

**LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN HANDLING FOREST AND  
LAND FIRES IN MUARO JAMBI REGENCY**

by :

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**Abstract**

Dealing with forest and land fires is not an easy matter, but a complex one. Handling forest and land fires requires the role of a leader in providing solutions to existing problems. There have been many efforts by local governments to stop forest and land fires, but have yet to achieve significant results. The development of land use into oil palm plantations is the dominant reason for forest and land fires occurring in various regions. Especially for areas that have peat ecosystems such as Muaro Jambi Regency which has made the main potential for forest and land fires in the area higher. This study aims to see how the role and strategy of the local government of Muara Jambi Regency in dealing with forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency and the form of leadership from the regional head of the Muaro Jambi Regency in coordinating the parties involved in the process of handling forest and land fires in the Muara Jambi Regency. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. From the results of the analysis, we can conclude that leadership and management of social capital must be able to synergize to be able to deal with forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency This means that the process of handling forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency cannot be done by the government alone, but requires a collaboration between the government and the community and handling in physical matters is not enough, it takes a trust, cooperation and a strong network (network) to get maximum results.

*Keywords : Leadership; Social Capital; Forest and land Fire; Muaro Jambi.*

### **A. Introduction**

There have been many efforts by local governments to stop forest and land fires, but have yet to achieve significant results. The development of land use into oil palm plantations is the dominant reason for forest and land fires occurring in various regions. Especially for areas that have peat ecosystems such as Muaro Jambi Regency which has made the main potential for fires in the area higher.

Muaro Jambi Regency, which has a fairly large peat area, which is 30% of the area of peatland in Jambi Province, has experienced forest and land fires since 1998 until the end of 2019 with a smoke emergency status. The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) in 2019 through the terra and aqua satellites released that the number of hot spots in Sumatra reached 1,182 points. Of these, the most was in Jambi Province which reached 499 points. In fact, the highest number of hot spots indicating forest and land fires in Jambi is in Muaro Jambi Regency, reaching 177 points (Tempo, 11/09/2019). The impact is very dominant for economic, ecological and social losses for the people of Muaro Jambi Regency. In such conditions, the capacity of regional leaders and communities is highly demanded in controlling forest and land fires. The capacity in question is a form of ability and skill that must be possessed by regional

leaders and communities in dealing with fire and forest problems that occur repeatedly. The fires that have occurred so far have indicated that the role of leaders and communities to control forest and land fires collectively is very much needed.

Muaro Jambi Regency also is one of the areas most prone to forest and land fires every year. Data from the Jambi Regional Police's Ditreskrimsus (2021) said that throughout 2021 forest and land fires that occurred in the Muaro Jambi district covering an area of 28.7 hectares. This is the widest among other districts in Jambi province. The worst forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency are located in Kumpeh District, which is spread over Arang-Arang Village, Sipin and Puding Village. Arang-Arang Village is the most vulnerable village and is prone to forest and land fires cases every year, has a total area of 12,000 hectares of peat land which is the largest number in Kumpeh Ulu District. The existence of forest and land fires that occurred in Muaro Jambi Regency has caused smog which has an impact on public health and also has an impact on the transportation system, both land, sea and air.

If we look at it from a normative point of view, the responsibility for handling forest and land fire cases at the district government level rests with the regional head, namely the regent who is also part of the public official with the authority to make policies. The

regent is an important pillar in the administration of the state, including in the handling of forest and land fires. From this description, the success or failure of forest and land fire management will be related to the capacity of the regent in managing every potential that exists in the community, both natural resource potential and social resources or what is often referred to as social capital. The ability to manage this in the conception of administration and government is known as leadership. In other words, the regent's leadership and social capital will more or less relate to the success or failure of forest and land fire management in an area.

Regarding the handling of forest fires in Indonesia, there have been several previous studies that also examined how to deal with forest fires in Indonesia, including: *First*, research conducted by suryani with the title, *Handling Smoke Haze From Forest Fire At Border Regions In Indonesia*. In this study Suryani concluded that the haze caused by fires forests and land in Indonesia have an impact on Neighboring countries, the smog also has an impact on Social, Economic and Ecological. and as for the efforts made by the government to minimize fires forest and land are still at the stage fire fighting, not much touches on prevention activities.

*Second*, research conducted by budi darmawan with the title,

*Sustainable Management of Peat Swamp Forest Ecosystems Toward Forest And Land Fires In Kampar Peninsula, Sumatera*. In this study budi darmawan concluded that The level and status as well as the key factors that affect the sustainability of management peat swamp forest ecosystem against fire forest and land using the approach Multi-Dimensional Scaling. Refers to the overall research results index or sustainability status is at medium criteria (45.81%) or moderately sustainable status. By partial for each of the dimensions having a moderately sustainable status is economics, technology and law, while ecological and social dimensions are less sustainable so it needs serious attention.

*Third*, research conducted by bambang hero with the title, *Formation of a Fire Care Society as a Strategy for Forest Fire Control in the Education Forest of Holcim Cibadak Sukabumi*. The results of the study concluded that 47 out of 70 respondents or 67.14% stated that they were willing to join the Fire Care Society. This is because public awareness of the environment and the desire of the community to carry out activities with the Holcim Cibadak Educational Forest are quite high. A total of 23 out of 70 respondents or 32.86% stated that they were not willing to join the Fire Care Community institution. This is due to the influence of working hours on the diversity of respondents' livelihoods so that respondents who do not have

enough free time find it difficult to participate.

From the previous studies above, the position of this research is a fairly new one because of research it focuses on how leadership and social capital can be a solution in dealing with forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi District.

Based on Robert's understanding. D. Putnam (1993), an institution that is successfully defined by the structure of its society. He stated that if there is social capital in the community structure, it is possible that cooperation will be easier to do. Social capital in this case refers to the existence of trust between community groups, reciprocal norms, and exchange networks that involve various community group without discrimination. Meanwhile, leadership theory as proposed by Charles Stangor (2004) states that the success of an institution can also be influenced by the role of individuals who have the power to change the structure of society.

This means that regional leaders, both regents and subordinates, are required to make policies that support the performance, abilities, and interests of their citizens at large. Interaction between them will also be encouraged in order to advance the existing potential. This encouragement includes efforts to ensure that local leaders must know

the potential of their region as well as smart ways to maximize that potential, including the potential of social capital. In this context, regional leaders ultimately need to develop social capital, because social capital is an important factor in relation to the success of a regional head's leadership in handling forest and land fires. This is because the handling of forest and land fires carried out on a community basis requires handling effort that rely on the strength, characteristic, and independent initiatives of the local community network.

## **B. Research Method**

This study used a qualitative research approach, that according to (Creswell 2007) is an approach that gives an opportunity for researchers to be able to carry out detailed descriptions and interpretations in order to gain a holistic understanding. This type of research is a case study, which is understood by (Creswell 2007) as a type of research that can be interpreted as an approach to study, explain, or interpretation a case in its natural context without outside intervention. More specifically, this research is an instrumental case study which is used to examine a particular case so that a perspective can be presented on the issue or improvement of a theory.

This study discusses Leadership and Social Capital as a Strategy for Handling Forest and Land Fires in Muaro Jambi Regency. The design or design of this research is seen from the

analytical approach, the author uses a qualitative approach. In this study, the emphasis is on how the process is, not just how the results are. Research using a qualitative approach emphasizes the analysis on quality. The data collected is not in the form of numbers, but the data comes from interview scripts, field notes, personal documents, and other official documents. So that the main purpose of this qualitative research is to describe the empirical reality behind the phenomenon in depth, comprehensively, in detail and thoroughly. Therefore, the use of a qualitative approach in this study is to match, compare, and find a common thread between empirical reality and applicable theory by using descriptive methods.

Creswell (2007) revealed that effort to analyze data can use qualitative data analysis techniques in three ways, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, abstracting, and transforming "rough" data that arise from written records in the field. Furthermore, the presentation of data is a collection of information that has been organized to facilitate the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action. The final method used is drawing conclusions or verification, namely interpretation of the entire data collected so that adequate conclusions can be obtained.

### **C. Research Result and Discussion**

According to Darwiati and Tuheteru (2010) in Indonesia, almost 99% of forest and land fires are caused by human activities, whether intentional or not (element of negligence). Among these percentage figures, land conversion activities accounted for 34%, illegal cultivation 25%, agriculture 17%, social jealousy 14%, transmigration projects 8%; while only 1% are caused by nature. Another factor that causes forest and land fires to become more intense and triggers fires is the extreme climate, energy sources in the form of wood, coal and peat deposits. Most forest and land fires originate from burning activities in agricultural land processing systems, fields and plantations. The clearing of forest areas to open a new area for food crops has been going on for a long time. After 2 or 3 years of being planted with food crops, the land usually becomes nutrient-poor and abandoned. (Ministry of Forestry: 1995).

The provincial government is part of the organization for controlling forest and land fires, referring to the Minister of Environment and Forestry 32/2016. This organization is ad hoc which was later called the Provincial Controlling Task Force for Forest and Land Fire Management. As for the efforts that can be taken by a governor, namely by issuing a policy of fixed procedure for controlling forest and land fires in Jambi Province, beside that a governor can issue a circular to the Regent/Mayor regarding the anticipation and early warning of the potential for forest and land fires,

conduct socialization, coordination, ask the Regent/Mayor The mayor activates the Karhutla post.

From geographically, Muaro Jambi Regency, of the 11 sub-districts, almost all experienced natural disasters. Both forest and land fires, floods, landslides, and others. Based on data from the BPBD of Muaro Jambi Regency regarding natural disasters that occurred from 2015-2020, forest and land fires were the most frequent problems with 35 cases, compared to floods with only 23 cases and landslides 7 cases.

Muaro Jambi Regency, this is because the handling is only carried out by the central and regional governments. In handling forest and land fires, cooperation between the government and elements of society, both private and government organizations, is required. If you look at the data on forest fires in Jambi Province and Muaro Jambi Regency below, it can be said that it is quite high. Below is data on the distribution of forest fires from 2015-2021 in Jambi Province and Muaro Jambi Regency. See table 1 and 2 Below:

**Table 1.**  
**Area of Forest and Land Fires in Jambi Province in 2015-2021**

Years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Wides (Ha)	115.634,34	8.281,25	109,17	1.577,75	56.593,00	1.002,00	174,00

Source: [sipongi.menlhk.go.id](http://sipongi.menlhk.go.id) Direktorat PKHL Ministry of Environment and Forestry RI

**Table 2.**  
**Distribution of Forest and Land Fires in Muaro Jambi Regency 2012-2020**

Tahun	Nama Daerah	Luas Area Terbakar
2012-2013	Kecamatan Kumpeh	150 Ha
	Kecamatan Taman Rajo	300 Ha
2014	Kecamatan Kumpeh	350 Ha
	Kecamatan Sungai Gelam	31,5 Ha
	Kecamatan Jaluko	14 Ha
	Kecamatan Muaro Sebo	8 Ha
	Kecamatan Mestong	1 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	2 Ha
2015	Kecamatan Kumpeh	3211 Ha
	Kecamatan Sungai Gelam	263 Ha
	Kecamatan Maro sebo	151 Ha
	Kecamatan Taman Rajo	28 Ha
	Kecamatan Jaluko	106 Ha

Tahun	Nama Daerah	Luas Area Terbakar
	Kecamatan Sekernan	44 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	265 Ha
	Kecamatan Mestong	4 Ha
	Kecamatan Sungai Bahar	150 Ha
	Kecamatan Bahar Selatan	30 Ha
2016	Kecamatan Taman Rajo	2 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	4,65 Ha
	Kecamatan Maro Sebo	1 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh	12,5 Ha
2017	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	0,25 Ha
	Kecamatan Sungai Gelam	5 Ha
	Kecamatan Taman Rajo	5 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh	10,5 Ha
2018	Kecamatan Kumpeh	134,8 Ha
	Kecamatan Taman Rajo	2,6 Ha
	Kecamatan Jaluko	6 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	39 Ha
	Kecamatan Sungai Gelam	15 Ha
	Kecamatan Sekernan	3,5 Ha
	Kecamatan Maro Sebo	17 Ha
	Kecamatan Bahar Utara	2 Ha
2019	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	1 Ha
	Kecamatan Jaluko	1 Ha
2020	Kecamatan Sekernan	9 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh	5 Ha
	Kecamatan Kumpeh Ulu	0,5 Ha
	Kecamatan Mestong	30 Tumbuk
	Kecamatan Taman Rajo	10 Ha
	Kecamatan sungai Gelam	15 Tumbuk
	Kecamatan Maro sebo	20 Tumbuk

Source: sipongi.menlhk.go.id Direktorat PKHL Ministry of Environment and Forestry RI

### Social Capital

According to Sumardjo (2010: 2) social capital is a relationship that is mutual, trust, institutional, values and other social norms that play an important role in improving people's welfare. The relationship can be formal or informal. Formal relationships in society, for example, what happened through community organizations, religious groups, cooperatives,

political parties and so on, while informal social relations include social interactions between people in one environment. The most decisive thing in strengthening capital Social media is the intensity of interaction between citizens or related parties, which can play a role in becoming a participatory and effective public space or the existence of a strong collaboration between the parties.

The aspect of togetherness between individuals in the community

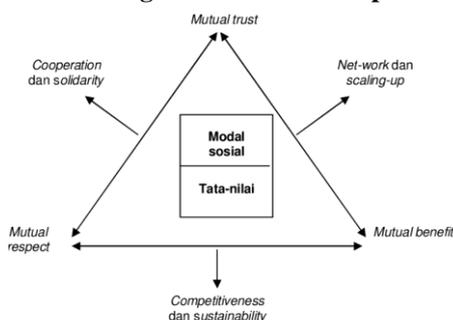
to meet various needs is one indicator of the dilute/thick level of social capital. Another indicator is the extent to which members of a community know, are willing and able to take advantage of their free time.

Meanwhile, according to Lin (2003: 4) social capital is an investment in social relations which is expected to provide reciprocity. Definition of this general has several elements in it. The first facilitates the flow of information. Second, these social ties can influence agents who have an important role in decision making. Third, resources in social ties will support the credibility of individuals or organizations in gaining access to resources resources through their network or social capital. Fourth, social relations will build an identity and recognition. Meanwhile, social capital generally focuses on three dimensions (trust, cooperation and network) without paying attention to the values behind it.

From the picture above, we can understand that if the development of social capital is only based on these three dimensions, it will produce contradictory explanations. The dimension of cooperation, for example, will not be realized if in a small or large community the rules of collectivity cannot be built based on mutual respect, and the development of networks or networks progressively. Network will not develop if in it is not built collectivity without being based on the rules of mutual benefit relationship. In developing a relationship of mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit in the social system, it is a series of outer circles of social capital. The inner circle or core of social capital is the values that live in that society.

In the context of handling forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency, from the aspect of cooperation, we can see how the Muaro Jambi Regency government and several agencies related to forest and land fire management have collaborated, for example the Muaro Jambi BPBD with the police and the forestry service carried out socialization related to how to clear land properly and correctly so as to avoid forest fires. In addition, the community and organizations concerned with forest and land fires are also required to be active in monitoring and reporting to the government regarding the fires that occurred in Muaro Jambi Regency.

**Figure 1:**  
**Values as the Core, Shaper and Strengtheners of Social Capital**



### **The Role and Leadership in Handling Forest and Land Fires in Muaro Jambi Regency**

Leadership literally comes from the word lead. The word lead contains the meaning of directing, fostering or regulating, guiding and also showing or influencing. Leaders have both physical and spiritual responsibility for success work activities of the led. According to Wahjosumidjo (2005: 17) leadership is translated into terms of traits, personal behavior, influence on others, patterns, interactions, cooperative relationships between roles, the position of one administrative position, and persuasion, and perceptions of others. About legitimacy of influence. Meanwhile, according to Miftah Thoha (2010: 9) leadership is an activity to influence the behavior of others, or the art of influencing humans attitude, behavior, both individually and in groups.

There is much that a leader at the district level or a district head can do in dealing with forest and land fires in his area. Regarding the handling of forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency, there are several actions that have been taken by the muaro jambi regency government including:

- a. Establishing an emergency alert status for forest and land fires at several points in the Muaro Jambi district, such as peatlands in Muaro Jambi

which are spread over 5 sub-districts and the most vulnerable are Kumpe, Sungai Gelam, and Taman Rajo.

- b. Established several special posts for handling forest and land fires in several areas prone to forest and land fires.
- c. Carry out coordination meetings with relevant agencies.
- d. Make MoU and joint commitment between local governments, and Forkopimda with plantation and forestry companies in an effort to prevent and control forest and land fires.
- e. Dividing the operational area for the prevention and management of forest and land fires in each sub-district and village in the form of sectors operational post.
- f. Conducting socialization, patrolling and carrying out extinguishing operations with a joint team. (Anari: 2021).

### **The Role of The Regional Planning and Planning Agency Muaro Jambi Regency**

The Regional Planning and Planning Agency (Bappeda) has a very important role in regional development planning, because this institution is responsible for implementing regional development in accordance with its authority. Bappeda is a planning element in the process of administering

regional government, and is responsible to regional heads through the regional secretary. The main task of Bappeda is to carry out regional government affairs in the field of regional development planning based on the principles of autonomy and assistance tasks. The development planning is included in the prevention and management of natural disasters. There are three types of natural disasters in Muaro Jambi Regency, namely floods, landslides and forest and land fires. Especially for the natural disaster of massive forest and land fires that occurred in Muaro Jambi Regency, all OPDs participated in the response.

Bappeda has a position as a policy maker for every natural disaster that occurs.

In dealing with natural disasters and forest and land fires, Bappeda together with the Regional Secretary will command and act as the driving force for the related OPD. For handling forest and land fires natural disasters, BPBD is focused on implementing it in the field. Meanwhile, Bappeda is waiting for information from the BMKG regarding reports on temperatures and potential hotspots on land prone to forest and land fires. After there was a decision that the status of forest and land fires was raised to standby, the Bappeda immediately held a coordination meeting with the regent and the relevant OPD to draw

up a plan to deal with forest and land fires. Formulating and planning is an important task and role for Bappeda in tackling forest and land fires. Then coordination between OPD becomes an obligation that must be carried out properly to realize the formulation and planning that has been designed.

Planning and formulating natural disaster management is carried out routinely through meetings with BPBD on regional resilience index (IKD). The results of the meeting can be used as evaluation material to formulate and design better policies. Likewise, the management of forest and land fires which has become an annual disaster in Muaro Jambi Regency, therefore the formulation and planning must be more optimal. Because the main task of Bappeda as the agency that formulates and plans every development in the region, in efforts to overcome natural disasters such as forest and land fires, Bappeda is in a decisive position. Considering that forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency have always been the concern of all parties, therefore the policies that have been designed and the coordination of all related OPDs must be in good synergy. (Interview with zuhri: 2021).

### **The role of the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of Muaro Jambi Regency**

The role of the Regional Disaster Management Agency of Muaro Jambi Regency in preventing

forest and land fires. The problem of forest and land fires (karhutla) in Muaro Jambi Regency continues to be a threat to the community every year, so the Muaro Jambi government under the Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) continues to make efforts to prevent forest and land fires from happening again. This effort is carried out so that the negative impacts caused by forest and land fires, both in the fields of health, economy, and education, do not suffer such large losses. One of the efforts made by BPBD Muaro Jambi is to carry out independent outreach activities to the community. This prevention socialization approach places the community as the main actor, because society is an inseparable part of the surrounding environment.

Meanwhile, the Muaro Jambi BPBD in this case acts as an actor who transforms understanding to the community regarding efforts to prevent and control forest and land fires in the area around the community. In providing socialization to the community, of course, BPBD Muaro Jambi must use a way that is easily understood by the community to avoid misunderstandings that might occur. With the independent socialization carried out by BPBD, it is hoped that it will provide knowledge, skills and raise public awareness to protect the environment and be able to anticipate

and carry out initial handling in the event of a forest fire disaster.

Then another role of BPBD Muaro Jambi in preventing forest and land fires is to conduct a risk assessment of areas prone to forest and land fires. This risk assessment is based on the role of BPBD such as compiling, establishing and informing disaster-prone maps. This is done so that the BPBD or the government OPD involved can know and plan what programs are capable of dealing with forest and land fires based on the data that has been obtained and compiled by the previous BPBD. Therefore, forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency can be handled and resolved effectively and efficiently by the Muaro Jambi government (Interview with Anari as Staff BPBD Muaro Jambi Regency: 2021).

#### **D. Conclusion**

The role of a leader at each level of the work organization, especially in the field of forest and land fire control is different. This is because forest and land fires are caused by the complexity of the problem, so that it affects the achievement of forest and land fire control in Indonesia, especially in the district of Muaro Jambi. At the central government level, leadership characteristics that are able to communicate well with the task force and local governments have proven to be the right type or leadership style to control the recurring

problem of forest and land fires. For example, from the leadership shown by President Joko Widodo and Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya, various policies and corrective actions to control forest and land fires have been issued that have an impact on control operations down to the regional level.

However, because not all Regional Heads or Heads of the Karhutla Task Force in the regions have the same leadership characteristics, the success of controlling forest and land fires in several regions also has different levels of success. At the Muaro Jambi district government level, we can say it was successful, it can be seen from the indicators of achievement and hard work carried out by the Muaro Jambi district government, such as the reduction in forest fire hotspots and the number of posts prepared to anticipate forest fires in Muaro Jambi district.

From several combined efforts and actions that have been taken by the central government, Jambi province, districts together with the Muaro Jambi community in controlling forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency, several things have resulted: see the decline in hotspots from year to year, and the reduced area of burned land, especially peat areas (See Map of Muaro Jambi Forest Fire Points). Reducing the number of days of

emergency response status for forest and land fires in Muaro Jambi Regency. Even during 2020-2021, Muaro Jambi Regency did not experience an emergency status due to forest and land fires. Growing awareness of companies operating in the plantation and forestry sector of the regulations that have been made by the central, provincial and district governments.

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