

The Implementation of the National Community Empowerment Program in West Borneo

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Introduction

Community development in the border areas of Indonesia have not received sufficient government attention, despite being a strategic area and a reflection of a country's front line. West Borneo is one of the four regions in Indonesia that have direct borders with neighboring country Malaysia. The West Borneo border spans along the length of 847 km, which covers five (5) regencies, sixteen (16) districts, and ninety seven (97) villages with a total area size of 2.490.491 hectare. The size of the area has not been sufficiently balanced with the availability of the means and structures needed for community development. As a result, almost every part of the border areas is underdeveloped.

The main them of this article is community participation. As the research focus is the National Community Empowerment Program (*Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, hereafter abbreviated as PNPM), with a bottom-up approach in policy development in the area. There are a number of existing studies on border area development, which take different aspects and use different theoretical orientation and methodology, which will be analyzed in this article. These studies have presented specific issues relating to communities in border areas such as poverty, underdevelopment, lack of infrastructure, area isolation, forest exploitation, illegal activities linked to law enforcement

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and orientation issues linked to community empowerment within the border areas.¹ This means that future policies can be prepared by looking at aspects of self-reliance, cooperation between local governments and participation, aspiration, and conditions of communities living in border areas. These policies can then be stated through and reformulated by both regional (local) and centralized government institutions.

Various social phenomena have indicated that government-initiated border area development strategies have not been performed successfully. One of the main causes in the failure to succeed is the abundance of economic programs that treat the community as tools to further the development, instead of as goals to achieve empowerment.

This article will focus on community participation in the commencement of PNPM Independent Rural Border Area (PNPM *Mandiri Perdesaan Kawasan Perbatasan*, hereafter abbreviated as PNPM MPKP), run in line with the respecting of natural resources and local values as part of a national mandate to improve the welfare of communities living in border areas. Further researches into existing issues have shown that top-down government-planned PNPM programs in border areas have not succeeded in achieving social welfare and prosperity. Implementing a policy system from a centralized hierarchical position has proven to be ineffective to address the needs of the community. Moreover, this system shows a policy development that is only geared towards achieving a particular target instead of one that aims to empower human and natural resources, and to treat the social institutions within the border area as the main stakeholders.

Although the encouragement of self-reliance in PNPM will increase community welfare, local authorities have yet to completely

¹ For example, Pitch Pongsawat conducted a study on border area development issues and found that (1) traffic and development issues in border areas are an integral research focus that can contribute to the development of urban and regional planning; (2) border area development remains a complex issue, given the presence of geo-political perspectives, group or ethnic economic and political struggles, cross-border trading, illegal narcotics, and human trafficking. Pongsawat's study used the regional planning approach within the historical perspective present in the development of the border between Thailand and Myanmar. The study mentions a few issues and cases regarding border area development, but does not discuss the role of community empowerment and participation extensively. See Pitch Pongsawat, "Border Partial Citizenship, Border Towns, and Thai-Myanmar Cross-Border Development: Case Studies at the Thai Border Towns," a Doctoral Dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley (2007).

entrust the community with the task of building the area. There is a lack of community participation in rural PNPM activities that promised welfare and prosperity to marginalized communities, which has resulted in a negative social effect. This phenomenon needs to be studied in order to assess how communities can respond to and support government policies to improve border area welfare.

Previous research has indicated various impacts to the border area welfare, such as the rise of unemployment within communities, difficulty in gaining access to food sources, increase in the consumptive nature of the people, heightening of criminal cases, decrease of the quality of environment, and the rising presence of patrons and clients. If this issue is left unresolved, the community will surely face increasingly complex conditions. Therefore, it is important to conduct an in-depth study in this area in order to come up with solutions to address these social impacts and to help border area communities by facilitating change to uphold welfare and self-reliance. This study also aims to find an appropriate method of PNPM that can be applied to both the government (as patrons) and the community (as clients).

Community Empowerment

Effective communication efforts can only exist if the government, as a patron, takes up the role of the client as part of the community in order to eliminate poverty in border areas through utilizing local resources and adopting a closer social approach.² The efforts will therefore be designed and implemented to include the local communities within all aspects of the development, starting from problem identification and performance planning, to assessing the impacts of the local governments (patrons) as PNPM leaders and community involvement in PNPM.

Empowerment Theory

Community empowerment has been known to have a strong correlation with the sustainable development theory, in which the empowerment of a society is a main focus and requirement for welfare and is seen as a tool to bring communities toward a sustainable

² T. Ndraha, *Metodologi Pemerintahan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bina Aksara, 2003), p. 477.

economic, social, and ecological living environment. Through empowerment efforts, members of the community are encouraged to utilize existing resources to their utmost optimum capabilities, as well as to be fully involved in the production, economic, social, and ecological mechanisms. Thus, it can be assumed that there exists a link between community empowerment and sustainable development.

The primary goals of community empowerment are: (1) To enable the authentic, integral, and humane development of communities that are weak, poor, and marginalized, which include farmers, underdeveloped and poverty-stricken members of the community; (2) To empower those groups socio-economically in order to be self-reliant, able to fulfill their basic needs, and able to play a role in community development. Kartasasmita stated that empowerment is an act of building that is achieved by encouragement, motivation, and raising awareness as well as development of potential.³ Kamaluddin also mentioned that community empowerment is "an effort to build on the resources and energy from the community through encouragement, motivation, and raising awareness of the potential of the members of the community, as well as improving the conditions of local resources."⁴

The Goals of Community Empowerment

It can generally be stated that the goal of an empowerment initiative is to strengthen a powerless state in the hopes of raising the activities of an individual or a community towards a shared goal.⁵ Community empowerment is aimed to benefit the individual or community through raising awareness, development, and skill building. As a focal point of the empowerment initiative, the community holds an integral role in achieving successful results from the Independent Rural PNPM program.

³ G. Kartasasmita, *Power and Empowerment: Sebuah Telaah Mengenal Konsep Pemberdayaan Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional, 1996), p. 159.

⁴ Rustian Kamaluddin, *Beberapa Aspek Pembangunan Nasional dan Daerah* (Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia, 1998), p. 36.

⁵ Himawan S. Pambudi, *Politik Pemberdayaan, Jalan Baru Keadilan Dokumen Pertama Konsolidasi Pembaruan Desa* (Yogyakarta: Pondok Pustaka Jogja, 2003), p. 57.

Community-Based Development Concept

An alternative mode of development does not intend to oppress the local/native community, but instead aims to uphold preexisting values and encourage the local community to actively participate within the development of the rural areas, as explained by Johan Galtung.⁶ This alternative mode of development encourages participation and emphasizes the need to fulfill human rights responsibilities in every step of its way. By encouraging participation, certain aspects will also come to focus, such as accessibility and sufficient representation of the community in terms of planning and decision-making. Moreover, this mode of development focuses on the fulfillment of basic needs and human rights responsibilities, namely economic welfare, freedom of speech, and identity; while at the same time liberating the community from four main challenges to welfare, namely poverty, community destruction, oppression, and alienation. This local approach to development is assumed to be a form of partiality toward a local sense of urgency by placing local knowledge and local skills on the forefront of various activities. Through efforts of accommodating local potential as human resources, this approach is hoped to diminish marginalization, inequality and local injustices, and to strengthen the community sector.

The Concept of Poverty

One study shows that poverty levels in border areas are higher in comparison to other areas due to geographical and non-geographical factors, including the lack of basic socio-economic facilities.⁷ Another study focuses on an area of Pamanukan Sebrang, which has experienced "social exclusion" as a result of being exploited by the local communities.⁸ Another study explains that the rights of the community in relation to market and government participation are seen as an erosive process to the economy and as a reduction to the local

⁶ Johan Galtung, "Human Needs as the Focus of the Social Sciences," unpublished paper of the University of Oslo (1976), available at <http://www.transcend.org/galtung/papers/Human%20Needs%20as%20the%20Focus%20of%20the%20Social%20Sciences.pdf>

⁷ Ade Latifa et al., *Penduduk dan Kemiskinan di Daerah Perbatasan Sulawesi Utara dan Kalimantan Timur* (Jakarta: LIPI Press 2006), p. 35

⁸ Yuli Indrawati Sari, "Perempuan dan Pengambilan Keputusan dalam *Good Governance Project*: Studi Kasus Program Pengembangan Kecamatan di Pamanukan Seberang Jawa Barat," in *Jurnal Analisis Sosial* Vol. 8 No. 2 (2003), p. 19.

autonomy.⁹ Although there exists various concepts linked to border area development, they are all linked with poverty. The development of poor rural areas is not only linked with inequality to urban cities, but also inequality to government relations within the local communities. The issue of poverty is often viewed as 'normal' until seen from the context of formalized socio-cultural studies.

There are many complex factors that can lead to poverty. From an economic point of view, poverty is seen as the inability to cope with even the minimal standard of living, which is measured by one's consumption or income to fulfill basic needs. According to that concept, poverty is linked to a particular situation or condition where an individual's right to ownership and control over their basic needs is diminished. Within this dimension, poverty can be defined as inequality in terms of: (1) decision-making, i.e. the poor community is not involved in the allocation of resources; and (2) providing action to regain economic resources. This concept emphasizes poverty as a condition of vulnerability, as the underprivileged lack control of the deciding factors in their lives.

There are several indicators that can help measure a society's poverty rate quantitatively. Firstly, this can be measured through the society's income per capita from rice sales. For instance, if the community's income per capita is lower than 240kg in the rural area and less than 360 in the urban area, then this community is categorized as "Barely Enough." If the income per capita is between 360-480 in the rural area and 540-720 in the urban area, then it is categorized as "Very Poor." If the income is above 480 in the rural area and above 720 in the urban area, then it is categorized as "Not Poor". Secondly, the National Bureau of Statistics (BPS) determines 14 criteria to indicate a poor household, such as the availability of clean water, education levels and personal savings. Thirdly, the National Family Planning Coordination Agency (BKKBN) states that individuals or families can be categorized as 'poor' if they are not able to: practice their religion freely, eat twice a day, wear various types of clothing, go to work or school, receive basic healthcare, and if the floors of their houses are not paved. Fourth,

⁹ Tania Li, "Bekerja Terpisah tetapi Makan Bersama: Kodrat, Kekayaan dan Kekuasaan dalam Hubungan Perkawinan," in *Jurnal Analisis Sosial*, Vol. 8 No. 2 (20030), p. 38.

The World Bank stated that people who are under the poverty line earn less than US\$1 per day (about Rp 8,000 per day). Fifth, measure of sustenance. People who consume about 1,900 calories a month is categorized as very poor, between 1900-2100 calories as poor, and between 2100-2300 as almost poor.¹⁰

Participation

An absolute widespread involvement of the community is integral to the society, as they are the ones who will eventually proceed to do activities to support the development of the area.¹¹ The community will therefore hold the roles of both enablers and recipients of the development. Mikkelsen has stated that the concept of participation has long been a part of a debate between the theoretical model and practical applicability model, which has its ties with a few development programs implemented by both government and non-government organizations alike.¹² Local community participation is also necessary in the process of developing poor and marginalized border areas. As stated by Mubyarto:

“A direct form of community participation is one of the characteristics of an ideal rural development process, one that differentiates itself from developments in other areas (sectional, regional, etc). This method enables and encourages local communities to be more knowledgeable, self-reliant, and participatory in achieving a sustainable rural development”.¹³

Community participation does not only entail physical involvement, but also non-physical involvement, such as participation in government-related activities linked to community empowerment. The involvement of the community in these activities does not only reflect the success of the government, but also the success of the people in achieving their goals.

¹⁰ Sajogyo, “Peluang Berusaha dan Bekerja pada Masyarakat Pedesaan,” in *Prisma* No. 2 (1982), p. 21.

¹¹ Sondang Siagian, *Proses Pengelolaan Pembangunan Nasional* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1988), p. 30.

¹² Britha Mikkelsen, *Methods for Development Work and Research*, 2nd Edition (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 53.

¹³ Mubyarto, *Strategi Pembangunan Desa* (Yogyakarta: P3PK UGM, 1999), p. 80.

Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is a multi-faceted concept, but it is one that is essentially focused on self-confidence: on the ability, strength and determination that is unyielding, with a strong emphasis on identity, integrity, and a strong personality. A self-reliant community is therefore one that is able to independently and confidently interact with their own environment. Hagaul stated that the concept of self-reliance can be seen from two perspectives:

1. There needs to be an emphasis on the overall ability of the people to enact change within their community, and this change can only be achieved through sufficient development by way of self-reliance; and
2. The rise of income within the community as a result of skill development should be widespread, instead of only limited to the privileged few within the rural areas.¹⁴

Both perspectives aim to overcome obstacles from outside of the community that might hinder the development of the people within rural areas and to increase their individual and familial welfare. Conceptually, a self-reliant community is one that is able to control or influence their own future. Ndraha stated that the concept of self-reliance can operate based on a number of indicators:

1. The ability of the community to initiate, maintain or care for a few preexisting physical and non-physical resources, assets, and facilities;
2. The ability of the community to rise up from challenges or hindrances as a result of their own failures;
3. The ability of the community to develop or improve preexisting resources, assets, or facilities;
4. The ability of the community to provide a positive response towards every social change.¹⁵

¹⁴ Peter Hagaul, "Lima Ciri Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat: Mitos atau Kenyataan," in Peter Hagaul (ed.), *Pembangunan Desa dan Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (Jakarta: PT Rajawali, 1992), p. 11.

¹⁵ T. Ndraha, *Kybernology: Ilmu Pemerintahan* (Jakarta: BKU IP, 1986), p. 91.

The Concept of Border Area

In general, the concept of a country's border can be understood as the official demarcation line between two sovereign countries. A border is therefore initially formed following the formation of the country. Ricklefs stated that the Indonesian sovereign border is a result of the Dutch colonial power, a product of the killing of countless lives, destruction of the environment, social inequality, and human rights abuse.¹⁶

O.J. Martinez categorized four types of state borders:

1. Alienated borderland, which is a border area where there is no cross-border activities, and is often a result of war, conflict, nationalist domination, religious animosity, cultural differences, and ethnic struggles;
2. Coexistent borderland, which is an area where cross-border conflicts can be suppressed to a permissible level, although there might at times be unresolved issues such as resource ownership;
3. Interdependent borderland, which is an area where both ends of the border retain a relatively stable diplomatic relationship, and both states are also often involved in mutually beneficial economic activities on a relatively equal level, for instance, while one country has abundant production facilities, the other has cheap labor; and
4. Integrated borderland, which is an area where the economic activities from both countries have reached a union, and nationalist sentiments are also integrated to a strong unity.¹⁷

Participation of the local community is important in the development of border areas, especially within the decision-making process and in solving the ever-present organizational gap, which, according to local government groups, is one of the issues that weaken local community participation. Local community participation is often viewed as an integral factor in the process of community empowerment.

¹⁶ M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (London: MacMillan, 1981), p. 101.

¹⁷ Oscar J. Martinez, "The Dynamics of Border Interaction: New Approaches to Border Analysis," in Clive H. Schofield, *Global Boundaries, World Boundaries Vol. 2* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 29.

PNPM in the Border Area of West Borneo

Government officials have designed a national program to treat the community as clients, in line with Ndraha's proposal, which states that an effective communication can only exist if the government acts as a patron that serves the community as clients.¹⁸ The influences of the program can be divided into two categories: (1) those that positively influence the workings of the local government; and (2) those that negatively influence the workings of the local government. The PNPM policy makers, in this case the government (as patrons), and the community (as clients) have different perspectives on understanding the performance of local government actors in border areas. This might cause miscommunication between the community (as clients) and the PNPM officers.

This research employs a modification of Scott¹⁹ and Roniger²⁰'s Patron-Client Theory, which suggests that there is a reciprocal interaction between the client and the patron, created through the emotional connection derived from the patron's ownership of the resources and the client's ability to exchange them for money. This relationship indicates the lack of formal laws surrounding the theory, given that this reciprocal interaction would cease to exist once the client stops supporting the patron. It is instead enforced by the strong emotional connection between the patron and the client, further strengthened by notions of kinship and friendship.

The pattern present within the Patron-Client relationship represents an emotional tie, ensured to keep the clients from betraying the patron's trust, as the client's performance has a direct effect on his own empowerment. During an interview with the Secretary of the Regency of Sambas, he said, "if the Patron-Client relationship is implemented correctly and according to the procedures, it will automatically increase the people's aspirations and participation in the

¹⁸ Ndraha, *Metodologi Pemerintahan Indonesia*, p. 477.

¹⁹ James C. Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 66 (1972).

²⁰ L. Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust in Modern Mexico and Brazil* (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1990).

local development program".²¹ The Secretary, as the vice leader of the Independent Rural PNPM program, also said:

"the 2008 PNPM program, although it has existed since 2001 under a different name (PPK), was received very well by the local community following the district community meeting in the 2008-2009 budget year. The three programs that were conducted, however, were not very successful, as members of the savings group did not pay their loans in installments. Each group consisted of 6 to 8 people with loans of Rp.15.000.000. People who did not have their share of the loans were disappointed by the local government (patrons)".²²

Such portrayal indicates that there is a relationship based on trust within the community, and the effectiveness of these programs depend highly on the ability and quality of the government officers to fulfill promises made to the community, as explained by Ndraha.²³

A few Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have expressed that the effectiveness of the program is determined by the aspirations of the clients, the design implemented by the patrons, the time allocation, and sufficient cooperation from the local government. On the other hand, an 'irrational' Patron-Client relation will weaken the performance of the local government officers. A local intelligence officer mentioned, "...in the end, there will be hesitation from the patrons to perform their responsibilities and the functions that they serve."²⁴ Another issue that might come across as a cause for concern is that "anyone that is believed to have come from the area" who acts as a Patron can behave however they want, as we found from an interview with an NGO and Malay Community Leader in the area, who also mentioned that one of the men in the region doubted the community's trust in the PNPM program because one of the PJOK officers who had been trusted to manage the funds from the 2009-2010 budget was found guilty of budget misuse.²⁵ This PJOK officer was eventually sentenced to arrest for 3 years and 6 months in the Paloh District. Affan Gaffar

²¹ Interview with the Secretary of the Regency of Sambas, 31 May 2012.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ T. Ndraha, *Kybernology: Ilmu Pemerintahan Baru* (Jakarta: BKU IP, 2001), pp. 122-123.

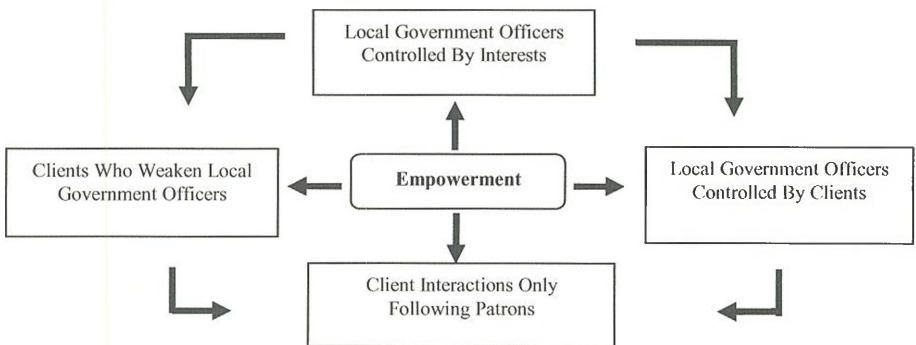
²⁴ Interview with an intelligence officer on 31 May 2012.

²⁵ Interview with and NGO and Malay Community Leader on 1 June 2012.

mentioned that these cases are often under patronage, “there are some officers who are said to be close to the regent who have now become a middleman or broker, and have formed his own ‘client’, consisting of regional government officers.”²⁶

These findings show that such patron-client mechanism is imposed by making ‘irrational’ organisations. The majority of the community members would follow the demands of the patrons, and such mechanism remains one of the efforts made by the clients to gain a closer approach to the patrons or government organizations. The clients indirectly control the local government while trying to imitate the behavior of the patrons to create a superior-subordinate relationship that affects the work performance of the local government. Local government officers, those who initiated the Independent Rural PNPM Program, should work on the program continuously under the full interest of the rural community. Such mechanism or pattern is what will be the basis for this study.

Figure 1: Mechanism of Community Empowerment



According to Adi, the terms participation and participatory are often used in different contexts, for instance participation is “the voluntary contribution by people in projects, but without their taking part in decision-making”; the client voluntarily provides resources such as loyalty, energy and support as a form of participation to the

²⁶ Affan Gaffar, *Politik Indonesia Transisi Menuju Demokrasi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1999), p. 110.

patron.²⁷ This strengthens the patron-client relationship while at the same time provides a degree of misdirection to the local government by encouraging them to be partial to the development management of one particular area instead of the other. While the Women's Savings Funds (SPP) were originally intended for the consumption of poor families in border areas, there are only eight groups in the village that have received it so far, comprising of family members of the village leaders and legislative candidates.

Factors of power, ethnocentricity, and weak law enforcement procedures have intervened in the workings of the local government. What can otherwise be a standard rational procedure by a seemingly ideal leader is now meddled with personal and subjective approach. Most studies that discuss community empowerment focus on how individuals, groups and communities try to control and develop their future according to their needs. What is relevant to this study is the loyalty or participation that is understood in relations to the empowerment process that the client partakes in. This does not refer to loyalty in terms of an institutional basis, i.e. an understanding of the mission and vision of the empowerment program, but as part of the patron-client relationship, as will be illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2: Patron – Client Relationship



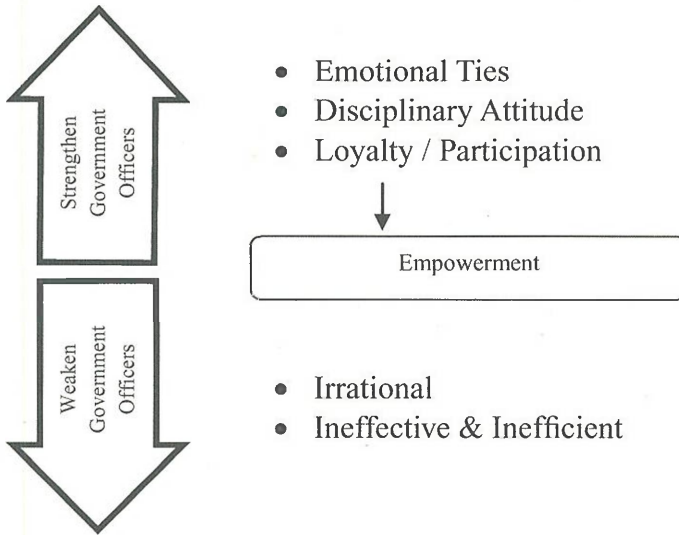
²⁷ Adi, *Pemberdayaan, Pengembangan Masyarakat dan Intervensi Komunitas* (Jakarta: FEUI, 2008), p. 106.

The effects that are experienced by the local government have caused a less than objective work performance, due to their inability to assess skills and capabilities, as well as their lack of attention to the development of the border area. The clients often think that all development processes should be done by the local members, solely because they come from the village, causing an abandonment of the protocol and orders from their superiors. Thus, it is difficult to maintain a consistent system, comprising of explicit orders which delegates the responsibility of each member of the organization.

The inconsistency of the character of the local government has caused the overall work performance to only be of "sub-par" quality, such as working on projects without exactly following the instructions. Studies have shown that the local government officers often perceive that client empowerment has a negative effect on development procedures. According to Soetomo, community development is an on-going process that does not end as the day ends.²⁸ Every activity is attached to the one before it, and the local government officers need to realize this in order to perform the activities following it. Often, negative effects of these activities can be quite dominant. This further strengthens the hypothesis that the patron relations in client empowerment is not directly proportional to the work performance of the local government, making the implementation of the PNPM program less rational in addressing the needs of the community. The pattern of patron-client relationship in border areas negatively influence the work performance of local government officials, causing the process to become 'irrational'. Local government officials tend to disregard the vision and mission of the PNPM program designed to fulfill the needs of the community. This is illustrated in the figure below:

²⁸ Soetomo, *Pembangunan Masyarakat Merangkai Sebuah Kata* (Jakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009), p. 248.

Figure 3: Strengths and Weaknesses of Local Government Officers in the Context of Empowerment



There seems to be an abundance of patron involvement in community empowerment in regency areas. The pattern of patron-client relationship is explained using the theory of behavioral exchange as well as the initial patron-client theory coined by Scott and Roniger.²⁹ Both theories are useful in explaining the social relationship of the members of the local community and local government officers, and provide a detailed description of the social structure present within the local government. It also explains the structural relationship between the government and a few non-government organizations in the regency. The structure of the groups within the Independent Rural PNPM Program, along with each of its functions, can be described as follows: the District Chief as the Supervisor, the District Economic and Development Chief as Operational Activity Coordinator (PJOK), the District Facilitator as the Independent Rural PNPM Associate, the Rural Chief and Secretary as Activity Organizers, and the Local Customs, Youth Agencies, and NGOs as Program Monitors.

²⁹ Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia"; and Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust in Modern Mexico and Brazil*.

According to the behavioral exchange theory, there exists a social relationship within the structure of the local government, which possesses a similar characteristic to a social organization. As part of a social organization, the local government acts as part of a network of organized social interactions, or as part of intricately linked social activities.³⁰ The social activities of the local government officers are linked with those of other groups, such as the local community, because the local government is a public organization that has a responsibility to empower the community. According to Duncan, "Organization is the systematic bringing together of interdependent part to form a unified whole through authority, coordination, and control may be exercised to achieve purpose."³¹ As the District Chief Secretary has mentioned, within the scope of the of the local government organizers of the PNPM program, the empowerment initiatives are directed towards the people in the particular community. The local government officers act as providers of the PNPM programs, while the community members are the receivers of the program. The local government organization is part of an organized social interaction network that is able to utilize resources in the area for the community empowerment program, as shown in the figure below:

As mentioned by Ndraha³² and Rasyid³³, this organized social interaction network involving local government officers is in many ways similar with other development programs in that it directly serves the community. Programs that serve to fulfill the needs for goods and services for each individual in the community is part of the life support system present within the area.

Community members need a variety of goods and services in order to support their livelihood, and the PNPM program provides a majority of those goods and services. A collective action is an action that is done repeatedly by and for all members of the community. In the context of community empowerment, the local government officers are the

³⁰ A. L. Bertand, *Social Organization: A General System and Role Theory Perspective* (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Company, 1972), p. 3.

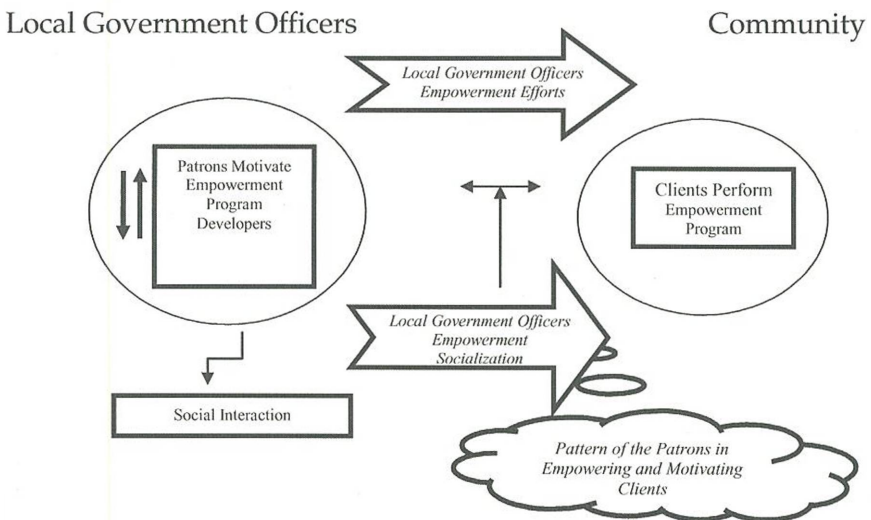
³¹ W. Jack Duncan, *Organizational Behaviour, 2nd Ed.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), p. 37.

³² Ndraha, *Metodologi Pemerintahan Indonesia*, pp. 75-76

³³ M. R. Rasyid, *Kajian Awal Birokrasi Pemerintahan dan Politik Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Yasrif Watampone, 2000), p. 48.

ones who motivate the community members to perform those actions. Thus, conducting the PNPM program also includes motivating community empowerment. There are three main steps to prepare for community empowerment: (1) The patron acts as a motivator to empower the patron; (2) The empowered client does the empowerment directly to other members; (3) The patron is a monitoring agent that controls the empowerment program. The patrons in charge of monitoring the empowerment program will be the local government officers, which at the same time act as the governing institution in the empowerment framework. In other words, the local government acts as both the patron and providers of the services, and the community members are the clients or receivers. The model shows that by having the local government act as a patron to motivate and control the empowerment program, the program will be the main indicator to determine the work performance of the local government. Within the context of social interaction, the local government officers make up a form of basic cooperation skills in enabling the actions of individuals to achieve social and economic goals.³⁴ The local government officers make up one social entity or organization that is effective in restructuring social interaction according to the goals of the program developers.

Figure 4: Patron – Client Motivation Process



³⁴ Judistira K. Garna, *Teori Sosial Pembangunan III* (Bandung: Primaco Akademika, 1996) p. 267.

The ability of local government officers as patrons in organizing and managing the empowerment program has garnered positive response from the members of the community. However, their work performance is not in line with the main goals of the empowerment program, as the local government only relies on the loyalty of the community to perform the activities.

As Barnes stated, when the members of one community is satisfied with the services provided by the empowerment program, there is a large chance that they will recommend the program to other communities of the services that they received from the institution.³⁵ This indicates a successful mission on the part of the local government. On the other hand, if the members of the community are dissatisfied by the services provided by the program, it shows a failure of the local government in performing the empowerment program.

Studies have shown that the patron-client relationship is more prominent in areas where the empowerment programs were conducted, but less so in villages that are closer to each other, which makes the distribution of the program challenging. A sufficient working condition is what can cause the pattern of client empowerment to be performed professionally.

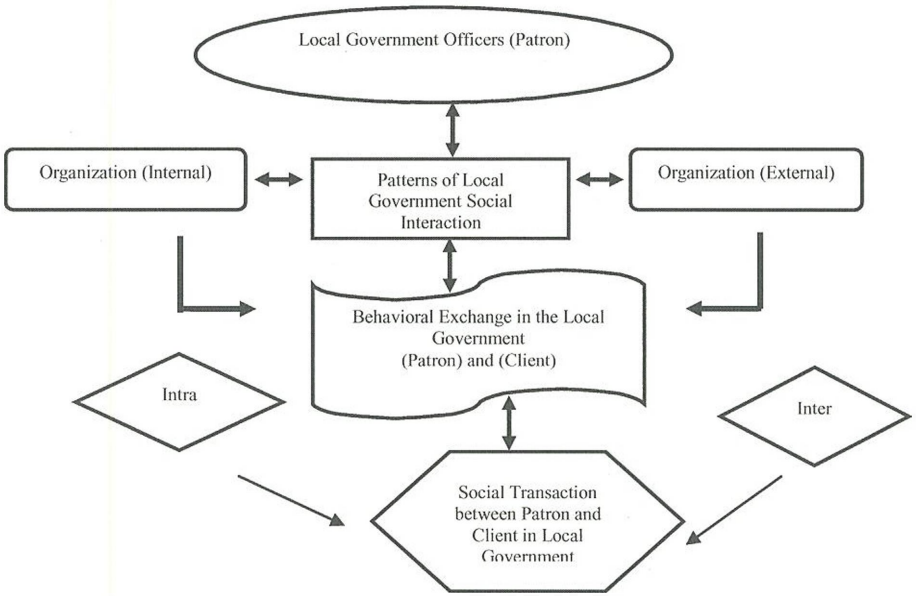
The Social Interaction Between Communities (Clients) and Local Government Officers (Patrons)

An organization can be defined as a group of individuals that interact according to particular social norms within as well as outside the organization. The interaction between the patrons and the community outside of the local government system causes an exchange of social behaviors related to the empowerment process. Through social interactions, local government organizations possess a different characteristic in communicating with the community leader through a few behavioral exchanges with the patrons. The social interaction within the local government network is based on the psychological proximity between the patron and the client through sharing the same values, perspective, and principles. This similar way of thinking is

³⁵ J.G. Barnes, *Secret of Customer Relationship Management* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi, 2003), p. 63.

what creates a sense of trust on the client’s ability to perform in the empowerment program. Behavioral exchanges in the local government are affected by structural configurations stemming from internal and external situations related to the organization. In the local government organization, individuals interact in a structural way, which causes dependency between the client and the patron. This dependency creates a type of social interaction within the empowerment program, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 5: Structural Configuration of Patron – Client Interaction



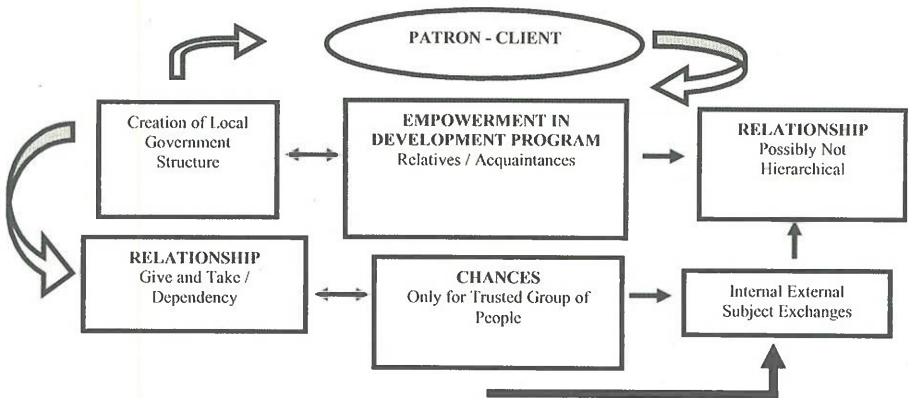
Although the local government officers appear to be dominating the relationship, the shared goals create a sense of harmony in terms of power relations. These shared goals have caused the local government officers who are active in the empowerment program to disappoint the program managers, who use it to measure the work performance of the government officers and community members in the empowerment program. This is in line with a theory by Homans³⁶ and Poloma³⁷, stating that the sharing of goals is part of the social and behavioral

³⁶ G.C. Homans, *Social Behaviour: Its Elementary Form* (New York: Harcourt, 1961), p. 3.
³⁷ M.M. Poloma, *Sosiologi Kontemporer* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 1994), pp. 51-66.

exchange theory. A prominent characteristic of the social interaction within local government officers is the ability of the local government as a patron or a client to influence or be influenced by the mutually beneficial goals. The ability to influence and be influenced has created a sense of interdependence between the patron and the client in terms of understanding each other. Generally, clients are hesitant to express their opinions to the patrons. This situation is why there needs to be a special relationship within the local government system that is not identifiable by the government officers as patrons or the community members as clients.

Furthermore, in regards to the structure of the local government, the patrons who have closer relations with higher-ranked officials are those who are often more motivated to perform well in the Independent Rural PNPM Program. Officials who have the authority as patrons see the clients as having enough loyalty and support to be held responsible. Studies also show that there exists infrastructure between villages and regions that are meant to connect local businessmen with the village leaders, emphasizing further interdependence. This is the basis of the Figure 6.

Figure 6: Patronage Mechanism



Within the local government, there is a relationship forming between a particular patron and a particular client who, in reality, are not directly working together. Furthermore, studies have concluded that there exists an occurrence of this 'serving' phenomenon in patron

areas, which have caused many officials to have preferences over certain staffs that are more competent and motivated in the client empowerment program, such as the regency or village facilitators. This is further emphasized by the emotional loyalty that is present between the client and the patron. They often prioritize their colleagues instead of the community that they are supposed to be serving. Furthermore, within the recruitment process, there still exists a few officials or figures who demand compensation in return for managing the development program. For example, the Malay Indigenous Leader of the Paloh District mentioned that the building of the infrastructure in the Sakura Regency in 2009 required a total budget of Rp. 7 bilion, and was handled by a company from the same district, personally appointed by the regency leader. The issue of client empowerment by the patron has thus become a more complex issue, especially in the area of study, that is the Sambas regency.

The presence of special interests in the local government officers in obtaining compensation in the physical development sector has created a social disparity. This social disparity has an adverse effect to the community development program. As mentioned by Perrow, the behaviors of the individual within the local government organization often indicate their inability to separate between their personal and organizational interests.³⁸ On one hand, there exists sufficient interaction due to a shared goal, but on the other there is a social disparity that will surely affect the overall goal of the development program, which is specifically designed to fulfill the needs of the community.

In the social interaction structure, there exists a very strong interdependence between the patron and the community, as clients. On the other hand, there is a weak interaction between the patron and the other clients, which causes social disparity in the development program. Roniger mentions this as a hierarchical relationship, where one party is dependent on the other due to unequal levels of power and position.³⁹ The intense interactions between particular patrons and clients, as well as Roniger's statement, further emphasize the presence of patron-client relationships in border area regencies.

³⁸ C. Perrow, *Complex Organization: A Critical Essay* (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 101.

³⁹ Roniger, *Hierarchy and Trust*.

Aside from a shared sense of priority and understanding, strong ethnocentricity and friendship have created small, institutionalized social groupings within the local government system in the Independent Rural PNPM Program, further emphasized by strong emotional ties. This is in line with opinions from Homnas and Poloma, stating that in each society, there exists an organized social structure that is composed of the smallest unit group that consists of close-knit families.

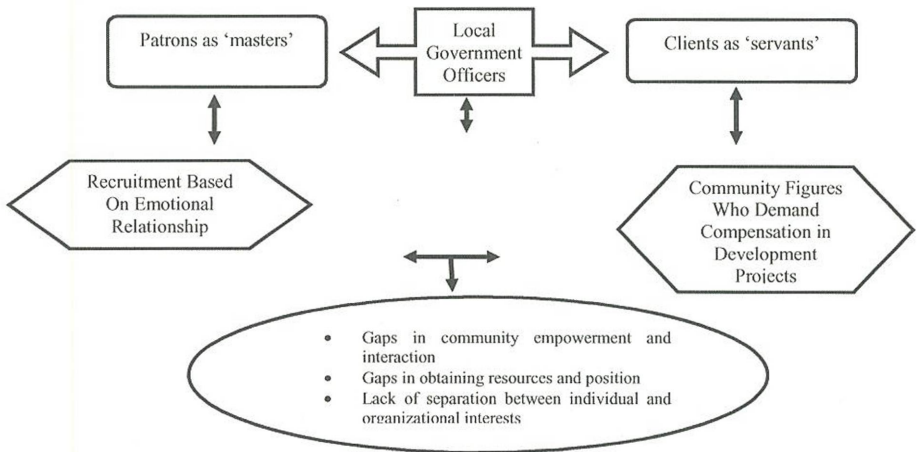
A more in-depth study has been conducted in these issues, revealing that even within the local government structure there exists solid, interacting groups that fight for position and resources in order to gain a larger influence in the local government. Interviews were conducted in the border area throughout the Independent Rural PNPM program and results have shown that in the years 2011-2012, through the saving-and-lending program, there were 8 groups that received a loan in the amount of Rp.15.000.000,-, and those groups are among the close relatives of the village leader. Research has found that the saving and lending program has failed to be sufficiently distributed to neighboring villages and communities. An insider has revealed that the reason for this is the presence of a market constraint (buyers). Other studies involving researchers and NGOs have revealed that there are still many government officials and high-rank figures that expect financial compensation in projects and developments in rural areas. This has proven to create a challenge to the local government. This has also resulted in unfair preferences in conducting developments that are done by the patrons and clients that share the same priorities, creating a stronger patron-client tie. Scott mentioned that a relationship between two parties involve a level of friendship, for the more powerful or economically beneficial party to give protection or benefits to the party that has lower economic benefits, i.e. the client.⁴⁰

On the other hand, the client also provides benefits to the patron in the form of support and participation, including personal favors and labor power. This is also what makes the patron-client ties that are present in the border area so difficult to be eliminated, due to special preferences given to particular clients or patrons to perform projects

⁴⁰ Scott, "Patron Client Politics and Political Change."

that serve purposes that are beneficial to both parties. The figure below illustrates this concept in detail:

Figure 7: Complexity of Local Government Officials and Phenomena in Client Empowerment



Apart from local government officials, relationship ties in the client empowerment program are also present between individuals or officials within an institution. Those ties are formed based on similarities in areas of origin, political views, blood ties and paternalistic relationships, not based on economic interests.

This study indicated that there were major political interests stemming from an area of residence of one of the Local Government Representatives (DPRD) from the Golkar fraction. There was a building of an 800 m long and 3 m wide road leading to that particular area of residence, using the funds allocated for the Independent Rural PNPM Program. Residents of RT2 RW4 were also led to work on this development by the Regency leader, as they are known to have sufficient equipment such as stone grinders and 4-wheeled trucks, as well as labor power and experience. These incidents have been known to happen in the West Borneo border area community and are claimed to have negatively influenced the community empowerment program.

This finding illustrates that there might be positive reinforcements to the performance of the local government officers in the

empowerment program, but at the same time, there might also be negative reinforcements that might affect it. However, as seen from the perspective of the local community, the pattern of the patrons' behaviors in empowering the clients significantly affect the empowerment process as there are many 'irrational' factors that influence this process, such as special preferences, favoritism, etc.

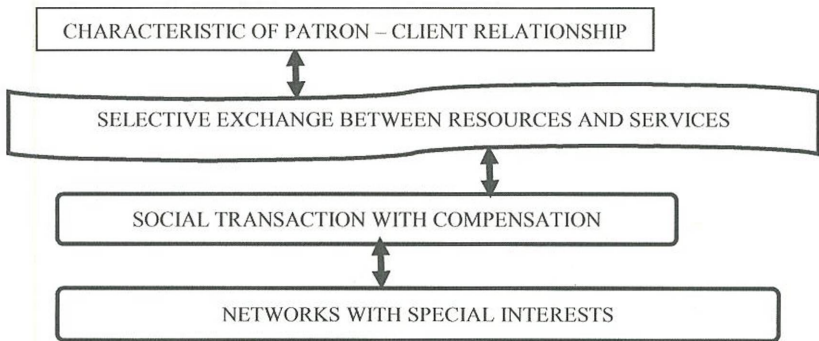
The presence of patron ties in the client empowerment program can be seen from the interactions that occur between the local government officials and between the local community members. Some studies concluded that rational patron-client relationships could have positive effects to the local government officials, whereas other studies have also stated that patron-client relationships have negative effects to the work performance of the local government officials. Either positive or negative, these relationships are known to have significant influences to the empowerment program, as have been claimed by PNPM MPKP Program officials and community members alike. These relationships contain a characteristic that makes up the pattern in the border area community empowerment program.

This study found that the existence of a patron is a positive thing in a way that when the clients have a good relationship with the patrons, they tend to work harder to support and protect their friends or colleagues. This can then improve the work performance of local government officials, for instance, a person who is personally entrusted by the Regency leader will surely strive to keep the trust and work harder as they are indirectly representative of the whole Regency system.

The above-mentioned findings show that the relationship pattern in the client empowerment program is equally important to both the patron and the client, so long as both of their priorities are achieved. This study has thus further elaborated the findings of the studies by Scott and Roniger, by showing other factors that portray more variety in the emotional relationship. The presence of a particular person that is entrusted by the Regency leader is an example of a characteristic of Roniger's theory on the selectivity of patron-client relationships, meaning that not many people have direct connections within this network. In other words, only a select few are entrusted enough to join the network and participate in the empowerment program.

This study found that there is a form of agreement on dealing with goods and services. The patrons in charge of the program entrust jobs to managers to perform specific tasks such as road construction between the regency areas to villages, enabling sufficient transaction of economic and social services. This is illustrated in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Selective Exchange of Patron and Client Relationship



It is apparent that the patrons in the client empowerment program are quite subjective, and this will have a negative influence on the performance of the local government officials due to the lack of transparency of project tenders, seemingly limiting opportunities to particular people. Few observations have concluded that the job performances and qualities done by partners that are given 'special' preferences are insufficient and unsatisfactory. For instance, the width of the concrete in the road construction project was only 10 cm wide, instead of the previously agreed 20 cm width. Another example is the lack of constructive competition present among the Independent Rural PNPM groups, due to its leaders having special preferences for certain people to fulfill certain personal interests. According to Roniger, this interaction is a highly selective form of patron-client relationship and has an absolute unconditional tie, causing it to be a long-term relationship that is free from any reward. This pattern occurs mostly between local government officials and is said to benefit the patron-client relations.⁴¹

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

There is a general pattern within the local government officials between the managers and the people being managed, that is, an emotional connection that lies on the patron relations in client empowerment programs that have caused them to reveal the 'irrational' behavior of the local government officials. Such lack of rationality has had a significant effect on the behaviors of the local government officials in relations to the empowerment program. There seems to be different treatments given to certain communities with certain preferences, which has resulted in an unequal distribution of services. There are certain groups that are prioritized in terms of being given the best services in the program, whereas other groups are given inadequate services. This is in contrast to the goal of the program, that is empowerment for the whole of the local community. A few interviews with informants and NGOs have revealed that this is a result of the financial compensation present in building certain projects and interventions from their superiors. This is due to the pattern of the patron-client relationship, which causes the program developer to be hesitant in stating their opinions against the local government officials based on the high level of loyalty that the community has towards the patrons. Group leaders are also often hesitant to state their opinions without the permission of the patrons.

There is also the presence of the officials who always tend to affirm the opinions of particular group leaders, even if they have been heavily criticized by the masses, creating an unhealthy competition in the community empowerment program. The role of the patrons in the client empowerment program is evident in border areas, shown through the presence of social interactions and other factors that influence the work performance of the local government officials. This can be studied in depth in relations to the level of community participation in the Independent Rural PNPM program that has been conducted in the border area of West Borneo.

Concluding Notes: Identifying the Actual Problems in Community Empowerment

While under the empowerment program, the border area conducts community awareness and involvement projects and attempts to optimize the function of local regional officials. The local government

fully supports the PNPM MPKP program on the hopes that it will benefit the local economy. In order to support the empowerment program, the village/community facilitator and the local government try to maximize community participation, as without it the program would not occur. This is achieved through motivating and educating the community members on the benefits that the Independent Rural PNPM program has on the local community. The growth of the program depends highly on the involvement of the community and thus they have a responsibility in implementing it successfully.

This study found that in the preliminary phase of community empowerment programs, which is the phase of problem identification aimed at deciding the types of programs that will be conducted, is very helpful. One of the community group leaders, SD (38 years old), informed this study that when the program was initially conducted by the community groups, most of the activities and decision-making stem from the local government officials instead of the community members. Another informant, TR (44 years old), mentioned that in meetings to determine the types of programs that will be conducted, the community members are not involved at all, those who are involved are limited to the group leaders and secretaries. Studies have concluded that community participation is delegated by the local government officials due to the pressing nature of some projects such as road constructions between the villages and the Regencies.

This study found that a few of the decisions made within the program is not in line with the actual needs of the community. The population of the village consists as follows: 32.8% people who live by the beach and are traditional fishers; and 67.2% of the population live in hillsides as farmers of coconuts, rubber, and rice. Based on the population, the village leader initially suggested the program to cater to the people living by the sea by providing tools to ease their fishing activities, such as motor-powered machineries and cooling boxes. This suggestion was rejected and what were instead approved were: physical construction of roads using concrete machineries; savings and loans for small business; and savings and loans for women.

Thus, as found through interviews with a some informants, non-governmental organization leaders and community members, it can be concluded that the initial steps of the empowerment program do not

seem to place importance on community participation, especially in the process of identifying problems. Problem identification is therefore a process that is only conducted by a few members of the community and mainly by the government officials. The problems that are identified therefore become the problems that reflect the whole border area community and are dealt with in the empowerment program.

According to Mikkelsen, participation is crucial to illustrate the empowerment process. In this case, participation is seen as a tool to enable the local community to analyze their own problems, think of the solutions, and decide to solve the problems based on their own understanding.⁴² The border area sees a relationship between the local government officials and the community members as one that is based on personal emotions between the superior (government officials) and the subordinates, as suggested by Scott.⁴³ An individual relationship between two individuals from the local government and the community consists of reciprocal interactions that enable the trading of resources. The government officials, for instance, own resources in terms of power, position, protection, and material possession, and the community is resourceful in terms of their participation in deciding a problem.

** Translated from the Indonesian language by Dalia Kuwatly.*

⁴² Mikkelsen, *Methods for Development Work*, p. 54.

⁴³ Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change," p. 178.