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DECENTRALISATION AND ITS EFFECT ON PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN- NING

DOES DECENTRALISATION REALLY MATTER FOR INCREASING THE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING?

By

Theodora Erma Viatiningsih

Lecturer at the Department of Regional and City Planning, Diponegoro University, Semarang

Abstract. *Decentralisation brings many promises for the local government and to the community. Decentralisation will increase participation, accountability and service delivery in physical infrastructure at the local level. Decentralisation also brings the decision-making process 'close to the people' and 'open a chance' for the community to influence the decision-making process. However, there are some problems that can be obstacles for participation at the local infrastructure planning. Political interference, who participates, levels of participation and degree of power for civil society and community are the main problems in participation in the infrastructure planning process. Various actors involved in infrastructure planning especially at the municipal level; however, community participation is limited at the provincial level. At the early phase of the planning process (identification and designing the alternative projects) the level of participation is limited (informing and consultation), while in the implementation and monitoring process, community participation is at the level of partnership and control in both provincial and municipal level. However, without power sharing, participation will have no meaning in planning process. Hence, decentralisation may increase participation of both local government and community in the planning process at the local level; however, the level of participation in the planning process is still at a low level. It is expected that community participation will shift from 'passive participation' to 'active participation': shift the level of participation from participation at the project level to the policy level, from appraisal to implementation and from informing and consultation to partnership and control. By 'active participation' the promises of decentralisation may be achieved.*

Key Words: *decentralisation, participation, infrastructure planning*