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A Relationship between Local Government and Civic Groups in Budget Planning in Malang City

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***Abstract*— This research aims to study the relationship between local government and civic groups in the budget planning process of the government of Malang. The findings of this study show that there exists a relationship between local government and civic groups but that the relationship does not represent the principles of democracy (equality, participation, and justice) in the budget planning. These findings contribute to developing budget planning in Malang that establishes a democratic budget policy process that is more responsive to public needs.**

Keywords—Budget Planning, Public Policy, Democracy, Local Government.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Indonesia underwent political reform. At the time, there arose a great awareness of good governance in Indonesia, following on from the multidimensional crisis experienced by the country in 1997. One of the major factors in the crisis was weak

public sector governance resulted in corruption, collusion, nepotism, and monopolistic behavior. Consequently, the Indonesian government has changed several regulations, from rules based on an authoritarian system to rules according to the democratic system. However, a democratic system has not been successfully implemented, including in terms of budget planning affairs at the local level. This issue has been illustrated by the results of research conducted by scholars such as Alfred and Franklin [1], Davenport and Skandera [2], Jainuri [3], Souza [4], and King [5]. They have indicated that local government has dominated civic groups in the budgetary process. Jainuri [3] revealed that local government's domination in arranging budget and expenditure policy (APBD) was very resilient. The findings of the research indicate that the aspirations of the people, supported by civic groups, do not feature as a part of the policy design, as people are not invited or asked to participate in determining budget policy documents, and civic groups are considered as rivals rather than partners. In line with Jainuri's research, Souza [4] noted that local government dominated budget planning. The local government applies a bureaucratic system during the budget planning, a system which does not provide an opportunity for civic groups to take part. In addition, Souza [4] explained, according to his research conducted in a local government in China, the budget process is based on a political paradigm in which the involvement of politicians, such as via political parties and parliament, is a part of civic group participation. This means that civic groups in the budget process are represented by politicians.

In addition, Souza [4] reveals that the relationship between local government and citizens is dominated by the role of government officials. They arrange the budget established on legal procedures, commonly designed to map the bureaucratic budget. In this context, civic groups have a limited time to become involved in the budget process. Therefore, the final approved budget may be

seen as taking the side of the administrators of public affairs. As highlighted by Alfred and Franklin [1] budget planning is underlined by the actions of administration officials. This causes a disproportionate distribution in favor of government over social affairs in budget policy.

Referring to these issues, Alfred and Franklin [1] suggested that, in accordance with democratic values, budget planning should be related to citizens, public services, and public goals. Hence, public participation in the budgetary process is an important way to ensure that budget policy is responsive to citizens' needs. They recommend that local officials select a participatory mechanism more deliberatively once the outcomes desired from citizen participation in budgetary decision-making are articulated. Davenport and Skandera [2] assert that relevant civic groups play a distinctive and vital role in a democratic society. They develop core virtues and values that enable individuals to contribute to society's needs and to help design political institutions adopting public policies supportive of citizen preferences.

A democratic political system requires the active role of civic groups in carrying out their respective functions in shaping and determining public policy, including budgetary policy. As recommended by Huntington [6], the active role of society in the political process is to minimize the political interests of political and bureaucratic elites. Lock [7] believed that through public participation, the problems of life in a society could be solved. In addition, a society would gain knowledge and understanding, develop a sense of social responsibility, and reach new perspectives beyond the boundaries of personal life.

Davenport and Skandera [2] explain that the main role of community organizations is to empower the people so that they have room to advocate their aspirations to government. In principle, the core role of civic groups is to empower the people and advocate

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