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# MODERNIZATION OF FISHERY AND CONFLICT AMONG FISHERMEN IN BENGKALIS DISTRICT OF RIAU PROVINCE

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### ABSTRAK

Modernisasi alat tangkap yang difasilitasi oleh bantuan pemerintah diharapkan dapat meningkatkan penghasilan para nelayan. Akan tetapi, pada kenyataannya bantuan dan pengenalan terhadap alat-alat modern seringkali menjadi tantangan bagi para nelayan tradisional. Tidak jarang modernisasi menjadi pemicu konflik antarnelayan. Hal ini dapat dilihat pada kasus konflik antar nelayan rawai dengan nelayan jaring batu di Kabupaten Bengkalis-Indonesia sudah berlangsung lebih dari 30 tahun. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap akar masalah terjadinya konflik dan memahami manajemen komunikasi dalam mengatasi konflik antarnelayan tradisional dan modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian studi kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konflik antarnelayan di daerah pesisir Kabupaten Bengkalis terjadi karena penggunaan jaring batu dan perebutan wilayah dalam menangkap ikan. Konflik antarnelayan disebabkan oleh faktor perbedaan pemahaman yuridis dan aturan, kesenjangan ekonomi, dan perbedaan nilai dan budaya. Bantuan modernisasi alat tangkap nelayan bisa berhasil jika dibekali dengan kemampuan pemerintah dalam manajemen komunikasi yang sensitif konflik. Manajemen komunikasi pemerintah yang tidak tepat membuat konflik antarnelayan terjadi berlarut-larut. Penyelesaian konflik pada masyarakat nelayan ini dapat dicapai jika pemerintah mampu membuat kebijakan, program, dan cara komunikasi yang tepat serta adil pada komunitas nelayan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Komunikasi pemerintah; Konflik; Manajemen komunikasi; Nelayan.*

### ABSTRACT

Modernization fishery tools facilitated by government support is assumed to help improving fishermen incomes. However, on reality the introduction of the more advanced tools has also posed challenges to the traditional fishermen. Modernization of fishery technology can also caused conflict between fishermen. This found evidence in the conflict between longline (*rawai*) fishers and trawl fishers in Bengkalis District-Riau has occurred for more than 30 years. The modernization of fishing gear by government is one of the triggers of the conflict. This research aims to uncover the root causes of conflict and understand communication management to overcome the conflict between traditional and modern fishers. This research used the qualitative and explorative method. The results show that the conflict among fishers in the coastal area of Bengkalis occurs due to the use of trawl and the territorial dispute in fishing. The causes of conflict between fishers are related to lack of rule understanding, economic

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inequality, and differences in value and culture. Government delivery of the aid that is not sensitive to the need for traditional fishermen play role in the conflict. This is due to the problem communication management. The resolution of the conflicts at the Fishers community level is possible if the government is able to build the atmosphere through appropriate policies, programs and communication ways for the Fishers community.

**Keywords:** *Communication management; Conflict; Fishers; Government communication.*

## INTRODUCTION

The management of fishery and marine resources is one of the essential agendas in development policy in Indonesia as the world maritime axis (Fathun, 2018). Unfortunately, the construction of maritime has not touched the root of the problem and the basic needs of fishers. Poverty, illegal fishing and economic inequality of fishers are the main issues that often arise (Zamzami, 2016). Besides, there is also another problem related to the marine ecosystem, that is widespread destructions due to the exploitation of marine products and the inappropriate use of technology. Inappropriate policies and communication management of the government in addressing socio-economic vulnerabilities are the cause of conflict on fishers' communities in the coastal area.

One of the essential issues of the fishery that contribute to the occurrence of conflict is the lack of understanding and interpreting the rights of each stakeholder (Mosepele et al., 2015). The problem of conflicts among different fisher groups is a global concern. This problem also comes from an institution in controlling fishing activities, especially in regulating shared property. In these cases, the lack of understanding and control also cause unresolved conflict between longline (*rawai*) fishers and trawl fishers in Bantan Air-Bengkalis. Conflicts in this region which have emerged since the 1980s have been caused by the use of technology under the pretext of modernization and improvement of fishers' economy. Modernization of fishing gear has created many problems. It is evident in the

imbalance and injustice in the utilization of natural resources that cause socio-economic inequality of fishers' community.

In 2006, the abduction of longline fishers (traditional) by trawl fisherman (*bottom gill net*) provoked the anger of longline fishers, so they burned the trawl fishers' fishing boats. This conflict killed fishers and injured dozens of people from both sides. The conflict occurred because the government officials and law enforcement were very slow and weak in anticipating and resolving the conflict (Sari et al., 2010).

This conflict between fishers continues, as evidenced in the case of burning warehouses and ships on December 7, 2016. It occurred because trawl fishers hit the fishers of Muntai village while they were doing longline fishing in the middle of the sea, so the Muntai villagers responded by burning the ship and warehouse owned by Edi Sulung, a businessman from Bantan Air Village. This case continued on March 9, 2017, when traditional fishers from Muntai village burnt two units of trawl fishers boat of Pambang Village given by Bengkalis Government (Sani, 2017).

The conflict occurred in Bengkalis Regency water were caused by threadfin hunting; the fish with high economic value. The form of conflict among fishers was also caused by the differences in values and interests among fishers who are in the same position. Modernization in the wild fishery sector has been proven to expand the form of exploitation that leads to the destruction of marine ecosystems and overfishing. Consequently, it raises social vulnerability among fishers due to competition in the utilization of fishery resources. The increasing numbers of fishers and fishing gears that operate do not match the availability of fishery resources (Sari et al., 2010).

Poverty in coastal areas had often triggered by intense competition for fishery resources (Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2014). The inability of the competent authority in managing competition among fishers has triggered an increase in conflict among fish-

eries stakeholders. Arnason (2007) also argues that social institutions should attempt to solve fishery problems controlled by the capital owner (Mosepele et al., 2015). Until now, Bengkalis District government has not handled the conflict between fishers properly. Even SNKB (*Solidarity of Bengkalis District Fishers*) assess that there is no serious effort and communication from the government to solve the conflict. Government agencies such as Riau Governor, Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs (DKP) Riau Province, Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs Bengkalis District, and law enforcement officers do not take enough action.

In reality, the forms of government communication and element in the community have a very strategic role in resolving the conflict among fishers. Effective communication plays a vital role in overcoming conflicts. Many conflicts can be resolved through the right communication strategy (Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2014). Most people in Bengkalis expects that the fishers' community needs are fulfilled to achieve a more decent and harmonious life. In reality, people still have suspicion on the government because of the attitude of the Department of Fisheries and its officials who are not in favor of them, even considered more in favor of large capital fishers.

This research is aimed to give clearly understanding the root causes of conflicts, communication management model, and fishing conflicts in Bengkalis District. Additionally, as well as the lack of research discussing communication management in addressing conflict. Therefore, this paper aims to explain and to find out the best communication management and to resolve the conflict between traditional fishers and modern fishers and to maximize communication and conflict to be more constructive. At the end of the day, it is improving the well-being of the community. Additionally, this article aims to develop conflict communication theories.

Communication and conflict are two interdependent components and define each other simultaneously (Berger et al., 2014).

Conflict and communication are an integral part of people's lives that is inseparable from human life. Communication is one of the core issues surrounding conflict creation, as it encourages the development of divergent views. Communication contextualizes and gives further insight into conflict through its ability to understand emotions into conflict behaviors, which creates a platform for future conflicts (Nwagbara and Brown, 2014) this paper contends that integrative and distributed communication can be a platform for managing conflict in the conflict-ridden oil and gas industry in Nigeria. Nigeria's oil and gas industry is habitually known for controversy and conflict as a consequence of mode of relations and communication amongst companies and wider stakeholders. Specifically, the wider stakeholders -- the community people -- have constantly accused the companies of not putting their views into consideration during corporate communication process as well as not living up to their billings in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Managing communication and its context basically is a management of conflict. Communication management refers to the optimal use of human and technological resources to build relationships among human. Communication management combines management approach with communication and conflict that enables us to realize harmony in communication (Kaye, 1994).

Fundamentally, a community cannot avoid conflict, but one needs to consider how the conflict becomes functional and supports the change in the process of development and improvement (Kaye, 1994). Conflicts are unavoidable because there are different interests. Conflicts also exist because they are means by which organizations make adjustments, compromises, and learn to adapt to changes (Nwagbara and Brown, 2014) this paper contends that integrative and distributed communication can be a platform for managing conflict in the conflict-ridden oil and gas industry in Nigeria. Nigeria's oil and gas industry is habitually known for controversy and conflict as a consequence of mode of re-

lations and communication amongst companies and wider stakeholders. Specifically, the wider stakeholders -- the community people -- have constantly accused the companies of not putting their views into consideration during corporate communication process as well as not living up to their billings in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Also, conflict is the way a system survives while adaptation is constant, so conflict and adaptation cannot be separated (Ritzer and Goodman, 2004). Conflict also results in misunderstanding, conflict of interests, beliefs, values, and especially unrecognizable needs. Conflict can also be both destructive and constructive, depending on how to handle it (Littlejohn and Foss, 2016).

Conflict is a struggle between two or more interdependent parties, who have a purpose or feel an incompatibility in their goals (Berger et al., 2014). Conflict is inevitable, and it can be constructive, has dynamic nature and purpose, and describe mutual constitutive relationships between communication and conflict. Social conflict is affected by technical conditions of each personality, political, and social conditions such as the existence of a communication relationship (Ritzer and Goodman, 2004). Conflict also helps the communication function before the conflict, but due to the conflict of positions and borders between groups, it often becomes clear. Conflict also allows conflicting parties to find better ideas about their strengths and increase the likelihood of getting close or reconciled.

A conflict is a form of communication that may take place in the process of interpersonal and interpersonal communication. The role of an individual is critical in communication and conflict. Some experts argue that how individuals perceive and understand conflict is strongly affected by the context as well as the person's personality traits. Some of them also argues that conflict as a process is a reality in communication. If it is to manage conflict effectively, it will be essential to focus on the communication process (Berger et al., 2014).

Community conflict management is a way of dealing with conflicts in the public arena, focusing on communities defined based on physical location. Conflicts rooted in these different views are more difficult to manage; the logic of view is impossible to reconcile. Moral conflicts cannot be managed through conventional dispute resolution; it must be addressed through dialog. Dialog theory has a rich tradition and it has relationship between dialogue, conflict, and democratic practice. There are three essential theories: community mediation, participation and public dialogue, and appreciative research. The point of dialogue theories explores how dialogical communication can manage conflict and build communities (Littlejohn and Foss, 2016).

This study used a qualitative method. The theory used to understand the problems is based on the theory of communication conflict (Littlejohn and Foss, 2016). This research was conducted in Bengkalis-Riau Province. The research subjects were several Fisheries and Marine staffs of Bengkalis Regency, Bantan Subdistrict Head, Bantan Air Village Head, and Muntai Village Head, Bengkalis District Fishers Solidarity (SNKB) Chairman, some fishers and residents. The informants were chosen purposively according to the required data from this research. The research object was the process of communication management and conflict between fishers in Bengkalis. This study used three of the six data collection forms widely used in case studies. It also adopts an in-depth interview technique using a list of question guides as a reference. Researchers also conducted observation by participating limited according to ability, based on consideration of time and depth. The observation was essential to perform in-depth research and explore the meaning, either related to the policy or form of communication of Fishers community, government, law enforcement apparatus and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Furthermore, researchers also used documentation technique to analyze some government policies/regulatory documents,

data in the form of history, news, or information about conflicts fishers and other things related.

The researcher explained the problems by differentiating, comparing, categorizing, and grouping and interpreting the object of study. The following steps were taken through *data reduction*, *data display*, and *verification*. To get the validity of the data, the researcher conducted examination techniques based on some criteria to test the degree of credibility. The technique to examine used observational persistence, triangulation, and peer checking through discussion (Moleong, 2010).

## DISCUSSION

### The Roots of Conflict among Fishers in Bengkalis

Ability to manage conflicts and differences among fishers can start from understanding the root causes of conflict. The causes of conflict include scarce resources, deception change, incivility, aggression, stress, burnout, emotional labor, the relationship of all types, preferences, and past experience (Anwar, 2015). Differences in values and interests among fishers who are in the same position have resulted in conflict among fishers. Conflict rooted in different views is more difficult to handle; the logic of the paradigm is impossible to meet (Littljohn and Foss, 2016). Conflict occurs because traditional longline fishers use simple technology, needs small capitals. While trawl fishers use more advanced technology and more considerable capital. As fishers use these two fishing gears with different social level, grouping based on the values or paradigms of their habits and interests automatically occurs. The growth of the use of trawl results in the lower chance of longline fishers in obtaining catches and also damages the coastal environment.

In this case, the cause of Fishers conflict are cultural background of longline fishers in managing and utilizing fishery resources that do not get recognition from trawl fishers; the presence of trawl fishers has been considered to disturb the serenity and com-

fort of longline fishers; and inconsistent laws and regulations governing the utilization of fishery resources with regional characteristics and value systems prevailing in Fishers communities (Sari et al., 2010).

The impact of conflict is widespread. The dispute between the longline fishers and trawl fishers in Bengkalis has also triggered a poor relationship between longline fishers and other parties, such as local government, police, and navy. This secondary conflict occurs due to the longline fishers' dissatisfaction with the government and the police. Even the fishers community thinks that government apparatus and law enforcers are more in favor of trawl fishers (Sari et al., 2010).

The conflicts generally stem from a lack of understanding between two competing groups. Differences in understanding value and culture in utilizing marine fishery resources between fishers do not only happen between traditional fishers but also with trawl fishers coming from outside area even foreign fishers. These fishers utilize and exploit fishery resources differently according to their owned value. Longline fishers are more likely to capture and utilize fishery resources based on local wisdom with conservation, while the trawl fishers are more exploiting based on their interests and economic aspects and large profits. These different values and cultural orientations are what make the conflict keep going. At least three main factors become the root causes of prolonged conflict, namely juridical factors and differences in understanding the rules, economic inequality, and differences in value and interests owned.

### Juridical Factors and Understanding Rules

The occurrence of conflict between longline fishers and trawl fishers due to the lack of understanding the existing rules, namely Law number 45 of 2009 on Fisheries and then Regulation of Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries number 71/Permen-KP 2016 on the fishing line (Peraturan Pemerintah,

2016). The rule provides a clear regulation for the trawl fishers to only catch over an area of 4 miles, but in practice, many of them catch under 2 miles. The fishing lane of longline fishers shows that the customarily, the protected area of traditional Fishers of Bantan Subdistrict covers from Tanjung Jati to Tanjung Sekodi. Anyone who utilizes fishery resources in the region must follow the local rules and wisdom applicable in the region.

The rules on local communities are excluded in the broader system such as laws and regulations (state law). The state law has provided a loophole and opportunity to deny the value system prevailing among traditional Fishers communities. The denial of customary law causes a large number of non-environmentally friendly fishing practices. Besides, there is also uncertainty in the application of regulations related to supervision, resulting in the ineffectiveness of fishing line distribution in solving the problems.

Regulations on the use of fishing gear up to the boundaries of operational areas of trawl users continue to change. Marine and Fisheries Regulation 2016 regulate zoning, while Regulation of Governor of set fishing gear (Pemerintah Indonesia, 2016). Misunderstanding on the regulation between the Ministerial Regulation and the Governor's Regulation is the basis for modern fishers to show that they feel right and do not violate the law, as there is no regulation governing the prohibition in using trawl. While for traditional fishers, it is not a matter of zone or region, but the problem of using fishing gear, because if trawl Fishers operates in their territory, traditional fishers cannot catch the fish.

### **Economic Gap Factors**

The life of traditional Fishers communities is highly dependent on the natural resources of coastal water. These resources have strategic value to survive. Threats on the source of their fishing catch are a threat to life sustainability. Traditional fishers in Bengkalis District generally have a very high dependence on sea products. Therefore, the seizure of fishery resources increases. Signifi-

cant capital ownership and advanced technology will help the fishers to gain the largest share of resources available. Traditional fishers with small capital and traditional fishing gear (longline), while modern fishers with large vessels and trawl. Trawl fishers tend to be greedy and destructive to marine resources sustainability and do not maintain local wisdom. A traditional Fisher from Teluk Pambang village reveals:

*"Modern fishers use 150-200 trawls, and they also use a fish finder, so they know where the threadfin is, and in catching the fish, the net reaches the seabed causing the reefs to be lifted as well when pulling the net"* (Junaidi, Personal Communication, June 10, 2017)

Both traditional and modern fishers have the same fish target, so there is competition to predominate the available resources. The modern fishers with capital and advanced technology won the seizure of resources. It affects the traditional fishers because it has been increasingly difficult for them to get the fish catch and to widen the income gap among the Fishers community. It makes traditional Fishers community jealous of trawl fishers. In response to this, some longline fishers still choose traditional ways, but some are switching to modern fishing gear with the help of capital owners. Some fishers who have changed to modern fishing gear are strangely still catching in the traditional fishers' waters. So, this attitude triggers the conflict to prolong.

### **The Factor of Value and Culture Deduction**

The obstacles to communication with different cultural backgrounds are generally encountered in thinking, perception, and language (Anwar and Cangara, 2016). Utilization of marine fishery potential is interpreted differently by each Fishers based on the values, interests, and culture they believe. Bengkalis District, as a source of fisheries, has a very high potential for social conflict. It is due to the difference in value owned among fishers. This difference in value can be found

among fellow fishers who use the same fishing gear, or among fishers using the different fishing gear, but they remain to work in the area of longline fishers.

Few recent cases of conflict between longline fishers and trawl fishers show that it no longer occurred among fishers from different regions. The conflict has also occurred among fishers from neighboring villages, and even from the same village. It is due to factors of value and socio-cultural differences or their already different status. Differences in using technology and capital used are related to differences in ratings and levels or social status trigger the conflict. The sloping geographical characteristics of the water base, also causing the fish catchment space to become narrow. This limitation of fishing space forces the fishers to catch in the same space equally, consequently, overlapping or buildup of fishing gear, eventually can lead to conflict.

Longline fishers operate during the day, and trawl fishers operate day and night. The trawl can damage the traditional fishing gear (longline) because trawl is a fishing gear that moves with the current. There are differences between longline settles and trawl moves, the technical operation of the two fishing gears creates conflicting conditions that result in losses to traditional fishers. A traditional fisher from Muntai Village confirm this is the case and express that:

*"Before trawl exists, our fish catch was good. Sometimes we get 20-30 kg from some species of fish in one go, but now after trawl exists sometimes we cannot catch any fish at all"* (Rusli, Personal Communication, June 10, 2017)

It is evident that a state-of-the-art construction trawl is capable of sweeping a larger catch area, has a higher capture rate than longline. So that in every capture operation, the trawl will get more results than longline trawls. In this situation, the traditional fishers were forced to give in, as the longline outnumbered the trawl mechanically. Conditions like this repeatedly happen in the traditional fishing catchment areas that lead to the

decline of their catch and grow the emotions and anger of traditional fishers.

An increasing number of fishers operating the trawl has reduced the opportunity for the longline fishers and diminishing their fish catch, especially threadfin. Longline fishers use of trawl not only seize the catch area but also damage the water's ecosystem. The foundations of this assumption are namely: the difficulty of longline fishers to get fish due to the trawl operation, destruction of coral reefs as the habitat and shelter of fish by the trawls. Threadfin is a mainstay resource to be caught and traditional Fishers communities' primary source of livelihood that cannot be sustained now. Longline fishers consider this type of threadfin to be endangered when exploited extensively.

Additionally, the primary issue that also creates prolonged conflicts in the fishers' community is the injustice conflict resolution. It is triggered by suspicions among the community that the trawl fishers have been negotiating law with law enforcement officers. Group prejudices derived from these emotional ties give rise to in-group and out-group attitudes (Berger et al., 2014). This way of thinking and behaving will continue to provoke conflict. The values that the group believes play a vital role in the conflict because people will eventually return to their cultural values and customs. These values are essential to recognize the existence of every fisher.

Traditional fishers in Bengkalis District, especially Bantan subdistrict, believe that the sea warrants their life and future, so they have to protect and preserve the sea. The selection of environmentally friendly longline is proof that they have tried to keep the sea in order to stay sustainable. Fishing knowledge and technique using longline are obtained from their parents or predecessors. The strength of local wisdom, then become one of the factors guarantying the sustainability of fishery resources and Fishers's survival. Their fishing territory as a sea law customary territory or an *ulayat* right (an authority held by customary law communities over certain area) of the sea should be respected. This customary law

should be able to regulate the use of fishing gear and fishing time. This social institution is very important in preserving the traditions (Zamzami, 2016).

Even traditional fishers have a ritual ceremony in connection with the preservation of fishery resources within the customary law. Traditional events and rituals are routinely performed by traditional fisher communities once a year in *Muharram* month. The performance of "*kenduri*" rite that begins by butchering the lamb, cooking, and eating together. Before eating, the people prayed together to pray for blessing, by the beach. In adherence to the beliefs, customs, and habits of fishers' communities, fishing on Fridays is prohibited, because they believe that Friday is the time for the fish to lay their eggs. Additionally, Friday is a holiday; the time for cooperation among fellow citizens. Traditional Fishers communities maintain these customs to date as local wisdom that must be preserved and maintained.

### **Communication Management and Conflict among Fishers**

Communication management ability is the capability to manage conflict. The involvement of management in managing and anticipating poor behavior is also needed to reduce conflicts (Anwar, 2015). The inability to manage conflicts between traditional fishers' groups and trawl fishers causes the conflict to prolong. Various forms of communication, dialogue, and other efforts have been made to resolve the conflict to seek agreement with the parties involved in the conflict. The consensus between the conflicting parties has not been sufficient because of the absence of proper and consistent communication. Conflicting parties and mediating institutions have not managed the conflict properly because of the unavailability of communication to create understanding and empathy. Dialogues made to find common ground from various conflicting views are not an easy avenue.

Communication or dialogue plays an essential role in reducing conflict. Conflicts

can be resolved through appropriate communication strategies (Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2014). Settlement of conflicts in Bengkalis District fishers is unique because each party maintains its interests. This conflict needs solutions based on the aspirations and interests of each group that adapts the local wisdom in which they live. They must give understanding to each other that keeps marine and aquatic ecosystems as a shared responsibility. The sea is a joint property, it must be preserved for the sustainability of the life of the existing system, including the values of the wisdom, rather than prioritizing momentary economic interests only for commercial purposes. Therefore, integrative communication process has the capacity to foreground most vital elements that sustainability adumbrates. It is because such communication framework is shared, emancipatory, and harmonious, which obviates doubts and mistrust (Nwagbara and Brown, 2014) this paper contends that integrative and distributed communication can be a platform for managing conflict in the conflict-ridden oil and gas industry in Nigeria. Nigeria's oil and gas industry is habitually known for controversy and conflict as a consequence of mode of relations and communication amongst companies and wider stakeholders. Specifically, the wider stakeholders -- the community people -- have constantly accused the companies of not putting their views into consideration during corporate communication process as well as not living up to their billings in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Conflict management can provide guidelines for resolving a conflict between individuals, groups, and organizations (Gunawan and Rante, 2011). Communication and conflict management among fellow fishers' communities and the government has not touched the root of the problem. As explained earlier, this conflict has been going on for so long without more constructive communication. It is because the root of the problem is not understood well; moreover, government communication is less empathetic to the community. There are some at-



tempts to address the problem of fisheries, namely: fishing permit, sole proprietorship, the right to use territory in fishery, fish catch quota of individuals, and community rights in catching fish (Mosepele et al., 2015)

Moreover, this step can provide a basic framework for dealing with conflicts and managing fisheries. If this can be managed, communicated, and understood, it will certainly provide solutions to the problems of this fishing conflict. Despite several forms of communication and conflict management, but in general, this form of dialogue is not fully integrated and performed to the maximum extent.

### **Communication through Negotiation**

Communication management among the people in conflict is performed by negotiation. Negotiation is used as a mean to exchange agreement or medium to manage conflict (Berger et al., 2014). Negotiation is a structured process used by the parties in conflict to engage in dialogue on issues in which each party has a different opinion. Negotiation may work well if each party can develop excellent communication skills by empathizing with other groups.

The purpose of negotiation is to seek clarification on issues and try to find agreement on how to solve them. In principle, negotiation is conducted with the decision-making and policy parties, so that the decisions and policies are issued under the common interest and can resolve the conflict that has been going on. Symbolic activity in the form of words in negotiation is both in verbal and nonverbal, which is an object in the form of signs, cues, and instructions. They interpret the objects in meaningful ways, and therefore form a mental image of the objects. They exchange these images or meanings through symbols. These symbols used must be precise because they are significant in negotiation. If there are errors in use, it will lead to meaning that leads to conflict and disputes. This interpretive-symbolic perspective focuses on the meanings attached to their communication (Berger et al., 2014).

Interpersonal communication between fishers in the form of representation, as a negotiator of interaction, is more instrumental and meaningful in understanding and achieving the desired outcome agreement. Each group of Fishers community uses words that are mutually understood because of differences in value are owned. In fact, the ability to empathize is crucial, so that each group can understand the root of the conflict and the problem that occurs. Communication with negotiation can work well if people can understand and use the symbols of both parties in conflict. Many studies support that inter-group contacts can reduce prejudice and encourage other positive outcomes (Berger et al., 2014).

Negotiation is goal-directed activity. At the beginning of a negotiation, contextual factors enhance the priority of individualistic orientation factors or cooperative orientation factors. Therefore, managing communications and conflicts without knowing the underlying cause is a failure; as a result, the conflict will continue to occur even destructively (Berger et al., 2014). The context of local wisdom in preserving the coast, fish, and traditional fishing culture is essential. Local wisdom manifested in ritual form, place of residence, and work ethic is also an effort of farmers to improve social cohesion among citizens, and forms of transmission of inter-generational values (Runtiko et al, 2019). The local wisdom is also proof of the sustainability of traditional Fishers culture traditions.

### **Communication through Mediation**

Mediation in conflict resolution is used when conflict has spread to the surface. Several meetings were initiated by the police and government agencies when the burning of ships, warehouses, ships' slats by traditional fishers as a result of traditional fishing boats being breached in the sea by trawl fishers. The complexity of this problem will require a settlement through mediation. In contrast to negotiation, the third parties intervene to help manage conflict in the process of mediation. The intervention of government agen-

cies and police are essential to prevent the escalation of the conflict. The most important thing is that a mediator who can adapt to the emotions of the conflicting party is a successful mediator (Littlejohn and Foss, 2016).

The emotions of each Fishers community create prejudices and conflict among groups. A group gets emotional bonds and traits in such a way that individuals will react emotionally to in-group and out-group (Berger et al., 2014). The emergence of emotions among groups triggers anger and excessive animosity. Therefore, a mediator must be neutral in order to find a form of settlement that can be agreed by both parties in conflict, to assist the resolution of the conflict occurring.

Since the beginning of the conflict in 1983, until now, several meetings have been held, presenting the conflicting parties and mediated by the relevant agencies that are Government of Bengkalis Regency and Regional Government of Riau. Such mediation and meetings have resulted in several agreements. The results of mediation in the implementation have not been even executed as expected. Mediation is expected as the right way to resolve the conflict, but what happens is that each community in conflict still has suspicions among fellow Fishers communities. This suspicion exists both on longline or traditional fishers as well as between trawl fishers on government and law enforcement officers.

### **Communication through Facilitating**

An attempt to resolve the conflict is essentially a communication process. Government is a party being responsible for facilitating and supporting the smooth communication as well as community life as a regulated citizen. The government, as the power holder is more dominant in the third step. The government and its apparatuses should have the right policies and communication skills in running their government and apply the principles of procedures for managing their citizens (*good government*). When a community conflicts, the government must be ready and alert to control with all its poli-

cies and authorities. In this case, controlled communication of government agencies is critical in dealing with conflicts, especially in making contact between the groups in conflict (Berger et al, 2014).

The government, as the holder of the budget, has allocated and made various policies and programs in building the areas and its people. The Government of Bengkalis District has developed a Village Tourism program such as in the village of Tanjung Senekip Pambang, Meskom and Selat Baru in Bengkalis and Rupert Island (Yasir et al, 2017). The government has developed some forms of communication to empower fishers by building fishing villages, developing villages, tourism, and providing tools and capital facilities. Also, these techniques of conflict management sometimes include processes and techniques outside the governmental, judicial process, and incorporate a participatory approach (e.g., negotiation, mediation, collaborative law, and arbitration).

The form of solving the root problem of conflict between fishers is by facilitating meetings among fishers, training or empowering the fishers by developing some villages as tourist destinations. Empowerment of the fisher is vital in generating quality human resources. An indicator of community empowerment is the ability and freedom to make the best choices in determining or improving their lives. It means that the community is trained to have the knowledge, skills, and skills that can be used economically so that the community can advance and empower themselves through productive economic efforts (Subekti et al, 2018).

Community empowerment programs should be environment based (Subekti et al., 2018). In fact, facilitating to traditional fishers with customary catch areas, in which usually based on customary rights and local wisdom has not been performed. The fishers desire is anyone who is entitled to catch in the coastal areas acts according to the agreement with the criteria of the use of fishing gear that is justified by the community and the rules set. If the government is consistent with the rules,

the trawl fishers whose fishing gear can damage the environment are punishable according to the rules. If this communication step is implemented correctly by the government, it can certainly eliminate the suspicion among the groups in dispute.

### Communication with Confrontation

Various communication actions in resolving conflicts can be performed, including by confrontation. Traditional fishers often do not get what they want regarding government decisions. As a result, the fishers often mobilized social forces and tried to gain public sympathy to fight unjust policies. The support from government officials on large capital owners often becomes the trigger. The action of community mobilization is often performed by both parties during the conflict causing violent conflict. It includes an attempt to mobilize the masses to strengthen their position and force the other side to accept the position. In addition to dealing with opponents of the dispute, many social actions are directed to change a decision or policy of government agency that becomes the base of dispute.

Action mobilizing the masses or public sympathy can be in the form of advocacy and campaigning activities such as face certain officials, writing letters of criticism, flyers, banners or appeal to the opposite group and also to those who support (government). In fact, this action is also followed by meeting and visiting the House of Representatives (DPR/MPR) both at the central and regional levels, or National Commission on Human Rights, writing and disseminating the writings in social media, holding public meetings, organizing community groups, and rally. The campaign aims to gain sympathy and mobilize a broader public in a particular issue of conflict so that decision-makers can change a policy or regulation.

The traditional fishers in protesting conducted several forms of communication. The protes was performed by spreading messages written on banners and social media. Besides, many actions are conveyed directly



Figure 1.  
Forms of Communication Against  
the Use of Trawl

Source: Documentation of WALHI Riau (2017)

through lobbying the authorities in policy-makers at all levels, within organizations, communities, and the wider community. The freedom of speech in the society often facilitates this process; the existence of social media becomes an arena for debates within the scope of the democratic atmosphere. This democratic public sphere (social media)

debate can even reduce conflict effectively (Berger et al., 2014).

Many public issues and interests are raised to gain support, sympathy, and even mobilize others to support fundamental issues of conflict and values such as environmental damage, justice, and freedom. Even by getting the pressure, the government will usually respond quickly in settlement of the conflict. Community activities in the form of direct confrontation by challenging or criticizing government policies can even get a faster response than being silent.

## CONCLUSION

Conflict among fishers in the Bengkalis Regency occurs because the use of trawl and seizure of fishing line. The root of the conflict between fishers is due to juridical factors and differences in understanding the rules. Economic inequality and differences in values, interests, and culture among fishers also have made the conflict to be unresolved. Assistance and modernization of trawl, on the one hand, can improve the economics of a group of Fishers communities, but on the other hand, exacerbate the conflict. The use of trawl vessels that fishing in shallow waters is proved to increase the exploitation that leads to the destruction of marine ecosystems and damage of cultural values of society.

The lack of proper communication management of the government in solving the problem causes the conflict becomes protracted. Conflict management and government communication have not been as effective as they should be. Resolution of conflict cannot be reached by merely implementing the principles of communication capable of meeting the needs of each conflicting fisher. Conflict should be minimized and mitigated if the government can act firmly in carrying out the mandate of other laws and regulations consistently. Resolution of the conflicts at the Fishers community level is attainable if the government can build the atmosphere through appropriate policies and programs for the Fishers community. It is time for the Fishers community opportunity to improve

their welfare in education, social, economy, and culture through appropriate government programs. The implementation of integrated communication and conflict management are crucial. Some approaches can be used to continue the research on communication and conflict management of the fishery, such as the political economy perspective to reveal the real forces that create conflict. Besides, the ethnographic approach of communication to traditional fishers also needs to be performed to reveal how the community keeps the tradition and local wisdom of the fishers to explore the meaning of their lives. Therefore, a more in-depth and critical research is needed to reduce and solve the problems of conflict in society.

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