

Power Distance on the Utilization of Kendeng Mountain Resources

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Abstract Kendeng Mountain conflict was handled by the Indonesian Government by forming a SEA team. This government policy was considered appropriate considering that the benefits of SEA have been recognized and are increasingly being adopted in Europe and Asia. However, the existence of the SEA did not necessarily resolve the Kendeng conflict. The government, both in the liberal and socialist perspectives which should be the mediator of the conflict between the private sector and the community, is considered to be absent for the community against Cement. Specifically, through a cultural approach, the Kendeng Mountain conflict occurs because of a high-power distance, where public participation is low in the formulation of government policies, plans, and programs. The research method was through explanatory research by conducting interviews and FGDs as primary data. This research has also collected the SEA, BPS, and Omah Kendeng reports, also the government website as supporting data. Using explanation building, this research found that central authority has formed a mental programming that encourages the bureaucracy of paternalism. In this condition, environmental institutions have low status in the bureaucracy and have little power or authority. Meanwhile, the power and authority are needed for an effective EIA. In addition, there are cultural and technical factors that also cause low public participation, including information, communication and evaluation issues.

Keywords; *Kendeng Conflict; SEA team; Cultural Research*

I. INTRODUCTION

The conflict over resource utilization at the North Kendeng Mountain in Central Java, Indonesia occurred since 2006 [1]. Now, this has come into a new phase that the Government of Indonesia has formed an independent team to conduct KLHS (SEA, strategic environmental assessment) I in 2016 and II in 2017. The team worked on assessing scientifically the North Kendeng mountain as an ecosystem covering four regencies in Central Java and three other regencies in East Java. The SEA team was expected to provide recommendations of which area for conservation and for utilization. The SEA phase 1 was to assess specifically *Cekungan Air Tanah* (CAT, groundwater basin) in Rembang Regency and the phase 2 covering all

regencies that the CAT and the KBAK (Karst Landscape Area) (Rochmi, 2017) was determined by the Presidential Statute no 26/2011 [2].

SEA has been well recognized for its benefits and is increasingly being applied in Europe and Asia [3]. SEA is useful for identifying the long-term consequences of a PPP (policies, plans, programs) through comprehensive testing [4] by involving public participation [3]. Thus, SEA is part of sustainable development. However, SEA is not legally binding. Even though under the Act 32 of 2009 [5] SEA is compulsory in Indonesia for the government to employ for formulating spatial planning and long-term development planning, but there is no sanction if the government does not adopt the result of SEA. SEA has been applied by provincial and local governments in formulating their spatial planning. In addition, EIA studies were also adopted for all cement factories plan in Pati and Rembang Regencies.

Employing SEA is considered the right decision due to the fact that North Kendeng Mountain is an ecosystem covering seven regencies. The SEA for North Kendeng Mountain emerged as an agreement between President Joko Widodo and JMPPK (a Community Network for Caring of North Kendeng Mountains) on August 2, 2016. The SEA phase 1 has finished in April 2017 and the SEA phase two was finished in April 2018.

The SEA recommends that mining activities in the Kendeng Area be temporarily terminated. Even the Provincial Government is asked not to issue new mining permits (IUPs) until there would be further studies with primary data in order to map the CAT [6] [7]. However, the JMPPK assumed that the Provincial Government is deemed not to comply with the KBAK classification as ESDM Ministerial Regulation Number 17 of 2012, the Supreme Court's judicial review Number 99 PK/TUN/2016, and KLHS recommendations, by continuing to provide new mining permits. From January 2017 to March 2018 there are 120 new mining business permits which include Rembang (87 permits), Grobogan (13 permits), Blora (11 permits), and Pati (9 permits) [8] [9]. Thus, the KBAK of Sukolilo, Kayen, and Tambakromo was 71.80 km² in 2014 presumed to be narrowing [10] [11], and Watuputih CAT which includes Rembang and Blora was only 31 km² in

2016 [12]. In addition, the scope of the KBAK area itself is a debate between parties.

The conflict which is known as "semen (cement) vs samin" [13] as a form of resistance from the traditional Sedulur Sikep community towards the operation of PT Semen Indonesia [14] seems to be continue because the SEA report is not a legal product, so both the Central and Local Governments have the potential to disregard the recommendations. The government, both in a liberal and socialist perspective, should be a mediator of conflict between the private sector and the community, namely between "semen" and "samin". The government is expected to be present "in the middle" so that the interests of both parties are facilitated, creates security, and to avoid resource exploitation. [15]. Unfortunately, the Kendeng Mountain conflict actually places the Government as the opposite party. The provincial government was considered "not present" for the "counter-cement" community. The Governor did not meet with the perpetrators of the mass actions on the Governor's office which demanded that the Government obey the decisions of the Supreme Court and recommendations of SEA I and II [11]. The community, especially those who are members of the JMPPK, got updated support and information related to the development of government policies precisely from academics, researchers, and NGOs [16] and even media that are biased due to media framing [14]. In this case, there is no media for delivering adequate information and communication between the Government and citizens who are counter to the cement. Hence, this paper observes how the involvement of local people in the process of EIA and their influence on the EIA decision making, environmental permit, also in the SEA and revision of spatial planning. This study explores how power distance contributes significantly to the Kendeng Mountain conflict.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a systematic decision support process, aiming to ensure that environmental and possibly other sustainability aspects are considered effective in policy, plan, and programme (PPP) making [4] [3]. SEA is analytical and participatory approaches that aim to integrate environmental considerations into PPP and evaluate the inter-linkages with economic and social consideration [17]. Indonesia adopts SEA in making environmental policies into national regulations even to the provincial level. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been seen as a preventive and participatory environmental management tool designed to integrate environmental protection into the decision-making process. However, the debate over the performance and effectiveness of SEA has increased in recent decades [18]. Developing countries should consider the social and economic factors that can be combined with environmental protection and a necessary to maintain a sustainable environment [19].

SEA is the development of EIA (environmental impact assessment) [3]. The difference is in the initiator, the product,

and the need for the existence of an appraisal institution. EIA is initiated by the Government and the Private sector which has certain projects or activities that have the potential to affect the natural and social environment. The products produced by EIA are EIA report (s), RKL (environmental management plan), and RPL (engineering software). EIA in Indonesia is formally regulated in government regulation no 27/1999. The SEA is conducted by the Government to produce SEA report (s) and KRP (policies, plans, or programs) [3].

Hofstede Framework is an approach introduced by Hofstede to identify the culture of countries in the world. This approach is usually used in cross-cultural contexts, also organizational and management studies. Hofstede Framework is divided into four dimensions, namely power distance, individualism and collectivism, certain and uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity and femininity. This understanding of nationality is important in politics, sociology, and psychology [20]

Power distance is related to how humans interact in inequality conditions. The higher the inequality, the higher the power distance. In autocratic governments, there is a tendency for high power distance, because of the centralization of authority. Hofstede referred to this as mental programming, where people have a high dependence on the government which ultimately makes them relatively submissive [20].

III. METHOD

This is exploratory research (descriptive study) which involves in-depth interviews and serial focus group discussions for the primary data collection. The informants are members of the JMPPK (Community Network for the Caring of North Kendeng Mountains), SEA members, also public which specifically Sedulur Sikep (a cultural-indigenous people). The secondary data were collected from the SEA report, the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Omah Kendeng, and the Indonesian government web pages, also from reputable news resources. The secondary data is essential to enrich sequential analysis describing changes in policy, the activities of various involving parties, and the response of various parties to the developments that have taken place.

The FGDs were held in several forums, they are the commemoration of a year after the death of Yu Patmi, a JMPPK activist, which was also used as a medium for citizen consultation with various parties related to Kendeng Mountain. The FGD was also held on events that were packaged in halal bi halal forms, also SEA consultation forum.

This research applied explanation building for the data analysis. This is intended to explain specifically how power distance occurs in the sustainable utilization of Kendeng Mountain by establishing relations between variables so that full analysis can be carried out.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Kendeng Mountain conflict started from the EIA drafting process that the public participation was limited. The public, who was the community around Kendeng in particular, academia, and environmental institutions felt they were not involved/be involved in the drafting process, so the EIA feasibility was doubtful. This has been reinforced by the Supreme Court's decision which assesses that the Kendeng Mountain EIA was defects in the processes and the procedures, related to mining procedures, guaranteeing the sustainability of the system, concrete solutions for community clean water needs and agricultural water needs (Indonesian Supreme Court, 2016). The similar phenomenon has occurred in other Southeast Asian countries, namely Thailand and Malaysia, in which technical and cultural factors caused the EIA quality was not optimal. Even, environmental advocacy was often ignored [21]. Boyle (1998) adds that it is important to consider cultural and technical factors when evaluating the application of policies or programs created in the West and transferred to other cultures with very different inheritance and social and political practices.

Specifically, through a cultural approach, the Kendeng Mountain conflict also has the potential to occur due to the existence of a high power distance, that public participation was low in the preparation of government policies, plans, and programs, as in China, Indonesia and Vietnam [3]. Victor & Agamuthu (2014) states that the inhibiting factor of public participation in SEA is the political and cultural context of Asian countries so that SEA integration in policy becomes more challenging and complex.

Both technically and culturally, the high power distance factor in Kendeng Mountain conflict due to paternalist culture, hierarchy, government status as a social organization, and patron-client relationships that benefit certain parties by ignoring the community during the EIA drafting. Paternal culture places public leaders as the dominant, glorified, and respected parties such as "ndoro" or superior [22]. This culture was formed in the history of a feudal society that there was a high range of power between leaders who were regarded as protectors, and the people who were placed as needed protection and submission. Therefore, the public service factor precisely places leaders as a priority to be served, compared to people who need services. This is a successful form of *mental programming* after a hundred years in colonial times. In this context, protection is obtained by the community when they have a higher rank/social status or status than the general public. In addition, paternalism also results in a government bureaucracy in which low-status environmental institutions have little power or authority and the inter-agency cooperation needed for an effective EIA is still lacking.

In the bureaucracy feudal perspective, the pro and cons parties emerge from the difference in the interest of the public towards the cement business operation. The pros are people who get new jobs/businesses with the existence of the cement factory so that there is an increase in economic status or income. On the contrary, the counterparties are the Kendeng

farmers who are members of the JMPPK and in need of water sustainability.

The establishment of the JMPPK began with the concern of a few people who were concerned about farming sustainability in Sukolilo, Pati, especially the Samin community. There is a unique institution from this organization in which the JMPPK runs formally without the appointment of the chairman and the structure. The field coordinator for each activity depends on "who is eager to". Funding for this organization's activities comes from community self-reliance collected through "yasinan" forums (religious meeting), PKK (Family Welfare Development, an organization of local woman empowerment), as well as directly by individuals.

The Samin community itself, as the driver of cons counter-ement, identical to that society who has low formal education, collective in nature, does not recognize social structures, refuse to pay taxes, and even opposes capitalism which is often represented by trading activities. They have strong values despite not have a particular religious identity. This is indicated by the attitude of upholding honesty because it believes in the existence of reincarnation and depends on nature with the philosophy of natural balance [23]. Following the SEA results, Gunretno, a JMPPK activist admitted that he has been, at least twice, be invited to meet and discuss with Moeldoko, Head of Presidential Staff Office, but he was not confidence. He felt he did not have enough competence and knowledge to argue. This shows the high level of inequality.

Through a consistent struggle and approach which accompanied by a wider public awareness, the number of JMPPK members has expanded to Grobogan, Rembang, Blora, and Tuban, the are areas crossed by Kendeng Mountain. The public concern is not limited to the local community. The outside parties which involved Ulama, Media, Academics, and Non-Governmental Organizations, such as Watchdoc Indonesia Blue Expedition, Speleology Club which provides Kendeng geological data, even musicians from Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

The involvement of various parties is diverse. The local community self-sufficiently contributes in the form of ideas, energy, money, crops, and food and beverages. Academia contributes to the karst region geomorphology data, including the cave system and the ornaments. This study also has found that the underground river in Kendeng Mountain is eternal and is a water storage area for Pati and Grobogan areas which have more than 8,000 households and 4,000 hectares of cultivated land [24]. Watchdoc facilitated the making of the documentary video Samin vs Semen in several versions [13] which are used by JMPPK to provide awareness about Caring for Kendeng through "nobar or nonton bareng" (watching together). Academics / Researchers (such as LIPI, UI, IPB, UGM, Undip, UPN) provide advocacy assistance. They have an academic statement about the concern for Kendeng Mountain on April 5, 2017. No less than 195 academics from various

Universities in Indonesia and Abroad participated in signing the statement [9].

In the Kendeng Mountain conflict, this study formulated that EIA quality was influenced by public participation. In addition, there are cultural and technical factors that influence the quality of public participation. How the culture, technical constraints and bureaucracy culture impact on the EIA drafting of Kendeng Mountain can be described in the following model:

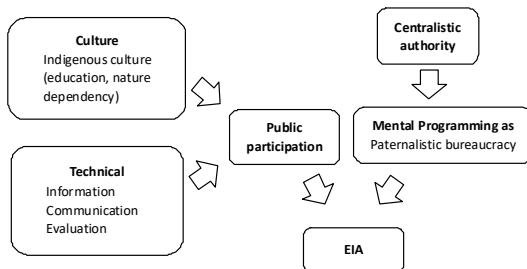


Fig. 1 Public participation in EIA Drafting

V. CONCLUSION

This study has found that the Kendeng Mountain conflict was due to a high power distance. There was a low level of public involvement in the EIA drafting which made a doubt on EIA feasibility. The low level of public participation was due to indigenous culture and technical factors. In terms of bureaucracy, the centralistic authority has encouraged paternalistic bureaucracy. In turn, the public participation and paternal bureaucracy affect the quality of EIA. When EIA was well drafted and involved all components of society, horizontal and vertical conflicts can be minimized. The efforts to encourage public participation are to erode paternalistic bureaucracy and indigenous culture. In addition, there are technical factors that need to be improved, namely the existence of updated information access and communication between parties, as well as evaluation of public services. This study has a limitation on the use of secondary data which was explored from electronic media, in which media framing plays a significant part, especially at the Kendeng Mountain utilization, that places a conflict between farmers and the government.

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