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**Title of the paper**

**Local Direct Election, Public Participation, and Accountability  
in Papua and West Papua, Indonesia**

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## Local Direct Election, Public Participation, and Accountability in Papua and West Papua, Indonesia<sup>\*</sup>

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**Summary.**—Decentralization emerges as the major governance reforms in Indonesia. Under the regional autonomy scheme, the local government together with the local community play an important role in the policy making process. This paper focuses on the political decentralization in Indonesia with a particular case study in Papua and West Papua provinces. It examines that election, public participation, and accountability as the implementation of political decentralization are related in the local development process. Furthermore, this article also demonstrates how local cultures then could affect the political decentralization in Papua and West Papua.

**Keywords** —Decentralization, special autonomy, election, public participation, accountability, Papua, West Papua

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between decentralization, democracy, and good governance has emerged as one of the major debate both in academic literature and government reform practices in many countries. There is evidence that constituting government closer to the people would increase government accountability and responsiveness to the citizens (Blair, 2000; Faguet, 2014; Grindle, 2007). On the other hand, decentralization policies could undermine democracy and good governance if the implementation is not supported by the local government capacity, such as the lack of financial support or the inadequacy of human resources (Bardhan, 2002; Fukuyama, 2013). In recent decades, the potential benefit which is promised by decentralization attracts many countries to implement the concept of regional autonomy as the formula for policy reforms. For instance, due to the political and economy factors, decentralization is adopted to maintain unity in multi-ethnic countries (Ghai, 2000) or as the strategy to increase economic development in large territory countries (Bardhan, 2002). Notwithstanding, the benefits of decentralization which are positively and optimistically portrayed in theory do not automatically result in democratization, good governance, and the strengthening of civil society at the empirical level (Nordholt and Klinken, 2004). Exclusion,

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capture, and clientelism (World Bank, 2017) are some of the main factors that make the distribution of power to sub-national level unsuccessful in reaching the benefits of decentralization. These demonstrate that the effectiveness of decentralization as a policy depends not only on what policy is chosen but also how it is chosen, implemented and evaluated (World Bank, 2017).

In Indonesia, decentralization is implemented as a response to political problems. It has been a reaction to a highly centralistic and authoritarian system during the Suharto's regime, known as the New Order, for more than 32 years. The reform of 1998, following the abdication of President Suharto, then had a significant impact on redefining the relationship between the central government and the local government. The issuance of Law 22/1999 concerning regional government has devolved greater authority to local government to administer their regions. Nevertheless, this arrangement was not really effective in reducing secession movements in some provinces in Indonesia, such as in Papua and West Papua. Elites in these two provinces kept demanding independence and did not enthusiastically support the decentralization scheme (Pratikno, 2005; Hadiz, 2004). In November 2001, Law 21/2001 of Special Autonomy for Papua has been issued to accommodate Papuan aspirations and to give Papua province greater political, administrative, and fiscal authority than other provinces in Indonesia.

Political decentralization is manifested in transferring political authority to the local government. It is implemented in several forms such as the direct election of local leaders or the establishment of local representatives who are also directly elected by the community (Faletti, 2005). This mechanism is not only to increase citizen participation in selecting political representatives but also to give a greater role for local people in public decision making (Inman & Rubinfeld, 19997; Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). The political dimension of decentralization opens greater opportunities for local citizens to participate in the policy-making including to determine their development needs (Fritzen & Lim, 2006 ). On the other hand, political decentralization through the competitive election will be an incentive to make government more responsive to local needs as local people can use their vote to assess the performance of incumbents (Grindle, 2007).

Under the regional autonomy laws, the relationship between election and public participation in Indonesia can be examined in the arrangement of the local development plan. As the top-down approach, the vision and mission of elected candidates will be accommodated in the local medium-term development plan while as the bottom-up approach, public participation is implemented through public consultation forum (known as

*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan*, Musrenbang). The result of those two approaches will be combined together in the local development plan. The problem which then emerges is that the top-down approach much more dominant than the participation approach. Public consultation merely becomes a ceremonial process to fulfill the procedure whereas the aspirations of the local people which have been articulated during the *Musrenbang* are not consistently accommodated in the local development plan (Sindre, 2012).

Besides, the competitive election is also served as an instrument of political accountability from local governments to the citizens (Francis & James, 2003; Devas & Grant, 2003; Bovens, 2004, 2007). Local constituents will use their vote as an instrument to assess the performance of the candidates, particularly the performance of the incumbents (Grindle, 2007). Popular competition allows voters to elect candidates who can show their ability to be more responsive to citizen interests. This condition then creates an incentive for local governments to be more responsible for their actions. Nevertheless, these potential benefits may lead to failure when the voters do not have sufficient information due to the lack of transparency (Devas & Grant, 2003). Another hindrance is the vulnerability of political accountability to be captured by local elites who can use their power to influence the election process by buying the votes or directing the policy making process to align their personal interests.

From the explanations above, it can be inferred that political decentralization does not necessarily result in democratization and good governance. The local direct elections do not automatically force the local government to be more accountable to their constituents and improve public participation in the development planning. Due to that problem, this paper will examine the hindrance of political decentralization process in Papua and West Papua by analyzing the impact of the local direct election on public participation and accountability in these two provinces.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

The problems in Papua and West Papua have inspired scholars (Chauvel & Bakti, 2004; Widjojo, 2009; Chauvel, 2013; Bertrand, 2014; Anderson, 2015) to analyze the obstacles in the regions from different perspectives. Several of them discuss the violence conflicts and the human rights violations due to the confrontation between the military and the separation movements. Another group of scholars examines the progress of development in Papua and West Papua by using the socio-economic indicators such as economic growth, health and education indicators, and the poverty rate (Resosudarmo, et.al., 2014).

Faguet (2014) explained that many studies on decentralization mainly focus on the output effects of decentralization while only a limited number of studies explore the effect of decentralization on governance. Several studies conclude that the special autonomy in Papua and West Papua has failed and the national government is responsible for the failure without really paying attention to how decentralization is implemented and governance works in those two provinces. Therefore, this paper explores the effect of political decentralization on governance after the implementation of special autonomy. The research question is: *Do local direct elections improve public participation in local development planning and increase the local government accountability in Papua and West Papua? If not, why does such participation and accountability fail to develop?*

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

This research employs qualitative methods and focuses on Papua and West Papua as the case study. Papua and West Papua are selected as the case study because these two provinces have greater autonomy than other provinces in Indonesia and special autonomy policy mainstreams the indigenous Papuan as primary beneficiaries. However, after more than 15 years of implementation, the development progress shows that the special autonomy has not shown significant results. The qualitative method is used to provide a comprehensive understanding of how competitive election could make government more accountable and strengthen community involvement through participation in the local development planning process. The data will be obtained primarily from an analysis of regulations and a literature review on theory and previous empirical cases. Thus, this research is limited and based on existing literature. The empirical research will be conducted in a later phase to apply the theory to the two provinces.

### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 4.1 Political Decentralization and Local Direct Election

Political decentralization refers to the devolution of political authority or electoral capacities to subnational actors (Faletti, 2005, p.329). It is implemented in various forms, for instance, the creation of representative institutions at the local level or the establishment of direct election (Schneider, 2003; Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). The main purpose of political decentralization is to enhance local democracy and good governance by giving greater authority to local government entities in decision making. Decentralizing the political authority through competitive local elections provides a mechanism for local citizens to oversee the performance of local officials. This could then increase the awareness of the local

governments to become more transparent and responsive to their constituents, and in the end, this reciprocal mechanism will create electoral accountability between the local governments and their constituents. Thus, the relationship between the local officials and citizens can be conceived as a principal-agent mechanism. The local leaders and representative members act as the agent while the community stands as principal. The principal can sanction the agent if the agent does not accommodate the principal's interests. Election is the most visible sanctioning mechanism from the principal to their agents (Fischer, 2016).

However, election is also a crude instrument for accountability as it is only conducted in a particular period such as once in every four or five-year term (Blair, 2000; Devas & Grant, 2003; Francis & James, 2003). Another problem of election as the mechanism of accountability is the asymmetry of information. Electorates do not have a sufficient source of information in monitoring the candidates' performance. Hence, marking the ballot paper is thus a selection mechanism rather than a sanctioning of the bad performing candidates (Fearon, 1999). Furthermore, the problem of popular election is the vulnerability to be captured by local elites or interest groups (Bardhan, 2002; Blair, 2000; Verbrugge, 2015) that can use their wealth and social influence in financing a local campaign and then distort policy making in their own favor (Faguet, 2014).

Popular election is closely related with representation, that means sub-national actors act as the community representative who serve to accommodate various interests of the community into a policy (Schneider, 2003). An example of representation in decentralization is elected local leaders or local parliament members. Local leaders and local parliament members represent the community in the government system. However, there is a tension between representation and participation in the policy-making process. Local leaders or representative members are directly elected by the community, but they also affiliated with a political party as they need support from the political party to be nominated. As a consequence, they might also accommodate party interests rather than representing the interest of the community. Therefore, direct public participation is still important as a way to involve citizens directly in the governance process.

#### 4.2 Public Participation

Political decentralization is not only aimed at giving greater authority in the decision-making process to local governments but also transferring the power to local communities to participate in the governance process such as in electing their representatives and in setting public policy (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007, p.7). Transferring responsibilities to sub-national levels will be an incentive for local government to recognize the potential resources and

problems in their territories. However, government agencies cannot work alone to address those development problems. It requires the involvement of communities as local people have a better knowledge of their problems in a region. Enhancing the relationship between local governments and citizens would be an effective and responsive policy when citizens have been more involved during the policy-making process (Bovaird, 2007). Decentralization opens up new space for citizens to propose their development needs and participate in the implementation phase of the development projects. It gives citizens an essential role in policy design and decision-making processes that affect them (Blair, 2000; Devas & Grant, 2003). This community-based development will provide a checks and balances mechanism to reveal the consistency between the community needs and the development results.

Theoretically, community participation can be looked upon into two different perspectives: participation as a process and participation as a result. Although those two perspectives are different, they are mutually correlated due to the impact of public participation has been determined on how participation is arranged. From the perspective of process, Fung (2006) identified three dimensions of participation: who will be the participants, how participants communicate with one another and make decision together, and how the results of public discussions are linked with policy or public actions (Fung, 2006; p. 66). These dimensions are used to explain how citizens can be involved in the policy-making process. Concerning the first dimension, accommodating all stakeholders is important in creating inclusiveness in the development process. However, the selection of participants is not an easy task, particularly when it involves a large number of populations or cultural diversities. Participants should represent the various groups in communities, such as women and marginal groups in an effort to generate inclusiveness. Therefore, the selection procedure is important to be analyzed as this step will determine how public participation could represent the interest of the community. The second dimension is the interaction between participants. Public participation involves various stakeholders and every participant has its own agenda and priorities. On the participation forum, participants will deliver their aspirations or defend their opinions in various ways, for example through discussion, deliberation, negotiation. There is even the possibility of elite domination who only struggle for their personal or group interests and do not represent the interest of the community. Thus, the way in which an agreement is reached in determining the development priorities is also important to be examined. The last dimension is the connection between the result of

participation and the policy implementation. This dimension analyzes how the result of public participation can be witnessed in the policy implementation.

From the perspective of results, Michels & Graaf (2010) analyzed the relation between citizen participation and democracy by using four aspects: inclusion, civil skills and virtues, deliberation, and legitimacy. First, inclusion in public participation means equal opportunity for every citizen to be included especially the marginal or minority groups to participate in the decision-making process (Fung, 2006; Michels & Graaf, 2010). This dimension is closely related to participant's selection. The approach to select the participants will determine how inclusive or exclusive the public participation process is. Second, participation can also be a medium to improve civil skills. Debating many issues, communicating their problems, and mediating their interests would improve citizens' ability. Besides skill improvements, participation also functions as a civic virtue (Michels & Graaf, 2010). Involving citizens in policy making might increase the sense of responsibility for decisions that they have been made as they are actively engaged in determining the policy choices. The third dimension is deliberation. Deliberation process occurs where citizens voluntarily and openly reciprocate their interests with other participants. They can openly discuss and negotiate their perspective with one another to reach a consensus or agreement on a policy issue (Fung, 2006; Michels & Graaf, 2010). This dimension is related to the way participants communicate and formulate a consensus together. The last aspect is legitimacy, it is "the extent to which participant and other key actors support the procedures and its outcomes" (Michel & Graaf, 2010; p. 488). When a policy is decided through public participation mechanism and the decision is accepted by all communities, it might lead to a policy's effectiveness and then would enhance its legitimacy.

However, community-based development can be inhibited if it is not supported by a strong civil society. Participation is vulnerable to becoming dominated by local elites who use their power to manipulate the interests of the community to further their own personal interests (Acemoglu *et.al*, 2013). The exclusion of some communities to participate in policy process has resulted from "the political inequality on electoral dynamics, such as the role of money and other private resources in campaigns, special relationships between some interest groups and candidates, and persistent legacies of racialized and gendered exclusion from political offices and organizations" (Fung, 2006; p.70). Furthermore, there is a tendency for local governments to approach elites over citizens. This is because local elites have a better bargaining position than the grassroots communities with local governments (Devas & Grant,



2003). Due to this problem, public participation will be only effective if it is supported by the availability of social capital in a community. Social capital will establish coordination and cooperation among citizens and, thus, it would enhance the civil society to participate in local government projects and in the end would create mutual partnerships between the local government and the community-based organizations (Putnam, et al, 1993; Khrisna, 2003).

#### 4.3 Accountability

In decentralization, the relationship between the government and the governed contains a number of mechanisms. Citizens are not only being the object of the government's policy, they also have the supervision role to ensure that governments are responsible for their activities. The redistribution of authority by giving greater autonomy to local governments requires the mechanism of transparency to avoid the abuse of power from the authorities.

Accountability is defined as "a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences" (Bovens, 2007, p.450). Transparency and trustworthiness are closely related with accountability (Boven, 2007), citizens as the taxpayers demand transparency about government responsibility in spending budgets, and as voters during an election, they will use information about government performance before electing their leaders or representative candidates. However, as a social relation, accountability is not only about the relationship between the government and the communities, but it also involves a number of elements of the governance process (Boven, 2007).

In the context of decentralization, accountability involves two parties, local government as the actor while a number of public entities represent as the accountability forum. Local government as the actor should account their behavior to at least three accountability forums. First, for political accountability, the local government is responsible to the local representatives. Second, for administrative accountability, the auditors, inspectors or higher authorities will evaluate the budget spending and development output to measure the performance of the local government, and for legal accountability, the court will impose sanctions when a government official violates the rule of law (Boven, 2007)

However, there is an issue about who will act as a representative of the local government in those various accountability forums. Local government organizations have structured in many different functions and responsibilities. As an integrated system, each and every department in local government organization will be responsible to the local leaders.

Thus, a pyramid of the hierarchical accountability (Boven, 2004) builds, where the governors or regent/city majors as the top official will be responsible for local government performance. Nonetheless, for legal accountability, every government official who is involved in the maladministration might be examined by the court personally.

Devas and Grant (2003) divided accountability into three dimensions: upward accountability, horizontal accountability, and downward accountability. Upward accountability is a form of responsibility from local governments to the central government. Boven (2007, p.460) identified this mechanism as vertical accountability, a condition where the actor and the forum are in a hierarchical relationship. This pattern of relationship is dominantly employed in political accountability arrangement when the government entities at sub-national level are politically responsible to the central government.

Horizontal accountability is the accountability arrangement from the local executives to the local representatives (Devas & Grant, 2003; Francis & James, 2003). Political decentralization also establishes greater authority for local representatives to create and determine the local policies, including to supervise the local government activities. Nonetheless, based on the research in Uganda, Francis and James (2003) argue that this mechanism tends to be manipulated because personal or party interest is much more dominant than alignment to public interests.

Downward accountability is the form of accountability from local government to local constituents. This mechanism is mainly arranged through the election (Devas & Grant, 2003; Francis & James, 2003). The election provides an opportunity for people to determine their preference in selecting the best candidate which can show the best performance and turn the community aspirations into policy actions. This mechanism might not be effective if voters do not have sufficient information about the candidates' performance (Francis & James, 2003).

In brief, accountability is one of the important instruments to achieve the goals of decentralization. It is the obligation of local government to explain and justify the conduct of their job and function, to accomplish their duties responsibly, and where the checks and balances mechanism can be fully implemented. However, all kinds of accountability: upward, horizontal, and downward accountability are depended on the availability and the accuracy of information (Devas & Grant, 2003) as the forum needs sufficient and accurate resources of information before evaluating or even imposing any consequences on the actor.

## 5. THE MECHANISM OF POLITICAL DECENTRALIZATION IN INDONESIA

### 5.1 Decentralization and competitive election

The relationship between election, public participation, and accountability can be explained as a sequence process while each and every process is correlated with one another (see graphic 1). The election is the first stage of that sequence. In this step, the local community would directly choose their leaders and representatives. When the local leaders are elected, they will design the medium-term development plan and discuss it together with local representatives. As a bottom-up approach, public participation then emerged as the instrument to involve communities in determining the local development plan, and as the final process, accountability will be an instrument to evaluate the result of that development process.

Elections in Indonesia can be categorized into executive elections and legislative elections. The executive election is the mechanism to select government leaders: from the president to governors (regional) and district's heads/city mayors (local). Legislative election is the voting procedure to select members of Parliament for every tier of government. Although these two elections are organized at the same interval, that is every five-year, the legislative election is held earlier than the executive election. This is due to the law that allows a majority political party or the coalition winning the ballot and gaining a sufficient number of seats in parliament to nominate a candidate for the executive election. The election times for presidential, governor, and mayoral elections are also not scheduled simultaneously. The election cycles of national and regional do not overlap in time as it is also the case for local election cycles. Time differences tend to be a problem for local development planning. As the vision and mission of elected leaders are to be translated into the medium-term development plan, then it may difficult to accommodate national or provincial development plans into a district's development plan.

The local government leaders, that is Governor (*Governor*), Head of District (*Bupati*), and city mayor (*wali kota*), have been directly elected since 2005 as the implementation of Law 32/2004. Before that, local leaders were elected by local representatives. The candidacy of those leaders comes from the political party or a coalition, that gained a majority of seats in the local parliament. There is a possibility for independent candidates to join the contestation without any support from political parties, but they should gain a minimum percentage of support from the population. The bigger the constituency, the smaller the minimum percentage that must be obtained by independent candidates. When the

candidates are elected, they will be appointed as the local government leader for five consecutive years and can be elected again for the same position only for the next term.

## 5.2 Public Participation

Public participation is one of the development approaches in Indonesia as regulated in the Law 23/2014 concerning Local Government. Practically, it is implemented through a public consultation forum (*Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan*, Musrenbang). This forum is held every year in every tier of government, from the lowest level: village, sub-district, district/city, province, to the highest level, national level. Furthermore, this consultation forum will be employed as the bottom-up instrument to identify the development priority needs from every level of government while the priority lists from the lower level will be accommodated and discussed at the higher level.

The public consultation forum involves various stakeholders. According to the Ministerial of Home Affairs Decree of 54/2010, stakeholders act as the representative of communities. For example, the public consultation at the village level will be attended by village heads, religious leaders, traditional figureheads, and a representative from several community groups (farmers, fishermen, women, youth association and school committee). These consultation forums are open to all communities, however, in many cases, the representatives of the community in those forums are mere spectators than they to negotiate and deliberate their preferences. Determining the development priorities is dominated by the local elites, politicians, and bureaucrat interests (Sindre, 2012). Frequently, the proposals from the communities are inconsistently accommodated and taken into policy implementation which then creates a gap between the public needs and the development results (Sindre, 2012).

The result of those consultation forums then will be embodied in three development planning documents: the long-term local development plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Daerah*, RPJPD) which is set for 20 years, the medium-term local development plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah*, RPJMD) for a five-year period and the local government work plan (*Rencana Kerja Pemerintah Daerah*, RKPD) for a one-year period. For the national level, there are also three documents of development planning: the national long-term development plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional*, RPJPN), the national medium-term development plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional*, RPJMN), and the national annual development plan (*Rencana Kerja Pemerintah*, RKPD).

Every document is related to one another. The national development plan serves as guidance for designing a local development plan, and development plans for a longer period serve as guidance for the shorter development plans. Nevertheless, the critique of this mechanism is how the national development plan can be synergized with the local development plan. One of the reasons is that the election cycle between national level and local level does not happen at the same interval. Therefore, it will be difficult for local government to adjust their development plan with the national plan if the election time for local leaders is not in sync with the presidential election. Another critique is how the development plan for a shorter period can consistently refer to the longer development plan. The long-term development plan is set for twenty years while the medium-term development plan is for five years. Thus, the long-term development will be a guidance for four terms of government. The medium-term development plan heavily depends on the vision and mission of the elected local leader in every five-year election. Frequently, the elected local leaders will have their own priorities and do not consider the long-term development plan in designing the medium-term development plan.

### 5.3 Accountability

Debate about the potential benefits of decentralization for democracy raise the questions to why decentralization so often fails to promote democracy (Hadiz, 2004). Law 23/2014 on regional government clearly states that democracy is one of the principles to reach the decentralization's goals. Nevertheless, "decentralization and democratization in Indonesia have been characterized by the emergence of new patterns of highly diffuse and decentralized corruption, the rule of predatory officials, the rise of money politics and the consolidation of "political gangsterism" (Hadiz, 2004, p.711). One of the main reasons for the problem above is the lack of accountability with respect to the implementation of decentralization. As Blair (2000, p.27) argues that "democratic governance at the local level can succeed only if public servants are held accountable". As has been discussed above, theoretically there are several mechanisms of accountability. In the next sections, the mechanism of local government accountability in Indonesia will be analyzed based on the nature of the obligation: upward, horizontal, and downward accountability.

#### 5.3.1 Upward Accountability

Upward accountability is the mechanism of accountability from the local government to the central government. This mechanism has two dimensions: financial accountability and performance accountability. Financial accountability is conducted to assess the financial

statement of the local governments. The assessment is performed every year by the Supreme Audit Institution (*Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan*, BPK). The result of the audit is one of four different opinions: disclaimer of opinion (*tidak menyatakan pendapat*), adverse opinion (*opini tidak wajar*), qualified opinion (*opini wajar dengan pengecualian*) and unqualified opinion (*opini wajar tanpa pengecualian*). The audit report is then submitted to the local representatives and to the president. The auditing results might lead to various consequences, from administration sanctions to penal sanctions if there is an indication of financial misuses of the local government budget. However, the auditor has only authority to inflict an administrative sanction for a local government to refund the money if the auditing result indicates a financial loss, while if there is an allegation of corruption, penal sanctions can only be imposed by the courts.

Besides financial assessment, every year the local government files performance reports to evaluate their achievements to the central government. Two reports are submitted to two different ministries. First, the performance accountability report (*Laporan Akuntabilitas Kinerja Instansi Pemerintah*, LAKIP) is filed with the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (*Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi*, KEMENPAN RB). The second report, the local government performance report (*Laporan Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Daerah*, LPPD) is submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs (*Kementerian Dalam Negeri*, KEMENDAGRI). The problems with these two performance measurements mechanisms are: first, those two reports are not integrated as each ministry performs its own assessment to evaluate local government reports. Consequently, a region may get a higher score on one report but a lower one in another report whereas both use similar data. The second problem is that these performance reports are merely seen as a ritual assessment, as these do not necessarily show governmental effectiveness or efficiency (Widodo, 2010; Hudaya, 2014, 2015).

### 5.3.2 Horizontal Accountability

Every year local governments file an accountability report to local representatives. Besides the annual report, every five-year the local governments also submit the end-of-term report to the representatives. This arrangement is an instrument of political accountability as local representatives serve on behalf of the people. However, local governments are not directly accountable to local representatives. Therefore, this reporting mechanism merely as an administrative instrument without clear consequences if local government executives cannot shows their good performance in reaching the development target.

Consequences only result if local governments do not file the reports to the representatives. The representatives may address questions to the local government, and if the local government cannot justify its acts or the representatives reject the government's statement, the representatives have to report to the Minister of Home Affairs. For the head of districts or city majors, the representatives will report to the governor. If the local leaders do not respond the second written warning, the local leaders are obliged to follow a coaching program which is conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

As has been mentioned above, both local leaders and representatives are directly elected by the people. Hence, they have equal positions in the local government structure and as a consequence, the local leaders are not responsible to the representatives. This non-hierarchical structure might lead to a weakening the role of the representatives in supervising the local government. Local representatives can only give an opinion without any rights to accept or reject that report.

The relation between local leaders and local representatives is a problematic one in Indonesia. In the past, representatives were directly elected while local leaders were selected by the representatives. This established a more effective accountability mechanism because local leaders were responsible to the representatives and as a consequence, the local representatives could hold local leader accountable for their activities. Nonetheless, in many cases *"Local representatives do not show much eagerness to represent their constituencies because they are generally controlled by national party bosses who protect, in the first place, the special interests of their own party"* (Rashid, 2003 in Nordholt and Klinken, 2004, p. 17). Therefore, in 2004 both local leaders and local representatives were directly elected by the people. Law 32/2004 constitutes local governments and local representatives as *"an equal partner in building a mutually supportive working relationship and not stand as an opponent or a competitor to each other in carrying out their respective functions"*. Consequently, the local representatives do not stand as a legislature that can counterbalance the power of the local government executives.

In short, the horizontal accountability from local governments to local representatives is not an effective instrument for checks and balances. This is due to the accountability process as the administrative than political because the representatives only can deliver a recommendation on the local government accountability reports, without any authority to accept or reject that report. However, arranging the dichotomy between local governments and local representatives is a dilemma. When the representatives are more

dominant than the executives, there is a tendency of representatives to put their party interests as the priority rather than to the local constituents. It indicates that the autonomy relying on the capacity of local entities in bringing their greater authorities and responsibilities to reach the goals of decentralization.

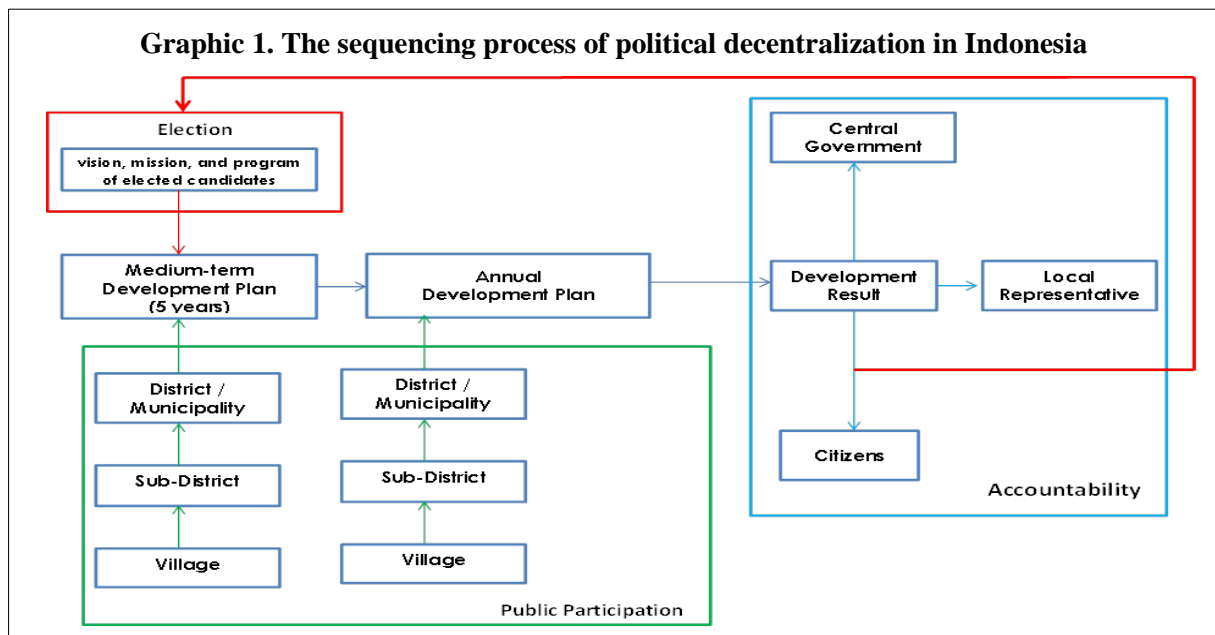
### 5.3.3 Downward Accountability

Election is the most direct mechanism of accountability from the government to the citizens (Blair, 2000). In a democratic system, competitive election functions as an opportunity for citizens to evaluate the incumbents. If the incumbents can show their best performance, they will be elected again and if they failed, the voter will select other candidates that can serve their interests better. Thus, election as the mechanism of accountability is only effective if an incumbent joins the competition. If there is no incumbent, election purely serves as the selection mechanism (see Fearon, 1999, p.55-97).

However, election as a mechanism for accountability is an issue in Indonesia. Local people now can directly elect their local leaders, but it does not necessarily mean that the voters will use the election as an instrument for sanctioning or rewarding the performance of incumbents. Political contestation in some regions is merely a battle of interest from elites while due to the lack of transparency, voters has no sufficient information in considering the track records of the candidates. This condition is then compounded by the practice of vote buying. Even if voters are fully aware of the performance of a candidate, the selection process is then driven by how much benefits, such as money or facilities, the electorates can get rather than to evaluate the incumbents.

The other issue with the local direct elections in Indonesia is local egoism. Decentralization creates cultural boundaries in the country with high culture diversity. Although the issue of ethnicity or religion as the political identity is prohibited in Indonesia (Duncan, 2007), the fact is that local executive elections and creation of new administrative regions since the post-Suharto era are mainly driven by ethnic or religious identities (Hilman, 2012; p.434). The issue of sons of the soil (*putra daerah*) has emerged as an effective propaganda to influence the voters during the campaign. Hence, the election is not fully effective as an accountability mechanism when people preferences are more driven by ethnic or religion identities rather than the quality or performance of a candidate. Max Weber (1978) in Fearon (1999, p.58) stated that premodern election was about the acclamation and recognition of charisma, rather than a selection of a delegate or agent.





Source: adapted from Devas & Grant (2003), Francis & James (2003), Bovens (2007)

## 6. ELECTION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PAPUA AND WEST PAPUA

### 6.1 Papua

Papua is the biggest province in Indonesia with an area of 316.553 square kilometer. In contrast, the region has a sparse population with an average density of only ten people per square kilometer. The province is divided into 28 districts, one city, 558 subdistricts and 5.419 villages. Special autonomy status to the province has been given since 2001. This status establishes greater authority to the province including a huge financial transfer from the national budget. In 2016, the special autonomy and infrastructure budget for the province amounted to 8 trillion rupiahs or about 600 million dollars. Nevertheless, after more than 15 years, the development progress in the region does not show a significant result. In 2016, the human development index in this province is the lowest, while the poverty percentage is the highest among 34 provinces in Indonesia.

The first direct election in Papua was held in 2006 and five candidates for governor and vice governor joined the contestation. Barnabas Suebu and Alex Exegem were elected as Governor and Vice Governor of Papua from 2006 to 2011. The next election for governor in 2011 was delayed for more than 2 years due to the dispute between the provincial general election commissions and the provincial house of representatives. The election was finally held in 2013 and Lukas Enembe was elected as the Governor of Papua for five years until 2018. However, the governor election in 2013 had a number controversy. Nolan et.al (2014) argue that the abuse of a traditional practice or known as *noken* system during the election

was believed as the major factor for the winning of Governor Enembe. *Noken* system is a traditional system in the central highland region that is employed to accommodate the local custom during the election. This practice overlaps with the national electoral laws that only allows one man one vote, while the *noken* system accommodates the community consensus where a tribe leader can vote on behalf of his communities.

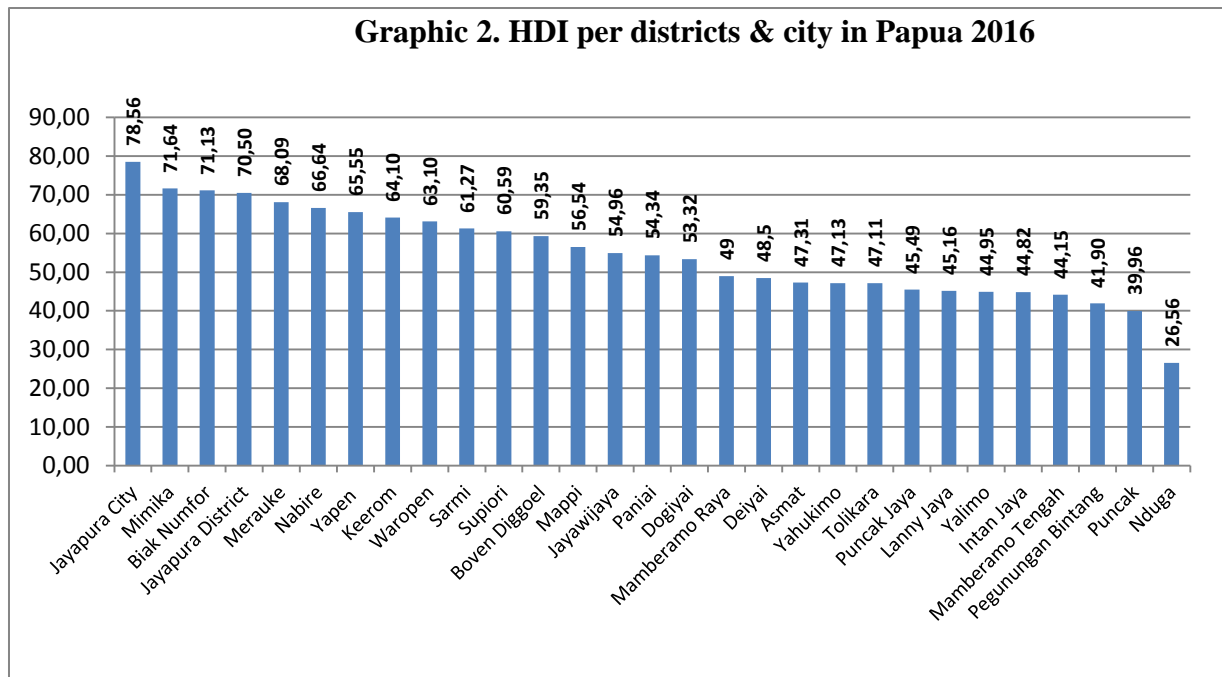
When the governor is elected, the vision and mission of elected candidates will be accommodated in the provincial medium-term development plan. According to the Papua medium-term development plan 2013-2018, the provincial development priority comprises four dimensions: governance and bureaucracy reform, enhancing special autonomy, public welfare, and economic growth. As the macro indicator for development, the provincial government set some goals to be achieved in 2018, such as the human development index, poverty percentage, and economic growth. The following table shows the target in 2018 and the achievements between 2013 and 2016.

**Table 1. provincial medium-term development target and achievements**

Indicator	Year				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	Target 2018
Human Development Index	56,25	56,75	57,25	58,05	60
Poverty Percentage (%)	31,52	27,80	28,17	28,40	25
Economic Growth (%)	7,91	3,81	7,47	9,21	> 7%

Source: RPJMD (medium-term development plan ) Papua 2013-2018

Table 1 above shows that the human development index in Papua increases every year and that the target for HDI is optimistically set on reaching 60 in 2018. However, this result is at the provincial level. If we examine the HDI at the district level, the higher score for HDI is mainly found in the urban regions, for instance Jayapura as the capital of the city province, the district of Jayapura which is located near to the provincial government, and the district of Mimika where Freeport, the gold and coppers mining company, operates. Moreover, in Graph 1, shows that the HDI in those three regions is higher while in several regions especially in the several districts in the central highland area, such as Pegunungan Bintang, Puncak, and Nduga HDI is still very low.



Source: National Statistics Board (BPS)

Equally important, poverty also emerges as the major development challenge in Papua. This problem is caused by several different factors but related to each other. The first factor is the geographical condition. The difficult geography and the lack of road infrastructure make some isolated regions in the highland area only approachable by flight or by foot (Anderson, 2012). As a result, people who live in the remote areas do not have access to basic services such as health and education. Second, the absenteeism of civil servants in providing public services resulted in a high number of illiteracy, malnutrition, endemic disease such as tuberculosis and HIV, and also maternal deaths. Anderson (2012) calls this difficult situation as a “living without state” where people in remote areas do not see the public services in their daily life. Although there are schools and health center buildings, however, due to civil servants absenteeism without any service activities (Anderson, 2012). Reducing poverty to 25 percent in 2018 is thus a great challenge for the provincial government. One of the challenges is coordination. In the decentralization scheme, the government of districts has a greater responsibility in solving the poverty problems. The district has more authority to administer their regions and closer to their constituents, while province only acts as the coordinator for development across the district regions.

In the medium-term development plan, the provincial government targets economic growth in 2018 to be more than seven percent. From Table 1, it can be seen that the target has been reached in 2016, with the provincial economic growth above 9 percent. Nonetheless, the economic growth in Papua is mainly driven by the mining sector, particularly the gold and

copper mining in the district of Mimika. The benefits from mining sector are not spread equally among regions, the urban benefit more than in rural areas (Resosudarmo, et.al., 2014).

The national policy regulates that the public consultation forum from every tier of government is the mechanism for public participation in designing the development plan. However, the provincial government arranges an innovation for public participation. Besides the forum on every level of government, there is also a public consultation forum based on local customary regions. Local customary regions are divided into seven regions, five regions in Papua and two regions in West Papua. Those customary regions supersede the district boundaries as one customary region takes up more than one district. Table 2 elaborates the division of customary regions and also districts within those regions.

**Table 2. The division of customary regions in Papua and West Papua**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Customary Region</b>	<b>District</b>
<b>Papua</b>	<b>1. Saireri</b>	Biak Numfor Supiori Kepulauan Yapen Waropen
	<b>2. Mamta</b>	Jayapura District Jayapura City Sarmi Mamberamo Raya Keerom
	<b>3. Meepago</b>	Intan Jaya Paniai Deiyai Nabire Mimika Dogiyai
	<b>4. Ha-Anim</b>	Merauke Boven Digoel Mappi Asmat
	<b>5. Lapago</b>	Jayawijaya Lanny Jaya Pegunungan Bintang Nudga Yahukimo Yalimo Memberamo Tengah Puncak Puncak Jaya Tolikara

Province	Customary Region	District
West Papua	6. Bomberai	Fakfak Kaimana
	7. Domberai	Manokwari Sorong Bintuni Teluk Wondama Raja Ampat Tambrauw

Source: Kompas.com

In 2017, the public consultation forum in Papua has been arranged only for the five customary regions as the rest two customary regions are in the West Papua. The arrangement of public participation forum which based on the customary regions is one of the efforts to empower the indigenous people in Papua. The results of this forum will be discussed at public consultation forum at the provincial level (*Musrenbang Provinsi*). Nonetheless, this mechanism raises the question of how effective it is in accommodating the development needs of the indigenous people of Papua. The other question is how to synchronize the results of those two public participation approaches in the local development plan. This is due to the customary consultation forum is specifically arranged in Papua and West Papua and not regulated by the national development planning policy.

As has been noted before, concerning accountability, the result of local government financial and performance accountability can be examined via the two major accountability reports. The financial assessment result in 2015 shows that the provincial government got an excellent opinion by achieving an *unqualified* result for their financial arrangement. However, from 29 districts in Papua, 12 districts still got a *disclaimer opinion* and ten districts got *qualified opinion*, while only seven districts got the *unqualified opinion*. The 2016 auditing report also indicates that there is a discrepancy between the local development plan in the district of Puncak Jaya and Supiori and the development programs that are funded by special autonomy budget in those two districts still has not been able to provide benefits for indigenous people (IHPS BPK, 2016).

Another performance accountability report is assessed and published by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform. According to these two assessment reports in 2015, the province had a low score: 2,3956 out of 4 for performance accountability assessment from Ministry of Home Affairs and 46,03 out of 100 for assessment from Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform. The province was

among the of five provinces with the lowest performance rank. At the district level, six out of ten districts with the lowest assessment score in Indonesia are in Papua. The low score on the performance assessment report indicates that the local governments still face a challenge in improving their performance despite greater authorities that they have on the autonomy scheme.

## 6.2 West Papua

West Papua was officially formed as a new province in 2003. Before that, the province was part of the Papua province territory. The establishment of West Papua as a new administrative region caused controversy, as was seen as a divide-and-rule strategy from the central government to weaken the secession movements in Papua (Bertrand, 2014). The creation of West Papua was implemented without consultation with the Papuan People's Council as regulated by Law 21/2001 concerning Special Autonomy for Papua (Nolan et.al, 2014). However, the creation of new administrative regions is not only imposed by the central government, it is also strongly endorsed by local politicians in creating new space for political power at the local level (Chauvel, 2013) or in obtaining a greater fiscal transfer from the central government (Nolan et.al, 2014).

The first direct election for Governor and Vice Governor of West Papua was held in 2006. Abraham Octavianus Atururi was elected as the governor and Rahamin Katjong as the vice governor. In 2012, both of them joined the contestation the incumbent candidates and were elected again for a second period from 2012 to 2017. In 2017, West Papua held the third direct election for governor and vice governor. Different from Papua, the *noken* system is not used in for the election in West Papua. Therefore, in West Papua the national system operates where voters have to come in person to the voting location without the possibility of being represented.

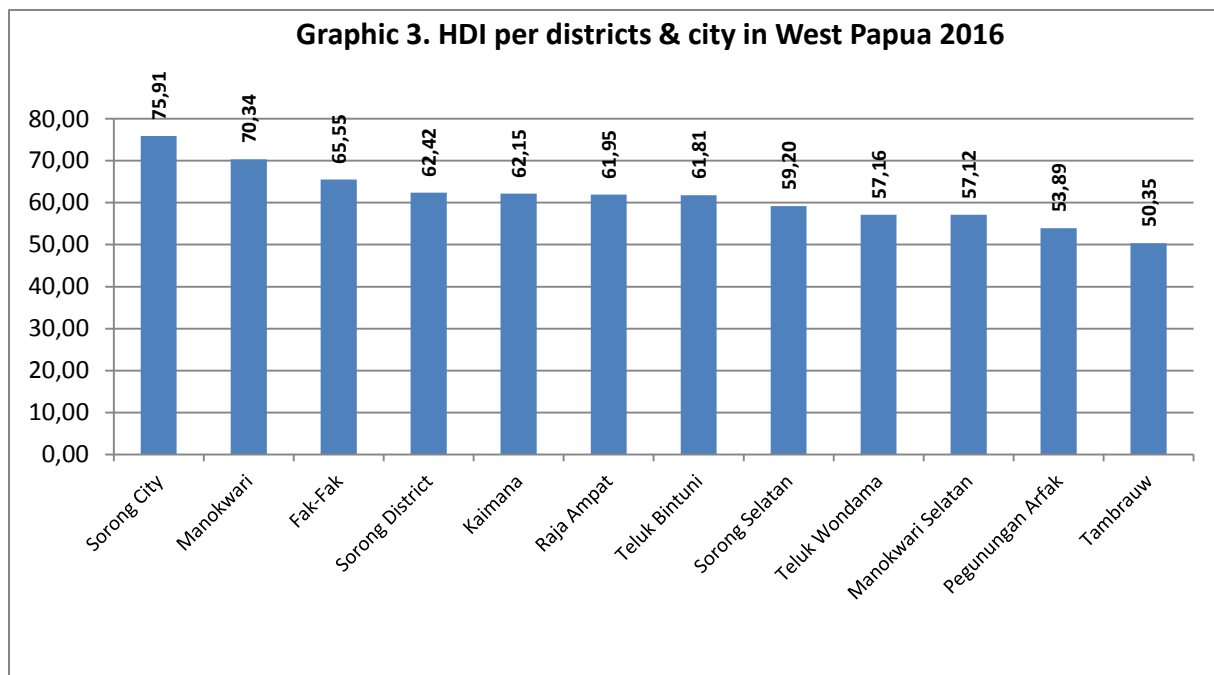
In the provincial medium-term development plan 2012-2017, the development priorities in the region were presented in six aims: utilizing special autonomy as new paradigm of development, improving the regional economy, reducing poverty, governance reform, the equality of development, improving human resources, utilizing the natural resources for the people welfare, and preserving culture and environment. In general, compared to the Papua Province this region records better development progress, although compared to the national level this province still has several low development indicators. Table 3 presents the development progress in the province from 2012-2017.

**Tabel 3. The development progress in West Papua**

Indicator	Year				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Human Development Index	60,30	60,91	61,28	61,73	62,21
Poverty Percentage (%)	28,20	27,14	26,26	25,73	24,88
Economic Growth (%)	9,30	7,39	5,44	4,15	4,52

Source: National Statistics Board (BPS)

The province of West Papua has a smaller area compared to the Papua province. The area of West Papua is 120.777,02 square kilometer and divided into 12 districts, one city, 218 subdistricts, 95 *kelurahan* and 1.744 villages. Due to the geographical position, the province has benefitted with its interaction with traders or migrants from different islands, such as from South Sulawesi, North Sulawesi or Moluccas. This interaction process created a transfer of knowledge from immigrants to the local people. This helped West Papua to develop. On the other hand, the issue of immigration also emerged as a force for a further marginalization of indigenous people. The domination of immigrants in many sectors is conceived as a threat by indigenous Papuans. Government then tried to answer this problem by giving a greater job priority to native Papuan in bureaucracy (Widjojo, 2009). However, empowering a higher number of indigenous Papuan as the local civil servants has not significantly improved the public service provision in the region (Anderson, 2013a, 2013b). As has been explained above, civil servant absenteeism emerges as one of the problems in providing public services in remote areas (Anderson, 2012). Based on the HDI data per districts in 2016, the urban areas like Sorong and Manokwari have higher human development index than in the rural areas such as Tambrau with the lowest HDI over the province (see graph 2). Although West Papua Province dominates the economic development over Papua Province (Resosudarmo, 2014), the high poverty rate still remains as a challenge for the development in West Papua.



Source: National Statistics Board (BPS)

Although West Papua has been divided into two customary regions: Momberai and Domberai, the provincial public consultation forum in 2017 still has not employed the customary regions for the participation approach. In many studies, the problems in Papua and West Papua are often conceived as a problem in one region. In fact, these two administrative regions have different problems and characteristics. West Papua has a smaller territory and also has lower tribe diversity than in Papua. Due to this condition, it can be assumed that the public participation can be more easily organized in accommodating various interests in West Papua.

As the new governor and vice governor of West Papua have been elected for the period 2017-2022, the provincial government will set the new medium-term development plan. The provincial government needs tackle some development challenges in designing its development plan for the next five years. The other challenge is budget sufficiency as in 2021 the special autonomy budget transfer from the central government will be discontinued. The provincial government thus has to find a new strategy in generating revenue for its plans.

On the accountability aspect, the local governments in West Papua record better result in financial accountability. Based on the auditing report in 2016, the provincial government got the *unqualified opinion*. The 9 of 13 districts in West Papua got *unqualified opinion* while the rest got a *qualified opinion*. However, the auditing report also examines the shortcomings in the education sector. The provincial budget for the education sector is less than 20 percent while the law regulates that minimum 20 percent from the local government budget is to be used for education. Concerning the performance accountability, based on the



two accountability assessment reports from Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, the West Papua Province has a lower performance score than Papua province.

As a relatively new province, established in 2003, in general, West Papua records better development progress compared to the Papua province. The creation of West Papua province is seen as the divide and rule strategy from the central government to reduce the secessionist movements (Bertrand, 2014). However, if we look at the development progress in West Papua, the new administrative region does show some positive results. Although their economic growth does not increase significantly, the HDI has increased while the poverty percentage is declined slightly over 2012-2016. It indicates that the creation of the new administrative region might have positively impacted the regional development by shortening the span of control and bringing government closer to the people, particularly for a big territory like the Papua region.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Political decentralization is aimed to enhance the local government in decision-making and at the same time involving people to determine their own development needs in policy making process. Devolving political authority to local government is implemented in various ways such as the direct election of local officials (local leaders and/or local representatives) and the establishment of public participation. Direct election at the local level is believed to make governments more responsive and accountable to the citizens. For this reason, the establishment of public participation then emerges as an effort to increase government responsiveness by including aspirations from below and as local autonomy gives a greater authority to the local governments, it has consequences for local government to be responsible and accountable for the result of development.

This paper has argued that those three governance processes: direct election, public participation, and accountability are related in the development planning system in Indonesia. When a pair of local leader candidates is elected, their vision and mission will be accommodated in the medium-term development plan as the top-down approach and for the bottom-up approach, public participation is manifested in the form of public consultation forum which is conducted at every level of government. The result of those two approaches then will be combined and synchronized together in the development plan and while those development plans are executed, the result of this development plan should be accounted to several parties, such as to central government, local representative and to the citizens. To emphasize, the most direct accountability mechanism from the local government to the

citizens is implemented through the direct election. Therefore, under those circumstances, election, public participation, and accountability create an interconnected system. Election stands at the beginning and at the end of the system. Furthermore, election is not just being one of the approaches in development planning, but also being the instrument of accountability from the government to the people.

This article has also examined the implementation of political decentralization in two provinces in Indonesia, Papua and West Papua. Both provinces have special autonomy status which implies greater authority than other provinces in Indonesia. Special autonomy mainstreams indigenous community as primary beneficiaries of the autonomy. The current analysis in those two provinces indicates that local culture has a great influence in the local governance system, for instance in the election and public participation. In Papua, besides the general public consultation forum in every tier of government, there is also a consultation forum that is based on the customary regions. This arrangement is implemented as a mechanism to empower and accommodate the specific needs of the indigenous people. In West Papua, this province is also divided into two customary regions, but the provincial government has not recognized this customary regions forum as one of the approaches in the development planning process. Local culture also influences the election system. Several tribes in the central highland area in Papua employs the *noken* system during the elections. This system allows the chieftains to mark out the ballot papers on behalf of his tribe communities. In contrast, the *noken* system is not used in West Papua. The 2017 election for governor and some district heads in West Papua demonstrates that no districts in the province accommodated the *noken* system on the election. It indicates that the two provinces have a different governance approach in implementing political decentralization, although they are in the same region and often seen as a single entity in many studies. Given these points, whether accommodating the cultural system could be more effective in reaching the development goals still stands as a question that needs further exploration.

For the accountability, based on the financial assessment report in 2016 that the province of West Papua records a better result than Papua province, whereas, for performance accountability, the provincial government of Papua has a better score than the West Papua province. These various results of accountability signify that between fiscal and performance accountability are not always in sync as the assessments are conducted by various institution. Furthermore, if we elaborate the accountability results at the district or city level in those provinces, the result is more varied. For the development results, the economic growth in both provinces is slowly increased ever year. However, Papua and West Papua still have a low

score on the human development index while their poverty percentage is still high among the 34 provinces in Indonesia. It indicates that despite the greater autonomy and fiscal capacity, the development results in both of the regions are still not significant.

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