Doctoral dissertation summary

Navigating the Future: Scenarios and Strategies in Upgrading Indonesian Fishing Village

未来への進路: インドネシアの漁村改善における
シナリオと戦略

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Summary

As a result of intensifying coastal land use, obtaining decent housing and accessing habitable human settlements have become one of the social struggles experienced by contemporary small-scale fishermen. Many poor small-scale fishing households live in slum settlements that are overcrowded, lacking in basic services, and vulnerable to coastal disasters. Although living in coastal slum settlements adds another dimension of hardship for the fishermen, the issue has rarely been discussed thoroughly in academic and policy debates. These theoretical and policy gaps need to be addressed because declining and removal of fishing villages could negate cultural and economic production, or worse, threaten the existence of fishing communities who are the most important contributors to fishery productivity. Policy intervention aimed at a community as vulnerable and unique as small-scale fishing communities requires an approach that is sensitive to the local context, responsive to local needs, and supportive of local capacities.

To address the coastal slum settlement problem, many governments, such as the Indonesian government, seek to improve the living condition of such settlements through slum upgrading projects. The scheme was inspired by the conception of aided self-help housing, which assume that in-situ physical interventions will induce transformative place-making practices and autonomous incremental development by the residents. Literature review on this study proposes two important considerations that need to be taken into account for slum upgrading to generate transformative outcomes: 1) recognition of residents' sense of place as the basis in formulating locally sensitive development strategies, and 2) inclusion of a future-oriented approach that anticipates uncertainties such as scenario planning method. Fishing settlements provide an excellent setting to explore these conjectures, as they not only represent fishermen's unique maritime culture and radiate a unique sense of place based on waterscape urbanism, but also face growing uncertainties as a result of, among others, climate changes, ecosystem disturbance, and volatile economic trends. Scenario planning is proposed in this study to support locally sensitive slum upgrading processes and transform place-making practices of slum residents. The research employs Bourdieu's theory of practices as an overarching analytical framework in analyzing a scenario planning exercise to examine this assumption.

The study focuses on Mola villages in Wakatobi Regency as its research area. The settlement is inhabited by the Bajo people, once a sea-nomad ethnic group that holds a strong economic, cultural, and spiritual relationship with the ocean. The settlement was built above shallow waters and represented their habitus as the 'sea people'. Despite its uniqueness, the settlement was labelled a slum settlement since it lacks a street network and proper sanitation facilities. A technocratic infrastructure-led slum upgrading project was implemented from 2015 to 2018, which had altered local place identity and residents' ways of using the space. The project and the newly established landscape can be interpreted as the restructuration of the place-making field of the area. However, the study reveals the hysteresis effect as habitus of Bajo people, which embodied a marine-based and informal life, and their capitals are incompatible with the new formal land-based place-making process. The hysteresis effect can be observed in housing design and daily transportation behaviour. The project also depicts the deficiency of a single sectoral approach and silo-based bureaucratic arrangement in dealing with complex and unstructured coastal problems such as the fishing villages.

The community of Bajo Mola villages also face growing uncertainties in the future. The area has recently been designated as priority tourism; hence, major tourism development initiatives and investments that will alter the landscape and affect community livelihood are expected. To navigate the uncertain future, scenario planning was conducted with the Bajo youth. The process identified the fishing industry, new housing or settlement development, and tourism development as pivotal uncertainties that will determine the shape of different scenarios. Based on variations of these uncertainties, the scenario team identified plausible futures of Bajo Mola villages that are described in four scenarios: Sea Urchin (deteriorating environment), Halfbeak Fish (stagnant economy), Napoleon fish (growing but vulnerable economy), and Marlin (vibrant settlement and the rise of creative economy). The exercise stimulates discussion that produces valuable insight and contributes to the youth's social learning process. By reflecting on the plausible condition of the future, they have identified the necessary habitus and capitals to strive in the future world and devise a pathway to acquire required practical mastery or feel for the game to realise the desirable future. As they update their mental models, the Bajo youth experience subjective reframing, which is critical in instigating transformative learning.

Drawing from the experience of conducting scenario planning with the Bajo Mola youth, it can be concluded that scenario planning can direct locally sensitive urban development process and bring about transformative changes by performing as a tool for communicative planning and as a tool for social learning. In this fashion, scenario planning can cause transformative governance or transformative learning which ultimately leading to transformative outcomes. Thus, this study recommends the application of scenario planning to support slum upgrading process so that a more robust action plan that anticipates plausible futures and brings about transformative outcomes in place-making practices can be generated.

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