The Construction of Actor-Network:
A Study on the Local Election Conflicts in the Perspective of
Actor-Network Theory in Banyuwangi Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at understanding the map of actor-network and finding the solution to make actor-network's solidity in running the governorship. The study employed qualitative method that used principles in Actor-Network Theory a lot, which prioritized descriptions of events or phenomena without distinguishing human actors from non-human actors. The study revealed that for some periods, the governorship in Banyuwangi Regency was prone to the broken actor-network due to the lack of commitment, disputes over power, the unfair distributions of the "construction cake" to the actors, and no written agreements, which caused a lot of breach of contracts and resulted in conflicts that led to the negligence of the region construction.

KEY WORDS: actor, Actor-Network Theory, conflict

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's existence started at the ends of World War II era with the description similar to that by Rosenbaum [1]. The country's governorship was not very good. Conflicts developed both horizontally and vertically and there was also some deviation in the country's finance. The centralized sovereignty up to the reformation era was finally broken with the Law Number 32 of the Year 2004 local autonomy and region decentralization (province/regency/district).

Regarding politics, the power distribution causes problems from the elites, which resulted in new conflicts that had never happened due to disputes over power particularly during the local election. These descriptions fitted Schrottshammer [2] that decentralization, on the other side, caused new conflicts in developing countries. The studies conducted by Barron [3] in Indonesia, Mahakanjana [4] in Thailand, Oberst [5] in Srilanka, Green [6] in Uganda, Collins [7] in Columbia, Tosun and Serdar [8] in Central Asia and North Africa, or Sasaoka [9] in Sierra Leone and The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) showed various conflicts intensities related to the development of decentralized governorship system.

Banyuwangi Regency was full of conflict values, both horizontally and vertically. If the number of demonstrations in 2005 was only 36, it increased up to 41 in 2006. This was considered high for regency for there was a demonstration triggered by society's politics almost every month.

The conflict dimension in Banyuwangi was various. Political dimension included local election conflicts and conflicts between the regent and The House of Regional Representatives (DPRD). Socio-cultural dimension included the demonstration by teachers in Banyuwangi Regency and the demonstration by the citizens in south Pasanggaran beach regarding the gold mining. Those conflicts, particularly the ongoing conflicts with DPRD, resulted in the government's inability in concentrating on doing their responsibilities. There were even times when the member of DPRD planned to give impeachment to the regent (some former regents were even toppled down before the due time). With such condition, some programs of the regent could be hindered in some ways by DPRD (Indonesian Survey Circle, edition 07, November 2007).

Starting from the understanding of the maps of the region and key actors in the citizenship, understanding the roots of the conflict that led to the key actor creating it would make it easier to understand the values and the required solution including the background and the creation of the actor-network.

The review of literature results in ANT model framework in this study that can be used to investigate actor-network and the conflicts happening inside. The ANT model framework made can then be compared to the result of actor-network model in ANT approach in accordance with the data and the facts in the practice.

Actor network, referring to the number of individuals or communities involved in the conflicts, also refers to the scale of the ongoing conflicts (for example: local conflicts, ethnical conflicts, national conflicts, international conflicts, religion conflicts, etc). The conflict intensity is the width of social commitment that can happen due to a conflict. Highly-intensified conflicts are the ones that can build wide social commitment so that its width can develop; a conflict with high awareness when its details are known and understood by wide-ranged society. On the contrary, a conflict has low awareness when it is covered with many things so that the level of

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people's awareness and knowledge about the conflict is limited. Conflicts of actor-network refer to certain figures that are influential and potential to affect people or community in realizing the conflict actor network.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Qualitative method is used by adopt many principles in Actor-Network Theory which prioritize on phenomenon description by undifferentiating actor and actant. Main data gathered directly from actor, closed person to actor and many parties that directly involved in conflict at Banyuwangi.

To obtain accurate information conducted in depth interviews and observations. The process of data analysis in this study follows the model of Interactive Data Analysis of the Miles and Huberman Analyses [10] were performed continuously during field data collection, to data collection is completed. This analysis includes several activities, i.e. check the data, grouping data, discover what is important according to the focus of research and study and decide what will be reported

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Actor Network
Actors will always rise and fall in line with the claims of the resources they have. The resource could be in the form of position in a particular party, the amount of mass that can be controlled, the money that could be spent to mobilize the masses or for other purposes, personal charisma, competence, certain situations, and so on.

NU (Nahdatul Ulama) and PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa) become non-human actors who play a crucial role. Actors are all elements bound by space, binding other elements, and transform the desires into one. NU and PKB make the other elements have ties. NU and PKB each has interests, using which they try to convince other actors to align with their interests and when the persuasive process becomes effective, it results in the creation of actor-network, which means that the actor network is formed when there is an understanding among the actors through the process of convincing other actors that they have the same interests or that the interests of other actors are combined in a new mission by gathering forces and mandated to the main actor to convey and realize their interests. Even though NU and PKB become a binding element, the interests of other actors can be different, especially if the concern is about power. The difference can be found in NU and PKB figures in the later period.

Somerville [11] found an agent that is able to explore and influence other actors. In this study, when we use the term agent, money, and power, the *ulama*/their decendants become an important agent in exploring and influencing other actors in the process of translation. The results of other studies conducted by Scheuer[12] focuses on the role of human as a translator with a meaningful narrative that mobilizes and plays the role of human similar to the influence of non-human actors. In this study, it was found that NU plays a great role in mobilizing and giving meanings to its followers to follow the meaning given by one of its leaders. The translation was done by employing the issue in accordance with the understanding of the religion such as religious and gender matterss. On the other hand, the role obtained from power and money is the motive that cannot be hidden.

Sage [13] used Actor Network Theory to understand the complexities of a complicated project, while in this study Actor Network Theory is used to understand the complicated social complexity without distinguishing the present time from past, visible from the invisible, writing from meaning, etc. Mitev[14] used Actor Network Theory to detect the success and the failure of the information system implementation. Information system is one of the non-human actors with the symmetrical concept and translation that was reflected to see the benefits and its limitations. This study treats the mass organizations and the status (Kyai) as non-human actors and other actors that were found during the study.

Actor-Network Theory doesn't distinguish knowledge from works, society from nature, right from wrong, officials from structural, context from content, human from non-human, nor phenomena at micro level from that at macro level. Nature and society, subjective and structured, facts and fictions, they all affect the process of data collection. Actor-Network Theory is a relational material, semiotic prolonging material that assumes that all entities reach the meaning in connection with others. Although previously it's intended to expand, the actor-network theory is suggested not to be involved in interpretation area.

The Impact of Actor Network
The Impact of Factual Network. The incumbent regent in this era was Mrs-Rt. This power gave a lot of access to the regent to manage the governance and strengthen the network. The weakening of NU and PKB network due to the vacancy of a powerful actor gave Mrs-Rt freedom in managing the government but she ran into problems when dealing with DPRD. At that time PKB was governed by structural ulama or the young but they still couldn't unite the power of the elders. The elders at the present time are still waiting silently for the right time to resurface. This explained that initial conflicts happened between the regent and PKB since the

beginning of her inauguration till the end of her period. Many conflicts are reflected in the movement of PKB masses in demonstrating against the regent's policies particularly the ones unpopular in Islamic community such as the construction of 'temple', pork trading arrangement, prohibition of istigoshah, etc.

The first impact that can be concluded is the hampered governance due to the disharmony between DPRD and the local government, one of which can be seen from the low absorption of the developmental budget. The demonstration resulted in the disruption of society's activities seen from the highway users, the declining levels of security and declining interests from the investors. The other impacts include the spreading conflicts between the elders and the young which resulted in every occasion that brought both parties in many levels.

Further investigation on the case will lead to the fact that during her period, Mrs-Rt paid little attention to the big parties with a variety of concessions. Mrs-Rt was only concerned about the 'small' parties represented by Mr-Sr. This wasn't a good condition for all parties and governmental projects, in which they were usually divided based on various concessions, all of which was done by the government and the proposal from the board would usually be hindered and slowed down and difficult to get approval from the government.

Mrs-Rt network only strengthened the network with the small parties and the networks within the government, because in fact, Mrs-Rt was still on the top list for the second candidacy based on the survey. Mrs-Rt did not come to think about how to build a network with the big parties. The steps were only taken at the end of her period so that the time to build the network was way too short.

The Impact of Contemporary Network. The networks in the contemporary era is a network of the reunited elders that took control of NU masses as the main voters of PKB and the weakening of Mr-W till he quit PKB. This network statistically managed to place Mr-X7 as the regent. The number of previous demonstrations decreased as the main actor in the historical era got back into play. This main managed to prevent the demonstration.

The running well government apparently created some obstacles for NU ad PKB figures, in which the regent didn't pay attention to the existing networks. The regent tended to trust the actor's interests in the network to his right hand without further supervision while his right hand became the hindrance of the actors who want to meet the regent in person. They had to deal with the regent's right hand for all matters including the proposal submission and other matters. This resulted in the actors' disappointment and little demonstrations resurfaced albeit not as massive as that in Mrs-Rt's period due to the strong role of Mr-AM.

The further impact will get bigger as the issue of gold-mining by PT. IMN in TumpangPitu was getting stronger if the regent did not pay attention nor strengthen the network. Other researchers associated with the network were able to give full description until her period ended. This paper is only able to reveal the impact of the early governance because the governorship hadn't yet ended while the underground network kept on finding ways to meet their own interests. There are now two camps, one of which was represented by Mr-AM and in the regent's side while the other party became solid when the translation happened and created a main actor. The next phenomena will depend on the steps taken by the two parties.

Actor Network Model

Actor's development in Banyuwangi has actually been well-established since the beginning. This is due to the central force which is used to resolve problems to maintain the harmony among actors. KyaiZarkasi is a figure that can bring peace to the actors with his charisma and leadership skills that made him the reference to the settlement of all disputes between the actor and made him the main actor. But ever since KyaiZarkasi as the central figure passed away, the actors began to flare up and brought up their egos that caused conflicts of interest that complicate the translation. The first key in the formation of the network is to strengthen the self-competence, the ability to influence other actors, accept and discuss the others' interests, strengthen the control over scarce resources, and strengthen the charisma as well as increase the knowledge of religion like in the social conditions of NU even though many actors are religious experts.

The spirit of democracy as a new outlook in Indonesia is no exception in Banyuwangi. It caused the increase of political euphoria among actors. Wahyudi[15] argued that social movements in various regions in Indonesia, which was driven by the actors, are growing the democratization and opening up public spaces to the general public. But the political euphoria that cannot be limited escalated the upheavals among actors. The unfinished problems generated new groups in the actor-networks, but the relationships formed within the group were just based on personal interests alone (Intersegment) so that shifting dynamics in the group occurred rapidly, at one time, one actor could change to join different groups and the extreme point, they move to the opposing party. This dynamic usually begins with political agreements to achieve a common goal despite having a different vision, but when that goal has been achieved the union between actors will end and they will form their own groups in accordance with the ultimate goal they want to accomplish previously. Thus, it can be said that within the actor-network in Banyuwangi, there were no absolute and constant groups. It is as stated by Latour[16] that there is the principle *No Group, Only Group Formation* within the network, in which the association among the groups is an unclear, fragile, controversial, and changing ongoing process. It is not surprising that the

relationships occurring between political actors in Banyuwangi cannot be stable; there are always disputes as a result of different goals and interests that resulted in new deals among the actors translating for those interests.

The betrayal of the agreements will result in conflicts between actors and also affect the members. Political maturity takes process so the occurring betrayal not just because of the material but should be on the substance of the fight and honour the agreements. Betrayal in politics sometimes becomes something usual so it is not really difficult to meet and make new deals.

On the other hand, a regional candidate would try to form a network or enter certain networks with some agreements. Power and authority of a regent allows him to provide resources to his network. Status and position can be given as an item and what commonly happened was that the distribution of the projects to his own network only. It often happened at his early governance and declined at the next year. What the regent couldn't let go is the network made for the candidacy in the local election, and if this happened the political turbulence will be very frequent. Another important lesson was viewing the power balance between the parliament and the regent, that the candidate should come from the big parties and was of the party cadres or the solid coalition parties so the policies weren't hampered in the Parliament and thus make a strong network consisting of actors capable of providing a significant role and is able to face the other actors. If at the time of the election the candidate does not have a strong network, he should build the network during his governance and pay attention to the actors beyond his circle. Mrs-Rt, for example, was from a 'small' party and did not get full support from the board members which resulted in unnecessary disputes between them.

Lack of support from the council disrupted the regional development such as low budget absorption, delays in the development process, and many others. Political stabilization, security and tranquillity due to the weak network between the regional officials is the main factor in hindering the regional development so that the conclusions of this model are that the presence of an actor-network with the strong leading actor is able to provide a medium for all parties' interests, high commitment and low betrayal that happens in collaboration with the local government or the candidate or potential leaders who will run for the local election will be a major factor in running the government to achieve the goals of the regional development.

CONCLUSION

1. Three actor networks were formed during the local elections in Banyuwangi, in which the actor networks were formed for individual's and group's personal interests to fight over power.
2. The actor network consists of actors who are relatively the same, but those actors are dynamic so sometimes they work in a network, while on the other occasion, they work with other networks.
3. Actor networks generate power, the greater the network both in quantity and quality, the greater the power it generates and is able to win the competition against other actor-network that isn't affiliated.
4. Prolonged conflict will not result in people's prosperity. Instead, it hindered the regional development. However, it becomes an important lesson for the public and the actors that conflicts based on individual and group interests should be considered further when dealing with public interests.
5. Weak actor-networks generate a lot of conflicts; a strong actor-network causes a relatively few conflicts, but the main actors have to be good at playing his part to maintain the solidity of the network and its focus in developing the region.

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