

## THE STEEP ROAD TO INSTITUTIONALIZING NEGOTIABLE GOVERNANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** Law No. 6/2014 on Villages becomes the rule of application of negotiable governance in the management of village development. Authority in this domain must be translated as a negotiation space for various stakeholders. Accessibility of public participation in any regular citizenship forum must be guaranteed to be fulfilled by the Village Government, in line with the willingness of this village-scale authoritative institution to create public information transparency. This paper aims to examine the level of institutionalization of negotiable governance in the management of development in Bajo Village, Soromandi Sub-District, Bima District. As qualitative research with a descriptive approach, this research utilized in-depth interviews, observation, document tracking, and document analysis techniques in which a number of village government apparatus and villagers were used as informants to mine the data. The results of this study show that institutionalizing negotiable governance has not been taken seriously because the public participation in regular citizenship forums in Bajo Village is only possible because of "invitation" from the village government alone. The politicization of the public space seems only to be positioned as a mere formality through that "invitation" mechanism. Participatory governance seems to exist, but it is not implemented properly. More than that, the availability of information access is still very limited and relies heavily on the willingness of the village government to provide it to all existing residents. Certain information can only be accessed by the people who have the closest relationship with certain village officials, not villagers in general. The communication media is still limited to the existing formal forum which is believed to remain exclusive because it only involves certain elements of the community, who cannot possibly represent the needs of all groups of society.

**Keyword:** Disclosure; governance; negotiation; participation; politicization.

### Introduction

The resignation of President Suharto on May 21, 1998, after 32 years of authoritarian rule marked the success of the articulation of the massive demands of various parties who wanted to change the pattern of state regulation from authoritarian to democratic. The

transition of national leadership has been utilized as a seed for stimulating systemic change "the mechanism for administering government, development and community tasks" carried out by all public institutions in Indonesia, including the Village Government. The realization of the collaborative power relations

between the government and citizens through the democratization scheme is believed to be a "quality guarantee" for accelerating the achievement of national ideals as stated in the constitution.

Intention to develop democratic life in the village, as an inseparable part of the reformation agenda, is embodied in the form of improved regulations that are more accommodating to the bottom-up development process based on respect for local wisdom and knowledge in order to promote the standard of village life. The latest policy that carries the idea of the realization of a prosperous democracy in the village is nothing but Law No. 6/2014 on Villages.

Law No. 6/2014 on Villages was passed by the government in January 2014. The law is aimed at freeing villages from the authority of higher levels of government — that is, by village autonomy — and creating openings for democratic institutions, decentralization aimed at revitalizing the village development, make community institutions more representative and accountable, and improve state-society relations. These issues need to be addressed in various ways, including the development of budgeting and improving internal village governance (Antlöv, Wetterberg, & Dharmawan, 2016: 161-162). In the midst of the deviant heritage left by the New Order in the form of weak organizations and civil society institutions at the village level, Law No. 6/2014 has created a broad political opportunity for the birth of new models of governance of public affairs at the village level based on a combination of responsive village leadership, citizen groups who have full initiatives with

deeply rooted deliberative traditions, and high-performance and open formal representation institutions (Priyono, 2017: 8).

This law mandates the realization of village government with a professional character, efficient and effective, open, and responsible, with the support of the existence of active citizens where their initiatives, movements and participation are also optimally utilised in the framework of managing village potential and assets to realize mutual prosperity. The Village Law has become an oasis that presents opportunities as well as challenges for the democratization of the village. It provides a route for revolutionary change in village life. Through the two main principles of recognition (recognition of origins) and subsidiarity (village-scale local authority), the opportunity for villages to develop themselves is increasingly wide open. Villages are also encouraged to revive democratic practices through the Village Deliberation mechanism, especially in deciding strategic matters (Mariana et al., 2017: 18).

The realization of accountable and democratic village development management is not only focused on the initiative, role, and actions of the village government alone, but also requires high-level community agencies who participate in managing village development while overseeing the performance of the village government so that public welfare becomes the basic orientation of the village development can immediately surface. The 2014 village law was initiated by the government as a means to recognise the traditional rights of village communities; strengthen weak

governance arrangements; and empower villages to meet their own development needs, reducing poverty and social inequality (Antlöv, Wetterberg, & Dharmawan, 2016: 172).

The Village Law No. 6/2014 designs villages to foster local democratic capacity through civic engagement scenarios (Priyono, 2017: 10). It accommodates citizen participation through village meetings (Musyawarah Desa/Musdes) as an area in which contestations and conflicts of interest are held to produce consensus. This is a reflection of the "gateway to the establishment of democracy", namely a situation in which public relations take place more openly, influence each other, and are egalitarian so that communication is free from anyone's domination and hegemony. It does not stop as limited as the arena of contestation of ideas, village meetings can also produce consensus from the fight and negotiate the interests of village stakeholders. Musdes can produce a product of the Village Medium Term Development Plan (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Desa/RPJMDesa), which is then derived into a Village Government Work Plan (Rencana Kerja Pemerintahan Desa/RKPDesa), then concretely budgeted in the Village Budget Plan (Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Desa/APBDesa). Thus, the village at a certain level is so autonomous because of its authority to take strategic decisions, plan, budget, implement, and supervise the implementation of development (Sujito, 2017: 135-136).

Although the Village Law has opened the widest possible space for

citizens to participate in the village development process, there are some difficult challenges to develop substantive democracy in the village level, mainly in the form of: first, the village government really "obeys" its above government (supra desa) in managing funds development, even though this level of dependence has been limited by the determination of village-scale local authority; and second, community participation is still relatively weak, both substantively and constructively. But there is also a limited appetite for participation in community meetings. In general, communities are left out of the process. Formal meetings are often limited to participation by certain circles. Those who are included or not is often contested and subjective. Sometimes decisions are made unilaterally. But where there is some collaboration this is often by invitation only (The Reality Check Approach+ Team, 2016: 50).

Citizen involvement in the management of village governance is a buzzword that should become an opportunity and a challenge to encourage the growth and development of substantive democracy. The presence of substantive democracy is characterized by the existence of deliberative democracy which manifests itself in the form of public space. Without the existence of public space and the participation of civil society in the process of policy formulation, democracy will have no meaning whatsoever for rural communities (Mariana et al., 2017: 24).

Viewed from the perspective of the science of public administration, the Village Law serves as a rule of creation of negotiable governance in which the

authority to manage village development becomes the negotiation domain of various stakeholders. Communicative relations between the village government and citizens are not merely articulated through formal authority but are driven by informal exchange processes between the rulers and the ruled which must be open, developing and reflexive. Management of village development is negotiable so that the process is effective and legitimate. Negotiable governance requires the existence of an authorized institution that is more interactive, negotiable, dialogical and facilitative for the needs of helping the community to be able to regulate themselves (Bang, 2003: 8).

Governance refers to less or more deliberate efforts to regulate specific policy areas through negotiated interactions between many actors, processes, and institutions (Torfing, 2007: 3). This concept reflects the application of power in an institutional context aimed at guiding, pumping, and directing the activities of citizens through daily political engagement. There are three crucial terms to understand the substance of governance, namely accountability, legitimacy, and transparency. These three interrelated terms indicate the familiar bond between governance and the political process (Kuper & Kuper, 1996: 387).

The arguments above are the basis of this paper to examine the level of institutionalization of negotiable governance in a particular village context in Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara Province as a form of application of the Village Law mandate which underlines the signification of participatory

governance and/or substantive democracy at the village level. The concept of negotiable governance presupposes that the use of village resources for the achievement of public welfare must always consistently apply the socio-cybernetic pattern based on interdependence between the social-political-administrative factors in the village. Therefore, the domain of village development management must be function by the holders of village level formal authority as an arena of negotiation and contestation of the interests of various actors which then lead to collective consensus, with a low level of resistance when it is implemented. On that basis, the question is how the institutionalization of negotiable governance in the management of village development is carried out by the formal authority institutions as a manifestation of the will of the Village Law?

## **Methods**

This study used a descriptive-qualitative method in which observation, in-depth interviews, document tracking, and document analysis were functioned as main techniques of data collection. The authors aim to explore the level of institutionalization of negotiable governance in the management of development in Bajo Village refers to the aspect of expanding access to public participation in regular citizenship forums and aspect of creating public information disclosure for the dissemination of development data to villagers.

This study is based on in-depth interviews with key informants in Bajo

Village during the six months of fieldwork research from December 2017 to May 2018 which is focused on the level of citizen participation forums and the public access to development data provided by the village government.

Administratively, Bajo is one of the villages in Soromandi Sub-District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara Province. It was formed since 1957 as the initial existence of the Level II Region of Bima District after the issuance of Law No. 1/1957 concerning the Elimination of Self-Governing Areas (Daerah Swaparaja). This village consists of 6 hamlets namely Ndanondere, Rasabou, Nangalere, Kampung Sigi, Bajo Selatan, and Bajo Utara. Besides being inhabited by Mbojo ethnic residents, Bajo Village is also inhabited by migrants from various tribes in Indonesia such as Fatce, Bajo, Falahu, Mangon, Buton, Bugis, and Javanese.

The determination of Bajo Village as the location of the study was solely intended to limit the scope of research. Based on the limitation of time and cost, researchers only targeted one village in Bima District in order to explore the institutionalization of negotiable governance in the management of village development, not in the 191 villages there. Although all villages in Bima District are assumed to have similar problems in developing social accountability and participatory governance, Bajo Village was chosen on the basis of the researchers' interest in concentrating the subject matter for the achievement of research objectives. Thus, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all villages in Bima District but are positioned as an embryo of reflection about the implementation of

the 2014 Village Law according to a particular village context.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Public Space Restriction in the Development Planning Cycle in Bajo Village**

Regular citizenship forums held annually in the context of village planning and budgeting constitute a group of political public money manifestations of village-scale deliberative democracy. The citizenship forum is one of the primary contents of the Village Law, requiring the full participation of citizens in it to make decisions or determine policies that relate to their collective interests. In order to eliminate the characteristics of elitist democracy, the village level public decision-making space must be fully politicized through expanding access to participation by non-elite citizens.

In other words, the politicization of public space for the establishment of an open and responsible village government, as outlined by the Village Law, requires full community participation in any forum for decision making that takes place in the village. Planning and implementation of village development must involve the whole community based on the spirit of mutual cooperation and guarantee the granting of their constitutional rights to monitor and supervise development, because their involvement is one of the keys to successful village development, which is realized in the use of rights to express opinions in each village development planning meetings and access and full control of local resources.

Village development planning is the process of the stages of activities organized by the village government by

involving the Village Consultative Body (Badan Permusyawaratan Desa/BPD) and community elements in a participatory manner to utilize and allocate village resources in order to achieve village development goals. Participatory village development can be interpreted as a development management system in the village and rural areas coordinated by the village head by promoting togetherness,

kinship, and mutual cooperation to realize the mainstreaming of peace and social justice (Article 1 of Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri No. 114/2014).

The following table presents a variant of the regular citizenship forum that can be used as a medium for village participation in determining development policies that are closely related to their collective needs.

**Table 1**  
**Types of Regular Citizenship Forums in the Village**

Types	Forums	Output	Nature	Legal Products
6 Years of Planning	Village Consultation ( <i>Musdes</i> ) and Village Development Planning Consultation ( <i>Musrenbangdes</i> )	<i>RPJMDesa</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vision and Mission of Village Heads;</li> <li>2. The direction of Village Development Policy;</li> <li>3. The direction of Village Financial Policy;</li> <li>4. The direction of General Village Policy.</li> </ol>	Village Regulation on <i>RPJMDesa</i>
1 Year Planning	Village Consultation ( <i>Musdes</i> ) and Village Development Planning Consultation ( <i>Musrenbangdes</i> )	<i>RKPDesa</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Elaboration of <i>RPJMDesa</i> for a period of 1 year, which includes:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Activities funded by <i>APBDesa</i>, mainly based on a village-scale local authority;</li> <li>b. Activities that are not funded by the <i>APBDesa</i> which are not village-scale local authorities are proposed to the Sub-District Development Planning Consultation (<i>Musrenbang Kecamatan</i>) to the District/City.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Contains information on priority activities and village development needs that are funded by <i>APBDesa</i>, village self-reliance, and/or District/City Budget Plan.</li> </ol>	Village regulation on <i>RKPDesa</i>

Source: Murtiono & Wulandari, in *Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2016: 96.*

Constitutionally, from villagers' participation space or gap in the village development planning is at the moment

of the preparation or discussion of *RPJMDesa* and *RKPDesa*, as presented in the following table:

**Table 2**  
**Citizen's Participation Space in the Village Development Planning**

Document	Activities	Description
<i>RPJMDesa</i>	Hamlet Deliberation	Organized by each hamlet head involving all residents in his hamlet.
	Village Consultation (Preparation of Village Development Plans)	Organized by the BPD by involving the Village RPJM Development Team and village communities.
	Village Development Planning Consultation	Organized by the Village Head, which was attended by village officials, BPD, and village communities.
<i>RKPDesa</i>	Village Consultation (Preparation of Village Development Plan)	Organized by the BPD by involving the <i>RKPDesa</i> Development Team and the village community.
	Village Development Planning Consultation	Organized by the Village Head, which was attended by village officials, <i>BPD</i> , and village communities.

*Source: Processed by the authors from various relevant kinds of literature.*

The politicization of the public space means the elimination of restrictive barriers for villagers to engage in regular citizenship forums. If the restriction is still maintained, then this is a form of de-politicization. The lack of development of political relations between the state and the people who are autonomous becomes the core of the concept of de-politicization of the public space (Tornquist, 2009: 1). It reflects the process of removing political character in decision making or the creation of an arena of decision making that is theoretically free from political pressure through the application of rule-based systems that significantly erase or reduce the discretion of politicians and the public (Flinders & Buller, 2005: 4).

De-politicization of the public space will further strengthen the existence of elitist democracy, which reflects an unhealthy situation where powerful actors, good networking, and

intolerance are able to use extreme institutions or democratic procedures to concentrate wealth and power between them. In the process, inclusionary mechanisms changed by these actors into an exclusionary mechanism (Nylen, 2003: 4). To eliminate this kind of elitist democracy, a powerful strategy is needed in the form of politicizing the public space in order to create substantive democracy that reflects a competitive political system in which leaders and organizations compete with each other to determine alternative public policies through a way that allows people to participate in decision-making processes (Schattschneider, in Vileyn, 2011: 5). The politicization of the public space deals with a participatory situation, in the sense that certain interests or issues are capable of being subject to consideration by the community collectively and the subject of citizens' actions both inside and

outside the existing political system (Tornquist, 1996: 7).

Democracy must prioritize public deliberation, give full authority to all citizens to take the best actions for the realization of public benefit, and sow participatory decision-making processes based on those principles (Pettit, 2004: 52). This is the spirit of the contents of the Village Law where deliberative democracy, participatory governance, inclusive democracy, negotiable governance, and other similar terms can be used as core characteristics of the village development management.

Referring to the context of Bajo Village, restrictions on the public space are still maintained as one of the "real defects" in the process of democratizing village life. The practice of village democratization, as the main agenda of Law No. 6/2014, is still experiencing a complex deficit because the opening of

public space in the domain of decision making is still purely pseudo where elements of citizens invited, outside the Village Government and Village Consultative Body, are only directed at the leaders of Village Community Institutions (Lembaga Kemasyarakatan Desa/LKD) such as Youth Organization (Karang Taruna), The Family Welfare Coaching Team (Tim Penggerak Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/TP.PKK), Citizens Association (Rukun Warga), Neighborhood Association (Rukun Tetangga), and etc.

Village Development Planning Consultation Forum (Musrenbangdes) for the formulation of the 2017 Village Government Work Plan (RKPDesa) which was held on October 17, 2016, where only thirty-five participants reflected restrictions on the access of citizens from all social categories to get involved in the regular citizenship forum.

**Table 3**  
**Participants in the 2017 *Musrenbangdes RKPDesa* Forum**

No	Forum Types	Participants		Amount	Total
1	<i>Musrenbangdes RKPDesa 2017</i>	Gender	Male	30	35
			Women	5	
		Position/ Position	Village Government	6	35
			BPD	4	
			LKD	8	
			Poor Citizens	0	
			Disabled Person	0	
			Community Leaders	9	
			Others	8	

*Source: Bajo Village Secondary Data, 2017.*

Men greatly dominate the composition of participants in the 2017 Musrenbangdes RKPDDesa forum

because the number of female participants only reached 17.5% which came from Village Government elements



(2 people) and LKD (PKK, 3 people). The regular citizenship forum has not involved community groups outside the structure of the Village Government, BPD and LKD. Participants who were positioned as "Community Leaders and Others" in the forum were none other than those who helped manage various LKDs in Bajo Village. Elements of Village Vulnerable Groups such as the poor and disabled person have never been involved in village-based decision-making forums at the level that their position is only as beneficiaries of development programs, not planning makers, decision makers, and/or policymakers.

Marginal groups in Bajo Village, including women, are almost never involved in a development planning forum that has been held by the Village Government or BPD. They often escape the coverage of the list of Musrenbangdes participants who were officially invited by the Village Government. Most of the villagers in this category did not know that there were "informal invitation mechanisms/channels" that could be taken to become participants in the village planning forum as stated in Peraturan Menteri Desa No. 2/2015. The lack of understanding of this was further compounded by the reluctance of the Village Government and/or BPD in the village to inform the schedule of organizing the Musdes and Musrenbangdes through an "informal channel" as mandated by regulation.

"I have heard information that there will be an organization of Musrenbangdes in all hamlets to capture the aspirations of the community which will become the

foundation for the preparation of the 2016-2022 RPJMDesa documents, but I did not follow it because I was never invited. Likewise, with the Musrenbangdes RKPDesa forum, every year must be carried out, but an ordinary figure like me escapes the coverage of an official invitation participant from the Village Government." [Personal communication with Ms Nining, Honorary Teacher, April 10, 2018]

Most of the women in the Bajo Village inhabit six hamlets: Bajo Selatan, Bajo Utara, Nangalere, Kampung Sigi, Ndanondere, and Rasabou have never had adequate access to any information related to the village planning. This is based on the level of apathy that is too high from the women themselves to obtain information about village development planning. Such conditions are exacerbated by the deliberate, unwillingness and/or indifference of the Village Government apparatus, both the BPD and the Village Government, to spread information about it openly to the public through certain means/communication media.

"Only village women have an influential position in the village such as the Leaders of the Village Community Institutions who have the privilege of accessing information regarding village planning, and even on limited coverage and levels. In line with the limited/inadequate access to information on village development, it is natural that women's participation in decision-

making forums at the hamlet and/or village level is low. The accompanying impact that accompanied the limited access and low participation was the absence of a prominent role of women in the domain of supervision of the village development management, especially in the implementation of various development programs/activities by the Village Government. Although in the village development documents there are special programs/activities that relate to women's interests, they are not born on the basis of women's initiatives, aspirations or proposals." [Personal communication with Ms Yuana, a Cadre of TP. PKK of Bajo Village, March 21, 2018]

To a certain extent, a number of women in Bajo Village benefited from the implementation of development programs (activities) in the village. However, these benefits are often not relevant to and/or unable to provide a complete solution to their priority needs. There is a "missing link" between women's interests and the solution steps offered by the Village Government for that. Village development programs/activities that do not originate from women's initiatives are a fundamental cause of their synchronous needs by resolving the problems taken by the Village Government.

"So far, the implementation of Musrenbang at both the hamlet and village levels has never involved marginalized groups such as

disabled person and the poor. The persistent participants of such forums are no other figures whose are considered to representing the interests of the collective community such as religious leaders, community leaders, youth leaders, women figures represented by PKK, and some administrators in village institutions such as BPD, LPMD, Karang Taruna, and etc. Deliberation is more dominant in discussing proposals for physical work in the form of alleyway revitalization, and farm roads making. The problem was caused by the lack of knowledge capacity of the village officials about the village development management, as well as a lack of community control over the proposal and supervision of the implementation of development programs funded by village funds." [Personal communication with Mr Amiruddin, Bajo Village's Hopeful Family Program Advisor, March 21, 2018]

When referring to regulatory provisions, the Musdes RKPDesa forum must be held no later than June of the Year by BPD by involving the RKPDesa Compilation Team and village community, while the RKPDesa determination must be agreed through the Musrenbangdes RKPDesa which must be held by the Village Head and attended by village officials, BPD and village communities no later than September of the Year. However, the 2017 Musrenbangdes RKPDesa event in Bajo Village actually shows something that is contrary to this

provision due to the mind-numbing factor of the Village Government and BPD to distinguish the meaning of the Musdes and Musrenbangdes. Because the forum has been facilitated by the BPD and attended by the Village Government, as seen in the News Event, it should be termed the 2017 Musdes RKPDesa, not the 1017 Musrenbangdes RKPDesa. In other words, the BPD and the Bajo Village Government positioned the Musdes RKPDesa as the Musrenbangdes RKPDesa. After the mat of the forum, there was no variant of another planning forum held by the Bajo Village Government. The Village Planning Cycle in 2017 was only held once in October 2016 in the form of the Musdes RKPDesa forum, without being supported by the implementation of the Musrenbangdes RKPDesa and Musdes APBDesa.

As a reflection of this condition, the biggest challenge that must be overcome is by straightening the understanding of the village government and the BPD on differences in meaning between the Musdes and the Musrenbangdes, and disciplining or breaking down the cycle of organizing village planning forums to be held by village government and/or BPD and Village Budget every fiscal year, so that none of the types of forums will be eliminated and can be held immediately according to the schedule as stipulated in the regulations.

A year later, the Village Planning Cycle of 2018 was almost more orderly according to the schedule of regulatory provisions where there were three regular citizenship forums held separately, both by the BPD and the Government of the Bajo Village. The cycle

improvement was based on the intervention program "Community Collaboration for Welfare (Kolaborasi Masyarakat Untuk Kesejahteraan KOMPAK)" which was implemented by the Village Marginal Empowerment Consortium (Konsorsium Pemberdayaan Kelompok Marginal Desa/KPKMD) for fifteen months, from 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2018. In general, the aim of this program is to encourage greater opportunities for marginalized village groups involved in the participatory village planning cycle.

As an output of the KOMPAK program, the stages of the village planning cycle for the 2018 budget period began with the Village Development Planning Arrangement (Musdes RKPDesa) held by the BPD on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, at the Bajo Village Office Hall. Unlike the previous village planning forum, participants in this activity were more varied with an adequate quantity of 58 people, who not only came from the Village Government, BPD and LKD elements but also involved a small number of marginalized groups.

Although it cannot be separated from the KOMPAK Program intervention, the seeds of awareness to participate in the 2018 Budget planning village forum have emerged in a number of marginal groups in the Bajo Village such as the poor, women and disabled person. The predicate of "Passive Citizens and Zero Experience in Participating in Village Planning Forums" would be eliminated through the use of invitation-based "Official Pathways" from Village Governments as well as "Unofficial" paths that regulations have provided, especially Peraturan Menteri Desa No. 2/2015

concerning Rules of Conduct and Decision Making Mechanisms in the Village Conference, to involve themselves in the village planning forum for the upcoming fiscal year.

Located in the Village Office Hall, on December 19, 2017, the Bajo Village Government held a Village Development Planning Meeting (Musrenbangdes RKPDesa) for the Fiscal Year 2018 which

was attended by the BPD and a number of elements of the community. On the same day and place, after the Musrenbangdes RKPDesa forum was held by the Village Government, the BPD also held a meeting to discuss the Draft of 2018 Village Budget Plan as well as the establishment of the Village Development Planning Team.

**Table 4**  
**Participants in the 2018 Musdes RKPDesa Forum**

No	Forum Types	Participants		Amount	Total
1	Musdes RKPDesa 2018	Gender	Men	47	58
			Women	11	
		Position/ Position	Sub-District Head	1	58
			Village Government	14	
			BPD	5	
			LKD	13	
			Village Facilitators	1	
			Poor Citizens	8	
			Disabled Person	1	
			Community Leaders	10	
Other	5				

Sources: Bajo Village Secondary Data, 2018

Although it seemed rather haphazard to understand the substance of the Village Law and its derivative regulations, the BPD of Bajo Village insisted that the *Musdes APBDesa* was a preliminary process/step/stage before entering the "actual" *Musdes APBDesa* forum to discuss and agree on a draft of Village Regulation on the 2018 Budget Plan which submitted by the Village Government (through the Village Head).

If referring to the provisions of *Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri* No. 113/2014 concerning Management of Village Finance and/or *Peraturan Menteri Desa* No. 2/2015 concerning Rules of Conduct and Decision Making Mechanisms in the Village Deliberation, the term *Musdes* was not "Preliminary" for the discussion of the Village Budget Plan and the establishment of the Village Development Planning Team, but only one *Musdes APBDesa* forum (in the

framework of discussing and agreeing to draft Village Regulations on Village Budget). Thus it can be concluded that what was done by the BPD of Bajo Village was very contrary to the regulatory corridor. The Drafting Team of APBDesa does not need to be formed again because the formulation of the types of activities and budget plans for the implementation of these activities has been embedded in the main tasks of the Village Development Planning Team. The types of activities and budget plans should be an inseparable attachment to the draft of RKPDesa agreed upon through the Musrenbangdes RKPDesa forum.

"This random understanding is fairly reasonable, because the regulations previously issued by the Government of Bima District (for example District Head Regulation No. 9/2017 on 2017 Village Budget Evaluation and Preparation Guidelines) underline the provisions that apply to all Village Governments that Implementation of Village Regulation Draft Arrangements about the APBDesa by forming a Drafting Team on Village Regulations concerning the Village Budget through the Decree of the Village Head, with the composition: Village Head as Responsible Person; Village Secretary as Chair; Head of Planning and Reporting Affairs as Secretary; as well as 5 to 7 members from the Sub-District Staff, Village Officials, Chairpersons of Village Community Empowerment Institution (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan*

*Masyarakat Desa/LPMD*), Village Community Empowerment Cadre (*Kader Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa/KPMD*), and Community Leaders." [Personal communication with Mr Yahya, Chairperson of Village Consultative Body, March 7, 2018]

Based on this district head regulation, the Village Consultative Body organizes the *Musdes* for discussing the Draft of APBDesa and the Formation of the Compilation Team of the Draft of APBDesa as a precondition before entering the village budget planning stage which was intended, mainly by *Perauran Menteri Dalam Negeri* No. 113/2014 concerning Management of Village Finance and/or *Peraturan Menteri Desa* No. 2/2015 concerning Standing Orders and Decision Making Mechanisms in the Village Conference. The Village Regulations draft on the 2018 Bajo Village Budget was agreed upon by the Village Consultative Body with the Village Government through a meeting held by the Village Consultative Body on Friday, March 9, 2018. The draft of village regulation (*Rancangan Peraturan Desa/Raperdes*) on APBDesa was then promulgated into the Bajo Village Gazette No. 01/2018.

"Starting the orderly planning cycle in the Bajo Village seen from the implementation of the *Musdes* and *Musdes RKPDesa* in 2017 (because in previous years the term *Musdes RKPDesa* was not known or never held at all) occurred not without cause. The assistance, communication, and intensive

intervention applied by the KPKMD KOMPAK program implementers in Bajo Village in the framework of encouraging the Village Government and the Village Consultative Body to be willing to curb the implementation of the village planning cycle have resulted in the emergence of this kind of village change situation." [Personal communication with Mr Kadarusman, Community Organizer of the KPKMD KOMPAK Program, March 15, 2018]

In each fiscal year, there is no *Musdes APBDesa* forum that is formally carried out by the Village Consultative Body in Bajo Village which involves and/or invites elements of the community. There is only the submission of the draft of village regulation on APBDesa by the village government to the Village Consultative Body for consideration/approval.

### **Low Level of Institutionalization of Negotiable Governance in Bajo Village**

The establishment of an open and responsible village government as mandated by the Village Law, in practice is still "far away" from the ideal condition because the full involvement of the community in planning, budgeting and implementing the village development is still positioned as "meaningless discourse" by influential elites in the village. As a constitutional imperative, community involvement in the village meetings has never been adequately implemented by those who feel very upset about the threat of reducing their

power and authority when the portion of the village development management must be divided or handed over to many parties, including non-elite citizens.

Set against the intention of securing covert interests, village elites did not fully open the community's involvement in the village development planning forum. Citizen participation is often limited, so the regular citizenship forum that has been held so far still shows its exclusive face. The "pseudo" title inherent in the politicization of public space in the Bajo Village has been validated by a series of authentic facts that the determination of priority programs for village development is absolutely in the hands of village elites, not the collective authority of the community.

"Although the stages of screening citizen aspirations through the *Musdes* forum have been carried out, the development priorities there are still only "hit-or-miss" because the determination of the priority scale is strongly influenced by pressure from groups seeking benefits for their own groups in the name of interest of residents. In addition, the weak governance of development in Bajo Village has provided space for the emergence of project monopolistic practices by the village officials and has automatically triggered various forms of intimidation from other elite groups who also want to get a similar development project allotment. As a result, this kind of fact further marginalizes the interests of the villagers in general, moreover the aspirations or needs

of marginalized groups." [Personal communication with Mr Andhika, Chair of LPMD of Bajo Village, April 5, 2018]

The politicization of public space is an absolute obligation that must be carried out for the realization of substantive democracy in the village, but in practice, access to citizen involvement in every village development planning meeting has never been fully opened by certain elites in Bajo Village. The politicization of the public sphere seems to be positioned only as a formality. Such a process seems to exist, but it doesn't work as it should be. In fact, public participation can be a marker of the degree of democracy created. It is a necessity if various types of public forums are inclusive. When applied, inclusiveness is beneficial for giving affirmations to government policies, but when it is ignored in its policy formulation, it can transform into the background of demands for improving the performance of the state institutions because it neglects to involve the public in collective decision-making processes (Hikmawan & Hidayat, 2016: 40).

The context of public participation in the development planning cycle in Bajo Village is possible because of "invitations" from the village administration alone, not based on their demands as active citizens. Active citizenship in the form of public participation in decision (policy) making has been made possible because of the existence of decentralized government, facilitated by transformational leadership, and sown through a top-down pattern based on the mandate of the concept of "good governance" (Carino, 2000), not

active citizenship as a demand imaging applied bottom-up patterns in which the public acts proactively in the articulation of demands for welfare, claiming its constitutional rights as formal citizens, and controlling government performance by breaking into the "guardrail" of decision-making forums whose access is deliberately exclusive and limited to public (*closed spaces*), or requires the provision of special forums - from nothing to *claimed spaces*, or even by offering unique deliberative space variants that have never been done before (*invented spaces*). Government institutions act as facilitators (stimulants) for public participation according to the top-down pattern. Beyond this, in a bottom-up pattern that underlines active citizenship as a demand, the public organizes and mobilizes themselves to be involved in decision-making forums.

Community participation in regular citizenship forums in Bajo Village is still at the level of "*as a practice stimulated by the government institutions*". Even then it is at a limited level. This kind of active citizenship is the result of a complex process of development that is institutionally driven because of certain social and political needs. In these terms, it follows top-down patterns where public institutions promote public policies aimed at stimulating civic and political engagement and civic and political participation. On this basis, active citizenship is an institutionally driven process aimed at favouring participatory behaviours with the purpose of facilitating access to the political system, to share responsibilities with the broad polity in determining public policies and also of promoting democratization. This is

essential in neoliberal settings where the aim is to enlarge the basis of democracy via the promotion of input legitimacy and to facilitate participation in governance, as well as it is functional to solve emerging social and public problems. Channels for participation can be different, but all serve the purpose of providing feedback and input to public institutions in planning specific policy interventions (Bee, 2017: 60-62).

The idea of active citizenship as demand becomes particularly important when the civil society express certain claims through different means, by using both traditional (such as protest) and alternative channels of mobilization (such as social media). From this perspective, active citizenship can, in fact, be thought of as a bottom-up process where civil society actors engage and participate in the civic and political domains seeking to 'raise their voices', within the scope of shaping forms of reciprocal solidarity or expressing dissent toward the current political status. In these terms, active citizenship can be defined as a bottom-up process through which the civil society comes together in order to shape forms of reciprocal solidarity or through which forms of dissent toward the current political status is expressed. In these terms, active citizenship becomes a demand for democratization and for extending the social bases for participation in a particular society (Bee, 2017: 63).

The raising of the question "*Will the implementation of the Village Law provides more benefits for non-elite villagers?*" marked the pessimism of a number of people in Bajo Village regarding the significance of the presence

of Law No. 6/2014 for improving the welfare of ordinary citizens in the village when the apparent politicization of popular space, as an old pattern of managing public affairs which has derogatory connotations, still remains entrenched in the implementation of village governance in the post-reform era. This sceptical question surfaced because the reason that all forms of deliberative meetings currently held in Bajo Village were still very rarely attended by poor people and other vulnerable groups, but were only filled with elites, both from the village government (village government and consultative body) and manager of the Village Community Institution. The reluctance of citizens to attend (which is based on specific reasons) further strengthens the exclusivity style of the various regular citizenship forums there, even though the forum is actually held in order to discuss providing better access to services for vulnerable groups in the village.

Moreover, as found in the context of Bajo Village, the Village Government is not fully willing to carry out its constitutional obligations in the provision and/or dissemination of information on the administration of government in writing at the end of the fiscal year. This was reflected in the recognition of a number of informants from the villagers who were interviewed that the village government had deliberately restricted people's access to knowing everything that was related to village development management, especially detailed information about the implementation of the development program and the realization of Village Budget.



Although informants from the elements of the village government insisted that they had applied the principle of public information disclosure in the administration of village governance, the field facts prove that the Village Information System (*Sistem Informasi Desa/SID*), Village Info-graphic Banner, Village Information Board, and informal communication media which were used for disseminating the public information really does not fulfill the eligibility (appropriateness) requirements for the implementation of village government accountability and transparency because the series of communication media only contains general information about ceremonial activities of actors in administering government-level tasks at Bajo Village.

"Provision of access and disclosure of public information by the Village Government is still limited to the display of the *APBDesa* Info-graphics in one location that still cannot be reached by all villagers (generally only in front of the village office). The village government has not been "moved" to publish other strategic documents to the public, especially the Village Development Implementation Report and/or the Realization Report of *APBDesa*." [Personal communication with Mr Majhar, Youth of Bajo Village, April 5, 2018]

The unavailability of space and access to information disclosure for citizens in the village budgeting domain is

a cause of their helplessness and passivity to evaluate the implementation of the village development programs. Concerned that they were subjected to public criticism, the village government was reluctant to open access to any information, so that the oversight role of citizens in carrying out development activities did not show its form. In fact, the exposure of government information is claimed to provide greater accountability and encourages better decision-making. Greater transparency in the decision-making process establishes responsibility for the decision and requires increasing the range of interests consulted. Requiring access encourages efficiencies in record-keeping and information gathering processes, improving the responsiveness of consultation and enabling correction of incorrect or incomplete information (Stewart, 2015: 80-81).

The reluctance to provide access to public information often leads to the establishment that "not all information must be disseminated to the public because there are certain things that are sensitive so that they should be kept confidential". What is finally being realised is the hidden costs of secrecy – it allows bad practices to continue unchecked. One reason why government officials hate openness is that it highlights their mistakes, and that's embarrassing. However, avoiding embarrassment should not be the guiding principle of any government; running an efficient and well-run system should be. We only improve by making mistakes, and as it is with people, so it is with the government. So

if an agency is never held accountable, it is never faced with its mistakes, it can never really learn anything and thus will never improve. Bad practices will continue unchecked until they reach such a point of incompetence or corruption that no effort can contain the scandal. The problem then is the public's loss of trust, and trust in government is essential to a well-run democracy (Brooke, 2005: 5).

However, in certain scenarios, there are individuals who are keen to oversee the management of the development budget by the village government, but the activity orientation tends to intimidate and take personal advantage of the situation in the village level authoritative power holders in implementing the development programs. Active citizens in Bajo Village do not come from elements of vulnerable groups, but middle-class actors who want to monopolize the variants of special development work carried out in certain hamlets. Monitoring from the community elements raises caution and safeguards the quality of the development programs by the Village Government, but this control is not based on a pure orientation towards the creation of social accountability but rather the desire to get a share in the implementation of the program.

The lack of communication media for public information disclosure in Bajo Village proves the existence of one of the institutional accessibility barriers by Dervin (1973) where government institutions as a source of information may consciously prevent individuals from obtaining the information that is needed. This invention is based on the intention to hide all information that is

considered the secret of the village government so that it is "taboo" to be disseminated. To some extent, detailed information about the realization of the budget for the implementation of the development (project) program is positioned as something sensitive and at the same time as a secret that cannot be lifted to the surface.

This condition further eroded the degree of institutional accessibility of the Bajo Village government in managing the village development in a transparent and accountable manner. This low level of institutional willingness and capability have impacts on the lack of activation of villagers to monitor the performance of the village government so that participatory democracy in village life does not show its form. The image of a regular citizenship forum that is not inclusive complements the deterioration of social accountability of the government power holders in Bajo Village.

The limited access to information, as well as a shortage of the communication media variant for the dissemination of development data to the public, reflects the reluctance and unpreparedness of the village government to sow the principles of transparency and social accountability in the management of village development. The Bajo Village Government tends to be willing to provide information to certain people only, not disseminated it to the general public in the village as an embodiment of its constitutional obligations (Personal communication with Mr Muhidin, Chair of the Bajo Village Youth Organization, April 21, 2018).

Ordinary (non-elite) citizens are unable to access any information from the Village Government. Information relating to the implementation of the village development programs, for example, is actually obtained by the people from mouth-to-mouth without the adequacy of its validity. The availability of information access is still very limited and relies heavily on the willingness of the village government to provide it to all existing residents. Certain information can only be accessed by people who have the closest relationship with certain village officials, not villagers in general. The communication media is still limited to existing formal forums such as the *Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa* which are believed to remain exclusive because it only involves certain elements of the community, who cannot possibly represent the needs of all groups of society.

Even worse, orderly administration which is the pillar of the effectiveness of village institutional governance is often overlooked by the Village Government and the Village Consultative Body, both within the internal scope of each and the external scope (relations between village institutions are under the supervision of the Village Government). The existence of the Village Community Institution as the result of the *Musdes* formation is very rarely legitimized directly and quickly by the Village Head by issuing Decree on Management Standing. The existence of Village-Owned Business Entity, Customary Institutions, Village Community Empowerment Institution, Village Youth Organization, and others in

Bajo Village, for example, always left a Decree of Establishment from the Village Head which confirmed their legitimacy as administrators of village institutions for a certain period of time. The low capacity of the Village Government and the Village Consultative Body to organize the village government actually inhibits the acceleration of achieving the village development management goals in a transparent, accountable, inclusive and democratic manner. The delay in the implementation of the development planning cycle in Bajo Village is a follow-up impact of these low capacities.

The participatory village planning approach actually wants to ensure the involvement of citizens in identifying development priorities, policies, programs, and activities that require budget allocation or village resources. Participatory planning provides opportunities for citizens to participate in allocating resources for implementing priority policies. In applying this approach, it is necessary to ensure its alignments to the poor, women, and children lives, and also must pay attention to environmental preservation. This is important, not only in order to ensure that the voices of the poor and women can be "heard" through their involvement in regular citizenship forums, but also to help the village government ensure that efforts to fulfil citizens' rights in the form of good public services are fulfilled (DESA, 2005: 4). Participatory village planning emphasizes the significance of public participation in each process or opportunity to influence collective decisions. Each individual has a voice in determining public policy and is part of the democratic decision-making

process (Lang, in Kolopaking, Apriande, & Syaharbian, 2016: 3).

Increasing the level and scope of citizen participation in the village development planning must be a new spirit that must be applied to attach the title of "inclusive and participatory" to the management of village development. This is important to eliminate the existence of a bad legacy of the New Order where the practice of public participation only takes place formally-ceremonially without providing more access for citizens who attend regular citizenship forums to communicate and fight for their interests to the Village Government and *BPD*.

The creation of negotiable governance is in accordance with the will of the Village Law where the management authority of rural development becomes the domain of collective negotiations of various stakeholders, supported by communicative relations between the Bajo Village Government and citizens that are open, developing and reflexive so that the process is effective and *legitimate* is still at a low level. The existence of village-level authority institutions that are more interactive, negotiable, dialogical, and facilitative has not surfaced so that the basic needs of villagers are often ignored.

## Conclusion

The 2014 Village Law was present in response to the insistence and need to develop democratic life in the village. It becomes an inseparable part of the reform agenda that manifests itself in the form of improving regulations that are accommodating to the idea of bottom-up development in order to advance the standard of village life. The realization of

prosperous democracy in the village will be on the road of cutting when the domain of the village development management has been transformed as a field of contestation of interests, between active citizens and open village government. The social accountability of village-scale authoritative power holders is closely related to their willingness to open access to public participation in the forum arena for determining any strategic policy that takes place in the village. The elimination of barriers to participation as a reflection of the politicization of public space is the primary prerequisite for the creation of substantive oriented social welfare democracy in the village.

The Village Law, no other, requires the implementation of negotiable governance in the management of village development. The authority in this domain becomes a negotiating space for various stakeholders. Therefore, the village government must always guarantee the full accessibility of citizens to engage in regular citizenship forums that take place every year in the village for the determination of policies that relate to their collective interests. Elitist democracy can be eliminated through the politicization of the public space to expand access to participation by non-elite citizens in village-level public decision-making spaces. The spirit of the Village Law boils down to the functioning of deliberative democracy, participatory governance, inclusive democracy, negotiable governance, and other similar terms as core characteristics of the village development management.

Referring to the context of Bajo Village, the institutionalization of negotiable governance in the

management of village development has not been done seriously by the village government as the authoritative power holder mandated by the constitution. This lack of seriousness has led to the reluctance of the village government to fully open up the taps of community involvement in regular citizenship forums. Citizen participation is often limited so that development planning deliberations such as the Musdes RKPDesa and Musrenbangdes RKPDesa which have been held so far continue to show their exclusive faces because the involvement of villagers in such forums is still at the level of "as a practice stimulated by the Village Government" which has limited scope and degree. In other words, public participation in the development planning cycle in Bajo Village is possible because of "invitation" from the village government alone. The politicization of the public space seems only positioned as a mere formality through the mechanism of the "invitation". Participatory governance seems to exist, but it is not implemented properly.

Another form of the unseriousness of the Bajo Village Government to institutionalize negotiable governance in village development management leads to restrictions on access to information for residents on village development data, namely programs/activities related to it and the realization of the budget because the Bajo Village Government tends to be willing to provide information to people certain, not spread to the general public in the village. The lack of variants of communication media used to disseminate development data to the public increasingly complements the

spectrum of reluctance and unpreparedness of the village government to sow the principle of social accountability in the management of village development.

The availability of information access is still very limited and relies heavily on the willingness of the village government to provide it to all existing residents. Certain information can only be accessed by people who have the closest relationship with certain village officials, not villagers in general. The communication media is still limited to existing formal forums such as the Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan Desa which are believed to remain exclusive because it only involves certain elements of the community, who cannot possibly represent the needs of all groups of society.

As an output of lessons learned from this situation, the author recommends that the management of village development in an accountable, inclusive and participatory manner should be able to be upgraded in the future by various stakeholders in Bajo Village. The village government must be willing to publish the Village Development Reports or the Realization Report of APBDesa through a variety of communication media that are easily accessible to the general public in the village while opening the widest possible access for citizens to know any information relating to village development programs (activities) that are being or have held.

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