



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL AGENDA
21 IN MALAYSIA**

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MALAYSIA

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

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MARIANA BINTI MOHAMED OSMAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti
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In the Name of Allah Most Beneficent Most Merciful. All the praises and thanks to Allah, the Lord of 'Alamin, and Salat (Blessing of Allah) and Salam (peace) be upon the last end of Allah's Prophets and Messengers Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)

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ABSTRACT

Abstract Of Thesis Presented to The Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in the Fulfilment of the Requirement for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Community Development.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL AGENDA 21 IN MALAYSIA

By

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September 2008

Chairman: Associate Professor Syarifah Norazizan Syed Abdul Rashid, Ph.D.

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Central to this study is the subject of community participation and local governance in Malaysia. It is acknowledged that the community and local authority play an important role in the local decision making process. Stakeholder participation has become an important part of the decision making process. It can empower and significantly influence the decision making process as well as the project design. How effective has participation been historically? Does it actually influence the decision making process in Local Agenda 21 (LA21)?

It has been noted that participation practices have increased over the last three decades and is now practised in the planning and development process. However, the constant debates over stakeholder participation and citizen control have not resulted in the ability to identify its real issues and problems. Planning and participation of stakeholder at local level is the process of incorporating into the plan consideration of stakeholder needs, preferences and values attributable to each proposal before the decision making body. The determination of effective planning and decision in LA21



takes into account diverse perspectives and impact allowing the decision makers the opportunity to find solutions and empower stakeholder and local citizen in the LA21 process.

This thesis examines the roles of the stakeholders i.e. community residents, local authority staffs and community organizations in LA21 process in Malaysia. The objectives of this research are to identify the level of participation of local authorities in LA21 and to investigate factors influencing the participation of the local authorities in LA21 in Malaysia. Furthermore, the research examines the way in which the participatory principles of LA21 are being carried out in Malaysia, using Petaling Jaya as a case study. The research uses a model of public participation to analyse the Petaling Jaya case study showing the level of participation among community in the LA21 process. The research uses several methods to collect the data which includes self administered questionnaire, interviews and participated observation. The investigation includes an examination of the problems faced by the stakeholder in the participation process of LA21 and the reasons for the low level of adoption of LA21 by local authorities in Malaysia. However, as this research will illustrate through survey and case study analysis, there are several factors and limitations contributing to the success of stakeholder participation in Local agenda 21 process. By highlighting these factors and limitations, the researcher's goal is to mobilize research and policy efforts to overcome those limitations and to foster widespread stakeholder participation in the implementation of LA21 among local authorities in Malaysia.

The results show that there is low level of participation among local authorities in LA21 in Malaysia. In the case study of Petaling Jaya, the level of participation among community is also low ranging from 'non-participation' to 'tokenism' level and not at the 'partnership' level as it should be in a LA21 process. In the case study it was found that the local authority try to emphasise a listening and open approach to decision-making process, but despite their commitment to participation, there has been limited success in securing widespread involvement and trust of people into the process. Key issues to emerge are the importance of the commitment of key individual and politicians, the readiness of the authorities to the outcomes of the participatory methods (responsive, transparent and consensus decision) and the need for participation to be an ongoing commitment by the authorities themselves rather than just one off exercise. The implications are that change is needed in the way local authorities relate to the communities they serve, but this will place considerable demand on already stretched local authority resource, particularly where positive action is needed to build capacity.



ABSTRAK

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia adalah sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah di dalam Pembangunan Komuniti.

PENYERTAAN PIHAK-PIHAK YANG BERKEPENTINGAN DI DALAM PERLAKSANAAN AGENDA TEMPATAN 21 DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

MARIANA MOHAMED OSMAN

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Perbincangan utama dalam kajian ini adalah merujuk kepada penyertaan komuniti dan kerajaan tempatan di Malaysia. Sepertimana yang telah diketahui, komuniti dan pihak kerajaan tempatan memainkan peranan yang penting dalam proses penentuan keputusan (*decision making process*) untuk sesebuah kawasan tempatan. Penglibatan dan penyertaan pihak-pihak yang berkepentingan (*stakeholders*) adalah penting dan telah menjadi sebahagian daripada proses penentuan keputusan. Ia dapat mendayaupayakan komuniti dan seterusnya mempengaruhi keputusan yang dibuat. Sejauh manakah keberkesanan penglibatan ini sebelumnya? Adakah ia benar-benar dapat mempengaruhi proses membuat keputusan dalam LA21?

Berdasarkan kajian ilmiah, penglibatan pihak-pihak yang berkepentingan (*stakeholder*) telah menunjukkan peningkatan dalam jangka masa tiga dekad ini dan sekarang ianya telah digunapakai didalam proses perancangan bandar dan pembangunan wilayah. Walaubagaimanapun, perdebatan yang berterusan tentang pentingnya penglibatan golongan yang berkepentingan (*stakeholder*) dan masyarakat setempat didalam proses membuat keputusan tidak membantu didalam mengenalpasti isu-isu dan masalah sebenar yang dihadapi



oleh pihak ini. Perancangan dan penglibatan golongan berkepentingan di peringkat tempatan adalah suatu proses yang mengambil kira keperluan, kehendak dan nilai pihak-pihak ini didalam setiap cadangan yang dikemukakan sebelum sesebuah keputusan itu dibuat. Penentuan perancangan yang efektif dan keputusan dalam LA21 perlulah mengambil kira pelbagai pandangan dari semua pihak yang terlibat supaya pihak pembuat keputusan (*decision-maker*) berpeluang untuk menimbang-balik semua pendapat dan mencari penyelesaian yang sesuai untuk semua pihak yang terlibat..

Tesis ini mengkaji dan meneliti peranan pihak-pihak yang berkepentingan seperti komuniti masyarakat setempat, pihak berkuasa tempatan dan organisasi didalam komuniti (*community organization*) yang terlibat didalam proses LA21 di Malaysia. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti tahap penglibatan pihak berkuasa tempatan dalam LA21 dan mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penglibatan pihak berkuasa tempatan didalam LA21 di Malaysia. Disamping itu, kajian ini juga mengkaji kaedah-kaedah dan prinsip-prinsip penglibatan atau penyertaan yang telah dilaksanakan di Malaysia, dengan menjadikan Petaling Jaya sebagai kajian kes. Kajian ini menggunakan teori penglibatan awam sebagai model untuk meneliti kes kajian di Petaling Jaya bagi mengenalpasti tahap penglibatan di kalangan masyarakat dalam proses LA21. kajian ini menggunakan beberapa kaedah untuk mengumpul data seperti kajian soal selidik secara individu, temuduga serta pemerhatian. Kajian ini merangkumi penelitian tentang masalah-masalah yang telah dihadapi oleh golongan berkepentingan (*stakeholder*) didalam menyertai proses LA21 dan juga sebab-sebab yang menjurus ke arah tahap pelaksanaan LA21 yang rendah di kalangan pihak berkuasa tempatan di Malaysia. Kajian ini berjaya mengenalpasti beberapa faktor yang membataskan penglibatan golongan berkepentingan dalam proses LA21 ini seperti kurangnya kepercayaan diantara pihak yang terlibat, kurangnya komitmen dari semua pihak, kekurangan ilmu dan kesedaran mengenai

prinsip-prinsip pembangunan mampan serta kekurangan kewangan dan staf untuk melaksanakan LA21.

Analisa juga menunjukkan tahap penglibatan adalah rendah dari pihak berkuasa tempatan di Malaysia didalam melaksanakan LA21. Didalam kajian di Petaling Jaya, tahap penglibatan di kalangan masyarakat adalah rendah iaitu di tahap '*informing*' iaitu diantara 'non-participation' dan 'tokenism' level dan bukan pada tahap 'partnership' seperti mana yang diharapkan didalam proses LA21. Merujuk kepada kes kajian di Petaling Jaya, walaupun kerajaan tempatan di kawasan tersebut cuba menekankan pendekatan yang lebih terbuka didalam proses penentuan keputusan, tetapi penyertaan dari pihak penduduk masih rendah dan tahap kepercayaan dari golongan masyarakat kepada pihak berkuasa tempatan masih terbatas didalam proses tersebut. Isu-isu utama yang dikenalpasti melalui kajian ini adalah pentingnya kewujudan komitmen oleh anggota masyarakat dan ahli politik untuk melaksanakan LA21, kesediaan pihak berkuasa tempatan terhadap keterbukaan didalam membuat keputusan dan pentingnya perbincangan yang dilihat sebagai responsif, telus dan konsesi oleh semua pihak yang terlibat (*responsive, transparent and consensus decision*). Penglibatan ini memerlukan komitmen yang berterusan daripada pihak berkuasa tempatan dan ini bukan sekadar komitmen daripada sebelah pihak sahaja. Perubahan minda dan cara kerja serta kesungguhan pihak berkuasa tempatan amatlah diperlukan demi menggalakkan penyertaan awam didalam proses ini. Walaubagaimanapun, perubahan yang perlu dilakukan adalah amat bergantung kepada sumber yang terhad dan pertimbangan yang bijak oleh pihak berkuasa tempatan. Langkah yang proaktif dan bijak perlu dilaksanakan bagi memastikan pembangunan mampan dapat dicapai.

I certify that an Examination Committee met on 25 September 2008 to conduct the final examination of Mariana Binti Mohamed Osman on her Ph.D thesis entitled “Stakeholder Participation in the Implementation of Local Agenda 21 in Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examinations Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citation which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

MARIANA MOHAMED OSMAN

Date:



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Throughout human history, people worked together to find solutions to challenges facing their communities. Community leaders and authorities met to discuss problems and called on other community members to add their perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom. As societies became more complex, decision making became the focal point in the relationship of communities and their local authorities. Often, decisions were imposed on communities by a group of powerful individuals residing in remote locations with different environmental, economic, or societal conditions. Recently, governments and organisations returned to more inclusive decision-making processes. Such processes are inherent to sustainability and designed to involve the public or their representatives in the decision making processes.

Sustainable development requires the integration and balance of environmental, social and economic benefits in decisions of any development (Atkinson, 2004). By definition, sustainable development is a development that takes the impact on the environment into account and tries to minimize environmental damages (Atkinson, 2004). Sustainable development is defined as “*developments that meet our needs while ensuring that we leave a healthy and viable world for future generations.*” (Sandbrook and Quarrie, 1992). For creating the integration balance, an initiative called Local Agenda 21 (LA21) was proposed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNDEC) in 1992 (Tonami and Mori, 2007). LA21

is “an agenda that set tasks and a vision in order to promote sustainable development at the local level and shows the menu of actions” (Nakaguchi, 2004:28). It introduced community participation and good governance back to the centre stage, and during UNDEC, most world’s leaders agreed that harmful degradation of the environment was due to human negligence and the lack of community participation in the decision making process (Grubb,1993; Dodds 2000). LA21 is an attempt to set development agendas at local level for a better quality of life and liveability (Selman, 2000). The stakeholder participation was considered essential in the agenda setting process for quality environmental planning and management (Sandbrook and Quarrie, 1992). The idea of stakeholder participation at the local level demands openness, accountability and plurality of opinions (Tonami and Mori, 2007). Participation is a powerful tool for gaining insights from many sectors of the community and helps to incorporate public values and community needs into decisions made by the authority. (Solitare, 2005) Public participation can not only improve the quality of these decisions, but also effectively resolve conflict among competing interests, build trust in institutions, and educate and inform the public (Selman, 2000; Renn, Webler & Wiedemann, 1995).

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Today, fifteen years after the introduction of Local Agenda 21 (henceforth to be referred as LA21) as a chapter of the Agenda 21, LA21 is seen as a powerful instruments for environmental, social and economic management on the local scale (Nakaguchi, 2004). LA21 is defined as ‘*a framework for providing services with a long term view*’ (ICLEI, 1994: 3). It is a process of building partnerships between local authorities and other stakeholders to implement and develop local policies for

sustainable development (Bateman, 1995). Consequently, LA21 argues for decentralisation of sustainable development and requires a proactive response from the local government sector (Bond et al.1998; Ekins and Newby, 1998; Lake 1996, Selman, 2000). Decentralisation principles require policy measures to be determined by the lower level of authority suited for a given problem (Zylicz, 2000:145). At the same time, it requires local municipalities to assume responsibility for public duties such as environmental management and to introduce sustainable development policies in a broader framework of local councils with support from the federal or central government (Tonami and Mori, 2007).

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Some authors (Barnes and Phillips, 2000; Bells and Evans 1998; Franklin, 2002; Hughes, 2000; Laffety, 2001; Selman, 1998, Young, 2001) consider LA21 is based on the premise that community involvement is essential in its decision making process. All stakeholders must be comfortable with the word "sustainability" and its central concepts before attempting to identify community sustainability goals. The programmes of LA21 implemented by the local authority together with the local community must have strong public awareness, interest and commitment for it to be a success (Dodds,1993; Laffety, 2001; Selman, 1998, Young, 2001). LA21 helps to re-conceptualise the scale of solutions for problems at the local level. In this sense, LA 21 recognised that local environmental problems affect people directly. With the endorsement of LA 21, it is now recognised, that a focus on individuals within the community, and specifically, within the realm of local government is a desirable location for sustainable development initiatives to occur (Zylicz, 2000). This is so, since local governments help to shape the lives of communities at local

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