

**SELF EMPOWERMENT MODEL OF THE POOR
IN IMPROVING PROSPERITY:
Studies in the District of Alang-Alang Lebar Palembang, Indonesia**

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ABSTRACT

Poverty is a very complicated problem. The government has done various efforts to overcome poverty, but has not come up with optimal results yet. Every effort made to overcome poverty often prevails temporarily. There should be alternative effort to overcome poverty through self-empowerment.

This research aims to conduct a qualitative research, using symbolic interactionism approach. In this approach, human behavior and interaction are transformed into symbols and interpretation. This research analysis is more specific as it is more individual.

This research is expected to provide a model of self-empowerment for poor society to help them promote their prosperity. Through this self-empowerment, poor society can serve as the subjects, not merely as the object of poverty reduction. This poor society empowerment involves social capital (norms, values, trusteeship, network, reciprocity) and personal quality (prayer, entrepreneurship, efforts, initiative, and self-trust on God). Subsequently, this self-empowerment is expected to influence poor society to be able to change their life quality standard and to motivate them better to work harder and finally to promote their productivity. The condition in which the performer of self-empowerment owns good social capital and personal quality will increase revenue, saving and better quality of life, thus this self-empowerment will help reduce poverty, and achieve the expected welfare.

Keywords: *Self-empowerment, poverty, social capital, personal quality, welfare.*

INTRODUCTION

Palembang has gone through quite rapid development, alongwith the regional division or the formation of new district. One of them

is district Alang-Alang Lebar, which was formed in 2007. In 2007, two distrcet spins-off took place; the district of Alang-Alang Lebar and the district of Sematang Borang. Ideally, a

region spin off, whether of a province, regency or a municipality is expected to accelerate the development progress, so it can enhance the people's social welfare. However, in fact, the division program has created social gaps and disparity. The policy of division is one of the factors that triggers social gaps and disparity especially when seen in the perspective of inter-regional revenue and development (Rohima, 2009). This is due to the fact that some regions are blessed with readily-available natural resources and adequate human resources, while the others are not. This condition generates social gaps and disparity. Regions with natural and adequate human resources will grow more rapidly than those with poor and inadequate ones, which sometimes made them even gradually left behind. This will create uneven distribution of development and social gaps that finally can enlarge gaps of poverty in the region.

The uneven distribution of development and social disparity influence the level of poverty. The poverty level of Palembang with 16 districts shows an ever-increasing number of poor people and unemployment along with the increasing number of population, as seen from the average of poverty rate, which was 175,425 persons. From 2004 until 2005, it showed the rise of poverty level up to 68.75 %, which is the highest poverty rate ever in Palembang. In 2011 the number of poor people reached 10% out of 1.7 million people, whereas the unemployment level was 14%.

Alang-Alang Lebar district is a new district, which was spun off in 2007. It consists of four villages, covering Talang Kelapa, Srijaya, Alang-Alang lebar and Karya Baru villages. The number of poor people in Alang-Alang Lebar district always increases year by year with 9,231 persons in 2007 becoming 10,342 persons in 2008. The following year, 2009, the number of poor people increased to 13,556 persons, and in 2010 to 17,032 persons, and in 2011, it increased to 20,887 persons, while the total number of Alang-Alang

Lebar's population is 83,853 persons (taken from the district's data in 2011). The division program should have created an even distribution of development to the lowest level, but in fact, it can create social gaps and disparity (Rohima, 2009). This social gaps and disparity occur due to the difference of natural resources and of inadequacy of human resources that each region has.

The number of poor people in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar shows an increase every year along with the increase of population. The increase of population is influenced not only by the birth rate but also by the migration of people (newcomers). This brings about the uneasy access for the society to the key natural resources required to lead a decent living. If this situation remains unsolved right away, it will worsen the condition of the poor people, which can be identified through the low work ethos, bad habits that the poor people do. This behavior pattern should be stopped in order not to create new poverty-trapped cultural behavior.

To overcome poverty, the government has developed some poverty eradication programs to promote the social welfare. So many empowerment programs have been conducted since New Order era until today. Among others are PPK (*Program Pengembangan Kecamatan/District Development Program*), JPS (*Jaring Pengaman Sosial/Social Safety Net*), BLT (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai/Straight Cash Aid*), and PNPM (*Program Nasional Pengembangan Masyarakat/Society Empowerment National Program*) and KUR (*Kredit Usaha Rakyat/Credit for Society Business*). *Inpres Desa Tertinggal/Presidential Instruction on Backward Village (IDT)* program has two-directional partnership programs; between the government and reformist agent without involving private sector. In this case, the government serves as the donator and the development planner, while the reformist agent serves as an executor. Other than that, another type of partnership is Takesra (*Tabungan*

Keluarga Sejahtera) and Kukesra (*Kredit Usaha Keluarga Sejahtera*), which is four-directional partnership program between the government, private sector, bank and society. The government serves as the regulator, private sector as donator, bank as executor, while society as a party whom they motivate to be keen saver. However, those programs mostly have not been successful/optimal, in a sense that they are not yet able to enhance the prosperity of the poor society, if not too slow in changing it. As soon as the programs were over, the poor society would return to their previous condition. Besides, those programs only stressed on physical development, and the allocation of the fund to elevate the social welfare was quite small. It indicates the little participation of the society in implementing the programs.

The factual problems found in observation area are to be the presence of the increasing number of poor society along with the increasing number of population of Alang-Alang Lebar district from 2007, which was 0.9%, turned into 18.45% in 2011. The increase of the number of the poor society is influenced by many poverty-resulting factors, either external or internal. The rise of petroleum price causes inflation, that in turn, will suppress the life standard of most society, for worse, that of poor society. Those who previously live a slight above the poverty line will drop below the poverty line, resulting from the increase of basic need price. The low quality of human resources in poor families, and other conditions do not allow them to get access to the facilities available at the market. Besides, the empowerment program implemented was inclined to be *top down* without involving the society as the target of the program. This condition led to poor implementation that did not meet the society's need.

According to Hamid (2003), there are some shortcomings of the poverty eradication program, namely planning is designed by the central government (*top down*): (1) They are

not corresponding to the society or region's need; (2) The programs implemented are sectoral, in which the society is considered as an object; (3) The difficulty in keeping the program running, so many empowerment programs discontinued with poor administrative responsibility to the government. The society was not involved optimally but given only a small portion of role in the implementation of the program. The society was merely considered to be the receiver of the program, and to be the machine, which they could manage to implement the programs, as they wanted. Furthermore, the programs were not sustainable and were implemented like a temporary project. This all reflects the real current condition, meaning that the empowerment program is partial and not effective yet in encouraging the society to live independently (Kompas, 2011).

Promoting social welfare requires some efforts to self-empower individuals. This self-empowerment emphasizes on each individual in a society being actively involved in the self-empowerment not merely as an object but as an actor and subject of empowerment. This is expected to reduce the number of people who are trapped in the vicious circles of poverty. Generally, empowerment is aimed at promoting the standard of social welfare and the multidimensional equilibrium of life. Self-empowerment is an individual empowerment in an effort of overcoming poverty to get rid of economic deprivation and to achieve prosperity. Self-empowerment starts from a premise of an individual who is the main actor of the development. Therefore, the development of individual's potential to help him/herself (*self help*) in life survival (independence and self-empowerment).

One of the important components to support self-empowerment and human development is social capital that covers up value, norm, reciprocity, trust, and network. Bourdine asserted that every social network potentially could produce power and inequality

(Dwyer, 2006 in Rohima, 2010). The inequality produced in a social network has additional value that benefits the job description distribution for each individual in a social network as social capital. This social capital is potentially owned by an individual of which role can be improved to overcome poverty.

Social capital, according to Coleman (1988) should be seen from its function. Coleman stated that social capital is not a single entity, but rather a hetero entity that contains two major elements, namely: (1) Social capital covers up social structure in which there are some aspects; and (2) Social capital can facilitate certain action and habit of the doers in such environment of social structure. Rotberg (2011) stated that social capital is a social infrastructure, which is constituted from the interaction of the citizens based on trust, cooperativeness in order to achieve common goals and to produce civilized culture.

In general, social capital is measured based on (1) *generalized trust*, (2) *value*, (3) *reciprocity*, and (4) *networks*, namely trust, norms, reciprocity and network (Field, 2003; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 2001; Lin, 2001, 2004, 2005). Thereafter, Fukuyama (1995), stated that trust is a growing expectation in a society, which is indicated by some attitudes; honesty, regularity and cooperativeness in compliance with the respected norms. Cox (1995) stated that society shows a high level of trust, positive and cooperative social relationship. A healthy society tends to have strong, cooperative social network. Putnam (1995) argued that strong social networks would strengthen the roles of cooperation of its members and the benefits of their participation.

The increasing number of poor society necessitates more efforts to overcome poverty. Poverty problem should not always rely on the government, and should become individual problem to achieve independence and to awaken from poverty, using *bottom-up* approach. Independence is constituted by efforts

of empowering poor society through social capital. Various programs of empowerment have been implemented to reduce poverty and to enhance social welfare in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar, however has not yet come up with optimal result. This study is conducted to observe the implication of self-empowerment of the poor society using social capital in order to awaken from deprivation and vicious circle of poverty. It is expected to change the condition of poor society into more decent living than before by promoting the life standard and achieving the expected prosperity.

Problem Identification

The availability of social capital is considered important in order to reduce poverty. Poverty has something to do not only with the fulfillment of economic need, but also with larger and easier access to living resources, which are determined by the availability of network, values, mutual trust, reciprocity and the prevailing norms in a society. The sustainability of the program is expected to persist to ensure its success and to reduce poverty in Palembang, especially the district of Alang-Alang Lebar. The problem that would be observed in this research, "How to implement self-empowerment of the poor society in promoting prosperity."

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Welfare in Empowerment

Economic dimension plays quite important role in promoting social welfare since it can serve as supporting facilities for the fulfillment of need in other dimension. The primary conditions for the society in fulfilling their necessity are the raise of income. Therefore, the main problem in the process of development is how to afford a raise for the society's income rapidly, so they will have more opportunities to fulfill their need. Social welfare is marked with prosperity, that is, the increase of consumption resulting from the increase of income. However, in general social

welfare is the level of someone's ability to fulfill his or her basic need in the form of clothing, food, housing, education and health. Social welfare can also be defined as the individual's level of ability of accessing ownership of production factors from which he/she can benefit from its process.

Poverty

Chambers, *et al.* (1987), in his theory on "deprivation trap" stated that poverty occurs as a result of a complexity of causal relationship, which is correlated with powerlessness, vulnerability, physical weakness and isolation. In his opinion, powerlessness has correlation with other trap dimension. Powerlessness restricts access to resources, and complicates judicial justice into abuses and results in the absence of bargaining power and makes society more vulnerable to sudden demand of paying off loans. This is strengthened by the statement of Sharp, *et al.* (1996 in Kuncoro, 2000), who tried to identify the causes of poverty in society. He divides them into three perspectives. First, poverty occurs because of the different patterns of resources ownership that creates disparity in the distribution of income. Poor society only has very limited resources with low quality. Second, poverty arises, resulting from the different quality of human resources. The low quality of human resources will result in the low productivity so that it can bring about the low wage that they will receive. The low quality of human resources is caused by among others, the low education, bad luck, discrimination and genetic factor.

Self-empowerment

Empowerment is an integrated process among motivators, facilitators and a group of society that requires empowerment through the improvement of knowledge, skills, the provision of amenities as well as opportunity to reach access to the system of resources in the augmentation of social welfare.

Self-empowerment, which denotes to "self" is the main actor and subject in the interaction that are able to assume an attitude of empowering "him/herself" by making good use of "personal potential" in dealing with problems that they faced (Charon, 1979). Rutherford (1994, in Yustika, 2010a) stated that an individual's action is influenced by two factors; rationality and norm (*non-rationale*).

Sumardjo (1999, in Rohima, 2010) stated "the characteristics of an empowered individual are (1) being able to comprehend him/herself and his/her potentials, being able to make planning (to anticipate the future change of condition), (2) being able to direct him/herself, (3) having power to negotiate, (4) having *bargaining power* in doing a mutual cooperation, and (5) being responsible of his/her own action. This indicates that an empowered individual is one who knows, understands, and has good motivation and opportunity, makes good use of the opportunity, has the energy, can cooperate, knows various alternatives, can make a decision, dares to take risk, can search for information, and has the ability to act in accordance with the situation. The process of empowerment should be done persistently and continuously so that it can lead them to prosperity.

"Self", according to Mead, is also not an object, but a subject of his/her own thought. This implies that on the one hand, Mead stated, "body is not the self and only becomes the self when one's mind grows". On the other hand, the self and reflection become important for the mind growth. Therefore, "the self" is another aspect of the overall social process in which an individual is part of it. The general mechanism to develop "the self" is reflection or the ability to put oneself in other's shoes and act accordingly. Furthermore, "the self" also allows one to play role upon conversing with others. Thus, "the self" is the ability to make reflection on oneself in the perspective of others, in which an individual acts to communicate, to analyze, to direct, to be wise and

to give label to “the self” (Charon, 1079, also see Basrowi & Sukidin, 2002).

Social Capital

Social capital is similar to other forms of capital, in a sense that it has productive characteristic. Social capital can be identified as a product of inter-human relationship, particularly an intimate and consistent relationship. Social capital denotes to network, norms and trust from which the society’s potential productivity may arise. However, social capital is different from financial capital, because social capital is cumulative and increasing itself (*self-reinforcing*) (Putnam, 2002). That is why, social capital will not be vanished if utilized, but will increase, instead. The damage of social capital most often does not result from being used, but rather from being unused. Unlike human capital, social capital also denotes to the human’s ability to socialize with others.

Social capital plays strategic role as it is characterized productive and cumulative and has a function as adhesive and supporting social elements through a consistent relationship and network. It does not matter how much or how often this social capital is used, it will not be vanished or worn out. A social capital will even be stronger. The larger the inter-social element relationship is the larger network it will create so there will be bigger opportunity for one or a group to get information and access, economically or socially. The amount of benefit of social capital for someone or a group will drive them to establish relationship and network through either organization or individual.

According to an expert of social capital, Fukuyama (1999) stated the followings:

“Social capital is a set of informal values or norms shared among members of group that permits cooperations among them. If a member of group comes to expect that others will behave reliably and honestly then they will come to trust one

another. Trust is like lubricant that makes the running of any group or organization more efficient.”

A set of informal value or norms that spread among members of group, which allows cooperations among groups in a society to take place. Such cooperations occur if among members of social groups could fulfill what is expected by other social groups, and could behave reliably and honestly, such social groups will trust each other. Trust is like lubricant that will make the organization run efficiently. Several social capital elements can be used to observe self-empowerment of the poor society. They are *norms, value, trust, reciprocity, and network*.

RESEARCH METHOD

Symbolic Interactionism Approach

This research done in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar consequently brings about the choice of qualitative research with symbolic interactionism approach. This means that it highlights the disclosure of social phenomena about the implication of self-empowerment of the poor society towards prosperity. This is in line with the elaboration Ulin et, al (2002), stating that:

“..... when the primary objective of a research is to explore and explain behavior rather than describing it, when the research problem is not “common” and does not suffice for an observation or when decent words for communicating with respondent are not available, the researcher is recommended to show answers for his/her research questions and to use qualitative method.”

Even though individuals are rationale in the perspective of economics, such rationality has limitation. According to Lin (1999, in Manzilati, 2009a), rationality on individual is restricted to neuro-physical ability and to costs in obtaining information. Physical restriction has correlation with the ability to receive, store and regain the information and linguistic com-

petent to make his knowledge and feeling understood by others. Whereas, the cost of information has something to with the cost of obtaining information as source of making decision on various possibilities.

In this case, the researcher would prefer Symbolic Interactionism (in line with the point of view of *homo sociologist*), because the survey is considered accurate to measure behavior and usually bears problems and gets responses, opinion and idea. However, this method is less accurate to measure behaviors, because what people say about what they do possibly or impossibly reflects what they really do (Manzilati, 2009). Through this approach, it aims at obtaining information as comprehensively as possible about various phenomena of self-empowerment of poor society, at comprehending what they do, at observing interactions in using social capital as if the researcher were present in their environment.

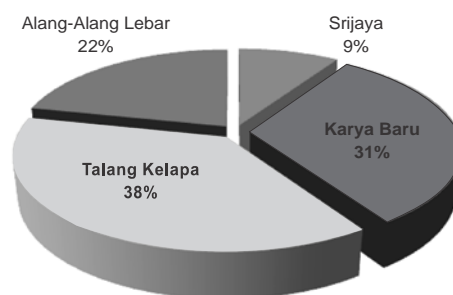
Subsequently, Blumer (1969) stated that symbolic interaction is a scientific perspective to observe social life and human behaviors. This perspective is based on an insight that human is an active and creative body, always involved in social interaction with people or environment, as well as her/himself. The outcome of self-interaction is influenced by several factors, like *self-concept*, past experience (of the same object), and goals. Such factors will determine an individual's action, personally or collectively or on behalf of an organization with consistent orientation of achieving certain goals. Such orientation, on the one hand interacts with *the significant others*, on the other hand, plays important role in forming meanings, because from such interaction, a perspective was born. Therefore, with one's own perspective, an object must be understood.

In this research, symbolic interaction has correlation with how poor society empowers themselves, interprets every signs and symbols of other parties and does activities based on

meaning and interpretation of those signs and symbols (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The most basic proposition of this symbolic interaction is that human's behavior and interaction can be differentiated as they are performed in symbols and interpretation. Symbols are very important aspect that allows human to act in accordance with humane typical methods.

The Scope of Research

This research was conducted in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar. The center of government of the district of Alang-Alang Lebar is located in the Village of Talang Kelapa, Alang-Alang Lebar district of Palembang. Furthermore, Alang-Alang Lebar has a strategic position and is easy to reach. The distance between Alang-Alang Lebar and capital city of the province is only 1.1 kilometers and the furthest village is 5 kilometers from the district of Alang-Alang Lebar. As a new district born out of regional division, it has 34,581 hectares and becomes the fourth largest district among the other districts in Palembang city. It consists of four villages, namely Srijaya, Alang-Alang Lebar, Talang Kelapa and Karya Baru village. The details can be described as follows in Figure 1.



Source: BPS of Palembang City, 2012

Figure 1. The Percentage of Size of Villages in the District of Alang-Alang Lebar

This research is focused on model of poor society empowerment implication toward prosperity in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar, Palembang. In this research, it also

observes interactions that are understood to have relation with the self-empowerment of poor society in their economic activity. The relation can be reflected through perception, attitudes, action, symbol as well as statement on the existence and the role of social capital. This implies that this research will also explore and find out the forms of social capital, the description of the utilization of social capital that is done by an individual in the self-empowerment of poor society in economic activity to overcome the vicious circle of poverty so that it will enable them to elevate the life standard as expected. Moreover, this research employs micro, inductive (not deductive) approach.

Key Informant Identification

This research is focused on the model of self-empowerment of poor society through social capital. The identification of key informant in the process of data sampling of this research is individual of the poor society who leads a poor life. Other than that, an additional data sampling (which can also serve as data validity test), is obtained from supporting informant, that is, regional government and department officials, intellectual figure, public figure, and non-governmental Organization (LSM).

Method of Data Collection

The data of this research is collected using several methods, namely: *First*, unstructured interview (without questionnaire). What the researcher means by interview is a conversation to explore deeply what happens, which enables the researcher to explore why people have different points of view and which can be used to avoid mistakes (unclear statement can be replaced directly upon the interview in progress).

Second, observation was carried out, by putting the researcher as object of observation and the participant of the poor society's activity. It is meant to make the object of observa-

tion (the researcher) unconscious of being observed (*unobtrusive*) so that the obtained information would really reflect the attitude, perception and action chosen by an individual who is self-empowering him/herself.

Third, written source. Other than non-words and action source, this research also uses written source, or the so-called 'bibliography'. It is obvious that written source cannot be neglected. In the perspective of data source, additional material from written source can be classified as book and scientific magazine, archive, personal and formal document etc.

Data Analysis Technique

Like what has been elaborated previously, this research employs Symbolic Interactionism Method that is based on Mead's social psychology insight. It suggests seeing social reality as being in process of "becoming" rather than as static fact. Human beings and social rules are in the process of "becoming" rather than an established fact (Poloma, 1984).

According to Mead (Poloma, 1984), people do not only realize others but also are able to be aware of themselves. Therefore, people do interact not only with others but also with themselves symbolically. Symbolic Interactionism is carried out by using language, the most important symbol and gestures. Symbols are not established facts, but rather in a continuous process. This process of conveying meaning is a subject of symbolic interactionism. As a matter of fact, in this kind of interaction, an individual is free to change it through several alternatives of action.

DISCUSSION

The imperfect condition of the market, retarded, and shortcomings are a condition of which they experience consciously related to poverty. So does the poverty of the society in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar. It results from the absence of productive assets, the

shortcoming of setting entrepreneur's capital, the shortcoming of education, skills, the controversy of open-mind and introvert attitudes among the members of the society themselves. Consequently, being retarded, backwardness, being isolated, being deprived are all that will create the vicious circle of poverty.

Social capital is all what the poor society has ever owned, since material capital has been something hard to obtain. Social capital is similar to other kinds of capital, in a sense that social capital has productive characteristic. Social capital can be defined as the product of human's inter-relationship to one another, particularly an intimate, consistent relation. Social capital denotes to network, norm and trust that are potential for the society's productivity. However, social capital is different from financial capital, as social capital is cumulative and increasing by itself (*self-reinforcing*) (Putnam, 2002). Moreover, social capital will never run out after utilization, but will increase, instead. The damage of social capital is contributable to not being utilized, not to being utilized. Unlike human capital, social capital denotes to the ability of human-kind to socialize or interact with other people. Rooted in norms and communal value, this inter-human association will produce mutual trust, which in turn, will create a high economic and measurable value (Fukuyama, 2002). In relation to this, five elements of social capital are trust, norms, value, networks and reciprocity.

The model of self-empowerment focuses more on the human quality development in the attempt of enhancing humane capacity to influence and manage their future. This capital attempts to elevate human dignity and prestige from a poor individual to someone with skills and feelings. Positioning a poor individual in self-empowerment as subject "I" and object "me" can help him/her arise from deprivation and vicious circle of poverty. So far, a poor individual has always been merely the object and considered as a production factor. How-

ever, they cannot be regarded as production factor and as physical being used in the production process to manufacture output or to multiply the amount of the obtained products. Therefore, it requires efforts to position oneself "I" in order to be able to be the well-motivated subject to be more empowered in enhancing the better life standard, the independence and the being established.

Principally, the objective of self-empowerment is to create a condition that describes individual's "self" ability to develop him/herself independently and persistently, and to collaborate the "I" and "me" position. This empowerment places human on a better prestige and dignity as a poor individual can act as a subject not merely as an object of empowerment. Poor society as individual has equal rights to improve his/her life standard and the living. This self-empowerment increases the motivation of the poor society to raise from deprivation and poverty trap, as well as their productivity so that the income of those who do the self-empowerment.

Through self-empowerment, poor society can determine attitudes and action to be taken. According to Sulistiyani (2004), empowerment is a process to become empowered, or a process to obtain power or ability from any party that has power to any party who has less power. Subsequently, Pranaka (1996) stated that empowerment contains two meanings. *First*, it is meant to *give power or authority* that means to give authority, diverting power or delegate the authority to other party who has not been empowered or less empowered. *Second*, it is meant to *give ability or to enable* other party to do something.

Self-empowerment is an effort to enhance prestige and dignity of the less-powered or poor social components to awaken from poverty trap, deprivation and backwardness. In other words, empowerment is enabling and making the society independent. It is done to promote productivity in order to enhance their income so that they can save and make in-

vestment and finally can make themselves more empowered.

Self-empowerment for poor society to reduce poverty by utilizing elements of social capital covers up (Figure 2):

(a) Maintaining and implementing social norms that prevail in the society. This constitutes a set of rules - either written or conventional - that are strongly observed by the local society. The presence of norms creates tolerance and mutual assistance among individuals of the society to empower each other; like visiting a sick neighbor. Social charity can be taken from rice-picking (*jimpitan*), or attending invitation of a party thrown by a neighbor. Norms comprise of insights, values, expectations and common goals that they want to achieve and run together by members of group in a society. Norms derive from religion, morality guide, or secular standards of value, like professional ethic code. Norms are established and developed based on the past cooperation and applied to support cooperative atmosphere (Putnam, 2002; Fukuyama, 2002). Such norms are prerequisite and a product of social trust. Fukuyama (1999) asserted and added that informal norms can encourage cooperation between two persons or among people. Norms contain social capital that covers a quite wide spectrum, ranging from reciprocity between friends to a complicated one and religious-value based one.

(b) Observing values is an idea that is passed down through generations and considered true and important in a society. The presence of value makes each individual take care of each other, help one another when in trouble, and give assistance when needed. According to Fukuyama (2002), the prevailing values can either strengthen or weaken the social capital. Therefore, such values must be managed well to be better oriented and more beneficial. The improvement of social capital also must pay attention to the improvement of capacity in order to make the organization or the system run the way it should and more effi-

ciently, effectively and sustainably. In the district of Alang-Alang Lebar, environmental and neighborly values are still so strongly held that mutual assistance, in renovating the poor member of society is still going on. In addition to that, friendly values drive them to take care of each other's business among the poor members of society. It indicates that poor members of society are mutually helpful, respectful, and appreciative to each other.

(c) Upholding trust strongly constitutes attitudes of mutual trust among individuals in a society so that it enables them to unite and not to harm each other. The presence of mutual *trust* among individuals allows them to give each other capital to set a business to elevate the life standard. Furthermore, giving each other facilities in the transaction such as giving a trust for late payments. As stated by Fukuyama, trust is a growing expectation in a society, which is characterized by honesty, well organized, and cooperation based on the common norms that they observe.

Social trust is an application of this insight. Cox (1995) stated, "In a society with high level of trust, social rules are prone to be positive; relationships are cooperative". According to Cox (1995), "We expect others to manifest good will, we trust out fellow human beings. We tend to work cooperatively, to collaborate with other in collegial relationships." Social trust is basically a good product of social capital. A good social capital is characterized by the presence of strong social institutions; social capital that brings about harmonious social life (Putnam, 2002). Social capital can only be instituted if each individual learns and has good will to trust others so that they will make a reliable commitment to grow other forms of mutually beneficial relationship (Putnam, 1995).

(d) Setting up as wide network as possible and a structured relationship in the social interaction among individuals in society. In this research, "mutual symbiosis" among the poor members of society to do self-empowerment is

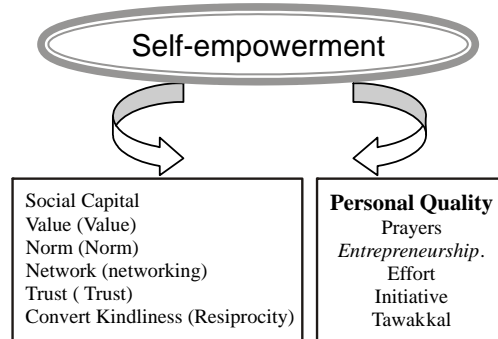
largely found. The availability of network can widen horizon, expand marketing, enhancing skills by learning and create job. Dynamic infrastructure of social capital is in the form of inter-human cooperative network (Putnam, 2002). Such network facilitates the presence of communication and interaction, enabling the growth of trust and strengthening cooperation. A healthy society tends to have strong social networks. An individual of society knows and meets another individual, and then he establishes strong inter-relationship, either formally or informally. Putnam (2002) stated that strong inter-relationship, either formal or informal, would strengthen the emotional ties of cooperation among its members and give more benefits because of their participation. Related to the ability of utilizing network and connection to help each other among the poor members of society in doing self-empowerment, namely mutual assistance (*berewang*) for productive activities, such as expanding the market of the products as the preliminary step of setting up business/entrepreneurship.

Moreover, family relation network provides job vacancies. One relative may need labor and the other might need job. This form of cooperation takes place because individual tends to trust his own relatives more than other people, upon setting up productive activity together. No one harms others but they will benefit each other. Reciprocity is a dimension of social capital in which an individual is guaranteed to give benefits to the other, and so is the other individual. In this principle, the spirit is to help and prioritize other people.

The success of self-empowerment depends not only on social capital (*value, norms, trust, network* and *reciprocity*), but also on the personal quality of the poor individual in a society. This personal quality should be owned by individual who do the self-empowerment. It covers up prayer, entrepreneurship, effort, initiative, and *tawakkal* (reliance on God).

While the model of self-empowerment done by the poor society using social capital

and personal quality in achieving prosperity can be seen on Figure 3.

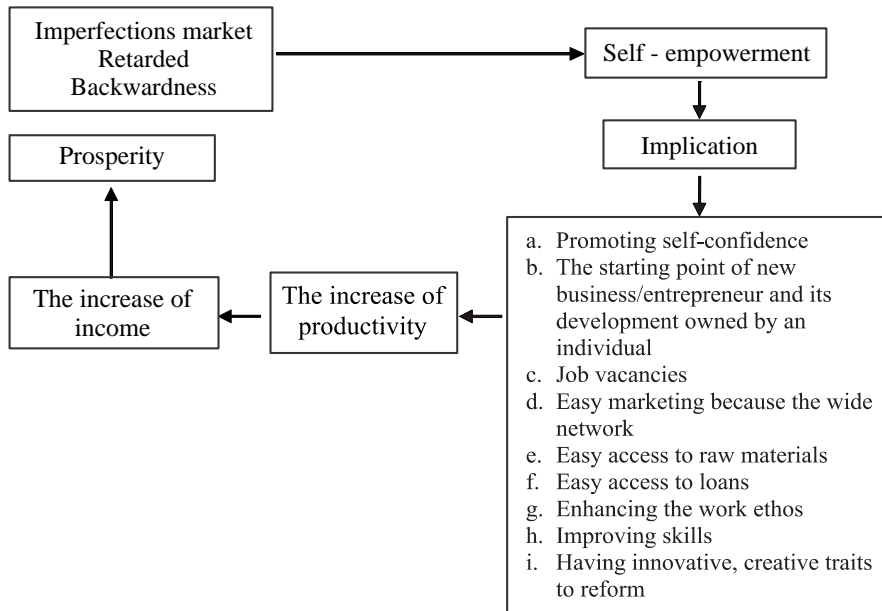


Source: Managed field data (2012)

Figure 2. Supporting Factors of Self-empowerment

After the presence of self-empowerment through social capital supported by personal quality factor done by the poor society in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar, they are now able to promote their productivity. Self-empowerment creates independent individuals. The increase of productivity will add individual's income, and finally will improve individual's prosperity so that he/she will save and make investment. The increase of saving and investment will support the poor society to enlarge their business/entrepreneur and to give them bigger turnover. The increasing amount of turnover and a more established business will make them able to rise from poverty. Therefore, through this self-empowerment, new atmosphere in which society can develop and strengthen their economic potentials to overcome poverty will be born.

The model of self-empowerment through a strong social capital that is maintained well in togetherness is able to grow personal spirit and to make an individual more productive, so that it will improve individual competence. Self-empowerment will give implication on giving positive value for individual who do the self-empowerment, namely: (a) Promoting self-confidence; (b) Opening and developing



Source: Managed field data (2012).

Picture 3. The Model of Self-empowerment of Poor Society

individual's entrepreneur; (c) Opening job vacancies; (d) Facilitating marketing because of the wide network; (e) Facilitating obtaining raw materials; (f) Facilitating obtaining loans; (g) Improving work ethos; (h) Improving skills/competence; and (i) Having creative and innovative trait to reform.

Therefore, self-empowerment implemented in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar is able to overcome poverty and to create an atmosphere that enables individual to develop and awaken from deprivation and get away from poverty trap. Efforts to enhance economic resources are done in order to create independent, brave individuals to take risks out of his/her decision and to promote productivity. A dependent individual will depend on others. This dependence will make him/her immature, spoiled and unable to make hard efforts, making his/her innovativeness, creativeness undeveloped. On the contrary, an individual with independent trait will gain self-confidence of his personal competence, and

bravery to make use of opportunities, without fear of failure, to work hard, to be tough, innovative, creative and productive.

In line with the opinion of Charon (1979) who stated that self is central: attitudes of self-avoiding, self-encouraging and self-controlling and of straightening out oneself for one another. This means that individual as self owns high spirit and motivation to improve what is not in line with his/her own will of self-betterment with creativity, innovativeness, toughness, responsibility and independence.

This condition will make a poor individual to empower him/herself optimally and to make betterment for his/her life standard so that s/he can achieve the expected prosperity as well as awaken from poverty trap or vicious circle of poverty. In symbolic interactionism, it can be stated that self-empowerment enables someone to position him/herself as "I" or as "me" to make a change in him/her. Moreover, positioning oneself as "I" means that he/she should be able to place him/herself as subject and

object who is able to actualize all his/her potentials (Kuncoro, 1997). As "I" or "me" one can be motivated to change his fate better by making the best effort to increase income. The obtained income is not only spent on short-term expenses but also put aside to meet long-term need/necessity in the form of saving. This condition will be able to strengthen economic potentials of an individual, as each individual will make good use of any power that belongs to him/her to achieve prosperity.

The obtained prosperity results from the high level of trust that comes out from honesty attitude of most individuals in the society so that it can produce mutual trust, consistency in behaviors, responsibility, mutual assistance, appreciativeness, respectfulness. Subsequently, the structured relationship resulting from the social interaction called *network* plays an important role in strengthening self-empowerment. The existing network provides opportunities for individual productive cooperation so that self-empowerment is able to improve output and to produce better income than ever. This can help achieve the expected prosperity.

CONCLUSION

The vicious circle of poverty stated by Chamber, that is, the imperfect market, retarded, backwardness and lack of capital will bring about the low productivity. The low productivity will create the low individual's income, which in turn, will cause the low saving since all income is spent on consumption. The low saving will cause the low investment, in other words, lack of capital. If this condition persists, it will create vicious circle of poverty. The availability of self-empowerment can reduce the circle of poverty so that poor society is able to promote their productivity, which will be followed by the increase of income, and the saving because not all the income is spent for consumption. This way investment will also rise and the society will be able to overcome the lack of capital and the poverty so that social welfare can be achieved, in

which each individual can fulfill life necessities, materially or non-materially, and can reach tranquility.

So far, education has been believed as human resource investment. The level of education also influences the level of poverty because education is one of the primary components in the vicious circle of poverty. The availability of qualified education can reduce the society's circle of poverty.

Meanwhile, the implications of self-empowerment for the poor society in the district of Alang-Alang Lebar can be seen through the utilization of social capital for self-empowerment in overcoming poverty and in the improvement of productivity, so that it can elevate the social welfare. Poor society upon self-empowering, exploits personal potentials as social capital that covers up value, norms, trust, network and reciprocity.

Maintaining and implementing social norms that prevail in a society is a set of written or conventional rules, which is observed and upheld by the members of society. The presence of norms creates tolerance and mutual assistance to help self-empowerment.

Observing values is an idea, which is passed down through generation and considered right and important in society. The presence of value can encourage them to take care of each other, help each other in time of need like giving assistance when required.

Upholding trust is an attitude of trusting and relying mutually among individuals in a society that enables them to unite and to avoid harming the members of society. Trust among individuals allows one to give loans for capital in establishing business for the betterment of life standard. Furthermore, mutual trust can facilitate the society to make transactions by favoring late payments.

Opening as wide network as possible and structured relationship in social interaction among individual in society can widen horizon, expand marketing, improve skills by

learning and create job/employment network.

Enhancing reciprocity among individuals in a society that are able to work in an atmosphere of togetherness will benefit individuals and never harm them.

The research result for the district of Alang-Alang Lebar, it can be analyzed that not all self-empowerment conducted bring about optimal result. Some are not quite successful, as they can only fulfill their daily necessities. Some can do self-empowerment maximally and reach success, as they can fulfill not only their daily necessities but also can provide job opportunities for the surrounding society. The success of this self-empowerment through social capital (*trust, network, norm, value and reciprocity*), is supported by good social capital, as well as personal potentials of 'self'. So in implementing self-empowerment, an individual should be able to make a self-change and to explore self-potentials in him/herself. Personal quality covers up prayer, entrepreneurship, effort, initiative, and tawakkal (reliance on God). Both should go hand in hand and cannot work separately. Both are mutually supportive to gain successful self-empowerment. This condition will give implications on : (a) Promoting self-confidence, (b) being the starting point of new entrepreneurship for individual, (c) developing individual's entrepreneurship, (d) Job opportunities/vacancies, (e) Facilitating marketing because of the wide network, (f) Facilitating obtaining raw materials, (g) Facilitating obtaining loans, (h) Improving the work ethos, (i) Improving skills/competence, (j) Having innovative, creative trait to reform in running business.

Self-empowerment elevates self-productivity in doing economic activity so it can increase income. The increase of income will enable individual not to spend it out for consumption. So this will allow them to have long-term investments, like saving and investments for future need. The society then will be able to awaken from retarded, deprivation and isolation. This self-empowerment

allows an individual to position him/herself as actor, subject and object in overcoming poverty by improving his/her productivity so that a better life standard can be improved and social welfare can be achieved. This complies with the model of self-empowerment of poor society through social capital formed.

Based on the reality captured in the field and the discussions held integrally, this research is not aimed at applying or examining theories into empirical realities, but rather an inductive empirical research that is expected to produce substantial theories. The empirical findings bring about lessons that poverty should not be seen through physical observation but non-physical one, as well. It means quantitative and qualitative analysis should be equally employed.

This research gives lesson that in reality it is unique. Poor individuals do make efforts to get away from any limitation/ shortcoming and are able to survive with the shortcomings. They exploit their self-potentials and social capital in a *bottom up* self-empowerment and do not only rely of the governmental aids of which arrival cannot be predicted. Good personal quality and social capital are two mutually supportive factors in doing self-empowerment to awaken from deprivation and get away from the vicious circle of poverty, so that poor society can improve their productivity and income to achieve the expected social welfare.

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