Analysis of The Formation of Autonomous Regions to Improve Local Government Efficiency in Public Services

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ABSTRACT	Published Online: August 02, 2025

This study examines the formation of new regions or autonomous regions to improve public services. Regional autonomy is the authority of autonomous regions to regulate and manage the interests of local communities according to their own initiative based on community aspirations, in accordance with laws and regulations. Meanwhile, autonomous regions are legal community units that have certain regional boundaries authorized to regulate and manage the interests of local communities according to their own initiative based on community aspirations within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. This study uses qualitative research, focusing on the formation of new regions. With data analysis using this spiral data analysis model as a conceptualization to explore and follow procedures in conducting data analysis. The process of analyzing the spiral model data uses qualitative analysis procedures by following contours or patterns. Research Results That the formation of regions is the granting of status to certain areas as provincial areas, district areas, and city areas. Meanwhile, what is meant by regional expansion is the division of provincial areas, district areas, and city areas into more than one region. The practical consequences of regional expansion will be changes in the organizational structure of regional government, changes in area followed by changes in regional boundaries and changes in population. These changes will have implications for other, more essential changes, especially in efforts to provide services to the community.

KEYWORDS: region, autonomy, formation, service, community

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of regional governance based on regional autonomy demonstrates the community's awareness as holders of the true right to autonomy to manage their affairs based on the authority granted by the central government in a broad, real, and responsible manner (Moonti, 2019). Regional autonomy must be understood as a means to achieve community prosperity at the local level, not as the result of work achieved by the regional government. Regional autonomy belongs to the community. The transfer of authority from the community to the regional government to implement regional autonomy is philosophically based on the principles of democracy by the people, according (Aminah et al., 2021).

Regional autonomy is the authority of an autonomous region to regulate and manage the interests of the local community on its own initiative, based on community aspirations, in accordance with laws and regulations (Sipayung & Cristian, 2022). An autonomous region, on the other hand, is a legal community entity with defined boundaries authorized to regulate and manage the interests of the local community on its own initiative, based on community aspirations, within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Prabowo, 2019). Autonomy is the transfer of central government affairs to regional governments, which are operational in nature, within the framework of the government bureaucratic system. The goal of autonomy is to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in public service. With this autonomy, opportunities are opened for regional governments to directly build partnerships with the public and private sector in the relevant regions in various fields (Ariany & Ristiawati, 2019).

Furthermore, Sarundajang (2012:135) states that the

principle of real autonomy is a principle that handles government affairs based on tasks, authorities, and obligations that actually exist and have the potential to grow, thrive, and develop in accordance with the region's potential and unique characteristics (Baier & Zenker, 2020). Therefore, the content and type of autonomy for each region are not always the same as for another region. Meanwhile, the principle of responsible autonomy is autonomy whose implementation must be fully aligned with the objectives and intent of granting autonomy, which are essentially to empower regions, including improving people's welfare, a key component of national goals (Keuffer & Ladner, 2021).

Within the framework of implementing regional autonomy, the meaning, philosophy, and principles that must be applied are sharing of power, distribution of income, and empowerment of regional administration. All of this is within the framework of achieving the ultimate goal of autonomy: regional independence, especially community independence. This all means how regions have authority, not simply the transfer of affairs for regional government administration .

Decentralization is the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources through deconcentration, delegation, or devolution from the central government to lower levels of administration (al Farid Uddin, 2018). According to Syaukani et al (2002:19) Of course, the choice of decentralization must be based on strong arguments both theoretically and empirically (Hanson, 2022). With various problems faced in adopting and realizing a federalistic government, the alternative is to choose a unitary state with the implementation of government based on the principles of decentralization, which concerns the relationship of power in all its dimensions between the National government and Regional governments. According to Rondinelli and Cheema (1983), Decentralization has a meaning that can be seen holistically or narrowly, which is defined as follows: Decentralization is the transfer of planning, decision-making or administrative authority from the central government to organizations below it, as well as local administrative units, semi-autonomous organizations and local governments or non-governmental organizations (Çiner, 2018).

Essentially, decentralization policy is a method used by the ruling elite to establish government units at the local level by delegating some central government tasks to be carried out by the established local units. The question that arises in this delegation of central authority is whether the central government will delegate this authority to branches of central units established in the regions or to local government units with full authority to regulate and administer the delegated authority (Mudalige, 2019).

Referring to Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, it states that granting the broadest possible autonomy to regions is implemented based on the principle of a unitary state. In a unitary state, sovereignty rests solely with the national government, and there is no

sovereignty granted to the regions. Therefore, regardless of the extent of autonomy granted to regions, final responsibility for the administration of regional government will remain with the central government. Therefore, regional governments in a unitary state are integral to the national government. Accordingly, policies created and implemented by regions are an integral part of national policy. The difference lies in how to utilize local wisdom, potential, innovation, competitiveness, and regional creativity to achieve national goals at the local level, which in turn will support the achievement of national goals as a whole (Rondinelli, 2017).

The experience of implementing decentralization in Indonesia requires consideration of the philosophy and paradigm of change in the policy of decentralization in Indonesia (Prasetyo et al., 2021) . The direction is towards balanced decentralization, balancing the principles of democratization with the principles of effectiveness and efficiency, balancing the rights, authorities, and obligations between the central government and regional governments, as well as between regional governments. This balanced decentralization will, in principle, align with Pancasila, which is essentially an ideology of middle ground and balance (Tyson, 2010). Indonesia is not merely implementing a major decentralization initiative, but rather a decentralization revolution. This is so-called because Indonesia is transferring authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to regional governments on a very broad scale and at a very rapid pace of change (Kuhon, 2020).

With decentralization, the welfare of local communities will be realized more quickly, as local governments are more flexible in responding to societal changes and their needs. Decentralization policies will always reflect the interests of both the central and regional governments. This is as expressed by Smith (1985:20-29) as follows: (1) Political Education, the first function that decentralization is said to perform for a democratic state is political education. (2) Political Leadership Training, Similar attention must be used in dealing with claims related to local government in providing a good training ground for the national legislature. (3) Political Stability, Democratic decentralization is said to contribute to 'the birth of a better society' (Sharpe, 1981 d p.34) and the establishment of social harmony, community spirit and political stability"). (4) Political Equality, First, local democracy is said to contribute to political equality. By providing additional opportunities for citizens to participate in public policy making it strengthens the political equality implied in civil rights. (5) Accountability, The second value of democratic decentralization for individuals and local communities is the facilitation of accountability and freedom. (6) Responsiveness, The ultimate value of local government to the community is responsiveness and therefore the ability to provide what is needed by the community (Lockwood, 2015).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach aimed at conducting a research and understanding process based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and human problems. The research strategy and type used in this study are the Naturalistic approach, as follows: (a) Research can be conducted in natural conditions, (b) Data collected is based on the perspective of the subject being studied, (c) The research design is flexible because it is based on reflexive principles, (d) There are no standards for tools, observation methods, or analysis methods (May & Perry, 2022).

Qualitative research methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. In qualitative research, the usefulness of informants for researchers is to help them immerse themselves in the local context as quickly and thoroughly as possible, especially for the researcher. Furthermore, informants are beneficial for researchers in gathering a large amount of information in a relatively short time, acting as internal sampling, as informants are used to communicate, exchange ideas, or compare events found by other subjects (Dźwigoł, 2024).

The overall data analysis process involves interpreting data in the form of text or images. Data analysis is an ongoing process that requires constant reflection on the data, asking analytical questions, and writing brief notes throughout the research. Qualitative data analysis can involve simultaneous data collection, interpretation, and reporting. Descriptive research aims to ensure the data are unbiased and focused on the research topic. In addition to analysis, the research results provide a clear picture of what is happening at the research location (Ahmadin, 2022). Research description plays a central role, and situations and events can be seen in alignment with the results in the field, using the spiral data analysis model (Hancock et al., 2001).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regional government can generally be divided into two parts: Local Self-Government and Local State Government.

1. Local Self-Government.

Local governments, in the form of Local Self-Government, have the authority to regulate and manage their own affairs. This form of Local Self-Government is required by the state government system to administer various government affairs appropriate to regional conditions. This means that in certain cases, the administration of state government in a region will be more efficient and effective if delegated to a specific regional government. Therefore, we can see the characteristics of Local Self-Government, or autonomous regional government, as follows: (1) All affairs are handled within the region's own jurisdiction. Therefore, these matters need to be clarified in detail. (2) Government administration is carried out by a system composed not entirely of central officials, but of regional government employees. (3) All affairs are handled entirely on the basis of the region's own initiative or policy. (4) The relationship between the central government and the regional governments that manage their own affairs is solely supervisory. (5) All administration is essentially funded from the region's own financial resources.

2. Local State Government.

Local state government is a regional government organizational unit, a government organizational unit in a region that is formed based on the principle of decentralization. Regional government or administrative government is formed to carry out government affairs that are the authority of the central government in the region. Not all central government affairs can be handled directly by the central government efficiently and effectively. For this reason, regional government is formed whose purpose is to carry out certain government affairs that are the authority of the central government in the region. Local state government or regional government is tasked only with carrying out instructions, directives, instructions and policies of the central government. There are several characteristics of regional government or administrative government, namely: (1) the form of transfer of power is the delegation of power. (2) the delegation of power is directed to central government officials in the region. (3) the authority of central government officials is limited to implementing central government policies. (4) regional government does not have the authority to manage its own household affairs.

The benefits of local government, according to liberal democracy, include: (1) providing a positive contribution to the development of national democracy because it can serve as a means for political education for the people and provide training for political leaders, as well as supporting political stability; (2) local government can provide benefits to the local community, namely political equality, accountability, and responsiveness.

The formation of new autonomous regions is part of the implementation of the principle of decentralization in a national government. In modern governance, decentralization promises many benefits for the utilization and welfare of local communities. Through the implementation of this principle, it is hoped that a method of managing authority and resources will develop that will not only facilitate the implementation of national-scale activities but will also significantly accommodate aspirations at the local level. The basic values in the formation of an autonomous region can consist of: administrative efficiency and effectiveness, government democracy, and national resilience. Administrative efficiency can include regional competitiveness (the region's ability to develop its territory), economies of scale, and the amount of workload (the number of affairs and authorities). Administrative effectiveness can include span of control, community accessibility, and regional potential. Meanwhile,

democratic governance includes public aspirations, public control, and representation.

The formation of autonomous regions is a common phenomenon in many countries. The distribution of power or authority to local communities to make certain decisions and carry out government functions has become a necessity in modern nations. In large countries, it is more appropriate, efficient, and effective to delegate some of the authority held by the central government to a local entity that forms a regional government. The formation of autonomous regions is also ideally based on objective considerations to achieve the goal of improving public welfare. However, it would be a mistake to view the formation of autonomous regions solely from an administrative perspective, meaning to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government administration. In fact, the formation of autonomous regions can, in some respects, be compared to the formation of a nation bound by national identity, although the two are certainly different in terms of scale and political depth. Autonomous regions cannot be formed without a relationship between the community and the region in which they reside. It is this community and its territory that possess a certain political significance that drives the emergence of autonomous regions. In various cases of the formation of autonomous regions around the world, this political dimension dominates the formation of most autonomous regions. Even for autonomous regions established through the initiative of the central government, the political dimension is always a primary consideration in the consideration of autonomous region formation.

Regional formation refers to the granting of status to a specific area as a province, district, or city. Regional expansion, on the other hand, refers to the division of a province, district, or city into more than one region. The practical consequences of regional expansion include changes in the organizational structure of regional government, changes in territorial area, followed by changes in boundaries, and changes in population. These changes will have implications for other, more essential changes, particularly in the provision of public services. Ramses (2003) (in Wasistiono 2008:56) states that regional expansion, or more precisely, dividing an autonomous region into several regions, aims to bring government services closer to and optimize them, accelerate development growth, and improve the welfare of the people in those regions. Public participation will increase due to more open access and more effective oversight due to the relatively narrow area of supervision.

Regional structuring, in practice, has always connoted the formation of new autonomous regions. Therefore, going forward, regional structuring needs to be framed within a policy that emphasizes responsibility and benefits for the community. This policy should be based on values that include the efficiency and effectiveness of government administration, the development of democracy that guarantees public representation, aspirations, and control, and the strengthening of national resilience.

Regional governance is crucial, as it is a determining factor in regional planning. According to Smith (1985:61-77), in his book "Decentralization: The Territorial Dimension of the State," chapter IV on Area, Community, and Efficiency, it seems clear that the area designated for government purposes must correspond to the territory recognized by its inhabitants as forming a socio-economic unit, one with which they feel a sense of attachment and identity. This will ensure the necessary legitimacy for the government. Efficiency and decentralization of government are often based on the belief that there is a systematic relationship between the quality of government service delivery and local characteristics, which can be varied by changing geographic boundaries. For managerial convenience, the division of a country's territory into regions can be tailored to the administrative needs of national agencies or departments. Technical requirements and the natural characteristics of a region may be crucial for administration, thus providing a regional pattern determined by its physical form. Social Region, the territorial structure of government and administration may have to accommodate people into socially distinct regions based on history, ethnicity, language. Administrative spatial requirements, or regional boundaries for decentralized government and administration than just a technical execise.

Driving and Inhibiting Factors in the Formation of New Autonomous Regions

In practice, the process of regional expansion still faces various obstacles, including the very limited availability of public services such as education, health care, and infrastructure. The distribution of services is linked to the area's size and the number of residents who serve as consumers or beneficiaries of the provision of public goods and services. Regional formation aims to improve services to accelerate the realization of public welfare. Therefore, population and area factors enable regions to organize and realize the objectives of regional formation. The decision to expand or not is a function of population size and area, all of which will impact public services.

Since the implementation of government decentralization policies in the reform era, pressure from communities and local governments in various regions to establish new autonomous regions (both provinces and regencies/cities) has continued to increase. This desire is based on various political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics. With the formation of new autonomous regions, communities in certain regions hope to explore and capitalize on greater opportunities in managing regional resources that can be utilized for public services with the primary goal of improving the welfare of the people in those regions. With such a broad scope, it is clear that decisions regarding regional development must be aligned with other decisions

related to government affairs, organizational restructuring, border restructuring, asset management, and supervision and capacity building.

One of the driving factors for regional expansion is the vast service areas. The vast scope, coupled with challenging terrain and difficult transportation, results in uneven distribution of government, development, and public services across regions. Consequently, there is a disparity in the level of public welfare between regions within the same autonomous region. Regional expansion, or the formation of new autonomous regions, has long been viewed as a solution to the underdevelopment of a region due to the overly broad span of regional government control and the lack of local government attention to the provision of public services. This, in turn, results in uneven distribution of public welfare within a region. However, this is not the only factor driving regional expansion. Various other factors can also be identified as driving regional expansion, such as political and bureaucratic advantages, economic advantages, ethnic heterogeneity, and so on. The main inhibiting factor for regional expansion is generally the efficiency and effectiveness of government administration. Regional expansion is generally only an expansion of structures that are contested by elites with consequences in the form of huge funding oriented towards the development of local government management facilities and infrastructure (infrastructure), financing of regional government apparatus.

CONCLUSIONS

Regional formation refers to the granting of status to a specific area as a province, district, or city. Regional expansion, on the other hand, refers to the division of a province, district, or city into more than one region. The practical consequences of regional expansion include changes in the organizational structure of regional government, changes in territorial area, followed by changes in regional boundaries, and changes in population. These changes will have implications for other, more essential changes, particularly in efforts to provide services to the public. Regional expansion or the formation of new autonomous regions has long been viewed as a solution to the underdevelopment of a region due to the very broad span of regional government control and the lack of regional government attention to the provision of public services. This then results in uneven public welfare in a region. However, this is not the only factor driving regional expansion. Various other factors can also be identified as driving regional expansion, such as political and bureaucratic advantages, economic advantages, ethnic heterogeneity, and so on. The main inhibiting factors for regional expansion are generally government efficiency and effectiveness.

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