

# TRANSFORMING INDONESIAN FORMAL ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN IN THE DECENTRALISATION ERA

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## Abstract

*The large number of children living in orphanages across Indonesia, due to economic hardship and limited access to schooling, has urged the government to shift the paradigm in the provision of formal alternative care since the last decade. The policy and practice changes, however, have been encountering several challenges in regards of decentralisation. Referring to the ecosystem theory, the change in the macrosystem has affected the relationship patterns of each system units. The changing government power distribution has shifted the hierarchical relationship between central and local governments, and social workers as the front liners. The political interaction dynamics post-decentralisation has resulted in the sufficient coordination among the stakeholders. This, to some extent, has influenced the local government's standpoint towards the central policy on reducing the community reliance on residential-based care. Recognising the subsequent challenges, as well as needs and possibilities, is required to enhance the efforts of developing the sustainable child welfare system.*

*Keywords: orphanages, formal care, child welfare system, paradigm shift, alternative care*

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## Indonesia's changing social and political contexts

The 1998 Indonesian Reformation endorsed a shift from authoritarian to democratic governance. The demand for regional autonomy resonated, and the power redistribution was cited as a key to local social and economic development. The pressure to end central government control and for development order was fuelled by demands for participatory governance from citizens, governments, non-government organisations and influenced by international donors (e.g. IMF and World Bank) (Bunnell et al., 2013; Green, 2005; Widianingsih, McLaren & McIntyre-Mills, 2017; Widianingsih & Morrell, 2007). However, under the notion of democratic devolution, reformation actions have propelled regional dissatisfaction. Both vertical and horizontal government conflicts have emerged. Public expressions of dissatisfaction with government are well recognised as a serious "disintegration threat" to national economic and socio-political stability (Braga, 2017; Sanityastuti & Trijono, 2003; Tadjoeuddin, Suharyo & Mishra, 2001, 2003; Warokka, 2013). These issues show that Indonesia's government reformation over the last twenty years are still ongoing.

Theoretically, Indonesia's government decentralisation, and devolution of welfare, is a worthwhile endeavour as it would seek to ensure democracy, freedom and human rights, promoting efficiency and better social services, and for advancing social and economic development (Basta, 1999, p. 34). Some of the benefits of a decentralised government include the development of local constituencies to advance regional economies and local production, and to provide supplies for meeting local demands, which may attract investors and thereby lower taxes (Thornton, 2007, p. 65). McCarthy (2004) and Guess (2005) suggest that central government should remain responsible for financing regional specific innovations, and for developing evaluation mechanisms for regulation and monitoring. However, decentralisation remains a complex and enduring task, owing to the vast population spread across Indonesia's archipelago, and the cultural differences across regions (Rosser & Wilson, 2012). Workers are exposed to exhaustion, as they are active in the context of reformation, decentralisation and devolution of welfare to the regions, in a constantly changing system in which none of these agendas are complete, even with the introduction of policy beneficial to the poor.

National reformation has not only brought about systemic change but also created a political-cultural lag. Indonesia's relatively new democracy had generated freedom of speech and political expressions, and invited partnerships in change from outside the country. Transparency and accountability are conditions necessary to ensure functioning democracy and that public services sufficiently meet the citizens' needs (Bubandt, 2006; Dale, 2015; Dhani, Lee & Fitch, 2015; Diamond, 2015; Hadiz, 2004; King, 2003; Pietsch & Clark, 2015). As a product of democracy, these are intended to enhance local participation and improve local governance.

In relation to social welfare, decentralisation has mandated the sharing responsibilities between Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and sub-level governments. While MoSA provide the framework for action, sub-level governments are responsible for policy development to do with social welfare (including taking over the formal alternative care) and budget allocations. In this situation, social workers' capacities to fulfil their roles are limited by their accountability to different institutional management bodies and government levels. They are also required to meet central government outcomes and constricted by sub-level budgeting. Furthermore, democracy has brought with it five-yearly elections and a government personnel employment rotation system (Widianingsih, McLaren & McIntyre-Mills, 2017). Constant change in staff, work philosophies, skills, and styles all present additional challenges for social workers employed in government residential child care institutions and for social workers in NGOs working under government guidelines and policies.

### **A paradigm shift in the provision of child residential-based care**

Globalisation has created new social problems, and they inevitably affect child welfare in a global context. This has led global movement to permeate the shifting paradigm in child support provision. The systems approach may able to create better support provision for children in need (Connolly & Smith, 2010; Gallagher et al., 2011; Wulczyn et al., 2010). The authors agree that linking the authority, human resources, and infrastructure as support system with the process of care and sustainable programs is required to achieve sustainable changes. Connolly and Smith (2010) emphasise that child service should focus on the children's rights and best interests. This acknowledgement implies the recognition of family roles, basing the intervention on children's social context background, and adequate record and documentation. To ensure the transformation sustainability, Connolly and Smith (2010) and Wulczyn et al. (2010) describe the continuum of care in three domains. They refer to different interventions based on diverse circumstances and risk, ranging from low/not-at-all, middle, and high risk. The first is the universal domain with family and community as the target of preventative intervention, by raising awareness through education and sensitisation. The second is relates to middle-risk cases, for which strengthening family roles to support children is the primary intervention. High risk cases require special protection; in addition to reinforcing family support, alternative care is considered at this stage. Connolly and Smith (2010) and colleagues stress that an integrated system is required not only to deal with the problems, but also to anticipate its coming.

Reducing reliance on residential-based care is part of the systems approach, placed as the last resort in the system. Efforts to minimise children's placement in institutions have been a central feature of debates surrounding the deinstitutionalisation of children at risk, particularly in European countries. Terziev and Arabska (2016), for example, review the process of deinstitutionalisation in Bulgaria. This study critiqued several policies and processes on deinstitutionalisation from 2010-2014. The first project, known as "Childhood for all", relocated children from institutions to family-based care. With limited assessment of the children's care needs and preparation to ensure appropriate after-care support, this project lead to large quantities of return cases of children to the institutions.

In minimising the reliance on residential care, a serious measure to develop family-based care is substantial. Davidson et al. (2017) argue that developing family-based care needs to comprise efforts to enhance families' capacities to prevent institutionalisation in the first place, and to prepare families with institutionalised children for reunification. Family-based care policies are also needed to prepare non-birth families to provide family-like environments for children unlikely to be reunified with their birth families (Davidson et al., 2017, p. 755). According to the authors, two principles are necessary for support through alternative care arrangements: necessity and suitability (Davidson et al., 2017, p. 757). Necessity means that children should be placed in alternative care only when necessary, based on recommendations of a thorough

assessment. No child should be cared for away from their family or community without cause. Suitability means that the substitute care should meet a suitable standard of care and ensure the best interest of the child.

Gibson, Leonard and Wilson (2004) describe their experiences in transforming residential child care. According to the authors, residential care is a political activity and its operation involves the mobilisation of specific powers. In addition, the care system is related to wider social and political themes (e.g. gender, disability, and ethnicity). Considering the wider context of residential care, Gibson, Leonard and Wilson (2004) employ system theory and system thinking, in addition to understanding the politics of residential child care. The systematic framework allows the researchers to look at beyond the subject. They can see both the individual and the systems they function within. This can guide future transformation. Comprehending residential child care as part of a system enables the researchers to see surrounding aspects to determine the direction of transformation. Gibson, Leonard and Wilson (2004) highlight that system theory and system thinking provided a road map that can show the key variables as well as their relationships. Acknowledging the interaction dynamics among the system units enabled them to determine intervention in the residential child care transformation.

### **Transforming the residential-based care practice in a challenging environment**

The Aceh tsunami in 2004, one could suggest, is a marker of a paradigm shift in Indonesia's child welfare system. In response to a perceived rise in orphaned children as a result of the Aceh tsunami, Martin (2006) was commissioned to undertake a rapid assessment of children's whereabouts, to map and track children who had lost their families. She found that large numbers of children were living in residential child care institutions; e.g., orphanages and Islamic boarding. However, the investigation revealed that many children were living in institutions for various reasons other than the Aceh tsunami or orphanhood at all. This urged the Indonesian government to make further enquiries into the large number of children living in institutions.

Follow-up research was conducted by MoSA, in partnership with Save the Children and UNICEF (Martin & Sudrajat, 2007, p. 1). This enquiry found that up to 500,000 children were estimated living across approximately 7,000 residential child care institutions. Ortiz, Moreira Daniels and Engilbertsdóttir (2012) identified that ninety percent of children living in these institutions were not orphaned as they had at least one parent who was alive; about half of the children had both parents. The first study in Aceh (Martin, 2006) and follow up study in several other provinces (Martin & Sudrajat, 2007) reveal an overreliance on residential child care as an intervention for children of poor families. Poverty led many parents to send their children away from their communities to institutions for the provision of food, shelter, education and other basic needs; the promise of food and education was a strategy in the recruitment of children by institutions. Due to distance, many children did not have contact with their families or communities for many years after being relinquished to institutional living. Martin and Sudrajat (2007) expressed concerns with the standard of care, as well as the maintenance of children's contact with family and community. Although overseen by the MoSA, government emphasis was on institutions maintaining proper documentation and legal formalities instead of implementing guidelines and monitoring to ensure quality of care at residential child care institutions, reunification with families and other needs critical to children's development (Martin & Sudrajat, 2007, p. 2). In more recent authorship, Martin (2013) notes little staff awareness of the potential negative impact of institutionalisation for children. The researcher expressed concerns about the parents who had placed blind faith in these children's institutions, while the institutions might be putting their children at risk of harm.

The paradigm shift was prompted by the shocking findings of the large number children living in substandard conditions in institutions, away from their families and communities. A systems approach was adopted by MoSA (Martin, 2013, p. 4). Based on meeting specific goal of improving the children's wellbeing, the systems approach has important elements to achieve it: functions (governance, management, enforcement), capacities (human resources, infrastructure, budget), structures (relationship between system component and actors), process of care (case management, standard of procedure), and service continuum/continuum of care (promotion, prevention, response) (Wulczyn et al., 2010, p. 22). The current paradigm emphasises contextualisation of the child welfare system, as the differing contexts influence the support provision. Setting goals based on the problem definitions, identifying the related systems, and recognising the interaction patterns and dynamics are essential for sustainable changes (Foster-Fishman, Nowell & Yang, 2007). Understanding the core problem and support capacity enables the action

determination. The systems approach sets a range of service, including setting a gatekeeping mechanism, considering the diverse circumstances that may involve the children.

Along with aid agencies, this approach involved several strategies. These included the development of child welfare policies; the translation of policy to practice through the promotion of an integrative system approach towards child wellbeing; building the capacity and skills of human resources at the front line; and changing community attitudes to sustain a social image of institutional care as beneficial to children. Changes included the enactment of Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of Republic of Indonesia No. 30/HUK/2011 on National Standard of Care for Child Welfare Institutions. A result of the recommendation of the United Nations of Committee on the Rights of the Child, this national standard aims to regulate the use of residential child care as the last option of substituting family care, and to improve the quality of care, especially in the non-government institutions that have no access to social workers. Most importantly, systemic changes were argued necessary to break the over-reliance on residential child care as a support mechanism for children of families experiencing economic hardship (Engle & Black, 2008). Beazley (2015, p. 34) describes the use of institutional care, as a solution, as 'inappropriate aid'.

Transforming the residential-based care model requires a range of actors, thus calling for an integrative child welfare system that is both horizontal and vertical in its design. Distribution of welfare responsibility to regions and attempts towards developing stronger pro-poor policy has been associated with Indonesia's successes and failures in its democratic decentralisation agenda, which has been ongoing since 1998 (Booth, 2003; Greer, 2010; Rosser & Wilson, 2012; Widianingsih, McLaren & McIntyre-Mills, 2017; Widianingsih & Morrell, 2007). Challenges to welfare development and reform have arisen because of the changed approach to child welfare. This new approach was instigated by relatively recent changes to Indonesia's governance system, most notably its decentralisation which placed welfare responsibility onto regional administrative units. Indonesia's social political change over the last few decades has presented significant barriers to ensuring the best interests of children.

Despite the last decade's changes to policy and practice in Indonesia's child welfare system, the more recent systems approach in child welfare provision has not been widely promoted. Various stakeholders are also unaware of Indonesia's the systems approach in child welfare provision, ironically including many who should be inextricably linked to the child welfare system. The Department of Social Services, which is a sub-level authority located in each of Indonesia's municipalities, has brought about a significant impact in the implementation of the National Standard of Care (Standar Nasional Pengasuhan Anak/SNPA) locally. Problems with the availability of personnel capable of understanding, implementing and sustaining policy and practice have become the decelerating factors of putting the shift into practice.

An effort to shift the paradigm of child support provision appeared in a study by Anasiru (2011), which discusses four models of intervention used by Makassar local department of social service: institutional-based, family-based, community-based and half-way house service. The author mentioned a lack of detailed guidelines, including clear indicators for children's placement in residential child care, which the department considered most appropriate in providing for children's physical needs and safety. The lack of coordination between inter-local departments, and the use of repressive methods were argued as hindering efforts to take children off the streets.

Several other studies more specifically investigated the implementation of the SNPA. A study undertaken in Semarang, Central Java, showed the insufficient effort of Department of Social, Youth and Sport in promoting the current standard of care (Wijayanti, Rengga & Santoso, 2015). The findings show an indefinite schedule for socialising the Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs No. 30/HUK/2011 on National Standard of Care for Child Welfare Institutions, and the lack of competent personnel involved in the monitoring system and assistance towards the non-government residential child care (Wijayanti, Rengga & Santoso, 2015, pp. 6-7). Impoverished families continued to send their children to institutions. Workers unfamiliar with the paradigm shift still conflate child protection with institutionalisation, unaware of alternative intervention options available, including preventative approaches.

The need for capable social workers in advocating the changing practice of residential-based care was also found by Rahayu (2017) and another research conducted by Susilowati, Dewi, & Kartika (2019). The later was conducted in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, finding the limited endorsement of the standard shown by both the province and municipal Department of Social Service. There were four out of twenty four registered child residential care institutions that had received technical assistance of the SNPA. The research

discovered the significance of social workers' presence in providing formal alternative care for children. The only institution assisted by a social worker showed better implementation of the standard of care.

The various studies suggest that integrated child welfare system is required to ensure the fulfilment of children's rights. The sharing power between central, regional and local governments is expected to advance the social welfare development. The inadequate endorsement of national standard of care, however, has been shown both at the regional and local levels. The lack of potential social workers appeared to be one of the challenges in advocating the shifting practice of formal alternative care. The existing literature on changing practice of child formal alternative care in Indonesia, however, overlooked the advocacy challenges and root causes of insufficient responses on the shifting paradigm in the provision of formal alternative care for children.

The gaps between this paper and the existing literature appear in the research focus and methods. This research focuses on the role transformation of child formal alternative care from the social workers' point of view. The use of phenomenology, ecological system theory and critical social work theory as tools of analysis present another perspective in seeing the limited endorsement of the changing practice in the provision of formal alternative care at the local level.

## Method

This research attempts to answer the research question: "How do Indonesian social workers experience working in the midst of policy and practice change, specifically the social workers who have received training from the Ministry of Social Affairs on social work's role transformation, front-line practice and system changes affecting residential child care in Indonesia?". Using qualitative method, this study aims:

1. To interpret phenomenologically the social workers' experiences of training<sup>1</sup> and application of Indonesia's system-based approach in child welfare provision, and the changing role expectations<sup>2</sup> of social workers employed in residential child care.
2. To locate the social worker's experiences of the changes to residential child care practice in the context of the social workers' system and of Indonesia's broader socio-political transformations.

According to Creswell (2007, p. 40), qualitative design is used when the issues require thorough exploration; the design is helpful in acquiring a detailed understanding the contexts as well as complexities of the issues. Opting for a qualitative approach works well when the researcher aspires to support people by listening to their voices and interpreting meanings as they relate to perceived experiences. In this research, qualitative inquiry allowed for an understanding of individual perceptions to be intertwined with critique on the social, political and environmental systems that subjects interact with. Participants' responses were received via in-depth, one-on-one interviews. Investigating social workers' perceptions demanded both a specific approach and a specific set of data collection tools. Phenomenology is used to explore social workers' living experiences and how they perceive the changing approaches in the day-to-day delivery of services at residential child care facilities. Open-ended questions were used to collect information from social workers and related key informants. Analytical interpretations were informed by ecological perspectives and critical social work theory.

Conducted from mid-December 2015 to mid-February 2016, the data collection involved 20 participants. The fieldwork took place in six provinces, namely Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java, Bali, East and West Nusa Tenggara. These six provinces are under coordination of Balai Besar Pendidikan dan

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<sup>1</sup> Training experiences here include both pre- and in-service trainings. The pre-service training refers to related education taken before becoming a social worker. There are three levels in the Indonesian national education: primary, secondary, and tertiary/higher education (*Act of the Republic of Indonesia on National Education System* 2003 article 14). Fahrudin, Adi and Yusuf (2016) explain that the higher education covers academic education and professional education. While the academic education aims at the particular science development and innovation, the professional education focuses on applied science and technology that emphasises the competency and work skills development. Social work in Indonesia is offered both in secondary and tertiary education. While the pre-service training refers to formal education, the in-service training relates to trainings provided by Ministry of Social Affairs as a part of supports to social work profession development (*Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on Social Work Profession Development* 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Expectations here refer to the paradigm change in child welfare practice. Accordingly, the expectations come from across the child and welfare system in Indonesia and also global human rights conventions for systems to be more responsive to children's rights, development and wellbeing. This is explained later in this thesis in terms of the role transformation of social workers in Indonesia. This involves a shift in social work in residential child care from discrete caregiving in institutions to family empowerment and capacity building, and community development.

Pelatihan Kesejahteraan Sosial (Centre for Education and Training of Social Welfare) Region III Yogyakarta. Taking this region as the locus of the study was one way to avoid negative effects of bias. I work at region IV Kalimantan, so collecting data in another region helped avoid assumptions concerning the social workers' circumstances in the respective region and avoided any conflict of interest regarding my status as MoSA's trainer.

In this research context, data was collected from social workers and other key informants and developed into several themes that allow meaning of the experience on the shifting paradigm to appear in one piece. The participants were selected based on criteria:

- Work or were previously assigned in residential child care
- Have participated in the training/s on child protection held by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

These criteria are essential given this study's aims. The training participation is significant to include participants than can reflect on their pre-service and in-service training. This study also involved several developmental agencies as key informants, such as representatives from Ministry of Social Affairs, Save the Children, UNICEF and higher education.

Following Creswell (2007) and Smith and Osborn (2003) the data analysis process started along with the data transcription. The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) aims to find the meaning beyond the participants' explanations during the interview. Engaging with the transcription and interpreting the results are ways to access meanings as the essence of participants' perceptions, since they are not explicitly available (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 66). Further, the data collected was analysed Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, and critical social work theory. The ecological system theory enabled extraction of the social workers' perceptions of the system they worked in pre- and post-change, as well as their perceptions of how changes influenced their professional roles. This stage included developing the ecomaps, comprising chrono-, macro-, exo-, meso-, and micro-systems, to describe the interactions of social workers with their surroundings. The use of ecomaps to compare the situations before and after the Tsunami in Aceh in 2004 was in purpose of showing the social workers' social contexts and how those shaped their perceptions of the changes in residential-based service. The critical social work theory was employed to emerge the interpretations in relation to social workers' capacity to engage in social change and justice, and to create better outcomes for children.

## **Results: ecological findings**

This study examined the role transformation of child formal alternative care from the social workers' perspective by viewing their position in their ecosystem, in the midst of changing practice of child formal alternative care in the decentralisation era. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem theory, the social workers were located in the centre of their environmental system. Although the theory is basically about child development, it is applicable to analysing an individual in an organisational systems context, including how organisation and work dynamics influence their working journeys.

### **The Chronosystem**

The chronosystem refers to the individuals' dimension of time, serial events, and life transitions. The expected and unexpected life events are contained in this system, bringing about particular experiences or individuals and shaping their perceptions. Bronfenbrenner (1988, p. 41) identifies puberty, school entry, job promotion, employee rotation, political change, marriage, retirement, etc. as expected events, while unexpected experiences may include death, disasters, winning lotteries, divorce, losing jobs, etc. Those diverse circumstances come to individuals' lives and effect developmental change (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Life transitions create new experiences that shape certain mindsets towards certain things.

The political, economic, and social changes in Indonesia have shaped social workers' experiences and perceptions of their roles and social service delivery, especially in dealing with the transformation of the child welfare system. The centralised system meant that the central government held the majority of the power, which resulted in centralised policies, rather than localised ones. The national reform in 1998 brought about systematic changes in other areas. MoSA has gone through various changes after the reform. First, in 1999, President Abdurrahman Wahid closed the Department of Social Affairs along with eight other departments, and later replaced it with the National Social Welfare Board. This board was established to

respond to various disasters at that time (Fahrudin, 2013, p. 138). Consequently, there was a large employee transfer to regional and local governments, as the government closed all regional offices. It took two years for political uproar to rise in 2001, which resulted in the President's impeachment. Megawati Sukarnoputri took over the presidency and reactivated MoSA. Despite the reopening, based on the Act Number 32/2004 and Act Number 23/2014 concerning Local Governance, regional autonomy and administration also covers the transfer of management and supervision of the residential based care centres that were previously administered under MoSA.

The changing bureaucratic relationships and interaction dynamics have shaped particular perspectives among the government social workers, such as how they perceived their employment status changing from central to local. The closing of regional offices in each province indicated the end of a direct relationship between social workers and the ministry. This caused many social workers to struggle in managing their roles under different management and supervision.

### **The Macrosystem**

The changing paradigm in child welfare system mandates that formal alternative care should be the last option, in case of children experiencing problem of care. In the macrosystem, where values, norms, belief, laws, policies, body of knowledge and public minds shape certain perceptions, the institutional role transformation has come across several challenges. Various questions and dilemmas as well as hopelessness raised and influenced the social workers' way of delivering services and perceiving their position and roles in the systemic change. Participants were unsure if they had done the right thing in helping the children of poor families, on account of the conflicting ideas of urging family-based care, and societal and religious values emphasising providing support for poor families. Most social workers used to think that institutionalisation was the right way to help children pursue education.

In the aspects law and policy, social workers are caught between the central government's policy requiring institutional transformation of residential child care, the local government's limited support for the paradigm shift and society's resistance to change. Despite the willingness to enhance protection for children, the paradigm shift was only partially understood. The child welfare system was understood as a program aiming to protecting children from neglect, violence, and exploitation. The local governments' regulations mostly focused on children with issues or risks and indicated an insufficient understanding of the systems approach.

### **The Exosystem**

Decentralisation has consequently affected the interactions between the central government, through MoSA, and government residential child care. Before the local autonomy was granted, the reciprocal relationship allowed the government's agenda and policies to be disseminated efficiently, while social workers were able to access the support system to maintain service quality. The situation has changed since the local government took over management of all residential care centres. Decentralisation allows local governments to set their own regulations and to decide supporting actions towards policies initiated by the central government. The previous mutual interaction has weakened, although the positivity is still maintained at some point. MoSA no longer has the authority to force local government residential child care centres to follow the ministry's recommendations. Nevertheless, MoSA still provides training to maintain social workers' capacities. This situation has created a dilemma among social workers regarding the paradigm shift. They were motivated to apply the approach recommended in the paradigm shift, yet they had to be realistic given the lack of support from their institution head, the local department of social service (*Dinas Sosial Provinsi/ Dinas Sosial Kabupaten/Kota*), or other local apparatus.

The challenge in synchronising the local supports to the central policies has been apparent from the quota system related to budget planning that is still applied in some regions. The system-based approach's mandate to put residential-based care as emergency plan means that the obligation to meet the quota should be waived. The inconsistency shown by many regional governments in supporting the implementation of the National Standard of Care created dilemma for social workers. On one hand, social workers were eager to reform their procedure, particularly on the recruitment program to meet the quota. On the other hand, those social workers were obliged to follow the regulation to avoid below-standard audit reviews.

## The Mesosystem

In the context of social workers as developing people, the mesosystem refers to the settings where they are directly involved: family, the workplace, and the surrounding neighbourhood. The mesosystem includes the connections between these and links the interaction patterns with the social workers in the organisational context, including shaping their perspectives.

The subsequent challenges resulting from decentralisation that were directly encountered by the social workers:

1) Poor allocation of staff with specialised skills

Decentralisation resulted in regionalisation, where local governments took over some residential-based care services that were previously managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). The larger autonomy enables local government to conduct employment rotation. The participants stated that they were not exempt from rotation, despite developing specific skills in training. Some participants experienced a rotation shortly after participating in training on child protection. They felt disappointed as they had planned to promote the systems approach. They felt that it was unfair as they had spent lots of time and energy to improve their knowledge and skills to support the institution's role transformation.

2) Synchronising knowledge backgrounds

Following the issue of poor staff allocation as an impact of local autonomy to conduct employment rotation is the diverse background of people placed in the local Department of Social Service. Some participants responded this concern that they preferred working under the Ministry's supervision. They argued that shared knowledge of social work resulted in clear communication leading to goal achievement. A supervisory gap occurred due to different perspectives on social service delivery. The diverse knowledge backgrounds of each local stakeholder shaped various point of views on social service provision.

3) Role conduct

Some social workers advised that some challenges emerged because they were rarely involved in the decision-making process. Jon, for example, experienced an obstacle in proposing a project regarding the role transformation of a social home. After participating in child protection training, he proposed a community-based vocational program for children that had dropped out of school. The idea was to empower the children without taking them away from their communities. This program was considered budget-friendly but was not approved. This led him to think that he had failed to convince his institution head that the proposed program was worth presenting to the regional program planning board.

## Discussion

Human development can be viewed from different perspectives: nature, nurture, and a combination of the two. Bronfenbrenner's theory is one of many that views an individual's development as influenced by the interactions between them and their social surroundings, as well as by the dynamics in their ecological systems. Although the theory is basically about child development, it is applicable to analysing an individual in an organisational systems context, including how organisation and work dynamics influence their working journeys. In this research, the ecological theory and critical social work theory are employed to analyse the research findings in order to answer the research question. The Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is used to show the social workers' position within the ecosystem and to analyse their relationships with the outer layer systems, to see how intersystem relationships influence and shape their perceptions of the changing policy and practice of residential child care.

Regarding the political context, the Indonesian government was centralised until the 1998 national reform. The centralised system meant that the central government held the majority of the power, which resulted in centralised policies, rather than localised ones. The New Order Regime of President Suharto strongly implemented centralisation for three decades with a vision of equalising national development. This idea was followed by equalisation policies subsidising regional governments, particularly in economic development, which resulted in high rates of national economic growth (Tadjoeddin, Suharyo, & Mishra, 2003, p. 3). Centralising the system aimed to manage national resources and distribute them equally to all

regions, so that none was left behind. Centralisation was a colonial legacy, including the social welfare system. During the colonisation by both the Dutch and Japanese, colonial governments supported local social agencies through their respective governments. This concept was adopted by the government of Indonesia with the establishment of the Department of Social Affairs, focusing on helping people suffering from the war. The centralised system was manifested in the establishment of regional offices in each province as the representatives of Department of Social Affairs (Fahrudin, 2013). The hierarchical relationship in this era was effective in ensuring that the central government's policies were well distributed and implemented.

The centralised system was preferred due to its uniform nature, in which national expenditures were kept at a similar level and were predictable (Besley & Coate, 2003, p. 2612). This system meant concentrated control of management and supervision, in which the central government was able to ensure the implementation of national policies. In the context of the social welfare system, the tiered and direct relationship between the Department of Social Affairs and social service institutions all over Indonesia was regarded as beneficial by employees, especially those who worked in local areas. The shared background of knowledge, skills and values, as well as the centralised controlling system, assured the Department of the organisation's directions and needs, including program planning, budgeting and monitoring, as well as employees' capacity building. This fits with the general understanding that a centralised organisational structure conforms to homogenous environments, whereas decentralised structures correspond to heterogeneous environments. As the contrary of the decentralised one that positively corresponds to heterogeneous tastes (Bardhan, 2002; Besley & Coate, 2003). Working in an organisation with shared knowledge, skill and values made the social workers feel comfortable, as they disclosed in the interview. The bond among the employees and the organisation arose naturally due to long-term mutual understanding.

The social workers' working journeys have significantly influenced their understandings of their professional roles, specifically within the changing paradigm. Important experiences during these journeys include their first experiences of employment with the Department of Social affairs; the restructure and their placement under their respective local government's management; and employment rotation. The different work settings and cultures often triggered dilemmas, in which the social workers experienced conflicts with the status quo in their efforts helping people to access support. The transition of policy authorisation from central government to local became a challenge for the social workers, which is analysed later in this section.

The data collected in this study confirmed the finding of O'Leary et al. (2018), which described that despite showing professional attitudes and understanding towards the paradigm change, Indonesian social workers had problems in incorporating systematic intervention without leaving the institutionalisation out of the options. Taking children to live apart from family and own community was considered acceptable rather than leaving them unschooled. This perception, however, has become problematic, since CRC suggests that the family is the right place for children to grow and develop. Social workers' feelings of uncertainty in carrying out their roles, implementing proper case management and the National Standard of Care, was in some regions shaped by the dynamics of inter-systems relationships presented in the next section.

The required social work skills in dealing with contemporary issues, including being able to access and mobilise resources, negotiate, and develop networks (Skerrett, 2000) are demanding for social workers. The conflicting circumstances have affected social workers' abilities and willingness to exert their efforts to critically manage their roles to advocate for related policies and contribute in creating social change. McAuliffe (2005) writes some of the impacts of moral dilemmas include lacking confidence in making decisions and planning effective case management. The dilemmas potentially lead to psychological distress, as many of social workers actually have access to supervision but they avoid discussing the conflicting values experience with their supervisor. Instead they prefer conversing their dilemmas with their colleagues or family (McAuliffe & Sudbery, 2005). If it keeps going, there will hardly be effective solutions to solve the problem.

Gaining resource access is significant in enhancing self-capacity when adjusting with changes. Being resourceful gives power to manage changing practice, while limited resources creates powerlessness and hinders creativity (Narey, 2014). Avelino and Rotmans (2009, p. 551) identify a range of resources, namely persons, assets, and materials. They also specify resources including human, information, ideas or concepts, funds, infrastructure, and natural resources. Each diverse resource has its own particular significance and complements the others; one may need the other to make it work. For example, various concepts require competent personnel and adequate funding or infrastructure. Resources as products of a social system coexist with erudite agents, which includes manpower, in the social context. Individuals' power is partly indicated

by their access to resources in certain contexts, such as at work. This implies that the individuals' level of power determines the extent of resources they can utilise, as Giddens (1984) states that "resources are media through which power is exercised". The more power an individual has, the more resources they can access.

The limited access to resources shown in this study discouraged the social workers, as well as the institution's management transition from central government to local. This situation has created a "structural weakness", the term suggested by Decker, Bailey and Westergaard (2002, p. 71) that includes insufficient administrative and supervision support, leading to feelings of powerlessness that might become a source of stress and influence work quality. Struggling with local bureaucracies, whose staff have non-social work backgrounds, and acquiescing to the institution's protocol on the child recruitment, were examples of structural weaknesses. Institutional management restructure has subsequently diminished resource adequacy as support for social workers' professional performance. The research participants' responses to decentralisation indicated their distress; many wished they could return to the old system. This feeling of powerlessness, according to Mänttari-van der Kuip (2016), stems partly from inadequate resources. In this study context, having no power or support to make changes has influenced the social workers' enthusiasm for their jobs.

The findings indicate low satisfaction in some regions, since regional governments failed to identify priorities and needs for regional social welfare development. Low satisfaction was reflected in how social workers struggled to perceive and manage their roles, while maintaining their commitment to delivering services for children. The different perspectives between social workers and institution heads, or between local social services and the boards of local planning in several regions hinder the implementation of system-based child welfare. Tension also appeared as a result of increased workloads mandated to the social workers owing to institutional transformation, yet support provision was hardly available.

Contact is important in a work setting, to connect the microsystem units in the organisational context. The term "contact" refers to two-way communications among staff, not simply self-reporting (Leiter & Maslach, 1988, p. 299). Contact itself is differentiated into several types that can be either positive or negative and include contact with co-workers and managers/supervisors. While co-worker contact might help individuals cope with existing stressors, contact involving managers has led certain conditions that might trigger particular stressors. Contact might be positive or negative, and each kind has significant impacts on social workers (Leiter & Maslach, 1988, p. 298). Constructive, reciprocal relationships generally minimise conflicts. In this research context, the developing contact between social workers and other employees has become a form of support, backing up the social workers who bear increased workloads resulting from the changing paradigm. The institutional transformation also affects the institution heads. The transformed leaders should be aware of their supervisory roles, which impacts on program achievement. Their skills include being role models, articulating concepts, and stimulating creativity, all of which will help clarify personnel's roles and their management. Different educational backgrounds might be bridged by the institution heads' willingness to learn and adapt. Transformed leaders, who are able to raise awareness, motivate, and encourage, are part of social workers' support system to manage their roles.

The research findings indicate that providing access to various resources was vital to support the social workers' social resilience development. The complexities resulting from the change in the governance system have allowed some social workers to develop coping capacities and a few more on the adaptation level. Inadequate government assistance has led some social workers to cope with their situations that have been much affected by the current social and political changes for the sake of securing their present wellbeing state only. They would rather focus only on their current status as civil servants, as they lacked the support to anticipate upcoming changes or disturbances, while a few others have at least prepared for certain occurrences.

The social workers developing distinct levels of social resilience were spread throughout most of the selected regions, with different support system available. One region considered developing such support systems, providing a range of resources to back up social workers, especially concerning the paradigm shift. With adequate support systems, including specific budget allocations, transformative policies regarding the quota system, and supportive teamwork between the local government, residential child care centres and developmental agencies (universities and international non-governmental organisations), social workers were expected to be well-engaged in the shifting approach. The findings suggest different levels of social resilience amongst workers despite accessible support systems. This proves that resources serve as tools only to enhance social workers' capacities to adjust to changes rather than that they determine their behaviour and

attitudes. After all, the different means by which social workers manage transitions or disruptions in their working journeys cannot be judged by any single factor. Instead, multiple factors result from social dynamics and various relationship patterns across their own systems, from micro to macro.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research articulate a complex situation in Indonesia, in which transforming the role of formal alternative care for children has been a challenging task. The political interaction dynamics post-decentralisation has resulted in the insufficient coordination between MoSA and local governments concerning the changing policy and practice. The lack of local supporting policies indicates the failed local attempts to synchronise. This study found that only few regions, of the six under study, considered child issues strategically and utilised social work approaches accordingly.

The challenges of applying the paradigm shift, as indicated in this research, urge the need for a culturally and politically relevant model. Valuing the diversity is substantial. Indonesia is diverse in its demography, geography, and human resources. The large area and number of population require customised approach, as each region has their own characteristics, potentials and challenges. This extent consequently demands for an integrated data and information management system that could be accessible by any related element or stakeholder in broader the child protection system. In this digital era, the benefit of providing accessible information through official websites is logical. The changing policy and practice in residential child care promoted by MoSA would benefit from being complemented with adequate access to policy documentation and relevant data. In the institutional context, a clear job description for social workers plays an important role for achieving goals associated with paradigm change, particularly when social workers in Indonesia have historically conformed to rule-based and structured administration processes. Job clarity would assist social workers in residential child care to manage their roles, set targets and identify appropriate supervisory supports in their organisations and supports across their broader systems. An integrated system, in particular, offers potential to improve the network of government and of development organisations, and enhance the interagency, intergovernmental, and inter-local department coordination regarding the changing policy and practice.

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