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Thematic Village Development for Creative Economy Improvement of Semarang City Residents

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Abstract. This article is the result of a study of the formation of "thematic villages" in Semarang. This research is based on historical methods, starting with heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Until now in Semarang there are 16 sub-districts, covering 177 villages with their uniqueness. Semarang faces a serious urban problem which is the limited supply of infrastructure such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, and others. In addition, health facilities, houses of worship, schools, sports and social facilities are inadequate. The Mayor of Semarang has created a program to reduce urban poverty. One of the main programs is the Thematic Village. This program is structuring the village to raise the village's potential and identity. The conclusion is that community participation and village potential in the form of culture, tradition, and local wisdom can be a capital for Thematic Village development. Thus it is hoped that the people's economy will increase.

Keywords: Thematic Village; Creative Economy; Semarang City Residents.

1 Introduction

Indonesian cities are generally started from villages and spread throughout the cities. Village is a term for traditional settlements before the modern settlements exist. The Ministry of Public Works and Housing reported that in 2009 there was 70 percent of villages on the overall of urban area and became the settlement for around 70-85 percent citizen. Villages still become settlements for most cities in Indonesia [1].

It becomes a source of civilization, creativity and city culture. By exploring the potential social, economic, cultural, and character of living in villages, it will become a basis of new paradigm in planning a more qualified city space [2].

To organize the villages in Semarang, Mayor Hendrar Prihadi created an innovation by establishing Thematic Village program. Thematic Village is actually the existing village with its unique characteristics which then being repaired and managed according to its characteristics. In addition, the name of Thematic Village is according to its uniqueness. By launching this Program, Semarang Government expects to reduce poverty and unemployment, improve the quality of settlement environment, raise local wisdom in managing potential and solving the environmental problems, and add tourism destinations.

Thematic Village as an innovation of Semarang Mayor has been implemented to 32 villages from 177 villages in Semarang. Some villages implementing Thematic Village in this article are *Batik Village* in *Rejomulyo* Urban Village, *Art Village* in *Palebon* Urban Village,

Photography Village in *Pendrikan Lor* Urban Village, Chicken Rice Village in *Panggung Kidul* Urban Village, Alam Malon Village in *Gunungpat* Urban Village.

2. Method

This article was a research result related to Thematic Village Development for Creative Economic Improvement of Semarang City residents. According to the problem and research objectives, it is used qualitative method. Qualitative method is the process of researching social phenomena and problems facing humans. Researchers can make a picture of oral information, notes about the views of respondents and can analyze the situation they experienced [3]. Qualitative research aims to explain phenomena through deep and complete data collection [4].

Qualitative method was used to deeper understand the problem and meaning of the phenomenon, understand social interaction between parties, develop theories, determine data validity and examine the history of studied object [5].

The data collection process was conducted through several techniques, namely observation, independent interview, focus group discussion (FGD) and literature studies. Observation was conducted by taking field notes related to the occurring events and studied objects' behavior at the research site [6]. Observation is an activity of observing the occurring phenomena in the field and recorded systematically [7]. It was conducted at several Thematic Villages related to the environmental situation and community activities and social interactions among the residents. *In-depth interview* was conducted to individual respondent using an interview guidance. The selection of respondents was determined using snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Literature studies were conducted to obtain data from literature, official documents, newspapers and other written records.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion and verification. Data reduction was conducted by researching and selecting data to obtain related important data to the research. These data were then arranged and presented in the form of narrative causal relationship and chronological sequences. The non-related data was reduced or discarded. Finally, conclusion and verification were conducted as the result of research and research problems solving [8].

3. Background of Thematic Village

Indonesia has three types of settlements, which are well-planned type with structured infrastructure and complete facilities that can be accessed by motor vehicles. The second type is small village with houses, yet cannot be reached by car or motorcycle. This type is an old type of original cities in Indonesia. The third is squatter, spreading in many marginal city spaces [2].

Urban villages were originally formed as native villages in the cities during the colonialization. Urban villages were residential environments growing in urban areas without infrastructure planning and city economic network [9]. In high-populated urban villages there are various issues related to the physical environment and socio-cultural condition of the residents. Despite the disorganized appearance of urban village, it keeps its own dynamics [10]. Urban villages are the settlements in urban areas developed by spatial concept in a very long time by indigenous and homogeneous people [11]. Urban villages are settlements developing in urban areas without infrastructure planning and urban economic network (Wiryomartono and Bagoes (1995). [9] The development of urban villages is affected by

various aspects, such as socio-cultural, economic, political, technology and nature. These aspects may eliminate the initial characteristics of a city. However, they may also enrich the old cities characteristics, so, the urban areas emerge with different characteristics according to the affecting culture.

A city area will always experience development, either in physical, cultural, political, economic, and technological aspects [12]. In line with the development and problems faced by urban villages, especially in Semarang, the Regional Government has launched a program for handling urban villages. Semarang Government program through Thematic Village aims to alleviate poverty and elevate featured potential in each small village in the urban village.

The Thematic Village launched by the Semarang City government since 2016 began to be implemented in 2017. Based on the field data in 2016 from 16 sub-districts in Semarang, there were 30 small villages registered as Thematic Villages, which were chosen based on their unique and potentials.

4. Development of Thematic Village for Creative Economy Improvement of Semarang City Residents

After the establishment of these thematic villages in Semarang, there was a change. The change is on the environment, the residents behavior, and economic changes that are emerging as creative economy. Creative Economy is a concept of placing creativity and knowledge as the main assets in driving the economy [13]. These changes can be seen in several Thematic Villages as follows:

- **Kampung Batik** [Batik Village]. It is located on Rejomulyo urban village, East Semarang Sub-district, which is an old village established alongside the development of Semarang [14]. Before 2011, it was a slum and unsafe area because it became a criminal hideout. After it was established as a cultural preserve based on Regional Regulation No. 14 of 2011 by Local Government, Semarang Batik Village began to improve and organize. Batik village was improving greatly during Mayor Hendrar Prihadi who designated Batik Thematic Village in 2016. The village turns into a clean, safe, and organized village. In line with Semarang batik production which began to increase, the economic condition of Batik Village's residents has also increased. The development of Batik Village gave a positive impact on the residents of RT 02 and RW 04 of Batik Village who took the initiative to renovate the village into a *Djadoel* (old style) Village. Their creativity to repair and rebuild their village was performed by creating beautiful murals about Semarang history on the walls and reliving Semarang culture. The management of Batik village can be called as community management since most of the residents take the initiative and create for the development of their village. As Batik Village and *Djadoel* Village go vibrant, the people from various cities and foreign countries are interested to visit the sites. Their creativity to attract tourists, raising the creative economy aspects of the resident by presenting several attractions at certain times in the form of art, culinary, batik courses and batik stores. Recently, Batik Village and *Djadoel* Village become tourist destinations in Semarang.
- **Kampung Alam Malon** [Alam Malon Village]. It is located on Gunungpati Urban Village, Gunung Pati Sub-district. It is widely known since inaugurated as a Thematic Village named Alam Malon on May 12, 2017. The designation is based on its potential of plantation products such as longan and durian, art, and as the center of Semarang batik industries. The art is pioneered by people who actively practice dance and traditional

music at *Padepokan Ilir-Ilir*. This village has been the center of Semarang batik craft since 2010, when the husband and wife Maherno Jayanto and Zazilah settled in Malon Village. Marheno and Zazilah fostered community members to become batik artisans using natural dyes from plants such as mahogany, indigo, mangrove. Recently, there are 20 independently artisans. Marheno and Zazilah do not only make batik, they developed Eco-Print with natural motifs and coloring. Alam Malon has become one of the domestic and foreign tourist destinations. In line with tourist visits, unique culinary and arts in Alam Malon are also developing. The tourism activities lift the economy of community.

- **Kampung Nasi Ayam** [chicken rice Village]. It is located on Panggung Kidul Urban Village, North Semarang sub-district. As its name implies as Chicken Rice Village, most of its residents sell chicken rice in this area. At the past, there was a chicken rice seller from Klaten called by Mbah Arjo in this village which was originally named West Brotojoyo Village. Initially there were around 30 people selling chicken rice, but then there were only 16 traders. After being designated as a Thematic Village with the name Chicken Rice, there was a change in the physical environment and social life. The environment improvement was conducted by mural painting and drawing on the walls. Their social life is increasing by the recognition of Chicken Rice Village.
- **Kampung Fotografi** [Photography Village]. It is located at Jl. Abimanyu V, Pendrikan Lor Urban Village, Central Semarang Sub-district. It is called as Photography Thematic Village since there are many people working as photographer. Initially, there was only 1 (one) person who was working as a photographer, Siswanto. In the 1980s, the village at Jl. Abimanyu was not organized yet and many of the locals were often drunk and did not have permanent jobs. At that time, there was someone who wanted to study photography from Siswanto for his livelihood. Siswanto provided photography knowledge to residents on condition that the people would no longer get drunk and live in an orderly manner. After successfully developing residents into photographers, until finally in 1990 there were about 20 young people who managed to become photographers and they made a living to other cities such as Magelang, Kendal. At present in Abimanyu V Village there are still around 20 people who open a photography business with the innovation of creating interesting photo spots. After being designated as Thematic Photography Village, Abimayu Village began to be organized and addressed. Community participation is very high in the arrangement of villages, namely arranging the sidewalks, roads, environmental cleanliness and so on. The economic improvement of the community members has also increased along with the popularity of this Photography Village
- **Kampung Seni 29**. It is located on Palebon Urban Village, Pedurungan Sub-district, Semarang. It is called as Seni 29 Village because it is located at RT 02 and RW 09. Since 2010, this village has developed many forms of arts, for instance puppets, Javanese music performance, ketoprak, drama, painting, etc. The art activities are funded by the community independently. In 2016, this village was included in Thematic Village program based on potentials developed by the community. Seni 29 is an education-based village and the activities cover arts, crafts and environmental subjects. The craft produces patchwork flowers, calligraphy from aluminum, crafts from bamboo waste, etc. In the environmental field, they produce compost fertilizer. The potentials of Seni 29 Village have economic value to increase the community income. Therefore, community participation in managing and development of their village raises a creative economy with a positive value.

5. Conclusion

Semarang Government program in the form of Thematic Village since 2016 has produced good benefits. Most of the villages designated as Thematic Villages are organized and do not longer have slum area. In addition, community participation in developing the potential of their village gives a bright side for creative economy and enhances the economy. It gives effects on the increasing planning, management, and development.

The sustainability of Thematic Village requires the roles of community leaders as a promoter, organizer, and mentor to always introduce innovation for the development of the village and its community. One important issue is the government participation in improving community welfare in all villages in Semarang by providing stimulants in the form of funds and assistance in structuring activities of thematic village.

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