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Post Decentralization Corruption:

A study on perpetual corruption at the local level in West Lombok

Abstract

The current article aims to explore corruption at the local level. There are two main discourses that set the background for this study. *First*, corruption is considered a result of decentralization, which opened up the local political structure. *Second*, corruption happened as a result of a societal shift along the prismatic continuum. These two main discourses serve as the theoretical background in research to find the meanings behind the reality of perpetual corruption occurring at the local level. The research employed the theory of decentralization and a prismatic society approach as analytical tools along with a phenomenological approach. The study found linkages in decentralization as a new reason for the growth and development of corruption at the local level on account of the prismatic structure empowering elite rulers to replicate corrupt practices.

Keywords:

decentralization; prismatic; corruption.

Introduction

A systemic change from centralization to decentralization had altered the map of socio-political power structures at the local level. Decentralization encompasses more than just the transition of government authority and power from the national to the subnational levels, it also involves changing the structure of dominance

in the bureaucracy as well as opening up social and political opportunities for the emergence of local identity based forces and competition (Aspinall, 2010; Buehler, 2010; Schulte Nordholt & van Klinken, 2007), consequently creating a circulation of elites at the local level (Grindle, 2009). Throughout the authoritarian regime, military and bureaucratic officials coming from a particular

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social identity secured strategic and substantial positions within the government. Decentralization had ended their dominance. Along the same line, it had brought about fundamental changes that led to the opening of local power structures, subsequently providing opportunities for local identities to express their political interests (J. Kingsley, 2012; Kingsley, 2012; Mietzner, 2014), which was also the case in Lombok. The island of Lombok is geographically located between two islands, Bali to the West (Lombok Strait), and Sumbawa to the East separated by the Alas strait. Administrative wise, Lombok consists of four regencies and one municipality, namely: West Lombok Regency, Central Lombok Regency, East Lombok Regency, North Lombok Regency, and Mataram Municipality as the capital of West Nusa Tenggara Province. Most of Lombok's populace are Muslims.¹ It is known as an island of a thousand mosques (Telle, 2009; Tyson, 2013). Culturally speaking, the Sasak tribe is the majority in Lombok.²

Post decentralization, Lombok's socio-political dynamics has received a lot of attention from scholars. Decentralization provided civilians political opportunities to create political space for citizens wanting to express their voices at the local level, including in Lombok (Antlov, 2003). This led to the emergence of local-based security groups (Macdougall, 2007; Tyson, 2013), and the creation of political transformation opening arenas of contestation over political positions within the power structure at the local level (Gayatri, Irene et al., 2009). Decentralization also generated competitions based on ethnicity and status of Lombok's elites, particularly religious leaders and the nobility (Kingsley, 2012). In brief, decentralization had strengthened the role of *Tuan Guru* (religious leaders) and weakened that of the *menak* (nobility) within Lombok's local socio-political structure (Anwar, 2016; J. Kingsley, 2012; Kingsley, 2012; Oktara, 2015; Putrawan, 2013).

A specific phenomenon concerning change in local structure is observed in West Lombok. It is historically noted that classification of local ethnicities was initiated at the time the Dutch governed Indonesia. The local identity framework was developed by viewing the nobility as local aristocrats (Schulte Nordholt & van Klinken, 2007). In the case of Lombok, colonizers (the Dutch, Japanese) included the nobility as a part of the colonial administrative structure. Bureaucracy was taught to the elites by opening the Hollandsch Indlandsche School for the nobility, who would then become pioneers in the civil service or high-ranking officials in Lombok (Fath Zakaria, 1998; Kingsley, 2012; Macdougall,

1 <https://ntb.bps.go.id/indicator/108/333/1/persentase-penduduk-menurut-kabupaten-kota-dan-agama-yang-dianut-.html>

2 <https://kompaspedia.kompas.id/baca/profil/daerah/provinsi-nusa-tenggara-barat>

2007; Magenda, 2005). The nobility's genealogical power dominance in West Lombok's government structure ended, particularly, following the implementation of electoral politics. There were three key changes in West Lombok's social and political structures. *First*, decentralization ended the dominance of the nobility (*menak*) class within the power structure at the local level. *Second*, it opened up contestations without the dominance of any particular social stratification. *Third*, it became a starting point for the emergence of perpetual corruption.

The structural change in local power post decentralization did not only usher in new local elites into the power structure, it also indicated the presence of perpetual corruption in West Lombok. It is recorded that Iskandar, the regent for the 1999-2009 period, was tried for corruption on account of swapping assets owned by the Regent Office of West Lombok.³ Serinata, West Lombok's Regional Secretary, was also tried for corruption of social assistance involving many regional officials and politicians.⁴ Mahrip, the vice regent for the 2009-2014 period, was found guilty in the case of fictitious Official Travel Warrant (*Surat Perintah Perjalanan Dinas – SPPD*).⁵ Dr. Zaini Aroni, the regent for the 2014-2019 period, was found guilty in the corruption case on tourism development permit.⁶

3 <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-949202/bupati-lombok-barat-iskandar-ditahan-kpk>, <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/190031/kpk-tangkap-bupati-lombok-barat>, <https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2009/02/09/12072491/rekanan.pemkab.lombok.barat.akan.divonis.hari.ini>. Accessed on January 21, 2021.

4 <https://www.jpnn.com/news/dua-anggota-dpr-dtersangka-korupsi-bansos>. Accessed on January 21, 2021. Also see the directory of rulings of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia number 1818 K/Pid.Sus/2012 in putusan.mahkamahagung.go.id concerning Agung Purnomo Nugroho.

5 See the directory of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia No. 5/Pid.Sus.TPK/2015/PN MTR under the name of Dr. H. Mahrip.

6 See the directory of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia No. 175 PK/PID.SUS/2017 under the name of

Discourses on decentralization continue to be an intriguing object of study. Decentralization exists within two opposing continua, particularly when correlated with corruption. It is believed to be an effective remedy for reducing corruption as well as a system capable of opening spaces where various actors are involved in conducting corrupt public administration practices. These various debates serve as a backdrop in the current study by using social transition to read and find meanings behind the reality of perpetual corruption at the local level in Lombok.

Theoretical Review

Decentralization

Decentralization is the transfer of authority and responsibility for administrative functions, including civilians and the private sector from the central to the regional governments (D. Rondinelli, 1999; World Bank, 2013). It is the delegation of political and legal authority to subordinate government to carry out planning and decision-making functions (D. A. Rondinelli, 1981; Shabbir Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). Rondinelli divided decentralization into four types: political, administrative, fiscal, and market decentralizations (D. Rondinelli, 1999). Administrative decentralization includes: deconcentration, delegation, and devolution (Shabbir Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). Decentralization lessens the central government's monopoly of power by getting more transparency and accountable decision-making closer to the people (Antlov, 2003; Shah, 2006), this includes getting vulnerable communities without access to government provided goods and services closer (McGuire, 2010). In brief, decentralization incorporates the mechanism of public engagement within the government based on the argument that closer proximity between citizens and the government makes it easier for the government

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to respond to public needs and demands (Grindle, 2009; World Bank, 2013).

Closer proximity between the public and regional government is a factor that reinforces theoretical-practical arguments stating that decentralization promotes government accountability. Developing countries are encouraged by donor organizations to implement decentralization as part of the country's political democracy policy package (Asthana, 2012; Shabbir Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). The World Bank believes that decentralization promotes government accountability (World Bank, 2013). Arguments and claims of decentralization being able to reduce corruption have generated a number of antitheses from the results of numerous studies. Local corruption has resulted from decentralization. Asthana's research on water provision service in India demonstrates that decentralization of institutional arrangement caused an increase in corruption (Asthana, 2012).

Two Faces of Decentralization:

Decentralization Reduces Corruption

Decentralization became a system for reducing corruption (Fisman & Gatti, 2002). It opened up participatory spaces for civil society to demand improvements in the public sector and encourages government accountability (Grindle, 2009). In decentralization, there is the proximity factor, which is a condition that enables demands and communication to be better and more responsively made and carried out between public officials and citizens (Bardhan, 2002; Umam, 2014; Widmalm, 2008). Decentralization encourages people to correctively question policies that do not support public interest. It provides citizens with direct information when misappropriation of government assistance occurs (Goel & Nelson, 2011; Shah, 2006). The public's closeness with its local political structure makes it easier for collective resistance against corruption to unfold. Various information can

be easily acquired and they can reach more local citizens than access to power or authority at the national level can (Manor, 2011; Slijepčević et al., 2020). In the Indonesian context, decentralization opens up spaces for public monitoring, and presents space for public aspirations functioning as a stage for public scrutiny of the government (Buehler, 2010; Ronald L. Holzhaecker et al., 2016). Decentralization accommodates political space for civil society, and it particularly promotes an anticorruption movement as an integral part of its socio-political movement (Rinaldi et al., 2007).

Decentralization as a New Argument for Corruption

In practice, decentralization is, instead, considered a new reason for the birth of corruption. The argument for this reason can be observed based on Prud'homme's study results which found counterfactual relations with the view of decentralization as a system capable of reducing corruption. Decentralization creates opportunities, produced channels for corruption, wherein the flow of resources distribution is directed toward local interest groups, which is the result of politicians and bureaucrats' submission to group interests at the local level (Hadiz, 2010; Karlström, 2015; Kirana, 2014; Prud'homme, 1995; Tornquist, 2005; Winters, 2013). Decentralization presents elite capture (Bardhan, 2002; Fjeldstad, 2004). Bribery is on the rise at the local level due to an increasingly complex government system designed to fill the pockets of local bureaucrats (Fan et al., 2009). In Indonesia, it has been proven effective to suppress local tensions that may fracture national integrity. However, it indicates a predatory countenance at the local level (Aspinall, 2010). It has become a political space for developing new patronage networks throughout Indonesia in the aftermath of the bureaucratic authoritarian system (Hadiz, 2004; Silitonga et al., 2016). Oligarchy remains in power, despite the authoritarian political system

having been replaced by more democratic political institutions (Robison & Hadiz in Liddle, 2013). Following decentralization, corruption actors have shifted from the central to the local level. Patron-client networks, which was a defining feature of the authoritarian regime, have been created in the decentralized and new democratic structure. The post authoritarian democratic institutions produced have revealed the presence of powerful locals with access to influence local level policies (Silitonga et al., 2016). Decentralization is not enough for reducing corruption. As is the case with electoral democracy. Therefore, it is crucial that the analytical focus be emphasized on democratic institutions at the local level (Karlström, 2015; Saha et al., 2014)

Theory of Prismatic Society

An Approach

A prismatic society is a society transitioning from a fused homogenous traditional state into a diffracted heterogeneous modern society. It is likened to a homogenous light going into a prism. A diversity of colors is created, yet these colors remain confined within the prism without scattering outwards (Priyono, 2016; Riggs, 1964). A temporary process or condition of a society between a specific past time and a predictable future state is referred to as transition. Under such societal conditions, concepts containing particular characteristics that apply in the country of study need to be used (Riggs, 1964).

Prismatic society is a society that maintains a combination of overlapping modern and traditional values, wherein those values coexist within a single bureaucracy (Harber, 1993; Soelaiman, 1998). Developed countries demonstrate variables of universalism such as achievements and functional specificity (professional authority). Whereas developing countries show particularism-ascription values. Riggs adopted this perspective to examine the dynamics of administration in developing

countries (Soelaiman, 1998; Zwart, 2010). In transitional societies, it is impossible for state administration to stand alone as a separate entity with other aspects contained in the society. State administration is not a mechanical system, even in developing countries. There are overlapping aspects caused by the blending of old and new values (heterogeneity), which subsequently results in administration practices displaying the power of formalism (Riggs, 1964). In the context of the present study, it is important that the corruption cases are analyzed based on the pattern of corruption evident in the transitioning society so that a holistic perspective can be acquired to explain how perpetual corruption unfolds. Accordingly, it is essential that the bureaucratic institution be seen as an entity that is inseparable from the effect of influential, old, and traditional socio-political structure (Riggs, 2015).

The Perspective of Corruption in Prismatic Society

Avarice is not a key determinant of corruption. Perhaps corruption emerges from the basic nature of prismatic society itself. In the traditional system, officials are not paid using the central treasury fund, they are paid through tributes, rents, and the like. Harber continues by stating that such corrupt behavior will continue in moderate bureaucracies (Harber, 1993). There are formal rules regulating policies, but they differ in practice. Rules are formally announced, but they are not effectively implemented. It seems highly formalistic in reality, but not so in practice. For such a contradiction, Riggs referred to it as formalism or double talk (Laxmikanth, 2011; Riggs, 2015; Zwart, 2010). Corruption, bribery, and clientelism are associated with legal and bureaucratic processes that serve an unfavorable function, according to prismatic administration. Laws and procedures may be implemented in another normative order that has functional implications on the environment they live in

without having to change the new environment (Zwart, 2010).

The administration model in a prismatic society is known as the Sala Model. This is reflected in developing societies (Margono, 1998). Officials enjoy the power and authority their position gives them. Officials of the Sala Model formally comply to rules that are specific in nature but covertly use their discretion to make decisions that tend to be ascriptive, which is a feature of particularism (Riggs, 1964). In terms of public administration, this approach is relevant in explaining the emergence of double talk, wherein modern administration rules and methods are employed but they are utilized to serve particular values and purposes in the public domain (Priyono, 2018).

Social Structure of Prismatic Society

In prismatic societies we can find a unique form of institutional structure, distinct from other social typologies, which is known as poly-communal structure. Poly-communal refers to the existence of various ethnic and religious groups that indicates a state of competition (Laxmikanth, 2011). The elite opposition group in transitioning societies is incapable of gaining access to get in touch with key ruling elites, thereby leading to hostility. Within such poly-communal structure, we can subsequently find poly-functional structure, which demonstrates more distribution of function than association (Riggs, 1964). I argue that such institutional structure is one of the factors causing perpetual corruption in transitioning societies. Offering conceptual tools to examine specific changes in administrative behaviors of developing countries serves as a theoretical basis to analyze the influence that history, culture, and present phenomena in cultures that are no longer traditional but have not yet evolved into modern societies (Bytyci, 2016; Chapman, 1966; Harber, 1993; Ikeanyibe, 2017)

Methods

The present study is developed based on the interpretive paradigm by using phenomenology strategy to understand the reality of perpetual corruption post decentralization. The qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher attempted to obtain a depth of meaning from the observed reality and found the meaning behind the reality of perpetual corruption. The research was conducted from January of 2019 to June of 2020 by using observations, interviews, and documentation for data collection. Observations were done between September 2020 and November 2020, wherein intensive interactions were carried out with anticorruption activists Somasi, Rajabatu, Kasta Lobar, and Fitra of West Nusa Tenggara in relation to the anticorruption movement activities they undertake. During the observations, the researcher obtained information about key informants that could be interviewees for the study. Information pertaining to the affected local structure was also acquired in the process. The notes obtained during the observations were subsequently compared with the theoretical perspectives acquired from the literature review. The informants were determined using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, in which in-depth interview method was accordingly applied. The researcher then requested for the informants' consent to participate in the study via telephone. Consent was easily procured from informants with background from anticorruption activists Somasi, Rajabatu, Kasta and Fitra NTB, academicians (UIN, UMMAT and UNRAM), and cultural figures. But, specific lobbying tactics needed to be employed in securing consent from informants who are politicians. Some informants were only willing to be interviewed via telephone. Some were also willing to be informants on the condition that they could remain anonymous. Secondary data in the study were retrieved from mass media news, and reports published by anticorruption NGOs such as Fitra and Somasi of West Nusa Tenggara. The

most crucial secondary data in the study were obtained from court rulings that have permanent legal force.

These court rulings with permanent legal force were most helpful in exploring the chronology of the cases and their subsequent dynamics even deeper. An example is the asset swap corruption case involving Regent Iskandar in 2008. The informants have their limits in recalling the dynamics of cases that transpired long ago. The court rulings helped in examining the cases deeper, including the actors involved. This method is also a part of data source triangulation, wherein the researcher also conducted informant triangulation jointly and separately. The data source triangulation method, which is based on informant interviews and court rulings as secondary data, was most beneficial in excavating corruption cases that occurred in the distant past, including in obtaining data validity of the flow of funds and values underlying the corruption.

Data analysis was done by referring to Miles and Huberman's interactive model. First, data recorded throughout the data collection process were categorized based on types of data sources. Classification was made according to interview data, court rulings, mass media news, and anticorruption-NGO-published reports relevant to the corruption cases of study. The data were subsequently selected and those that did not contribute to answering the research question were removed from the created data category. Sorting data sources based on the examined corruption cases facilitated in finding actors, values, and dynamics of the cases. Second, interview data were transcribed and presented together with summaries of the court rulings and important notes made during observations into a narrative table in accordance with the analyzed corruption cases. These were, subsequently, identified based on themes and significant statements, and codes were then attributed to answer the designed research question. The data

presented in the table displays the relational patterns formulated, and they were analyzed to find meanings in the occurrence of perpetual corruption in West Lombok. Third, the meanings produced were summed up into a credible conclusion in the form of narrative writing. The data were re-verified by employing data source triangulation of observation notes, interview transcripts, and summaries from court rulings with permanent legal force. Representativeness of data sources was also considered in the study by conducting repeated analysis so that no data is found to undermine the credibility of the research results.

Results and Discussion

Poly-Communal Structure

Poly-communalism is described as an entity of diverse groups with a tendency of low group assimilation. Its power structure indicates a strong tendency of particularism. Strong support is given to community members thereby influencing social relations. As a result, a different community pulls the society toward a different direction, and there is no consensus on what should be done (see Ikeanyibe, 2017). The local political structure established post decentralization indicates a poly-communal structure, which is a feature of prismatic or transitional society. Decentralization generated new political elites and abandoned old elites. This included groups of commoners (*jajar karang*) as a social class in Lombok's local structure. Social-stratification-based local identity politics emerged, and these strategic groups succeeded in constructing discourses and winning electoral political contests by replacing the old elites who had been representing a particular social stratification for a long period of time. One of the significant findings is mobilization support given by a group named Raja Batu (short for *rakyat jajar karang bersatu* which means commoners unite). This group, specifically, identified its movement

as a social-stratification-based resistance, and it has been involved as a socio-political movement participating in West Lombok's local political structure. We are *Jajar Karang*, we are the majority of the population based on social stratification in Lombok yet not many had been representing us [our interests] within the local power structure (HF, interview June 2019). If we explore further, factually speaking, since the New Order, West Lombok's local power structure had mostly been held by social entities with a noble (*menak*) background. To be exact, this had continued since the mandate for the second term of the West Lombok Regent had been given to Lalu Anggrat BA in 1960-1965, Lalu A. Rahman in 1972-1978, Lalu Ratmaji in 1979-1989 and Lalu Mudjihatid in 1989-1999. The political shift from authoritarian to democratic with the decentralization model became a trigger for structural change in local power.

Decentralization became a contradictory concept with the rise of perpetual corruption at the local government level. Decentralization, which opened up the local political structure, has resulted in public officials that are untrustworthy. Decentralization as a democratic system was not accompanied by the local structure's capacity to conduct checks and balances of power. In other words, the implementation of decentralization was not supported by sufficient local political infrastructure to safeguard decentralization. It seems that the change from old to new elites did not produce participatory channels that support public monitoring activities. Local groups that were established are not strong enough to safeguard the administrative process on account of their lack of access to information.

"I am dismayed with the emergence of perpetual corruption in West Lombok. The channel of participation to convey aspirations relating to strategic policies remains incapable of reaching the ruling elites, unless you are part of their team of supporters" (Interview with SH,

June 2019). A similar statement was also made by a scholar who is a professor, "There is a dilemmatic situation in West Lombok. Decentralization has altered the political structure. It is no longer controlled by figures of a particular social stratification. Political competition is open. But, it indicates perpetual corruption" (interview with AS, Mei 2020). Such phenomenon, according to the perspective of prismatic society, is known as poly-communalism, i.e., the tendency of elite groups outside of the power structure not having access to the elite groups in power.

The structural change in local politics post decentralization produced differentiated elite categorization and their existence are like embryos that have no influence so they can be easily controlled by the ruling elite. There is no local consolidation initiated by civil society to change the corrupt local structure. In transitional democracies the formal accountability mechanisms usually do not function (Ian Chalmers & Budi Setiyono, 2012). During a period of political transition, corruption thrives due to the lack and insufficiency of social control in dealing with social and political freedom (Moran, 2001, p. 389).

The state of structure without assimilation in this case occurred on account of elite fragmentation post decentralization. Social control was poorly implemented, keeping in mind that the elite groups had differing interests at the local level. Such fragmentation of the elite groups is considered by Riggs as poly-communalism, wherein the level of elite assimilation is lower than their level of mobilization. The poly-communal structure without assimilation, subsequently, became a structure that benefits the local elites in controlling public resources for their individual and group interests. In a poly-communal structure, movements that oppose corruption are difficult to carry out. The exceedingly strong fragmentation of the elites is the reason for this. So, encouraging civil society to be part of the determining forces to reduce corruption seems to be doomed to failure

so long as the elite assimilation process runs at a snail's pace. Nonetheless, poly-communal structure does not necessarily mean a low level of participatory space. Bearing in mind that poly-communal structure also has the potential to produce strong oppositions. As findings in the present research show, groups outside of power also have the ability to uncover corrupt practices.

Formalization of Corruption

Corruption in the perspective of prismatic society is seen as double talk in regulation. People abide by specific rules but behave very subjectively and are particularistic. Before the public they loudly voice their opposition against bribery and corruption, as well as corrupt practices and behavior. They enforce various rules yet they close their eyes to ongoing violations (Riggs, 1964). The argument relating to the strong formalization of corruption is grounded upon the idea of normative structure, in which principles and techniques are based on the perspectives of Western society, which is identical to industrial society. These are transplanted into the normative structure of transitional society in which a mixture of tradition and modernity still remains. Because of the mix of traditional values in the normative system of bureaucracy, particularism will emerge (Zwart, 2010).

The corruption that occurred in the three periods of political leadership is a social pathology that shows a double face. The West Lombok bureaucracy has been known to be very open in terms of data access. A study conducted by Fitra NTB published in January 2020 reinforced the assumption that bureaucracy is highly responsive to public requests of data and information. The West Lombok government is very open in terms of efforts promoting budget transparency, which includes their positive response when we encourage a budget clinic for the public (interview with R, anti-corruption activist, January 2020). Corruption, on the other hand, continues to be a

major concern at the local level. Such a condition reflects the presence of a pseudo or façade democracy, i.e., a condition in which democratic institutions and mechanism are established but do not substantively function, a system that operates within artificial democratic instruments (Diamond, 2002, Haynes, 2005,).

Civil society openly became a part of those engaged in the existing participatory channels. In the case of regional asset data, which had, thus far, been problematic in West Lombok, the ruling elites involved civil society groups as a part of the working group. They received a formal letter of assignment signed directly by the West Lombok Regent as stipulated in Decree number 1960A/23.A/KAD/2013. Results of their work in documenting asset data have provided a lot of information concerning assets that have been problematic. Civil society groups were involved in the documentation of regional asset data and the results provided considerable information about assets that may be corrupted by the ruling elites (S G, interview in December, 2019).

An anatomy of the corruption case in West Lombok reinforces the poli-normativism of corruption. The property/asset swap corruption involving the former property of the West Lombok Regent office is an empirical fact that corroborates this. The case began with a meeting held in March 2003 between Haji Iskandar as the Regent of West Lombok at the time and Izzat Hussein, a contractor from Varindo Lombok Inti, that was a discussion about doing a property swap of the former office and property of the old administrative buildings of West Lombok. The Regent of West Lombok, H. Iskandar, asked Izzat Hussein as the director of Varindo Lombok Inti Ltd. Co. to prepare a property swap proposal. The regent then ordered his subordinate to prepare an estimated price by referring to the estimated value made by the contractor. A team was subsequently established, and they fulfilled the formal requirements as though land price appraisal had been done by the

appraisal team. This property swap case resulted in financial loss to the state by as much as IDR 36.540.159.819,55.⁷

Another case featuring a strong formalization of corruption is apparent in the social assistance fund corruption case that involved the 2009 Regional Secretary of West Lombok, H. Serinata, along with a number of regional officials and members of the West Lombok Regional House of Representatives. The corruption case that resulted in billions of rupiahs of state financial loss was uncovered when fake stamps were found to be used on behalf of hundreds of social organizations in West Lombok which posed as recipients of the assistance. While in fact, there had never been any receipt of such social assistance funds. Based on the trial records, the funds were channeled to legislative members for purposes outside of the social assistance program. This is an interesting case to study, keeping in mind that there are two rules in play. Formal requests and disbursement mechanisms were defined, but in reality, the ruling elites in West Lombok's bureaucracy deviated from implementing the rules. Facts in trial revealed that just the oral request made by the regional secretary was enough to request and disburse social assistance funds without having to fulfill the defined formal requirements. It is evident that there are two rules operating within a single bureaucratic system. In other words, the formalization of corruption works systematically by utilizing all potential resources and supporting

local structures. This is an example of corruption in prismatic society with its institutionalized Sala bureaucratic countenance. The ruling elites instruct their lower officials as followers, who obey to gain protection, maintain good image, and surely to influence their career position.⁸

A review of another corruption case that reinforces the corruption argument in prismatic society is the corruption case that led to the arrest of the 2009-2014 and 2014-2019 period Regent of West Lombok, Dr Zaini Aroni, in the case of permit submission for the Buwun Mas Sekotong West Lombok tourism area. The case started with the submission of several permits to open up a tourism site in Sekotong, which was submitted by the Djaja Business Group Ltd. Co. to the Regional Government of West Lombok, which included space utilization permit; principal permit for expansion of foreign investment; location permit; and land utilization permit. During the period when the permits were being processed, the Regent at the time requested a number of vehicles, cash, and a plot of land from the investor to accelerate the licensing process. Requests that were not fulfilled resulted in technical difficulties in the licensing process. The formalized structure observed in the case review seems to be dominating. Regulations in the licensing process are understood differently, thereby creating a space not unlike a bazaar-canteen where prices are not as certain as the amounts listed in the formal regulations. Written regulations have become a point of entry to renegotiate the entire process and price that must be paid by the permit applicant. In the context of public space, this is seen as the emergence of double talk. Modern administrative rules and methods are used, but they are employed to serve other purposes and values. Corruption becomes institutionalized as it involves various actors in the power structure.

⁷ The legal process of former Regent H. Iskandar was discontinued because he was suffering from dementia, which is a mental disorder indicated by reduced cognitive function particularly relating to memory. As a result, the panel of judges issued Court Verdict Number 23/PID.B/TPK/2008/PN.JKT.PST. dated February 16, 2009, which among others stipulates that criminal case document Number 23/PID.B/2008/ PN.JKT.PST. under the name Drs. H. Iskandar be returned to the Public Attorney of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), and instructs the defendant, Drs. H. Iskandar, be released from custody. The case process can be searched in the Directory of Court Rulings of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia: putusan.mahkamahagung.go.id.

⁸ The track record of the case was processed based on various sources and by utilizing news portals containing the trial process on the www.kejaksaan.go.id webpage.

Officials enjoy their strategic position that allows them to receive bribes, they utilize the lower structure to generate extra personal income aside from their official income as a civil servant (Priyono, 2018, Riggs, 1964).

In the December 2019 corruption case concerning the rehabilitation of mosques after the Lombok earthquake, the case began with a 20% cut taken from each of the mosques receiving reconstruction funds from the central government. The mosques received reconstruction funds in the amount of 50 to 200 million rupiahs each, in which 13 mosques in West Lombok were recipients. A review of the corruption case indicates it had features of the Sala Model wherein the Head of the Administrative Affairs Division in West Lombok's ministry of religious affairs instructed a direct subordinating staff to make a 20% cut. It was a tiered corruption structure as the direct staff to the head of division subsequently instructed a lower-level staff in the Religious Affairs Office to directly withdraw the cut from mosque caretakers receiving the reconstruction funds. Implications of technical difficulties in disbursement of funds were mentioned to the mosque caretakers when they did not provide the cut the perpetrators requested. The corruption model was structured, wherein the subordinate provides a remuneration or kickback to a higher structure with more authority as a guarantee to getting a promotion.⁹ An analysis of such a case from the perspective of prismatic society indicates a structured relationship between administrator-follower which consequently creates administrative hurdles to open up negotiations (Riggs, 1964).

Discussion

Following the findings on the ground, it is clear that there are connections between

decentralization and the prismatic society system, which leads to an increase in corruption at the local level. Decentralization has become a new reason for corruption to grow because institutions found in prismatic society lack enough power to put pressure on the ruling elites. In a prismatic society, the new elites generated by the change in political structure are still in the earliest stages of developing their power and as a result they are easily co-opted by the ruling elites (Riggs, 1964).

The prismatic local structure provided opportunities for ruling local elites to continuously conduct corrupt practices due to the structure's inability to limit the elite's power. It seems that various anticorruption approaches and policies will be incapable of reducing corruption so long as no change occurs in the local structure. There must be a constraining structure that limits local elites from exerting their political power.

An approach that overemphasizes the institutional aspect and localizes the influence of democracy outside of state institutions involving the community is considered to be the cause of failure in corruption eradication (Djani, 2013). Focusing on incentives to formal institutions does not seem to be enough, it is important to consider influential local aspects as well (Hira, 2016). In other words, the diagnosis on corruption so far, according to the view of universalism, is that it often occurs in a concept of uniformity. Hence, it is important to diagnose corruption based on certain organisms, of which particularism is one: a value that prioritizes personal interest or a form of non-universalistic public goods distribution (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006). Accordingly, corruption should be seen as a result of disorganization where there is an unstable intergroup relationship within a recognized system and authority (Huntington, 1973).

Such a universal approach is no longer sufficient for reading into the complexities of corruption. Corruption as a scientific study is examined more through the perspective of

⁹ Reviews of corruption cases like the Sala Model are open in trial. The track records of cases can be acquired via the Mataram District Court case search information system portal, which is accessible at sipp.pn-mataram.go.id

dualism.¹⁰ This implies putting one approach over another. This argument becomes clear in the context of corruption studies in Indonesia. Law-enforcement-based movements are not strong enough to reduce corruption, and vice versa, institutional-reform-based movements do not have sufficient capacity to confine the emergence of corruption based on the abuse of public mandate (Butt, 2011; Juwono, 2016; Macmillan, 2011). Corruption should be seen as linkages between structure and agency, to be precise, as a duality that continues to generate corruption as social practice. Accordingly, decentralization should be accompanied by efforts to open up participatory channels so that accountability and checks and balances are fostered at the local level. To achieve such a condition of accountability in the Indonesian context, civil society and mass media capable of playing an optimal role are required to bring about proper political competition at the local level (Kirana, 2014).

Conclusion

There are linkages that mutually complement each other facilitating the expansion of corruption at the local level in West Lombok Regency. The prismatic structure opened up opportunities for creating a perpetual state of corruption. The social structure with its poly-communal and poly-normative qualities resulted in poor assimilation as a collective entity. The prismatic structure made it unviable for effective monitoring of public administration to develop, and this condition was exacerbated by the elites having a very difficult time assimilating. Decentralization and poly-

communal structure are a duality that has influence in perpetuating corruption at the local level. The two structures provide local political elites the opportunity to continue producing a corrupt public administration system at the local level.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research contributes to the field of social and political sciences by providing a perspective on the emergence of perpetual corruption in transitional societies. It also indicates that an approach to corruption that heavily focuses on law enforcement and bureaucratic reform would be insufficient without considering local structures affecting the spread of corruption at the local level. Local structures must be encouraged to generate checks and balances in order for anticorruption policies to succeed.

Limitation of Study

As a product of science and knowledge, scientific work is never final. There is always an antithesis to the thesis. Admittedly, this study has its limitations, particularly in relation to its research methodology. *First*, the study is limited by the informants' ability to recall the various dynamics that occurred when discussing the various corruption cases under examination. This particularly applies to old cases. To address such limitations, relevant information such as court rulings that have permanent legal force were collected and examined as part of the secondary data. This is a rather effective means to address issues relating to informants not being able to remember the details of the cases. *Second*, the research was carried out in West Lombok Regency, and as a consequence, it has not explored the various local structures affecting the emergence of perpetual corruption post decentralization in other regions throughout Indonesia. Further studies are, thus, necessary to expand the scope of the research so that a generalization of this issue in other communities can be defined.

¹⁰ Dualism is a perspective in social science that attempts to place one perspective over another. It is set as a turning point for Anthony Giddens to bring about a theoretical synthesis of the tension between subjectivism and objectivism, voluntarism and determinism, i.e., the structuration theory. In the current study, this implies that it does not highlight a single approach, but it attempts to combine two approaches or discourses that have not been done much. Herry Priyono discusses this theme quite straightforwardly in reading the thoughts of Anthony Giddens.

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