

The Strategies of Scavengers in Maintaining their Viability Based on Social Networks in Surabaya City

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Abstract

As a big city, Surabaya still becomes its own magnetic attraction for the urban to come and earn a livelihood. The informal sector is basically a form of response to the migrants and the poor people of the city towards the uneven development in many regions. The informal sector operationally growing or developing in urban areas generally includes the fields of trade, construction, services, and transportation. And one of the types of work that can be categorized important is trading rubbish/garbage. The front-liners in trading rubbish/garbage are scavengers. Social network has its leading role in their effort to maintain the survival. It is very important to fulfill the need of information concerning employment, food, clothing, housing and others. Social network is formed because basically humans have their limitations in dealing with other people and the social network is used by scavengers as a strategy to maintain their survival.

The study explored the ability of the scavengers in maintaining their viability based approach to social network. This is a descriptive-qualitative research. The techniques applied were purposive and random samplings, data collection based on FGD, and in-depth interviews. After careful observation, it was known that the social network was formed due to the bond of kinship in the scavenger community. Besides the mechanical and organic ties of solidarity could develop a chain of trading to sell their scavenging goods. There was a mutual beneficial relationship between scavengers and collectors. They also developed their social interaction outside the communities. After some prudent observations were conducted, the strategies of scavengers in maintaining their viability based on social network were described.

Keywords: strategy to maintain viability, scavengers, social network

PREFACE

Scavengers community is a specific community with its own characteristics. Its presence, on the one hand, is rejected by the society because the scavengers are considered potentially committing a crime, not trustworthy and as an object of suspicion.(Twikromo ,2000) On the

other hand, its presence is required because they can help minimize the garbage to be disposed of in the garbage disposal areas. They particularly selected the inorganic garbage which is needed by certain factories. Rubbish/garbage in this study was described as the ones having certain economic values, such as wastes of paper, plastic, metal, glass and animal bones. The front-liners in trading rubbish/garbage are scavengers. In this study they are described as: "someone who has a job of collecting garbage items which are no longer used by the owners and they are obtained free of charge or without having to buy and then those items (with the economic value) can be sold again and recycled and usefully be put as a livelihood that can support their daily lives." (Ferri,2000) Scavengers as a profession with its lower income can be handed down from generation to generation. Even they persuade other families, relatives or friends to be scavengers. It could happen because certainly they implemented the strategy based on the social network which played an important role in order to maintain their viability.(Todaro,2010)

STRATEGIES USED BY SCAVENGERS IN MAINTAINING THEIR VIABILITY IN THE CITY OF SURABAYA BASED ON THE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Rationale

1. The inequality or the gap in the development of rural and urban areas is the background of the massive flow of migration of the population from countries to cities. It results in the employment in the informal sector. It is the only choice in order to survive and improve their standard of living in the city of Surabaya. One form of the informal sectors is garbage/rubbish/waste trading and the front-liners of it is the scavenger community.
2. Up to now scavenger is a kind of jobs that has not been written. It has not got any recognition from the government. Consequently, the people who work as scavengers are not included in the parts of the policy of the State although they are citizens to be paid some attention.
3. There has not been any official legal protections such rules or regulations to protect the scavenger community.
4. The existence of social networks for the social interactions among members of the scavenger community resulted in the formation of a social group and social bond as a means to maintain the viability.

The purpose of The model of the strategy of the scavengers In maintaining the viability based on social networks

It is implemented in order to:

Social networks established are aimed to facilitate their social interactions, and communication. Through the interaction the primary and secondary needs are fulfilled in order to maintain the viability.

Targets of The model of the strategy of the scavengers In maintaining the viability based on social networks

The targets of the model are the people who come from other cities, counties, provinces, and islands.

The criteria

- a. Having the principal job as scavengers and who lived in Surabaya for at least one year.
- b. Having some limitations in meeting their basic and social needs.

Strategy and activity

Strategy

The strategy of the scavengers in maintaining their survival is a way which has been selected by using a group approach in which a person will experience an effective social learning process to develop their capacities, so that they meet all the needs. The concept focuses on emphasizing the utilization of social networks in which patterns of social relationships, social situations and social roles have an influence in the establishment of social networks in which the needs of primary and secondary can be fulfilled

Activity

Activities carried out by scavengers in order to maintain the viability based on the social network are developed through social bonds in the community. The social bonds are formed due to the bonds of kinship, solidarity, establishing a good trading system in selling scavenged goods and interaction with the community outside of the area of the scavengers.

Establishing a bond of kinship in the scavenger community

Most of the scavengers had the family ties, ranging from grandfather/ grandmother, father/mother, children/children in law, and so on. They had a high sense of brotherhood. The marital kinship of the scavenger families or relatives were included in the study. Thus it can be understood that the relationships among scavengers become closer – from a friendship to a family.

Fukuyama (2000) stated that the relationship in the families got closer and it improved the social capital in the family of the scavengers. In fact the number of the scavengers in the research area did not decline but it actually increased significantly due because they invited friends. or neighbors to be scavengers. The exist kinship of the scavenger community resulted in the high level of participation and proximity. They could relate directly or indirectly through another individual.

Establishing of Solidarity

Various ways were taken by the community of scavengers to survive. They formed a mechanical and organic bond of solidarity. The mechanical bond of solidarity could be observed through a social network sharing information about opportunities to work as scavengers (Effendi, Tadjjudin, Chrisr, 2004). Besides, the existence of the association was very useful to overcome the problems in matters relating to the sale of scavenged goods, saving clubs, mutual cooperation in the form of moral and financial support, and friendship. The activities were usually done informally. When they were at rest, they helped the sick people. They also permitted the neighbors to watch television or listen to the radio in their homes.

The organic bond of solidarity was also found in the scavenger community because of the working division and interdependence resulting from the specialization of the work (Putnam, 1993). To maintain their viability with regard to how to overcome difficulties in terms of jobs, their style of communication was one-way, with the communication patterns of patron and client. The one who played a role as patron was the collector, while the client was the scavenger. The organic bond of solidarity can be observed through the formation of social networks in determining the price of scavenged goods, and the social network when lending some money.

- Establishing the procedures of the commercial chain of the sale of the scavenged goods between Scavengers and Collectors

The social networks of the scavengers and the collectors could be described in the business chain of material/scavenged goods. It started from the scavengers to the factories or plants. It was such a long business chain because it involved a number of players with multiple levels. The bottom level were scavengers. The higher one was a number of small collectors. The next one was a number of big collectors who would be in touch with the factory or Final Manufacturer.

Developing a social interaction with people outside the scavenger.

Humans cannot live alone and they need other people for their social interaction. All human actions are reciprocal and they are called the social interaction (Suparlan, 1995). Basically humans have a kind of instinct to always be in touch with one another. The scavenger community living around the area of garbage disposal also establish their social relations with the citizens outside the garbage disposal area. Some female scavengers were sometimes invited for message, and the male scavengers with special skills were also hired to do some repairs or renovation and so on. Even some of them were builders. The social networks formed due to the social interaction could assist them to handle some matters of food, groceries, and health.

Several social networks are formed within the social bonds. They are used by the scavenger community as a means of fulfilling their needs including the primary and secondary needs. The social bonds here are more familial friendship. The social networks have an important role in the fulfillment of the secondary needs (except the needs of clothing, food, and house) such as the needs of health, entertainment, and education because within the community the members can have their social interaction, and meet the needs. In order to make the interaction effective in the social network, there should be a leader who has the guiding views and strong influences to the members of the community to achieve a certain decision. Besides the leader also has a role as a liaison among the social networks, because there are some needs which are not only met through the social networks, for example fund-raising for the medical expenses of one member of the social network. The funds can be raised from the existing social networks. In this case the roles of the leader and the collectors are very significant. The community members listen to their opinions.

In terms of the primary need related to the fulfillment of the needs of clothing, food, and house, the interaction between scavengers and collectors is very important. The social interaction here is more likely to act as intermediaries. Those collectors are the mediators connecting the scavengers as the bottom layer with the larger collectors who are at intermediate levels. Collectors are generally manipulative with the selling prices of scavenged goods. They purchase at a relatively cheaper price or lower than that of the great big collectors. In this case, the collectors gain the high profit.

The form of social networking communication is down-directed because the collectors have a position as a patron while the scavengers are as clients. The patron-client relationship is a social exchange relation of two people or more leading toward an unequal relationship. One party clearly has a higher position than the other side. It is due to the existing positions of a superior and an inferior. The superior is considered to have a bigger ability and more powerful which causes the inferior to be dependent on them. The inferior provides assistance and support which includes personal services. Dependence which starts from a broad aspect of its dependence include other social life. (Robert, 1995)

CONCLUSIONS

1. Activities carried out by scavengers to maintain their viability based on the social networks was to build a social bond in the community. The forms of the social bond were the bonds of kinship and solidarity. Establishing a good chain of trading system in selling scavenged goods and interaction with the community outside of scavenging area were also other forms of their striving.
2. Within the social bonds several social networks were formed. They were used as a means of scavenger community to meet their needs which include primary and secondary needs, and the social bonds here were more familial-friendship.
3. The social networks have an important role in the fulfillment of the secondary needs (except the needs of clothing, food, and house) such as the needs of health, entertainment, and education because within the community the members could have their social interaction, and meet the needs. In order to make the interaction effective in the social network, there should be a leader who had the guiding views and strong influences to the members of the community to achieve a certain decision. Besides the leader also had a role as a liaison among the social networks, because there were some needs which were not only met through the social networks, for example, fund-raising for the medical expenses of one member of the social network. The funds could be raised from the existing social networks. In this case the roles of the leader and the collectors were very significant. The community members listened to their opinions.
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