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Facilitating Transparency and Recognizing Barriers in the Bojonegoro Regency

Master's thesis in Geography with Teacher Education
Supervisor: Ståle Angen Rye
May 2020

Master's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
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Kunnskap for en bedre verden

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ABSTRACT

Jacobsen, F. M. (2020). *Facilitating transparency and recognizing barriers in the Bojonegoro regency.* (Master thesis in Geography with Teacher Education). Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim.

This thesis has sought to answer the following research questions; *How does NGOs and local leaders understand and facilitate transparency on the local level in Bojonegoro regency*; *and; which barriers lessens the benefits of transparency*? These questions have been sought answered using a qualitative methodology. More specifically, the interview, the walk-along interview, and participatory observation has been used to gather data during fieldwork in the city of Bojonegoro and villages surrounding oil and gas field.

Indonesia is a compliant country to the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, have adopted a Freedom of Information law, and more specifically, the Bojonegoro regency has become a pilot regency for the Open Government Partnership. All these initiatives oblige governmental institutions to be open about the management and use of revenues coming from the extractive industries. In addition, in the Bojonegoro regency, these laws also encompass health and safety issues, environmental risk and impacts, corporate responsibility and community development. Aside from the regents focus on transparency, a large part of the Cepu Block – an area with huge oil and gas reserves – is found here. This makes the Bojonegoro regency especially suitable for investigating the impacts and practicalities of transparency initiatives regarding extractive natural resources.

Despite huge revenues originating from the natural resources in the Bojonegoro regency, the poverty remains pervasive and allegations of corruption and mismanagement has been reported. This study investigates whether the lack of outcomes envisioned in the 'transparency narrative' in the Bojonegoro regency are caused by how transparency is understood and facilitated, or whether it is caused by other contextual factors. As several scholars proposes different contingencies for transparency to have an effect, the informants understandings are subjected to a comparison to these contingencies. Activists from NGOs, village leaders, and a local informal powerholder have been selected as informants. The goal has been to identify what happens when internationally formulated initiatives are implemented at the local level.

A stepwise deductive-inductive method has been applied to analyze the data. Key terms in the following thesis, despite transparency and different forms and approaches towards transparency, are accountability, empowerment, participation, corruption, and knowledge broker. The aim has not been to generate typicality or representativeness, but rather give a detailed and subjective account through the informants' perceptions and stories. The study reveals that how informants understand transparency have little influence regarding how transparency is facilitated. Furthermore, the findings reveal that both limitations regarding the scope of transparency and contextual factors act as barriers towards transparency in the Bojonegoro regency.

SAMMENDRAG

Jacobsen, F. M. (2020). Å fasilitere gjennomsiktighet og identifisere barrierer i Bojonegoro. (Masteroppgave for lektorutdanning i geografi. Institutt for Geografi, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, Trondheim.

Denne mastergradsoppgaven søker å svare på følgende forskningsspørsmål: *Hvordan forstår og fasiliterer ikke-statlige organisasjoner og lokale ledere gjennomsiktighet (transparency) på lokalt nivå i Bojonegoro, og; hvilke faktorer begrenser fordelene av gjennomsiktighet?* For å svare på disse spørsmålene, har det blitt anvendt kvalitativ metode. Mer spesifikt har de anvendte metodene bestått av intervju, deltakende observasjon og en hybrid av disse under feltarbeid i byen Bojonegoro, og landsbyene som omringer olje- og gass-feltet.

Indonesia er medlem av EITI (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative), har iverksatt en FOI-lov (Freedom of Information), og mer spesifikt har Bojonegoro blitt en pilotkommune for OGP (Open Government Partnership). Alle disse initiativene krever at statlige institusjoner er åpne om administreringen og bruken av inntekter knyttet til utvinning av naturressurser. I tillegg har Bojonegoro besluttet at disse lovene om å offentlig publisere informasjon også gjelder områder som helse og sikkerhet, miljørisiko, bedriftsansvar og samfunnsutvikling. Ved siden av kommunens fokus på gjennomsiktighet, finnes det også store olje- og gassressurser i området. Dette gjør Bojonegoro spesielt egnet for å se på virkningene og praktiseringen av disse gjennomsiktighetsinitiativene i forbindelse med utvinning av naturressurser.

På tross av at Bojonegoro har store inntekter i forbindelse med naturressursene sine, er det fortsatt utbredt fattigdom i kommunen. I tillegg har det blir rapportert om korrupsjon. Denne studien ønsker å finne ut om fraværet av de positive effektene knyttet til gjennomsiktighetsinitiativene kan knyttes til måten gjennomsiktighet blir forstått og praktisert på, eller hvorvidt det skyldes andre kontekstuelle faktorer. Ettersom ulike forskere har foreslått ulike betingelser som må oppfylles for at gjennomsiktighet skal ha noen effekt, vil informantenes forståelse sammenlignes med disse. Informantene består av aktivister fra ikke-statlige organisasjoner, landsbyledere og en lokal, uformell maktholder.

En stegvis deduktiv-induktiv metode har blitt brukt for å analysere dataene. Viktige nøkkelbegreper i denne avhandlingen er ansvarlighet, myndiggjøring, deltakelse, korrupsjon og kunnskapsmekler. Målet har ikke vært å skape typiskhet eller representativitet, men heller gi en detaljert og subjektiv redegjørelse gjennom informantenes persepsjoner og historier. Studien avslører at hvordan informantene forstår gjennomsiktighet, har liten innvirkning på hvordan denne gjennomsiktigheten fremmes. Videre finner studien både mangler i forhold til omfanget av gjennomsiktighet og kontekstuelle forhold som påvirker effekten av gjennomsiktighet i Bojonegoro.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CitRes	Citizen Engagement, Transparency and Transnational Resource Governance
CitRes-Edu	Citizen Engagement, Transparency and Transnational Resource Governance Education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EITI	Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
FOI	Freedom of Information
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OGP	Open Government Partnership
POLGOV	Department of Politics and Government
TAI	Transparency and Accountability Initiative
UGM	Universitas Gadjah Mada
VOC	The Dutch East India Company

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In its broadest term, transparency refers to the full disclosing of information within a polity (Hollyer, Rosendorff & Vreeland, 2014). Access to information about "official rules and activity" are believed to help "[…] empower citizens and journalists, constrain politicians, and expose corruption" (Berliner, 2014, pp. 479). Transparency has especially been hailed as a strategy after witnessing many resource abundant countries go through what is commonly known as the 'resource curse' – a phenomena in which the discovery of vast resources leads to poorer economic performance and social development within the discovering country. But Indonesia has been regarded as a "miracle economy" because of its strong economic development, especially throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Rosser, 2007), during the period in which most other resource abundant countries were performing weaker than their less resource-rich neighbours. Indonesia then used their oil revenues to diversify its economy. But the situation was about to change. In 1989, mismanagement of the oil revenues and corruption carried out by current leader Suharto, almost made Indonesia bankrupt (Prijosusilo, 2012; Hadiz, 2008). Since the end of Suharto's authoritarian regime, Indonesia has become one of the world's largest democracies. 2004 mark the year when Indonesia got their first president which was elected directly by the people (Hadiz, 2008).

Hadiz (2008) would still not term the political situation in Indonesia today as a true democracy, partly explaining this by reference to Indonesia's history with being under colonial control. *The Dutch East India Company* (VOC) is believed to have created, or amplified, the hierarchy that still affects the Indonesian society to this day (Adams, 1996). The company whose aim was to dominate the Asian trade, settled in Indonesia in 1603, during the Golden Age era in the first wave of European colonial enterprise and depended on building strong relations with the existing elite to get support for their business. The existing feudal culture in Indonesia at the time coincided with this quest (Anderson, 1966). When VOC went bankrupt in 1799, the area was seized as a Dutch colony (Anderson, 1966). Like many other former colonial states, Indonesia reached independence in the aftermath of World War 2, in 1949, but many believe that the colonial heritage still has an impact on the Indonesian society today (Peet & Hartwick, 2015; Hadiz, 2008). Informants in this study would sometimes refer to the 'postcolonial

mentality' inherent in the society to understand and explain social phenomenon. Further, Hadiz (2008) believe that the lack of a middle or entrepreneurial class in the Indonesian society is a direct consequence of colonialism.

The middle-class is further believed to be important for a democracy as this class occupy the resources and capacity to influence and question policy decisions, and sanction policy leaders deviating from their official responsibilities (Hadiz, 2008). Especially important is this believed to be for countries with vast revenues stemming from natural resources as these resources can offer a means for widespread development (Ofori & Lujala, 2015). Today, much of Indonesia's revenues originate from the Cepu Block – an area with vast oil and gas reserves. Estimated to hold more than 1.4 million barrels of oil, these reserves equal roughly 20 per cent of Indonesia's total oil production (Ardhiyanti & Hanif, 2014; Prijosusilo, 2012). A huge part of this block is found in the Bojonegoro regency of East Java Province. The government started issuing large concessions for energy production there in 2001, and today, 45 per cent of the total participating interest in the Cepu Block are owned by US company Exxon Mobiles (Ardhiyanti & Hanif, 2014; Prijosusilo, 2012; Bachriadi & Suryana, 2016).

Receiving aid from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Hadiz (2008) argues that Indonesia, under the ruling of Suharto, followed an exceptionally 'predatory' form of capitalism, driven largely by oil revenues in the 1970s and 1980s. Accepting the modernization theorists belief in the free market as the accelerator for development, this especially benefitted foreign actors and especially US-companies (Hadiz, 2008). Foreign investment controls about 80 per cent of the oil and gas extracting businesses in Indonesia (Bachriadi & Suryana, 2016). In Bojonegoro, the government decided to renew Exxon Mobiles contract for another 20 years in 2010, until 2030. This decision has been widely critiqued, ranging from the indication of rent seeking to the issue of colonization mentality in the sense that the decision benefit foreign economic actors rather than domestic ones (Sugiri & Adiputra, 2011). There have also been allegations of corruption, especially in the exploitation of natural gas reserves, which has been estimated to cause the local government of Bojonegoro a loss of about 2.2 trillion rupiahs ($142, 991 776). One of the critiques specifically concerns how the locals are getting robbed of proper benefits from the oil exploitation of the Cepu Block (Sugiri & Adiputra, 2011). In their study, Bachriadi and Suryana (2016), found that the area has been subjected to "[…] a combination of legal pressures, market transactions and political manipulation of civil society protests that resulted in the exclusion of local people from decision-making and dispossession of their land and livelihood" (p. 578).

From estimations, Bojonegoro could, with its vast reserves, receive roughly 88 million dollars and triple the budget (Prijosusilo, 2012). But even though the Bojonegoro regency has the second highest Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) in east Java, the ten poorest districts are found here and nearly 40 per cent of the citizens live beyond the poverty line (Farida, 2019, p.35; Prijosusilo, 2012, p. 2). The Bojonegoro regency, despite their vast oil and gas reserves, thus remain as one of the more backward areas in the corresponding regions (Sugiri & Adiputra 2011). The citizens in the villages surrounding the oil and gas field, survive on roughly four million rupiahs a year, equivalent to 472 dollars, in combination with subsequent agriculture (Prijosusilo, 2012). This implies that development is dependent on other interactions than purely economic variables, and that the villages has the potential to benefit more from the revenues they are receiving (Peet & Hartwick, 2015, pp. 84). Transparency could be a solution to the problem - a term that will be elaborated on and explained in the following chapter.

Transparency has thus been recognized as important in Indonesia, visible through the country's implementation of global standard such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), Publish What You Pay (PWYO), Right To Information (RTI) and Open Government Partnership (OGP) (Ardhiyanti & Hanif, 2014). These initiatives have partly been established after experiencing social and environmental issues caused by the extraction of oil and gas, but may also have been driven partly by the international attention brought to the concept of transparency to avoid a resource curse when discovering vast natural resources (Ardhiyanti & Hanif, 2014). Further, David-Barrett & Okamura (2015) explain how it is necessary for countries to adopt these initiatives to be competitive in a global market where a country's commitment, or lack of, to international standards can break or make a deal with international actors.

The Open Budget Index ranking of 2017 gave Indonesia a score of 64 out of a 100 on how transparent the budgets are, in which a score of a 100 equals no room for improvements (NRGI, 2017). Except for the Philippines, this score is significantly better than many of their neighboring countries. For instance, Thailand received the score of 56, Malaysia 46, and Timor-Leste received 40 (NRGI, 2017). However, the impact transparency is believed to have on public participation is not supported by the ranking on public participation offered by the same organization. Here, Indonesia only received 22 out of 100 (NRGI, 2017). Participation is therefore not dependent on transparency alone. Strategies to increase the public participation in policy matters has thus received much attention among NGOs the last decade. Efforts have especially been made towards representing the voices of the marginalized groups (Hadiz, 2008).

These NGOs has further strengthened their power in the provinces and districts because of the recent decentralization of power in Indonesia. Beside gaining political strength, it has been an exceptional rise in the number of NGOs the last years, counting as many as 254, 633 in 2016 (BTI, 2018; Hadiz, 2008).

According to the International Budget Partnership (2019), Indonesia can increase the public participation rates in the following manner; 1) actively engage with individuals or civil society organizations representing vulnerable and underrepresented communities during the formulation and monitoring of the implementation of the national budget, 2) hold legislative hearings on the formulation of the annual budget, during which members of the public or civil society organizations can testify, and 3) establish formal mechanisms for the public to participate in relevant audit investigations (International Budget Partnership, 2019).

These strategies are however implemented as government obligations in the OGP, which requires "[…] every public institution to open information access to the public, except specific information" (Indika & Vonika, 2018, p. 42). There has been a heightened focus on transparency in the Bojonegoro regency after the regency was chosen as one of the pilot projects of this collaboration. The commitment to the OGP means, in addition to publish information, a two-year action plan must be made through the collaboration between the government and civil society organisations (CSOs). Through the CSOs, the citizens in Bojonegoro should be able to directly influence the shaping of this action plan. The plan also enables the civil society to monitor whether the government act accordingly to this plan (OGP, 2020). Furthermore, the transparency laws that are implemented in Bojonegoro, shall not only cover revenues, but also "[…] health and safety issues, environmental risk and impacts, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and community development" (Prijosusilo, 2012, p. 1).

Aim of study and research questions

The research questions that this thesis will seek to answer is: *How does NGOs and local leaders understand and facilitate transparency on the local level in the Bojonegoro regency? Which barriers lessens the benefits of transparency?* As much articles have been written about the visions of transparency, the objective for this thesis is to see what happens when internationally formulated strategies are implemented in a local context. A further aim is to illuminate the contextual relations which inhibit the positive outcomes as they are assumed. These relations

will further be referred to as barriers in the upcoming chapters. As these barriers are projected to be specific for this specific context, the goal has not been to generate typicality or representativeness, but rather to shed light on how international standards create different results in different contexts, because of the context-dependent nature of such standards (Fox, 2015).

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

Bojonegoro has adopted extensive transparency reforms the last decade. NGOs or CSOs have taken the task of facilitating the public so they could benefit from these reforms. As will be shown later, such reforms are believed to battle corruption, improve governance, and hence spur development. But that has not been the case. As mentioned in the introduction, the poverty in the villages surrounding the extractive areas remains pervasive and corruption is still reported as an issue. Furthermore, evidence suggest the locals have been deprived of benefits from the oil and gas exploitation, in addition to suggestions that the locals are unable to participate in policy matters regarding this industry (Prijosusilo, 2012; BTI, 2018). As transparency is believed to encourage participation, extensive transparency reforms should suggest high participation rates, which in turn should suggest improved governance and tangible improvements (Ofori & Lujala, 2018). As will be shown in the following chapter, there exists several interpretations of what transparency is and entails. As transparency cannot be regarded as a unified concept, the lack of development within these villages surrounding the areas of oil and gas exploitation could be caused by how local leaders and activists from NGOs understand and facilitate transparency.

How transparency is understood and facilitated is important as the positive effects associated with just information sharing are debated (Rustad. Et. al., 2017; Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Fox, 2015). An explanation of transparency's insufficiency in the villages in Bojonegoro could then lie in how the term is understood and performed. If the lack of positive effects cannot not be related to the facilitators understanding of the term, there might exist context-specific barriers towards transparency. However, it is likely that there exist both barriers due to the magnitude of transparency and the context. As transparency is hailed as crucial for good governance and development within a country, it remains an important strategy that is presumed to benefit whole populations. At least as projected by the 'transparency narrative', which many of the international standards and initiatives of transparency is based on (Lujala & Epremian, 2017).

Thus, the importance of investigating the practice of transparency in a local context, is given through the impact transparency is believed to have.

As many have been unable to reaffirm a certain positive linkage from transparency, it thus becomes important to map the barriers that exist between transparency and these positive linkages. If international standards could be formulated with an awareness of these barriers, transparency might become more suitable when applied to local communities and more likely to produce positive outcomes. Researching transparency, I also realized the presumed lack of studies which investigates how transparency is facilitated on the local level, with the 'local level' being small communities or villages. However, this study relates to Ofori and Lujala's (2015) study on transparency in the oil sector in Ghana, where they identified some of the barriers which counteracts the positive effects of transparency initiatives.

THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis consists of six chapter. This first introductory chapter have provided the contextual background for this research, together with a presentation of the research questions and a legitimization of these. Chapter two will then theorize transparency and related concepts which has been used when analysing the results. The methodological framework and challenges will then be presented in chapter three, followed by a presentation and analyze of data to answer the first research question in chapter four. Chapter five will then seek to answer and elaborate on the final research questions, which also will relate to the findings from chapter four. A brief discussion of the main results will be provided towards the end of chapter four and five. A conclusion and suggestions for further research will be provided in chapter six.

2. TRANSPARENCY IN NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

The international community have hailed transparency as a key to good governance, based on the causal mechanisms projected in the transparency narrative (Lujala & Epremian, 2017). But, as will be shown in this chapter, transparency is a term that has been subjected to multiple interpretations. As scholars range from viewing transparency as synonymous with the flow of information, to viewing it as a *process* dependent on local participation, researchers include different aspects in their understanding (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Kosack & Fung, 2014). This is also true with the informants that work with the practicality of transparency. In delivering and practicing their own understanding of transparency, the informants can be seen as 'knowledge brokers', as will be discussed in more detail in chapter four (Meyer, 2010). A certain approach for understanding transparency has thus provided the theoretical justification for the aim of this study and the lenses when analyzing the results. This together with related theories will be especially elaborated on in the following sections. Throughout, how transparency is believed to be positively related to both governance performance and participation, but also how the positive impacts are both highly debated, questioned, and uncertain, will be discussed (Khagram et. al., 2013; Fox, 2015). An account of why transparency is seen as especially crucial in areas with vast non-renewable resources, like Bojonegoro, will also be provided. The last section consists of a brief discussion about the origin of citizens' participation, how it is associated with empowerment, together with its believed benefits and consequences.

THE TRANSPARENCY NARRATIVE

Johnston (2006) defines transparency as "[…] official business conducted in such a way that substantive and procedural information is available to, and broadly understandable by, people and groups in society, subject to reasonable limits protecting security and privacy" (p. 2). Hence, a large literature in political science relates transparency to government accountability (Hollyer et. al. 2014). Accountability can be understood as "[…] procedures requiring officials and those who seek to influence them to follow established rules defining acceptable processes and outcomes, and to demonstrate that they have followed these procedures" (Johnston, 2006, p. 2). Hence, information about these procedures improve the precision with which the public observes either the outcome of governments decisions or the policy choices adopted. The conclusion is typically that improvements in the flow of information to the citizenry enables

them to adopt superior strategies for disciplining their leaders, thereby improving government performance (Hollyer et. al. 2014). The hypothesis implies that when government-decisions and budgets are transparent, the citizens are both empowered and enabled to surveil the acts of the higher authorities. With access to official rules and activities, the public can hold their governing authorities accountable to these (Berliner, 2014; Hollyer et. al., 2014). This accountability is further thought to prevent poor governance and corruption (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Berliner, 2014).

Corruption can be defined as "[…] the use of entrusted power for private gain at the expense of public interest (Aaronson, 2011, p. 50). When one actor has more information on resource revenues, the opportunity to benefit from these at the expense of the civil society rises (Ofori & Lujala, 2015). Furthermore, the many stages inherent in the extraction process of natural resources; the exploration, the development, the construction, the operation, and the exporting, also creates an opportunity for rent-seeking and corruption (Aaronson, 2011, p. 51). Transparency is therefore viewed as especially crucial in countries which are abundant in natural resources. With huge resources, often comes individuals who seek to capitalize on these (Ofori & Lujala, 2015). Especially detrimental is transparency in cases were the resources are non-renewable, like the oil- and gas found in Bojonegoro. A just government will then have a massive impact on both present and future generations (Ofori & Lujala 2015, pp. 1187). Revenues from these resources could enhance development for all, by investing in public goods such as education, healthcare, and roads, among others, rather than exacerbate socio-economic inequality caused by poor governing (Aaronson, 2011, p. 51; Peet & Hartwick, 2015). The suggested positive impacts of transparency are summarized in the figure below, which visualize the transparency narrative in natural resource governance. Important is that each step is considered as a causality of the former step (Lujala & Epremian, 2017).

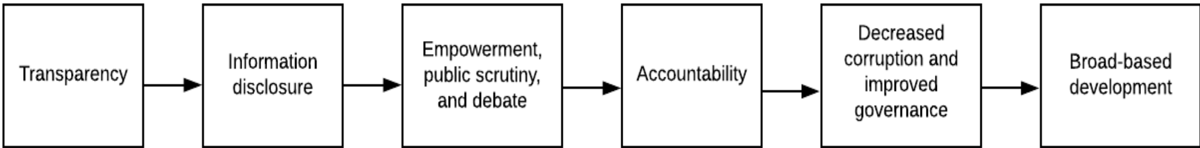

Figure 1: The transparency narrative (Lujala & Epremian, 2017; Frida Jacobsen, 2020).

As the model shows, transparency is believed to end up with broad-based development. Transparency should therefore trigger physical and tangible improvements, such as improved internet coverage, schools, health clinics and roads, or more generally, a higher standard of

living (Kosack & Fung, 2014, p. 69). The transparency narrative thus rest on the assumption that "[…] information is power" (Fox, 2015, p. 346). Fox (2015) have elaborated on how such an assumption have driven practices of transparency forward, without the empirical theory to support such a positive linkage. He also mentions how initiatives based on the transparency narrative fails to take the context into account, while stressing how context-dependent the outcomes of these initiatives really are (Fox, 2015, p. 346).

Together with accountability, transparency represents a principle that has been adopted by a broad array of political and policy actors the last decades (Fox, 2007). This has resulted in a rapid growth of transparency and accountability initiatives (TAIs), as seen through the formulation of Freedom of Information (FOI) laws and countries adaption of initiatives like the EITI. FOI laws gives citizens the right to ask for public information held by public bodies. The FOI law further oblige the government to disclose the requested information, unless it is listed in the category of 'excluded information' within the FOI law (Kosack & Fung, 2014; Butt, 2013, p. 2). The FOI law in Indonesia was adopted in 2008, but first came into force in 2010. However, as the FOI law demands every public body to nominate an information officers to handle information requests, some public bodies in Indonesia has yet to nominate one (Butt, 2013, p 3). The underlying assumption for FOI laws is that citizens will be better able to govern themselves when they have information and the ability to influence the making of law and policies, either directly or indirectly through voting for representatives. As Kosack and Fung (2014) says, "In order for citizens to express their preferences effectively – and hold their representatives accountable for realizing those preferences – they require access to the widest possible range of information and arguments" (p. 67).

The implementation of TAIs reflects an attempt to implement institutional mechanisms which can hold governments accountable for the extraction, allocation and use of rents connected to the extractive resource sector, with the EITI representing the most extensive attempt (Acosta, 2013; Ofori & Lujala, 2015). The initiative "[…] aims at building a globally recognized institutional norm around transparency in natural resource management", hence it has influenced making transparency a global term (Rustad et. al., 2017, p. 153; Lujala, 2018). The EITI is a public-private partnership initiated to help resource-rich countries manage their resources to achieve economic development. It demands a collaboration between the government, civil society, and the business in EITI implementing countries in a multi stakeholders group (MSG), consisting of the government, company, and the civil society (Aaronson, 2011; Rustad et. al., 2017). The MSG is further responsible for overseeing the

implementation, producing reports, and ensuring that these contribute to public debate (Lujala, 2018).

The partnership, through giving citizens access to information, should give the participants channels where they can hold the government accountable for the use of rents related to the extractive industries (Aaronson, 2011). Although not explicitly using the term 'corruption' itself, the most fundamental goal of the initiative has been to reduce corruption (Rustad, Le Billon & Lujala, 2017). Even though it may seem contradicting that corrupt countries then adopt the EITI, David-Barrett and Okamura (2013), as mentioned in the introduction, have found that the motivation may be international reputation rather than an effort to eradicate corruption. They found that countries who joins improve their corruption levels but that this is mainly because the EITI enables the civil society to hold their government accountable of any discrepancies (David-Barrett & Okamura, 2013). Other scholars investigating the impact of the EITI on corruption have not been able to manifest a positive linkage (Rustad et. al., 2017). In other words, the positive effect of the EITI is highly debated (Lujala & Epremian, 2017).

Even though the impacts of TAIs has been debatable, the importance given to transparency is due to its perceived association to good governance. Governance first occurs when the governing is a result of "the interactions among structures, processes and traditions", which in turn "[…] determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions and how citizens or other stakeholder have their say" (Lockwood, Davidson , Curtis , Stratford & Griffith, 2010, pp. 987). In other words, moving from government to governance, means that more actors have become more influential in controlling policy at the cost of the state (Peters & Pierre, 1998, p. 3). Good governance is dependent on a well-functioning democracy, in which people can voice their opinion and where their saying is considered when the government makes decisions. In Johnston's (2006) words, good governance equals: "legitimate, accountable, and effective ways of obtaining and using public power and resources in the pursuit of widely-supported social values […]" (p. 2). However, some have pointed to the fact that even though TAIs creates channels for the citizens, either directly or indirectly through citizen representatives, they continue to have the least influence of the parties involved (Rustad et. al., 2017). Transparency do not automatically give the voices of citizens more influence (Kosack & Fung, 2014).

Governance performance is thus seen as reliant on transparency and accountability. But critics of this presumed link between transparency and better governance points to how this relationship is never clearly elaborated on. The relationship lack evidence, especially regarding

how and under which conditions it materializes (Sovacool, Walter & Van de Graaf 2016, p. 180). Transparency and the right to information are important and necessary for accountability but insufficient (Sovacool et. al., pp. 180). In other words, the benefits of transparency are both conditional and contextual, which make the 'transparency narrative' itself highly contested (Sovacool et. al., 2016, p. 180; Ofori & Lujala 2015, p. 1190). Information does not ensure that it will be used purposefully or at all. The use of it will depend on the people's interests, desires, resources, cognitive capacities, and the social contexts. The information must be considered as meaningful for the citizens in realizing their wishes or goals, and the information must be both accessible and understandable (Khagram et. al., 2013, p. 9). Fox (2015) uses the term 'targeted transparency' to describe information that is both useful and actionable by the recipients, and which further "[…] can be integrated into their routines" (Fox, 2015, p. 352).

Instead of using the term targeted transparency, Ofori and Lujala (2015) draws a distinction between effective transparency and nominal transparency. Effective transparency is information the consumers can comprehend, process, and use to make a stand in decision-making processes. Nominal transparency, on the other hand, makes information available, but in a way where the information is not readable nor understandable. The gap between effective transparency and nominal transparency, Ofori and Lujala (2015) terms *illusionary transparency*. They propose a definition of transparency contingent on several criteria: information must be collected, it must be available for the public, also for those without access to media and the internet, and it must be comprehensible. In addition, Ofori and Lujala (2015) state that "[…] the receiver must be willing and have the capabilities to turn that information into knowledge" (p. 1190). If one or several of these criteria's are lacking, the transparency is just illusionary.

Ofori and Lujala (2015) therefore uses a more extensive definition of transparency in the context of natural resources, which seems to necessitate empowered citizens able to act on the information. Even though this definition separates itself from Johnston's (2006) definition that was used to introduce this section on transparency, the two understandings also shares similarities. Especially, when Johnston (2006) necessitates that the information must be 'understandable', which seems to resonate with effective transparency. He also shows similarities when viewing transparency as an outcome of, rather than a strategy towards, democratizing processes. These democratizing processes, he explains, must not only be driven "[…] by committed leadership, but also by the participation of, and contention among, groups and interest in society […]" (p. 1). This speaks for viewing good governance not just as

dependent on transparency, but transparency itself dependent on good governance, which further provide means for understanding the relationship between transparency and good governance as circular and re-enforcing. Furthermore, his criteria necessitate people participating, which highly relates to the definition from Ofori and Lujala (2015), that transparency demands a participating and capable public.

In addition to the distinction between nominal and affective transparency, there also exist a distinction describing the origin of available information. Accessible information can be either proactive or demand driven. A proactive dissemination occurs when the government voluntarily provides information about its affairs, while a demand driven dissemination occurs when the people are provided information because of their request for it (Fox, 2007). Moreover, the approach towards transparency can further be either 'collaborative' or 'confrontational' (Kosack & Fung, 2014, p. 75). The collaborative approach sees transparency and hence improvements in public facilities as a result of collaborative problem solving between citizens and the providers. In a confrontational approach, however, there is a need to "[…] empower beneficiaries and other citizens to confront indolent, inept, or predatory providers and officials" (Kosack & Fung, 2014, p. 74). Hence, the confrontational approach is associated with "[…] complaint hotlines, citizen charters, and social audits – that aim to expose corruption and malfeasance" (Kosack & Fung, 2014, p. 75). However, the approach to transparency could entail elements of both (Kosack & Fung, 2014).

Furthermore, transparency can be divided in 'upwards' or 'downwards' transparency (Fox, 2007). Upwards transparency occurs when information is directed from the state towards the public. Downward transparency on the other hand, can be a way for the state to surveil their citizens (Fox, 2007). No matter the cause of why people have access to understandable and meaningful information, and no matter how you chose to define transparency, information thus remains crucial in achieving transparency and accountability. Despite its complex and debated nature, it has been highlighted as one of the key strategies to improve the governing of natural resources (Ofori & Lujala, 2015). Its success is thus contingent on a participating and capable public (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Johnston, 2006; Lujala & Epremian, 2017).

Demanding an MSG to be a compliant country of the EITI thus recognizes the importance of a participating public. The initiative consists of six principles, in which one states that it must request "[…] the active engagement of civil society (Sovacool et. al., p. 181). Further, the OGP, which was launched by US President Obama in 2011, also requires a participating public (Kosack & Fung, 2014; Lujala, 2018; Indika & Vonika, 2018). Lujala (2018) thus points to the

necessity of empowerment in facilitating participation among the civil society. A lack of focus on empowerment in the process of transparency may be the reason for continued low participation rates despite implementation of TAIs which recognize the importance of participation (BTI, 2018).

TRANSPARENCY, EMPOWERMENT, AND PARTICIPATION

Participation as a concept relates to the right of citizenship and a democratic governance and, as mentioned, is believed to be an important counterweight to corruption (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Aaronson, 2011, p. 51). Participation can range from "[…] simple information requests, raising the issue in public meetings, contacting (local) government officials, signing petitions, and joining a demonstration or supporting campaigns by civil society organisations" (Lujala & Epremian, 2017, p. 62). The belief is that participating citizens are better than passive ones, as it enables the formulation of policies which are rooted in the citizenry's preferences, together with allowing the public insight into the sometimes though decisions that governments must make (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Berliner (2014) has found that existing literature on FOI laws, view political actors to be hesitant and resistant towards them, and that FOI laws must be pushed through by civil society advocates and is by that the reason for the implementing them. This, however, he says, does not represents a nuanced picture (Berliner, 2014). Transparency and participation can make the public more cooperative which in turn makes the policies less costly (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). In addition, public participation as an anti-corruption strategy makes a more appealing environment for investments, as corruption also poses a risk for businesses (Aaronson, 2011; David-Barret & Okamura, 2013).

Participation is hence thought of as beneficial for all parties involved, except for those who seeking personal gains from corruption. Not every process of obtaining the citizens preferences are rooted in the wish to make implementations more appealing for the public though. Discussions with citizens are sometimes used by governments as a strategy to convince the public of their ideas, rather than obtaining the citizens' ideas. Despite such a motivation, it enables governments to claim that citizens have participated in the policy implementation, which they can use to legitimate their decisions, gain support, and attract investors (Irvin & Stansbury, 2014, p. 57).

Thus, transparency requires that those who voice opinions, also are being heard and responded to (Fox, 2015). Peoples voices necessarily must have influence before one could expect these voices to contribute positive change. This is the underlying reason to why Hadiz (2008) saw

the lack of middle-class as threatening to Indonesia’s democracy, as was mentioned in the introduction. This class generally desire “[…] greater quality and efficiency in the provision of public goods and gain the resources to express that interest politically (Khagram, de Renzio & Fung, 2013, p. 5). As mentioned in an earlier section in this chapter, transparency positively correlates with the degree of development. One cause could be how a higher degree of development equals a larger pool of citizens which both have the resources and influence to question or demand from government officials (Khagram et. al, 2013; Hadiz, 2008).

The transparency narrative suggests that people become empowered with access to information, hence it will encourage participation. Studying what kind of information that make people participate, Fox (2015) found that people must view the information as ‘actionable’. Rather than transparency, people should be subjected to ‘targeted transparency’, which “[…] focuses specifically on accessible information that is perceived as useful and actionable by stakeholders and can be integrated into their routines” (Fox, 2015, p. 352). First then can information be empowering. Empowerment is thus a concept which can be interpreted in several ways, as it involves the often-deep structures of power relations, and aspects such as social norms, discourses, and cultural practices (Pettit, 2012, p. 5–6). Pettit (2012) argues that empowerment can be understood as “[…] a process involving social, political, economic and legal changes that will enable people living in poverty and marginalization to *participate* meaningfully in shaping their own futures” (Pettit, 2012, p. 2). For marginalized groups, however, it can be both frightening to participate and, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, their voice may be ignored despite their participation. One way to create an empowering environment for them to participate is by creating specific collaborative groups, or what Gibson and Woolcock (2008) term organized collectives. Gibson and Woolcock (2008) view these as “[…] fundamental to people´s capability to choose the lives they have reason to value. They provide an arena for formulating shared values and preferences and instruments for pursing them […]” (p. 153). This logic is further supported by Ostrom (1990) which advocate that homogenous groups are most appropriate in terms of collaborative in decision-making. In addition to promote a safe environment consisting of individuals with similar characteristics, where participating may be less frightening than an arena where for example the whole village is attending, organized collectives can also be a measure to achieve more influence. Being in a group, instead of acting as a singular individual, can be empowering, as it increases the chance that the state will respond (Fox, 2015).

A simpler definition is that empowerment is getting 'power over' or the 'power to' (Sharp, Briggs, Yacoub & Hamed, 2003, p. 282). But this still requires us to understand […] the identities and relationships that create particular hierarchies" (Pettit, 2012, p.5). Empowerment essentially means altering the power relation in areas such as politics, economic, society, or culture, which necessitates that we consider "[…] the actors, institutions, spaces and levels where it operates (Pettit, 2012, p. 5). When one actor is empowered, this has happened at the expense of another actor. As information can be empowering for citizens, making them able to sanction a government or voice complaints, so can the act of participation itself be empowering. Educational outcomes from being able to participate are hailed as a key beneficial outcome to engage citizens in the decision-making. From their involvement, they become educated on how processes work, how laws are implemented and get to understand complex situations, in addition to getting custom to a higher degree of reflection that is necessary to understand some policy decisions (Irvin & Stansbury, 2014). This can be empowering, as people who are unaware of their rights, confused on how processes work, or do not know what to use the information for, seldomly participate or demand more information (Lujala & Epremian, 2017). Transparency itself can also be thought of as an empowering measure. As transparency encompass empowerment and participation, as in the definition by Ofori and Lujala (2015), it can be seen as a process of social equalization, seeking to fluctuate power from the ruling elite towards the citizens.

BROKERING TRANSPARENCY

As shown in the previous sections, different aspects can be viewed among actors to be crucial for facilitating transparency. The informants in this study, holding a position either in an NGO or as a leader in the village government, thus deliver or practices their understanding of transparency. The informants can therefore be vied as *knowledge brokers*. Knowledge brokers are "[…] people or organizations that facilitate the creation, sharing, and use of knowledge", an activity seldomly recognized nor planned (Meyer, 2010, p. 119–122). With 'brokered' knowledge, as stated by Meyer (2010), we talk about "[…] knowledge made more robust, more accountable, more usable; knowledge that "serves" locally at a given time; knowledge that has been de- and reassembled" (p. 123). From transparency being an international or global term, it gets understood and performed in a context far from where it was formulated. This is realized by scholars who partially blame the lack of success of TAIs on the very context-dependent nature of such initiatives (Fox, 2015; Rustad et. al., 2017). Comprehending this international term, thus involves a transformation of it (Meyer, 2010). Moreover, the knowledge broker

transforms this knowledge through the spaces within he operates. In this way, ‘knowledge’ becomes a social product, produced by the interaction amongst multiple actors (Meyer, 2010). As of this, transparency is not a single entity, but has “[…] multiple meanings, as well as multiple rationales, purposes, and applications” (Kosack & Fung, 2014, p. 67). This creates a room for interpretation, which enables transparency to be facilitated in different manners dependent on the context and the understanding brought forward by the knowledge broker.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter, the methodological choices will be described and discussed. First, the CitRes project will be briefly introduced before an overview of the research design will be given. This will include a brief review of the research process, how the study of research was chosen, the rationale behind using a qualitative methodology and how the data was gathered, together with a table of the research sample. How the data has been generated and managed will then follow. The chapter will then turn to the ethical challenges experienced, which will include reflections on the conduct of my research behavior and the potential impact it may have had on the legitimacy and validity of the research. Since this study has been reliant on an interpreter in a cross-cultural context, some related challenges will be discussed as it may have influenced both the study and findings in several ways. Throughout this section, how my navigation and awareness of my “otherness” in the field may have impacted both the reliability and validity of this research, will be reflected upon.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The following section will provide a description of how the research process unfolded, how the final research questions were formulated, and justify the methods used to create an understanding to these. Further on, the process of constructing empirical data and analyzing the results will be accounted for. Here, the methodological choices will be discussed together with the impacts these may have had on the ethics, validity, and reliability of the study.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This thesis initially started with an interest in the aspects of governance and development. As of this, I planned in collaboration with my supervisor to do cyclical fieldwork related to the governance of natural resources in the Bojonegoro regency, Indonesia. Later, I together with a fellow student, was lucky enough to take part in the Citizen Engagement and Natural Resource Governance in Education (CitResEdu), which is a student exchange program between the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and Universitas Gadjah Mada. The student exchange program is offered by the Citizen Engagement, Transparency and Transnational Natural Resource Governance (CitRes) network, which in turn is a collaboration

between NTNU, UGM and the University of Oulu (CitRes, n.d.). As a part of the CitResEdu, I and the fellow student were welcomed into the workspace for researchers at PolGov in UGM. Once we were there, it got established that we were to conduct three fieldworks together over the next few months in three different location, to investigate the governance of natural resources in Indonesia.

The fieldworks got arranged by the head of the CitRes-network at UGM, Dr. Nanang Indra Kurniawan, and were chosen partially because it was possible and convenient due to his already established networks and ongoing research there, but also because of relevance due to the areas vast natural resources. These natural resources has in turn introduced both challenges and possibilities for the local communities; Bojonegoro with its massive oil and gas reserves; Belitung, with its past and present history of both tin mining and palm oil, and; Palangkaraya, where peatlands surrounding the city, and much of Borneo, are characterized by massive palm oil plantations, in addition to its experience with the still occurring illegal gold mining. The common denominator is that natural resources, and the extraction of these, have had, and still has, a great impact on day-to-day life for the residents in these areas. Even though I had decided on investigating transparency in Bojonegoro before I arrived in Yogyakarta, we were advised to stay open to the multitude of issues that might arise while conducting fieldwork. I therefore had an open minded regarding the object of study and did not decide before finalizing all three fieldworks.

Our first fieldwork in Bojonegoro were made possible because a research team from POLGOV were to conduct their own research there and we got the permission to follow. Being able to join this team conducting interviews and meetings offered a unique opportunity to meet informants that otherwise would be unreachable. The researchers had already established networks of informants in the area, and these already established relationships may have been crucial for the informants willingness to let us join to conduct our own research. Being able to observe experienced researchers interact with informants and ask questions, also gave me a huge learning outcome regarding the 'local code' of research practice in Indonesia (Crang & Cook, 2007). It also made a good preparation for the second half of the fieldwork in the village of Dolok Gede, a few hours outside the city of Bojonegoro, and the two fieldworks in Belitung and Palangkaraya, which required us acting more as independent researchers. Even though we still got accompanied by respectively a researcher in Belitung, and a research assistant in Palangkaraya, which took the task of interpreting and arranging meetings with potential

informants, it was valuable observing experienced researchers before engaging independently in our own cross-cultural research (Howitt & Stevens, 2016).

As a preparation for these fieldworks, I had signed up for an extensive language course the first month in Yogyakarta, in addition to initial readings about the areas and their specific challenges regarding natural resource governance at POLGOV. With no hope of being able to conduct interviews or engage in discussions using solely Indonesian, some language skills could be necessary for basic conversations and orientation during my stay. An effort to learn the language could also help establishing a favourable relation to those who my access to information were dependent upon, in addition to offer a way to understand the norms and values of the Indonesian culture, which sometimes is identifiable through their way of speech. Being at POLGOV, however, also proved essential for understanding the Indonesian society and culture. The researchers also contributed greatly in understanding the context of the different phenomenon that got revealed under the process of gathering data.

As this thesis ended up investigating the practicalities of transparency in Bojonegoro, I will briefly mention how and where the fieldwork took place. During the fieldwork in the Bojonegoro regency, we first stayed a few days in the city centre together with the research team from POLGOV. Here we met with people from the government and former and current leaders of NGOs working with transparency and related concepts, mainly empowerment. We then moved to the village of Dolok Gede, a few hours outside the city centre, where Ademos was located - an organization which especially works toward empowering the local people. With their allowance, and the arrangement of Dr. Nanang, we got to observe and participate for one week to see how they work with locals on a day to day basis. We also got to interview village leaders from two surrounding villages, Kacangan and Gayam, in addition to the activists from Ademos. During the time spent in the village of Dolok Gede, we were visited by the research team from POLGOV, which had continued their own research in the city of Bojonegoro. Together, we travelled to the village of Wonocolo. Here we met with a local informal powerholder and drillers in the traditional oil extractive activities the village is known for. In Wonocolo we spent two days and one night, before returning to Yogyakarta with the rest of the research team to start the process of transcribing the gathered data.

CASE SELECTION

The issues surrounding the governance and management of the oil and gas reserves in the Bojonegoro regency became the choice of study. This resulted from a curiosity surrounding the

practicality of transparency, but also highly appreciated advices and discussions with the researchers from POLGOV at UGM. Since the researchers from POLGOV already had on-going research in the regency, it made the field possible and convenient to explore. Further, transparency has become especially relevant to explore in the Bojonegoro regency, since the Bojonegoro regency's application of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The OGP is a transparency or 'open government' initiative which shall ensure closer communication between local communities and the local government (Indika & Vonika, 2018). OGP has four primary objectives; 1) increasing the availability of data on state administration; 2) supporting public participation; 3) implementing the highest standards for the integrity of public administration professionals, and; 4) increasing access to new technologies (Indika & Vonika, 2018, p. 42). The Bojonegoro regency has therefore been willing to implement an extensive transparency initiative, which oblige the local communities to get involved in policy matters. As mentioned in the introduction and the previous chapter, Indonesia and therefore also the Bojonegoro regency, has also adopted both the EITI and a FOI law and further broadened to scope regarding when these transparency laws shall apply.

CHOOSING QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

When I was given the opportunity of doing field work in Indonesia, I got to engage with the people affected by the oil and gas activity and the people who works directly with governance principles formulated by the international community. I had already read about the principals of governing natural resources and on which strategies that ensures the best utilization of these. Especially, plenty of articles on transparency had been read and reread. My curiosity further was on the translation and practicality of these principles given from above. What I was interested in was the subjective perception and experience of working on and with transparency. The goal was not to reach an objective account, but rather use subjectivity as a "[…] resource for deeper understanding" (Crang & Cook, 2007, pp. 13). Using a qualitative methodological approach, the aim was to achieve an illustrative selection, rather than a representative one. The only way to find out was therefore trough accessing these informants' own account of how they work with transparency. A qualitative methodology is thus in accordance with searching for such an account.

SELECTING INFORMANTS

A theoretical or purposive sampling were used to decide which individuals to approach to take part in the research. In contrast to random sampling, a theoretical sampling involves thoughtfully deciding which groups that are appropriate to include in the research, based on their involvement in, or experiences of, the research problem (Crang & Cook, 2007). The value of the selection rest not on "[…] the sheer number, typicality or representativeness of people approached […], but the quality and positionality of the information that they can offer" (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 14). Confident choices on who we wish to involve in the research, thus rests on comprehensive background knowledge (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016). As the final research questions and interest were yet to be formalized at the beginning of the fieldwork, exploratory research on natural resources in Indonesia combined with discussions with representatives from the CitRes-network, helped narrowing the potential selection.

As the research team we would be joining in Bojonegoro already had ongoing research there regarding the governance of natural resources there, we used time to discuss whether these informants would be suitable for our research as well. The guidance and selection made by the head of the CitRes-network at UGM, Dr. Nanang Indra Kurniawan and the other researchers from POLGOV, were thus of great importance. Although the actual selection was pragmatic, in the sense that these informants were the ones available as the researchers from POLGOV would be meeting them while in Bojonegoro, these informants were deliberately selected by these informants due to the information these informants possessed. As the research of the fellow student and I coincided with the ongoing research at POLGOV, these informants were judged to be valuable for us as well.

Dr. Nanang and the researchers at POLGOV thus became my initial gate keepers (Crang & Cook, 2007). Reaching out to informants were highly dependent on their already established networks and their willingness to put us in contact with them. Together we decided the target individuals for this study to be people working in NGOs concerned about transparency, people representing the government, and locals in the surrounding villages of the oil and gas sites in the Bojonegoro regency. After identifying and meeting the participants, the informants we met further nominated individuals they judged to posit special insight in what is known as snowball sampling (Valentine, 2005). Snowball sampling was especially used when the fellow student and I spent one week with Ademos in Dolok Gede, without the researchers from POLGOV. People from Ademos then suggested new informants for our research and arranged meetings

on our behalf. They also followed us to these interviews and acted as our translators. One of the main advantages of the snowball sampling, as mentioned by Valentine (2005), is that it "[…] helps researchers to overcome one of the main obstacles to recruiting interviewees, gaining their trust" (p. 117). There is a chance that individuals would be less likely to participate in the research if they had been asked directly by us, as there had yet to be established any relationship and they could question our intentions for doing research. As a part of a group that already were trusted by the informants, we got accepted as a part of this group, rather than being complete strangers (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 19).

DATA COLLECTION

Fieldnotes were written during and after every interview, participatory observation, and walk along interview to record all non-verbal communication, like emotions, facial expressions, and the overall setting, in addition to serve as a backup in case anything unforeseen happened to the recordings (Valentine, 2005). I also wrote memos, scribbling down possible connections in the data, which proved valuable for elaborating on further questions to ensure progress during the fieldwork and in the initial analyzing of the empirical material (Cope 2016).

INTERVIEW

In accordance with the aim of the research, in-depth interview was applied as it allowed me to grasp the informants opinions, perceptions, and experience in the pursuit of an intensive research (Crang & Cook, 2007; Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016). Intensive research is used to describe research which seek to explain how processes work or why people believe the things they do. Intensive methods are thus characterized by open-ended questions as they will illuminate peoples' reasoning (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016). Attaining sufficient knowledge of a phenomena in an unfamiliar context to formulate adequate research questions can be challenging. As was it for me. As mentioned earlier, we were advised to have an open mind when going in the field. There existed some limitations regarding what to research however, so semi-structured interviews would be appropriate to guide the interviews towards relevant content. Semi-structured interviews can range from having fully prepared questions to a list of themes you wish to cover. An advantage is that it lets you stay on topic while maintaining flexibility (Dunn, 2016).

My interview guide consisted of some formulated questions but was designed to be open enough to allow the exploration of new connections or situations directed by the informants. These explorations created a means to revise and update the interview guide continuously as the fieldwork progressed and new connections appeared. In addition to providing a means to keep the conversation on track, the predetermined questions in the interview guide were also meant to establish rapport. As defined by Dunn (2016), "rapport with another person is basically a matter of understanding their model of the world and communicating your understanding symmetrically" (p. 160), which can be done through mirroring the other persons' behavior and emotions. The purpose is to create an environment in which the informant feels at ease, which is believed to encourage more insightful and valid data (Dunn, 2016, p. 160). For instance, before beginning any interview, I introduced myself and the project in Indonesian. This acted as an icebreaker and was without exception reacted to in a positive manner. Even though an interpreter had to be used in the actual interviewing, easing the informant with some chit-chat without the interpreter allowed some rapport to be established despite the inherent language-barrier.

Regarding 'local code' of interviewing practice in Indonesia, the accompanying research team made us aware of the informality its often characterized by (Valentine, 2005). For instance, when staying in the city of Bojonegoro, we had arranged a breakfast meeting at 9 am the following morning. Then, at 8 am the following morning, we were informed that the informant was already awaiting us. The meeting then went on for approximately 3 and a half hours, so we had to postpone a meeting that was set for 12 am, as we would use some time getting there. From reading textbooks in methodology, we are taught to be cautious with taking up too much of our informants time, and we should give an approximation of the time we intend to use (Parfitt, 2005). When talking to and interviewing informants in Bojonegoro, however, it felt impossible to adhere to the time set aside. The informality thus allowed plenty of room for chit-chat and getting to know each other before and during the interviews. Thus it may have helped on ensuring the previously mentioned rapport and prevent finishing the interview in an abrupt manner (Dunn, 2016).

While the number of actual interviews in the Bojonegoro regency totaled 13, both the final formulation of research questions and the language barrier, as will be elaborated on later, narrowed which interviews that could contribute to answering the research questions. As can be seen in the table below, the data stems from 8 semi-structured interviews. Five of these are interviews with either leaders or activists in NGOs which in a broad sense are occupied with

development within local communities in the Bojonegoro regency. They are thus familiar with facilitating transparency on behalf of these local communities. Further, two interviews with the leader of specific villages has been conducted. In addition to facilitating transparency on behalf of the village in which they lead, they are also representatives of their own specific village, but also obliged to practice transparency when reporting to higher authorities. One interview with a local informal powerholder in Wonocolo has also been used to create an understanding in this thesis. This informant has both economic and political power in his village, and thus has influence when conducting his own strategies for developing his village.

Table 1: Research participants in semi-structured interviews

Role	**Organization**
Activists	IDFoS (Institute Development of Society)
Leader	BBS (Bojonegoro Bangun Sarana)
Leader	BI (Bojonegoro Institute)
Leader	IDFoS
Activists	Ademos
Head of village	Kacangan
Head of village	Gayam
Local informal powerholder	Oil-activity in Wonocolo

PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION AND 'WALK ALONG' INTERVIEWING

The participatory observation was done spending one week with Ademos in the village of Dolok Gede. But what was supposed to be participatory observation, turned out to be more of an opportunity to conduct several unstructured 'walk along' interviews, with elements of participatory observation in between. Their ordinary work continued, managing the computers, performing tasks, and making visits to newly started enterprises, and we got to follow. But, when meeting villagers, their excitement or curiosity of meeting 'foreigners' conflicted with the task of observing. Among other visits, Ademos took us to the local school. The teachers and principal had prepared several local snacks, aware of us coming, and we were convinced to make a small performance in front of the entire school. Here, we ended up singing "head,

shoulder, knees, and toes", before every child said their goodbyes through the heartwarming practice of a Javanese greeting (children take the adults hand towards their chin to greet).

Foreigners is rare in Dolok Gede, and many of the villagers have never previously seen one in the village or at all. Us doing participatory observation with Ademos engaging with the villagers, would therefore be conflicting with the wishes of those involved, at least their wishes as we perceived them; engaging and getting to know us and why we were there, as foreigners. The day to day activity was thus abrupted by our presence, and it called for questioning how the observations would mirror Ademos's usual work.

Crang and Cook (2007) terms participatory observation as 'deep hanging out' in a three-stage process involving; 1) gaining access to a group or community; 2) live and work with the group or community to understand their sense of the world, and; 3) analyzing the results back at the academy (p. 37). Our ability to engage in true participatory observation, getting a glimpse of their actual and ordinary day to day tasks being a part of Ademos, may have been disrupted by the short time we were there, which prohibited the informant from getting used to us and 'continue their *normal* behavior' before collecting data. As Crang and Cook (2007) writes: "To be a *participant* in a 'culture' implies an immersion of the researcher's self into the everyday rhythms and routines of the community […]" (p. 37). Taking part in the 'everyday rhythms and routines' was thus hard to achieve in one week. We no matter got to witness the actual interaction and get a sense of the relationship and place Ademos has in the village, together with observations of the actual lived environment of the people of Dolok Gede. Hence, it would be false to claim that no observation was done, in the same sense it would be wrong to claim we strictly observed. Movement also remain as a key element in the method of participatory observation, and we did not take the informants out of their original environment which usually characterizes the typical walk along interview (Jones, Bunce, Evans, Gibbs & Hein, 2008). Jones et. al. (2008) also terms the walk along interview as a hybrid between participant observation and interviewing (p. 3).

During walk along interviews and the participatory observation, I always kept a notebook to write down observations, sudden chit-chats, and considerations. Being 'on site', both in terms of the resource extraction and the sites for their empowering entrepreneurial programs, was believed to trigger insightful comments (Jones et. al., 2008). Under these circumstances, it allowed what Kearns (2016) describes as "[…] the seeing of multiple viewpoints […]", which "[…] assist in interpreting the experience of place […]" (p.315). Many interesting conversations about natural resource governance and transparency happened while being in the affected areas,

with a strong connection to their sense of place. One of the advantages of the walk-along interview is thus that the environment function as a prompt, potentially triggering associations. Letting the informants be in their own environment, can also be empowering, which could allow a more emotional response (Jones et. al. 2008). During these 'walk along' interviews, conversation often started with the informant directing my attention to a place in which they pointed, followed by a story or an exemplification of what was earlier said. Being 'on site' also triggered memories and stories of 'how it used to be', allowing me to understand what the informant viewed necessary for excepting the present state of the place.

Processing the data material

Although some of the methodological aspects and challenges related to cross-cultural research will be reflected upon in the following sections, an interpreter and being a part of the interpretive community at POLGOV has been vital for generating the data. The chance of producing flawed data exists in all qualitative research, but cross-language research especially calls for considerations to not compromise the validity of the empirical data (Crang & Cook, 2007). Most of the conducted interviews and discussions in this study has been dependent on using a translator. When information underwent translation during the interviews, it also got processed and reduced by the interpreter. In this way, the translation also involved interpretation (Crang & Cook, 2007). For instance, on a few occasions the informant talked uninterruptedly for 5 minutes, while the translation took 30 seconds (as showed later in the tape recordings). Other than loosing general semiotics that contributes to meaning, as occur when you translate one language, with its own special phrases, cultural expressions, words and sentences to create meaning, into another language with another structure (Choi, Kushner, Mill & Lai, 2012), material were also reduced since the circumstances made it impossible for the interpreters to translate sentence by sentence. The chance of producing flawed data therefore increases in cross-language qualitative research (Choi et. al., 2012).

One of the most important factors in the ethical behavior of translators according to Choi et. al. (2012), is the ability to maintain neutrality. Except for two interviews which will be discussed in an upcoming section, the translators were experienced researchers from POLGOV, mainly with PhDs. They took the task of translating professionally, aware of the ethics in gathering data using qualitative methods. All informants also agreed on being recorded, which in addition to be of great importance when transcribing and analyzing the data, proved valuable in later

communication with the translators. It allowed for reviewing the data together in case of any perceived misinterpretation. This communication with the translators is regarded as especially important when doing cross-language research (Choi et. al., 2012). Them conducting their own research, also benefitted us in times when the informal and sudden character of meetings or discussions made the data go unrecorded. I then got to cross-check my notes with the notes of the other researchers who accompanied us.

The data analysis followed multiple steps to generate empirical theories. I first began reading literature related to transparency and the extraction and governing of natural resources, getting familiar with related theoretical concepts. After the fieldwork was completed, the empirical data were subject to thematic coding and categorizing. The framework for the analysis is a stepwise-deductive induction (SDI) which describes a process working from raw data towards developing concepts or theories (Tjora, 2017). The induction, Tjora (2017) terms as the 'upward process', which represents the first step. The aim is to keep the generated codes and theories as close to the data as possible and hence reduce the influence of presumptions and theories (Tjora, 2017, p. 37). The prereading of literature thus influenced my understanding of the phenomena in research and thus the interview guide, which again influenced the codes apparent in the data. Also when transcribing the data, the practice of using an interpreter who had already reduced the material made the codes more visible. In other words, this inductive stage does not represent a 'pure induction', even though it tries to stay as close to the empirical data as possible. Trying to maintain a 'closeness' to the raw data manifests itself in the analysis using actual replicates of the informant's statements, mostly retold by the interpreter, in addition to descriptions of concrete situations. Tjora (2017) argues, however, that these descriptions are "[…] based on the bodily experiential position of the researcher, so that the actual field notes may represent memory tools rather than complete empirical description" (p. 43). My positionality will thus be elaborated on towards the end of this chapter.

The codes generated from the data were compared to previously adopted knowledge and reviewed on its own for further analysis. The initial categorization and organization were done based on these codes. Main topics then got developed through these codes, before beginning the deductive stages, or 'backward processes', inherent in the SDI' framework, where you compare the codes with existing theories and concepts (Tjora, 2017). The codes, in addition to reducing and organizing the material, also guided the formulation of the final research questions (Gibbs, 2007). In other words, the empirical data, together with the predetermined limitations regarding what to research, decided on which questions to ask.

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE ETHIC AND VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH

INFORMED CONSENT

Preparing for the first field trip, I was concerned on how to formulate the declaration of consent I should give informants before starting any discussion. This proved challenging for two reasons; 1) at the time, I only knew that I had an interest in transparency in natural resource governance, but was still open for the possibility that other aspects could become more interesting as the fieldwork progressed, and; 2) at the time, it was uncertain who we were going to meet. The researchers who were to accompany us during the fieldwork, advised to not bring any paper of informed consent. The research informants had already agreed on meeting, and that is enough they said. In Indonesia, or at least for the informants who we were to meet in Bojonegoro, it was considered scary to sign a paper. Informants are reluctant to stay bound to any legal document, so asking for a verbal consent is preferred. Even though, during the courses in methodology, we are taught that an informed consent in writing is preferable, we are also taught to pay attention to "[…] cultural codes of behavior" (Valentine, 2005, p. 124).

In other words, some of the ordinary research requirements, especially regarding an informed consent in a paper form, would in a worst-case scenario simply disrupt our chance to talk with informants (Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2018). This experience also coincides with Howitt and Stevens (2016) knowledge about conducting cross-cultural research. Foreign researchers, they say, should instead be "[…] held accountable to local cultural protocols" (p. 56). A formal research approach, we were told, acted as a psychological barrier that potentially could create difficulties for us to access in-depth information or any information at all. Instead, I outlined what the research interest and what the information potentially could be used for. I also exchanged my contact info, so they could reach me if they had any second thoughts about being involved. Hence, a verbal consent was given before the start of each interview.

Anonymity

It proved difficult keeping the informants anonymity as social media is both popular and seems to be used as one of the strategies, especially for NGO`s in giving information about their work and gather support. A huge part of our informants, also those representing the village government, wanted to take photos after our discussions and some also wanted us to record videos. Since they already had our social media account, we experienced, on multiple occasions, that these photos and videos were posted online, together with a description on what our discussions fluctuated around. However, Dowling (2016) mentions that the ethical customary about ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, usually are meant to keep researchers from sharing personal and private information. Even though the semi-structured interview guide led to an exploratory form of interviewing, with the occurrence of new questions, private and potentially sensitive information about our informants were never sought to be used in the study. What is viewed as private, however, is not up to me to judge. All informants were therefore asked about how we could use the data in our research and if they would like total anonymity. None of the informants wanted anonymity nor that any information was excluded from the research. Either way, all the research informants are provided with some anonymity by excluding names and other personalia from the research.

Engaging in cross-cultural and cross-language research

As Scott, Miller and Lloyd (2005) points to, the challenges with cross-cultural research "[…] range from the application for research visa, to requests for official data, and the negotiation of relationships with local host institutions and 'gatekeepers' (p. 28). However, Howitt and Stevens (2016) argues that the "[…] complex dimensions of diversity created by societal and group constructions of regional, ethic, linguistic, class, racial, gender, sexual, religious, ideological, and other differences" (p. 46) makes much geographical research cross-cultural, even if happening close to home. As Crang & Cook (2007) also put it, "in sum, it is necessary to challenge the stereotype of […] a researcher's immersion in, and eventual understanding of, a 'pure' 'local' culture" (p. 13). This study does not attempt to reach such an account, and it would require a whole chapter to describe how I'm both an 'insider' and 'outsider' in some accounts when interacting with the informants in this study due to my different identities, positionality and partiality. However, this part will revolve around some of the experienced

ethical challenges, which later could be contributed in part to the research being cross-cultural and cross-language.

As rendered by Skeggs (1994), the feminist geographer and professor Haraway claims that "[…] unlocatable knowledge, […] is irresponsible knowledge" (p. 79). By this, she means that feminist knowledge can never be, or should ever strive to be indifferent and neutral. Instead, the researcher should replace it by "conscious partiality" (Skeggs, 1994, p. 79). I found this saying important for the context and the issues raised in this study. Unfortunately, during the fieldwork in Bojonegoro, after spending some time with the informants, I on occasions forgot the location and partiality of my informants knowledge as well as my own. During time spent with Ademos, I got in a discussion about their future desires for themselves and the villages surrounding the oil and gas sites. The discussion then took a turn towards the gas and oil industry, discussing its limitations and potential environmental effects, which led us into talking about climate change and global warming. The people I sat with from Ademos are all born and raised in these villages and can thus be said to represent the locals and the NGO at the same time. They told how Exxon Mobiles makes sure to nozzle down concepts of global warming and climate change in the Bojonegoro newspapers. People in Bojonegoro, they said, do not believe in these ideas, and see a warmer day for just that, a warmer day. I then asked: "Do you ever take time to explain or teach people about global warming and how it is related to pollution?". They had to ask me a couple of time what I meant, which made me rephrase the question a few times. They then said: *"We don't believe in that (climate change or global warning)"*.

For a moment, I had forgotten about our different cultural backgrounds. I had taken for granted that their view was the same as mine, and that this view was the right one. I especially felt ignorant for using the term 'teach', as it implied that, in my view, their different understanding of climate change was related to their lack of knowledge, and that I rejected this because of my greater knowledge. The saying also conflicted with the ideal of the research being non-hierarchical, even though some will argue that such a goal is naïve (Rose, 1997; Skeggs, 1994). Instead I should have been aware of our *different* knowledge, due to our different positionalities (Skeggs, 1994). I realized rather quickly my lack of awareness of my position as an outsider in the sense of how we interpret and understand the world (Crang & Cook, 2007).

In some feminist geography, especially when confronted with interviewees' racism or prejudiced thoughts, educating participants can be an important goal of the research. However, in this study, when talking about beliefs surrounding whether global warming is a true

phenomenon, it could also create a bigger distance to the participants, damage rapport, and create obstacles regarding the rest of the research process (Valentine, 2005). Among other risks, the insensitivity could have caused the informants to be intimidated of 'sounding stupid' (Jones et. al., 2008, p. 3). This intimidation could further have led to the informants 'trying to find the right answer', instead of revealing their actual ideas (Jones et. al., 2008). Valentine (2005) argues that we need a 'heightened sensitivity' to the power relations which exists between researcher and interviewees when interviewing in different cultural contexts (p. 124). This becomes even more important when interviewing in less developed countries. Instead of being sensitive, I would argue that using the word 'teach' demonstrated and highlighted the unequal power relations inherent in the conversation. The inequality is manifest through our different access to material resources, social goods, like higher education, and the power I possess in the act of producing knowledge about others – an interpretive power inherent in all relationships between researchers and informants (Rose, 1997, p. 307). Some of these differences though, had been brought up by the informants on different occasions, especially our privilege of being born in a relatively wealthy country.

During our time spent with the people in Bojonegoro, our informants asked questions about the economical differences between Norway and Indonesia. For example, they would ask about the average income in our home country. Even though these questions brought attention to a difference between me and the informants I preferred to nozzle down, I felt obligated to answer as best as I could. In addition, the Bojonegoro regency had previously proposed to establish an oil-fund, an idea originated from reading about the Norwegian one. Naturally, some informants were therefore eager to learn more about the management of and the principals behind it. Because of my lack of ability to respond with certainty to these questions the first time, I did some research to be better prepared if ever questioned about Norway's oil-fund again. I embraced these questions as an opportunity of achieving a research relationship that potentially could be mutually benefitting, as they contributed to a conversation where we both shared knowledge and ideas (Miller et. al. 2005). During the rest of the interviewes and meetings, time was therefore deliberately set aside for the informants to ask questions. As of this, some of the discussions during this field work felt more like a knowledge-exchange, rather than a researcher-informant relationship. According to Castrodale (2017) purposefully implementing 'sharing' in the research design, in addition to discourage an exploitative research relationship, helps collaboration, reciprocity, knowledge production and shared decision-making (p. 45).

When transcribing the tapes and beginning to analyze the material, I also became aware of some of the insensitivity visible through how questions were asked. When interviewing the head of village in Kacangan, I asked: What do you believe is most important for development in this village, transparency, or empowerment? The question is ignorant of the relationship between transparency and empowerment, overlooking the connection between them, but it also signified that the village is 'in need of development'. Both the translators and the informant reacted to the question by laughter, which went unnoticed for me during the actual interview. Doing cross-language research clearly showed how important it was to think through the questions and ask them in a careful manner, aware of the existing power-relations inherent (Valentine, 2005; Crang & Cook, 2007). From transcribing the tapes, it also became clear how much information got concealed due to the translators and informants ability to carry on a conversation without me understanding what was said.

It happened that we were in the field without the researchers from POLGOV. In addition to the negative impacts of not being able to communicate as close with the translators afterwards, miscommunication and the language-barrier became especially noticeable. Under our stay in Dolok Gede with Ademos, the researchers from POLGOV had left to continue their own research in the city of Bojonegoro. While away, we had arranged with two people from Ademos (those most comfortable talking English) to act as our translators. During an interview with a head of village and former activist in Ademos, I asked: "Does he (head of village) think it is important to have discussions with the oil companies (especially Exxon) without NGOs like Ademos?". The context was the development of empowerment programs for the villagers. When the translator processed the response, she said: *"Ademos makes the program and give the big impacts for the society".* I tried to rephrase the question, but it became a bit awkward after some time trying to understand each other. If it was the language-barrier that made it difficult to understand each other, or my inexperience of asking questions that could be blamed, is difficult to answer, even after the study was concluded. What is evident is thus that some of my questions during interviews and meetings were left unanswered, some conversation was characterized by misconceptions and was thus rendered useless in the analysis, and some aspects of my conduct in the field may have impacted the respondents openness for the remaining research.

CRITICAL REFLEXIVITY, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The content in the previously described ethical considerations may have impacted on the reliability and validity of this research. The sometimes-ignorant research behavior in the field may have led some of the material to be less truthful, as informants may have reacted to this behavior by deviating their statements to 'fit in' with my worldview, instead of their own. In addition, the methods for selecting informants may have influenced the reliability and validity of this research. While most of the selection was made cautiously to investigate multiple viewpoints regarding the practicality of transparency, the method of snowball sampling was also utilized. A general critique regarding this method is how it may just recruit informants with similar views on the research topic, which possibly could create a one-sided view of a complex phenomenon (Crang & Cook, 2007). A strength attributed to the selection, is thus that several already selected informants with different roles in the community recruited informants, which is believed to have maintained the broadness in this research.

Inherent in any question about the validity and reliability of the research, is also how dependable the interpretation can be said to be (Crang & Cook, p. 146). To avoid presumptions when processing the data, a few interviews were removed from the analysis, as they were characterized by, in my view, too many misunderstandings due to a language-barrier. The interviews conducted, was thus more than the eight listed in this chapter. The choice to leave some of the material from further analysis, rested on the pursuit to maintain a 'credibility' – that my account of what happened, was really what happened (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 146). The ability to cross-check the findings with experienced researchers, thus is believed to have avoided some of the consequences on reliability and validity when conducting cross-cultural and cross-language research, in addition to the interpreters own vast experience of being in the field.

A further method to judge the reliability and validity, lies in how the findings relates to other studies (Crang & Cook, 2007). Finishing the analysis, the results relates to the discoveries made by Ofori and Lujala (2015) on transparency at the local level in Ghana, especially regarding local citizen's barriers towards participation. Further, the method has been consistent, following the steps recommended by the SDI-method to reach a conclusion. Even though other researcher may have ended up with a different knowledge, as they possess a different positionality, but also talent and interest, the consistency and rules for the analysis in this study, should make

other researchers able to understand how the study reached its results (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 147).

Finally, critical reflexivity is hailed as a strategy to situate geographical knowledge, acknowledging that knowledge is produced somewhere, and that this somewhere, influences the knowledge produced (Rose, 1997). Hence, the researcher itself impacts the knowledge that is produced, and different researchers with different positionalities, would produce *different knowledges*. The neutral, objective researcher is seen as an ideal, but is practically impossible. Thus, it is believed that critically self-reflecting on your own positionality as a researcher, and especially how this positionality impacts your experience and understanding, avoids the "[…] false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge" (Rose, 1997, p. 306).

Even though I had difficulties understanding my positionality as a researcher, using an analytical method which tended to stay as close to the empirical material as possible, may have lessen the impact of my hidden presumptions. Furthermore, choosing to use a qualitative methodology rested on the assumption that a wider and more general phenomena could be understood using in-depth methods to investigate a single incident of that phenomena. Even though the specific barriers identified regarding transparency in this thesis may not regard other societies, it still could shed light on the difficulties with such a western concept could be when implemented in a unique context. While the study can contribute to understand the range of how the phenomena of transparency is performed depending on the context, the main goal of this research was to create an illustrative picture from the quality of information, not to generate typicality or representativeness (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 14). Thus, the study is more suitable to understand how the phenomena of transparency manifests in different places, rather than finding some true nature of the practicality and barriers towards transparency itself.

4. TRANSPARENCY AS…

As mentioned previously, transparency is believed to be an anti-corruption mechanism that facilitates governance and democratic processes (Hollyer et. al., 2014). With large revenues from the oil and gas activity in the villages where this study has taken place, governance is further believed to accelerate development (Aaronson, 2011). As there exists several ways of understanding transparency (Kosack & Fung, 2014), continued corruption and poverty in the villages surrounding the extractive areas in Bojonegoro could be explained by how actors understand and perform transparency. In this chapter, the findings and the results regarding what role informants have in facilitating transparency and how they understand transparency, will be presented.

USE OF TERMS

Transparency will be analyzed in the light of the definition provided by Ofori and Lujala (2015), which states that information must be available, effective in terms of it being comprehendible, and the citizens must have the capabilities to turn the information into participation. Hence, empowerment or already empowered citizens, in terms of the 'power to' sanction and act on this information, must be present to fulfill the requirements of transparency (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Aaronson, 2011). Further, this means that rather than viewing participation and empowerment as distinct processes, these are viewed as incorporated and essential in providing transparency. However, the analysis has sought to capture how the informants perceive transparency, which means a presentation of these also will be given. Further, Meyer's (2010) conceptualization of the 'knowledge broker' will be used to explain how NGOs and the local head of villages facilitates and involve the locals in their understanding of transparency.

Moreover, the study investigates transparency in two directions. The informants were both asked about how they facilitated transparency towards the citizens and how higher authorities practiced transparency. When referring to the local community, those without a position within either an NGO or the government, these terms will be used: locals, citizens, local citizens, and villagers. These terms will be used somewhat interchangeably. Higher authorities and government officials will be used when talking about government on district, regent, or national

level. Hence, 'higher authorities' refers to government officials which are positioned higher than village level.

BROKERING TRANSPARENCY

There exists some difference in the role of head of villages and informants from NGOs interviewed in this study. The NGOs not only work on behalf of the locals to help them demand information, monitor their government and empower them in an effort to secure the accountability of their government, they also negotiate and deliver their understandings of transparency to the local community. The NGOs can further be placed on a spectrum on how tightly they work with the government and the locals, with some holding stronger connections to the government and vice versa. All these informants from NGOs are thus operating with both, and their affiliations with 'two different worlds' also entails an effort to bridge these two. In defining and delivering their own accounts of a global term to make it understandable and practicable for the local community, the NGOs in this study can be viewed as 'knowledge brokers' (Meyer 2010). How they are managing transparency both at the government and local level, can be seen with the leader of BI, who especially seeks to educate and influence the government and educate and facilitate the locals.

As mentioned in the introduction, in 2001 decentralization brought more responsibility to the districts but "[…] it did not automatically equip them to manage their windfall revenues[…]" or that they would "[…] have the capacity to carry through those plans for sustainable and economic development"(Prijosusilo, 2012, p.2). The leader of BI has recognized this discrepancy between responsibility and capability at the district government: *"People do not have capabilities, even though they want. The government in Bojonegoro do not know about oil and gas management. It is isolated to the national government"*. He researches online and seek advices from corporate leaders in Jakarta. This knowledge, which also involve, as he said *"theory of western communities",* is then presented to the district government as suggestions for how they should manage the revenues and activities related to the oil and gas originating from the Cepu Block. In this way, he moves knowledge around by connecting the research he reads, and hence other researchers, to government bodies (Meyer, 2010).

On one side, his activity with the government concerns creating awareness towards international standards and principles so they could develop institutional mechanisms or practices that constitute 'good governing' of Bojonegoro's oil, as he believes the district

government has a low capacity to handle such issues. An example of such suggestions has been, after reading about Norway's' sovereign wealth fund, to initiate a similar fund for the district, based on surplus revenues from the extractive industries in Bojonegoro. This suggestion fell through, however, as there lacked regulations to hinder misappropriations of such a potential asset.

He also tries to influence the district government to believe in the locals, by trusting them to serve locally made materials for the extractive businesses in the area and be a part of the workforce: *"I didn't want investors. I wanted competition. I wanted the oil companies to have an obligation to use local materials"* (Leader, BI). In other words, he envisions tangible outcomes of transparency initiatives which should benefit the local communities throughout Bojonegoro in form of labor and increased incomes originating from the extractive industries. Since the Cepu Block is in their area, he describes a sense of ownership over the natural resources. He was thus disappointed when the contract with Exxon Mobiles got renewed, as he would like the oil to be extracted by Indonesian companies instead of foreign ones.

On the other hand, he seeks to educate and hence empower marginalized groups and communities to demand from their government and participate in policy-matter by creating awareness of their rights as citizens. He hence serves them usable knowledge (Meyer, 2010). The FOI law gives citizens the right to ask and complaint to government bodies, but he sees the need to: *"raise critical awareness about rights. How to claim their rights".* Even though channels directed from the local community towards the district government may exist, people need to be made aware of their existence.

As demonstrated by the leader of BI, the NGOs involved in this study, despite them being non-governmental, facilitates the government in addition to the local communities, serving them both actionable knowledge (Fox, 2015). However, the negotiations with government bodies are envisioned to benefit the local communities. That NGOs regularly are invited to discuss with government bodies, thus strengthens the NGOs legitimacy, and provide an arena for increased political influence. As the leader of BI said: *"We are perceived as experts in local government. At least by the former Bupati (head of regent)".* The relations the different NGOs have to higher authorities in Bojonegoro are thus under change. In Bojonegoro, the informants viewed the previous Bupati as more concerned about connecting with people on the grassroot level and bring them into the political negotiations. The current Bupati, which became the head of regent in 2018, is more centralistic in her approach and more concerned about: *"Building legitimacy to negotiate with the higher authorities"* (Leader, IDFoS). Improved transparency thus equals

improved influence on policy matters for the local communities directly or through representatives (Johnston, 2006; Fox, 2015; Pettit, 2012). With the current Bupati less willing to include these in political negotiations, the civil society has instead lost influence, which in turn causes less transparency. A determinant for the influence NGOs has, together with how they can facilitate transparency through knowledge brokering, is related to who is in charge.

From the results in this study, the head of villages is both the closest governing authority of the local people in their respective villages, but they also hold the role as village representatives. Thus, they constitute a part of the audience for NGOs, which further represents both the villagers and village leaders in negotiations with higher authorities. As an example, NGOs in Bojonegoro have tried to map the villagers desires or complaints and brought these up for discussion with higher authorities. There also exists occasions when the NGOs has been involved in developing plans for the village without first discussing it with the villagers. For example, the head of village in Gayam rejected a community development program from Exxon Mobiles in 2017, and then again in 2018. The reason was that Exxon Mobiles developed the program in a collaborating effort with an NGO, so that *"the program did not fit the need of the people in Gayam. They should collaborate with the village in designing the program. They did not talk to the village"* (head of village, Gayam). He went on to describe how NGOs sometimes compromises the role of the village leaders in negotiations with higher authorities or the oil companies. A reason for the NGOs to engage in negotiations without the village leader, could be that the village government in themselves constitute a government body that should be monitored and held accountable. While the NGOs represent the locals, the wishes of the locals as perceived by the NGOs, may deviate from the wishes of the village government. If so, it suggests a further fluidity in the role of NGOs; as mentioned, they represent the locals and the village leader, but on occasion also just the locals without the village leader.

The local head of villages that were interviewed, following Meyer's (2010) elaboration on the knowledge broker, exercise more as a 'capacity builder' in relation to the villagers, but has a more limited role than the NGOs. Even though they have tried to receive information on behalf of the village in what potentially could trigger demand driven transparency (Ofori & Lujala, 2015), these data suggests that their main facilitating role has been to get the local community to feel capacitated enough to participate in policy matters. The local head of village Kacangan has for example recognized the need for creating a 'sense of belonging' within the village to encourage participation: *"If they have this, that will both empower them and give them incentives to care about the village. Important for sense belonging is that I and the other*

villagers together control the village and develop strategies for empowerment" (head of village Kacangan). While NGOs influence their understanding of transparency, and facilitates transparency on behalf of the village, the local head of villagers are concerned of the actual participation.

In other words, the data from this study indicate that the role of the local head of villages and NGOs partly have overlapping roles in terms of facilitating transparency. Both NGOs and head of villages are representatives for the villagers, but the NGOs are more included to negotiate with higher authorities or oil companies. Not being included in these collaborations can be viewed problematic by the village leaders, as these often deals with matters directly related to the villages. Also, the strong relationships between the village leaders, villagers, and NGOs can potentially act as a barrier when they all meet to discuss. This will be further discussed in the next chapter, where contextual barriers towards transparency has been identified. How being a knowledge broker also involves the transformation of knowledge (Meyer, 2010), will be the focus of the next section, where the different understandings of transparency will be presented.

TRANSPARENCY AS INFORMATION, EMPOWERMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

To create an overview of the informants' understandings of transparency, I analyzed the informants responses on which processes they believed to be inherent in the term. The following categories: 'information', 'empowerment', 'participation', and 'knowledge sharing', thus originate from the informants vocabulary. Information and knowledge sharing possess similarities but are used to explain different phenomenon. Information in the matrix is synonymous with giving information, for example about the village budget, a new development program or upcoming events in the village. Hence information could be given electronically or by flyers handed out in the village. Knowledge sharing, on the other hand, describes the purpose of becoming wiser together, which requires proximity between people.

Knowledge sharing, however, could also be labeled as an empowering measure. Ademos for example, deliberately call their meetings for knowledge sharing, so that the participants feel they are contributing, and hence valuable for the community. An implication of the interlinkage between empowerment and knowledge sharing has been to elaborate on these together in a

section that follows. Hence, all of these categories are partly overlapping. They are thus valuable in mapping whether the informants have an extensive or limited understanding of what transparency entails. From the thematic coding, this matrix shows the width in the informants understanding of the processes they view to be inherent in transparency:

Table 2: Understandings of transparency

Transparency as:	Information	Empowerment	Participation	Knowledge sharing
Activists, IDFoS	X	X	X	
Leader, BBS	X			
Leader, BI	X			X
Leader, IDFoS	X, 2	X,1	X,1	
Activists, Ademos	X, 2	X, 2	X, 2	X, 1
Head of Village, Kacangan	X	X	X	X,1
Head of Village, Gayam	X, 1			X, 2
Local informal powerholder, Wonocolo	X	X	X	

Vertically in the matrix, the different informants have been inserted. Horizontally, you will find the informant's different perceptions and understandings of the term. The matrix shows that the informants rarely connect a singular word or concept to transparency, but rather think of it is an interconnected term, reliant on the fulfillment of several criteria. Transparency is then viewed as unachievable in the absence of these other terms. On some occasions, the informants view some processes as more important than others. "X, 1" in the colon implies that the factor is believed to be the most crucial. When several other factors are believed to play the same importance, they have been given the same code. For example, the code "X, 2" imply that the

concepts are ranged as the second most important, "X, 3" implies they are recognized as the third most important, whereas concepts with the same code are weighed the same regarding importance for transparency.

INFORMATION

Every informant viewed information as inseparable from transparency. Further, there existed two distinct ways of how the informants facilitated this aspect of transparency: *providing* and *improving*. The aspect of providing information can be exemplified by the leader of BBS, which was the only informant that saw transparency solely as information disclosure. For him, transparency meant being transparent about the price offered to oil drillers in Wonocolo, so that the drillers sell the services promised to Pertamina (Indonesian state-owned oil company): "*Pertamina owns the rights to extract the oil but the people own the land. Pertamina do not buy the oil but buy the services provided by the drillers*". By selling to Pertamina, the drillers would obtain a higher price than they would by selling on the illegal market to middlemen.

The knowledge he serves the drillers, can thus be thought of as 'actionable', 'targeted transparency', as it is especially directed towards the recipients' interest, and further should enable them to make the best beneficial choice for themselves (Fox, 2015). Hence, this transparency also constitute 'effective transparency', as the information, in addition, also is meaningful and comprehendible (Ofori & Lujala, 2015) The rationale behind FOI laws would suggest that the drillers then would sell the oil at the highest possible price (Kosack & Fung, 2014), but the leader of BBS says the drillers continues to sell illegally at a lower price, because they prefer to get paid straight away, in addition to the trust and relationships that are established between the drillers and the middlemen. Providing information had little impact on the receivers, he said. Even though he did not regard other concepts besides information disclosure as inherent in transparency, he still saw information as insufficient for behavioral change.

Between the informants in this study, ways to disseminate information was through social media accounts, OGP, meetings, and by banners put throughout the village. The use of internet to publish information was especially widespread among the informants. Through the OGP, the Bojonegoro regency have tried to develop an e-government, but this is contingent on improved "[…] IT network infrastructure, socialization, and readiness of human resources, both application managers and application users" (Indika & Vonika, 2018, p. 49). Furthermore, the

leader of IDFoS mentioned an interactive website made for the citizens, which allowed them to search through all the available information. Here, you could, by typing the right key words, like Google, get directed towards documents of interest. Even though releasing information online is effective, most households, especially in the villages outside Bojonegoro city, lack access to computers. In Dolok Gede, where Ademos were located, there is only internet access outside one of the villagers' home. The women that lives there willingly share her internet with the whole village, but few have the economic ability to own devices such as computers and mobile phones. Even if information is released online, it remains inaccessible for most of the villagers. The OGP has thus realized the obstacles with technology driven transparency. When they mention a lack of human resources as an obstacle, in addition to currently poor IT network infrastructure, they consider the fact that most households in the villages are not custom to manage such devices. Empowerment thus becomes one aspect to consider when facilitating transparency.

Meetings and banners with information thus seems to be the only non-exclusionary strategies when providing information to citizens. Only one informant mentioned the use of banners to give information, while all informants held meetings on a regular basis. As an example, the head of village in Kacangan holds a meeting every 36. Day in every mosque in his village. Some of the informants where also involved in improving the information that already had been released. The 'improvement' involved securing that information that gets published, among other things, use the Indonesian language and the national currency. It has also involved making information more comprehensive, such as broadening the scope of the village openness index. The improvement of information thus constitutes an effort to transform 'nominal' and 'illusionary' transparency into 'effective' transparency (Lujala & Ofori, 2015).

EMPOWERMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The 'transparency narrative' and FOI laws rests on the assumption that 'information is power' (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Fox, 2015; Pettit, 2012). Hence, empowerment is devalued to the simple release of information. Certainly, information can be empowering, but empowerment encompass more, and some would claim that there exist certain contingencies before one could equal information with power (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Fox, 2015). The former leader of IDFoS recognize this: The former leader if IDFoS state that: *"If they do not feel it is relevant, they do not have any further reason to use the data"* (activist, IDFoS). For him, empowerment is a

condition for increased transparency: "*There is information but not really a demand for it. We must empower the citizens to increase the demand*" (Former leader, IDFoS). Here, empowerment becomes a necessity for transparency altogether. This relates to findings from several scholars, such as Ofori and Lujala (2015), Fox (2015), and Rustad et. al (2017), that claims that the nature of the information and how it relates to the recipients, determine whether the information is empowering. This saying also reveals what kind of approach to transparency they view necessary. For the first, they see transparency as driven through demand (Fox, 2007). For the second, they describe the necessity of a confrontational approach to demand (Kosack & Fung, 2014). Citizens must be empowered to dare to demand.

The informants in this study, when talking about empowerment as an inherent quality of transparency, thus mentioned own empowering programs, apart from how information can be empowering itself. This was also important for those informants that did not see empowerment as inherent in the term, but as an own aspect that should be worked with parallel to transparency. The leader of BI for example saw both empowerment and participation as important outcomes of information sharing and knowledge sharing, but not as inherent in transparency. Empowerment programs to facilitate transparency, can take several paths, partly because of the fluidity of the concept (Sharp et. al., 2003). The findings from this study indicates that empowerment programs were directed towards the enabling of citizens to get 'power over' their own lives, followed by the 'power to' participate. The opinion seems to be that the locals could benefit from acquiring better skills and higher knowledge, and in the case of the local informal powerholder in Wonocolo; better work ethic, the ability to be ambitious, and set goals for the future. Providing empowerment- and training programs are among the informants in this study believed to enhance the villagers knowledge and awareness, establish trust and good relationships, and improve their economic situation and self-confidence, so they feel capacitated, secure, and enabled to demand and participate in policy-matters.

How the informants connect empowerment to transparency can be seen through the local informal powerholder in Wonocolo, located in the Bojonegoro regency. He is afforded his position due to his ownership of approximately 400 wells in the Wonocolo village, in addition to his effort to build a political career within the local government. The most recent wells he has opened in Wonocolo, are shared between him and 4 or 5 other local investors, with him owning 50 per cent of the shares. The reason for getting investors in the wells, he says, is to make the locals: *"real players"*. He envisions Wonocolo as an oil-extractive village where the locals also own the wells, in addition to drilling and refining the oil. According to the leader of

BBS, “*The problem in Wonocolo is illegal drilling, refining and environmental issues*”. The locals call Wonocolo for ‘Teksas Wonocolo’. Because of the lack of security regarding health and environmental regulation and security, it is easy to make associations to Texas as referring to the wild, wild west. But that is not the case. According to Tony, the word ‘Teksas’ bears the meaning; “*the willingness to be safe, well, and prosperous*”.

Figur 2: Oil wells in Wonocolo, Bojonegoro regency (Frida Jacobsen, 2019).

However, the local informal powerholder in Wonocolo is not working on a resolution to these problems. Instead, he practices is own empowering strategy by giving the drillers, and thus locals, actual power over the oil wells. Moreover, he has also employed an empowerment strategy in the management of these wells; the payment is provision based. The more oil they take up, the more money they will receive. The purpose is to show local workers how hard work pays off. Through this strategy, he seeks to enhance the work ethic and communication skills throughout the community, in addition to offer them an ability to increase their own economic power. Since each well is managed by a team of 4 or 5 workers, it is necessary that they all try

to cooperate to ensure the highest possible profit. He also believes that the righteous owners of the wells should be locals, as *"the oil is in their land"* (Local informal powerholder, Wonocolo).

Ademos also have a strong focus on empowering the local community, through establishing village enterprises from oil and gas revenues, so that the villages become sustainable in the future. While staying with Ademos in Dolok Gede, we visited both a young man inspired to succeed with his newly started batik company, and a couple who had started to make banana chips. Both enterprises were initiated through Ademos to create economic opportunities for the villagers, apart from the revenues related to the extractive industry. Ideally, these enterprises in the long run are envisioned to benefit the whole community, as the business expand and the need for a larger workforce arises. As the level of economic development is found to strongly correlate with the level of transparency within a country, initiatives to spur economic development is further a way to facilitate transparency (Khagram et. al., 2013).

As integral to transparency, empowerment does not have to equal physical power over something, as in the case of the oil wells, or economic power, as with Ademos (Pettit, 2012). Empowerment also entails invisible qualities, like higher self-confidence or more influence. Among other things, the purpose of calling meetings for knowledge sharing was to increase the villagers self-confidence. An example of knowledge sharing is thus when Ademos gather a specific group to get knowledge regarding a specific practice, like making batik or figuring out what the village needs for continued and improved agricultural farming. They are then able to develop programs based on their own and the villagers knowledge and later judge if these programs could be sought supported by the oil companies. Further, Ademos believe that economic development within the village, in other words, more economic power, essentially contribute to a stronger self-confidence. Thus, more power in one arena are believed to have trickling effects onto other arenas.

PARTICIPATION

Five of the informants viewed participation as an inherent quality to transparency. However, those that did not involve participation as a part of transparency, still saw participation as a

potential, positive outcome, which in addition is dependent upon empowerment. Still, others, saw participation as crucial for transparency. Facilitating participation thus becomes facilitating transparency and facilitating empowerment equals facilitating participation. Pettit (2012) state that "empowerment and participation are deeply complementary and can be considered both means and ends, processes and outcomes (p. 2). How participation is linked to empowerment can be visualized through the examples of empowerment in the previous section. Not only is it empowering to invest and manage the wells or take part in 'knowledge sharing' and other entrepreneurial programs, but the actual act of joining constitute participation. However, there exist examples of how the informants involve the community in actual policy matters.

To get the citizens involved, the head of village in Kacangan makes sure that he and the villagers *"control the village and village budget together"*. He also uses informal arenas to hold meetings, as *"People have many recommendations for the village when they are given the right arena to talk – like the mosque"*. Furthermore, the informants have recognized the importance of organized collectives to influence and empower the marginalized into participating. Recognizing that the civil society is not one homogenous group but consists of several viewpoints and power relations within the same community (Fox, 2015), IDFoS have divided those they find vulnerable in three different groups: women, farmers, and street workers. IDFoS then created a corporation for each group, where the participants can discuss issues close to them in a setting with equals. They have thus realized the importance of encouraging those who otherwise are excluded, to be heard. In addition, being a part of a group, rather than one single individual, increases the chance of being heard (Gibson & Woolcock, 2008; Fox, 2015; Ostrom, 1990).

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In line with the idea behind TAIs, the respondents also view transparency as necessary for accountability (Fox, 2015). They thus saw it as an important outcome of transparency. This linkage is exemplified by the leader of IDFoS: "*The villages have laws that affect the money they receive. It is therefore important to have something to measure the openness to avoid corruption and make the village leaders accountable*". This correlate with the suggestion that transparency enables people to hold the authorities accountable (Berliner, 2014; Hollyer et. al., 2014; Fox, 2007; Ofori & Lujala, 2015). Accountability can first be implemented after information disclosure however, as the accountability the leader of IDFoS refers to is

accountability to the plans, budget, and information that he seeks to give the local community access to. Even though transparency should contribute to government accountability, one of the barriers towards transparency becomes evident when talking about this aspect of transparency: *"People do not want to complain, and the government do not want critique"* (head of village, Kacangan). This aspect will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

DISCUSSION

In line with the understanding brought forwarded by Ofori and Lujala (2015), the informants mentioned several requirements that must be fulfilled if the local society should benefit from transparency initiatives. But, some of the informants separates themselves from this understanding, by viewing aspects as not inherent in the term transparency, but rather as entities that should be worked on in addition to transparency as information disclosure. Even though an informant understood transparency as information disclosure, he viewed other aspects as crucial for any behavioral change within the recipients. This suggests that instead of seeing the facilitation of transparency as dependent on the understanding of the term, it is rather dependent on the terms' contingencies as the facilitators perceive them. Hence, the findings suggest that the interpretation of the specific term, does not cause a limited facilitation of transparency. Instead, the facilitation is distributed between multiple knowledge brokers. The aspects of what should be facilitated to achieve the desired outcomes of transparency, is thus consistent with transparency in its extensive form (Ofori & Lujala, 2015).

An interesting finding is further how focused both informants from NGOs, village government, and the local informal powerholder is on empowerment for transparency to have any effect. Instead of viewing empowerment as dependent on the nature of the information, empowerment was mentioned as a crucial starting point *before* the disclosure of information. For the NGOs, empowerment was facilitated by initiating entrepreneurial programs to increase the participants economic ability, in addition to increase their self-confidence by portraying to the villagers that they are valuable, as exemplified earlier when Ademos purposely calls their meeting-activity for 'knowledge sharing'. Another empowering measure was to divide the society in homogenous groups, which they believed could contribute to an environment where they dared to voice opinions and participate. A view of the villagers as hesitant to voice opinions where in other words seen as a barrier to overcome if transparency should have any effect, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

In other words, the NGOs initiated empowering measures that was not directed towards policy matters specifically, but rather more generally. When suggesting that their facilitation of empowerment, and transparency, should increase the villagers self-confidence which eventually lead to the villagers' participation, they view empowering as social changes which eventually lead to power to participate (Pettit, 2012; Sharp et. al., 2003). For the head of villages that were interviewed, the empowerment aspect of transparency was mostly facilitated by the circumstances around the meetings, and the relationships the village leader has to the villagers. A desired arena for meetings was the mosque, as it constitutes an informal arena to talk about village matters, in addition to how it enables the village leaders to engage in daily activities with the locals.

5. BARRIERS TOWARD TRANSPARENCY

The findings that were presented in the previous chapter implies that how the informant's define transparency is of less importance when determining necessary measurements for improved participation and good governance more generally. These findings suggest that the positive potential of transparency is not disrupted by the way transparency is understood, but rather by context-specific factors which the international formulations do not consider (Fox, 2015). In addition, limitations regarding how transparency is practiced by higher authorities and oil companies, have been identified. In this chapter, data and an analysis of these barriers and limitations will be presented. Although most of the data originate from the Bojonegoro regency, data from Belitung will on occasions be used to complement the findings.

POVERTY

The informants were concerned on information being both actionable, meaningful, and comprehendible. Despite, the information did not always translate into behavioral change. In the case of oil drillers in Wonocolo, the lack of economic abilities kept them from making more beneficial choices. Poverty often correlate with more acute problems which the citizens must attend to, such that it may hinder citizens from benefitting from available information or engage in policy matters more generally (Lujala & Epremian, 2017). Poverty may force people to make less beneficial choices, as they may experience an acute need for money to buy food, pay doctoral bills, amongst other things, which means they are not afforded a position in which they can wait for a paycheck. Hence, poverty constitute one of the context-specific barriers towards transparency in the Bojonegoro regency. The transparency narrative assumes that people will do what is best for themselves but does not consider that people may be unable to do so (Lujala & Epremian, 2017).

This would suggest that actionable and meaningful information is insufficient. But it resonates with the extensive understanding of transparency, and further exemplify that all the aspects of this definition, must be fulfilled for transparency to have an effect. Hence, to enable the oil drillers to choose between alternatives when selling services, requires economic empowerment (Ofori & Lujala, 2015; Pettit, 2012). Poverty act as a barrier towards transparency in other ways as well. The informants in this study preferred technology driven ways to disseminate

information. Through an interactive website, all available information could be gathered in one place. In addition, the use of social media was also widespread. However convenient, this does not benefit the whole community as poverty remain a cause to why people are unable to access information online. The problematic aspect of using technology to deliver information is not solely caused by poverty even though it is seen related to poverty in this specific case. People may also be unaccustomed to use such devises, or simply unwilling to engage with them. Even though informants also disseminated information using other channels, the magnitude of these cannot be compared to the capacity that online methods possess in saving and distributing information.

INSUFFICIENT DOWNWARDS TRANSPARENCY

The OGP was mentioned by just one of the informants in this study, in relation to how information is distributed, while FOI was not mentioned at all. Regarding the EITI, the activist from IDFoS said: *"The EITI has no impact on the local level and does not reach the public. It's an initiative for the elite".* Both the OGP, FOI, and EITI, as mentioned in the introduction and theory of this thesis, oblige partnerships to be developed to ensure participation from the civil society, viewing participation as crucial to hold the government accountable and avoid corruption. Hence, these initiatives are all formulated with a precaution that participation is crucial if they shall have any effect on the governing of natural resources. These initiatives are meant to reach the civil society, at least through civil society representatives, such as NGOs (Indika & Vonika, 2018; Lujala, 2018).

Although there may exist other channels than the ones provided by these initiatives (Ofori & Lujala, 2015), the informants generally did not know how to complaint to higher authorities: *"There is no place for argue. No forums, no meeting for them to discuss about this topic. And there is no place for that"* (Head of village, Kacangan). When the channels directed from the community towards the government is unknown for the community, it hinders the ability of the civil society to act as a correcting mechanism, securing the accountable behavior of higher authorities. Further, it also hinders the local society to have an influence on policy matters when the proper audience, those with executive power, remains inaccessible. Fox (2015) elaborate on how information must be actionable, but for information to be actionable at all, he says, the citizens must trust that the government will react and respond to their voice.

The data in this study further indicates that the informants view the downwards transparency as insufficient: *"It's not good yet. In the higher level they did not do the transparency yet. The Government in the regent also force the village to the transparency programs. They must give the budget to the village, but the village do not know how much the budget is in the regent. That is why some of the villages do not feel responsibility to do transparency program in their place, because they do not do it in the regent"* (Head of village, Kacangan). Even though village leaders also should be held accountable for their governing, it seems to deteriorate their effort towards achieving greater transparency when they have the opinion that the district, regional, or national government do not follow the same standard. An example can be derived from the head of village in Gayam. He told that Exxon Mobiles did a pilot project with the University of Bojonegoro regarding his village. The conduction relied on his approval. He said yes with the condition that they shared their results when the project was finalized. This promise was not met, even though he tried contacting the University of Bojonegoro several times, specifically asking for the results. Later, they asked for permission again for a second pilot project. He asked himself why he should allow this, when the information and results, which can be useful for the village of Gayam, is not shared with those it matters. Nevertheless, he agreed to the second pilot project, but used the word 'forced' when asked to explain why.

The head of villages felt pressured to ensure 'upwards transparency' without receiving 'downwards transparency' in return. Rather than seeking the positive outcomes like enhanced participation among citizens, asymmetrical transparency – when one actor has more information than others – can be felt as a controlling mechanism by the state. As mentioned in the theory, asymmetrical transparency also increases the likelihood of corruption and mismanagement of revenues (Ofori & Lujala, 2015). The general opinion found is that the higher authorities, instead of operating by principles of transparency themselves, demands transparency from below to monitor their citizens, thus favorizing 'village budget transparency' in transparency (Fox, 2007).

However, statements by the leader of IDFoS, as mentioned in the previous chapter, revealed that holding the village government accountable, is as crucial as holding higher authorities accountable. More specifically, Ademos commented the mismanagement of the oil revenues in the village of Gayam: *"Gayam has been a bad example. They used their oil and gas revenues to spontaneous spending rather than securing for the future"*. This might suggest that the head of villages in this study has another role, in addition to those that were mentioned in the previous

chapter. For the locals and the NGOs, they might constitute a part of the higher authorities they must monitor to and hold accountable.

Another dimension of this apparent lack of downwards transparency is that, in the absence of relevant information, people will not engage: *"The main problem is lack of incentives for transparency. To what extent the data fit their needs? If they do not feel it is relevant, they do not have any further reason to use the data"* (activist, IDFoS). The research results from the pilot project in Gayam could have constituted targeted transparency, as the results could have contributed to increased understanding for the village leader, which in turn could guide him towards better governing of Gayam. Relevant information is therefore a crucial starting point, at least after or together with empowerment, as this necessarily provides what could be responded to by the citizens.

These examples support the viewing of how the informants see the necessity of using a confrontational approach to get transparency from higher authorities, as was suggested in the previous chapter. Moreover, it also suggests that the informants view accessible information as contingent on their demand for it. However, as mentioned in the theory, information could also be given through a proactive dissemination (Fox, 2007). Ideally, the government should voluntarily be transparent about their affairs and secure proper conduct from the oil-companies (Ofori & Lujala, 2015). A pro-active dissemination would require less from the local community as a demand-driven dissemination necessarily involves the public acting, requiring their participation to access information. It has already been established how the informants view empowerment as necessary for participation. In addition, since what constitutes relevant information partly is dependent on individual factors (Ofori & Lujala, 2015), some groups may wish fort other kinds of information than what is demanded for by other groups in the community. They may further act a figure willing to demand such information. This can be detrimental for marginalized groups which already are socially excluded, when accessible information is contingent on their participation.

ILLUSIONARY TRANSPARENCY

Besides the presumed lack of channels and downwards transparency, a notion of insufficient transparency was also caused by how informants felt they were not taken seriously when they on occasions reached out. This resonate with Fox (2015), which says that "local voices that

challenge un-accountable authorities, by themselves, are likely to be either ignored or squelched" (p. 350). During a black-out in one of the villages in Bojonegoro, which will be described later, we were able to ask the mother in Gayam some questions about the oil- and gas-activity. She told us about 'a smell' which overflows the area multiple times a month. This smell causes her and the other villagers severe headaches and nausea, so severe that they are unable to function properly. The activists from Ademos were also aware of this smell caused by gas emissions from the site of Exxon Mobiles but: *"Exxon don't take it seriously. They say it is not dangerous"* (activist, Ademos). As mentioned in the chapter in methodology, it was during this night we talked about whether they believed in global warming, and if so, if they take the time to teach others about it. Evidently, none of the informants from Ademos believed in global warming, but they had some reflections on why. They told that the oil companies, also Exxon Mobiles, exercise some control over what gets written in the Bojonegoro newspapers. Directed by the oil-companies, the newspapers disprove any suggestions of global warming or negative effects caused by this sector.

The 'mother of Gayam' sought answers in relation to the smell. But even though supported by other villagers and an NGO willing to ask questions, in addition to laws implemented in Bojonegoro that support such requests, she failed in receiving a 'straight' answer. She still was convinced that the gas leakage was harmful. Although not specifically mentioned by Ofori and Lujala (2015), their term 'illusionary transparency', referring to "[…] information concealed in highly technical vocabulary and details" (p. 1195), may be a just term to also describe a situation in which the public are victims of wrongful information. Wrongful information can further pose risks on the health and environment of the receivers if they accept its legitimacy and hence accept status quo. Thus, the participants in this study were not of the illusion that the gas was harmless, but the newspaper's mentioning of the lack of risks connected to the oil and gas industry, and how global warming is not happening, may deteriorate them from seeing connections and act. Hence the illusion is that everything is transparent, when some of this apparent transparency is information manipulated to prevent the local society from complaining.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Findings from this study indicates that one factor which maintains this illusionary transparency, is how the government and oil companies are acting out a social hierarchy and continues to

underestimate the local society. In egalitarian societies, "[…] The central idea has been that […] political leadership is weak and ranking and stratification among adult males are absent and muted" (Boehm, Barclay, Dentan, Dupre, Hill, Kent, Knauft, Otterbein, & Rayner, 1993, p. 227). An egalitarian society is the opposite of a hierarchical society (Boehm et. al., 1993). Even though a hierarchy is evident in most countries regarding political power, the hierarchy referred to here, is a social hierarchy in which some people are perceived as better than others based on their position in the society. This is exemplified through how informants believe corporate directors and government leaders perceive them as stupid in the following episode:

One afternoon, Ademos took the fellow student and I on a scooter tour to visit the different sites of oil- and gas extraction. On our way to one of the villages closest to the Exxon Mobiles oil-site, it started to rain heavily, followed by thunder and cold wind. My driver then decided that we should stop at the place of her 'mother in Gayam'. The mother in Gayam had a small food serving shop and we both got a warm cup of beverage and fried grasshoppers with steamed rice. The place laid directly opposite to an Exxon Mobiles' site, and we sat only meters away from the high fences that surrounded the area. Suddenly the lights went off and when the others from Ademos arrived after being stuck in another warung (a small food shop), the mother in Gayam had to use matches to navigate in the dark to manage her gas oven. While we sat there, one of the people from Ademos pointed to the irony that a village so rich in oil and gas went completely dark.

According to Ademos and the mother in Gayam, these blackouts are happening several times a week and lasts up to 3 hours each time. An activist from Ademos then nodded towards the site of Exxon, which still was completely lit up. *"We don't want to be solely unskilled workers"*, he said. *"If Exxon really want the villages to benefit from the oil and gas extraction, they should offer training programs and education. But they think we are stupid and can only do low-skilled work, and even those who have taken education, cannot get the jobs high up. Maybe they don't trust our education system?".* That higher authorities lack trust in locals, also became a topic while doing fieldwork in Belitung. An activist exemplified how the national government sells land for the up-coming tourist industry to foreign investors instead of trusting the locals to build their own tourist enterprises and be direct beneficiaries of the upcoming industry: *"The lack of trust that the locals can do anything is pervasive. They (locals) already think I cannot do anything; I cannot manage tourist... how can I talk with tourist when I do not talk English... but they are not just struggling with themselves. Government are selling the land to foreign*

investors because they lack trust. They think local people have low capabilities, low human resources" (activist, Belitung).

Evidently, it suggests that the lack of trust is not just directed from higher authorities towards the locals. The locals are also portrayed as lacking trust in themselves, with some exceptions. Even though informants viewed poor self-confidence as a barrier towards transparency, it does not apply to everyone, but rather explain tendencies within the local population. For example, as mentioned previously, Ademos viewed themselves and the locals as individuals that could contribute to economic growth if they were given a chance in the oil companies. For the village leader in Kacangan, however, it became necessary to create a sense of belonging and ownership over village matters within the village. Without it, the villagers would feel it is 'out of their place' to get involved in policy matters. An example is also given by how Exxon Mobiles provides the surrounding villages with agricultural training, even though the villagers stems from generations of farmers and possess the necessary skills. What they really need to improve to secure future harvests are proper irrigation systems, but instead, Exxon Mobiles provide them with training which is not really needed. The villagers still meet up to these trainings initiatives, even though they do not benefit from it. This was explained by referring to the Javanese culture, which is known for being polite, not raising critical questions, voice opinions, or ask questions.

The Javanese culture is regarded as one of the main barriers towards transparency and participation by the leader of BI: *"The feudalistic culture... People are hesitant. We must counter this culture"*. This culture can also be problematic when the NGOs are participating in the process of designing development programs for the villages. The village leader of Gayam explained: *"The Javanese culture... it can be hard to say they do not agree with the NGO when they have a relationship with them. Especially when they have a good relationship"*. His solution is to keep NGOs out of such collaborations. The local head of village in Kacangan further stated that peoples willingness to talk do not just depend on *who* is present, but also *where* the meetings take place: "*in formal settings, like in the head of village office, people don't talk"*. This was the reasoning behind using both the mosque but also his private home as arenas. His explanation behind his discovery he found in the Javanese culture, which he again thought acted as a barrier toward local people's participation.

Incidents were those which obtain a higher social status are hesitant to conversate with those with lower status, can thus not be explained by the Javanese culture. While doing field work in Belitung, we had hired a driver to take us to and from meetings and discussions with informants, as well as showing us the island. Our driver got through auditions and was rewarded with one

of the main roles in an Indonesian hit movie as a child. The future seemed bright and he applied for college in Jakarta, building on his career within the movie business. Unfortunately, he did not manage to get through the studies, and moved back to Belitung shortly after. He is still widely recognized as the character he played when he was a child, which manifests itself in people passing by often asking for photographs. He accompanied us to meet all our informants before the interviews even though he did not participate in the interviews. After meeting one informant, a leader of a biofuel and palm oil company, he decided instead to go back to the car. When we were finished with the interview, our translator and friend from POLGOV noticed that his mood had changed. Until now, he had been funny and talkative. Now he was quiet and inexpressive. When asked about the matter, he replied that: *"He thought I was a nobody. Just a poor man. Not good enough to meet him"*. The head of village in Kacangan further revealed that government officials and corporate leaders *"[...] feel special, very special".*

Rather than explaining the situation with reference to the culture, it might seem be more suitable to both view the culture, lack of trust, and social hierarchy as interconnected in maintaining the ruling order (Anderson, 1966; Hadiz, 2008). A Marxist account of hierarchy would suggest it derives from the 'capital mode of production', producing social inequality and poverty, hence it would be impossible to eradicate without changing the entire system (Peet, 1975, p. 564). Social hierarchy was therefore used to describe these potential barriers toward transparency, as it encompasses several aspects which causes inequality within the society. An environmentalist and human activist in Belitung could also reveal that the Indonesian society is highly egalitarian despite its strong hierarchy: *"People don't like it when other people are happier than themselves. They become like, why are you so happy, you don't deserve to be this happy"*. Citizens should accept their position within the rank they occupy.

On one side, citizens with lower social status are not viewed as equals by high-ranked officials and leaders, which manifests itself in them either ignoring complaints from the local community or giving them biased information in return. On the other hand, those within this local community, should agree to the local code of behavior, and act as equals to those within the same community. It is disliked attracting too much attention by questioning the ruling elite. The lack of a middle class, as mentioned by Hadiz (2008) could further potentially have increased the social distance between government officials and the public. This could explain why the informants believe the presence of authorities would silence the local community in meetings, and hence hinder them from participating. As mentioned previously, this passive behavior of the citizens is further expected by higher authorities. They are not interested in being questioned

nor critiqued by the local communities, but also do not view the citizens as capable to question them. These findings thus correspond with the findings from Ofori and Lujala (2015) in Ghana, which found that the locals consider government officials as rulers rather than public servants (p. 1195).

CORRUPTION

Some of the informants, both those within the village government and those affiliated with an NGO, mentioned that corruption still maintains an issue in Indonesia: *"People have tried getting information from the government, to negotiate with the government. People have done a lot but the government, the police. They are all corrupt"* (Activist, IDFoS). BTI (2018) also report that corruption in Indonesia still is an endemic issue, both at the national and the local government level. Although not investigating the corruption claims in this study, the informants found one of the barriers towards participation to be corruption. The informants seemed to view leaders at national and district level as uninterested in critique and that despite requests, they would do whatever they wanted. As shown in previous sections, both the Javanese and the feudalistic culture act as a barrier towards the whole transparency process. But this a double-edged sword: *"People do not want to complain, and the government generally do not want critique"* (Head of village, Gayam). Some also elaborated on how leaders or government officials manipulated the different laws and regulations in Indonesia, so that the conduct would happen 'legally' and 'transparent', but thus highly manipulated.

In relation to the up-coming tourist industry in Belitung, people have tried getting certification for their land to avoid it being sold to foreign investors *"but they cannot give it because, oh, it is protected forest now"* (activist, Belitung). The room for interpretation between these different laws are therefore assumed by the informants to be an arena which can be exploited by policymakers (Bachriadi & Suryana, 2014), as with the case of land-deals in Belitung, where the ownership of lands is dependent on which laws they find valid: *"Sometimes, the information like this, because of some person, they got network to person inside the government. I need this forest, I need you to bring this out of the status of protected forest, and then the government; okay, I can help you, but It means I should be looking for other places. And they put another, based on the map. Sometimes people look, and they do not know that their area has already become an area of protected forest"* (Activist, Belitung). The passiveness thus comes from a

sense of hopelessness – an idea that their participation would not matter, which keeps them for trying to change a climate they are not completely satisfied with.

DISCUSSION

When the informants talked about their practice of transparency, they descried an approach that has resemblance to what Kosack and Fung (2014) termed the 'collaborative approach' to transparency. Informal discussions, meetings, and designing empowerment programs and the village budget together, were all descriptions of how they practiced transparency between themselves, as providers of transparency, to the citizens. However, the mentioned 'barriers toward transparency' revealed that they see the necessity of using a confrontational approach when demanding transparency from higher authorities. Hence a barrier towards transparency becomes the citizens lack of self-confidence, as described under 'social hierarchy', and lack of resources to confront 'predatory providers', which again constitute a need for empowerment before transparency can be improved (Kosack & Fung, 2014, p. 75).

Further, this study has identified two different kinds of barriers towards transparency. On one side, barriers that seem to be related to the social context of implementation have been found. On the other side, barriers related to the magnitude of how transparency has been implemented, such as insufficient downwards transparency and illusionary transparency, has been identified. In other words, there exist barriers that relate to the culture and social hierarchy within the context which seem to hinder the presumed positive outcomes of transparency, but there also seem to exist some limitations in how transparency has been adopted and is performed by the higher authorities. Furthermore, the data in this study suggests that there exists a relationship between these different kinds of barriers. Especially, the possibility of the government and oil companies to maintain illusionary transparency, is seen as reliant on how they underestimate the local society and assumes a passive response. This further allows the higher authorities to use transparency as a method to monitor or surveil the village government, rather than as a strategy to combat corruption and promote good governance.

The barriers that relates to the social context concerns deep processes within the society. Through speaking with informants, both the Javanese culture, the heritage of colonialism, the feudal culture and the social hierarchy which is strongly egalitarian within the different social classes, was all mentioned as cultural and societal aspects which maintained the current power

relations within the society. As these aspects are recognized by the informants in this study, an especially strong focus has been to empower the local community, both in economic, personal, and a political sense. The need to empower the locals are recognized as the most important if transparency can be a success.

6. CONCLUSION

For the first, this study has found that the informants from the NGOs are knowledge brokers which facilitate both the locals and higher authorities. The head of villages and the local informal powerholder, however, can be perceived as ‘capacity builder’ within the local community. The findings imply that how the informants interpret transparence, do not determine whether transparency in its extensive form is facilitated. All the informants still consider aspects such as empowerment, participation, and knowledge sharing, besides the obvious information disclosure, as processes that must be facilitated for transparency to have an impact. Further, they recognize the importance of comprehendible information, informal arenas, and own corporations for groups in the villages to voice opinions. For those that viewed transparency in a simplistic sense, as the flow of information, still recognized other aspects as important, but they did not involve those into their understanding of transparency. Hence, more importantly than the informant’s actual interpretation of transparency, is the processes they view the positive outcomes of transparency to be contingent upon.

For the second, this study supports the findings from Ofori and Lujalas’ (2015) study in Ghana, were they found that the main barriers for acquiring information are people’s lack of capacity and willingness to acquire such information (p. 1187). This study thus reveals that many of these barriers are related to the culture and power relations within the society which is evident through a strong social hierarchy. The perception among informants is that the higher authorities requires transparency from below, demanding an ‘upwards’ transparency, but that they don’t follow the same procedures themselves, making a deficit of ‘downwards’ transparency (Fox, 2007). This is evident through the asymmetric flow of information in favor of the higher authorities.

At last, the study found that the barriers constitute deep processes within the society, which are difficult to alter with transparency initiative. As transparency should function as a power equalizer among actors in the society, it further demands an altering of exactly those processes which maintains the existing hierarchy. Rather than trying to change the culture, the identified barriers and limitations suggests that one should lessen the expectations of such initiatives as the EITI, FOI law and OGP. By acknowledging the initiatives limitations and acknowledge that these are context-dependent by nature, an effort to establish initiatives which takes these contextual factors into account, could be formulated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has been conducted with limited time and informants. The political arrangement has only slightly been discussed but does seem to have a role in why and how transparency has become a main agenda for NGOs and local formal and informal leaders in the Bojonegoro regency. The political arrangement could thus be an important element to implement in further research on this topic, together with the role of the oil-companies in transparency matters. This study could also benefit from having more informants from the local society, as they are important receivers of transparency measures. In addition it could be valuable to compare the view the local society has on transparency to the view government officials have on the same matter. Furthermore, the findings from this current study could be more legitimized if it implemented actual methods to measure the degree of transparency in the Bojonegoro regency. When obstacles or limitations to transparency is recognized, further research could take on the task of how to handle these.

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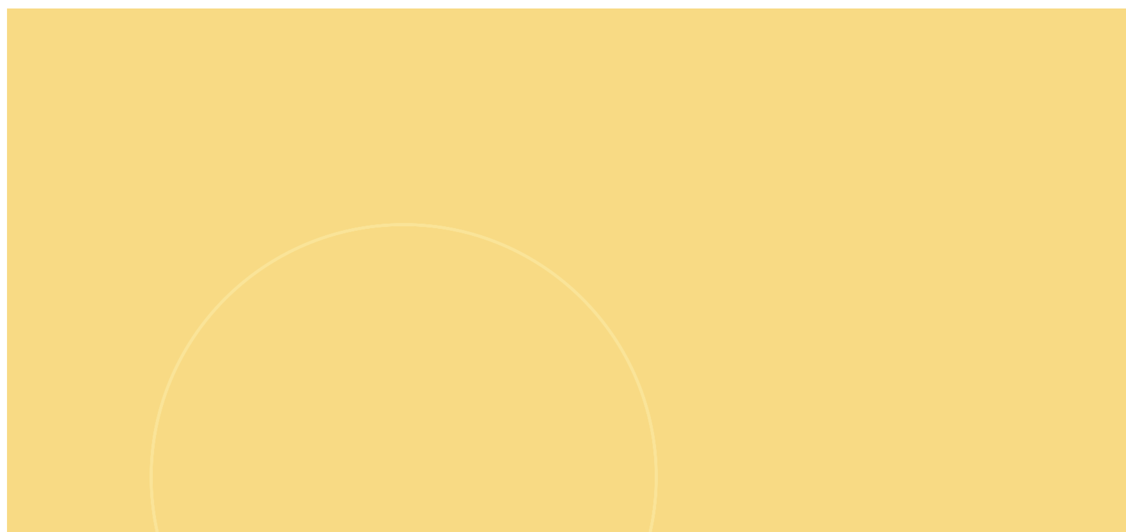

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