

The Role of the Natuna Fishermen Alliance in Facing Conflict

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Abstract

This research examines the dynamics of conflict between Natuna fishermen, who use traditional fishing gear, and non-local fishermen who tend to use modern fishing equipment in the seas of Natuna. Natuna fishermen often face violations of their fishing grounds by non-local fishermen, leading to tensions in the area. This conflict is also influenced by economic competition, regulatory ambiguity in the fishing industry, and uncertainty regarding fishing territory boundaries. The Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA) plays a crucial role in mediating this conflict through communication, dialogue, and coordination with the government. The research methodology employed is a descriptive qualitative approach. The results of this study indicate social and educational changes that emphasize the importance of sustainable fisheries resource management. Stricter regulations in fisheries management in the region are a key factor in resolving this conflict. Although conflicts still occur, solidarity among fishermen and efforts to find solutions continue to be the primary focus in creating a more harmonious environment in the seas of Natuna.

Keywords: *fishermen conflict, Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA), Natuna*

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts among fishermen in Indonesia frequently occur, both overtly and covertly. The roots of these conflicts are quite complex and involve numerous underlying factors. To understand the sources of these conflicts, it is essential to first recognize the various types of fishermen. In Indonesia, there is a diverse range of fishermen, and to differentiate one from another, we need to identify these categories. Categorizing these types of fishermen is useful for understanding the differences in their fishing durations, fishing areas, and the types of equipment they use. This serves as a key to comprehending fishermen's behavior from various aspects, including social, cultural, and economic dimensions. According to Andriati's research (2012:61), there are "three types of fishermen, namely (1) independent fishermen, (2) coastal fishermen, and (3) river and swamp fishermen."

The same applies to fishermen in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands Province. The type of fishermen in Natuna Regency falls under the category of coastal fishermen based on the fishing gear they use. Despite being classified as coastal fishermen, Natuna fishermen often venture out to sea for distances of 12 nautical miles or more, using fishing methods such as trolling and Tonda (<https://koran-jakarta.com/nelayan-natuna-keluhkan-aturan-zona-tangkap-ini-yang-akan-dilakukan-dprd>). On the other hand, non-local fishermen typically belong to the category of independent fishermen and often use gear that is prohibited by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Regulation No. 18 of 2021 concerning the Placement of Fishing Gear and Fishing Aids in the Waters of the Republic of Indonesia and the High Seas, as well as the Arrangement of Fishing Operations. The differences between these two types of fishermen often lead to conflicts, which can result in losses for both parties.

Fisher & Kartikasari (2001, as cited in Kusnadi 2003) have stated that without the involvement of various stakeholders in addressing resource conflict, social tension may potentially escalate into mass violence. In the context of conflicts among fishermen, conflict

resolution should involve the participation of the fishing community, stakeholders, and local governments. Therefore, local governments should have a deep understanding of the sources of conflict before making decisions related to its resolution. Kusnadi (2003) explains that when local governments make decisions related to fisheries resource management, they should collectively consider policies designed to improve the well-being of the region while also taking into account environmental sustainability.

The research focus on the phenomenon of fishermen conflicts and the role of the Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA). Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining how the Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA) employs strategies to anticipate ongoing conflicts among fishermen. This is particularly intriguing to investigate because of the importance of the participation of all fishermen, in this case, through their organization, in achieving peace. Based on this background, the researcher formulates the problem: "What strategies does the Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA) employ to anticipate ongoing conflicts among fishermen?" The term "conflict" has its roots in the Latin word "configure," which means to strike against each other. Conflict can be described as disputes between individuals or groups arising from differences in interests and often involving aggressive actions against one another. Quasi-groups, also known as "quasi-groups," refer to a number of individuals or position holders with similar interests (Dahrendorf, 1959:180). These quasi-groups often exhibit similar behavior, and interest groups formed from these quasi-groups are actively involved parties in group conflicts.

However, it's important to note that conflicts between groups do not always have to end in disputes. These conflicts can also lead to agreements or consensus. Furthermore, society cannot achieve unity or integration without elements of power dominance. Conversely, an integrated society with various agreements also requires power elements to solidify its structure. Therefore, conflict and consensus are two phenomena that inevitably coexist in the life of a society (Rosana, 2015). Dahrendorf explains that conflicts can surface due to social interactions within a particular system (Susan, 2019). In other words, any group or individual not bound by the structure of a specific system has no potential for conflict. Therefore, when conflict arises, there is the potential for it to lead to violence. Violent conflict is an expression of underlying conflicts where violence is triggered by the use of weapons to express disagreement with the opposing party (Dahrendorf, 1959). Dahrendorf interprets power as the action of an actor in a social relationship that can involve acts of resistance without considering the possibility of losing (Dehandorf, 1959).

According to Susan (2019), "Resolution in conflicts between groups involves the redistribution of power or authority, which then makes the conflict a source of change in the social system." The emergence of new groups with new roles can regulate authority and power over positions below them. The redistribution of authority and power can regulate the system carried out by new role groups (ruling class) with roles that are regulated (ruled class). This represents the interests of groups that always exist in the competition for authority, which can re-emerge in different situations and conditions. So, social reality is an ongoing action of power conflicts carried out by various coordinated groups in the social system (Dahrendorf, 1959). In this regard, Dahrendorf's conflict theory can be described as dialectical conflict that explains ongoing conflicts among existing groups.

In facing the conflict among fishermen in the Natuna area, the government has taken various strategic measures. One of the main efforts is the regulation of fishing zoning to prevent competition and conflict between local and foreign fishermen. The government has also enhanced surveillance and maritime security in the Natuna waters, collaborating with the central government to prevent illegal fishing activities by foreign vessels. In addition, economic development initiatives for local fishermen have been implemented through training programs, providing market access, and credit facilities, aimed at increasing the independence and economic capabilities of local fishermen.

Education and training on sustainable fishing practices have also been a focus, to improve awareness and knowledge of fishermen regarding legality and sustainability in fishing. In resolving conflicts, the local government plays an active role as a mediator, facilitating dialogue among various parties to find a peaceful solution. Close cooperation with central government and international agencies has also been conducted, particularly in managing fishing issues and conflicts in Natuna, including negotiations with neighboring countries regarding maritime boundary issues. Lastly, the local government supports the empowerment of local fishermen's organizations, giving them a stronger voice in the management of fishery resources and related policies. These steps demonstrate the commitment of the Natuna local government in creating stability and sustainability in the region.

In addressing the conflict among fishermen in the Natuna region, the government has taken various strategic steps. One of the main efforts is the arrangement of fishing zone zoning to avoid competition and conflict between local and foreign fishermen. The government has also increased surveillance and maritime security in the Natuna waters, cooperating with the central government to prevent illegal fishing activities by foreign vessels. Additionally, there has been economic development for local fishermen through training programs, providing access to markets, and credit facilities, aimed at improving the independence and economic ability of local fishermen.

Education and training on sustainable fishing practices are also a focus, to increase the awareness and knowledge of fishermen regarding legality and sustainability in fishing. In resolving conflict, the local government plays an active role as a mediator, facilitating dialogue between various parties to seek peaceful solutions. Close cooperation with central government agencies and international bodies is also carried out, especially in managing fishing issues and conflicts in Natuna, including negotiations with neighboring countries regarding maritime border issues. Lastly, the local government supports the empowerment of local fishermen's organizations, giving them a stronger voice in the management of fishery resources and related policies. These steps demonstrate the Natuna regional government's commitment to creating stability and sustainability in the area. (Fibrianto, 2022)

but that is not enough to overcome the conflict that occurred, because in carrying out their activities, humans naturally adapt to culture as a survival strategy. When behaviors deemed deviant emerge, communities often create initiatives to avoid conflict by adjusting to their environment. Thus, the relationship between humans and their environment is one of mutual influence, complementing each other, and coexisting (Saharuddin, 2007). One common source of conflict among fishermen is often related to the limitation of fishing grounds. Acheson (1981) explained that fishing communities face various challenges, including conflicts among fishermen regarding maritime boundaries. Disputes over fishing areas frequently arise among fishermen and can lead to conflicts. Therefore, fishermen develop strategies to avoid conflicts related to fishing ground boundaries. Local fishermen often take the initiative to preempt issues that could trigger conflicts, and they have specific strategies to anticipate various problems that may arise in this context. These strategies help reduce the likelihood of continuous conflicts among them. Thus, fishermen's efforts in anticipating conflicts are steps they take to maintain peace and avoid potentially harmful conflicts. However, it's important to remember that individuals' thought processes differ, creating differences in their behavior patterns. The behavioral patterns of fishing communities are based on the knowledge system adopted by the community, also known as culture (Suparlan, 1982). By examining the involvement and methods employed by fishermen organizations in handling and anticipating conflicts, it is important to research this aspect due to the significance of the Fishermen Alliance in resolving conflicts and clashes among fishermen.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used to address the problem is normative research. Data collection includes primary data, obtained directly from the interviewees, and secondary data, including laws, official documents, books, research reports, and others. Data and legal materials are analyzed using qualitative-descriptive analysis, which involves describing and examining literature data in a meticulous and systematic manner to draw conclusions and make research recommendations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Fishermen in Natuna Regency fall into the category of coastal sea fishermen based on their fishing gear and the size of their boats. However, they can venture out to sea for distances of up to 12 nautical miles, with daily fishing trips. Natuna fishermen use trolling and Tonda fishing gear (<https://koran-jakarta.com/nelayan-natuna-keluhkan-aturan-zona-tangkap-ini-yang-akan-dilakukan-dprd>). Fishermen typically use two different types of reels in their fishing activities: baitcasting reels and spinning reels. These two reels play different roles in their fishing techniques. When a fisherman chooses to use a spinning reel, the first step involves meticulous preparation. They carefully attach bait to the fishing line and adjust the reel by turning the handle clockwise to reduce tension on the fishing line. When the moment to cast the bait arrives, the fisherman presses the bait release button or the reel handle, then pulls the bait backward before casting it forcefully forward while releasing the release button. After the bait is in the water, the fisherman can adjust the tension of the line by turning the reel handle as needed, depending on the water conditions.

On the other hand, when a fisherman decides to use a baitcasting reel, they face a more complex technique. The initial step is to prepare the equipment according to their needs and the target fish to be caught. The bait is carefully attached to the fishing line, and the line tension must be adjusted very carefully. When it's time to cast the bait, the fisherman must press the bait release button, hold the bait with their index finger, and cast the bait forcefully forward while releasing the release button. This requires intensive practice to avoid issues like backlash or tangled fishing lines. After the bait is in the water, the fisherman will rapidly turn the reel handle to retrieve the fishing line. The ability to control bait actions can be enhanced by adjusting the speed and movement of the reel handle according to the needs at the fishing location.

Injustice Towards Fishermen

Since March 10, 2020, a total of 23 fishing vessels from the North Coast of Central Java have begun operating in the vicinity of the North Natuna Sea, which administratively falls under the Natuna Regency, Riau Islands Province. The operation of these vessels has been officially authorized by the Indonesian Government. These vessels are equipped with cantrang fishing gear, as confirmed by the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Edhy Prabowo.

The presence of these vessels in Natuna is part of the government's effort to revive fishing activities in the North Natuna Sea. However, this plan differs from the government's initial statement of operating 30 vessels from North Java. This policy has been criticized by the People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice (KIARA), arguing that it disregards justice for 7,000 traditional fishermen from Natuna. According to KIARA, allowing cantrang vessels from Central Java to fish in Natuna represents a form of injustice perpetrated by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries against the local fishermen.

KIARA emphasizes that the use of cantrang could significantly impact three main groups in coastal communities: small-scale fishermen, traditional fishermen, and women fishermen. Susan Herawati from KIARA opines that the planned revision of Regulation KP 71/2016 indicates a regression in maintaining the sovereignty and sustainability of Indonesia's fishery

resources. For KIARA, the sustainability of fishery resources is more important than large-scale catch that damages these resources.

Abdul Halim, the Executive Director of the Center for Maritime Studies for Humanity, views the dispatch of fishing vessels from North Central Java to the North Natuna Sea as a hasty idea that could trigger new conflicts, given the need for complete licensing and understanding between the Riau Islands Provincial Government and Central Java. This potential conflict relates to the status of andon fishermen from Central Java operating in the fishing management area 711.

Local fishermen use traditional fishing gear, while non-local fishermen typically use modern fishing equipment. When local fishermen are at sea, they often encounter foreign or non-local fishermen in their fishing grounds, which they believe should not be in that area. For example, in March 2022, in the North Natuna Sea, alleged violations were found by Indonesian Fishing Vessels (KII) with a size exceeding 30 GT using purse seine and cast net fishing gear. These KII vessels were strongly suspected of violating fishing zones by operating within 12 nautical miles of the coast (Zone II) of Subi Island in Natuna. Additionally, several KII vessels with squid fishing gear, larger than 30 GT, were found operating in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), especially in the Dogleg area from February to July 2022 (<https://oceanjusticeinitiative.org/2022/08/01/ancaman-iuuf-di-indonesia-maret-juni-2022>).

Local fishermen feel disadvantaged by the presence of non-local fishing vessels. If there is no resolution between the two groups of fishermen, it can lead to conflicts at sea. Traditional fishermen often feel jealous of modern fishermen because modern fishing gear is active and can catch more fish than traditional nets. Fishing communities that do not use trolling and Tonda fishing gear believe that, firstly, modern equipment is often not environmentally friendly and can harm the marine ecosystem. Secondly, fishing outside the designated fishing zones can reduce fish populations. Thirdly, local fishermen may feel that the use of modern fishing gear by non-local fishermen threatens their long-preserved traditions and culture (<https://kumparan.com/kepribadian/tolak-nelayan-pantura-nelayan-natuna-mereka-pakai-alat-cantrang-1sd4q9CSBMY/full>)

Furthermore, the conflicts among fishermen are also driven by the fact that fishermen need to meet the needs of their respective families, which pushes them to compete for available fisheries resources. This can be observed by considering the Natuna fishermen's belief that if they do not go fishing in the North Natuna Sea, their catch will be limited. Looking at the marine conditions in the Natuna region, the potential for marine fishery resources in the North Natuna Sea (WPP 711) is estimated to be around 1,057,050 tons per year. The marine waters of the Riau Islands have fishery resource potential totaling 860,650.11 tons per year, including large pelagic fish amounting to 53,802.34 tons per year, small pelagic fish at 506,025.30 tons per year, demersal fish at 272,594.16 tons per year, coral fish at 17,562.29 tons per year, and others (squid, shrimp, lobster) at 10,666.02 tons per year (Barenlitbang, 2023). The differences in the types of fish available in the sea lead fishermen to venture to other fishing areas. In addition to the diversity of fish species, the scarcity of fisheries resources in the sea also drives fishermen to compete for these resources. The scarcity of fisheries resources is caused by unpredictable weather conditions, leading to a decrease in fish populations.

From a legal standpoint, there are no specific boundaries related to fishing areas; it is only centered on distances from 0 to 12 nautical miles for Natuna fishermen. Meanwhile, fishing permits for traditional fishermen are issued for 0 to 4 nautical miles. Fishermen find it difficult to distinguish sea boundaries because the sea area is dual-natured (Acheson 1981). It can be said that there are no clear maritime boundaries in various regions, making the sea a shared resource. However, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Regulation No. 18 of 2021 regarding the Placement of Fishing Gear and Fishing Aid Equipment in the Fisheries Management Zone of the

Republic of Indonesia and Offshore Fisheries and the Arrangement of Fishing Andon allows fishing according to the designated fishing zones specified in the regulation. This has led to frustration among local fishermen, and tensions can be triggered when someone violates the fishing zone regulations.

Natuna fishermen admit they are somewhat frustrated by the chaos that occurs, especially conflicts caused by non-local fishermen, which have been happening since ancient times until now, although the situation is now more conducive than in the past. The chairman of the Natuna Fishermen Alliance is also active as a Civil Servant (PNS) in Natuna. This is recognized by young fishermen that conflicts among fishermen are not actually desired because they are highly detrimental to the parties involved. Therefore, the hope of young fishermen is that such conflicts only occur once or twice. Furthermore, despite their tough demeanor, fishing communities have a strong sense of solidarity. When there are problems or when other fishermen face difficulties, they assist each other. For example, when a boat is damaged in the middle of the sea, fishermen take the initiative to help and tow the boat to the shore.

The Solution Carried Out By Anna

In relation to conflicts among fishermen, a fishermen's alliance can implement several solutions, including:

- Dialogue and Mediation: Conducting dialogues between fishermen, government, and other relevant parties to find peaceful solutions and create mutually beneficial agreements.
- Policy Advocacy: Actively participating in the fisheries policy-making process to ensure justice and sustainability, as well as protecting the rights of traditional fishermen.
- Education and Training: Providing education and training to fishermen about sustainable and efficient fishing methods, as well as responsible management of fishery resources.
- Economic Empowerment of Fishermen: Developing programs that enhance the economic independence of fishermen, such as access to markets, better fishing technology, and microcredit systems.
- Regional Cooperation: Collaborating with fishermen's alliances from other regions to address cross-border issues, such as illegal fishing and territorial disputes.
- Improving Access to Resources: Assisting fishermen in gaining better access to fishery resources, like fair and sustainable fishing zones.
- Awareness Campaigns: Conducting campaigns to raise public awareness about the importance of sustainable fisheries and the impacts of illegal fishing.
- Monitoring and Reporting: Taking an active role in monitoring fishing activities and reporting harmful or illegal practices to the authorities
- Strengthening Networks and Collaboration: Building strong networks between fishermen, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions to support sustainable fisheries policies.
- Utilizing Technology: Using technology to monitor fishery resources, track vessel movements, and improve fishing efficiency.

These measures can help reduce conflicts and promote sustainable and fair fishing practices. In this case, there is a way to resolve it, including conflicts over fishing territory violations. The parties involved in resolving such conflicts include the fishermen in dispute, fishing association leaders, young fishermen, and even the government when major conflicts arise. The Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA) follows a specific approach to address conflicts

that arise: First, they engage in effective communication and assess the root causes of the conflict. Second, in cases where anger and tensions run high, leading to attempts to burn boats, ANNA strives to calm the emotions of the fishermen. Third, they hold further discussions and emphasize the importance of avoiding vigilante justice while working to rebuild the community of fishermen. Fourth, ANNA coordinates with government authorities to resolve the conflict. Based on Law No. 23 of 2014, coastal areas from 0 to 12 miles fall under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government. Thus, the management and supervision of this area fall under the responsibility of the Provincial Government. Even though the central government may step in during problems or conflicts within the 0-12 mile zone, the District Government still participates in overseeing and supporting the fishing communities.

The Chairman of ANNA takes responsibility for various matters, courageously listens to the grievances of the fishermen, and voices their concerns to the government and legislative bodies to ensure the well-being of local fishermen. As a regeneration of ANNA, it is essential to bring about positive changes in the local community and effectively mitigate and resolve conflicts that may arise. Additionally, ANNA actively engages in guiding fishermen to maintain composure and patience when facing challenges at sea, whether caused by the actions of the local fishing community or non-local fishermen.

CONCLUSION

In the conflict between Natuna fishermen and non-local fishermen, several complex issues influence the dynamics of the conflict. Natuna fishermen, who rely on traditional fishing tools such as baitcasting reels and spinning reels, feel increasingly marginalized by the presence of non-local fishermen using more efficient modern fishing equipment. The technological gap between these two groups triggers intense competition for fishing resources in the waters of Natuna. Conflict related to territorial fishing violations becomes a major consequence of this situation. Natuna fishermen are frustrated and disadvantaged because non-local fishermen often catch fish outside the areas they should avoid. In this context, weak legal regulations and ineffective law enforcement in Natuna waters exacerbate the conflict. Additionally, economic issues play a significant role in this conflict. Natuna fishermen depend on their catch to meet their families' needs. When the presence of non-local fishermen using modern fishing gear threatens their income, the competition for fishing resources intensifies.

In an effort to resolve this conflict, the Natuna Fishermen Alliance (ANNA) plays a central role. ANNA works to mediate conflicts, advocate for the rights of Natuna fishermen, and maintain open communication between the two groups of fishermen. They make significant efforts to calm the emotions of the fishermen and prevent actions that could escalate the conflict further.

Furthermore, changes in fishing regulations, such as the transfer of coastal jurisdiction to the Provincial Government, affect how Natuna waters are managed and monitored. Clearer regulations can help address the uncertainty in determining valid fishing areas. However, for a sustainable resolution, education and social change must also be considered. Awareness of the importance of protecting fishing resources and respecting each other's rights and fishing areas should be enhanced through educational programs. Only through collaboration, communication, and shared understanding can conflicts like this be overcome, creating a more harmonious situation in the resource-rich waters of Natuna.

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