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Rethinking Problematic Governance of Local Government in New Proliferated Regions and Their Impacts

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Abstract. Regional proliferation is a policy to improve governance of local governments upon decentralization taken into effect since 2001 in Indonesia in order to get public services in touch to the locals as well as further increases of prosperity level, but it is not necessarily proven as the matter of fact. This article gives a try to critically rethinking problematic situation of governing new municipalities upon proliferation, taking cases from Singkawang City and Bandung Barat Regency, to confirm previous theories. The study uses positivism approach by employing combining qualitative and quantitative method of inquiries through in-depth interviews to various actors, statistical analysis of conditions in comparison between those at the time of proliferation and recent progress, as well as content analysis of important documents. It suggests that regional proliferation in two municipalities implies double-edged impacts; they are opportunities to grasp local development on one side but counterproductive results of much dependency and stagnancy in local service delivery on the other side.

Keywords: *decentralization, regional proliferation, local government, local development*

Abstrak. Pemekaran daerah sebagai sebuah kebijakan dalam rangka meningkatkan penyelenggaraan pemerintahan daerah dilakukan sejak 2001 untuk mendekatkan pelayanan publik sekaligus meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat. Sayangnya, ditemukan sejumlah masalah dalam pelaksanaannya. Tulisan ini berupaya secara kritis memetakan kembali situasi problematis penyelenggaraan pemerintahan daerah otonom baru hasil pemekaran yaitu Kota Singkawang dan Kabupaten Bandung Barat. Penelitian dilakukan dengan pendekatan positivistik dan metode kuantitatif-kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam kepada sejumlah pihak, penelusuran data statistik mengenai indikator kelayakan daerah saat pemekaran dilakukan dan penelusuran data yang sama pada saat penelitian dilakukan untuk dijadikan pembandingan, serta content analysis terhadap dokumen-dokumen pendukung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemekaran daerah memiliki dampak ganda, di satu sisi merupakan kesempatan untuk meningkatkan pembangunan daerah, di sisi lain membawa hasil yang bersifat kontraproduktif, yaitu ketergantungan dan stagnasi dalam penyelenggaraan pelayanan publik.

Kata Kunci: *desentralisasi, pemekaran daerah, pemerintahan daerah, pembangunan daerah*

INTRODUCTION

Not only does momentum of reform movement in 1998 have positive correlations with changes in administrative system but also implies to decentralization practices towards vertical balance of power among governments at all levels. The Local Government Act No. 22/1999 jo No. 32/2004 have been reshaping implementation of local autonomy policy. The implementation then has consequently granted greater autonomy in decision making over and uses of public resources at local level which has in turn raised euphoria of local elites, especially their favor to regional proliferation. Even before local autonomy policy has taken into effect in 2001, this favor has stipulated in the Government Regulation (PP) No. 129/2000 which is then revised through the PP No. 78/2007.

The reasons behind supports for regional proliferation meet its justification in normative term. Regional proliferation is expected to open higher degree of

accessibility to public services as well as to enhance the quality. Regional proliferation as a consequences occur under decentralization is expected to bring closer the *locus* (place) of political decision making, so that public will be enabled to be actively involved in the decision making by which the process should be carried out by the level of governance that is closest to the public in order to guarantee allocation efficiency (Stiegler, 2007; Morphet, 2008). As policy implementation implies to fiscal aspects, proliferation is also a mean of decemtralization to improve resource allocation, economic growth machine for developing countries, creation of democratic governance, and economic maintenance instrument (Martinez-Vazquez and McNab, 2006). Oates (1972) previously argued about the basic relations between the width of territory and public service: “*each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over minimum geographic area that would internalize benefits and costs of such provision*”. The reason for this is that local government is the first entity that can understand

best people need better, and hence it can also reduce the governance level, as well as stimulating competition and innovation between regions. Decentralization concept has brought forward the local governance function in governance, and the service shall be based upon the subsidiary principle, in which the tax collecting, funding and management functions are done by the government at the closest level to the public.

Practices of regional proliferation in Indonesia have very much in turn come to high rate of failure than the successful ones. The evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (2010) shows that the majority of new autonomous regions has high rate of failure both in term of public economic welfare (41.2%), good governance (47.4%), and public service (76,1%), new regions generally fails to create good service quality. Only 21.5% of new regions managed to pass, and 4% that excelled in public service. In governance, there is only 29.4% that succeeded and 27.4% that excelled in creating good governance. The new regions that succeeded to increase public welfare is 36% and those that excelled 23%. Several indicators that are measured in economic welfare aspect are Gross Regional Domestic Product and poverty alleviation. For GRDP, the failure is 34%, the success rate is 53% and excellent is 13%. For poverty alleviation, the percentage of failure is 59%, success is 18% and excellent is 23%. In public service aspect, some indicators measured is the investment easiness level and integrated service. The indicator of investment easiness consists of 92% failure, 7% success and 1% excellent, while the integrated service has 58% failure and 42% success.

Singkawang City and Bandung Barat are two of those new proliferated regions in cases of not optimal or having tendency to failure. Both of them are currently above five years after region formation, representing urban (city) and rural (regency) characteristics respectively, each located in Java and outer Java Island. This study aims to describe the performance level of new autonomous regions and to find out impacts and problems within. Quantitative and qualitative description provides comprehensive understanding related to the governance of new autonomous regions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Using the positivist approach and quantitative-qualitative methods, this research attempts to provide description on performance level of new autonomous regions. Quantitatively, the research is done by comparing existing performance level of government with proliferation visibility indicators regulated in PP No.

129 Year 2000 jo. PP No. 78 Year 2007). The assumption is that existing performance level of new autonomous regions is better than Qualitatively, data was collected by in-depth interview and literature study. In-depth interview is done toward some informants selected through purpose sampling representing local government, local NGO, entrepreneur, council, etc.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Examining outcomes resulted from post-proliferation in the two municipalities, according to theories and the PP No. 129/2000 *jo* PP No. 78/2007, there are insufficient achievements in both cases. It is Singkawang City to perform better than Bandung Barat Regency in comparison. Types of municipalities—urban characterizing the city and rural characterizing regency—are not confirmed to be determinants to those achievements. As the matter of fact, Singkawang is five years older than Bandung Barat proliferated five years ago. Nevertheless, very much influencing factors doesn't come from age differences although being proliferated earlier means longer chances to do more development. It is the experience of proliferation of Singkawang contributes to development outcomes. Singkawang used to be former capital territory of Bengkayang Regency—the principal area—made the city more prepared in terms of infrastructures for development than those in the very new Bandung Barat—the peripheral area to Bandung Regency—having no capital territory up to the study conducted, even Regency Government of Bandung Barat had set up temporary office facilities in abandoned manufacture building at Batujajar Area. Ngamprah Area was chosen to be prospective capital territory, but it was merely a plan till five years following proliferation.

The background of new municipality formation in a case of Singkawang City was different in comparison with Bandung Barat Regency. The two cases contain involvement of various elements of society to aspire idea behind formation of new autonomous regions, but somehow they are cannot be verified as representation of the locals as a whole. The formation of Singkawang as a new municipality departed from high concern of weak economic condition and stagnant growth of prosperity, even there were ever high level of poverty occurred. Based on the study and according to the locals' point of view, these are a paradox since they have sufficient modalities to be fast-growing municipality in term of natural resources and landscape, former status of territory, and social capital.

The locals and local government are not able to optimize the use of all natural resources available as

well as regional position that combine characteristic of seashore, mountain, and forest. The regional landscape has made possibility of Singkawang City to be transit city with rich features of tourism. Nevertheless, worsen by low level of education earned; weaknesses in managing resources have led to insignificant level of gross regional domestic product. This implies limited local owned-revenue earned.

As a former capital territory of the principal Bengkayang Regency, Singkawang City should have supporting existing condition, for instance basic infrastructure and main facilities of the city are available. Singkawang City also has social capital as there is a unique combination of plurality elements of the locals in terms of ethnicity, religion and beliefs, as well as occupation. Nevertheless, the plurality of locals yields fragmentation of different elements of society. New immigrants have not leveraged helps to creation of economic creativity, but negative influence of worsening free-sex and HIV/AIDS of which the people has been suffering beforehand. It seems to become problems hampering the city to elevate their economic condition.

Formation of new autonomous region does imply to increasing needs of new office facilities of local government. There were cases of unclear transfer of asset to Singkawang City as a consequence of problematic local asset management in the principal regions; transitions during formation if new regions has opened illegal opportunity for individuals having interest to own government assets. Furthermore, big size of organization structure of local governments is not balanced with sufficient fulfillment of the need for functional staffs. The worst things are underperforming public services and poor innovation to fulfill basic social needs until the second period post-proliferation as results of those mentioned problems.

Different with existing problematic condition in Singkawang City, articulated aspirations to proliferate the very wide area of Bandung Regency and formation the new Bandung Barat Regency had come from the needs for optimizing the economics of scale to deliver public service as well as optimizing span of control to local government. Social aspect in Bandung Barat is favored by homogeneity of the locals, in terms of ethnicity and religion or beliefs, leading to high level social cohesiveness as a great modality for further stable economic growth. Nevertheless, political intention matters and there were vested interest of the elites to gain benefits from regional proliferation since it opened a number of new positions both in local government structures and council.

The local government of Bandung Barat seems to manifest bad governance in practice. Civil servants at most

come from the principal municipality. This has somehow become an explanation of why they are perceived as low responsible apparatus. The transfer of civil servants also implies to insufficient knowledge of local context. Administration of civil service apparatus is also featured by spoil system; preferences of positioning civil servants are made on the basis of seniority, not professionalism and level of education. Without significant effort to remedy this condition, local bureaucracy has become underperformed.

Despite of underperformed local bureaucracy and political intentions, regional proliferation implies in two faces. On one side, economic growth has slowly increased and acknowledged to give impacts to enhance affordability of the people to buy their needs and to improve health condition. One might note that the source of this improvement comes from creativity of the locals to seek for new economic and investment opportunities. Nonetheless, on the other side all of these improvements have deteriorated cooperative behavior among elements of the society.

CONCLUSION

Regional proliferations yield more negative impacts than the positive one. More than problems of incapability and lack of readiness, governance of local government in new autonomous municipalities, as shown in cases from Singkawang City and Bandung Barat Regency, regional proliferation have led to counterproductive results. Not only do public service delivery and local resource management perform under initial expectation, being proliferated means more negative side effects occurred. While the new autonomous region are failed to or at least slowly achieved intended local development goals, principal regions are suffering lack of capability to perform their functions following the proliferation since high-valued resources are exploited by new autonomous regions. This research affirms previous researches done by other institutions. Therefore, the government has to take these findings into account for further design of local government arrangement as well as main consideration to examine every proposal of new autonomous region formations.

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