The Role of the Catholic Church in Overcoming Community Poverty Around the Area of St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang

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Abstract

The Catholic Church is actively involved in efforts to overcome the problems that exist in the world manifested by Catholics in the involvement of the weak, poor, and suffering. This study aims to analyze the role of the Catholic Church in overcoming poverty in the community around the area of St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type and case study design. The location of the research was carried out around St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang. The data collection technique in this study uses observation and interviews. The data analysis technique used is Miles and Huberman's data analysis technique which consists of four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion or verification. The results showed that the role of the Catholic Church carried out by St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang in overcoming poverty is by providing employment, educational assistance, basic necessities to the surrounding community, holding free medical examinations, and planning a house renovation assistance program. The form of the role of the Catholic Church carried out by St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang is able to provide benefits and have an impact on the surrounding community in overcoming poverty.

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Introduction

Poverty is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Poverty is a condition where there is no access that a person has to resources to meet his or her life needs (Fahmi, 2021; Fuady et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2022). Poverty can affect various aspects of life and is caused by various factors. Poverty is caused by several factors such as low education (Ramadanisa & Triwahyuningtyas, 2022; Wahab & Sudirman, 2023), lack of job opportunities (Santoso & Setyowati, 2023; Umar et al., 2023), and low income (Maulana et al., 2022; Ramadanisa & Triwahyuningtyas, 2022).

Poverty is a problem faced and experienced by the whole world, including in Indonesia. Poverty in the world currently reaches 9% of the world's total population (World Bank Open Data, 2023). Meanwhile, poverty in Indonesia reaches 9.36% of the total population or 25.90 million people (Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 2023). The number of poor people in Malang Regency is 251.36 thousand people with a percentage of 9.45% (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Malang, 2023). This makes Malang Regency rank eighth in the percentage of poor people out of 38 districts/cities in East Java. Based on data Landungsari Village Government (2020), the poverty rate in Landungsari Village reached 18% of the 2492 families in Landungsari Village.

St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel is one of the chapels in Dau District, Malang Regency and is included in the Parish of the *Santa Perawan Maria* from *Gunung Karmel (SPMGK)* Malang. The existence of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Malang Chapel is expected to help the community in improving the economy and alleviating poverty (Muslim, 2016). Based on the remarks at the inauguration of the chapel by the Regent of Malang Regency, he emphasized that the hope that the chapel can be a benefit for the surrounding community and can revive the community's economy (Suryono, 2023). This speech is in line with the efforts that have been made by the Catholic Church in responding to the problems that exist around it.

The Catholic Church is actively involved in efforts to overcome the problems that exist in the world. This is evidenced by the issuance of the Church's Social Teachings. The Church's Social Teaching is all kinds of documents or encyclicals about the just order of society and how the Church responds to the social problems that are occurring (Makiliuna et

al., 2024; Viktorahadi et al., 2021). The Church's Social Teaching provides an appeal in the form of guidelines from the moral and spiritual point of view of Christianity in assessing policies to defend human dignity which is the image of God (Chandra, 2022). The Encyclical on Social Teachings of the Church began with the publication of Rerum Novarum in 1891, Quadragesimo Anno in 1931, Mater et Magistra in 1961, Pacem in Teris in 1963, Gaudium et Spes in 1965, Populorum Progressio in 1967, Octogesima Adveniens in 1971, Convenientes Ex Universo in 1971, Evangelii Nuntiandi in 1975, Redemptor Hominis in 1979, Laborem Exercens in 1979, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis in 1987, and Centesimus Annus in 1991 (Chandra, 2022; Riyanto, n.d.). The encyclical is the Church's response to the problems that are happening in the world. The encyclical is still relevant to the current state of the world, even though it was published a few years ago.

The majority of encyclicals in the Church's Social Teaching respond to the problem of poverty, but there are several encyclicals that focus on poverty, namely the encyclical Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno, Mater et Magistra, Populorum Progressio, Octogesima Advenis, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis and Centesimus Annus. In the encyclical, it is explained how the Church's view of the problem of poverty caused by various things according to the development of the times and the Church's proposals in overcoming existing problems. In addition to the encyclical in the Church's Social Teachings, the essence of the teaching of Jesus Christ is the love and love contained in the Bible. The Old and New Testament Bibles reveal God's partiality towards the poor and suffering by calling for a struggle for social justice. The form of love taught by God is a guideline that continues to be firmly held by Catholics. This love can be manifested by Catholics in the joint involvement of the weak, poor, and suffering (Kwirinus & Peri, 2023; Riawan, 2021). Catholics in the area of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel took part in efforts to overcome poverty that occurred in the Landungsari Village area. This call confirms that Catholics still continue to adhere to one of the teachings of Jesus Christ, namely love for others and the Social Teaching of the Church. Catholics of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel Malang have carried out many social activities, both individual and group, in an effort to overcome poverty that occurs around the chapel area. Therefore, the discussion of the role of religion, especially Catholicism, in alleviating poverty is an interesting thing to study in the Landungsari community.

The role of religion in overcoming poverty has been carried out by many researchers such as the Benefits of Money Waqf to Overcome Poverty (Rinawati, 2021), Islamic Philanthropy in Poverty Alleviation (Hayati & Soemitra, 2022), The Role of Sharia Maghasid Values in Poverty Alleviation in the Midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Nur & Shodigin, 2022), The Church's Role in Responding to Poverty (Latumahina, 2021), The Role of the Church in the Economy of the Church and the Church's Efforts in Improving the Economic Empowerment of the Church (Silitonga, 2023), The Role of the Church in Minimizing Poverty in the Gereja Masehi Injili in Minahasa (GMIM) Solagratia Matani Congregation (Tarumingi & Mawitjere, 2024). Religion provides an important role for society to act, so it is a good thing if poverty alleviation activities are based on religious values. The role of the Catholic Church in this case as a small community of Catholics who are in direct contact with the village community has not been explained in depth in previous research. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the role of the Catholic Church in overcoming poverty in the community around the area of St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang. This research is important to be carried out because religion as a social construction of the people can play a role in overcoming poverty around the area of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel. Thus, the results of this research can be used practically in providing alternative strategies to solve poverty problems in villages. Likewise, theoretically, this research can be used to fill the literature gap about the role of religion in alleviating poverty.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. The design used is a case study. A qualitative approach with a descriptive type and a case study design was chosen in order to describe the situation in the field in depth and specifically regarding the analysis of the role of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel in overcoming poverty in the community around the chapel area. The location of the research was carried out around the Chapel of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Malang. This location was chosen because based on the results of observations, it was found that the majority of the people around the chapel were still in poor conditions and the chapel played an active role in overcoming community poverty by carrying out social action activities.

The data collection technique in this study uses observation and interviews. Primary data was taken from interviews with resource persons. In addition, other primary data was obtained through observation by going directly into the field. This was done to strengthen information dan research data (Rahman et al., 2021). Secondary data was obtained from literature studies related to the study being studied. The literature study was carried out by reviewing articles or books related to the role of the Catholic Church in overcoming poverty in the community. The key informant is administrator of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel and the supporting informant is community around the chapel. The determination of informants in this study uses a purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because it is a data collection technique with certain considerations, namely people who are considered to know in depth the object to be researched.

The data analysis technique used is an interactive analysis technique (as shown in Figure 1) consisting of four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion or verification (Miles et al., 2014). Data collection is carried out by collecting all data results such as observation and interviews results obtained at the research location. Furthermore, data reduction is carried out from the data that has been collected. Data reduction was carried out by summarizing and selecting data that was in accordance with the main points of the research, namely the role of the Catholic Church in overcoming poverty in the community around the area of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel. Data reduction is carried out to provide a clear picture of the research. After reducing the data, the data is presented in the form of a description by including the actual conditions in the field. The last stage is to draw conclusions based on the data that has been obtained and processed.

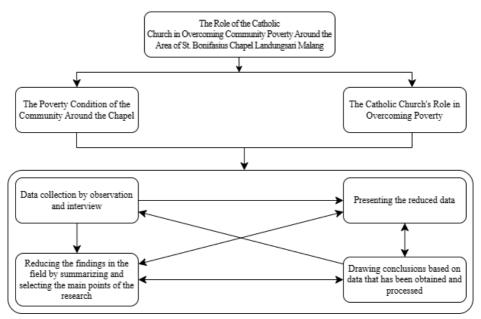


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram

Source: Customized Interactive Analysis Technique Flow (Miles et al., 2014)

Result and Discussion

The Poverty Condition of the Community Around the Chapel

Poverty is a condition where a person has difficulty meeting their life needs. This condition can happen to anyone, both rural and urban communities. The problem of poverty is a social problem that needs to be dealt with immediately so that it does not have a worse impact in the future. According to Tarumingi & Mawitjere (2024) divide poverty into four forms, namely absolute poverty, relative poverty, cultural poverty, and structural poverty. Absolute poverty occurs when a person has a low income that cannot be used to meet their living needs. Relative poverty occurs due to the impact of development policies that cause it to become poor. Cultural poverty occurs because of the attitude and culture of a person who is lazy, wasteful, does not want to develop, and is not creative in seeing the opportunities that exist. Structural poverty occurs when a person has difficulty accessing resources that do not support the improvement of welfare.

Based on the results of observations, it is known that the poverty condition of the community around the chapel is in the form of houses with narrow sizes and close to each other, the form of work owned is menial work, and difficulties in accessing educational and health facilities. Based on the results of the interview, it was found that poverty occurred in the community around the St. Bonifasius Landungsari chapel in Malang because the majority of the people around the chapel worked as daily laborers with uncertain incomes every day. This is as stated by informant H (47) as a daily worker in an interview that has been conducted.

... iyo mas ngeneki penghasilan ya gk tentu tergantung enek sing butuh nukang opo ngewangi liyane, nek masalah rego gak nentu mas, sak dikekine karo wong e ...

(Meaning: yes, this kind of income is not certain, depending on whether or not there is someone who needs a builder or other help, if the price problem is also uncertain depending on how much the person is given)

In addition, some people also work as city transportation drivers. However, they are not the owners of city transportation cars so they are required to pay city transportation car rentals every day. The rental rate for a city transportation car is between Rp. 70,000 – Rp. 150,000 depending on the owner and condition of the city transportation car. This was stated by informant T (52) as a city transportation driver in an interview conducted.

... yowes urip sopir ngeneki o mas, opo maneh nek randuwe mobil dewe, oleh e sedino kudu disetor nang bos e, setoran e yo lumayan gede mas sangang puluh ewu, nek ra nyukupi gawe setor yo dianggep utang dibayar pas narik mene ...

(Meaning: this is the life of a driver, especially one who does not have his own car, today's results must be deposited with the car owner, the deposit is also quite large at ninety thousand, if the money is not enough to deposit, it is considered a debt and paid tomorrow when working again)

Based on the interview, it explains that the occurrence of poverty in the community around the area of St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang is a form of absolute poverty that occurs due to low income making it difficult to fulfill daily life. The condition of their residence can also be considered mediocre. Based on the interview, they unanimously stated that "the important thing is to sleep and rest". This happens because the lack of income causes difficulties in renovating livable residences. They can only repair parts that are considered important to be repaired if there is damage such as a leaking roof in the rainy season.

... omah sing penting iso gawe turu ngaso mas ...

(Meaning: home can be used to sleep and rest is the most important thing)

Furthermore, H (47) said that,

Niat pengen ndandani omah enek mas, tapi yo ngenteni duwit e gatau ngelumpuk, kegawe butuhan liyane.

(Meaning: there is a desire to renovate the house, but the money is never collected, always used for other needs)

In contrast to H (47), T (52) argues that,

Omah iki tak syukuri tok wes mas, ndandani omah ragat e gk sitik, ndandani yo sing perlu-perlu ae, pokok sek iyup enak ...

(Meaning: already grateful to have this house, to renovate a house requires a lot of money, renovating the house is done as needed, so that the house is still comfortable to live in)

The informant's low education is also a cause of poverty. The informant said that they were only junior high school graduates so it was quite difficult to find a job with a high income. In addition, the spouses of the informants also have no income, resulting in the economy only relying on the informant with no additional income. This certainly exacerbates the poverty conditions experienced by the informants. Low education, lack of knowledge, and skills are the main factors that cause informants to be trapped in poverty (Jafar, 2021).

H (47) says,

Isone mergawe yo mek ngeneki mas, ape ngelamar nandinandi yo angel, ijazah mek SMP (Meaning: there is limited work that can be done, and it is also difficult to apply for a job, because I only have a junior high school diploma)

... bojoku ora mergawe mas dadi yo duwik cuma teko aku ...

(Meaning: my wife doesn't have a job, so the only income is from me)

T (52) says,

Aku mek lulusan SMP mas, biyen tau melu pelatihan ndek BLK tapi yo akhir e gak kegawe wes lali dadi yo ngeneki mas akhir e, bojoku yo nomah tok ra mergawe, kolo-kolo ngewangi nggolekno penumpang carteran tok mas

(Meaning: I am only a junior high school graduate, I once participated in job training at BLK but the results are not used because I had forgotten, my wife is only at home and does not have a job, occasionally helping to find charter passengers)

The poverty conditions experienced by H (47) and T (52) as residents of Landungsari Village occurred due to the low level of education, namely only junior high school graduates, a single income only from her husband, and low income. This is in line with research Tarumingi & Mawitiere (2024) Where it is mentioned that there are four forms of poverty, namely absolute poverty, relative poverty, cultural poverty, and structural poverty. The poverty conditions that occur in H (47) and T (52) are a form of absolute poverty. This happens because the poverty conditions experienced occur due to low income levels which cause the inability to meet their living needs. Based on the causal factors, the poverty experienced by H (47) and T (52) occurs due to natural factors that occur due to environmental conditions, lack of knowledge, and natural disasters (Rinawati, 2021). Lack of knowledge is one of the factors causing poverty experienced by H (47) and T (52) where both are only junior high school graduates. Low education is also one of the main factors in the occurrence of poverty, in addition to limited employment opportunities (Latumahina, 2021). As a result of low education, it limits the opportunities for H (47) and T (52) to apply for available jobs. Silitonga (2023) explained that low education is one of the factors causing poverty, namely the individual factor.

Individual factors that cause poverty are laziness, limited knowledge, and limited skills. Low education is one of the main factors causing poverty that continues to be raised by various researchers. This happens because the consequences of low education close various opportunities to apply for better jobs where the jobs available today require applicants to have high education and good skills.

The Role of the Catholic Church in Overcoming Poverty

The Catholic Church is a community of Catholics who believe in Jesus Christ. The Church is a forum for fellowship and building relationships with each other to get to know each other, share and support each other (Baskoro & Arifianto, 2021). The church has three duties known as the tripartite vocation of the church, namely Koinonia (fellowship), Marturia (witness), and Diakonia (serving) (Danukusumah et al., 2023; Zega, 2021). Koinonia means to be in fellowship by taking part together in forming one body of Christ. Koinonia or fellowship is contained in the Bible such as in Luke 5:10 about Jesus asking his disciples to fish together, 1 Corinthians 10:16 about fellowship in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper, Philippians 4:15 about giving part to others in the form of Paul preaching the gospel and the Philippians giving Paul a living (Setinawati, 2021). Marturia or witness by bearing witness to Jesus Christ in words and deeds. Marturia or witness is contained in the Bible such as Luke 24:48, Matthew 23:31 about the testimony of facts or truth, Luke 4:22, Heb. 2:4 about the good testimony of a person, Acts 23:11 about sending or preaching the gospel (Setinawati, 2021). Diakonia or serving with love to others in the form of service to the poor, sick, left behind, and suffering. Diakonia or serving is contained in the Bible as in Col 10:45 about the ministry of Jesus by giving His life, Acts 1:17-25 about the apostleship, Acts 6:4 about the ministry of the word, Acts 6:1 about table service (Setinawati, 2021). The Catholic Church's form of service to the poor is contained in the duties of the Church's Diakonia. The Catholic Church is responsible for serving the poor, the underprivileged, and the suffering.

The Catholic Church's Tri mission is carried out based on the teachings of Jesus, namely love. Love is the main teaching of Jesus that continues to be guided by Catholics in word and deed (Rakhman, 2023). In addition to the tri-duty of the Catholic Church and charity as a guideline for Catholics in serving, there is also the Church's Social Teaching as a

call for Catholics to continue to be able to participate and contribute to problems that occur in the world. The Church's Social Teaching is a document of the church's appeal and response to the problems that occur in the world (Hamu, 2024). The Church's Social Teachings that discuss poverty are contained in the encyclical Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno, Mater et Magistra, Populorum Progressio, Octogesima Adveniens, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis and Centesimus Annus (Riyanto, n.d.). In the encyclical Rerum Novarum discusses the poverty experienced by workers due to social justice problems (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-f). This encyclical was the first encyclical published in the Church's Social Teachings in 1891 against the backdrop of the industrial revolution that caused extreme poverty among workers.

The Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno discusses the principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity to regulate the structure of society to avoid disputes between classes (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-e). This encyclical was published in 1931 against the backdrop of the great economic depression in 1929. The Encyclical Mater et Magistra discusses the poverty experienced by developing countries which was published in 1961 against the background of the era of extraordinary poverty in developing countries (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-b). The Encyclical Populorum Progressio discusses the development of the nation and the relationship between rich and poor countries which was published in 1967 against the background of the era of many new countries and the threat of the marginalization process (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-d). The Encyclical Octogesima Adveniens discusses inequality between rich and poor countries, racial discrimination and alienation by consumerism published in 1971 against the backdrop of an economic recession that has an impact on the poor (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-c). The Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis discusses the changes that must be made in structures and mechanisms that are unfair and foster global solidarity (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-g). This encyclical was published in 1987 against the background of the era of ideological wars that occurred in the world. The Encyclical Centesimus Annus discusses the principle of special attention for the poor about the market system, free competition, and a liberal international economy (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.-a). This encyclical was published in 1991 against the backdrop of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

The role of the Catholic Church in responding to the problem of poverty can be guided by the tripartite duties of the Catholic Church, love, and the Church's Social Teachings. Based on the results of an interview with the administrator of St. Bonifasius Chapel, Landungsari Malang explained that the role of the Catholic Church carried out by the chapel in overcoming the problem of poverty in the community around the chapel is guided by the law of love taught by Jesus, the encyclical of the Church's Social Teachings, and practicing the tri-duty of the Catholic Church. The form of the Church's role in overcoming the problem of poverty in the community around the chapel that has been carried out is by providing jobs to the surrounding community, educational assistance, and basic necessities for the surrounding community. In addition, the chapel also often holds free health checks for the surrounding community. However, this activity is not a routine activity such as educational assistance and basic necessities for the community. Some of the activities that are being planned in overcoming the problem of poverty around the chapel area, according to the management of the St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel in Malang, are house surgery assistance. However, this social action activity for home surgery assistance is still under planning because it requires careful preparation.

The form of the role of St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel in Malang which has been carried out is in line with several studies where the role of religion in overcoming poverty can be done by providing jobs to work in religious institutions or houses of worship, educational scholarships, basic food assistance, and health assistance (Hayati & Soemitra, 2022; Latumahina, 2021; Nur & Shodiqin, 2022; Rinawati, 2021; Silitonga, 2023). The role of the chapel as a community of Catholics that is in direct contact with the village community gives more meaning. This happens because the chapel knows firsthand various things that happen in society. So that the role played by the chapel can be more effective in overcoming the poverty experienced by the surrounding community.

The role of religion in overcoming poverty can be one of the solutions in overcoming poverty. Based on the theory of social construction, religious teachings internalize in individuals, and become guidelines in behaving and acting. Religious teachings form a common meaning and understanding as a form of interaction that continues to be maintained. Ongoing and enduring interactions will shape the religious practices, beliefs, and norms that are lived by the people of that religion (Indriani et al., 2022; Syarifuddin et al., 2021). So that the role played by St. Bonifasius Landungsari Chapel Malang is the result of interaction and communication between individuals that form a common meaning and understanding. The role played by the chapel is the result of externalization, objectification, and internalization of Catholic religious teachings that produce joint actions and behaviors in overcoming existing problems based on Catholic religious teachings. This is in line with Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction (in Buton et al., 2021; Firdausi et al., 2020) Where the social construction process takes place with three simultaneous processes, namely externalization, objectification, and internalization which eventually become guidelines for individuals in behaving and acting.

Conclusion

The poverty experienced by the community around the St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang is a form of absolute poverty. This occurs because of low income so that they have difficulty in meeting their needs and difficulty accessing resources that can support welfare improvement. The role of the Catholic Church in overcoming poverty in the community around the area of St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang is by providing employment, educational assistance, basic necessities to the surrounding community, holding free medical examinations, and planning a house renovation assistance program. The form of the role of the Catholic Church carried out by St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang is able to provide benefits and have an impact on the surrounding community in overcoming poverty. This happens because the role carried out by the chapel is in accordance with the conditions experienced by the surrounding community. So that the role of the Catholic Church carried out by St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang can contribute to overcoming the poverty that occurs. This research is still limited to the role of the Catholic Church carried out by St. Bonifasius Chapel Landungsari Malang in overcoming poverty based on the teachings of Love, the Social Teachings of the Church, and the Tri-duty of the Catholic Church. Thus, recommendations for further research can examine the structural role of the Church in overcoming poverty that occurs as a problem in the world.

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