Gender Analysis of Communal Conflicts in Indonesia

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Abstract

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Indonesia has seen communal conflicts occur in its regions since the Reform Era. In conflicts, women are regarded as vulnerable groups. Women's experience of conflict is unique and different from men. This study aimed to: 1) Identify the impacts of violent conflicts in Indonesia for the women who experience the conflict episodes; 2) Analyse the experience of women in facing violent conflict situations in Indonesia; and 3) Investigate the role of women in managing violent conflicts in Indonesia. The agency model in gender and development analysis is used to address the research aims. The results are that communal conflicts in Indonesia has several impacts for women in terms of social reproduction, livelihoods and participation in society. These impacts and experiences are related to the 5 expressions of women's agency. Women can actively participate in the three phases of conflict so that they can have a role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding process, as well as rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction post conflict by participating both in formal level (politics) or informal levels personally or in women's organizations. The Presidential Decree (Perpres) No. 18 Year 2014 as a result of the collective agency of women experiencing conflict is to be celebrated. But the real challenge is how to implement the Perpres in real-world setting in communal conflicts in Indonesia so that the negative impacts of conflict can be handled towards programs of conflict prevention, conflict management and peace process that is gender based which ensure equality and facilitate women's empowerment.

Keywords: gender analysis, communal conflict, agency, women
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Introduction

In all parts of the world, violent conflicts continue to occur. With globalization and modernization, the world becomes smaller, man becomes more aware of their diversities. On the other hand, the effects of globalization and the awareness of those who are 'different' as well as the modernization process create more potential for conflict that can happen on many levels either locally in one community to one state and between states internationally.

Violent conflict affects men and women differently. Because most men go to war, men are more likely to suffer violence, get hurt and even killed. Women are also suffering from conflicts caused by rape and systematic sexual violence, forced displacement and those seeking refuge are mostly women, loss of livelihoods and loss of access to essential basic services such as socioeconomic, health and education services.

In conflict or war, women are faced with several conditions that make them vulnerable, such as:

– Special reproduction conditions that make women need a place to stay that is safe and protected from those who have bad intentions like conduct of sexual harassers - it is difficult to obtain in conflict situations.
– Resources become threatened or limited, so the work of caring for families and households including caring for children is difficult.
– The division of domestic labor can be compromised with men who have lost their livelihoods due to conflict, or men who go to war or go into conflict and become victims, so women have to bear the burden of the family without the male head of the family.
– With uncertain conditions, men can become frustrated and lash out to women and thus vulnerable to victims of domestic violence both physically, verbally and psychologically. (Poerwandari 2004)

GBV *(Gender Based Violence)* is a phenomenon that frequently occurs in the conflict. Rape and violence against women is a very common feature of conflict. Even rape and sexual abuse are systematically used as a strategy (Hubeis 2010). Sexual violence during conflict is in the form of rape, forced marriages, mutilation and enslavement, forced pregnancy and sterilization that are used as a weapon of war and domination over women. The impact of this is shared by families and communities, in the form of economic and psycho-social losses. Sexual violence also fosters ethnic, religious and political conflict. Many women are forced to live in insecurity, and often there are no services that can cope with the physical and psychological trauma that they must endure (Madre and the Center for Women's Global Leadership 2014).

On the other hand, involving women's participation in the conflict management process can have a positive effect. Regardless of negative impact conflict against women, it can also empower women, take them on public life where they are involved in activities that were previously only available to men (HD Center, 2010). In families, the traditional role of women makes them able to shape family involvement, social politics and citizenship (Fink et al, 2013). That is, taking into account the aspect and voice of women can empower them to mobilize families and ultimately communities to transform conflict that results in a collaborative resolution that benefits all parties.

Gender is an important dimension of the peace process. Because conflict itself is a gendered activity, in the sense that division of labor depends on the gender, women and men have different access to resources (including power and decision-making) in the conflict, and men and women have different experiences about the conflict.

This is internationally recognized in the Beijing Declaration as a result of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Department of Women and Gender Studies Makerere University 2005). Also strengthened by the release of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000. This resolution reaffirms the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security (UNOSAGI 2014). Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase women's participation and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peacekeeping and security efforts. It also called on all parties to the conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict (UNOSAGI 2014). The issuance of this resolution indicates that the international community formally recognized the specific security threats and different facing women and girls in armed conflict and humanitarian crisis, and acknowledges the relationship is closely related to peace and equality between men and women. With this Resolution, for the first time in history, threats to individuals, especially women, pose a threat to international peace and security. Since then, non-traditional security threats such as sexual violence in armed conflict, human trafficking and the vulnerability of women and children in humanitarian crises, have become important in international security and international law, as demonstrated by the subsequent UN Resolution of Resolution 1820 (2008)), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010). These resolutions are interrelated, housed within Resolution 1325, all of which are considered as *"Agenda for Women, Peace and Security"* (Dharmapuri 2012).

Although in general people face the consequences of violent conflict, women are particularly affected because of their status in society and because of their gender. Understanding the gender dimension of violent conflict is crucial in understanding the general conflict situation.

Although efforts have been done to resolve the violent conflicts, by governments, religious institutions, community organizations, international organizations and even individuals, in reality women's participation in the process of conflict resolution is rarely discussed. Therefore, this research tries to address three questions: 1) How do conflicts impact women, 2) What are the roles and capacities of women when involved in the peace process, and 3) Are the mechanisms of conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction gender-sensitive?

It is hoped that this research is useful in understanding the aspect of women in conflicts in Indonesia to enrich scholarship in the gender dimensions of conflict particularly in Indonesia to create conflict resolution processes that address gender and women's dimensions in order to create collaborative and beneficial solutions for all parties.

Methods

This research used qualitative methodology using desk study technique by analyzing secondary data sources. In data analysis, we employed the gender analysis using agency theory. Gender analysis is a tool and technique to determine the gender issues by knowing their gender disparity. With gender analysis it is expected that gender gaps can be identified and analyzed to that causes can be found and solutions can be formulated. Gender analysis is very important because with gender analysis expected problems gender can be overcome or reduced so that the realization of programs and policies are gender responsive. The benefits of gender analysis are able to gain insight into understanding a gender gap in the region on many fronts, using both quantitative and qualitative analysis; through appropriate gender analysis, it is expected to provide an overview or even a detailed situation objectively and in accordance with the existing truth and can be understood universally by various parties, also gender analysis can find the root cause of the issue of gender inequalities and at the same time find the right target solution according to the level of the problem (Puspitawati 2012).

Agency Theory

The agency model is one of the gender analysis models used to examine gender issues based on agency concepts. Agency is a concept generally defined as the capacity to act or cause a change. A person or something that acts or causes a change is called an agent.

Hewson (2010) identifies three main types of agencies: 1) *Individual agency:* this is the most fundamental form of agency made up of individuals acting both in the micro scale (within the private sphere or in the local sphere in front of several people) or a macro scale (in public activity); 2) *Proxy agency:* the agent acting on behalf of (on behalf of) another agent called a proxy. Examples of *proxy agents* are employees acting on behalf of an employer, manager acting on behalf of the owner of the company, or an official acting on behalf of the government. Although nominally acting on behalf of the principal, *the proxy agents* can also act on their own behalf because of differences of interest and mismatch of information between *principal* and *agent;* 3) *Collective agency:* when individuals collaborate they created a collective entity, at one time this entity is acting in effect, they become collective agencies. Examples of *collective agency* are companies, the state, social class and social movements. The more tenuous a collectivity the more difficult it is to attribute the agency, therefore the level of coherence is necessary in order to shape intentions, make decisions, and act.

The agency model in gender analysis in development

In gender and development, agencies are still concerned with the capacity to act and make choices that lead to change. Evans and Strauss (2010) view agencies as the capacity of a person to make decisions

concerning a major aspect of their life that is not wholly limited by and in some cases based on the social, economic and family circumstances of that person. While the World Bank (World Bank 2012) in the *World Development Report 2012,* which makes the agency of women as key factors in achieving gender equality in development, see the agency as:

> "an individual's (or group's) ability to make effective choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. Agency can be understood as the process through which women and men use their endowments and take advantage of economic opportunities to achieve desired outcomes. Thus, agency is key to understanding how gender outcomes emerge and why they are equal or unequal." (World Bank 2012: 150, emphasis added)

The problem that hinders development is the lack or absence of agency from women, where men are considered to have more agencies than women. The assumption is that by increasing women's agency it will achieve gender equality and other expected development outcomes.

World Bank (2012: 150) identifies five expected results in achieving gender equality in development known as *"five expressions of women's agency"*, as follows:
1. **Control over resources,** with regard to women's ability to access resources and markets, to acquire and control of income and ability to possess, use and dispose of material assets such as land
2. **Freedom from the risk of violence,** as measured by the prevalence of domestic violence and other forms of violence such as sexual, physical or emotional violence.
3. **Ability to move freely,** increased mobility can empower women and their welfare as well as their own families, for example, provide access to education and health. This freedom to move is measured by the freedom of women to determine their movement and their ability to move beyond their home.
4. **Decision making over family formation,** related to the ability of women to have a voice in shaping the family as their ability to determine when to marry and to whom, when and how many children to have, the freedom to decide contraception, and when to leave the marriage.
5. **The ability to have a voice and influence policy,** as measured by participation and representation in the formal political sphere and engagement and collective action and association.

In relation to women's empowerment, Pettit (2012) criticizes most empowerment approaches that focus too much on the agency i.e. how to improve individual capacity, but ignores making changes to the structure, norms and networks of social constraints that empower or limit agency. According to Pettit, empowerment would be most effective if it departs from the concept and meaning of power, which takes into account the point of intersection between the agency and the structure and shape of the positive and negative of the agency. One is, using a gender analysis framework such as the Kabeer model (1999) comprising resource-agency-achievement. Kabeer (1999) sees agencies as one dimension of empowerment, in which agencies – both individual and collective – act as processes of empowerment (Figure 1).

resources   agency   achievements
(pre-conditions)   (process)   (outcomes)

According to Kabeer (2003), although this agency is central to social transformation and the changes resulting from the achievement of development goals can contribute to enhancing women's agency, but to produce structural transformative change, this agency must be collectively undertaken by individuals. This is in line with the findings of World Bank (2012) which states that the collective voice of women can improve the agency and implicate for better gender equality.

In this research on gender in communal conflict in Indonesia, the data will be analyzed using the agency model or more precisely 5 expressions of women's agency presented by World Bank (2012) and also Kabeer's model of empowerment (1999).

Results and Discussion

Women's experiences in conflict can be analyzed on three levels. The first is the personal realm where they experience conflict as individuals, the private sphere in which they experience conflict as mothers, wives or daughters, and public sphere where they meet with social structures that limit their participation in the decision-making process and the peace process. Indonesian women in conflicts are victims of violence and have a significant impact on social reproduction, livelihoods, and participation in society. The impact and experience of women in communal conflicts in Indonesia is described using 5 agency expressions from World Bank (2012) as follows.

Women's access to and control over resources; freedom of movement; freedom from the risk of violence; decision-making over family formation; and having voice in society and influencing policy.

Access to and control over resources

Under normal circumstances, women's access and control over resources can be limited, and this becomes even more difficult in conflict situations. In conflict situations, their livelihoods are threatened because they have difficulty accessing and controlling their own assets because they are unsafe, or even occupied by armed parties that can threaten their safety. Important documents relating to the ownership of these assets may also be damaged, lost, or forcibly taken during the conflict. Not only access to resources and livelihoods, access to basic services such as health, education, and other socio-economic services is also threatened. During the conflict in Aceh, for example, many men left their families (Hubeis 2010). As a result, the women were widowed. This may impact on the inheritance of land and other property rights of women.

Freedom from the risk of violence

In conflict, the prevalence of violence against women increases. This trend also occurs in communal conflicts in Indonesia. In Aceh, women are sexually abused by security forces as a tactic of spreading terror in their communities (Hubeis 2010). In Poso, women were used as a political tool of Poso conflict, both for revenge, building public sentiment, spurring conflict escalation, and also to terrorize opponent communities (Komnas Perempuan 2009). This is done with the forcibly capturing and stripping women, as well as rape, forced abortion, sexual exploitation and the exploitation of women workers conducted by the armed forces (Komnas Perempuan 2009). In the May 1998 riots in Jakarta, women were also victims of violence. Rape of women were reported, especially ethnic Chinese women but also indigenous (*pribumi*) women from low socioeconomic level (Eifert 2012).

In other areas, violence against women in communal conflict also show similar patterns. Sadly, violence against women in this conflict follows a continuum. According to the World Bank (2005) analysis, women face "gender-based violence continuity", often rooted in pre-conflict conditions, aggravated during the conflict, and continue in the post-conflict phase. Thus, this gender-based violence does not arise solely because of conflict or crisis conditions but is directly related to violence that occurs in women in times of peace.

The situation in Indonesia is exacerbated by the fact that violence experienced by women is often considered taboo and therefore inappropriate to be discussed. This complicates the handling of violence because victims often do not want to confess, and even when telling their experiences are considered as inappropriate women or considered to be a disgrace of their family or community (Poerwandari 2004).

Freedom of movement

Women's mobility and women's freedom to move in conflicts depend on several factors such as the conflict stage, whether women experience displacement from their home region, whether they are directly or indirectly affected, to the culture of the conflict area. Forcible transfer increases mobility but is often not in a positive way. Frequently, fear of violence is a major factor limiting women's freedom of movement.

Women's mobility is limited because the traditional values that assume by limiting women's movement will protect them from harm. For example, in Aceh, women are afraid to go to the fields because they feel insecure, threatening their welfare and families for losing their livelihoods from farming (Hubeis 2010).

This limitation of movement also affects girls. In conflict, girls often lose the right to education. This can happen because of several factors:
- The occurrence of conflicts leads to insecurity so women are forbidden to go to school for fear of violence outside the home
- Conflicts can damage access to the school physically, the building, its transportation access, or the faculty's resources
- In the case of girls having to evacuate due to the outbreak of conflict, often in refugee camps there is not sufficient educational facilities available, so girls are often forfeited in school as boys are given preference
- When the conflict threatens the livelihood of families, women are expelled from school and more at home, while schools are preferred for boys assuming women can live from their husbands later in marriage while men need education in order to earn a living

<div align="right">(UNESCO 2006; McDevitt 2009)</div>

Decision-making over family formation

In conflict situations, the order or structure of the family can become chaotic. Women become affected because they are the heart of the family, in the sense that family welfare and security are often dependent on women. When the family order is threatened, for example with the loss of the head of the family or other family members, women become widows and switch roles into the breadwinner, as in the case of DOM in Aceh (Hubeis 2010). Under these circumstances, they are vulnerable to becoming victims of violence, or entering into forced marriages, or being forced to remarry and even into polygamist marriages to ensure their own well-being and the well-being of their children. There are even cases of women selling themselves or engaging in prostitution during the conflict in order to save themselves and their family (Poerwandari 2004).

In conflict situations or during evacuation, access to reproductive health services becomes more difficult or even absent. So women have no control over reproductive health or family planning. This will affect women, especially pregnant women and nursing mothers, which also affects their fetus and infant (McDevitt 2009; Haeri and Puechguirbal 2010). Sexual violence can also threaten women's freedom in determining family formation. Because the impact of sexual violence is the birth of children outside marriage due to rape experienced by women, both young and old. Young women or girls in a family can be impregnated and give birth to babies that cause new problems in the family.

Having voice in society and influencing policy

Women's voices in communal conflicts in Indonesia are often unheard, their participation in formal political level is also low, making it difficult to produce policies that respect women's rights as human rights in the conflict in Indonesia. However, there is a glimmer of hope that the synergy between the women's movement, civil society organizations and the government advocating women's voice in the conflict successfully put women's issues in conflict with the enactment of Presidential Decree No. 18 of 2014 dated March 7, 2014 on the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social conflict. At the Presidential Regulation, the government recognizes the vulnerability of women to

violence in times of social conflict and that women are not yet optimally receiving protection and empowerment. The Presidential Decree aims to protect, respect and guarantee the human rights of women in conflict management. In the Presidential Decree, the Government provides protection for women and children by taking preventive measures to avoid women and children from the impact of conflict situations.

In social conflict, the government has an obligation to empower women and children. Child empowerment includes efforts to improve children's understanding of non-violence by implementing peace education and gender justice. While the empowerment of women include improving survival by providing guidance and mentoring for spiritual mental reinforcement, increasing economic effort and providing easy access to information and marketing production, and lastly increasing the participation of women as mediators of peace building and negotiations by involving women in training as mediators and peace negotiators, as well as the initiators of mediators and negotiators in the peace-building process. The Perpres also invites communities to participate in providing protection and empowerment of women and children in conflict that can be done in the prevention, service and empowerment of women and children in conflict. (Presidential Decree No. 18/2014)

Women's Roles in the Communal Conflict Management in Indonesia

Women can play an active role in the peace process in three phases of conflict (before, during, and after). The following describes the role of women in the peace process in each phase of the conflict, both before, during and after the conflict.

In the pre-conflict phase, latent conflicts and structural causes of conflict existed earlier such as oppression, discrimination, human rights abuses, inequality of land and resource access and lack of security. Women can help the community and government in doing preventive efforts such as:
  - Capacity building and promotion activities undertaken by women's organizations by establishing a peace network
  - Women's empowerment undertaken to avoid conflicts thereby reducing discrimination and other preventive efforts through peace awareness-raising campaigns
  - Through individual women's networks and contacts as well as women's own private observations, women can be important informants that can provide early warning of potential conflicts that may occur
  - Conduct training and provide access to information and knowledge, its issues on human rights and women's rights, women can play an important role in politics and local government so that they have a share in conflict prevention
  - Adequate economic status of women will enable women to free their families from poverty, thereby minimizing the threat of radicalization

At the outbreak of the conflict, the threat of increased violence leads to fear, insecurity, destruction of livelihood, loss of family members and death. Women's active role in conflict becomes more challenging:
  - Women bear the responsibility and pressure of uniting families in times of conflict. As female heads of households, they often find it difficult to survive in patriarchal societies like in Indonesia.
  - Women's organizations or women's collective action may serve as negotiators and mediators between the conflicting parties in order to create a dialogue between the conflicting parties.
  - In refugee camps women have to deal with other difficulties such as uneven distribution of consumption, special needs of women (health and nutrition needs of pregnant and lactating women, other women's reproductive needs such as sanitary napkins, safe and closed toilets), as well as threats of harassment from men both fellow refugees and officers.
  - Training and awareness raising or consciousness-raising in the field of peace-building and human rights awareness should be carried out in evacuation, raising awareness of women's rights and making women able to fight for their rights in conflict situations.

In the post-conflict phase women have an important role especially in the peace process and rehabilitation and reintegration processes. This role is parallel to the role during the earlier conflict phase especially pre-conflict because the peace process and conflict prevention are crucial both before and after the conflict. Some of the things women can do post-conflict are:

- Women can play a significant role in decision-making by participating fully in conflict resolution and the peace process. Women can also act as negotiators and mediators.
- Taking into account the needs of women in the process of demobilization and reconstruction, women's groups and networks can play an important role in creating sustainable peace
- Women's support for women in providing psychosocial health services; trauma management and the reintegration of widowed women can prevent social and economic isolation.
- In resettlement of refugees, women can be given support in choosing safe and comfortable accommodation for themselves and their families.
- In reconstructing the justice and administrative system, women can help formulate laws and regulations that reflect gender equality in society and equitable access to economic resources (for example land and property rights).
- Compensation for the suffering endured due to experiencing (sexual) violence must be taken into account. Particular attention is paid to the victims of rape and sexual slavery. Community stigmatization of them can threaten the success of their reintegration.

The above breakdown of women's roles in the peace and conflict management process also applies to cases of communal conflict in Indonesia. As discussed earlier, women have the potential to be positive agents in the conflict management process. In communal conflicts in Indonesia such as the conflict in Ambon and in Aceh, women can reduce the escalation of violence (HD Center 2010). They have the advantage of being perceived as weak, so they can easily enter the 'opposite' without hostility and can pave the way to peace (HD Center 2010).

HD Center (2010) also noted that in Papuan culture, women actually become symbols or objects in the peace process. The role of women as a symbol of custom peace puts them in a strategic position to act as mediators in conflict and to assist in reconciliation. They often act to prevent the outbreak of violence. They do this by mediating between the warring parties in, for example for conflicts between different ethnic groups, between local communities and logging and mining companies, and conflicts between Papuans and the security forces. In the case of certain conflicts between tribal groups, women play a role in peace by seeking and maintaining communication with women from other ethnic groups. This is mostly done informally in the marketplace, at school or in church. Papuan women are active in holding religious or adult meetings every week where issues including armed conflict and other conflicts such as sexual violence, imbalances of natural resource sharing or unfair access to economic resources, are discussed. Agreements are endeavored at meetings and decisions are made to approach key figures or stakeholders to discuss issues concerning them. This participatory approach of conflict is considered ideal because it will result in complete and comprehensive conflict resolution and create collaborative solutions that benefit all parties (Dharmawan 2006; Littlejohn and Domenici 2001).

However, in reality the process of communal conflict management in Indonesia rarely involves women at the formal or political level. The case in Ambon revealed by HD Center (2010) sees that women play a role in the resolution of the conflict at the grassroots level, but at the formal level – marked by the Malino II Treaty – there are only three women involved. HD Center (2010: 10) even further states that "the peace agreement in Indonesia has been consistently insensitive on gender issues".

The Government of Indonesia sought to improve this condition by issuing Presidential Decree Number 18 of 2014 dated March 7, 2014 on Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social Conflicts whose contents and essences have been discussed in the previous section. This Presidential Decree is a form of successful enhancement of collective women's agency resulting in a structural transformation that facilitates women empowerment, in accordance with the Kabeer model (1999, 2003) where the agency is a process of achieving women's empowerment (Figure 2).

The challenge ahead is how this Perpres can be implemented in real terms in the real case of social conflict that affects women. If implemented successfully, the women's agency in Indonesia in conflict

will increase in 5 areas that have been previously identified by World Bank (2012), resulting in gender equality and empowerment.
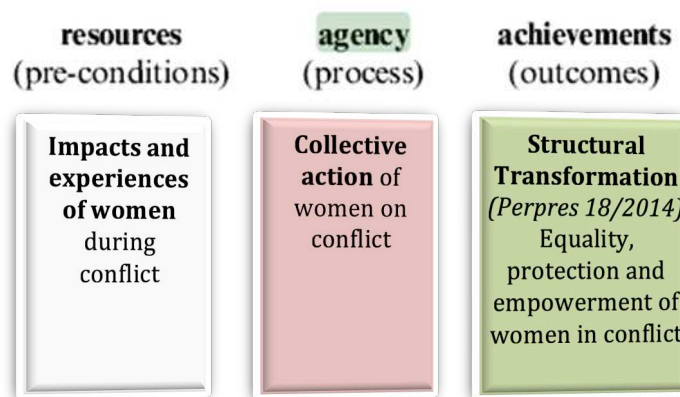

Figure 2. Application of Kabeer's (1999) model of empowerment in gender analysis in conflict in Indonesia

Conclusion

Communal violence in Indonesia has an impact on women in various areas such as Aceh, Ambon, Poso and Papua, among others in terms of social reproduction, livelihoods, and participation in society. The impact and experiences of women in the communal conflict in Indonesia related to the 5 expression female agency in the form of women's access to and control over resources; freedom of movement; freedom from the risk of violence; decision-making over family formation; and having voice in society and influencing policy.

Women can play an active role in the three phases of the conflict, namely before, during and after the conflict so that it can contribute to conflict prevention, peace process (negotiation and mediation), as well as rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction by participating both in the level of formal (political) and informally in the personal realm as well as in women's organizations.

Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2014 dated March 7, 2014 on the Protection and Empowerment of Women and Children in Social Conflict is the result of a structural transformation that originated from women's collective agency based on the experience and impact felt in facing communal conflict in Indonesia. The challenge of the future is how to oversee the regulation to be implemented in real world setting in the case of communal conflict in Indonesia so that the negative impact of the conflict can be resolved leading conflict prevention, conflict management and peace-building process that guarantees gender equality and facilitate the empowerment of women.

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