

**THE ROLE OF AGENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAKU LAMPAH COMMUNITY
EXISTENCE IN SURAKARTA**

Afika Fitria Permatasari, R.B. Soemanto and Supriyadi

Postgraduate of Sociology Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Laku Lampah Community is a community for historical and cultural lovers in Surakarta. This community has a vision and mission in inviting people to learn about various historical and cultural relics around them. Through the activity of walking around the historical buildings in an area, this community wants to arouse people's enthusiasm for preserving and maintaining the historical and cultural heritage that is around them. This study aims to analyze the role of agents in developing the existence of the Laku Lampah community. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological study approach. Data collection uses observation, interviews and documentation studies. The results showed that agents have an important role in developing the existence of the Laku Lampah community in society. The presence of an agent makes the Laku Lampah community can survive to date. The relationships created between agents foster cooperation in maintaining the existence of the Laku Lampah community.

KEYWORDS: Agent, Existence, Community

INTRODUCTION

Community is one form of groups in society. A community can also be interpreted as a social group consisting of several individuals in the community. Individuals who are members of a group have the same interests. The individuals who are joined in a group also have similarities in terms of goals, beliefs, resources, preferences or tastes, needs, risks, and several other similar conditions. Common interests and goals make individuals in society join to form a community following the similarities they want to have (Haryanta & Sujatmiko, 2012).

In sociology, the notion of community is always associated with the concept of social systems. Community is considered as one type of social interaction that forms a social system in society. Communities will be formed if there are socialization and internalization among the individuals concerned. Social structures will also be formed when communities are created. This social structure has control over individuals in the community so that the community can run in society (Liliweri, 2014).

The existence of a community is part of the community itself. In the present time, the existence of the community is related to what is being favored by the community. The similarity in a hobby is one of the reasons many communities have sprung up today. People start to form their community based

on what they love. So it is not surprising if within a region several communities have a common vision and mission.

In the city of Surakarta, the development of a community is rapid, one of which is a community engaged in history and culture. The emergence of the community is inseparable from the historical existence of the city of Surakarta which makes this city has many historic sites and also cultural diversity. Surakarta has 172 buildings that have been registered as cultural heritage buildings. Even so, outside the 172 cultural heritage buildings, there are still many historic sites scattered throughout the city and have not been registered as cultural heritage. Besides, Surakarta City has people from various ethnicities such as Javanese, Chinese, and Arabic. This makes the city of Surakarta has a variety of cultures that are still maintained today. Even though it has many historical heritages, the awareness of the people in this city in maintaining, caring for and preserving these historic relics is still lacking. The lack of public awareness is one of the reasons how the community of lovers of history and culture can develop rapidly in this city. One of the lovers of history and culture is the Laku Lampah community.

Laku Lampah Community is one of the historical and cultural lovers in Surakarta. This community first appeared in 2012 with an activity called Blusukan Solo. The emergence of the Laku Lampah community was motivated by the anxiety of the founders of the community regarding the historical and cultural existence in their city. The lack of public awareness, especially young people to deal with things that are associated with history and culture is the reason this community was formed. At the beginning of its appearance, the Laku Lampah community was managed by three volunteers from Solo Batik Carnival namely Mariska Apriyani, Agung Luningkito, and Fendy Fawzy. In addition to managing the community, the three volunteers are also the founders of the Laku Lampah community itself. Through Blusukan Solo activities, Gowes Bareng, Dolan Bareng, Museum Visit, and Soerakarta Walking Tour, the Laku Lampah community hopes to foster public awareness to pay more attention to the historic and cultural sites that are around them.

In realizing its vision and mission, the Laku Lampah community must be able to maintain its existence in the community. Moreover, the Laku Lampah community is not the only community engaged in the field of history and culture in Surakarta. Although engaged in the same field, competition between communities in attracting people's attention in participating in the activities they hold cannot be avoided. Amidst competition between these communities, surviving alone is not enough. The Community of Lampah must be able to find their own identity so that the community will be easily recognized and remembered in the future. To make this happen, the Laku Lampah community needs individuals who are loyal to support its existence. Individuals who are involved in the scope of the Laku Lampah community are none other than agents who are tasked with maintaining or developing the existence of the community itself. From this background, researchers will describe the role of agents in developing the existence of the Laku Lampah community. The

purpose of this study is to determine the extent of the role of agents in the development of the Laku Lampah community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. The Concept of Agent

According to Giddens, structure and agents are dualities, which is the conception of social structure which is the result of social actions carried out by agents. Structures can occur because of the existence of agents, and agents can exist due to the presence of structures (Susilo, 2008). According to Giddens, every human being is a purposeful agent because as an individual, he has a tendency to have reasons for his actions and then collaborating these reasons continuously as aiming, intending and motivating (Giddens, 2010).

The assumptions put forward by Giddens on the concept of an agent are drawn from interpretive sociology related to the human ability to know (knowledgeability) and the involvement of that ability in taking action. According to him, 'to be human' is to be an agent who has a goal that not only has a logical reason for his actions but is also able to do a discursive elaboration of these reasons. Giddens said that knowledgeability has a reflexive form which is an important part of repetitive social practice. In carrying out social actions, agents always conduct reflexive monitoring. Giddens called it the purposive character of human behavior. Through reflexive monitoring, agents are not only influenced by structure but also affect the structure. In reflexive monitoring, the action is not a string of actions that have their respective characteristics or an aggregate of goals, but a process that continues (Giddens, 2003).

The social structure includes social relations between individuals, individual differences, and social class according to their social role (Nasrullah, 2008). According to Giddens, structures are rules and resources that are embedded in the traces of an agent's memory. With the traces of their memories, agents have the knowledge to carry out social actions. Giddens divides the memory traces of structure in knowledge into three types which include dominance (power), significance (meaning) and legitimacy (norms). These three memory traces are used by agents as knowledge to determine the actions they take in their social interactions (Giddens, 2010).

2. Research Methods

This type of research is qualitative research with a phenomenological study approach. A phenomenology is an approach where researchers identify the experiences of individuals associated with certain phenomena. Through understanding experience making phenomenology a research method that has procedures to require researchers to study several subjects who are directly involved with certain phenomena over a certain period in developing patterns and relationships of existing meanings (Creswell, 2015). The application of the phenomenology study approach in this research is considered able to explain the role of agents in the development of the existence of the Laku Lampah community.

The selection of informants in this study used a purposive sampling technique. This technique determines the informant based on the consideration that the informant is considered the most knowledgeable about the object or situation of the social movement which is being studied (Sugiyono, 2010). Through this technique, informants are determined based on key informants, main informants, and supporting informants. Data collection uses observation, interviews and documentation studies. Data analysis uses three stages which include data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions or verification (Afrizal, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Laku Lampah community is one of the communities for historical and cultural lovers in Surakarta. This community was established in early 2012, precisely in February 2012. The name Laku Lampah comes from two syllables in Javanese, which are Laku means to walk and Lampah which means to walk. When the two syllables are combined, Laku Lampah means walking through and to something. Before it was named Laku Lampah, this community was originally called Blusukan Solo. The name Blusukan Solo also comes from the Javanese language too, namely blusuk or blesek which means to enter. The name Blusukan Solo is intended so that people who hear the name will immediately understand the activities of the community that is exploring in or visiting every village in the city of Surakarta.

The Laku Lampah community has four main activities, which are Blusukan Solo, Gowes Bareng, Dolan Bareng, and Kunjung Museum. The Laku Lampah community activities have almost the same type of activity. The core of this community activity is to trace the remnants of historical and cultural heritage that is around the location of the activity held. As a whole, the activities of the Laku Lampah community were formed to make the community more aware of their increasing concern for historical and cultural sites that are around them.

Blusukan Solo is an activity that was formed first. In Blusukan activities, participants will be taken around to historic sites in a village in Surakarta. Participants will be taken around entering a predetermined village by walking. In the Gowes Bareng, participants will be taken around as well, just like the Blusukan Solo activity. But the difference is in the Gowes Bareng activities, participants will use bicycles in their activities. In the Dolan Bareng activity, the form of the activity is the same as Blusukan Solo and Gowes Bareng but the location of the activity is different that is outside the city of Surakarta. The time for Dolan Bareng's activities can be longer than other Laku Lampah community activities, which can take up to a full day. While the Kunjung Museum activity is an activity that combines museum visit activities with blusukan activities in the area around the museum located.

Of the four activities, only Blusukan Solo and Dolan Bareng activities are still active. In addition to the four main activities, the Laku Lampah community also has a side project that is quite successful,

the Soerakarta Walking Tour. This side project is a mini version of the Blusukan Solo activity. If in Blusukan Solo, the time needed for one activity can reach three to four hours, but in the Soerakarta Walking Tour, it can be done in around two hours. What makes the Soerakarta Walking Tour activity interesting and different from other Laku Lampah community activities is the matter of donations. In the Soerakarta Walking Tour, participants can pay their sincere donations or in other words, this activity implements a donation system of activities by "pay as you wish".

Laku Lampah community has survived to this day thanks to the presence of the individuals behind the community. These individuals are agents who have their respective roles in the Laku Lampah community. According to Giddens, every human being is a purposeful agent because as an individual, he has two tendencies which are to have reasons in each of his actions and then to use those reasons repeatedly. Individuals also take action in a purposeful, intent and patterned manner. Agent refers to the capacity and ability of an actor to act. An agent is an executor of action, has the opportunity to act differently from what he should have done (Giddens, 2010).

Being able to survive until now is not easy for the Laku Lumpah community. There is an up and down phase following the existence of the community itself. In its journey, there are times when this community has a small number of participants, but there are also times when the community has participants who exceed the capacity. Even the delivery of activities does not always run smoothly. Although all permits and preparations have been done carefully, sometimes on D-day, the design of activities can change according to the conditions on the field. All these phases can be overcome by Laku Lampah community thanks to the presence of the agents in their possession. Therefore, the existence of agents greatly influences the sustainability of the Laku Lampah community itself. The following are the roles carried out by agents in the Laku Lampah community in developing the existence of the community.

1. Agents are in Charge as Activity Conceptor

The agents within the scope of the Laku Lampah community are administrators and also community participants. Both the management and community participants have their respective roles in developing the existence of the Laku Lampah community. As an agent, the board has to carry out the provisions of the structure, which is the Laku Lampah community. The board is responsible for carrying out all preparations until the activities in the community take place. In any event, the committee also must coordinate the participants so that the activities run according to the schedule. In contrast to the board, the participant who is also an agent has to follow all the provisions made by the structure. Participants must follow the scheduled activities from the beginning to the end of the activity. In participating the activity, the participants are also required to follow the rules given by the Laku Lampah community such as being polite at the location of the activity, keeping speech during the activity, not stealing, always informing the committee when wanting to do personal things (such as going to the bathroom and buy food or drinks when traveling), and still follow the group when the activity takes place.

Apart from the tasks given by the structure, agents can act according to what they think is right. For agents, the Laku Lampah community is a place to develop their interest in matters relating to history and culture. Therefore, to maintain the existence of the Laku Lampah community, the agents will try to find various strategies that they can use in developing the existence of the community. Laku Lampah community cannot be separated from their activities. The community can survive until now is thanks to the activities that make people interested to participate in it. The existence of activities becomes the most important factor in the sustainability of the Laku Lampah community. This makes the agents work hard to display activities that are always different in each implementation.

Creating an activity that is always different requires a variety of innovations and creative ideas. Here the management plays an important role in making it happen. Laku Lampah community is not the only history and culture-loving community in Surakarta. Because it is not the only one, the Laku Lampah community needs an identity that shows the society that this is Laku Lampah. To form self-identity, in each activity the committee gives a unique title and theme of the activity so that it can make people interested in following it. The board also groups community activities based on the characteristics of each activity. Through a unique concept in each of its activities community activities is made to be easily recognizable by society.

In making a series of activities, new and up to date ideas are needed. How an event can be packaged interestingly and can attract many participants is a work that must be completed by the leaders of this community in every activity. Routinely doing various kinds of innovations in the packaging of the event, making the activities of the Laku Lampah community will look fresher. With such enthusiasm, the participants who want to participate in Laku Lampah will also increase. To show innovations that look fresh and up to date, the involvement between the board and also participants is very large. It is through the creative ideas of the management and also the participants, innovation in activities can run until now.

Each agent in the Laku Lampah community, both administrators and participants, has different educational and occupational backgrounds. Some of them also joined other communities. So that it affects the mindset of each individual in the community. Experiences that can be obtained by agents from other communities such as participating in other community activities or being part of other communities can influence their actions. The experiences they get outside this community will influence the way they view activities in the Laku Lampah community. The experience from outside the community is reflected by the management and participants in developing constructive ideas or suggestions for the Laku Lampah community. Having a good relationship with the management makes the participants of the Laku Lampah community not hesitate to convey constructive ideas for the community. Also, if there is a discrepancy in each event, participants are not reluctant to give their suggestions. The strong relationship between these agents makes them free to exchange ideas and even deliver breakthroughs for the future activities of the Laku Lampah community.

2. Agents are Responsible for Marketing the Laku Lampah Community

The most influential factor in the development of the existence of the Laku Lampah community lies in the actions of the agent in promoting the activities of the community itself. In this digitalization era, social media plays an important role in people's lives. The average community routinely accesses their social media every day. From children to adults, they can easily access social media. What's more now the development of technology is also increasingly making all kinds of information easily accessible through the digital world. The more easily the public in accessing information makes the digital world more and more utilized for various things. One of them is media promotion. Social media is no longer only used as a means of communication. But with the increasingly advanced era of digitization, people are also starting to use social media for their work. By using social media today, people can easily carry out various promotions for their businesses. Seeing this opportunity, the Laku Lampah community also used social media as a tool to promote their activities. Because social media is widely accessed by the public, information about the Laku Lampah community will easily spread quickly.

Social media plays an important role in the development of the existence of the Laku Lampah community. With the presence of social media, the existence of the Laku Lampah community is increasingly being recognized by the community. At the beginning of this community, the social media used was Facebook. Through Facebook, Laku Lampah community began to introduce themselves in the community. Besides being used as a means of communicating with the community, Facebook is also routinely used by this community to post their planned activities and also stories and documentation of their activities. Besides Facebook, the Laku Lampah community also uses Blogs, Youtube, Twitter, and also Instagram to promote their activities. In the use of social media, this community always follows the development of social media which is a trend and is widely used by the community. Therefore, after using Facebook at the beginning, this community also uses blogs, Youtube, Twitter and Instagram in stages.

One of the tasks of the board as an agent is to introduce the Laku Lampah community to the public sphere. In introducing the Laku Lampah community, the board used social media as a marketing tool. Social media plays an important role in attracting community interest to join Laku Lampah community activities. The existence of social media helps a lot in marketing the Laku Lampah community in society. Social media also makes it easy for the Laku Lampah community to be widely known by the community. Social media plays an important role in maintaining the existence of the Laku Lampah community. Therefore, it becomes a necessity for the management to be actively involved in promoting the activities of the Laku Lampah community through social media. In addition to actively promoting community activities using the community's social media, participants are also indirectly required to promote through their social media accounts. In addition to the community organizers, the participants also contributed to increasing the existence of the Laku Lampah community.

For administrators, promoting community activities through the community's social media is their obligation. But apart from these obligations, as an agent, the board also promotes the Laku Lampah community through their social media. This can happen because the board feels that they have become an important part of the community itself so that the board members are happy to promote community activities through their social media. Likewise, the participants, their sense of engagement with the community, made them participate in promoting the activities of the Laku Lampah community through posting on some of their social media accounts. The participants and also community board can be said to be agents reflected in the actions they take. Both participants and administrators have an important role in marketing the Laku Lampah community. Marketing through social media is the most effective way to attract people's interest. Such patterns will continue to be repeated and have a positive impact on the development of the Laku Lampah community in society.

Besides, social media can also help the Laku Lampah community in building relationships with several parties. As an agent, the board utilizes social media as a means of communicating both among fellow agents and with other parties. The existence of social media makes the administrators and participants can communicate intensely so that the relationships between these agents are well established. In developing the existence of the Laku Lampah community, the board used social media to establish relationships with several parties such as other historical communities and mass media. As a structure, the Laku Lampah community is obliged to build good relations with several parties in developing its existence. To make this happen, the management's task as an agent is to establish relationships with several parties that are beneficial for the development of the existence of the Laku Lampah community. Assisted by social media, administrators can easily establish good interactions with other historical communities and other parties such as online media accounts, historians and cultural figures. With good relations, the parties concerned will also be able to help develop the existence of the Laku Lampah community by promoting the existence of this community. Of course, this is realized by the existence of good cooperation between fellow agents in the Laku Lampah community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above it can be concluded that the agent has an important role in the development of the existence of the community of past behavior. The role of the agent is included in two actions:

1. Agents are in Charge as Activity Conceptor

Laku Lampah community cannot be separated from its activities. The existence of activities becomes the most important factor in the sustainability of the Laku Lampah community. This makes the agents work hard to display activities that are always different in each implementation. To form self-identity, in each activity, the board will give a unique title and theme of the activity. The board also

groups community activities based on the characteristics of their respective activities. Avoiding monotony, in every activity of the Laku Lampah community, the agents always try to showcase activities innovations to make it look more fresh and up to date.

2. Agents are Responsible for Marketing the Laku Lampah Community

In promoting the Laku Lampah community, agents use social media as a means of communication and promotion. As an agent, the board is obliged to regularly promote the activities of the Laku Lampah community through community-owned social media. But outside of these obligations, the board also promoted the activities of the Laku Lampah community through their social media. Different from the board, the participants do not have the obligation to promote the activities of the Laku Lampah community. However, the participants also promoted the activities of the Laku Lampah community through their private social media.

REFERENCES

- Afrizal. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Sebuah Upaya Mendukung Penggunaan Penelitian Kualitatif dalam Berbagai Disiplin Ilmu*. Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Penelitian Kualitatif & Desain Riset: Memilih di antara Lima Pendekatan*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Giddens, A. (2003). *The Constitution of Society: Teori Strukturasi Untuk Analisis Sosial*. Pasuruan: Penerbit Pedati.
- Giddens, A. (2010). *Teori Strukturasi: Dasar-Dasar Pembentukan Struktur Sosial Masyarakat*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Haryanta, A. T., & Sujatmiko, E. (2012). *Kamus Sosiologi*. Surakarta: Aksara Sinergi Media.
- Liliweri, A. (2014). *Sosiologi dan Komunikasi Organisasi*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Nasrullah, N. (2008). *Teori-Teori Sosiologi*. Bandung: Widya Padjadjaran.
- Sugiyono. (2010). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Susilo, R. K. D. (2008). *20 Tokoh Sosiologi Modern: Biografi Para Peletak Sosiologi Modern*. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media.