



## Network Governance in Natural Resources Management and the Role of Multi Stakeholder Collaboration in Banyuasin Regency

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### ABSTRACT

Natural resource management is a strategic issue in sustainable development in various countries, including Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the role of network governance in natural resource management through multi-stakeholder collaboration in Banyuasin Regency. The approach used is qualitative with a case study method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The results show that the success of natural resource management is greatly influenced by the quality of interaction between actors, the level of trust, and the effectiveness of institutional coordination. However, there are still challenges in the form of policy fragmentation, low integration between sectors, and limited capacity of local actors. This study recommends strengthening coordination mechanisms, increasing institutional capacity, and developing adaptive collaboration models to support the sustainability of natural resource management.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Natural resource management is a strategic issue in sustainable development in various countries, including Indonesia. This is due to increased pressure on the environment due to economic activity and population growth (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). In the context of regions, natural resource management often faces high complexity because it involves various actors with different interests (Ostrom, 1990). Banyuasin Regency as one of the areas with great natural resource potential faces challenges in managing the horticultural sector in a sustainable manner. This complexity is not only related to technical aspects, but also concerns governance and coordination between stakeholders.

Traditional hierarchical approaches are considered no longer effective in dealing with the increasingly complex dynamics of natural resource management (Rhodes, 1996) Therefore, a new paradigm has emerged in public administration, namely network governance which emphasizes collaboration between actors. Network governance allows for more flexible and adaptive interactions between government, the private sector, and society (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016)

In this framework, the government is no longer a single actor, but rather a facilitator and coordinator. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is key in creating effective and sustainable governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008) However, the implementation of collaboration often faces various obstacles such as low trust between actors. In addition, differences in interests and capacities between actors are also obstacles in the collaboration process. In Banyuasin Regency, the management of the horticultural sector involves various parties such as local governments, farmers, and the private sector. The interaction between these actors forms a complex and dynamic network. However, the network has not fully run optimally in supporting natural resource management.

One of the problems faced is the lack of coordination between government agencies. In addition, public participation in decision-making is still limited. This condition shows that network governance practices have not been fully implemented effectively. Previous research has shown that the success of collaboration is strongly influenced by trust and communication factors (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015) Therefore, it is important to understand how networks between actors are formed and function in local contexts. This study seeks to examine the role of network governance in natural resource management in Banyuasin Regency. The focus of the research is on how collaboration between stakeholders is carried out. In addition, this study also identifies factors that affect the effectiveness of collaboration.

## LITERATUR REVIEW

The concept of network governance is a development of the public administration paradigm that emphasizes the importance of interaction between actors in the public decision-making process. According to Rhodes (1996), network governance refers to a pattern of horizontal and interdependent relationships between various actors, both government and non-government, in a policy network. In this context, the government is no longer the dominant actor, but rather functions as a facilitator that coordinates various interests. Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) explain that policy networks are formed because of the complexity of public problems that cannot be solved by one actor alone. Therefore, collaboration is needed involving a wide range of stakeholders with different resources, knowledge, and interests. Interactions in these networks are dynamic and require effective coordination mechanisms.

In the perspective of collaborative governance, Ansell and Gash (2008) emphasized that the success of collaboration is determined by several key factors, such as trust, face-to-face dialogue, commitment to the process, and the existence of a common goal. This model shows that collaboration is not just about working together, but also about building sustainable relationships between actors.

Emerson et al. (2015) then developed a more comprehensive collaborative governance regime framework by including three main dimensions, namely system dynamics, collaboration capacity, and collaboration results. This framework provides an understanding that collaboration is a complex process and is influenced by various internal and external factors. In addition, Ostrom (1990) through the theory of common-pool resources management emphasizes the importance of the role of the community in maintaining the sustainability of natural resources. This approach shows that the involvement of local communities is a key factor in the success of natural resource management.

In the context of natural resource management, network governance is a relevant approach because it is able to accommodate various interests and encourage synergy between actors. Effective collaboration can improve the efficiency, legitimacy, and sustainability of the resulting policies. However, various studies show that the implementation of network governance often faces challenges, such as conflicts of interest, power imbalances, and low institutional capacity. Therefore, the right strategy is needed to manage the collaboration network so that it can run optimally.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand in depth the practice of network governance in natural resource management in Banyuasin Regency. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore complex and contextual social phenomena. The location of the research was determined in Banyuasin Regency with a focus on the horticulture sector as one of the region's leading sectors. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that this area has great natural resource potential while facing various challenges in its management.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with

key informants who were selected purposively, including representatives of local governments, farmers, business actors, and other related parties. Observations were carried out to obtain a direct picture of the interaction between actors in the natural resource management process. Meanwhile, documentation studies were used to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations.

Data analysis was carried out using the interactive model Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) which included three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The analysis process is carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure the validity and reliability of the data.

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

The results of the study show that the practice of network governance in natural resource management in Banyuasin Regency has involved various main actors consisting of local governments, farmer groups, business actors, and other supporting actors. The interaction network that has been formed reflects collaborative efforts in managing the horticulture sector, especially in terms of planning, implementation, and supervision of activities. Local governments play a dominant role as the dominant actor facilitating policies and programs, while farmer groups are the main implementers on the ground, and the private sector contributes in terms of distribution and market access. However, the relationship between actors in this network is still partial and not fully integrated in a strong and sustainable governance system.

From the institutional aspect, it was found that the coordination structure between government agencies is still sectoral and runs independently in accordance with their respective authorities. This leads to overlapping programs and policies, as well as weak synchronization between planning and implementation in the field. In addition, the lack of a formal and continuous collaboration forum results in communication between actors tending to be sporadic and unstructured. This condition has an impact on the low effectiveness of decision-making that should involve various parties together.

From the relational side, the level of trust between stakeholders is still relatively low. This is shown by the limited disclosure of information, the lack of communication intensity, and the tendency of each actor to defend his or her own interests. This low trust has a direct impact on the weak commitment to carry out mutual agreements, so that the collaboration that has been established has not been able to produce optimal synergy. In addition, the lack of an effective conflict resolution mechanism also strengthens the potential for tension between actors in the network.

Furthermore, from the aspect of participation, this study found that community involvement, especially farmers as the main actor in the horticulture sector, is still limited to the program implementation stage. The community has not been optimally involved in the strategic planning and decision-making process. This shows that the participatory approach in network governance has not been fully implemented. Lack of access to information and low public capacity to understand policies are factors that contribute to the low level of participation.

In terms of resources, there is a significant inequality in capacity between actors, especially between local governments and community groups. The government has greater resources in terms of budget, regulation, and access to information, while communities and farmer groups still face limitations in terms of knowledge, technology, and market access. This inequality causes relationships in the network to become unbalanced and potentially hinder the ideal collaboration process.

In addition, this study also found that leadership factors have an important role in driving the effectiveness of network governance. Collaborative and inclusive leadership has been proven to improve coordination and strengthen relationships between actors. However, in the context of Banyuasin Regency, the leadership role is not fully optimal in integrating various interests in the network.

Overall, the results of the study show that although elements of network governance have begun to be formed in the management of natural resources in Banyuasin Regency, their implementation still faces various structural, relational, and cultural obstacles. Therefore, more systematic efforts are needed to strengthen network integration, increase trust between actors, and encourage wider participation to achieve sustainable natural resource management.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study show that the implementation of network governance in natural resource management in Banyuasin Regency is still in the development stage and has not reached the optimal level of collaboration. Conceptually, these findings reinforce the view of Rhodes (1996) that policy networks are formed in the context of the complexity of public problems, but their success depends heavily on the quality of interaction between actors. In the case of Banyuasin, although there have been various actors involved, the relationships that have been formed have not fully reflected the characteristics of a strong network, such as productive interdependence and structured coordination.

One of the main findings in this study is the low level of trust between stakeholders. This condition is in line with the collaborative governance model put forward by Ansell and Gash (2008), which affirms that trust is the main foundation in building effective collaboration. The low trust in Banyuasin Regency can be seen from the limited information disclosure, the lack of intensive communication, and the weak commitment in carrying out mutual agreements. This shows that the collaboration process has not been able to create a safe and inclusive interaction space for all actors.

In addition, the problem of policy fragmentation and weak coordination between government agencies reinforces the argument of Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) that policy networks are often faced with complex structural challenges. In the context of this study, each agency tends to run programs sectorally without adequate integration. As a result, there is an overlap in policies and inefficiencies in the implementation of the program. This condition shows that the government's role as a coordinator in the network has not been running optimally.

In the perspective of the collaborative governance regime developed by Emerson et al. (2015), the findings of this study indicate that the collaboration capacity in Banyuasin Regency is still relatively low. This includes limitations in aspects of collaborative leadership, institutional structures, and resources that support the collaborative process. Without adequate capacity, it is difficult for the network to produce effective outputs and outcomes in natural resource management.

Furthermore, the limited participation of the community in the decision-making process shows that the principle of inclusivity in network governance has not been fully realized. These findings contradict the principles put forward by Ostrom (1990), who emphasized the importance of the involvement of local communities in the management of shared resources. This low participation is not only caused by structural factors, but also by the limited capacity of the community to access information and understand policies.

The inequality of resources between actors is also a factor that affects network dynamics. Actors with greater resources tend to have a more dominant influence in the decision-making process, thus creating an imbalance in collaborative relationships. This condition can hinder the creation of an equal and inclusive deliberation process, which should be a key characteristic of network governance.

On the other hand, this study also highlights the importance of the role of leadership in driving the effectiveness of collaborative networks. Leadership that is facilitative and inclusive can function as a liaison between actors and encourage the creation of mutual trust and commitment. However, in the context of Banyuasin, the role of leadership is still not optimal in integrating various interests in the network.

Overall, this discussion shows that the implementation of network governance in natural resource management in Banyuasin Regency still faces multidimensional challenges that include structural, relational, and cultural aspects. Therefore, comprehensive efforts are needed to strengthen collaboration capacity, increase trust between actors, and build more effective coordination mechanisms. Thus, network governance can function optimally as an approach in realizing sustainable and inclusive natural resource management.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that the implementation of network governance in natural resource management in Banyuasin Regency has not been running optimally even though it has involved various stakeholders such as local governments, farmer groups, and the private sector. The collaborative networks that have been formed are still partial and have not been systematically integrated into a strong governance framework. The main problems faced include low levels of trust between actors, weak institutional coordination, policy fragmentation that causes overlapping programs, and limited public participation in the decision-making process. In addition, inequality in capacity and resources between actors is also a factor that hinders the creation of effective and equal collaboration. This condition shows that although the network governance element has begun to take shape, more comprehensive efforts are still needed to strengthen the quality of interaction and synergy between stakeholders.

In line with these findings, this study recommends the need to strengthen coordination mechanisms through the establishment of formal, inclusive, and sustainable collaboration forums to facilitate communication and policy integration between actors. Local governments need to play a more active role as facilitators and network managers in managing network dynamics, including in building trust through information transparency and policy consistency. In addition, increasing institutional capacity and human resources, especially at the level of communities and farmer groups, is an important step to encourage more meaningful participation. The development of collaborative leadership is also needed to bridge various interests and strengthen a shared commitment to achieving sustainability goals. Thus, the implementation of network governance is expected to be more effective in supporting sustainable, inclusive, and community-welfare-oriented natural resource management.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

The next research is suggested to examine network governance with a quantitative approach to measure the level of effectiveness of collaboration more objectively. In addition, comparative studies between regions can also be conducted to gain a broader understanding of best practices in natural resource management.

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