

COMMUNITY-BASED FISHERY MANAGEMENT IN THE POST CONFLICT SITUATION: A CASE STUDY IN COASTAL VILLAGES, NORTH MALUKU, INDONESIA¹

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ABSTRACT

The paper uses a case-study of the coastal villages in North Maluku, Indonesia that is in the process of reconciliation between the Muslim and Christian. The paper attempts to contribute to the understanding of the use of traditional Community Based Fishery Management (CBFM) in facilitating the reconciliation process in the post-violent conflict. The paper begins by examining catalyzed factors contributing to the use of CBFM in the post violent conflict period. Subsequently, the paper continues by exploring the outcomes of CBFM and its affect in rebuilding relationships. The paper ends with briefly analyses to the sources of tension which perhaps come out from a control over fishery resources and unequal power relations between the Muslims and the Christians. This study found that it is possible for CBFM to facilitate the reconciliation with respect to two factors. Firstly, shared rules and cultural values promote cooperative behavior and enhance solidarity. And secondly, the role of the community leader as a mediator of community conflict allows disputes to be settled in relatively fair and amicable manner. It is hoped that a lesson from this study can be applied to provide an understanding of the traditional community-based management and its dynamic role in helping to facilitate the reconciliation. © 2014 Journal of Rural Indonesia [JoRI] IPB. All rights reserved.

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Introduction

The incidence of violent social conflict seems, if anything, to have increased in the last two decades. The Rwanda genocide woke the global community to the fact that it can break out between close communities with the same geographic, cultural and religious identities. In my observation with regard to the North Maluku case, the effect of violent conflict can be complex when the conflicting parties are living together in the same area, use the same natural resources and are highly interdependent both socially and culturally.

In the violent conflict that occurred between Christians and Muslims in North Maluku, Indonesia, in 1999 and 2000 around 2,400 people died. A further 3,000 were injured, and approximately 200,000 were internally displaced. The violence only lasted a short time, but it destroyed the social and economic fabric of the communities involved. Trust evaporated. Around 80% of the basic infrastructure was totally destroyed, including houses, schools, health centres, water and sanitation facilities and community buildings. It had a devastating effect on the lives of the local people (Brown et al, in a UNDP report: 'overcoming violent conflict', 2005; based on interview data with the Social Welfare Office of the North Maluku Province).

As so often, the cause of the conflict is difficult to pin down, but there were at least three inter-related factors² involved—a decentralisation process, competition for resources, and religious sentiments.

So, while the underlying sources of the conflict were not religious, the conflicting parties were effectively segregated according to their religious identity and other national/cultural/ethnic identities became effectively

meaningless. It was an accepted dogma that any threat to one's belief was a threat to all who shared it. This made the conflict complex, particularly for local civilians who had been living in mixed neighbourhoods. They blindly claimed that the violent conflict was a holy war to protect their religion. There was widespread human rights violation, mass murder and mutilation when the conflict was most intense from December 1999 to the middle of 2000.

By the middle of 2001, things had calmed down and in the same year, the local government embarked on a reconciliation program, called 'the returnees program', aimed to return Muslims and Christians to their original villages. This started from the middle of 2001 and lasted to 2005. Reconciliation programs have been successfully implemented and, since 2001, there has been no serious clash between Muslims and Christians in North Maluku.

Though the situation has become stable, the government and NGOs continue to promote reconciliation programs to strengthen social cohesion and encourage people to learn from their past experience. Most communities in rural areas (and most people in those communities) are still recovering. They are in the process of rebuilding their lives and learning to rebuild relationships of trust with other communities. Violent conflicts can have long-term psychological impacts, because, the victims are also the witnesses. This makes the reconciliation process difficult, dynamic and complex. Importantly, it does not only help them to rebuild, survive and interact but, crucially, to empower them to deal with their differences peacefully. I argue that if local civilians have conflict-handling capacities, there will be less chance of violence in future. The reconciliation process has been promoted through informal activities that allow conflicting parties to meet regularly and to grow together on a day-by-day basis, rebuilding relationships naturally. It is with this in mind that, in this research, I try to understand how far local reconciliation has worked in coastal communities, using the CBFM.

² This conclusion is based on the Brown et al, (2005), the interviews with government officials: in Kesbanglinmas office (in charge for NGO/INGO coordination), the Social Welfare Office, INGO CARDI staffs, UNDP staffs, local NGO staffs and my observation in the field when working in the conflict and post violent conflict situation.

In North Maluku, CBFM was intended to help communities employ productive resources together as a means of rebuilding their communities. In particular, it was to be a way of enrolling and integrating Muslims and Christians on the basis of common (local) cultural values and rules. However, the role of CBFM in post-conflict situations is dynamic and multifaceted. On the one hand, it emerged as an activity that could foster or create an environment for dialogue, extensive interaction and negotiation. On the other hand, fishing is important for livelihoods and it is associated with power and control over resources. Communities inherited and enflamed conflict but they were also vulnerable to the eruption of conflict, especially when power is not equally distributed and when the powerful dominate the powerless. In the post-conflict period, they had to carry out their affairs with these risks in mind.

This study focuses on the role of CBFM, though it was only one element in a wider effort to facilitate a reconciliation process between the different communities. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it can contribute to a better understanding of the potential in facilitating the reconciliation.

Relevance and Justification

‘One of the main factors that sustained the conflict in North Maluku after [it] broke out was a desire for revenge’ (Brown et al: 2005: 34-35). This was especially so amongst those who had witnessed murder and other violations against their families and relatives. When it was all over, a big challenge had to be faced by the reconciliation program was how this fear, desire for revenge, and the effects of traumatic experiences could be replaced with trust and rebuilt relationships between Muslims and Christians. This was particularly so when violators were known and the social context was intimate, sharing the same small area and common natural resources. The North Maluku government did not believe that the idea of separating the communities was a meaningful long-term strategy and emphasizes was placed on achieving tangible and mutual beneficial by building strong foundations, re-constructing

inter and intra community relationship. This was to be the critical first step in a reconciliation process that was always of considerable human significance in areas that are so affected.

Assefa argue that reconciliation has to be a ‘voluntary initiative of the conflicting parties to acknowledge their responsibility and guilt through new relationship that emerges as consequence of the process’ (Assefa, in Mark: 2007:13). In this sense, reconciliation is a dynamic process that has to be constructed through the conscious intentions of the conflicting parties to accept their differences and to learn to live together. As an outcome of conflict transformation process, it has to help them to be more tolerant and cooperative in maintaining their relationships. ‘The reconciliation process needs to be grounded in the local context and driven by local actors’ (Mark, 2007:9).

Community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) is often considered appropriate when it comes to managing natural resources that are physically indivisible and unbounded, as is the case with fisheries. It requires people to work together for a collective goal and to cooperate (Mc Kean, 1996:226). Logically, if the different groups have a strong commitment to work together, CBNRM can help the community to survive and, in the process, re-build contacts and assist and strengthen the process of reconciliation.

There has been exponential growth in studies of the commons and communal resource management since the late 1990s, especially on forestry and water management but also on fisheries (Laerhoven and Ostrom, 2007:7). With local users participating in the decision-making and implementation that is involved in the management of communal resources, CBNRM has been considered an effective management strategy when it comes to the conservation of resources, benefiting the community, local government through decentralization, and the poor in particular (Danida, 2007:2-3). However, little has been written about its potential in the context of a post-conflict reconciliation process.

Community-based fishery management (CBFM) is nevertheless an instrument that has been used to bring about the reconciliation in North Maluku where the parties to the earlier conflict share common natural resources. CBFM in Eastern part of Indonesia involves a form of local management that is not commonly found in many other places (Nikijuluw, 1996:96).

Finally, A lesson learnt from the Northern Ireland peace building process is that three main elements are required to sustain it: (1) the involvement of civic society in resource allocation and the design of appropriate policies; (2) a psycho-cultural approach that aims to define and develop the relationship between conflicting groups through contact and cooperative possibilities; and (3) the reframing of problems through negotiation and mediation (Mari Fitzduff, 1999:98-99). CBFM offer these possibilities.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the literature on common property management by examining its use as a tool in a post-conflict reconciliation process. Rebuilding relationships between the conflicting parties is not easy. It takes a long time and it can be undermined by power relationships and political interests. However, this study will explore its role in enhancing cooperation, reducing tension and rebuilding lives.

Methods

The CBNRM examined in this research is limited to community-based fishery management in selected villages. The focus is on two villages (Toniku in West Halmahera District and Maldi in TidoreKepulauanMunicipality), both in North Maluku province. They are considered indicative of the kinds of problems faced and to be in this sense representative. The reasons for choosing them were threefold. First, TidoreKepulauan and West Halmahera were both hot spots during the conflict and in both communal fishing activities are carried out by mixed groups (Muslim and Christian). At the same time, they present very distinctive dimensions of the reconstruction problem. In the case of Maldi, the community receive the fishery equipment

(*rumpong*) from the government and an International non governmental organization (INGOs) after the conflict. In contrast, in Toniku, people had owned already fishery equipment (*bagan*) earlier but it had been totally destroyed. Second, both villages are religiously and ethnically heterogeneous, both are typical of mixed villages in North Maluku where the question of reconciliation is a real issue. Third, they both caught small pelagic fish and were therefore typical of the local fishermen in North Maluku, but with differing degrees of commercial specialisation, bringing out valuable contrasts. In Toniku, communal fishing is commercially-oriented, using expensive boat-operated lift nets (or *bagan*) and a combination of fishing and farming is the main source of livelihoods. In Maldi, in contrast, it is very much a secondary livelihood source, supplementing farming, and the community used fishing aggregate device (or *rumpong*) which is relatively cheaper. In addition, the CBFM in both villages used a traditional community-based system where the fishery resources management was operated in accordance to culturally shared values and rules and through reciprocities and solidarity principles.

In substantiating the analyses and answering the research questions, the study relies on both secondary and primary data. The latter came from observations, interviews, life stories and group discussions in the study areas. Observation helped contextualize and understand the situation on the ground, especially when it came to nuances and sensitive issues that were not easily addressed by questioning. Interviews were conducted using a structured format based on a pre-determined set of questions and by using an unstructured format in in-depth interviews to follow up on questions that emerged during an interview. Focus group discussions were used to cross-check the information received in the interviews and to build clearer picture of the situation.

As the research relies on qualitative methods, I have used purposive snowball sampling. First I looked at 'the Key Informants (KI)' data as a guide to help identify respondents.

Key informants comprised local government officials, village authorities, community leaders (religious and/or traditional leaders) and the UN/INGO staff. KI also provided additional primary data that could not have been drawn from interviews with respondents. Secondary data comprised published and unpublished studies, including government and NGO reports, internet documents and library material. Data collection included work on the historical process of CBFM; patterns of interaction between community groups in general and within CBFM in particular; existing CBFM arrangement; power relations within community and its effect on CBFM arrangement; forms of negotiation and mediation within CBFM and how such factors influence the relationship building or reconciliation process.

The fieldwork was conducted over one month in July 2008. First, I visited the Fishery and Marine Office North Maluku Province and government boards in charge of specific issues such as the regional planning offices at province and district levels; UNDP North Maluku, a local NGO-ElsilKieRaha and the fishery faculty at local state university-Khairun Ternate. These institutions helped me gain a clear picture of the situation in the field before finalizing my selection of research locations. The latter are small villages chosen to contrast different dimensions in a short period of time. Group focus discussions were conducted for two groups in Toniku and two in Maldi. I also visited interviewees individually and in small groups usually consisting of two to four persons. Informal conversation proved necessary and invaluable in developing themes during field work, especially in relation to traumatic conflict experiences.

In total, I conducted four group discussions each consisting of seven to ten persons, 14 small group discussions involving two to four persons, 60 individual interviews with local people in Toniku and Maldi and the neighboring villages of Rioribati and Tewe. I met 15 government officials, fishery faculty academics, 3 UNDP staff, 2 IRC/CARDI INGO staff, and 7 local NGO staff.

Discussion of conflict experiences between Muslims and Christians has taken place frequently and openly in North Maluku and this provided relatively easy access to both communities (Muslim and Christian) in research data collection, though discussions were obviously less open as they became more sensitive and less amenable to group work. I was also aware that my own identity could influence the answer of respondents and I tried to minimize the possibility.

Finally, additional information could be contributed by the author, having had 8 years experience working with the community in the post-conflict situation in North Maluku. This had both advantages and disadvantages; advantages because provided knowledge of the concrete situation on the ground, but also disadvantages because it could involve preconception and bias. A conscious attempt has been made to present an academically balance analysis.

Findings and Discussion

CBFM and its role in the post violent conflict

Our study suggests that the use of CBFM in the aftermath of violent conflict in North Maluku was catalyzed by the four following factors.

First, fishing has traditionally been practiced for centuries by the coastal inhabitants in North Maluku. *Funae* is a traditional fishery activity that generally involves all the community members. They usually fish together and then share the harvest among themselves (Regional Development Planning Board Maluku Utara, 2007:20). Although the *funae* system does not exist anymore since fishery has become a commercial activity, the cultural values of working together still play crucial roles in the coastal communities.

Second, as noted earlier, North Maluku is rich in fishery resources. In general, fishing activities in North Maluku fall into two categories: one is fishing for big pelagic fish such as tuna, skipjack (Fishery and Marine Affairs Office North Maluku, 2006), which is commonly performed by the commercial fishermen who own big boats with inboard engines and sufficient financial capital. These fish are very profitable in the local market and also for the foreign export. Second the capture of small pelagic fish like Scads, Indian mackerel, anchovies, Indian oil sardinella, Yellow strip and Needlefish (Ibid). The majority of fishermen in North Maluku catch small pelagic fish which are commercially sold in the local market (Ibid). This fishing activity does not require much time and needs relatively small financial capital. Thus it is accessible to the coastal inhabitants who mostly work both as farmers and fishermen and generally lack of financial sources. Beside its commercial potential, the majority of the population culturally consume the sea foods, mainly fish as their staple. Based on the research of the North Maluku Government, geographically, fishery potencies in North Maluku are divided in three main locations. 1) Zone 1 is for coral fish which mainly located in SulaIsland, Bacan and Obi- South Halmahera and Tobelo North Halmahera 2) Zone 2 is for demersal and small pelagic fish, which mainly located in Ternate and Tidore fishing zones including Toniku and Maidu. And 3) Zone 3 is for big pelagic fish that mainly located in deep sea areas (BAPPEDA, 2007).

Third, CBFM uses as one of the economic recovery efforts in the post conflict situation. Conflict had increased the vulnerability of the local people due to disruption of livelihood along with the destruction of basic infrastructure. Fishery activity, particularly capture of small pelagic fish is seen as the most viable economic effort in the post conflict context. The advantages of this activity are that require a small cost, use of simple equipment, and provide a regular income. Comparing with agricultural activities where the majority of farmers are petty trading farmers whose income

fluctuates seasonally due to changes in the cash crops price. In addition, most of the affected rural communities are poor and solely dependent on common natural resources. Thus the development of small scale fishery activities can possibly help them to recover more quickly.

Fourth, as a method of integration, Brown et al (2005) remarks, 'one of components to support ongoing reconciliation process in North Maluku is economy recovery for three sectors....including fishery. Driven by the need to integrate people, the agencies (local/national/international) attempted to bring Muslims and Christians together in the same activities whether through livelihood assistances or by designing project for the post conflict reconstruction.

In general, there are three levels of the CBFM intervention strategy. First, is the distribution of fishing equipments; second, follow up the first strategy, is the provision of short basic courses in management and skill training; third, agencies accompany the community from the period of 6 months to 2 years (based on the interview data with Marine Office official, Social Welfare and INGO staff). Lastly, most of the communal fishing management is arranged on the basis of local rules and norms.

How does CBFM influence the relationship between Muslims and Christians?

The findings show that there are two main factors within the CBFM arrangement which are appropriate to facilitate the process of relationship building. These factors make the community share the resource equitably, promotes cooperate behaviour, and strengthen solidarity. They are: shared rules/norms and the role of the leaders.

Shared Rules/Norms

As a traditional community, living in small-localized place, the people of Toniku and Maidu culturally and socially share the same values and common behaviours. The set of communal rules, like fishing rules, are primarily used as a response to managing and sharing fishery

resources equitably and to overcome disputes between community members over particular common arrangements. Once made, the rules will be used as the common rule or behaviour.

The process of regulating the common rules is based on the four following conditions. First, rules are made based on the negotiations among the fishermen groups. For instance, in the Maidi case, rules are imposed that no one should harvest with *purse seine equipment* in *rumpongs* owned collectively. This decision came out as a result of a compromise arrived at by the community members to benefit from resources fairly.

Second, the outcomes of disputes which are mediated upon by the village head become rules. The disputing parties send their grievances to the head of village to mediate when they are unable to resolve it. In some cases, the Imam (mostly found in Toniku) will also be invited to play a role in resolving the dispute. Basically, the Imam is not much involved in the communal arrangements, unless the people want him to mediate. The respondents explained that the role of the village head or the Imam is only in facilitating the resolution of dispute, and not that of a decision maker. After a solution to a dispute has been arrived at, the rules will be used as the common rules or behaviour. Morally, people have to adhere to the arrangements that they have made themselves.

Third, common rules like access to harvested fish or fishing grounds have been used as a pattern of reciprocity for a long time. This practice does not only apply to fishing activities but also to agricultural harvest, i.e. when somebody harvests vegetables or fruits, others can take some for free.

Fourth, the village head can impose the rule of restriction – he can restrict the cutting of mangrove trees in Toniku. He only allows the people (includes Rioribati) to cut mangroves selectively, that is, choose the old branches and it must be located a bit farther from the river or sea. This rule is enforced to ensure the sustainability of the mangrove vegetation. This

serves the needs of the people whilst at the same time conserving it for future benefit.

The community takes responsibility for the enforcement of the rules. As the respondent explained, ‘it is difficult for them to violate common rules’. In the first place, they are worried about social isolation and also they want to show their moral responsibility to abide by the internalized rules.

As explained by the interviewees:

‘Sometimes, we think, it is not fair that we invest more money, and others only get fish for free, but if we did not allow them to do so, they will isolate us’ (*bagan owner*).

‘I feel ashamed, if I did not help to replace bamboo or change the leaves in *rumpong* because I know other fishermen do the same’ (*rumpong fishermen*).

‘I had fished with medium gear at *rumpong* because I wanted to have more fish. But then I felt guilty because other fishermen friends told me that I just think for myself and not others. I can make fish disappear and then no body can catch fish’ (fishermen Muslims in Maida and Christians in Tafaga)

Social and moral enforcement are quite powerful in maintaining the cooperative behaviour. Communities who have shared norms usually consider the needs of other rather than individual and self- centred needs (Agrawal and Gibson, 1996:6). As a result, in all conditions people are forced to abide by the common rules. Adherence to hierarchal ideology and norms could be a potential reason to facilitate the cooperative behaviour (Fachamps, 1992, cited in Bardhan& Johnson, 2003:89).

Regardless of differences in religion, wealth and ethnicity, the people of Toniku and Maida belong to the same cultural roots. It shows that cultural homogeneity helps to facilitate their heterogeneity and contributes to rebuild their social cohesion and enhance their solidarity. As the facts show, in Toniku, barter system still exists, though they can sell fish commercially in Ternate/Sofifi. They still prefer to practice this system despite the immense commercial

potentials they have at their disposal for their fish. From Maldi, regardless of their ownership status, all the members have equal access to rumpong; this way, there is no emphasis on class, religion or ethnicity. 'People from collective cultures see themselves as interdependent with other people and behave cooperatively' (ShirliKopelman et al, :2003:120).

When consulted individually, some Christians expressed, 'sometimes, other fishermen act arrogantly when we are fishing together, but our Muslim friends will usually be on our side'. The Muslim friends of the insulted Christian will argue with the offender; or report the incidence to the head of the village who will automatically caution the offender. This effort has a very strong implication to stop any negative action that may result in a dispute. Culture can play a role in innovating home-grown tools in support of the reconciliation process (IDEA, 2003:46).

As observed, cooperative behaviour can minimise the desire for competition among the users and create an environment for people to learn and share knowledge. For example, in Toniku, the *bagan* owners have to use the same amount of watts for their under-water lamps. This aims at minimizing competition and share resources equitably. From Maldi, all the fishermen are subjected to use the same equipment and harvest the fish with *purse seine* can only take place seasonally. These rules allow all the people to benefit from the resources fairly. As Agrawal and Gibson (2003: 6) indicate, internalized norms or behaviour among members of the community can guide resource management outcomes in desired direction.

When consulted individually and collectively on how they share knowledge or learn from others, it was found that those who have the expertise in a new useful technique will voluntarily share that knowledge with others, such as instalment of electric under-water lamp and build *rumpong* -Christians have learnt how to build rumpong from the Muslims and now they able to do it by themselves.

The equal access and similarity in employing resources can minimize the conflict. As seen from the Maldi case, disputes among the community members over *bagan* owned collectively does not lead to a major conflict because they still have the same access and receive the same benefits. While in Toniku (Toniku and Tewe), the difference in access and benefit received from fishery resources led to dissatisfaction of the Tewe people, who could not afford to employ resources like others did.

It was observed that because of these communities are relatively small and closely interdependent, cooperative behaviour is effectively taking place within them. As indicated by the respondents:

'Our group members can not work alone to protect the bagan during bad weathers, we need others to help us' (bagan owners)

'The fishermen are caring and maintaining my rumpong because they also use it. If I use it alone, nobody will help me when the bamboo is broken (the bamboo has to be changed regularly) or if it gets destroyed during a storm' (individual rumpong owner).'

Interdependence in doing livelihood activities (fishing) creates an environment where people have no option to work individually. People will share their power and resources with others because they see it as instrumental to meeting their own needs in an interdependent relationship (McClelland, 1975 in Coleman, 1996).

Another positive feature is women's participation in communal fishing activities. Generally in North Maluku, fishing activities are always recognized as a male's job. The conventional view is that fishing in North Maluku tends to be either paternalistic or authoritarian where women just participate for fish-food processing. However, evidence in Toniku shows that the community tends to involve women in fishing activities and women have a great chance to participate in the CBFM. Unlike Toniku, field observation shows that less than 1% of women in Maldi are involved in fishing activities. They work as fish retailers, who usually sell fish to other neighbouring villages.

Finally, Borini et al (2004) noted that there are three fundamental features of CPR which can either result in its success or cause conflicts. They are: the rules of enforcement, equity and fairness in access and the change of rule as effect of social and political dynamics'. In the Toniku/Maidi case, the enforcement of rules is still taking place effectively, and people are sharing the resources fairly. It is proved that this practice can adapt with changes in the social and political dimensions of violent conflicts. Hence, we can say these practices are still useful to facilitate the relationship building process, as long as it synergizes with the cultural values, rules or norms. The role of community leaders will be discussed in the next section.

Power Relations Dynamic Within Communities and Its Affect to Relationship

In analyzing the dynamics of power relations, I discuss the concepts of 'power relations' (power to, power with, power within and power over) interchangeably. The reason is that power relations in this study are closely interrelated, despite being a bit complex.

The power hierarchical structure within communities of Toniku and Maidi are formally and informally structured. Formal structure in this study refers to elected officials (head of village and his staff) whilst the informal refers to religious leaderships.

Following decentralization, the head of village is directly elected by the villagers. There is heavy competition between candidates for the position. Sometimes it results in serious disputes between contesting parties.

One contested party in Toniku, who lost an election recently explained, 'it is difficult for me to accept this failure, but being part of the community, I still have to cooperate with my rival party in undertaking communal work.' It shows that communal work can be used to facilitate better interaction amongst community members. This helps to consolidate communal rules /norms and to strengthen social cohesion.

In Maidi, it shows a different situation: one of the contesting candidates who lost an election was seen as 'a man who always makes trouble', both for Muslims and Christians. He has not been cooperative ever since he lost his position as the village head. It gives an impression that 'power to' held by the leaders in formal power structures can change when their political position change.

In the informal structure the Imam and Priest are recognized as the informal leaders. The Imam, within Muslim communities in Toniku and Maidi, is a person legitimized by the people as a leader for religious affairs. The position of the Imam is chosen based on two criteria: he has highest Islamic knowledge, and consistently practices Islamic basic rules (prays 5 times a day, fasts and so on). The Imam's position can only change on the condition of sickness or death and his position can not be inherited. A process of becoming an Imam is an extremely tough process. It is must be based on how he performs the above criteria which is difficult for Muslims to easily follow. It shows, 'power to' held by Imam is very useful in any condition, particularly in helping to settle disputes as mostly found in Toniku. Basically, every man within the community has a possibility of becoming the Imam. However, it shows that women have no opportunity at all to gain that position as this reflects the religious principal rules. The involvement of the Imam in communal arrangements or mediating the disputes depends on the community. In Toniku, the Imam will automatically be contacted by the villagers when a serious dispute can not be dealt by the head of village alone. Meanwhile, in Maidi, it was found that the Imam is respected but he is rarely involved in communal arrangements or disputes.

Unlike Imam, the Priest is appointed by the church; he/she is usually an outsider but has committed him/herself to live with the community. It is observed that the Christian leaders (elected officials and priest) are not confident enough to deal with a dispute between Muslims and Christians. Instead they bring it to the Muslims leaders (head of villages or the

Imam in particular circumstances) for him to mediate it. It also identifies that the Priest is quite powerful to impose the rule within Christian community, but not for Muslims. 'Power to' held by the Priest is given by the church and therefore, the power of the priest can only exist within the people who share the same belief but not for other groups. In contrast, the Imam is powerful to influence the communal rules for both Muslims and Christians, especially in the Toniku case. Culturally, even before the conflict, the Muslims as well as the Christians adhere to Imam's decisions. So unlike the priest, the influence of the Imam is not restricted only within his community.

Through in-depth interviews, some Christians explained often they choose to be silent rather than resist when they have serious disputes with Muslims. Usually they will inform the head of villages/Imam (particularly in Toniku) about that dispute or other Muslim friends will voluntarily do the same. In many cases, their voices are heard and solution is reached.

From the above case we see that 'power over' (dominance and individualism) of some Muslims has contributed to the insecurity of the Christians. It makes the Christians perceive themselves as powerless (and hence choose to be silent). However, solidarity of some other Muslims like those who report disputes to the village leaders help to maintain good relationships. 'Power to' used by the village leaders is effectively have been useful to facilitate the Christians to exercise their rights and to benefit like their Muslims fellows. As Deutsch (in Coleman, 1996:10) regards, 'disputants who share the cooperative orientation attempt to minimise the power differences and work together to achieve their shared goals'.

The relationship of Muslims and Christians is definitely intricate. It identifies that individuals and groups of Christians in Toniku and Maldi have different perceptions and responses over security threats. In Maldi, some of Christians fear and distance themselves from the offender whilst in Toniku, it does not have the same effect. The summary below presents brief analyses of the differences in the responses to security threats.

	Maldi	Toniku
Kinship Relationship	Maldi have kinship relationship (extended* families) with Tafaga Christians (field data)	Toniku Muslims have kinship relationship (extended families) with Rioribati and a few of them with Christians Tewe (field data)
Experiences of the conflict (Christians)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the houses of Christians were destroyed. -One Christian was killed in Maldi by Muslims who come from outside the village. Muslims helped the Christians to safely escape from the attacks of Muslims from outside during the conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the houses of Christians were destroyed. One Christian was killed in Toniku by Muslims who come from outside the village. Muslims helped the Christians to safely escape from the attacks of Muslims from outside during the conflict.
Responses to post conflict security threats and its effects on patterns of interaction	Some of the Christians of Tafaga were afraid to fish with the man (who lost an election for the position of head of village) after he threatened them. Consequently, some of the Christians chose to fish in their <i>rumpung</i> to avoid any interaction with that man though majority of Muslims (including the head of village) defended them from that man. This case shows that the individuals have different responses to security threats and it affects their pattern of interaction (i.e. distancing themselves from the offenders).	The Christians (Tewe and Rioribati) and Muslims (Toniku) sometimes have serious problems (youth fighting). However, Christians of Tewe feel safe to sleep with Muslims in <i>bagan</i> after such incidences; and in Rioribatthey do not feel scared to come to get harvested fish. This shows that security threats do not affect the pattern of interaction between Muslims and Christians in these areas.

* *Extended families refer to the family group that consisting of the nuclear family (the parents and their children), the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and more distant relatives.*

The above cases tell that the trust of the Christians to the Muslims varies from one group to the other, because individuals and groups respond differently to what they may deem as threats on their lives and properties. As a relationship between people easily develop and change, the nature of trust and distrust may coexist in the same relationship (Lewicki and Wiethoff, 2000, 86-107). Hence it can be said that a reconciliation process is very complex and multifaceted.

It is also noticed that trust of the Christians for the Muslim leaders made them feel secured. Currently, they feel that conflicts will not be initiated by the Muslims within the communities but, it can perhaps be started by Muslims from outside. As they expressed:

‘We don’t think we have problems with Muslims because we trust the Head of village will keep his promise except if the Muslim outsiders-*pasukan jihad* come and force them’ (a Christian from Maldi). Another Christian from Toniku intimated, ‘We feel safe because the head of village and Imam will be there for us but we don’t know about other Muslims outside’. The above fact implies that trust in the leaders is a valuable precondition for rebuilding the relationships of the different groups in the communities.

Finally, it was found that the people of Maldi and Toniku have developed stronger mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts. Both Maldi and Toniku normally use familial relationships in dealing with their problems. For example, in disputes over agricultural land borders, they first deal at the individual level. If it is unsolved, they use family relationship to mediate it. But if it still fails, the head of village/Imam will facilitate the solution.

They strongly avoid bringing a communal case to the police, except for criminal cases. Firstly, they are worried because taking a case to the police might affect the relationship between them. As they expressed:

‘Why should we go to the police, they do not know us well. They will divide us between right and wrong and it is not good for our relationship. We have to go back to the village and live together again’.

Secondly, the decision made in the village is always gainful for both sides as it allows them to discuss together.

‘The head of village can not make decisions. Until we are both satisfied, he has to just facilitate our discussion. That is the reason why even after having problems, we are still friends’.

By providing positive environment in mediating the disputes, the village leaders play a vital role in helping the community to interact fairly. It enhances the trust of the community as they don’t need an outsider to solve their problems. Importantly, that mechanism enforces the people to consider that the value of relationship is more important than individual welfare. As Deutsch (2000, 21-41) indicates: ‘People’s adherence to the norms of cooperation can provide constructive conflict resolution’.

CBFM and Reconciliation

This chapter presents the reflection on the reconciliation as a natural healing process in the context of CBFM activities. It also briefly discusses the preconditions for potential conflict within community.

Reflection on Reconciliation as A Natural Healing Process

IDEA (2003:80-84) highlights, one of the approaches in supporting the healing process is taking place through the use of self-help groups where the conflicting parties can build relationship and companionship (Ibid). In North Maluku, community-based fishery management (CBFM) has created an environment an environment in which conflicting communities can engage jointly in livelihood activities and which, at the same time, is a forum for

friendship, companionship and emotional support.

Below is a statement that captures local attitudes derived from in-depth interviews:

‘we can chat to our friends or neighbours more frequently when we are fishing. While waiting for the fish to be caught, we chat, share and laugh with others. Often we talk about our experiences during the conflict. If we are farming, everybody has to work on their own, we rarely meet each other as our gardens are separate and we have to work from early morning to late afternoon. It is natural that sometimes we have problems and get angry with our friends (Muslims and Christians). But then other fishermen friends make fun of us saying that we are like children. This makes us enjoy fishing, not just for the money or the fish but because it makes us relaxed. Even during elections for the head of district/BUPATI and the governor that took place in the period from 2006 to mid 2008, we sometimes argued and even fought over the best candidate. But then it was also funny because others would laugh and say that the governor is not our business, our business is to catch fish.’

This statement shows that communal fishing (CBFM) has helped Muslims and Christians rebuild their relationships in a natural process. By working together, they interact intensively on a daily basis. People who live together in small-localized places do interact regularly and separate locations and different working hours mean it is difficult to regularly meet. And since intensive interaction and communication is a necessary precondition for reconciliation, arrangements that bring the two sides to the conflict together in personal contact and sharing is a way of reducing tension (People Building Peace, 1999). CBFM has enabled them to act more positively, and ‘fishing as relaxing’, suggests that there have been significant improvements. It is in marked contrast to the situation during or just after conflict, when people showed intense anger, anxieties, hostility and desire for revenge (as described in chapter1). Getting them to a situation where they feel relaxed and can joke together when they are engaged in livelihood activities has been a very valuable development. Rather than organizing

them in psychosocial recovery counselling or training (which are both very formal and at times hypocritical), fishing provides an atmosphere for spontaneous and genuine interaction. Reconciliation must not be limited to communications alone but should also engage people in self-reflection on how they can transform their behaviour and the pattern of their relationships from something that is negative to something that is positive (Assefa, 1999) and an activity like fishing (as described above) can be very useful in the healing process, in getting over the sense of loss and separation caused by conflict. The healing process has to allow people to grieve in a constructive way so that they are able to deal with the impact of the conflict (IDEA, 2003:78). By sharing their conflict experiences, they express their dissatisfaction about the past which helps to heal psychological wounds.

However, the supportive conditions that have been created by the reconciliation process imply different things for different people. For some women in particular, traumatic feelings still remain and they have not passed yet. When they share their conflict experiences, they still express fear when they recall how they escaped from the village. They repeatedly recount how Muslims occupied their land and made money from it and the bitterness shows that physiological wounds are deep and that the trauma of their ordeal is engraved deeply in the memories of victims. It will take for effects of the violent conflict a long time to heal completely. As IDEA (2003: 31, 60) has remarked, time does not heal all wounds because the sense of loss does not simply disappear with time. In particular, women’s experience of trauma differs from that of men (*ibidem*).

In my opinion, re-building relationships is a human process; it can only take place when people know and trust each other, and it takes a long time. As a result, reconciliation is not a linear process, but it is a dynamic one.

Remarks of people interviewed during fieldwork brought this out clearly. Christians, for example, said that

'though, we lost property and almost our lives during the conflict, we still want to return to our villages, the place where we were born and grew up. We don't feel comfortable to live in other places, even if we can afford it. We also believe that we can live together with Muslim people, as we did in the past'.

Muslims similarly said that:

'It was so sad when I remember how Christians escaped from the villages. See them when they returned for the first time and looked at their burned houses, it made me realize how cruel the conflict was. They are like me, people, who deserve to live in this areas. We have lived together before and why should we not live together again'.

If people are intent on building a new relationship, it has to come from both sides, as pointed out by Assefa (van den Mark, :2007:13). Another important factor is a sense of trust in community leaders and the government. This is a precondition that is profoundly important in making the reconciliation process work in North Maluku. However, behind it all there has also to be an honest but self-critical learning process. Reconciliation is not limited to getting people to live together, it is also important they learn from past experience in dealing with their own problem. In North Maluku, strong cultural traditions has contributed greatly and has continued to guide villagers' attitudes. They reflected a continuing intention of the community to keep the dynamics of the healing process within their own community.

Conclusion

My interest in this research was motivated from personal experiences, witnessing the social conflict that erupted in North Maluku, Indonesia. This research has presented a case-study of how a local reconciliation effort and process, in the context of communal fishing activity (CBFM) can facilitate the reconciliation process between conflicting communities (Muslims and Christians) in a post conflict environment.

Though most scholars recognize that small groups, shared rules, institutional arrangements and external factors can all be critical to the

success of a community-based system, little, if any attention has been paid to its potential in the context of a post conflict reconciliation strategy. Similarly, scholars of the reconciliation processes have tended to look at the reconciliation process and have been less inclined to go into in-depth discussions on how to achieve it successfully through natural day-to-day processes. One reason is because reconciliation is a multidimensional and multifaceted process. Every community has a different way of living and reconciliation is understood and takes place differently according to its context. The difficult part of this study was how to link theories on communal management with those on reconciliation because they remain very separate.

The study found that the use of CBFM in the post-conflict situation in North Maluku involved a number of complementary but important factors: fishery resources potency, cultural values and traditions, economic livelihood activities and (introduced exogenous) developmental activities. Joint fishery management provided an everyday forum in which traditional values could play out in important ways. Two factors were important in facilitating the reconciliation process: moral commitment to a shared set of rules and the mediating/dispute-settling role of community leaders. In North Maluku, shared rules enhanced cooperative behaviour, minimized the desire for competition and enhanced solidarity. They encouraged people to behave for the common good, and to consider other people's needs and interests as well as their own. Community leaders helped to bridge the gap between the powerful and powerless (or between Muslims and Christians) when conflict or potential conflict arose over access to resources, who benefit when and to what extent from fish catches etc, in the process helping to maintain equality and build positive relationships. These values/norms/practices were essential in getting the process of reconciliation to grow naturally and CBFM was a relaxed, everyday process in which it worked particularly well. At the same time, for all its advantages, fishing has the potential to weaken the same social cohesiveness

of these communities. The case studies were of relatively undeveloped traditional communities. If the commercial demand for fish continues to increase and incomes from farming continue to fluctuate or even fall, larger commercial markets could undermine the moral authority of traditional leaders and, at that point, CBFM may no longer help to keep an increasingly differentiated and heterogeneous community together. Unequal power relations and powerlessness of the weak can provide the potential for more conflict. However, this study has been about reconciliation in the wake of past violence and in that context its contribution has been invaluable.

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