

Institutional Approach For Adat Community Empowerment: Case of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar In West Java

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the application of institutional approach for adat community empowerment, through a case of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar. It employs qualitative research design, and finds that the implementation of adat community empowerment program did not improve the institutional capacity, especially persons and their structures. As a consequence, there are misunderstandings and conflicts of interest, especially related to forest and land management, between the adat community and the government. To be more effective, the government needs to increase the frequency of open dialogue with Adat institutions and people. The government also needs to consider the Adat values and culture, and support the community initiatives by providing facilities and other supporting factors.

Key words: Adat Community Empowerment, Institutional Approach, Kasepuhan Ciptagelar

INTRODUCTION

After the 1998 reform, there was a phenomenon of “Adat Revival” in Indonesia, which was presented from various efforts to revive traditional norms, institutions and mechanisms in local government. Adat revival occurred in West Sumatera (Beckman & Beckman, 2001), East Nusa Tenggara (Erb, 2007), Central Sulawesi (Sangaji, 2007), Central Kalimantan (Carthy, 2004), and other regions in Indonesia (Duncan, 2007; Li, 1999; Bebbington et al, 2004). Adat revival also occurred in Sukabumi District, West Java Province, where there is adat community of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar. The community is administratively located within the protected forest zone of Taman Nasional Gunung Salak and Halimun. The estimated population is around 30,000 people (Efendi et al, 2010).

Several studies find that adat revival of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar was economically motivated for legal recognition of adat rights over the area of 70,000 hectares within the forest. Their efforts to pursue legal recognition has not been very successful, and often ends in conflict due to differences in perceptions between the community, governments, and Perhutani (Efendi et al., 2010; Prabowo et al, 2010; Rusmana et al, 2017). Low process of empowerment from the government becomes a catalyst for the emergence of conflicts. Rusmana et al (2017) find that low levels of education,

weak law enforcement, lack of environmental awareness, and poverty factors accelerate forest destruction of the forest.

Institutional approach is expected to be an alternative method of resolving conflicts and improving the livelihoods of adat communities. As shown by Sutiyo and Maharjan (2014) from the cases of several regions in Indonesia, collective awareness and social solidarity are easier to develop through empowering community institutions. The institutional approach to community empowerment means effort to build communities by utilizing their social institutions as a medium to increase the capacity of their members (Ostrom, 2007). The approach is carried out based on arguments that a norm, both formal and non-formal, will have a real impact on the pattern of interaction between institutions and effect the final outcome of governance. Syahyuti (2006) classifies four elements of institution, namely: Person; Structure; Interests; Rules.

This study aims to explain the application of institutional approach for adat community empowerment, through a case of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar. The context includes policies implemented after the enactment of Law 6/2014 on Villages. This is a multidisciplinary study of development and social sciences.

METHOD

Primary data was collected from observations and interviews. Fieldworks were

conducted in 2018. Key informants included the officers from Cisolok Sub-District Office, and the leader and prominent figures of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar. Overall, this study employs qualitative research design.

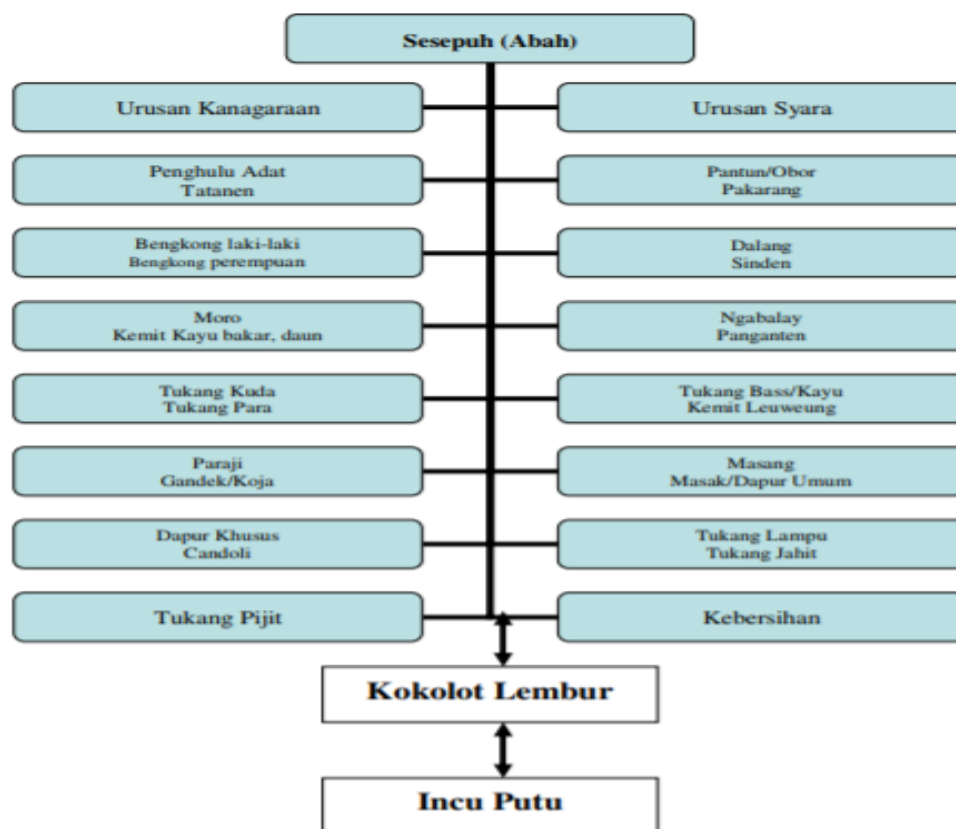
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Person and Structure

Administratively, Kasepuhan Ciptagelar is under the Sirnaresmi Village, Cisolok district, Sukabumi District. In 2008, Kasepuhan had 84 households with 293 people, which included 151 men and 142 women. Customarily, the community is part of Kesatuan Adat Banten Kidul,

which also includes Kasepuhan Cisungsang, Kasepuhan Cisit, Kasepuhan Cicarucub, Kasepuhan Citorek, Kasepuhan Sirnaresmi, Kasepuhan Ciptamulya, and Kasepuhan Cibedug.

The community is well known to strictly practice customs and traditions. Various rites include farming activities like *ngaseuk*, *mipit*, *nganyaran*, arts and cultural activities like *Angklung Buhun*, *Wayang Golek*, and *Jipeng*. The community is led by an adat leader, commonly called “*Abah Ugi*”. Organizational structure of the community is as follows:



Source: interview with Ki Ugi Suganda

Figure 1 Indigenous Community Institutional Structure

All organizational structures are responsible to the highest leadership, Abah Ugi. All positions in the structure are obtained by descent, not chosen and determined by the community. Exceptions apply to *Kokolot Lembur* or elders at the village level chosen by *incu putu* or Kasepuhan residents.

Other customary tools that support the life of the Ciptagelar community are *mabeurang*-

(*dukun pondok*), *bengkong*, *dukun-tani*, *dukun*, *paninggaran*. In addition, there are guards or aides who accompany old-fashioned fathers if they are on official trips.

Kasepuhan is now led by Abah Ugi Sugriana Rakasiwi. He has been the leader of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar since 2007, after his father died. The community believed that customary leaders hold trust of their ancestors to help the

community in their daily activities. Many things, especially those related to rice planting ceremonies, thanks-giving events, and others always await the decision of the customary elders. Their role is very important in various activities carried out by the community, both in groups and individually.

It is found that the government does not optimally involve the adat leaders. For example, the inclusion of the Ciptagelar areas in the integrated tourism plan of Sukabumi District did not consider the input from *Abah* or the head of the Kasepuhan. Several other empowerment programs that have already been running are also more emphasizing on physical infrastructures. The program did not reach out to increase the capacity of human resources, especially the top leadership of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar.

Generally, although some institutions now begun to be included in various programs, many of them still need socialization and involve the traditional leaders and their institutions as a whole. Moreover, it is not only the government that offers empowerment programs. Many private sectors such as Non-Governmental Organizations and profit companies also collaborate with the community of Kasepuhan through their *Corporate Service Responsibility* (CSR) programs. From the narrative of the informants, two companies that successfully ran the program included Telkomsel and Bank Mandiri. Telkomsel helps residents in providing ambulances with special wheels, while Bank Mandiri helps residents build turbines at several village points. In the implementation of the program, residents were invited to design and provide advice on their execution in the field. This approach was even more successful in attracting public sympathy, so that there is a match between the target and the realization of the program.

2 . Interest

Since the past time, Kasepuhan was well known as an independent community. They have their technology based on local wisdom. Thus, cases of harvest failures, pests attack, food shortages and starvation are very rarely occurred. Their food stock storage, namely *leuit*,

is reported to have never even been empty all year. Even when we ask about community expectations in various empowerment programs that are now being implemented intensively in various regions, local people tend to respond casually. For them, their status has been empowered both economically and socially.

The statement is based on their satisfaction with the standard of living they have lived for years. For their daily lives, the community fulfills basic needs by farming. Some of them also make money from raising livestock and garde-ning. When the rice fields are in time *Boyor* (quite a lot of water), they also use it for fish ponds. They also earn income from making various woven crafts and sugar. After the harvest period, each household will usually set aside two bunches of rice to be handed over to the elders. The rice will usually be stored in communal barns which can also function as a reserve. In addition, rice in communal barns is also borrowed by the community.

There is a system of *maro*, meaning a system of share between the owner and the cultivator in agriculture and livestock. In addition, there is also a system of *bawon* when the harvest arrives for those who help harvest. For example if someone helps harvest as much as five bunches of rice, one will get a tie. The same system is applied when pounding rice into rice.

The customary law prohibits the sale of rice and its processed products. At present, people have been allowed to sell rice if they experience excessive reserves. Selling rice is also carried out mainly to finance the construction of various facilities and infrastructure needed, for example the construction of waterways, roads, and bridges.

There are two main interests of Kasepuhan Ciptagelar in the recent Adat revival. Firstly, preserving and maintaining the Adat rules, rites and tradition as the way of life. The community wants to be recognized as an adat entity, thus being treated not in the same way as ordinary village community. They also want the government to facilitate, and if possible, to help the financing of various rites of the community,

especially *Seren Taun* rite. *Seren Taun* is a traditional season in which all members of community join together with some dancing, food and various ceremonies. In the *Seren Taun*, community and people from the other villages can freely join the party.

Secondly, the interest of Kasepuhan is to manage and utilize the resources from the forest they claimed, as large as 70,000 Hectares. Traditionally, the community has set the forest areas in their area: *Leuweung Kolot*; *Leuweung Titipan*; *Leuweung Sampalan*. *Leuweung Kolot* is a forest that should not be exploited. *Leuweung Titipan* is a forest area that must be guarded and should not be used without obtaining permission from the adat leader. *Leuweung Sampalan* is a forest area that can be used for the purposes of working on fields, plantations, grazing livestock, and looking for firewood. The main interest of the community is to have a legal recognition over their forest claim. Yet, so far only informal recognition can be obtained.

The division of forests into three categories also supports empowerment programs in Ciptagelar, not only in terms of the economy but also from the environmental side. With their customary rules and values, the institutional structure of Kasepuhan indirectly has helped to realize economic and social welfare, while managing the sustainability of forests for the future. Empowerment programs carried out by the government have in some level accommodated the interests of Kasepuhan. This was indicated by the absence of forest conflicts over the past three years. In addition, the community is committed to helping reforestation.

3 . Rules

Kasepuhan Ciptagelar has a belief that these humans are part of several creatures that inhabit the universe. They classified the world to be "*Jagat Leutik*" (small world/microcosm) and "*Jagat Gede*" (big world/macrocosm). The universe with its various contents must be seen as creatures as well and therefore can interact with humans. Not only humans are entitled to determine the fate of all other creatures.

The community prioritizes balance of relations between humans and nature. They believe that nature has and gives signs that can be read in communication to maintain balance. The application of this basic view of nature can be seen in the fields of agriculture and forest management by the Kasepuhan community. The community recognizes several star formations and their meanings in agricultural activities:

- "*Tanggal kereti turun beusi*", meaning that in about August Bintang Kereti began to appear, meaning that the community must immediately make farming tools / tools.
- "*Tanggal kidang, turun kujang*", meaning that people start clearing land for fields and start working on the fields.
- "*Tilem kidang, turun kungkang*", meaning, if the *Kidang* has disappeared sometime in May, then paddy fields and paddy fields must have been harvested, because based on experience, in May there will be a lot of stingy parasites as rice pests.

The community does not view forest as the production tools. This means that wood is not known as economic commodities, and forest products are not utilized directly. Forests function more as springs, climate balancing, animal habitat, and conservation. According to the informant, the people who live now only borrow survival rations for generations to come, thus they have to manage the forest in a fair and sustainable way.

The values and customary rules that are held firmly by the community mostly include the general objective of empowerment. But in some fields such as health and economy, the government programs are often less acceptable to the people of Kasepuhan. The tradition of local people who believe that disease is a natural occurrence in the human body and can be cured through herbal medicines raises people's reluctance to take part in health education programs. The community trusts more the *dukun desa* in handling diseases, even if the condition is chronic. The other example, the limitation on the sale of rice is also a tradition which then limits the

level of income. Although the majority of the population believes that this cannot be violated, the leeway in this regulation will certainly increase the amount of people's income.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of adat community empowerment program run by the local government did not target the improvement of institutional capacity, especially persons and their structures. As a consequence, there are mis-understandings and conflicts of interest, especially related to forest and land management, between the adat community and the government. In addition to the lack of coordination, community empowerment has been carried out independently by the community themselves with minimal supporting facilities by the government. These conditions are indeed more effective in achieving goals, but in terms of results, the goal of increasing the capacity of citizens themselves has not run optimally.

To be more effective, the government needs to increase the frequency of open dialogue with *Adat* institutions and people. The government also needs to consider the *Adat* values and culture so that the programs are more effective. The efforts carried out by the community independently needs to be supported by the provision of facilities and other supporting factors, both financially and physically.

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