

## Manipulating Image and Communication Issues in the Dolly Ex-Prostitution District Community Development Program

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**Abstract.** *This research focuses on the problematic meaning of opinion leaders' views on the Dolly Bangkit community development program initiated by the Surabaya City Government in response to the conflict following the closure of Dolly's prostitution site in Surabaya. The problems are described from the opinion leader's point of view. This research uses a qualitative approach and phenomenological methods. The aim is to describe the experience of opinion leaders in dealing with the Dolly Bangkit program, which in turn shapes the meaning of the program. The results indicate that there are problems with the experience as well as the meaning. On the one hand, this program is interpreted as a helpful program to change the negative image of the Dolly area. On the other hand, opinion leaders also interpret this program as an imaging event by the Surabaya City Government officials to show that they are responsible for the closure. They also saw that there was a neglect of several essential things in the community development program, such as the participation or involvement of the target community and training that facilitate the target community in finding solutions, as well as aspects of equality.*

**Keywords:** *Dolly Bangkit; image; community development.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The closure of Dolly prostitution in June 2014 by the Surabaya City Government led to horizontal conflicts between affected residents who agreed and disagreed. The impact of the closure of the prostitution place, which is said to be the largest in Southeast Asia, is still a new topic in the mass media several years later. On the other hand, the closure also gave rise to implications in the form of social responsibility from the Surabaya City Government in the form of a community development program that was later named Dolly Bangkit (Noviana, Fadhilah, & Munika, 2015).

The most profound implication of the closure was related to the economic problems of the residents, as many of them have economic resources related to Dolly prostitution. Before it was officially

closed, some residents, on behalf of the Prostitution Workers Association, had voiced their rejection. As reported by the online news portal Kompas.com, the rejection was even supported by the Surabaya City Representative Council and the Deputy Mayor of Surabaya at the time (Wisnu Sakti Buana). The group that rejected the closure argued that prostitutes and pimps could still make a living by practicing in other locations. Still, affected residents who had made a living there for decades would lose their source of income (Faizal, 2014).

Responding to these problems, the Surabaya City Government designed a community development program called Dolly Bangkit. This program is designed to keep Dolly alive without the prostitution. Conceptually, community development is a systematic effort to

improve the lives of groups that are considered disadvantaged. Still referring to Kartini, community development is part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and focuses on improving living standards from various sides, both social and economical, and even political depending on the background. As a result, community development is targeted at specific groups, which are referred to as vulnerable groups of society (Kartini, 2013).

Phillips & Pittman (2009) also explain that community development should focus on how a group works together to solve problems. As a process, community development is more about improving a person's ability to work in groups. Meanwhile, as a result, community development is more directed towards the results of work in groups, either in the cultural, social, political, or economic scope. As part of CSR, referring to Kartini (2013), community development fundamentally differs from CSR. CSR is responsible to all stakeholders, such as shareholders, competitors, government agencies, NGOs, customers, and even civil society.

Meanwhile, community development in its implementation only targets specific groups of people who are then referred to as vulnerable groups of society. The measure of community development success, quoting Anwas (2014), is the participation of the community to be empowered. The more people involved, the greater the success of the community development activities.

The development of the Dolly Bangkit community development program can be seen in this context. The program was initiated as a systematic effort to improve the living standards of community groups that were economically affected by the closure of the localization located in Putat Jaya Village, Sawahan Sub-district, Surabaya. As a community

development program, Dolly Bangkit was narrated in the proposal paper of the Public Service Innovation Competition (Kovablik) in 2017. Its central axis focuses on two aspects, namely: social and economic aspects. On the economic aspect, the government felt that the residents were too dependent on the nightlife area for income. In contrast, the government thought that the residents could earn income in other, more halal ways. The government felt a terrible stigma attached to all Dolly residents on social issues, and all activities were against cultural and religious values (Koesdarjono, 2014).

Dolly Bangkit is the umbrella for other programs within the community. In the economic aspect, the focus of the development is to provide training and education related to the creative economy based on establishing Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). For this reason, the Surabaya City Government collaborates with other elements, such as the East Java Provincial Government and several ministries, to distribute grants and assistance to residents. In addition, it also cooperates with the campus community regarding technical training on product marketing (Koesdarjono, 2014).

While in the social aspect, the program focuses on building a positive image of Dolly by holding events such as Dolly Saiki Fest and collaborating with the media for coverage. Surabaya City Government also mobilizes its bureaucracy, namely Sawahan Sub-district officials who oversee the location of the program implementation. Several agencies within the Surabaya City Government were also involved, such as the Office of Population Control, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, the Office of Agriculture and Food Security, the Office of Trade and Industry, and the Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs to provide training (Koesdarjono, 2014).

In its implementation, the program elicited a variety of responses from residents. Research by Nugroho (2017) illustrates that the program has not been fully implemented. The reasons are the lack of budget from the Surabaya City Government, the lack of target market segmentation, and residents who find it difficult to get out of their habits during localization activities. Localization activities generate relatively fast and easy money turnover, while empowerment through this community development program requires time and perseverance. Meanwhile, the study of Savitri, Nuswantara, & Rai (2018) presented the opposite results. The results of this study state that the Surabaya City Government has successfully formed around thirteen fostered SMEs, such as Batik Jarak Arum, Samijali, Tempe Bang Jarwo, and several others. Even the Mayor of Surabaya (at that time), Tri Rismaharini 2016 announced the formation of Dolly Village into a tourist village, and the brothels were packed into basecamps for SMEs.

The results of these studies illustrate that the closure of Dolly still leaves problems among the residents. Some residents still insist on rejecting the closure, while others support it. In September 2018, there was even a class action event, as those who agreed and rejected the closure faced each other in court with their respective opinions. Residents who rejected the closure (especially those living in the Jarak and Dolly areas) even sued the Surabaya City Government for Ro 2.7 trillion for the loss of their economic resources (Ridwan, 2018).

Based on researchers' observations in the field at the end of 2019 (before the Covid-19 pandemic), prostitution is still running secretly. At night, the services of commercial sex workers (PSK) are still sold at several locations with rates

between IDR 300 and IDR 350 thousand (Hakim, 2021). But apart from that, the face of Dolly village now looks different and is given specific themes due to the Dolly Bangkit program.

Based on this condition, the researcher sees a communication problem in implementing the Dolly Bangkit program. The communication problem can be inferred from how opinion leaders interpret the Dolly Bangkit community development program. The program is interpreted diversely by opinion leaders, reflecting their experience. What is envisioned by the city government as opinion leaders do not equally understand empowerment. At this point, the researcher sees a problem in the opinion leaders' interpretation of the Dolly Bangkit program, which then impacts their participation.

The problem of the meaning of opinion leader is also related to the communication model often used in the context of development communication, which is a linear or top-down communication model. This communication model tends to impose the government's will on the community; the government thinks it knows best what the community wants. The government has not allowed the community to decide what they want to improve their welfare.

Whereas development communication, referring to Harun & Erdianto (2011), is intended to enhance humane development and educate and motivate people. The goal is to instill ideas and mental attitudes and teach skills needed by the community. Development communication is seen as a series of efforts to communicate development to the community so that they participate in obtaining the benefits of development activities. For this reason, a new approach is needed in this communication process: a convergence approach based on a circular communication model to replace the

linear one. In addition, the participation of all parties in the development communication process needs to be increased to achieve a common focus (Fajri, Mawadati, & Yudhana, 2018). In other words, this approach is based on the dialog between all parties rather than being determined by one party (Nasution & Anuar Rasyid, 2019)

This is where researchers see the crucial role of opinion leaders, which Rogers (1983) said plays a vital role in influencing the spread of innovation. An opinion leader becomes an important figure who can influence other people's behavior. He also becomes a figure with informal leadership for his ability to establish social relations, technical skills related to a matter, or adjust to the prevailing norms.

In the context of the Dolly Bangkit program, the researcher sees the role of opinion leaders in the local area who participate (even dominant) in shaping people's opinions or understanding of the program. Quoting Nurudin (2016), opinion leaders influence how innovation is accepted or rejected. Dialogue with opinion leaders in innovation development is essential to be carried out, according to Rahman (2009), as they represent the aspirations of the community. Conceptually, several groups of opinion leaders influence the adoption process of innovation. First, the individual is a figure who is the primary decision maker and is then spread to others. Second is the collective. In this group, the innovation-decision is discussed and implemented. Because of a significant voice, other people eventually adjust to the innovation. Third, authoritative. In this group, innovations are implemented by several people who have status or power and then followed by others who are below them in social status (Tidd, 2010).

Referring to this, the researcher

sees the opinion leaders' role in accepting the Dolly Bangkit program by the local community. All the problems surrounding the closure of Dolly localization (from horizontal conflicts between residents to the acceptance of this program) are connected to the position of opinion leaders in the local area. The position of an opinion leader is essential in the context of community development because, as mentioned (Effendy, 2009), the primary purpose of communication in community development is to shift attitudes, opinions, and how residents who are exposed to the program have behaviors that will produce social change and affect the success of the program.

Therefore, this research focuses on how opinion leaders in the local area understand or interpret the Dolly Bangkit program, which will be shared collectively with the surrounding community. At the end, how opinion leaders interpret the Dolly Bangkit program will be closely related to how the local community interprets the same program.

Previously, social or communication problems related to Dolly prostitution have often been such as Amalia (2018), Destrianti & Harnani (2018), Noviana et al. (2015), Moefad (2015), Nugroho (2017), Oktaviari & Handoyo (2009), Savitri et al. (2018), and Prakoso (2017). However, these studies have not touched deeply on the position of opinion leaders in the problems surrounding program implementation. These studies seem to focus more on the social network of pimps after the closure, the social and economic impact of Dolly's closure, and so on. None of these studies have placed opinion leaders as a significant research subject.

Meanwhile, other research related to aspects of city government communication, such as that conducted by Z (2017), Budhirianto, Sumiaty, & Syaidah (2018), and Muntadliroh (2020),

imply the existence of several problems. For example, they are related to the public relations function in disseminating city government policies (primarily related to the poor), imaging in the mass media, or communication messages and perception measurement.

This research focuses on a space that has not been touched in depth by previous studies, namely how opinion leaders interpret the Dolly Bangkit program, which theoretically will be connected to how people interpret the same program. At this point, this research becomes crucial, as it focuses on the dynamics of people's meaning towards development programs that tend to be run with a linear or top-down communication model.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. Quoting Satori & Komariah (2017), the qualitative approach refers to the quality of the phenomenon as a preference when researchers study phenomena that cannot be quantified. The qualitative approach is used because the data explored is a process of meaning rooted in a person's personal experience so that it cannot be generalized, let alone measured using numbers. Researchers also use a descriptive type of research that seeks to see reality as a construction of truth with a social background (Nurhadi, 2015). The word "describe," according to Satori & Komariah (2017), can be described as an effort to provide a description or illustration of what is to be conveyed and then embodied in narrative form.

This approach and type of research are suitable for this research because all the results of the interviews with the interviewees of the former Dolly localization will be described in narrative form. Truth is built based on individual experience and meaning, so it cannot

be measured or compared because it is purely from personal experience. For this reason, phenomenology is used because the data to be explored is the meaning of individuals (opinion leaders in Dolly) and the experiences that shape them. Referring to Husserl, this method allows researchers to explain the phenomenon and maintain its purity by exploring individual experiences and meanings of certain phenomena (Moran, 2013).

The research subjects are opinion leaders in the local area written with the initials JO and KC. JO is an opinion leader against the closure of Dolly's prostitution. He then formed Tempe Bang Jarwo and requested assistance from the Surabaya City Government to fund and market his products. Meanwhile, KC is an opinion leader in the opposite position (supporting the closure) and is known as a prostitution worker (providing motorcycle transportation for prostitutes) who tried to escape from the trap of prostitution but did not find a place in the community. Finally, she mobilized the community to improve Dolly's image so that other residents would not experience the same thing.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

As often reported by the mass media, the Surabaya City Government closed the Dolly localization based on all the social and economic problems it caused. Quoting from Sindonews.com, the then Mayor, Tri Rismaharini, insisted on the closure because she was saddened by the rampant cases of human trafficking in the area, especially those involving minors (Syafei, 2014).

KC shared her experience during her activities in Dolly when it was still operating. She recounted how the children in Dolly could earn their income. For her, Dolly knows no taboo boundaries; everything becomes legal in the name of the rupiah. The sight of parents

selling their children or husbands taking their wives to become prostitutes is not something surprising. There is also the term “kucing garong,” for pimps who are still young, around 20 years old. These reasons in the Dolly Bangkit Innovation Program script are the root of why the closure should be done. The government created a community development program for the affected residents to promote a positive image of Dolly as a clean area. It divided it into two program axes: social and economic.

JO and KC (who have diametrical positions in responding to the closure of Dolly localization) saw that the Surabaya City Government could not execute the Dolly Bangkit program well. The intention conveyed in the early days did not fully reach the residents. The demands and voices of the residents until the term “Ready to Die If Dolly is Closed” was not taken seriously by the government. According to JO, residents who were shocked and had difficulty changing the rhythm of life chose the quick way, namely suicide. Referring to Oktaviari & Handoyo (2009), Dolly is not only a location of prostitution but has transformed into an economic system. Dolly benefits not only prostitutes and pimps but also urban workers in the area, such as laundry workers, pedicab drivers, coffee shops, guesthouse cooks, and street vendors (Amalia, 2018).

This makes opinion leaders feel that the government has not effectively empowered residents who have been tied to prostitution activities for years. JO and KC also testified that many affected residents returned to prostitution. From this, it can be seen that there are problems in implementing Dolly Bangkit. These problems are described in the three sub-sections below, using the opinion leaders’ perspectives. However, the success of a program can only be assessed by those who directly experience the program

through the process of their experience and the meaning of the program.

### **Between Community Development and Image Manipulation**

When invited to talk about the establishment of SMEs, one of the focuses of community development in the Dolly Bangkit program, KC reacted strongly, even though he is known to be pro Dolly closure.

*“Sometimes the government raises SMEs so that other residents are also encouraged. Citizens are used as puppets, for what? So that the municipal program looks like it’s working.” (KC, 07/19/2019)*

KC expressed this sentence as a party that initially agreed with the closure. He felt that the imaging element was very much behind this program. Therefore, KC chose not to be involved in the program. The imaging he was referring to was related to how the government was very keen to acknowledge that the SMEs were the result of its assistance, which was then used to make the government program appear to be working. JO also felt the robust imaging as an SME activist. He said that the Surabaya City Government’s involvement in fostering his tempeh business was minimal. Therefore, he does not want his tempeh business to be claimed as an SME assisted by the Dolly Bangkit program.

*“I don’t want to be claimed. Suppose you want to partner, yes. Being called a partner is uncomfortable; you’ll be showing off. If the business is already running, the assisted SMEs will be recognized, but I didn’t want to participate when I started. The funds were disbursed and then disappeared.” (JO, 11/10/2019).*

JO is reluctant to be considered

a mentor because he feels that the involvement of Surabaya City Government staff is only on the surface, and does not have the responsibility to develop his business. He also invites some people to run similar businesses with a partnership method because if he is recognized as a mentee, it will close the space for other parties who want to assist. Based on his experience, JO interprets Dolly Bangkit as a program that only moves on the surface. Or straightforwardly, JO calls it with the phrase, “the important thing is that the funds are disbursed; after that, there is no continuation.” Regarding her *tempeh* business, JO admits that she is mainly assisted by an NGO (non-governmental organization) called GMH (Gerakan Membangun Harapan) regarding packaging and marketing techniques. GMH also thinks about how JO should build relationships with consumers so that transactions can be carried out continuously and repeatedly.

JO’s explanation confirms Hadi’s (2011a) argument about the social responsibility that social responsibility is often carried out based on the primary economic motive approach. The substance of social responsibility will become an ethical problem when there is an element of self-promotion by the program implementer. The development of Dolly Bangkit as a community development program is closely related to the predicate of CSR because both community development and CSR are equally oriented to maintain the relationship between the organization and its environment (where the organization has activities and impacts) so that both can operate effectively (Suparmo, 2011). What became a problem in the eyes of opinion leaders was that this program was then submitted to the Public Service Innovation Competition in 2017, an annual innovation competition between districts/cities in East Java. This is where

the problem of perceived imaging (or manipulating images through community development programs) is formed in the minds of opinion leaders.

KC saw that the Surabaya City Government created an image by utilizing the citizens through the Dolly Bangkit program. Through mass media coverage (which is used as a partner of this program), eventually, many other areas followed suit, and Dolly is now known as a tourism village. But unlike JO, KC feels that using Dolly Bangkit as an image material of the Surabaya City Government is legitimate. She feels that the situation in Dolly is currently better than when prostitution was still running.

*“Imagine if it weren’t closed, many children would fall into it. It’s hard to find jobs now, but kids have known environments like Dolly’s since high school. After graduating, they are not employed when it’s time to work. Then they return to Dolly. This is happening.” (KC, 26/10 2019)*

Although he feels that the Surabaya City Government is using Dolly Bangkit for image building, KC feels that the program also improves Dolly’s image and benefits the residents. She recounted how, previously, the working-age children in the Dolly area had difficulty getting a job just because they lived in the area. She sees this as a social selection that seems normal and inevitable.

Therefore, KC interpreted Dolly Bangkit as an image improvement program to make Dolly residents upgrade, giving opportunities for young people not to fall into the world of prostitution. But still, the image improvement is considered not to answer the root of the problem, which is a matter of the stomach. The government is still considered negligent in reading the problems in Dolly. JO also experiences this image repair business

with his business.

*“At first, my tempeh was called Tempe Dolly. Then the sub-district head said, where’s your tempeh? Dolly is closed. Why do you still call it Tempe Dolly? I said, let it be. People know Tempe Dolly. But eventually, I changed it. Because I was given a machine, I was told to change my tempeh name. The sub-district head asked me to use the name, Mandiri Jaya. After a month of using that name, it wasn’t well-known. Finally, I changed it again to Tempe Jarwo. Tempe Dolly was said to sound dirty.” (JO, 11/10/2019)*

After receiving assistance with a soybean milling machine, JO was recognized as a resident who claimed to be assisted by the city government. Meanwhile, KC chose another path. He knew that some residents were already running independently with their respective SMEs. However, he and several residents admitted they did not want to go down the same path. She thought that if it were only driven through SMEs, it would only benefit a small group, while Dolly is broader than that.

*“Has (the program) been experienced by the people of each neighborhood? SMEs are only small groups. We talk about the potential of the residents.” (KC, 26/10/2019)*

From KC’s experience, it can be seen that there is a problem with community need analysis in the Dolly Bangkit program. Referring to Triyono (2014), community leaders should be involved as resource persons to explore community needs analysis data. That way, the program will become a common need, not just a group of people. KC then described her experience following

the socialization of the batik training program. She felt that this training was not a need for the community. However, the residents still attended the training because they received Rp 50,000 for transportation. In a joking tone, KC said, “Sampek jereng motone lagek entuk 50 ewu,” (Until I go cross-eyed, I only get Rp 50,000). Therefore, for KC, the program is nothing but a way to improve the image of the city government, while the city government itself ignores the potential of the residents there.

KC hopes that if the government dares to close something big, it must also open something significant in terms of benefits. For him, the image can be helped by closing Dolly, but residents who directly feel the impact have not felt significant benefits.

*“If the city government closes something big, the benefits of which are felt not only in one neighborhood, it should open something big too. Big or small is not about the place but the benefits. Dolly has a great benefit value, so it should also be opened with big benefits. Dolly’s image should be changed; the secure place and its image should also be improved. This is about Dolly’s image, not the government’s image.” (KC, 26/10/2019)*

According to opinion leaders, the city government focuses on improving its image instead of prioritizing economic affairs. The word manipulation is then raised because, according to opinion leaders, the existing program seems to be a “blanket” so that residents are silent and the government is not blamed. In short, social problems can be solved. However, economic problems are still a matter that must be resolved immediately because opinion leaders are worried that this will encourage residents to re-enter the world

of prostitution.

### **Development that Ignores the Potential of the Community**

Opinion leaders perceive the fame of Gang Dolly as not only supporting prostitutes and pimps and the surrounding community. The closure of Dolly is not only about focusing on the improvement of economic issues but also about the culture of the surrounding community. KC, who has depended on prostitution activities to survive since she was a child, testified that her income as a motorcycle taxi prostitute helped her college tuition fees. KC said she was one of the lucky ones who had the opportunity to get an education. Generally, children in Dolly have been earning their income since they were young, so it is not surprising that education is a secondary factor.

*“You see, their education is still poor. I used to have a good job, so I didn’t think about school. Now the government has not seen that.”*  
(KC, 10/26/2019)

Education, according to KC, is not the main thing for Dolly residents. Many do not go to school or are not even serious about their education because they feel that money can be earned without studying. JO’s experience is the same. While studying at SMK, he admitted that he only came as needed. If it was break time, he chose to go home and sleep because he had little sleep after staying up all night selling coffee.

KC questioned these things as a recipient of the Dolly Bangkit program. She wonders why the government does not read such things. If the residents have relied on prostitution activities since they were young, she thinks it is natural that they do not have skills. This was KC’s concern, which she tried to convey to the government before coming up with the program.

Regarding training, JO once asked his wife to join batik and sewing training. However, his wife decided she no longer wanted to participate because she felt it was unnecessary. Rooted in this, JO ventured to apply for equipment assistance for his tempeh business to the local sub-district head to be conveyed to the city government.

*“I told my wife to join the batik and sewing training. Then I told her to tell the sub-district head that she didn’t want to join the training anymore because she wanted to help me grind soybeans for tempeh. Then I asked for a soybean grinding machine. Finally, they surveyed me and gave me a grinding machine.”*  
(JO, 11/10/2019)

As a result of Dolly’s closure, JO lost his coffee shop business, earning him IDR 40 million a month. After a long road, JO finally followed the path recommended by the city government. However, he regretted the government’s performance, which was not serious. He pointed to his experience; JO did not receive further guidance after being given a grinding tool. The assistance provided at that time was only the provision of tools and inviting SMEs to attend SME exhibitions. Quoting Phillips & Pittman (2009), community empowerment should focus on training people to work together to solve community problems. Looking at what happened to JO, what the city government did through Dolly Bangkit seems to be just a charity program instead of empowerment. That makes JO and KC claim to be reluctant to participate in coaching because there is no intensive assistance.

*“At first, many people participated in the program, but after a while, there were fewer. That’s the problem; there was no mentoring. The training was like that, and then*

*it was over. We were given tools and never checked. Eventually, many were sold by people. They used to give money, and that was it. Then they got the goods; then they sold them. Indeed, the focus should be on assistance, not just the assistance. After receiving the milling machine assistance, I had no problem leaving it behind. My business is already independent, so it can survive. What about the others?" (JO, 16/10/2019)*

Like JO, KC also believes that the program's existence is inappropriate. When the program was running, she asked what the role of the experts working in the city government was. He even feels that his thinking is much better than the government people.

*"There are many teams of experts. Mrs. Risma's smart companions can't think like that? People who don't like batik are told to make batik, and people who don't like making shoes are trained to produce shoes. In the end, everyone stopped because it didn't suit their taste. Now we have to see the potential that is there. I once said to them, 'City Government has closed something big; the impact is being felt not only in one neighborhood. It should also open something big. Don't keep making SMEs. It's just a small group.'" (KC, 26/10/2019)*

KC sees that the program is not based on the needs of the residents. If many residents do not want to be involved in the Dolly Bangkit program, according to KC, it is not because they do not want to be empowered but because the program that has been running has not moved them. Theoretically, something like this is confirmed by Kartini (2013), that community empowerment is indeed

particular because it is tailored to the needs of the affected community.

KC has tried to discuss the program's state with the Surabaya City Government. However, based on her experience, discussions with the city government always ended with the answer, "we will review it later." He felt such an answer was given to "silence" the residents so they would not protest too much. The opinion leaders stated that citizen involvement in program creation and implementation is minimal. The existence of a development program will be more trusted if the surrounding community is empowered to be involved in both the communication process and the discussion (Rinaldy et.al., 2017).

Regarding programs that do not see the potential of residents, KC admitted that he was not surprised. This is because when talking about the government's performance in the field, the government still often relies on outsourced labor.

*"So agencies in the city government told outsourced workers to work. They were told to come to the hotel, make an offer. It's annoying. The civil servants are taking it easy. They are playing around." (KC, 10/19/2019)*

### **Subjective and Discriminative Implementation**

After deciding that she was "willing to be empowered," JO found that her fate had not completely changed. Since establishing his tempeh business three years ago, he feels that Mayor Tri Rismaharini has not given him any attention. JO expects the government's attention to be improved in dealing with the Dolly case.

*"Those who get compensation only know the city government staff, who agree with the closure. Before the closure, there was some socialization, and prostitutes were*

*compensated and not allowed to build a guesthouse or add prostitutes. Data was collected, and joint operations were frequent. After the closure, there were letters from the neighborhood association (RT) training on this and that. Most of the invitations are word of mouth. It's usually the sub-district and district that give the information, with the help of students. There is no dissemination of information for street workers. What was collected were prostitutes and pimps. That's why they get compensation; we don't.*" (JO, 16/10/ 2019)

JO expressed his aspirations as one of the evicted street vendors. He regretted that the socialization of closure and compensation was only given to those actively involved in the world, such as prostitutes and pimps, while residents and street vendors were not. Even though the majority of residents there are involved in this world. JO's experience in refusing to be empowered was also seen as wrong by the city government. JO refused because she did not like the activities, not because she refused to close Dolly. In 2014, JO said, he stood at the forefront against the closure of Dolly by carrying a buffalo bearing Risma's name. This event continues to be carried around, sometimes even becoming a joke when she visits the city government office.

*"The scene was in 2014. Bungkul Park was trampled, and Risma was furious even though it was just a park. Now that the people's needs are being trampled on, why isn't Risma angry? Dolly being closed is the same as trampling on the livelihood of the people who live there."* (JO, 16/10/ 2019)

For JO, the closure of Dolly, which is not accompanied by adequate

empowerment, is tantamount to trampling on the residents' self-esteem. During the closure, he expressed his aspirations with other localization Workers Front members. They aspired to reject Dolly's closure because they wanted equal compensation. They did not want Dolly to be closed without a way out. But the city government misinterpreted the message, so JO felt that she and her friends were accused of supporting prostitution activities.

Having stood at the forefront of the refusal to close Dolly made JO receive different treatment during the program. Once on the wanted list, his name still haunts the city government.

*"My image was poor before the city administration because I refused the closure. It was because I brought a buffalo that had Risma's name written on it. When there was a bazaar event in Dolly, Mrs. Megawati was present. I fried tempeh; only Mrs. Mega ate it. Mrs. Risma didn't. My heart broke. When there was another exhibition, the city administration did not tell me. I just kept quiet. In fact, on that day, my tempeh was asked to be displayed at the exhibition. But I wasn't invited to join the exhibition. So I just gave it to them, no more words."* (JO, 16/10/2019)

When researchers attended an SME exhibition organized by the Surabaya City Government, JO was seen holding her wares at a booth owned by Bank Jatim. She attended the exhibition because she was invited by Bank Jatim and was never informed or invited by the city government. To make her even more upset, when Mayor Tri Rismaharini visited Dolly, her merchandise was always asked to be placed on the storefront. This experience made her feel discriminated against and subjectively treated.

On the other hand, KC was appointed as part of Surabaya's SatPol PP (Praja Pramong Police Unit) in early detection.

*"I entered the PolPP. Why was I assigned that? Maybe one day, there will be a change in regional regulation. I don't understand; that's the official's business. In 2017 I just joined. But I have a principle I will support if the Surabaya administration's policies are good for the people. If not, I will tell my friends. It's time for jihad. I have many friends in the movement until these days. Yes, even though I am his subordinate, if the government is wrong, it is still wrong." (KC, 26/10/2019)*

Based on her experience joining the early detection team, KC said she carried out all responsibilities as instructed. She interpreted her involvement with the municipal government as an effort to bring justice to the residents and herself as a fellow resident affected by the closure of the former Dolly localization. Through experiences and meanings directly related to the program's running, residents are aware of differences in attitudes between those who agree or have rejected government policies. Whereas the core of empowerment is about equality, where individual differences are necessary, each party in the empowerment process has rights and obligations. This reality of difference and equality must be maintained in empowerment (Anwas, 2014).

These opinion leaders admit that there are differences in arguments related to the program's existence, which is supported by differences in how they respond to its existence. However, they regret this because it leads to discrimination. This contradicts what Anwas (2014) mentioned in the

program's implementation; the reality of differences and equality is then ignored. The existence of these two opposing assumptions certainly causes friction and mutual accusations. This continues to this day. Differences between one party and another are natural. However, as a program maker, we must hold the core of equality that both are affected residents targeted for empowerment.

The description of the experience of opinion leaders (KC and JO) in dealing with the Dolly Bangkit program above shows that there are problems. Although both stand in different positions, they see problems in this program. The program ignores several essential things in the context of community development, namely the participation or involvement of the target community, both in terms of program implementation, formulation of needs, and equality. In the end, opinion leaders tend to interpret this program as an image practice of the Surabaya City Government to be considered responsible for the impact of the decision to close Dolly prostitution.

In the context of opinion leader studies, the findings illustrate the tendency to neglect the vital role of opinion leaders in the formulation and implementation of the Dolly Bangkit program. The Surabaya City Government did not utilize opinion leaders' strategic role as messengers considered credible by the public or the surrounding community. Opinion leaders were not even involved since the beginning of the program preparation, formulation of needs, and implementation. That is why both KC and JO seem to have the same meaning of this program.

Opinion leaders are usually figures whose communication messages can influence audiences (Valente & Pumpuang, 2007). Contemporary communication studies also show that the role of opinion leaders is even more

critical and practical in convincing audiences than the use of advertisements in the mass media (Messiaen, 2017). In marketing communication, corporate communication, and social media studies, for example, research conducted by (Bergström & Belfrage (2018), Candra & Oktavianti (2019), Nunes et al. (2018) Turcotte et al. (2015), Yuanita (2021), and Tobon & Madariaga (2021) show how opinion leaders (or in today's language, often referred to as influencers) play an essential role in convincing or shaping certain perceptions about specific products, brands, or communication programs to encourage specific consumption or behavior.

These studies show the role of opinion leaders in the digital communication era, which is then referred to as digital opinion leaders. This means that although digital transformation has now become the backbone of communication, the role of opinion leaders is still crucial. Initially, opinion leaders were more associated with the word of mouth strategies. But now, as digital-based communication is dominant, the role of digital opinion leaders is then associated with what is known as the e-WOM (electronic word of mouth) strategy (Setiawati et al., 2020).

In the context of the Dolly Bangkit program, the role of opinion leaders can be referred to several types of research conducted by Bahfiarti (2016) that discussed the role of opinion leaders in innovation among cocoa farmers in South Sulawesi, Sulistyanto & Jamil (2021) that focused on the formation of Covid-19 discourse by opinion leaders, Sriwartini (2020) that discussed the communication management of opinion leaders in KB Village in West Bandung Regency, or Jaali & Cangara (2013) that described the role of opinion leaders in maintaining peace in Ambon conflict areas. All of these studies were conducted in different locations and with subjects.

Still, they all show how strategic the role of opinion leaders is in persuading public perception, which in turn helps shape the desired behavior.

Meanwhile, in the context of the Dolly Bangkit program, this research did not find the involvement of opinion leaders by the Surabaya City Government. That is why, although the program is acknowledged to benefit the residents (although it is limited to charity), the opinion leaders (KC and JO) tend to interpret the program as an image tool. With such an interpretation, both of them keep their distance from the program and do not actively arouse the participation of the target community members.

This is where the problem of program communication becomes apparent. In the context of development communication, the communication process must be characterized by an awareness that the communication process must be guided by the community's ability to plan, implement and evaluate development. The community is not the object of development but the subject of development; therefore, community participation is a significant factor. Communication must be carried out convergently; communication interaction is carried out in a more democratic and participatory manner. Communication activities are not giving and receiving messages but sharing and dialoguing (Setyowati, 2019)

In the context of the Dolly Bangkit Program, based on the interpretation of the opinion leaders there, community involvement is only seen in a narrow context, meaning that the community is only seen as the recipient of development innovations. They are also not involved in planning and decision-making, are not developed creatively from within and must accept decisions that outsiders have taken.

As a result, the community

is dependent on other parties, not empowered and independent. Community empowerment is an alternative paradigm of development to make people empowered and independent. To achieve this independence, efforts to achieve welfare are the main thing. A prosperous community will be able to cope with its life needs, both material and non-material needs. According to Mardikanto (2010), the goal of development is a comprehensive change that includes various aspects and orders of life of the community concerned, both material and non-material.

The way opinion leaders interpret the Dolly Bangkit Program shows the absence of participation from the target community, especially in planning and formulating their own needs. The way the Surabaya City Government communicates this program tends to position the local community as the target object, not as subjects who can plan and formulate their own needs.

Citing the study by Yanti & Amaliah (2021), the right empowerment communication strategy is to place the communicator --in this case, the Surabaya City Government-- as a motivator, dynamic innovator, and facilitator of community change. This means communicators must place themselves on an equal footing with the target community. With this position, the community empowerment process is assumed to be of higher quality, and the community will be encouraged to realize their potential independently.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study describes how the opinion leaders in the affected area interpret Dolly Bangkit as a program that is used as an image event by the Surabaya City Government under the guise of community development. The Surabaya City Government is seen as not only wanting to improve the negative image

of the Dolly area but also utilizing the Dolly Bangkit program as a self-imaging event. By referring to their respective experiences in dealing with this program, the opinion leaders also see the SMEs as one of the outcomes of the Dolly Bangkit program treated as “puppets” used to show that the program is running. Opinion leaders interpret the Dolly Bangkit program as ignoring the involvement of the target community members (both in the preparation, formulation of needs, and implementation).

Therefore, it can be concluded that this program ignores the role of the opinion leader as a party that has the potential to deliver program communication messages to the community. In the opinion leader’s understanding, community development is not only about creating programs and mobilizing people to participate. What is more critical is facilitating residents to find solutions to their problems. Community development programs should be run based on the assumption that affected residents are more aware of the conditions, situations, and solutions that are good for their environment. Thus, community involvement should be voluntary, not forced, or based on specific lures.

Theoretically, this study can reflect how communication problems often arise in utilizing the role of opinion leaders in government programs. The tendency to use a linear or top-down communication model in the preparation and implementation of government programs makes the role of opinion leaders tend to be ignored. Thus, this research confirms previous studies’ tendency to place opinion leaders as a crucial variable in the communication process. Practically, this research is suggested as a reference for policymakers to involve opinion leaders so that they are not trapped in a linear or top-down communication model.

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