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Research paper

Developing Civil Society: Can we Expect NGO ?

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Abstract

Democracies in some countries have stagnated because civil society failed to play their roles as controlling, watching, influencing policy, and so forth. The existence of civil society can not be separated from the character of society. It means, developing civil society needs to consider the character of society.In Indonesia, some scholarsview one of civil society's primary activity through observing NGO activities, demonstrations, and so forth. Institutionally, we can refer to them as civil society organizations. Socially, however, NGOs have trouble being part of society and society has no values to take people on demonstrations. In those situations, does it make sense to see the organizations and activities as civil society activities?. Based on evidencefrom some rural areas in Indonesia, this article will show that certain kinds of community leaders have major opportunities to lead civil society. They have strong social capital to play a major role in civil society, similar to Putnam's argument about social capital in civil society. While not perfect, these community leaders nonetheless complete some of the functions in civil society and, with their social capital, help develop civil society while NGO's have struggled to perform these same functions.

Keywords: *Developing; Civil Society; NGO; Community Leaders*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, democracy is seen as ideal way for operating relation between state and citizen. Most of countries in the world claim themselves to be democracies [1], including Indonesia. Even during Soeharto regime, the government told that they implemented a democracy which calledas Pancasila democracy [2], although many scholars judge it as an authoritarian regime, by exercising control over social and political forces [3-4]. The government was very powerful over citizen, without giving a chance to citizen to control the government.

What the government did, and economic crisis in 1997, triggered a successful people movement [5] that take political change in 1998, from Soeharto regime to democracy era. The moment became a door to build democracy in Indonesia. Then, political freedom is opened widely, especially in chance for people to control government. In early days of the new era, we called it as Reformationera, euphoria of political freedom has given opportunity for rising new political forces, which it was not possible in Soeharto regime. Practice of three party system and engineered election in Soeharto regime has turned into multi-party and free elections. Many organizations such as NGOor other forms of community organizations,emerge as political force which have purpose to control the government.

As we know, NGOs are declared as civil society organization. Even, NGO is sometimes used interchangeably with civil society organization (NGO) [6]. Thus, NGOs have to play function of civil society. Refer to some scholars, civil society have ability to influence political system [7]. In fact, more than a decade after the movement, we still have less NGO that play civil society's function well, especially in influencing government. In Indonesia, many NGOs tent to have an affair with government, so it take democracy to stagnant level [8]. NGO failed to represent public interest and failed to reach state institutions [9]. That was shown by the 2014 Indonesian Democracy Index [10], where political participation in decision-making and overseeing got bad point(50, 28/ Bad). Some researchers shown NGOs failed to be bottom up movement [11], profiteering motives; lack of funds andlack of professionalism, the ideology is unclear [12-13], and index of advocacy is in low level [14]. Those confirmed Edelman's survey that people trust government more than NGO [15].

Based on Indonesian democracy index [8] shown that, generally, democracy in Indonesia experienced fluctuations. On a scale of 0 to 100, in the 2009 Indonesian democracy index, Indonesia got 67.30 points, down to 63.17 points in 2010, then up to 65.48 in 2011, down to 62.63 points in 2012, then up to 63.68 in 2013. In 2014, Indonesia increase to 73.04. But the performence still take Indonesia to moderate category. The increasing from 2013 – 2014 was influenced by changes of three aspects of democracy: (1) Increasing of Civil Liberties from 79.00 into 82.62, (2) Increasing of Political Rights from 46, 25 to 63.72, and (3) Increasing of Democratic Institutions from 72.24 to 75.81.

In 2015, Indonesia has decreased to 72.82. The decreasingwas influenced by three aspects of democracy. (1) Decreasing of Civil Liberties from 82.62 to 80.30, (2) Increasing of Political Rights from 63.72 to 70.63, and (3) Decreasing of Democratic Institutions from 75.81 to 66.87. The main point we needs to highlight is,democratic institutions can not be a variable that increase the democratic index, even tending to take to lower index.In general, by assessing the performance of NGOs, some people who interested to Indonesian democracy judged Indonesia has no good democracy.

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2. Literature Review

Referring to cases above, we need to discuss concept of civil society, and to see if we can consider NGO as civil society.Conceptually, we can call NGOas CSO.'NGO' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'CSO', but NGOs should be properly understood as a subset of CSOs [11]. Whether NGO is used interchangeably with CSO or subset, in fact NGO often was seen as embodiment of civil society. So they have to play functions of civil society. We can start with rethinking about concept of civil society.Civil society was interpreted interpreted as a society that has ability to influence political system [15].Accordingly, civil society can be formed in autonomous and independent groups to interact with the state (Purdue, 2007b). Civil society is also described as an independent and autonomous from state power and social benefit-oriented (Kim, 2007). The shape of civil society also was seen as an institutional network that reflects society [8]. Green defines civil society as "... the venue for the aggregation and communication of societal interests" [16].

From the difference of scholars in defining civil society, at least we have some basic things in civil society; society, independent, social benefit, and influencing government. It means that civil society should be formed from society, by society, and for society, in order to interact with government. In this study, civil society refer to society which basically is not a formal institution. It is possible that civil society is not formal institution, but still have to come from community. The institution should act as a social network [17]

Important features of civil society are independence, which collective decisions are not controlled by government. In order to actualize the collective interest, civil society should have sufficient resources to maintain independence from political interests of government. One of resources is funding. Civil society which has independent funding, will block chances to depend on other parties, such as government. Use of outside resources, such as funding, raises ambivalence position of civil society, which can betray the independence [17].

Other features of the civil society are, able to influence or control the government. Lobbying ability, a strong position when face government, should be a precondition that must be held by civilsociety. That can be directed directly to the government, the political superstructure institution, as well as through other infrastructure agencies such as political parties. Even, civil society can help unlock the limitations of political parties and representative institutions [18].

In addition to the features mentioned above, civil society must be able to communicate with the government. This ability is not to demonstrate the ability of civil society to influence the government or to catch people's interest, but rather to demonstrate the ability of civil society to show itself as a communication channel. Civil society must reflect the channel, which ensures that the information from both directions delivered to each.

One of main features is, civil society should have social benefit oriented. One of important reasons why civil society needs to be there is to savepublic interest to be accommodated in government policy. The public interest is simply understood as the social benefit. In another context, an civil society can act as an actor that develop society, such as providing assistance to society.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of civil society is determined by the resilience of civil society to follow the change. Civil society can not emerge an instant and then disappear. The existence of civil society must be sturdy. Even at a more micro context, the establishment of civil society is an important element in controlling government institutions [19]. Learning from civil society in non-democracy regime, civil society can be an effective agent of political socialization. Civil society can provide specific insights to the public, so that people have enough knowledge to decide attitude.In authoritarian regime, Civil society can mobilize people to fight againt knowledges injected by governments [20].

In order to play its function, an institution of civil society is needed. Elements of Institution will explain how the civil society in practice. One of important elements in institution is leadership, such as the presence of a charismatic leader, who actually is individu with high sosial position, shows how civil society representing the society, even describing an collective action [23].Although civil society leaders tend to dominate , but the fact that they became reference for people can not be denied. His ideas can be easily accepted by society [21], and play a function in building issues in society [22]. Their existence also has significance when dealing with other social elites, in this case is political elite. Negotiations among the elite can be more dynamic, especially when collaborating to achieve goals, in same goals and different goal That is why, the institutions of civil society is key in achieving the goals [23].

What is needed for civil society? Social capital is important to build a civil society [24]. High social capital will influence public participation. Further Putnam explains what high social capital is, which refers to the relationship between individuals in society, social networks, trust and norms of mutual need, which leads to independence. The forms of social capital are regarded as a crucial factor in democratization.

An important lesson that can be drawn is, four elements of social capital, such networks, norms, trust, and resources, interconnected and overlapped to form an integral social capital which as foundation of civil society. When we refer to the social capital and elements of civil society above, so Putnam's argument about social capital in civil society can be applied to find a institution that has chance to be analyzed as civil society, which represent society, autonomous-independent, sturdy, able to influence government, being bridge between citizen and government, capable to provide political education, and certainly has public benefit oriented.

The high network , is a network that reflects the social network, meaning it involves the cooperation of individuals formed in daily life of society. This type of network is able to reflect the workings of society (representative). This network has chance to make the institution to be solid and established, and has sustainability. High norms are norms which can make persons in the network act like what they want. The norm would bind people to move together in the name of same values, which means that they shared commitment to act and attain aims.

The high resource is having good resources. In this context, ability to support the network independently will encourage autonomous and independent attitude. High trust is, among person believe that each person will do what they expect. Trust becomes a crucial element in the workings of institution. It include trust to follow, and attain expectations. As elements of social capital, it should again be emphasized that the four elements are inseparable, and overlap in a institution. With a simple sentence, based on a literature review, the working of civil society requires a high social capital , ie, a network that reflects society, strong norms in the network, trust between individuals, and have enough resources to drive the network.

3. Methodology

This article will answer some questions, whether NGOs have enough social capital to play the functions of civil society, then we can call them as embodiment of civil society? Are there institutions in society that have enough social capital? To answer that, we interviewsone hundred informantsduring 2016-2017 in two city; Pati and Demak. Both are cities in Java Island, Indonesia. Interviews were conducted to NGO activists, heads of government at village and district level, members of parliament, community members, and community leaders. We choosed NGOs based on list of NGO which government office have, then we

categorized them to NGO which had activities in the year, and did not have. We choose five in each sides, in two city. So we have twenty NGOs to be observed. We choosed one NGO leader and one member for interviewed. For members of parliament, we choosed ten persons randomly. For community members, we choose twenty persons randomly. For community leaders, we categorized them as economic leaders and religion leaders, then we choosed five persons in each side.

4. Findings

4.1. NGO but Not Really Society

As institution which embodiment of civil society, NGOs are conceptually born from society, but in fact it is not always. We found that most NGOs in the site do not have strong foundation for taking them on behalf of society. Putnam's argument can be used as an instrument to analyze it. In a network, NGOs are not socially connected to social structure of society. The majority of NGOs are operated by people who socially do not have strong ties in society, and even tend to be foreigners to society. Their involvement in daily social life is very weak. They look like having their own world that is not connected to daily life of society.

Indeed, people in NGOs are educated people, with good knowledge about democracy. But, they do not blend in with society. When we interviewed people, they did not have enough knowledge about people involved in the NGOs, even they did not know about the NGOs. This fact gives us an understanding, that as an organization, the NGOs do not reach the society.

By norm, NGOs and communities are not tied by strong norms. It is actually consequence of the weakness of NGOs network, so NGOs and society are not connected. Socially NGOs have no obligation to interact and care to society, and people do not expect NGOs. Thus, NGOs do not have social pressures to think about community issues. The results of interviews with some NGO leaders indicate that people rarely discusses issues to NGOs. Interviews to people indicate that NGOs are not right place to discuss social issues.

In trust, NGOs do not have trust from society. The social distance between NGOs and the society, make people to do not have reason totrust NGOs as a society-based organization. Some people who interviewed showed that they can not belive NGOs. The worst comment is, NGOs are organization which seeking personal benefit in name of society organizations. When NGOs criticized the government, it is interpreted as seeking position for personal gain.

The bad comments can actually be traced back from the background of NGO activists. Most people who operated NGOs did have no enough money. It means, no financial power. Some NGO activists in the research sites, are jobless, they did not have job for making money. Simple assumptions submitted by respondents, they can not pay for their daily needs, so how they can think about society. That is, financially, NGOs are weak. However, NGOs have good human resources. Most of NGO activists are educated people, and understand how the government works. They have sufficient ability to process information from the public.

Conclusion of this section is, NGO does not have enough social capital to act on behalf of society. The weak social ties between NGOs and the society, the absence of binding norms among them, the low level of trust from society to NGOs, and the lack of financial resources, make NGOs unable to play the function of civil society. NGOs appear to be outsider of society'sdaily life. Even, we did not have enough reason to call them as NGO. NGO as institution, still have problem in leadership. Commonly, NGO leaders did not come from community leaders. They are common people socially, even people did not know them.

4.2. Does Society have Institution (Network) Which has the Social Capital?

To find out who has potential or even has played the function of civil society, we need to do some stages of discussion. First, we need to recognize characteristics of society. Civil society is about society, NGO is ideally part of society, so we need to understand the background of society. Second, we need to analyze social capital of each social actors in society. We will distinguish the actors in some categorize, based on their social positions, show their social capital, then discuss it with opportunity to play the function of civil society. Third, finally, we will map activities of actors that can be considered as civil society activities.

4.2.1. Characters of Society

Traditionally, Java society still adheres to stratification , it reger to there are groups that occupy higher social status and lower social status. The existing social stratification can be distinguished between formal and non-formal background. Formal background refers to stratification which influenced by positions in government offices. A person occupied a social status because he or she occupied a government office, such as village head, neighborhood head, civil servant, then "common citizens" who did not positions in government offices placed in lower status. Non-formal background refers to stratification which influenced by social factors. A person occupied a social status because daily social dynamics, such as rich persons, village elders, religion leaders, big family leaders, then "common people" who did not high social values in society placed lower status. Because we are discussing civil society, which without governmental persons, so we only talk about persons in stratification vased on non formal background, and will skip persons in stratification based on formal background.

Referring conceptual discussion above, we will focus on persons who occupied higher social status. Why we do it is, one of important elements in institution is leadership, such as the presence of a charismatic leader, who actually is individu with high sosial position, shows how civil society representing the society, even describing an collective action [25]. We distinguished the persons in four background. One, economic background, which placed rich persons on higher social status, and labour or people who need rich persons on lower status.Two, religion background, which placed religion leaders on higher status, and santri (Islamic students or followers) on lower status. Three, age background, which placed village elders on higher social status, and youngers on lower status. Four, family background, which placed person who has more values on higher social status, and less values on lower social status. The values refer to whatever that makes family members respect others, such as higher family level in hierarchy, even financial resources or knowledge.

In some societies, such as in Pati, place rich persons and village elders on higher social status than religion leaders and family leaders. The degree is shown by how much they are used as a reference by people. The social dynamic placed the rich persons and the elders as primary reference. Different evidences were shown in other type of society, such as in Demak, placedreligion leaders (kyai)on higher social status than rich persons, elders, and family leaders. The degree is shown by how much they are used as a reference by people. The social dynamics, placed the Kyai as primary reference.

In daily social life, people in the two types have different patterns of interaction among persons in each positions. In Pati, persons who occupied higher social status mingle with"common people" who occupied lower status, and did not make distance among them. This was demonstrated by high frequencyof having time together between rich persons and common people, in casual forums that we called it as *Jagongan*. Thus, pattern of interaction that arises is the intimacy between social classes. The intimacyis factor which make higher

person have influence larger than their background. They often go beyond their social skills. For example, the rich person basically becomes a reference on economic stuff. Because of the intimacy, the rich person becomes a reference on various social issues such as politics, not only on economic issues. What happens in Pati is according to character of coastal society, it is equal.

Unlike in Pati, Demak society has low frequency of interaction among person in each social status. Persons in higher status, in this case is Kyai, have a distance with common peoples, even with their Islamic students or followers. The religion leaders are difficult to mingle with persons in lower status. This is indicated by absence of *Jagongan* between religion leaders and common people or their followers. They only have time together in Islamic study forum, not casual forum. Thus, the interaction pattern that emerges is awkwardness among social classes. The awkwardness is factor which person in higher status can not influence on other social issues. The religion leaders often did not become reference on political issues. They only became regerence on religion issues.

Based on evidence above, we can conclude that society in the sites have some characters. First, each society has different background for person who occupy high social status. In Pati, rich persons occupied highest status. In Demak, religion leaders occupied highest status. Both have different interaction patterns. Rich persons have high frequency of interaction with persons in lower social status. Otherwise, religion leaders have low frequency of interaction. It can explain why a community leaders able to come in various social issues, but others only able to come in specific issues according to their background.

4.2.2. Who has Social Capital ?

By analyzing the four aspects of social capital – networks, norms, trusts, and resources – we can examine which actor has the highest level of social capital. Our research shows that in some areas wealthy individuals have higher social capital and thus larger social networks than others (e.g., religious leaders in Demak). This is because wealthy individuals interact more often in daily social life in some areas and that there is less social distance between them and others. As discussed above, wealthy individuals are often involved in casual discussion forums with people of all social classes. These often include individuals from a variety of backgrounds such as labourers, religious people, business people, and even gamblers and drunkards. There are few social norms that prevent them from interacting across a variety of such individuals. This means that wealthy individuals (at least in some areas) feel freer to meet and interact with whomever they wish. They do not live separate from the community but often actively seek out relationships with a variety of people in the community.

By contrast, religious leaders (at least in Demak) have less involvement in casual discussion forums and other community events. They often only meet their students and followers at Islamic forums and rarely meet outside of these circles of acquaintances. There exist some norms that prevent them from meeting and interacting with others, especially gamblers and drunkards in the community. The total population within their respective communities often vastly outnumber the followers and students of these religious leaders. Likewise for elders or members of notable families, their personal social networks are smaller. Moreover, the younger generation are beginning to minimize and even forget the role of village elders when it comes to social and political issues. Thus, like religious leaders, these village elders often become more reclusive within the larger community. Village elders often do not seek out interactions with others, though they will provide assistance if others come to them for advice. Regarding members of notable families, these individuals are likewise not large in number, representing at most 20 percent of the people in a village.

Turning to the second aspect of social capital (norms), the Javanese community has norms that tend to be associative. These associative norms can take many forms such as solidarity, obedience, understanding, and respect. Actually, all community leaders are able to construct these associative norms and are the object and subject of these norms. As the object of these norms, community leaders can earn the respect, loyalty, and obedience of the community. However, community leaders also have a responsibility to be the subject of these norms by being understanding and generous with the larger community.

Based on some of our interviews, the degree of the norms differs across community leaders. Wealthy individuals have more pressure as the subject of norms than do religious leaders or others. Economic issues are a social problem with have a larger and more widespread reach. The public expects wealthy individuals to help solve them. For example, members of the community often approach wealthy individuals when they need money or other financial assistance. Thus, there is a social expectation for wealthy individuals to be generous. In contrast, religious leaders and village elders are not expected to solve economic problems within their communities. Put simply, common people will rarely approach a religious leader for financial assistance. One respondent, for example, explained that the public has an obligation to support the religious leader, not vice versa. When people seek out the advice and assistance of religious leaders, it is almost always regarding a religious issue. Yet these types of religious problems are rare in most societies and thus religious leaders have a smaller role in assisting the overall community.

Can the social capital held by community leaders be viewed as an opportunity? Which individuals have higher social capital? To answer these questions, we will analyze the possible relationship between social capital discussed above and the elements of civil society. Networks, norms, trust, and resources are viewed in the context of civil society as autonomous, independent, representative of the community, sturdy, and the ability to have an intermedia effect on influencing government and also be oriented towards benefiting the public. The social status held by community leaders is aligned with their network performance. These networks can help community leaders to represent the broader society. The network surrounding a community leader can be considered as a community itself. IN addition, the social structure that helps maintain an individual as a leader does not develop immediately but rather through a long social process. This extended process is what can make a community leader's network strong and long-lasting. Who has the largest social network? Based on the above analysis, it appears that wealthy individuals have a better chance of representing society.

On economic issues, wealthy individuals obviously have more influence. Their greater financial resources make them independent and autonomous from financial aid provided by government. In fact, this financial power can be used to mobilize the public either to pressure the government or to develop their own communities. Because NGOs often lack sufficient financial resources, which makes them more easily influenced by the government. Some NGOs we interviewed are known as "red plate NGOs". That is, the existence of these NGOs tend to represent a tool of government bureaucracy legitimacy. In contrast, religious leaders and other community leaders lack this same financial power and often seek financial assistance from the government.

Turning to trust, community leaders tend to hold approximately the same position in society. We did not find significant differences in the level of trust placed in community leaders by society. People tend to trust wealthy individuals, religious leaders, village elders, and others approximately the same. This trust instilled in community leaders by the people provides opportunities for the community leaders to bridge the public's aspirations and the government's policies. With a higher level of interaction within the community, these leaders can obtain information about problems facing the citizens in their communities. Community leaders of all types are thus better situation to discuss social problems of the citizens, in other words. On the other hand, government often finds it difficult to reach out directly to society in order to identify problems facing the community. The government could, therefore,

look to the help of community leaders for gathering information about which problems are of greatest concern for the citizens. This would provide more accurate information compared to a team of government employees and would appear to be a more effective and efficient way for government to uncover problems within these communities.

Their higher social positions as community leaders also creates social pressure for these leaders. In Javanese society, status as a community leader is the result of social dynamics. People thus have an expectation of those with higher social status and an individual cannot obtain the status of a leader without meeting or addressing these expectations. The expectations of the people, and often the dependence of the people on the leaders, is what puts the person in a higher social status. Thus, community leaders are expected to help resolve social problems within their respective societies. In their positions as leaders, these individuals are unable to refuse to listen, understand, and be the face of their communities. The point is that this social pressure encourages, even forces in some cases, community leaders to act for the public benefit. If community leaders do not care about society and are not active in helping to resolve societal problems, they will lose legitimacy and their status in society will decline.

Our conclusion is thus that community leaders who are wealthy individuals have a better chance of fulfilling the roles of civil society than do community leaders with other backgrounds. This is because they have higher social capital to work on behalf of society. With this social capital, community leaders who are individually wealthy, institutionally speaking, are able to be strong, independent, sturdy, and better able to bridge the gap between citizens and government. They are, moreover, often forced by their status to be oriented towards the public benefit.

4.2.3. Do they Already Fulfill the Role of Civil Society?

Interviews with several government officials and leaders indicated that community leaders often pressure them to enact certain policies or programs. These interactions often occur on a personal level. Community leaders contact the head of the government agency or elected official personally, in other words. Two examples can illustrate this point. First, after severe floods in one area in Demak, one of the community leaders directly contacted the government officials and asked them to send food and evacuation facilities. Second, in Pati, several public infrastructure projects (especially roads) were created and completed because community leaders contacted government officials personally requesting this assistance.

Moreover, we should note that the public contacted the community leaders and encouraged them to contact the government on their behalf. The community leaders felt direct pressure from their respective societies to take a leadership role and secure government assistance on behalf of the public. Their role as intermediaries also did not go unnoticed by the community. Our interviews indicate that several members of the community felt strongly that the government assistance was the direct result of their community leaders pressuring government officials. The increased the trust that the community has for the leaders, increasing these leaders' social status within that community. This reciprocal relationship is mutually reinforcing with citizens looking to community leaders who already have higher social status to help them resolve problems, the community leaders contacting government officials on behalf of the citizens, and citizens developing greater trust in their leaders and thus increasing the leaders' respect and esteem within their respective communities

Beyond personal interactions between community leaders and government officials, the government has also provided formal instruments for community leaders to participate in governing. In Indonesia, one example of this would be *Musrenbang*, which is a forum to discuss development issues and planning. Conceptually, *Musrenbang* has become a reference for development programs and exists at various levels of government. The type of forum that is most connected with local society occurs at the village level (*Musrenbang Desa*). The village government organizes this forum by actually inviting community leaders, who are then given an opportunity to articulate the problems and needs of their respective communities. The expectation from these forums is that community leaders, as people who live in their areas and interact with citizens in their daily lives, can provide more accurate information about the needs and problems of the citizens in these areas.

5. Conclusion

Our analysis above leaders to the conclusion that NGOs often lack the social capital to fulfill the functions of civil society. The weakness of their networks results in their inability to represent society, to reach citizens within that society, and thus makes them less effective as an intermediary between government and society. Also missing from NGOs involvement are the societal norms that would lead NGOs to feel a sense of personal responsibility to the society and, conversely, for citizens to have expectations of the NGOs to resolve their problems. They also lack the same amount of trust that citizens place in community leaders and citizens often do not consider NGOs as the best representatives for discussing their social problems. Finally, NGOs also lack the financial resources that can make them independent and autonomous from government, let alone to help the NGOs mobilize society for collective action.

While NGOs struggle to fulfill the role of civil society, our results strongly suggest that community leaders, especially wealthy individuals, have the high levels of social capital to serve this function. They have large social networks that can help them better represent their communities. They are bound by norms and trust which creates pressure on them to be oriented towards the public's benefit and also creates pressure for them to serve as intermediaries between society and government. And because wealthy individuals are financially independent, they possess greater autonomy from government than do NGOs that can build trust within the community and even help mobilize society for collective action. We believe that these community leaders can better fulfill the basic functions of civil society better than NGOs have done and are more effective at influencing government for the public benefit and helping to resolve economic and social problems facing their respective communities. section you should present the conclusion of the paper. Conclusions must focus on the novelty and exceptional results you acquired. Allow a sufficient space in the article for conclusions. Do not repeat the contents of Introduction or the Abstract. Focus on the essential things of your article.

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