jakarta, Indonesia, dalam perkara-perkara yang berbeda, ditangkap, ditahan, diadili, dan diputus bersalah telah melakukan pemerasan dengan kekerasan dan penyerobotan lahan. Perkara-perkara ini diduga berkaitan dengan sengketa-sengketa hak atas tanah yang terus berlangsung antara penduduk Pulau Pari dengan PT. Bumi pari Asri, yang mengklaim kepemilikan secara hukum atas 90% dari lahan yang ada di pulau itu dan bermaksud membangun resor pariwisata mewah di sana. Para penduduk Pulau Pari sebenarnya, atas prakarsa dan dana sendiri, telah mengembangkan, menjalankan, dan mengelola obyek-obyek dan fasilitas-fasilitas wisata di pulaunya. Melalui pendekatan sosio-legal yang memeriksa bagaimana ketentuan-ketentuan hukum dan kebijakan dilaksanakan dalam latar-latar sosial-kultural dan ekonomipolitiknya, artikel ini mencoba menyelidiki, memeriksa, dan menilai kemungkinan dampak putusan hakim terhadap perkara-perkara pidana tersebut pada praksis wisata lingkungan berbasis masyarakat di Pulau Pari, guna menentukan apakah putusan-putusan itu merupakan kriminalisasi terhadap praksis-praksis dimaksud. Pemeriksaan sosio-legal terhadap putusan-putusan itu menemukan bahwa kerangka hukum dan kebijakan Indonesia menganjurkan dan melindungi praksis wisata lingkungan berbasis masyarakat, dan bahwa Pulau Pari sesungguhnya adalah contoh sempurna dari wisata sedemikian sebagaimana dianjurkan oleh hukum dan kebijakan negara. Sementara itu, perkara-perkara pidana tersebut justru merupakan kriminalisasi terhadap praksis-praksis wisata lingkungan berbasis masyarakat yang besar kemungkinannya menghambat perkembangan praksis wisata itu tidak hanya di Pulau Pari tetapi juga di seluruh Indonesia.

Kata kunci: wisata lingkungan berbasis masyarakat, kriminalisasi, Pulau Pari, Kepulauan Seribu

INTRODUCTION

The criminal cases where some residents of Pari Island, Kepulauan Seribu, Jakarta, Indonesia were indicted and imprisoned for illegal extortion, trespassing, and land grabbing—while in fact they only managed tourist facilities in their own islands communally developed by themselves—have caused not only restlessness among the proponents and practitioners of community-based ecotourism (CBET), but also a situation of legal and policy uncertainties (Mongabay, 2017/09/19). As a matter of fact, the practice of tourism whose main attractions are natural environment and local culture

1



initiated, developed, and managed by the local community is recognized, protected, and encouraged by Indonesian government through laws and policies (Phelan, Ruhanen, & Mair, 2020, p. 1671). Although not explicitly, the 2007 Coastal Zone and Small Islands Management Law is the first to do so. It stipulates, among others, that community participation is one of the governing principles in integrated coastal zone management. Furthermore, coastal zones are prioritized, among others, for natural conservation and tourism activities (Towner, 2016, p. 218).

Correspondingly, Government Regulation Number 50 Year 2011 on the National Tourism Development Masterplan 2010-2025 also emphasizes the importance and centrality of environmental orientation and community empowerment in tourism development. Furthermore, Ministry of Tourism Regulation Number 14 Year 2016, which is updated by Regulation Number 9 Year 2021 on the Guidelines to Sustainable Tourism Destination laid out the details to develop tourism destinations that are sustainable i.e., benefitting local community economically by preserving the beauty of natural environment. Therefore, the arrest of several Pari islanders in early 2017 because of what they thought as managing the island's tourist facilities was likeaccording to an islander-thunder cracking in bright daylight.

Christian, Satria, and Sunito (2017) argue that the criminal indictments were in fact continuation of conflicts between Pari islanders and PT. Bumi Pari Asri (PT. BPA), a real estate development company that claims to possess the legal ownership and building rights of over 90 percent of land in Pari Island. They perceive the cases in the context of capital encroachment or invasion to the living space of agrarian community to allow capitalist reproduction of space. Martini and Lubis (2021) reported that the conflicts originated from an indication of government maladministration or even corruption where local land registration authority, unbeknownst to Pari islanders who possess girik (proof of tax payments) land in Pari Island, have issued 62 ownership right certificates and 14 building right certificates based on land purchase agreements, which are now in the possession of PT. BPA.

Anandar and Laksmono (2020) argue that the incidence of corporate land grab takes place not only in Pari Island, but also in thousands other small islands scattered all over Indonesia due to their remoteness and government preoccupation with densely populated areas in the big islands. They further add that, despite the existence of laws and policies that specifically aim at developing coastal zones and small islands sustainably, lack of implementation and enforcement, sectoral egotism, and weak inter-sectoral coordination prevent the laws and policies to achieve their goals. Khairunnisa and Mufidi (2018) point out that, if it is not clear whether PT. BPA has legitimate claim over the land in Pari Island and its use for the company's business from coastal zones and small islands management perspective, the land possession by the company is nevertheless problematic because according to the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law legal entities or companies cannot own lands; only individual persons may own lands in Indonesia. It is thus clear that the above assessment and examination of the Pari Island cases mostly focus on the tenurial aspect.

This article, therefore, seeks to inquire into the potential impacts of these cases to the practices of initiation, development, and management of tourism whose main attractions are the natural environment and the culture of local community living in and around the environment, in short, CBET, in Indonesia. It will be examined whether the criminal cases are fundamentaly criminalization against CBET itself. For the purpose, the research for this article employs a socio-legal approach, in which consistency and synchronization of written legal and policy stipulations both in coastal zone and small islands management as well as tourism sectors are examined within its social and cultural contexts (Wiratraman, 2019, p. S244). In these contexts, the stipulations are understood to interact and transact with the purposes and interests of real human actors contesting and competing over the coastal spaces of Pari Island (Bourdieu, 2018, p. 310). The problem statement thus needs to be broken down into several research questions. *First*, how Indonesian legal and policy framework conceive, formulate, and stipulate CBET. Second, how Pari islanders initiated, developed, and managed tourism in their island and how it led to conflicts with PT. BPA and criminal indictments. Third, how the conflicts and criminal indictments might potentially impact the practices of CBET in Pari Island as well as Indonesia as a whole.

LAW AND POLICY ON CBET IN INDONESIA

Tourism has always been one of Indonesia's most important industries since its beginning in the 20th Century. The nature and culture have always been Indonesian tourism main attractions, particularly tropical beaches adorned with white sand, coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests (Hampton & Clifton, 2016, p. 201). Unfortunately, the very things that attract tourists at the beginning are also the very first things that will be spoilt due to



tourism. Natural environments are beautiful and attractive because they are in a preserved or conserved state, meaning human contact is nonexistent. Once people become aware of the beauty and start to frequent the natural environments, the pristine splendor and charm of the natural environments will gradually fade. Once the ecological carrying and supporting capacities are exceeded, not only the outward appearance of the environment will be distorted, but also the functions and ecological services it used to provide for the living inhabitants and surrounding ecosystems will be disturbed and eventually cease to exist (Butarbutar & Soemarno, 2013, p. 101).

Awareness of the importance and, at the same time, fragility of coastal areas where tourism activities are often found also came late in Indonesia. At the end of the last century, coastal areas with heavy tourist traffic like in Bali and elsewhere in Indonesia have shown signs of exceeding their environmental carrying and supporting capacities (Herawati, Hakim, & Guntur, 2016, p. 123). However, Indonesian government did not show any concern about the issue back then, even continuing to exploit the coastal areas for tourism and other economic interests. At about the same time, Indonesian scientists who specialize in the studies of ecological, social, and economic aspects of coastal zone began to relay and amplify an international demand for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) (Dahuri & Dutton, 2000).

By the end of the 1990s, ICZM has developed into the science and practices of managing coastal zone in an integrated manner where business and economic activities taking place in coastal zone must be balanced with social justice and ecological sustainability considerations. Coastal zone itself must never be understood rudimentarily as a line that separates land and sea, but distinctive, complex, and integrated ecosystems that seamlessly connect terrestrial and marine ecosystems, which usually consist of estuaries, beaches, mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and coral reefs (Post & Lundin, 1996, p. 3). Another feature of ICZM is the emphasis to integrate ecosystem-based management and community-based management, the where participation of local community along with their ecological, socio-cultural, and economic knowledge in managing coastal and marine resources is prioritized and recognized as the reference for any management initiative (Aswani, et.al. 2012). After waiting for quite a long time, Indonesia finally adopted and enacted these principles and practices in its legislation on coastal zone and small islands management in 2007.

Although not necessarily related, both ICZM and CBET aim at the same goal, that is, a balance among ecological sustainability, social justice, and economic profitability. The 2007 Coastal Zone and Small Islands Management Law defines ICZM as a process of planning, use, monitoring, and control of coastal zone and small islands resources that integrates the many different industrial sectors, levels of government, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, as well as science and management to improve people's welfare (Art. 1, Par. 1 jo. Art. 6). While there are no official and standardized definition of CBET, most observers and practitioners agree that it involves initiation, development, and management by local community of tourism where nature is the main attraction. CBET is understood to create an ideal situation where the local community obtains economic and other benefits, not by exploiting or desecrating the natural environment and resources where they live, but by preserving and conserving them (Jones, 2005, p. 305).

Since tourism is managed communally by the locals themselves or in collaboration with local businesses and governments, CBET may also improve not only general welfare among the community, but also create a sense of social justice. Even better, an ideal CBET practice usually attracts tourists with healthy awareness of the importance of natural conservation, so they would voluntarily participate in preserving and conserving the nature as the main tourist attraction in the locality (Pradati, 2017). The 2007 Coastal Zone and Small Islands Management Law does not explicitly stipulate concerning CBET, but it adopts community participation as one of the overarching principles of ICZM and prioritizes coastal zones for, among others, conservation and tourism (Art. 3. Art. 23, Par. 2). These stipulations, therefore, can be interpreted as providing at least a legal framework, if not legal bases, for CBET in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, in the international world, CBET has been developed and promoted almost parallel to the development and promotion of the concept of sustainable development since the 1970s. Indeed, tourism boasting the local nature as its main attraction, initiated, developed, and managed by a community living in the locality is a perfect example and exact realization of the sustainable development ideal to balance economic profitability with social justice and ecological sustainability. Therefore, international organizations like the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) have been active in promoting ecotourism since the early 1990s. UNWTO understands ecotourism as the



strong link between tourism and natural conservation. In one hand, natural conservation benefits tourism by providing highly sought tourist attraction, particularly for tourists with good environmental awareness. On the other hand, tourism also benefits natural conservation by providing incentives for it and at the same time a viable source of financing where the income from the activities is earmarked for conservation efforts.

UNWTO believes that ecotourism might play an important part in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030 (OECD, 2022). With this understanding, UNWTO promotes and encourages the development of ecotourism and sustainable tourism practices at regional and national levels. Since then, many countries in the world have adopted and enacted laws and policies to promote ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Countries like Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey all joined the bandwagon (Ibid.). In Southeast Asia, the Philippines is among the countries that aim to develop and manage globally competitive ecotourism sites, products, and markets, where the strategies to achieve this goal include strengthening the capacity and participation of local communities and stakeholders and mainstreaming environmental and social responsibility in ecotourism (DOTRP, 2014).

In 2009, Indonesia also adopted and enacted a legislation i.e., the Law Number 10 Year 2009 on Tourism that asserts the country's commitment to CBET, ecotourism, and sustainable tourism as a whole. The Law aims at creating economic benefits, social welfare, and cultural preservation for the people of Indonesia through tourism. To do so, tourism development shall be carried out in a sustainable, responsible, and integrated manner i.e., protecting the environmental quality. The 2009 Tourism Law specifically stipulates that tourism development aims at the conservation of natural environment and resources (Art. 4, let. e), and that tourism shall be managed while upholding the values of harmony between human and nature, local culture and wisdom, social justice and people's welfare This is implemented by preserving and conserving the nature while empowering local people at the same time (Art. 5).

It is also stipulated in the Law that the designation of tourism areas shall consider, among others, conservation towards the natural environment and its ecological functions, carrying and supporting capacities, as well as the readiness and support from the local community (Art. 12, Par. 1). The 2009 Tourism Law even makes disturbing, polluting, or damaging natural environment in tourism areas indictable offenses and threats the perpetrators from among the tourists, business, even local people with administrative and criminal sanctions (Art. 27 jo. 62 -64). Other interesting stipulations include an order to the local government to allocate a portion of tourism income for natural and cultural preservations (Art. 59) and an order to the government to provide incentives for businesses and/or local communities that initiate and develop tourism in small islands (Art. 60).

As a follow up to the enactment of the 2009 Tourism Law, to provide details and to implement the Law, Indonesian government adopted the Government Regulation Number 50 Year 2011 on the National Tourism Development Masterplan 2010-2025. The Regulation provides that the development of "national tourism destination" (Art. 1, Par. 5 jo. Art. 7-8) shall be implemented by developing tourist attractions which include (a) natural attractions; (b) cultural attractions; and (c) man-made or artificial attractions. The development of these tourist attractions shall, among others, be parallel with nature conservation efforts to protect the sustainability of preservation and natural environments and resources (Art. 14). It is further elucidated that "natural attractions" are tourist attractions in the form of unique and diverse natural environments.

The natural attractions are categorized into marine and terrestrial attractions, in which the marine attractions are further categorized into (a) beaches, such as Kuta, Pangandaran, Gerupuk-Aan; (b) waterscape, both coastal and off-shore waters until certain distance that have marine tourism potential such as Seribu and Wakatobi archipelagoes (kepulauan); and, (c) water column and seabed, such as Bunaken, Wakatobi, Raja Ampat, Kakaban Marine Parks. There is also an elucidation about cultural attractions which can be in the form of intangible culture, for example, customs and traditions which are unique to a certain locality. These attractions shall be developed into various forms of tourism activities, that may include adventure tourism, marine tourism, creative tourism, cruise tourism, culinary tourism, heritage tourism, volunteer tourism, and so on (Elucidation to Art 14).

To this date, the most operational and technical regulation concerning CBET in Indonesia is the Ministry of Tourism Regulation Number 9 Year 2021 on *the Guidelines to Sustainable Tourism Destinations* which update the previous Regulation



Number 14 Year 2016 concerning the same title. The regulation stipulates that the guideline on sustainable tourism destinations shall be a reference for the central government, regional governments, and other stakeholders in the development, management, and supervision of tourism destinations (Art. 1). It defines sustainable tourism destination as a tourism destination that applies the principles of sustainability, namely the management of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects in an integrated and balanced manner. Furthermore, the Regulation also understands sustainable tourist destinations as the ones which promote the tourism development, which is appropriate to local culture, acceptable to prevailing social standards, prioritize local communities, non-discriminatory applying policy, and environmentally friendly (Appx., p. 7-8).

The Guidelines in the ministerial regulation set out the criteria and indicators of sustainable tourism destination, which include destination governance, destination management, destination planning, destination development, destination marketing and promotion, destination quality assurance, destination safety and security, destination accessibility and connectivity, destination infrastructure and facilities, destination environmental management, destination sociocultural management, and destination economic management. The Regulation also regulates the roles and responsibilities of the central government, regional governments, and other stakeholders in implementing the guideline on sustainable tourism destinations. Finally, the Regulation aims to improve the quality and competitiveness of tourism destinations in Indonesia, as well as to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

PARI ISLAND CASES

Pari Island is one of the islands in the Thousand Islands (Kepulauan Seribu), a chain of islands off the coast of Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. It is part of the South Thousand Islands District (Kecamatan Kepulauan Seribu Selatan) and includes four smaller islands: Kongsi, Tikus, Burung, and Tengah (Cahyadi, Khakhim, & Mardiatno, 2018, p. 108). Covering an area of about 108 hectares, the Island got its name from the abundance of stingrays—or in Bahasa Indonesia, "pari"—that used to be found in its waters (Pulau Seribu, 2021/04/21). It is located about 50 kilometers from Jakarta and can be reached by boat from Marina Ancol or Kali Adem. Pari Island has a tropical climate with an average temperature of 27°C and an average rainfall of 2,000 mm per year. The island has a rich biodiversity, especially in its coral reefs and mangrove forests (Nurrahman & Nurdjaman, 2018, p. 3).

The coral reefs are home to various species of fish, sea turtles, and other marine life. The mangrove forests provide habitat for birds, crabs, and other animals. The island also has several beaches with white sand and clear water, such as Pasir Perawan Beach and Bintang Beach (Liputan 6, 2022/10/24). Pari Island has a population of about 1,500 people, mostly from various ethnic groups in Indonesia, such as Betawi, Sunda, Jawa, and Bugis. Most of them are Muslims and work as fishermen or seaweed farmers (Wisata Pulau Tidung. 2016/11/15). Some of them also work in the tourism sector, as traders or service providers. The island has several facilities for tourists, such as homestays, restaurants, souvenir shops, and water sports equipment rentals. The island also offers various attractions for tourists, such as snorkeling, diving, island hopping, sunset watching, and mangrove exploring (Assa, 2019, p. 156).

If fisheries and other marine livelihoods have existed in Pari Island since colonial times, tourism is relatively recent since it was initiated only in 2010. According to some Pari islander informants,¹ the inspiration to develop tourism came when they visited their relatives in nearby Tidung Island, some 13,5 kilometers away from their Island. Tidung Island back then was already a busy tourism destination frequented by local tourists from Jakarta and its surrounding areas such as Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi since being initiated in 2009. At that time, Pari Islanders were concerned with the situation and condition of their Island. They realized that the remaining marine and coastal resources that have supported their lives for at least five generations have shown signs of depletion.

Tidung islanders have taught them valuable lessons that conserving what is left from their originally lush and abundant marine and coastal environments and resources would apparently be enough to attract city and inland people wanting to escape from the hustle

¹ Unless specified otherwise, this article are mostly composed from ethnographic materials based on numerous personal communications with informants from among Pari islanders, civil society organization activists, and government and judiciary officials

during two-years field research in 2017 and 2019. For ethical and security reasons, informants' names and identities will not be disclosed, except for some indication about their affiliations.



and bustle of city life or simply enjoy marine and coastal ambience and surroundings. Pari islanders then agreed among themselves to limit, even suspend altogether, any extraction activities in the mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and coral reefs. It only took approximately two years for the ecosystems to bounce back and show signs of regaining their past glory. By then, the islanders contributed their fund to purchase, build, and develop tourism facilities, renovated their houses and converted some of the spaces into homestays for tourists, installing electricity and water pipes and taps to the beaches, building gazebos and beach huts, etc. In the new year eve of 2011, Pari Island was ready to welcome a steady flow of tourists.

Pari Island is a true gem for tourists seeking a serene tropical getaway. With its beaches, waters, and marine life, the Island offers an escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. One of the main attractions of Pari Island is its stunning white sandy beaches (Alie, Pratama, & Andhika, 2023, pp. 69-70). Travelers can bask in the sun, take leisurely strolls along the shoreline, or simply relax under the shade of palm trees. The waters surrounding the island are perfect for swimming, snorkeling, and diving, allowing visitors to explore the coral reefs teeming with colorful fish and other marine creatures. For nature enthusiasts, Pari Island offers opportunities for ecotourism and wildlife encounters. The island is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, where travelers can embark on nature walks, bird-watching tours, or even explore the island's mangrove ecosystem by canoe (Shadrina, Besila, & Widjaja, 2023, p. 249).

For those seeking a taste of local culture, Pari Island provides an opportunity to engage with the friendly local community. Visitors can experience traditional island life, interact with the locals, and savor authentic local cuisine. Pari Island offers cozy homestays that cater to various budgets and preferences, ensuring a comfortable stay for every traveler (Yustika & Goni, 2020, p. 526). Pari Island is a hidden paradise that boasts breathtaking beaches, vibrant marine life, and rich cultural experiences. Nature lovers, adventure seekers, or those who simply looking for tranquility will find Pari Island an idyllic destination for an unforgettable tropical vacation.

Tourism on Pari Island has brought about significant social and economic impacts to its inhabitants, positively transforming their lives as a whole. On the social front, tourism has created employment opportunities for the islanders. The growth of tourism has led to the establishment of homestays, food stalls, and various supporting services, generating a demand for local workforce in areas such as hospitality, transportation, and tour guiding. This has provided a means of income for the residents, reducing unemployment rates and improving their standard of living (Kinseng, *et.al.*, 2018, p. 1068). Furthermore, the interaction between tourists and the local community has fostered cultural exchange and appreciation. The islanders have a chance to showcase their traditional ways of life and promote their unique cultural heritage. This exchange of ideas and experiences encourages cultural preservation and pride among the inhabitants, strengthening their sense of identity (Mardiputra, 2018, p. 77).

In terms of economic impact, tourism has stimulated business growth and entrepreneurship. Local entrepreneurs have seized the opportunity to establish small businesses catering to the needs of tourists, such as souvenir shops, water sports rentals, and local tour operators. This has led to a diversification of the local economy, reducing dependence on traditional livelihoods like fishing and aquaculture. Moreover, the revenue generated from tourism activities has been reinvested in the development. Infrastructure community's improvements, such as upgraded roads, better waste management systems, and enhanced public facilities, have been made possible through tourismgenerated funds.

This benefits not only the tourists but also the local population, enhancing their quality of life and wellbeing. All told, tourism in Pari Island has had a profound social and economic impact on its inhabitants. The industry has provided employment opportunities, promoted cultural exchange, stimulated business growth, and contributed to community development. Pari islanders, too, always try to ensure sustainable practices and equitable distribution of benefits to maximize the positive impacts and preserve the island's unique identity and natural resources for future generations (Sulistyadi, Eddyono, & Hasibuan, 2017, p. 11).

Into this happy picture suddenly enters PT. Bumi Pari Asri. Out of nowhere, in early 2015, the company claims to own most of the land in Pari Island. PT. BPA was founded by Herman Susilo, who claimed to buy the land from some of the "local residents" between 1991 and 1995. As a result, the Company is in possession of 14 building rights and 61 ownership rights certificates under personal names, as well as 62 deeds of sale by the then subdistrict head or approximately 90 percent of land in Pari Island. Equipped with these certificates and deeds, PT. BPA sets out to develop tourism and real estate projects on the Island. Undoubtedly, the



Company's operations and activities have been met with resistance and protests from many of the Pari islanders (Martini & Lubis, 2021, p. 27).

They have been living there for generations and relying on fisheries and other coastal resources of the Island and now tourism businesses for their livelihoods. The residents accuse the Company of trying to evict them from their homes and destroy their environment and culture. The islanders also argue that they have legal rights based on adat law and tax payments, and that certificates and deeds in the Company's possession are invalid or fraudulent (Ibid., p. 32). The land dispute has been going on for years and has involved various parties, such as the local government, the National Land Agency (Badan Pertanahan Nasional; BPN), the Ombudsman, and the Indonesian Institute of Science (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia; LIPI) which controls approximately the remaining 10 percent of land at the westernmost tip of Pari Island (Fitriana, 2019).

On a usual, uneventful business day, 11 March 2017 (Walhi, 2020/03/11), five personnel from Coastal Youth Forum (Forum Pemuda Pesisir; Forsir)-an organization established by the youth of Pari Island to manage tourism-are on duty in Pasir Perawan Beach, acting as some kind of lifeguards, tour guides, or anything the tourists might need assistance with. There were no ticket booths whatsoever in any tourist attractions on Pari Island, but usually these personnel will inform the tourists about a "donation" or a "participation" for the maintenance and development of local tourism. In the beginning, the donation was IDR 2000 (USD 0.13 or EUR 0.12) for the entire duration of my stay on Pari Island. "Whether you stayed only half a day or a whole week, the rate is the same," explained a Forsir activist. It was later increased to IDR 5000 (USD 0.34 or EUR 0.31) in 2015 per a verbal instruction from the then subdistrict head, "because he thought IDR 2000 was too cheap and not bona fide".

For years, there were never any complaints from the tourists about this donation, but on 11 March 2017 it was different. When one of the five personnel on duty informed two tourists basking on the Pasir Perawan Beach about the donation, they somehow became angry and started shouting: "This is illegal. This is extortion!" Due to the commotion, other personnel approached to see what was happening. This somehow intensified the tourists' anger: "what

are you going to do, rob us?!" The personnel tried to calm the tourists by saying if they do not want to donate that is okay, but the tourists suddenly screamed at the top of their lungs for help. At this point, several men not in uniforms but claiming as police officers suddenly showed up out of nowhere and put handcuffs on the five Forsir personnel, alleging them of extorting "illegal levies" (Berita Satu, 2017/03/11).

The five islanders were apprehended without any warrant, taken by boat to Thousand Islands Police Station in Cilincing, North Jakarta. There they were interrogated about "who your frontman (pentolan) is," as if they were a gang of thugs. Terrified, the five islanders mentioned the name of the Forsir² coordinator. The Police detectives swiftly departed back to Pari Island to capture him, "carrying with them assault rifles and wearing balaclava as if [the Forsir coordinator] were a terrorist." The coordinator was then taken to the Police Station while three of the younger Forsir members were released. The two remaining suspects and the coordinator were then detained in the Station during Police investigation. After the investigation completed, the case was thus forwarded to the North Jakarta Prosecutors' Office where the prosecution was altered from "illegal levies" to "extortion with violence," and the suspects were transferred to the Prosecutors' detention. In total, the duration of their detention until the North Jakarta Court decided their case on 7 November 2017 was 6 months 14 days (Walhi, 2020/03/11).

In 2018, the Police paid another visit to a Pari islander who happened to be a head of community association (rukun warga). In addition to being an official, the islander's daily occupation is the manager of a homestay. One day, while tending the homestay, some police officers came and informed him of a warrant to arrest him under an allegation of trespassing and land grabbing. The islander duly obliged and followed the officers to their Station in the mainland in Cilincing, North Jakarta. There the police officers explained to him that he was accused of illegally running a business, in this case, a homestay, by trespassing and grabbing a land that is legally owned by someone else, in this case, Pintarso Adijanto. Pintarso, it was documented in the case's minutes of investigation, acquired the land by purchasing it in 1991 from an unnamed person who possessed the land by way of inheritance (Tempo, 2018/09/28).

7

² The name of the unincorporated organization was later changed into Pari Island Caring Forum (Forum Peduli Pulau Pari; FP3) after the arrest and detention

of their three members, one of them was the coordinator.

Journal of Indonesian Tourisman Foliry Possivol. 8 [2023], Iss. 1, Art. 3

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The claim was proven with a certificate of land ownership right issued by North Jakarta Land Registration Office. The accused islander refuted this by saying that he never heard of any Pintarso, and that the homestay he managed along with the land it is built upon is owned by Surdin, a former Pari Islander who then resided in inland Bogor, who bought the land from Tasim, an heir of Mat Lebar (LBH Jakarta, 2018/09/10). Unfortunately, the only document available to corroborate this claim is a deed of sale, which by law is not proof of ownership. Because of this, the investigation was carried on to prosecution and then trial. However, the accused was not detained, according to the police officers and prosecutors of this case, because the threat of punishment for land grabbing is not exceeding a maximum of 4 years of imprisonment. According to the Indonesian Criminal Procedural Law, detention is unnecessary for this kind of offense.3

These criminal cases have terrorized and stroke fears in the heart of Pari islanders, if those are what is expected by anyone who contemplated them. Never in the islanders' wildest dreams would they have thought of doing anything that might get them into this kind of trouble, moreover, tangling with the police and jail. All they did was try to make a better living that they thought the tourism has given them for a while, before this endless jostling with the PT. BPA, and then with the criminal justice system (Gresnews, 2017/03/11). Their lives were threatened once with resources depletion, on which they depend almost exclusively, and conflict between themselves due to competition over scarce and meager resources. Then they found a new way to survive and continue with the living, this time, not by exploiting the resources, but conserving them as tourist attractions.

However, the slow-paced, laidback, and peaceful tourism-driven island life has been disturbed in the most brutal way by PT. BPA trying to get rid of all the islanders. Their friendly, good nature, and open arms mentality is being eroded by constant alertness and suspicion of just anybody, among themselves and tourists alike, especially towards strangers (Fitriana, 2019, p. 369). When some tourists talk with the islanders and try to probe and inquire about conflict with the company and the criminal cases, they become defensive and inquire whether the tourists are some sort of "company spies". One of the ex-detainees in the extortion allegation even does not want to talk, hear about or have anything to do with tourism anymore or anything related to it, moreover his experience in the detention. His friends explained that he is deeply ashamed and too traumatized by the experience.

CRIMINALIZATION OF CBET

The root of the conflict and criminal cases between PT. BPA and Pari islanders, as concluded by the public lawyers from the legal aid institution that counseled and represented the accused islanders in the cases, could be none other than problems with tenurial rights (Wibowo, 2020). Land registration system in Indonesia is notoriously sketchy and full of uncertainties particularly, for those whose land rights are still based on hereditary rights only acknowledged by local adat laws. It is not uncommon for a land parcel measured and registered in the same land registration office to be issued two or more land rights certificates with different names, moreover if the land parcels are overlapping with one another and registered in different offices by different officials. This might be because of the deeds registration system adhered to by the 1960 Basic Agrarian Law as the basis for the exercise of the Indonesian land registration system. This means that the registration of land rights is not compulsory and does not guarantee the validity or legality of the land rights (Annisa, Karjoko, & Purwadi, 2023, p. 131).

The land rights certificates only serve as evidence of the transfer of land rights, not proof of ownership. Such a system opens the possibilities for overlapping claims, fraud, corruption, or errors in the land administration system (Brits, Grant, & Burns, 2002, p. 7). To complicate problems even further, people's low legal awareness only the flaw. Most Indonesiansexacerbates particularly those who live in remote areas and/or have low educational level, when transferring land rights by means of selling and purchase, if they ever remember about documenting the deed at all, will usually produce and keep only the deed of sale without bothering to even inquire and verify whether the seller legally owns or possesses the land. Therefore, legal functionaries and law enforcers usually require at least two documents i.e., the deed of sale and certificate of right. The party whose

³ This argument is correct, but the previous allegation of illegal levies and extortion with violence are also threatened with a punishment of 4 years imprisonment in maximum. So, the three islanders in that case should have not been detained as well. The

Police and Prosecutors' Office also explained that the Suspect in the land grabbing case is "well behaved and cooperative," while the suspects in the extortion case, had they not detained, have the potential to repeat their actions or run away, so they argued.



claim is backed by these two documents shall be deemed the rightful owner of a land parcel. Those who fail to produce the two documents will lose whatever claim they make.

PT. BPA is completely aware of this, so as the first step in doing its business, the Company amasses the two types of land documents that cover 90 percent of land on Pari Island-because the remaining 10 percent is under the control of LIPI, a government institution (CNN Indonesia, 2018/04/14). The next step was informing everyone residing on Pari Island that they have illegally occupied the land that is legally owned or possessed by PT. BPA, based on the two documents. This is done by erecting ballyhoos in many strategic spots on Pari Island asserting the Company's ownership over the Island. To make sure that its presence is felt by all the islanders, PT. BPA hires a company that employs security guards to be posted all over Pari Island around the clock, twenty-four seven (Tempo, 2017/03/09).

Some islanders reported that, apparently, their job was to harass and intimidate the islanders "because there is nothing by way of assets that need guarding, except, maybe, the ballyhoos. The guards are there to prevent us islanders from taking them down." An informant who requested to be kept incognito said that he tracked down the security company and found out that it is owned by a high-ranking police officer. "Apparently, there are [high-ranking police officers] as well in [PT. BPA] in various positions, [such as] stakeholders and commissioners." It goes without saying, the Company's next order of business is filing reports to the Police. Before the 2018 case, the first land grabbing accusation to a Pari Islander in fact happened in 2015. In the 2015 case, the accused was indicted as guilty and served 4 months in prison (Koran Tempo, 2017/03/14). However, in the 2018 case, the accused was acquitted, "perhaps, due to heavy media coverage and public attention," according to the legal counsel of the accused.

If the other criminal cases are related to tenurial conflict, the 2017 extortion allegation case was pure shock and awe. "Perhaps, PT. BPA realized that there was increasing media coverage and public attention to Pari Island case, so they had to be a bit more creative. They must use a different strategy" argued an environmental activist who participates in the Save Pari Island Coalition (Koalisi Selamatkan Pulau Pari; KSPP). The strategy was indeed creative, so much so that some islanders suspected that the tourists who refused to donate were a set up. "I mean," said an islander, "what is the odd of two tourists making a scene because they did not want to

donate while there were undercover police officers nearby? We really must be watchful of what we do and our surroundings" (Tirto, 2017/11/07).

Seeing their neighbor being extremely silent and looking depressed, particularly about his experience during detention, Pari islanders cannot help but feel sorry for him while also concerned about their own safety and future. "If it happened to him, it could well happen to any one of us. There is no guarantee. is there? [that such summary arrest and detention will not happen anymore in the future]. In fact, as if corresponding with the decline of tourist visits since the beginning of hostility with PT. BPA (Walhi, 2020/03/11), the islanders are not as enthusiastic about tourism as before, particularly after the extortion allegation. Quite some islanders indeed return exclusively to their old occupation in capture fisheries and aquaculture, cultivating seaweed, that even before the tourism started in 2010 have no longer been rewarding. Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic when tourist visits were at an all-time low, life on Pari Island was getting even harder (Koran Tempo, 2021/04/22).

Of course, the above first instance court decisions were appealed against and brought to cassation level. The 2015 land grabbing case was appealed by the convicted islander, but the appellate and cassation courts corroborate the first instance decision (Jawa Pos, 2018/04/09). "If we analyze the decisions," commented a public lawyer from the legal aid institution, "the sentence itself was not important, so [the accused] was sentenced for the same time as his period of detention." The importance of the decision is that the accused is declared guilty, so PT.BPA's claim is backed by a court decision with permanent legal power. The same goes with the 2017 extortion allegation. Seeing their neighbor suffered so much after being detained for six months is enough to shock and awe the rest of the Pari Islanders. With this, the Company's purpose and intention have already been well served.

With the 2017 land grabbing allegation, the story is different. The legal counsel provided the following analysis. There are at least two factors that contribute to the acquiting decision at the first instance. From a non-legal perspective, intense media coverage and public attention might have made the judges hearing the case self-conscious, so that they dared not to decide against public sense of justice. From a strictly legal perspective, the legal counsel team to the accused used a new strategy to counter the claim of legality made by PT. BPA, that is, proving the illegality of the land rights certificates and deeds of sale in their possession, or, at least,



pointing out that there are legal problems with them. This was done by petitioning the Indonesian Ombudsman to investigate into the issuance of said certificates. The Ombudsman, although seemingly very careful and circumspect, declared that there is indeed "maladministration" in this matter. The declaration was quickly followed by an explanation about the complex and sensitive nature of any tenurial conflicts in Indonesia (Kausar, Darmawan, & Firmanzah, 2020).

Pari islanders have been living on their island for generations and have recently developed a community-based tourism management that supports their livelihoods and social services. Tourism might have been their only hope for the future. The criminal cases have threatened their access to land, resources and culture, as well as their human rights and dignity. The cases also have bearing on the socio-cultural life on Pari Island. First of all is the loss of identity and sense of belonging. The residents of Pari Island have a strong attachment to their land and sea, which are part of their cultural heritage and identity. They have been practicing traditional fishing methods and preserving the coral reefs and mangroves around the island. The threat of losing their Island have disrupted their connection to their ancestral territory and their way of life (Media Indonesia, 2017/06/12).

Secondly is the loss of social cohesion and solidarity. The residents of Pari Island have been organizing themselves through the Coastal Tourism Forum, which regulates the tourism activities on the island and distributes the income for social purposes such as education, health, religion and funeral services. The cases against them have created divisions and conflicts among the community members, some of whom may have been co-opted by the company or the authorities, while others have resisted or simply stayed away. Finally, there is also the loss of cultural diversity and resilience. In fact, he residents of Pari Island have been contributing to the cultural diversity and resilience by maintaining their local knowledge, values and practices related to fishing, tourism, conservation, and social welfare. The cases against them have endangered their cultural heritage and their ability to adapt to changing environmental and economic conditions (Christian, Satria, & Sunito, 2018).

In one of the hearing sessions of the 2017 extortion case, the court heard and examined the testimony of an expert in coastal areas and small islands management law (Mongabay, 2017/09/19). Firstly, after the examination of the identity, legality, and credential of the expert witness, the chairman of the panel of judges asked the Public Prosecutors if they

have questions for the witness, in which the Prosecutors said they had none. The Chairman subsequently gave the turn to the accused's counsellors, in which they asked the witness whether the activities of Pari islanders initiating, developing, and managing tourism in their island, as well as their action of collecting donation from the tourists for the maintenance and development of tourism facilities are lawful. The witness replied that not only the activities are lawful, the initiation, development, and management of a "communitybased ecotourism" (CBET) such as the one found in Pari Island is in fact advocated, encouraged, and protected by the law, in particular the 2007 Coastal Areas and Small Islands Management Law.

The Law, continued the witness, stipulated that community participation is one of the governing principles of integrated coastal zone management, and that the zone is prioritized for, among others, conservation and tourism. A CBET is thus the exact implementation of the Law. To this reply, a member of the panel of judges seemed to disagree and be dissatisfied. She further probed about the exact legal basis for running a tourism business and collecting money from tourists, "maybe, in the form of permits, or perhaps a village regulation." The witness responded to the inquiry by saying that there are not yet any legal bases in that sense. Although the policy attitude towards CBETs is already very clear, government administration at all levels might still be unsure about how to put them into action. Therefore, continued the witness, rather than criminalize it, this court of law should corroborate the practices as a correct and lawful implementation of the policy (See also Phelan, Ruhanen, & Mair, 2020).

Similarly, it is indeed impossible to solve the land grabbing cases by relying on the exact wording of the law, since the problems lie in the actual practices, even deep in the people's culture and mental predisposition. Clearly, PT. BPA has manipulated the ignorance and gullibility of simple people with simple minds like the Pari islanders (Timmer, 2010, p. 707). In the 2015 case, the judges went headlong to the guilty verdict only by considering that the Company possessed both documents of land rights certificate and deed of sale, while the accused islander, just like most of his fellow islanders, only possessed a deed of sale or nothing at all. The worst are maybe the "natives" or the descendants of the first inhabitants of Pari Island, who usually only have verbal accounts about how they inherited their land parcels from their fathers, and their fathers from their grandfathers, and their grandfathers from their great-grandfathers, and so on.



A progress, if it can be called that, was found in the 2018 case where the judges acquitted the accused islander based on the 1945 Basic Law, Article 33 stipulating that the land, water, and natural wealth contained therein are controlled by the State for the greatest prosperity of the people. The judges understood that, according to this stipulation, the land of Pari Island, should be controlled by the State, not by any person, be they individual persons or legal entities, and that the land should benefit the people who live and earn their livelihoods on the land in question (Walhi, 2018/10/28). Although appreciation is due to the decision, the judges in their consideration could have cited more detailed legislation and regulation that specifically govern the matter, which is basically a conflict between capital-based tourism and community-based tourism, such as the 2007 Coastal Areas and Small Islands Management Law and the 2009 Tourism Law, as well as all the relevant implementing regulations.

The criminal indictments against Pari islanders must criminalization be understood as against community-based ecotourism, in the sense of the use of legal or illegal means to suppress, intimidate, harass, or punish the people who are involved in or benefit from community-based ecotourism activities (Steinberg, 2004, p. 184). Community-based ecotourism itself is a form of tourism that is managed and controlled by the local community, and that aims to conserve the natural and cultural resources, empower the local people, and generate income and livelihood opportunities for them. There are some possible reasons why some actors may want to criminalize community-based ecotourism. The most common reason might be to gain access to the land, resources, or markets that are occupied or used by the community-based ecotourism actors. It could also be directed to eliminate or weaken the competition or opposition from the communitybased ecotourism actors.

Another plausible reason might also be to impose a different vision or agenda for the development or use of the land, resources, or markets that are related to community-based ecotourism activities. In the case of Pari Island, it seems that the criminal charges against the residents are based on false or exaggerated accusations that aim to justify the privatization of the island by PT. BPA and other actors that might be related both directly and indirectly to the Company (Christian, Satria, & Sunito, 2017). The residents have been running their tourism businesses in a sustainable and participatory way and have not committed any acts that could be considered as criminal offenses. Therefore, the

criminal charges against them could be seen as a form of criminalization against community-based ecotourism, which violates their rights and interests as well as the principles of environmental justice and social responsibility.

CONCLUSIONS

From the above discussions, it can be concluded that the criminal indictments against several Pari islanders constitute a criminalization against CBET. Indonesia indeed has some laws and policies that support and encourage CBET in coastal areas, but there are also some challenges and gaps that need to be addressed. The 2007 Coastal Areas and Small Island Management Law provides a legal framework for the management of coastal areas and small islands, including the recognition of customary rights, the promotion of community participation, the protection of marine ecosystems, and the development of sustainable tourism. The 2009 Tourism Law defines tourism as a strategic sector for national development and encourages the development of tourism that is based on local culture, natural resources, environmental sustainability, community empowerment, and regional autonomy.

At implementation levels, the Government Regulation Number 50 Year 2011, which regulates the management of marine protected areas (MPAs), stipulates that MPAs should be managed in a participatory way, involving local communities, NGOs, private sector, and other stakeholders, and that MPAs should support the development of ecotourism as a source of income and livelihood for local communities. The Tourism Ministry Regulation Number 9 Year 2021, which regulates the development of tourism villages, provides guidelines and criteria for tourism villages that are based on community empowerment, local culture, natural resources, environmental sustainability, and quality standards.

Tourism in Pari Island, Thousand Islands, Indonesia is a good example of a community-based ecotourism, but also faces some challenges and threats that need to be addressed. Some of the reasons why tourism in Pari Island is a good example of community-based ecotourism are as follows. The tourism activities are managed and controlled by the local community, through a community forum, which regulates the tourism services, facilities, and fees on the island. The forum also distributes the income from tourism for social purposes such as education, health, religion, funeral services, etc.

Journal of Indonesian Tourisman Foli y Possivol. 8 [2023], Iss. 1, Art. 3

Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Policy Studies Vol. No. E-ISSN: 2541-5360

The tourism activities aim to conserve the natural and cultural resources of the island, such as the coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, and traditional fishing methods. The tourists are required to follow the environmental rules and regulations on the island, such as not littering, not stepping on the corals, not using chemical products, and not fishing. Tourism activities empower the local people and generate income and livelihood opportunities for them. The local people provide various services and products for the tourists, such as homestays, food stalls, boat rentals, snorkeling guides, souvenir shops, and bicycle rentals.

Although the root of the conflict and criminal indictments involving Pari islanders is indubitably tenurial, a closer look to the cases is in order because any conflicts over natural space and resources use and management between investors and local communities in Indonesia would usually be tenurial. The cases of Pari Island here are specific and distinct. This is about local community initiating, developing, and managing tourism whose main attraction is the natural environment they live on and around, as well as their own culture, *vis a vis*, capital owners wanting to take over the space and develop a mixture of artificial, natural, and cultural tourist attractions to generate profit from them.

The first type of tourism, i.e., CBET is recognized, supported, encouraged, and protected by the law as the best strategy to attain and maintain the delicate balance among ecological, social, and economic purposes and interests. Although the second type of tourism is not discouraged, moreover prohibited by law, should the two types of tourism clash for some reason, the policy preference, priority, predilection is loud and clear: the CBET should have precedence, while other spaces might be allocated to other types of tourism. The governments, legislators, and judiciaries must never hesitate when faced with such a situation.

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13



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14



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