



COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP OF URBAN MARGINAL COMMUNITIES WITH THE GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

This paper offers an elaboration to develop a communication strategy in empowering marginalized urban communities for creating a harmonious society in relation to the government. Besides, this paper outlines the influence factors related. Hence, marginal urban community in Ledok Timoho and Ledok Tukangan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, are appropriate representations for empowerment communication applications that have different relations with the government. In this case, the Ledok Tukangan community is a portrayal of an urban marginal community who has a harmonious relationship with the government. Contrarily, Ledok Timoho community is an urban marginal community's depiction who has more independent from government intervention. The research design is a case study using the strategic planning of communication theory as an analytical framework. The results revealed that the relationship with the government influenced the process and governance of community empowerment. The agents involved and the culture of the community are significant factors. This study also found a new government-community relationship model in community empowerment domain as theoretical implications arose. Furthermore, the practical implications emerged for government and non-government agents involved in the process of community empowerment communication.

Keywords: *Community Empowerment Communication, Government-Community Relations Model, Urban Marginal Communities*

INTRODUCTION

The growth of organic villages is inevitable in the lives of marginal urban communities (Kwartnik-Pruc & Droj, 2023). This is supported by the existence of the city which is seen as the foundation of hope for rural communities to improve their standard of living (Ying & Wu, 2023). A person's lack of skills and low level of education makes them invincible and choose to live in places that are both administratively and geographically vulnerable (Anthopoulou, et.al, 2019).

This condition is also seen in the Yogyakarta City area. Urbanization in cities that is not accompanied by adequate levels of education and skills triggers the emergence of organic villages in areas that are administratively or geographically vulnerable. Ledok Timoho and Ledok Tukangan villages are the two representations of the area. The composition of the community in the two villages triggers the emergence of institutions that seek to empower the community to be able to be independent. However, community empowerment efforts cannot be separated from the process of delivering messages from one party to another with certain goals and feedback.

However, the different power relations in the two villages can make the communication process for community empowerment that occurs also different. This research aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of community

empowerment communication in organic villages with different relations with the government. The position of the two villages, both geographically vulnerable, and the different relations they have, makes the communication process for community empowerment there not only unique, rare, and interesting, but also important to be studied. Through the findings of this study, we can map out more appropriate strategic planning for phenomena with similar characteristics.

Communication is a human process of changing information, expressing thoughts and feelings verbally and non-verbally to spread messages (Arifudin, et al, 2013; Widdersheim and Koizumi, 2017). It is a kind of interaction order where the interaction is made-and re-made (Goffman, 2022). In this case, communication can motivate the community to continue and promote the social program. There must be communication in building community awareness, needs assessment, prioritizing needs, community empowerment planning, empowerment arrangements, monitoring, and project evaluation.

Strategic planning in a community empowerment program cannot be separated from a series of strategic plans that involve all communication components. Therefore, the systems approach in the context of communication is appropriate because the systems perspective sees communication in the community empowerment process as an important community binder for the related community growth efforts (Messner, 1964). In particular, this study elaborated strategic planning with a systems approach (general system model) which consists of problem analysis, verification research, management by objectives, message, and media planning, work analysis, budget planning, and evaluation (Simmons, 1990).

Referring Lasswell's communication model which describes the communication process as "who says what with what channel to whom with what effect", it appears that the communication components consist of 5 basic components, namely "who" (communicator), "says what" (message) "with what channel" (media), "to whom" (communicant or audience) and "with what effect" (impact or result of communication) (Widdersheim and Koizumi, 2017, Syafrizaldi, et.al, 2022). From this process, it can be observed that the design of a strategic communication plan cannot only dwell on one component.

In addition, community empowerment actors are required to be creative in dealing with power imbalances encountered in the field (Wiber, 2009). Here, the model was taken since the model could due to it to portray something (Fauziah, 2021).

Moreover, Amanda's (2017) study on the process of rejecting the system built by a university in a community shows that interaction and relationships between community members give rise to a project risk perspective appearing in the community. In this point, there is a communication factor that can consist of formal and informal communication networks.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the case study method because it focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality, the relationship that cannot be separated between the researcher and the subject under study, and the pressure of the situation during data collection. In addition, researchers try to compare the cases studied.

Data collection techniques carried out by documentation, interviews, and

observations at year 2018. The case study analysis strategy used in this research is relying on theoretical propositions (depending on theoretical propositions). In particular, the technique used is pattern matching.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community Empowerment Communication in Ledok Timoho Village

Administratively, one of the Ledok Timoho villages (kampung) that became the location of this research is located in RT 50 RW 05, Muja Muju Village, Umbulharjo District, Yogyakarta. Kampung Ledok Timoho was founded in 1999 as a result of several evictions that occurred at that time. Most of its citizens come from the evicted area behind Yogyakarta State University.

After living together for a long time, the residents declared the TAABAH (Understream Advocacy Team) whose members came from the residents of the village as well as several people who were relatives of one of the residents. This community mentions that they are an institution that fights for the right to life (self-identity, decent life, health, and education) with the vision "Together with the City's Poor Build and Struggle Towards Prosperity and a Dignified Life". TABAAH also has an ORSOS operational permit from the DIY (Special Region of Yogyakarta) social service. Some of its activities include forming an advocacy team, mutual cooperation, and improving the health, economy, and education of the residents of Ledok Timoho village.

Community empowerment in Ledok Timoho is an effort to improve the living standards of the urban poor community in that location. The process is carried out by establishing a system to preserve the efforts to increase the standard of living from time to time. The activity started with the monthly community meeting which has been going on for 20 years. Gradually, the meeting was tied up with the establishment of a treasury to accommodate contributions from local residents. This money from the cash is used to finance developments as well as religious activities oriented towards improving the welfare of the Ledok Timoho community in mutual cooperation. Among the results of these developments are the prayer room and the Gajah Wong School.

Community empowerment in Ledok Timoho is driven by TAABAH. It is the name of a community-based institution. The founders came from "street" people, especially buskers and scavengers. Community empowerment activities often receive assistance from students. However, the assistance is temporary in nature and is not permanent.

One of TAABAH founders, A, said that they emphasized the importance of the social system being built rather than the people who are members of the community. They believe that people can come and go, be born, move or die. Therefore, community empowerment needs to emphasize the formation of a good social system, so that whoever is involved in it, will still give good social order.

The most important party that is expected to participate in empowerment is the government. In addition, there are religious community organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. There is no specific period to determine success. The goals are not written, but the community understands and participates. TAABAH does not segment detailly the audience at empowering activities.



Government Relations

The citizens and the government are both in a dilemmatic position. The residents of Ledok Timoho feel discriminated against to get the freedom to access formal identities which are the gate of health, educational, economic, and social facilities from the government. In fact, even though they have lived in the village on the banks of the Gajah Wong river for about 20 years, this does not mean that they get ID cards as residents of Yogyakarta. The absence of an ID card makes the local government unable to provide access to health, economic and social assistance to residents. It also complicates the registration process for residents who wish to receive formal education at the formal education level.

The difference in the government's attitude between the residents of Ledok Timoho who are on the banks of the Gajah Wong river, and those on the banks of the river can be seen clearly. The government here is a state apparatus at the RW, kelurahan, sub-district, and city government levels. Differences in government attitudes are influenced by several things, namely:

- a. Land status: the status of the land in Ledok Timoho is unclear, while the land status of the people living above is clear and legal.
- b. Residential status: the resident status of the people living above is clear as citizens of Mujamuju so they will definitely get what they are entitled to as citizens. Meanwhile, the status of residents living in Ledok Timoho has not yet received recognition from the government

TAABAH has tried to apply for legalization but has not produced significant results. A said that the government did not prohibit and also did not support the settlement of Ledok Timoho Village. The secretary of the Mujamuju sub-district admitted that he did not know about the possibility of legalizing Ledok Timoho's land for community members or the possibility of the displacement of residents who lived in the area along the riverbank. Moreover, he admitted that they had not done anything because there was no policy from "above" that came down on this matter. However, without a recognized administrative identity, it is not easy for the government to open the gates of economic and social assistance which often requires that administrative identity as one of the necessary conditions.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the relationship pattern between the internal actors of empowerment and the government in the context of community empowerment communication in Ledok Timoho Village is closer-stagnant. The indicator is the government's silence in responding to the sustainability of the community empowerment program in Ledok Timoho Village. The stagnation even continues even though the community empowerment program on the banks of the Gajah Wong river has reaped success and has received good publications in the mass media.

Community Empowerment Communication in Ledok Tukangan Village

Ledok Tukangan is located on the banks of the Code river with a total of 15 RTs which are shaded by 3 RWs. Several hectares of land along the river is inhabited by 250 families per RW. Even though the residential areas are very close together and crowded with household appliances outside the house, the government does not stop providing programs for its citizens every year. Programs received by residents are usually two to three times each year. Residents



are also often helped by programs from various agencies that carry out research and community empowerment. The majority of the population of Ledok Tukangan are traders who trade on the outskirts of the city of Yogyakarta.

In particular, the research in Ledok Tukangan Village was carried out in RW 1 which was named the Bright Gas village. The designation began with the existence of a gas base at the location which was upgraded to a cooperative until finally being introduced to the public as the first Bright Gas Village in Indonesia by Pertamina. The coronation was allegedly able to have a positive impact on the local economy.

Community empowerment began to be stuck out since 2014. The residents are able to develop independence through the administrative structure that has been formed. In addition to regularly holding community meetings to discuss village problems as well as evaluation and accountability reports for activities, the residents have also started their own empowerment programs through community contributions, namely "seliweran". It is money given by residents sincerely to the person in charge of activities outside of routine fees.

Interestingly, the main character who drives community empowerment in this research location is dominated by women, one of which is Atik. Having previously been busy with work outside the home, Atik resigned from her job in the catering sector in 2014 due to pregnancy with her first child. This triggered her to take part in several programs from the government as well as increase the frequency of time to gather with residents, especially mothers and teenagers. She is often trusted by residents as well as government officials to oversee several village activities. The teenagers also assisted to participate in useful activities instead of spending useless time on the streets.

The head of RW 1, B, who inaugurated at 2018 is an internal village figure who also plays an important role in mobilizing residents to be active in participating on empowering activities. She has a significant role in bridging communication between local residents and government officials such as the kelurahan, public health center to the Food Service who are supporting actors for community empowerment.

Besides, Muhammadiyah organizations, especially at the branch level, play a role in community empowerment. It carried out advocacy, provided facilities, funds, and training. The mosque built in the village is also part of the Muhammadiyah waqf.

In addition, there are the initiators of the Bright Gas village in RW 01 Ledok Tukangan in collaboration with Pertamina at 2017. According to B, the name "Kampung" in Bright Gas was one of the triggers for the program's suspended animation. This is because the term "village" in Ledok Tukangan includes three RWs, namely RW 01, RW 02 and RW 03.

Community empowerment carried out in Ledok Tukangan aims to improve the standard of living of the community, both in the economic and social fields. In the economic field, it could be seen in Asman Toga (Independent Care and Acupuncture and Family Medicinal Plants), maintaining residents' health through joint gymnastics to directing the actualization of residents' talents to participate in jathilan, ketoprak, and lion dance associations as well as organizing religious routine events.

All residents are the targets of the many community empowerment

programs carried out. However, B said that residents belonging to the elderly and those in the lower middle economic class were the priority targets. The background of the residents who now live in Ledok Tukangan tends to be homogeneous since they are the natives of Yogyakarta.

Government Relations

Community empowerment in Ledok Tukangan, especially in RW 01, has a significant level of sustainability because there are internal actors who accompany them personally, formally-administratively, and institutionally. Personally, the existence of actors who are natives of the community along with their initiative and awareness to assist residents is the main social capital for the sustainability of existing empowerment. Formally-administratively, the existence of the head of the RW is active in seizing opportunities, passionate and painstaking in inviting residents to participate in various empowerment programs, and has good relations with various government officials paved the way of existing community empowerment programs. Muhammadiyah also has a positive influence on the initiation of several empowerment programs.

The relationship between internal empowering actors and government officials is well established. This is indicated by the response of the village officials who look familiar and show a supportive attitude, even praise some of the ongoing community empowerment programs. This support is even shown through the provision of budgets and quick response assistance in emergency situations. The existence of residential residents on the banks of the Code River which is the Sultan Ground is also not a crucial problem. The government accept their existence and accommodate their rights as citizens.

The increasing achievements of the village such as winning the TOGA Competition even to the provincial level and other competitions that trigger the increase in positive publications in the mass media are thought to be one of the triggers for the increasing attention and support from the government. Thus, the relationship pattern between the internal actors of community empowerment communication and the government is closer-closer.

Factors Affecting Community Empowerment Communication

Based on the findings in the field, the following factors are suspected to be supporting factors for the sustainability of community empowerment programs in Ledok Timoho and Ledok Tukangan Villages.

a. The presence of internal actors

The position of community empowerment actors who come from internal villages are the main supporting points for success. Their sincerity and concern become a big social capital considering that the success of an empowerment program cannot always be achieved in a short time.

b. The existence of institutional actors

The institutional actors, such as the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama facilitates access for the fulfillment of facilitators to the budget for a community empowerment program. The participatory government, as seen in Ledok Tukangan, also bring a wider opportunity to residents to empowering themselves. This finding has a similarity to Gustafson and Hertting research (Gustafson and Hertting, 2017).

c. Established social system

People come, go, stay, or leave. Residential conditions in riverbank areas, which are prone to evictions, can trigger significant displacement of the residents. Without a well-established social system capable of bringing about a sense of "guyub" among fellow communities, the success of community empowerment programs will be more difficult to achieved.

d. The success of the community empowerment program

The success of community empowerment programs that have received positive publications in the mass media has become an effective trigger for harmonization of relations between local residents and the government. At least, although not proactive, the government officials also did not act defensively, such as issuing eviction policies and so on.

e. The homogeneous background of the residents

The homogeneous background of the residents, in terms of culture, is allegedly a supporting factor for harmonious relations with the government. In this case, the communication made by the residents of Ledok Tukangan as native residents with the Government has a more significant conformity with Yogyakarta customs in terms of speech and behavior.

Meanwhile, the following are alleged to be factors that hinder the sustainability of the existing community empowerment program.

a. Less proactive bureaucracy

Allowing access to their formal administrative identity to be blocked due to a less proactive bureaucracy, as happened in Ledok Timoho Village will not solve the dilemma of their vulnerable housing position. Sanfelici (2020) wrote that the primary sector truly needs policy initiative. Therefore, the government's proactiveness must be increased.

b. Residents' understanding of empowerment programs.

The community's lack of comprehensive understanding of the objectives and efforts of the ongoing community empowerment program affects the level of community participation. Even though they have a positive understanding of the community empowerment process, they are still hit by the time and energy factor. If this is added to the element of lack of understanding, the expected level of citizen participation will decrease.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings above, it can be concluded that the relationship pattern of community empowerment communication between internal empowering actors and government officials in Ledok Timoho Village is closer-stagnant. The government's response to silence the residents of Ledok Timoho Village even though the community empowerment program carried out by its internal actors has reaped success and positive publications in the mass media are the main indicators. However, the level of independence of local residents tends to improve.

The pattern of community empowerment communication relations between internal empowering actors and government officials in Ledok Tukangan Village tends to be in a closer-closer pattern. This is because local government officials have responded proactively to various community empowerment programs conducted. As a result, the level of independence of citizens is also



getting better.

Hence, several recommendations for community and government empowerment actors are formulated. Community empowerment actors, especially those from internal actors, should focus their main strength on the goals to be achieved, not only on the stakeholders involved. Reflecting on community empowerment in Ledok Timoho Village, although the government's response is considered stagnant, community empowerment efforts in the field still bear fruit.

The government should be proactive to the existence of community members and their various empowerment programs, no matter how vulnerable their conditions are. The dilemmatic condition of this marginal urban society should not be allowed to drag on and a solution is immediately sought by involving the relevant stakeholders.

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