

VILLAGE AUTONOMY AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA: THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN POST-VILLAGE AUTONOMY IN THE SOUTHEAST SULAWESI PROVINCE

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study is to describe the granting of village autonomy and the implementation of participatory democracy in Indonesia by observing the practice of village planning and budgeting in the Southeast Sulawesi province. This research uses the descriptive qualitative method alongside the data collection techniques of document study, observation, interviews, and focus group discussions. The results of the study show that, firstly, decision-making in village development planning is dominated by the village elite and the government. Second, the village budgeting process is closed, elitist, low-accountability, inefficient, and off-target. There are four things that cause village autonomy to fail to realise participatory democracy: weaknesses in regulatory aspects; overlapping institutions; budget dependence; and the low competence of village communities and civil society in supervising the implementation of autonomy. The implication of this research is that autonomy that is practiced in a smaller scope does not fully realise democratisation and citizen participation in its implementation.*

Keywords: *autonomy, participatory democracy, community participation.*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *autonomija, dalyvavimo demokratija, bendruomenės dalyvavimas.*

Introduction

This article considers the problems that occur when practicing village autonomy, the lowest tier of public administration in the governmental hierarchy in Indonesia (Antlöv, Wetterberg, and Dharmawan 2016). This is also the smallest form of autonomous government in terms of population and area in Indonesia, and usually governs around 500 to 7,500 people. In contrast to the implementation of autonomy at the provincial and district levels, village autonomy has a smaller scope. This should make the implementation of autonomy at the village level easier, as theoretical ideas explain that autonomy is more suitable to being adopted in small units of government (Clark 1984; Stoker 1988; Goldsmith 1995; Lawrence 2004).

However, this is not as simple as it might first appear because village autonomy in Indonesia often entails a number of problems during implementation. The village, which is expected to be an arena for democracy, autonomy, and the participation of community members (Mariana et al. 2017), does not serve its fundamental purpose. The implementation of autonomy and democracy at the village level is still challenged by a number of problems, and village autonomy appears to have failed in fostering participatory democracy. That being said, it can be suggested that the implementation of village autonomy is not substantially different from autonomy at the provincial and district levels, which are characterised by the corrupt practices of regional heads, patronage, clientelism, oligarchy, and dynasties. This article proposes the notion that village autonomy, which is small in scope, does not necessarily encourage the growth of participatory democracy.

Literature Review

Autonomy is defined as self-government and independence, where decision-making is carried out freely and independently by citizens (Goldsmith 1995). Freedom from higher governmental control, freedom to act, and freedom to express local identities through political activities (Lawrence 2004) characterise autonomous areas. In the context of the village, autonomy is defined as a degree of independence or freedom from the nation state, a degree of freedom to satisfy local preferences and to meet local needs, and the capacity to define and articulate the village's own true meaning (Eko et al. 2014).

Village autonomy in Indonesia is considered to be a genuine, unanimous, and complete autonomy, and is not a gift from the government (Widjaja 2003). Sutoro Eko and Abdul Rozaki refer to village autonomy as a form of local self-government, where the state not only recognises the existence of villages, but also grants them autonomy, local wisdom, social capital, democracy, participation, authority, the allocation of funds, and other provisions (Maulana 2016). Suharto mentioned two things that characterise village autonomy. The first component is administrative and/or economic independence, which is observed through the proportion of the villages' domestic income (*PA Desa*) that is

utilised: a village can be said to be independent if it is able to finance its own development needs (*swadaya*). The second component of village autonomy is independence in terms of village politics, which includes: the recruitment process of apparatus and their development programs; the accountability of the apparatus; the realisation of political rights or community participation; independence in policy making; and freedom to express local wisdom and customs (Maulana 2016).

The implementation of village autonomy in Indonesia adheres to the concept of participatory democracy (Eko et al. 2014). Participatory democracy entails the involvement of citizens in decision-making, where public participation can change people's non-democratic attitudes and provide a political education for people who possess an insufficient understanding of political participation, or are otherwise simply apathetic. Public participation can also decrease the number of decision-making processes monopolised by the elite, as these processes involve all citizens at large – often termed the expansion of democracy (Pateman 1970). The involvement of citizens in decision making is also termed communitarian democracy (Young 2000), civic democracy (Crick 2002), associative democracy (Hirst 2013), or deliberative democracy (Elster and Przeworski 1998; Gutmann 2004).

One form of the practice of community involvement in the implementation of village autonomy in Indonesia is participatory planning and budgeting activities. Participatory planning is defined as planning activities that involve citizens directly in making public policies and providing public goods (Fung 2006; Pateman 2012; Speer 2012; Sheely 2015). Meanwhile, participatory budgeting is understood as a budgeting approach that actively involves citizens in government administration to discuss and determine the allocation of public resources (Shah 2007). Participatory planning and budgeting models have been practiced in many countries in managing their government in smaller units, such as districts, cities, and villages. This concept first emerged in Porto Alegre, Brazil, then developed rapidly in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and the Southern Cone countries – Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay – as well as in several European countries (Cabannes 2004; Goldfrank 2007; Sintomer et al. 2013; Bassoli 2012). A participatory budgeting model was also introduced in Nigeria in order to enhance the effectiveness of local governance (Adesopo 2011). Participatory budgeting has also been undertaken in several countries in Asia, including: Japan, Korea, Indonesia, China, and India. The adoption of the participatory budgeting model continues to experience growth; recent studies have spread globally and led to its emergence in thousands of locations, ranging from Latin America to Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Oceania (Sintomer et al. 2013).

Research Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques involved document study, observation, interviews, and focus group discussion (FGD). The document study was limited to the budgeting period of the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years. The data sources were derived from the Southeast Sulawesi Village Community Empowerment Agency and the village government. Observation activities were limited to 24

villages spread over 6 districts in Southeast Sulawesi. The determination of the target villages was carried out by considering the two geographical areas of Southeast Sulawesi, namely the island and the mainland, the FGDs were held over six meetings, with 10 participants per meeting, and FGD participants were community leaders, youth leaders, NGO representatives, village government officials, members of the village consultative body, village community empowerment institutions, and village facilitators. In addition, separate interviews with village facilitators were also conducted.

After data collection activities, data analysis was carried out including data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014). The data reduction activity began with the collection of all data from the study of documents, observation notes, and FGDs from all research locations. This was followed by selecting and summarizing documents, making notes, storing, analyzing, and finally creating a temporary summary. Data presentation was then carried out using descriptive methods, namely displaying data, narrating then interpreting the data, and drawing temporary conclusions. The last activity was drawing conclusions and verifying data. At this stage, the data was verified first through the triangulation method by combining data from document studies, observations, interviews, and FGDs. Final conclusions were then drawn up and presented as research findings.

Results and Discussion

Results

In Indonesia, the position of village government has come a long way. In the colonial era, villages were recognized by the government, but had no legal or regulatory standing as part of the government. After independence, the status of the village attained a clearer legal position. In the old order, the village was situated as part of the national government unit (the self-governing village government), whilst as part of the new order, the village existed as the lowest level of government. Political reforms in 1998 brought the village towards a more democratic order of political life, including the granting of village autonomy, village naming based on local characteristics, the establishment of a village representative body to balance the power of the head of the village, and village government accountability (Antlov 2003). The ratification of the Village Law in 2014 further strengthened the status of the village as an autonomous government. Based on this law, village development planning is carried out in a participatory manner. In order to observe this, two things were examined: the implementation of village development planning, and the village budgeting process. These two activities are different, but are crucially linked in that a planning process always precedes every budgeting activity, so in various discussions the two are often combined.

Village Development Planning

Participatory village development planning is planning that includes village institutions and elements of village societies (Yustisia 2015). Village development planning begins with the preparation of a Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJM *Desa*), which is carried out no later than three months after the inauguration of the village head, and is set forth in the village head regulation as stipulated in Minister of Interior Regulation (*Permendagri*) No. 114 of 2014 (*PERMENDAGRI No. 114 Tahun 2014 Tentang Pedoman Pembangunan Desa* n.d.). The RPJM *Desa* consists of activities for a period of 6 working years, during which, time the village government may amend the RPJM *Desa*. After it is enacted, the village government prepares an annual development plan or Local Government Work Plan (RKP *Desa*). Unlike the RPJM *Desa*, the RKP *Desa* has a shorter working duration as one budget year.

The compilation of the RKP *Desa* begins with a tiered conference activity starting at the hamlet level and moving up to the village level. Actors involved in the hamlet conference are groups of people from various social backgrounds, such as religious leaders, local leaders, community leaders, educational leaders, farmer groups, fishermen groups, craftsmen groups, women's groups, child protection and observer groups, lower-middle-class groups, and other groups in accordance with the socio-cultural conditions of the Village community. After the hamlet deliberation, a Village Development Planning Conference (*Musrenbang Desa*) is held. These conference activities are held between the Village Consultative Body, the Village Government, and community elements organized by the Village Government. They aim to determine priorities, programs, activities, and Village Development needs, and are funded by the Local Government Revenue and Expenditure Budget, the Village community funded budget, and/or the District Government Budget (*PERMENDAGRI No. 114 Tahun 2014 Tentang Pedoman Pembangunan Desa* n.d.). The implementation of the village *Musrenbang Desa*, which is mandated by the Village Law, is carried out as a form of accountability, and is a condition for allocating government budgets to villages.

One of the outputs of the *Musrenbang Desa* is the compilation of the RKP *Desa*, a document used as the material for the preparation of the Draft Local Government Revenue and Expenditure Budget (*RAPBD*), which subsequently takes shape as the Local Revenue and expenditure Budget (*APB Desa*). In the preparation of the RKP *Desa*, the local government is obliged to refer to the RPJM *Desa*, which further refers to the District RPJM prepared by the district-level regional government. This tiered development plan is implemented up to the highest Provincial and National (Central/State) levels of government. This is intended to ensure that village development planning is synchronized and integrated with national development planning within the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, as stated in Law Number 25 of 2004 regarding the National Development Planning System (*Undang-Undang No. 25 Tahun 2004 Tentang Sistem Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (SPPN)* n.d.). That being said, *Musrenbang Desa* activities not only carry the interests of the village community – the bottom-up scheme, but also carry the interests of the government at a higher level – the top-down scheme. The par-

ticipatory principle in village development planning is not fully autonomous, and often elicits intervention from higher authorities. The existence of intervention is an event that is frequently encountered in *Musrenbang* activities in every village by, for example, the presence of the local government represented by the district head who is in charge of evaluating the APB *Desa* (output *Musrenbang Desa*). Hans Antlov termed this ‘a country within a village’, where the village becomes a shadow – a representation – of the state, albeit smaller in scope (Antlöv 2002).

Meanwhile, based on the results of observations and interviews, community participation in village development planning activities was not perceived very enthusiastically. This is evidenced by the presence of the community in deliberations at the hamlet and village levels being only half of the total number of invited individuals. These absences were based on various reasons, such as being busy with work, deeming it unimportant, or not receiving an invitation. Meanwhile, based on the results of the FGDs, the majority of participants stated that the results of the meeting and the realization of the activities carried out were appropriate. Others, however, stated that the results of the meeting were not in accordance with the activities carried out in one of the villages, as illustrated in table 1 via the presence of an asterisk. The causes of differences between the results of meetings and the realization of activities stem from several factors, such as: the village head changing the results of the meeting themselves; disaster factors, and policy changes. Of these three things, changes in policy at the national level dominate reasons for the lack of synchronization between the results of meetings and the realization of activities, followed by changes made by village heads, and finally the disaster factor.

Community participation in village deliberation activities also has different characteristics in each village, as the results of an interview with district village facilitators in the Muna Regency illustrates:

“The level of community involvement in deliberation is different in each village that I assist. Villages in the developing category have a higher attendance rate, in terms of meeting activities. This can be seen, for example, in the meeting room at the village hall, which is often fully occupied or even overflowing. In my assignment site, there are two developing villages, with a high rate of participation in each meeting. On the contrary, the participation rate in the underdeveloped villages is lower, with sometimes only half of the invited participants attending the meeting. In addition, there are more village meetings held at night than during the day. Participants who attend the night meetings often work as traders or farmers. Meanwhile, participants who attend during the day are usually fishermen or those who work as government employees”.

Residents who are not present during the deliberation will not see their interests accommodated for in the priority work plan. This then raises the assumption, from residents who are not accommodated for, that the RAPB *Desa* that has been set does not reflect the needs of all villagers. The implication is that the interests of residents are not accommodated for, and changes in activities often lead to polemics at the village level.

The Process of Village Budgeting

The village development budget planning system refers to the Village Law, the RPJM *Desa*, and the RKP *Desa*, which are developed in a participatory manner. When the APB *Desa* refers to the planning document, it is assumed that the Village Budget is in accordance with the needs of the community. The village budgeting process is one of the responsibilities attached to the village, and is an activity that is integrated with village development planning (figure 1). The use of village budgets must meet the principles of good governance, it must be transparent, accountable, participatory, orderly, and demonstrate budgetary discipline (*PERMENDAGRI No. 20 Tahun 2018 Tentang Pengelolaan Keuangan Desa* n.d.).

Based on the research findings, the principles of good governance are often violated in village budgeting. This can first be considered in terms of transparency, as findings from the field indicate that most villages do not publish the village budget to the community in the form of billboards or bulletin boards. Instead, village financial reports are difficult for the wider community to access. Whilst we did not find this to be the case completely, as several village heads put up billboards containing village financial reports in public places, this number of villages doing so was still very small. In fact, this is very important in encouraging budgetary transparency, because through the publication of the Village Budget, the public can find out about the use of funds and thus monitor the budget. The second principle to consider is accountability. Based on the results of the FGD, the Head of the Village Consultative Body is often not careful enough in examining and signing the accountability report. This is because, in addition to reasons of urgency, the body often do not have the skills required to examine accountability reports, so they put full trust in the village head. The third principle is order and discipline in the use of the budget. The results of the analysis of documents and interviews indicate that the use of the budget is sometimes poorly targeted and inefficient, this is due to the inclusion of the political and economic interests of village elites, contractors, and regional heads. These elites often take advantage of the procurement of goods and services within the village to fulfil their personal interests and enrich themselves.

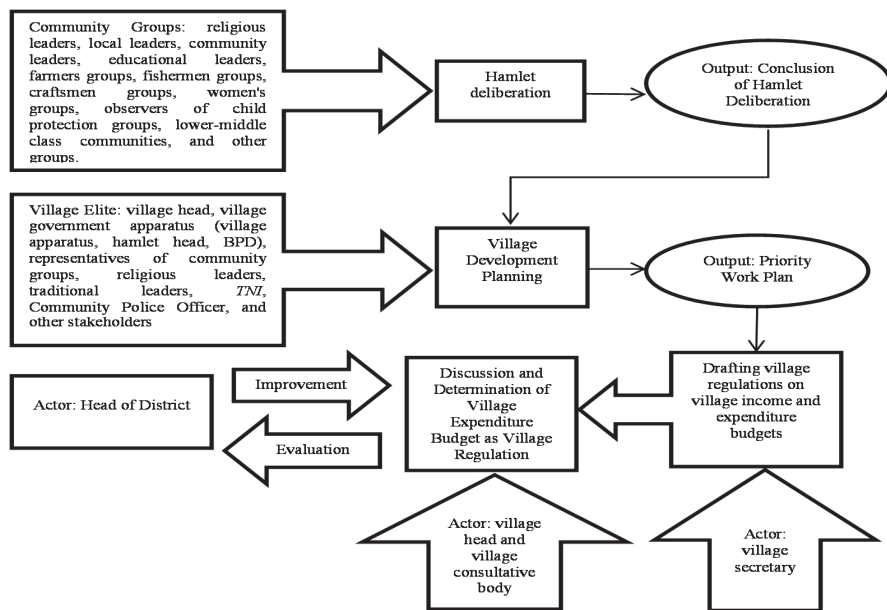


Figure 1. Actors and schemes in the village budgeting process

The Assigning of projects and funds to the village by the government slowly opens up the entry space for contractors to work on village projects. In the Muna and West Muna Districts, contractors working on village projects have close affiliations with the state bureaucratic elite and the political elite at the local government level. This connectivity with power indicates that many village projects are carried out by contractors, rather than being independently manage, or conducted by community participation (empowerment). Participatory action only takes place during the proposal process, but the process of project work is carried out through self-management by the entrusted contractors. The poor use of the village budget has implications for an increase in cases and reports of corruption in the village, based on data from 2018 to 2019 compiled from police and prosecutors in Southeast Sulawesi. From 1,951 villages, 170 (8.7%) received reports of cases of the misuse of village budgets. Although this number is relatively small, it should be noted that villages have become a new arena for corruption, as a by-product of the large amount of budget being allocated to villages.

In several villages studied, the preparation of the APB *Desa* did not fully translate to the RKP *Desa*, despite its status as a reference that was built based on agreement with community members. Often, the village government changed activities, so that the activities contained in the village RKP *Desa* document were different from those budgeted for in the APB *Desa* (Table 1).

Although the development of community participation in village development has been known for a long time by villages, until now this principle has not fully underpinned village budgeting steps. A number of challenges appear to characterize the development of participatory village budgeting processes. First, the quality of the village apparatus is still low in making development plans. Based on the results of the interviews conducted in this research, the village government does not yet have the ability to formulate the RPJM *Desa*. The results of examining the RPJM *Desa* document show that there is no difference in substance between each village. This results in the desynchronization of village plans and potential, for example, in some cases village development plans are directed at the agricultural sector, but the potential of the village is in fisheries, and small and medium marine businesses.

Table 1. Village priority work plan and village budget and revenue documents

Sector	Village priority work plan documents	Village budget and revenue documents
Village Development	(1). Multipurpose building construction	(1). Multipurpose building construction
	(2). Electrical installation	(2). Electrical installation
	(3). Making rainwater storage (*)	(3).
	(4). Construction of a washing toilet	(4). Construction of a washing toilet
	(5). Path construction	(5). Path construction
	(6). Duicker	(6). Duicker
	(7). Manufacture and pavement block for farmer business roads	(7). Manufacture and pavement block for farmer business roads
	(8). Pavement of alleys and axles (*)	(8).
	(9). Environmental road penetration	(9). Environmental road penetration
	(10). Village/subdistrict markets	(10). Village/subdistrict markets
	(11). Gazebo	(11). Gazebo
	(12). Home renovation (*)	(12).
	(13). Insertion house (*)	(13).
	(14). Cuban mosque	(14). Cuban mosque
	(15). Mosque ceiling	(15). Mosque ceiling
	(16). Clean water network (*)	(16).
	(17). Construction of groundwater wells	(17). Construction of groundwater wells
	(18). Drainage	(18). Drainage
	(19). Village Consultative Body Office	(19). Village Consultative Body Office

Source: research result data (2020).

The second challenge in the development of participatory budgeting is the perspective and limited understanding of the community regarding the use of the village budget.

The total amount disbursed in village fund budgets by the central government to villages every year has increased. In 2015 this figure was 20.67 trillion rupiah, in 2016 it was 46.98 trillion, in 2017 and 2018 it was 60 trillion, and in 2019 this figure reached 70 trillion rupiah (“Sistem Informasi Pembangunan Desa”, n.d.). Thus, the village budget increases if it is combined with transfers from the local government to the village in the form of village fund allocations. Based on the results of interviews and FGDs, some people understand that the budget is a government gift that needs to be distributed evenly to the community in cash, as illustrated by the following response:

One time, we held a village meeting to determine the form of assistance that would come from village-owned enterprise funds. The community wants the aid to be allocated according to the wishes of the community. For people who want cash, money is given. Meanwhile, people who want goods are given assistance in the form of goods. As a rule, this is not possible because the provision of assistance originating from village-owned enterprise funds must be efficient and provide added value to the community and village-owned enterprises (Village facilitators, Central Buton District).

The third challenge is that the dependence of villages on the state budget is high. Although the village is recognised as an autonomous government, in terms of budget capacity the village is not autonomous. Based on the examination of APB *Desa* documents in 24 villages observed in Southeast Sulawesi, 99% of village income came from state funds, namely in the form of central government transfers via Village Funds and regional government transfers via the Village Fund Allocation. Meanwhile, the village’s original sources of income only contribute approximately 1% of the village income and expenditure budget.

The dependence of the village on funds from the government above it results in the village government not being flexible in planning and discussing the budget. Local government intervention is an event that is often experienced by village heads in planning and discussing budgets. Based on the results of the FGDs, ahead of the national and local election processes the regent’s pressure on the village is very real. The Village Community Development Agency, as a subordinate to the regent in the region, often charges the village government to deposit a certain amount of money in the name of village contribution to regional development – a streamlined excuse to practice extortion. Village heads who do not deposit money face a number of difficulties in the disbursement process and in terms of financial accountability.

Discussion

The view that autonomy will increase community participation in decision making (United States Agency for International Development 1999) and develop civil society (Diamond 1999) is different from the reality of the implementation of village autonomy in Indonesia. The transfer of power and finances to the village does not automatically make the community play a more flexible role in decision making. The allocation of resources to the village evolved into a means for village elites to yield personal benefits (Lu-

cas 2016), thus strengthening the position of the village head and village elites (Ito 2007). The role of the head is very dominant in the management of village funds, and overrides the role of the BPD as the supervisory agency for the village government (Nurlinah and Haryanto 2020). This then leads to corrupt practices involving the village head. The increase in corruption in villages is often related to the suboptimal implementation of the concepts of transparency and accountability in the management of village funds (Ash-shidiqi and Wibisono 2018). However, it is very rare to link these aspects to the weakness of the village community in mobilising participatory supervision. As Lewis's review (Lewis 2015) states, the problems faced by villages in budget management are that the village public financial management system is not sufficiently prepared to handle a significant increase in funding, and mechanisms to monitor and control village expenditures are still underdeveloped.

The autonomy of villages can be seen to represent freedom from higher authority, freedom to do something, and freedom to express local identity through politics (Lawrence 2004; Ladner et al. 2019). In terms of the implementation of village autonomy in Indonesia, this goal has not been well realised for at least four reasons. The first of these comes from a regulatory angle. As stated in Law No. 25 of 2004, national development planning is the main reference in regional and village development planning. In the village context, development planning must be connected to development planning at the district, province, or national levels. This indirectly limits the progress of the village, as the village development plan should not conflict with that at the national level. The second reason can be seen from the institutional perspective. The implementation of village autonomy in Indonesia is faced with an institutional structure that is not integrated and often overlaps. Administratively, village government is under the hierarchy of the Ministry of Home Affairs (*Kemendagri*), but in terms of managing village funds the village government is under the control of the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration (*Kemendes PDTT*).

The third reason for the lack of autonomy is budgetary. The source of village income is very much dependent on the budget transferred by the state to the village, and a higher proportion of local government income from a higher level of government carries with it a lower rate of autonomy (Ladner et al. 2019). Similarly, Katorobo (2007) observed that "the dependence of the budget on transfers from the central government allows agency problems to creep in". In addition, demands for budget accountability are often issued by higher government authorities in order to intervene in villages. Villages in Southeast Sulawesi often face this problem, arguing that problematic accountability reports are often used to extort and criminalise village heads. The fourth reason is the competence to carry out autonomy. Village governments do not have the freedom to act and innovate, because the village is not supported by a reliable civil society and the resources that come with it.

This portrait of the implementation of village autonomy – especially in participatory planning and budgeting activities, which are experiencing many problems in Indonesia – shows that this concept does not guarantee that democracy will grow well and succeed in every country that adopts it. In Sri Lanka, the practice of participatory budgeting has

failed to achieve its basic objective of realising equal, fair, and transparent public participation. On the contrary, what happened was that the practice of power and domination that threatens the sustainability of democracy emerged (Kuruppu et al. 2016). The same occurred in Brazil where, although the allocation for participatory budgeting continued to increase, it had no effect on reducing poverty and reducing the Gini Ratio. This is because the participatory budgeting process was not supported by a democratic process in its application (Baierle 2003). The implementation of participatory budgeting has also failed to promote democracy in South Africa due to bad policy implementation, the weak political will of political elites, and poor plans (Piper and Von Lieres 2008). In Kenya, participatory planning failed to meet the needs of its citizens due to interventions and elite stratification (Sheely 2015). Research findings in Southeast Sulawesi and the difficulties experienced by various countries in the implementation of autonomy illustrate the notion that autonomy does not fully realise democratisation and citizen participation in its implementation.

Conclusion

1. The village law as the basis for implementing village autonomy in Indonesia mandates that the village planning and budgeting process be carried out in a participatory manner, but this research finds that, in practice, it is not implemented as it should be. In implementing village autonomy, The planning and budgeting role is played by village elites and external forces (local and national governments) through a number of regulatory and budgetary authorities. Planning proposals set out in village deliberation meetings attended by residents, when the budgeting process is often not implemented, are not used as a reference when faced with elite interests and intervention from higher government. This indicates that the implementation of village autonomy does not necessarily encourage participatory democracy in the village, on the contrary, autonomy is often held hostage by the elite.
2. The problems faced in implementing village autonomy – in Southeast Sulawesi in particular and in Indonesia in general – consist of, weak regulatory aspects, overlapping institutions, village dependence on the state budget, the low competence of village officials in carrying out autonomy, weak citizen participation, and civil society's failure in supervising the implementation of village autonomy. Therefore, efforts to realise local village democracy are insufficient if they only grant autonomy. Instead, they must also strengthen the capacity and competence of village officials (village heads and village officials) and, village communities (civil society), strengthen regulations, and improve the effectiveness of government institutions in implementing village autonomy.

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Kaimo autonomija ir dalyvavimo demokratija Indonezijoje: bendruomenių dalyvavimo administruojant kaimus problema Pietryčių Sulavesio provincijoje

Anotacija

Šio tyrimo tikslas – aprašyti kaimo autonomijos suteikimą ir dalyvaujamąsias demokratijos įgyvendinimą, stebint Indonezijos Pietryčių Sulavesio valstijos kaimų planavimo ir biudžeto sudarymo praktiką. tyrime taikytas aprašomasis kokybinis metodas. Pasitelkti šie duomenų rinkimo metodai: dokumentų analizė, stebėjimas, interviu ir tikslinių grupių diskusijos. Tyrimo rezultatai, atskleidė, kad, pirma, priimant sprendimą, kaimo plėtros srityje, dominuoja kaimo elitas ir valdžios struktūros; ir antra, kaimo biudžeto sudarymo procesas yra uždaras, mažai atskaitingas gyventojams, neefektyvus ir nėra orientuotas į užsibrėžtus tikslus. Egzistuoja keturios esminės problemos, dėl kurių autonomiškuose kaimuose nesuvokiama, kas yra dalyvaujamoji demokratija: tai yra teisinio reguliavimo trūkumai, įvairių institucijų funkcijų dubliavimas ir persidengimas, kaimų priklausomybė nuo regioninio biudžeto ir menka kaimo bendruomenių ir pilietinės visuomenės kompetencija prižiūrint autonomijos įgyvendinimą. Šiuo tyrimu konstatuojama, kad kaimuose gyvenančios bendruomenės sunkiai suvokia demokratizavimo ir piliečių dalyvavimo procesus.

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