

The Governance Accountability of Manado Local Government in the Local Autonomy Era

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ABSTRACT

The research was aimed at describing, analysing, and interpreting the rule of Manado city and factors that inhibit and support the implementation of the administrative accountability of Manado municipality. The empirical study of the phenomenon showed low accountability of local government administration in the local autonomy era, of the creation of good governance and accountability in local government and, of professionalism in planning and implementation by the local government. So the issue raised here is how is the accountability of Manado government and what factors constraint and support the implementation of the public accountability. In accordance with the subject issues and research objectives, the study used qualitative research method. The study found that there were low levels of the implementation of accountability of Manado municipality in terms of organizational, legal, professional, moral and political one

KEYWORDS: accountability, good government, local government.

INTRODUCTION

Regional autonomy must be understood as an effort to optimize the potential of the community so that public accountability in all areas of the governmental policy on the society and parliament might not be neglected in order to enhance democracy at the local level. Although there was a process of accountability to the basic principles of democratic government in achieving good governance and decentralization, the results of the empirical experience can be used as a justification that accountability in Indonesian governance is still low. Corruptions on the Regional Budget seem to have become chronic diseases in some Indonesian areas, including in Northern Sulawesi Province where there was a budget deviation by the head of Manado city, which led the mayor, the chairman of Manado city Parliament and, a number of other officers become suspects in the abuse of budget (Comment News, October 28. 2008). Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW) as a social institution concerning about corruptions noted that in the first six months of 2004, 325 legislators were accused of corruptions in various areas with an impaired state money value of about 428.511 billion rupiah. The low accountability of local governments under decentralization would not only adversely affect the whole political life and the regional governance, but also hinder the achievement of the regional autonomy perspective.

In Indonesia, Law no. 22/1999 on Regional Autonomy enacted since January, 1. 2001 and then revised by Act no. 32/2004 on Regional Government has been enacted since October 15. 2004. It gave hope to accountability model of local governance. In general, the basic principles of Law no. 32/2004 contain not only democracy, equality, justice, privilege, and specificity of a region, but also public accountability. Regional autonomy according to the definition in Article 1 of Law no. 32/2004 is the rights, authority, and obligation of the autonomous regions to organize and manage their own affairs and interests of the local communities in accordance with legislation. The policy on decentralization and regional autonomy in Indonesia has brought not only changes to the relationship between regional and central government, but also the emergence of a greater community demand on the performances of local government and parliament. Political space is given to public through decentralization policy which grows democratic practices at the local level with a new development pattern in which the policy of the local government and parliament is demanded to be more opened and democratic. Opened community participation and attention are given to the interests of the people. This accountability of local government is expected to lead to a better direction. By considering the Law no. 32/2004, it can be seen that in local government law, accountability is one of the important criteria in administrating regional government affairs and becomes an important principle in governance. In practice, accountability is not specifically mentioned but can be understood as "accountability" for the performance of duties, authority, rights and obligations of the regional governance. Parliament as an institution representing the local people and services as elements of the regional administration (article 40 of Law no. 32/2004) has a legislative, budgetary, and oversight function (article 41 of Law no. 32/2004). The parliament can supervise the local government performance. Therefore, the duties, authority and rights of parliament are very large. In article 42 paragraphs (1)

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of Law no. 32/2004, there are 11 (eleven) duties and authority of parliament and one of them is (h) requiring the head of accountability reports the details of the regional administration.

Through a more in-depth analysis on administrative accountability and the factors that hinder and support the administrative accountability of Manado municipality, the research is expected to be able to assist Manado government to identify problem areas relating to the accountability of the government, and at the same time to give input to the development of the local government accountability to be better.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the background, the formulation of the problem, the objectives to be achieved in this study, and in-depth study on the context were taken as data source. Due to the natural context, the research approach used a qualitative one or often called 'naturalistic' since it is conducted in natural conditions [1]. In accordance with the subject matter and purpose of the study, the research on the accountability of local government in the decentralization of regional autonomy used qualitative method.

The phenomenon of accountability in the decentralization of local government in the era of regional autonomy is an extremely complex phenomenon that requires a full photo shot. According to Sprenkle [2] qualitative method is suitable for 'describing complex phenomenon, defining new construct, discovering new among relationship variables, trying to answer why question, and grabbing with theoretical questions about meaning, and understanding. The study used a case study type namely an 'enquiry' to investigate the empirical phenomena in the context of real life, where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly visible, and where multiple sources of evidence are used [3].

Therefore, an in-depth and thorough review of a community in order to obtain results that is explanative describes the process of accountability that occurs in Manado local governance. This aims at developing a deeper knowledge about the object studies in detail through depiction of the background, and character traits, the characters and accountability of Manado local government.

Research Focus

According to Strauss and Corbin [4], the focus is aimed at: (1) limiting the study or restricting the field of enquiry (investigation) in the study, and, (2) determining the criteria for the including or excluding any information obtained in the field. In accordance with the subject matter and purpose of the research that have been established, the focuses of this study are as follow:

1. Accountability of administrative decentralization in Manado in the era of Regional Autonomy, namely the description of Manado City government is behind the importance of the implementation and development of accountability, and achievement accountability level.
2. What are the factors that hinder and support the implementation of the governance accountability in Manado City in the decentralization era or regional autonomy, namely, factors that could hamper the accountability of the local government in the era of regional autonomy on Manado local government especially with regard to budget (accountability procedure)

Research Sites

Starting from the onset of the idea to develop a substantive theory about the accountability of local government in the era of regional autonomy, this study took place in Manado in North Sulawesi.

Research instruments

In qualitative method, the main instrument to collect data is the researchers themselves. [5][6] Besides, the researchers used other instruments that served as supporting ones: (1) guidelines for the interview, (2) camera, (3) field note book, (4) tape recorder.

Data Collection Techniques

The data in this study were obtained by recording from multiple sources of data: interviews, observation, archival documents and records that exist in various instances. Techniques of data collection are done by in-depth interviews.

Data validity

In looking at the degree of truth and validity of the trust or other research data in this document, the criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba [5] were as follow: (1) confidence (credibility), (2) transferability, (3) dependence (dependability), and (4) assurance (conformability).

Analysis Techniques

Data analysis according to Ross [7] is a process of ordering the data, organizing into a pattern, category and description of the basic unit, theme or category. Furthermore, data analysis according to Bogdan and Biklen [8] is a process to systematically search for and organize the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials collected. According to Miles and Huberman [6] that “the most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative methods of data is that of analysis which are not well formulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the implementation level of accountability, if viewed from the accountability indicator of the legitimacy of the procedures, processes and products are found where accountability in the budget process got less response aspirations from the people although in the early drafting stages Musrenbang (planning for development group) has been done through village, district, city and even down to provincial level.

The achievement level of governance accountability of Manado city can be seen through the description of the findings. By considering the findings in cases of the abuse of Manado budget by the mayor of Manado, the level of government accountability in the budget of Manado City can be known. From accountability indicators, namely: legitimacy of policy makers/decision makers, the existence of adequate moral qualities (moral conduct), sensitivity (responsiveness), openness, optimal resource utilization, and efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness (improving efficiency and effectiveness), it appears that lack of accountability of government implementation of Manado is not only the procedure, but also the processes and products.

The empirical data on Manado City budget for fiscal year 2009 showed that in terms of legitimacy of decision makers, the legitimacy given by people to the head of local government and the parliament in public policy making was not done properly as mandated by Act 32/2004 by ignoring the public participation in budgeting; legitimacy granted by the State under the Act and other regulations to local governments (regional head) and the parliament in public policy making has been abused, with impartiality to the public budget.

In terms of moral qualities (moral conduct), there was a collusion between the parliament and the regional head in the approval of projects, the occurrence of “day-care budget” by the Head of Regional and Parliament; nepotism in the allocation of development funds to specific groups and regions; and misuse budget by the executive.

Indicators of sensitivity (responsiveness) showed that there were lack of attention to Musrenbang’s suggestions to accommodate the aspirations of the people in developing direction and public policy budget; the lack of attention of municipal government and parliament in setting priorities in budgeting with no impartiality budget to the public interest; and, the ignorance of public opinions published through mass media so that they have no effect on the decisions related to budget.

For indicators of openness, it was found that there were: (a) lack of transparency in municipal government and parliament throughout the budgeting process in which only the regional head and parliament were entitled to make decisions and (b) lack of information to the public about the materials, processes and implementations of the budget. Indicator of optimal resource utilization shows that most of local revenue resources were used for personnel expenditures. Indicator of efficiency and effectiveness improvement showed that frequent rolling positions did not motivate the employees to improve their performances. During the period of 1 (one) year (2005 to 2009), there were as many as four-times turnover of the mayor. Good governance is a system of government that is transparent but there was weakness in realizing the agenda of open government.

Open local governments a requirement that has to be met by local government in an effort to increase its public accountability. In line with the theory, concepts by Jabra and Dwevedi who develop 5 (five) kinds of accountability was also used. They are: administrative/organizational accountability, legal accountability, political accountability, professional accountability, and ethics (moral) accountability.

Manado government has not fully realized the rights of the people in discussing the budget. The parliament did not provide explanations on the finance used so that it was not surprising that not many people knew about the planned use of the budget. Some discussions on the budget conducted by the parliament were often delayed without any obvious reason. The closing of the council’s stance is clearly contrary to the values and spirit of reformation and accountability of government processes that are expected by the society in the era of regional autonomy.

Referring to the theory of accountability, Spencer [10] states that accountability is often expressed as a form of operation and responsibility since they are related to each other. So in solving the problem happened in Manado, all government officials should be responsible for the implementation of effective, efficient, and productive jobs, while maintaining on-going duties well and smoothly, managing it professionally, and implementing reliable roles. The performance of the government officials in performing their duties and responsibilities should be clearly measured. In this case, Levine, et al. [11] suggested that there are three important concepts in measuring the performance of public bureaucracy associated with duties and responsibilities, namely: accountability, responsibility, and, responsiveness. Accountability is ‘ the

government to explain and justify publicly how he uses his power and take immediate corrective action when there is something wrong' [12].

Other research finding that could be summarized is that the accountability of Manado government organization in 2009 budget process was still "low" (viewed from procedure, process, and product accountability). Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the accountability was not fully carried out to touch the values of democracy, participation, and legitimacy of the expected collectively. This is mainly because there was no transparency and opened opportunity for stakeholders to participate.

Administrative/Organizational Accountability

Associated with a strict hierarchical relationship between the centres of accountability and the units under it, the relationship is usually defined by clear and firm rules of the organization having either formal or informal relationships. Violation on the performance of duties should be given sanction by the unit at the top hierarchy ranging from the lightest to the most severe sanction (dismissal).

Although the accountability of a civil servant of the administration/organization is related to his superior, but according to Jabra and Dwivedi [13], this type of accountability has a horizontal dimension in which the government is accountable for its work. The administrative/organizational accountability is just one example. Administrative assistant to the secretary general and regional of Manado city is responsible to the mayor. Another example of accountability is an inspector who led an inspectorate responsible to the mayor. Within Manado scope, in accordance with the Government Regulation Number 41/2007, the regulatory element of governance is the inspectorate. Its duty is to supervise the implementation of government affairs at the district/city and to foster the implementation of village governance and of village affairs. In carrying out its duty, the inspectorate held three functions, namely planning of monitoring programs; facilitation of policy formulation and monitoring; and inspection, investigation, testing and assessment of supervisory duties.

Legal Accountability

Legal accountability related to the legal actions taken by the executives is over the policies adopted by the legislature. Violation against it was resolved by the courts or by revision of the regulations considered contrary to the law. Legal founding for governance accountability in the areas was stipulated in article 20 paragraph 1 of Law number 32/2004 on regional government.

Legal accountability in Manado can be seen from an example, namely the misuse of budget funds in 2006-2007 and 2009 as much as 6.5 billion rupiahs in which the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Secretary of the Council and the Head of Finance were proved to be guilty.

Political Accountability

In all democratic government systems, the administration is obliged to recognize the authority of the political authority that organizes, sets priorities, redistributes resources, and ensures compliance with orders. Political accountability has the responsibility both politically and legally.

In Law 32/2004, the political accountability in the area includes the accountability of the regional head and parliament. They have political responsibility for their positions that they got from a process of parliamentary elections in Manado.

Manado was led by the regional head or the Mayor who has a good political accountability to his constituencies. The Mayor has also been responsible to the Governor including technical and administrative aspects (USAID-DRSP, 2006). In addition, the political accountability of the regional chief was also manifested by reporting duties and obligations to parliament and public through regular reporting mechanisms. The parliament also asked the head of the region to be responsible through the exercise of oversight function, especially related to the implementation of programs and projects funded through the budget, and the implementation of local regulations. This is similar to those expressed by the head of Planning Agency.

Meanwhile, the parliament was accountable to the voters by requesting accountability of the local government. They asked the accountability through interpellation, petitions, rights to ask, give opinions and the rights of immunity (USAID-DRSP, 2006).

Nowadays, necessary support to the parliament is needed in the budgeting process throughout the region. Most of the process was taken by the executives. The participation of the parliament was very limited. Later, the budget was 'evaluated' by the central government "a move seen by many legislators as trimming their independency. The legislators also have difficulties in combining their political promises that vary with the political realities in terms of annual budget.

In general, it was done by calling the head of the region through a plenary meeting of the commission and asked the parliament to show the problems to him. According to the new draft of the regulations, the head is responsible to prepare a report three months after the approval of the budget. The parliament has one month to prepare the plenary session and invites the head of the region to deliver his accountability speech, an event that is waited by the members of the council, the media and the community. Nevertheless, more detailed monitoring mechanisms have not existed yet. How the executive members will be questioned has not been clear either.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Accountability has to include the participation of the stakeholders. Recommendations to improve the accountability systems are: (1)transparency, (2)simplification of the discussion on budget process, (3) public participation, (4) enforcement of codes of ethics/moral, and (5) keep in forged PERDA (regulation of local government) on transparency (a set of planning, budget execution and accountability).

Overcoming barriers to implementation and accountability mechanisms are necessary to run optimally a transparent system and the existence of a medium that is easy to access by the public for proposing ideas. The propositions can be drawn as follow:

Minor proposition 1:

- a. Understand that the accountability of Manado government as implementation of rules and regulations. It looks that there was less tendency of public participation involved.
- b. Understand that the accountability of Manado government as a city was only in the policy formulation process, the tendency of public participation neglect, from the planning formulation to the implementation.
- c. Understand that the accountability of the government as a product of Manado government policy, and there was a tendency that public participation was neglected from the planning, formulation, implementation, to evaluation.

Minor Proposition 2:

- a. Improve the performance of the conduct of public organization with respect to the functions and utilize human resources and professional attention to quality, make better and more efficient organization in the budgeting process and accountability.
- b. Improve the morality of the leader by considering the legality of the executive and legislative leaders.

Major Proposition:

Transparency, opened control systems, legislative functions, and socialization would increase public confidence and transparency for government accountability.

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