

ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ENCOURAGING COASTAL MANAGEMENT IN THE SPERMONDE ISLANDS

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In South Sulawesi the concept of “regional autonomy” is relatively new and not yet firmly established. Regional autonomy laws, passed at the national level in 1999 (Law 22) and renewed in 2004 (Law 32), have given greater authority to local governments, and allow greater empowerment of, and participation by, the people. However, the previous New Order favored a top-down approach to governance, and local governments have had little experience in encouraging community participation. “Participation,” up until recently, was defined as involvement in designated tasks and activities, as a part of government-run projects. In contrast, the as yet underdeveloped bottom-up approach aims to strengthen, capitalize on, and acknowledge citizens’ initiatives.

One indicator used to measure the progress of regional autonomy is that of local government regulations, which, thus far, have only been measured quantitatively. What is additionally needed is a process by which to examine the impact of such local regulations. This study focuses on regulations related to coastal area management. More specifically, it focuses on the issue of whether local government regulations have encouraged community participation and empowerment, and served as facilitators or catalysts of community-based initiatives. By scrutinizing local government regulations, this study aims to identify the means used to stimulate community-based initiatives related to coastal management. That is, it examines whether the local government has been able to stimulate community initiatives in coastal resource management, and the extent to which the government is able to provide support (both through solidarity and legal means) for developing such initiatives.

The Spermonde Islands lie off the coast of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, and have distinct physical, biological, and cultural characteristics. Current environmental regulations are only concerned with land-use management; they neglect littoral and coastal dimensions. The process by which local people become empowered and inspired to participate in coastal management and in other, related aspects of social capital, must be identified, clarified, and promoted. The nearby Pangkep Regency has distinct coastal terrains and includes some of the Spermondes Islands. Since regional autonomy policies began, the regency has passed two local regulations on coastal and sea management. Currently, another local government regulation is being developed, which is related to coastal management and sea preservation. The Regency of Pangkep has been pioneering in establishing local maritime conservation regulations; these regulations and related text could be set out in more detail in implementation manuals for more widespread use.

This study examined the wording of these local regulations and categorized this wording into three broad categories: 1) that with the potential to discourage community-based initiatives, 2) that with the potential to increase community awareness, and 3) that with the potential to promote active community participation in coastal management in the regional autonomy era.

Keywords: Coastal management, Community-based initiatives, Decentralization, Local government, Sulawesi