INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS IN POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAM:

A contribution to the raise of new elites in rural Java[1]

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Abstrak

Umumnya, kelompok elite diidentikkan dengan penguasaan sumber-sumber kekuasaan yang biasanya berupa materi (tanah, rumah, ternak) dan pekerjaan di instansi formal. Definisi seperti ini sudah jamak ditemukan di lingkup perdesaan di Jawa. Namun, dari pengalaman Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (PNPM) Perdesaan khususnya oleh kader program, artikel ini berargumen bahwa ada alternatif sumber kuasa yang lain selain materi dan posisi di pemerintahan yang kemudian menjadikan seorang yang biasa menjadi anggota kelompok elite. Sumber non-material ini adalah loyalitas, dedikasi dan kepercayaan. Diilhami oleh pendekatan Power Cube, artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam proses PNPM terdapat transformasi kuasa dari individu biasa menjadi elite. Artikel ini berdasar pada metode studi kasus di dua desa di Kabupaten Malang, Jawa Timur yang mendapatkan program PNPM.
Kata kunci: elite, kuasa, pemberdayaan

INTRODUCTION

While poverty alleviation program turns into being a global agenda, there is still much concern on its effectiveness to reduce the number of the poor. Thus, multilateral donor such as the World Bank has initiated alternative methods in order to overcome this problem. The most popular method which the Bank has been proliferating is through inclusive development in which the voice of the poor is appreciated. By inclusive, it means that development process should be participative in nature and ensures all the people to be part of the process, including the marginalized. It is not a suprise should the words as participation, empowerment and inclusive development have become 'buzzwords' (Cornwall and Brock, p. 2005). Though anti-poverty programs lead to the decreased numbers of the poor, researchers start to investigate its socio-political impacts, especially in the place where the program is being operated.

As Gibson and Woolcock (2008) argue, deliberative contestation (where power contestation is part of it) seems to be an obvious socio-political impact of such anti-poverty program especially in developing country like Indonesia. The deliberative contestation term refers to, "situation, in which villagers may challenge local elites in public meeting with fair argument" (Gibson and Woolcock, 2008). This contestation is found in a scaled-up and

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flagship national program of anti-poverty, named as *Program Nasional Pemberdayaan Masyarakat* (PNPM)/ National Program for Community Empowerment. This was an initiative which was firstly supported by the Bank which majorly comprised of participation and of empowerment model. PNPM was launched by former President *Yudhoyono* in *Palu*, Central Sulawesi, in 2007. The objective of the program is (PNPM Mandiri Management Working Group, 2014, p. 2):

> To improve the welfare and increase the employment of the poor. It aims to achieve this by developing people's capacities (both individually and collectively) to solve various problems they face in improving quality of life, self-reliance and prosperity. They should be able to solve these problems by utilizing their economic and social potential through an independent development process. [2]

Target in 2014, as stated, was, the program would be implemented in 5,300 sub-districts across the country and supported by national budget of IDR 7,599 Trillion (US$ 633,25 Billion)(Ibid:1). In terms of operating, the program is equipped with institutional setting which consists of rules, regulations and organizational structure. On the one hand, poverty in Indonesia drops gradually in the period of 2006 to 2010. In 2010, about 30 million people were living under national poverty line from previously 40 million in 2006 (World Bank, 2015). On the other hand, there is no significant correlation between PNPM and decreased number of poverty. Further, stated by Sulistyaningrum (2005), "…PNPM is not directly impacting to poverty, but to empowering society"[3]. Against this account, the study investigates on how people become empowered which eventually may lead to deliberative contestation.

There are two important aspects that will be explored in relation to deliberative contestation. These aspects are empowerment and power dynamic. The former explains on how people gain more power, meanwhile the latter exposes how institutional setting creates a media for power dynamic. Following paragraphs below will detail.

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[2] [Indoensian: Untuk memperbaiki kesejahteraan dan meningkatkan lapangan kerja bagi warga miskin. Hal ini diupayakan dengan cara membangun kapasitas masyarakat (baik secara individu maupun kelompok) to mengatasi berbagai masalah yang mereka hadapi dalam meningkatkan kualitas hidup mereka, kemandirian, dan kesejahteraan mereka. Mereka harus mengatasi masalah-masalah ini dengan memanfaatkan potensi ekonomi dan social mereka melalui proses pembangunan yang independen]

[3] Woro Sri Hastuti Sulistyaningrum, Head of Sub-Directorate of Community Empowerment, National Development Planning Agency (*Bappenas*) Indonesia in Asia Regional Conference on Community Driven Development: Scaling Up and Mainstreaming of CDD Programs: Practitioners and Policy Makers Discussion Forum, March 24-27, 2015 Cebu, the Philippines.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Power and Empowerment

According to Robert Dahl (1957), power is that '*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do' (Dahl 1957, 2002, pp. 8-25). Further, he proposes that power of someone to another is greater if he/she has greater resources. Here, things that can be classified as resources of power are respect, rectitude, affection, well-being, wealth, skill and enlightenment. By typology, two types of power in terms of relations are identified. The first is 'power over' which means exercising the power through organizations and the second is 'power to', the direct influence by the powerful to powerless (see discussion in length by Gaventa (2003). In this paper, typology of power that will be used is 'power to', which is embedded in the concept of empowerment.

There are many definitions of empowerment. One mentions that empowerment is a process to give power to powerless groups in order to gain more balance with powerful ones (Oakley 2001:16). The others, like Cornwall and Brock (2005), assume that empowerment is the way of generating personal and collective action for whom who is suffering from inequality. The use of the concept is more complex than its definitions, in fact. It connects with other aspects such as grassroots movement (Sethi, 1993), economics (Botchway 2001, Mohanty, 2001) and facilitator (as exogenous factor) (Rowlands, 1995). As empowerment is merely about gaining power, it also deals with zero-sum situations (Luttrell et al., 2009) where in most cases yield result with serious tension.

Power Cube

Power Cube concept is then used to shape this study as well as to explain the power dynamics among actors, who are involved in a particular place. Developed by John Gaventa (2005), the Power Cube enables researchers to define and to analyze the power dimension in three shapes namely space, level and forms (IDS Sussex. 2014). In more detail, space is "decision-making arenas and forums for action, but they can also include other 'spaces' that are seen as opportunities, moments and channels, where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships which affect their lives and interests" (Gaventa, 2005). In addition, level refers to relations among local, national and global. The third component of Power Cube is form, which means a form of power that can be classified into visible, hidden and invisible (Gaventa, 2005, Luttrell et al., 2007). The following sections present the two case studies, where empowerment and institutional setting are inter-related,

which deepen deliberative contestation. Prior to do so, PNPM at glance will be showed in order to understand on how PNPM relates to both empowerment and institutional setting.

PNPM IN INDONESIA

PNPM and Empowerment

It was mentioned above that PNPM aims to empower society. Here, empowerment means efforts to create and to increase both individual and group capacity in order to tackle any problems in relation to quality of life, independent and welfare (Menkokesra, 2007). As a program, PNPM has been focusing on how to empower community. This objective, by design, can be achieved through several components. These components include community development, community block grant, strengthening local governance and partnership, and technical assistance for program management and development (Menkokesra, 2007, p. 20). In addition, according to the PNPM manual book, empowerment also includes several steps, namely socialization, autonomy and sustainability. Socialization means that community as well as government officers have good understanding on PNPM and on participatory development. This step takes more or less 2 years depends on geographical location and on readiness of community. Some issues in this step that should be concerned are include block grant as the vital component, specific fund allocation for women (minimum 30% from total budget), dominant role by facilitator, low sense of belonging, participatory development process that is not yet integrated into regional development plan, and dependency to consultant and facilitator (Menkokesra, 2007, p. 20) (see Annex 1).

Autonomy is the second step to achieve empowered community. This is the process of intensifying development projects where the projects are taking place. It takes 2 years and involves few efforts, including institutionalizing participatory development at village level and sub-district level, institutionalizing micro finance in order to meet the poor's need, increasing community as well as government capacity on development management and sustainability (Menkokesra, 2007). Things that should be taken into account are, the fund is only a stimulus, development facilitation by community, moderate level of sense of belonging, equality among community, government and facilitator, and integration of participatory development with regional development plan.

The next step after socialization and autonomy is sustainability. In this step, community is able to maintain development process with rationale, fair and participatory. Moreover, they can organize as well as address their own need in development. In this step, vital components are the understanding that self-funded money is the main source in development; transparent,

participatory and democratic development process becomes common practice; the increased capacity of the government to responde and be aware of social issues, and facilitator is only supplementary (Menkokesra, 2007, p. 20).

PNPM and Institutional Setting

PNPM is an Indonesian anti-poverty program that depends largely on institutional settings. Institution in PNPM, moreover, is identified into two different forms. The first is institution as body of organization, whereas the second is rule of the game. In relation to the first form, there are organizational arrangements that operate at various levels from national to community level. At the community level, PNPM is supported by small units of organizations. Name of these units are *Tim Pelaksana Kegiatan* (TPK)/ Community Project Implementation Team, *Tim Monitoring*/ Monitoring Team and *Kader Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa* (KPMD)/ village cadres.

Despite organizational support, PNPM is also equipped with rules and regulations. One of the examples of rules and regulations is on sanction. By definition, sanction is a punishment that given to any misconduct which may occur in the process of PNPM. It is enacted in order to develop self-responsibility of community. There are three types, in general, of sanction, namely community sanction, legal sanction, and program sanction (Depdagri, 2008, p. 8). On community sanction, this is a consensus among community on sort of punishment toward violation in PNPM. This local consensus must be written and inserted in the official report. Meanwhile, legal sanction is a punishment which is based on Law in Indonesia. The program sanction is given, whenever a sub-district or a village is unable to maintain PNPM programs. As the result, the sub-district or the village will be banned for the following year and their fund will be stopped. Noteworthy, PNPM also uses *musyawarah* as open forum, where people and PNPM actors meet. This is part of country's cultural heritage of sharing and consultation particularly in rural areas.

CASE STUDIES

The study is conducted in two villages, which are both located in Malang regency, East Java. Selection is based mainly on information from district facilitator and on the performance of the two villages. The first village is considered more successful, whereas the second is the opposite. In both villages, few empowered people are identified. The following sub-section will present the case in more detail.

Case 1: Treasurer of TPK in Gadingkulon Village

The village is located just beside the forest. It is well known of fruits and of vegetables products which contribute to local economy. Based on survey 2009, total numbers of population were about 3,771 in which 1,879 were men and 1,892 were women (Tim Penyusun RPJMDes Gadingkulon, 2010, p. 10). The majority of people work on agriculture (80 percent of total population). The rest works on other sectors such as government officers and traders. The village suffers from lack of adequate infrastructures especially roads, school and public health facilities. Damaged roads are mainly caused by over-used of big vehicles that daily commute to and from the village for harvesting.

PNPM came into action in 2009 when Gadingkulon received water and piping project. In the following three years, the village benefited from other infrastructures projects such as road construction (2010), irrigation (2011) and *Posyandu* or maternal health facilities (2012). The treasurer of TPK joined the team in 2010. Since then, he was mandated to manage PNPM projects for the following years. Based on a small survey conducted to 50 households in Gadingkulon, most of respondents admit that the successfulness of PNPM projects is caused by active role of the treasurer. He is not only a trustworthy person, but also a responsible man who are thoroughly dealing with project's complexities, the survey adds.

Having completed only in the 5th grade at elementary school, the treasurer found him unfortunate. Like other children in his age, he dropped-out from the school and went to orange field for pennies. Living with four children, he was small farmer prior to joining with PNPM. It was in 2010, when he bravely enough to apply as treasurer of TPK. With lack of formal education and of limited skills on project management, he was finally elected at village meeting. He feels happy, later on, as PNPM provides space for capacity building such as seminars, workshop and trainings[4]. In the last five years on his contribution to PNPM, he is now a merchant with various businesses from orange trading to car renting. To note, the most important feature in PNPM, for him, is *musyawarah*.

The treasurer admits that *musyawarah* in PNPM is an open forum where everyone can speak up. This is the case when he protested to PNPM facilitator in *Musyawarah Antar Desa* (MAD)/inter-village meeting[5]. He opposed strongly, in this event, on scoring mechanism in

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[4] Interview with the treasurer, 26 February 2013.
[5] Observation in MAD, *Kecamatan Dau*, 13 February 2013. MAD is one of the stages in PNPM cycle where all villages in sub-district compete one and another to get PNPM fund. Here merit proposal should be based on the highest score.

which he thought unfair[6]. A person from another village dominated the process of MAD. He was a lecturer with doctoral degree and had a good skill on debate as well as on presentation. The other members of MAD were farmers, who mostly did not have such skills.

Case 2: Village Cadre of Ngadirejo

Different to the situation in Gadingkulon, Ngadirejo has adequate infrastructures. Located about 2 kilometres from provincial road, the village is benefitted from rice production and local trading. Hot mix road is built through the village as this is one of the accesses to the *Kawi* Mountain[7]. In 2011, total number of people in Ngadirejo was 4,726 which among them 2,383 were men and the rest 2,343 were women. Most of them were in age school (7-18 years) which counted 1,224 people and in productive age (18-56 years) which was the same number as age school (Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa Kabupaten Malang, 2011, p. 19). In addition, type of occupation varies in Ngadirejo, where 390 people are farmers (people, who have land) and 1,114 of them are small peasants (people, who work for land owner). The others are government officer (21 people), housemaid (23 people, all of them are women) and military and government officer retiree (18 people). Other occupations are also found, such as private employees (109 people), driver (33 people) and carpenter (70 people).

PNPM has been implementing in Ngadirejo in the last couple of years. Among the infrastructure projects are water and piping (2010), water tower (2011) and small road (2012). Revolving fund is also operated in the village, like other places where PNPM is being implemented. In common, woman village cadre is responsible for managing revolving fund. In 2012, there was one group in Ngadirejo, which was managing the fund. The total amount given to the group was US$ 1000.[8] On managing revolving fund, the village cadre is not only required to monitor the use of money, but also asked to provide capacity building to group members. Types of capacity building are book keeping, public speech and writing proposal. In fact, revolving fund in Ngadirejo has serious problem of late payment.

As of 29 May 2013, total late payment in the village was US$ 9,000. Four groups contributed to the total late payment, including Suplir, Dahlia, Bougenfil and Tulip. Among these groups, Suplir contributed most counted for US$ 7,000 (Tim PNPM Mandiri Perdesaan

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[6] In PNPM, there is a scoring mechanism to rank village proposals. The highest score is 4 whereas the lowest is 1. Score 4 will be given to project which is closely related to poverty reduction such as health facilities whereas the score 1 is the vice versa.

[7] *Kawi* Mountain is a famous tourism where many people-mostly Chinese-are worshiping the cemetery asking for fortunate.

[8] The group consists of five people; US$ 200 each.

Kec. Kromengan, 2013). Due to this problem, the village cadre had to consult with facilitators at the district level. As the problem remained unsolved, she finally asked the police to handle the issue.

A mother of two, the village cadre is living alone in Ngadirejo. She married with a man from another village and her family stays with her husband. Prior joining to PNPM, she was an ordinary housewife. The village head appointed her as PNPM cadre in 2010. At first, it was a daunting for her as she found herself incapable. Because of her role, she often visited sub-district office for PNPM activities. Her network became wider as she met other people from different places. Last, she was asked to be part of 2014 election's committee [9]. Accordingly, she admitted that because of PNPM, she was familiar with many people not only bureaucrats but also businessmen. She thanks to PNPM for this. However, few people are unpleasant with her achievement.

The village head seems to do not like her most. The last *musyawarah* held in village's hall was cancelled due to lack of attendance. He was very angry and blamed PNPM activists, in particular village cadre and facilitators for not seriously organizing the meeting[10]. In fact, information about the meeting had disbursed days before. The village head, in addition, came to me and said "I am very disappointed to PNPM facilitator and its cadres. Their work is under performance". Prior to the event, the village head said that he was not in favor to PNPM as the program was complex and took time, especially the *musyawarah.* The village cadre stood up and talked furiously to the village head saying that all team members had disseminated the information about *musyawarah*.

DISCUSSION

This section will discuss two things related to deliberative contestation. First, it will explain on how people become empowered, which provides them a degree of confidence particularly on challenging elite. Second, it will explore how *musyawarah* is used as media for power articulation.

Empowering people

Before discussing empowerment more detail, it is worth to re-exposes the objectives of PNPM as a program aiming to empower society. Clearly stated in the 2007 PNPM Manual Book, the objective of the program is "creating and increasing capacity of society, individually or in group, to overcome problems in relation to independency, quality of life and welfare"

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[9] Interview with *Ngadirejo* village cadre, 6 April 2013.
[10] Observation at *musyawarah desa Ngadirejo*, 5 June 2013.

(Menkokesra, 2007, p. 11). Here, capacity is further detailed as a desire to take action and be part of decision making process in participatory development. Thus, empowered society is hoped, in the long run, to achieve the overall objective of PNPM, namely poverty reduction. Taken this account into consideration, PNPM falls, in relation to empowerment, into two related aspects. They are empowerment as an end and empowerment as a means (Wils, 2001). By the first category, he refers to the objective of empowerment, which empowers the excluded in decision making process. The second category refers to empowerment as vehicle to achieve other goals (p. 61).

The 'capacity approach' that has been used in PNPM adopts primarily from international donor. The World Bank, in this sense, stresses that empowerment is capability of the poor to participate in, negotiated with, influence and control over development (The World Bank, 2002, p. 12). In so doing, it needs two components, namely capacity of agency and opportunity (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005). To make effective choices, agency is influenced by such asset endowments like psychological, informational, organizational, material, social, financial and human aspect. Then, agency is empowered if they could transfer these endowments into desired actions. Opportunity is related to socio-political context which allows agency to further the actions. In development context, there is a need to eliminate institutional barriers both formal and informal, including laws, regulatory frameworks, and norms to provide greater space for the poor to participate (World Bank, 2000).

From the case, we can see some important elements that will be further explained. The first is about the capacity to choose. This relates to 'capacity approach'. The second is on transforming endowments into real policy/program actions. Being active players in PNPM, both the treasurer and the cadre are pushed to engage with problems. And, they have to overcome those problems in short and respectful manner. As shown in the cases, they are not only expressing capacity to make choices but also asserting their thoughts against the more powerful agency. Equally important, they may do so as they have power resources to show-off. According to Uphoff (2005, p. 225), type of power resources are economic resources (control over land, labour, and capital), social resources (social status, respect, esteem), political resources (capacity to enforce decision), informational resources (knowledge), moral resources and physical resources. The ideas of type of power is interesting, at least, in two ways. First, before joining PNPM, none of them (the treasurer and the cadre) had those types of power resources. Second, it dismantles social structure, especially in rural Java.

It is very common in rural Java that property (seen as power resources in this paper) transmission is through kinship and marriage. White and Schweizer (1998) state that older son shares bigger heir than his siblings. If they get less from this, they may get it through marriage. Javanese social structure is relatively loose, in which inter-family marriage is open. Nevertheless, for village oligarchs, they have more tight structure. Along with marriage and kinship, this particular class manages their capital accumulation and transfers this into their younger generations (Schweizer, 1988). In contrast to this traditional path of gaining power, the two case studies demonstrate that they become more powerful through 'modern' ways. On her analysis of poverty reduction in Indonesia, Sari (2012) states that "the present estimation shows that the more people have access to facilities and education, the more likely they overcome poverty". What does PNPM reflect precisely on this matter? With series of trainings to educate people, the program is actually also to widen opportunity for people mentioned above to change their structural relations in rural society.

The Power Cube Analysis

Power cube is the concept which is developed in the Participation, Power and Social Change Research Group at Institute Development Studies (IDS) in the UK. Introduced by John Gaventa (2005), this concept is widely used in many aspects such as monitoring and evaluation program, research and context analysis, and program planning and design analysis. To illustrate, the figure below will show the Power Cube analysis (Pantazidou, 2012).
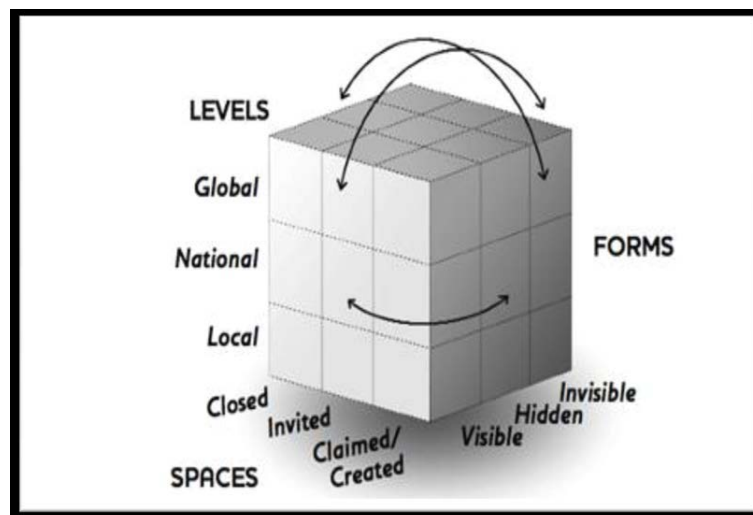
As shown in the figure, there are three elements in Power Cube analysis, namely levels (global, national, local), spaces (closed, invited, created) and forms (visible, hidden and invisible). Each of these elements will be applied to better understand the case of 'deliberative contestation' in PNPM.

Levels

Although the Power Cube states that there are three layers in levels, it becomes more difficult to separate one and another in particular in the globalizing world (Gaventa, 2007). A particular debate or issue in the global level will impact to the lower level. This is true in the case of PNPM. The idea of community-driven development (CDD), which is used globally and is initiated primarily by the World Bank, has been implemented in Indonesia. Such intervention is not new in many developing countries. Advice by the World Bank to many African countries, which deal with financial crisis through the structural adjustment process is a manifestation of direct influence by the Bank to the domestic sphere. More interestingly, the proposal of structural adjustment by the Bank towards countries in Africa had never been challenged or at least questioned even though the result was not impressive (Storey, 2000). Another example of direct influence is coined by Carroll (2010, p. 180) on his writing on the World Bank project in Indonesia. She stated that the World Bank insisted to change behaviour of bureaucracy in many levels (in particular local level).

Spaces

According to Power Cube official website, spaces can be viewed, "spaces refer to decision-making arenas and forums for action, but they can also include other 'spaces' that are seen as opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships which affect their lives and interests" (Power Cube, 2014). In relation to this, *musyawarah* in PNPM is seen as arena, where decision making takes place. During *musyawarah*, spaces are created publicly in order to invite villagers to be part of the project. On the later, decentralization in Indonesia falls into opportunities, where citizen furthers their interest in a process of policy making. Interestingly, these two are found in the *Musrenbangcam*,[11] in which in one stage of PNPM, [12] it is underlined to meet with regional development planning. In theory, decentralization not only shortens the gap between the state and its citizen (administrative decentralization), but also widens opportunity of citizen to involve in decision making process (political decentralization) (Von Haldenwang, 1991).

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[11] This is a term which refers to *musyawarah* at sub-district level where people are invited to plan development projects in the area. Participants are bureaucrats, stakeholders, media, academia and representatives of villages in the sub-district. This is also part of Indonesian bottom-up planning mechanism which is started from hamlet level to national level.

[12] This stage is MAD (*Musyawarah Antar Desa*/ inter-village meeting). In PNPM, MAD and *Musrenangcam* are held at the same time and place.

Forms

By attending two *musyawarahs,* where 'deliberative contestation' emerges, it is relatively seen that visible power is in the place. Here, visible is defined as process that can be seen, who wins and who loses (Power Cube, 2014b). In the case of the treasurer, he managed his argument and was able to direct the forum to favour him. He, furthermore, used his knowledge on PNPM rules and regulations to express his argument, where he saw something wrong in MAD. Different to this case, the village cadre did not challenge frontally to the village head in public, but the village head admitted that the cadre was right on her explanation. And, at the end of the meeting, he mentioned in front of the audience that information about the meeting was well distributed and acknowledged the work of the village cadre.

CONCLUSION

The understanding of elite in rural Java mostly relates to material basis such as property as the primary resources of symbolic power. In the context of new millennium when poverty seems to be one of the most crucial issues to counter, the definition of elite and its resources has changed, however. The case of World Bank flagship anti-poverty program named PNPM exposes this trajectory of change.

Aiming for increased welfare, PNPM is seen as political technology where global buzzwords, such as participation and empowerment are intensively used. To support, the program is also equipped with institutional setting. This setting is not only ensuring the process, on the one hand, but also opening opportunities as forum to empower people, on the other. Nevertheless, not all people benefit from this matter. Only few, who fortunately act as the program key actors, who get this benefit. In the two case studies, it is explored each on how these people become more empowered.

The trajectory of being 'new elite' is elaborated. To sum, it has two components which contributes to this. First, it relates to the resources of power and second it links to forum where these resources are particularly articulated. Both of these are well in place within PNPM. The program, in addition, has changed from material basis into non-material basis of power. Caring, knowledge, and dedication are the forms of resources, which are gained through the stages of PNPM. This is also supported by creating a forum, where the new elite has chance to 'show off'. At the very end, this situation is in favour for creating 'deliberative contestation'.

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