

## The Implementation of Regional Autonomy Principles in Local Government Administration in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi

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### Abstract

Regional autonomy is an important principle in Indonesia's government system that aims to grant greater authority to local governments to manage their own administrative affairs and promote regional development. This study examines the implementation of regional autonomy principles in local government administration in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi. The objective of this research is to analyze how regional autonomy has been implemented by the local government and to identify the challenges faced in its implementation. This study employs an empirical legal research approach with a qualitative method. Data were collected through interviews with government officials, analysis of legal documents, and observation of administrative practices within the local government institutions in Mamuju Regency. The findings indicate that the implementation of regional autonomy in Mamuju Regency has generally been carried out in accordance with national regulations, particularly in the areas of public service delivery, policy implementation, and local development planning. However, several challenges remain, including limited human resources, bureaucratic constraints, and coordination issues between the central and local governments. These challenges affect the effectiveness of policy implementation and the realization of good governance at the regional level. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, improving administrative professionalism, and enhancing coordination between levels of government are necessary to optimize the implementation of regional autonomy in Mamuju Regency. This research contributes to the understanding of how regional autonomy operates at the local level and provides recommendations for improving governance practices in regional administrations.

**Key Words:** Regional Autonomy; Local Government Administration; Public Governance; Mamuju Regency.

### Abstrak

Otonomi daerah merupakan prinsip penting dalam sistem pemerintahan di Indonesia yang bertujuan untuk memberikan kewenangan yang lebih besar kepada pemerintah daerah dalam mengelola urusan pemerintahan serta mendorong pembangunan daerah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implementasi prinsip otonomi daerah dalam penyelenggaraan pemerintahan di Kabupaten Mamuju, Sulawesi Barat. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis bagaimana prinsip otonomi daerah diterapkan oleh pemerintah daerah serta mengidentifikasi berbagai tantangan yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian hukum empiris dengan metode kualitatif. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan aparat pemerintah daerah, analisis dokumen peraturan perundang-undangan, serta observasi terhadap praktik penyelenggaraan pemerintahan di lingkungan pemerintah Kabupaten Mamuju. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi otonomi daerah di Kabupaten Mamuju pada umumnya telah dilaksanakan sesuai dengan ketentuan peraturan perundang-undangan



nasional, khususnya dalam bidang pelayanan publik, pelaksanaan kebijakan, dan perencanaan pembangunan daerah. Namun demikian, masih terdapat beberapa kendala, antara lain keterbatasan sumber daya manusia, hambatan birokrasi, serta masalah koordinasi antara pemerintah pusat dan pemerintah daerah. Kendala-kendala tersebut mempengaruhi efektivitas pelaksanaan kebijakan serta upaya mewujudkan tata kelola pemerintahan yang baik di tingkat daerah. Oleh karena itu, penguatan kapasitas kelembagaan, peningkatan profesionalisme aparatur, serta peningkatan koordinasi antar tingkat pemerintahan menjadi langkah penting untuk mengoptimalkan pelaksanaan otonomi daerah di Kabupaten Mamuju. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami pelaksanaan otonomi daerah di tingkat lokal serta memberikan rekomendasi bagi peningkatan praktik tata kelola pemerintahan daerah.

**Kata Kunci:** Otonomi Daerah; Penyelenggaraan Pemerintahan Daerah; Tata Kelola Pemerintahan, Kabupaten Mamuju

### Introduction

Regional autonomy is one of the fundamental principles in the governance system of Indonesia following the reform era. The implementation of regional autonomy aims to provide broader authority to local governments to regulate and manage their own governmental affairs in accordance with the needs and potentials of their respective regions (Nurrochmat et al., 2021). This policy is expected to improve public services, accelerate regional development, and strengthen democratic governance at the local level. According to Bagir Manan, regional autonomy is essentially the authority granted to regions to regulate and manage their own governmental affairs within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The legal foundation for the implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia is regulated in Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, which emphasizes the delegation of authority from the central government to regional governments. This law provides local governments with the authority to manage administrative, developmental, and public service functions. In line with this, Ni'matul Huda states that regional autonomy is a constitutional instrument designed to strengthen democracy and enhance the efficiency of governance at the local level (Harun, 2020). Through decentralization, local governments are expected to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community.

Furthermore, the concept of decentralization as the foundation of regional autonomy has been widely discussed by scholars. Rondinelli Dennis A. argues that decentralization allows governments to distribute authority and responsibility to lower levels of administration in order to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and public participation in governance. Similarly, Cheema G. Shabbir explains that decentralization strengthens local institutions and promotes democratic governance by bringing government closer to the people (Faguet & Pal, 2023). Therefore, the success of regional autonomy largely depends on the capacity of local governments in managing their authority and resources responsibly.

In practice, however, the implementation of regional autonomy often faces various challenges, such as limited human resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and coordination problems between the central and regional governments. According to Mardiasmo, effective regional autonomy requires strong institutional capacity, transparent governance, and accountable public administration. Without these elements, decentralization may not achieve its intended goals of improving public welfare and governance quality.



Mamuju Regency, located in West Sulawesi Province, is one of the regions that implements regional autonomy as mandated by national regulations. As the administrative center of the province, Mamuju has a strategic role in implementing local governance and public service delivery. However, like many other regions in Indonesia, the local government still encounters several challenges in implementing the principles of regional autonomy effectively. These challenges include administrative capacity, coordination among government institutions, and the optimization of regional resources to support development (Mukhlis et al., 2025).

Based on these conditions, it is important to examine how the principles of regional autonomy are implemented in the administration of local government in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi. This study aims to analyze the implementation of regional autonomy in the region and to identify the challenges faced by the local government in carrying out its authority. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of constitutional and administrative law studies, particularly in understanding the dynamics of regional autonomy and local governance in Indonesia.

## Method and Materials

This study employs an empirical legal research approach to examine the implementation of regional autonomy principles in the administration of local government in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi. Empirical legal research focuses on how law operates in society and how legal norms are implemented in practice. According to Soerjono Soekanto, empirical legal research analyzes the effectiveness of law by observing social behavior and institutional practices related to legal regulations. This approach is considered appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to analyze how the principles of regional autonomy are applied in the daily governance practices of local government institutions.

The research design used in this study is qualitative in nature. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to explore deeply the implementation process of regional autonomy and the challenges encountered by local government authorities. As explained by John W. Creswell, qualitative research is suitable for understanding complex social phenomena by collecting detailed information from participants and analyzing their perspectives. Through this approach, the researcher can obtain comprehensive insights into the administrative practices and governance dynamics within the local government of Mamuju Regency.

The materials used in this research consist of both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from the field through interviews and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with several key informants, including officials from the local government of Mamuju Regency, administrative staff, and community representatives who are directly involved in or affected by local governance policies. These interviews were designed to gather information regarding the implementation of regional autonomy policies, administrative procedures, and the challenges faced by local government institutions in delivering public services.

In addition to interviews, field observations were conducted to examine how governmental activities and administrative processes are carried out within the local government institutions. Observations helped the researcher understand the real conditions of governance practices, coordination among government units, and the interaction between government officials and the community. This method provided valuable contextual data to complement the information obtained through interviews.

Secondary data were collected through the analysis of relevant legal documents,



government regulations, academic literature, and official reports related to regional autonomy and local governance in Indonesia. Key legal documents include Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government and other related regulations governing decentralization and local government administration. Academic books, journal articles, and previous research studies were also reviewed to support the theoretical framework and to provide a broader understanding of the concept of regional autonomy.

The data collected in this study were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. This analysis involves organizing, interpreting, and describing the data systematically in order to identify patterns and draw conclusions. According to Miles B. Matthew and Huberman A. Michael, qualitative data analysis generally involves three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Through these stages, the researcher systematically examined the collected data to understand the implementation of regional autonomy in Mamuju Regency and to identify the main factors influencing its effectiveness in local governance.

## Result

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of regional autonomy principles in the administration of local government in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi, has generally been carried out in accordance with the national regulatory framework. The delegation of authority from the central government to the regional government has enabled the local government to manage various governmental affairs, including public services, regional development planning, and administrative governance. The local government of Mamuju Regency has implemented several programs and policies aimed at improving the quality of public services and strengthening regional development in line with the mandate of Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government.

One of the important aspects of regional autonomy implementation in Mamuju Regency is the improvement of public service delivery. Based on the findings from interviews with local government officials and community representatives, it was revealed that several administrative services, such as population administration, licensing services, and public complaint management, have been gradually improved. The local government has attempted to simplify administrative procedures and increase service accessibility for the community. These efforts reflect the commitment of the regional government to fulfill its responsibilities in providing effective and efficient public services under the decentralization system.

Another significant result of this research relates to the role of local government institutions in regional development planning. The Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) plays an important role in coordinating development programs and ensuring that regional policies align with the needs of the community. Development planning processes are conducted through participatory mechanisms, including community consultations and local development planning forums (Musrenbang). This participatory approach allows the community to express their aspirations and priorities regarding regional development programs. As a result, development policies in Mamuju Regency tend to reflect local needs and regional potentials.

Another challenge identified in this study is the issue of coordination between the central government and the regional government. Although decentralization provides autonomy for regional governments, certain administrative and financial decisions still require coordination with the central government. In some cases, delays in policy coordination and administrative procedures can hinder the implementation of regional programs. Additionally, financial dependency on central government transfers also affects

the ability of the local government to implement development programs independently.

Furthermore, bureaucratic procedures within some local government institutions are still relatively complex, which sometimes slows down decision-making processes. Although efforts have been made to reform bureaucratic practices, institutional improvements are still needed to ensure more efficient governance. Strengthening administrative capacity and improving governance mechanisms are essential to maximize the benefits of regional autonomy.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that regional autonomy in Mamuju Regency has contributed positively to local governance and development. However, improvements in human resources, institutional coordination, and bureaucratic efficiency are necessary to optimize the implementation of regional autonomy and to achieve better governance outcomes in the region.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the implementation of regional autonomy principles in the administration of local government in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi, has generally been carried out in accordance with the national legal framework governing decentralization. The delegation of authority from the central government to the regional government has enabled the local government to manage various governmental functions, particularly in the areas of public service delivery, regional development planning, and administrative governance. These developments indicate that regional autonomy has provided opportunities for local governments to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community.

The study also reveals that the local government of Mamuju Regency has made several efforts to improve governance practices, including simplifying administrative procedures, strengthening development planning through participatory mechanisms, and enhancing public service accessibility. The involvement of community members in development planning processes demonstrates the increasing role of public participation in local governance under the decentralization system. However, the implementation of regional autonomy in Mamuju Regency still faces several challenges. The limitations of human resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and coordination issues between the central and regional governments remain significant obstacles in optimizing the effectiveness of local governance. In addition, financial dependence on central government transfers also affects the ability of the regional government to fully exercise its autonomy in implementing development programs.

Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, improving the professionalism of government officials, and enhancing coordination mechanisms between different levels of government are essential steps to improve the effectiveness of regional autonomy implementation. By addressing these challenges, regional governments will be better positioned to deliver efficient public services, promote sustainable regional development, and realize good governance at the local level. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of how regional autonomy operates in practice at the local level and highlights the importance of institutional strengthening and governance reform in supporting effective decentralization in Indonesia.

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