

The effect of dispute resolution on the presence and quality of social safety nets

Effect: Positive (Community-based mediation, especially when using respected locals and social ties, is seen as a positive and effective way for communities to handle conflicts and maintain order. This strengthens local support networks, which also act as safety nets against violence and disorder)

Confidence in study findings: Low (one study, low confidence)

Short summary

Indonesian men often perceive the police as ineffective and potentially corrupt, leading to widespread distrust. In contrast, community mediation is viewed positively and holds significant potential for conflict resolution, diplomatic relations, and peacebuilding in East Asia and Pacific countries. However, the success of mediation depends on several factors, including the perceived legitimacy and authority of the mediators, the willingness of all parties to engage in a participatory process, Trust in religious leaders and the head of the family, and the capacity of mediators and institutions to implement agreements and address systemic issues. Suspicion of mediation interventions and other measures that are tied to the authority of the state means that the promise of service-oriented policing reforms may not be effectively implemented.

Long summary

The intervention

This intervention represents a culturally ingrained, community-level system for resolving disputes, primarily through mediation. It relies on the principles of deliberation (*musyawarah*) and the utilization of existing social bonds (*secara keluarga*). Conducted by trusted local figures like the head man and religious leaders, this approach is widely favored over external interventions like policing, underscoring its importance as an internally managed mechanism for addressing conflict and maintaining order within Indonesian communities

How is the intervention expected to work

The specific interventions employed depend on the context of the conflict, the nature of the parties involved, and the skills and resources of the mediators. However, the overarching goal of these interventions is to shift the dynamics of the conflict from confrontation to collaboration, facilitate dialogue and agreement-building, and promote sustainable solutions that address the needs and interests of all stakeholders. For instance, the mediators could provide training on conflict management, negotiation, and communication skills. This empowers parties to address future conflicts constructively (p.135).

The evidence base

There is one qualitative study assessing the effect of **Dispute resolution on the presence and quality of social safety nets**. The included study is by A. Demartoto, P. Nilan, A. Broom, & J. Germov (2014). *Indonesian men's contrasting perceptions of how to deal with local violence. Asian Journal of Criminology, 9, 125-142*. All references are from this study.

The evidence

- 1) The findings state a strong preference for community-based conflict resolution, particularly mediation utilizing trusted local figures and culturally rooted methods like

"family way" or musyawarah, over police intervention. This approach is deeply embedded in Indonesian indigenous culture and tradition, a tradition of deliberation and consultation aimed at reaching consensus and considered a form of restorative justice. When a local crime or event occurs, it often comes to the attention of respected community figures such as the head man (village leader). These community-driven methods frequently prioritize private resolution, with the "family way" or secara keluarga being a commonly mentioned and preferred strategy, even for violent matters, as it leverages existing community and family ties to restore social harmony (p.130-134). The perceived quality of these mechanisms for dispute resolution is overall reported as positive.

- 2) They are seen as adept at resolving local issues by drawing upon religious resources and using their symbolic influence to de-escalate violence. While the headman also plays a role in calming tensions and reconciling parties, the effectiveness of their interventions has shown varied outcomes (p.136). The perceived effectiveness and quality of mediation specifically led by the head man appear to be more inconsistent according to the interviewees (p.135-136). These findings suggest that while the community structures for dispute resolution are present, their perceived effectiveness (or "quality" as a safety net) can vary depending on the specific method or mediator involved.
- 3) Consistent effectiveness of community-based dispute resolution as a "safety net" are hampered by the variable success and trust issues associated with the Head Man's role, the limited formal authority of the community mechanisms compared to state power, concerns about mediators having vested interests, and the potential for powerful groups to ignore the mediation process. The authors state that there isn't a "universal endorsement of it in practice as a means of dealing with local violence" (p.138)
- 4) Despite peace-making efforts by religious leaders, powerful local gangs can easily disregard these attempts. This reveals a significant limitation, ie, community mediation may not be effective against well-established or influential groups who can choose to ignore its outcomes, hindering its ability to act as a consistent safety net against violence.

Confidence assessment

Overall confidence: Low Confidence Qualitative Study (It is unclear whether the study uses an established small n approach; theoretical framework is not presented; no triangulation done; sources of potential data bias are not discussed)