

# **CONTROLLING FISHERIES RESOURCES FOR WHOM? POLITICAL NETWORKING AND CONSERVATION IN THE BERAU MPA, INDONESIA**

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## **Introduction**

The coastal area of Berau (Kalimantan, Indonesia) is rich in shrimps and fishes as significant resources for small-scale fishermen's livelihoods (Gunawan, 2008). Meanwhile, the area has been internationally declared a marine protected area in 2005 (TNC, 2006). To control access to the area the local government has developed *Pokmaswas*, a village community group aimed at coastal surveillance particularly to eliminate illegal fishing and reduce conflict of local fishing access. This paper investigates how local practices contribute to the functioning of *Pokmaswas* in controlling fisheries resources and the interplay among actors involved in fisheries at village level.

## **Livelihood study**

This paper is based on PhD field research<sup>1</sup> conducted in the coastal villages of the Berau Delta namely Kasai, Teluk Semanting and Pegat Batumbuk. The research adopted an actor-oriented approach (Long, 2001) to understand everyday practices and the dynamic interactions among social actors and used a political ecology framework (Bryant and Bailey, 1997). In doing so some in-depth interviews with different background of key social actors including various small scale fishermen, *pongawa* or boss, shrimp and fish traders, *Pokmaswas* actors, *andon* outsider fishermen and district government officers were done. In addition, focus group discussion and household survey were also carried out.

Socio-political ecology shifts affect actors' social relationships and organizational practices and the creation of livelihood opportunities in the Berau MPA. *Pokmaswas* is crafted from external belief and generated to intentionally 'shape' people behaviour in the appropriation of coastal fisheries resources. However, actors of *Pokmaswas* are currently becoming new elites who create a political network to access local government authority to control *andon* outsider fishermen who enter the Berau MPA for the purpose of raising regional income. It thus threatens local trust as, on the one hand,

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<sup>1</sup> The research is part of the RESCOPAR (*Rebuilding resilience in coastal populations and aquatic resources: habitats, biodiversity and sustainable use options*) interdisciplinary research program of Wageningen University with the main aim to study resilience of coastal community and aquatic resources in the case of Indonesia and Vietnam (see <http://www.afi.wur.nl/UK/Research/RESCOPAR/>)

it excludes local fishers who still use the prohibited mini trawls and, on the other hand, it includes 'illegal as foreigners' using gill nets on the basis of familiarity.

It concluded that *Pokmaswas* as a socially embedded institution to control coastal resources may be seen as process to create political networking and to build social resilience of various actors and organizational practices across scales in terms of social exclusion and inclusion, local and outsiders relation, patron-client ties and friendship and ethnicity institutions.

## References

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