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Special Issue: REDEMOCRATIZING SOUTH EAST ASIA THROUGH CITIZEN, CORPORATION, AND GOVERNMENT ALLIANCES

Is There Room for More Social Responsibility in Asia's Business and Economic Turn Around?
 >>.....Joaquin L. Gonzalez III 1

Government and Citizen Engagement at the Local Level in Thailand: Nan Municipality's "Roundtables" and "Expert Panels"
 >>.....Alex M. Mutebi 16

The Penang, Malaysia Experiment in People, Private, and Public Partnerships: Process, Progress, and Procedures
 >>.....Tan Pek Leng 29

Citizens, Government, Business and the Transformation of a Ravaged Philippine City: The Case of San Fernando, Pampanga
 >>.....Edel C. Guiza 44

Initiating Participatory Democracy in Indonesia: The Case of Surakarta Municipality
 >>.....Pratikno 59

Asia Pacific: Perspectives is a peer-reviewed journal published at least once a year, usually in April/May. It welcomes submissions from all fields of the social sciences and the humanities with relevance to the Asia Pacific region.* In keeping with the Jesuit traditions of the University of San Francisco, *Asia Pacific: Perspectives* commits itself to the highest standards of learning and scholarship.

Our task is to inform public opinion by a broad hospitality to divergent views and ideas that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and the dissemination of knowledge unreservedly. Papers adopting a comparative, interdisciplinary approach will be especially welcome. **Graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit their work for consideration.**

* 'Asia Pacific region' as used here includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the Russian Far East.

Initiating Participatory Democracy in Indonesia: The Case of Surakarta Municipality

by Pratikno

Abstract

Citizen participation in public policy making was absent in Indonesia during the centralized and military-bureaucratic authoritarian regime, 1965-1998. Following the meltdown of the government in 1998, decentralization was promoted and the first free and fair election in the last 44 years was conducted. The emergence of civil society organizations and freedom of the press has colored the political reform. This article shows that political reform aimed at decentralization and democratization do not guarantee an increase in citizen participation in public policy making. Local parliaments' increased strength in local government structures does not increase people's involvement or control over policymaking and implementation. Local bureaucracy tends to be defensive and reluctant to change its exclusive policymaking. A more politically active society, civil society organizations and the local press are able to speak loudly but are unable to develop more effective participation. The sustainability of any promotion of citizen participation will be endangered unless greater energy is invested in most municipalities in Indonesia, making it possible for them to learn from each other.

I. Introduction

Citizen participation in public policy making is almost totally absent in the history of Indonesian politics. Following the takeover of military forces by the national political leadership from the civilian government in 1965, political authoritarianism was the main feature of Indonesian politics. The military bureaucracy dominated politics without interference from other institutions. Centralization characterized political as well as economic life. Society was excluded from the political arena and disadvantaged by government practice.¹

When the people's movement successfully forced President Suharto to step down and end his 34 unchallenged years as president in 1998, the political structure started to change. State control over the society declined significantly, and there was room for individuals to express their views freely. Democratization and decentralization became two of the most important demands made to the newly weaker government. 1999 was an important year because of the state's declaration of support for decentralization and democratization. National laws on the political party and election systems, as well as on the law of local government, reflect the new policy options.

Following stipulation of the laws, local autonomy and democracy began to grow. Municipal governments received more authority from the central government. These governments had more freedom to generate local revenue and to spend according to local policy. Municipal assemblies became

much stronger and took over political control previously owned by higher bureaucracies. Their members were elected in the 1999 election, the first free and fair election since 1955.

Has the new macro political environment brought changes for citizen participation in the municipal government policy-making processes? This question will be the focus of this paper. The case of the budgeting policy in a single municipal government of Surakarta, in Central Java, will be elaborated on in this paper. This is one of a limited number of cases of improved citizen participation in Indonesia at this moment. This case shows that initiating citizen participation in public policy making in Indonesia is hardly complex and difficult, even in a highly developed city like Surakarta. Many lessons can be drawn from this case about participatory public policy making in a post-authoritarian government like Indonesia's.

II. From Centralized to Decentralized Government

After the military regime under Suharto came to power in 1965, a highly centralized political structure was developed in the name of national integration, political stability and economic development. Although unity in diversity (*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*) was a dominant political slogan during this time, the political arrangement made no room for the emergence of competing powers outside Jakarta. Local power was seen as a threat, and subject to central government repression, even through such crude military operations as were demonstrated in the cases of the former East Timor province, West Papua and Aceh.

In providing a political basis for this highly centralized political arrangement, the Soeharto government channeled much of its energy into weakening local power. In doing so, one important strategy was the institutionalization of a highly centralized and bureaucratic local government. In this respect, the promulgation of Law No. 5 of 1974, was the most significant. It provided the constitutional basis for the operation of a highly centralized political structure at the local level. Below the central government there are three levels of local self-government: province; district (*kabupaten*, for rural and semi-urban areas), and municipality (*kota*, for urban areas); and the village government. Apart from having its own authority in some affairs (*Urusan Rumah Tangga Daerah*), the local government had the responsibility to secure and implement national and provincial policies.

The supervision and control by the central government's Ministry of Home Affairs was significant, throughout a wide range of issues at all levels of government, for implementing national policies. The government structure was monolithic in character, with a governor and head of district who were guaranteed to hold all power through the concept of *penguasa tunggal* (the one and the only authority). On behalf of and for the sake of national interests, the head of region had the right and responsibility to "guide," meaning to intervene in, all political forces, including parties and legislative branches in a given territory.

The local legislative body was simply a subordinate of the governor or mayor, who were the central government's

political arm. Local parliament, for instance, had no political right to elect a governor or mayor. Local parliament also had no significant role in politically controlling or supervising. At the same time, both governor and mayor had no obligation of responsibility to the local parliament. In addition, both the internal structure and the rules for running the local parliament gave almost no power to its members. Taking into account the fact that the political recruitment of members of any local parliament, as well as its very existence, was fully controlled by and depended on the national political power, the significance of local parliaments as representative of local interests was meaningless.

The highly centralized political structure was also reflected in, as well as maintained through, over-regulation and over-bureaucratization of local affairs. Almost all local government policies, programs and activities were subject to central government regulations and approvals. Policies, programs and activities were very much determined by Jakarta. Within this context, citizen participation in municipal decision making was, of course, absent. However, elite bureaucrats at the central as well as at the local government level benefited from the practices of the system.

Pressure for a more decentralized system of government was coming mostly from outside of Java Island. The political arrangement during the Suharto government provided room and legitimacy for central government to have control over the economic resources of local areas. Activities such as mining and forestry in outer islands were managed directly by the central government. This, in turn, provided the material basis for Jakarta to get even more political control over local areas. Uneven distribution of economic resources between Jakarta and the rest of the country allowed Jakarta to have a very strong material base. It led to a local dependency on the center, providing more reasons for a highly centralized political structure to continue.

The political implications of this policy were very clearly that most regions outside Java, especially those having rich natural resources such as West Papua, East Kalimantan, Riau and Aceh, were left unsatisfied. It is understandable then that soon after President Suharto lost power in 1998, formerly delayed regional movements emerged. Defining themselves as ethnically or religiously different from the dominant group, many regions demanded control of more political and economic resources. Some even asked to have independence, as in the cases of the provinces of Aceh and West Papua. Therefore, for the sake of national unity—the same reason that was given by the Suharto government in 1966—the Habibie government in 1999 declared an intent to decentralize government.

III. The 1999 Regulation on Local Autonomy

During the weak and short period of the Habibie government in 1998–1999, new laws regarding local government and central-local financial relations (Law Numbers 22 and 25 in 1999), and guaranteeing autonomy and parliamentary democracy at the regional level, were stipulated. These laws have far-reaching implications for changing the structural character of central-local government relations in Indonesia.

Law No.22 (1999) decentralizes authority to the district and municipal level more than to the provincial level. The authority of the national government is limited to five areas of public affairs, especially international affairs, defense, monetary policy, religion, and the judiciary. Central government offices at the provincial level are also limited to these five issues, while their presence at the district and municipality level is now dissolved. Central government regulation No. 25 (2000), names in detail all kinds of activities and authorities belonging to central and provincial governments; others that are not on the list fall into the hands of districts and municipal governments. However, in all cases the central government still has authority to set standards and to monitor and supervise the local government in implementing its autonomy.

The law also strengthens the position of the local parliament at the district and municipal levels, giving it the right to determine local regulations and elect the head of region without any intervention from Jakarta. Parliament even has the right to impeach a mayor under presidential approval. The new law clearly stipulates that if the accountability speech that the mayor is required to deliver every year in the plenary session of local parliament is rejected twice, then he or she has to resign. To give some examples, in 2001, the district head of Semarang, Central Java, decided to step-down from his office due to political pressure from the local council. In 2002, the head of the Surabaya municipal government was also forced to resign by the local parliament.

Apart from the strong constitutional base provided by the new law, new local parliaments have very strong political legitimacy. This is so because they were elected through a democratic process, i.e., a free and fair election. Despite the persistence of debate among Indonesians in regards to the question of whether or not a new council represents local people, parties, or even its members, the fact that it is a result of a democratic political process makes it a reflection and representation of the local people's aspirations. Unlike in the past, all members of new local parliaments are freed from political screening. Moreover, most of them are from outside the bureaucracy. However, the presence of appointed military men remains. Their number has been reduced significantly to only about 10% on average; but from a democracy point of view, their presence is still problematic.

In terms of local government financing, Law No. 25 (1999), on central-local financial relations, also makes some important changes. This law stipulates that 25% of the national revenue should be allocated for block grants to local government. In the past, there was no guarantee of how much money would be delivered to the local government. Another important change is the introduction of revenue sharing between central and local governments generated from natural resources such as oil, mining, forestry and fishery. In the past there were only property taxes, a national tax that was shared between national government and local government. Now, a district producing oil receives 6% of the total revenue generated from this source, and the provincial government receives 6% of it.

The regions rich in natural resources, such as East Kalimantan, Riau, West Papua and Aceh, of course, celebrate this policy. It reduces political tensions between Jakarta and these regions, which emerged in 1998–1999 since, as discussed before, one of the sources of political conflict between Jakarta and regions such as these was their economic dissatisfaction. However, this policy does not contribute to the regional budgets of those regions with poor natural resources.

IV. Some Macro Problems in Implementation

The undergoing changes in central-local relations as well as in local political arrangements are a promising sign that the country will be able to cope with existing regional problems. As promised by the new laws, a wide-range of local autonomy will be introduced. This kind of political arrangement seems to be the proper answer to the problems of political dissatisfaction in the outer islands. At the same time, it will also lead to the fulfillment of democratic principles in the country, especially at the local level. However, during the transitional period, especially with what Indonesia experienced in 1999–2001, there have been some problems.

One major issue with the implementation of the decentralization policy is the notion of locality, closely related to the concept of ethnicity or religion, which is seen by political leaders in Jakarta as endangering nationhood. There are more than 70 proposals from local areas asking the central government and national parliament to give them the right to be independent districts, cities, or even provinces. Most of them justify their demands on the basis of different ethnic and other primordial categories. In this context, the transfer of power from Jakarta, therefore, would also mean providing room for contending local political groups based on ethnicity and religion to compete with each other for control of power. In addition, local autonomy also provides conditions for the revival of local aristocracy. There are some indications that the new arrangements in local politics are also bringing back the old feudal structures. In some cases, this leads to the spread of horizontal conflict within society, such as in North Maluku province.

Political elites in Jakarta, including former President Megawati, have often pointed out that local autonomy has led to the emergence of conflict among districts or municipalities, or between district and municipality within the province. Conflict between fishermen from different districts, which emerged in several regions, is often connected to the issue of local autonomy. Also, many governors are disappointed by the absence of district and municipal government heads at coordination meetings.

Another important issue has been the spread of corruption down to the local level, especially among local parliament members and political parties. Evidence from some regions reveals that the transfer of power from Jakarta also means the transfer of corruption, collusion and nepotism. Whilst corruption in Jakarta has not been reduced yet, the spreading of corruption to the local level has increased significantly. It seems that despite significant change in local political structures, including membership, there is no significant change in the attitude of power holders. Money

politics is now one of the most discussed issues in explaining the behavior of members of parliament at the local level.

Political tension, as well as collusion between the executive and legislative branches, is also an important public concern. New politicians try to compensate for their inferiority by over acting, while bureaucrats remain arrogant and have no respect for the new politicians. Consequently, there is the possibility for local parliaments to undertake a kind of political intervention with the bureaucracy, resulting in an even deeper politicization of local bureaucracy. From the bureaucrat's side, there is a possibility of boycotting. Any of these would jeopardize the whole process of governance, development and public services at the local level.

Finally, soon after the laws were released, local governments instituted many new local regulations. Unfortunately, most of the regulations were mainly concerned with the effort to generate local-owned revenue which, consequently, according to the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, discourages investment from outside.

Since November 2000, a variety of new local taxes and charges have been introduced in many provinces, districts and municipalities. The most common kind are local taxes or charges directed to those transporting goods that exit or enter the region. The province of Lampung, for instance, collects taxes from traders transporting agricultural products from Lampung to other regions. The district of Pasaman obligates traders transporting goods to and from Pasaman territory to have a letter declaring the origin of the goods which has been legalized by the district government. To get the letter the traders have to pay a charge. This kind of regulation has encouraged public debate which has attacked the decentralization policy being implemented.

Indeed, many cases have appeared in the public discourse implying that some of the practices of local governments in Indonesia during the first year of the decentralization policy in 2001 were irresponsible and cannot be accounted for. Therefore, it is crucial to ask about the quality of the participation of the people in the process of public policy making at this level of government.

In answer to this question, this paper will focus on the case of the Surakarta Municipality in Central Java. Both local society and the municipal government have undertaken some effort to initiate more participatory decision-making. This case will show the difficulties in doing so in a post-centralized and authoritarian government like Indonesia.

V. Transition in Surakarta: The People's Movement

Surakarta, more commonly known as Solo, is an interesting city in many ways. For Indonesian tourism, it is one of the most important destinations in Indonesia, especially in Java. Located in the middle of the Central Java province, this city is also one of the most important centers of trading in Java. As an old city, Solo has a long heritage dating back to the Kingdom of Surakarta Hadiningrat, established in the seventeenth century. The people of Solo are known as polite and friendly, associated closely with the old Javanese culture. However, Solo is also interesting because it was the most

burned over city outside of Jakarta during the political crisis of 1998–1999.

The city of Surakarta was established back in the eighteenth century when the capital city of the Mataram Kartasura Kingdom was moved to a village known as Solo in 1745. Solo then grew rapidly and became the capital city of a new kingdom called Surakarta Hadiningrat. Solo became the center of the Javanese culture and economy. Benefitting from its location in the province, it also became the center of trading activities.

Following Indonesian independence from Dutch occupation in 1945, the formal political position of Surakarta Kingdom ended. Unlike the Kingdom of Yogyakarta, which maintained political position in the Special Province of Yogyakarta, the Kingdom of Surakarta became merely a monument of the Javanese cultural heritage. The form of local government in Surakarta is similar to many district and municipal governments in most parts of Indonesia.

Modern Surakarta is a middle-sized city for Indonesia. The population is slightly over 750,000 at night, and rises to 1 million during the working day, due to the workers who come from outlying areas. A vast majority are Javanese, with the minority ethnic groups being Chinese, Arab and Indian. Soloneses are recognized for their hospitality, wisdom and friendliness as well as for their feudalistic values and social attitudes. The Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat heritage still has a strong influence culturally on the people of this city.

Inequality is inherent in the economic structure of Solo, with the minority Chinese ethnic group being the most dominant one. Back in the Dutch colonial era, the Chinese ethnic group had the most government support for doing business after the Europeans. The majority indigenous Javanese were the lowest ranking community and lived in poverty. The Chinese dominated the textile and batik painting industries, the most important business activities in Solo for centuries.

Economic inequality and domination by the Chinese ethnic group continued to grow until modern times in Surakarta. The textile industry, one of the most important manufacturing industries in Surakarta, is owned by the non-Muslim Chinese ethnic group. This group dominates the big trading companies located in the central city as well. Big houses and luxury cars are associated with this group. On the other hand, poverty is closely affiliated with the indigenous majority Javanese group. One hundred percent of pedicab (*becak*) drivers come from this latter group. Understandably, therefore, social and political relations between the Javanese majority and Chinese minority have been problematic throughout Surakarta's history.

Within the social and economic context, the majority Javanese have seen the position of government as supporting the Chinese ethnic group in exchange for bribery. Indeed, corruption has been a common feature of national and local bureaucracies in Indonesia, including in Surakarta. The increasingly richer Chinese minority and senior bureaucrats are perceived as being part of the serious poverty problem in Surakarta and are an important source of society's distrust of the government.

The government and the ethnic Chinese have been the main targets of riots by the people's movement in Surakarta. During the political crisis of 1998–1999, Surakarta was the site of some of the most extensive rioting and burning in Indonesia. In May 1998, a few days before President Suharto stepped down, there was a massive riot with arson that destroyed most of the economic facilities, such as factories, shops, malls banks, as well as the residences of the Chinese ethnic group.

Less than a year later, there was more rioting and burning. Following the dismissal of an illegal motorcycle racing crowd in December 1998 by the local police, an angry crowd attacked the police station and many police cars were burned. The ultimate riot took place when Megawati Soekarnoputri, the leader of the PDIP and winner of the 1999 presidential election, was defeated by Abdulrahman Wahid in the MPR (People's Consultative Assemblies) plenary session on October 20, 1999. The Surakarta City Hall and many other government buildings seen as symbols of the previous government were burned.

These events were traumatic for most of the people of Surakarta, especially those in the Chinese minority group and the municipal government. In the 2002 fiscal year, the Surakarta Municipal government had to allocate more than 34 billion Indonesian rupiahs, approximately 5% of the total budget, to rebuild the burned down city hall. However, for grassroots communities, it was evidence that they can challenge the domination of economically and politically elite groups, even if by violence. In other words, it creates a more confident grassroots society, and a more careful dominant group.

VI. Democratization and Its Problems

Below the municipal government, there are two layers of government that are known as the *kecamatan* (sub-district or sub-municipal) government and the *kelurahan* (village) government. The Surakarta Municipality consists of five *kecamatan*, which are then divided into 22 *kelurahan*.

Following the implementation of the 1999 law on local government, the Surakarta municipal government, like other municipal and district governments in Indonesia, controlled a minimum of 11 important public affairs, including education, health, social services, and land administration. In the 2002 budget year, this municipal government controlled 70 billion Indonesian rupiah, far above the average for district and municipal budgets in Indonesia at that time.

Unlike what had been practiced from 1965–1999, the role of politicians in the municipal council has increased in recent years. Elected in the 1999 election, the first free and fair election in the past 44 years, the municipal council has a strong political legitimacy in the political structure of Surakarta. Legally, the new law regarding local government provides significant power for the legislative body to legislate and supervise the executive branch. As mentioned earlier, the council has the right to dismiss the mayor, especially if a mayor's speech of accountability at the end of the budget year is rejected.

At the end of the 2001 budget year, the Surakarta council rejected the accountability report that the Surakarta mayor,

Slamet Suryanto, delivered on 16 April, 2002. The mayor was given one month to revise his report, which was then accepted by the council in the council plenary on 23 May, 2002. Money politics then became a public issue in Surakarta. It was widely discussed that the mayor had to bribe the councilors in order to gain support from the council.

In practice, the influence of the council is not only limited to the macro policy of the municipal government, but is also expanded to the daily practice of government. In the opinion of local bureaucrats, dominant groups in the council are able to intervene in the appointment and promotion of bureaucrats. Under pressure from the councilors, the Mayor of Surakarta dismissed the General Secretary of the municipality, a purely career bureaucrat, on 22 September, 2001. Following the mayor's speech of accountability in May, the council was penalized due to the misconduct of three senior bureaucrats.

Indeed, many bureaucrats feel that their careers are easily affected by the council. This kind of intervention also takes place in activities previously controlled by the bureaucracy. The process of municipal development planning is an important dispute between bureaucracies and the politicians. The opportunity for corruption in designing projects is now open for the local politicians as well. Indeed, politician tension is not only appearing between the legislative and executive branches, but more specifically between politicians and bureaucrats. It also appears clearly in the process of planning and budgeting policy.

Traditionally, since the 1970s, the process of public policy making at the local level was nationally designed. According to the central government's regulations, development planning should be bottom-up, starting at the *kelurahan* (village) government level, then the *kecamatan* (sub-district) level and moving to the municipal government level. However, citizen participation in the process is not guaranteed, and is even excluded from the process.

According to the national standard, (known as P5D), development planning at the village level, whether to be executed by this level of government or to be proposed to a higher level of government is decided by a representative body called LKMD. The members of this institution are appointed by the village head who automatically is the head of the institution as well. There was no obligation to include villagers in the process. What had been happening in practice was that the village head monopolized the policy making process.

For the formulation of municipal planning and budgeting policy, the proposals of the village governments was compiled at the sub-municipal (*kecamatan*) government level. This level of government had to prioritize programs based on the villages' proposals. However, since no village representatives were involved in this stage, the sub-municipal government had full autonomy in decision making, regardless of proposals sent by the village governments. Again, the elite bureaucrats at the sub-municipal government level dominated the policy making.

The proposals of the sub-municipalities were then submitted to the municipal government and discussed in a

meeting of the municipal planning body, consisting of all sectoral agencies and the heads of sub-municipal governments. In a centralistic political environment, the bureaucracy at the municipal government level could easily ignore proposals of the sub-municipality governments. The officially bottom-up planning process became a top-down one in practice. More importantly, the bureaucracy dominated the process.

Based on the development plans formulated by the municipal bureaucracy, the municipal budgeting committee, consisting of bureaucrats and council members, drafted municipal budgets. The draft was then presented to the plenary session of the municipal council. However, since the government political party dominated the council, the council approved whatever was proposed by the bureaucracy.

Following political reform in 1999, including the stipulation of the decentralization and democratization policy, the position of the municipal council became much stronger. The process of the planning and budgeting policy in Solo, in 2000, was just the same as in previous years. However, whilst in the past the municipal council was just like a rubber stamp, the council elected through the 1999 election had strong political legitimacy and formal political power. As presented above, the council could intervene in many aspects of governmental processes traditionally controlled by bureaucracy.

The budgeting process in 2000 was a depressing experience for the municipal bureaucracy. Whilst in the previous year the bureaucracy controlled the whole process of policy making, in 2000 the policy draft prepared by the bureaucracy was almost totally rejected by the politicians. The politicians proposed some detailed projects to be financed by the municipal budget. A senior bureaucrat said that the council proposed that each village government should have at least one new computer. Rather than giving autonomy to the village government to purchase them on their own, the councilors argued that it should be purchased by the municipal government and financed by block grant allocations to be given to the village government. In addition, the councilors proposed the name of the computer shop at which to make the purchase.

This case shows how more parties are becoming involved in the corruption. While in the past corruption was mostly dominated by municipal bureaucrats, after the 1999 election municipal politicians became involved as significant actors. Furthermore, this also demonstrates the emergence of a new pattern of relationships based on "mutual distrust" between the municipal bureaucracy and politicians.

It is important to note that most of the new members of local parliaments are from outside the bureaucracy. Since most of them have had negative experiences with bureaucracy in the past, they have a strong tendency to use their current political positions as a means to enact political revenge. This is aggravated by the fact that in terms of level of education and experience, most members of parliament are lacking. There is a psychological problem involved here. As mentioned before, the new politicians try to compensate for their inferiority by over acting, while bureaucrats remain arrogant. Consequently, there is a tendency for municipal

councils to try to intervene in bureaucracy, resulting in an even deeper politicization of local bureaucracy.

In the case of the planning and budgeting policy process, the 1999 election did not bring any significant changes in citizen participation. The vast majority of people are still excluded from the process. The difference was in the shift from the domination by municipal bureaucracy to the domination by politicians and political parties. Centralization of policy making and corruption still continue to grow.

VII. The Partnership and Initiation Process

The idea of developing participatory planning and budgeting policy is not a new one in Surakarta. Many components of civil society, especially non-governmental organizations and academicians, worked hard to make it happen. Due to the authoritarian and closed system of government in place until 1998, most civil society organizations concentrated their agendas on strengthening the organization of community groups in general rather than on specifically increasing direct popular participation in public policy making.

Since the 1970s, Solo has had some civil society organizations, especially NGOs, universities and the local press. As early as 1978, an NGO called LPTP (*Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedesaan* or the Institute for Rural Technology Development) which later became one of the most outstanding NGOs in Solo, was established. Energized by some well-educated activists, this NGO has been contributive in many aspects, including in organizing the grass-roots community in Solo. The NGO's presence grew significantly in the mid 1990s with the peak in 1999–2000. Now, Solo is a city rich in NGOs, in terms of number, density and plurality.

There are some NGOs concerned with specific issue such as the environment, like Gita Pertiwi (environmental issues), and gender equality, like Mitra Wacana, Gerakan Anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Indonesia, Lembaga Studi Pengembangan Perempuan dan Anak, Pusat Studi Wanita of UNS, and UMS. But the most massive NGOs at this moment are those concentrating on organizing local communities. KOMPIP (Konsorsium Monitoring dan Pemberdayaan Institusi Publik) is an important one that has been able to organize some marginalized communities. SOMSIS (Solidaritas Masyarakat Pinggiran Surakarta) and P3S (Paguyuban Penata Parkir Surakarta) are other examples.

Most interesting are the NGOs working on developing understanding among groups in Solo. Paguyuban Masyarakat Surakarta (PMS) is an example of an NGO trying to develop more effective communication among ethnic groups, especially between Javanese and Chinese ethnic groups. Another important organization in this regard is Paguyuban Pasopati, an association of soccer maniacs, which has been able to bridge the social and cultural gaps among ethnic, religious and economic classes in Solo. All of them are working on the society itself.

NGOs which focus on bridging the gap between state apparatuses and the society are almost absent. NGOs in Indonesia, as in most part of the world, see themselves as being autonomous, critical and independent from the state.

Keeping a clear distance from, even having no contact with, the bureaucracy and politicians is a common strategy. On the governmental side, bureaucrats and politicians are reluctant to have contact with the NGOs as well. Therefore, a partnership between government and NGOs is difficult to establish.

Until 2000, the idea of developing popular participation was a rejected idea by local bureaucrats and politicians. Seeing themselves as being in a much stronger position compared to the society at large, no local state apparatuses were interested in the idea of a participatory decision making processes. Both municipal bureaucracies and politicians benefited from the elite-dominated policy process. It is evident that civil society organizations in Surakarta were unable to convince the municipal government to be more open to a participatory budgeting policy.

Following the riots and burning in 1998–1999, civil society organizations found a new argument for the political crisis being the product of a centralistic policy making process which excluded people for over three decades. A group of NGO activists, moderates² and academicians tried to find partners from within the bureaucracy along with politicians to promote participatory policymaking.

On the bureaucracy side, especially among some well-educated bureaucrats in the Municipal Development Planning Body (*Bappeda*), the idea of participatory planning also started to grow. As a theory, this idea was not new in Indonesia at the time. But the momentum of political freedom starting in 1999 made the bureaucracy think about the possibility of applying participatory planning.

Following the establishment of a new Municipal Council in 1999 with a strong and dominant political role, the position of the bureaucrats weakened significantly. The intervention of councilors in the daily activities of the bureaucracy has been getting stronger over time. Individual councilors can easily intervene in plans already drafted by the Municipal Planning Body. The feeling of insecurity following the dismissal of their colleagues also encourages bureaucrats to gain support from other institutions, especially NGOs, media and the vast majority of the population. The promotion, by some bureaucrats in the Development Planning Body, of participatory planning was partly driven by these interests.

Some NGO activists started to find partners in the bureaucracy, especially among senior bureaucrats in the Development Planning Body. For the first time in more than three decades, people coming from previously different worlds started to interact, making discussion and working together possible. The idea of developing partnerships between government institutions and civil society organizations started to grow.

While many other NGOs in Surakarta concentrate on strengthening community organization, these partnerships focus on supporting the bureaucracy in evaluating the previous planning and budgeting policy making to identify potential factors for developing a participatory decision making process.

An organization called Indonesian Partnership for Local Governance Initiative (IPGI) was established in Solo in 2000. It may be the first important NGO concentrating on and able

to develop partnership between civil society and government in Solo. While most NGOs in Solo concentrate their programs on strengthening local community as such, IPGI's commitment is to promote democracy by strengthening the capacity of societal groups and local government as well.³ In the case of Solo, one of its most important programs is to develop popular participation in public decision-making.

IPGI of Solo is a part of the networking group of IPGI at the national level. With its national secretary in Bandung, West Java, the National Secretary of IPGI has three local networking groups consisting of IPGI of Bandung, IPGI of Solo, and IPGI of Riau. All the groups concentrate their activities on developing participatory planning and public policy making. In terms of membership, the three local "branches" are comprised of NGO activists, local academicians and bureaucrats.

The IPGI of Solo is headed by a senior academician who is supported by a long-standing NGO activist and a senior bureaucrat as vice-heads. Below the directorships, there are some positions filled in by, again, some academicians, NGO activists and bureaucrats. This composition is expected to make the partnership between civil society and government more workable.

VIII. Mobilizing Support

The main agenda of the partnership is to mobilize support from stakeholders for participatory public decision-making. First of all, it is very important for the group to gain support from the state apparatuses, especially the bureaucracy, which previously monopolized the decision making process. Secondly, it is also imperative to gain support from the local community at the grass roots level, from other NGOs and from the local media in Solo.

When first initiated within the government, most municipality bureaucrats rejected the idea of participatory planning openly until the mayor's decision promoting participatory planning was stipulated. Among the reasons was belief that participatory planning would reduce the role of bureaucracy in the planning process significantly. In addition, since for decades only the Surakarta bureaucracy was familiar with what had been done, the new initiative was seen as impossible. This kind of perspective was common among bureaucrats at every level of government, from the municipal down to the sub-municipal government, including the village level. Most village heads were also reluctant to support the idea.

Following much lobbying and persuasion, the partnership was able to gain support from the mayor. This was one of the most important steps toward gaining larger support from the bureaucracy. The partnership's ideas on participatory public policy making were adopted by the mayor, to be stipulated in his decision. Following the stipulation of the mayor's Decision on Promoting Participatory Planning and Budgeting Policy (*Surat Edaran Walikota*) in January 2001, open rejection from the local bureaucracy declined significantly. The following year, this decision was renewed and further strengthened by Mayoral Decision No. 410/45-A/1/2002 (Keputusan Walikota tentang "Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Musyawarah Kelurahan Membangun, Musyawarah

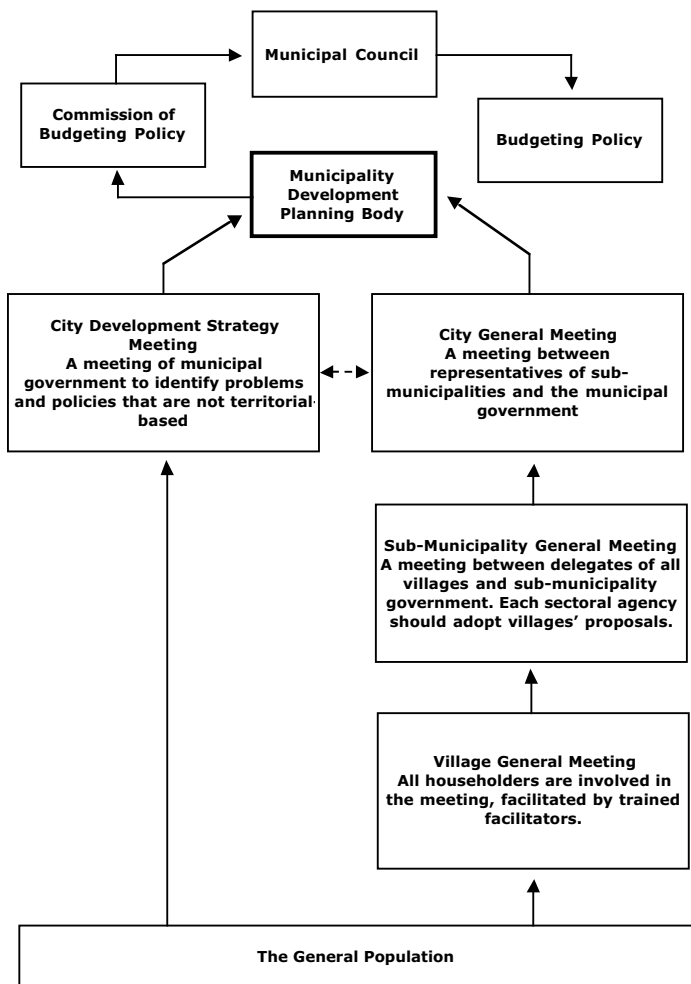
Kecamatan Membangun dan Musyawarah Kota Membangun di Kota Surakarta Tahun 2002"). Although it does not guarantee the full support of the whole municipal bureaucracy, its positive impact on participatory planning is clearly significant.

The mayor's decision stipulated that decision making on development planning and budget allocation should be participative through the following several steps:

1. Processes at the village level
 - Started by meeting at each neighborhood association.
 - Meeting of neighborhood representatives and village government officials (as Organizing Committee) to prepare general meeting at the village level: (a) drafting rule of the game for the general meeting, and (b) identifying some crucial public issues.
 - General meeting, involving all householders in the village, discussing: (a) the OC's drafts; (b) formulating village government budget allocation; and (c) proposing development plans to higher levels of government.
2. Processes at the sub-municipal level
 - Meeting of sub-municipal government officials and village representatives (as organizing committee) to prepare general meeting at the sub-municipal level to: (a) draft rule of the game for the general meeting, and (b) identify some crucial public issues.
 - General meeting, involving larger representation of villages, representation of business community, CSOs and social leaders, to discuss: (a) the OC's drafts; (c) proposing development plans to be submitted to the municipal government.
3. Processes at the municipal level
 - The municipal bureaucracy, under the coordination of the Municipal Development Planning Body, organizes a meeting with the heads of sub-municipal governments, chambers of commerce, and CSOs to: (a) establish an organizing committee; (b) draft rules of the game; and (c) draft spatial and sectoral development plans based on the sub-municipalities' proposals.
 - General meeting at the municipal level discussing drafts prepared by the organizing committee. Development plans are then proposed to the municipal parliament.

To ensure the procedure, a significant amount of energy should be dedicated to making it happen. Since the local bureaucracy has no experience in facilitating citizen participation in local decision-making, and is reluctant to do so, the role of the partnership (IPGI) and other NGOs is crucial. A series of focus group discussions with local people was organized to develop better understanding of the importance of the role of the people in the process. Training of facilitators recruited from each village was also conducted. The process in each village and each sub-municipality was closely followed, monitored and supervised.

Figure 1. PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING MECHANISM



IX. Achievements and Limitations

What has been practiced in Surakarta Municipality is an exercise rather than a definitive model. It has only been implemented for two years as a first step learning process. Most stakeholders have no experience in participatory decision-making. However, its role in developing democracy is clear as it promotes a greater role for local citizens in public policy making.

Although basically as many people as possible are involved in the process of decision making, in most villages, those invited to the village general meeting are the house-

holders. Since, culturally, householders are always male rather than female, what happened in 2001 was that almost all participants at the village general meeting were men. This was seen as insensitive on the issue of gender equality. Starting in 2002, some villages started to initiate more inclusive meetings by inviting both the husband and wife of each household. However, the experience in Surakarta was that not many women joined the meeting.

Another important achievement of participatory planning was the establishment of a more important role for the people in budget allocation. It was the first time in the history of Surakarta that the majority of people, the poor, were involved in the policy making process. Better budget allocation for the poor started to appear. Budgeting policy in some village governments is interesting. Because many of the villagers are pedicab (becak) drivers, the village general meeting is used to allocate money to provide soft loans for them to buy pedicabs.

Lastly, because of greater participation by citizens in public policy making, the people have come to know government policies and development programs better. Demands for more transparent government have increased significantly. It is expected that a cleaner and less corrupt government will emerge.

One last question to raise is whether the process will continue. Looking at the incentives for bureaucrats to support the idea, one apparent reason is to gain support to compete with the politicians. Once the support is not needed anymore, will the bureaucracy take back the right to participatory planning? The level of the support of the politicians is still unclear. If greater support from local politicians is achieved, the future of participatory public policy making in Solo will be more secure.

It is quite reasonable to believe that the process of participatory policymaking will continue. The local people who have started to enjoy the results of participatory policy making will not be willing to lose what they have just gained. If they did, it would not be impossible to imagine the traumatic experiences of the burning of Solo in 1998-1999 happening again.

ENDNOTES

1. In the literature of Indonesian politics, this period, 1965-1998, was labeled as either Bureaucratic Authoritarianism or Bureaucratic Polity.
2. For the type of NGOs in Indonesia in regard to their relation to government.
3. See IPGI's newsletter "Media Partnership IPGI" which first published in 2001.

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