

Stopping the Habit of Killing Rivers, the Struggle of the Karang Mumus River Lovers Community to Build River Friendly Cultural Practices in Samarinda, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia

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Abstract

The Karang Mumus River is a very serious irony for the city of Samarinda, Indonesia. The river is the main source of drinking water and at the same time a giant garbage bin for the city's residents. The GMSS SKM (Gerakan Memungut Sehelai Sampah Sungai Karang Mumus/Karang Mumus River Garbage Movement), is a community that is trying to save it, by cleaning the river from garbage, educating residents by establishing the Karang Mumus River School and planting trees upstream along the riverbank. Social media accounts became important social capital in the beginning, were used for socialization and succeeded in mobilizing thousands of citizens from various circles. The movement became popular, many parties contributed assistance. But the phenomenal movement began to shrink greatly in the last two years, and was abandoned by some of its intellectual figures. This article analyzes how hard the GMSS SKM struggled to build river-friendly cultural practices in Samarinda. Bourdieu's concept of practice, field, habitus and capitals, are used to analyze how the strategy and struggle of the GMSS SKM to save this river. GMSS SKM has succeeded in collecting and converting various capitals to educate and mobilize the city's residents at the moment, but failed to make it a new habit for them. They failed to build a suitable cultural capital that could be used to approach and mobilize the closest residents. On various occasions, this community activities seem alien and distant to the stakeholders of this river.

Keywords: river, community, habitus, practice, field, culture

1. Introduction

1.1 Industrialization, society, and Ecological Crisis of Riverbed

In the past, rivers became an important part of people's lives that built the distinctive cultures of the people around the river. In subsistence societies, there is no doubt that rivers are an important part of human socio-economic dynamics for livelihoods, transportation and communication to the outside world. Archaeologists even strongly believe that there is a significant relationship between the distance and position of a community from river landscape features and the structures of material culture that are formed (Schillinger & Lycett, 2019). In Bali, the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy teaches the main value of wellbeing which is based on 3 harmonious relationships between humans and God, humans and humans

and humans and the environment. This teaching builds a strong river ethic among the people along the Ayung River which is the longest river in Bali. The behavior of not destroying rivers is believed by the Balinese Hindu community to be an important part of ensuring their welfare (THK) (Rosilawati et al., 2020)

The city of Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia, is well known as the city of a thousand rivers. The Dayak people who was intervened by Islam to build the identity of the river community with an Islamic pattern. Residents who converted to Islam later claimed to be Banjarese, but the distinctive cultural features of the river community persisted. The philosophy of life "Baiman, Bauntung, Batuah" (faithful, lucky, lucky/trusted by others) is very thick with Islamic values, still combined with typical river traditions such as *ketinting* (small boat with engine) transportation, *lanting* houses (floating houses) and floating markets (Abdurrahman & Abduh, 2020).

However, the industrialization process and development policies that are not river-friendly present symptoms of river ecological decline and cause many problems for river basin communities. There are 257 rivers in Bangladesh, 59 of which are transboundary. The confluence of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river deposits forms an active tidal deltaic ecosystem plain, a wetland that occupies a unique position in local culture, but is also highly susceptible to annual flooding. The construction of settlements, the urbanization process and the use of delta natural resources are substantially massive (Islam, 2016). Punjab's rural communities living in the riverbanks of Pakistan, often face increasing psychological, social and economic stress due to the negative impacts of riverbank erosion. Survey data from 398 families on this riverbank, 60% have lost their homes once, 38% more than three times and were forced to evacuate. Empirical estimates of household food security status show a Food Security Index value of 2.11 (low). The risk of riverbank erosion is caused simultaneously by population movement, increasing vulnerability of the rural environment (Ahmad & Afzal, 2021).

On the Musi River, Palembang, riparian dwellings that were long considered historical artifacts were excavated to be redeveloped to build a river-friendly house design on the banks of this river. Riparian dwellings are no longer seen as backward, but are considered as exemplary values, philosophies, and beliefs with a primordial cultural background on the banks of the Palembang river and its cultural meanings. On this basis, the concept of traditional river housing is considered worthy of being used as inspiration for construction and current river-worthy architectural concepts (Bambang et al., 2016). However, recently, what has happened is a massive change in the culture of river-literate riparian settlements towards settlement models that increasingly leave the identity of river communities. Riparian areas are getting narrower, knowledge of river-friendly building architecture is increasingly being abandoned. Increasingly, the introduction of land-style settlement architecture and technology is used to build settlements in riparian river areas. (Wicaksono, 2018)

For urban areas, river damage is caused by the complexity of the problem of a combination of massive urbanization, development that is not river-friendly, allowing the development of slum settlements that lead to riverbanks and no less fatal is the behavior of throwing garbage into rivers. Efforts to restore river ecology have become very difficult, involving complex urban problems such as inequality, deterioration of environmental ethics and policies that are not river literate. Some examples of good practices that stand out come from the river lover community who try to explore and assimilate local values that have been buried with concepts of river-based tourism. The Martapura River in Banjarmasin is managed

to become a tourism village based on the culture of the typical Banjar river community, named Kampung Hijau.

One of the tourist attractions is river attractions created with the Community Based Tourism (CBT) approach. The attractions are designed to provide basic knowledge about community adaptation and mitigation actions to climate change and other matters related to river ecological degradation (Riadi et al., 2020).

The behavior of protecting the ecology of the Wei River watershed in Shaanxi Province, China, was built by optimizing local personality norms, watershed ownership, and social capital which were grafted into sustainable development policies. A strong sense of ownership and developed social capital continuously builds norms of behavior for protecting important ecological watersheds (Zhang et al., 2021).

In West Java, the restoration of the Citarum river, the river restoration program initiated by the military, has minimal community participation. Public perception of the role of the military is surprisingly positive, but not accompanied by strong participation. The level of social capital that is classified as moderate and a good perception of the role of the military does not show a significant relationship to increasing community participation. This study concludes that the lack of weak socialization from the start has led to low community participation in this activity (Diana & Kartasmita, 2019).

1.2 Objective and Location of Research

The aims of this research are:

- 1) Describes the struggle of a river lover community called GMSS SKM in an effort to educate the residents of Samarinda to stop the habits of behavior that damage the ecology of the Karang Mumus River
- 2) Explaining GMSS SKM organizes sympathizers from community groups to build a more structured movement called Sekolah Sungai Karang Mumus (SeSuKaMu)
- 3) Identify the points where the movement finds great support on one side; and other points where the movement met resistance from citizens

Karang Mumus River or more often locally abbreviated as SKM is a tributary of the Mahakam River. This river divides the city of Samarinda along 34.7 Km. Previously, this river was the source of livelihood for the people of the SKM watershed (DAS) for the purposes of transportation, drinking water, washing and bathing. Unfortunately, as Samarinda City developed, the SKM banks developed into slums. This river has become an icon for the people of Samarinda because the damage to the river space is very severe. The riverbanks are congested by slums, the water is dark brown with a pungent smell and the flow is colored by household waste and small industrial waste such as tofu and tempeh SMEs. In the rainy season when the water is high, it is not uncommon for large pieces of trash such as chairs, mattresses, tables and even beds to be washed away in the river, along with plastic waste and other household waste.

Currently, there are 8000 families living on the banks of the river and it is estimated that most of them dispose of their household waste into the river. In 1992, has relocated residents along 1.3 km along the banks of the SKM. This location is then plastered on both sides of the Bridge I to the Animal Bridge, and on the 600m-long Ruhui Rahayu bridge. At that time, as

many as 900 houses were provided for 900 families, of the 3,384 families that were moved. In another location, a total of 60 households in the Gang Nibung area and 80 households in Jalan Keburuan failed to be allocated because they refused to be moved.

GMSS-SKM is a movement that carries out actions and campaigns to maintain, care for, and restore the Karang Mumus River. The founders of this movement are Misman who is a journalist by profession and Bachtiar (Iyau Tupang) as the head of the neighborhoods on Jalan Abdul Muthalib, who is very concerned about the condition of the Karang Mumus River. The main activity is picking up a piece of garbage in the Karang Mumus River. The activity was carried out independently with volunteers ranging from students, nature lover activists, government institutions, community organizations, environmental researchers participated. Seeing the positive response from the community, Mr. Misman took the initiative to ratify GMSS-SKM as a non-governmental organization. In 2016 GMSS-SKM officially became a legal entity as a non-governmental organization legalized by a notary.

The first location of the command post is at Jl. Kehewanan, downtown Samarinda, precisely in the SKM watershed in the middle of the city. The second location is at the SeSuKaMu post in Muang Village, Samarinda ILir District, upstream of SKM. Since the start of the movement until now, hundreds of community groups from various groups have regularly joined, involving thousands of people. This community is also active in conducting river ecology education in the mass media and providing the same counseling to primary and secondary schools in Samarinda.

2. Research Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with participant observation. Researchers joined for 6 months in the movement to explore the breath of this movement, participating in various community activities, such as picking up trash, maintaining pick-up tools, community discussions, and participating in providing river ecology counseling to primary and secondary schools in Samarinda City. Researchers also had the opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews and participate in more intimate discussions with the founders of the community.

Data analysis was carried out using Pierre Bourdieu's perspective on Practice, with the famous Bourdieu formula $Practice = (Field + Habitus) \times Capital$. Bourdieu imagines the world of life as a system of space/life domains (fields), in which it is further divided into smaller spaces. Each domain of life applies a unique system, with all its habitus. In it, all citizens, both individuals and competing to win the competition, but the most likely to win is the party that has the largest collection of life capital and is symbolic. There are 4 variations of capital covering material, social, cultural and symbolic capitals; all four can be interchanged depending on the need.

The GMSS SKM community is engaged in the complex life of the city of Samarinda. The local culture that is friendly to the river has long been eroded by the rapid growth of outsiders and the development of settlements that are not river-friendly. As is the problem with big cities in Indonesia, the people of Samarinda have a habit of throwing garbage into the river. The habitus lasts a very long time along with the development of industrialization in the city of Samarinda, making Samarinda residents view the behavior of throwing garbage as normal behavior.

The founders of GMSS SKM consist of dozens of people with quite varied capital capacities, even though the material capital capacity is very minimal. Its chairman, Misman, is a former university-educated journalist who has links to local bureaucrats and has the ability to build highly critical narratives. The other three are environmental activists, whose educational backgrounds are Bachelor of Agriculture, Master of Environment and Theology. One other member, although his educational background is only high school, but has a fairly good knowledge of the condition of SKM before the rapid urbanization and industrialization in Samarinda.

GMSS SKM collects and converts various capitals to create a counter discourse habitus of river unfriendly behavior. The ability of material capital that was lacking at the beginning of the struggle was tricked by using social media to massively spread knowledge about the severity of the SKM condition on the one hand and knowledge about river-friendly ethics on the other. This strategy won a lot of sympathy from the middle to upper class citizens, making this movement later supported by many educational institutions, NGOs and government institutions. This support becomes good social capital, which is then converted into other forms of capital to grow the movement. Until the end of this research, GMSS SKM already has 2 posts in the middle of the city and the upstream area, and is in the process of developing the same movement in other river areas outside the city of Samarinda.

3. Research Findings

Points of finding of this research are summarized below.

3.1. The GKMS SKM movement started in 2016 by playing a Facebook social media account to provide education as well as counter practice from the dominant habitus of the Samarinda community which is not river friendly. It succeeded in mobilizing support from hundreds of middle class groups in Samarinda.

3.2. The power of social capital is then used to collect material capital, by applying for or obtaining donations of equipment used to collect garbage from the river, from government agencies, NGOs and hobby communities in Samarinda. The consistency of this counter practice has then led GMSS SKM and its activists to receive various awards and invite more community groups to join.

3.4. In 2017 many academics, students and environmental activists have joined. GMSS SKM was then transformed into Karang Mumus River School (SeSuKaMu or *Sekolah Sungai Karang Mumus*), a new practice that aside from picking up trash in the river and its surroundings. The movement is in the form of non-formal education practices that teach people to restore river. The SeSukamu Command Post shifted downstream of SKM, in Muang Village, Samarinda Ilir. At this Command Post, SeSukamu restored the less densely populated SKM watershed area. They buy land on either side of the river to be restored as riparian space. Every person or community who comes to this post, will get the practice of river restoration education. This education begins with knowledge, seeding, planting and maintaining endemic plants along the SKM. Since 2017 until the end of 2019 before the pandemic, every day the Sesukamu Post has 3-5 communities that join in this river restoration practice. One community can consist of 10 to 50 people. During the campaign period, executive and legislative candidates also bring their supporters to carry out this SKM watershed maintenance practice.

3.5. The success of GMSS SKM and SeSukamu in building a new habitus for river care among larger city communities, in fact, did not succeed in establishing a new habitus for the residents of Muang Village, the closest resident of the SeSuKaMu post. The enthusiasm of the city residents in joining SeSukaMu did not succeed in attracting their attention, even the SeSukamu activities were far from them, they were like outside spectators. There were even incidents where some equipment for planting trees and seeds were lost, when SeSukamu personnel could not go to the command post because the city of Samarinda was flooded.

4. Conclusion

4.1. GMSS SKM is a community of lovers of the Karang Mumus River in Samarinda which fosters new habits, builds river-friendly cultural practices, in the midst of the life of the city of Samarinda which previously caused a lot of damage to the river's ecology.

4.2. GMSS SKM and SeSuKaMU successfully mobilized thousands of people from hundreds of middle class communities, academics, students and government institutions; but has not succeeded in mobilizing the same practice on the residents of the upper riverbanks in Muang Village

4.3. It is necessary to think about the formulation of appropriate types of capital to be able to approach and mobilize the layers of society that have not yet joined, in order to be motivated to change the habitus that is not river friendly.

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