

# Community Participation in Managing The Space and Settlement Environment on The Riparian Area: A Case Study in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Rini Rachmawati

## Abstract

Settlements along the river often creates slum area. But on the two settlement areas along the river in two cases reviewed in this paper indicate different conditions. Cases of Code and Gajah Wong riparian shows a success in managing a previously-unclean settlement area to a well-arranged one. This cases shows that the society's self-reliance and creativities have resulted to clean, beautiful public space and environment. The participation of the society in managing their space and settlement environment on the riparian of the two cases is caused by their high awareness as well as the role of community leader figures. Well-targeted program implemented by the government and the roles of academicians, NGO and other stakeholders play an important role in supporting the people there to manage their own area.

**Keyword** : Community Participation, Space, Settlement Environment, Riparian

---

*r\_rachmawati@geo.ugm.ac.id*

*Regional Development Study Program*

*Faculty of Geography, Gadjah Mada University*

### **Introduction: Issues on Settlement in Riparian River Area**

Housing the poor which form the slum areas in some Asian cities is triggered by high urbanization and lack of availability of land. (UN-HABITAT and UNESCAP, 2008). A lack of formal housing options, many are force to settle in slums and informal settlement, or on unsuitable land (UN-HABITAT and UNESCAP, 2008). Informal settlements is means people have obtained access to land housing outside the legal framework and regulations that prescribe the way land ought to be developed and buildings ought to be erected (UN-Centre for Human Settlements, 1984). The poor do not own the land they occupy, or possess housing registrations and building permits In several places of down town areas, there is the same phenomenon of the appearance of settlements on illegal areas, such as riparian space, the railway sides, as well as the areas close to the business centers (behind the shopping buildings, commonly called the worst side).

The Baan Mankong Community Upgrading Programme is an important example for Asian Government, to show that using public land assets for low-income housing is possible (UN-HABITAT and UNESCAP, 2008). Through this programme, being implemented by the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), public land upon which hundreds of informal settlements have been squatting (some of them located in riparian area) is being transformed into "development land" which generates a modest rental income, without any of the country's key public land owning agencies having to invest a penny (UN-HABITAT and UNESCAP, 2008).

Riparian area in the cities is usually a densely-populated area with illegal land status and unclean environment, forming slum area. Accordingly, a slum area, that is always associated with poverty, is inevitably formed. The riparian that located in the centre of the city usually as a destination area for migrant to settle. The closest to the zone one in which central business district (CBD) area is found and many city activities are also held there (social, economic, cultural, technological, and political). One of the factors that cause people

to live there is an easy access for economic activities. As stated by Burgess (Hall, 1998) in the concentric zone model that there is a decrease in terms of the environmental qualities of settlement due to the functional intrusions of the zone one that usually constitutes the business centers, offices, and industries. The people living in this zone are usually those considering their location choice for living not far from their work places. In some cases, riparian habitant doesn't aware of their environment. In Indonesian case, they consider river as waste dump place result in poluted water. In other situation, they use river for bathing, washing, and defecating

The city of Yogyakarta is passed by three river. Two of them are those of Code and Gajah Wong rivers. The areas along the riparian of Code and Gajah Wong rivers are two examples showing that the people living there are able to well manage the space and settlement environment by themselves. Furthermore this paper will discuss about community participation in managing space and settlements on the banks of the Code River region and Gajah Wong.

### **The Past Condition in Code Riparian and Gajah Wong Cases**

The riparian space of Code and Gajah Wong river is a densely-populated area that is susceptible to flood. In the past, the settlement along Code river was of poor condition. The people living there did not have any access to land and legal settlement. They had low income and were not well-educated. This brought a negative consequence to their environment, such as discarding garbage directly onto the river so that it caused flood during the rainy season (shown by figure 1 and 2).



Figure 1. People's Misbehavior of Throwing Garbage Anywhere  
(source: Code Community Documentation)



Figure 2. Flood in Settlement Area in 2006  
(source: Gajah Wong Community Documentation)

### **The Government Policies in the City Development and Settlement Solution of the Riparian Space**

The vision of the city of Yogyakarta is "The realization of the city of Yogyakarta as the city for qualified education, cultural place of interest, growth and primary service, environmentally-friendly place, and equalized civil society". This vision can be realized in several missions, such as making the citizens realize the importance of preserving the environment that is based on the spirit of sense of belonging. The other mission is realizing democratic society.

With these vision and missions, the city government of Yogyakarta stresses on the environmentally-oriented development by increasing the awareness of the people on how important it is to preserve environment and how to realize it. The spirit to having sense of belonging for the surrounding environment is also emphasized for the smoothness of development.

The city government of Yogyakarta has a concept in managing slum area through improvement without removing the people by keeping the kampongs clean, neat, healthy, and comfortable. This concept derives from the idea that an ideal city begins with its ideal

kampongs. The settlement management is included in the development plan and public policy of the city of Yogyakarta and it involves all components of the society.

The government of Yogyakarta puts an effort to arrange the riverside areas such as those at Code and Gajahwong Rivers in order to make them cleaner. This settlement management is even put on the General Plan and Policy of Yogyakarta which involves all components of the society. Some activities to support this program are the communal sewage recycling installation, block grant to the community empowerment institution, stimulant aids for the establishment and rehabilitation of bathrooms/toilets, or house-flooring programs, infrastructures for sanitation of self-recycling waste. The local government gives the motivation that a river is not a waste dump and, in doing so, people are encouraged to build their houses facing the river. In 2005 and 2006, Yogyakarta Municipality received the Ciptakarya award from the Ministry of Public Works for its achievement in the internationally best slum settlement management.

### **The Community Participation in Managing the Area.**

Participation has a number of synonyms such as citizen involvement, citizens' influence action group, cooperation, co-decision, self decision, etc (Wulz in Sanoff, 1990). At the international level there is a tendency decades recognition of the growing importance of the approach to a more socially-oriented development known as the concept of community development (Crescent Team, 2003). The community participation in the current development is of primary need (Rachmawati, 2012). The participatory development planning can be in the form of involving the local people in designing, planning, and implementing the program or project (Jamieson, 1989 in Mikkelsen, 2001). For example the case of Sustainable Lusaka Program (Lusaka is Largest City and also a Capital of Zambia) focus on capacity building at the community level to assist communities in planning, implementing, and managing sustainable environmental programs that need long time in achieving success with community

participation and as effort to scale up upgrading initiative (Talwar, 2008). It takes long time to run the process and to strengthen the society participation. This is due to the fact that society participation is related to the social issues in the society that is not easy to generate. As stated by Khudori (2002) that the structure of the society consists of social, cultural and political factors. Among them, the cultural factor is the strongest one and it is the most difficult to change. Meanwhile, the social and economical factors are relatively easy to change.

The key success in involving the society is that they are a part of design and implementation processes of development. They are willing to involve themselves because they are given a chance by the government (Rachmawati, 2012). Friedman (1992) writes about empowerment that describes the empowerment of the marginal groups of people in the economic and democratic development.

The areas along the riparian of Code and Gajah Wong rivers are two examples showing that the people living there are able to well manage the space and settlement environment by themselves. The case of Code riparian shows a success in managing a previously-unclean settlement area to a well-arranged one. Since 1990, they have started managing their area with the help of the government, academicians, and NGO through a program called "Kampung Improvement Program". One of the programs was building jetty (talud) along the river and followed by changing the house position facing the river. At present the society has better garbage and water treatment and made their area green as well (shown by figure 4).

The strong participation of the Code people is shown by the establishment of the north Code community forum in 2004 by the community leader, youth and community figures. In several meetings, they discuss their potentials and arising problems in Code area. The Code community forms three organizational groups, called Forum Code, consisting of

Community of North Code, Community of Middle Code and Community of South Code. Code Forum was established to maintain the environment of Code River according to its capability. The members of the Forum become the leader of the area in order to achieve the aims as well as to improve the behavior of community (e.g. waste management).

The success of arrangement of Code area is not regardless of the role of community leader. In this case, through community leader, communication with external parties i.e. the government, NGO and universities can be accomplished. Usually, community leader invited by the government in some activities such as the preparation of development plans and also be a resource person in several activities public aspirations for development. For the university, community leaders can be a source of important information about the development in the region. The results of the study and its application were carried out by the university can also be transferred to the community, moderated by the community leaders. It can be argued that the leader of the community is the entrance into the area and has access out to a wide network.

At present the people in north Code has a vision of "North Code as an Alternative Tourism Area." The vision shows that the people of Code have enthusiasm and willingness to make progress and want to make their area a place of interest. To make their area a place of interest, they surely have to keep their environment clean and well-arranged so that it could attract visitors to come. So far Code area has been a natural laboratory that is often visited by both national and international people, mainly academicians (lecturers, researchers and students) who are doing their research or community service in the area. The Code people also hold a festival and traditional ceremony (Merti Code) as tourism attraction. At present, they have a better treatment to the environment.



Figure 3. Community gathering (source: Code Community Documentation)



Figure 4. Usage of limited space for ornamental plants in Code River area

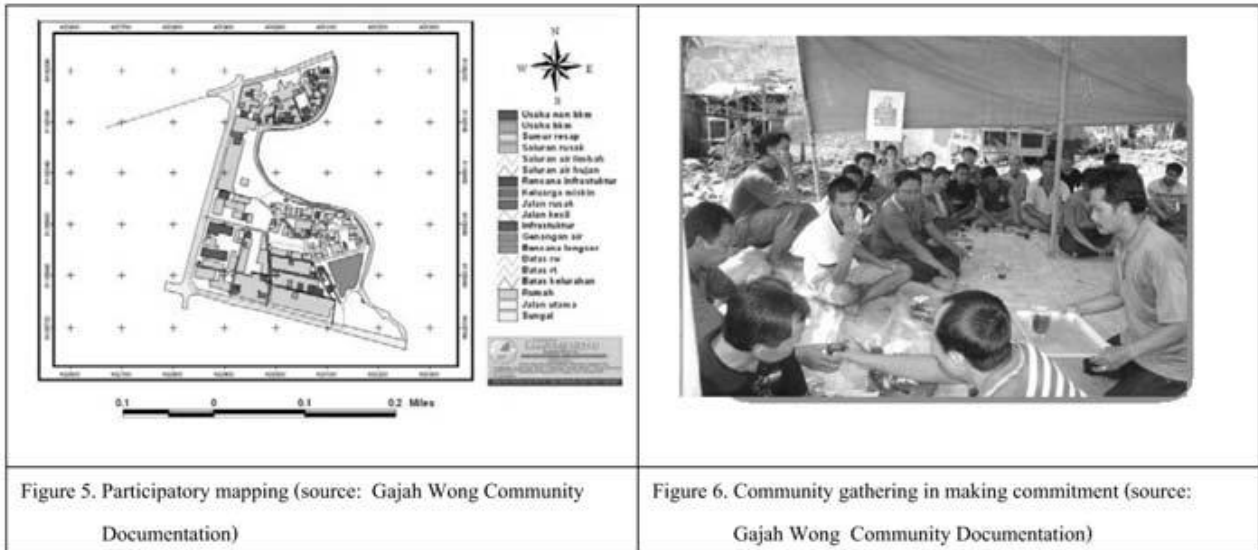
The case of Gajah Wong river's riparian shows that the society's self-reliance and creativities have resulted to clean, beautiful public space and environment adding it a more value to become a tourist destination. The people of the area have once been best awarded for their keeping the area clean and beautiful. The area is sometimes visited by interested parties from other various regions and even other countries for comparative study. Other several measures implemented by the government are trash bin provision, water treatment, and plantation and they are of big support. In addition, the role of NGO in greening activities in the area has also been of great support.

The participation of the society in managing their space and settlement environment on the riparian of the two cases is caused by their high awareness as well as the role of the society figures. Well-targeted program implemented by the government and the roles of academicians, NGO and other stakeholders play an important role in supporting the people there to manage their own area.

In the case of Gajah Wong area the society facilitated by the community figures and NGO is autonomously able to; 1) Set the plan for the area (shown by figure 5), 2) Manage the environment. The socialization of environmental awareness through art, cultural



activities, posters, audio visual, and 3) Create an organization for area development by declaration of kampung Hijau Forum in 2007 along with the establishment of working group and management facilitated by WALHI (NGO).



Working areas of Kampung Hijau Forum are management of river through embankment environmental oriented, gardening and plantation, sanitation, waste management by compost processing and recycling (shown by figure 7 and 8). Waste management give the impact on decreased volume of waste at the dump site. Waste recycling especially turning aluminum foil into handicraft. In 2007, people of the area (Kampung Hijau-Gajah Wong) received the best award for the environmental cleanliness and beauty from the city mayor.



Similarly, the importance of the role of community leaders in the residential area in the north Code, This also applies to the settlement area at Gadjah Wong. Can be added in this case that the success of the arrangement of the settlement area in the river Gadjah Wong one of which is caused by the reliability community leaders in communicating with external parties such as government. In this case the community leaders are able to prepare a proposal and submit it to the government for the development of the region. Cooperation was also be raised with universities for several activities such as research, community service and others.

### **Lesson Learned from Cases**

Both the Code and Gajah Wong cases show that the people's participation is very high for environmental management. This can be seen from the well-arranged area and settlement that are relatively better than other areas of the same river. The leader of community of both areas play a very important role. In addition, the support from the government and NGOs are also very big in contributing to develop the area.

From the case studies of Code and Gajah Wong rivers, we can learn how the society anticipates the existing problems through a series of actions. The case studies in both places can also give an example of key success in managing the area by involving the main actors who have big role in it.

### **Remarks**

The factors which influence the success towards civil society and participatory process for Code River case are 1) Leadership : Leaders play an important role to determine the success of the actions to tackle the problems in Code River, 2) Communication Method : A face-to-face approach is more effective to encourage the society to participate in managing the environment considering their poor educational level and environmental knowledge, 3) Network: Relationship between institutions, university, NGO and the community is needed.

Nevertheless the process of changing the image and generating community awareness takes 10 years.

The factors which influence the success of Gajah Wong case are 1) Leadership : Leaders play an important role to determine the success of the action to tackle the problems at Gajah Wong River, 2) Role of stakeholders: cooperation among the community-NGO-government supports the success of the action, 2) Financial support from the government. Comparing with the Code case, the process of generating community awareness toward their environment in the case of Gajah Wong runs fast supported by the level of the education and the economic condition of the society.

#### **Acknowledgment:**

The preparation and process of writing this article was funded by Community Fund, Faculty of Geography, Gadjah Mada University, Fiscal Year 2012 through the scheme of Research Grant for Lecturers.

#### **Literature:**

- Friedman, J. (1992). *Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development*. Blacwell Cambridge MA & Osford UK.
- Khudori, Darwis. (2002). *Menuju Kampung Pemerdekaan*. Yayasan Pondok Rakyat.
- Mikkelsen, Britha. (2001). *Metode Pendekatan Partisipatoris dan Upaya-upaya Pemberdayaan : Sebuah Buku Pegangan bagi Para Praktisi Lapangan*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Rachmawati, R. (2012). *Praktek Perencanaan Partisipatif: Tinjauan Berbagai Kasus dan Implikasi dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Perencanaan*. Procceding. International Seminar Planocosmo. Institute Technology Bandung.

- Talwar Arun Kumar. (2008). *Population Settlement and Development*. Delhi: Commonwealth Publisher.
- Tim Crescent. (2003). *Menuju Masyarakat Mandiri: Pengembangan Model Sistem Keterjaminan Sosial*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. (1984). *Land for Human Settlements: Review and Analysis of the Present Situation Recommendations for National and International*. Nairobi.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and United Nations Economic and Social Commissions for Asia and The Pasific (UNESCAP). (2008). *Housing the Poor in Asian Cities. Urbanization: The Role The Poor Play in Urban Development*. Bangkok: UN-HABITAT and Nairobi: UNESCAP. ISBN: 978-92-113-1937-8.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and United Nations Economic and Social Commissions for Asia and The Pasific (UNESCAP). (2008). *Housing the Poor in Asian Cities. Land: A Crucial Element in Housing the Urban Poor*. Bangkok: UN-HABITAT and Nairobi: UNESCAP. ISBN: 978-92-113-1937-8.
- Sanoff, H. (1990). *Participatory Design: Theory and Techniques*. North Carolina State University. ISBN: 0-9622107-3-0.