

Regional Autonomy Policy From A Philosophical Perspective

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Abstrak

Pada awalnya, otonomi daerah dianggap sebagai ancaman terhadap integrasi nasional. Namun di sisi lain, beberapa pandangan juga melihat bahwa otonomi daerah dapat menjadi perekat integrasi nasional. Penelitian ini akan dilakukan untuk melihat bagaimana perspektif filosofis memandang kebijakan otonomi daerah. Penelitian ini akan dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini berasal dari hasil penelitian atau penelitian terdahulu yang masih relevan dengan isi penelitian ini. Kajian ini menemukan bahwa adanya otonomi daerah dapat membantu mengefektifkan pemerintah pusat dalam menjalankan tugasnya. Selain itu, kebijakan otonomi ini juga memberikan peluang bagi pemerintah provinsi untuk lebih leluasa mengembangkan wilayahnya.

Kata kunci: Otonomi Daerah, Ontologi, Epistemologi, Aksiologi.

Abstract

Initially, regional autonomy was considered to be a threat to national integration. But on the other hand, some views also see that regional autonomy can be a glue for national integration. This research will be carried out to look at how a philosophical perspective views regional autonomy policy. This research will be carried out using a descriptive qualitative approach. The data used in this research comes from the results of previous research or studies that are still relevant to the contents of this research. This study found that the existence of regional autonomy can help streamline the central government's carrying out its duties. In addition, this autonomy policy also provides an opportunity for provincial governments to develop their territory more freely.

Keywords: *Regional Autonomy, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology.*

INTRODUCTION

The regional autonomy policy is one of the issues that has always colored this nation's journey. At least two mainstreams have been formed in Indonesian society, namely, the granting of autonomy policies to the regions. The first perspective sees regional autonomy as a threat to national integration, while others argue the opposite. What is the relationship between the problem of regional autonomy policy and the problem of national integration, a philosophical review (Maula, 2022).

Fundamentally, public policy analysis cannot be separated from the political system adopted by the country concerned. Public policy can be said as an act of government in realizing the political system it adheres to in people's daily lives. The interests of the political system will color all decisions taken by the government from the center to the regions. In other words, the political system is the primary basis for compiling and determining the desired policies (McConnell & Hart, 2019). Suppose I may take a concrete example from experience in Indonesia in the past. Because the administration of

government adheres to a centralized system, all activities carried out by government institutions and apparatus must be based on a central authority, to the extent that the provision of a typewriter for the needs of a university must be based on the approval and decree of the State Secretariat, and even must be provided by the central government (Basri & Hill, 2020).

Experts on public policy put forward many formulations, but no single definition is generally accepted and can satisfy everyone. This is because public policy coverage covers every area of human life and covers a regional or national scale. As Soewargono said, "Public policies are authoritative directions for carrying out government actions within national, regional, and local jurisdictions" (Head, 2019). But what is certain is that whatever the contents of the formulation of public policies, all lead to one goal: to fulfill the public interest. In other words, public policy is a form of government intervention in fulfilling the public interest in connection with the government's "regreen" functions, namely "establishing policies to lead the forces of society towards the society it aspires to". This is related to the existence of the government as the personification of the state, which is inherent as "coercive legitimacy power", which is tasked with preparing, determining, and carrying out policies in the name of the welfare of all the people in its territory (Mayer, 2021).

Regional Autonomy

In theoretical studies, the understanding of regional autonomy varies. Especially if the concept of regional autonomy is viewed from political disciplines, such as the autonomy that the Palestinians fought for in the West Bank of the Gaza Strip, the Moro Muslim Group in the Southern Philippines, the Kurds in Northern Iraq, and so on. However, in this description, the definition of autonomy used is of nature following the provisions of the applicable laws and regulations (Fossati, 2019). In this regard, the meaning of regional autonomy according to Law number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government; Chapter 1. The general provisions of Article 1, paragraph 5 state that regional autonomy is an autonomous region's rights, powers, and obligations to regulate and manage its government affairs and the local community's interests following statutory regulations. Or in other words, it can be called the implementation of self-government (Rodiyah et al., 2020).

The legal basis for implementing regional autonomy is the 1945 Constitution, as stated in Chapter VI. Article 18 and its explanation. Article 18 states that "The division of Indonesia's regions into large and small regions with the form of government structure is determined by law by observing and considering the deliberative basis in the system of state administration and the rights of origin in areas that are special in nature". Meanwhile, the explanation stated, among other things, that "Indonesian regions will be divided into provincial areas and provincial areas will also be divided into smaller regions" (Susilo, 2021).

It is clear that regional autonomy is inherent in the 1945 Constitution and has been implemented for a long time, although the progress has not been smooth. This can be seen from the various arrangements regarding autonomy issued by the government since the proclamation of independence until now (Boestomy, 2021).

METHOD

This research will be carried out using a descriptive qualitative approach. The data used in this research comes from previous research or studies that still discuss regional autonomy in terms of philosophical studies. Research data that researchers have successfully collected will be processed immediately so that the results of this research can be found.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ontological Studies

The ontological study of regional autonomy as a public policy in this paper is the authority of the regions to regulate and manage their households. This self-regulation is based on the aspirations and interests of the community, which is oriented toward an attitude that leads to centrifugal or centripetal on the one hand and continues to maintain national integration on the other hand, in the context of realizing national unity and unity while remaining within the context of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia (Sorsa & Fougère, 2021).

Public policy terminology has many meanings, depending on which angle we give meaning. Based on history, the term is in English *policie*, which means dealing with public matters or government administration. Historical facts show that ancient documents have been discovered from a conscious effort to analyze public policy in Mesopotamia, namely the Code of Hammurabi (producing facts about government and politics) (Hariyanto, 2022). The code covered criminal procedures, property rights, trade, family and marital relations, healthcare funds, and what is known today as public accountability, for example, procedures designed to regulate governors, judges, officials, and others (Greenstein, 2022).

In further developments, public policy is essentially an established decision or “a standing decision” regarding the public interest by government officials and government agencies in the process of administering the state. Decisions are based on choices or considerations to realize a particular goal using the appropriate means Klejin (Mashuri, 2020).

Easton, for example, defines public policy as the forced allocation of values to all members of society. Laswell and Kaplan define public policy as a program of achieving values and goals in directed practices (Purnamasari et al., 2020).

Anderson further mentions the implications of the notion of state policy as follows:

- a. Public policy always has a specific goal or is a goal-oriented action.
- b. That the policy contains actions or patterns of action of government officials.
- c. The policy is what the government does, so it is not what it intends to do or says it will do.
- d. Public policy is positive in that it is a form of government action regarding a particular problem or is harmful in that it is a decision by a government official not to do something.
- e. At least in an important sense, government policies are based or always based on coercive laws and regulations (Jensen et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, according to Jones’ understanding, policies are often used or exchanged with goals, programs, decisions, laws, proposals, and particular goals. Heinz, Eulau, and Kenneth Prewitt define policy as a fixed decision characterized by the consistency and repetitiveness of the behavior of those who make and those who comply with the decision (Aylagas et al., 2020).

Epistemological Studies

The epistemological study in this paper is to conduct a literature study, namely searching and studying various literature, both in the form of books and journals, that are related to the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia. In its development, the implementation of regional autonomy uses a strategy, namely the “Assimilation” Strategy and the “unity in diversity” strategy or the “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” strategy, in realizing national unity and integrity.

In connection with the above, since the beginning of independence, Indonesia has adopted a centralized system of government. This government system does not encourage integration because the centralization of the bureaucracy carried out by cabinets from the Old Order to the New Order era

has created anger in many areas outside Java. Regional autonomy policies are almost never implemented consistently. What the government is doing as far as the government system is concerned is focusing on normalization, restoring a safe situation, and growing a strong, united, and efficient government. With these priorities, the central government seeks to bureaucratize the government and prepare for national development by adhering to policies that reject ethnic aspects and prefer a national approach to solving problems that arise. For this purpose, the central government always controlled the regions by placing its own people in the provinces. It can be estimated how government actions threaten local interests, and this is often shown openly from time to time. The irony is that many regional leaders have been thrown out of the local power structure, so regional interests have also been neglected (Antoni et al., 2020).

On the one hand, one can understand that the policies mentioned above were implemented during the first twenty years of independence, even though there were many discordant voices from the people in the regions. It must indeed be admitted that regional elements lack understanding of the problems faced by the central government as a result of the policies of the Dutch colonial government in the past and to unify the whole country administratively. It is acknowledged that the government at that time was experiencing a crisis regarding the shortage of skilled bureaucracy, while in Java, there were quite a few. This fact justifies that the central government implemented a policy by sending administrative personnel from Java to Java.

However, this policy continued until the New Order period after the government had succeeded in spreading education evenly throughout the country. There has been a growth in skilled workers in areas outside Java, so the continuation of this policy naturally raises the question of whether these skilled workers are intended to fill the shortage of personnel in the regions or if the policy is intended to dominate the region. Therefore, it is only natural that the central government's policies get discordant votes from the areas. The central government's lack of attention and respect for the regions has forced the regional governments to make efforts requiring broad autonomy policies. As a result, the relationship between the central and regional governments until the New Order era was always colored by conflicts between advocates of autonomy and centralization. Regional leaders are keenly pursuing regional autonomy policies because they believe that they will not have a fair share in the national development program without regional autonomy. On the other hand, the central government views regional autonomy as a threat to national development (Nugroho et al., 2022).

Theoretically, to overcome this problem, the central government in countries with a pluralistic society takes two strategies that Weiner calls "assimilation" and "unity in diversity". What is meant by the assimilation strategy is the attainment of national unity and integrity by making the dominant ethnic culture a national culture. This can be achieved by subordinating ethnic identity or minority groups to the dominant ethnic culture. The strategy: "unity in diversity" or "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" is intended to form national loyalty, which is carried out by not eliminating the culture of minority groups or ethnic groups. In this case, the identity of the ethnic group or minority group is still recognized as a national identity, as is the case with the ethnic group or the identity of the majority group.

It has become a national consensus that Indonesia adheres to the Bhinneka Tunggal Ika strategy, which is also stated in the 1945 Constitution and is symbolized in the national motto. However, it cannot be denied that many central government policies towards the regions do not reflect the diversity in diversity strategy. For various reasons, the central government often cannot avoid assimilation policies. That is why, as Legge said, regional autonomy is governed by a "colonial taste" strategy, a method used by the central government to manage and maintain its power. In the regions,

it gives the impression of a foreign government. Such a policy certainly does not satisfy people in regions, especially outside Java. And as if keeping them away from the central government. Ironically, protests have sprung up in areas controlled by the central government, promising them various forms of autonomy. These promises were never fulfilled, but their form and content changed from time to time and were never carried out. For example, in 1966, the MPRS stipulated the need for “widest possible autonomy” to remove the old order concept contained in Law No.18. In 1965, this new concept had not yet been realized and then abandoned by the MPR in 1973, when the assembly introduced the idea of “real and responsible regional autonomy”. This concept is described in Law no. 5 of 1974, but this has not yet been implemented and underwent a change by the MPR in 1978, becoming a real, dynamic, and responsible regional autonomy. From the development of the regional autonomy process during the New Order era, there was a discordant tone, saying that there was reluctance from the central government to grant autonomy, or in other words, the grant of autonomy was half-hearted. At this time, whatever the concept offered by the central government, it can be ascertained that the idea is full of restrictions on the freedom of local governments to develop themselves. It was as if the born concepts showed the central government’s suspicion of the regions. The central government in granting autonomy to the areas could threaten the unity and integrity of the nation, the archipelago concept, or the form of a unitary state. Such suspicions do not need to arise if the central government is willing to understand the lawsuit’s background, namely for the region’s development. Regarding, self-development, the regions can overcome all the problems without burdening the central government.

Based on the description regarding the implementation of the autonomy policy above, since both the Old Order and the New Order eras, it can be concluded that regional autonomy is not serious about implementation. The central government provides more directions and instructions and tends to make efforts to uniform local governments throughout Indonesia. This shows that the unitary state is managed by a centralized system (Soebagyo et al., 2019).

History has proven that such a vision of the new order poses a serious threat to the integrity of the Indonesian state and nation. Excessive concern for regional freedoms results in the centralization of power in the hands of the central government, which is then used by cronies and ruling families at the central level to drain natural wealth in the regions. The management of central-regional relations by the New Order opened opportunities for political elites at the national level to take economic and financial benefits for themselves by exploiting natural resources on a large scale and without limits. Precisely what was feared by the New Order political elite, namely the threat to the integrity of the Indonesian nation-state, actually occurred in a bigger form after the collapse of the New Order regime in managing central-regional relations had resulted in a more significant threat to the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia.

So as a nation that seeks to progress and be intelligent, it must have the courage to change the paternalistic and centralized pattern of central-regional relations into a partnership and decentralized pattern. That is what then gave birth to regulations in Law no. 22 of 1999 and Law No. 25 of 1999, and in subsequent developments, these regulations underwent revisions contained in Law No. 32 of 2004 and Law No. 33 of 2004. The four laws have left this centralistic and paternalistic paradigm. Furthermore, the government no longer commits to development but places the task of development based on service and empowerment values. This means that no more development policies will contain the value of injustice and kill people’s creativity (Fernandes et al., 2020).

This paradigm shift can be considered a movement back to the true character of the government. This change can also be why the principle of full autonomy is placed in the regency and

city areas, not in the province, due to the closeness factor to the people as the party that must be served and empowered. The assumption is that the closer the distance between the waiter and the served, the more effective and efficient the service is (Santoso, 2021).

The decentralization policy for regional autonomy is a correction to the failure of the system of centralization and uniformization of government that has been in effect so far. How regional autonomy can maintain national unity can be seen from the substance of the vision of regional autonomy itself;

- a. The strategy of decentralization that gave rise to regional autonomy is one kind of democratization policy execution. In the framework of democratization, government management and decentralization go hand in hand. This implies that there can be no democratization of government without decentralization, as it is thought that the people as a sovereign party must not only be served well, but also be serviced in a manner that respects their sovereignty.
- b. Regional autonomy in an economic setting is intended to increase community and local government's options to achieve prosperity and develop themselves. This will considerably lessen the load on the central government while simultaneously creating a climate of competition among areas to find innovative new methods to manage their economic potential. If it is recognized that the welfare of the people is one of the keys to national unity, there is no reason to fear that regional autonomy poses a threat to national unity.
- c. Regional autonomy in the social context is intended to provide provincial governments with the chance to improve the quality of their society and to share responsibility with the national government for enhancing services in education, health, and other social areas. In the framework of culture, regional autonomy entails chances for regions to explore and develop local cultural values and personalities, which will increase community self-respect and pride as part of the diversity in diversity of national culture.

Axiological Studies

The axiological study in this paper is the benefits or usefulness of the regional autonomy policy, both pragmatically and theoretically, towards the people, nation, and state of Indonesia as follows:

a. Pragmatic Benefits

In a unitary state like Indonesia, it is very easy for national interest issues to arise that are opposed to regional interests. In this context, the central government becomes the primary defender in realizing national interests. The sources of wealth in the regions are an essential part of the national income because mining, industry, agriculture, forestry, and various business entities are located in the areas. In the view of the central government, sources of wealth originating from a region are national property used for national interests (Tatang et al., 2021).

This means that the wealth generated by a region is not only intended for the interests of the region concerned. The principle of equity is one of the work guidelines of the central government so that resources in the regions are distributed to the other areas (cross-subsidies) as a consequence of a unitary state. Thus, it can be concluded that a unitary state that cannot balance national interests with regional interests will experience disturbances in the form of lawsuits against its existence, which may disrupt national integration. Indonesia's experience proves that the emergence of regional upheaval is that regional wealth management policies are more profitable for the central government. Therefore, the granting of sufficient autonomy to the regions must be accompanied by supervision by the central government for the national interest, which is a condition for creating political stability in Indonesia (Wang et al., 2018).

b. Theoretical Benefits

Regional autonomy is closely related to democracy. If democracy regulates the relationship between the government and the people, then regional autonomy regulates the relationship between the central government and the regions. Although different from the object, there are similarities between democratic values and the values that underlie regional autonomy. In other words, the formation of autonomy is based on democratic values. If democracy is upheld, regional autonomy should not be a characteristic of regional government. The State of Indonesia is a country that adheres to the ideology of democracy, which emphasizes individual development, freedom, and equal opportunities given to individuals, opening up opportunities for those concerned to carry out activities according to their wishes. The state guarantees individuals to work and be creative without being coerced by others. In the end, many great and useful works are produced by individuals, not only for themselves but also for society.

The function of the state is to protect every individual in activities in society. So the state does not make it difficult for individuals in their activities as long as they do not cause disturbance to other people. Easton said that the armed apparatus, as a tool of state power, has the authority called legitimate physical coercion (Mensah, 2019).

The relationship between the state/government and the people in a democracy is similar to that between the central government and the regions. The values that underlie the relationship between the state and the people in a democracy also underlie the relationship between the central government and local governments. Therefore, in line with the description above, the purpose of regional autonomy is to advance the region while at the same time advancing the state, nation, and society as a whole. Autonomy provides opportunities for regions to develop themselves following the conditions and interests of the local people (Jongerden, 2019).

The implementation of regional autonomy will be able to expedite the wheels of regional development and national development. This is because regional autonomy allows regions to do what is good for their region, which is also good nationally. Then, in the end, what became the noble ideals of the nation as contained in the opening of the 1945 Constitution was realized.

CONCLUSION

Regional autonomy is a policy to give authority to a region to develop its territory without the need to be fully regulated by the central government. This policy can allow local governments to advance and compete with other regions. In addition, the burden on the central government is also decreasing. Regional autonomy also has a reasonably close relationship with democracy. Democracy regulates the relationship between the government and its people, while regional autonomy regulates the central and regional governments. Even though it has different objects, its values have the same basis.

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