

The Meaning Construction of Poverty and Communication Behavior of Poor Women in Bandung City, West Java, Indonesia

Fajarina¹, Bugi Satrio Adiwibowo¹, Halomoan Harahap¹ and Dani Vardiansyah¹

¹Faculty of Communication Science, Esa Unggul University, Arjuna Utara Street Number 9, Kebon Jeruk, Indonesia

Keywords: Construction of Meaning, Poverty, Communication Behavior, Poor Women

Abstract: The research aims to find out the meaning construction of poverty based on what the Poor Women have experienced by themselves and communication behavior of the Poor Women with their neighborhood, and to find out the meaning of each neighborhood of the Poor Women in Bandung city. The research uses the phenomenological paradigm. The data were obtained by using direct observation and in-depth interview with fifteen informants. The result shows that the poverty experienced by the Poor Women is significantly defined as the most unpleasant life condition that tends to be negative in which they feel to live in restlessness, discomfort and insecurity in economic condition that causes the informants to have a responsibility to work and often makes them forget to socialize. Furthermore, the communication behavior of the Poor Women with their whole neighborhood varies from very often to very less intensity whether in face-to-face communication or via the media using the communication tool like a mobile phone. And last, the neighborhood of the Poor Women including the family, neighbors, employers and friends is defined for the whole as something important and meaningful, something exist but feels not exist, and something usual.

1 INTRODUCTION

Women's Life in Social-Economic Proneness (PRSE) is one of the types of people with social welfare problems (PMKS) besides street children, neglected elderly, beggars, homeless people, and so on. The definition of PRSE according to the Ministry of Social Affairs (Depsos) RI is an adult woman aged 18-59 years who are not yet or not married or a widow who does not have enough income to be able to fulfill her daily basic needs or a wife whose husband leaves indefinitely.

Women's Life in Social-Economic Proneness (PRSE) in the Women's Profile on the Social-Economic Hazard Profile (PRSE), which is a collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs' Social Welfare Data and Information Center and the Indonesian Statistical Center in 2010 is classified as poor (living below the poverty line). Poverty is a condition where people are unable to fulfill basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education and health.

A woman prone to social economy (PRSE) with her life experience in dealing with poverty has the construction of its own meaning about poverty and also has behaviors including its own communication behavior with the surrounding environment, such as

with family members, neighbors, people in the work environment such as employers, and friends, and have meaning about their own surroundings.

A woman prone to social economy (PRSE) whose daily work outside the home to help the family economy besides her husband often very often becomes the main or single family breadwinner because she becomes a single parent for her children or because the husband does not have a steady income from his job and more often not making money because of the type of work, often forgetting to interact and communicate with the surrounding environment, especially with the environment outside his family.

The time they have besides taking care of themselves all the household and child work, a lot is spent working even they have to have more than one place and/or one type of work to meet their daily needs and family. If there is little time after work, they use it more to rest than to gather, interact and communicate with their environments such as with neighbors or friends.

There is also a woman who is prone to the social economy (PRSE) who does not work regularly outside the home, does not mean she can freely gather, interact and communicate with the surrounding environment. The poverty that they

experience makes them inevitably also have to accept any type of work even though it is not routine and only works on the request of someone who is in need of energy assistance at that time by being directly rewarded by the work that was enough to help increase the family's economy at that time.

Because of poverty, the overall association of PRSE both those who work and those who are housewives can be limited to parties who are far away from their homes even though they have a family relationship or have had close friendships when they were in the same place. Even poverty makes PRSE feel that they no longer need friends like women from the upper middle class have, namely to be able to walk (hang out), shop (shopping), go to cafes, to malls or other expensive entertainment and recreation centers with friends.

This is because the interaction and PRSE communication with the environment that he has or has ever had is hampered by financial problems that do not allow them to meet frequently visit or visit together. It is even difficult to communicate just to ask the news even though the HP communication media for example. Not infrequently they have to be good at resisting the longing that can only send healthy prayer strings always for families and friends who have been far away living with them and they have been very long as if forgetting worldly pleasures namely entertainment that requires no small amount even though make them want.

Poverty also makes women prone to the social economy (PRSE) have a communication behavior that is different from the surrounding environment which can make the PRSE feel inferior and often withdraw in relationships. Likewise, PRSE's communication with family, especially with their children, can influence their parenting to their children, which can be different from parents with middle to upper economic conditions. Many children from the PRSE are forced to drop out of school either directly requested by their parents or the child's awareness of the economic situation of their parents and often help work to make money in an age that tends to be early rather than studying. Moreover, there are still many more distinctive behaviors of PRSE communication with the surrounding environment in a situation where life is lacking, limited or poor.

The description above really illustrates that the problem of poverty can also have an impact on the communication problem of Women with Economic Social Hazard (PRSE) with its various environments. Though as social beings, humans cannot live without interacting and communicating with other humans. Because poverty can have an impact on a person's behavior towards the

environment, the researcher is also interested in knowing what each neighborhood means for the PRSE as well as wanting to know the construction of the meaning of poverty according to what the PRSE itself experiences and the PRSE communication behavior with the surrounding environment.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Women and Poverty

Women and men are created with different biological functions so that the continuity of human beings on earth is maintained. Differences will be a problem if it causes between them to experience non-biological injustice functions which are the result of socio-cultural construction. Socio-cultural construction tends to place women in a subordinate position by marginalizing women. Differences in the roles of men and women have been widely discussed in various theories which can generally be classified in biological construction and socio-cultural construction. This difference in the roles of men and women determined by biological factors gave birth to the separation of the responsibilities of hunters and gatherers, in modern societies known as the public and domestic sectors (Budiman, 1985).

Differences in men and women indirectly affect the productivity and availability of labor in the labor market. This concept has given rise to the assumption that women have lower human capital than the opposite sex. This concept is used as a justification guideline, that women have limitations so that it is difficult if they have to be given wider responsibilities in the public sector. It is justified when women remain placed in the domestic sector by limiting women's movement to increase their abilities outside the household. Without the ability to master skills, increase education, and knowledge will bring women to remain entangled in powerlessness and poverty.

Poor women do not have priority for resource development due to limited capital, education, skills. Poor women will be increasingly marginalized to less productive and low-income sectors. This marginalization is supported by the socio-cultural construction so that women remain in a position to do domestic work and less productive work because only the work is considered most suitable for women because of the low human capital that women have.

Differences in the social roles of men and women are more determined by cultural factors, differences that are constructed by the culture of society continue to be preserved in a patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society, as adopted by most

Indonesian people, especially Javanese, of course, socio-cultural construction of the role of male women tends to benefit men. Many values of gender bias occur in a society that are not caused by biological factors but the result of cultural construction such as power relations. Power relations to limit women's roles at home and outside the home because in this way so that the opposite sex can still control women.

This approach emphasizes that social, cultural factors have placed women disadvantaged in the labor market. Women work in households and men earn a living as a form of subordination is a product of socio-cultural construction. This construction is entirely determined by social construction. Inequality of male and female roles is one form of oppression. Oppression has brought women to enjoy poverty without resistance to free the shackles.

Qualitatively rural women have done much work both in the domestic and public sectors, but women are still marginalized due to gender bias policies. Policies in agricultural development in Java in the 1970s had much impact on the shifting of labor from the agricultural sector, Javanese women were the group of workers most disadvantaged by development in the agricultural sector. Some work on agriculture originally loaded with female labor must be cut down and forced women out to find sources of income outside agriculture for the sake of their household economics (Ann Stoler, 1982; Pujiwati Sajogyo, 1984; Joan Hardjono, 1990; Endang S. Soesilowati and Darwin, 1995). Limited capital owned by women, limited education and skills forced women to work at very low wages. Women are increasingly having difficulty increasing women's resources because the workload that must be borne is more severe, namely completing the main tasks in the household, helping to make a living and carrying out activities that lack economic value.

2.2 Independence of Poor Women

Independence known as autonomy in Greek comes from the word *autos* means self and *nemiin* means giving up or giving. Autonomy implies the power to regulate itself, or the act of regulating itself or determining and directing itself. Women who have autonomy or independence means having freedom without relying on other parties to be free to move and make choices according to their needs. According to the Big Dictionary of the Second Edition of Indonesian Language autonomy is one of the characteristics of human existence as a form of recognition of one's independence. People are said to have independence if someone has self-esteem, independence and independence. Someone can

determine the will and convey ideas by the desired goals without fear of threats or attacks from other parties who intend to control him.

The division of labor that places women in domestic work and men in public works raises issues of injustice towards women. Women become dependent on men because of domestic work that spends even a woman's life without pay. Dependence of women on men can be reduced by placing women proportionally. Women's independence is the right of women to argue that they decide or determine the problems that exist in the household. So the meaning is clear that women are not just *wingking* co-operatives but must be positioned as equal partners who have an equal position in joy and sorrow. Thus women must be invited to speak, discuss, discuss in all matters. Of course, it must be done reciprocally and openly.

Independence of rural women includes self-regulating daily household needs, arranging and managing household wealth, determining work choices outside the home both in agriculture, as well as other production fields, businesses and services, and trade and participating in community activities. Independence is the ability to bring women as humans who have the value of living alone in society. Independence can be realized if there is recognition of humanity for its humanity. These changes can be made through the construction of socio-cultural environments as well as those of women. Independence is an important concept because it can bring women to humans who have their own lives in society. Independence or autonomy is one of the characteristics of human existence, as a form of recognition of one's independence.

People are said to be independent if they have self-esteem, independence and self-sufficiency and have courage. Mandiri means being able to determine one's own will and ideas and goals; can realize all on their ability and not acute threats or attacks from other people. Independence means someone does not depend on others. However, independence with the notion of being dependent on others can cause confusion because women's independence means women who are not dependent on men. For example, the independence of women as wives means that wives know and are involved in every decision making in solving problems faced in their households.

Women will achieve independence if women work and do work that generates wages so that the income earned can be decided for its use. Women are said to be independent when acting as wives related to education and care for children and domestic work arranged with their husbands is not only imposed on women as wives. Independent

women in carrying out domestic work are not carried out alone when these women participate in earning a living do not carry out dual roles and even multiple roles alone. Domestic work is considered as an extension of reproductive duties such as caring for and guiding children, providing food and education for children can be done by men and women, as well as public work is not only the responsibility of men. Women also have the right to make these job choices. The division of labor that places women to do domestic work alone where women must work to earn income, domestic work will become an obstacle for women in developing their potential.

Blood and Wolfe in Sajogyo (1983) state that the imbalance in the division of labor between men looking for women's wage work leads to domination or control of the economy by men towards women. Women who have the opportunity to develop their potential so that they do not depend on men by having their own income women become economically independent. The independence of women in the household is determined by involvement in making decisions about what foods and dishes are purchased and must be served for the family, freedom to organize household wealth including the purchase of household appliances, and the freedom to get the opportunity to work outside the home.

The role of women in the economy and household expenditure does not necessarily indicate the high status and power of women. It means that women's independence is not only determined by the role of women in managing the household economy. The expansion of women's opportunities to interact outside the household is likely for women to develop their potential. Women who earn income to meet their own needs or help with household needs can make women economically independent. Even though economic independence is not always related to independence in other fields. Women's independence is not only determined by the social status and economic status of women in the household. Nevertheless, women's participation in economic activities allows women to have independence (Sadli, 1997).

The economic contribution of women in the household is a forceable women to play a role in decision making in various aspects of household activities and their environment (Sajogyo, 1990). Although mastery of some resources by women does not necessarily positively correlate to women's power in their households (Abdullah, 2001). The ability of women to earn income can bring women to have independence in managing their income but not directly strengthen the bargaining position of women in the household. Women with economic abilities

have the opportunity to choose work in their own household or be done by someone else by paying wages. The economic capacity possessed by women by having their own income will open opportunities for women to be able to engage extensively outside the household and in social activities.

Revenue is one variable that can be used as an indicator to see the power in the household that is related to decision making (Cohen, 1998). Women who have income make women more independent so they can meet their needs and even help in fulfilling their household needs. Women tend to have independence if they have income and economic activities (Sadli, 1991). Research on women in rural areas of Yogyakarta Special Region stated that with their own income women are very independent, so they dare to make decisions independently (Hull in Budiman, 1991).

In a society that adheres to a patriarchal culture, it is considered one the cause of the injustice between men and women as happened in Javanese society. To understand Javanese rural women, there are two perspectives. The first view emphasizes the positive aspects and factors that benefit Javanese women in the household and society. The second view emphasizes the existence of structural and cultural mechanisms and ideological hegemony which gives birth to subordination to women. In patriarchal culture gave birth to the reality of a gender-based division of labor, the role of reproduction has placed women in the domestic sector considered weak because reproduction has no economic role. The wife does almost all work. Domestic work is carried out routinely and takes up most of the time and energy of women. If women participate in earning a living for domestic work it must still be their responsibility, husband's participation in domestic work remains small.

Men in production have an economic role. This division of labor produces economic dependence of women on men so that women become not independent (Abdullah, 1995). If women have economic independence in the ideology of gender that gives birth to subordination to women does not necessarily bring women to have a strong bargaining position (Abdullah, 2001). Patriarchal society as a product of cultural value systems has a strong contribution in positioning men and women, patriarchal society places women in subordinate positions. This subordinate position makes women have a dependency on men for example economically. Women are willing to work with low wages, and even women are willing to continue working without being paid, making women have low incomes and do not even have income so that women do not have independence (Sajogyo, 1984).

Women's independence has an important role in efforts to improve women's welfare. Independent women have the opportunity to choose activities that can be used as capital to improve their abilities so that they have a position that is economically strong, social in the household and outside the household.

3 PARADIGM AND RESEARCH METHODS

The research approach used in this study is the constructivism approach. According to this approach, the social reality observed by a person cannot be generalized to everyone. Social phenomenon is understood as a constructed reality, which means that the construction of the meaning of poverty is a construction of reality that is experienced and felt by each of the Social Economic Prone Women (PRSE) in the city of Bandung.

Therefore, the concentration of analysis on this approach is to find out how women who are prone to socio-economics (PRSE) undergo the poverty they face (experience and circumstances) and find a *verstehen* of women socio-economic prone (PRSE) about poverty constructed from the reality experienced and he felt.

The reality of meaning in each individual develops over time from the environment. The environment influences or gives color to the individual in constructing and constructing the meaning construction he has.

This research uses a phenomenology method, also known as a qualitative descriptive method and is used in an constructive approach to constructivism.

Phenomenology as one form of research that is based on existing meanings in cognition, and is related to the overall phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994: 58). This refers to the continuous assessment of phenomena from various positions and perspectives so that this condition requires researchers to understand the whole phenomenon (real and imagined), which appears as a conscious effort of someone who is examined on the aspect under study. Thus, phenomenology research will describe and explain that all questions related to social phenomena must refer to intersubjective reality as part of the research process. (Moustakas, 1994: 59).

Phenomenology research seeks to understand the meaning of events and their relationships to the people involved in a particular situation. This study emphasizes the subject aspects of a person's

behavior. The researcher seeks to enter the conceptual world of the subject under study so that researchers will be able to understand what and how an understanding they develop around events in everyday life. Someone will interpret the experience through interaction with others through his or her awareness. Furthermore, the understanding of experiences formed during the interaction process will shape the reality that exists in the individual. Thus, this study will reveal a person's awareness in understanding the phenomenon experienced, so that it will be known how one can construct phenomena experienced according to what is in the mind and experience.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION RESEARCH

Interpretatively, the meaning of life for each woman is prone to the social economy (PRSE) itself can vary, especially when viewed from their different backgrounds and perspectives. In this study revealed that the meaning of life experienced by the PRSE is described by informants as a life that is still difficult, living deprived, living in economic constraints/life, life is concerned, and life is suffering.

Likewise, all the actions or behaviors of the Women of the Social Economy (PRSE) as the implications of poverty experienced have their respective subjective meanings. First, the behavior of informants owing and asking for help from their families or other parties means solely to meet their daily needs and family members.

Second, the behavior of crediting or repaying new clothes and/or furniture that he bought is aimed at being able to own some items without incriminating them if they have to buy them in cash.

Third, the behavior of renting a house or more precisely a map room is intended so that the informants together with all their family members have a place to gather, rest, and do the activities of another family were to have their own place, they cannot. Besides that, it is still related to the place of residence, the behavior of moving around (nomadic) is to get a place to stay where the rent is cheaper and for informants who have been evicted by rented owners, finding a new place to live is an obligation where to avoid recurrence of the eviction incident again, the informants must be more selective in finding a new place to live with a variety of considerations in addition to the consideration of rent, also to know the nature of prospective new rented owners and others.

Furthermore, fourthly, the behavior of informants who only buy traditional medicine or herbal medicine in a stall to treat the illness and/or illness of their family members is aimed at reducing their expenses that have often not met their daily basic needs. Also, with regard to treatment, some informants choose just to leave the pain because they simply do not want to drag on thinking about the illness.

Lastly, fifth, the behavior of informants in line with Weber's social action theory is related to the behavior of informants asking their children not to go to school anymore and helping informants in making money is to be able to get income from other family members especially if their husbands have not made money because you have not got a job call or because you are suffering from prolonged illness.

PRSE, with poverty inherent in itself and its life, builds itself as a hard and strong worker so that it has an impact on its behavior that is to work for anything as long as it produces halal money where this indicates that many informants still have positive meaning. The PRSE's working behavior itself is also included in the social action put forward by Weber where the actions of informants to work or want to work are solely to make money.

Furthermore, there are still many PRSEs who build themselves up as people who pay enough attention to their neat and clean self-appearance even though they do not have to wear new clothes. There are even some informants who still dress up. Based on the results of the interviews, some informants further explained that even though living in poverty does not make it not pay attention to appearance or become intentionally dirty (dirty).

As mentioned above, many informants still see themselves positively even though their positivity is still limited to assessing their physical strength based on the information they obtain from other people and also based on the measurement of abilities conducted by the informants themselves where most they have felt various types of physical work.

However, there are also some PRSEs with the poverty they experienced to have a negative view of themselves as if they felt stupid because they could not attend high school. Or have an inferiority or low self-esteem in society and often withdraw from the environment. The perspective of the informant who views himself stupid is also based on his own reflection. While informants who have a sense of self-confidence (inferior) or low self-esteem are based on the spontaneous reaction of informants to the surrounding environment which is quite different from the situation.

Next, the conditions of poverty affect the meaning of the PRSE self where the unbroken poverty they experience, makes the informants build

the meaning of themselves as people who remain poor or unable. They actually admit that they are very difficult to determine whether poverty is a divine destiny or only their destiny can change for the better someday. This is because of the results of their hard work is alone and coupled with the husband's income when the husband is working, still felt by them not or not able to make them a little "breathe a sigh of relief" in living their lives let alone get out of the circle of poverty itself. In the end they can only surrender to the extent that they assume that their poverty is very natural because it is based on the results of reflection of themselves plus input from other people's assessment that their poverty has come from their families (parents) who are poor plus those who are live in their neighborhood (the surrounding environment) also has the same fate as those living in poverty.

In this study, the results of the study found that the poverty experienced and felt by Women in Economic Social Security (PRSE) from the past to the present is the only "motive of reason" (because of motive) of the PRSE in carrying out subsequent actions or behaviors. To create "goal motives" (in order to motive) in carrying out work activities and subsequent PRSE efforts in order to realize their "goal motives" (how) is nothing but continuing to work and find work if possible for informants who have not worked. The "order" motive (in order to motive) of the PRSE in working based on the results of the research is the improvement of the life of the PRSE and their families which can be broken down into three (3) specific "goal motives" namely: (1) the motive of wanting to own a home; (2) the motive of wanting to send their children to the highest level; and (3) the motive of wanting to live more quietly in old age.

In this study, the meaning of the environment around the PRSE is known. The first is the meaning of the family, the PRSE reveals that the meaning of the family for them is (1) meaningful, important and everything; (2) normal; and (3) It is like nothing.

The second is that the neighboring meaning of the PRSE has two variations: (1) It is like family, brother, important and meaningful; and (2) normal. The third is the meaning of the employer for the PRSE who works and who has a permanent employer. From the results of the interviews, all the informants who worked considered it as an important party who was the source of their obtaining legal money from the results of their hard work.

Finally the third is the meaning of friends. There are three (3) variations of answers from informants, including: (1) necessary, meaningful and important; (2) normal; and (3) no friends or no friends.

The communication behavior of the informants with the family based on the results of the study was first, the communication behavior of the informants with the family was carried out from very less intensity to very often both directly face to face and media through HP. Secondly, the communication behavior of the informants with neighbors is done with very little intensity to very often where communication is carried out face to face. Third, the communication behavior of the informant with the work environment that is the employer is carried out from intensity rather often to very often both directly and on HP. And fourth, the communication behavior of informants with friends is done from very less intensity to very often both directly and media.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the conclusions above, here are some suggestions that researchers can suggest or recommend:

Academic, this research is still the beginning of a picture of the life of the poor, one of which is the Woman of the Social Economic Prone (PRSE) which is revealed through a phenomenological perspective so that in the subchapters the results of research can bring up new research themes or topics for the next good in the field communication, sociology, psychology, economics, health and others.

Practically, poverty is not merely the responsibility of the government. For every citizen, it should also help to participate in combating poverty around them, which can be started from small things such as giving jobs to women who are vulnerable to social economy (PRSE) in their home or home business, willing to provide assistance as long as they can to the PRSE who are in need of help at that time, and others. As for the government, it is time to fix this problem of the people, namely poverty. The results of this study are expected to be able to make regulations or policies that are more appropriate for the problem of women prone to the social economy (PRSE).

Practically, any woman prone to the social economy (PRSE) whomever she is should not be the main breadwinner of the family breadwinner so that men who become their life companions can work harder as they are done by PRSE so far. This is because in essence the man is destined to be the head of the family who is very responsible for earning a living for all family members without exception. Men should feel that they are most responsible for protecting their families from

vulnerability. Not the other way around. Men should also be able to work not just to let their wives and children participate in making money which can seriously threaten the health and safety of their own wives and children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research was supported by Faculty of Communication Science, Esa Unggul University.

REFERENCES

- _____, 2012. *Tafsir Sosial Atas Kenyataan. Risalah Tentang Sosiologi Pengetahuan*. (Penerjemah: Parera, Frans M). Jakarta : Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan, dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (LP3ES)
- Abdullah, Irwan, 2001. *Sex, Gender dan Reproduksi Kekuasaan*. Yogyakarta: Tarawang Press
- Berger, Peter., and Luckmann, Thomas, 1975. *The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Australia : Penguin Books
- Budiman, 1985 *Pergeseran Peran Laki Laki dalam Rumah Tangga: Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologis*. Yogyakarta
- Cohen PN, 1998, *Replecing housework in the service Economy : gender Class and Race Ethnichity in Service Spending Gender and Society* 12 : 219 - 239
- Moustakas, Clark, 1994. *Phenomenological Research Methods*. USA : Sage Publications Inc
- Mulyana, Deddy, 2001. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif. Paradigma Baru Ilmu Komunikasi dan Ilmu Sosial Lainnya*. Bandung : Remaja Rosdakarya
- Sajogyo, 1986. *Pembagian kerja antara pria dan wanita di bidang pertanian Bogor*. Buku kenan kenangan untuk Selo Sumardjan
- Sunarto, Kamanto, 1993. *Pengantar Sosiologi*. Jakarta : Lembaga Penerbit Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Indonesia