Housing Policy Dynamics:
Actor and Culture Collaboration Perspective

Ahmad Sururi1* Budiman Rusli2 Ida Widianingsih3 Slamet Usman Ismanto4

1Public Administration Department, Universitas Serang Raya
2,4Public Administration Department, Universitas Padjadjaran
3Center for Decentralization and Participatory Development Research, Universitas Padjadjaran

*Corresponding author. Email: ahmad17029@mail.unpad.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research is about the dynamics of housing policy in the perspective of actor and cultural cooperation. The research method used was descriptive qualitative through case studies in Serang, a city in Indonesia and the data collection techniques used were semi-structured interviews and observations. The results showed that actor and cultural collaboration can create ideal social interactions and collaborative relationships through prerequisites which include initial conditions for creating ideal actor collaboration supported by a strong organizational culture, formal and informal structural processes through mutual understanding between core policy actors and society, the possibility and barriers marked by the type of collaboration based on a participatory cultural approach and accountability results that provide opportunities for traditionally local community institutions to develop in building collaborative relationships and social integration to realize the success of the housing program of the Regional Government. It is expected that this study will contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of housing policy from the perspective of actor and cultural collaboration.

Keywords: Indonesia, Housing Policy, Collaboration, Actors, Culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

By 2050, the world's population in urban areas as centers of economic activity, socio-cultural interactions, and humanity is projected to increase (UN-Habitat III, 2016). This increasing trend has resulted in the increasing need for greater housing development and has become a challenge for public housing sector organizations to provide housing for the community. In addition, there are demands for housing policy actors to address various housing problems in society. And collaboration is seen as an effort to solve problems [17] and [3] as well as being an important instrument in supporting the success of public service governance ([1]; [10]; [24]; [31]; [43]). Although in real fact, the collaboration process is not always easy and faces various challenges [15] and [26], practically collaboration is an effective approach in overcoming various challenges and public problems such as housing and poverty [18].

At certain stages the collaboration of housing policy actors often experiences stagnation or deadlock due to failures when dealing with community cultures such as beliefs, value systems, norms, customs, myths, symbols, language, behavior, and structural elements of certain groups or communities; basic assumptions and values; beliefs, attitudes and conventions; systems and institutions; artifacts, products, rituals and behaviors ([25]; Rapoport, 1969). In this case, the challenges and obstacles that must be overcome can include the complexity of the roles of formal institutional housing, the lack of competence in human resources and the different understanding among organizations outside the government [15].

The understanding that cultural differences can create tension as well as complementary strength in collaborative relationships ([15]; [37]) is an important point of view in this study. Although in the context of collaboration with housing policy actors, the cultural problems faced do not lie on cultural differences but on cultural similarities that prevail in society. This is because culture in community interaction [8] has become a representation that has been institutionalized individually and collectively.

Empirical problems of housing in Indonesia, precisely in Serang, a city in Banten Province are still
being faced, such as the existence of a system of values and public beliefs opposing various housing programs from the government, the low discipline of community behavior for healthy living, the existence of traditional local community institutions and the heritage of irreplaceable housing building hereditary.

The existing conditions of urban settlements in Serang Indonesia consist of 15,898 semi-permanent houses and 87,342 permanent houses. The number of slum housing areas is 1,602 Ha. And most of the existing housing consists of the number of households that own/control 75.17% of houses, while the number of households still rent is 8.66%, and others is 16.17% (BPS Kota Serang, 2020). Culturally, the people of Serang who occupies the urban settlement area tend to be homogeneous, this is because most of the people who live there are people who have migrated or come from suburbs of Serang and work in urban areas so that there is a strengthening of ideas, values, cultures and local beliefs of the community that have been maintained until today.

Based on the understanding that the collaboration of policy and cultural actors plays important roles in achieving the goals of sustainable housing development, this study tries to contribute thoughts to the dynamics of housing policy in the perspective of actor collaboration and the understanding that the house has become a cultural phenomenon so that its form and organization are strongly influenced by cultural environment (Rapoport, 1969). Thus, it is expected that the synergy of collaboration and culture will be able to encourage effective participation for all stakeholders. That recognizing cultural diversity is a source of enrichment for society and makes an important contribution to the development of sustainable cities, settlements and communities [41].

This article is divided into several parts: introduction, literature review, research methods, discussion and conclusions. The purpose of this study is to explain how the dynamics of housing policy is in the perspective of actor collaboration and cultural approaches.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on collaborative research based on different approaches from various experts and academics includes collaboration between government, the public sector, public services, and innovation ([12]; [5]; [7]; [34]; [36]; [40]; [46]). This diversity leads to broad dimensions and understanding of collaboration. Therefore, literature review in this study will focus on aspects of collaboration related to culture and housing.

Collaborative and cultural research in various perspectives has been carried out by several experts such as ([16]; [18]; [35]; [44]; [46]; [47]). Research states that collaboration as a management and leadership strategy experiences various obstacles due to the ghost of a management culture that was deliberately instilled in the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand [18]. The notion of culture in the context of collaboration was put forward by several experts such as ([9]; [11]; [12]; [13]; [19]; [25]; [32]; [35]; [45]; [49]. Some of these definitions explain the cultural dynamics and collaboration in a comprehensive manner.

In particular, the discussion of research will be based on the analysis of actor collaboration theory as proposed by [3] in relation to the cultural diversity of society, namely 1) Initial conditions; 2) Formal and informal processes consisting of agreement, leadership, legitimacy, trust, conflict management and planning; 3) Formal and informal structures include membership, structural configurations, governance structures, 4) Possibilities and barriers consisting of types of collaboration and power imbalances and competing institutional logics; and 5) Results and accountability. In this case, the cultural contribution that is internalized in individuals and related to social structures through collaboration makes culture an important element to society [35].

3. METHODS

This research used a case study approach. The method was chosen to understand complex social phenomena through our main research question - “how” policy dynamics [50]. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the dynamics of housing policy in the perspective of actor and cultural collaboration. This process is considered as the social construction of stakeholders in the housing ecosystem such as housing associations, private sector builders, developers and contractors, lenders and investors, as well as voluntary and community sector policy stakeholders in Indonesia through their daily activities. Those and the interactions cannot be explored by using survey instruments [20].

3.1 Sampling Procedure

Purposeful sampling procedure is one of the core distinguishing elements of qualitative inquiry. The logic and the strength of purposive sampling tie on the selection of information-rich cases for in-depth study [27]. The location selection is based on geographic location, in Serang, Banten, Indonesia. In this study we only chose one area that represented the density level of urban settlement areas (high residential areas, medium residential areas and low residential areas), sub-district A. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents and the sub-district.

Seven respondents consisting of government and non-government participated in this study with different roles. Before the respondents are found, we first carried out a licensing process to the Head of the Housing and Settlement Area Office, the Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency and the Head of the Sub district. After obtaining permission, the process of identifying prospective respondents was carried out by obtaining information support from the secretarial and staffing departments of each office and sub-district to
obtain information on the address of the residence and the respondent's contact number. Having acquired this information, we selected respondents on purpose and contacted them by asking for permission to conduct interviews. In this process, we introduced ourselves, provided information about our research, an explanation of the rights and participation of respondents in research, included how data would be used, stored and how the confidentiality of respondents would be guaranteed and anonymity was strictly protected. These processes were repeated during each interview process. A total of nine respondents agreed to participate in this study and the interview schedule was arranged based on the agreement and consent of the respondents.

The use of alphabetical naming aimed to maintain the anonymity of government and non-government institutions being studied. It did so for the respondents. To refer to respondents in analysis and interpretation, phrases such as 'female and male respondents' were applied to semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, lasting for 45 minutes to an hour, which were used to collect data. The interview took place in the offices and homes of each respondent to make the respondents comfortable. The interview process was recorded using a tape recorder. Unless the participants objected to the recording, we recorded the answers of the respondents to complete the interview data during the recording process. The key themes of this interview focus on the problem as stated in the research question. This interview was considered as an ideal method of understanding and exploring the experiences, attitudes, meanings, and actions of respondents [39]. Because this research was informed by the social constructivist paradigm in which social reality was perceived as a social construction, experiences, activities, and phenomena by each respondent, they are assumed to be sources of social reality and can be explored in depth only using interview instruments [20].

3.2 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using systematic qualitative data analysis proposed by [21]. Interviews were analyzed through a data classification process (coding data), then the results of this data classification were labeled (labeling) and then compiled categories. In structuring the data classification process, we were guided by research questions.

The original interview transcripts (in Indonesian) were translated into English so that the English translated version of the interview became a source for us to compile data classifications. After categorizing the data, the data were coded and themes were arranged. The ordering of the themes was adjusted to the interview data used. These themes were then marked to be constructed and described in order to get the essence of what the data was trying to convey. Each theme was arranged according to each category and compared with all interview transcripts and placed in the same group.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Initial conditions

The context of the relationship between actor collaboration and culture in housing policy can be seen from the initial conditions which include the main tasks and functions of housing policy actors. The duties and responsibilities that are carried out include the formulation of policies in the field of planning, programming, and budgeting for housing activities. In this case, organizational culture is one of the keys to the successful collaboration of housing policy actors. Organizational culture as a pattern of beliefs, values, and experiences in organizational history tends to be indicated by the behaviors of its members (Brown, 1998), therefore there are assumptions that direct the interpretation and actions described by behaviors in various organizational positions [30].

The impact is that collaboration becomes a facilitation process that runs within an organization's rules to solve problems that can and cannot be resolved [18], this is because organizational culture includes engagement, consistency and adaptability [6], it also shows there is a desire to increase the effectiveness and performance of the program and encourage public leaders to innovate in providing services. This is in accordance with research stating that collaboration can produce innovative approaches in providing services and building partnerships with other sectors [33]. In addition, organizational culture as a representation of the collective values, beliefs and principles of organizational members [23] in our view has a strong relationship with actor collaboration in achieving housing policy goals. This includes historical, product, market, technology and strategy factors, employee types, management style, and national culture [22], so that it can be concluded that the creation of ideal actor collaboration is supported by a strong organizational culture.

4.2. Formal and informal processes and structures

Collaboration of housing policy actors in Serang can be described in the context of formal and informal processes. Several parties who have interests in and influence on the dynamics of housing policy in Serang which are sourced from the policy implementers include:

1) Serang Settlement and Settlement Area Service is a regional apparatus which has an interest in the implementation of housing and residential areas that are fit for habitation, fulfillment of healthy and safe housing and residential areas supported by infrastructures, public facilities and utilities, improving the quality of housing and slum settlements and access to housing ownership.
2) Serang Regional Development Planning Agency is the regional apparatus or agency having an interest in planning housing development.

3) Housing developers have an interest in increasing economic value/investment and business needs.

4) Low-income communities (MBR) who have an interest in owning a decent, healthy, safe and prosperous house to live in.

5) Banks/Financing Institutions that have an interest in channeling funds in the form of Home Ownership Loans (KPR) for MBR in order to meet housing needs or repair houses that are already owned.

6) Association of housing and settlement area organizers who have an interest in advocating for the welfare rights of MBR in access to home ownership.

Figure 1

Core Actors with an interest in Housing Policy Source: compiled by Researchers, 2020

Figure 1 is an illustration of the process of core policy actors who have formal and informal interests, consisting of the Housing and Settlement Areas Service, the Regional Development Planning Agency, housing developers, bank financial institutions, housing and settlement area organizers and Low Income Communities (MBR). In its implementation, the core actors of policy work together to enter into agreements and trust to realize an increase in the quality of housing. This is in accordance with empirical research data that the parties with an interest synergize to realize the improvement of the quality and quantity of housing and settlement areas, especially for low-income families as the main target group must get priority in achieving housing policy output.

One of the main obstacles often leading to the failure of actor collaboration in Serang is when dealing with a culture that has been passed down from generation to generation as well as a culture that was created by the community. In this case, it can be said that culture is something that is embedded in human interaction in various groups [8]; [49]. This further emphasizes that the collaboration dimension is closely related to the capacity of individuals who consciously support other individuals [35].

Thus, encouraging collaboration through interaction and formal and informal communication with communities through instruments of mutually beneficial rules and norms and in our view can be done through shared understanding by involving community and religious leaders as role models [38]. In addition to, attention should be paid to the group styles that have been formed in society that have become a cultural element [8].

4.3. Possibilities and Barriers

As has been stated in the results of research, that the parties have different interests, this is because in the dynamic process of housing policy there will be interactions and reactions from each organization, target group and environmental factors that cause pressure to emerge and are followed by bargaining action bidding or transactions [29]. Even so, the possibilities and barriers remain to be potential barriers to actor and cultural collaboration.

The results shows that housing programs in Serang still experiences obstacles such as the existing strong value system and public trust that were against various
government housing programs. In this case the community still has an understanding that the housing program is not profitable and keeps people away from the cultural values that have been upheld and maintained so far. Therefore the cultural approach becomes an instrument for solving problems of actor collaboration with the community[47]. In this perspective, the cultural approach is expected to influence group dynamics when faced collaboration [47].

Thus, we argue that this type of collaboration based on a participatory cultural approach is expected to overcome the low discipline behavior of the community. One type of collaboration through participatory planning provides space for local governments to be more responsive so that they can provide better services. More importantly, the characteristics of participatory planning involve all development stakeholders and can minimize the potential for conflict between those involved in development [48].

4.4. Results and Accountability

The researcher argues that in principle actors or parties who have an interest and are in public and non-public sector organizations must always be involved in any policy analysis process, both functioning as a formulator, pressure group and as implementers who are always active and proactive in housing and residential areas policy. As stated that strengthening and interorganizational communication between parties who have an interest in policy implementation is a part that must be considered [42]. The formulation of a policy will have an impact on policy implementation, therefore it must be able to identify policy objectives and the actors involved (who may or may not be involved). Various instruments are needed to make these policies and limit the various options, different problems use different instruments [14].

From the results of study, it can be concluded that there are traditional local community institutions that pose a challenge in building collaborative relationships and social integration to realize the success of local government housing programs. In particular, we consider the ways in which interactions between different cultures can encourage the formation and dissolution of collaborative networks. This interaction is central to network dynamics because culture and collaboration are bound together in a system of reciprocal relationships. Culture arises from the social system in which individuals work and live. At the same time, norms and common meanings are central to the functioning and evolution of collaborative policy networks [15]; Ostrom, 1990). Fulfilling the needs of livable houses, especially for low-income people, is an issue that must get attention. This is motivated by the low income community financing capability which is unable to provide participation funds in housing procurement at the time of procurement and development provision is very minimal [4]. Therefore, in their research concluded that the housing and settlement area policy in China focuses on two objectives: first to develop a healthier and more effective housing market; and second, developing housing subsidies that are integrated into a system[28].

5. CONCLUSION

The dynamics of housing policy in the perspective of actor collaboration and cultural approaches are formed through an integrated relationship. Based on the dimensions of actor collaboration theory [3] and culture, it can be concluded that in order to create ideal actor collaboration, it must be supported by a strong organizational culture. In this case collaboration can produce innovative approaches in providing services and building partnerships with other sectors [33], formal and informal structured processes, through mutual understanding between core policy actors and society, as characterized with a variety of policy core actors who have formal and informal interests, consisting of Housing and Settlement Service Offices, Regional Development Planning, housing developers, bank financial institutions, housing and settlement area organizers and Low-Income Communities (MBR). In its implementation, the core actors of the policy work together in making agreement and trust in realizing an increase in the quality of housing, the potential barriers marked with the type of collaboration based on a participatory cultural approach emphasizing aspects of public awareness to behave in a healthy life and accept housing programs from the government, and the results of accountability by providing opportunities for traditional local community institutions to develop in building collaborative relationships and social integration in order to realize the success of the housing program from the Regional Government become a necessity in building collaborative relationships between actors and ideal cultures.

REFERENCES


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