

Community Engagement in The Balige People's Market Revitalization Program

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ABSTRACT

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This research is motivated by the implementation of market revitalization in Balige which has not been able to create an optimal market. This study aims to describe in detail community engagement in the revitalization of the Balige people's market. The research method used is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out by interview, observation, and documentation techniques. The data was obtained and analyzed qualitatively with the community engagement theory approach proposed by Vargas (2014). The results of the study show that community strength has not used a bottom-up approach with policies that only utilize land assets and balerong cultural heritage. Building trust between the government and traders and among traders has not been achieved with a commitment to engage traders only by carrying out six socialization sessions and two hearings and a lack of intervention to meet the needs of traders. Horizontal relations have not been implemented because a cooperative culture has not been formed due to mistrust and mutual relations that are also not carried out. Empowerment of traders is not carried out where traders are not engaged in the participatory process in decision-making and in important task forces. Community Engagement has not been optimally implemented as a decision-making strategy in the Balige people's market revitalization program.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional market revitalization program or people's market is a government program based on the first policy of the Regulation of the Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia Number: 03/M-DAG/PER/1/2010 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Trade 2010-2014 which is still running until now. Revitalization is a process that must be passed by traditional markets in the competition of the era of globalization (Arni, 2022). The market has a very important position to provide safe food and the market is influenced by the existence of upstream producers (providers of fresh ingredients), suppliers, sellers, consumers, market managers, health officials and community leaders (Museliza & Nesner, 2019). During the first administration of President Joko Widodo, this program was included in the development of nawacita with the goal and achievement of building 5000 units of people's markets and then in 2020-2021 as many as 227 markets (ksp.go.id).

The people's market revitalization program also refers to Law Number 7 of 2014 which is then further regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 of 2021 concerning Guidelines for the Management of Trade Facilities, where this program must be carried out with development in 4 aspects, namely physical, management, economic and social. The results of the National Market Profile Survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency regarding the impact of market revitalization for the 2015-2019 period in Java, Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan & Papua generally show that physical revitalization is the dimension with the highest index. The reform of traditional markets is not always related to the physical construction of

traditional market buildings, but also improves the behavior of traders in providing services to consumers (Saidah & Hakam, 2023).

Efforts to revitalize the people's market can raise new problems, one of which is when the results of development are rejected by traders. Rejection of development results often occurs due to the construction and distribution of new stalls that are not in accordance with the needs of traders. Rindu Sanubari, a researcher at the Center for People's Economic Studies UGM (2020), stated that this happened because the revitalization carried out by the government tended to prioritize physical-based development without paying attention to the engagement of traders who sell in the market (fisipol.ugm.ac.id).

The problem of the engagement of traders also occurred in the revitalization of the Balige people's market. Community engagement can be defined as community participation in relevant decision-making based on community interests and the improvement of community welfare (McCabe et al., 2006). The engagement of Balige traders with the existence of consultation rooms, socialization and forms of engagement that traders themselves strive to voice their aspirations shows that there is a tendency to policy problems as explained by Sihombing, (2019), problems often arise due to policymakers who often ignore the interests of the relevant community. The revitalization program that does not present the needs of traders brings problems to actions such as disobeying zoning that goes against the rules, empty stalls and stalls, refusal to take to the streets and conflicts between traders and traders and the local government.

After physical revitalization, there is a task for the local government regarding demands from traders related to engagement and programs that do not meet the needs of traders. Based on the results of interviews and the results of the initial research in the pre-research, it shows that the revitalization program that does not present the needs of traders brings problems to actions such as disobeying zoning that goes against the rules, empty stalls and stalls, refusal actions by taking to the streets and conflicts between traders and traders and the local government. On the other hand, the local government must also adhere to the regulations of the central government, namely the Indonesian National Standard 8152:2015 Pasar Rakyat where the funding for this program also comes from the State Budget of the Ministry of Public Works amounting to Rp. 23,356,657,000.

To assist in the analysis, the researchers took several previous studies as reference materials and comparisons with the conducted research. The research conducted by Triatmojo & Rengga, (2019). Indicates that the evaluation results show the Rejomulyo market revitalization program has not been optimal. The lack of engagement in program planning has resulted in facilities and infrastructure that do not meet their needs, leading to a group of traders refusing to relocate. The group of traders who refuse to move has resulted in a quiet market condition. Subsequently, research by Magdina et al., (2018). The results of the study compared the implementation of two market revitalizations in the city of Medan, namely the Sukaramai market, which was concluded to be less effective, and the revitalization of the Titi Kuning market, which yielded the opposite result. The subsequent research conducted by Fajri et al., (2020) showed the existence of a social movement against the construction project of the PLTP in the Gunung Talang area, with the reason being that they were not engaged in the planning of the development. The objective of the social movement in terms of changing the policies enacted by the community in rejecting the PLPT development in the Gunung Talang area of Bukit Kili cannot yet be deemed successful, as there has been no government policy to halt the construction project. The difference in the research to be conducted compared to previous studies lies in the research location. The research location in this study is the Balige public market, as one of the markets that has the opportunity to be revitalized; however, the implementation of this program is still marked by issues. The theory used in the research also differs by viewing engagement as a strategy in the public policy process for relevant and coherent decision-making.

Based on this background, this paper aims to describe and explain community engagement in the implementation of the Balige people's market revitalization program which can be seen as a way or strategy in decision-making that is relevant and coherent with the local context of traders.

METHOD

The method used is research using a qualitative research method approach in descriptive form. The research was conducted at the Balige people's market on Jl Sisingamangaraja, Napitupulu Bagasan, Balige. There are 2 data sources, namely primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are data sources that directly provide data sources to data collectors, for example such as live interviews. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are sources that do not directly provide data to data collectors, for example through documents. The data collection techniques used are through interviews, observations, and documentation. The informants

in this study were selected by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique of data sources with certain considerations. There are 3 informants in this study, including the Head of the Industry, Trade, Cooperatives & MSMEs Office of Toba Regency as the key informant, the Head of the Market Division and employees in the market sector, Market Officers, and traders in the Balige market as the main informants, and the public as additional informants. The researcher used the interactive analysis technique of Miles and Huberman in (Sutopo, 2002) with 3 steps of data analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The data validity technique is carried out using triangulation. The triangulation used in this study is method triangulation, data source triangulation and theoretical triangulation.

DISCUSSION

1. Genuine Community Engagement: Building Community Strength

Community engagement offers opportunities to harness the strengths of community, culture, resources, assets, and values (Morgan & Cook, 2014). The engagement of Balige traders in development is a way to utilize the strength of their community in the land of Batak Toba. The power of the community is utilized in the form of assets, namely land that originally belonged to indigenous peoples. Balerong used to be used as a theater center, a meeting place for kings and a court place, therefore the balerong is also known as Onan Raja. Previously, this market was a land of sonakmalela customs (Napitupulu and Pardede) which was donated to the government as a form of market. This is a form of effort to meet the expectations contained in the SNI of the people's market, namely the market to become the home of the economy and the house of Indonesian culture.

The use of the merchant's obedience was in fact only to defend Belerong. Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, it was concluded that the Balige people's market revitalization program has not used a bottom-up approach or development that is not based on the needs of traders but policies from the center implemented in the Balige market with minimal adjustment to the local context of Balige traders. The flow of funds from the central government as well as programs, which come from the central government, results in local governments that must be subject to the central government in terms of physical development. Thus, in this case, the local government has not shown self-reliance where the local government itself is still very dependent on the flow of funds from the central government and the absence of policies issued to adjust to the local context of traders.

2. Building Trust

The community needs government commitment and a sincere presence in the community to respond to the needs of the community through real intervention (Vargas, 2014). The decision made by considering the moral values of society has great potential to gain broader support and strengthen public trust in government institutions (Wirata, 2024). Building trust requires a commitment to engage traders in the long term. The form of trader engagement in accordance with the classification of the form of government interaction with the community by Cavaye (2017) was found only in the first and second level, namely informing decisions and consultations to provide feedback related to the Balige people's market

revitalization program. Thus, the government's commitment to engaging traders is limited to conveying information, community engagement should engage community members in the public policy process from planning to project evaluation (Bice et al., 2019).

Trust can be built with a genuine presence in the community to respond to the needs of the community through real intervention. Based on the documentation study conducted by the researcher on the documents of the socialization minutes in the revitalization program, most of the engagement activities are carried out in government places, in the sense that non-government goes directly to the market. The first socialization in 2019 was carried out at RM. Sinar Minang. The second socialization on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 was carried out at the data center on the 4th floor of the Toba Regent Office. Then the next 4 socializations were carried out at the pavilion of the Toba regent's official house. This then shows the lack of presence of the local government in the midst of traders.

The government's seriousness in building trust can be seen from real intervention in responding to the needs of the community, especially Balige traders as a target in the implementation of this program. The needs that have been proposed by traders include:

- a The request for the building to be adjusted to the needs of traders so that not much is changed, including considering related to the second floor because before the revitalization, the local government also built the 2nd floor of the market but it was not used.
- b Reviewing the problem of Indomaret, Alfamart, Alfamidi which according to the regulations should not be built that close, there must be a distance from the market, but in reality this market is close to more than one modern store.
- c Request that the market should not be changed to a modern market because the Balige market is a traditional market that must maintain its traditional side by not zoning.
- d Repairs for damage to several spots in the new market and requests for the demolition of stall tables so that traders can rebuild as needed.
- e The request to review the distribution of stalls and stalls to pay more attention to traders who have been complying with taxes only so that traders who have been compliant do not experience a reduction.
- f Submitting settlement demands against traders who do not comply with zoning.

Regarding the request from these traders, the local government has tried to take action but not all of them can be fulfilled because they are bound by SNI regulations. Strengthen the form of local government intervention in traders' applications:

- a The application related to the 2nd floor and the development that does not need to change much is not possible due to land limitations.
- b The problem of Indomaret, Alfamart & Alfamidi can no longer be done because the development permit already exists and the local government that issues.
- c Market development does not completely transform the market into a modern market because the traditional side is maintained such as bargaining and zoning is an obligation in accordance with the provisions of a healthy market.
- d Some of the damaged spots have not been repaired by the local government because what has been handed over is only management while the building has not been returned

to the Regency Government so that the Regency Government is not legal to carry out physical intervention. However, in this case, the local government has prepared its own estimated price recapitulation for the rehabilitation of the Balerong Balige market at an estimated cost of Rp.87,467,737.

- e Regarding traders' disobedience to zoning, the local government has formed a Balige market control team. The appeal was also issued on October 27, 2022 and the last warning was issued on October 31, 2020. Until now, the zoning system has not run optimally.

The engagement of the community in the people's market development program left the problem of distrust from some traders. Intervention from the government that is not in accordance with what is expected results in disappointed traders. The interaction between the government and the community has not succeeded in gluing and building trust between traders and trust between the government and traders (Veriasa, 2017). The government has failed to send a signal that the government is serious about building mutual trust. In fact, building trust is one of the indicators of success in engagement.

The lack of a community-based agenda from the planning period to the return of management to the local government in 2020 and since then has shown a less long commitment to be present in the midst of traders and engage them so that traders provide support and strive to make the program a success. But what is happening now is that some traders ignore the rules that have been agreed upon.

3. Horizontal Relationship

When the government must establish relationships outside of itself, it will be faced with the necessity of managing relationships that each have equal standing and autonomy (Dwiyanto, 2020). Engagement requires a collaborative and reciprocal approach that requires active listening, not dictating participants and learning about the specific needs of the community (Vargas, 2014). Horizontal relationships can be built from a cooperative culture, namely a culture to be willing to cooperate in this case between the local government and traders in the Balige market. Working together between two parties requires a willingness to listen and learn from each other. The interaction between the government and Balige traders in socialization and hearing meetings is often colored by chaos caused by traders who feel that the government has not listened to their aspirations so far.

This condition resulted in a lack of cooperative culture between traders and the government. The Toba local government in several respects, including physical development, also feels that it is not engaged so that they cannot engage traders as well widely. The local government does accept and hear traders speak out during socialization and hearing meetings, but real evidence of commitment is the existence of real intervention. This phenomenon is then not in line with the horizontal relationship that actively listens without dictating the participants because socialization is mostly carried out to convey decisions that have previously been decided by the government.

The above phenomenon is the same as the research conducted by Eversole (2011) regarding community engagement in rural development in Australia. The government always tries to engage the community in the governance process, but the approach to community

engagement often works in one direction, such as in the Balige people's market revitalization program which is adjusted to government regulations. Even though the expectations, values and ways of working between the government and the community are different. As a result, the government does not understand the community like Balige traders and ignores or does not know what is really happening or what they need.

The engagement approach has not been able to overcome obstacles because the interaction between the government and traders does not make efforts to build and develop the same understanding. The existing form of engagement has not been able to become an effective means of mutual communication to build a cooperative culture. Differences in interests in interaction make it difficult to build a culture of cooperation. Local governments interact with traders as their channel to convey policy information only, but traders expect more that they should be engaged in planning and decision-making.

This is influenced by unbuilt trust so that it is less possible to carry out collaborative and reciprocal processes where socialization and other engagement efforts do not engage activities to learn from each other and develop understanding and build common arrangements. Traders are also not engaged in the market development task force so they do not have access to be directly engaged in the decision-making process in this program.

4. Empowerment Through Shared Leadership and Participatory Processes

Breaking down the isolation between community members, public officials and service providers is a way to initiate empowerment that can lead to expanded and healthy partnerships (Vargas, 2014). The local government as a bureaucracy works separately with traders in the Balige market, therefore community engagement must break through the isolation and loneliness of traders. Participation in governance and local communities refers to the capacity of citizens to engage in matters of public management, not only participation in voting and democracy-based processes that maintain the accountability of policymakers to the public interest, but also by taking part in decision-making that will ultimately respond proactively to citizens' concerns (Ricciardelli, 2023). In the construction of this people's market, the local government is the closest channel for traders because some affairs are also held by the ministry. However, the engagement of the local government can also be seen with the formation of the Balige Balairung Market Development Task Force which consists of regional apparatus organizations only.

Engagement is basically a democratic process that engages the public directly or when administrators engage the public privately and not through their trustees or powers of attorney (Meyer et al., 2022). The engagement of community elements in a structured manner does not engage traders but sees the potential of traditional and religious leaders in terms of delivering information to traders. It is unfortunate then that the presence of traders is not taken into account in strategic matters even though according to what was conveyed by the Agency for Regulation, the community groups engaged in this development are all traders because they are directly affected by the policy. Community engagement should close this gap.

The community as governance dissolves the line that separates the line of power that separates the government and the community so that both work together by sharing responsibilities (McCabe et al., 2006). The engagement of

traders in the Balige market revitalization program does not pay attention to this very important thing, not only seen from the unthinkability to consider and include traders in the development task force as well as the trader control team consisting of 73 people from different Regional Apparatus Organizations. The reluctance to share this responsibility can also be seen from the uninvited traders in meetings responding to development plans. The minutes of the socialization of the Balige market development on Tuesday / July 7, 2020 show that the initial socialization was carried out in response to the development plan only inviting government agencies and representatives of community leaders.

Joint learning is part of a participatory process that emphasizes the existence of an element of education as part of community empowerment. Regulation, in accordance with the SNI Pasar Rakyat 8152:2015, the principle of market management requires the empowerment of the people's market with a market community empowerment program followed by a market development and activity program. Regarding this, the people's market in terms of regulations and requirements strongly emphasizes the existence of a community in the market. Balige market traders have independently formed the Balige traders association.

This program is a program that must be carried out after traders return to the market after the physical construction is completed. However, in its implementation in the Balige market, the empowerment of management only comes to socialization without the existence of FDG (focus discussion group), market schools and technical guidance on market management due to the lack of human resources, funds and the reluctance of the Regional Government to cooperate with traders because it is considered difficult to regulate. As a result of market activities do not attract the interest of consumer visits or public customers because of the absence of events that should exist if the Regional Government and traders work together.

The people's market SNI also states that one of the development requirements is that the technical planning process must be participatory by engaging stakeholders. In accordance with the physical development held by the central government through the North Sumatra Facilities and Infrastructure Center, it should provide a participatory process by considering that the local government is a stakeholder who has a role and function related to the market. The local government can also be a key person who needs to be established because the local government can provide information about who is very important to be engaged with the consideration of being able to develop potentials that have not been developed to the maximum. However, on several occasions during the construction of the Balige market, it was highlighted because of the refusal of local government traders, giving an answer that they were also minimal or even not engaged in physical development.

The engagement of the local government will certainly greatly affect the engagement of the traders themselves. Because the Government is the most responsible party for the existence and management of the market (Sumenda, 2016). Empowerment begins with the dissolution of the line between the government and the community and breaking down the isolation so that partnerships can be expanded and healthy. Thus, when the local government is not engaged as the host of the implementation of this program, how can the community be empowered with joint leadership and a participatory process. The engagement of Balige traders in this program is

only limited. They are not seen as the subject of development itself. Their engagement is only seen from whether they are willing or unwilling to accept and implement policies that come from the center. This is then not in line with the mission in achieving the vision of Toba Regency, which is to build superior and reliable human resources (HR). The participatory process that highlights the principles of education has not been seriously worked on in this program.

CONCLUSION

The dimension of genuine community engagement: building community strength has not used a bottom-up approach with policies that only utilize land assets and balerong cultural heritage. Building trust between the government and traders and among traders has not been achieved with a commitment to engage traders only by carrying out six socialization sessions and two hearings and a lack of intervention to meet the needs of traders. Horizontal relations have not been implemented because a cooperative culture has not been formed due to mistrust and mutual relations that are also not carried out. Empowerment of traders is not carried out where traders are not engaged in the participatory process in decision-making and in important task forces. Community Engagement has not been optimally implemented as a decision-making strategy in the Balige people's market revitalization program.

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