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Multi-level tensions in transport policy and planning: bus-rapid transit (BRT) in Indonesia

A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Planning
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2017

Abstract

International development agencies, supporting climate change sensitive transport policies in Low-Income Asian (LIA) cities, promote Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). However, these policies create tensions at the local level. Using a multi-level governance lens (MLG), this research examines the relations between and distribution of power among actors in BRT investment decisions in the two medium-sized Indonesian cities of Bandung and Surabaya. Analysis of policy and planning documents, and interviews with key stakeholders at central, provincial and city government levels highlighted financial-institutional, socio-political and discursive tensions at multiple levels in BRT projects in these cities. The financial-institutional tensions resulted from city government funding dependency on central government and international development agencies that promoted BRT projects as low-cost ‘green’ solutions to traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Their “Go-green” campaign made it possible for Bandung and Surabaya governments to privilege BRT over traditional minibuses (*angkot*) and regular bus modes. The BRT projects were advanced through the low-cost, environmentally friendly and modern public transport discourses that did not get attention due to the absence of site-specific narrative. Open communication and proactive public participation were also missing when undertaking BRT projects in Bandung and Surabaya so that the projects were opposed by social and political actors in both cities. As a result, national and provincial policies were modified in Bandung limiting BRT to two peri-urban corridors that do not meet local needs. In contrast, Surabaya accepted a BRT project, but then turned it down due to political and social pressure that developed during the process. This research identified the importance horizontal and vertical relationships in the BRT projects’ planning and implementation. While vertical alignment is important for translating national transport policy to local transport planning, horizontal integration and communication is crucial for transport project implementation. The mismatch between horizontal and vertical actors resulted in delays and ultimately rejection of BRT project in Surabaya and distortion of the BRT project in Bandung. This research identifies a need for integrated policy packages to help develop site-specific BRT projects for LIA cities. The evidence suggests a refinement for MLG theory in the context of LIA countries by taking into account the role of power and communication within the emerging economic, social and political pressures at the local level and the need to take into account the vital role of individual actors, institutions and planning process as they respond to and shape policies imposed by higher levels. It also identifies the important role of international level non-government organisations play in setting, or at least, influencing national and local policy agenda.

Acknowledgements

Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alamien, a PhD journey is a memorable experience that teaches me a lot about important things in life especially knowing my own ‘self’, to see who I am and what I like best in my life. I enjoyed my study life so much with all its ups and downs, it’s a privilege of being a student and doing an independent research. The feeling of isolation was also existed, but guidance and helps were always on the way whenever I need it the most.

I must first thank Imran Muhammad and Jeff McNeill, my supervisors at Massey University, who made it possible for me to undertake and complete this research project. I really appreciate their time, assistance, critical feedback and encouragement, as these have been crucial for the successful completion of my research project.

I would like to thank the New Zealand Government for providing me with the New Zealand Development Scholarships (NZDS) to study at Massey University where I was able to pursue my research interest in urban and regional planning. The international support office at Massey University, Sylvia Hooker and her team were also a great help with the administrative and wellbeing matters.

I would also like to thank Alannah Ryan, the former head of School, People, Environment and Planning at Massey, and Glenn Banks, the new head of the School, together with all the staff, Mary Roberts, Kevin Butler, Amy Tootell, Faye Sherriff and Rose McLean, for their great help with administration and logistics matters during my stay at Massey. I am really grateful to Caroline Miller, who helped in the early stage of my PhD journey. Special thanks to Paul Perry and his family and Bryan Ponter as well for their time spent listening to my confusing thoughts when I was writing this research project. You are part of my life too!

My PhD friends in Room 3.07, Waheed, Axel, Ross, Hina, Amelia, Andrew, and Camille, thank you so much for listening to my talks. My best friends, Nur Iskhamiati and Leny Maryouri in Jakarta, Asmad Kari in Malaysia and Sharini Shomasiri in Srilanka, thank you for your great supports. My friends from Indonesia (Nina, Lili, Norma, Erika, Muti, Hera, Darni, Bachtiar, Jatnika, Jermi, Yulfia, Yuni, Neneng, and others), Malaysia (Rai,

Shu, Khairul), especially 42 Ward Street girls (Fatin, Yana, Dayah, Wana, Sheril, Leeza), Pakistan (Sadiah, Syma, Shazrah, Sofia, Rubab, Khadija), Africa (Pili, Fred, Moshi, Dorcas), PNG (Dora, Carol, Cynthia) and from other countries that I met in Palmy. Sister Amatullah from Whanganui, thank you so much.

I extend my warm thanks to all my research participants in Surabaya, Bandung, and Jakarta, who helped me to conduct my research by sharing their experience and knowledge about urban transport problems, which enriched the information that I obtained from the text books and articles. I enjoyed the fieldwork experiences and had the opportunity to meet people from diverse backgrounds in the process of learning more about my research topic. My classmate in Gadjah Mada University, Tury Damantoro has helped me with the contact persons and supported with his own experiences in dealing with urban transport policy and planning in Indonesia.

I would also like to thank Julia Rayner at the Graduate Research School (GRS), together with Fiona McKinsey for their very kind assistance. Lois Wilkinson, Julia Tanner and Tania Waitere at the Student Learning Centre (SLC) for improving my writing skill during the course of my PhD life at Massey. Also, I would like to acknowledge the help and assistance of my big brother from Pakistan, Dr. Abdul Rehman Cheema, who had spending his time reading my chapters and comments on my writing.

The Governor of NTB Province, Bapak Dr. TGB HM Zainul Majdi, the Provincial Secretary of NTB Province (Dr. H. Rosiady Sayuti), the Head of BAPPEDA of NTB Province, Bapak Ridwan Syah, Bapak Chairul Mahsul, Bapak H. Makchul and his family, my colleagues in the BAPPEDA NTB and my best friends in Lombok (Yuliati, Chandra, Nyimas, Rini Krisna), thank you so much for your prayers, support and trust in my ability to get my thesis done.

Lastly, to my parents (Ajie and Umie), my brothers and sister (Anton, Amie, Jefry, Ewie), my big family in Lombok, Dompu and Bima. I hope I can contribute more to the development of urban transport in Indonesia in the near future. *Terima kasih banyak.*

Palmerston North, December 2016

Eka

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BAPPENAS	Ministry of National Development Planning
BPJT	Badan Pengatur Jalan Tol (Indonesian Toll-Road Authority)
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
BLU	<i>Badan Layanan Umum</i> , Public Service Authority
BUMD	<i>Badan Usaha Milik Daerah</i> , Local Government Owned Enterprise
CMEA	Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs
CMSA	Coordinating Ministry of Social Affairs
CNG	Compresses Natural Gases
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
DAK	Special Allocation Fund
DAMRI	<i>Djawatan Angkoetan Motor Repoeblik Indoenesia</i> , the state-owned bus operator
DAU	<i>Dana Alokasi Umum</i> , General Allocation Fund
DED	Detail Engineering Design
EU	European Union
GIZ	Germany Technical Development Agency
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environment Initiatives
IGES	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
IndII	Indonesia Infrastructure Initiative, Australian Government funded project
ITDP	Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KAI	<i>Kereta Api Indonesia</i> , Indonesian railway company
KITA	Kitakyushu International Techno-cooperative Association
KPU	<i>Koordinator Pengawas Unit</i> , Unit Control Coordinator
LIA	Low-income Asian cities
MEMR	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources
MERR	Middle Eastern Ring Road
MLG	Multi-level governance
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs

MoT	Ministry of Transport
MoPW	Ministry of Public Works
MSOE	Ministry of State-Owned Enterprise
MUHEC	Massey University Human Ethic Committee
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ORGANDA	<i>Organisasi Pengusaha Angkutan Darat</i> , Land Transport Owners Association
Paratransit	Transport service owned and operated by individuals and the private sector
PKN	<i>Pusat Kegiatan Nasional</i> , Centre of national activity
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
PROPEDA	<i>Pola Dasar Pembangunan Daerah</i> , Local development fundamental patterns
REPETADA	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Tahunan Daerah</i> , Annual urban development plan
RKP	<i>Rencana Kerja Pemerintah</i> , Annual national development work plan (1-year plan)
RKPD	<i>Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Daerah</i> , Annual provincial/city development work plan (1-year plan)
RPJMD	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah</i> , Provincial/City medium-term development plan (5-year plan)
RPJMN	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional</i> , National Medium-Term Development Plan (5-year plan)
RPJPD	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Daerah</i> , Provincial/City long-term development plan (20-year plan)
RPJPN	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional</i> , National long-term development plan (20-year plan)
RTRW	<i>Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah</i> , Spatial development plan (30-year plan)
SERR	Surabaya Eastern Ring Road
SUTIP	Sustainable Urban Transport Improvement Project

Indonesian terms

<i>Angkot</i>	A popular local transport service in Bandung that owned and operated by individuals and the private sector
<i>Becak</i>	Non-motorised three-wheeler vehicles (cycle rickshaw)
<i>Kampung</i>	Informal housing/settlements in urban and rural areas
<i>Lyn</i>	Local minibuses in Surabaya own by individual and private with 9-12 passengers seat
<i>Musrenbang</i>	<i>Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan</i> , public consultation for development planning at village, sub-district, city, provincial and national government levels
<i>Ojek</i>	Motorcycle taxi uses as informal public transport services provided by individual owners