IMPLEMENTATION OF EVICTION POLICY ON COMMUNITIES

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The Impact Of The Implementation of Eviction Policy On Communities Affected By Road Expansion

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ABSTRACT

This scientific study aims to observe and analyze the impact of the implementation of eviction policies carried out by the government on affected communities, particularly concerning private land and private houses, including those built by communities on state land from Kuluhun to Becora. This policy was implemented to provide space for the government to carry out development projects, specifically the planned dual carriageway road expansion, initiated by the IX Constitutional Government in accordance with the National Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030 (NSDP).

Before implementing the eviction policy, the government, through a joint team known as SEATOU comprising the Ministry of Public Works, the Secretary of State for Toponymy and Urban Organization, and the Secretary of State for Land and Property conducted preliminary dialogues with the affected communities. During these dialogues, both support and opposition emerged between the government and the communities due to differing interests; however, solutions to the issues were eventually reached.

This research adopts a qualitative approach to examine the government's eviction policy. Data were collected through observation, field interviews, and theoretical frameworks, particularly drawing on the eviction theory proposed by Nulhaqim et al. (2022) as the foundational basis.

The findings indicate that the implementation of the eviction policy has not yet demonstrated satisfactory progress for the affected communities. This is mainly due to several factors, including delays in compensation payments and the absence of agreement between the government and some communities in Kuluhun and Becora regarding land issues related to road expansion.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of the Secretary of State for Toponymy and Urban Organization is to prepare plans and conduct socialization regarding its duties and competencies to communities affected by national territorial development. On the other hand, the institution clarifies that, administratively, all territorial matters fall under the Ministry of State Administration. At the same time, its own work is based solely on Decree-Law No. 33/2008 of January 17, as amended by Decree-Law No. 3/2024 of August 27, concerning public hygiene and order.

The socialization activities conducted are not limited to specific individuals, government members, groups, or political parties; rather, they are directed toward all citizens, especially in Dili, without discrimination based on wealth or social status. The presence of SEATOU is not intended to threaten or use force against communities; instead, it follows structured mechanisms, including socialization, initial notification within 30 days, and a final notification within 10 days before taking action if compliance is not achieved.

According to the Timor-Leste National Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030, particularly in the section on social inclusion, the government declares its commitment to supporting vulnerable citizens to develop themselves. This strategy reflects efforts to enhance human resource capacity.

Furthermore, in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), partner organizations have established the SDGs on the principle of "leaving no one behind." This principle has been adopted by all UN member states, including Timor-Leste, and is integrated into national development planning. However, the eviction process in Dili, particularly affecting local communities, represents a form of development that involves demolition and reconstruction led by the Secretary of State for Toponymy and Urban

Organization and the Ministry of Public Works, aimed at renewing and aligning development with existing plans and programs.

Theory of Impact

Impact can be understood as the result of actions or changes in various situations, including social conditions within environmental and political research contexts. Impacts may originate from external or internal sources. External impacts arise from influences outside the society, while internal impacts originate within the society itself (Ernawati Waridah, 2017; Suharno & Retnoningsih, 2017). Impact also refers to conditions that reflect relationships between influencing and affected elements (Irwan, 2018). In simple terms, impact signifies influence or consequence. Based on these perspectives, impact can be understood as a phenomenon that results from changes aimed at creating new conditions within society.

2.2 Theory of Implementation

Implementation is the process of applying policy decisions that have been previously formulated. In the context of public policy, implementation refers to the execution of actions or practices that translate established decisions into reality while ensuring that objectives are achieved. According to Nurdin Usman (2005), implementation involves two main dimensions.

McLaughlin and Schubert, as cited in Nurdin and Basyiruddin (Ina Magdalena, 2020), explain that implementation is an activity requiring alignment and coherence. It serves as an action derived from lessons learned, helping to design more detailed plans to achieve objectives. Implementation begins with appropriate planning aligned with intended goals.

According to Charles O. Jones (Widodo, 2001), implementation consists of activities that operationalize programs into action, ultimately producing results. Therefore, implementation is the pathway through which policies are realized and objectives are achieved.

2.3 Political Theory

In every state, there is a separation of powers (Budiardjo, 2008), which can be categorized into vertical and horizontal divisions. Vertical separation refers to hierarchical levels within the governance system. In contrast, horizontal separation concerns functional divisions within a republican system, such as the division between central and local governments, as in Timor-Leste.

According to Imawan (2004), government policy is often influenced by political party ideologies and opinions. Therefore, policymakers must consider social, economic, and cultural factors within society. Although government policies aim to improve community welfare and access to resources, they often generate debate within society, leading to both support and opposition.

2.4 Theory of Government

The term “government” derives from the Latin word “to order,” which implies that any activity within a system requires the exercise of power to regulate social, economic, and political life within a nation. Government is therefore understood as an institution that possesses the authority to govern a state.

According to Syafiee (2003:22), the government is an organization composed of individuals who hold authority and power and can exercise control. Similarly, Ndraha (2003:6) defines government as an organization with the competence to manage public services and the responsibility to deliver civil services to all citizens who interact with the state. Thus, society depends on the government’s capacity to provide services on time in accordance with public needs and expectations.

Based on these perspectives, it can be concluded that the government has the authority to regulate all aspects of a system and the competence to administer processes related to public service delivery.

2.5 Theory of Eviction

Eviction often occurs as part of broader processes such as human migration from one place to another, which can be understood as a natural and dynamic process of human adaptation to environmental needs. When analyzing population displacement from rural to urban areas, the term urbanization is commonly used. However, it is important to recognize that individuals continuously seek better opportunities and improved living conditions that fulfill their personal needs.

Human dynamics throughout history have consistently evolved alongside social changes. Eviction, in this context, can be viewed as an activity driven by general societal needs to maintain balance. According to Nulhaqim et al. (2020), eviction, as an outcome, can be defined as a form of coercive or even violent action carried out by the government or other actors against communities, often involving the use of resources and power that significantly affect citizens’ livelihoods.

From this perspective, eviction can be understood as part of the urbanization process aimed at transforming living conditions; however, it often creates obstacles and conflicts, including acts of force by authorities, which negatively affect affected communities.

Casto (2002) explains that economic factors are the primary drivers of population mobility, closely linked to centers of power and economic concentration. These dynamics often lead to complex urban challenges, including poverty and unemployment, particularly in rapidly growing cities. Urbanization, therefore, contributes to the expansion of metropolitan areas, such as Jakarta in Indonesia, and is frequently associated with development challenges.

Furthermore, Casto (2002) concludes that economic factors play a central role in shaping population dynamics. Urbanization often results in limited access to education for children, reduced income levels, and difficulties in obtaining adequate housing.

Feriyanto (2014) argues that urbanization stimulates industrial growth and economic development, creating employment opportunities and supporting both national and local business development. As a result, urbanization becomes a key indicator of development levels in many countries. It enables populations to access employment and sustain their livelihoods, while also reflecting broader global development trends.

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2.6 Theory of Society

According to Simanjuntak (2016), society refers to a group of individuals who maintain social relationships with one another to achieve shared objectives within a specific time and place, often referred to as common and latent interests.

Koentjaraningrat (1969) further explains that society is a living unit of human beings whose lives are closely connected to cultural systems that shape their daily interactions. Additionally, Syani (1987:30) notes that the concept of society originates from the Arabic term, which implies collective living, in which individuals interact, influence one another, and contribute to social change.

From these perspectives, society can be understood as a group of individuals bound together through social relationships and cultural systems that define their collective identity.

2.7 Theory of Development

In the context of national development strategies, achieving goals requires well-structured planning aligned with national decisions and priorities. Development strategies serve as frameworks containing comprehensive programs designed to implement a nation's vision and mission (Subandi, 2011:9–11).

In strategic management, the success of development planning depends on four key determinants:

1. Strong leadership within government institutions
2. Organizational commitment
3. Organizational culture
4. Organizational consensus

Leadership plays a vital role in achieving development goals, as it drives the implementation of vision and mission. Hitt and Hoskisson (2013), as cited in Lios E. and Tarigan J. (2016), emphasize that strategic leadership is a critical factor in organizational success, particularly in implementing effective strategies and achieving planned objectives.

Based on these perspectives, development must align with national goals and be implemented through structured programs guided by vision and mission, supported by the four key determinants mentioned above. Leadership, in particular, is a decisive factor in ensuring organizational success and achieving development targets.

The development process of Timor-Leste reflects its status as a sovereign nation in Southeast Asia that restored its independence on May 20, 2002, following the 1999 popular consultation, in which 78.5% of the population voted for independence from Indonesia. This marked the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (RDTL), supported by international recognition both de jure and de facto.

As a newly independent nation, Timor-Leste has implemented national development plans to achieve its state objectives. The first phase (2002–2020), known as Vision 2020, was implemented until 2010. Subsequently, the government introduced the second phase, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2011–2030.

The Strategic Development Plan of Timor-Leste is a 20-year vision that reflects the aspirations of the Timorese people to build a strong and prosperous nation. It was designed to inspire change, support collective action, and promote a better future for all citizens.

According to the theory presented in the book Strategi Pembangunan by Martinus Nahak (p. 1), the development process of Timor-Leste leads to the conclusion that the National Development Plan, both in its first and second phases, serves as a fundamental roadmap for any government that gains the trust of the people to exercise authority. The primary obligation of the government is to implement policies and programs in accordance with the framework established in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).

However, in practice, during the Eighth Government's mandate, implementation did not fully follow the established plan; instead, actions deviated from the NSDP framework. In contrast, the Ninth Government has demonstrated a return to the planned framework, including the implementation of eviction policies that relocate communities from urban to rural areas. This policy is intended to support the execution of the national development plan, particularly in reducing poverty and social vulnerability.

The implementation of an approved strategic plan must consider its long-term orientation and predetermined objectives. Within the strategic management process, this stage is critical, as it translates strategic thinking into concrete organizational actions. According to Pearce and Robinson (2005), managerial priorities play a key role in driving strategic change into more effective operational actions during the implementation of a strategic plan.

According to Pearce and Robinson (2005), as cited in Strategi Pembangunan by Nahak (pp. 4, 5, and 33), long-term strategic plans approved by the government, with clearly defined objectives and timeframes, require strong managerial prioritization. Such prioritization becomes the key factor in ensuring effective transformation and successful implementation of strategic plans.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach and Type

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative, naturalistic, and holistic approach to explore, understand, and explain complex phenomena from the perspectives of individuals or groups. According to H. Mudjia Rahardjo (2017:10), a naturalistic approach implies that data collection is conducted in real-life contexts. A holistic approach requires the researcher to obtain comprehensive data, ensuring that no important information is omitted. From such data, facts, and realities, one can identify.

To obtain comprehensive information, the researcher does not rely solely on participants and key informants through in-depth interviews, but also includes individuals who possess relevant knowledge about the research topic. In relation to the theoretical framework mentioned above, the researcher adopts a naturalistic and holistic approach to analyze the "Impact of the Implementation of Eviction Policy on Communities Affected by Road Expansion."

Strauss and Corbin (as cited in Eko Murdiyanto, 2020) explain that qualitative research can examine social life, history, behavior, organizational functioning, social movements, and human

relationships. Similarly, Bogdan and Taylor (as cited in Eko Murdiyanto, 2020) define qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behaviors. Qualitative research is conducted in natural settings and is characterized by its ability to uncover what has actually occurred. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in the ongoing research process.

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design. According to Rukajat (2018), descriptive research aims to describe phenomena in a realistic, factual, and contemporary manner. It involves systematic description, accurate representation, and factual analysis of characteristics and relationships among observed phenomena. The objective of this study is to examine the phenomena occurring during the government's eviction of communities affected by road expansion from Kuluhun to Becora.

3.2 Researcher Presence

Researcher presence refers to the extent to which the researcher is involved in and influences the research process through the selected methods, interactions with participants, and interpretation of results. This concept is critically important in qualitative research, as it directly affects the validity, credibility, and integrity of the findings.

Researcher presence is a key factor influencing how data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted in relation to the research topic. The researcher's ability to understand and manage their role effectively enhances the credibility and validity of the study, while ensuring that the research process is conducted ethically and transparently.

In this study entitled "The Impact of the Implementation of Eviction Policy on Communities Affected by Road Expansion," the researcher directly engages in fieldwork by conducting observations and in-depth interviews with key informants, as well as collecting relevant documentation. All data obtained are carefully validated to ensure credibility and integrity, thereby producing scientifically sound research findings.

RESULTS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Policy Implementation

Mrs. Maria Odete Barros Florindo, in her capacity as Director General of SEATOU and as a key informant, explained the government's perspective regarding the road expansion from Kuluhun to Becora.

Before the Ninth Government, through SEATOU, implemented the road expansion plan and carried out administrative evictions of communities affected by the development project, the process focused on private land, private houses, and houses built on state land. Before executing the eviction, SEATOU followed three main procedures:

1. Conducting dialogue with affected communities as the primary approach to resolving issues before implementation.
2. Delivering verbal notifications to affected communities.
3. Issuing formal written notification letters, which included:

- The legal basis granting authority to SEATOU
- The fundamental reasons for vacating the area to allow the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) to implement the road expansion project
- The timeline for vacating the identified areas

Policy

Mr. Deus Dadu Martins, Head of Kuluhun Village, as a key informant, explained the development policy of the IX Constitutional Government. Based on an interview conducted on September 25, 2025, the road expansion policy is part of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2011–2030.

Through the Ministry of Public Works, the government implemented road expansion across the national territory, particularly in Dili. The road from Kuluhun to Becora was frequently congested; therefore, the government planned to widen the road and divide it into two lanes to reduce daily traffic congestion.

Government

According to Mr. Deus Dadu Martins, before implementing the program, the Ninth Government, through SEATOU and its joint team, undertook preparatory steps. A joint team comprising SEATOU, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Land and Property Authority issued invitation letters to the village chief to disseminate information to the Kuluhun community.

In January 2025, all community members were invited to gather at the village office to receive information from the joint team regarding the government's plan and program to expand the road from Kuluhun to Becora.

Eviction

Mr. Deus Dadu Martins further explained that the objective of SEATOU's eviction process in Kuluhun was to address severe urban road congestion. The government aimed to expand and improve road infrastructure to reduce traffic problems in the area.

During the socialization process, some community members supported the plan, while others did not. On January 9, 2025, SEATOU conducted a public information session and provided one month for communities to prepare, until February 9, 2025. The local authority later requested an extension of one to two additional weeks before the eviction process began.

Community

Reverend Mother Dulce Magno dos Santos, FDCC, as a key informant, shared her perspective on the compensation process for affected communities, including religious institutions.

To date, some affected individuals have not received full compensation. The government has reconstructed certain damaged structures and promised to rebuild two buildings (a shop and another facility). However, compensation for land and crops has not yet been provided. Although formal requests have been submitted to the government, no response has been received.

Nevertheless, according to available information, some affected community members have already received compensation from the government.

Development

Mr. Deus Dadu Martins explained that from the beginning, the joint SEATOU team directly engaged with the community to provide information about the development process. Communities owning private land, private houses, and houses built on state land were assured compensation.

As Head of the Village, he guaranteed and encouraged cooperation by persuading communities to relinquish their land and houses for development. According to the information provided, the government would compensate affected households based on the size of their land and the dimensions of their buildings. For houses built on state land, compensation would be provided only for the structures, while for private land and private houses, compensation would cover both land and buildings.

Discussion and Data Interpretation

Referring to the research findings and their discussion, the data collected by the researcher in the field indicate that the impact of policy implementation is primarily related to government eviction actions affecting communities residing on both state-owned and privately owned land, including those who constructed houses in public spaces.

Based on direct field observations, the road expansion process has already commenced from Kuluhun to Becora and has reached approximately 45% completion, as implemented by the construction company. However, some affected communities have expressed disagreement with the compensation provided. The main reason for this disagreement is that the land in question is privately owned. While the government promised compensation of USD 40 per square meter, communities have rejected this offer and instead proposed USD 90 to USD 100 per square meter. As a result, no final agreement has yet been reached between the government and the affected communities. Nevertheless, it has been reported that the government is seeking alternative solutions to resolve this issue.

In the process of state development, challenges often arise between the government and communities, particularly regarding physical development and human resources. According to Otto Soemarwoto (as cited in Gorys Keraf, 2015:25), the impacts of eviction can be understood as changes resulting from activities that generate both positive and negative consequences. From this perspective, impact is viewed as a consequence of policy actions that produce concrete changes in attitudes and environmental conditions.

The implementation of policy aims to assist governments in executing policies effectively and efficiently. According to Van Meter and Van Horn (Narendra, 2009, p. 37), policy implementation encompasses actions taken by public and private individuals or groups to achieve policy objectives. This includes both initial efforts to translate policy decisions into operational terms and ongoing efforts to implement the mandated changes.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study are closely related to the research problem formulation and the empirical data collected. The findings indicate a clear connection with theoretical perspectives, particularly the theory of victims proposed by Muladi (2005:108).

In the context of eviction, affected individuals and communities can be considered victims, both individually and collectively, as they experience various forms of deprivation, including physical or mental disturbance, emotional stress, and economic or material losses. These impacts also extend to violations of their fundamental rights due to government-implemented eviction policies.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study focus on the impact of the government's eviction policy, implemented through SEATOU and its joint team, on affected communities in Kuluhun and Becora. The primary objective of the eviction policy is to facilitate road expansion into a dual carriageway system, aimed at minimizing traffic accidents and reducing congestion along the Kuluhun–Becora corridor.

In practice, the policy reflects the Ninth Government's commitment to urban development, particularly in Dili, the national capital, and to its expansion toward municipalities and remote areas, in accordance with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). Furthermore, the government introduced amendments to Decree-Law No. 33/2008 through Decree-Law No. 3/2024 (August 27), granting SEATOU the authority to implement eviction policies targeting communities occupying public spaces, thereby enabling the availability of land for development.

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