

# Entrepreneurship and conflict resolution: The role of women in environmental economics

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## Entrepreneurship and conflict resolution: The role of women in environmental economics

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**Abstract.** Women play an important role in supporting the environment economics, especially in supporting the independence of the area around the forest through entrepreneurial activities. This study aims to analyze the relationship between social conflict and natural resources, especially in forest areas, and identify the role of women in conflict resolution management through the use of natural resources. Since women have the skills and knowledge in processing natural products, it has been utilized as a strategy to minimize social conflicts. Social conflict closely related to natural resources due to dissatisfaction from the community. Conflicts in forestry areas will persist as long as differences in interests among stakeholders still exists. For this reason, the role of women in processing natural products becomes essential. Even though the activity is one of the informal sector activities, it can support the family economy if conducted optimally. This study found that the role of government was insufficient in supporting entrepreneurial activities in remote areas, especially in forest areas. Research data showed that there are still many village women who do not have skills in processing natural products. The condition is a result of the lack of collaboration between the government and the private sectors.

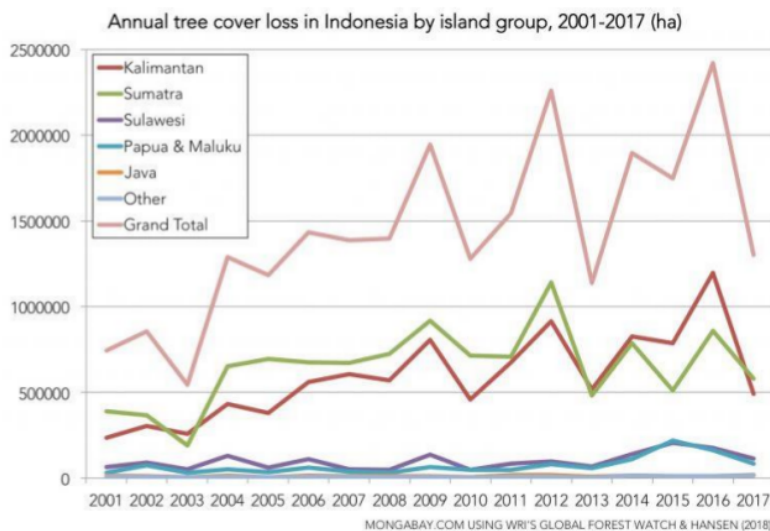
### 1. Introduction

Women have a significant role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, especially related to environmental economics. Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Additionally, Indonesia also has a wide variety of ethnicities, local languages, and abundant natural resources. This condition is one of the sources of internal conflict. Internal conflicts can occur because of the factors in a country that are related to financial, natural resources, and human resources. There are two types of domestic conflict, namely, vertical conflict - a conflict which involves the government or decision-maker; and civil society and horizontal conflicts - conflicts involving certain groups such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), official organizations, and civil society [1].



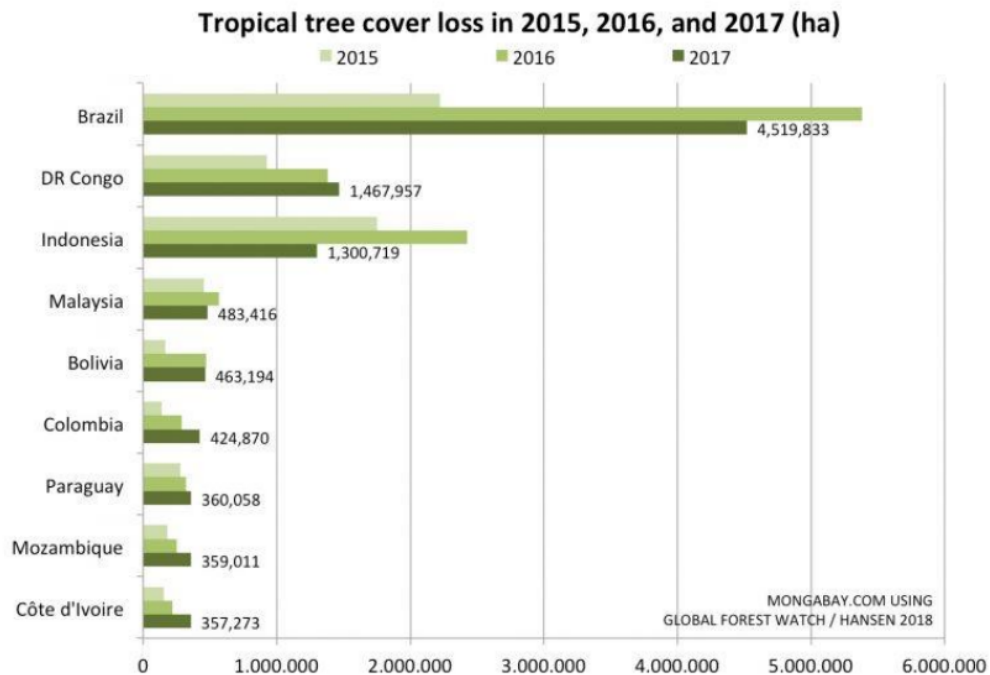
Competition in managing natural resources is a source of social conflict and causes violence and casualties. Social conflicts can occur anywhere and anytime, including in production forest areas [2]. Social conflicts occur because of the dissatisfaction of indigenous people living around the forest site. They argue that the forest belongs to them, resulting in a conflict between government employees or forest supervisors and the community who is known as the holders of forest product utilization permits. Interview with communities around the forest location revealed that they had long cultivated the land in the forest because the community felt that the forest belonged to them.

Even so, natural resources also have a significant role in resolving a conflict in an area and preventing new conflicts. The focus of natural resources in this study is the forest sector. Based on data from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the local government, the government has taken several actions to overcome social conflicts in the forest area, such as creating a conflict mapping information system, known as "simplik". Simplik aims to conduct mapping activity in forest areas, especially those with potential conflicts. Simplik is also expected to be one of the ways in conflict resolution because the system has a social aspect, namely, to improve the welfare of the people around the forest. The government needs to involve women in processing forest products and keep forest ecosystems maintained.



**Figure 1.** Annual data regarding tree cover loss in Indonesia from 2001-2017 (ha)  
(Source: Jong, Hanz Nicholas [3])

The picture above shows that the forest area in Indonesia continues to decrease. Therefore, wise forest management, especially the involvement of women in processing forest products and the use of forest land through entrepreneurship, is essential.



**Figure 2.** The development of the forest state continues to decrease from 2015 to 2017 in the tropics (Source: Jong, Hanz Nicholas [3])

The picture above shows the condition of forests that continues to decline in Indonesia and other tropical countries. This research is relevant because it can support government policy in overcoming the problem of forest land in Indonesia that is steadily decreasing.

## 2. Research Questions

This research focuses on the role of natural resources as one of the causes of conflict sources and the role of natural resources in conflict resolution. Research also identifies the role of women in utilizing natural resources as a strategy in conflict resolution. Based on the previous overview, the objectives of this study are:

- To analyse the relationship between social conflict and natural resources, especially forest areas.
- To identify the role of women in conflict resolution management through the use of natural resources.

Based on the background and objectives of the above research, the research questions are:

- How can natural resources cause social conflict?
- What has been done by the government in supporting village women's entrepreneurial activities?
- What is the impact of the policies that have been made by the government on village women? Are there policies that support environmental economics?.

### 3. Methodology

This research was conducted in Sidenreng Rappang District, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The approach used in this study is qualitative, namely semi-structured one-to-one and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). FGD participants were representatives from local governments and women who were active in entrepreneurship activities. Interview was conducted from June to November 2018. Researchers took interview data from local governments as stakeholders, civil society, especially women involved in entrepreneurial ventures.

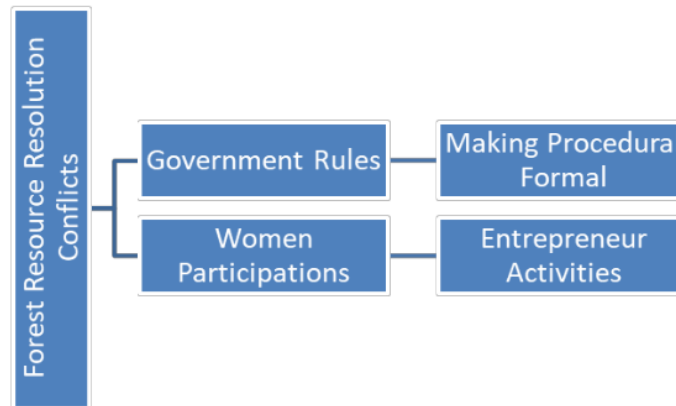


Figure 3. Analytical framework for analysis and data collection

### 4. Discussion and Analysis

#### 4.1. Relationship between social conflict and natural resources

Forest Management at the international level is guided by the principles of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) issued at the ASEAN Social Forestry Network conference in Brunei Darussalam on 21-22 June 2011. SFM is the concept of sustainable forest management that has ecological functions and economic functions of forests involving the government and civil society. Meanwhile, the Republic of Indonesia has issued a regulation concerning forestry management since 1999. The Republic of Indonesia Law Number 41 of 1999 concerning Forestry Article 4: states that all forests in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia are under the state's control including natural resources contained in the forest zone for the prosperity of people.

Therefore, the implementation of the application of the law should be fair and sustainable. The Indonesian government regulates and manages forest and forest products based on the law. Regulations or laws that are applied appropriately in the community will not cause social conflict. Vice versa, if the forest area processed by the government is improper and only allows it to the private sector, it will quickly lead to conflict. Community dissatisfaction in the utilization of forest products such as woods procurement and land mastery would result in conflict. Conflict can also occur due to deforestation, monopolistic practices, oligopoly, inefficiencies in the allocation and loss of indigenous cultures of local communities [4]. The conflict could get worse due to the difference of interests in processing the results between the government as the stakeholders [5]. In addition, several countries or governments make a regulation in the form of a policy that is not consistent with the reality in the field [6].

For the Indonesian government, especially the government in Sidenreng Rappang (Sidrap) Regency has also issued several regulations on forest land use by local residents. Based on interviews and FGDs, the government claimed to have taken legal action to set boundaries for areas of conflict

between land processing companies (companies appointed by the government) and communities around forest areas. Even so, some community groups still do not follow the prescribed laws or regulations. The community did this because they considered the land to be theirs that they had long used for farming. This condition often causes social conflict.

#### 4.2. *The role of women in conflict resolution management through the use of natural resources*

Conflict in forest area has invited initiatives from multilateral governments and NGOs to raise awareness on the sustainability of national and multilateral forest products [6]. Research related to the role of women in the informal sector has been carried out by many researchers, especially those related to working hours, division of working hours, job selection due to locations that are close to home, involvement in entrepreneurs [7,8].

Women have an important role in supporting their family's economy by involving them in processing forest land. The involvement of women in this sector belongs to the informal sector. The influence of gender in the informal sector is not only the case of Indonesia but also at the international level. This condition illustrates that conflict knows no boundaries both in the village and in the city as a result of international migration [9]. Other researcher argued that the influence of globalization, especially in cultural and economic transfers between regions or countries, and the use of borderless online media, both have significant impacts on people working in the informal sector [7]. Chant said that women in urban areas also experience gender injustice even though women in urban areas have more complete facilities than in rural areas. Women in urban areas also experience many obstacles in the labor market and informal companies. These obstacles include security and non-safety work, physical and financial assets, large workload, education, and skills that are lacking, age, and area of residence [10].

Based on interview data, the local government has been trying to create entrepreneurs from villages, especially in forested areas, to strengthen the village economy. The government invites the public, especially women, to be active in entrepreneurial activities. The Village Minister for Disadvantaged Development and Transmigration (PDPT) Marwan Jafar said that the government supports new entrepreneurs. To support these activities, the government established BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises). The establishment of BUMDes or Village-Owned Enterprises aims to improve the national economy and open up more employment opportunities, especially in the field of entrepreneurship [11].

The aim of the government to form a village that stands independently and has a contribution to the national economy needs to be supported by a strategy that involves women. Women in villages, especially women who live around the forest area, rarely have the skills to process natural products around the market. In general, they process natural products only for the benefit of their household. "Empowering woman" is only a concept because the implementation is not right in the field. Some women have attended invitations made by the government to obtain skills and knowledge in the village office or sub-district office. Even so, the implementation of the program was not optimal because several community groups had financial limitations. In general, women living in remote areas have a deficient level of skill in processing natural products. This condition will not minimize conflict, and on the contrary, it will lead to new conflicts.

Therefore, the involvement of stakeholders is essential [5]. Additionally, the collaboration between the government and the private sector or non-government institutions is needed to support entrepreneurial activities in the villages. For Sidrap Regency, this collaboration activity is mostly only in urban areas. In contrast, collaborative activities are infrequent for rural areas. Nevertheless, with the existence of funds for village development, several village administrators have invited women living in the vicinity of forests and disputed land to participate in various training activities in the village. Activities like this need to also be disseminated to various other regions, especially those in remote areas.

Forest land conflicts are very high because the forest area gets the term 'open access property'. Women who live around the forest participate in claiming that the land in the forest is their right.

Therefore, conflicts between farmers and land authorities in forest areas are very high, including female farmers. Conflict also occurs between communities in forest areas and the government because it is a protected forest area. The research data showed that female farmers could become mediators of the ongoing conflict. Through empowerment activities, the government continues to motivate women to actively participate in entrepreneurship, such as processing natural products into products that are ready to be marketed. The government has also formed several women's groups located around forest areas to be active in the production of home industries. This activity can reduce the potential for conflict regarding forest land tenure.

The role of local governments in providing entrepreneurial skills to female farmers around the forest can be a process of mediating conflicts between local governments and farmers in forest areas. Therefore, the role of women as mediators to reduce land tenure conflicts is very strategic in the effort to find land conflict resolution in forest areas

### 5. Conclusion

The concept of empowerment is a very appropriate concept when accompanied by action in the right field. The study concluded that a planning approach in entrepreneur activities is necessary, by involving women in the forest area to minimize the social conflicts that always occur. The involvement of the government, especially in providing funds for the public, is vital. This study found that the policies made by the village authority in the form of regulations, training, and the application of village funds were not optimal. There are still many village women who do not have the skills in processing the land around them as well as an indicator of the government's lack of business. Women's empowerment activities in supporting environmental economics, especially entrepreneurship activities, are still deficient. Activities that are collaborative between the government and the private sector are still lacking. The usage of village funds is more dominant in village infrastructure, but there is very little use of skills to improve rural women.

### Limitation of Study and Future Research

This research is limited because it only retrieves data from one district. The more data obtained from various regions will provide the perfect variation for a study. Therefore, future research is expected to be carried out in many regions in Indonesia. This research is also limited to conducting interviews only with local and female governments in the district. For future research, researchers should also conduct interviews with the legislature and the central government.

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