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# Politics of Curriculum in the Educational System in Indonesia

**ABSTRACT:** Curriculum is broadly defined as a plan to guide instruction or a written document with content and planned learning experiences for achieving intended goals. This article, using the qualitative approaches and literature review methods, tries to discuss some phenomena concerning the politics of curriculum in the education system in Indonesia. It also discusses some hot issues of curriculum changes, due to the change of education leaders in national level, that strongly influence the implementation of national policy on education. The results also showed that, as a case in Indonesia, the coherency curriculum is relatively low between what it has been planned and what it shall be implemented. Even though a curriculum must take into consideration not only the planned curriculum, but also the enacted or taught curriculum, the experienced curriculum, and the tested curriculum. From the other side, curriculum is as a political process. It is strongly determined by many considerations from many stakeholders. Curriculum as a public policy, it is generally referred to the executive as well as legislative regulation to address a public issue by instituting laws and regulations. Lastly, since Indonesia declared independence on August 17, 1945, the national education system has gotten more 10 curriculum changes. These changes are a logical consequence of curriculum politics that occur in accordance with changes in the political system, socio-cultural, economic, and science and technology in the nation society. The curriculum as a set of educational plans needs to be developed dynamically in accordance with the demands and changes that occur in the community.

**KEY WORDS:** Curriculum Development; Politics of Curriculum; Educational Policy in Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is as a political process. It is strongly determined by many considerations from many stakeholders. Curriculum as a public policy, it is generally referred to the executive as well as legislative regulation to address a public issue by instituting laws and regulations. Education is one such issue

addressed by public policy (Fullan, 2015; OECD/ADB, 2015; and Viennet & Pont, 2017).

Ben Levin (2007), and other scholars, have written that every educational policy decision is basically a political decision. Every education policy decision can be seen as being, in some sense, a political decision. However, this does not mean that

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every educational issue will be the subject of intense public discussion and political lobbying (*cf* Levin, 2007; Rosser, 2018; and Kasuga, 2019).

Indeed, most policy decisions in education, including curriculum decisions, are made with little or no public attention. But, whether controversial or not, education policy decisions, because they involve questions of public choice and concern, are essentially political in nature (Levin, 2007; OECD/ADB, 2015; and Kromydas, 2017).

This paper discusses some phenomena concerning the politics of curriculum in the education system in Indonesia. It also discusses some hot issues of curriculum changes, due to the change of education leaders in national level, that is strongly influenced by national policy on education.

**Theoretical Point of View.** Curriculum is defined broadly as a plan to guide instruction or a written document with content and planned learning experiences for achieving intended goals (Pratt, 1994; Marsh & Willis, 1999; Marsh, 2009; Albashiry, 2015; Wahyudin, 2017; and Hasan, 2019). However, as a case in Indonesia, the coherency is relatively low among what it has been planned and what it shall be implemented. Even though, a curriculum must take into consideration not only the planned curriculum, but also the enacted or taught curriculum, the experienced curriculum, and the tested curriculum as well as the hidden curriculum (Ornstein, Edward & Stacey, 2011; Hasan, 2013; Joseph, 2015; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin, 2017).

But, curriculum is also viewed as an arena for social engineering, which takes into account all the experiences individuals are expected to have in order to become the kind of productive citizens. The curriculum can be seen as a strategic instrumental input in educational programs (Oliva & Gordon, 2013; Wahyudin, 2014; and Ali, 2017).

As Albert I. Oliver (1977), also cited in P.F. Oliva & I.W. Gordon (2013) and other scholars, emphasized that the curriculum must be a systematic tool for reconstructing knowledge developed with managerial control from educational institutions.

Curriculum, as that reconstruction of knowledge and experience systematically, developed under the auspices of the school and university to enable the learners to increase his or her control of knowledge and experience (Oliver, 1977; Oliva & Gordon, 2013; and Fullan, 2015).

Every education policy decision can be seen as being, in some sense, a political decision. Ben Levin (2008), and other scholars, supported that the public policy, especially in education, is about the rules of governing public sector activities. Ben Levin (2008), and other scholars, argued that politics governs almost every aspect of education in relation to what schooling is provided, how, to whom, in what form, by whom, and with what resources. Indeed, policies shape the structure of higher education as well as the curriculum offered at those institutions (Allington, 2002; Levin, 2008; and Ali, 2017).

In additions, Said Hamid Hasan (2019), and other scholars, stated that the curriculum might not be a decision or policy, if it does not have political support – politically viable. Therefore, the political support of policy makers, including the legislature, is a major concern. Curriculum, which is declared valid, has an impact on the lives of the wider community, and impacts on the funding issued by the government and the community (Tibbitts, 2015; Hasan, 2019; and Shrestha *et al.*, 2019).

Curriculum is a product of public policy. As public policy, the decision of curriculum is strongly influenced by decision makers in education. Public policy, generally, refers to government action to address a public issue by instituting laws and regulations. Education is one such issue addressed by public policy (Marsh, 2009; UNESCO, 2015; and Shrestha *et al.*, 2019).

Ben Levin (2008), and other scholars, supported the view that public policy is about the rules and procedures governing public sector activity. It is clear that politics governs almost every aspect of education in relation to what schooling is provided, how, to whom, in what form, by whom, and with what resources. Indeed, policies shape the structure of higher education as well as the curriculum

offered at those institutions (Levin, 2008; Ali, 2017; and Shrestha *et al.*, 2019).

Since curriculum is largely about what is taught, issues surrounding value and quality of education institutions across the countries also become legitimate matters of public policy in education. Each country has a different education system from one country to another. In every education system, the curriculum has also adopted and reflected from the philosophy and values embraced in the efforts to educate the nation. Behind the decision is the philosophy and assumptions of the national and state politics that underlie it (Reagan, 2005; UNESCO, 2015; and Rosser, 2018).

As a case in Indonesia, according to the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, for example, it has been declared that the purpose of national education is to educate the life of the nation and develop Indonesian people as a whole, that is people who believe in and be devoted to God Almighty and are virtuous; possessing knowledge and skills, physical, and spiritual health; personal personality steady and independent as well as a sense of community and national responsibility (Depdiknas RI, 2003; Abubakar, 2017; and Komara, 2017).

In this context, it is also reflected in the curriculum political system, which will be developed in the education system in Indonesia. In addition, according to the Article 3 of Law No.20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is stated that national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. This is intended in order to educate the life of the nation, aiming at developing the potential of students to become human beings, who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Depdiknas RI, 2003; Suratno, 2014; and Wahyudin *et al.*, 2017).

Important policy decisions are made through political processes. It is obviously clear that politics is the process used by any society to determine how power, wealth, opportunity, status, and other social goods

are distributed to members of that society (*cf* Young, Levin & Wallin, 2007; Viennet & Pont, 2017; and Kasuga, 2019).

So, in this paper, it is mostly discussing about politics on education, there are not strictly limited to the formal process of government nor the procedures of legitimation during legislative forums. Rather, according to Ben Levin (2008), and other scholars, it is a broad view of politics as extending beyond formal processes to include a wide range of informal influences and larger social processes. As H. Lasswell (1958) statement, quoted also in Stephen Joseph (2015) and other scholars, on the definition of politics as “who gets what”, can be applied to every setting including the classroom in higher education institutions (*cf* Lasswell, 1958; Levin, 2008; Schiro, 2013; Joseph, 2015; and Kasuga, 2019).

More strong statement, it has been stated by G. Tinder (1991), and other scholars, who described that political system is equally apt. G. Tinder (1991), and other scholars, described a political system as a set of arrangements, by which some people dominate others (Tinder, 1991; Evans & Penney, 1995; and Levin, 2007). In G. Tinder (1991), as cited also in Stephen Joseph (2015) and other scholars, on curriculum policy and what should be learned in schools. Since political influence is usually unequal, those persons who have the least status are also the ones with the least influence on political decision making (Tinder, 1991; Levin, 2007; and Joseph, 2015).

Curriculum politics, therefore, should be seen as part of the overall process of government and involves decisions about curriculum content, including what body of knowledge should be included or excluded from the curriculum. In connection with the politics of this curriculum, Wilfred Carr & Anthony Harnett (2010), and other scholars, asserted that education policy always refers to fundamental questions about educational politics that are grounded in the rules of education for the benefit of the nation in the broadest sense (Levin, 2007; Carr & Harnett, 2010; and Viennet & Pont, 2017). Wilfred Carr & Anthony Harnett (2010), then, stated as following here:

[...] policies on education always address fundamental political questions, in the sense that debates on education inevitably include alternative views on good education and good society (Carr & Harnett, 2010).

According to Wilfred Carr & Anthony Harnett (2010), and other scholars, education politics and curriculum politics always end up with four main conditions that are used as references in the nation and state, namely:

Firstly, school is embedded in society, meaning that the school is always closely related to the community, that the school is a fertile nursery in fostering socio-economic and cultural life that is the foundation of its community (Samuelsson & Kaga eds., 2008; Carr & Harnett, 2010; and Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017).

Secondly, inherent tension of education of social transformation, namely the educational position must be the main vein in ensuring the development of social reproduction and social transformation expected in accordance with the demands of the times and the aspirations of a community that is always dynamic (Carr & Harnett, 2010; Ali, 2017; and Leicht, Heiss & Byun eds., 2018).

Educational change, which means how the politics of education and curriculum politics, must become a vehicle that can harbor the potential for conflict and disagreement over new policies and regulations that are determined as a result of changes in education that are carried out (Carr & Harnett, 2010; Wahyudin, 2018; and Shrestha *et al.*, 2019).

Thirdly, an ethical and informed discourse, namely education, is always associated with the question of how an ethic is built, and how ethics that are expected can be achieved through models and education systems that are built based on the philosophy and ethics of the nation (Carr & Harnett, 2010; Yap, 2014; Chowdhury, 2016; and Wahyudin, 2016).

The curriculum is a public policy, because the curriculum that is declared to have an effect on the lives of the majority of the community, has an impact on the costs incurred by the government and society, impacts on the lives of the nation in the future, and has an attachment to the lives of the people served by the curriculum (*cf*

Levin, 2001; Carr & Harnett, 2010; Sari, 2013; Partovi, 2018; and Hasan, 2019).

Therefore, the curriculum may not be a decision or a policy, if it does not have political support – politically viable. The most aspect of the curriculum with regard to the political element is the aspect of curriculum ideas. This aspect states philosophically the quality of the nation's young generation that will be developed through the development of the potential of every individual, who experiences the educational process (Levin, 2001; Carr & Harnett, 2010; Schwab, 2015; Hasan, 2019; and Shrestha *et al.*, 2019).

This article, however, by using the qualitative approaches and literature review methods (Plomp & Nieveen eds., 2007; Furlong & Oancea, 2008; and Creswell, 2014), tries to discuss some phenomena concerning the politics of curriculum in the education system in Indonesia. It also discusses some hot issues of curriculum changes, due to the change of education leaders in national level, that strongly influence the implementation of national policy on education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Universally, each country has its own education system that differs from one country to another. In every education system adopted, it reflected the philosophy and value system used. Behind the decision is also stored political philosophy and assumptions in the nation and state. The report of the international research institute, NIER (National Institute for Educational Research) in 1999, as cited also in Dinn Wahyudin (2017) and other scholars, stated that the politics of curriculum is the national curriculum policy of a nation (NIER, 1999; Cheng, Chow & Mok eds., 2004; Brennan, 2011; Wahyudin, 2017; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

Those are some imperative driving, which is the focus a feature in the politics and education curriculum policies of each country. The five main characteristics are as the following: (1) Focus in the development of social integration and national identity in the global arena to maintain cultural heritage,

**Table 1:**  
Curriculum Development Model among Countries

Name of Countries	Type of Curriculum
Australia	Outcome Based
China	Content Based
Fiji	Content Based
Germany	Mixed among Two
India	Content Based
Indonesia	Outcome Based
Japan	Content Based
Malaysia	Mixed among Two
New Zealand	Outcome Based
United States of America	Mixed among Two

**Sources:** NIER (National Institute for Educational Research), in 1999, as adopted also by Dinn Wahyudin (2017 and 2019).

for examples in Australia and Germany; (2) Focus on the importance of fostering cultural, ethnic, and moral values, while still paying attention to the development of science and technology, for example in Malaysia and Indonesia; (3) Focus on preparing for the development of science, future economies, and global competition, for example in the United States of America; (4) Focus on equality of opportunity and equality in gender, students with special needs and income, for example in India and Sri Lanka; and (5) Focus on hopes to increase the degree of student achievement, for example in United States of America and New Zealand (Cheng, Chow & Mok eds., 2004; OECD/ADB, 2015; and Tibbitts, 2015).

In addition, the NIER report in 1999, as cited also in Dinn Wahyudin (2019) and other scholars, revealed that in politics and policy in developing national curriculum, there are at least three approaches adopted by many countries, as following here:

Firstly, policy of the national curriculum which are based on a content-based approach. A national curriculum, that emphasizes the assessment of materials, arranged in the form of subjects and learning experiences that are expected to be obtained by students. Generally, countries that adopt this approach tend to implement centralized policies in the field of education. But, at the bottom levels such as states/provinces/districts and school communities, autonomy is proportionally delegated to them, in order

they have space to develop their creativity and innovation in designing and implementing the adopted curriculum (*cf* NIER, 1999; Hongbiao, 2013; and Wahyudin, 2019).

Secondly, policy of the national curriculum that are based on the outcome approach (outcome/competency-based approach), namely the national curriculum that emphasizes the achievement of outcomes and competencies that are expected to be achieved by students. The central government only makes general guidelines, including competency standards, that should be achieved by students at every level of education. While designing of learning experience, or its application in teaching and learning activities, are given to be carried out at the school level. Countries, that embrace this national curriculum model approach, are typically applying decentralized education (NIER, 1999; Levin, 2002; and Wahyudin, 2019).

Thirdly, national curriculum development policy that combine content-based with outcome-based approach, namely the curriculum approach model that is characterized by content approach with relatively dominant central government control. Although, office of education in province and district, as well as headmaster and teachers at school level, are given opportunity to actively plan and implement the curriculum in accordance with local demands and needs (NIER, 1999; Westbrook *et al.*, 2013; and Wahyudin, 2019).

Every country has its own national

education system and curriculum that shall be adopted. This is aligned with the philosophy, policy, national education strategy, and overall education politics. Another thing that stands out is that curriculum politics will also be greatly influenced by the politics of the curriculum adopted and the objectives to be achieved within the framework of nation and state. The following is curriculum model adopted by the curriculum developers among countries. See table 1.

Curriculum development is interpreted as a science, revealing various dimensions of the characteristics of science, including concepts, theories, principles, and generalizations, regarding curriculum development at the micro level at school and at the macro level at the national scope. In the study of teaching and learning theory, however, there is a close relationship between theories, concepts, and principles built in the realm of learning with theories, concepts, and principles that are built in the realm of curriculum development (Levin, 2007; Viennet & Pont, 2017; and Wahyudin, 2018).

E.W. Eisner & E. Vallance eds. (1974), as cited also in Stephen Petrina (2004) and other scholars, described five orientation in organizing curriculum. The consensus in curriculum theory formed around five orientations to organizing curriculum: (1) *Academic rationalism*; (2) *Cognitive processes*; (3) *Self-actualization*; (4) *Social reconstruction*; and (5) *Utilitarian*. Pertaining *Academic rationalism* orientations are primarily about disciplinary knowledge and cultural aspects. *Cognitive processes* orientations are primarily about intellectual reasoning skills, such as problem solving. *Self-actualization*, or personal relevance, orientations stress psychological conditions and are concerned with individuality and personal expression. *Social reconstruction*, generally, called critical pedagogy, orientations stress sociological conditions, social justice, and collective reform. *Utilitarian* orientations are primarily concerned with functional competencies, performance, procedure, and instructional efficiency (Eisner & Vallance eds., 1974; Petrina, 2004; Schwab, 2015; and Wahyudin, 2017).

The first thing, curriculum theory which is oriented to *Academic rationalism*. This curriculum theory, curriculum dimensions on the side of scientific disciplines and culture. The second thing, curriculum theory which is oriented towards the *Cognitive processes*, namely curriculum studies that focus on intellectual abilities and skills in problem solving. The third thing, *Self-actualization* curriculum theory, namely curriculum theory which is characterized by self-relevance, psychological conditions, and individual development. The fourth thing, the theory of *Social reconstruction*, or often also called critical pedagogy, which focuses on theoretical study of the curriculum from the viewpoint of social conditions, social justice, and collective reform for the welfare of society. And finally, the fifth thing, curriculum theory which is oriented towards *Utilitarian*, namely curriculum theory that focuses on functional competence, performance, procedures, and learning efficiency (Eisner & Vallance eds., 1974; Petrina, 2004; and Wahyudin, 2017).

From a historical perspective, the Indonesian people had experienced various forms of educational policies in the eras of: Hindu education practices; Buddhist education; Islamic education; VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) education; Dutch colonial education; education during the Japanese occupation; and education in the post-Indonesian independence (Mestoko, 1985; Suwirta, 2009; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

Likewise, the practice of educational politics adopted, along with the educational objectives in each period, the politics of education and curriculum politics adopted in each period vary in parallel with the philosophy and educational goals to be achieved in Indonesia (Mestoko, 1985; Suwirta, 2009; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017). In this paper will only be elaborated three critical periods: (1) *Politics of Education during the VOC and Dutch Colonial Era, 1602-1942*; (2) *Politics Education during the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945*; and (3) *Politics of Education in the Post-Indonesian Independence Era, 1945 to Date*.

The elaboration of each period is following here:

*Politics of Education during the VOC and Dutch Colonial Era, 1607-1942.* I.J. Brugmans (1938 and 1987), as cited also by other scholars, reported that for almost two centuries, the mission of the arrival of the VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-Indie Company) to Indonesia was very different from the mission of the arrival of the previous Portuguese. The VOC came to collect wealth and drain wealth from its colonies (Brugmans, 1938 and 1987; Kartodirdjo, 2005; Amal, 2006; Hasan, 2013; and Wahyuni, 2016).

Unlike Portuguese overseas expansion, which in addition to trade was motivated by strong religious zeal, the VOC (1602-1799) was solely concerned with commercial gain. The Dutch came to Indonesia to amass wealth and they remained traders rather than civilizers, at least for the first two centuries of their presence in the area. The motto of the VOC was to leave indigenous society as intact as possible (Brugmans, 1938; Suratminto, 2013; and Wahyuni, 2016).

The purpose of establishing a school by the VOC was to carry out the maintenance and spread of Protestantism. The first school was established by the VOC in Ambon, Maluku islands, in 1607. Although the school curriculum was not well known, the lessons were given in the form of reading, writing, and praying (Brugmans, 1938 and 1987; Penders, 1968; Ramli, 2010; Suratminto, 2013; and Wahyuni, 2016).

During this period of the Dutch colonial era (1799-1942), the practice of education was aimed to develop capabilities of the indigenous population through Dutch education. It was hoped that with the practice of this Dutch model of education, Dutch education will be able to prepare the natives to become a new middle class. Thus, in fact, the purpose of education in the Dutch colonial period was not to educate the natives, but in the interest of the Dutch colonial government itself, namely to perpetuate its occupation of the whole of the country (Brugmans, 1938 and 1987; Penders, 1968; Suwirta, 2009; Suratminto, 2013; and Wahyuni, 2016).

In 1870-1914, for example, with the growth of Dutch Ethical Policy in 1901, formulated by Conrad Theodor van Deventer, some of these Dutch-founded schools opened the doors for *Pribumis* or native Indonesians. They were called *Sekolah Rakyat* (Folk School), the embryo of what is called *Sekolah Dasar* (Elementary School) today. In 1871, the Dutch Parliament adopted a new education law that sought to uniform the highly scattered and diversified indigenous education systems across the Indonesian archipelago, and expanded the number of teacher training schools under the supervision of the Dutch colonial administration (Brugmans, 1938 and 1987; Penders, 1968; Suratminto, 2013; Aritonang, 2016; and Wahyuni, 2016).

The Dutch introduced a system of formal education for the local population of Indonesia, although this was restricted to certain privileged children. The schools for the European were modeled after the education system in Netherlands itself and required proficiency in Dutch. The Indonesian elite native and Chinese population, who lack Dutch language skills, could enroll in either Dutch, Native, or Chinese Schools (Brugmans, 1938 and 1987; Penders, 1968; Suratminto, 2013; Aritonang, 2016; and Wahyuni, 2016).

*Politics Education during the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945.* The motive of early Japanese occupation was very different from the Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. Through the Dutch colonial and VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-Indie Company) came to Indonesia based on trade motives and Christianization mission. Whereas the Japanese occupation first came to Indonesia purely with military political motives, which had a goal parallel to the ideology of world imperialism (Said & Mansur, 1953; Ramli, 2010; Suwirta, 2009; Wahyuni, 2016; and Juwitasari, 2019).

Although the Japanese occupation was very short, only 3.5 years (1942-1945), but for the development of education in the country had significantly meaning. This was partly through the Japanese education system implemented in Indonesia, indirectly it inspired unity the education system in

the country. There was no more education for foreigners as happened during Dutch education system. There was no educational discrimination. Through the education system pioneered by Japan, directly, inspired the birth of the national education system in the post-independence era in Indonesia (Ramli, 2010; Wahyuni, 2016; and Juwitasari, 2019).

The same thing was reported by Alexander Vincent Beck (2015), and another scholars, who stressed that the Japanese occupation ended the practice of discrimination, including educational discrimination. The idea was to achieve this through the introduction of egalitarian justice and the education system that be applied to all, regardless of their ethnic and religious background. The Japanese put an end to this discriminative practice, which was consistent with their ultimate aim to transform parts of Indonesia into a semi-independent colony. The idea was to achieve this through the introduction of an egalitarian judiciary and education system that was applied to all, irrespectively of their ethnic and religious background (Beck, 2015; Wahyuni, 2016; and Juwitasari, 2019).

*Politics of Education in the Post-Indonesian Independence Era, 1945 to Date.* Since Indonesia declared independence on August 17, 1945, the national education system has got more than 10 curriculum changes. These changes are a logical consequence of curriculum politics that occur in accordance with changes in the political system, socio-cultural, economic, and science and technology in the nation society. The curriculum as a set of educational plans needs to be developed dynamically in accordance with the demands and changes that occur in the community (Hing, 1995; Hasan, 2007; and Wahyuni, 2016).

In Indonesia, as also happened in nearly all countries, national curriculum changes would be accompanied by the different educational goals, because in each of these changes there is a specific goal to be achieved to advance our national education (Thomas, 1991; Hing, 1995; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017). The changes in

the educational curriculum in Indonesia can be described as follows:

*The 1947 Curriculum.* It is called *Rentjana Peladjaran* or Educational Planning. At that time, the curriculum in Indonesia was still influenced by the Dutch colonialism and Japanese occupational education system. *Rentjana Peladjaran* of 1947 can be regarded as a substitute for the Dutch colonial education system, because the atmosphere of national life in that time still in fighting spirit for the independence rather than education development (Sutisna, 2011; Saputri, 2014; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 1952 Curriculum.* After the *Rentjana Peladjaran* of 1947, in the *1952 Curriculum* in Indonesia was modified. The *1952 Curriculum* was called *Rentjana Peladjaran Terurai* or Elaborated Educational Planning. This curriculum was approaching to a national education system. The most prominent feature of the *1952 Curriculum* was each lesson plan should have focus and pay attention to the content of the lessons associated with daily life of the community (Hing, 1995; Sutisna, 2011; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 1964 Curriculum.* In this period, the government tried again to enhance the curriculum system in Indonesia. It was called *Rentjana Pendidikan* (Educational Planning) of 1964. The main idea of the *1964 Curriculum*, which was become characteristic of this curriculum, was that the government had a desire for people to get academic knowledge to equip the elementary school level. In general instructions, specific instructional objectives, learning materials, learning tools, learning activities, and evaluation should be detail done by teachers as curriculum developers (Hing, 1995; Sutisna, 2011; and Wahyuni, 2016).

*The 1968 and 1975 Curriculums.* In early New Order government era, education in Indonesia had the *1968 Curriculum*. It was actually a renewal of the curriculum in 1964, which change the structure of the educational curriculum of *Pancawardhana* (five groups of subjects) become coaching spirit of *Pancasila* (five basic principles of

the Republic of Indonesia), basic knowledge, and special skills (Nishimura, 1995; Gaylord, 2008; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

The *1968 Curriculum* was a manifestation of a change in the orientation of the 1945 Constitution's implementation of a genuine and consistent. In terms of content of curriculum are directed on the activities to improve intelligence and skills, and develop a healthy and strong physic young generation (Thomas, 1991; Hamalik, 1993; Sutisna, 2011; Saputri, 2014; Wirianto, 2014; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

Meanwhile, the *1975 Curriculum* was emphasizing the goal, making education more efficient and effective. It was strongly influenced by the concept of management by objectives. All components of instruction, such as methods, materials, and teaching purposes, were specified in procedure of ISD (Instructional System Development). In general instructions, specific instructional objectives, learning materials, learning tools, learning activities, and evaluation should be detail done by teachers as curriculum developers. The *1975 Curriculum* was heavily criticized, due to teachers were busy on details editing related to elaborate the abilities that shall be achieved from each learning activity in every lesson. (Thomas, 1991; Hamalik, 1993; Sutisna, 2011; Saputri, 2014; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 1984 Curriculum.* In this curriculum, process skill approaches were introduced to all teachers in managing classroom activities. Then, this *1984 Curriculum* was also often called the *Revised 1975 Curriculum*. The students' position was put as a subject of study by giving them more chance in observing something, classify, discuss, to report. This model was called the ASLM (Active Student Learning Method) or SAL (Student Active Learning) and PS (Progressional Support). It was clear that the *1984 Curriculum* was oriented to instructional purposes (Thomas, 1991; Saputri, 2014; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 1994 Curriculum.* This curriculum was implemented in accordance with Law

Number 2 of 1989 on National Education System. This curriculum had an impact in a time sharing system, namely by changing from a semester system to the quarter system. The quarter system expected to provide opportunities for the students to be able to receive the subject matter quite a lot. The purpose of teaching emphasizes were focused on understanding concepts and the ability to solve the problems and problem solving (Yeom, Acedo & Utomo, 2002; Depdiknas RI, 2003; Mulyasa, 2006; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 2004 Curriculum.* This curriculum was better known as CBC (Competency-Based Curriculum). Competency-based education focused on developing the ability to do specific tasks in accordance with performance standards that have been set. CBC was also education program that geared toward preparing individual to perform-identified competencies. This implies that education referred to the effort to prepare individuals, who were able to perform the predetermined competencies. It can be noted that the orientation of CBC were, among other: (1) the expected outcomes and impacts, which appear to self-learners through a series of meaningful learning experiences; and (2) the diversity that can be manifested according to his needs (Utomo, 2005; Mulyasa, 2006; Sutisna, 2011; Power & Cohen, 2015; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 2006 Curriculum.* It was known as the SBC (School-Based Curriculum) or KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*). The most prominent difference was the teachers given the freedom to plan learning appropriate with the environments and the conditions of students as well as the condition of the school itself. This was due to the basic framework, standard competence, and basic in each subject for each educational unit had been established by the Ministry of National Education. So, the development of learning tools, like the syllabus and assessment system, was under the authority of schools under the coordination and supervision of District level (Falak, 2014;

Saputri, 2014; Wirianto, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

The purpose of SBC or KTSP was included to achieve the national education goals as well as compliance with the distinctiveness, condition and potential of the area, and individual students. Therefore, the curriculum prepared by teachers in school level was possible to allow any adjustment of educational programs to pertaining the local needs (Sutisna, 2011; Falak, 2014; Saputri, 2014; Power & Cohen, 2015; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

*The 2013 Curriculum.* In 2014, a new curriculum was introduced. The *2013 Curriculum* was actually a CBC (Competency-Based Curriculum) that was designed to anticipate the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies. Based on the characteristic and formula in developing the *2013 Curriculum*, at least, this new curriculum had three characteristics (Kemendikbud RI, 2013; Saputri, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; Wahyudin, 2017; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

The competences that shall be gained are determined in advance based on the needs and, then, developing subject area. The *2013 Curriculum* has more intact approach, based on the creativity of the students. The *2013 Curriculum* integrated also which composed between one subject to another, so that the three main components of education, they are: attitudes, skills, and knowledge are used as reinforcement in the character formation of the students. The *2013 Curriculum's* competencies at each level primary schools, junior high school, and senior high school are designed in continuous and intact (Kemendikbud RI, 2013; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

In addition, compared with the two previous curriculum, the *2013 Curriculum* has some new things, among others: (1) curriculum is based on scientific approaches, where learning process emphasizes in observation, questioning, reasoning, tried, and communicate; (2) in primary school level, curriculum approaches are using integrated thematic, it means that the subjects are not taught separately, but they are taught based on certain themes which in

it obviously integrates into subjects to gain intended learner competences; (3) gained competences shall be achieved in balance between attitudes, skills, and knowledge in the way holistic and fun learning or joyful learning; (4) all learning experiences emphasize in aspects of attitudes, knowledge, and skills with assessment system is based on the test and portfolio; (5) there are the number of subjects from six to ten grades, such as Religious and Moral Education, *Bahasa* Indonesia, Mathematics, Arts and Crafts, Physical Education, Sport and Health, plus extra-curricular Mandatory Scout/PRAMUKA or *Praja Muda Karana*; (6) in terms of time allocation during working day, time allocation per hour lesson in primary school is 35 minutes, junior high school is 40 minutes, and senior high school is 45 minutes; and (7) load hours of lessons per week: primary school = 36 hours, junior high school = 38 hours, and senior high school = 39 hours (Dharma, 2008; Kemendikbud RI, 2013; Falak, 2014; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

The *2013 Curriculum* in the Era 4.0 and Society 5.0. currently the world community has entered the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Industry 4.0 integrates technology, virtual space and humans, between the real world and the virtual world, resulting in a collaborative network consisting of intelligent robots; automatic simulation; Internet of Things; cloud computing; manufacturing additions; and big data analytics (Kemendikbud RI, 2013; Wahyuni, 2016; and Wahyudin & Suwirta, 2017).

The concept of the Society 5.0 or Society 5.0, which was originally initiated by Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, in 2019, is more an answer to the use of technology, the internet of things and Big Data to be more humane and more focused on the use of technology for the benefit of humanity. Society 5.0 tries to place people at the center of innovation. It also utilizes the technological impact and results of Industry 4.0, by deepening the integration of technology in improving the quality of life, social responsibility, and development sustainability (Serpanos & Wolf, 2018);

Dhelika, 2019; and Hargrave ed., 2020).<sup>1</sup>

In the *2013 Curriculum*, in addition to the integration of Character Education Strengthening, or PPK (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter*), carried out in the learning process, also given the strengthening of literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The *2013 Curriculum* must observe how learning to answer the challenges of the disruptive era. Therefore, the implementation of the *2013 Curriculum* must integrate the strengthening of literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and Industry 4.0 through 4-Cs (Creative, Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration) and strengthening of HOTS (High Order Thinking Skills). These skills are very important for young people to have in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era which, according to B. Trilling & C. Fadel (2009) and Mohammad Ali (2017), can be grouped into three categories, namely: learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills. The variety of skills that are believed to be very useful to be provided to the younger generation of the Indonesian people, so that they can survive in life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and this highly disruptive era of competition (cf Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Wahyuni, 2016; Ali, 2017; and Wahyudin, 2019).

The politics of curriculum today are also clearly applied by the new Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem A. Makarim. Through the *Merdeka Belajar* (Free to Learn) policy and the *Kampus Merdeka* (Free Campus) government policy in education is trying to bring the young generation of Indonesia to survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They have ability and high-level skills, coupled with superior character. The *Merdeka Belajar* concept, for example, is a new policy program at the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. According to the Minister, free learning must be preceded by teachers, before they teach their students. He said, in the competency of teachers at any level, without the process of translation of existing basic competencies and

curriculum, then there will never be learning that occurs (Albar, 2019; Mustaghfiroh, 2020; and Prabowo, 2020).

The free learning movement consists of 4 main areas. Firstly, National Standard School Examination or USBN (*Ujian Sekolah Berstandar Nasional*) in which, in 2020, USBN will be replaced by an examination, or assessment, held only by schools. Secondly, National Examination or UN (*Ujian Nasional*) in which, in 2020, the UN will be held for the last time and, in 2021, the UN will be changed to the Minimum Competency Assessment and conduct Character Survey data. Thirdly, Learning Implementation Plan or RPP (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran*), in which the teacher can freely choose, create, use, and develop the RPP format, and there are 3 core components developed, other components are complementary and can be chosen independently, namely: learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment. Fourthly, Zoning Regulations for New Student Admissions or PPDB (*Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru*), in which the composition of PPDB is as follows: zoning pathway, minimum 50%; affirmation path, a minimum of 15%; transfer path, a maximum of 5%; and achievement path 0-30%, adjusted to regional conditions (Maulipaksi, 2019; Harususilo, 2020; and Houtman, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Curriculum is as a political process. It is strongly determined by many considerations from many stakeholders. Curriculum, as a public policy, is generally referred to the executive as well as legislative regulation to address a public issue by instituting laws and regulations. Education is one such issue addressed by public policy. Every education policy decision can be seen, in some sense, as a political decision. However, this does not mean that every educational issue will be the subject of intense public discussion and political lobbying.

Curriculum development is interpreted as a science, revealing various dimensions of the characteristics of science, including concepts, theories, principles, and generalizations, regarding curriculum development at the

<sup>1</sup>See also, for comparison, "Reimagining the Digital Era: Digital Transformation Agendas & Initiatives within the Asia-Pacific Economies", on September 2017. Available online at: [https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ASOCIO\\_Consolidated\\_24Aug17\\_Finalrevised.pdf](https://witsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ASOCIO_Consolidated_24Aug17_Finalrevised.pdf) [accessed in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia: May 27, 2019].

micro level at school and at the macro level at the national scope. In the study of teaching and learning theory, however, there is a close relationship between theories, concepts, and principles built in the realm of learning with theories, concepts, and principles that are built in the realm of curriculum development.

From a historical perspective, the Indonesian has experienced various forms of educational policies: Hindu education practices; Buddhist education; Islamic education; VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch East-Indie Company) education era; Dutch colonial education; education during the Japanese occupation; and education in the post-independence era. Likewise, the practice of educational politics adopted, along with the educational objectives in each period, the politics of education and curriculum politics adopted in each period vary in parallel with the philosophy and educational goals to be achieved.

Since Indonesia declared independence on August 17, 1945, the national education system has gotten more 10 curriculum changes. These changes are a logical consequence of curriculum politics that occur in accordance with changes in the political system, socio-cultural, economic, and science and technology in the nation society. The curriculum, as a set of educational plans, needs to be developed dynamically in accordance with the demands and changes that occur in the community.

Last, but not least, in the *2013 Curriculum*, in addition to the integration of Character Education Strengthening or PPK (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter*) carried out in the learning process, also given the strengthening of literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The *2013 Curriculum* must observe how learning to answer the challenges of the disruptive era. Therefore, the implementation of the *2013 Curriculum* must integrate the strengthening of literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and Industrial Revolution 4.0 through 4-Cs (Creative, Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration) and strengthening of HOTS (High Order Thinking Skills).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>**Statement:** This paper, with all its contents and interpretations, is our own academic work. So, this paper is

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not the result of plagiarism, because the sources that we have cited and quoted are very clearly indicated in the Bibliography or References. This paper has also not been sent, reviewed, and published by other journals. We are willing to be given appropriate academic sanctions or penalties, if what we declare turns out to be, in the future, is not in accordance with reality.

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