

'Traditional-Contemporary' Community Engagement Approaches for Effective Local Climate Change Adaptation in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The current problem of inadequate community engagement in Indonesia poses a major policy gap for the Indonesian endeavour to develop effective climate change adaptation. This gap needs addressing for robust adaptation to occur in a country highly vulnerable to extreme weather events and changing weather patterns. Currently, 65% of the Indonesian population (of some 265 million) reside on the coast with many dependent upon natural resources for their livelihoods. As climate change strengthens, effective participatory climate change adaptation – here with the focus on inclusive and active local community engagement – needs development as a priority to reduce the high vulnerability of communities and to achieve resilient communities. To close this policy gap – as informed by historical analysis, archival materials, and interview data – we posit that local community engagement approaches that integrate traditional and contemporary (or “old” and “new”) engagement practices and approaches offer much promise for local community adaptation effectiveness in the case of Indonesia. Such approaches we also posit should have relevance for other traditional-contemporary informed societies, as most evident in developing countries.

Keywords: Community engagement, climate change adaptation, traditional and contemporary, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Indonesia has experienced intensifying climate-related environmental incidents that include frequent floods, extreme droughts, natural forest fires, and tsunamis. (1-4) Any notable sea level rise threatens some 65% of the population (of some 265 million as of 2017), who live in the low-lying coastal zone, (5), and are dependent on it economically, culturally, and socially. (2,6,7) The coastal zone is thus a priority for Indonesia to develop sufficient adaptive capacity for effective climate change adaptation, as it is in many other countries. (8-10)

Adaptive capacity is the capacity to identify and respond proactively to reduce vulnerability risks and heighten resilience to climate change impacts. (11-13) Developing such capacity, however, is particularly challenging for

Indonesia. Posed as the fifth country in SE Asia with largest population with below poverty line, (14) Indonesia lacks sufficient infrastructure and resources to even address many existing dire environmental problems. (2)

A key part of developing local adaptive capacity, as found internationally, best includes a meaningful or inclusive engagement role for coastal communities. (15-18) This type of role fits with the notion of “effective” policy making, which refers to “policy implemented in a timely manner that involves improved governmental relationships, and multi-stakeholder and local knowledge and action partnerships or platforms”. (19, see also 20)

However, the current Indonesian approach to community engagement reflects the participation concept of public involvement,

which emphasises public input on the content of programs and policies, but precludes a meaningful role for citizen inclusion in decision-making. Quick and Feldman (21 p272) explain the difference between ‘participation’ and ‘inclusion’: “Participation practices entail efforts to increase public input oriented primarily to the content of programs and policies. Inclusion practices entail continuously creating a community involved in coproducing processes, policies, and programs for defining and addressing public issues”.

Accordingly, the aim of this article is to explore how local community engagement to inform effective climate change adaptation can best occur. As Quick and Feldman (21 p273) also noted, such inquiry lies in the broader governance context of “public engagement becoming a fundamental feature of the public–government relationship”. Internationally, local inclusion, reflective of local sociocultural and knowledge contexts, has been widely found to inform decision-making processes that seek to build effective adaptation policy and planning approaches. (11,22-24) As Spink et al. (25) found regarding local riverine environments, multiple historical knowledge contexts of any local community best inform decision-making for successful transitions to transformational change at the local place-based level; (see also 26) as climate change adaptation implies. So, what is our structure and method of inquiry?

STRUCTURE AND METHOD OF INQUIRY

Methodology used in addressing our aim, are, first, we discuss contemporary

community engagement approaches found internationally to be most effective to engage local communities in the environmental arena, which then inform climate change adaptation as a sub-field of engagement; as informed by the international literature on this topic.

Second, we explore the historical contexts and evolution of traditional (or customary) community engagement practices in Indonesia that have substance to inform inclusive CCA community engagement. Third, we discuss Indonesia’s current and emergent practices of community engagement in the environmental management and climate change policy and planning arenas. Both these areas were informed by socio-political, cultural, and historical sources, as found in research articles, books, reports, and websites, and fieldwork archival data collection in Indonesia (including relevant articles published in Indonesian language journals); and archival documents from the Indonesian Government archives. Fourth, we turn to our interview data with 38 Indonesian policy actors most relevant to adaptation policy for their suggestions on how to improve community engagement; as part of a study identifying key factors (determinants or elements) for effective community engagement in Indonesia. These included social inclusion in partnership programs, social capital, institutional change, and the need to address social-economic issues of vulnerable, usually poor, communities, in particular, issues of poverty and low levels of literacy and education. (27) The 38 interviews was both manageable as well as seen as adequately representative, to reflect divergent perspectives on the main topic of the research (28) by which to best address the primary aim of this research.

The data that was important for this paper was the references made by our respondents to the potential of traditional Indonesian community engagement as a complement to contemporary community engagement approaches for more effective CCA in Indonesia. The interviews occurred in Jakarta and seven local sites in West Sumatra Province and Yogyakarta Special Region Province from February 2012 to December 2013. The policy actors interviewed had substantial responsibility and interest in climate change adaptation and disaster management, and represented national to local government, NGO representatives, and local communities.

Integrating the substance and findings of these diverse and informative data sources, we find a good potential for an integrated traditional-contemporary community approach to contribute to more effective local climate change adaptation in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Historical Analysis

1.1. International contemporary community engagement approaches

Inclusive local community engagement most typically falls within the collaborative community engagement approach (e.g., 26) This approach best informs the argument of Smiley et al. (29 p1046) that “complex environmental planning problems typically demand a high degree of public involvement so that an acceptable decision can be made”. (see also 30,31) As Hindmarsh (26 p1126) noted:

This describes the thrust of the collaborative approach in contrast to the shallower ‘inform-

consult-involve’ spectrum of community involvement, through, for example, inquiry or planning submissions, town hall meetings, or public information sessions, where community decisional influence is distinctly lacking. Most often the thrust of these ‘weaker’ (and often standalone) approaches is ‘information-giving’ to inform people of proposed changes rather than engaging meaningfully with them to incorporate their social knowledges and views in policy planning.

In other words, inclusive approaches like the collaborative one reflects high input and output legitimacy, where democratic decision-making processes satisfy conditions of political and epistemic fairness (and trust) to enhance productive learning approaches (32). In practice, inclusive approaches involve transparency of information and process, intersubjective dialogue, participant diversity, broad representation, and partnership in addressing public issues in relation to the content and practice of policies and programs; (31,33-35) including CCA programs. (18,36,37)

Such open and dialogic approaches prompt better understandings of the differences and convergences among stakeholders including developers, government planners, and communities. Subsequently, such understandings lead to participant social learning, high-quality stakeholder agreements, and policy innovation and new practices involving networks and flexibility, and typically, enhanced local support for and social acceptability of change. Renewed public trust in government programs of change can then occur. (24,29,38-40) Following this approach, a 2009 study – for Victoria’s state government

in Australia's southeast – found well-designed local engagement strategies posed “an important foundation for strengthening the inclusiveness and effectiveness of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies”. (36, more broadly,16,41-43)

In contrast, the exclusion of local knowledge and perspectives about change results in local apathy and social conflict and ineffective policy and program outcomes. (24,26,44-46) Exacerbating such outcomes are non-transparency in local planning processes, selective inclusion of participants, and/or elite or power stakeholder co-option of the decision-making process. (41,47) Another common problem encountered in the limited public participation or involvement approach is when planners retreat from, or do not refer to inclusive processes, due to knowledge difficulties or deficits of how to conduct these processes. (31,34,48) Also referred to are excuses or reasons of time and/or budget constraints, and/or insufficient internal support at the institutional policy and planning level. (26,49,50) However, planners can address such “pitfalls” through several principles and practices of public participation, more so “engagement”. (51 p456)

1.2. Indonesia's historical contexts of traditional community engagement

The interrelated historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts of traditional public participation and community engagement in Indonesia, which remain evident today, we have found clearly inform contemporary inclusive notions of community engagement. In this section, we explore their nature and evolution in Indonesia over five political

periods, as well as providing important information on the contextualising cultural and political profile of Indonesia. Knowledge of this history is essential to explore and inform the potential of traditional forms of community engagement within and beyond communities for contemporary CCA engagement. The political periods are (i) the pre-Dutch colonial era (pre-1600); (ii) the Dutch colonial era (1600–1945); (iii) the Old Order (1945–1965); (iv) the New Order (1966–1998); and (v) the so-called ‘reform’ period (1998–present).

1.2.1. Pre-Dutch Colonisation

As the fourth most populous country in the world, Indonesia lies just south of the equator, and quite close to neighbouring Australia. Of its 17,000 islands, 6000 are inhabited. High cultural diversity is evident with over 1000 ethnic groups. (52) The variable topography sees highland communities substantially differing from lowland ones, and coastal communities differing from inland ones, (53) regarding economic, social, and cultural values, which are, of course, associated with the surrounding natural environments. (54) In addition, influencing cultural diversity over time, particularly at the coast level, was trade with India, Persia, and Arabia. (53,55,56)

Geertz (55) found cultural diversity characterised in three significant ways: (i) inland communities strongly influenced by Hinduism; (ii) trade-oriented coastal communities strongly influenced by Islam; while (iii) mountainous tribal groups remained pagan due to inaccessible terrain, which also led to high cultural diversity across these tribal groups due to social isolation. In contrast, the socio-cultural interactiveness of coastal

communities resulted in these communities having less cultural diversity than their mountain cousins. (see also 56-58)

In the coastal communities, the traditional community engagement or participatory practice of *gotong royong* was notable as a local custom surviving time but with a rather tumultuous history yet one, that still enables its original intent today. Above all, the intent of *gotong royong* was to facilitate spontaneous cooperation to serve the common good and fulfil life’s necessities. (59-61) *Gotong royong* was described by Bowen (62 p546) as a harmonious social relationship among Indonesian communities where “labour [was] accomplished through reciprocal exchange, and villagers [were] motivated by a general ethos of selflessness and concern for the common good”. An oligarchic representative system of community elders oversaw this local communalistic system. (61,63)

Concomitantly, largely autonomous villages and their sub-communities had customary laws that also featured more formal community consultation processes. (63-66) In village meetings, community members first considered an issue or communal matters, which lead to decisions taken through consensus building procedures chaired by the village head. Every adult had the right to attend the meetings. This so-called “village democracy” enabled people to also question any of the King’s regulations seen as contestable, for example, as unjust, and to affirm the considered right to decide a village’s own fate. (64 p20)

Hatta (64 p5) thus argued that Indonesian society was characterised by “deep democratic roots”. However, regarding village democracy,

Naim, (61 p3) highlighted the complexity of Hindu and Islamic influences. (see also 67) On one hand, the central island of Java had a large population – today representing some 57% of Indonesia’s population¹ – that having been exposed to 15 centuries of Hinduism featured a Java-Hindu centralistic (or centripetal, and feudalistic) culture, with a largely subservient populace. In contrast, in Islamic-influenced regions like South Sulawesi and West Sumatra, royal ascendancy was more a symbol for the unity of autonomous villages in being more decentralist, egalitarian, and democratic. (61)

1.2.2. The Dutch Colonial Era (1600–1945)

Dutch colonial governance followed the Islamic-influenced “autonomous system”, with regions and local areas still largely considered autonomous and, in more detail, controlled by customary laws or *adat*. (66) *Adat* “encapsulated the way of life of a village community that had developed over the centuries in the context of communal interests within a specific territory”. (63 p8) It governed relationships between the individual and the community, determined the responsibilities of parties in inter-individual and inter-group relations, and served as the legal basis for relationships between the community and the land. (63 p8)

However, the Dutch approach to its continuation also reflected a strategy of “divide and rule”, designed to enable more effective control over the vast Indonesian archipelago than a system of tight control. (63,66) As such, the Dutch administrator “instituted indirect rule, exercising control over the most senior *adat* heads in each area”. This reorganisation of local power relations also attempted to break the unity

of the rural villages in increasingly isolating them to manage their own affairs. (63 p8, see also 68,69) Dutch control then collapsed during the Second World War due to Japanese occupation. With the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Indonesian nationalists then had enough strength to declare independence, (66) which introduced the rule of the so-called “Old Order”.

1.2.3. The Old Order (1945–1965)

In this period, independence saw Indonesia introduce parliamentary democracy, (58) with its first general election held in 1955. Several features of constitutional democracy occurred: a dominant role for civil liberties, few violations of civil liberties, and moderate government power in governance. (70) Over time, however, President Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia (1945–1965), expressed discontent with the introduced, adversarial western-style parliamentary system. He considered that it spawned a diverse and fractious country. (64) Consequently, in 1959, through presidential decree, Sukarno established an autocratic system called “Guided Democracy” (or “*Demokrasi Terpimpin*”). (58,64)

Guided Democracy marked a significant turning point for Indonesian notions of democracy. Designed to apply the Indonesian traditional way of “mutual cooperation”, as a *gotong royong* democracy, it proclaimed deliberation and consensus making at the national level. However, this situation more reflected the notion of “public talk”, (71 p318) as little public dialogue existed under “presidential guidance”. (66) Authoritarianism rapidly crept in and led to dictatorship. (64,65)

Autocratic and centralistic government lasted until 1965 when Major-General Suharto organised a coup to wrest power from the conservative and widely criticised “left leaning” Sukarno. (72) Subsequently, Suharto became Indonesia’s second president (1967–1998), and ushered in the so-called “New Order”.

1.2.4. The New Order (1966–1998)

The name of governance in this period may have changed but its nature remained similar to the authoritarianism of the Guided Democracy period. Although Suharto’s regime was framed as a new order (or type) of democracy, the concept of “Pancasila” was used to legitimise state authority over the people, as a framework to govern social relations. Informing Pancasila democracy were five principles: (i) belief in the one and only God (of Islam), (ii) a just and civilised humanity, (iii) the unity of Indonesia, (iv) inner wisdom guiding the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, and (v) social justice for all.

Nevertheless, in this democracy style, little or no place existed for opposition or contestation. (73,74) Military domination of social and political life and tight media restrictions further limited public debate. The New Order regime was thus also characterised by centralisation, nepotism, and despotism. (58,66,74,75,76)

Premising such regime features was the need to unite the nation and counter post-independence instability due to the growth of armed separatist groups during the Old Order. In this process, *adat*-based villages and customary law and village-level representation were increasingly replaced by centralised,

feudal-paternalistic, government institutions, (77) which also undermined the cultural tradition of *gotong royong*.

In becoming a central strategy for national development, *gotong royong* was reconceptualised radically as community participation for ‘essential’ state development projects. (62) Communities were mobilised to provide volunteer labour, building materials, and money for government coffers. (62,78) Typically, the people were not included in any decision-making related to their welfare or interests. (79) Consequently, under the impact of the Old and New Order regimes of more than 30 years’ duration, Indonesian society shifted from a society featuring strong solidarity and social cohesion to one more reflective of individualism, apathy, and materialism. (68)

1.2.5. The Reform Era (1998–present)

Growing government corruption and authoritarianism, and poor financial management, which saw Indonesia hit hard by the 1997–1998 Asian economic crisis, (79,80) attracted and fed rising political dissent and massive demonstrations. The New Order regime finally collapsed and Suharto resigned. His successor Vice-President Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie (1998–1999) initiated a reform agenda of a new relationship between state and society, with sovereignty to the people revived. (76)

In 1999, “regional autonomy legislation was rushed through the Indonesian parliament to assuage discontent in the regions and forestall the country’s disintegration”. (79 p51) Barring constitutional powers of security and defence, foreign policy, monetary and fiscal matters, and

justice and religious affairs, (81) provinces, then cities and districts, became largely self-governing. (82) Decentralisation aimed to allow participatory, transparent, responsive, and publicly accountable policymaking processes. (83) In turn, local communities attained greater opportunity to self-manage. (84, see also 54 p66)

In turn, as part of government endeavours toward advancing democratic governance and in implementing regional autonomy, community aspirations were recognised as an important component in the national development planning system, as stipulated under Act No.25/2004. This Act remains the main legislation that governs the inclusion of communities in planning processes through *Musrenbang* or Development Planning Consultation: a stakeholder forum for helping to design national and regional development plans. Downstream at the regional level, procedures for the local level *Musrenbang* lie under local government regulation.

Following these legislative procedures, respective national and local authorities referred to drafts of development plans as references to *Musrenbang*. In this respect, the ‘local level’ includes the provincial, district/city, sub-district, and village levels of jurisdiction. In turn, participants of district and sub-district *Musrenbangs* comprise government agencies, members of the local legislative, NGOs, and village representatives. For village-level *Musrenbang*, in addition to local government officials, more community level components are involved including community-level government administrative organs (RTs), youth groups, and community leaders.

In turn, further strengthening the role of community was the stipulation of Village Law No. 6/2014, which empowers communities in village development through active engagement in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of such programs. Complementing this position, village engagement was the disbursement of a village fund from government development funds, which aimed to finance village government administration, implementation of village development programs, and community development and empowerment.

However, following the collapse of the New Order regime, the traditional practice of *gotong royong* alongside *adat* institutions quickly began to claim prior authority within customary domains, (79) and more effectively contribute to decentralised reform and community engagement, in addition to complementing contemporary styles of community engagement, as discussed above. In the next section, we discuss the emergence of contemporary community engagement in environmental management, as the umbrella field for climate change adaptation.

1.3. Community engagement in environmental management in Indonesia

With environmental problems becoming more noticeable, particularly concerning widespread industrial pollution, forest degradation, and wildlife decimation, stronger environmental protectionism began to emerge in Indonesia in the 1970s following international trends. (85) Earlier contributions had seen “Nature Reserves” emerge, notably, Ujung Kulon National Park in 1958, as well as some contestation by university student

environmental societies of the massive exploitation of natural resources for economic growth initiated during the Old Order.

Subsequently, from the mid-1970s, environmental issues began to move up the policy agenda, although still highly overshadowed by state developmentism associated with economic growth. (86) A significant trigger for strengthened environmental protection was the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm), which Indonesia attended and made a submission on its environmental protection status. In addressing the conference’s resolutions, Indonesia subsequently began implementing environmental laws and regulations, particularly post-1976.

In 1978, the Environment Ministry was established, (87,88) which produced the landmark Environmental Management Act 1982. The Act highlighted Indonesia’s shifting environmental commitment in a legal context, as outlined in the Third Five-Year National Development Plan (1979–1984). (86) It was a turning point in protecting the environment for future codification of environmental and related laws and regulations. (89 p10)

In its initial years of operation, the Environment Ministry also cultivated support from environmental NGOs. In 1980, 79 non-government and community-based organisations set up Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI), otherwise known as the Indonesian Environmental Forum. By 1992, membership had increased to some 500 members. (90 p2; also see 85,87,91) The Forum’s agenda followed an integrated socio-environmental approach of “social

transformation, people’s sovereignty, and sustainability of life and livelihoods”, (92) in linking democracy to social and environmental well-being.

A key action of WALHI members has involved pressuring for inclusive policy-making regarding natural resource and environmental management, (93-95) and, of late, climate change adaptation. Disputes with government, and sometimes with corporations, on the use of and access to lands and forests also solidified the intent of national and local NGOs to empower communities to retain or regain their rights to their lands and forests and their well-being. (79,95,96) In 1986, such deforestation developments led to environmental impact assessment measures, which incorporated community engagement on proposed development projects. (88, also 85)

Consequently, by the early 1990s, Indonesia was internationally seen to have “the most detailed and extensive environmental regulations” for a developing country. (86 p98) However, the laws and regulations remained weak and hard to enforce, not least because of unclear delegation of government agency authority and responsibility, (85) which has stymied the progress of community engagement. In 1997, replacing the 1982 Act was Act Number 23, and in 2009, Act No. 32.

The latter Act strengthened the provision of public participation to enable the public to play an “active” role in environmental protection and management in various forms, which included community engagement in addressing grievances and complaints about development and infrastructure projects. (97)

Further strengthening such developments was the advent of the Reform Era in 1998 when the new government began to cultivate a “partnership” relationship with environmental NGOs to address environmental issues. (94,95)

Over time, the Environment Ministry became the State Ministry of the Environment (MOE), and, later, in 2014 – prompted by inadequate environmental sectoral policy coordination across government agencies and jurisdictional levels (19)– merged with the Ministry of Forestry to become the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. More recently, further strengthening community participation in environmental protection and management was Ministerial Decree No. 60/2015, which regulates the means to increase community participation through capacity building and the strengthening of community institutions. So how did all this institutional change actually affect practice on the ground towards participatory community-based approaches for environmental environment?

1.3.1. Strengthening community engagement in environmental management in practice

In the late 1990s, situated at the forefront of strengthening community engagement development in Indonesia concerning the environment was community-based coastal resource management (CBCRM), which followed emergent trends across Southeast Asia. (54,98) In Indonesia, a CBCRM project conducted in three sites in the North Sulawesi Province used a participatory community planning process for problem identification, planning, planning

approval, financing, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. (98,99) The collaborative management approach involved local communities, local governments, technical experts, and other agencies at the provincial, district and sub-district levels. Engaged communities decided which coastal management activities best suited their needs and interests in consensus building exercises.

Another CBCRM project occurred in the Spermonde Archipelago, South Sulawesi, in 2008 under the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Program, known as COREMAP's community-based marine protected area (COREMAP's CB-MPA). (100) The project – in the absence of local traditions in marine tenure and protected area management –sought to engage islander communities more actively to protect the region against destructive fishing, especially the use of explosives and cyanide. (100) Engagement methods including a seasonal calendar, future visioning, and backcasting – a planning method that starts with a desirable future and works backwards to identify policies and programs that aim to connect the desired future to the present² – were used with focus groups. In addition to local government officials, the project involved three levels of facilitation: a coordinator at the subdistrict level, a community facilitator at the village level, and a village motivator.

Despite the positive experience of involving fishing communities in marine protected area conservation, the implementation was weak, (54) principally because of weak community inclusion processes. This was because an external contractor, without coordination with local communities, undertook the

demarcation of the core and no-take zones for protected areas. Local communities were also not involved in the development of the CB-MPA operating conditions, which omitted important local or bottom-up economic, social and cultural considerations. Several communities in the village were also unaware of the operating conditions. Subsequently, unsustainable fishing practices continued in the no-take fishing zone. In sum, Glaser *et al.* (100) found the weak development and implementation of the project was mainly due to a lack of time and resources for participatory rule development, a key problem found more broadly in inclusive community engagement attempts. (e.g.,26)

Participatory rule development was “especially important for areas without explicit customary marine management traditions where the emergent non-formal institutional set-up needs to fill a particularly large void in the non-formal adaptive core within the formal MPA framework”. (100 p1224) This situation thus also suggested a role for *gotong royong* in a revival of customary traditions for participatory rule development. Such failure to develop and implement inclusive community engagement also saw failures in implementation of the marine protected area in Berau (East Kalimantan Province). (101,102)

Yet another failure accompanied the introduction of a community forest-management program in Kolaka District, South-East Sulawesi. (103) Government conducted its implementation through third parties without community engagement and the consideration of local qualifications and perspectives about the project. This was exactly what Glaser *et al.* (100 p1224) had pointed out

was necessary in the case of effective marine conservation and management; specifically, transparency and representativeness, local cultural qualifications, comprehensive and active participation from resource use conceptualisation to implementation, local knowledge, and locally coproduced rules, including long-standing, traditional forms of community engagement. In the absence of such processes and practices, the community remained apathetic about being involved in, and supporting, the community forest-management program. (103)

Similarly, a mangrove forest-rehabilitation program in the Sambas District, West Kalimantan largely failed because a top-down management approach dominated the planning stage, with the local community only involved in a largely passive and piecemeal way in site selection and project scheduling. Consequently, the project only drew limited community support. (104)

In contrast, in late 2015, Asia Pulp & Paper (APP) Sinar Mass introduced a successful participatory corporate social responsibility program that involved an integrated forestry and farming system (IFFS) “to empower the people living near and around the APP’s concession area”, distributed across five provinces. In this system, programs that provide guidance to improve social and economic welfare around local farming and environmental sustainability involve the engagement of local communities through meetings and “dialogues with various stakeholders, from the village officials and local public figures, to the farmers’ groups”.³

From these mixed experiences of attempting to strengthen community engagement in

environmental management and sustainability programs, both public and private, we turn to the experience of emergent community engagement in the sub-field of climate change adaptation.

1.3.2. Community engagement in climate change adaptation in Indonesia

From the mid-2000s, climate change adaptation has risen on Indonesia’s policy agenda (Republic of Indonesia 2010), following international trends, although projects that specifically mentioned active or inclusive participation were and still are emergent. In 2009, a notable pilot project on climate change adaptation occurred in Demak on the North Coast of Central Java Province. The local community was engaged to help identify and address climate change issues in more or less permanently inundated Bedono Village, which was due to the sea level rising from 2010.

Despite many experts suggesting that Bedono Village was inappropriate as a residential area, community groups of the affected village engaged in robust dialogue with experts from local village government units, to identify their problems to contribute to a village CCA management plan. (104) The problems included damage to community housing units, increasingly saline fresh water, and loss of land including fishponds. (106) The management plan aimed to sustain the livelihood of the village and build adaptive capacity. It included mangrove rehabilitation, stabilisation of coastal sedimentation, and house renovations with the ground floors elevated by up to one metre, or by the construction stilt houses, as well as by road elevation. (107) A key element of the engagement process was the inclusion of traditional cultural values, which informing

the villagers' resistance to be relocated from ancestral lands, drove them to develop the plan. (108)

In 2010, another participatory CCA program, initiated by the Ministry of the Environment, encouraged both rural and urban communities throughout Indonesia to initiate actions on climate-related measures. The *Kampung Iklim* or "Climate Village" program presented community awards that recognised active engagement of village communities in conducting climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives, particularly for adaptive capacity building. (109) During 2011–2014, there were 97 awards in the program take-off period. (110) More broadly, from 2012–2017, the program had reached 1375 villages with 796 awards presented. Notably, in 2017, one sub-village in the above-mentioned IFFS program in West Kalimantan province received an award.⁴

More broadly, the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) has emerged to develop multi-stakeholder participatory approaches to build resilient communities and cities and conduct vulnerability assessments involving a "shared learning" dialogic approach. (111 p2) For example, in Indonesia, in the cities of Bandar Lampung and Semarang, various participatory mechanisms improved the capacity of governments to plan, finance, coordinate and implement climate resilience programs. Informing these programs were supportive active participatory networks of government agencies, communities, civil society organisations, research centres, and local universities. (112 p15) We now turn to our interview data on the potential interface of traditional and contemporary community engagement.

2. Interview Findings

Concerning our question to our interview respondents on suggesting appropriate participatory strategies at the local and community levels to inform effective adaptive capacity building in Indonesia, a sub-theme that emerged in the data was "community-based action". Eighty per cent of the 38 respondents mentioned community-based action as the most common form of participation practiced by Indonesian communities to address environmental issues, and natural disaster and climate change impacts. Community-based action as mentioned by the respondents included traditional collective action, known as *gotong royong*.

For example, in relation to natural disasters, a collective community-based action would include removing *debris* from homes and cleaning collapsed houses (respondent LGB1), or cleaning up the mess after landslides (respondent CB3). On community self-support, respondent CS3 stated clean-ups were a traditional participatory custom that he had already observed in communities responding to sea level rise, which involved collecting donations from community members in addition to community team actions in building embankments. Community members with financial capability also quickly repaired or rebuilt collapsed houses without expecting government aid (respondent LNCS1).

Respondents, however, raised several problems involving this form of participation because of the erosion of traditional *gotong royong* during the New Order regime. (74) By association, the role of community leader, which traditionally played a significant role in promoting *gotong royong*, had also weakened

over time (respondent LNCS1 and CS4). Yet another factor weakening this practice in the contemporary context saw increasing livelihood difficulties of villagers in poor coastal communities leaving little time or willingness for the affected community members to participate in *gotong royong* (respondents CB1, CS3, CS4, CS5, CS7, CB5, and LNGB1).

An important exemption, though, concerned community self-support carried out in response to government inaction to community needs (respondents G4, NG2, CS3, CS4, and CS9). For example, one community representative (respondent CB3) outlined that in the aftermath of one disaster, “the work to rebuild the houses was managed through *gotong royong* ... the system was created by the people themselves”. Such actions, a local government respondent (LGS4) opined was also due to customary law teaching communities about *gotong royong* and that related to the notion of “good deeds” within Islamic teaching.

DISCUSSION

To reiterate, the aim of this article was to explore how local community engagement to inform effective climate change adaptation can best occur. It is clear that the role and contribution of multiple contexts – historical, political, and socio-cultural – inform such a task. The contexts and experiences discussed in this article show that traditional (or customary) participatory functions like *gotong royong* and *adat* are deeply embedded in Indonesian culture and politics, which, despite the political manipulation of these functions that occurred during the New Order regime, are recovering in the Reform Era.

For example, post-1997, *rukun warga* – literally meaning “harmonious residents”, comprised of *rukun tetangga* or “harmonious neighbourhoods” – are transforming back into community-based institutions to voice community aspirations in governmental decision-making processes. (113) As such, these local administrative organs have significantly helped governments to enable community wellbeing regarding social, prosperity and security aspects. (79) Subsequently, with neighbourhood associations and cooperatives common in Indonesia, (e.g., 114, also 54, 63) local social capital – a key effectiveness determinant of contemporary community engagement (15, 27, 115) – appears relatively evident in Indonesia.

As such, these local institutions offer potential to contribute to a more solid foundation for building adaptive participatory actions and policy responses concerning climate change adaptation. Yet another development since the advent of the Reform Era has been the establishment of local government community-empowerment boards (referred to as *Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*), which suggest another conduit to meld traditional to contemporary community engagement approaches.

Notably, positive support for community-based action to enhance community engagement for more effective CCA came from our respondents, most of whom referred to this sort of action as *gotong royong*. Other developing countries have similar cultural traditions, for example, the *bayanihan* concept of the Philippines that involves activity cooperation at the community level. (e.g., 116) Lessons of failed community engagement in coastal

management, each with long-standing, traditional forms of community engagement a notable omission from the process, (100) reinforces the argument for melding traditional and contemporary community engagement approaches.

Further strengthening this argument in recent times, are studies emerging by Indonesian authors on the potential of *gotong royong* for active community engagement and cooperation in relation to environmental circumstances and thus, by extension, in relation to climate change adaptation. Such examples include strengthening social capital and facilitating community cooperation and participation in reducing riverbank vulnerabilities; (117) planning more effective water management; (118) developing more effective community-based rebuilding approaches post-disaster; (119) and coping with flooding impacts. (120)

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in this paper indicates that traditional and contemporary forms of inclusive community engagement in Indonesia share many commonalities and synergies, and also support from local communities and their representatives, as well as policymaking representatives of government and non-government sectors working in the environment and climate change adaptation areas for effective and locally representative community engagement. In sum, it appears a “traditional-contemporary community engagement approach” may well be the most successful route to achieve effective climate change adaptation in Indonesia, as well as in other active traditional-contemporary informed societies.

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NOTES

(Endnotes)

1. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java> (Accessed 1 December 2017).
2. See, for example, http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/new_metrics/renilde_becque/backcasting_roadmap_transformational_change (Accessed 1 December 2017).
3. See <https://www.pressreader.com/indonesia/the-jakarta-post/20170907/284155041191592>
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