

Prefectural System Practices in The Indonesian Local Government

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the implementation of the prefectural system in Indonesia, examining its historical development, current application, and future trajectory in regional governance. This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a case study approach across several provinces in Indonesia. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, document analysis, and field observations to capture the nuances of the prefectural system's operation within different regional contexts. The prefectural system in Indonesia originated with the enactment of regional government laws and became more prominent after the New Order. It involves dividing the national territory into smaller administrative regions, with governors representing the central government, and features both deconcentration and decentralization. While previous studies have focused on decentralization and autonomy, this research highlights how these processes reinforce the prefectural system. This study provides fresh insights into the prefectural system's evolving role in Indonesia's decentralized governance. Unlike earlier works, it examines how the system balances central and local powers, anticipating its growing importance as Indonesia refines its decentralization policies.

Keywords: Prefectural system; deconcentration; decentralization; local government

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INTRODUCTION

The regional government system in Indonesia tends to coincide with autonomous regions with administrative regions through the implementation of the principles of decentralization and deconcentration (Shoesmith et al., 2020). The performance of decentralization realizes local self-government by forming autonomous regions, while deconcentration creates field administration (vertical agencies) and local state government (Firman, 2014). The deconcentration design in local government law adapts the Integrated Field Administration pattern, parallel with decentralization. The model requires uniformity of various vertical agencies' working area boundaries (jurisdictions) according to the administrative area under the government's representative (Rahayu et al., 2021).

The adherence to the Integrated Field Administration demands the coincidence of the autonomous region with the administration area (fused model) and the concurrent position of the regional head and the government representative (dual role). During the New Order, provinces, regencies, and cities occupied autonomous and administrative territories while governors, regents, and mayors held concurrent positions as regional heads and government representatives. A local government system with such characteristics is the Integrated Prefectural System model

(Fried, 1963). Indonesia still adheres to the prefectural system. This fact can be traced through local government law as a basis for implementing regional government that has been and is currently running (Sutiyono et al., 2018).

State territory into provinces, districts, cities, and other small areas is one of the characteristics of the prefectural system. In addition, the existence of government representatives and vertical agencies scattered throughout the country's territory is also evidence that the prefectural system is used in the design of local government in Indonesia (Aritenang, 2020). Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government has a solid prefectural construction, especially related to the increasingly clear tasks and authorities of government representatives, the regulation of general government affairs, the status of regency/ city areas as autonomous regions and administrative territories, the dual role of the governor who is a governor regional heads and representatives of the central government, as well as the duties of regents/mayors who also carry out general government affairs (Purwanto & Pramusinto, 2018).

The concept of the prefectural system has, to date, received limited attention from experts, academics, and practitioners in the field of local governance in Indonesia (Bjørnå & Jenssen, 2006; Ridley, 1973) because the prefectural system, in Indonesia's case, is practically merged with the principles of centralization, deconcentration, and decentralization (Wong et al., 2021). If we look closely, the system of regional government in Indonesia cannot be separated from colonial influence, especially during the Dutch colonial period, which implemented centralization and deconcentration during the control of the archipelago (Adnan et al., 2021; Sarkar et al., 2022; Yarram et al., 2022). The prefectural system was reflected in the practice of centralization and deconcentration at that time, one of which was through the governor-general as a representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, who ruled the archipelago as a colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The prefectural system continued until Indonesia became independent, strengthened in the new order era, and partially adopted by the current regional government system (He et al., 2018; Hoekstra et al., 2023; Winarna et al., 2021).

One of the key objectives of the prefectural system is to promote development and address regional disparities within Indonesia. The system aims to foster economic growth and improve living standards across all regions by granting significant decision-making power to local governments. Prefectures have the authority to manage local budgets, invest in infrastructure projects, and promote local industries, facilitating targeted development initiatives and effectively allocating resources (Pinson & Morel Journal, 2016).

Moreover, the prefectural system enhances citizen participation in governance and promotes accountability at the local level. Through elected governors and local representatives, citizens have a direct voice in shaping policies that directly impact their communities. This participatory approach strengthens democratic principles, as it encourages transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of the people (Rizzo et al., 2022).

However, challenges exist within the prefectural system, such as local government's capacity and capability gaps in some regions. Ensuring consistent administrative competence across all prefectures remains a significant undertaking. Efforts are being made to provide capacity-building programs and support to strengthen the capabilities of local governments, enabling them to effectively manage resources, deliver public services, and govern their regions (Suzuki & Han, 2019).

This study addresses the identified research gaps that could lead to a more nuanced understanding of the historical, theoretical, and practical aspects of the prefectural system in Indonesia. First, there is a need for a more in-depth exploration of the historical evolution of the prefectural system in Indonesia, particularly its roots in colonial practices during the Dutch period. Understanding the historical context could provide valuable insights into the development of the regional government system. Second, further investigation is warranted into integrating the prefectural system with decentralization principles, given its practical merging with centralization, deconcentration, and decentralization. Exploring the specific mechanisms and challenges associated with this integration could offer a more nuanced understanding of the system's functioning. Third, a gap exists in the comparative analysis of the prefectural system with other local government systems, both nationally and internationally. Such an analysis could shed light on the prefectural system's unique aspects, challenges, and advantages, providing a broader

context for its study. This study, in turn, may improve local governance, policy-making, and academic scholarship in the relevant fields.

This study examined the prefectural system practiced in the local government system in Indonesia, the prefectural system implementation, and its future in Indonesia; this study tries to answer three research questions. First, how does integrating the prefectural system with decentralization, deconcentration, and centralization principles influence the efficiency and effectiveness of local government practices in Indonesia? Second, which the historical legacy of the prefectural system, rooted in Dutch colonial practices, continues to shape and influence contemporary local government structures and policies in Indonesia? Third, which prefectural system contributes to or hinders the achievement of key objectives outlined in local government laws, such as promoting development and addressing regional disparities, thereby evaluating its practical impact on socio-economic development in different regions?

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used the constructivism paradigm, which emphasized the importance of understanding the social construction of reality and the subjective experiences of individuals. Constructivism emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality, suggesting that individuals actively build knowledge based on their experiences and interactions. In the context of the Indonesian local government system, the constructivist paradigm suits the study because it allows for exploring the multifaceted and context-dependent nature of the prefectural system. The study emphasizes historical influences, colonial legacies, and the integration of the system with decentralization principles, all of which require an understanding of the subjective interpretations and meanings attributed by individuals and institutions involved. Constructivism enables the researchers to delve into the perspectives of experts, academics, practitioners, and policymakers to comprehend the complex interplay of historical, cultural, and social factors shaping the prefectural system in Indonesia. It provides a framework for uncovering the tacit knowledge, shared meanings, and socially constructed realities that quantitative methods may not fully capture. Ultimately, the constructivist paradigm enhances the depth and richness of the study by acknowledging and exploring the subjective and socially constructed aspects inherent in the Indonesian local government system. The qualitative approach, a naturalistic and interpretive research method, was used to explore the perceptions and experiences of individuals related to the practices and implementation of the prefectural system in Indonesia. The case study research method provided an in-depth and holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Bogdan & Taylor, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research design involved selecting a case study and identifying the research questions. The case study site was the regional government in Indonesia. The research questions explored how different population subgroups implemented and perceived the practices and implementation of the prefectural system in Indonesia (Yin, 2012).

The data collection methods included interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Credible informants were carefully selected from various categories. Government officials, including governors, regents, mayors, and decision-makers, were chosen based on their roles and influence in the local government system. Academics and researchers with expertise in Indonesian regional government practices were selected based on their publications and research contributions. Practitioners and experts in local governance were identified through professional networks and practical experience. NGO representatives focusing on governance and community development were included. The number of informants interviewed was 30 people from various competencies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the prefecture system.

Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) involved participants from diverse backgrounds, including government officials, community representatives, academics, and practitioners. The FGD participants were selected based on their relevance to the research questions and the need for diverse perspectives. The number of FGD participants who attended was 40 out of 50 invitations sent, which ensured varied representation. Observations in the research encompassed policy implementation, interactions between stakeholders, decision-making processes, and the level of citizen participation facilitated by the prefectural system. This

method approach, incorporating interviews, FGDs, and observations, aimed to triangulate data and comprehensively analyze prefectural system practices in the Indonesian local government.

Document analysis examined relevant policy documents, laws and regulations, and media coverages. The data analysis was conducted inductively, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being imposed on the data. The analysis involved coding the data, identifying categories and themes, and developing a narrative to describe the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Moleong, 2018).

The verification process involved triangulation, which used multiple data sources and methods to validate the findings. It involved cross-checking the data from different sources and using member checking to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. The research adhered to ethical practices, principles, and guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring that the research did not cause harm to participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Sousa, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation and Practices of Prefectural System in Indonesia

Implementing the prefectural system in Indonesia over the past decade has undergone significant developments and challenges. The information is based on key informants, particularly from the West Java Province government, including the Regional House of Representatives and Provincial Regional Secretary members, who provided insights into the advancements and challenges within their region. The key informants emphasized the notable achievements, such as enhanced decision-making power of local governments, increased citizen participation, and efforts to strengthen the capacity and capability of local governments. This information is corroborated by observations and interviews conducted in West Java Province, highlighting improved regional autonomy, targeted development initiatives, and efficient resource allocation. Challenges, such as disparities in development outcomes and the need for better coordination among prefectures, were also supported by interview data and observations.

Similarly, challenges in implementing the Central Kalimantan Province's prefectural system were identified through interviews and observations. Key barriers include geographic and infrastructural limitations, socio-economic disparities, environmental and land-use conflicts, limited financial resources, and the need for capacity building. The information is sourced from interviews with key informants from Central Kalimantan Province, including the Deputy Governor and Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency, providing insights into the specific challenges faced in the region. The challenges are further reinforced by observational data regarding the region's geographic constraints, socio-economic disparities, and environmental conflicts.

Furthermore, comparing West Papua and Central Kalimantan provinces involves a combination of interview data, observations, and contextual analysis. Challenges related to geography, cultural diversity, socio-economic disparities, limited financial resources, governance capacity, and intergovernmental coordination were identified through interviews with key informants and observations. The comparative analysis is based on each province's unique characteristics and challenges, as highlighted by the key informants and observed during the research.

The discussion on the measure of success for regional government with the prefectural system is presented without specific statistical indicators. However, the information is presented in a general context, emphasizing the commonly used economic indicators like GDP growth rate, employment rate, and income per capita, as well as social indicators such as poverty rate, education indicators, and health indicators. While not explicitly referencing specific interview data, the information aligns with standard practices in evaluating the success of regional governments. It provides a comprehensive overview of the potential metrics for assessing the effectiveness and performance of the prefectural system.

Over the past decade, the implementation and practices of the prefectural system in Indonesia have witnessed notable developments and challenges. The government has significantly strengthened regional autonomy, promoted local governance, and addressed regional disparities. However, specific issues and obstacles require attention and further improvements. One of the key

achievements in implementing the prefectural system is the enhanced decision-making power of local governments. Prefectures have been granted greater autonomy in managing their budgets, resources, and policies, allowing them to address their respective regions' specific needs and priorities. It has resulted in more targeted development initiatives and improved public service delivery at the local level.

Additionally, the last decade has witnessed a notable increase in citizen participation in local governance. Through the election of governors and local representatives, citizens have a more excellent voice in shaping policies and holding their local governments accountable. This participatory approach has fostered a sense of ownership among citizens and improved the responsiveness of local governments to the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.

Moreover, efforts have been made to strengthen the capacity and capability of local governments. Capacity-building programs, training initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms have been introduced to enhance the administrative competence of local officials. These measures aim to address the capacity gaps and ensure effective governance across all prefectures. However, challenges persist in certain regions lacking the resources and expertise to manage complex administrative tasks. Despite the progress made, there have been challenges in implementing the prefectural system uniformly across all regions. Some prefectures have faced difficulties effectively managing their budgets and resources, resulting in disparities in development outcomes. These challenges are attributed to limited fiscal capacity, weak institutional frameworks, and inadequate technical expertise. Addressing these issues requires continued support from the central government regarding capacity-building, resource allocation, and policy guidance.

Furthermore, coordination and collaboration among prefectures have been areas of concern. The decentralized nature of the system can sometimes lead to fragmentation and a lack of coherence in policy implementation. Harmonizing policies and fostering cooperation between prefectures is crucial to ensure regional development initiatives align with national priorities and create synergies among regions.

In recent years, efforts have also been made to incorporate technology and digital innovations into the practices of the prefectural system. Digital platforms and e-governance solutions have streamlined administrative processes, improved transparency, and facilitated citizen engagement. These digital advancements hold great potential to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments.

According to our critical informants from the West Java Province government, the implementation of the prefectural system in West Java Province has undergone significant development and has faced significant challenges in recent years. As one of the country's most populous and economically dynamic provinces, West Java plays a crucial role in the overall governance and regional development. The implementation of the prefectural system in West Java has brought about improved regional autonomy and decision-making power. The provincial government has been empowered to make policy decisions and manage resources that align with the specific needs and priorities of the province. It has led to more targeted development initiatives, efficient resource allocation, and improved public service delivery.

Citizen participation in governance has seen notable improvements in West Java Province. Through the governor's and local representatives' elections, citizens have a direct voice in shaping policies and holding their local government accountable. This participatory approach has fostered a sense of ownership among the people and increased their involvement in local decision-making processes. West Java has made significant strides in developing its infrastructure and promoting economic growth. The prefectural system has provided the province with greater autonomy to plan and execute infrastructure projects that cater to the needs of its diverse population. It has resulted in improved connectivity, transportation networks, and the establishment of industrial zones, attracting investments and fostering economic development.

The challenges persist in implementing the prefectural system in West Java. One such challenge is the need to address regional disparities within the province. While efforts have been made to promote balanced development, certain areas in West Java still face socio-economic inequalities and inadequate access to public services. Ensuring that development benefits reach all population segments remains an ongoing task. Implementing the prefectural system in West Java has also emphasized the importance of coordination and collaboration among different levels of government. Effective coordination between the provincial, district, and city governments is

essential for cohesive policy implementation and resource management. Enhancing intergovernmental cooperation and strengthening institutional frameworks will be crucial in maximizing the potential of the prefectural system in West Java Province.

Conversely, implementing the prefectural system in Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, faces several barriers and challenges. These factors hinder the effective execution of regional autonomy, development initiatives, and governance within the province. The following are key challenges: (1) Geographic and infrastructural limitations: Central Kalimantan Province is characterized by its vast and remote geographical landscape, dense forests, and river systems. The region's challenging terrain poses significant infrastructural limitations, making developing and connecting various areas within the province difficult. Limited transportation networks, inadequate access to essential services, and a lack of infrastructure impede the efficient implementation of the prefectural system. (2) Socio-economic disparities: Central Kalimantan Province experiences disparities in socio-economic conditions across different districts and sub-regions. Some areas, particularly remote rural communities, face poverty, limited access to education and healthcare, and inadequate basic infrastructure. Addressing these disparities and promoting equitable development requires targeted policies and resource allocation, which can be challenging within the framework of the prefectural system. (3) Environmental and land-use conflicts: Central Kalimantan Province is known for its rich biodiversity and extensive forest cover. However, the region faces environmental challenges, including deforestation, land-use conflicts, and encroachment on protected areas. Balancing economic development with environmental conservation poses a significant challenge for the prefectural system. It requires effective governance, sustainable land-use planning, and stakeholder coordination. (4) Limited financial resources: The availability of financial resources is a common challenge many prefectures in Indonesia, including Central Kalimantan Province, face. The province relies heavily on central government transfers and revenue-sharing mechanisms, which may not always be sufficient to meet the region's diverse needs. Generating additional revenue streams and improving financial management at the local level is essential to overcome this challenge. (5) Capacity building and human resources: Developing the capacity and expertise of local governments and officials in Central Kalimantan is crucial for effectively implementing the prefectural system. Enhancing the skills of local administrators, improving their knowledge of governance principles, and providing training on policy formulation and implementation are critical areas of focus. Strengthening the human resources capacity within the local government is essential to overcome administrative challenges and ensure efficient governance. (6) Intergovernmental coordination: The successful implementation of the prefectural system in Central Kalimantan Province requires effective coordination and collaboration among various levels of government. Ensuring seamless coordination between the provincial, district, and city governments is crucial for policy coherence, resource allocation, and effective service delivery. Enhancing intergovernmental relationships and establishing precise mechanisms for cooperation is essential to address this challenge.

Implementing the prefectural system in Central Kalimantan Province faces barriers and challenges related to geography, socio-economic disparities, environmental conflicts, limited financial resources, capacity building, and intergovernmental coordination. Overcoming these challenges requires comprehensive and targeted strategies, including infrastructure development, equitable resource allocation, sustainable land-use planning, capacity-building initiatives, and effective intergovernmental coordination. Addressing these challenges will support the successful implementation of the prefectural system and promote inclusive and sustainable development in Central Kalimantan Province.

Similarly, implementing the prefectural system in West Papua Province faces barriers and challenges related to geography, cultural diversity, socio-economic disparities, limited financial resources, governance capacity, and intergovernmental coordination. Both West Papua and Central Kalimantan provinces in Indonesia face similar challenges in implementing the Prefectural System, such as geographical constraints, socio-economic disparities, limited financial resources, and the need for effective intergovernmental coordination. Both provinces have rugged terrains and remote areas that impede infrastructure development and connectivity. Additionally, socio-economic disparities exist in both regions, with specific areas facing higher poverty levels and limited access to essential services.

However, there are also differences between the two provinces. West Papua is known for its cultural diversity, with numerous ethnic groups and languages, complicating governance and policy implementation. Although diverse, Central Kalimantan may not experience the same cultural diversity as West Papua. Despite these differences, both provinces require efforts to strengthen governance capacity and human resources, as well as strategies to address financial constraints and foster intergovernmental coordination.

The measure of success of regional government with the prefectural system can be evaluated statistically using various indicators that reflect the effectiveness and performance of the region. Economic indicators are commonly used to assess success in this realm. The GDP growth rate provides insights into the region's overall economic performance. In contrast, the employment rate and income per capita indicate the region's ability to generate job opportunities and the economic well-being of its residents.

Social indicators are crucial in evaluating the success of regional government. The poverty rate measures the effectiveness of social welfare policies and poverty alleviation efforts, while education indicators, such as literacy rates and enrollment rates, reflect the region's educational attainment levels. Health indicators, such as life expectancy and infant mortality rate, provide insights into the effectiveness of the region's healthcare system.

Table 1. The comparison of economic indicators of local government 2019-2021

Province	GDP Growth	Employment	Per Capita Income
West Java	5%	95%	\$4500 to \$5000
Central Kalimantan	3.5%	85%	\$3000 to \$3500
West Papua	6%	75%	\$2500 to \$3000

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2021) and data processing by researcher

West Java is known for its vital industrial and manufacturing sectors and has experienced steady GDP growth. As an industrial hub in Indonesia, it offers employment opportunities for manufacturing, services, and agriculture. The province has maintained a relatively high employment rate. As a relatively prosperous province, West Java typically has a higher income per capita than the national average. Central Kalimantan province was rich in natural resources, particularly in the mining and forestry sectors, and has shown moderate GDP growth. With its reliance on the extractive industries, Central Kalimantan's employment rate has been moderately stable. Central Kalimantan's income per capita has been influenced by its dependence on resource-based industries. West Papua has witnessed notable economic development with its significant natural resource potential and emerging sectors such as tourism and fisheries. The employment rate in West Papua has shown improvement as the province seeks to diversify its economy beyond natural resource extraction. West Papua's income per capita has seen an upward trend due to increased economic activity and development efforts.

Table 2. The comparison of social indicators of local government 2019-2021

Province	Poverty Rate	Literacy Rate	Life Expectancy
West Java	9-7%	96%	73-75 years
Central Kalimantan	12-10%	92-94%	70-72 years
West Papua	20-17%	82-85%	65-67 years

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2021) and data processing by researcher

The poverty rate in West Java has seen a gradual decline over the years due to its relatively robust economy and development initiatives. Education indicators in West Java generally show positive trends. The province has made progress in increasing literacy rates, improving access to education, and enhancing the quality of education. Health indicators in West Java generally reflect a positive trend. The province has improved healthcare infrastructure, service access, and health outcomes. Central Kalimantan province was rich in natural resources, particularly in the mining and forestry sectors, and has shown moderate GDP growth. With its reliance on the extractive industries, Central Kalimantan has faced challenges in poverty reduction due to its geographical and economic characteristics. The province has seen a moderate decline in the poverty rate. Central Kalimantan has focused on expanding educational opportunities, particularly in remote

areas. The province has made efforts to improve literacy rates and increase school enrollment. West Papua has been making efforts to address poverty and improve socio-economic conditions. West Papua faces challenges in providing equitable access to quality education due to its remote and geographically dispersed communities. However, the province has made progress in improving education indicators. West Papua faces challenges in healthcare provision due to its remote and underserved communities. However, the province has made progress in expanding healthcare infrastructure and services.

The Future of Prefectural System in Indonesia

As a decentralized unitary state, Indonesia will keep implementing the prefectural dimension system in local government administration based on the territory of Indonesia being divided into provinces, districts/cities, which have their own government according to the mandate of the constitution. In addition, the regional government structure adopted by Indonesia shows the character of the prefectural system supporting the implementation of regional government through deconcentration and decentralization, which has been implemented so far. Provincial governments, district/city governments, and government representatives will still be maintained by adapting the character of the prefectural system.

The prefectural dimension system aligns with Indonesia's commitment to ensure effective and accountable governance at the local level. The prefectural system empowers local governments to address region-specific needs and aspirations more efficiently by decentralizing authority and resources. This approach recognizes that local contexts vary across the diverse archipelago, allowing for effective tailored decision-making and policy implementation to drive local development.

Moreover, the prefectural system promotes greater citizen participation in the governance process. Establishing representative bodies at the provincial and district/city levels allows citizens to voice their concerns, participate in decision-making, and hold local governments accountable. This participatory approach strengthens the democratic fabric of Indonesia's governance system and fosters a sense of ownership among the people.

The prefectural system emphasizes coordination and collaboration between different levels of government. It recognizes the interdependence and interconnectedness between provincial and district/city governments, necessitating effective communication, information sharing, and collaborative decision-making processes. This cooperative approach enables the optimization of resources, avoids duplication of efforts, and promotes policy coherence in addressing regional challenges and priorities.

Implementing the prefectural system also supports the principles of efficiency and effectiveness in local government administration. Delegating authority and responsibilities to local governments enables faster and more responsive decision-making processes. This system empowers local authorities to allocate resources based on local needs, streamline service delivery, and implement development projects promptly, thus maximizing the impact of government interventions on the ground.

Indonesia's commitment to the prefectural system in local government administration reinforces its decentralized unitary state structure. By embracing the principles of deconcentration, decentralization, citizen participation, intergovernmental coordination, and efficiency, the country strives to ensure effective governance and sustainable development at the local level. Implementing the prefectural system underscores Indonesia's dedication to empowering local governments, promoting citizen engagement, and addressing region-specific challenges, ultimately fostering inclusive and participatory governance across the archipelago.

Discussion

Based on previous studies, integrating the prefectural system with decentralization, deconcentration, and centralization principles in Indonesia yields diverse impacts on local government efficiency and effectiveness (Shoosmith et al., 2020). In decentralization, the fusion empowers local governments, granting them greater autonomy to tailor policies and resource management to regional needs. This condition can foster responsive governance, but challenges may emerge, leading to disparities in development outcomes among regions. The integration with deconcentration, particularly the Integrated Field Administration pattern, offers potential benefits

by improving the coordination of public services and field administration. However, challenges may arise in achieving uniformity across diverse regions with distinct needs. In terms of centralization, the integration aims to provide a unified framework for governance, ensuring coherence in policy implementation. It can streamline administrative processes and promote a standardized approach to governance (Firman, 2009). Despite these potential benefits, challenges are anticipated as the prefectural system is practically merged with centralization, posing practical hurdles and potentially affecting its unique characteristics. The overall impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of local government practices hinges on successfully navigating these challenges. Integrating the prefectural system with decentralization, deconcentration, and centralization principles holds promise for enhancing local governance. However, it entails challenges that must be carefully addressed to ensure a balanced and practical implementation across diverse regions in Indonesia. Further research is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes and dynamics associated with this integration.

The historical legacy of the prefectural system, rooted in Dutch colonial practices, exerts a lasting influence on contemporary local government structures and policies in Indonesia. During the Dutch colonial period, centralization and deconcentration were implemented to control the archipelago, reflecting a form of the prefectural system. This influence persisted through Indonesia's independence and was strengthened during the New Order era, partially shaping the current regional government system. The division of state territory into provinces, districts, cities, and other small areas, as well as the presence of government representatives and vertical agencies scattered throughout the country, reflects the enduring impact of the prefectural system. Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government solidifies this influence, outlining precise tasks and authorities of government representatives, regulating general government affairs, and defining the status of regency/city areas as autonomous regions and administrative territories.

The prefectural system in Indonesia plays a significant role in influencing the achievement of key objectives outlined in local government laws, particularly in promoting development and addressing regional disparities. One of its contributions lies in providing decision-making power to local governments, granting them autonomy in managing budgets, resources, and policies. This empowerment enables targeted development initiatives tailored to each region's needs and priorities. As a result, the prefectural system contributes positively to fostering economic growth, improving living standards, and addressing regional disparities by facilitating more effective resource allocation. Moreover, the prefectural system enhances citizen participation in governance, allowing direct input from the electorate through the election of governors and local representatives. This participatory approach strengthens democratic principles and encourages transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of the people. In this way, the prefectural system supports the critical objectives of local government laws by promoting accountability and citizen engagement in the decision-making processes, leading to more effective socio-economic development. However, challenges exist within the prefectural system that can hinder the achievement of these critical objectives. Local governments may face capacity and capability gaps in certain regions, affecting their ability to manage complex administrative tasks and deliver public services consistently. These challenges may result in disparities in development outcomes across different prefectures. Addressing these issues requires ongoing efforts to provide capacity-building programs, support, and guidance from the central government. By recognizing and mitigating these challenges, the prefectural system can better contribute to achieving the outlined key objectives in local government laws and ensuring more equitable socio-economic development across regions.

The lack of capacity between regional government units in Indonesia, particularly in the practice of the prefectural system, manifests in several challenges that hinder effective governance and development. One key aspect of this capacity gap is the uneven administrative competence across different regions. Some regional governments may face difficulties efficiently managing their budgets, resources, and policies, leading to disparities in development outcomes. Limited fiscal capacity significantly contributes to the lack of capacity in specific regional government units. Some regions may struggle with financial constraints, affecting their ability to implement development initiatives and deliver public services effectively. The reliance on central government transfers and revenue-sharing mechanisms can create dependency and may not always be sufficient to meet the diverse needs of each region. Inadequate institutional frameworks also

contribute to the lack of capacity. Regions with weaker institutional structures may find it challenging to coordinate and implement policies cohesively. It can result in fragmentation and a lack of coherence in policy implementation, especially in the decentralized nature of the prefectural system.

Furthermore, certain regional governments may lack the technical expertise to address complex administrative tasks. This deficiency in human resources and expertise can impede the effective management of resources, delivery of public services, and governance in general. Addressing these capacity gaps requires concerted efforts, including capacity-building programs, training initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms. The central government plays a crucial role in providing support and guidance to enhance the administrative competence of regional governments. By addressing these capacity challenges, the prefectural system can be more uniformly and effectively implemented across all regions in Indonesia, promoting balanced development and reducing disparities.

There are some differences between implementing the prefectural system in Indonesia and other Asian countries, especially Japan and China. The prefectural system in Japan holds a crucial role in the country's broader decentralization efforts and local governance structure. Acting as an administrative intermediary between the national government and local municipalities, it empowers regions with greater autonomy and decision-making capabilities. In Japan, decentralization, facilitated by the prefectural system, contributes significantly to effective local governance. By allowing regions to tailor policies and services to their specific needs and circumstances, decentralization promotes local accountability, citizen participation, and responsiveness to local concerns. This situation enhances the governance framework and ensures a closer alignment between government actions and community requirements (Ichimura & Arimoto, 2019).

Moreover, the prefectural system fosters intergovernmental cooperation and coordination, creating opportunities for collaboration among different levels of government. Intergovernmental partnerships enable more efficient and effective governance outcomes by sharing resources, expertise, and best practices. This cooperation strengthens the overall governance system, enabling the optimization of available resources and the achievement of common goals (Onitsuka & Hoshino, 2018).

However, challenges and complexities arise in balancing regional autonomy, national cohesion, and uniformity. Achieving a harmonious relationship between the national government and prefectural authorities requires careful consideration of power dynamics, decision-making processes, and policy implementation. Striking a balance between regional specificity and national coherence is vital for ensuring successful governance and effective policy outcomes within the prefectural system, as well as the significant role of the prefectural system in Japan's decentralization efforts and local governance structure. It emphasizes the benefits of decentralization in tailoring policies, promoting citizen participation, and fostering intergovernmental collaboration. However, challenges related to balancing regional autonomy and national cohesion should be addressed to ensure the smooth functioning of the prefectural system (Kie, 2020; Ovsiannikov, 2017).

The prefectural system in China holds a prominent position in driving economic development across diverse regions. Prefectural governments can introduce policies and initiatives that stimulate local economic growth, attract investments, and enhance the business environment. The effectiveness of the prefectural system in propelling economic development relies on essential factors like governance efficiency, policy coordination, and intergovernmental cooperation. When prefectural governments operate harmoniously with other governmental levels and stakeholders, it paves the way for more prosperous economic outcomes, ensuring the positive impact of the prefectural system on regional development and overall economic progress (Zhang & Yan, 2022; Zou & He, 2018).

The Fujian experience exemplifies the significant role of prefectural and local government reforms in China, as they have been instrumental in enhancing governance effectiveness, service delivery, and citizen engagement. These reforms prioritize the improvement of administrative efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Comprehensive strategies are implemented, encompassing diverse aspects of governance such as organizational structures, decision-making processes, and public participation mechanisms. By addressing these areas, the reforms aim to

create a more efficient, transparent, and participatory governance framework that benefits the government and the citizens (He et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Integrating the prefectural system with decentralization, deconcentration, and centralization principles in Indonesia presents diverse impacts on local government efficiency and effectiveness. While the fusion empowers local governments, granting them greater autonomy to tailor policies and resource management to regional needs, challenges may emerge, leading to disparities in development outcomes among regions. The integration with deconcentration offers potential benefits by improving the coordination of public services, but challenges may arise in achieving uniformity across diverse regions. In terms of centralization, the integration aims to provide a unified framework for governance, ensuring coherence in policy implementation. Despite potential benefits, challenges are anticipated as the prefectural system practically merges with centralization. Successful navigation of these challenges is crucial for balanced and practical implementation across diverse regions in Indonesia.

The historical legacy of the prefectural system, rooted in Dutch colonial practices, exerts a lasting influence on contemporary local government structures and policies in Indonesia. This influence persisted through Indonesia's independence and was strengthened during the New Order era, partially shaping the current regional government system. Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government solidifies this influence, outlining precise tasks and authorities of government representatives, regulating general government affairs, and defining the status of regency/city areas as autonomous regions and administrative territories.

The prefectural system in Indonesia plays a significant role in influencing the achievement of key objectives outlined in local government laws, particularly in promoting development and addressing regional disparities. Despite its positive contributions, challenges exist within the prefectural system, such as capacity and capability gaps in certain regions. Local governments may face difficulties managing complex administrative tasks, resulting in disparities in development outcomes. Addressing these issues requires ongoing efforts, including capacity-building programs and support from the central government. By recognizing and mitigating these challenges, the prefectural system can better contribute to achieving the key objectives outlined in local government laws and ensuring more equitable socio-economic development across regions.

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