IJHESS
International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences
PUBLISHER: Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu
ISSN: 2685-6689
SINTA 2

Urgency of Extending Hukum Tua Terms and Village Progress in Ranolambot Governance

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ABSTRACT

The extension of the village head's term of office from six to eight years under Law No. 3/2024 and Constitutional Court Decision No. 92/PUU-XXII/2024 sparks critical debates on rural governance and local democracy in Indonesia. This study evaluates the policy urgency of extending Hukum Tua tenure in Ranolambot Village, Minahasa Regency, across Cheema and Rondinelli's four decentralization dimensions: political leadership, programmatic support, bureaucratic capacity, and budgetary dynamics. Bridging macro-juridical mandates with grassroots administrative realities, this qualitative single-case study gathered empirical data from twelve key informants via in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Findings reveal that the eight-year tenure acts as a critical institutional buffer: politically, it mitigates post-election social polarization; programmatically, it protects multi-year development projects (80% of village programs); bureaucratically, it shields non-career, agrarian-background staff from premature reshuffling during their administrative learning curve; and budgetarily, it optimizes regional and national fiscal resources. This study concludes that extended tenure serves as a rational stabilization mechanism rather than executive power accommodation, filling a gap in rural governance literature. Practically, it highlights the necessity of institutionalizing stronger Village Consultative Body (BPD) oversight to prevent elite capture while securing operational continuity.

Keywords: Hukum Tua Term Extension; Village Governance; Institutional Stabilization

ARTICLE IDENTIFIERS

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
Volume 8 - Issue 4 - 2026
Pages 1361-1371
DOI: 10.56338/ijhess.v8i4.12381

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 08 September 2026
Revised: 09 October 2026
Accepted: 12 November 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Following successive waves of decentralization policies in Indonesia, the position of rural villages occupies a unique yet problematic locus within public policy and local governance discourse (Dwiyanto, 2015). On the one hand, villages are positioned as the vanguard of public service delivery, directly confronting the essential dynamic needs of grassroots communities (Monintja et al., 2025; Wijayanti et al., 2021) on the other hand, statutory frameworks lock village administrations into rigid governance landscapes that remain heavily burdened by hierarchical interventions from higher levels of government. This inherent conflict between accommodating genuine village autonomy and imposing bureaucratic standardization constitutes one of the most crucial (Mulyani, 2020) debates in rural decentralization and public policy studies in developing nations (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983; Prayugo, 2017). In this discourse, long-term development success is largely determined by local leadership capacity and institutional stability, yet empirical reality demonstrates a clear gap between legal mandates and ground-level execution (Prayugo, 2017).

The practical and academic importance of this study emerges following the enactment of Law No. 3 of 2024 on Villages and Constitutional Court Decision No. 92/PUU-XXII/2024 in early 2025, which restructured the tenure of village heads (Hukum Tua in Minahasa Regency) from six to eight years for a maximum of two terms. Practically, this study is vital to evaluate whether extending executive tenure serves as an objective prerequisite to provide adequate time for designing, executing, and evaluating the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) without rapid political succession interruptions (Kurniawan & Suswanta, 2020) and mitigating post-election social polarization from simultaneous village head elections (Pilkades) (Rajab, 2023). Academically, it evaluates whether this open legal policy risks weakening local democratic accountability, fostering elite capture, perpetuating local oligarchies, and increasing risks of authority abuse or bureaucratic political patronage (Maulana, 2023; Oktoberi & Rinaldi, 2023).

Existing literature on rural governance has largely been dominated by two main paradigms: normative-juridical analyses regarding statutory harmonization and macro-quantitative evaluations assessing the fiscal impact of Village Funds (Ministry of Finance RI, 2019, 2024). A significant research gap remains, as current scholarly work rarely examines how formal tenure extensions operate at the micro-level within rural administrative ecosystems manned by non-career personnel predominantly from agrarian backgrounds and sustained by strong socio-cultural capital (Septiani, 2020). This study fills this gap by examining how an eight-year tenure acts as an institutional buffer, shielding the administrative learning curve of rural staff from premature political reshuffling while balancing modern administrative standards with traditional kinship systems.

Building upon this gap, the research problem addresses: how does the legal extension of the Hukum Tua's term of office impact governance stability, program execution, and administrative capacity at the village level? Aligned with this problem, the objective of this study is to critically evaluate the implications of tenure extension through Cheema & Rondinelli (1983), four dimensions of decentralization and to propose effective policy oversight measures to prevent the abuse of authority. The research context focuses on Ranolambot Village, West Kawangkoan District, Minahasa Regency a locale exemplifying a unique intersection between formal national regulations and persistent local social capital, including religious institutions and Minahasan kinship traditions (Monintja et al., 2025). The unit of analysis comprises twelve purposively selected key informants, including the Hukum Tua (executive), village administrative staff (Secretary, Heads of Affairs/Sections), members of the Village Consultative Body (BPD, legislative oversight), and traditional and religious community leaders.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The second section details the qualitative Research Method, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures. The third section presents the Results and Discussion, structured around four core analytical dimensions: Political Leadership Support, Programmatic Support, Bureaucratic Capacity, and Budgetary Support. Finally, the fourth section provides the Conclusion summarizing theoretical contributions alongside actionable Policy Recommendations for future rural governance.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive single case study design (Yin, 2018). This design was selected to gain an in-depth, contextual, and holistic understanding of how the tenure extension of the Hukum Tua (village head) from six to eight years under Law No. 3 of 2024 operates within the rural government ecosystem of Ranolambot Village, West Kawangkoan District, Minahasa Regency. A single case study design is

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particularly appropriate because it allows researchers to examine the real-world interaction between formal national statutory mandates and local socio-cultural dynamics that cannot be captured through macro-quantitative indicators.

To ensure structural representation and data credibility, primary and secondary data were identified, collected, and differentiated as follows:

Primary Data: Primary data captured ground-level community knowledge, administrative adaptation, and local governance perceptions directly from field sources. These data were collected through two main techniques:

In-Depth, Semi-Structured Interviews: Informants were identified using purposive sampling criteria based on their structural role, decision-making authority, and direct involvement in village governance. A total of twelve key informants were selected, comprising the Hukum Tua (executive branch), village administrative staff (Village Secretary and Heads of Sections/Affairs), members of the Village Consultative Body (BPD, legislative oversight), and traditional, customary, and religious community leaders. Interviews focused on capturing first-hand experiences regarding policy transitions, administrative learning curves, multi-year project execution, and socio-political harmony.

Direct Field Observations: Researchers conducted direct observations of daily village government operations, administrative workflows, public service delivery, and formal governance interactions in Ranolambot Village to contextualize the interview narratives.

Secondary Data: Secondary data served as documentary context to verify and corroborate primary field findings. These data were collected through document analysis of key regulatory texts and local planning archives, specifically: (1) Law No. 3 of 2024; (2) Constitutional Court Decision No. 92/PUU-XXII/2024; (3) the Ranolambot Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes); (4) the Ranolambot Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBDes); and (5) spatial and administrative boundary maps of Ranolambot Village.

Data validity was established through source and method triangulation, systematically cross-checking interview transcripts against primary field observations and secondary policy documents to minimize subjective bias. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al (2014), consisting of three concurrent streams: data reduction (screening and coding field notes and interview transcripts), data display (organizing findings into thematic matrices, comparative tables, and illustrative interview excerpts), and conclusion drawing/verification (formulating analytical conclusions and policy insights). Thematic categorization was structurally guided by Cheema & Rondinelli (1983) decentralization framework, analyzing empirical findings across four core dimensions: political leadership support, program support, bureaucratic capacity, and budgetary dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Post-decentralization village governance in Indonesia cannot be understood in isolation but must be approached holistically. The construction of decentralization essentially validates the existence of local institutions in two interconnected domains: political decentralization, which focuses on decision-making authority, strengthening local capacity, and controlling resources; and administrative decentralization, which emphasizes the delegation of authority for public service delivery and the fulfillment of technical-bureaucratic tasks (Bhatt & Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 1987; Smith, 1989; Koswara, 2010; Suharto, 2012). In this context, the existence of village governance reflects a real blend of these two dimensions, where daily bureaucratic performance in public services (such as population administration) interacts directly with autonomous political authorities to build strategic partnerships and reject external interventions irrelevant to the community's basic needs.

The enactment of Law Number 3 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages marks a new chapter in the redistribution of formal power at the local level. This new regulation, which was later strengthened by Constitutional Court Decision Number 92/PUU-XXII/2024, radically changes the landscape of the term of office of village heads, specifically referred to as the Hukum tua in Minahasa Regency, to eight years for a maximum of two terms. This law explicitly includes dynamic transitional clauses to maintain local bureaucratic continuity, including: (1) providing an additional term for Hukum Tua who have completed two terms under the old regulation; (2) requiring active officials in their first or second terms to complete their remaining terms based on the eight-year provision; and (3) automatically extending the term of office of Hukum Tua, which was originally due to expire in February 2024.

This change in the duration of power linearly expands the legal mandate of the Hukum Tua. Based on Articles 2 and 26 of Law Number 3 of 2024, the Hukum Tua holds full authority as the primary determinant in the four pillars of village governance: governance, development execution, community development, and community

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empowerment. All of these normative mandates require the Hukum Tua to balance the Minahasan cultural values of kinship and mutual cooperation with modern formal legal standards. Details of the Hukum Tua's strategic authority under the new regulatory regime are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Legal Authority of Hukum Tua Based on Law Number 3 of 2024

No.	Dimensions of Juridical Authority	Legal Authority of Hukum Tua
1	Leadership & Internal Regulation	• Leading the implementation of Village Government. • Establish Village Regulations. • Represent the Village in and outside court (or appoint legal counsel).
2	Resource & Financial Management	• Determining the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBDes). • Developing original village income sources. • Proposing and accepting the transfer of part of the state's wealth for the welfare of the people.
3	Bureaucratic Structure & Personnel	Proposing the appointment and dismissal of village officials to the Regent/Mayor.
4	Socio-Economics & Public Order	• Fostering peace, order, and social and cultural life in village communities. • Fostering and improving the village economy towards a productive scale. • Utilizing appropriate technology. • Coordinating village development in a participatory manner.

Source: Researcher Synthesis Results on Law Number 3 of 2024 (2026)

From a good governance perspective, the expansion of authority and extension of terms of office summarized in Table 1 are not merely products of procedural democratization, but rather crucial instruments for building institutional capacity from a political foundation (Monintja et al., 2023). To empirically examine the extent to which the urgency of this extension of terms of office contributes to village progress or actually opens up administrative vulnerabilities, this study operationalizes the theoretical framework of decentralization (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983). This holistic approach (Noor et al., 2025) divides the analysis into four main analytical dimensions: (1) political leadership aspects, (2) program support aspects, (3) bureaucratic capacity aspects, and (4) budget support aspects. These four aspects will ultimately capture how the extension of the Law of Hukum Tua operates within the empirical reality of political and administrative decentralization in Ranolambot Village.

Political Leadership Aspects

Within the landscape of village governance, the existence of the Hukum Tua theoretically and legally occupies a central position as a political leader. Political leadership in this context is not simply defined as the ability to influence public policy for the general welfare, but also encompasses the strategic capacity to determine the direction of village organizations, unite and stimulate citizen participation through effective communication, and mobilize development agents through community empowerment. Although the nomination process for Hukum Tua is independent and free from formal political party nomination and recruitment mechanisms (Waworundeng et al., 2017), the legitimacy of their power is politically validated through direct elections by the people (Putri et al., 2023). Consequently, the Hukum Tua holds a purely political office based on the community's social mandate, rather than a bureaucratic career path.

The characteristics of the Hukum Tua as an autonomous local political leader are emphasized by at least three main juridical-empirical determinants (Surya et al., 2021; Rohman, 2020; Waworundeng et al., 2017). First, the recruitment process proceeds naturally from the bottom up without any party affiliation, which gives the Hukum Tua an independent position in establishing local policies and managing village finances. Second, their position is expressly stated as not being part of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), thus separating them from the vertical career bureaucratic structure. Third, there is a strict obligation of neutrality, strictly prohibiting the Hukum Tua from becoming a practical political party official. This neutrality regulation is designed to maintain the Hukum Tua's political position so that it can stand above all groups, mitigate social divisions, and act as a

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cultural guide that accommodates the diversity of educational backgrounds, religions, and local socio-political dynamics (Rohman, 2020).

The socio-cultural nature of the political leadership of the village head Hukum Tua has resulted in regulations governing the tenure of office being dynamic and responsive to conceptual changes in decentralization in Indonesia. Historically, the tenure and content of the village head's office have undergone a long metamorphosis from regime to regime in order to find a balance between rural political stability and accountability of power. The development of the regulatory dimensions regarding the village head/Hukum Tua position in Indonesia is summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Evolution of the Legal Tenure of Hukum Tua in Indonesia

No.	Law	Term of Office	Information
1	Law No. 22 of 1999	Article 96	Elected for a maximum of 2 terms (Maximum total of 10 years)
2	Law No. 32 of 2004	Article 204	The term of office is 6 years and can be re-elected for 1 subsequent term (Total maximum 12 years)
3	Law No. 6 of 2014	Article 39	Paragraph (1): The term of office is 6 years from the date of appointment.
4	Law No. 3 of 2024	Article 39	Paragraph (1): The term of office is 8 years from the date of appointment. Article (2): Can serve a maximum of 2 terms of office, either consecutively or not (Maximum total of 16 years).

Source: Primary data on village government regulations

The evolution in Table 2 demonstrates a paradigm shift among legislators in determining the optimal duration of executive power at the village level. The shift from an 18-year accumulation model (3 terms of 6 years) in Law No. 6/2014 to 16 years (2 terms of 8 years) in Law No. 3/2024 reflects an open legal policy designed not to extend absolute power but rather to optimize institutional stability throughout each leadership period (Kasenda et al., 2022). Theoretically, the implementation of this policy at the research site yielded two key, interrelated empirical findings.

Initial field findings indicate that extending the term of office to eight years functionally minimizes the need for repeated leadership consolidation due to excessively rapid political succession. In Ranolambot Village, adjustments to short-term development visions are often hampered if the succession cycle is too short, given that excessively dynamic leadership changes are prone to triggering governance uncertainty due to drastic changes in the political and economic environment (Hidayati, n.d., 2025). As the village executive leader fully responsible for the sustainability of the strategic decentralization plan, the Ranolambot Hukum Tua requires adequate time to prevent development focus from being distracted by post-election political factionalism. Furthermore, the urgency of the eight-year term in Ranolambot Village is not solely justified by administrative technicalities, but rather driven by the sociological need to reduce the potential for rifts in community kinship ties. Because simultaneous village head elections in the previous era often left long-lasting residues of horizontal conflict, the reduction in the frequency of local political contestation through Law No. 3/2024 provides sufficient time for village residents to recover. This sustainable leadership has proven to contribute significantly to the smooth execution of policies, maintaining the consistency of ongoing development programs, and optimizing the inclusive involvement of all village stakeholders.

The second finding confirms that extending the term of office directly contributes to maintaining village political and administrative stability against the risk of development obstacles (Taorik et al., 2024). In Ranolambot Village, this stability is not only based on the consistency of a modern administrative system and apparatus coordination, but is also deeply rooted in the cohesion of local social capital. The characteristics of local democracy in Ranolambot uniquely integrate formal direct election mechanisms with Minahasan cultural values that prioritize social harmony (Waworundeng et al., 2017).

This research found that cultural traditions such as "bakuk bakal makan" (inviting people to eat together), inherent in every communal space, including Thanksgiving Day, were peacefully adopted in the leadership

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selection process of the Hukum Tua (Old Law) community. Empirically, this tradition of eating together is not a form of political gratification by the candidates, but rather a manifestation of collective appreciation for the long-established values of togetherness and brotherhood.

These cultural ties, reinforced by church institutions and the advice of traditional leaders, act as a filter for candidates based on criteria of morality, track record, and social closeness (Hanif, 2011). Therefore, if the election cycle is forced to be too short, the intensity of political competition is feared to eliminate the existence of these shared values. In communities with strong traditional characteristics such as Ranolambot Village, maintaining social harmony and family gatherings is considered far more essential than getting caught up in the tedious procedural formalities of elections (Rondonuwu, 2015). The eight-year term of office thus provides a protective barrier for this social capital against the shocks of practical political polarization.

Program Support Aspects

Within the framework of administrative decentralization, the capacity of a regional or village government organization depends heavily on the support of the continuous execution of its work programs (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983). A policy program is not simply a single, instantaneous activity, but rather a series of systematic plans that require the arrangement of human resources (organization), understanding of policy direction (interpretation), and gradual implementation over a relatively long period of time (Jones & Jones, 1984). In the context of village governance, the Hukum Tua is required to carry out managerial functions such as resource management and directing the behavior of apparatus (Dewi et al., 2021; Thoha, 2007) to ensure that the political agreements born from the Village Deliberation (Musdes) can be translated into tangible program achievements.

The sustainability of the Ranolambot Village Government organization is largely determined by the completion of the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes). Based on document analysis and field observations, Ranolambot Village's flagship strategic work programs are not merely administrative in nature, but rather capital-intensive and require a long implementation time. Field findings identified eleven key programs resulting from community consensus, which can be classified into two broad clusters:

Economic Empowerment & Institutional Capacity Cluster: Includes mapping of village potential and boundaries, increasing productive economy as branding of tourism villages, establishing tourism institutions, implementing agrotourism seminars, developing tourism human resources, Village Cultural Advancement Program (PKD), and collaboration in assisting in the preparation of Village Regulations and Village Budgets with Sam Ratulangi University.

Basic Infrastructure & Welfare Cluster: Includes sustainable physical development such as opening plantation access roads, providing public cemetery land, constructing clean water reservoirs, and repairing pipe network installations from the main water source.

The details of the strategic programs in the two clusters above indicate the high technical and managerial burden that the Hukum Tua must simultaneously operate. A crucial finding in this study proves that approximately 80% of the total strategic work programs in Ranolambot Village (particularly the basic infrastructure cluster and tourism village initiation) require multi-level implementation and multiple budget years. Large-scale programs such as connecting the main water pipe, building garden roads, and establishing a tourism village ecosystem cannot be completed in one or two annual budget cycles.

If the political leadership succession cycle is too fast (as in the previous regulation's 6-year scheme), the implementation of these capital-intensive programs is vulnerable to turbulence, priority bias from the new Acting Head of the Village, or even halting midway due to changes in local political direction. Therefore, extending the term of office of the Head of the Village to 8 years in Ranolambot Village provides a crucial time-buffer. This duration is a rational objective need to ensure that the entire series of long-term programs (Jones & Jones, 1984) can be executed in a directed, sustainable manner, and with measurable monitoring indicators by the Village Consultative Body (BPD) and the wider community, without being haunted by the fear of project interruption midway.

Bureaucratic Support Aspects

Bureaucracy at the village government level has unique characteristics that fundamentally differentiate it from structural bureaucracy at the sub-district or district level, which is run by career State Civil Apparatus (ASN) (Dwiyanto, 2015; Hertati, 2024). Although conceptually, bureaucracy is a rational instrument for implementing political decisions (Weber, 1948 in Septiani, 2020), the effectiveness of its services depends heavily on the behavioral interactions, managerial capacity, and technical competence of its Human Resources

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(HR) (Prayugo, 2017). Competency development through training and education (Bisri, 2022; Kurniawan & Suswanta, 2020; Pujianti et al., 2022) ideally serves as the main foundation for smooth organizational operation. However, empirical reality at the village level often displays anomalies in operational capacity gaps (Monintja et al., 2025; Wijayanti et al., 2021).

In the context of bureaucratic support in Ranolambot Village, the human resources of village officials demonstrate extremely vulnerable structural limitations. The majority of village officials possess only a high school education, with no specialization in governance. From a technical operational perspective, their capacity to execute administrative tasks is minimal, particularly regarding the management of the Village Fund, which has a very large budget allocation. Crucial positions such as Village Treasurer are filled by personnel without certification or basic financial management experience. Intervention efforts through formal training have proven to be very rare; even when training is available, the material provided is deemed ineffective in equipping officials to manage the complexities of village finances. Furthermore, the village bureaucracy in Ranolambot is subsistence-based, characterized by dual work. Overall, these village bureaucrats are farmers who must divide their work focus by spending two to three days per week on plantations managing their private land.

The limitations of the sociological profile and competency of village officials gave rise to an important novelty in this research: that the urgency of extending the term of office of the Village Head is not merely to accommodate the political power of the village executive, but rather an objective necessity to protect the continuity of the village bureaucratic ecosystem itself.

The excessively short leadership cycle of the Village Law is generally followed by a massive reshuffle of village officials. Given that village officials are drawn from the general public with minimal administrative experience, they require a much longer learning curve and managerial adaptation process than professional civil servants. If continuity of leadership and staff is prematurely severed, village governance will experience paralysis and administrative slowness due to the need to restart the adaptation process from scratch. Therefore, an extended term of office provides a safety net of stability, ensuring officials have sufficient time to develop their capacities, maintain smooth village operations, and respond to community demands for prompt and accurate service.

Budget Support Aspects

Budgetary support sourced from the State Budget (APBN) through the Village Fund instrument is a concrete manifestation of state recognition of the autonomy of customary law communities and villages. Philosophically, this policy, which has been in effect since 2015, is designed to strengthen regions from the periphery in accordance with the Nawacita strategic agenda, by fulfilling five main objectives: optimizing public services, accelerating the local economy, alleviating poverty, strengthening the position of communities as subjects of development, and reducing inter-regional inequality (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

At the macro level, the central government's fiscal commitment continues to experience significant escalation. In the initial period (2015-2019), the accumulated Village Fund allocation reached Rp257.7 trillion (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). This expansive trend began with a ceiling of Rp20,766.2 billion in 2015 and has steadily increased to reach Rp70,000 billion in 2023, consisting of the pre-year allocation of Rp68,000 combined with the current allocation of Rp2,000 billion (Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). The concrete impact of this massive budget disbursement during the 2015-2018 period is summarized in the national infrastructure output achievements in Table 3.

Table 3. Volume of Village Development Achievements Through Village Funds

No.	Development Activities	Volume
1	Village Road	191,6 Km
2	Village Bridge	1.140,4 Km
3	Village Market	9000 unit
4	Village Reservoir	4.175 unit
5	Integrated Health Post	24.8 thousand units
6	Clean Water Facilities	959.6 thousand units

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No.	Development Activities	Volume
7	MCK	240.6 thousand units
8	Village Health Post	9.692 unit
9	Early Childhood Education	50.9 thousand units
10	Drainage and Irrigation	29.5 million units

Source: Researcher Compilation Results from Regulatory Data & Ministry of Finance (2026)

The volume of achievements in Table 3 reflects a decentralized development orientation based on real needs (bottom-up planning). The high rate of physical development, particularly in vital sectors such as drainage and irrigation (29.5 million units), demonstrates that budget allocations are capable of precisely intervening in the downstream agricultural sector in accordance with community aspirations as agreed upon in Village Deliberations (Musdes). However, the large amount of fiscal capital flowing into the Village Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBDes) requires strict participatory oversight from the community to eliminate the risk of budget overruns (mark-ups) and maintain public accountability (Andarista & Jatiningsih, 2018).

In the context of local budget operationalization in Ranolambot Village, the transition of the village head's term of office from 6 to 8 years plays a crucial role in maintaining the stability of the Village Financial Management Implementation Unit (PPKD). Referring to Home Affairs Ministerial Regulation Number 20 of 2018, the internal structure of the PPKD is filled by the Village Secretary, Head of Affairs (Kaur), Head of Section (Kasi), and Head of Finance. When the election cycle for the Village Head is short (6 years), a reshuffle of political leadership almost always triggers a complete change in the PPKD structure. This frequent change triggers new problems in the form of village residents' reluctance to join the financial management team due to the shadow of high legal risks.

The heaviest burden falls on the shoulders of the Village Secretary as the PPKD coordinator, who holds complex responsibilities: from coordinating policy formulation, designing the Village Budget (APBDes) and its amendments, drafting accountability regulations, to technical verification of the Budget Implementation Document (DPA), Budget Implementation Amendment Document (DPPA), Advanced Budget Implementation Document (DPAL), and the Village Cash Budget Plan (RAK Desa). Consequently, the rise in legal cases at the village level is generally not based on corrupt intent (mens rea) by officials, but rather due to limited administrative capacity in preparing accountability reports, which is exacerbated by the obligation to fully transition to a digital village financial application system that has not yet been mastered (Maulana, 2023; Oktoberi & Rinaldi, 2023). Spacing out the succession cycle through an eight-year term has proven to provide a protected time space for the PPKD team to mature their understanding of the digital system without local political interruptions.

From a macro-fiscal perspective, standardizing the eight-year term also significantly impacts state budget efficiency. Assuming the logistical costs for village head elections average Rp211,385,811 per village (Rajab, 2023), multiplied by the total of 84,276 villages in Indonesia, based on Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data, the state would have to spend up to Rp17.8 trillion in one simultaneous election cycle. A six-year cycle would drain this massive budget allocation too quickly. By extending the term to eight years, trillions of rupiah in state funds could be saved and diverted to more pressing social safety net programs or national infrastructure development.

This fiscal efficiency is clearly confirmed at the regional level. In Minahasa Regency, the simultaneous election of the Village Heads (Hukum Tua) was held in 129 villages, with total support from the Regional Budget (APBD) of Rp2.9 billion. This limitation resulted in the average village unit receiving only Rp22,480,620 in operational election funds. This relatively small figure forced village governments to make strict budget adjustments, while also demonstrating that the excessively frequent contestation will continue to burden the fiscal space of the Minahasa Regency APBD. Therefore, extending the term of office to eight years under Law No. 3/2024 is a rational legal policy instrument to reduce the regional fiscal deficit while providing sufficient time for the Village Heads (Hukum Tua) to fully complete the strategic targets in the Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes).

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CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical analysis and discussion, this study concludes that the regulatory transition extending the term of office of the Hukum Tua (village head) from six to eight years under Law No. 3 of 2024 and Constitutional Court Decision No. 92/PUU-XXII/2024 is not merely a political accommodation of executive power, but rather an objective structural necessity in rural governance. Evaluated through Cheema and Rondinelli's (1983) decentralization framework, the urgency and validity of this policy are interdependently supported across four strategic dimensions. First, it fosters political-cultural stability by reducing confrontational electoral frequency, thereby protecting community social capital and traditional family cohesion (pakaroyan). Second, it ensures programmatic continuity by providing a realistic timeframe to execute Village Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMDes) targets without leadership transition bias. Third, it safeguards bureaucratic capacity by acting as an "institutional buffer" for non-career, agrarian-background village staff against premature political reshuffles. Finally, it optimizes fiscal efficiency and accountability by stabilizing Village Financial Management Implementation (PPKD) teams and generating substantial election cost savings for regional (APBD) and national (APBN) budgets.

To translate these empirical findings into practical governance improvements and enhance community preparedness against potential risks of local power concentration or executive inertia during an extended eight-year term, relevant authorities must undertake three specific policy actions. First, village governments should institutionalize bi-annual public assembly forums (Musrenbangdes and Musdes) paired with digital budget dashboards, while equipping the Village Consultative Body (BPD) with standardized audit toolkits to ensure that community members are civically prepared to exercise continuous oversight. Second, regional governments need to enact specific Regent Regulations (Peraturan Bupati/Perbup) establishing a micro-scale merit system that restricts the Hukum Tua from arbitrarily dismissing village administrative staff, thereby anchoring tenure in objective performance evaluations rather than political loyalty. Third, district governments should directly reallocate the fiscal savings derived from reduced election frequencies into structured technical guidance for PPKD personnel and civic literacy programs for local watchdog groups.

Despite these analytical contributions, this study has inherent methodological limitations that must be explicitly acknowledged when evaluating the generalizability of its findings. Most notably, the qualitative single-case study design relies on a limited sample size of twelve key informants within Ranolambot Village, Minahasa Regency. This constraint introduces potential response bias, as interviews with village administrative figures and community leaders may inherently favor tenure extension due to shared institutional roles or political alignments. Furthermore, because these findings reflect a rural ecosystem defined by strong social cohesion, indigenous kinship networks (mapalus), and a homogeneous agrarian economy, readers should exercise caution when generalizing these results to peri-urban, socio-economically heterogeneous, or politically fragmented village environments where underlying power dynamics differ substantially.

To advance and extend the analytical insights presented in this manuscript, future scholarly endeavors should pursue three key research avenues. First, researchers should conduct comparative multi-site qualitative studies across diverse socio-cultural regions in Indonesia to test whether the "institutional buffer" framework functions effectively in less cohesive or peri-urban settings. Second, longitudinal policy tracking across the full eight-year tenure cycle is necessary to empirically monitor long-term risks, such as local elite capture, executive fatigue, or shifting BPD-executive power balances over time. Lastly, future studies should employ quantitative mixed-methods approaches across larger statistical samples to analyze direct empirical correlations between extended executive tenure, Village Fund (Dana Desa) absorption efficiency, and long-term development target fulfillment.

Acknowledgments

The authors sincerely thank the government officials, BPD members, and community informants of Ranolambot Village, Minahasa Regency, for their invaluable time, openness, and cooperation during the research process. The authors are also grateful to Sam Ratulangi University for institutional and academic support throughout the study.

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