

Javanese Culture, Bureaucratic Formalism, and Child Participation in Development Planning

Sri Yuliani and Rahesli Humsona
Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
sriyuliani63@staff.uns.ac.id

Keywords: Javanese Culture, Bureaucratic Formalism, Children Participation.

Abstract: It is not easy to involve children in development planning in a Javanese culture region. This research aimed to find out the effect of Javanese culture on children capacity to participate actively in development planning and the capacity of bureaucratic apparatus to support the active participation of children in development planning. The informants were selected purposively consisting of Surakarta Children Forum's members, local government institutions, and related NGOs. Data analysis employed an interactive analysis encompassing: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The result of research reveals that Javanese cultural values concerning the relation of children to adults and the meaning of power affected children's capacity of participating actively in development planning discussion. In Javanese culture, adults have dominant position in public decision making so that children voice their aspirations reluctantly and not confidently in development planning forum. The center of power in Javanese culture is superior; this view contributes to the stronger bureaucratic formalism so that government apparatus conceives that children participation in development is limited to fulfill bureaucratic rule only rather than based on the commitment to fulfill the children's right in order to accommodate their aspiration in development program.

1 INTRODUCTION

Children and youth are important resources to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda in 2030. The world population dominated by young people become the key factor to economic growth, life quality improvement, and social welfare and justice. The number of world population up to 2017 was 7.6 billion, 42 percent of this total number is children and youth. Nearly 40% of world youth population lives in developing countries (1.8 billion children and 1.1 billion youth). Approximately 87% of children and youth living in the developing countries faces limitation access to resources, education, training, job opportunity, and business opportunity (World Population Prospects, 2017; Youth Participation in Development, 2017).

As a third part of the world population, youth's interests and voices should be accommodated in development program. Regarding to that matter, United Nations had established Convention on the Right of the Child (2017) which is in Article 12 states that the countries ratifying the convention should obligatorily ensure the children's right to express their opinion freely about everything pertaining to or affecting the children, corresponding to children's

age and maturity. This policy becomes a foundation to recognize child participation right in development planning to design development program according to children's rather than adults' need perspective.

The Convention on the Right of the Child is the UN's convention ratified by nearly all states in the world (except USA and Niger). However, in reality many countries have not fully implemented the mandate of the convention (Harper and Jones, 2009; Asker and Gero, 2012; The State of the World's Children, 2016). Children's right to participate and to be heard for their voice in development planning is fulfilled only to comply with the regulation and procedure or formality's demand (Checkoway et al., 1995; Day et al., 2011; Yuliani et al., 2017) or Arnstein (1969) calls it *tokenism* in which children has as if been given opportunity or medium of channeling aspiration, but has not been given the opportunity of formulating their own opinion. This model is not really participative.

Yuliani, Haryanti and Humsona's study on the participation of Forum Anak (Child Forum) in Development Planning Discussion in Surakarta since 2012 until 2017 identified that the participation of Forum Anak in development planning can be said as still on quasi participation level, according to Arnstein

(in Hart, 1992), recalling that despite its establishment in 2008, until today – 2017 – not all Child Forum are involved and listened to actually for their voice in all stages of Development Planning Discussion.

Children participation is affected by many factors. One of which is social-cultural background. Therefore, in relation to children's capacity of making decision in development planning or policy, Sinclair (in Brady, 2007) recommends the social environment factor to be taken into account.

Alderson (2008) stated that children's understanding and competency are determined more by experience, culture and family life than by their age. Moreover, Hart (1992) states that the child's freedom of expression and participation in community issues may often be contrary to the child-rearing attitudes of the child's parents or caretakers.

Child participation in development planning in Surakarta is inseparable from the effect of Javanese social-cultural values, particularly the relation between adults and children and Javanese view on power highly respecting the position of leader. Anderson (2007) states that power in Javanese culture is emphasized more on power concentration rather than on the problem of how the power should be used. Javanese cultural perception on the meaning of power does not support democratic culture development and Weber's rational modern bureaucracy.

This article will analyze further the effect of Javanese culture on children capacity of participating actively in development planning and bureaucratic (governmental apparatus) capacity to implement children's participation program in development planning.

2 METHODS

This research was a descriptive qualitative research. Informants were selected purposively consisting of administrators and members of *Forum Anak* in 5 Sub Districts and 1 *Forum Anak* at City level; *Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Perlindungan Anak dan Keluarga Berencana* (Community Empowerment, Women Empowerment and Child Protection Agency); Bappeda (Local Development Planning Agency of Surakarta City); *Forum Anak* builders and facilitators; and NGOs. This research also employed secondary data source taken from documents, archives, government regulations, newspapers, magazines and etc, either printed or electronic. Data collection was conducted using observation, in-depth interview, and focus group discussion. Data analysis

was carried out using an interactive model of analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1992) consisting of three components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Child Participation in development planning and Bureaucratic Formalism

Child participation is the involvement of a child in decision-making processes relating to their lives, which is implemented based on the awareness, understanding and maturity of the child's thinking (Article 12 of the Convention on the Right of the Child). Participation right relates to political affairs or an individual's or a community's right as an actor in governance. Hart (2002) mentions participation a foundation and an indicator of measuring democracy. Participation is the citizen's basic right.

According to Stoecklin and Bonvin (2014) participation is not only right but also process and instrument of developing capability and facilitating the fulfillment of human rights. Elstain (in Roche, 1999) states that children are not considered as the part of politics so far. Children are positioned to be the one instructed, requiring guidance and overseeing, as they are still considered as incapable of solving their own problem. Such perception is not in line with participation concept and children's right assumed to have an ability of expressing their own need and interest.

The adults' view on children as adolescent who have not been able to make public decision cause the development policy and program "adult focus" (Griffin in Roche, 1999; Matthew, Kirby, and Bryson in Cavet and Sloper, 2004; Frank, 2006; Sinclair in Brady, 2007; Alderson, 2008). Therefore, the form of active participation of children, according to Shier (in Thomas 2007) can only occur when adults are willing to share power by means of delegating or transferring some of their power to children.

Cultural value factor becomes a main inhibitor in involving children in development planning deliberation. Children participation concept and children right in the Convention on the Right of the Child tending to reflect on democratic Western culture will likely in contradiction with traditional culture highly appreciating leaders and elders and will position children onto the position considered as

incapable of making their own decision (Hart, 1992; Frank, 2006; Day et al, 2011).

In traditional bureaucratic perspective, involving children in public decision making is something uncommon. However, as the law demands it, government apparatus should implement it merely to fulfill procedure, while its substantial function is unnecessarily obeyed. It is called as bureaucratic formalism.

Formalism is a characteristic of bureaucracy in a developing countries, Eisenstadt (1973) calls it Neopatrimonial a mixture of traditional Patrimonial type of domination with modern rational bureaucracy (Weber, 1978). Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2004) defines Neopatrimonial as an administrative system that seem to be modern and bureaucratic. Crouch (1979) explains that modernization process in Indonesia has not been able to remove the elements of traditional cultural values completely. Instead, traditional thinking and behavior even affect strongly the bureaucratic and political institutions. Riggs (1985) calls Neopatrimonial bureaucratic type as Sala Bureaucracy. Sala Bureaucracy is the prismatic community bureaucracy or the transition from traditional to modern community as characterized with heterogeneity, overlapping and formalism. Heterogeneity is characterized with the silent implementation of kinship and primordial bonds in bureaucratic management. Overlapping is characterized with the mixing of family affairs and office affairs, and there is no firm border between private and public affairs. Meanwhile, formalism is incompatibility of what is written in formal rule to the real practice.

3.2 Participation of Forum Anak Surakarta in Development Planning: Capacity and Obstacles

Forum Anak (child forum) is a communication forum managed by children and guided by government used to be a medium for children to participate in development planning. The membership of *Forum Anak Surakarta* consists of 12-18 year adolescent living and having activities in Surakarta. Currently, Forum Anak has been established in the whole 51 villages and 5 sub-district in Surakarta. However, in reality, not all child forums have enough capacity to participate actively in Development Planning Discussion (Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan or Musrenbang). There are some obstacles disabling the capacity of Forum Anak to function optimally. Internal obstacles coming from children are: *firstly*, the children's inadequate awareness and limited ability of articulating their aspiration and interest in

Musrenbang forum; *secondly*, children's reluctance, less self-confidence, fear of speaking before adults. Children also feel that the voice of a child is less considered by adults (Yuliani et al., 2016; 2017).

External obstacles coming from Surakarta City Government's support are: *firstly*, city government's bureaucracy still views the establishment of Forum Anak as the prerequisite or formalization to fulfill the rule's demand only, rather than to fulfill the substantial function of Children Forum. *Secondly*, DPRD (Local Legislative Assembly) has not considered the importance of children participation in development planning. Its attention focuses on physical or infrastructure development. *Thirdly*, the builders of *Forum Anak* have not functioned optimally yet because most builders are recruited from city government servants, most of which have been old, preoccupied with main duty in bureaucracy, and understand poorly the children's realm and rights. The quality of *Forum Anak* builder affects *Forum Anak* readiness to participate actively in *Musrenbang*.

3.3 The Effects of Javanese Culture and Bureaucratic Formalism on Child Participation

Many obstacles in optimizing role and capacity of *Forum Anak* indicate the discrepancies of role and interest between children and adults (bureaucratic apparatus and DPRD) in interpreting the importance of children participation in development. In bureaucratic perspective, children participation in development planning has not been considered as urgent. The builders of *Forum Anak* consider that facilitating *Forum Anak* is their additional duty, as their main duty is in bureaucracy. Meanwhile, DPRD views that the priority of public interest is given more to the physical infrastructure development rather than on the fulfillment of children rights to participate in and to enjoy the result of development.

Internal and external obstacles inhibiting children participation in *Musrenbang* is inseparable from the strong effect of Javanese culture highly respecting parents, adults and leaders. Javanese cultural value considers the male adults' position high as patron. Family head and male adult figure should be respected. In *Serat Wulangreh* by Paku Buwono IV (Harsono, 2005), there are five individuals to be respected obligatorily: (a) parents or fathers and mothers, (b) parents in law, (c) eldest brother, (d) teacher, (e) king. Children are obligatorily subjected to any decision or rule the parents make. (Endraswara, 2003).

In Javanese culture, women and children should obligatorily be submitted to decision and rule made by adults. It is also true for the position of children in

development planning discussion. Children do not understand the children's right in development planning, as democratic value in the relation between children and parents is not internalized since earlier in both family and society scopes.

Internal obstacle arises when children are not commonly involved in public decision making forum, so that they do not know what they should say in Development Planning Discussion. In Javanese culture, children are not conceived as an independent individual entitled to voice their opinion, aspiration, and interest in public decision. In public forum, children's interest is represented by adults. Such norm makes children having no bravery to express their wish and even to criticize their parents' or the adults' decision because it is considered as not proper or modest.

External obstacle includes the poor support from city government apparatus to encourage children participation in development inseparable from Javanese culture. Democratic culture is not in line with an aristocratic and paternalistic culture of neopatrimonial bureaucracy. Children participation in development planning is the form of power distribution in public decision making, a very democratic concept. An aristocratic power does not know a medium of listening to opinion and critique from servant and children. The tendency of bureaucratic apparatus to support *Forum Anak's* participation in Musrenbang merely to meet the regulation's demand is one of characteristics of Sala Bureaucracy namely formalism (Riggs, 1985).

4 CONCLUSIONS

This research concludes that the presence of Convention on the Right of the Child encouraging the recognition of children right and participation in development planning has not ensured that the children rights can be fulfilled in many countries that have ratified the convention. Convention on Children Right's assumption about children's world and freedom of expression is a part of western democratic culture, thereby in its implementation in contradiction with the Javanese values tending to be authoritarian and superior-oriented. To realize the children's right to participate in development planning, the measures to be taken are to reinforce the children's capacity in order to show the adults their positive contribution when they are involved in development planning and to make the stakeholders (particularly government apparatus as the power holder) aware of the importance of public administration based on democratic values and appreciation to human rights.

REFERENCES

- Alderson, P., 2008. *Young children's rights : exploring beliefs, principles and practice*, Jessica Kingsley Publisher. London.
- Anderson, B. R. O'G., 2007. The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture, in Claire Holt (ed.). *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Equinox Publishing (Asia) Pte Ltd. Singapore
- Arnstein, S., 1969. Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35, 216-224.
- Asker, S., Gero, A., 2012. *The Role of Child and Youth Participation in Development Effectiveness. A literature review*. The Institute for Sustainable Futures at University of Technology, Sydney, and ChildFund Australia.
- Brady, B., 2007. Developing Children's Participation : Lessons from a Participatory IT Project. *Children & Society*. Volume 21 pp.31-41.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., Goldsmith, A. A., 2004. Good Governance, Clientelism, and Patrimonialism: New Perspective on Old Problems. *International Public Management Journal*. 2004; 7, 2; ABI/INFORM Global pg. 163.
- Cavet, J., Sloper, P., 2004. *The participation of children and young people in decisions about UK service development*, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, Heslington, York, UK
- Checkoway, B., Pothukuchi, K., Finn, J., 1995. Youth participation in community planning: What are the benefits? *Journal of Planning Education & Research*. 14, 134-139. Sage Publications.
- Convention on the Rights of Children, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionallInterest/crc.pdf>.
- Crouch, H., 1979. Patrimonialism and Military Rule in Indonesia. *World Politics*. Volume 31 / Issue 04 , pp 571 – 587.
- Day, L., Sutton, L., Jenkins, S., 2011. *Children and young people's participation in planning and regeneration: a final report to the Ecorys Research Programme 2010-11*. UK: Ecorys. Retrieved from: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace.../children_planning_regeneration%5B1%5D.pdf
- Eisenstadt, S. N., 1973. *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrimonialism*, Sage Publications. Beverly Hills.
- Endraswara, S., 2006. *Falsafah Hidup Jawa*, Cakrawala. Yogyakarta.
- Harper, C., Jones, N., 2009. *Raising the game: mainstreaming children's rights*, ODI Briefing Paper 56. London, ODI.
- Harsono, A., 2005. *Tafsir Ajaran Serat Wulang Reh*, Pura Pustaka. Yogyakarta.
- Hart, R. A., 1992. *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*. UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

- Hart, R. A., 2002. Containing Children: Some Lessons of Planning for Play from New York City. *Environment and Urbanization*, 14(2), pp.135-148.
- Frank, K. I., 2006. The Potential of Youth Participation in Planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*. Volume: 20 issue: 4, page(s): 351-371. Sage Publishing.
- Miles, M., Huberman, M., 1992. *Analisis Data Kualitatif*. UI Press. Jakarta.
- Riggs, F. W., 1985. *Administrasi Negara-negara Berkembang. Teori Masyarakat Prismatis*, CV. Rajawali. Jakarta.
- Roche, J., 1999. Child : Right, Partisipation, Citizenship. *Childhood*. Vol.6 (4): 475 -493. Sage Publications.
- Stoecklin, D., Bonvin, J. M., 2014. *Children's Rights and the Capability Approach : Challenges and Prospects*, Springer Science+Business Media. Dordrecht
- Thomas, N., 2007. Towards a Theory of Children's Participation. *International Journal of Children's Rights* 15(2):199-218 · June 2007.
- Weber, M., 1978. *Economy and Society*, G. Roth & C. Wittich. University of California Press Ltd. London.
- World Population Prospects The Revision, 2017. *Key Findings and Advance Tables*, Bedminster Press. New York.
- The State of the World's Children, 2016. *United Nations*, New York.
- Youth Participation in Development, 2017. A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy Makers. Published by the DFID-CSO Youth Working Group. Retrieved from <http://www.restlessassets.org/wl/?id=umaETRcmVyn2VEpSrxu7JWWkHom5Ryli>.
- Yuliani, S., Humsona, R., Haryanti, R. H., 2016. Cultural Barriers in Involving Children in Development Planning The Case of Surakarta Children Forum. *Proceedings of International Conference on Integration for Regional Public Management (ICPM 2016)*. July 2016 473-475. Atlantis Press.
- Yuliani, S., Humsona, R., Haryanti, R. H., 2017. The participation of surakarta children forum in annual community consultations on development planning as democratic education media, in *Regionalization and Harmonization in TVET : Proceedings of the 4th UPI International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET 2016)*. November 15-16 2016. Bandung, Indonesia. CRC Press. Taylor & Francis Group. Routledge.