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The Actor Domination in the Collaborative Governance in the Lampung Province Central Government Displacement Policy: An Ambivalent

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THE ACTOR DOMINATION IN THE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE LAMPUNG PROVINCE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DISPLACEMENT POLICY: AN AMBIVALENT

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Abstract

The objective of this article is to explain the ambivalent existence related to actor domination in the collaborative governance. As a precondition for the collaborative governance process, domination is a factor which must be prevented to maintain equality and mutual trust between actors. Therefore, the core question of this article is that is it true that the actor domination has negative effects to the collaboration sustainability? This article was written by using qualitative method. Data were collected with deep interviews, document studies, and literary studies and data were analyzed by using descriptive technique. The case of Lampung province central government displacement in 2004-2016 was made to be a research basis to answer the core question. The research finding showed that actor domination was dilemmatic. The collaboration process was in fact very dependent on the main actor who "control" the collaboration process, both in the planning stage (through Planning Coordination Team) and in implementation stage (through forum of Region Management Agency). This finding was very important because in spite of violating equality between actors, the actor domination in this policy case was beneficial. The inequality which was assumed to produce mutual untruths was not proven. In conclusion, actor domination is an ambivalent; something that must be prevented, but it then becomes a key factor. In what situation this actor domination gives a meaning? This article tries to answer it.

Keywords: Actor Domination, Collaborative Governance, Ambivalent, Lampung Province



A. Introduction

Collaborative governance in the last two decades has emerged as an important and ideal approach in the process of government governance and public policy. Sorensen and Torfing (2012) takes the *collaborative governance* as a new idea and practical innovation for a strength in the public sector and a trigger for better decision making process. Kallis, Kiparsky & Norgaard (2009) suggest that *collaborative governance* is an adaptive management to ensure the implementation and sustainability of a program.

The process of government governance and public policy is called using the *collaborative governance* when it is characterized with six elements; the initial role of the government, the entering of non-state actors, mutual decision making, formal organizing, obtaining consensus, there is an issue to collaborate both concerning policy and public service (Ansell and Gash, 2007). These six characteristics in the *collaborative governance* also become parts of *good governance* principles, so that *collaborative governance* is an empiric practice of the *good governance* concept. According to Davis and Keating (2000), the *good governance* concept explains about how the government governance system runs with wider role scopes, not only including the government alone, but also including non-government organizations and civilian. It means that the interactions between actors (government and non-government organizations) in collaboration will contribute the *good governance* realization.

Empirically, the *collaborative governance* implementation in varying countries and in Indonesia regions has been widely conducted to produce policies. The majority cases show that *collaborative governance* is an approach which provides positive implications to better outputs and outcomes. *Collaborative governance* is able to recover varying pathology of policies, from the sides of regulation politicization, over budgeting or limited budgeting, and policy implementation failures (Achinike & Ogbonna, 2016).

Based on more critical urban problems, Lampung province government under Sjachroedin ZP governor in 2007 issued provincial central government displacement to a new small town in Jati Agung sub



district of South Lampung district. Even though not directly proclaiming using *collaborative governance*, this policy is an example of activity referring to *collaborative governance* criteria according to Ansell and Gash's (2007). This policy was characterized by the role or initial idea from the Lampung governor, there were private parties and public involvements, mutual decision making through role sharing between actors, formal organizing through official forum for Planning Coordination Team and Region Management Agency, obtaining mutual consensus between parties by the issuance of Regional Regulation Number 2 in 2003 concerning Lampung New City Development, and there was an issue of Lampung province central government displacement policy to collaborate.

However, beside the *collaborative governance* popularity, Ansell and Gash (2007) suggests important notes for the challenges arising in the *collaborative governance*; it takes a long time, the equality and trust issues, and interdependence between actors. Meanwhile Plotnikof (2015) in the perspective of public manager role emphasizes the existence of challenges implied in the *collaborative governance*; the social dynamics concerning ambiguity and complexity of membership, relationship tension between stakeholders, and domination of formal power structure.

One of important challenges according to Ansell and Gash as well as Plotnikof is about domination or inequality; between actors or by formal power structure to other actors. Domination results in inequality and inequality produce distrust. In a long term, distrust may produce seeds of conflicts. Thompson (in Rahim, 2001:1) suggests that a conflict arises because of perceptions between people interests which cannot be mediated as a result of mutual distrust in a cooperation.

The correlation between conflict, distrust and inequality in a collaboration begins from an actor domination. This statement became an ontology in this research, because the policy to displace Lampung province central government in one side was called as empirical practice of *collaborative governance* and in another side was assumed to be the *anticipatory government* from the regional head, and in 2014 it was stopped by the next regional head. The sustainability guarantee of the *collaborative*



governance was not proven. Was there because of the actor domination in stopping the Lampung province central government displacement policy? The answer of that question will be disclosed.

B. Literary Review

1. Collaborative Governance rationality in a policy

The central government displacement policy is very relevant to do and it is based on the facts of the urban inability (physical environment) in fulfilling its citizen needs and the regional government ability in serving public is not optimal. According to Sadyohutomo (2009), the location of offices in an integrated area will be influential to the public to be easily accessing public services and this is one of good government administration benchmarks.

Related to *reinventing government* concept, the regional central government displacement policy is one of government anticipations to reduce problem pressures before a town is growing bigger and bigger and more critical in the future. This is in accordance with *anticipatory government* concept (prevention rather than cure) from Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1996). Therefore in the *agenda setting* perspective, the Lampung province central government displacement is a rational policy to do.

The facts of limited capabilities, resources, and networks which become supporting factors were truly realized by the *agenda setter*. This limitedness awareness encouraged the regional government to cooperate with various parties; other governments, privates, public and civilian communities. The outputs of cooperation in an institutionalized forum produced collaborative cooperation and it contributed positively to obtain the objectives of the program or policy (Purwati, 2016). Therefore, using *collaborative governance* approach in the Lampung province central government displacement policy was a proper selection.

2. The domination challenges in Collaborative Governance

Literary studies show that *collaborative governance* is potential to produce creative problem solving with consensus form involved parties,



and even to create public innovations and values. However, the *collaborative governance* process also has opportunities to be obstructed and its results may not produce expected positive outcomes.

Ansell and Gash (2008) suggest notes about the possibilities of emerging challenges in the *collaborative governance*; concerning time, trust, and interdependence. Concerning trust and interdependence Ansell and Gash (2008) suggest that *collaborative governance* should consider the interaction effects which are built during collaboration process, such as distrust and interdependence between actors. If one of actors threatens to desert from the collaboration, then commitments of the rest of actors may shift, and this will make difficulties to develop sense of belonging, understanding or trust in the next process.

Along with the risk of tension that may arise in the social dynamic, power is also seen as an important challenge in the *collaborative governance*. It means that formal power structure in the hierarchy should not dominate, but there is togetherness with dynamic strength and ongoing social communication. A power with formal authority, resources, and discursive legitimation, can be a challenge when it dominates from defining roles, meanings, practices, and results of the collaboration.

Domination of formal power structure is characterized by: 1) maintained top-down hierarchy by government when building collaboration with other parties, 2) government still dominates in controlling processes and results, and 3) consensus is not implemented based on cooperation and egalitarian mentalities. Collaboration may fail if participations from groups of interests and other stakeholders are neglected and not needed, so that there is still domination from one actor to other actors (Sarboini, 2016).

3. Consensus: an effort to minimize domination effect

In the *collaborative governance*, power imbalance problem may occur, where the decision making process may be dominated by the strongest actor which is related to the interest being concerned. Choi and Robertson (in Susanti, 2016: 51) state:



“a common concern about collaborative governance is that, the decision process may still be dominated by the most powerful actors and interest pertinent to the situation being addressed”.

This imbalance problem results in difficulties in decision making. To overcome this imbalance problem, the key is by developing the effective *collaborative governance*, by how facilitating the decision making between different stakeholders. Choi and Robertson (in Susanti, 2016) state that:

“As the size of the forum increase, however, participants are likely to face greater difficulty making collective decision. A key question for those interested in developing effective collaborative governance systems is how to facilitate decision-making dynamics among diverse stakeholders confronting complex problems”.

Furthermore, Choi and Robertson (2011) state that consensus can help balancing power between stakeholders. However, by having more resources, information, legitimation, and/or prestige, there will be enough capacity to build consensus development process for stakeholders' interests. Choi and Robertson (in Susanti, 2016) exerts:

“The goal of achieving consensus among participants can help to balance their power, but those with more resources, information, legitimacy, and/or prestige have considerable capacity to shape the consensus-building process in a direction that favors their interests”.

Based on those two concepts, it can be concluded that *collaborative governance* is a complex structure where there is an imbalance possibility that may occur between stakeholders. Therefore, to obtain consensus in decision making, the roles of facilitators or public managers in balancing power between stakeholders are required. In fact in this point the role of power in the collaboration is debated, concerning where one actor cannot dominate, the role of balancer, and varying interests of other actors.

B. Method

This was a qualitative research and its qualitative quality depends on its validity and reliability. To ensure the trust level of the research results, according to Creswell (2010), validity test was conducted by using



triangulation and external auditors were asked to review the whole research results.

The qualitative data analysis was started by collecting data with interviewing collaborators and by studying varying documents related to research object, by interpreting, and reporting research results simultaneously. Any information obtained by informants either in oral or written forms were studied comprehensively. This research was not only to uncover the truth, but also to understand that truth. The final step was providing explanation whether there was actor domination during the *collaborative governance* in the Lampung province central government displacement policy. Answers to that research focus would be the explanatory base whether there was actor domination, its effects, and its relationship to that policy stopping.

C. Research Finding

There were two major findings in this research. Both of them showed ambivalence toward the actor domination in the *collaborative governance*. In one side, the actor domination should be avoided, but in another side it in fact contributed positively the collaboration process sustainability. Therefore, domination from one actor cannot be forever interpreted as an intervention to other actors, but it can be seen as a bigger role than other actors. This utility aspect can be reached when the consensus which has been agreed before is still becoming a common goal.

D. Result and Discussion

1. Consensus: results of *Collaborative Governance*

Ansell and Gash (2007) states that one of six characteristics of *collaborative governance* is the formal organizing. In this characteristic perspective, the actor collaborating in the Lampung province central government displacement policy was the organization that was institutionalized through decree of Lampung governor; the Planning Coordination Team in 2004-2014 and Region Management Agency in 2010-2014.



Output of that collaboration process was mutual agreement or consensus. In the context of collaboration done by Planning Coordination Team, the resulted consensus was final planning document and all complementary technical planning documents for provincial central government development. Meanwhile the consensus produced by Region Management Agency was the implementation of provincial central government displacement policy, which in one side the provincial central government should have been displaced in 2014, and in another side there were funding involvements of non-government actors in building non-government office facilities besides funding by the regional government itself.

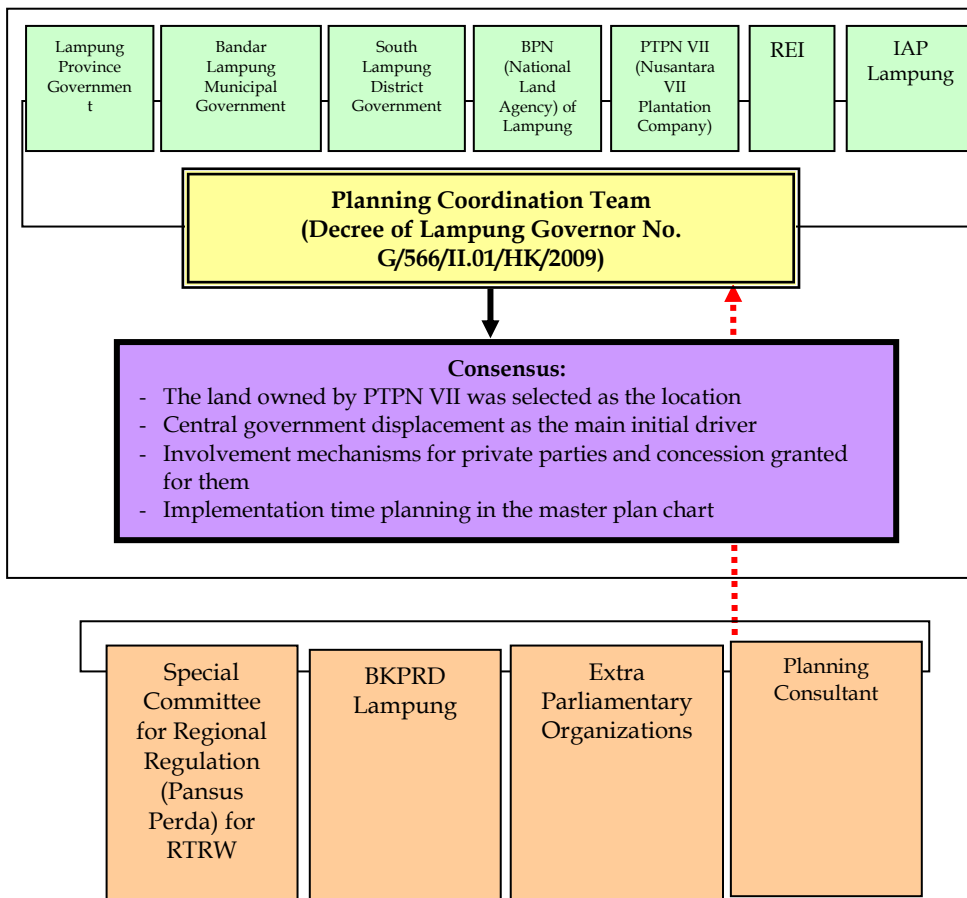


Figure 1: Collaborators and consensus in planning stage

Figure 1 shows the Planning Coordination Team as a formal forum in planning stage and it contains of varying actors which produce four consensuses as the *intermediate outcomes*. However, there are actors beyond the collaborators where during collaboration process they also have influences to the consensuses produced by the team.

Figure 2 below shows the Region Management Agency as a formal forum in the implementation stage which contains of varying actors and it produces two consensuses as *intermediate outcomes*. However, there are actors beyond collaborators who are politically and administratively having significant influences so that they must be considered in the policy implementation process. There are even stowaways getting benefit from the policy implementation.

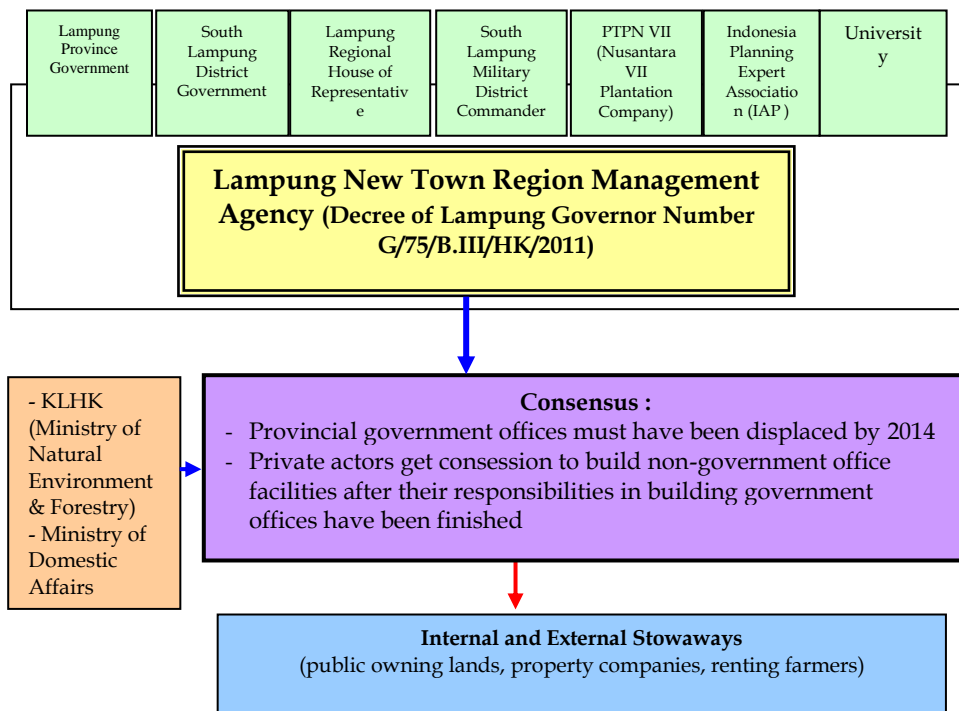


Figure 2: Collaborators and consensuses in implementation stage

In these *intermediate outcomes* there are small wins in the agreement and acceptance of planning results and progress of policy implementation. In



one side, these agreement and acceptance become a capital to improve trust levels between collaborators. In another side, these little wins will be feed backs for collaboration process and encouraging better cycles to build trusts and commitments between collaborators provided there is consistency in the implementation for the emerging collaboration in other aspects.

2. Interdependence and mutual trust between actors

According to Ansell and Gash (2007: 53) *collaborative governance* will work optimally to obtain the collaborated goals when the collaborators consider themselves mutually interdependence. Therefore, ideally the collaboration condition in the planning and implementation stages relies on the interdependence. However, some opinion differences and disappointments may arise, but collaboration process will still be able to continue. In this perspective, disappointment, trust, interdependence and motive (interest) are interesting to relate.

Trust between actors in collaboration becomes the requirement for collaboration success, and actors' disappointments will reduce trust level. However, reduced trust level will not immediately become the sole factor of the collaboration failure provided that there is still interdependence between actors to continue collaboration and this interdependence will be maintained by the collaborators for their motives (interests) to obtain.

Trust is very required in the collaboration process, and this refers to Vangen and Huxam (2003) who emphasize that trust is understood as an expectation of other parties' behaviors in the future related to the goals. This trust can be formed based on the expectation of the future or historical perspective. Trust is also seen as a mechanism to reduce opportunistic behavior risk from the parties. Mutual trust between collaborators will be an absolute factor in the collaboration and it becomes an argument that must be explained before selecting parties to be involved in the collaboration. If there is no mutual trust from one actor to another, the another actor will do the same.



Raising mutual trust can be done by carefully assessing the parties from experiences or working histories and their activities in the past. This becomes important because Ansell and Gash (2007: 54) exerts that the history or experiences which is either antagonistic (conflict history) or cooperation can be either inhibiting or facilitating the collaboration. In this historical perspective, there are four considerations to determine the actors must be involved in Lampung province central government displacement policy collaboration, that; 1) the organization should be directly related to authorities in regional development planning, 2) the organization should be assumed being affected by the policy, 3) the organization becomes a prerequisite for the planning success, and 4) the organization possesses competence to design planning.

There were few little conflicts which arose during collaboration process, and this can be seen as latent distrust situation. The actors had different arguments and interests to keep.

In the planning stage, for instance, even though all members of the Planning Coordination Team agreed consensuses that the land owned by Nusantara VII Plantation Company (PTPN VII Persero) was selected for the location, central government displacement as initial driver, there were mechanism for private enrolments and concessions granted for them, and implementation time planning was agreed, but the design problems were interesting to discuss by the team. Provincial government and Regional House of Representative (DPRD) exerted argument that central government development model which was done by Putra Jaya Malaysia without *cut and fill* should be made as an exemplary model, so that the implementation would still maintain the existing land contours in the plantation land owned by PTPN VII (Persero). Meanwhile, Indonesia Planning Expert Association (IAP) and MTI of Lampung argued that using *without cut and fill* model could not be immediately implemented because there would be flood and puddle risks in some areas of the land owned by PTPN VII (Persero).



In the implementation stage, conflict situation between collaborators was intangible. The situation in Region Management Agency was fairly coordinated, so that members of forum were in a common agreement when they dealt with other parties' interests beyond the team. Some debates occurred such as when the Malaysian investor's demand was too big for asking land concession outside areas which had been agreed as the location for central of offices for their commercial investment in the future.

At the beginning, Malaysian investor was not open to explain types of investments they would enter into, even though finally they disclosed that would use land concession for palm oil plantation investment. This kind of investment was rejected by members of Region Management Agency and Lampung provincial government, because this investment did not have any clear support and relevance to the long term goals of the provincial central government displacement policy.

This fact showed that the conflict that came from different perspectives between collaborators could be overcome by dialogue in the forum. Differences of actors' interests beyond the forum were done by not involving them anymore in the policy implementation. However, a collaboration is a cycle that is very dependent on the previous cycle. Conflict coming from perspective or even interest differences of the parties could be a pre-condition for building a collaboration, if each party feels interdependency to other parties to obtain their respective interest. Ansel and Gash (2007: 553) exerts that if there is any previous antagonistic history between collaborators, then the collaboration will not be successful unless there are high interdependences between collaborators and there are positive steps to do to restore lower trust levels between collaborators.

Referring the argument above, the collaborators in the central government displacement policy both in planning and implementation stages in fact had initiatives to join the ongoing collaboration process. This was based by the argument that each party had their own interdependence to other parties in a relationship to obtain their goals. Actually, there was an actor that was able to maintain mutual trust rhythm so that the collaboration process still continued.

2. Actor domination: advantage or disadvantage

The story in sub chapter 1 illustrates that the collaboration process will be much determined by whether there is a major actor who “controls” the collaboration process. Furthermore, even though there were Planning Coordination Team and Region Management Agency as official forums for the collaboration, in fact the Lampung province government as an institution or the governor as the individual became the major actor in maintaining the collaboration sustainability. Furthermore, even though there were Planning Coordination Team and Region Management Agency as formal forum for collaboration, in fact the Lampung province government as the institution or its governor as individual was the major factor in maintaining the collaboration process sustainability.

This finding is important to discuss, because it implicitly violates the necessity of equality between actors and no interdependence between the actors in the collaboration. In domination of one of actors and dependence of other actors to that actor is very big. There is a theory that the interdependence levels between actors will determine the collaboration success, but in the case of Lampung province central government displacement policy, this was not proven.

The role of governor Sjachroedin ZP as the major actor showed his big domination - even his rush - since that idea was delivered through revision of RTRW in 2007 to the target determination that in 2014 all Lampung province government activities must have been displaced to the new central government location. As a result, the discussion of RTRW Regional Regulation which produced Regional Regulation number 13 in 2007 was done in a hurry, so that not all stakeholders, who represented regional interests (districts/ municipals) or represented groups of interests, could not be invited to join that discussion. Sjachroedin ZP said that this hurry discussion was not because of a particular political interest, but it was because the demand that the strategic agenda for central government displacement policy required immediate legal standing.



During planning process, another domination was from planner consultant. The dynamics of many interests in planning required communication process. This emphasized the planner role as communicator of planning products. Planner listened, accommodated, conducted mediation, and finally conducted socialization concerning planning products both in parliamentary and extra-parliamentary environments. Any perspective that the planner selected, when it came into complex political processes and situations, the planner function as a communicator took important roles to overcome interest differences. Because information was the source of power for each actor which could improve political position and capacity of each actor, planner had a strategic position when planner played role to provide information because planner's scientific abilities and arguments that he/ she could provide.

That role was played by the planner with authority granted by Lampung province government to design New Town Development Master Plan. The story above proves that the role of planner in drafting master plan document is very big. This is understandable because the planner knows substantially about the plan documents he/she makes and detailed policy contents to implement.

Related to Forester theory (1989, in Mukhlis, 2009), it provides five perspectives which explain the planner's role in a planning with many political nuances, so that the planner's position in the context of Lampung new town development policy can be seen. First, the planner as a *technician*, where the power lies on the technical information related to data sources and used analysis method. This perspective uses the most traditional idea from planning, where the planner acts as a problem solver and the planner is not directly involved in the politic.

Second, the planner as an increment list who sees information as the source of power because information answers the organization's need, where everybody needs information source, permit procedures or restrictions in doing planning. The power obtained from the organization



as the source of information enables the planner to select information that the planner wants to deliver.

Third, the planner as *liberal advocate* who sees information as the source of power because responding varying needs from a political system. Information can be used by the unrepresented or unorganized groups to improve participation capacities in planning process. The planner has a role as an assistant for unrepresented public groups to provide technical recommendation and considerations to strengthen capacities and participation levels.

Fourth, the planner as a structuralist, where information become a media and device to obtain or to strengthen legitimation of existing power structure and to increase public attention to an issue. A planner does not have power, but the planner can maintain the existing power and provides a *quo-status* in the existing political system. The last, the planner as a progressive power where information is used as a tool to improve public participation and the avoid legitimation which is made by the existing structure. The planner has a function to organize public action to obtain existing power by organizing existing information to prevent misinformation and information manipulation which are conducted by groups with bigger political capacities.

The planner position is in fact becoming an analyst (technician role) which exists and only provides technical analysis for the rulers to strengthen arguments for issued policies. In this position, the planner acts as a problem solver and acts not to be directly involved with politic. However, the fact is that there is a too big domination from one actor, who is merely a supporting actor, that is the planner, where previously he/she serves only as an analyst who provide technical assistant (technician), but then becoming the most dominating actor in the plan substances by answering all needs and supporting bureaucracy function, so that the planner goes beyond his/her authority limit and he/she can be said as an increment list; the ruler of the policy.

Those two examples show domination which is not only to be restricted, but in contrary it is required and it provides benefits in the



efforts of maintaining collaboration sustainability. Domination from one party to another will also provide benefit when this domination is in accordance with the possessed power and resources or specialties that are not possessed by other actors, so that domination can mean a strategy to cover a shortfall of collective actions in the collaboration.

E. Conclusion

The story about *collaborative governance* in the Lampung province central government displacement policy shows that there is an actor domination in it. This actor domination is categorized into function domination perspective and structure domination. The function domination is defined by the control of substances and rationalities of the policy contents from planning actor, so that other actors will come to agreement and understanding that the rationality of the policy goals is "binding" them in the collaboration. The structure domination means control of actors or government formal power structure in order to facilitate transfer of resources and incentives upon the authorities possessed by the government power structure.

There are two conclusions in this research. First, the relation between actor domination and trust level, conflict, and the policy success or failure is actually confirmed but it is not immediately having negative effects. Second, domination of one of actors is still needed in the collaboration process to ensure that the collaboration process can keep going on, because domination is different with intervention. The question is that in which limit this domination occurs? Consensuses produced in a collaboration are truly the "binder". Therefore, consensuses should not only be about "common goals to reach", but they should also be about "in which limits that respective collaborators should take roles" with their own respective power and resources.

In this context, the actor domination factor as a challenge in *collaborative governance* finds it's ambivalent. Theoretically, the domination of one of actors should be considered as an important note for the



collaboration inhibition. However, factually the actor domination in contrary provides benefits when this actor domination is not defined as intervention, but as a bigger role by ability and resource than other actors for the sake of collaboration process sustainability.

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