THE EMPOWERMENT OF POOR SOCIETY BASED ON LOCAL INSTITUTION TO ARCHIPELAGIC COMMUNITY

Prapti Murwani[[1]](#footnote-0)

Mohammad Arsad Rahawarin[[2]](#footnote-1)

Abstract

Maluku is an archipelago that has unique and different characteristic from other communities living in continental area. On the other hand, empowerment program which has appeared is the community empowerment program on continental community, particularly about the problem of poverty in archipelago. Meanwhile, the poverty characteristics in continental society are different to archipelagic community. One of the unique characteristics of archipelagic community is its custom. Every small island has a different culture and a different community characteristics. The uniqueness of island communities is also reflected in their local institutions. These institutions exist in the island communities based customs and traditions they have. In an effort to alleviate poverty, the role of local institutions as a trigger development at the local level is needed. Therefore, the empowerment based on local institutions is interesting to study further. This is because this empowerment is top down and the success of community empowerment programs are less effective. This paper aims to examine and to explain the empowerment of poor society based on local institutions based to archipelagic community. The method used in this research is qualitative method. Data were collected by interview and observation. Informants in this study is *Raja* (head of the village), *Saniri* *Negeri*, *Kepala Soa* and also some villagers. The results showed that the characteristics of the poor in archipelagic communities are poor that is not because of the limited of natural resources but it is due to isolation and limitation of access. Therefore, the empowerment of poor society based on local institutions is so effective as the energy to mobilize local forces. It is closely related to the high cost and difficult access if this empowerment is only done on the basis of region or district. Local institutions such as *Mataruma*, *Soa* and *Negeri* become very important institutions to make it efficient and effective in terms of both cost and time. This is also closely related with family relationships in the communities living in small island is very strong with a very strong attachment to their territorial genealogies.

Key Word : Poverty, Empowerment, small Island

1. **Introduction**

Poverty is a phenomenon and reality will always be found in the society. All countries cannot be separated from the phenomenon of poverty, including developing countries like Indonesia. Poverty is also one indicator of a sustainable development. One of the Human Development Index is also shown by the poverty of a country.

Indonesia ranks 99th out of 156 countries in the ranking of global SDG. This ranking is up one point compared to 2017. According to the position of Global SDGs Index 2018, Indonesia reached 62.8 score. There is also the regional average score of 64.1 Indonesia. One indicator of the SDGs is poverty reduction. Therefore, poverty reduction is preferred and should be pursued.

Bps data (2018) shows that the number of poverty in Indonesia on September 2018 amounted to 25.67 million people, and the percentage of poor people in September 2018 at 18.75. BPS uses the concept of ability to meet basic needs (basic needs approach). With this approach, poverty is seen as an economic inability to meet the basic needs of food and non-food poverty line as measured by. Rujito in Sukidjo (2008). In economic terms, poverty is characterized by low income, limited ownership of the means of production, low savings, and a weak anticipate opportunities. From the social aspect, it is characterized by the limited of social interaction and control of information. From the psychological aspects, it is characterized by a sense of inferiority, fatalism, laziness, and a sense of isolation. And from the aspect of politics, it can be seen as the lack of facilities and opportunities, the weak position in the decision-making process, and their discriminatory treatment.

Maluku is one of the provinces with a relatively high in poverty level. The number of poor people in this province in March 2018 is 320.08 people (18.12 percent). The geographical position of the island is also the cause that makes the poverty rate in this area is quite high. Field studies show that the phenomenon of poverty in archipelagic communities have different traits and characteristics. On the other hand, indicators of poverty and empowerment of the poor tend to refer to the continental community.

The process of empowerment for poverty reduction is not able to bring change to society significantly yet. Development paradigm from the *Top Down to the Bottom Up Planning* is expected to make the local community into a major force development support. Local institution-based community participation is important as an element of development. This is because the empowerment is an effort to make the society more capable to increase their quality of living conditions. Therefore, the society empowerment program is expected to create autonomous community through the realization of their potential. Thus, the community is able to develop themselves towards a better life. Maluku Province which is an archipelagic province should be able to exploit the potential of the sea as a base of local empowerment. In this context, the sea has become the main barriers and obstacles in community empowerment, where time is maximized as a means of liaison between islands in which there are a lot of potential that can be explored for the benefit of future community development.

Marine wealth in this province is not only as the form of natural resources itself, but also as the cultural and social resources that exist in the huge archipelago. The diversity of indigenous and local communities and traditions are reflected also in the islands of existing local institutions. The local institutions at community-based of indigenous islands strongly influence people's lives. It can be one of the potential to empower the community for supporting their poverty reduction to the island. Imhar (2009) explains that the local institution is a group of individual who is together bound by shared interests and common goals and achieved through collective action that put themselves as actors in the solution of the problem. Geographical conditions of the region have a role in this matter.

Archipelagic community has unique local institutions and customs to become a major force in pushing the process of community empowerment. This is because the adherence to their custom is still very strong. Therefore, the community empowerment based on local institutions is interesting to study further.

Cheema in Imhar (2009) suggests that the empowerment of local institutions is something that is need to be done considering the functions or duties are as: (1) a means of community participation; (2) a means of planning and formulation of objectives; (3) instrument to facilitate various forms of service provision; (4) instrument to mobilize local resources; (5) medium to establish a two-way communication; (6) a means to articulate and process needs and demands of the local community and (7) instrument for establishing social and political consciousness of society. The explanation implies that local institution is a strong activator and energy in community empowerment. The poor are given the space to be independent with the support of local institutions around them. It is described by Ancok in Oman (2005) that public participation in taking care of themselves will be supported by the success of poverty alleviation because it will foster a sense of pride in the ability of oneself. Poor people also feel that they are given the space to determine their own destiny, rather than to rely on programs from the central government. The role of local institutions as the institution that grows from the society and has its own power in the process of self-reliance of poor people is not just rely on the programs from the central government.

Furthermore, Deepa in Sukijo (2012) the aim of community empowerment is not solely to determine solutions, but to work with the community so they will have the ability to solve the problems. The Definition is in line with Deepa Narayan’s that: "Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to Participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that Affect Reviews their lives"

1. **Research methods**

This study used qualitative research methods and the determination of the informant used purposive sampling. Research conducted at Lease Island in Central Maluku. The reason why Lease Island is chosen because this island is an archipelago which access is very close to Ambon City as the capital of the province. In-depth interviews carried out on some key people chosen by purposive sampling method. People who have become key informants are people who are considered knowledgeable and least understood of the information to be excavated. They consist of the *Raja*, *Kepala Dukuh*, Head of *Soa*, religious leaders, community leaders and indigenous Chairman, *Saniri Negeri* and some poor people. Some triangulation also conducted to check the validity of the data obtained in the field, with multiple stakeholders at the district level. Approach to research conducted by the approach of small islands. This is because people who live in small islands have characters of different communities. The Geographical conditions and the lives of people form different patterns even when the people are administratively stay in one area. Therefore, the study was taken in three small islands in Lease island such as Haruku, Saparua and Nusalaut Island.

1. **Results and discussion**

Poverty is caused by several dimensions in society. Empowerment of the poor in an effort to lower the poverty rate has also been carried out, but the empowerment of poor people is running less efficiently. Therefore, the necessity of community development in accordance with the character of the people is crucial. Poor people living in the Lease Island is the community that the geographical condition is small island, with a character of its people are highly influenced and shaped by these conditions. Therefore, the empowerment of bottom-up planning is indispensable so that empowerment can be implemented effectively and efficiently.

Lease Island is a group of islands that is located closest to the city of *Ambon* as the central government of Maluku Province. Lease Island consists of three islands that are inhabited, namely the island *Haruku*, *Saparua* and *Nusalaut* Island. All three islands have different characteristics even though it is administratively incorporated in one of Central Maluku. Lease Island is bounded by *Seram* and *Banda* Island and *Ambon* Island. Lease Island is as 3 cluster island in the division of island cluster in Maluku province.

Poverty in the region is not constituted by poverty because of limited natural resources but because of the access to the region. In fact, they are always burdened by the high cost of transportation and the expensive needs which are difficult to reach. Their natural products cannot be marketed for people living in the same island because they have the same natural resources. This condition makes people living in island regions do not have a market.

There are also objective factors described as follows: Rural communities in this region generally have a social responsibility, "reciprocity" is high if the work in a kinship mechanisms that people in the village the main controller. This situation makes a variety of production activities are constrained in the continuation of the market. The implication is that if the network market is experiencing difficulties in the distribution process then the activity of production would stop at a point where the villagers were united in the strength and integrity of kinship will again find the process of production and distribution market with their traditional ways.

People living on the island of *Nusalaut* must go to *Saparua* for shopping necessities of life. This is because the market in *Lease* Islands exist only on *Saparua* with large distances and the cost is quite high. Opened on Wednesday as the market of *Saparua*, the people of *Nusalaut* usually go there early in the morning using speedboat that can accommodate around 10-15 people with the cost of Rp. 25.000, - per person. So, the cost needed is Rp. 50.000, - for a single trip. Sinding in Titaley (2018) saw the poverty experienced by the people in the context of the development of the country, especially rural communities, caused by five factors as losses relate to each other: 1) poverty, 2) weak physically, 3) vulnerability, 4) isolation, and (5) powerlessness.

Transportation access to people living in the area of *Lease* Island can be said is good enough. The access among villages is by *Colt*, although it is not quite a lot and is still very limited. Meanwhile, to reach out to the Provincial Capital, they must use the sea transportation with the high cost. Although there are ships that connects the island of Ambon to the Lease Islands.

The results showed that one of the causes of poverty in the islands Lease had a fairly high migration rate in the region. Almost all of the people residing in this area migrated to Ambon City. There were so many empty houses found. The productive forces are mostly located in Ambon City. This migration caused poverty in lease island.

The use of agricultural technology as a means of production were also found to be very simple. Farming tools as simple as machetes, hoes, crowbars and *sungga-sunggah* were still used in farming activities in the rural communities of this region. The use of simple agricultural technology has become one of the characteristics of farming activities in Maluku that shows their subsistence cropping patterns as a prerequisite domestic need. Besides, it can also be said that: the use of simple agricultural technology is an indication showing the limited productivity of our farmers. It is closely related to the limited access to markets with high transport costs so that their agricultural products widely used purely as their consumption needs. It is sometimes only during the harvest season where there were some peddlers who come to buy their harvest at a low price. Therefore, the farmers lose because they cannot cover the costs of their production.

Furthermore, the housing conditions of the poor is their average stay in a small house with 2 or 3 rooms with family members who live quite large. The results showed that the average family dependents of people living in Lease Island is between 4- 5 people or even more. Their housing partially consists of iron roofing, wooden walls, and floor of soil or wood and some cement walls had been built or in a rough plaster. Most houses were categorized to be poor also due to the house owners were in Ambon and let their houses unprotected.

The health complaints of poor people were limited to fever and cold. The poor thought that as long as they could perform the activities then they were healthy. The pains felt by the poor were usually taken to a nearby paramedic or midwife for access to community health center in this area was quite remote. Even some people described that they merely took drugs that they bought at the nearest shop.

The level of education of the poor in the Lease Islands was quite good. Their average education was SMA because the school facilities in this area were fairly well. For some cases, there were some poor people who could send their children to college. There were several reasons to explain that the poor people who lived in this region had a very strong family ties, so that the mutual aid among families were existed. When there is a poor family in the village had a relative or some relatives in the city then there is an obligation to help their families, especially about the education of the children. Thus, the need to live up to the needs of study is usually assisted by their relatives in Ambon.

It is explained that the poor characteristics can be concluded as 1). Poverty occurs because of isolated access and small island areas separated by sea territory. 2) It requires a high cost to reach the territory of the other regions. 3) the poor in the archipelago has wealthy culture and customs to get out of poverty. 4) the poor have a strong kinship network. 5) the poor have a very strong custom. Characteristics of poor people in small islands is one foothold for determining the proper empowerment making it more efficient. The strength of custom and difficult access made important local institutions to be able to mobilize community participation.

The life of archipelagic community is very rich with social and cultural values ​​that bind the society. Maspaitella (2008) explained that the rationality of people living in small island formed in the rationality of cosmology. Average island communities living in indigenous community are rich in symbols. The entire worldview shaped by certain symbols. Cultural values are believed by the public is very shaping the mindset and their daily behavior. One is the sense of life help each other. Their family ties were strong enough and very close. Family ties were not only based society bound by blood ties but emotional bond between citizens that is strong enough.

The strength of traditional values and culture of the people was also shown on the existing local institutions. Indigenous People who have the island are still strong so that local custom institutions society is also natural. The symbols of indigenous and local institution role are still very important in the life of society. On the other hand, there has been the empowerment at the level of administrative districts and more. Therefore, the empowerment of local institutions becomes very important so the community empowerment can run effectively and efficiently.

Hirschman in Imron (2002) called "Social Energy" that is able to mobilize the people to indulge. The values and the teachings contained in the religion, culture or dogma contained in the community that has been the motivation and even a driving force in society to indulge. Dove in Imron (2002) states that the local culture and traditional religion was very instrumental in the development process and social dynamics of the development of society. Because somehow in people's daily life it cannot be separated from religion and culture, even if the cultural value is a mental factor that determines action or activity of a person or group of people.

Imron (2002) explained that the local institutions are capable of mobilizing local resources and effective means to improve well-being. Local institutions can improve work ethics in the grassroots level in support of empowerment. Even the local value of a dogma that is able to synergize the strengths that exist in society to towards the achievement of welfare.

Lease Island is one island that still has traditional values for the people living in this region. This condition is not far from poor people who are still uphold their cultural values. This condition is quite interesting because even though the access is relatively close to Ambon but the culture and customs of this community is still a force to survive. Here are a few local institutions that are still found and still exists in the region:

1. ***Negeri (Village)***

The community of Lease island has *Negeri* as a local institution to become a reflection of governance at the village level. Ajawaila (2005) explains that *Negeri* is a community of indigenous peoples based on territorial genealogical. *Negeri* has *petuanan* area or areas with clear territorial boundaries against *Negeri’s* neighbors. The population of *Negeri* is referred to *anak negeri* and has the rights and obligations within indigenous communities. *Anak Negeri* relationship with their environment and with the land ancestors of the founders of *Negeri* is very strong. The implication is seen in the strong sentiments and solidarity of *Negeri* communities.

As the islands based on empowerment *Negeri* is the right thing to do. Local institutions such as the *Negeri* will be able to more efficiently and easily as well as in the coordination process, monitoring the implementation of development as well as in the evaluation of development activities. It is closely related to the position of the people who live in small islands have sufficient access hard to reach and require time and substantial costs to reach the area. This condition is necessary to local institutions such as *Negeri* can mobilize development, especially in rural communities.

*Negeri* has a very strong function in the process of rural development. Existence of *Negeri* with *petuanan* region, led by *Raja (head of Negeri/ the village)* will be able to mobilize community development, especially indigenous embraced and believed by people living in the area of small islands are still quite strong.

The results of the field signify the interview that *Negeri* is headed by *Raja* still much less respected by custom that serves as Raja is indeed *soa Parentah* as are believed by the public. In the Lease Islands kingship society is still quite strong and was instrumental in the implementation of development programs.

The importance of the institution "*Negeri*" as the basis of empowerment is due to the characteristics of people living in small islands has a different character. Different countries also vary the character of its people. Therefore, to understand the community character of each country then empowerment will run efficiently and optimally. The public will feel the empowerment program for the participation of the country as a trigger.

Solidarity as *anak negeri* to become one force for the implementation of development in a region. This is because the fanaticism of their communities are very strong and very thick. Therefore, the strength of *anak negeri* can be used as activator so the result will be the maximum. In addition to a solid relationship among *anak negeri* domestically. They also have to promote fanaticism village / *negeri* over other *negeri* that is also very strong.

*Negeri* is the smallest government agencies at the lowest level in society. Strengthening public institutions into a positive energy for the development of society is important especially in poverty alleviation. The result of the research shows that during this time the poor in this region were not given space to express their needs directly. Therefore, it is necessary for the village meeting to presenting the poor so that they have an opportunity to express their aspirations and their needs directly. Poor community involvement in the planning process is considered important that the activities of poverty reduction is indeed the needs and aspirations of the poor.

The results of the field studies showed that the empowerment of the poor that had been done in Lease Island was only limited in receiving programs from the government. Even the implementation of activities in the field did not involve the local community. Facilitators of activities came from outside the region. In addition to that, the activities run less efficiently and it is merely as project activities without considering the results of an empowerment in society.

Coordination and consolidation at *Negeri* level will also be easy to do because the access is not too difficult. Even domestic control as grassroots organizations will also work more leverage in reducing poverty. For example: the purchasing of aid equipment while under the coordination of *Negeri* as local institution will be easy to control compared to the facilitator from outside of the village/ *Negeri*. The fact that the facilitator is limited in providing intensive programs without controlling because they come from a different certain area as though they were just watching from afar.

1. **Soa**

*Soa* is a broader alliance of *Lumatau*. Soa consists of several clans or fam (family). Soa is an alliance of territorial genealogical (Efendi, 1987). *Pelupessy* (2012) explains that the *Soa* is an area that is part of a *petuanan* or *Negeri*. *Soa* *Lumatau* consists of native and immigrant population, usually led by the head of *soa* originating from *anak negeri* (native).

*Soa* grouping is not based on a single lineage, but from several different lineages. *Soa* consists of several *lumatau* / *mataruma* different established under shelter or the same area. The community empowerment by seeing groups of *Soa* will be easier in monitoring because of its location among the community in one area. The position of *Soa Head/ Kepala Soa* has an important role, especially in the traditional administration. In cultural activities, *Kepala Soa* has symbolized positions in existing poles at the custom house (*Baileo*). These conditions explain that *Soa* has a strong enough role in society. *Kepala-Kepala Soa* raised in the group are the people who are considered to have a role and figure of a leader. When poor people in the territory of a *soa* actively involved in community activities, especially in the context of poverty reduction they will give opportunity for the poor to be independent.

Institutional strengthening of *Soa* is also indispensable in creating a participatory empowerment. Facts on the field indicates the status of the *Soa* as a traditional institution in society has become weak. Therefore, the concept of participatory development the strengthening of institutions is required to enable *Soa* to be able to help people, especially the poor in reducing unemployment.

1. **Mataruma**

*Mataruma* is the unity of genealogical larger group after family (Effendi, 1987). Pelupessy (2012) explains that *Rumatau* or *Lumatau* consists of several families with each family head and a basic structure for the formation of the social structure among the people of Ambon and Lease for each person must be in one *Lumatau*. Further Pelupessy (2012) explains that people who joined in *Lumatau* is *anak negeri*, in the sense of the native and was not a new person who come to the village/ *Negeri* for trading (not from the area).

*Mataruma* kinship group is the basis of all social relations relationship. Very strong kinship relationships among members *mataruma* shown through social obligations in certain events, such as ceremony of marriage and death. *Mataruma* is one of social institution formed on the basis of blood ties. *Mataruma* plays an important role as energy of empowerment, because its base is the family.

Empowerment that emphasizes the family institution is considered as a power for the archipelagic community. This condition is closely related to the nature of communities who always make the family and kinship become a binding between them. *Basudara* concept becomes a feature for the community generally in Maluku island. Therefore, It will be more efficient when empowerment is done at the level of *mataruma*. In addition, the control and coordination at the family level will be easier especially for poverty alleviation. For example, community development projects in increasing smoked fish selling in *Negeri* *Haria*, *Mataruma* approach will be more effective because of a sense of family name responsibility into demands for their responsibility in managing the assistance. Empowerment will be more efficient and effective for the name of the family is at stake.

1. **Religious activity**

People live in the Lease Island by customary institutions also have a growing religious institution and this position has become a part that characterizes the lives of the communities. The majority of Lease communities are embracing Islam and Christianity. Both religions have religious institutions that were originally created to meet the needs of each religion. However, these religious institutions have to function socially. For example, Muslim community has *Majelis taklim* groups. And in the Christian community has as *Pelwata* and *Muhabet*. These religious institutions initially only work on religious issues alone but now the agency has become a social institution that is owned by all the people in the study site.

These institutions helped the poor to cope with problems in society. If these institutions are given the strengthening and more attention than it will be the strength and positive energy in reducing poverty. The strength of religious and social forces that combined would be the form of a great power to alleviate poverty. Religious institutions have religious doctrine that its relationship help each other as an obligation to be done. On the other hand, camaraderie will inspire the rich to help the poor to create development programs to empower the poor to be more independent.

**Conclusion**

Local Institutions island communities is the locus of the most important in empowering the poor, especially in the archipelago. Local institutional basis is more effective for archipelagic communities living in the areas bounded by small islands with difficult access to reach among each other. Therefore, the empowerment based on local institutions will be easier to be done for coordination and consolidation of the programs to empower the poor.

The involvement of the poor in the process of planning of development programs through the implementation of development is vital. The hope is that the poor people will feel acknowledged so that the poverty alleviation programs will run properly. The poor will also feel involved in the program because they are powered from the planning to the realization of the program.

Family bond as the underlying strength of island communities where institutions grow and thrive in the community to make local institutions into empowerment energy trigger. Therefore, labeling that local institutions as obstacles to development can be broken. This condition is the opposite of local institutions based on kinship that has a great potential in poverty alleviation in archipelagic communities.

Bottom up approach, especially focused on Negeri and local institutions such as Soa and Mataruma on archipelagic communities is needed. This is because the empowerment that had been presented in a top-down programs is based on the continental community.

**Acknowledgement**

The author would like to express gratitude all of the key informants and the agency in the Lease Island for their supports during the field data collection. We also want *to* thank Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) as the Host in the International Seminar who has given us the opportunity to explain the results, the Departement of Social and Political Sciences, Pattimura University as the co-host in contributing to this paper completion. The last but not least, Special Thanks to Faculty of social sciences and political science University of Pattimura on their material support so as to facilitate the authors to make a presentation on international seminar at the State University of Yogyakarta on 23-26 July 2019.

**References**

Ajawaila, J. W. 2000. Orang Ambon dan Perubahan Kebudayaan . Antropologi Indonesia, 16-25.

Ali Imron H.R Riyadi Soeprapto Suwondo. Peran Institusi Lokal Dalam Pembangunan Desa. (Suatu Kajian Tentang Peran Lembaga Tahlil Dalam Pembangunan Desa di Desa Simorejo Kecamatan Kanor Kabupaten Bojonegoro).

Effendi ziwar.1987. Hukum Adat Ambon Lease, Cetakan Pertama, Jakarta: Pradnya Paramita

Huliselan, M. 2012. Perdagangan International: Pengaruhnya Terhadap Perubahan Sistem Nilai Budaya Orang Maluku. *Kapata Arkeologi*, 9-24.

Imhar. Djoko Edi. 2009. Pemberdayaan Institusi Lokal dalam masyarakat. Wacana no.10. Vol 1 Januari.

Pellupessy, P.J. 2012. Esuriun Orang Bati. Salatiga: Universitas Kristen Wacana

Sukijo dan Ali Muhson. 2012. Model Pemberdayaan Kelembagaan Lokal Sebagai Wahana Pendidikan Pengembangan Usaha. Jurnal Carawala Pendidikan. No.3 November

Titaley. Elsina, Sanggar Kanto, Darsono Wisadirana and Mardiyono. 2018. Poverty and local potentials. Eco. Env. & Cons. 24 (3)

1. Faculty of Sosial and Politic ,Pattimura of University e mail : prapti.murwani@fisip.unpatti.ac.id [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Faculty of social and politic, Pattimura of University [↑](#footnote-ref-1)