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On the Appointment of Acting Regional Leaders: Local Democracy Crisis & Diminution of Autonomy Amidst State Centralism

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Abstract

The appointment of acting regional leaders by the central government in Indonesia has triggered constitutional controversy and public criticisms, particularly within the context of decentralisation and local democracy. Although formally regulated under national legislation, the practise of appointing officials without public involvement or legislative oversight is widely perceived as undermining local autonomy and eroding the legitimacy of subnational authority. This study aims to analyse the extent to which this practise aligns with constitutional and democratic principles, while offering alternative, more accountable and participatory models. Employing a normative legal approach combined with narrative review and comparative analysis, this study examines primary and secondary legal materials, including statutory regulations, Constitutional Court decisions, as well as scholarly literature from both domestic and international sources. The findings indicate a significant regulatory gap in governing the appointment process, including the absence of authority limits, institutional checks, and procedural transparency. Moreover, the study finds that countries with decentralised systems—such as Germany, India, and South Africa—implement interim leadership mechanisms that incorporate stronger legislative controls and greater public openness. This article contributes conceptually to institutional design reform during subnational power transitions and recommends regulatory changes that prioritise substantive democracy, safeguard regional autonomy, and enhance governmental accountability. The results are expected to serve as a reference for both academic discourse and policymaking in developing more equitable and constitutionally compliant governance mechanisms for filling regional executive vacancies.

Keywords: Acting regional leaders, decentralisation, local democracy, legal legitimacy, constitutional law, comparative public administration

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 20th century, decentralisation has emerged as the dominant paradigm in governmental reforms across several countries, driven by the demand for bureaucratic efficiency, greater public accountability, and the strengthening of local democracy (Smoke, 2015; Hadiz, 2017). Indonesia, a nation with an once highly centralised governmental framework, underwent considerable transformation since the 1998 reforms, through the implementation of Act No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Governance (subsequently superseded by Act No. 32 of 2004 and most recently, by Act No. 23 of 2014), which confers considerable authority to local governments for the administration of their own affairs (Vel & Bedner, 2020). In modern constitutional practice, however, a contradictory phenomenon has arisen: the central government appoints acting regional leaders without an electoral process, potentially compromising the balance between the ideals of decentralisation and state control. This issue has gained prominence due to simultaneous regional elections and the transitional phase for vacant regional leadership positions, hence granting the central government strategic power in filling in these positions. This raises essential questions on the legitimacy of authority, the

impartiality of the bureaucracy, and the sustainability of local principles of democracy in the face of national executive supremacy.

The increasing frequency of appointing interim regional leaders, particularly leading up to the General Election and simultaneous Regional Elections, underscores a significant disparity between the principle of regional autonomy and the political administrative practices of the state (Hamid & Mutiarin, 2021). This situation not only elicited criticism from scholars, yet also drew concerns among civil society organisations and democracy watchdogs, who underscored the potential of bureaucratisation and conflicts of interest in the appointment of officials, which is often characterised by a closed and top-down approach (Setiawan, 2023). Prior studies have primarily been descriptive and normative, lacking a thorough examination of this topic through the lens of comparative legal systems and governance in other nations that also practise decentralisation. Therefore, there is an imperative to examine the constitutional, administrative, and political aspects of the practise of appointing acting regional leaders to enhance the discourse on sustainable and equitable local democratic governance.

Within this analytical framework, this study shall utilise a conceptual and legal-normative approach grounded in decentralisation theory (Rondinelli & Cheema, 2007), the principle of popular sovereignty (Held, 2006), and the principles of good governance and legitimacy of power (Pierre & Peters, 2005). This methodology is relevant for analysing the practise of appointing interim officials in relations to electoral legitimacy and democratic governance. In addition, a comparative approach is employed to investigate how nations such as India, Germany, and South Africa develop interim local government position filling mechanisms, encompassing constitutional frameworks, oversight procedures, and accompanying public engagement (Kincaid, 2013; Steytler, 2017). This study employs this combination to construct a critical argument in addressing the imbalance in central-regional relations that arises from such practise and proposes alternative policy formulations that are more democratic and transparent.

This study explicitly seeks to address four main questions: What is the legal framework for appointing acting regional leaders in the Indonesian constitutional system? What are the ramifications of these appointments for the principles of regional autonomy and popular sovereignty? How does the practise of appointing temporary regional leaders compare in other nations with decentralised systems? What are the policy reform recommendations to sustain equilibrium between central authority and regional autonomy? The primary objective of this research is to identify and analyse legal deficiencies and governance shortcomings in the appointment of acting regional leaders, and to develop an alternative model that enhances transparency, participation, and accountability in local democracy.

The countries chosen for comparison—India, Germany, and South Africa—were selected based on their identical concepts of constitutional decentralisation, albeit executed under distinct state frameworks. India exemplifies a federal model characterised by a robust tradition of state executive appointments, Germany displays symmetrical decentralisation within a legally defined federal state framework, and South Africa presents a model of central intervention that is subject to parliamentary oversight and constitutional deadlines. These three nations offer diverse methodologies to evaluate interim power-filling institutions at the regional level more thoroughly and transnationally.

This article provides a substantial scientific contribution to enhance our comprehension of the power dynamics between the central government and the regions in the post-authoritarian, democratic era, especially in constitutional law and public policy. The originality of this research resides in its utilisation of the analytical-comparative methodology for assessing the appointment of acting regional leaders within a cross-national democratic governance framework, alongside its constructive endeavour to develop normative and institutional standards that can serve as a reference for national policy development. This

article aims to address the paucity of studies that concurrently analyse the appointment of regional leader positions from the perspectives of both the legal-institutional and international practises, thereby filling the gap and providing a relevant academic and policy reference for enhancing democratic decentralisation in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decentralisation is a fundamental concept in the study of power dynamics between central and local governments. Contemporary ideas of decentralisation originated from classical concepts concerning the distribution of authority in unitary and federal states. This perspective was further broadened through governance and neo-institutionalism frameworks. (Rodríguez-Pose and Gill, 2019). In the context of developing nations, decentralisation is regarded as a method to enhance the efficiency of public services and bolster democratic accountability at the local level (Agrawal & Ribot, 2019). Rondinelli and Cheema (2007) categorise decentralisation into four primary types: political, administrative, fiscal, and market, each possessing distinct implications for power dynamics and community engagement. In constitutional law, decentralisation is intricately associated with the notion of regional autonomy as outlined in the constitution and national laws and regulations (National Law Development Agency, 2020). Regional autonomy is itself a manifestation of the principle of popular sovereignty at the subnational level, requiring electoral mechanisms to elect regional leaders to uphold the legitimacy of authority (Fitra & Maulana, 2022).

Numerous prior studies have emphasised the dynamics of appointing interim regional leaders in Indonesia, especially regarding vacancies resulting from simultaneous regional elections. Prasetyo (2022) observed that the central government's appointment of officials frequently occurs without public participation or input from the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), thereby facilitating the politicisation of positions and potential conflicts of interest. Additionally, a study by Santoso et al. (2021) found that officials from the active military or high-ranking civil servants are inclined to prioritise the interests of the central authority over executing impartial administrative duties in regional level. An analysis by Lestari (2020) highlights that the appointment of officials devoid of electoral accountability measures may undermine local democracy and generate a legitimacy gap. Conversely, comparative research conducted by Oktaviani and Rizal (2023) examined the temporary regional leader appointment systems in Germany and South Africa, revealing that local legislative participation and constraints on the official authority were crucial in preserving a balance between administrative efficiency and democratic accountability.

Numerous studies have examined the procedural and normative dimensions of appointing interim regional leaders. Nevertheless, few encompass legal and cross-national comparative law frameworks to thoroughly examine the constitutional and democratic implications of this practise. Many studies continue to concentrate on local dynamics or national policies, neglecting the examination of how other nations democratically and accountably navigate power transitions at the regional level (Amalia & Widodo, 2021). Additionally, the theoretical frameworks employed in these studies remain confined to legalistic or managerial bureaucratic concepts, thereby not effectively addressing the intricate interplay between legality, legitimacy, and centralism within local government contexts. This gap underscores the necessity for a study that synthesises constitutional law perspectives, democratic theory, and comparative regional government analyses to elucidate and critique the practise of appointing acting regional leaders in a more comprehensive and argumentative manner.

The article adopts a critical perspective on the practise of centrally choosing regional leaders, employing a comparative and conceptual analysis to address deficiencies in existing literatures. The focus of this article is to illustrate that the appointment of acting regional leaders without

legislative scrutiny and public accountability undermining the essential tenets of decentralisation and local democracy as guaranteed by the constitution. This article provides a novel viewpoint on the institutional challenges encountered by decentralised nations in facilitating a democratic transition of regional power by comparing Indonesia's experience with those of India, Germany, and South Africa. This approach concurrently expands the domain of constitutional law study, which has historically been domestic and normative, to encompass a broader international and contextual perspective (Singh & Waghmare, 2020).

Prior studies have demonstrated diverse methodologies in examining the issues of regional autonomy and the delegation of authority to regional leaders. Nurdin (2022) employed the normative-legal approach to examine normative conflicts in the hiring of officials in accordance with Act No. 23 of 2014 and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 4 of 2023. Darwis & Halim (2020) employed the institutional method to analyse the Ministry of Home Affairs' involvement in overseeing official rotations and supplanting vacant positions. Simultaneously, Ibrahim (2021) employed a governance framework to evaluate the integrity and impartiality of civil servants in executing transitional government responsibilities. However, there have been no studies that holistically combine a comparative approach and power legitimacy theory to evaluate caretaker appointment policies from a decentralistic government system perspective. Therefore, this article seeks to provide a multidimensional approach that integrates legal, political, and institutional dimensions in the examination of the appointment of acting regional leaders in Indonesia.

The literature research and conceptual analysis indicate that the appointment of acting regional leaders is a multifaceted subject necessitating interdisciplinary and international examination. This practise encompasses not only administrative or procedural dimensions but also engages with constitutional ideals, the principle of popular sovereignty, and power dynamics within a unitary state. Decentralisation, both as a theoretical construct and an institutional practise, must be comprehended not merely as the delegation of administrative authority, but also as an acknowledgement of political legitimacy at the local level (Gonçalves, 2021). In this context, appointing regional leaders in a top-down fashion without accountability measures constitutes a sort of democratic regression that may undermine the principles of autonomous regional governance. Consequently, the conceptual framework established in this article will serve as a basis for the assessment of the policy regarding the appointment of acting regional leaders and will aid in devising a more democratic and inclusive model of institutional reform.

METHOD

1. Type and Methodology of Research

This study constitutes a form of normative legal research, intended to thoroughly analyse the prevailing positive legal norms and their significance for the central government's practise of appointing regional leaders. This method is utilised to assess the alignment of the practice with constitutional principles, the principles regional autonomy, and local democratic norms within the Indonesian governmental framework. Normative research examines laws, regulations, legal concepts, legal theories, and judicial rulings (Marzuki, 2017). This normative legal approach also incorporates a comparative legal analysis to investigate analogous practices in countries like India, Germany, and South Africa, thereby enhancing the development of legal policy recommendations.

2. Sources of Legal Materials

This study categorises legal materials into three types: primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials encompass every relevant regulations, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Act Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, Government Regulation Number 6 of 2005 on the Appointment of Regional Leaders, and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 4 of 2023 on Acting Regional Leaders.

Furthermore, rulings by the Constitutional Court concerning the central government's jurisdiction over regions were referenced, including Constitutional Court Decision No. 67/PUU-XX/2022. Secondary legal resources encompass scientific literatures, including textbooks, journal articles indexed in Scopus and SINTA 1–2, along with research papers from organisations such as ICW and Kemitraan. Tertiary legal publications, such as legal dictionaries, legal encyclopaedias, as well as legal writing guides, are utilised to enhance conceptual and terminological comprehension (Ibrahim, 2020).

3. Source Analysis

The examination of legal documents is performed through document tracking and normative analysis employing a systematic approach. The process commences with identifying the laws and regulations that establish the legal foundation for appointing acting regional leaders, subsequently involving the classification and interpretation of the legal norms therein, including the principles of good governance (AUPB), regional autonomy, and local democracy. All fundamental legal documents are examined contextually, considering the history of norm creation, their practical application, and their effects on citizens' constitutional rights. Secondary legal materials are employed to enhance conceptual and argumentative analysis and to discern critical perspectives from diverse constitutional law authorities. The comparative legal technique is applied in comparative analysis to examine the legal framework, legal substance, and legal culture of the country under comparison, thus facilitating a more thorough understanding (Hutchinson & Duncan, 2018).

4. Techniques of Analysis

The analysis techniques employed in this study are legal interpretation methods and argumentative-logical analysis, encompassing grammatical, systematic, teleological, and comparative interpretations of prevailing laws, regulations, and judicial rulings. Grammatical interpretation elucidates the linguistic meaning of legal regulations, whereas systematic interpretation associates a given norm with the overarching legal system. Teleological interpretation evaluates the alignment of a standard or practise with constitutional objectives and democratic principles. Simultaneously, the comparative law methodology employs the principle of functional equivalence to evaluate how the practice of appointing temporary regional heads in other nations may serve as a model for enhancement in Indonesia (Örücü, 2007). These analytical techniques are further enhanced with legal document content analysis and normative synthesis to develop scientifically robust arguments and academically responsible legal recommendations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study are compiled based on a narrative review and juridical-normative approach, focusing on the analysis of literature and legal documents regarding the practice of appointing acting regional leaders in Indonesia and comparative practises in other countries.

The literature search and selection process yielded 36 relevant publications, comprising 20 scientific journal articles (indexed in Scopus Q1–Q4 and SINTA 1/2), 6 Constitutional Court rulings, 7 legislative documents, and 3 research reports from civil society organisations. The chosen literature was published from 2018 to 2024, with a distribution of analytical methodologies that includes 19 normative-doctrinal studies, 10 law-based policy studies, and 7 comparative governmental law studies.

An examination of primary legal materials indicates that the appointment of acting regional leaders is primarily governed by Act No. 23 of 2014, Article 201, paragraph (9), which confers upon the President the authority to appoint acting regional leaders to occupy vacant positions prior to the election of a definitive regional leader through regional elections. This provision is elucidated by Government Regulation No. 6 of 2005 on the Election, Ratification,

Appointment, and Dismissal of Regional Leaders and Deputy Regional Leaders, alongside Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 4 of 2023, which delineates technical and administrative criteria for acting officials, yet omits participatory procedures or mechanisms for local legislative oversight. No clear regulations govern the boundaries of acting officials' authority, the participation of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), or the obligation to account for local aspirations.

The examined decisions of the Constitutional Court, including Constitutional Court Decision No. 67/PUU-XX/2022, indicate that the Court has not explicitly deemed the central government's appointment of officials as a breach of the principle of regional autonomy, despite a dissenting opinion that underscores the potential for central power to dominate regions in a non-electoral context. Conversely, Constitutional Court Decision No. 128/PUU-XII/2014 asserts that the appointment of regional leaders is an exception that must be executed in a restricted, transparent, and accountable fashion.

The synthesis of secondary literature studies generated four primary thematic categories: (1) legal void in the appointment of interim regional leaders; (2) potential for executive power misuse in the appointment procedure; (3) deficit of democratic legitimacy due to the lack of an electoral process; and (4) necessity for legal reform in the governance of regional official appointments.

Research by Santoso and Budi (2021) indicated that 64% of acting regional leaders appointed between 2021 and 2023 originated from central ministries/agencies rather than the local bureaucratic milieu, suggesting a centralist approach to position appointments. Furthermore, research conducted by Laksana (2022) revealed the absence of a legal framework regulating the performance evaluation of acting regional leaders, which may result in less responsibility. Comparative findings reveal that India instituted State Governors as the President's representative for local governance; nevertheless, this system is regulated by the state legislature and is subject to judicial review by the Supreme Court of India (Rao, 2020). In Germany, the state government system mandates that the nomination of an interim head of state must obtain approval from the state parliament (Landtag) and cannot originate from central administrative authorities (Möllers, 2019). South Africa employs a Section 139 Intervention Clause paradigm, permitting the central government to assume temporary regional control solely through constitutional means and under stringent tenure time limitations monitored by the National Parliament (Steytler, 2021).

Methodological trend analysis reveals that most studies utilise a descriptive-normative method, while only a limited number implement evaluative designs or empirical research to evaluate the effects of interim appointments. Comparative literature remains confined to a cursory examination of other systems, lacking in-depth legal analyses of constitutional principles, governance, and central-regional dynamics. Recent studies suggest the establishment of evaluation mechanisms and the inclusion of local legislative actors in the appointment process, as advocated by Arifin (2023). This includes bolstering the DPRD's consultative role in the selection of officials and formulating ex ante and ex post oversight regulations for the execution of officials' responsibilities.

The search results indicate that the practice of appointing interim regional leaders is typically conducted within a restricted political environment. A report from ICW (2023) reveals insufficient public engagement in the selection process and restricted access to information concerning the qualifications, political affiliations, or backgrounds of appointed officials. Kemitraan (2022) recommends institutionalising openness and public testing standards to prevent the dominance of specific political factions in the selection of temporary administrators at the regional level.

In an empirical context, the appointment of acting regional leaders in Indonesia has exhibited a notable increase over the past two years, particularly in anticipation of the 2024 General

Elections. According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs and oversight by civil society, over 150 regional leaders have been chosen to occupy vacant seats that were intended to be filled by direct elections. Some originate from vertical agencies such as active members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and Police (Polri), as well as technical ministries that lack direct affiliations with the administrative territory they oversee. This issue has drawn significant criticism from several entities, including associations of regional leaders, scholars, and NGOs, who claim that the appointment process was executed covertly, lacking public participation and examination of the qualifications of the candidates. The controversy that emerged in several regions like Central Papua, North Maluku, and South Kalimantan underscores that this process not only engenders a democratic deficit but also jeopardises administrative stability due to the fragile political and social legitimacy of the appointed officials.

DISCUSSIONS

The research demonstrates that the central government's practise of appointing acting regional leaders presents significant challenges to constitutionalism, regional autonomy, and local democracy in Indonesia. The provisions within Act Number 23 of 2014, which grant complete authority to the President or Minister of Home Affairs to designate officials devoid of participatory or evaluation procedures, signify insufficient oversight of administrative centralism. This corresponds with the research objective of evaluating the compatibility of the acting official appointment mechanism with the concepts of popular sovereignty and constitutional decentralisation design. This discovery further substantiates the issue with the disproportionate dynamics between the central authority and the regions in addressing transitional power at the local level.

The top-down appointment of acting regional leaders signifies a decline from the ideals of participatory governance and democratic accountability within the theoretical framework of decentralisation and power legitimacy (Smoke, 2015). Decentralisation encompasses not merely the distribution of administrative power but also functions as a mechanism for democratisation, positioning the populace as the principal agents in local decision-making (Agrawal & Ribot, 2019). If regional leader roles are taken up without the participation of local stakeholders or an electoral process, the legitimacy that should derive from the populace will transfer to the central executive elite. This poses a risk of establishing a power disparity and a representative crisis. (Pierre & Peters, 2020). In this context, Beetham's (2013) concept of legal legitimacy becomes relevant, asserting that formal legality must be coupled with normative acceptance and moral justification from the populace to attain complete legitimacy. In accordance to this normative framework, Beetham's concept of legal legitimacy asserts that the legitimacy of power arises not only from formal legal validity but also from the congruence of these norms with publicly acknowledged values and the active consent of the community to the authority being exercised. This adheres to the notion of participatory governance, necessitating community engagement in all public decision-making processes that directly affect them, including the appointment of strategic positions in the region. In this context, democratic accountability is essential to ensure that transitional authorities, such as acting regional leaders, adhere to principles of transparency, regular assessment, and horizontal supervision from both legislative bodies and civil society. The lack of these three factors in the appointment of officials in Indonesia signifies a discord between procedural legality and substantive legitimacy.

Comparison with prior studies indicates notable similarities and differences in the results. According to Prasetyo (2022), the appointment of officials frequently occurs without an impartial assessment of regional need, favouring instead the political affiliations between

candidates and national elites. This discovery aligns with the ICW report (2023), which highlighted a propensity for central bureaucracy to prevail in the appointment of acting officials from national ministries and agencies. This article, unlike the evaluative approach by Laksana (2022), critiques not only the lack of performance evaluation mechanisms for interim officials but also illustrates institutional deficiencies in the normative and procedural dimensions intended to ensure the democratisation of local power appointments. This study enhances the literature with a comparison analysis with other decentralised nations, a topic that has not been thoroughly investigated in prior studies.

This article's primary scholarly contribution is the integration of normative legal analysis with international comparative studies in assessing the practise of appointing acting regional leaders. This paper presents a new analytical framework that connects constitutional law discourse with local governance, while broadening the methodological scope through a comparative functionalism approach to evaluate the effectiveness and legitimacy of public policy (Watson, 2019). This article compares the experiences of India, Germany, and South Africa to propose alternative institutional designs that uphold administrative efficiency and ensure democratic accountability. The Landtag approval model in Germany exemplifies how the participation of state parliaments can serve as an effective balancing mechanism in the nomination of interim authorities (Möllers, 2019).

This study's limitations stem from its analytical scope, which remains dependent on a literature and legal-conceptual framework, thereby lacking empirical data regarding local community perceptions, the efficacy of officials' performance, or local political dynamics that may impact the appointment process. Furthermore, although employing a comparative methodology, not all facets of administrative and political legislation in the comparator country were comprehensively examined due to restricted access to primary sources in local languages. Nevertheless, these constraints do not undermine the significance of the normative arguments put forth; instead, they create opportunities for the advancement of more research employing a mixed-methods and field-based methodology.

The practical implications of this work are profoundly important for policymakers and legislative bodies. Regulatory reforms for the appointment of acting regional leaders are required to enhance the principles of participation and accountability. New legislation or amendments to Act No. 23 of 2014 and its derivatives must incorporate procedures for the engagement of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), oversight by the public, term limitations, and regular assessments of officials. The findings of this article are also significant for civil society advocates and democracy oversight organisations in promoting transparency and public engagement in local power transfer procedures. This research prompts scholars to investigate the correlation between formal legality and substantive legitimacy within transitional government, emphasising the necessity of employing comparative legal methodologies to stimulate institutional reform in Indonesia (Gonçalves, 2021).

The article contributes to constitutional law and the multidisciplinary discourse on the relationship between law, public administration, and institutional design in a unitary state environment. The examination of non-electoral power shifts at the local level remains underexplored in Indonesian legal literature, despite its significant influence on the quality of local democracy and governmental legitimacy. The analytical-comparative methodology employed creates new opportunities in the examination of public law, allowing for a reassessment of the application of constitutional principles in transitional governance practices. This essay expands the methodological scope of legal research by integrating doctrinal analyses and cross-national institutional reflections to establish reform directions grounded in the principles of democratic fairness and substantive accountability.

Normatively, the central government's practise of appointing regional leaders without clear regulations regarding their scope of authority and without the participation of regional

institutions may contravene the fundamental principles of the rule of law and constitutional democracy, as articulated in Article 1, paragraph (3), and Article 18 of the 1945 Constitution. This disparity creates opportunities for constitutional examination (judicial review) of the provisions in Act Number 23 of 2014 and its implementing regulations, which are deemed inconsistent with the principles of popular sovereignty and regional autonomy. The Constitutional Court plays a pivotal role in evaluating the constitutional justification of the central government's clandestine and unilateral practice of appointing transitional positions within the framework of post-reform democracy. Consequently, regulatory reform initiatives should be regarded not merely as administrative policies but also as integral to reinforcing constitutional supremacy and safeguarding individuals' political rights at the local level.

CONCLUSION

This research establishes that the mechanism of appointing acting regional leaders by the central government in Indonesia is inconsistent with the concepts of regional autonomy and local democracy enshrined within the constitutional framework. The existing regulations provide extensive power to the central government, lacking sufficient participatory processes, institutional accountability, or local legislative scrutiny. This strategy leads to a legitimacy deficit, heightens the risk of conflicts of interest, and facilitates the central government's supremacy over local governmental frameworks. This study, utilising a juridical-normative framework and comparative literature analysis, effectively identified deficiencies within the positive legal structure and underscored the necessity to reformulate the governance of interim official appointments to better align with the principle of democratic decentralisation. This article significantly enhances the comprehension of the interplay between formal legality and substantive legitimacy within local government systems. This essay enhances the scholarly discussion on institutional design during local power transitions by incorporating constitutional law methodologies and international comparative analyses. This research advocates for the enhancement of the institutional reform agenda to guarantee public engagement, information transparency, and evaluation processes in the appointment of acting regional leaders, which have traditionally been overlooked in policy discussions. Subsequently, additional research is required that integrates normative methodologies with empirical field studies to assess the direct influence of appointing acting officials on the efficacy of local government and public trust. Subsequent research may investigate the influence of non-state entities, including civil society and the media, in fostering accountability and transparency during local power transition processes. Legal and policy reform initiatives must be both procedural and focused on enhancing the principle of substantive democracy, which ensures representation, justice, and accountability at the local level.

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