

Social Conflict Settlement in Indonesian Context: what Type of Leadership Competence Required?

Krisno Legowo, Muchlis Rantoni Luddin, Francis Tantri, James Tangkudung

Abstract--- Purpose : *This study aims to explain and explore leadership competencies possessed by Indonesian leaders, particularly under the Ministry of Home Affairs, in dealing with the problems related with social conflicts based on ethnicity and religion (In Indonesian known as SARA).*

Design/methodology: *This study adopts a qualitative approach and observes the government institution dealing with security. The researchers carried out deep interviews with around 70 research participants, most of whom are mid-rank official leaders who in the past have been assigned to be involved directly in dealing with social conflicts. All of them have a ten to twenty years working experience. The main analysis in this paper is based on the case study model (Yin, 2015; Creswell, 2016).*

Findings: *The result of the study shows that the elements of knowledge, governance managerial skills, as well as the attitudes that would coordinate and develop social capital, are deeply needed. However, among these three elements, the social capital is the most influential element that may influence the elements of coordination, knowledge, and skills.*

Research implications/limitations: *This study has practical implications on effective leadership and competences, particularly in their attempt to find solution for social conflict in a wider society.*

Originality/value: *This study shows how social capitals, roles and functions of social institutions, as well as social intelligence are crucial and strategically significant for Indonesian bureaucracy's strategy in solving social conflicts.*

Keywords: *Leadership, Competence, Social Conflict, Indonesia*

1. INTRODUCTION

The pattern of relations between different religious groups, as well as other interactions in a pluralistic society may be seen as a source of conflict itself. Besides making a positive contribution, relations and interactions between members of ethnic and religious groups also contain potential social conflicts. As a home to diverse ethnic and religious groups, Indonesia is also challenged by the potentiality of social conflicts. In fact, in the last few years, several ethnic and religious based conflicts have occurred in some regions in this country. Examples of these are the conflict that took place in Tolikara-Papua in July 2015, where local people were attacked by Church Youth groups. Meanwhile, in Singkil – Aceh, Islamic groups conducted an attack against a church that was built without a permission from the government. The attack occurred in August 2015.

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A few months later, tension based on religious issue emerged again in Jakarta in 2016, in relation with the gubernatorial election of the country's capital city which was conducted in February 2017. In fact, throughout the year of 2016, tensions and conflicts resulting from the allegation of Islamic religious defamation took place both in Jakarta as well as outside Jakarta. The latter broke in the form of anti-ethnic Chinese harassment by Islamic groups in Tanjung Balai, a city in the North Sumatra Province. The presence of such tensions and conflicts have brought human casualties, material losses, and even fostered "intolerance".

The potentiality of conflicts, as one may find in the studies conducted by well known private institutions (Indicator, 2016); highly recognized media corporation (Kompas, Nov 2016), a journal article on anti-Chinese in Tanjung Balai (July 2017), and a book authored by Nasikun (2012), revealed that the relationship between Islamic and non-Islamic religious identities, as well as between a certain group of Muslims and ethnic Chinese, have made the social life unstable. Consequently, such relationship disturbed the secure and peaceful life in the future. At the same time, in dealing with this problem, the government's capacity through the Directorate General of Political and General Governance Affairs (Hereafter DG of Polpum) and its leaders is based on Law No. 7/2012 concerning Social Conflict Management and the derivation of Government Regulation (Permen) No 2/2015 concerning the mechanisms for regulating government institutions. The government also prioritizes the use of social institutions as mechanism in maintaining the social stability of the diversity of the community. The fact that effectiveness of existing leadership is not optimal has become a challenge to the government. In an international perspective (Boucher et al., 1987), a study of the management and resolution of potential conflicts in a pluralistic society highlights the application of affirmative action policy. The Malaysian government applies a policy of partiality to ethnic Malays to balance the progress of social and economic status towards more advanced ethnic Chinese. In a decade since the 1980s the application of these policies had succeeded in stabilizing the social life of the people. Similarly, China adopted a policy of privileging minority groups in Yunan with the privilege of power at the provincial level and under it. Under such policy, minority group leaders may obtain the title of Deputy Leadership in the region. The result shows that a sense of justice is accepted by the minority group and can benefit the government's performance in reducing and



maintaining social stability and unity. Every country has its own way, Indonesia chooses an approach of handling social conflicts through Government Regulation No: 2/2015. Under such regulation, the government tends to implement containing policy when conflicts occur, either temporarily, systemically, or permanently. Nonetheless, the vigilance to maintain stability continues to be carried out in the absence of conflict. Therefore the ability of executive leaders in the DG of Polpum to increase knowledge and skills that contribute to the performance of effective organizations in the face of future conflicts is increasingly required. Therefore the research carried out at the DG Polpum is very challenging. It will have some practical impacts and contribute to theoretical development.

The leadership of the DG of Polpum has the main task of strengthening social stability. Nonetheless, attention given by the institution to the improvement of the leadership quality of its human resources is still not sufficient. This lack of attention may be seen in the lack of training that the DG of Polpum has conducted to equip its leaders (See table 1, 2, and 3). As a result, based on quantitative data from all numbers of leaders who have competencies, leadership competency among them is very lacking. Only 30% of the total 70 middle leaders master the knowledge and skills needed to carry out tasks such as; coordination and actively building trust and building repair in the midst of community pluralism. These 30% middle leaders, who may be considered as effective leaders, possess organizational mission-oriented behavior. This confirms the study of Martin Vaculik, Jakub Prochazka and Petr Smutny (2018) who believed that their thoughts could be applied to leaders in private and non-private organizations (government). According to these authors, effective leaders possess three elements, namely mission competence, human relations and competencies that owned in itself (knowledge, perception, integrity, ability to accept rules and confidence). The rest are ordinary employees. The results of the study from interviews and checks on the lower staff of side colleagues and superiors recognized sociometrically that their works were truly influenced by the bureaucratic cultural environment. The process of work carried out by every employee through procedures requires time. The hierarchy in the level passed is not always smooth. There is a growing fear of trying to propose ideas, which results in the “waiting for orders” mentality. The majority of the leaders reflects a character of working behavior in which they feel complacent with just doing business as usual. In comparison, there is a small number of leaders who are able to work in line with the organization's mission. Ineffective leadership due to not optimal organizational capital is very likely to reduce data information about the community. Anggela Baron and Armstrong (2013) states that effective organization is related to organizational capital that is described as knowledge that is planted or developed and is stored in a data base technology easily accessed, such as basic information documents and data. The character of “business as usual” behavior of employees is often felt to slow down organizational behavior in solving problems including social conflicts in Tolikara and Singkil.

2015	
Training Course Conducted in Bandung	Training Course in Jakarta
1. Leadership training for 3rd echelon officials	Leadership course conducted by the National Resilience Institute, Jakarta
1. Leadership training for 3rd echelon officials, second batch	
2. Leadership training for 4th echelon officials	

Table 1. Implementation of Training Program for Second, Third, and Fourth Echelon Officials in 2015 (Source: DG. Polpum)

Official Level	2015	2016
Echelon II	1	-
Echelon III	1	-
Echelon IV	5	1

Table 2. Participants of Training Program Conducted By DG Polpum, 2015 and 2016 (Source: DG. Polpum)

2016	
Education and Training	Training Program
1. Course on Participatory Development Planning at Ministry of Interior Affairs.	-

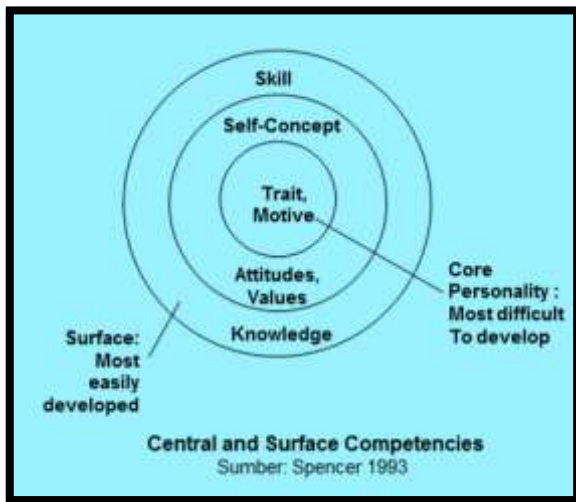
Table 3. Implementation of Education and Training Program for Second, Third and Fourth Echelon Officers, 2016

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Competence

Competence is one of the elements of human capital that is trusted and widely used. Baron and Armstrong (2013) mentioned that human capital is knowledge, skills, and experiences that are obtained through motivation and self concept. Spencer (1993) conceptualized competence as the deepest part of an individual which has a causal relationship with the requirements that needs to be met in order to achieve an effective performance, either while completing a task or in any other situation. Based on the above two statements, the authors define competence as the deepest part of an individual, namely motivation and self concept, that influences human behavior and human capital. Competence enables us to distinguish the superior leaders from the ordinary ones. Thus self-concept, human capital and experience are interrelated entities, which form a cybernetic system, which eventually shapes the "intellectual capital" that is important for effective organization. To simplify we can see the figure below.





Source: Spencer 1993
Figure 1. Competence as a cybernetics system

A situation that may be explained using the aforementioned conceptualization is observable among the leaders in the DG of Polpum, which is observed in this research. Among those who hold leadership, only roughly 30 per cents may be regarded as effective leaders with a significant contribution for the effectiveness of the organization. The rest are at the level of ordinary leaders. According to Spencer the situation in a relatively short and easy period of change can be carried out at the level of human capital. It is natural that in a government, bureaucracy must exist and be sustained. One of the means through which a bureaucracy sustains itself is through implementation of "training" and "assignment" (Vaculik 2018). Through these assignments, leaders are trained to become mission oriented (completing work that has begun, being able to anticipate risks, master the problem, and able to influence).

2. 2. Conflict Resolution

Conflicts involving two parties, which feel and realize that their interests are disturbed, often appear within social, political, economic, as well as ethnic aspects. Conflict is incompatibility, disagreement, debate, contestation, and war. All of them need a solution or a set of solutions so that people can live in peace without fear and danger. Wallen Steen Peter (2002), whose study on conflict resolution as a solution was cited by the Indian researcher Hilal A Wani, stated that conflict resolution is achieved, "... where the parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accepts each other's continued existence" (2011).

Meanwhile conflict resolution is also a mechanism. Based on this context, the resolution of the conflict is a situation where the conflicting parties meet through a mechanism or stage of completion which takes precedence over the prevention of conflict. In this context, the conflict prevention or resolution carried out by the DG of Polpum prioritizes conflict settlement or prevention which is followed with written agreement between conflicting parties in order to maintain post-conflict peace

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. 1. Method

Qualitative research is based on in-depth interviews with selected informants to collect data and provide the informants a space to express their opinions (Yin, 2012). The goal is to produce an analysis that may provide the answer to the open ended question, particularly the question "how" and "why".

The process conducted during the research is as follow. First of all, the researchers carried out an overview survey of the field. At the same time, the researchers conducted a sort of literature review by studying relevant journal articles that discuss subjects related to the focus of this research. This step was taken to avoid any irrelevant information, and simultaneously to find a wider space to collect data directly provided by the informants, as well as their opinion. In-depth interview was then conducted to find a deeper understanding of issue, which the researchers find in the preliminary information received earlier. The researchers then reduced the data and information to find significant themes related with the focus of the research. In order to verify the validity of the data and information, the researchers conducted triangulation process. Finally, for the purpose of research report writing, the researchers conducted a focus group discussion (conducted in 30th of April 2018) which was organized in the office of the DG Polpum.

3. 2 Material

The primary data in this research was collected during a field research conducted between April 2016 and March 2018. During this period, the researchers conducted various interviews, which were carried out nearly weekly, various leaders under the DG of Polpum of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The most significant interviewee is the highest leader of the DG of Polpum, that is, the Director General himself. The authors had an opportunity to discuss the matters observed in this research with the Director General. The author also had an opportunity to meet with other leaders who hold significant structural positions (hereafter referred to as leadership) under the Director General. They include 3 directors, 23 deputy directors, and 45 section heads. The authors conducted in-depth interviews with these leaders in their work place or any other location based on appointment. The interviews were audio recorded. In addition, the authors collected secondary data in the form of from official documents.

4. DISCUSSION

This research result is based on interviews and the study of documents related to the theme or topic. Interviews with the leadership of the DG of Polpum, which includes 3 directors, 23 deputy directors and 45 section heads were carried out after the researchers obtained a general explanation from the Director General of the DG of Polpum.

Previous research shows that conflict resolution is still slow and relies on the police, who act first in the field. The



right policy decisions by the leadership are made later, and are usually too late. This is in line with previous research conducted by the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue (2011) and by Komnas HAM [National Commission for Human Rights] (2015). Both organizations are civil society organization. The reason for the aforementioned late decision is related to the fact that most of the government officials who are assigned with conflict resolution tasks are bound by bureaucratic procedures, lack of knowledge, and rely more on functional relationship, rather than personal relationship with and the community leaders.

4. 1. Taking advantage of social institutions to resolve conflicts

The first question in the interview was related to the effort of resolving the social conflicts that occurred (Singkil-Aceh; Tolikara-Papua and the DKI-Jakarta Pilkada 2016). All informants elaborated on the importance of utilizing social institutions fostered by leadership in the structure of bureaucratic functions, such as the Communication Forum for inter-Religious People (FKUB), religious institutions, and ethnic associations. This method has been quite effectively done formally and institutionally. However, when researchers asked informants for the effectiveness of the mechanism in resolving social conflicts, the informants stated that the results were not optimal. The leaders that we interviewed stated that the use of social institutions in the mechanism of resolving social conflicts is only formally based on the government authority, which is based on regulations. This is not sufficient as more effective results are more determined by the quality, capacities, and competencies of the leaders. Unfortunately, the leaders observed are weak in these aspects. The results of the research in the form of data describe quantitatively and qualitatively the fact that the effectiveness of the leaders in the conflict resolution process are still minimal. This might be seen in the statements of some directors, as well as the data and the results of interviews, which show that the use of social institutions is not yet developed at the individual level. Organizations can be effective in utilizing social institutions in resolving social conflicts through the openness of individual leaders in the creativity and the improvement of their social awareness. As one of the deputy directors in the interview stated, "The mechanism for resolving social conflicts utilizing social institutions is an order of the Law No: 7/2012 concerning Social Conflict Management. The law regulates the government's role in facilitating conflicting parties to resolve the conflicts and to follow up by signing written peace agreements in order to maintain peace achieved after conflict ." This procedure has often been carried out to resolve inter-religious conflict (adherents of Islam-non Islam). The legal mechanism of the court is carried out if one party does not agree. Such mechanism is the right of individuals protected by the constitution. In Indonesia, this mechanism as an ideal mechanism for the dispute between parties which is caused by very complex background issues, such as religious and ethnic aspects, such as the anti-Chinese issues in the 2016 Jakarta Governor Election.

4. 2. Social Intelligence is needed in solving social conflicts.

In general, all informants agree with the importance of social intelligence in the process of solving social conflicts that occur. The results of research and data analysis show that the number of leaders who are aware of the need to build social relationships as a part of social conflict resolution program are very low, that is, only 30% of the total leaders. 20 % of these leaders may be regarded as leaders with a very effective performance. Meanwhile, the performance of the remaining 10% have been quite satisfying.

Most of the informants from the effective leaders and the leaders in general opined that intelligence, including social awareness, is a strategic element in solving social conflicts that occur in society. It is said that the form of empathy for listening and concern for social problems and the risk of conflict and large casualties which are a burden on the parties involved in the conflict must be resolved based on a neutral and fair attitude. Another informant stated that "The presence of formal leaders in the midst of the community groups that are in conflict is very important as it may encourage and bring parties to each other at the negotiating table". Furthermore, it was stated that the initial stage of resolving the conflict was directed to find a meeting point for the conflicting agreement so that there was no problem left after the agreement was reached ". On the other hand, an interviewee director states that "social intelligence competencies are needed to be improved through structural training and more field assignments, especially in the period where no social conflicts have occurred, that is within the following 2 years. This part of the strategy to make leaders effective is based on the efforts to improve competencies both in quantity and quality, and is aimed at preventing complex potential conflicts such as religious and ethnic conflicts from occurring.

5. CONCLUSION

In the midst of social conflicts (Tolikara-Papua, Singkil-Aceh, and the Jakarta gubernatorial election), each basic competency is needed and should not be ignored by the leadership to resolve social conflicts. This research aims at revealing how the actual leadership competencies are influenced by the norms for the use of regulations stipulated by Law No: 7/2012, specifically the mechanism for the utilization of social institutions in conflict resolution. It also aims to show how the leadership competencies are influenced by the competencies derived from individual behavior, which are led by several social awareness that comes from the lessons of conflict. In line with the previous studies, the results showed that in the context of Indonesia, the ability to use social institutions in the community and empathy in social awareness as well as the presence of leadership individuals in conflict groups in resolving social conflicts have constituted the basis of the main ability to bring, encourage and facilitate parties which have different interests and are in conflicts to avoid violence and head towards a peace agreement, which is continued with written



agreements that bind all post-conflict. As some informants said, "Social awareness is important to be developed through social networks".

5. 1. Implication

This study has an impact on the leadership attitude in a very complex bureaucracy, whose task and functions, is to manipulate and mitigate social conflicts. Despite its difficult task, top management of the institution does not adequately pay attention to the significance of suitable competencies required by its leaders to find solution for social conflicts. This may be seen in the limitation of authority as well as a poor data base of information regarding social conflicts which are possessed by those leaders. This lack of authority and information definitely leads to an inability of the decision making leaders to make an immediate decision.

Secondly, the pattern of a social conflict has an influence both on the approach that may be adopted to solve and on the competency that the leaders need to further develop. The study conducted on three cases of social conflicts (that is, the case of Tolikara, Singkil and Jakarta) shows how the conflict resolution approach varies from one case to another. The role of the DG of Polpum in making coordination during the Jakarta social conflict case is very important. In the effort to decrease the social tension between Muslims and non-Muslim groups, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs played a significant role. Meanwhile, in a social conflict that led to violence, such as the Tolikara case, the local police played an important role. The diversity of religion and ethnicity, as well as the variety of types and characters of conflicts should become reminder for the bureaucratic leaders that they should not ignore the fact that they need to improve and further develop the competencies of the leading officials posted in the area of conflict.

Finally, the wider society understands the existence of norms in the form of law and regulation that constitute the basis for the government to conduct a conflict resolution. The stake holder's responsibility to perform the task is under public scrutiny. In the event of social conflict and its aftermath, the failure of the government in keeping peace, as well as the perceived late response in dealing with the conflicts, have resulted in the distrust among the wider society in the ability of the government to keep peace and social stability.

5. 2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

This research has only focused on three case studies, that is, the case in Tolikara regency in the Province of Papua, the case in Singkil regency in Aceh Province, and the case of Jakarta. Meanwhile, Indonesian society is a diverse society consisting of people with diverse religious and ethnic groups who inhabit many different regions in the country. This means that further researches on conflict resolution, as this research has conducted, may be undertaken in other regions as a follow up of this research.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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