

Street-Level Bureaucrat as Policy Implementation Spearhead

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to investigate the roles of street-level bureaucrats (SLB) in delivering the new policy known as the locking wheel policy in Surakarta City. The city walk of Surakarta is selected as the study locus as it become the pilot project of the policy implementation. Before Regional Regulation of Surakarta No. 1 of 2013 (Organizing Transportation) especially chapter XV clause 231 (1) about locking-wheel penalty implemented, the area was known as an illegal parking spot. At the first time, the implementation process created dynamics but finally this policy successfully implemented. The research used descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected through interviews, documentation and observation. The results found that (1) The SLB actively played five main roles such as providing information, socializing, persuading, educating and taking discretions; (2) Their attitudes when delivering the new policy were a set of communication process that can escalate citizen social changes. This research contributes a new dimension of policy implementation study that the SLB can also run a realm of social change in the scope of communication development. These findings hold an important practical implication that the SLB should have communication competencies to carry out their roles.

Keywords: *policy implementation; locking-wheel penalty; street-level bureaucrats; communication development, communication competencies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Decentralization era evidently exerts positive impact on local governments in Indonesia. A variety of policy innovations and breakthrough programs for the sake of created development, improved public service, and people's welfare are some evidence relevant to it. Decentralization makes local governments having authority and resource, particularly financially, to make many policy breakthroughs and innovation as a way to speed up development rate and good governance in their regions. The policy breakthrough and innovation often comes from policy adoption conducted by other more developed countries, other regions' best practice, and local leaders' proposition. Nevertheless, in practice the new policy or program has not been surely implemented successfully because policy implementation is always affected by social, economic, and cultural contexts.

Such condition occurs in Surakarta City as well. The city's rapid development generates many urban problems to be solved. One of which is uncontrolled vehicle number and traffic impacting directly on the need for parking lot. In addition, another problem arises when public

space constructed by Surakarta City Government changes into illegal parking area. For example, it occurs in city walk of Surakarta City, in which thousands violations occur monthly [1].

Many attempts have been taken by Surakarta City Government: installing signs, building bordering portals, warning the parking offenders, and installing billboard containing parking prohibition, but these attempt have not been able to reduce parking infringement significantly. Finally, Surakarta City Government (Pemkot Surakarta) established a new Local Regulation (*Perda*), *Perda* No.1/2013, about Transportation Organization, the last article of which, Article XV clause 231 (1) adds a new policy instrument and approach, that is, locking wheel to deal with parking infringement. Through the regulation, the Department of Transportation, Communication and informatics originally having no authority to act on the parking offenders is authorized to act on directly them. Although this policy is protested by many offenders and targeted groups originally, eventually this policy is implemented successfully and reduces the parking violation rate effectively. In addition, all targeted groups and stakeholders actually harmed by this policy participate actively in making this policy implementation running successfully.

This study focuses its investigation on the role of street-level bureaucrats in the implementation of locking wheel policy. It is conducted based on the opinion of such scholars as Lipsky [2][3], Elmore [4][5], Hudson [6] and Tummers & Bekkers [7] stating that street-level bureaucrats play an important role in the policy implementing process. It is possible because they interact directly with targeted groups and have broad autonomy to make discretion. It means that street-level bureaucrats play important role in this successful policy implementation.

Many studies indeed have been conducted on street-level bureaucrats. However, considering the author's investigation, the study on street-level bureaucrats in implementing new policy, particularly locking wheel policy to control parking violation, has not been conducted previously. Many studies having been conducted investigated the problem and dilemma of street-level bureaucrats from negative side, for example studies conducted by Widaningrum [8] and Alden [9]. Considering the problem above, this study aims to find out the roles played by street-level bureaucrats in implementing new policy in the context of locking wheel policy implementation in city walk of Surakarta City.

2. METHOD

The research was a descriptive qualitative research. Data were collected through interviews, observation and documentation. The competent informants were chosen purposively. The interviews conducted to all personel of illegal parking control operation team or the street-level bureaucrats. They consist of the team Leader of Joint Operation for Illegal Parking Control, the team member of Joint Operation for Illegal Parking Control such as personel from police's traffic unit (*Satlantas*), the Samapta Bhayangkara Police for tackle riots (*Sabhara*), Police's Criminal Investigation (*Reskrim*), Prosecutors, personel/ staff from the courts, military police IV/ 4 (*Denpom*), The Civil Service Police Unit (*Satpol PP*), Civil Servant Investigators (*PPNS*) and Parking Association of Surakarta (*Asparta*). The data then analyzed by using an interactive model analysis. Meanwhile, the result of data analysis was narrated descriptively [10][11].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Viewed from the public policy perspective, the locking wheel is a regulation stipulated by the Surakarta's local government to solve the never ends parking problems. In its practice, the Surakarta's local government gave the authority to the Department of Transportation, Communication and informatics to implement the regulation [12]. Based on the authors research, the study found that the street-level bureaucrats actively gave information regarding the new policy not only before the implementation process, but also until it implemented effectively. Since the socialization process until the end of policy implementation, they did direct communication with the target group and the stakeholders in city walk area. That was not easy to do because in the fieldwork, policy implementation process influenced by the social and political context [13].

In the context of Surakarta city walk, there was conflict of interest between target group. It because, before the sideway that was poorly maintained built into the city walk, there were a lot of shops that do not have parking space and the citizen accustomed to park their vehicles there. After city walk built, the old shops still do not have parking space and the citizen and shop visitors habitually parked their vehicles at that place. Thus, the street-level bureaucrats did various attempts before and a long the policy implementation.

Besides did socialization through various mass media, both print and electronic such as local newspapers, local television, billboards, pamphlets, radio, and talk shows as known as the effective ways to socialize the policy as those media can reach wider audience [14][15], the street-level bureaucrats also went to the spots and communicating door to door as well as face to face to the target group, especially to the shop owners, parking attendants and also citizen who park their vehicles at that area. It means, they have played an important role as information provider of the new policy even before the policy implementation.

At the policy implementation phase, the street-level bureaucrats consistently continued the role. During the 'illegal parking control operation' and when there were offenders affected the policy, they always leave time to handling complains—even invective and insults—from the offenders by talked about the rule, explained informations regarding the rules as well as gave education. The team leader of illegal parking control operation Henry Setya Negara explains,

Firstly, this is a *Perda* (Regional regulation) that must be enforced. Everything have been set up clearly. Secondly, it is our duty as policy implementor to provide information and educate the citizen. About complaint, we have become accustomed and ready for it. Any way, we know that this is need a process because we are trying to deliver a change of mindset.

They embraced the offenders before explain about the rules and gave punishment to them. Although sometimes the complaints done with bad behavior, they still explained politely. They usually chat about parking regulation and the new policy with people around them whether it was children, old age, parking attendants, street-vendor owners and anyone to educate them and conveyed the norms of parking. They also used cultural behaviour like use Javanese language in their communication for handling protest. One of the member of illegal parking control operation Zubaidi says,

I am aware that public awareness for dicipline parking is terrible. They don't want to walk. As member of *Satpol PP* (The Civil Service Police Unit) as well as member of illegal parking control operation, I obliged to give them understanding about the

regulation. For what this policy is made?! In the end, the citizen will benefit as well. Because of that, the citizen must be told. So, if there were parking attendants, street vendors, children, elderly and so on here, I must give information about the norms for parking by chatting with them. So they will also tell others. As Javanese people we should *srawung* (socializing with around), shouldn't we?.

By handle complaint politely and convey information clearly then there were no antipathy against the new policy. In other words, they adapted the implementation of the new policy by using local values. That proves that they have adequate communication competencies. Spitzberg and Cupach [16] comprised the component of competencies into three dimensions, that are motivation (an individual's approach or avoidance orientation in various social situations), knowledge (plans of action; knowledge of how to act; procedural knowledge) and skill (behavior actually performed).

On the other hand, the street-level bureaucrats tried to comply Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as well as possible. In fact, the SOP designed to be complicated to give deterrent effect to the offenders. Based on the SOP, the offenders just can released their vehicles from the locking-wheel if they have got a traffic ticket from the police and have go to the office of Surakarta Technical Services Unit of Parking (UPTD Perparkiran Surakarta) to pay the penalty. Thus, it can be interpreted that they strive to consistently play the role to oversee the policy implementation as possible.

However, the emergence of new target operation i.e. motorcycle since 16 February 2015 made them did a discretion which is called 'open table'. The main consideration of this discretion is to smooth the policy implementation. It because there were usually a lot of motorcycle affected the locking wheel policy in every 'illegal parking control operation'. This discretion allows the motorcycle parking offenders to pay penalty on the spot in order to time efficiency in the releasing process. It means, the street-level bureaucrats also take the role of interpret the SOP in accordance with the encountered condition on the spot.

All of the attempts that have done by the street-level bureaucrats affect the target group and surrounding community in possitive side. They not only finally accept the new policy, but also contribute to warn people that they should never park their vehicles at the city walk. It can promotes information exchanges and conducive environments to bring about positive social change.

Further exploration indicated that besides play important roles in the policy implementation process, they also have a role to convey values and ideas of social change. Their roles in implementing locking-wheel policy gradually able to bring about positive behavior change i.e. parking discipline. This is because they have communication competencies in handling complaints, conveying information and persuading.

4. CONCLUSION

This research has affirmed Lipsky [2][3], Elmore [4][5], Hudson [6], and Tummers & Bekkers [7] argumentations on the importance of the street-level bureaucrats in policy implementation. The team of illegal parking control operation has palyed various roles, such as: socializing, providing information, persuading as well as educating the target group and also interpret the SOP through discretions. Additionally, this study contributes a new dimension of policy implementation study by suggesting that street-level bureaucrats can also run a realm of social change in the scope of communication development. It is because they

were able to transmit positive values and norms to the target group. Their roles gradually increased the parking discipline in the community. This study also hold an important practical implication as it denotes that communication competencies are very important to support the street-level bureaucrats to carry out their roles. It can be said, the team of illegal parking control operation has a good communication competencies that needed to support the policy implementation.

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