Institutional Organizations in the Decentralization Policy: Case of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Local Level of West Sumatra

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Abstract - **The process of democratic transition in Indonesia is characterized by the friction in institutional logic. In the political sphere, the friction can be seen from the change of decentralization policy to centralization policy. The decentralization policy can be distinguished vertically or horizontally. The vertical decentralization policy produces deconcentrated administrations, while horizontally generates the autonomy of civil society. This study focuses on the horizontal aspect. An important question of this study is how civil society organizations respond to the friction that occurs in the institutional environment. This study put the decentralization policy as an institutional framework and non-governmental organization (NGO) as a civil society organization. This study takes the case of *Yayasan Citra Mandiri* (YCM). The study is conducted using qualitative approach. Data collection is done through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation of data collection. The theoretical framework that will be the center of this research analysis is the theory of institutional organization. This study shows that decentralization policy supports the legitimacy of NGOs. On the other hand, decentralization policy also puts pressure on the existence of NGOs.**

Keywords: *decentralization policy, institutional framework, Non-Governmental Organization, legitimacy and field*

I. INTRODUCTION

The transition of democracy in Indonesia can be identified (one of them) by the friction that occurs in institutional logic. In the political sphere, the logic of state management frictions from central to decentralization. Decentralization can be defined as a process of authority delegation, where central government sharing of responsibility among multi-tiered of government. Therefore, the local government is given political and financial authority. Vertically decentralized policies are identical to state-centric or government-centric. The policy of decentralization is more on the formal aspect of how the implementations of the law order. Most of these suggest that decentralization policies have resulted in democratization to local government levels. Although some of them also note the formal aspects of decentralization policy are not supported by the informal aspects of bureaucracy.

Another aspect of a decentralized policy is the decentralization of the horizontal aspect. It deals with civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and community organizations in a broader sense. If on the vertical aspect occurs what is called big-bang decentralization, it is interesting to see how it occurs in the horizontal aspect. The general proposition is that the existence of civil society organizations is influenced by how much political space the state gives them.

This research focuses on the existence of NGO as one element of civil society organization. Yayasan Citra Mandiri (YCM) was chosen as the case study. It's a local NGO on the local level of West Sumatra. YCM was established in 1995. The purpose of this institution is to strengthen and empower the Mentawai community to be more autonomous so that it can participate in the development of its region while maintaining the wealth of local resources. Mentawai, in this case, can be seen as a cultural unity and can also be seen as a political unity. Mentawai is one of the tribes that can be grouped to Proto Melayu culture. At the local level of West Sumatra, the Mentawai tribe becomes a minority of the Minangkabau tribe. As a political entity, the Mentawai or Mentawai Islands District is the eldest zone where the decentralization policy has been implemented in West Sumatera.

YCM can be said to be the only NGO in West Sumatra that is consistent with the local issue of Mentawai from the beginning to the present. During the New Order, YCM was known to be critical of the government; consequently, its relationship with the government was more of a conflictual relation. YCM conventionally and no conventionally pushes local government policy for Mentawai. Until finally, Mentawai was set up as its own district in 1999, not apart from the role of civil society organizations including YCM. YCM is the protagonist actor in decentralization policy, one of which can be seen from the YCM struggle for Mentawai autonomy that has been started since 1997. Institutional level of NGOs in West Sumatra, YCM was named as a healthy NGO by the Civil Society Development Consortium (KPMM) of West Sumatra.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted with the qualitative approach using case study. Data collection was done in three techniques, namely interview, observation, and literature study. In-depth interviews was conducted with YCM officers, in this case, three officers of YCM with key informant is the director of YCM. Interviews were also conducted with other informants, such as other NGO activists who also knew much about YCM's whereabouts both in the YCM establishment and travel process. There were six activists of NGO West Sumatra who were also interviewed. The development of information in the field then brought this research to also conduct interview with the government; two people. Both of them have formally and informally interaction with YCM. Most of the data obtained from the existing documents in YCM, mass media and records from previous research. Finally, observations are made through direct interaction with YCM's activist in Padang.

Analytical framework

This study will be analyzed by new institutional approaches. Typical of new institutional approaches is the creative ability of the organization's actors in responding to institutional environments. These actors make strategic choices that affect their position. Actors attempt to adapt to the institutional environment by abiding, manipulating or influencing their environment. It means that organizational actors not only react to institutional environments but also make proactive interventions.

The new institutional approach used to analyze the existence of NGOs concerning decentralization policy is very useful because; first, the new institutional approach depends on the environment in which the arena of the existence of the organization. Therefore, the organization will adapt through coercive means of isomorphism derived from political influence and legitimacy issues; mimesis isomorphism is a standard response to uncertainty, and normative isomorphism is associated with professionalization. Second, the new institutional approach also addresses how they manipulate the institutional environment and influence their institution.

Organizations can be defined as structured units that have a specific purpose. All organizations are trying to achieve what their goals are. To achieve that goal, the organization will be faced with pressure from the institutional environment that is an external aspect of the organization. The institutional environment includes formal rules such as constitutions, laws, and regulations, as well as informal rules such as norms, values, and habits in society. The institutional environment is dynamic so that every moment can change or experience a shift. Changes or shifts that occur in the institutional environment can be a pressure for the organization. The organization can influence its institutional framework. Furthermore, Nee (2005) mentions that the actor can maintain its existence amid pressure coming from the institutional environment. The actor's existence is described through his interactions and relationships with other organizations (fields) and how he gets legitimacy. Through these interactions and relationships, actors manipulate or reconstruct legitimacy (decoupling). Actors have their

knowledge, interests, expectations, objectives, which may be the same or different from those set by the institutional framework. The decentralization policy opens space for actors to participate in influencing policies. To influence policy, actors have interchangeable resources.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizational legitimacy is usually associated with the ability to adapt to the expectations of the institutional environment in which the organization is located. This study found that first, the formal institutional environment (decentralization policy) regulates more about the relationship between state and central (government-centric) government. While related to autonomy, autonomy and civil society participation is more on cognitive but not explicitly in regulation. In this case, YCM defines itself as an actor in the protagonist of the decentralization policy. YCM's confidence to influence political policy increase after decentralization policy was implemented and shortly afterward the Mentawai was ratified as a new district. However, decentralization and new government policies do not formally provide sufficient space for them to participate. For example, there is no clear regulation of the government's obligation to engage civil society in local policy-making. The condition is a coercive pressure like the existence of YCM in Mentawai. For that, YCM forced to be close to the government. Consequently, YCM that previously had a conflicting relationship with the government is now in a more collaborative relation with government. Utilizing the power of resources owned by YCM, (such as data, community assisted, YCM and other focus) YCM builds positive communication with local government.

Second, the decentralization policy in its implementation is influenced by the informal institutional environment (values and norms). Being a new district, having autonomy, did not automatically change the bureaucratic culture. The tendency is at the level of local government in which there is a process of imitation (mimesis). The model is a bureaucratic culture that incidentally is not in line with the spirit of decentralization policy. State actors working in bureaucratic bodies are the product of the old system, being an indication of the difficulty of changing the work culture of the bureaucracy. Therefore, the majority of YCM member is the Mentawai society who have completed higher education in Padang City. They participate responsibly in implementing the decentralization policy. The trick is to give the YCM members a mandate to enter policy-making. The condition is supported by political policies on electoral systems and politics, encouraging the emergence of many new political parties. Through some political parties, YCM members advanced to the political stage.

Third, the policy of decentralization and the desire of NGOs to engage in local policy require YCM to fix its internal organization first. During this time YCM's struggle is more valued by the public on the thematic issues. But later the existence of NGOs is also highlighted from the institutional side. Through regulation, all civil society organizations should be in the form of legal entities. The choice is two; foundations or associations. YCM itself chose i foundation even though the majority of other NGOs prefer association. For YCM the

choice of legal entity in the form of foundation is appropriate and in line with the objectives of the establishment of YCM. Formal legitimacy, for YCM, is more on the fulfillment of administrative requirements. As for other requirements such as the requirement to get the program, funding or cooperation, the requirements of legal entities do not affect except by cooperating with local government. In fact, YCM works together with stakeholders on money, programs, and other forms.

Fourthly, the decentralization policy not only opens up opportunities for YCM but also affect all civil society organizations. As a result, many civil society organizations emerge at the local level. The birth of civil society organizations is due to the large number of international donors, the openness of opportunities, to practical and other political interests. The condition, on the other hand, is detrimental to the existence of NGOs. In the regulation, the position of NGOs with other community organizations are equally positioned. So to distinguish between NGOs and other civil society organizations, YCM together with members of the Civil Society Development Consortium (KPMM) of West Sumatra formed a common value (normative isomorphism). All members of KPMM are required to fulfill the common value. This shared value is then defined in the AD / ART (budgeting) of the organization.

Fifth, the legitimacy of YCM when inputting to policy makers such as the government is constrained by the authority that YCM has as an NGO. YCM is deemed to have no scientific authority, expertise in recommending a policy. Therefore, YCM has to get the legitimacy to expand its existence by cooperating with universities. Almost all of the strategic policies presented by YCM involve academics both individually and institutionally in universities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The decentralization policy in the horizontal aspect is responded by YCM by extending its existence and legitimacy. In responding to the decentralization policy, actors both in the sense of individual or collective adapt not only to the institutional environment but also to manipulate the institutional environment.

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