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To cite this article: M Syam *et al* 2019 *IOP Conf. Ser.: Earth Environ. Sci.* **241** 012017

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# Ecotourism: An alternative of socio-ecological crisis?

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**Abstract.** Wakatobi's natural landscape, well-known as "a real paradise under the sea", becomes one strategic area of the national tourism (KSPN). Wakatobi's ecotourism is based on the principle of sustainability. However, Wakatobi ecotourism does not meet ideal expectations. On the one hand, ecotourism is considered a way to avoid an environmental crises and to increase local economic growth. On the other hand, the development of Wakatobi ecotourism has resulted in marginalization and created a new social-ecological crisis. Access and opportunities of local peoples must be reviewed with the presence of the Tourism Authority Agency (BOP) as the protective body of the KSPN. BOP has become a new authority in the midst of overlapping authorities of Wakatobi National Park (TNW), Wakatobi District Government, and the customary authority. The customary authority as a public authority can at least be a "signpost" in the midst of state authorities (TNW, District Government & BOP), struggling to benefit from the nature of Wakatobi. Nevertheless, the paternalistic pattern of indigenous peoples also presents disputes in their institutions. Bajau ethnic, known as "orang laut", is always subordinated by "orang darat".

## 1. Introduction

While the global economic situation is uncertain, precisely the number of people travelling abroad is increasing. In 2014, an increase of 5% from the previous year, and is estimated at 1.11 billion people travel to overseas [1]. Similar to Indonesia, while the political-economic situation is uncertain, the tourism sector becomes the fresh air as shown from the positive trend of foreign exchange earning. A total of 11166.3 million US \$ is obtained, by placing the tourism commodities in the fourth place in the foreign exchange earning under the oil and gas, coal and palm oil [2]. This data is immediately greeted by Jokowi with the plan who wanted to create "10 new Bali". Bali is considered as a trademark Indonesia's most superior travel. The new Bali covering the area of Lake Toba (North Sumatra), Borobudur (Central Java), Bromo-Tengger-Semeru (East Java), Tanjung Lesung (Banten), Seribu Islands (Jakarta), Tanjung Kelayang (Bangka-Belitung), Mandalika (NTB), Wakatobi (Southeast Sulawesi), Komodo (NTT), and Marotai Island (North Maluku). Those destinations are 10 out of 88 National Tourism Strategic Areas that having typical characteristics in each area and having high prospects to become another Bali. Those 10 destinations are the priority of national development of tourism area, with the patronage of the Tourism Authority Board, which is appointed directly by the Presidential Regulation.

Wakatobi as a region in the world coral triangle has a high biodiversity (especially marine species) that can attract tourists with high frequency. In 2013 as many as 3,315 tourists have come to travel by generating as much amount of foreign exchange 3,315,000 US \$ [1]. Ironically, the total foreign



exchange coming into the country does not significantly alter the poverty rate in Wakatobi. By 2015 as many as 39% families including pre-prosperous family category [3]. Results Kasmiati et al. [4] also showed the same thing, "the overall income structure of the society does not become better because of the development of ecotourism activities. In addition, the level of per capita income of communities across the household range is still low, especially the income of the middle class is still very far from the poverty line. Ecotourism activities that occurred in Bajo Mola and Kota Island cannot increase the household's welfare".

Wakatobi designation in 1996 and is set in 2002 as Wakatobi National Park (TNW) Appointed as a Marine National Park by Ministerial Decree No. 393 / Kpt-VI / 1996 dated July 30, 1996 and designated by the Minister of Forestry No. 7651 / Kpts / II / 2002 dated August 19, 2002 with an area of 1,390,000 million ha would lead to a territorialising in "fences" zonation created. A Wakatobi National Park good intention to transfer the knowledge of nature conservation is perceived negatively by society, until there is a joke as "fish and corals are more important than human". This condition is exacerbated when a limited natural wealth is not managed optimally when the population growth increases significantly. From the total area contained only 3% of the land area available. This condition is clearly denying that marine resources are the main source of the production-consumption method of society to meet their daily needs. The limited public access to agrarian sources is increasingly visible when the control over all the area is in fact fully owned by the state through the appointment of TNW In this case, countries represented by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (KLHK).

Not finished with TNW territorialising problem, in 2003 there was a new authority that has a power in managing the same overlay with TNW. That authority arose when Wakatobi was appointed as New Autonomy Region after the separation from Buton Regency. This division was triggered to stimulate Wakatobi established towards the area economically. Therefore, infrastructure and superstructure have been prepared in facing economic competition on a national scale and particularly in global. Those pieces of evidence began to appear when the economic growth almost reached 10%. However, the economic growth adds the new economic disparity when poverty and unemployment increased (high-growth less-pro poor and high-growth, less-pro job) Adapted from the Development Trend of Southeast Sulawesi Province. Series Analysis of Regional Development of Southeast Sulawesi province in 2015.

Look at the existing today's condition, people rely heavily on the broad agricultural sector (agriculture, forestry, fisheries) with the figure of Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in 2014 amounted to 27.58% of Wakatobi, a review to the sector projects should be considered correctly. Although the trend of tourist services rose, the production-consumption process cannot be separated from agricultural products in the broad sense. Thus the necessity of a comprehensive review if the tourism sector has become a major alternative economic backer Wakatobi, especially becomes a mainstay sector.

From its historical story, Wakatobi as an island region that does not close from the newcomers. Wakatobi becomes the trade connector of Java-Sulawesi-Maluku-Papua, Nusa Tenggara for centuries. This is confirmed in the records of the expedition Alfred Russel Wallace See [5]. It who stopped at Wangi-Wangi in the journey from Makassar to Aru Islands on 22 December 1856. He found trader sold the natural resources product from the various regions of the archipelago to Europe. Along the way, he was amazed to see an impressive panorama. Therefore, there is no doubt if the exoticism of Wakatobi has been famous since old time. As it is, it is no wonder that some people intend to take the time to enjoy the nature of Wakatobi, or the popular term now is called travelling. Coincides with it, the need to travel into a new consumption type in today's modern market era. Tourism has become a commodity that is reliable, first became an answer to a model of non-extractive industry. This is captured by Lorenz Mader with establishing Wakatobi Dive Resort (WDR) as the first international travel business. Therefore, migration patterns between countries are currently running very fast, so that the control is needed to manage the negative excesses. Moreover, social change is very rapid. The change can be seen from the transformation of norms and values. Changes of norms and values transformation are seen from changing the commodification of culture, marginalization, imitation, traditions, religions, languages and consumption patterns, Maulana [6]. The change could be happened due to the struggle of control, ownership, distribution of agrarian resources, which sometimes leads to agrarian conflicts.

In addition to socio-cultural changes that occurred, BOP policy which unifies 10 regional KSPN at the same motive, namely economic acceleration in foreign exchange seemed to be explored further. Although the result of tourist activity raises awareness of environmental sustainability, but awareness is built on the basis of the economic motive that nature as an asset. Not only that, residues such as those in the conservation area of Raja Ampat seems to be strong evidence that ecotourism does not support the conservation of nature. Therefore, the need to reconsider the relevance of BOP policy in the development of ecotourism in Wakatobi sector as an alternative livelihood, especially a dual function in environmental conservation. Moreover, the BOP entered in the middle of custom existence start resurrected. Custom becomes the important pioneer that regulate and control the behaviour of its people until now. Custom not only a mere of ceremony committee, custom actually a set of institutional rules of the game in the life of society itself.

## **2. Material and Methods**

This research is descriptive research to explain the current condition of ecotourism after Wakatobi is appointed as a national tourism strategic area (KSPN). The location of the study is carried out in the several large islands of Wakatobi (Wangi-Wangi, Kaledupa, Tomia and Binongko), Southeast Sulawesi Province. This location is purposively chosen with the argument that Wakatobi is a marine ecotourism location with the agrarian structure managed by various authorities. This research starts from December 2016 to March 2018 with field research for 20 days in February 2018.

Data collection methods are qualitative with primary and secondary data collection techniques. Primary data is obtained from in-depth interview technique and direct observation in the field and assisted by a focus group discussion process. The data is obtained by snowballing, tracing the truth until it is saturated. While secondary data is obtained from official government documents, research reports, customary records, mass media news and other related literature. Data are analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Data reduction is done by conducting in-depth interviews and writing the results of in-depth interviews in writing and processing them by sharpening, classifying, directing, and removing unnecessary data. After the data is reduced, then the data is presented by compiling all information and data obtained into a series of words that are easy to read into a report in the form of quotations or typologies. The data that has been presented was then verified by drawing conclusions from the results that have been processed.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The vision of Wakatobi government as contained in the Local Regulation Number 3 in 2013 on the development of the Medium Term Plan of Wakatobi 2013-2016 is "The Realization of Real Underwater Paradise in The Center of Triangle Coral of the World". In the vision of Wakatobi in 2013-2016, there are three keywords or subject matter of vision namely The Real Heaven, Under Water, and the Center of The World's Coral Triangle. It is also triggered based on data of TNW (2015) Wakatobi is the centre of the world's coral triangle area of 8816,169 hectares of coral reefs. In spite of the coral reefs, Wakatobi also has a mangrove ecosystem, non-mangrove and seagrass. In line with this, before becoming a district administrative areas, Wakatobi has previously been designated as a Marine National Park based on the Minister of Forestry's decision Number 7651/Kpts/II/2002 on 19 August 2002 with the similar area in the one similar overlay with the administration area of Wakatobi Regency.

Until now, the custom leaders or meantu'u with their apparatus are still groping when asked about the extent or the border of customary land that they have. For instance Usman Baga even mentioned that the whole area of Wakatobi is custom territories, all is Sara land, the argument is simply that the whole territory of Wakatobi before affiliating with the Republic of Indonesia is the region of The Sultanate of Buton, it means that Sara (the customary regulation) has existed prior to the Republic of Indonesia, but in another argument he also could not deny that the regional autonomy government of Wakatobi and TNW also has legal authority over the Wakatobi, in addition the new authority will come in the form of Agency for Tourism authority also have legal force as the holders of authority of some parts of Wakatobi.

During the polemic of overlapping authority in Wakatobi is likely to marginalize and obscure the right and the authority of Sara so that local NGOs, international NGOs and academician helped the custom community of Wakatobi to explore knowledge, history and custom values that they have as well as in re-mapping their area/communal land as an effort in reinforcing the position of the custom in the contestation of power in Wakatobi.

Before known as conservation areas, Wakatobi archipelago has a long journey until it appointed a national park as it is today. Cited in Santoso and Rudianto [7], Wakatobi and surrounding sea have been designated as National Parks through the long process, which is as follows:

1. Starting from the Survey of Potential Marine Resources conducted by Wakatobi PHPA Team with WWF (World Wild Life Fund) in September 1989, and several research activities by Wallacea Operations Team, the expedition of the University of Indonesia; Marine research team from P3O-LIPI;
2. The recommendations of Islands Marine Protected Areas in Tukang Besi/ Wakatobi (Sekwilda Tk. II Buton No. 523.3 / 1255 dated June 3, 1991);
3. The Recommendations of KDH Regent level. II Buton No. 522.51 / 3226 dated October 3, 1993 and Recommendation of KDH Governor level 1 Southeast Sulawesi No. 522.51 / 2548 dated March 7, 1994;
4. The designation of Wakatobi sea in the district of Buton regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province of  $\pm$  306 690 ha as the Nature Park of the Sea (marine conservation area);
5. The Decree of Forestry Minister No. 462 / KPTS-II / 1995 dated September 4, 1995);
6. Appointment of Wakatobi islands and surrounding waters covering an area of 1,390,000 ha as a National Park on July 30, 1996 based on The Decree of Forestry Minister 393 / Kpts-VI / 1996;
7. Wakatobi National Park designated as a unit based on the Decree of Forestry Minister 185 / Kpt-II / 1997 dated March 31, 1997 on the Organization and The Work Management National Park (BTN) and the National Parks Unit;
8. Appointment of Wakatobi Island and surrounding sea covering an area of 1,390,000 ha as a National Park (Forestry Minister Decree No.7651 / Kpts-II / 2002);
9. The change of the National Park of Wakatobi Island into Wakatobi National Park, Forestry Regulation No. P.29 / Menhut-II / 2006 concerning Organization and Technical Implementation Unit of the National Park.

The long journey of Wakatobi National Park inaugural is not necessarily being able to run properly according to the wish of the management of Wakatobi National Park. Before it was passed, a lot of resistance from the various elements of society. People are worried that they will be relocated and the area designated as protected areas. People are worried during the zonation, it could mean the prohibition on fishing. They fear when the ocean where they live will be closed. Therefore, several efforts were made by The Wakatobi National Park about delivering the understanding of the major functions related to the enactment of The Wakatobi National Park Live interview with the Head of Section I Wakatobi National Park.

The coordination at the time did not heed the principles entrenched, such as the previous socio-cultural values in the community. In addition, the zonation was made not based on the previous biophysical information. Things that previously feared of zoning is really happening. From the beginning of creating the zone is not based on the biophysical and socio-cultural conditions. For example, people are prohibited in fishing in the defined core zone. Though there is no protected ecosystem in that region. In addition, in the designated region is a region which has become the traditional fishing area for the fisherman for centuries. Fishermen have understood the principle of sustainability according to local wisdom possessed. They already have their own conception of the conservation before their national park zoning. The term tuba dikatutuang in Bajo community and kaombo Wali Binongko for example, that is a way of looking themselves to conservation based on bioregion aspects.

The critical consideration of the monopoly area management finally getting the turmoil in the society. This situation forced The Wakatobi National Park to revise the zonation. Started since 2004, the public consultation carried out by The Wakatobi National Park to look at public perceptions of the region. This is done to look at the existing resources map. The result of the revision was finally completed and ratified on 23 July 2007 and produced significant changes, especially in the area of the taking zone and no-take zone. In the previous zonation, the range no-take zones (no take zone) shown in the core zone (ZI), Zone of Marine Protection (ZPB), Tourism Zone (ZPR) reached 78.38%, while the community utilization zone only 21.62% of the total area. Finally the PHKA Decree NO. SK.149 / IV-KK / 2007, zonation system and generate new zonation system. The zonation system that produced is part of the spatial of the Wakatobi regency (the spatial sea). These are the results of the revised zoning of Wakatobi National Park in the MoF (2008):

a. Core zone	: 1.300 Ha
b. Marine Protection Zones	: 36.450 ha
c. Tourism zone	: 6.180 Ha
d. Local Zones	: 80.4000 Ha
e. Public Use Zone	: 495.700 Ha
f. Special Zone / Mainland	: 46.370 ha

The formulation of zonation in the Wakatobi National Park in the Wakatobi National Park Zoning book [8], described as below:

1. Core Zone (Core Zone), part of the national park that has good natural conditions or physical species are still original and not yet disturbed by humans who absolutely protected, works for the protection of native biodiversity representation and typical.
2. Marine Protection Zones (No Take Zone), is part of a national park because of the location, condition and potential of supporting the interests of the conservation program in the core zone and utilization zone.
3. Tourism Zone (Tourism Zone), is part of a national park which the layout, condition and natural potential that is mainly utilized to benefit of natural tourism and conditions/ other environmental services.
4. Local Zones Utilization (Local Using Zone) is a zone that can be developed and utilized traditionally limited to the fulfilment of the daily needs for the surrounding community who usually depend on the natural resources of the sea.
5. Public Use Zone (Common Using Zone) the zone that is intended for the development and utilization of deep-sea fisheries.
6. Mainland Zone / Special (Land Zone) is the land area in the form of islands are inhabited and have established the ownership rights over the land by the people whose settings would applied and be inevitably which there has been a group of people and the live's supporting facilities before the area is designated as a national park, for instance, the telecommunication, transportation facilities and electricity.

Until now, the zoning is made still cannot accommodate the interest of various parties. Although the utilization zone that consists of local and general utilization zone is very extensive, amounting to 93.50% of the total area of The Wakatobi National Park, it could not accommodate the needs of local fishermen who go to sea. Boats and gear owned by local fishermen are mostly impossible to use in a distance away. It is considered that the catch of fishermen is fulfilled at a distance of 10 miles. The close distance leads many fishermen to sail back and forth around the settlement or area of residence.

The item 2 of Article 11 Government Regulation 50 of 2011 on the criteria on National Tourism Strategic Areas tend to develop the potential tourism that already exists. The item mentioned if the potential tourism is built based on the image built. To build that image, the Wakatobi management persistent to demonstrate to the world community that the Wakatobi is "a real paradise under the sea" through the repetition that has done. This is a strategy to instil in each of the minds of the world

community, that if given the Wakatobi certainly remember the beauty underwater like heaven. The term of heaven is an image that is reminiscent of a causality of behaviour in the world and results in the hereafter. Causality in the form of relationship behaviour with the reward or punishment given by God through the right which just has. Judging from the state of Jakarta lately, it will be interesting when the Islamic party Conservative highlight this. Heaven in Wakatobi is very easy to enter, the ticket to heaven only be redeemed through a travel package. People no longer respect the rights of God, God defeated by an economic money. Not to mention the pressure of heaven "real" in the jargon, as if travel managers in Wakatobi never see heaven to compare the "real" and "unreal" heaven. When it is used as a marketing strategy, it is apparently successful. In Wakatobi society, there is no resistance seen in the term of heaven. People do not criticize the meaning of paradise, even confirmed by making a counter antithetic through the jargon, "a real underwater paradise, hell appears in the mainland", a jargon that is equally biased. Through jargon "a real paradise under the sea" we can see that the public of Wakatobi is simply experiencing the hegemony of false pride.

#### 4. Conclusion

The KSPN-BOP plan that will enter to Wakatobi in the form of ecotourism so far has led to the attitude of the pros and cons in the society. That attitude then complicated and with the attitude of the political elite in Wakatobi. In the political arena of Wakatobi last election, the were two candidates were fighting for the position of Wakatobi's Regent played a public stance as a political campaign material, it is then further exacerbated the contradictions in the social class. However, in the end, the winner candidate initially refused to entry the KSPN-BOP. The attitude started to change slowly in accepting the BOP. There are some things that that become the concern of society if Wakatobi as a region that still holds the traditional values/ Sara transformed into a tourism area. For example, fading ancestral values for crushed by the inclusion of a variety of value systems from the outside. Besides the natural beauty offered other things that are considered to have local values or local traditions. This further exacerbates the public concern if local values are intended to be commodified in the world of tourism so that the sanctity of the value of it will be converted to the exchange rate because consumerism is always in conjunction with the tour.

Groups of pro ecotourism actually see it differently. For them, ecotourism precisely is the solution to encourage the public welfare also to sustain the ecology of Wakatobi. They develop an understanding that our seas are a paradise rich and beautiful but not so with the mainland. Land with rocky soil is very unlikely to meet their food needs. The fishermen also not entirely possible to rely continually on the oceans, because the community is always growing rapidly. No wonder a lot of people who choose to wander out Wakatobi village because there is no cultivable land is narrow and rocky barren except cassava nothing else can grow productively. If all the community people rely on the Wakatobi sea this is not possible to be continued because most of the region has also become a region which is fenced by Wakatobi National Park. There are zoning in which people may not access and use, the zoning also reduces the livelihoods, on the other hand, Wakatobi as the world's coral triangle centre needs to be maintained for marine ecosystems into the world. The dilemma then is an advanced alternative reason that allows the public needs Wakatobi people can still get his sources of life but also maintaining the natural. Tourism is the solution, the tourism in the concept of ecotourism. But lately appeared a lot of questions, whether the government planned ecotourism in Wakatobi is a genuine ecotourism or just a nature-based tourism industry? If what is meant is a nature-based tourism industry, it is almost certain that the ideal envisioned early on that tour as a solution to overcome the socio-ecological problems would be futile and impoverish society so is going to happen ecological destruction.

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