

Scaling up model of social capital: Developing a model of empowerment for poor society in rural areas

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Abstract. Indonesian government has delivered various community development programs to alleviate poverty problems of rural communities. This is despite the fact that the numbers of people who live in poverty in this area is going to increase. This has given rise to a crucial question in how development programs should be distributed to rural community members. This article present empirical findings of research depicts a model or mechanism by which rural community members who have been involved in Posdaya (Pos Pemberdayaan Keluarga/ Family Empowerment Post) program success in achieving economic empowerment objective by employing their social capital. This study employs qualitative method with an approach of case study and multiple case design. It conducts the logic of ‘replica’, meaning that it would lead the analysed case to be used either for making predictions of similar results (literal logic) or for achieving different results (theoretical replica). The fundamental assumption of the study refers to the lack involvement or participation of the empowered community or social groups. The domination of top-down approach has allowed people to rely on external party. On the other hand, bottom-up approach has not been fully implemented due to the absence of strong social capital in the empowered society. As a consequence, there have been only parts of people controlling and enjoying the presented empowerment program. Social capital is not an existing or a given capital in society. Rather, social capital is a mere potential, and in order to shape and develop it some strategies or endeavours are required. Thus, the study attempts to find out a suitable model to arrange and progress the social capital in the implementation of social empowerment program. Additionally, the study will advance the scaling up model into a wider space with an expectation to create a powerful community.

1. Introduction

The empowerment program is a program with a purpose to improve the welfare and to reduce the poverty level of people in both rural and urban areas. The community empowerment program is inseparable from the attempt of a community to establish or shape social capital. Along with the previous-mentioned statements, Fukuyama argued that social capital holds a prominent role in economic development, human resources, social and economic matters, including the stability of democratic climate [1].

There have been a lot of discussions in several related studies on the concept of social capital in empowerment program [2]. However, those studies have been more dominantly conducted in local scale and most of them assumed that social capital is a given component and does not affect community’s collective behaviors.



The present study, accordingly, intends to reveal that social capital is a potential which requires efforts to build and maintain the existing social capital. In addition, the study attempts to uncover a model of social capital development that is applicable for national scale so it is able to support the community empowerment program initiated by the government.

The empowerment program in this case study is POSDAYA (Pos Pemberdayaan Keluarga – Family Empowerment's Post) program in Ngroto and Pandansari villages, Pujon District, Malang Regency. The selection of these two locations is used as a comparative strategy and as an embryo of family empowerment. POSDAYA of Ngroto village is chosen to be the subject of the study due to its well achievement in regency, province, and national levels.

Meanwhile, POSDAYA of Pandansari and Madiredo village are used as the subject of the study is under a consideration that it has a close relation with Ngroto area, so it will help the researchers to build an integrated empowerment model. Besides, the establishment of empowerment group in Pandansari village is different from that in Ngroto village that is shaped based on the same interests. The empowerment group in Pandansari village is formed by the same Rukun Tetangga (RT – neighborhood association).

According to the above-mentioned discussion, the problems of the study are as follows: 1) What is the attempt to develop social capital in community empowerment program through POSDAYA in Pujon District, Malang Regency? (2) How can the model of developing social capital be scaled up at the wider level in order to support the POSDAYA program in the scale of district?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Empowerment

Empowerment is giving power or authority to act. Priyono and Soenyono said that empowerment is an effort to push social change and possibilities for marginal people to have power and give bigger influences at social and political arenas [3]. Soenyono explained empowerment is collective action that has changing power relations between individual, group and social institution [4]. The basic assumption is every individual has been born with the power of ownership but the power levels between one individual and another are different. The individual power is influenced by various factor such as knowledge, capacity, status, wealth, gender, etc. Empowerment initiatives needs support from local government to enhance rural development [5].

The purposes of empowerment program are human development. Object of empowerment program should increase their capacity and skill due to be responsible for their self-development [6]. This principle underlines human as the main source and the final goal of empowerment program. Other principles of empowerment is participation. Participation is members community involvement to has capacity for self-decision making related with implementation of community empowerment program. Ife, 2013; Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006 described the main principle of participation is inclusion. Inclusion related with giving opportunity of every members to reveal their problems and to use their own knowledge to find solution [7].

2.2. Social capital

Social capital offeres alternative community concept. This perspective rejects every form of structural system of authority include the role of government. Social capital emphasizes the role of community for self-help through voluntary principles, cooperation, and mutual help among members [8].

Putnam explained social capital as social relationship's role such as trust, norm and social network that has possibilities to produce community [9]. Furthermore, community can be built through voluntary action and cooperation between members. Fukuyama emphasized the important of norm that has informal characteristic to arrange social relation in community [10]. Coleman described community social capital can be formed by obligation, espectacy, trustworthiness, information channel, norma and effective sanctions [11].

Social capital sees community as entity that can maintain continuity of life through social network, trust and solidarity as basic norm of social relation. The analysis of social capital can utilize to see how rural poor group empower their self with develop social capital through em[powerment program in POSDAYA (Pos Pemberdayaan Keluarga/Family Empowerment Post).

Some theoretical framework states social capital is given and possessed by community. Conversely, social capital should be built by community with their strength and capacity for collective and individual purposes. Bourdieu stated social network is not given and has to be constructed through investment strategy that has beneficial for community members [12]. Coleman indicated that social capital has same characteristic with economic capital. They has productive characteristic [13]. Without develop social capital, everyone cannot obtain material profit and reach maximal success.

Social capital can be assumed as economic capital that can be built and accumulated with particular strategy to reach individual or group purposes. Community or group should develop social capital based on their capacity to implement empowerment program.

The process of social capital development should pay attention on social capital dimension. This dimension has relation with social capital typology, how the different of interaction pattern in community produces different typology of social capital namely bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding capital has exclusive characteristic. The idea context, relation, network and trust which developed are inward looking rather than outward looking. The ties of inward looking formed based on same of value, interaction and homogeneous daily knowledge. According to Putnam, the type of bonding social capital can be seen at sacred society which has particular dogma dominated and tend to maintain social structure [14].

Bridging social capital was generally emphasizes into outward looking that utilize social network of community members. It can give huge contribution for development, progress and strenght of community. Idea exchange, experience, knowledge, norm, value from other group create inovation as group problem solving.

Coleman, in Social Capital in teh Creation of Human Capital explains that bridging social capital, the creation of other network from the group, offers dimension to strive together

To maintain group solidarity [15]. In other part, there are other social capital namely linking. Linking social capital connects community with actor who has political and economic influence [16].

3. Methods

The study utilizes qualitative method with an approach of case study and multiple case design to comprehend the model of building and developing the social capital of a group of poor family joining POSDAYA program in Ngroto, Madiredo and Pandesari villages, Pujon District, Malang Regency. Yin stated that multiple case design followed the logic of 'replica', meaning that it would lead the analyzed case to be used either for making predictions of similar results (literal logic) or for achieving different results (theoretical replica) [17]. Along with the context of POSDAYA in Ngroto and Pandesari villages, the logic of replica is utilized to identify the similarities and differences of developing social capital in the implementation of community empowerment model through POSDAYA.

The present study employs an analysis technique which is divided into three stages namely; the researchers analyze the data during the stage of collecting data in the field, form a category or theme to interpret meaning from the collected data. The categories or themes in this study of POSDAYA program are: 1) the activities performed by the group of poor people joining POSDAYA program to establish and develop social capital, and (2) Scaling up model to build and improve social capital in the level of district. The last stage is to organize the pattern to determine the discussion structure, analyze the data according to the concepts of social capital and community empowerment.

4. Results

4.1. Utilization of Social Capital in Ngroto Village

POSDAYA in Ngroto village was established on July 18, 2012 according to an attempt of the women in the neighborhood to increase the income level of the community. There have been several POSDAYA groups exist in the area, they are: Makaryo Bersama group with a specific business of vegetable nurseries, Gemah Ripah group that concentrates on agriculture, Griya Rajut group with its knitwork products, Maju Jaya group for grocery shops, Srikandi Collection group of sewing or convection, and Sarinah Creative group that runs food processing.

The whole process of building the POSDAYA groups in Ngroto village is inseparable from the efforts of society to develop social capital. The social capital itself is, according to Putnam based on trust, norms, and social networks [18]. These essential aspects have been performed by the POSDAYA groups in Ngroto village. On the basis of trust, each member of the group keeps offering hands for those who are in need. One example is the borrowing seeds from the Makaryo group. While in knitting group, the aspect of trust is built through the group sales system.

Another component of social capital is networks. Bourdieu mentioned that social networks are not given but rather constructed [19]. In forming the social networks the members of POSDAYA groups hold a regular meeting in every 1.5 months and improve the frequency of communication through social media or WhatsApp. The trust and networks carried out by the members of these groups will finally create a regulation that aims at strengthening the bond among the members of POSDAYA groups.

In addition to the existence of POSDAYA in Ngroto village, the members do not only create a social bond but also a social bridge. For instance, the POSDAYA group of Makaryo does not only fulfill the need of seeds of the in-group region but also the out-group space. Also, the members maintain social link with the cooperatives service.

4.2. Utilization of Social Capital in Pandesari Village

The existence of empowerment program cannot be separated from the principle of empowerment that is human oriented and participation [20]. It goes well with the establishment of POSDAYA in Pandesari village that is based on the human oriented principle as represented by the women as the subject of empowerment.

Nevertheless, the formation of empowerment program in the village does not involve society in a way it determines the types of empowerment they are about to perform. This situation is due to the principle supporting the empowerment program in Pandesari village that tends to follow the code of practicality. As a consequence, the existence of POSDAYA program had just been realized by the surrounding right after the forming of administrator in village level that is the decree of the head of the village.

This condition later distinguishes the formation process of POSDAYA between Ngroto village and Pandesari village that embrace the bottom-up development principle. POSDAYA in Pandesari village is established on the basis of similarity of neighborhood association (RT – Rukun Tetangga). It was performed to allow the coordination among the empowered members through a direct targeting on the activities carried out by Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK – a social organization empowering women to actively contribute to national development) in each of the neighborhood administration. To add, there are 48 RTs in Pandesari village with a distant gap of area distribution from one to another.

One example of the empowerment programs in Pandesari village is to make the village a strawberry tourist village. However, the idea was originally derived from the empowerment agent that was carried by the community service of University of Brawijaya Malang. The community service also provided strawberry seeds and polybags for free to stimulate the community around to have an intention to plant strawberries. Consequently, since the program was mostly performed by the community service of the university, as their service period was over, the planting activity faced a failure.

One background of the failure in the empowerment program of strawberry tourist village is due to the lack of network in Pandesari group that depends much on the pioneer, that is the community service of University of Brawijaya Malang. The limited intensity of interaction on the neighborhood level and does

not cover the POSDAYA group in RT level triggers the decrease of community's level of trust. Additionally, the formation of POSDAYA that is based on the role of society to perform self-governing communities and the principle of practicality or administrative district has caused the absence of the binding rules on planting the strawberries and another obligation of producing strawberries in particular amounts applied to each member of the groups.

The formation of social capital in Pandesari village that puts greater emphasis on the role of people to perform self-governing communities has caused a decline of bonding social capital and bridging social capital. As previously mentioned above, a weak bonding social capital may lead to the failure of the empowerment program. This is all because the formation of POSDAYA program in Pandesari village is not built on the basis of common interest, trust, norms, and networks. Thus, it consequently affects the reducing sense of solidarity among people in the society and they tend to prefer to prioritize personal interest instead.

Furthermore, the decline of social bonding has affected the weakness of bridging social capital since the network that the POSDAYA group of Pandesari village has made with the outside party only refers to the community service of University of Brawijaya Malang.

4.3. Utilization of Social Capital in Madiredo Village

The POSDAYA program built in Madiredo village has put a basis on economic potential of the area that is represented into processing apple for snacks. The apple used in the POSDAYA program is the plants that the people around the village grow in their own yard. It is due to the apple they plant is intended to be consumed or sold whenever the harvest time comes with the best apple products. While the apple grown in the field is oriented to a mass production that is located outside of the Pujon District or Malang Regency.

The POSDAYA program in Madiredo village that exploits apple as their empowerment program attempts to create a business group of Karangmas. This group is a business group that processes apple into carangmas (a snack product made from sweet potato). The members of the POSDAYA consist of five villages in which every village will have two representatives to take care of the business, so there will be 10 in total.

In terms of management, the Karangmas business group refers to the system of work division. However, the division does not restrict the presence of any cooperation among the members of the group. In addition, there is also a regular contribution as much as Rp. 10,000.00 to fulfill the needs of rice. Analyzed from the principle of social capital by Putnam encompassing trust, norms, and networks, the trust and norms components in Karangmas group have been displayed through the collective cooperation and a working system that are built according to their interest on the expertise they are confident with. However, this system does not guarantee the long existence of the group.

Another aspect supporting the failure of POSDAYA in Madiredo village is the problem of the low network. For instance in terms of marketing, the group is only able to sell the products to the surrounding stores or food stalls so that they cannot optimize the income as compared to the production cost.

Internal factors have also been an element causing the failure of the POSDAYA program in the village. The internal factors are the production site that is centered and the social gap among the members in terms of working hours. Eventhough at the early implementation of the working hours each member is allowed to select the hours based on their interest of expertise, the marketing department has still experienced a double responsibility of work. It is because the marketing department does not only market the products but also participate in the production process.

The final cause of the failure is the lack of initiative from the chief of the POSDAYA in Madiredo in which he does not claim his purpose to protect the members' welfare but rather personal profit. It is against the standard of community development which believes that the chief of a group should play an important role in building and managing programs.

Basically, the POSDAYA program formed in Madiredo with the Karangmas business group has performed the principle of human oriented and involved people's participation in the process of determining the types of empowerment that they are going to carry out. However in the real practice,

there has been an absence of the involvement of members in the process of making decisions. The decision is made personally by the chief of Karangmas group himself.

Referring to Cooke and Kothari, participation may trigger the presence of ‘new tyranny’ in the society with an aim to obtain illegal or unfair issues [21]. This context has been applied in Karangmas business group in which the decisions have always been made personally and not collectively by the chief of the group. One clear example is when the chief decided to organize the cooking utensils only by some particular groups of people. Indeed there is not any distribution of business treasures to the whole members.

4.4. The Development Model to Establish Social Capital for Community Empowerment

The design of POSDAYA proposed in the present study is a bottom-up POSDAYA. This type of POSDAYA development program will create a domination for the society to decide on their own programs. Despite the role of government as a ruler of policies, the applied design of POSDAYA is adopted from the existing POSDAYA in Ngroto village.

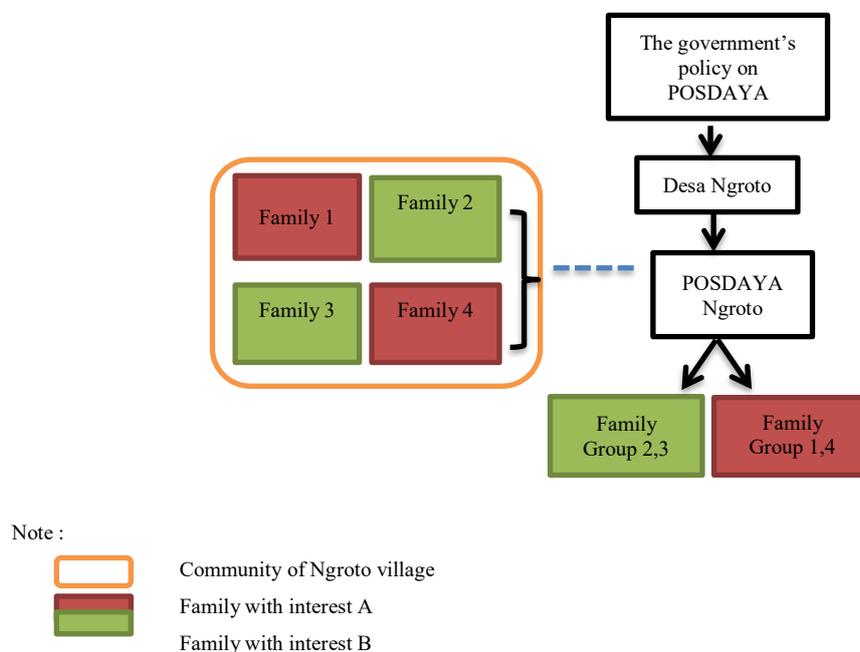


Figure 1. Model design of POSDAYA.

The program has been early started with the existing rule by the government about POSDAYA that is later implemented by the society. For example, if there are two families of A and B with different interest, they will be able to choose the interest group that is similar to their own interest.

The design of POSDAYA is expected to strengthen the society’s participation and teh solidarity among the members of the group. So, it might influence the social capital namely trust, network, and norms to create bonding and bridging social capital.

4.5. The Development and Implementation of Empowerment Model (Scaling Up) in a Wider Scale in Pujon District

The empirical result found in the field comparing the two models of developing POSDAYA in Ngroto and Pandesari villages has been a standard to develop and implement the empowerment program with scaling up model to a wider coverage that is Pujon district. The success of POSDAYA development with scaling up model in Ngroto village will be adopted to advance another village, that is Pandesari by performing a set of integrated coordination and cooperation between one village to another.

One example of developing the empowerment model in Pandesari village is to change the basis of similarity between the administration of RT and POSDAYA into the basis of similar interest. To realize the idea, the social connection between Ngroto and Pandesari village to create a cooperative relation is highly required. The relation is expected to create a similar stimulus. In the end, the people of the two villages will be able to organize the resources collectively.

As soon as the social collective capital is established, the model of empowerment will be expanded into wider coverage of POSDAYA with the basis of sharing similar interest among the people in the society.

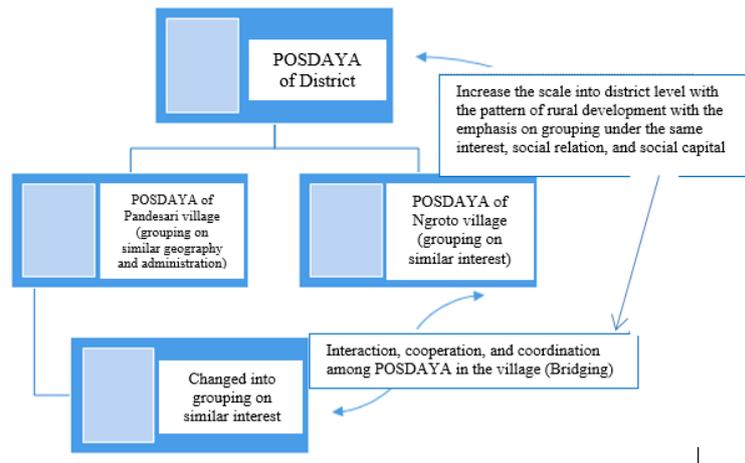


Figure 2. Implementation of empowerment model (scaling up) in a wider scale.

5. Conclusion

The scaling up model of development in the context of this present study is applied by performing the empowerment modeled by Ngroto village. Pandesari village is supposed to adopt the way Ngroto village carry out the POSDAYA by grouping people based on their own interest. Then, the villages may create a relation that will be able to coordinate and cooperate each other in the future.

By doing so, it is expected that the bridging social capital between those two villages can be formed and strengthen. There will be automatically a connection of social capital as represented in information, network, norms, expectations, and effective sanctions among the existing POSDAYA.

The empowerment of POSDAYA requires some considerations of collective potential, interest, and purpose. Besides, the scaling up model of empowerment needs to synergize the model of POSDAYA in the rural level. When the empowerment model in the village has not referred to the similarities that might tighten the bond of all members collectively, then the model will tend to be relatively top-down, and not bottom-up.

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