

The Paradox of Decentralization: Examining Corruption in Indonesia's Decentralized Framework

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Abstract: *While corruption may be found anywhere in the world, countries with weak institutions and unstable political environments tend to have more of it. Many countries have embraced decentralization as a workable solution for tackling corruption. The purpose of this study is to provide insight on how decentralization affects Indonesia's corruption problem. The research is qualitative library research, in which the data is collected from various sources such as journals from Scopus and Google Scholar, media reports, government documents, as well as books. The research indicates that local corruption has increased following decentralization, with local government officials, the private sector, and village heads being the most involved. The judiciary in Indonesia has a poor reputation due to low judicial standards, a dysfunctional criminal justice system, and lax enforcement, which have contributed to its poor reputation. By undertaking such research endeavors, the issues confronting corruption will be exposed, and the government of Indonesia will have a more comprehensive understanding of how to deal with corruption.*

Keywords: *Decentralization; Corruption; Local Leaders; Civil Society; Indonesia*

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Introduction

The generally accepted meaning of corruption is an illegal exchange of valuables between two or more parties (Warburton, 2013). Such corrupt practices and structures are widely thought to be ethically repulsive and capable of impeding economic development and access to public services. To tackle corruption, however, different intellectual and policymaking traditions have adopted very diverse strategies. Neoliberal economists frequently associate corrupt activities with rapacious governments or bureaucratic populism (Evensky et al., 1989). Levels of political and administrative corruption have not greatly decreased in most countries despite two decades of deregulation and economic liberalization, especially in the transitional economies of the former Soviet bloc (Humphrey, 2002).

Misuse of public funds and bribery are two examples of corruption. Both are instances of corruption, which is the misuse of authority for individual benefit. Although corruption exists everywhere on the globe, it is more prevalent in countries with weak institutions and uncertain political contexts (The World Bank, 2020). This relates to attempts by public officials to abuse their access to legitimate public power by utilizing their positions of authority in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government to get improper personal benefits for themselves or their associates (Fijnaut & Huberts, 2002). As an example, consider the case of public authorities who unlawfully demand money from citizens in exchange for their cooperation or agreement (Nielsen, 2003).

Decentralization is highly desired by some countries because of the advantages that it has for both governments and people. However, there

are significant disadvantages that need to be taken into account when planning any decentralization program because the advantages of decentralization are not as obvious as the conventional idea of fiscal federalism claims (Prud'homme, 1995). Many countries, especially developing countries, have embraced decentralization as a workable solution for fighting corruption. Decentralization is defined by the World Bank as the transfer of power and responsibility for public operations from the central government to intermediate and local governments or quasi-independent governmental bodies and/or the private sector (Litvack & Seddon, 2002).

A review of previous studies shows that decentralization has both benefits and drawbacks in terms of reducing corruption. On the one hand, some studies claim decentralization reduces corruption because it encourages local accountability by reducing the influence of the central government. The government becomes more accessible to people by empowering local governments and encouraging local public scrutiny (Holzhacker et al., 2014). Decentralization, however, may encourage corrupt behavior for a variety of reasons. First, decentralization frequently leads to less assessment, surveillance, and appraisal by the central government, which provides local authorities with more latitude to engage in corruption. Second, decentralized systems give local officials more power, and this autonomy may lead to closer ties with the public, which may enable public officials to prefer particular people or groups (Holzhacker et al., 2014).

Although there is controversy over whether decentralization reduces corruption in society, many countries began decentralization for a variety of

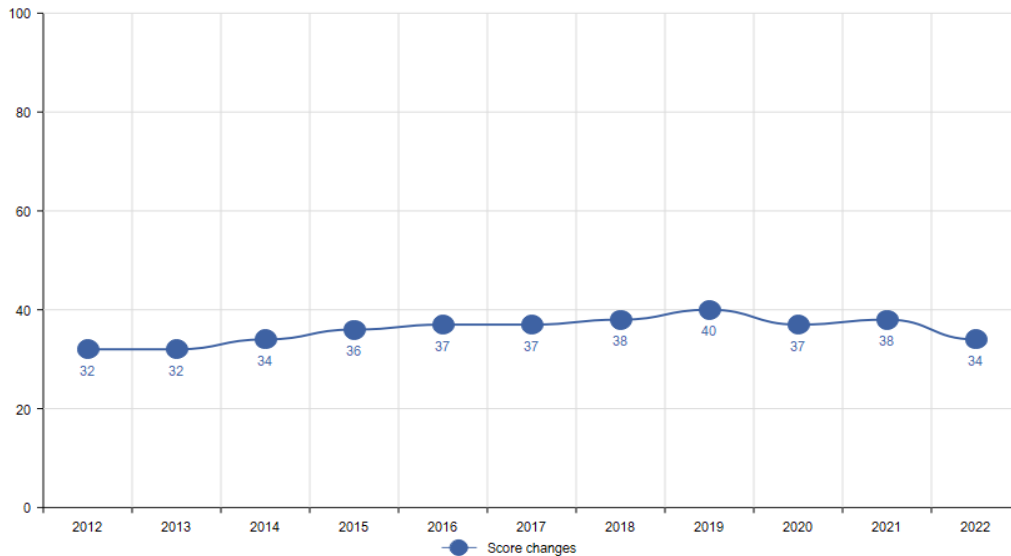
reasons (Prasetyia, 2010). Several countries, including Brazil, India, the Philippines, Uganda, and Indonesia, elected to switch from a centralized to a decentralized form of government. Indonesia has put in place an ambitious decentralization policy ever since the reform was first introduced in the late 1990s. By providing subnational governments the ability to choose policies that are more aspirational to community interests and local and regional development goals, it tries to promote regional development from below (Talitha et al., 2020). This transfer of power was especially significant because 473 district heads were given responsibility for overseeing the funding and execution of numerous socio-economic development programs, including public works, health, and education, for an average of It was closely scrutinized by specialists and observers of Indonesian politics (Kirana, 2014).

The 'devolution' style of decentralization is used in Indonesia, where local administrations are given complete legal rights and control over their own territories. Laws 22/1999 and 25/1999, which deal with regional autonomy and the financial arrangements between the federal and local governments, respectively, serve as the fundamental underpinning for decentralization. Defense, security, justice, international relations, and monetary and

fiscal policy remained under the control of the central government, while delivery of public services, such as public works, land management, investment, and so forth, was delegated to the subnational level (Talitha et al., 2020). The Indonesian government revised the law governing decentralization policy in order to create a more reliable structure. According to Firman (2003), the reforms have been critical in changing the relationship between central and local government, elevating the latter's political status.

Decentralization may actually lead to an increase in corruption over time, especially at the local level (Hadiz, 2004; Prud'homme, 1995). For instance, local elites in Indonesia have a tendency to seize control of local resources and even influence the formulation of public policy (Hadiz, 2004). Corruption remains a major issue in Indonesia despite decentralization efforts. On Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, which rates countries from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), Indonesia scored just 34 out of 100 in 2022. This low score indicates that corruption is still widespread in the country, even after initiatives to distribute power away from the central government. More progress is needed for Indonesia to meaningfully reduce corruption levels. This shows that corruption is still a major problem in Indonesia at all levels of government, despite efforts to grant local governments more authority.

Figure 1. Indonesia's corruption Index, 2012-2022



Source: Transparency International (2022)

This article will examine the reasons why corruption is so rampant in a country with a functioning decentralized government. The research highlights how decentralized Indonesia is and explores various causes for the country's continuous fight against corruption. Giving local governments more authority and encouraging citizen involvement in decision-making were two of the decentralization's main objectives. However, it has also opened up new doors for corruption to flourish.

The main research questions that this article seeks to answer are as follows:

1. What are the root causes of corruption in an Indonesian decentralized government system?
2. Does decentralization truly help to lessen the level of corruption?

Method

The present study employs a qualitative methodology utilizing secondary source analysis and library

research. Through a comprehensive review of authoritative published texts accessed via library collections and academic databases, the researcher aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Library research enables scholarly inquiry in a cost-effective manner by leveraging existing materials and accumulated knowledge. Analyzing prior studies and historical data facilitates elucidation of developmental trajectories and themes pertinent to the research questions. This allowed for nuanced exploration of the topic built on established findings in the literature. The skill of library research is finding the one thing you should have wanted to look for amid the many things that are there in front of you (Abbott, 2016).

Using a phenomenological approach, we conducted this data analysis to gain a deep understanding of the issue. By following principles of high validity and reliability, we aimed to generate insights from the existing data that are highly

relevant for answering the main question of the research. In order to facilitate a robust and comprehensive discourse, the researcher undertook a systematic review of the literature pertaining to corruption and decentralization in the Indonesian context. Multiple databases were searched to identify relevant books and peer-reviewed articles. Retrieved sources were carefully appraised and coded using a rigorous qualitative analysis framework designed to extract findings germane to the main research questions guiding this study. This process enabled a comprehensive synthesis of the current scholarly knowledge base around these issues of corruption and decentralization as they relate to Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

Following the overthrow of Soeharto's government in 1998, Indonesia was quickly moving away from a heavily centralized system of governance toward one that is primarily decentralized. The decentralization legal framework, which was enacted in 1999 and implemented starting in 2001, has allowed for a significant percentage of government service delivery to be transferred to the regions, especially the country's 416 local governments (cities and districts). Furthermore, it seeks to increase the political accountability of local administrations. Regional governments now make up about a third of total government spending, compared to 17% in 2000 (Kuncoro, 2004). Since May 1998, eliminating corruption has become a significant part of Indonesia's stated reform agenda. Presidents B.J. Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid had endorsed an anti-corruption campaign for political and economic reasons. Concern over the corruption's expected high cost is what

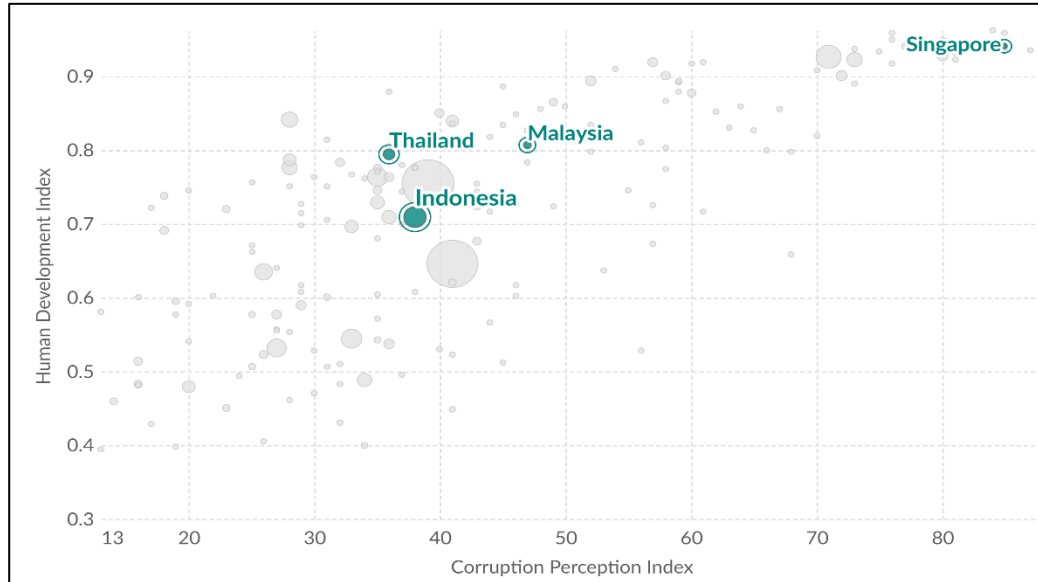
motivates reforms on the economic front (Hamilton-Hart, 2001).

According to Hadiz (2004), rather than being the result of procedural flaws, the inadequacy of decentralization in Indonesia is essentially an issue of power dynamics. As a result of the changes to autonomy, which also affected fiscal matters, the state has scaled back, moving governance to the village, which is the third level of government. After decentralization in Indonesia, corruption became more prevalent, and cases shifted from the center to the local level. As seen in figure (1) below, the Human Development Index (HDI) and Corruption Perception Index in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic that measures a country's average achievements in three key areas of human development: longevity, education, and standard of living. Specifically, the HDI combines data on life expectancy, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, and gross national income per capita. The Corruption Perception Index inversely measures the degree of corruption across countries and territories, with lower scores indicating higher perceived levels of public sector corruption.

When looking at specific countries, we can see that perceptions of less corruption generally correlate with higher human development outcomes. For example, Indonesia had a Corruption Perception Index score of 38 and a Human Development Index score of 0.71 in 2018. In comparison, Malaysia had less perceived corruption with a CPI of 47 and also has more favorable human development at 0.807 HDI. This pattern of higher CPI scores (less corruption) corresponding to higher HDI scores (more

development) is evident when contrasting the situations of Indonesia and Malaysia.

Figure 2. Human Development Index vs. Corruption Perception Index in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore (2018)



Source: (Transparency International, 2018; UNDP, 2021)

As you see in the above figure, Indonesia's map has the dark blue color and shows that the proportion of enterprises receiving requests for bribe payment is very high. The writer of the article will look at the difficult challenges of corruption and decentralization in Indonesia by examining their many facets.

Focus in particular on the connection between corruption and local authorities, as well as how corruption affects the provision of services. The research also highlights how sectors such as the judicial system, parliament, business, and civil society organizations like NGOs are involved in corruption. Undoubtedly, much research has been done on these related subjects, highlighting how crucial it is to combat corruption at all levels of governance.

Local officials have been found to be particularly susceptible to corruption in several countries, as their positions of

authority and influence present numerous chances for wrongdoing. Similar to this, corruption can seriously impede the provision of services by directing resources away from their intended uses and toward personal benefit. Additionally, corruption can harm the operation of important institutions like the parliament and the courts, weakening the public's trust and undermining the rule of law. While pervasive corruption may make it difficult for civil society organizations and NGOs to accomplish their goals, unethical corporate practices can give certain players unfair advantages over others and stymie economic growth.

Local Leaders and Corruption in Decentralized Systems

In decentralized systems, local leaders are important actors because they implement rules and oversee resource allocation at the local level. However, they

also have the capacity to engage in corruption activities, including money laundering, bribery, and nepotism. For instance, according to Rinaldi et al. (2007), a wave of corruption cases swept across Indonesia's newly empowered regional parliaments a year after regional autonomy went into effect in 2001. In various areas, including West Sumatra in 2002, Central Sulawesi, West Kalimantan, Lampung, and East Java, suspicions of corruption emerged (Rinaldi et al., 2007). The Blitar District Government's budget corruption is the other example of corruption. The Blitar District Head and his team fabricated losses of IDR 97 billion in the Local Budget FY 2002–2004. NGOs (Somasi and KRPK) and members of Team-11 of the governmental machinery joined forces with seven community leaders to bring this matter to light. The Deputy District Head, who is now the District Head, was spared punishment despite legal actions taken against him and numerous other employees being successful (Prasetyia, 2010).

One of the main challenges to eliminating corruption in decentralized systems is the lack of effective supervision mechanisms. Local officials typically don't have enough responsibility to higher authorities and the wider public, which creates an environment that's conducive to corruption. There is a link between corruption in all its manifestations and the environment that the region's ruler controls. For example, natural gas resources are plentiful in Bangkalan Madura; hence, the mining and natural gas industries were the focus of the corruption (Hadi et al., 2020). In Karawang's industrial location, corruption is the misuse of the Regional Head's discretionary power to grant licenses for commercial space utilization. Since there are few natural resource mines in Madiun

City and no industrial regions, corruption often occurs in local government projects. While in Tegal City, where the real estate developer had lured several desirable land plots for establishing business, corruption occurred in the form of an inland exchanging arrangement (Hadi et al., 2020).

The Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission's (KPK) frequent prosecution of "political corruption" (corruption of elected officials) is the main indicator of political corruption in Indonesia. Since its founding in 2003, the KPK has brought legal actions against more than 250 members of parliament (local, provincial, and central), 20 governors, 100 regents/mayors, 27 ministers, numerous heads and top party leaders, and numerous other high-ranking members of the legislature, executive, judicial, and legislative bodies, as well as some commissioners of state auxiliary bodies, such as Electoral Commissions, Business Competition Supervisory Commission, and others. Several reports and statistics indicate an increase in local corruption following decentralization (Faisal, 2019). KPK data reveals that, between 2004 and January 2022, 22 governors and 148 regents or mayors were apprehended by the KPK. This information only pertains to KPK data and does not consider data obtained from the Attorney General's Office and the Police. Furthermore, Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) has documented that from 2010 to June 2018, law enforcement officials identified 253 regional heads as suspects in corruption cases (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, 2022).

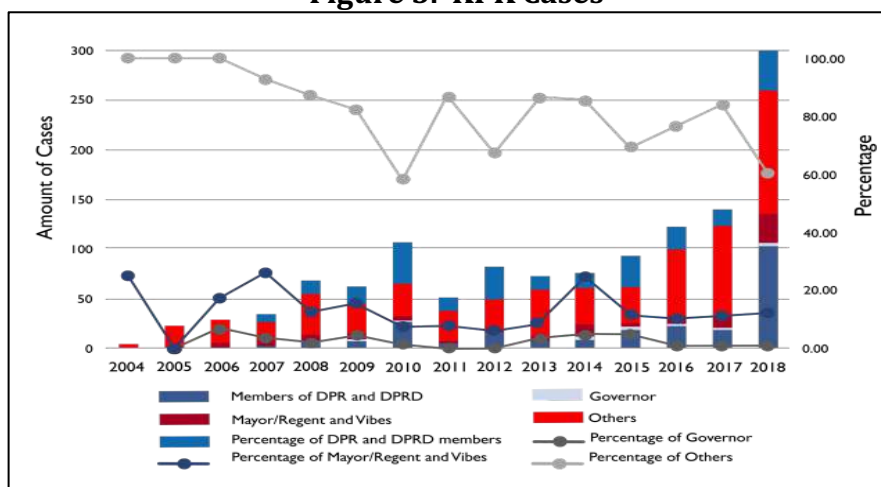
The data collected by the KPK and the ICW demonstrate that local corruption remains a significant challenge in Indonesia. The KPK data reveals that the highest number of apprehended

governors and regents/mayors occurred between 2016 and 2019, which is after the implementation of the latest decentralization policy.

Also, from the data provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Finance, it appears

that corruption is a significant issue in Indonesia, with actors such as local government officials, the private sector, and village heads being the most involved.

Figure 3. KPK Cases



Source: Badan Kebijakan Fiska (2021)

Judiciary and Corruption

The Indonesian judiciary has a bad reputation as a result of the criticism it has received for a variety of reasons. According to Transparency International (2012), one of the most corrupt sectors in Indonesia is the judiciary, which is still seen as being heavily influenced by local and national elites. Corruption in the judiciary is not a new phenomenon, and it goes back to before the decentralization era. For instance, the court system had been targeted for reform by both the Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid regimes, according to Hamilton-Hart's research, since the courts were corrupted (Hamilton-Hart, 2001). A Joint Investigative Team was established to keep an eye on judicial corruption. The team worked inside the attorney general's office with technical support from the Netherlands and suggestions from experts in civil society. The judiciary had also

undergone some reforms. 70% of the judges presided over cases in Jakarta courts as of mid-July had been replaced (Hamilton-Hart, 2001).

Bribes can affect judicial processes at all stages, including police investigations, attorney general's office indictments, court judgments, and appeals. During the time period under study, high-ranking judges continued to be detained on corruption charges. A judge in Balikpapan was detained in May 2019 for taking bribes while overseeing a fraud case. A quick modification to the Constitutional Court Law in September 2020 also frightened critics (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2022). The Judicial Commission received 2,970 public reports of corruption against Indonesian court institutions in 2018. The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) investigated 2,469 public complaints about alleged corruption (Sundari &

Retnowati, 2021). Between 2012 and 2018, KPK detained at least 27 judges for receiving bribes. Other ways of committing crimes in the legal system include interfering with the selection of judges who will hear cases, the method used to choose witnesses, the admissibility of evidence, the staging of trials, challenging the judgments of judges, and the scheduling of hearings (Sundari & Retnowati, 2021).

The Anti-Corruption Commission was established in 2004. As of the end of 2019, the commission had handled charges involving 257 legislators, 28 ministers, 21 governors, 119 regents, mayors, or their representatives, 225 senior bureaucrats, and 22 judges (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2022). Judges and other court employees have become corrupt, biased, and ineffective as a result of this. As a result, many Indonesians think that the judiciary is a place where justice isn't always done and where people in positions of authority can influence the system. The judiciary is in charge of protecting the rule of law and implementing tough rules to stop politicians and public servants from engaging in corrupt practices in democratic states. The rule of law is undermined, and a bad message is conveyed when political elites may escape punishment and avoid prosecution by using financial resources. It implies that the rule of law can be compromised by political clout and financial resources. (Kirana, 2014).

Professor Jeffrey Winters, a political analyst at Northwestern University in the United States, thinks that Indonesia is a democratic state devoid of the rule of law. Based on his belief that Indonesia's democratic system has turned into an oligarchy since the fall of the

Suharto government. Laws intended to restrain and safeguard the government are therefore entirely pointless. Although traditionally Indonesia has been recognized as a democratic country, in some ways even more democratic than the United States, it has also weirdly acquired a reputation as one of the most corrupt countries (Marwati, 2011). A previous rule that limited the terms of sitting judges to five years and two terms has been replaced with one that allows them to continue serving on the court until they are 70 years old. Many legal scholars saw this modification as the government's attempt to purchase the judges' support for a series of contentious policies that would undoubtedly be brought before them in the coming years (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2022).

It sends the wrong message that the rule of law might be readily undermined if someone had the political connections and financial means to escape the correct consequences and just buy their way out of any charges. These kinds of behaviors encourage both large- and small-scale corruption from the most basic levels of the executive branch and civil service, as well as creating an atmosphere of corruption. The root causes of Indonesia's legal shambles may be the constant game of extortion and forced sharing that redistributes wealth among the country's oligarchs and elites, poor legal education, and the unpreparedness of the country's legal system, which was crippled and rendered ineffective during the Suharto era (Kirana, 2014).

Although based on a study by Abdurrachman et al. (2020), the Supreme Court has gone further to maintain the unity of the implementation of the law and the consistency of decisions by assigning supreme judges with specific competencies and expertise to a case

chamber. This ensures the consistency of judges' interpretation of the room to create legal unity for the handled cases, with corruption cases being no exception. However, there hasn't been any legislation up to this point about standards or recommendations for figuring out how much of an indictment the Supreme Court issues, particularly in situations of corruption (Abdurrachman et al., 2020). The need for judicial reform has far-reaching consequences because, in addition to being a good thing in and of itself, doing so would strengthen the rule of law in the country, reduce the influence of oligarchs, empower lower class groups, and lessen the incentives for politicians to use their influence to advance their own interests rather than those of the general public.

Oligarchy and Corruption Issues in Indonesia

Oligarchs play a significant role in Indonesia's political and economic issues and are implicated in corruption charges. Since Suharto's government, there has been a culture that encourages the oligarch to emerge and flourish. The gradual development of Indonesia's new oligarch stratum was first fueled by General Suharto's efforts to solidify his rule after Sukarno was overthrown (Winters, 2013). It should come as no surprise that Indonesia became known as one of the most corrupt nations in the world while Soeharto was in charge. Indonesia was in third place after Cameroon and Nigeria on Transparency International's list of the world's most corrupt nations (King, 2000). Since then, Indonesia has remained an oligarchy, with a few families controlling and influencing all political decisions.

The majority of laws and regulations solely serve the interests of

oligarchs and political elites rather than addressing the true aspirations of people. The constitution's guarantees of rights for citizens have been violated by elites of political parties engaged in corruption and nepotism. The political party elites ought to be able to fulfill the welfare of the constituents they serve by taking into account the potential of the nation. Unfortunately, because it never materializes, such a desire has become a prolonged dream (Faisal, 2019). Politicians in Indonesia have grown reliant on taking away from the state or accepting donations from oligarchs to fund their political activities. As a result, politicians and executive authorities frequently put their personal financial interests before those of the broader people. In important areas like economic planning, poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, environmental protection, income distribution, and resource allocation, this has had a significant impact on policy choices (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2022).

Indonesia is an example of an "oligarch state" due to the dominance of a small group of individuals or families over its political parties. This situation creates a considerable gap between the goals of the people they serve and the laws and policies they created. Numerous laws and pieces of public policy demonstrate that the oligarchs are even willing to sacrifice the needs of the general populace in order to meet their own needs. (Faisal, 2019). Oligarchs are strong, and they have a wide-ranging and distorted impact on the politics of the country. An oligarch-controlled democracy lacks strong incentives to increase its judicial independence and impose legal restraints on itself, which has important ramifications for Indonesia's democracy. It would seem that "democracy is much

more constrained by the wealth power of oligarchs than the wealth power is by democracy" as a result of their impact on Indonesian politics (Marwati, 2011).

The Bertelsmann Stiftung, an independent foundation based in Germany, believes that reforms in the areas of anti-corruption, bureaucracy, and market liberalization are moving slowly because they pose serious threats to the oligarchic structures of old elites in the economic sector. These old elites still have a significant influence on both national and local politics (Transparency International, 2012). The campaign to undermine Indonesia's anti-corruption framework started with demands for the Constitutional Court to examine the Corruption Eradication Commission Law, which, according to data by Muttaqin & Susanto (2018), has received more than 20 such requests. The parliament was able to get the law changed at the end of President Widodo's first term. The Corruption Eradication Commission suffered as a result, and it was noted on the list of organizations that the people no longer trusted (Charles Simabura & Haykal, 2022).

It is significant to note that the persistence of the "oligarch" within Indonesia's political elites has been facilitated by a combination of poor management of political party finances, a lack of proper cadre recruitment, and a lack of enforcement of ethics. Although most political party leaders have consistently stated during campaign speeches that they have no tolerance for corruption, all political parties 'bribe' their supporters with cash, groceries, and a variety of other products (Faisal, 2019). Indonesia should therefore think about implementing significant and institutionalized state subsidies for parties and candidates in order to reduce

predatory finance and also bring about certain regulatory measures (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2022). It would be challenging to transition from the "oligarch" system to a true substantive democracy without such significant modifications (Faisal, 2019).

The Role of Civil Society in Combating Corruption

Human rights are not just a nice-to-have in the fight against corruption, according to Transparency International Chair, Delia Ferreira Rubio. Anti-corruption initiatives become subject to the whims of an elite under authoritarianism. The only long-term path to a society free of corruption is to ensure that civil society and the media have the freedom to express themselves and hold authority accountable (Transparency International, 2022). The civil society can function as a watchdog and hold the government accountable for its actions. By enhancing citizens' awareness of the negative repercussions of corruption on society, it can help promote a culture of responsibility and transparency (Ottaway & Carothers, 2000).

Strong social capital will lead to a large civil society, which is essential for a functioning contemporary democracy and efficient political institutions (Fukuyama 1999). Experts believe that civil society organizations in Indonesia are feeble and unorganized because of their weak background during the New Order (Hadiz & Robison, 2016; Hadiz & Robison, 2004). However, the existing civil society organizations have been making an effort to take on a bigger role in decreasing corruption levels. For example, they have established a variety of "watchdog bodies," including the Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW), in an effort to keep an eye on

how government agencies and other public offices are operating (Azra, 2010).

There are a number of CSOs that only focus on corruption in particular industries, in addition to generalist anti-corruption organizations. For instance, IPW (Indonesia Police Watch) works in the area of law and order; Fomappi (Forum Masyarakat Peduli Parlemen Indonesia, Indonesian Forum for Community Concern about Parliaments) and MP (Mitra Parlemen, Partners of Parliament) concentrate on the legislatures; ICM (Indonesia Court Monitoring) and LeIP (Lembaga Kajian dan Advokasi untuk Independensi) (Setiyono & McLeod, 2010). Since almost every state institution now has a CSO counterpart that monitors its performance and demands accountability, specialization not only enables each CSO to develop a detailed understanding of the corruption issues that characterize its area of focus but also aids the anti-corruption movement in moving forward in a more systematic manner (Setiyono & McLeod, 2010).

The relationships between oligarchs and civil society are significant because oligarchic dominance will decline as civil society organizations grow more active. They too act as guardians to ensure that strong law and order and good governance are upheld in the government, hence lowering corruption. Unfortunately, civil society organizations still lack the

necessary influence to influence the legislative and make their concerns heard. (Kirana, 2014). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has significantly contributed to donor programming for democratization and governance reforms by supporting Indonesian NGOs (Antlöv et al., 2010).

Civil society can perform a variety of roles in addition to preventing oligarchs from their effect on political rent-seeking. As an example, the explanation in Table 1 describes how civil society plays a role in “Gerakan Nasional Penyelamatan Sumber Daya Alam/National Movement to Save Natural Resources (GNPSDA)” activities. The GNPSDA, which was created by the KPK as a preventative measure, has the potential to develop into a common forum for parties with an interest in advancing better governance in the natural resources sector. This is significant since Indonesia's natural resources sector faces difficult governance issues (Epakartika et al., 2020). Refer to Table 1 below for detailed information on the role of Indonesia's civil society in the GNPSDA KPK initiatives.

The civil society involved in GNP Natural Resources is also growing, with more civil society activists focusing on problems of human rights, gender mainstreaming, and indigenous peoples, as well as actors who had previously primarily been involved in environmental and transparency issues.

Table 1. The Role of Civil Society in Eradicating Corruption in the Natural Resources Sector in Indonesia (2013-2018)

Anti-corruption efforts by civil society	Civil Society (2013-2014)	Civil Society (2015-2018)
Activity	Korsup Minerba /Coordination and Supervision Task Force for Mining (19 Provinces)	Penerimaan Negara Bukan Pajak (PNBP)/ Non-Tax State Revenue, oil palm plantation.
Role	Civil Society as part of the monitoring team.	Civil Society as the executor of activities.
Achievement	Gerakan Nasional Penyelamatan Sumber Daya Alam (GNP SDA I)/ strengthen corruption-free natural resource governance	Gerakan Nasional Penyelamatan Sumber Daya Alam (GNP SDA II)/ strengthen corruption-free natural resource governance

Source: Epakartika et al. (2020)

Therefore, for having more influence in government policies and having a bigger role in decreasing corruption, civil society should deepen and refine its strategies, especially by enlisting the aid of labor unions and other grassroots organizations to create a more expansive movement (Widjojoko, 2017). As Michael Johnston says, removing corruption necessitates profound democratic transformation, which is "a continuing process of setting limits to power, building accountability, and establishing social and political foundations of support for reforms" (Johnston, 2013).

The civil society involved in GNP Natural Resources is also growing, with more civil society activists focusing on problems of human rights, gender mainstreaming, and indigenous peoples, as well as actors who had previously primarily been involved in environmental and transparency issues. Therefore, for having more influence in government

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All governments, including the government of Indonesia, should expand and encourage opportunities for civil society to take part in initiatives aimed at combating corruption. Civil society may significantly contribute to the fight against corruption and the advancement of social and economic development, as evidence from numerous nations has shown. The prevalent issue of corruption impedes progress and development in numerous

countries. It is a complicated problem that calls for cooperation between the government and civic society. Civil society is essential to the success of anti-corruption initiatives, even though governments must take the lead in the fight against corruption. Governments can use the skills and resources of civil society to develop and put into action successful anti-corruption policies. Organizations in civil society frequently have good connections, are knowledgeable about the area, and can serve as a watchdog to check on government operations. They can also encourage citizens to hold public authorities accountable and transparent.

Conclusion

Decentralization, among its various benefits and drawbacks, is often considered a mechanism for combating corruption. However, findings from this study indicate that the decentralization efforts in Indonesia paradoxically resulted in an increase in corruption levels. The research outcomes highlighted that following decentralization, administrative corruption shifted from central to local government, culminating in a peak of corruption within local administrations. Decentralization led to an increase in corruption at the local level, with numerous regional heads, mayors, governors, and other officials being prosecuted for corruption activities like bribery, money laundering, and budget misuse. Weak oversight mechanisms have enabled local leaders to engage in corruption related to natural resource allocation, business licensing, land deals, and government projects. Data from the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and NGOs shows a rise in political corruption cases against local officials after decentralization policies were implemented in the 2000s. Therefore,

corruption remained a major challenge across Indonesia's decentralized system, demonstrating how decentralization can create opportunities for abuse of power and lack of accountability if proper oversight is not in place.

According to the results gained from this research, a spectrum of entities and stakeholders within the administrative framework are implicated in instances of corruption. For instance, the Indonesian judiciary struggled with a reputation for corruption and bias, with bribery affecting judicial processes at all levels. The rule of law is undermined when elites can escape punishment through political connections and money. While some reforms have been implemented, such as replacing many judges and establishing an anti-corruption commission (KPK), problems persist.

Critics argue that Indonesia became an oligarchy where laws intended to restrain the government are meaningless and a small group of individuals or families wield significant influence over political parties. For instance, oligarchs are influential and have a distorting influence on the nation's politics. Oligarchs influence politics by choosing candidates for and appointing people to crucial party and governmental offices. The public electorate eventually chooses the candidates, but these oligarchs only support those who support their ideological and financial interests. It has significant implications for Indonesia's future as an oligarch-controlled democracy lacks strong incentives to improve judicial independence and put legal restrictions on itself.

This oligarchic control leads to numerous challenges in addressing corruption and business-related issues. Implementing stringent regulations to prohibit politicians and public officials

from engaging in corrupt practices proves challenging amidst these circumstances. Despite having democratic institutions theoretically conducive to combating corruption, Indonesia remains among one of the most corrupt countries globally. More reforms are needed to strengthen the rule of law, reduce oligarchic influence, empower lower classes, and incentivize politicians to serve public rather than private interests.

The corruption problem in Indonesia has significant social and economic repercussions. Widespread bribery and graft undermine the rule of law and threaten democracy by eroding public trust in government institutions. The judicial system is perceived as biased and unfair, while some politicians and officials are seen as acting for personal gain rather than the public good. This corruption gives an unfair advantage to the wealthy and well-connected, stifling entrepreneurship and innovation. Ultimately, corruption hinders economic growth and development in Indonesia. To address this, comprehensive anti-corruption efforts are needed across government, business, and society. This includes strengthening oversight, accountability, and transparency mechanisms at all levels, reforming campaign finance and public sector management, empowering citizens, enhancing judiciary independence, and building political consensus and public support for zero tolerance towards graft. Robust anti-corruption institutions must be set up and protected from political interference.

Laws and regulations around asset disclosures, money laundering, and unexplained wealth should be strictly enforced. By taking such sustained, multi-pronged steps, incentives and norms enabling corruption can be altered to

restore public trust in state institutions. To combat corruption in Indonesia, many organizations, such as civil society, can play a vital role. They serve as watchdogs, monitoring government agencies and public offices, raising public awareness about the negative impacts of corruption, and advocating for transparency and accountability. Civil society complements government anti-corruption efforts with its on-the-ground expertise, watchdog role, and mobilization of public opinion. Future research can compare Indonesia's experience to other Southeast Asian countries, evaluate the role of e-governance and civil society, examine citizen perceptions of corruption, analyze impacts on service delivery, study political economy incentives, and assess anti-corruption legal frameworks.

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