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# Devolution of Power and Community-Based Fishery Governance in the Bay of Blongko, North Sulawesi, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

*Natural resource governance in modern Indonesia is marked by the tension between the centralized policy strategy of the Suharto period and the reactive strategy of post-Suharto decentralization. To some extent, decentralization led to devolution of power and opportunities for local resource users to make consequential decisions over the natural resources upon which they depend. Nonetheless, this approach rested upon the capacity of communities to reach a consensus untainted by local politics, commercial imperatives, and traditional power structures. Moreover, decentralization had not given the majority strategic and structural decision-making power. Power disparity could lead to contentions, unfettered competition, open access, and resource overutilization.*

*In the case of Blongko Bay's marine and fishery resources in Minahasa, North Sulawesi, social institutions and local rules came into play and some people were recognized to protect the resource on behalf of the community. These social institutions took the form of neighborly ties, collective identity, reciprocity, and social and ecological responsibilities. Blongko's marine and fishery resources were not free access but governed by local and informal rules to maintain its benefits for the good of the community. Individuals evolved behavior, which commensurated with their responsibilities, leading to innovative power structures which were more locally sensitive and environmentally appropriate.*

**Keywords:** power structure, devolution, participation, open access, common governance, contending ideology, identity validation, social inclusion

**JEL Classification:** Q2

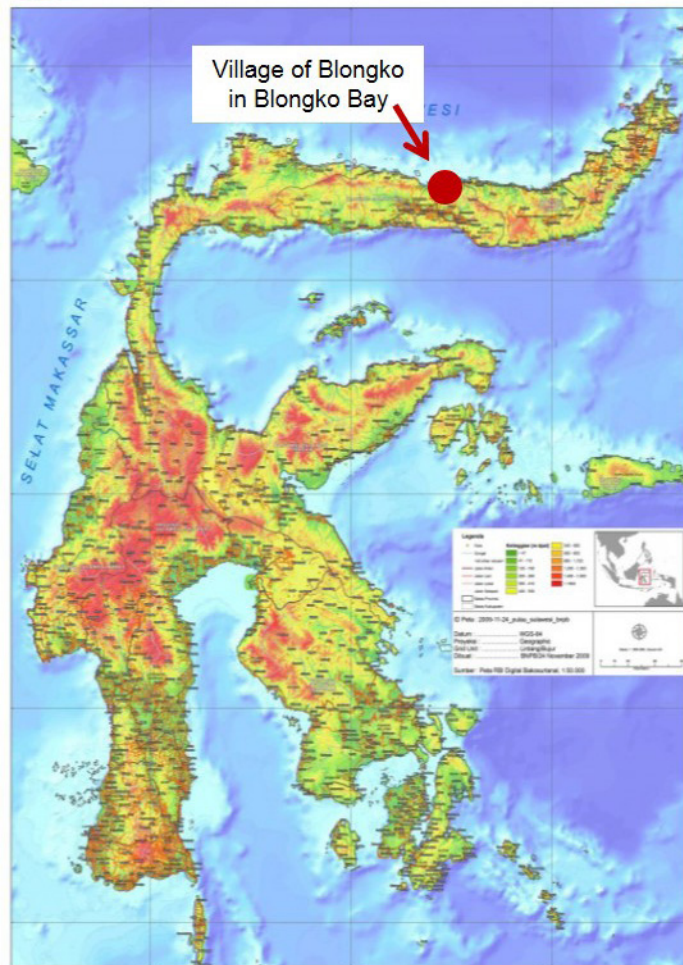
## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's population reached 210 million in 2000, with a growth rate of 1.8 percent per annum. Approximately 41 million people, or 22 percent of the population, live in or near coastal areas (BPS 2000), half of whom are dependent on coastal resources for their livelihood. Marine-related activities account for 20 percent of total gross domestic product (GDP) and 19 percent of non-oil and gas GDP. Moreover, the coastal areas provide employment and income for about 16 million people or 24 percent of the national labor force (BAPPEDA 1998). In 2012, Indonesia's fishery production reached approximately 8.9 million tons. Inland and marine catch accounted for about 5.8 million tons. About 95 percent of fishery production comes from artisanal fishermen. In 2012, around 6.4 million people were engaged in inland and marine fishing and fish farming (BAPPEDA 1998). Destructive dynamite fishing is common and can damage coral reefs in various ways, which lead to a decline in the productivity of harvestable reef resources and their aesthetic value (Ketchum 1972).

During the Suharto era (1967–1998), natural resource governance in Indonesia was marked by exploitation. Suharto's regime emphasized development that was primarily based on centralized decision making to ensure political stability and economic growth (Resosudarmo 2006). Despite efforts to decentralize toward the end of the regime, initiatives were marked by asymmetrical access to strategic and structural decision-making power. This undermined local democracy and community participation and led to the detrimental exploitation of the country's natural resources (Siswanto 2005). To promote social inclusion and sustainable natural resource governance, during the post-Suharto era (from 1998), the Government of Indonesia (GOI)

adopted the principles of community-based natural resource governance, which focused on decision making at the village, district, and regency levels. The regency governments, along with the district management and local user communities, were given the right to manage Indonesia's natural resources (Satria 2002).

This article discusses the later phase of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) community-based marine sanctuary program in the Bay of Blongko, Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province (Figure 1). The program was a government-endorsed fishery resource conservation scheme initiated by USAID through the establishment of its marine sanctuary in Blongko Village within the Bay of Blongko. In the case of Blongko Bay, subsequent to its departure, USAID's initiatives for protecting Blongko's fishery resources led to imposed identities, power imbalance, and unfair monopoly of the fishery resources by local village elites who were assigned to assume the monitoring and enforcement of the marine sanctuary by USAID officials. Coupled with destructive fishing practices by local village elites, overexploitation of local fishery resources became inevitable. This led to the emergence of contending identities and social movements for altering previous patterns of fishery allocation. A contending organization known as Blongko's marine sanctuary protection group was formed to sustain the momentum for change, inclusion, and resource protection. Though initially regarded as controversial, the organization, whose aim was to establish clearly defined user rights for safeguarding local fishery resources, eventually endowed community members with pride, identity, and a platform for fishery conservation. Presently Blongko's fishery resources are collectively managed and conserved by multiple resource users.

**Figure 1. The island of Sulawesi and the village of Blongko**

## METHODS

Using ethnography and qualitative inquiry, this study is a social inquiry of fishery governance in the village of Blongko within Blongko Bay, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. A number of reasons prevailed for selecting Blongko in North Sulawesi. The village suggests government and local community support in the governance of local fishery resources and was chosen due to the presence of USAID- and government-initiated coastal resource management programs. Inquiries and discussions about the site were conducted to understand the dynamics and complexities

associated with local community-based coastal resource governance schemes. As the research examines the “rules” for constructing social reality and common sense within the field setting, including how these rules are applied, maintained, and transformed in the face of power relations, the use of ethnography is necessary. Qualitative inquiry is adopted to enrich knowledge of the field setting. The case study approach is incorporated to acquire in-depth, detailed, and complex understanding of people in their natural settings while providing an inclusive picture of the myriad social and political elements which constitute the social and ecological landscape.

Data collection was conducted through participant observation, biographical interviews, and perusal of secondary data. Informants were selected through purposive sampling. Various groups were invited for in-depth interviews. The selection of informants was based on the extent of environmental issues which emerged within the locality, the extent of the research subjects' involvement, and on the need to triangulate to ensure adequate representation. The research informants who were invited to participate are shown in Table 1. Secondary data was obtained from government departments, donor agencies,

non-government organizations, government consultants, and members of the academe.

A pilot study in North Sulawesi was conducted from August to October 2004 to obtain data about the topography and the natural resource management programs in the site. Data collection in North Sulawesi was conducted from July to December 2005; the researcher later returned to the field site from May to August 2010. The year 2004 was the last year of USAID's program in Blongko, hence, this study is a post-program inquiry.

**Table 1. Research informants in North Sulawesi**

<b>Research informants</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
USAID representatives (2 informants)	Aid government officials in facilitating conflict resolution among fishermen
Project consultants, researchers, members of the academe (2 informants)	Aid the regency planning board in planning its annual coastal zone management programs and projects
Non-migrant inland fishermen (5 informants)	Decision makers and owners of boats targeted by projects
Provincial planning board (2 informants)	Coordinates coastal zone development policies across the regencies
Regency marine and fishery resource department (2 informants)	Plans, implements, and funds fishery and aquaculture development projects and fishery management projects
Village officials (3 informants)	Forefront personnel in promoting and implementing new initiatives in villages
Community leaders from fishery and religious groups (5 informants)	Leaders in Blongko respected and aspired to by villagers
Migrant fishermen and migrant farm laborers (5 informants)	Targeted by the fishery policies, programs, and projects for improved sustainability
Fish merchants and capital lenders (3 informants)	Middle class at the forefront to induce initiatives and change
Housewives and women fish traders (5 informants)	Play key roles in household decision making and targeted by development projects



## VILLAGE-LEVEL MARINE SANCTUARY ORGANIZATION AND DEVOLUTION

A major achievement during the post-Suharto era was the promulgation of Law No. 22/1999 on Regional Autonomy (Siswanto 2005). This was further supplemented with Ministerial Decree No. 5/1999 stipulating the procedure for resolving conflicts over natural resource use and indigenous rights (Benda-Beckmann 2001). In 2014, during Yudhoyono's term, Ministerial Decree No. 34/2014 was enacted by the Ministry of Fishery and Maritime Affairs to reinforce the roles of indigenous groups in governing the country's coastal areas. The regency government, acting as an autonomous entity, had the authority to work with community members for sustainable natural resource governance. Coupled with international pressure, the GOI adopted community-based natural resource governance where local resource users are given rights to decide natural resource allocation provided that it is in line with regency initiatives and national directives (Moeliono 2006).

A common practice of the GOI during the post-Suharto era was the implementation of community-based fishery governance along the country's geographical pockets and coasts. USAID became one of the GOI's major partners to promote community participation in the sustainable governance of Indonesia's fishery resources. A common approach was the creation of marine sanctuaries with the provincial government acting as the protector and advisor, the regency government as the overseer, and the village government as the enforcing agency. The village of Blongko, was incorporated into USAID's Marine Sanctuary Program in South Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi from 1998–2003. Blongko became the sole pilot project site for USAID's Coastal Resource Management Program (CRMP) within the Blongko Bay area in South Minahasa Regency. USAID's

CRMP incorporated the marine sanctuary conservation program discussed in this paper. The consumable fish found within the Bay of Blongko included, among others, skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus palamis*), eastern little tuna (*Euthynnus affinis*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), anchovies (family Atherinidae), and silversides (family Clupeidae).

The Blongko inlet in the Regency of South Minahasa Regency is utilized by 11 villages, each with a population of more or less 1,300 inhabitants. In each of these 11 villages, almost two-thirds of the population comprised of fishermen who earned their livelihoods from the Bay of Blongko. With regard to Blongko's social landscape, there are three main ethnicities in Blongko, namely, Minahasans from North Sulawesi, Sangirs from the island of Sangihe-Talaud, and Gorontaloans from Gorontalo. The Minahasans are mostly farmers and/or farm laborers who inhabit the plains and the hills; the Sangirs are mainly fishermen and seasonal farm laborers who inhabit the coasts; and the Gorontaloans are usually farm laborers living in Blongko's southern border. Much of the land in the village is cultivated by a coconut plantation company that was endowed with user rights by the regency government and the village officials and elites. The Minahasans, Sangirs, and Gorontaloans each occupied a social and physical space that was separate and distinct from one another. The village had a number of environmental issues with regard to fishing. The quantity and quality of marine and fishery resources in the bay plummeted due to overutilization and destructive fishing by fishermen from within and outside the village. Dynamites, bottom trawling, and the use of rakes are commonplace, resulting in the destruction of the coral reef, which served as nurseries and breeding grounds for fish and other marine organisms.

The objectives of USAID's Integrated Coastal Zone (ICZM) program in the village

of Blongko can be divided into three main categories: (1) to promote awareness and action for the sustainable governance of Blongko's coastal resources, primarily its marine and fishery resources; (2) to foster local economic development within the village; and (3) to institute social inclusion, consensus, and collective action in coastal resource use through the village-level government (USAID 1998). USAID officials, along with the provincial and regency governments, initiated the village-level marine sanctuary and ecotourism scheme in Blongko. According to officials, the marine sanctuary, equipped with its boating and snorkeling activities, would become a major tourist attraction (USAID 1999). To stimulate participation in sustainable fisheries, USAID and government officials aimed to improve local livelihoods by initiating projects to increase Blongko's commercial and trade activities. One example was the formation of Blongko's women's cooperative for accelerating fish trade through collaborations with local banks. Another was the donation of funds and machines to fishermen for improving their boats. USAID and government officials expected devolution, participation, and social inclusion to follow naturally from the implementation of the above initiatives. Highlights of the policies and regulations initiated by USAID and government officials at the regency and village levels are shown in Table 2.

USAID and government officials established the village-level ICZM board to facilitate the planning and implementation of its projects. The village-level ICZM Board was headed by the village head, its secretary, and treasurer. The board consisted of three subdivisions, namely: (1) coastal resource and public infrastructure division, (2) livelihood and welfare improvement division, and (3) marine sanctuary division (USAID 1999). According to USAID officials, the village-level ICZM board along with its marine

sanctuary management board was required to facilitate commonality, enable consensus, and ensure credible commitment. The ICZM board functioned as an umbrella organization for the marine sanctuary management board that is responsible for ensuring the sustainable governance of Blongko's marine and fishery resources. Blongko's marine sanctuary had two zones, namely the core zone in which no activity was allowed and the auxiliary zone in which research, monitoring, and the passing of boats without lights were allowed. Activities prohibited within the core zone included crossing, trespassing, operating boats with lights, fishing, marine resource extraction, stepping on corals, mining, and mangrove logging. Activities prohibited within the auxiliary zone include operating boats with lights and capturing marine and fishery resources. Beyond the auxiliary zone, the marine and fishery resources within Blongko Bay were to be sustainably managed through village-level regulations encompassing (1) the areas that were allowed for sustainable extraction and the individuals that were provided with the permits to fish within the designated areas successively, (2) the various areas of the bay with an open and closed season, (3) the marine and fish organisms that were allowed for capture, and (4) the fishing methods that were allowed in Blongko Bay. Four different sanctions apply to violators of the marine sanctuary regulations. The first instance of violation was met with a letter of apology from violators and the surrender of the marine and fishery resources that were previously extracted from the marine sanctuary (e.g., corals, stones, sand, mangrove, crabs, etc.). The second instance of violation by the same person was met with the confiscation of destructive fishing equipment by village officials and the need to pay fines. The third instance of violation was met with community service along with other sanctions to be devised by village officials in accordance with the

**Table 2. Regulations and decrees supporting USAID's integrated coastal zone management program**

Articles/Section	Contents
<b>Regency Government Regulation No. 02/2002</b>	
Sections I–III, Articles 2–7	The importance of sustainable and equitable governance of the coastal zone through integrated management across different sectors and departments, through integrated land use planning; community participation and acknowledgement of indigenous customs; and transparency and accountability in coastal resource use, distribution, and management.
Sections IV–V, Articles 8–10	The rights and responsibilities of the regency's marine and fishery resource department and the coastal communities in coordinating with other institutions and in initiating, supporting, and developing policies and programs for the sustainable and equitable management of the coastal zones.
Sections VI–IX, Articles 13–22	The rights and responsibilities of community members and the village government in planning and implementing policies and plans for the sustainable and equitable management of the coastal zone through community participation, integrated land use planning, and the formation of marine sanctuaries.
Sections XIV–XV, Articles 35–36	The regency government's responsibility in providing funding for continuing, replicating, monitoring, and evaluating the policies and programs initiated by USAID officials on an annual basis.
Section XV, Article 36	The rights and responsibilities of village officials, government officials, law enforcement officials, and indigenous groups in monitoring and enforcing the laws, and prosecuting and sanctioning violators because of environmental destruction.
Section XVI, Articles 37–39	Conflicts over the use, distribution, and management of coastal resources should be conducted in a communitarian and convivial manner with the aid of village and government officials. Community members are entitled to perform litigation measures and "class action" (2002: 16) against entrepreneurial activities which lead to the destruction of the environment.
<b>Village Regulation No. 04/2004A/KD–DB/XI/99</b>	
Sections I–II, Articles 1–4	The establishment of the village marine sanctuary, which consisted of two zones, namely, the core zone in which no activity was allowed and the auxiliary zone in which research, monitoring, and the passing of boats without lights were allowed.
Section III, Article 5	The rights and responsibilities of the officials within the village-level marine sanctuary management board encompassed planning and managing the marine sanctuary for the welfare of both the environment and the community; prosecuting offenders and confiscating equipment used by violators; and granting permissions over activities that are to be held within the marine sanctuary (e.g., research, monitoring, leisure, etc.).
Sections IV–V, Article 6	The rights and responsibilities of community members encompassed planning, ensuring and monitoring sustainable fishing and land use practice, and reporting violators to the officials within the boards.



severity of the violation. The fourth instance of violation was met with prosecution from law enforcement officials such as the police and the court (USAID 1999).

#### MAJOR ISSUES IN THE VILLAGE-LEVEL MARINE SANCTUARY ORGANIZATION

Blongko's marine sanctuary management board faced a number of conflicts historically rooted within Blongko's traditional power structure. These perceived issues took the form of misuse of power, appropriation of local identity, capture by commercial imperatives, and overemphasis on regulatory measures. The members of Blongko's marine sanctuary management board came from diverse backgrounds and social statuses. Among them were Minahasan landowners, landless Gorontaloan farmers, large 'pajeko' boat owners, small boat owners, fishermen laborers, and fish merchants. The majority of the villagers and a large number of the board members felt they were unrepresented in decision making, excluded in the monitoring process of fishery extraction and allocation, and omitted from participating in local economic development programs such as USAID's ecotourism initiatives and the joint effort to market and diversify Blongko's local fishery products. Hence, the common management of Indonesia's coastal resources requires redefining devolution to incorporate a more complex concept of divided and layered sovereignty without "loss of control and self-determination for those who agree to delegate some of their decision-making power and judiciary rights to a more encompassing level" (Etzioni 2004, 172).

#### Misuse of Authority and Social Exclusion

Some government officials were genuinely concerned about the depletion and degradation of Indonesia's natural resources. They saw the need for protection through collective governance and co-management. This, according to officials, can be facilitated through consensus and joint decision making in policy and program formulation (Ostrom 1990). Consensus ensued across the various levels of governance and with communities through *musrenbang*<sup>1</sup> or consensual development planning (Kurian 2000). Social inclusion in policy and program planning, when coupled with decentralized public administration system and devolution of authority, was envisioned to encourage a socially cohesive implementation of policies and programs at the grassroots level. Nonetheless, consensual planning, decentralized public administration, and devolution of authority to local entities did not automatically promote ecological sensibility and social responsiveness for the collective protection of public goods. In the presence of USAID and government officials, regulations over the extraction and allocation of Blongko's fishery resources were consented through discussions with community user groups. The village officials, along with community members who participated in the marine sanctuary management program, were given the rights and responsibilities to monitor and enforce the regulations for the collective good.

USAID carried with them a template for governing Blongko's marine and fishery resources. In its attempt to promote sustainable marine and fishery governance, USAID and government officials incorporated a model,

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<sup>1</sup> The term *musrenbang* is an abbreviation of two words in Bahasa Indonesia. It combines *musyawarah* (community discussion) with *perencanaan pembangunan* (development planning). *Musrenbang* therefore refers to the process of community discussion about local development needs.

which combined teaching and learning, economic empowerment, and sustainable development. The model adopted by USAID and government officials was universalized as opposed to being localized, and this led to the disengagement of local identities. Although villagers were invited to make social and ecological profiles of the village and to determine the programs and projects incorporated into the ICZM program, the program's predetermined goals and interests functioned to streamline and homogenize the existing complex and multifaceted coastal resource governance practices found within the village of Blongko. Moreover, the combination of a universalized model of natural resource governance and the village head's authoritarian decision making with regard to fishery extraction encouraged selective engagement among the villagers. This resulted in the substitution of one form of power for another without any real devolution of authority and responsibility. A village official, Mr. GNRT, claimed that in the past, Blongko's village head and village-level government represented the donor agency's interests, working to attain pre-determined targets:

The organization that managed the ICZM program and the marine sanctuary project in Blongko was created and sustained solely by the former village head and his close companions who were also in the village planning board. Nobody else was involved. This ICZM program had their own targets to fill, whether it's the marine sanctuary, the forest, or the organizations that were created. The organization's there and the plans and schedules were there in order for the funding from America to be available.

In the light of differing perspectives and contentions, USAID and government officials saw the need to reinforce agreed upon regulations governing Blongko's marine and fishery resources. Moreover, extension agents also saw the need to educate villagers and monitor whether they internalized qualities such as transparency, accountability, and commitment for safeguarding public needs.

USAID and government officials assumed villagers did not previously have these values. This was facilitated through project accountability meetings conducted in the presence of other community members. To promote these values, there were perceived needs for incessant negotiations and adjustments in village level policies through meetings. Nonetheless, in managing the program and enforcing regulations for sustainable fishery extraction, village officials used the language of the common good but were acting for their own private interests. Compounded by the institutionalized nature of Blongko's marine and fishery governance, devolution of authority to local user groups was very limited. This is illustrated by the following comment made by a farmer and fisherman in Blongko, Mr. ABDLH:

We did not get involved in the marine sanctuary, we were invited to meetings and we came to meetings and listened to what the marine sanctuary was all about, but we did not want to get involved in the administration matters because the village head and village officials were the ones handling that and we had to respect them.

Hence, community members could only engage in marine sanctuary management and the governance of Blongko's resources through village officials and elites.

### **Appropriation of Local Identity**

In determining the priorities to be incorporated into the ICZM program, social intricacies were relegated to the background and local identities were appropriated. Mr. FR, a senior government official from North Sulawesi's Marine and Fishery Resource Department, made clear his awareness of USAID's ICZM program:

We already have tons of coastal zone laws and institutions made by JICA, JBIC, CIDA, etc., and then USAID made their own laws and institutions without even wanting to know those other things which already existed. Every donor agency thought they had to make their own laws

and institutions on top of those that were already present. We were all just rubber stamps here. They collaborated with the House of Representatives to make coastal zone management laws and regulations without consulting us and then expected us to support and fund their cause.

Although the ICZM program had been approved by the national government and the people's representative council in North Sulawesi, Mr. FR somewhat refused to acknowledge the program. The social landscape underlying Indonesia's natural resource governance consisted of multiple layers of social constructs and practices whose depths and dimensions were not always accessible to planners and policy makers. This often led to misalignments and disconnections across scales. In determining the priorities to be incorporated into Blongko's ICZM program, USAID officials adopted knowledge which differed significantly from villagers' and community members' knowledge. Moreover, while the ideas were generated locally, they must 'fit' the overall template that USAID provided as preconditions. Hence, tension arose due to the need to massage and fit the programs within the criteria outlined by USAID for maintaining potential funding. This was unavoidable since the funding and authority for the programs and projects came from USAID and the national government.

During the implementation of the ICZM program, tension sprung between the need to enforce USAID's "best practice" formula and the need to adopt local knowledge anchored within local dynamics. Village life was romanticized by USAID officials as that of being simple, mono-dimensional, and benevolently egalitarian. The "best practice" formula adopted by USAID and government officials was linear in nature; preferred outputs had been predetermined beforehand and accomplishing the expected outputs required securing a series of successive steps under "contained"

circumstances. Through the instrumental use of knowledge, the "best practice" formula was used to determine actions that were to be taken.

### **Capture by Commercial Imperatives**

During the Suharto and post-Suharto era, the indicators of rural development encompassed local infrastructure development and the stimulation of trade and commercial activities through capital acquisition and microcredit schemes (Resosudarmo 2006). Local villagers came to associate USAID's presence with aid projects for local infrastructure development and microcredit disbursement as opposed to the sustainable governance of local marine and fishery resources through marine sanctuary initiatives. This, when coupled by the appropriation of local identity, the misuse of authority, and the emergence of social exclusion could lead to capture by commercial imperatives and natural resource overutilization. The seemingly inclusive and egalitarian consensual process over coastal resource governance led to an emphasis on reporting. Some villagers thought the USAID officials were simply ticking boxes on their list and this led to a disinterest in participating in USAID's marine sanctuary management program and reinforced the rights and authority of local village authorities and elites.

USAID's formula for collective action and inclusive governance did not necessarily lead to the same urgency for protecting common needs. In fact, recriminations began after the perceived misuse of power and authority by village officials and elites in extracting and allocating local marine and fishery resources. Simultaneous to USAID's presence in Blongko, numerous government projects entered the village. These projects were, among others, the construction of public latrines, the development of roads and electricity infrastructure, funding disbursement for local fishermen groups, the delivery of

low interest microfinancing schemes for local fishing cooperatives, and the establishment of a marine ecotourism park. Community user groups perceived rampant corruption among village officials and elites when managing these projects. This led to mistrust, contentions, as well as passive and active resistance among villagers who felt cheated and excluded from the projects. A former village official named ERK noted the following:

There was mistrust towards us as the manager of the projects in Blongko. They [the villagers] stated that we stole the project money, that we used the project money for our own purposes, that we did not allow others to fish in the bay, and that we cut and sold the mangroves, etc. What they did not understand was that project money was not that easy to acquire and that we did not even have the money in our hands. I tried to explain that to them in meetings but they just would not believe me. And then afterwards they retaliated against us and destroyed the marine sanctuary and used destructive fishing methods when fishing in the bay. It was such a pity because hard work was involved in making that marine sanctuary.

This suggested the villagers' anger and the incapacity of local government entities to establish order and governance in times of dissonance, great demands, and utilitarian interests. Mr. LPH, a fisherman, noted the following concerning the marine sanctuary management board:

The officials and village people who were involved in USAID's program had a lot of money and they used the money to buy new appliances and even motorcycles. Moreover, they gave out permits to their family members to fish in the marine sanctuary and to fish in the areas surrounding the marine sanctuary even if they were not allowed to do so and even if it was not their turn. And the fish there was really good, they [the elite's family members] could make a lot of money from the fish there and they shared the profits with the former village officials. But, they did not allow us to fish there.

By giving out permits and implementing profit-sharing initiatives from the capture of

local marine and fishery resources, village officials encouraged a utilitarian attachment to the landscape. As a result, fishermen who were also Blongko's elites aligned to the above social construction, leading to the detrimental commodification and commercialization of local marine and fishery resources. During the implementation of USAID's program, it was indiscernible whether the complex characteristic of local culture, which maintained ideas about collective action and sustainable commons, was acknowledged or understood. This was likely to be for a variety of reasons, for example, local people had different perceptions, interests, and timelines in mind for management than the USAID programs that were targeted by outcomes and milestones.

### **Overemphasis on Regulatory Measures**

USAID officials correlated the sustainable governance of coastal resources with several variables. First was the conservation of the fishery resources and coastal land through collective action. Second was the community members' adherence to statutes and regulations that were collectively drafted by villagers, USAID, and government officials for utilitarian needs. Third was the presence of village institutions for creating and enforcing agreed upon statutes toward the sustainable use of local coastal resources. Ms. KSMDI, a USAID extension officer, noted the following:

I make them understand that the marine sanctuary is a zone to earn interest, thus it is a piggy bank. If we save and put our money in the bank, the fish will come out, and we will use the interest, or the fish, in this case, for our daily food...and then we synchronize it with their concept, understanding, and language, and then from there on we also influence the villagers to slowly understand the need for a marine sanctuary for their common future...we will also have to promote an understanding that the marine sanctuary will enhance the working of the ecosystem which the community depends upon



for their livelihood. Through the institutions and regulations managed by the villagers, we will promote environmental awareness and local participation for ensuring the continuation of Blongko's marine sanctuary.

To maintain ideas about the common good, collective action, and marine and fishery resource protection there was the need to understand emerging governance practices and venture into the delicate and complex characteristics of local culture. When participating in government policies and programs, villagers aligned to the bits and pieces, which pertained to their needs and interests, while jettisoning others.

#### ENGENDERING MOBILIZATION AND POWER-SHARING

In the case of Blongko, the perceived civil inequity was important for mobilizing community members and forming new alliances toward social change. Community mobilization in Blongko required groups of influential community members to (1) be sufficiently alienated enough to be fundamentally critical; (2) be educated enough to be able to create counter-symbols, counter-ideologies, and contending identities; (3) command enough communication, networking, and organizational skills to serve as part of the controlling overlayer of the transforming movement; (4) accumulate sufficient knowledge and analysis to be able to evolve appropriate political strategies; and (5) be able to prevent personal and apolitical deflections from prevailing (Etzioni 1968). In Blongko, the formation of new groups and alliances started with informal gatherings: a number of neighbors in the same residential block getting together every weekend in the current village head's home to chat (i.e., the village head at the time of the study is a young man, 32 years of age). With the passing of time, the people in the gathering grew in number. The gathering was then transformed into a Bible

study group (elevated status) as people started to read the Bible and hold scholarly discussions of Bible stories in the gathering. Hence, the gathering became even more prestigious within and outside the village due to its scholarly discussions of the Bible. The group gradually changed from a general weekly gathering to that of a Bible study group. As time passed, this Bible study group began to invite priests from nearby villages, enhancing its status and position in the community. In addition, the present village head was a member of the Indonesian Democratic Party at the provincial and regency level, and he often invited influential members of the party to join the discussion. Moreover, government officials at the regency level and fish merchants from the regency's capital also came and joined the Bible study group providing further reinforcements and momentum. As more people joined, the objective also expanded from scholarly Bible studies to that of protecting marginalized community members and promoting democracy, participation, and social inclusion within the village. With the passing of time, a new discourse on common good and collective action emerged and the need to protect Blongko's marine and fishery resources resurfaced and reverberated across Blongko's younger generations and marginalized members. This attracted more community members from within and outside the village to join, and ultimately, even non-Christians (e.g., Moslems) also joined the discussion which pertained to their needs and interests.

Subsequent to the village election and the change in Blongko's village head and under the leadership of the current village head, the Bible study group members (1) established a counter-ideology when it decided to unify Blongko's diversity and reform the rights underlying its coastal resource extraction and allocation, (2) launched a counter-symbol when it revived and redrew the marine sanctuary management initiated by USAID,



and (3) formed a contending identity when they established Blongko's "marine sanctuary protection group". This effort at reviving the marine sanctuary was perceived by villagers as the emergence of civic participation and clean government. Community members perceived the move as a benign initiative for social incorporation and instilling coastal resource governance that is both socially viable and ecologically sustainable. The organization eventually endowed community members with pride, identity, and a platform for the equitable and sustainable extraction of local marine and fishery resources. Over time, through Blongko's marine sanctuary protection group, social institutions and local rules came into play and the people were committed to protect Blongko's marine and fishery resources on behalf of the community. These social institutions took the form of kinship ties, collective identity, symbolic reciprocity, social responsibility, and ecological sensibility. The marine and fishery resources in Blongko were not free access but governed by formal and informal rules to maintain its benefits for the good of the community. The community, through the village representatives, determined access and made decisions about management on behalf of them all. Community members acted in a way that benefited the overall good even when they were avowing individual rights, leading to innovative power structures that were locally sensitive and environmentally appropriate. Among others, the rules which came into play and were socially 'enforced' by community members encompassed (1) the areas, which were allowed for sustainable marine and fishery extraction and the various individuals who were allowed to fish within the designated areas; (2) the various areas of the bay with an open and closed season; (3) the marine and fish organisms that were allowed for capture; and (4) the fishing methods that were allowed in Blongko Bay. The legitimacy acquired by the current village head

as the leading government and political figure in Blongko, when coupled with reinforcements by party leaders, religious figures, government officials, and fish merchants from outside the vicinity, became the platform and catalyst for restructuring allocation rights underlying Blongko's marine and fishery resources.

In the case of Blongko, the Bible study group and the marine sanctuary protection group in time became a platform for establishing political strategies to alter the local power structure. To Blongko's young men and women, the Bible study group became the center of a grassroots political movement to overthrow the former despotic village head and end coastal resource monopoly by previous village officials. In the presence of party leaders, regency government officials, and leading fish merchants, young and influential community members advocated with the older generations from the previous government to support their cause and elect their preferred candidate, Mr. GNRT, as Blongko's next village head. The movement to depose the previous village head in the subsequent election resonated and gained momentum within and outside the village due to the significant roles played by the Bible study group and the marine sanctuary protection group headed by Mr. GNRT. This resulted in a landslide win favoring Mr. GNRT, the present village head, during the subsequent village election. In the case of Blongko, civic mobilizations, surging momentums, and contending identities would all lack harness and reinforcements without the involvement of party leaders, religious figures, government officials, and fish merchants from outside the locality. Moreover, in time, a number of fish merchants from Blongko's surrounding areas refused to purchase fish from groups and individuals who were considered 'impious' by a majority of the community members in Blongko. In his account of the events prior to his administration, the present village head, Mr. GNRT, stated the following:

We cannot just let the former village officials do whatever they wanted to us, I personally believe that as the village head I would have to provide an opportunity for the people to voice their needs and concerns and to facilitate an opportunity where the people can govern and build this village together with the village officials. That was why I decided to initiate meetings and discussions with the other villagers who did care about the village during the former village head's reign. I had to do that because no one else would do that, and we did not want the cycle to repeat itself during the next village election. I think my effort paid off because people were afraid to voice their concerns in the past and so they started coming to these Bible groups and social discussions which I initiated, and started to believe that together we could make a change in the village and build it so that everyone is involved for the well-being of the people in the village, including its marine and coastal resources.

The present village head associated his ascendancy with civil action for equity and justice. The formation of contending groups harnessed and stimulated social and political changes. Moreover, affiliations with contending groups became appealing to community members since alignment with these groups generated social and psychological rewards in the form of recognition, validation, and differentiation. Mr. LPR, a fisherman in Blongko, noted that "the present village head has a way of making people feel good so people want to get involved in village matters and in natural resource conservation." The contingent emergence and dissipation of multiple management regimes in Blongko created a space for power sharing among wider community user groups. The use of power by community members, along with the need to involve higher level authority, depended on the pace of change, perceived urgency, and timing.

## COLLECTIVE ACTION AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERY GOVERNANCE

To promote collective action and sustainable governance of the country's marine and fishery resources, the GOI, along with USAID, adopted three noteworthy measures. The first was the replication of foreign natural resource governance models across Indonesian regencies and provinces. The replication of marine sanctuaries, parks, and protected areas and ecotourism sites were among some of the GOI's preferred models. The second was the promulgation of nested institutions and regulations across various levels of government for consensual decision making of user rights. The third was the utilitarian commodification of local marine and fishery resources for improving social welfare and engendering political stability. These were perceived to promote inclusion, integration, and social cohesion across the landscape. In the case of Blongko, community user groups had diverse perspectives on how the local marine and fishery resources were to be managed. Promoting sustainable fishery governance entailed knowledge of multiple management practices and how they played out across time and space. Devolution, participation, and change could never occur outside its historical context, and socially viable and ecologically sustainable initiatives are neither arbitrary nor dictated. Social and political changes result from group dynamics as opposed to the evolution of social and political systems. In the case of Blongko, social and political changes occurred in a multidimensional setting as opposed to a mono-directional and linear setting. To promote the sustainable governance of Blongko's

marine and fishery resources, there was a need to look into the utilization of the numerous coastal resources in Blongko and understand how these influenced the various perspectives, which emerged for managing Blongko's marine and fishery resources. The former and present village heads, the community members, and the officials perceived the fishery resources and their functions differently.

In the case of Blongko, social dissonance led to gaps in participation and fragmentation in policy implementation. Nevertheless, the case study site also suggested platforms for alignment and convergence among resource users, which were triggered by a perceived common future and identity. These platforms, in turn, precipitated behavior for protecting collectivities and the local marine and fishery resources. In the case of Blongko, government officials were connected to the natural resources and other user groups through policy and program objectives; the fishermen and community members through collective needs and common identity and imagination; and the various groups across local villages through kinship ties, reciprocal engagements, and symbolic reciprocity. An individual's commitment to nature and the common good was very personal and precipitated by one's identity, imagination, and social constraints. Etzioni (2004) noted that the above platforms can lead to the rise of a community of communities. The concept of a community of communities lends itself to social, psychological, and political ties among resource users. In the case of Indonesia, these ties not only stimulated civic participation and social inclusion in the sustainable governance of the country's natural resources, they also precipitated social cohesion and political integration across the landscape.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation in common resource protection requires the creation of a new social space, which provides a sense of importance and identity to community user groups. At the heart of this is the need to engage resource users through identity, imagination, and social reciprocity through collective action. Active engagement leads to the creation of space for reflection and change, compelling groups and individuals to be more responsive in assuming responsibility for protecting the social and ecological landscape. The user groups' sense of importance and recognition motivate them to act for the collective good and perform extraordinary actions. Participation and inclusion in natural resource protection requires extending beyond utilitarianism and into the social, political, and psychological realms. Social engagements and group attachments to the social and ecological landscape extend beyond the utilitarian and policy measures found within intervention approaches. Findings suggest that planned changes within policy measures are most likely to result in highly restrictive environments, whereas social, psychological, and political engagements are more likely to result in new spaces for empowerment and incorporation. In the case of North Sulawesi, the proposal for action to secure active participation and group inclusion centered on the extent to which social and political changes were actively secured. In Blongko, changes occurred due to individual willingness and social structural forces, hence, there was the need to understand how structure and agency mutually interact. Therefore, in speaking of devolution for improved sustainability we are obliged to take up the matter of agency and structure within a context-dependent setting.

Intervention approaches for promoting participation and inclusion in natural resource governance requires venturing into the network of exchange and reciprocity within local settings. It is important to identify the various resource users, their network, and the symbolic resources, which help define their existence and roles in the community. It is important for government agencies to understand how struggle, resistance, and adaptation shape the constraints and enablers for participation in strategic and structural decision making. Second, promoting sustainable natural resource governance requires venturing into possible social and political spaces. These spaces are often “absent.” Nevertheless, when created and supported by social institutions, these novel spaces can alter the incentive-disincentive scheme and incorporate social and ecological agendas into everyday community life. The preconditions for creating new social and political spaces include forming new alliances, establishing

contending organizations, and stimulating rewards which appeal to the imagination and identity. In the light of the need to promote good governance and accountability, there is a need to institute sound intervention approaches. This requires flexibility and adaptive management capacity through negotiations and brokering. Negotiations and brokering are important for responding to dynamic and complex issues in natural resource governance. Through negotiations and brokering, communication is fostered and the alignment of various user groups are facilitated, capable of instilling a governance structure akin to Etzioni’s (2004) vision of a community of communities. This can encourage loyalty to higher levels of governance without undermining devolution and social institutions for natural resource protection within decentralized collectivities. Table 3 presents these issues and suggested recommendations for policy.

**Table 3. Issues and recommendations**

Issues	Recommendations
Misuse of authority and social exclusion	Promote social inclusion through collective governance, emergent social institutions, transparency, joint monitoring and enforcement, and indigenous laws and customs deeply rooted in social capital and reciprocity within local power relation contexts.
Appropriation of local identity	Form local identities, which promote alignments and convergence through communication, engagement, reciprocity, negotiations, and brokering.
Capture by commercial imperatives	Facilitate non-utilitarian forms of attachment to local coastal resources through identity, imagination, pride, social status, and acknowledging multiple management regimes of local coastal resources in which public ownership is assumed, private ownership is acknowledged, and collective governance is recognized.
Overemphasis on regulatory measures	Engender a novel social space, which can motivate user groups to care for the environment beyond regulatory measures (such as through socially benign and ecologically subservient patron-client relations); the instilment of social capital; and an understanding of a common future.

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