

The Reason of Government on Community Empowerment Through Paddy Field Tourism in Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency

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ABSTRACT

In Pematang Johar Village Deli Serdang Regency, there is a paddy field tourist attractions developed by the village government as community empowerment efforts. It is a good idea to chose paddy field tourist attractions because village Pematang Johar have the potential paddy fields with total area of 1750 Hectares. This study attempts to look at the process of rationalizing undertaken by governments in the village Pematang Johar tourism so as paddy field tourism program is received by society as community empowerment efforts. The rationalizing process would be seen from the perspective of *governmentality* offered by Michel Foucault in which includes the practice of *the reason of government*. As for the methodology used the *genealogy* by collecting data in-depth interviews, observations and documentations. The results showed that the Pematang Johar Village Government practiced government reasoning by internalizing tourism ideas to community leaders through the process of “discussion ideas”. In addition, the Pematang Johar Village Government also promises welfare to the village community by providing paddy field tourism.

Keywords: *Governmentality, Community Empowerment and Paddy Field Tourism*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

In 2014, the Government of Indonesia passed Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. In this law, the central government re-assigned considerable authority and role to the village government in planning village development and financial management [1]. There are four areas of authority owned by the village in the legislation, namely: Village Administration Department, Implementation of Village Establishment, Village Community Development, and Village Community Empowerment based on community initiatives, origin rights, and village customs. In addition to these powers, villages are also given powers assigned by the central government, provincial government and district/city regional governments.

Even though there are four areas of village authority, it does not mean that the central government's intervention in the village is non-existent. Precisely when the village government has a number of formal authorities, plays a role and is domiciled as a legal entity

(legal subject) and becomes an inseparable part of the official government system, then directly the development goals designed by the village cannot be separated from the national development goals that have been set by the government. This condition according to Aritonang has a positive and negative impact on the village [2]. The positive impact is that the village becomes an important area and is legally recognized by the state. Meanwhile, the negative impact is that the village development process will become more rigid and structured even though the regulations provide space to elaborate and accommodate the local value interests of the village community in the village development policy process.

If referring to Aritonang's opinion above, then on the negative impact, the practice of *governmentality* works by providing rules, control and discipline to the village government and village communities. The aim is none other than to control the resources and population in rural areas for economic and political purposes. An example of the existence of such control and discipline it can be seen from the issuance of the Minister of Village Regulation on PDTTrans concerning Priority for the Use of Village

Funds. Through Permendes PDTTrans No. 21 of 2015 the central government prioritizes the use of the Village Fund Allocation (ADD) for basic infrastructure development. In the next period, the focus on the use of ADD changed and shifted to empowering rural communities after the issuance of a new regulation, namely Permendes PDTTrans No. 16 of 2018 concerning Priority for the Use of Village Funds in 2019.

The two regulations eventually only provide space for the village government to elaborate and accommodate the regulations made by the central government based on local values, needs and interests of the village community. The existence of the elaboration and accommodation space makes the practice of *governmentality* applicable in rural areas, which is a practice that gives freedom to the village but at the same time directs it. In Foucault's concept of *governmentality*, this condition is interpreted as a form of '*the conduct of conduct*', namely a certain action that cause to be present the various possible choices of action, but they themselves choose the action that is actually desired by the state [3].

The existence of *governmentality* practices carried out by the central government against village governments initiates the research concerning of how these practices occur in rural areas, not in the context of the relationship between the central and village governments, but more about the desire to see how the practice of *governmentality* implemented by the central government is operationalized by the village government to the village community? In order to understand how governance practices work, Lubis said that a unit of analysis on governance can be carried out by looking at three dimensions of government, namely: *the reason of government, the technique of government and the subject of government* [4]. From the three dimensions, this study will only look at one dimension, namely the dimension of *the reason of government* in which there are all forms of practice of knowledge, expertise and calculations that make people think in such a way as to make them agree to a political program, which in this context is a community empowerment program.

In Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency, the community empowerment program is carried out by building a tourist village with the concept of paddy field tourist attraction. Since it was inaugurated in early 2020 by the Deputy Governor of North Sumatra and the Special Staff of the Minister of SOEs, Pematang Johar Village Paddy Field Tourist Attraction has gone viral on social media and immediately became famous among the people of North Sumatra. Almost every week, paddy field tours in Pematang Johar Village are visited by many local people and also outside the area. An average of 6,000 visitors came every holiday. The Pematang Johar Village Government even admitted that it had generated

30 millions rupiah income within one month from the paddy field tourist attraction.

The amount of income is certainly felt directly by the group of farmers who are the owners of the paddy fields above the tourist area and is also felt by the group of traders (MSMEs) who are involved around the paddy field tourist attraction. This condition obviously illustrates that efforts to empower the community can be carried out with various forms of programs that can accommodate various local potentials and resources in rural areas. With geographical conditions filled with paddy fields covering an area of 1750 hectares and the average community working as farmers, it is certainly appropriate for the Pematang Johar Village Government to develop paddy fields as a potential basis for community empowerment.

Therefore, this study aims to understand and analyze the operation of a *governmentality* practice in the dimension of *the reason of government* in a community empowerment program through paddy field tourist attraction in Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency. It is hoped that in the dimension of *the reason of government*, a rationalization process will be found by the Pematang Johar Village Government towards the rice field tourism program so that the program becomes accepted and recognized (legitimate) as a community empowerment program by the Pematang Johar Village community. In addition, this dimension is also expected to describe the form of power relations between the village government and the people of Pematang Johar Village in the rationalization process carried out by the village government in developing paddy field tourism program. Through the discovery of this form of power relation, we will see the process of elaboration, accommodation and negotiation between the village government and the community.

The research objectives above are the basis for the urgency of this research to be carried out. Moreover, until now, there have been no studies discussing the practice of *governmentality* in rural areas, even after the enactment of Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. Many studies related to village development and village governance are directed to see the readiness of village officials in implementing village laws [5], looking at accountability and policy aspects in managing village funds [6], [7], [8]. Or look at the role of village government such as the Village Head and the Village Consultative Council in village establishment [9], [10]. Meanwhile, research related to village community empowerment is more directed at looking at aspects of the factors that influence the success and failure of the program [11], [12], or in aspects of the role of the village government in implementing community empowerment programs [13].

1.2. Problem Formulation and Research Questions

In Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency, the principle of using Village Resources as part of community empowerment using ADD is implemented in the form of a paddy field tourist attraction. The village government's choice to make Pematang Johar Village a paddy field tourism village is quite right because paddy fields are one of the village's potential that exist. Where from a total of 2,217.84 hectares (ha) of the total area of Pematang Johar Village, there are 1750 hectares of rice fields. With the formation of a paddy field tourist attraction, the Pematang Johar Village Government has actually followed the rules set by the central government. But without realizing it, the village government chose a form of community empowerment program which had actually been directed by the central government implicitly through the principles stated in the Permendes PDTTrans.

On the other hand, the Head of Pematang Johar Village also admitted that the idea of establishing a paddy field tourism was based on the potential of existing paddy fields in Pematang Johar Village. The existence of these ideas and potentials made the Pematang Johar Village Government begin to develop strategic steps used to the success of a paddy field tourist attraction project as a community empowerment program in Pematang Johar Village. The existence of the preparation of these strategic steps will later show how the dimension of *the reason of government* in the practice of governance is operationalized by the Pematang Johar Village Government. So that the community can accept and be directly involved in the program.

Based on that explanation, the formulation of the research problem is: How does *The Reason of Government* Form on Community Empowerment through Paddy Field Tourism in Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency take place?

To be able to answer the formulation of the problem, 2 (two) research questions were asked, namely:

1. How did the initial process of developing paddy field tourism in Pematang Johar Village take place?
2. How is the attempt of Pematang Johar Village Government to obtain the village community's trust and willing to rationally accept the community empowerment program through paddy field tourism?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Tracing the practice of *governmentality* should basically rely on a *genealogical* approach. This is because the *genealogical* approach is a method used by Foucault to analyze and describe practices or habits that are considered a normal event. The *genealogical* approach in this research will begin with the stages; first, identify the figures and actors who are involved in the idea of establishing a paddy field tourist attraction. Second, conduct a search on the connections between figures or actors and the community involved in the formation and implementation of the paddy field tourist attraction. The search was carried out in order to obtain the relationship of power constitution between the village government and the Pematang Johar village community.

The data in this study consisted of secondary data and primary data. Secondary data was collected to support the arrangement of the problem background, the strengthening of conceptual and theoretical arguments and compose the research methodological principles. Secondary data in this study came from books, research journals and news publications in print or online media. While primary data is data collected by meeting research informants in the field, conducting in-depth interviews with informants, observing and documenting the object of research. Informants in this study were taken by using *purposive sampling* technique. A technique that used to collect data or informant sampling with certain considerations. For example, the selected person or informant is considered the most knowledgeable about the data or information to be sought in this study.

The data analysis technique in the study was carried out with a *grounded research* approach. This approach was chosen because in analyzing the data, it constantly compares one datum with other datum, and then constantly compares one category with other categories [14]. In addition, by using a *grounded research* approach, it is hoped that the research results can construct and compile the *governmentality* practices carried out by the Pematang Johar Village government. Therefore, the stages in *grounded research* in this study are the data reduction stage, the categorization stage, the synthesis stage and the preparation of working hypotheses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Early Process of Paddy Field Tourism Development in Pematang Johar Village

The process of developing paddy field tourism in Pematang Johar Village, Deli Serdang Regency, was initially motivated by the desire to make an independent and prosperous Pematang Johar Village. In order to make this, the village government began to develop the potentials that exist in Pematang Johar Village. One of

these potentials is rice fields. Where from a total of 2,217.84 hectares (ha) of the total area of Pematang Johar Village, there are 1750 hectares of paddy fields. According to Sudarman as the Head of Pematang Johar Village, the idea to form a paddy field tourism has been around since 2016-2017. At first, there was no idea about rice field tourism, what was there was to set up a restaurant in the middle of the rice fields. The main point of setting up a restaurant in the middle of this paddy field in order to the others can enjoy the paddy fields in Pematang Johar Village in various ways even though they are not the owners of the fields. So with this restaurant in the middle of the paddy fields, people can come to visit the paddy fields, eat, drink and of course there will be other sellers around the restaurant.

The idea of this paddy field restaurant continued to develop until finally the concept of paddy field tourism emerged. So visitors not only can eat and enjoy the view of the paddy fields, but also there is an offer to take pictures in locations, playgrounds, village MSME (UMKM) stands and even paddy field educational tours development for students. However, in 2016-2017, Sudarman still had the status of Chairman of the Village Consultative Council (BPD) and the idea of developing this paddy field tourism object was conveyed to the village head who served at that time. However, there was no response from the village government because they did not dare to budget funds for the construction of paddy fields tourist attraction. In 2018, Sudarman decided to participate in the Village Head Election (Pilkades) his desire to create an independent and prosperous village could be realized through the construction of a rice field tourism object. As a result, Sudarman was elected as the Head of Pematang Johar Village for the 2019-2024 period.

After being selected as the Village Head, Sudarman began to focus on building tourism in paddy fields in District 6 (six) Pematang Johar Village. The choice of paddy field tourism development in District 6 (six) is because that location already has a large paddy fields area with an interesting perspective. In addition, road access to the paddy fields in District 6 (six) has been built, making it easier for many people who want to visit tourist sites later.



Figure 1. Document Sketch of Paddy Field Tourism Development Location.

Sudarman said that the access road that was built at the paddy field tourist site in District 6 was the access road to the village community's graveyard. So placing a paddy field tourism location in the village is the right choice because road access is already available. Moreover, the access road is frequently traversed by the village community. In fact, according to Sudarman, before the paddy field tour at the district location 6 (six), many people stopped every afternoon to enjoy the paddy fields to take pictures. These conditions have determined Sudarman to make the location of District 6 (six) as a place for paddy field tourism to be built. Furthermore, in the District area of 6 (six) there are paddy fields owned by village government officials. So that the arrangement of paddy fields lease for the construction of tourist attractions could be easier.

3.2 Methods Used By The Pematang Johar Village Government In Order To The Village Community Receives Rationally From The Community Empowerment Program Through Paddy Field Tourism.

After being elected as the village head for Pematang Johar Priode 2019-2024, Sudarman immediately implemented his vision and mission as village head which was summarized in 10 strategic steps: "Exploring Village Potentials to the Realization of Prosperous Communities". The ten strategic steps are outlined in the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) which includes an agro-tourism development plan in the concept or form of Paddy Field Tourism in Pematang Johar Village. The planning for paddy field tourism development begins in 2019 and has been made as a top priority program with a development budget of 540 million rupiah.

With such a large budget, the village government under the leadership of Sudarman must convince several parties including the Deli Serdang Regency Government, Members of the Pematang Johar Village Consultative Council (BPD) and Community Leaders of Pematang Johar Village. Sudarman admitted that he had been asked by the district government whether he was not miscalculated in budgeting the development of paddy field tourism with such a large budget. The question was addressed with the reason that the large enough funds could not be accounted for in the future. However, because the authority for the use of the budget lies in the village party and Sudarman managed to convince the district government that the Pematang Johar Village Government can physically take responsibility for the use of the budget, the proposal for the development of paddy field tourism was accepted by the Deli Serdang Regency Government.

Within the scope of the BPD, plans and budgets for paddy field tourism development are easier to accept and approve because Sudarman is considered to have a good and trustworthy track record. Since before becoming the village head, Sudarman had been a member of the BPD

for 2 (two) periods and even had time to serve as the Chairman of the BPD. As explained earlier that the ideas of paddy field tourism development Sudarman has been talking about since he was still the Chairman of the BPD. So the idea of paddy field tourism is familiar among BPD. Bukhari as the current chairman of the Pematang Johar Village BPD admits that since 2017 when Bukhari and Sudarman were still at the Pematang Johar Village BPD, they often discussed plans to develop village rice fields. So that when Sudarman becomes the village head and the development proposal is submitted to the BPD, it becomes easier to be approved.

Meanwhile, to convince the village community, especially the people in District 6 (six), Sudarman must approach community leaders. In order for the idea of paddy field tourism development to be accepted, Sudarman internalized his ideas to community leaders through a process of *discussion ideas*. The concept of *discussion ideas* is more about exchanging ideas or asking for input from community leaders. With this process of *discussion ideas*, the idea of paddy field tourism development is no longer just the idea of the Head of Village but has become the idea and notion of community leaders. The internalization of the idea to community leaders made them participate in the campaign and socialize the paddy field tourism program to the community because they felt they were part of the idea of developing paddy field tourism so that people easily accepted the development of paddy field tourism in Pematang Johar Village.

In addition to the influence of community leaders, community support for the paddy field tourism program was also formed by the village government by promising economic welfare effects for rural communities. At the Village Musrebang, Sudarman promised the effect of paddy field tourism was to increase the economy for the community. This economic effect is generated from paddy field visitors who buy products and shop for food and beverages in Pematang Johar Village which directly has an economic impact on the people who sell them. The community is invited for selling around the paddy fields. It is also possible to rent booths (read: saung) which have been prepared by the village government with a lease fee of 10 thousand per day. The lease fee is also set only as a cleaning fee so that the sellers at the stand participate in maintaining the cleanliness of the paddy field tourism. While the money generated from parking fees and entrance fees paddy field tourism can be a source of Village Original Income (PADes) which can be used to provide health services to underprivileged communities.

From this review, it can be seen that the form of welfare discourse displayed by the village government is the main thing in the dimension of *the reason of government* in the practice of *governmentality*. The welfare discourse that was displayed from the start was the desire to form an independent and prosperous village. Here, the community has been convinced of the reality they are experiencing and the reality they will receive in

the future after the paddy field tour. In addition, the function of power-relations works by regulating, forming and constructing the realm of choice from other actions by utilizing the function of discourse which in this context is the discourse of welfare. However, the function of discourse and the production of knowledge produced here is no longer in the form of scientific definitions or truth claims but rather the production of knowledge based on politics-economy. Mudhoffir exemplifies the dominant actor in the implementation of community empowerment no longer using truth claims in disciplining the social council, but by presenting the view that the reality being faced by the community is a problematic reality [15]. So that a solution is needed by running a community empowerment program (read; paddy field tourism) which can later bring economic prosperity together.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed to this research article either directly or indirectly. Mujahiddin as a Development Studies Doctoral Student in the process of writing this research report received a lot of assistance and reinforcement in the form of theoretical and methodological conceptual studies from the other three authors, namely: Badaruddin, Zulkifli Lubis and Harmona Daulay.

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