

**Understanding the Roles and Challenges of Local Government in the Era of Technological Transformation in Indonesia: A Study of Public Policy Literacy**



**Memahami Peran dan Tantangan Pemerintahan Daerah di Era Transformasi Teknologi di Indonesia: Kajian Literasi Kebijakan Publik**

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**ABSTRACT**


This study is aimed to understand the challenges of the Indonesia’s local governments in the era where technology has transformed the public service system from a manual method to an all-digital application method. A series of efforts are made to discuss and find the solutions to the problem of the study. The data is searched electronically from literature sources including various publications such as journals, and other papers that are used as the data sources of this research. After a series of selection and searching for relevant data, the required data is finally collected. The data is examined through a phenomenological approach, referring to an effort in obtaining resilience from some existing data to get the answers for the discussed phenomenon, the challenges and roles of local government. The analysis process involves several techniques, including coding, verifying, evaluating, synthesizing, organizing, and carrying out in-depth interpretations that make it easier for the author to draw conclusions to answer the research problem with a good validity. The results of the data and discussion conclude that the challenges and roles given to the local governments in this reform era include the inconsistency of Bureaucratic Reform in the government and the challenges in adapting various dynamics such as pandemics and other crises, including the abuse of authority and indiscipline of the apparatus, especially the officials in carrying out their duties and functions as public servants. Thus, this research provides important results that complements and enlightens similar researches in the future.

**Kata Kunci**

*Peran dan Tantangan;  
 Pemerintah Daerah;  
 Transformasi;  
 Kebijakan Publik;  
 Literasi;  
 Teknologi;*

**ABSTRAK**

Kajian tersebut untuk memahami tantangan Pemerintah Daerah di Indonesia di era dimana teknologi telah mengubah sistem pelayanan publik dari metode manual menjadi metode aplikasi serba digital. Kami melakukan serangkaian upaya untuk berdiskusi dan mencari solusi dari pertanyaan kajian di atas. Kami mencari data secara elektronik dari sumber literatur, berbagai publikasi, seperti jurnal, dan konten lainnya, yang kami gunakan sebagai salah satu sumber data untuk membahas penelitian ini. Setelah serangkaian seleksi dan pencarian relevansi data, akhirnya kami dapatkan. Kami membahasnya dengan pendekatan fenomenologis, yaitu upaya mendapatkan resiliensi dari beberapa data

	<p>yang ada untuk mendapatkan jawaban atas data fenomenal yaitu tantangan dan peran pemerintah daerah. Proses analisis melibatkan beberapa teknik, antara lain pengkodean, verifikasi, evaluasi, sintesis, pengorganisasian, dan melakukan interpretasi mendalam yang memudahkan kita menarik kesimpulan yang menjawab pertanyaan dengan validitas yang baik. Hasil data dan pembahasan menyimpulkan bahwa tantangan dan peran yang diberikan kepada pemerintah daerah di era reformasi ini antara lain inkonsistensi Reformasi Birokrasi dalam pemerintahan dan tantangan adaptasi terhadap berbagai dinamika seperti pandemi dan krisis lainnya seperti penyalahgunaan wewenang dan ketidakdisiplinan aparaturnya khususnya pejabat dalam menjalankan tugas dan fungsinya sebagai pelayanan publik. Dengan demikian, hasil ini menjadi konten penting yang melengkapi dan mencerahkan penelitian serupa di masa depan.</p>
<p><b>Article History</b>                  Send 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022                  Review 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022                  Accepted 26<sup>th</sup> December 2022</p>	<p>Copyright ©2022 <a href="#">Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora)</a>                  This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> license.                  Akses artikel terbuka dengan model <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> sebagai lisensinya.</p> 

## Introduction

Various industrial sectors are currently implementing digital transformation to adapt to an all-digital environment, primarily driven by the numerous ongoing crises endured by the Indonesians (Saggaf et al., 2018). It is including the government, who tries to implement digital transformation in the public sector. Efforts to accelerate the digital transformation in the sector of government's public service have been made through several studies on digital transformation in the public sector as well as on the most recent challenges, which include the collaboration between academics and the government. However, the impact and performance of this digital transformation effort could be better. Infrastructure issues may also affect the implementation of digital transformation in the public sector. According to the findings of the studies, the implementation of digital transformation in the public sector experiences some difficulties. There are six obstacles in the implementation of digital transformation in the public sector identified in a survey involving 31 institutions (Leuwol et al., 2020).

Issues of policy and regulation, security and privacy protection, information technology infrastructure, system and service integration, organizational resistance, as well as the lack of quality and quantity of human resources (HR) are among those obstacles (Nugroho, 2020). Among the six challenges surveyed based on literature studies, there are three most significant challenges in implementing digital transformation, including the lack of quantity and quality of human resources, issues of regulations, policies, and procedures, as well as issues of security and privacy protection. Rahmadana et al. (2020) believes that the challenge on the lack of quantity and quality of human resources for digital transformation is a relevant result according to the employee demographics of the 31 institutions involved in the survey, which most of the respondents (institutions) have employees of less than 50 people, thus it is considered insufficient for the digital transformation to be implemented.

While relating to the regulation, policy and procedural issues, M. H. Chen (2019) said that these issues later also emerged in other themes in the research, which included the obstacle in adopting *cloud computing* as a technology that drives digital transformation. Based on the survey, the enforced regulations, policies and procedures are still considered insufficient, even though there has been an ITE Law to a Presidential Decree. They need one more legal umbrella that is clearer for digital transformation. The respondents also have security and privacy protection issues in digital transformation. This becomes a concern, in case later, there is a data theft or *hacking*. This security issue is then related to the policy of the State Cyber and Code Agency (Weber & Studer, 2016). Meanwhile, regarding the *cloud computing technology* as a

technology that accelerates digital transformation, the survey results show that out of 31 respondents, 67.7% have adopted *cloud computing* and 32.3% still need to embrace it.

Regarding the adoption of this technology, the survey on 31 respondents indicates that there are seven factors driving the adoption of *cloud computing*. The seven driving factors include the suitability of *cloud services* to the needs, the desire for innovation from the organizations, the perceived benefits of *cloud computing*, the number of users of the IT services, leadership supports, regulations and policies, to the social influence between agencies (Qasem et al., 2020). "The suitability of services to the needs, the desire for innovation from the organizations, as well as the perceived benefits of *cloud computing* are the main factors driving the adoption of *cloud technology*. However, in its adoption, agencies in the public sector also have several characteristics that hinder the adoption of *cloud computing*. There are ten factors inhibiting the adoption of *cloud computing*. These inhibiting factors include the agency concerns on the access and control of the data in *the cloud*, security and privacy concerns, regulatory issues, lack of technical competence, lack of HR knowledge about *cloud computing*, lack of trust in *cloud services*, difficulties in integrating *cloud computing* with other systems owned by the agencies, lack of reliability and performance of the *cloud services*, unstable internet networks, as well as the internal organizational resistance (Pearson & Benameur, 2010).

The respondents indicated that they were concerned about the data access and control since they owned no real property. This differs to the on-premise data storage, which automatically provides a full control over the data or applications it runs. D. Chen & Zhao (2012) explains that this matter is also related to the concern of the public sector agencies regarding the security and privacy of the stored data. This is due to the concern that the data or applications may be retrieved or read by the *cloud service providers*. Hence, based on the conducted research, the research team concludes that privacy, security and data access are the main issues that should become the concerns of the government. At the same time, they also want the *cloud computing service provider* to be responsive, easy to contact and respond quickly to any problems occurred. Furthermore, the biggest challenge faced in digital transformation is the issue of policies and regulations required to accommodate the digital acceleration in the public sector (Kim et al., 2014).

Aside from the regulations at the central level, internal regulations regarding digital transformation is also necessary in the future. Moreover, *HR training on cloud computing* needs to be conducted for the sake of HR technical competence (Nagy et al., 2018). The expectation is that this will reduce the factors inhibiting the adoption of *cloud computing*. Local

governments play a significant role in deciding the most appropriate policies for their regions. They must identify carefully the landscape of the problems, decide quickly on relevant policies and ensure that they work effectively. In short, local governments must continuously oversee and observe the guidelines for COVID-19. Policy improvements are always required to adapt to the new challenges in the process. For this reason, this study discusses about the local government's challenges and innovations (Mergel & Desouza, 2013).

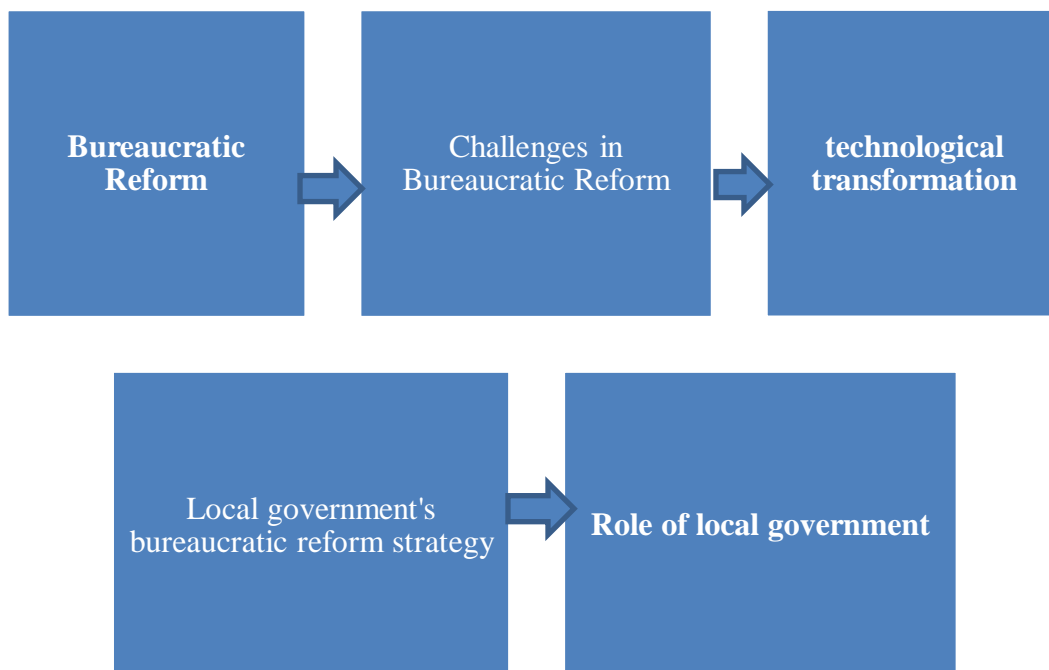
The challenge for the health sector is the fluctuating trend of Covid-19 that will be high. There are several clusters of Covid-19 such as hospitals, offices, markets, companies and others. It needs health facilities in referral hospitals, laboratories, as well as the availability of human resources for health workers (Chandrasekaran et al., 2020). Therefore, in Central Java, the activity of Covid-19's Mobile Combat PCR is assisted, to prevent new cases and transmission of Covid-19 as well as to improve the patients' recovery and reduce the patients' mortality. The priorities and directions of the 2021's development policies are increasing the economic growth and resilience along with the environmental sustainability, accelerating the reduction of poverty and unemployment, as well as strengthening the disaster resilience, governance, and regional fiscal stability. Azzahra (2020) explains that there are policies arranged to adapt to new habits, such as health protocols to be implemented in public transportations, markets or street vendor areas, restaurants, schools and other sectors. Central Java has created an application called as 'Sakpole' for the taxpayer's online payments and provided free internet at several mosques for online learning. During the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic, people are forced to be creative, capable and accustomed to information technology, to live more disciplined with health protocols and simplify their lifestyles efficiently (Campbell et al., 2020).

In Bogor City, after the implementation of PSBB (the large-scale social restrictions), the trend of Covid-19 has increased, yet the concerns regarding the Covid-19 pandemic have decreased according to the available data. In addition, unemployment was increased during the pandemic in Bogor, with a total of 12,658 residents in Bogor City were laid off. The divorce rate in Bogor City has also increased. In June, there were 90 reports of divorce cases submitted to the Bogor's Religious State Court, and the majority of the lawsuits were due to economic factors. Bogor also has an innovative information system, called as the Covid-19's digital map presented via the website *covid19.kotabogor.go.id*. This is important as the information regarding Covid-19 must be transparent and clear, and the people of Bogor can access the information on the site. Campbell et al. (2020) states that the government also has a system called as the Covid Detective (Covid Active Detection), referring to a system that helps with

tracing. It consists of 1,167 people divided into two teams, a tracking team and a monitoring team. The tracing group is formed at the sub-district and urban village levels to carry out contact tracing of positive cases within 2×24 hours.

The creative ability and innovation power of the local government units are very strategic in anticipating and responding to the public service challenges, that can lead to various service disruptions (Vanebo & Murdock, 2012). The shift of human resources towards digitization and information technology is a challenge that needs to be responded by every head of the government office to produce a comprehensive strategy in responding to the increasingly changing and demanding challenges of the 4.0 industrial revolution era. Public service personnel who play a role in realizing the smoothness and improvement of the community's fulfillment, undoubtedly, need to respond to the various impacts brought by the development of the 4.0 industrial revolution, especially regarding the professionalism and readiness of the government's human resources in facing any different actions in increasingly modern and sophisticated constraints (Nankervis et al., 2019).

## Literature Review



## Bureaucratic Reform

The ideals of reform in Indonesia continue to give birth to various changes in the government sector, both the central government and local governments (Spiegel, 2012). The desired reforms include the changes in the government bureaucracy sector, started at the state

level and then spread to all regional governments. The concept of bureaucracy was born from the younger generation, originated from the student element and several change movements. The concept of bureaucracy is aimed to develop the government services, which means that the change starts from the office with various rules or laws in public administration services (Ayuningtyas et al., 2021). In a simple language, it is related to the governance conducted by the government in serving the community as well as in designing regulations and sources of rules related to the running citizen government. Sometimes, these changes come from the power of the people's representatives in the parliament in drafting the rules. However, after the rules are accomplished, it is controlled by some professionals that are close to the government. Even, on behalf of specific organizations, they carry out various obstacles for the benefit of the group. Simply to understand, bureaucracy is a structure in the form of a governance pattern occurred in offices of which the executors are the officials sitting behind desks (Friyani et al., 2020).

All bureaucracies are expected to be practical and not conflicted with various rules, as the historical emergence of bureaucratic traditions from European countries urges bureaucracy to be anti-waste, anti-exploitation, free from oppressive opportunist collusion and various detrimental practices to democracy. However, what happened is that it triggers a bureaucratic mania which brings the function of each service become inefficient and ineffective since the bureaucracy is often convoluted in every public service activity. This is happened in various levels of government, both at the central and provincial levels and even in district areas, where laws and bureaucratic organizations in public-serving government institutions at various levels will experience a slowdown. Bureaucracy, which refers to almost all civil and military tasks, often makes the organization look physically elegant, stately, and complete with equipment. However, in the context of its implementation, this structure becomes constrained due to the complexity of the public-serving government institutions (Bandaragoda, 2000).

### **Challenges in Bureaucratic Reform**

There are at least three issues in the development of Indonesia. The first concern is the bureaucracy, which continues to be significant, slow, and unable to serve the investor and the community well. The second concern is the corruption, which numerous state administrators continue to mismanage the state finances (Turner et al., 2022). The third concern is related to the issue of insufficient infrastructure and the absence of state budget for construction and preservation. The acceleration of bureaucratic reform program is urgently required to create a

bureaucracy that is free from corruption, nepotism, and collusion, full-serving and competent in the duties and responsibilities, deviating from those three concerns above. Administrative malpractice, resulted from a direct contact between service providers and users, is one type of public service issue that frequently occurs. Types of regulatory misbehavior related to the presumption of public authorities are such as acting randomly, manhandling authority, and behaving improperly or inappropriately (Gaus et al., 2017).

Types of administrative malpractice in public administrations include request for money-related payment (can be called as debasement), control without privileges generally conducted by the public authorities, and abuse of evidence when the public authorities are associated with any criminal matters. According to Aris (2018), administrative malpractice can be eliminated through the electronic government (e-gov) by cutting off the communication between users and service providers. The most prominent indicator for the government's performance is public service. The public can directly evaluate the government's performance based on the services they receive. As a result, the quality of public services in all ministries and agencies requires to be improved immediately. According to Law No. 25 of 2009, excellent service is prompt, straightforward, confident, inexpensive and accountable. The community is encouraged to participate in the formulation of policies, preparation of service standards, execution of public service's satisfaction surveys, and submission of complaints, grievances and compliments in order to enhance services (Lips, 2019).

The involvement and participation of the community will support the established service standards. For example, a satisfaction survey on public service will provide a better understanding toward any unsatisfactory aspects in the provided services. KemenPAN RB (the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform) has implemented a policy declaring 2014 as the year of innovation in public service to encourage improvements. It is expected that all the central and regional government agencies will be able to create innovative solutions on the public service issues. KemenPAN RB gathers and evaluates all completed developments in various offices throughout Indonesia. For BPS (Central Bureau of Statistics), public services is developed to maintain a healthy competition with other organizations, and it is expected that they will always be able to improve their services in terms of innovation and quality (Saluy et al., 2019). The Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (PANRB) has named BPS in the Top 35 Public Service Innovation (<https://www.bps.go.id/KegiatanLain/view/id/93>). PANRB through the Ministerial Decree No. 99 of 2016 concerning the Selection of the Top 35 Innovations in the Public Service for 2016, chose the Top 35 agencies for their innovations in the public service, taken from the



2,476 participants that took part in the 2016's public service innovation competition and chosen from the Top 99 Public Service Innovations. The Top 35 include three ministries, two institutions, eight provinces, fourteen districts, five cities and three BUMN/BUMD (state-owned/ regional owned enterprises).

### **Local Government's Bureaucratic Reform Strategy**

One of the efforts to strengthen the regions to run the wheels of government and to strengthen the role of local governments in carrying out the concept of decentralization following the mandate of regional autonomy is to reform the bureaucracy of the regional government. The autonomous regional government must be able to explore the owned resources to be used for the welfare of the society by providing services, increasing the regional competitiveness according to the potential, uniqueness and excellence of the region that are managed in a democratic and accountable manner. Regions must be given with autonomous government to manage their financial resources, provide public services and develop the region concretely based on the principles of efficiency and effectiveness (Labolo & Indrayani, 2017). Regional governments must be able to process and carry out their rights and responsibilities according to the principles of good governance to achieve maximum results. To achieve a good governance, all parties—including the government officials, the public sector, or both—must be committed and consistent. It needs a strong work ethic, high morale and excellent coordination from various parties for its implementation. To make the governance and development run in an efficient, effective, and clean manner, the strategy for bureaucratic reform also requires the modification of behavior according to the dimensions of government ethics, efficient law enforcement, as well as the creation and implementation of an appropriate, transparent, and tangible accountability system, as accountable is in line with the idea of good governance. The relationship between the bureaucratic reform strategy, the demands for an effective, efficient and responsible government, as well as the establishment of a clean government, is that essentially, it is a transformation of numerous dimensions of values contained in the constitution. Human resources with integrity, competence and consistency in managing the government affairs are necessary (Umar et al., 2019).

By utilizing information technology and fostering communication, bureaucratic reform is expected to produce a simple, systematic and easy management on an administrative level. As a result, the improved management is expected to result in a superior performance of an accountable and transparent service process. Cimahi City's Regional Government still finds that the public service process is lengthy and complicated, making it difficult for the people to

obtain services with the long procedures and mechanisms. Additionally, they continue to discover that the service's standard operating procedures (SOPs) shall be better understood, since the relevant community needs to be informed with the service procedures. Regarding the creation of standard operating procedures (SOPs), the coordination between related agencies is still required (Aziz & Roziqin, 2020).

For example, for types of services that require certain agency requirements to be used as prerequisites for making permits, this causes the issuance of the permits to take a long time. Human Resources (HR) factors include performance, bureaucratic culture, ethics, and behavior. Changes in the perspective of HR should have the option of creating a perfect and qualified regulatory HR according to the Extraordinary Diary, Vol. 3, Number 1, Walk 2017 48 with hierarchical necessities both concerning on the quantity and the quality (having a sense of skill, ability, extraordinary morale and having a high hard work attitude). Related to Local Government, the factor of Human Resources (HR) is still an interesting topic and is currently the center of attention, because as can be seen, there are a lot of Civil Servants in Indonesia. However, when it comes to placement in the organizational structure, it still needs to be proven that there is a buildup of authority that must be carried out by one of the agencies which is not matched with the existing number. Similarly, regarding the quality of HR, placements still need to be conducted in a more relevant way, which means that HR placements are not based on their competence. This also affects the wheels of governance as the local government's human resources need to be adapted to the qualified capabilities and competencies (Dewi et al., 2019).

## **Methods**

This study discusses about the understanding on the roles and challenges of local government in an era where technological transformation is a solution to public services (Kamal et al., 2011). The author believes that understanding the roles and challenges experienced by local government officials in an era of all-technology is very interesting when studying policy literacy and public services in Indonesia (Ncamphalala, 2019). Thus, for this reason, we look for information and search electronically related literature on the published data sources in the form of books and other scientific papers published between 2010 and 2022. It is by considering that in the last ten years, there have been big significant changes especially due to the impact of technology on public services, both in central and local government level. This study aims to get some scientific evidence that says and justifies the role and challenges faced by the regional government officials in serving the public interest. This task has been mandated by the laws of the Republic of Indonesia (King et al., 2015).

To be able to answer the problem with a high validity and reliability, the data obtained from several electronic searches is then analyzed under a phenomenological approach. It refers to a strategy to answer the problem by searching relevant data from several available pieces of information. This study is designed with a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an easy understanding for the readers. Our finding is supported by previous findings, which become the scientific evidence for the importance and enormity of the challenges faced by the government in providing excellent service to the community in an era where technology shows effectiveness and innovation in helping not only the business and government, but also other sectors such as education and other health businesses (Ioannidis et al., 2014). This model is an elaboration of the strategy and methodology of data analysis, especially the implementation of studies that aim to gain an in-depth understanding on the obstacles faced by the local government officials in the era where technology has become one of the solutions for services and the completion of domestic administrative tasks not only by the government, but also by the business sector and other human activities (Sun et al., 2015).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Challenges and Strategies of Bureaucratic Reform**

The year of 2010 was marked as the beginning of bureaucratic reform breakthroughs by Presidential Regulation No. 81 of 2010 regarding the overall plan for bureaucratic Reform from 2010 to 2025. The 2010-2020 Bureaucratic Reform Grand Design was then turned into the 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 Bureaucratic Reform Road Maps, respectively. From 2020 to 2024, Bureaucratic Reform will enter its third phase (Tome, 2012). KemenPAN-RB (The Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform) in the era of President Joko Widodo was in charge for the second phase of bureaucratic reform and would be in charge for the third phase, meanwhile President SBY was in charge for the first phase of bureaucratic reform. Munawaroh (2018) states that Bureaucratic Reform aims to establish professional, high-integrity, public servant-like government bureaucracies that serve the nation and promote a good governance. It is expected that such bureaucracy will improve the performance of the government as well as the regional and national development. The above objective of Bureaucratic Reform is to realize its vision of establishing a world-class government. Eight areas of change have been identified to implement the Bureaucratic Reform program throughout the two ongoing phases, including mentality, supervision, accountability, institutions, management, laws, regulations, and public services, all are part of the state apparatus (Napir & Junus, 2019).

Evaluation on the achievements of the first and second phases of Bureaucratic Reform in the eight areas of change showed mixed results. Yet, it still shows less significant changes occurred. Bureaucratic Reform in the government accountability by developing the performance of the government agencies in its accountability system is an area of considerable change. Although offering several changes by building public service malls and various efforts to improve service quality, the public service area is still a concern for change. Data on the government's compliance, especially the district/city regional governments as the spearhead of public services, with laws and regulations in the field of public services (Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning public services), still needs to be improved (Henderson et al., 2011).

Similarly, evaluation of the State Civil Apparatus Commission (2018 and 2019) shows that very few ministries/agencies and local governments still need to implement human resource management properly (Giljević & Lalić Novak, 2018). The areas of change related to the mentality of the state civil apparatus need to be visible in the programs and its echoes. Many people are still questioning the capability and integrity of the state apparatus. Evaluation on the areas of change related to institutions and governance (in this case, electronic government) also shows alarming results. One of the findings in the evaluation of the e-government implementation in Indonesia is the low level of connectivity between e-government systems, both within one ministry, agency and region, as well as between ministries, institutions, and regions. The areas of change related to legislation and supervision are still the most concerning. Another problem outside the eight areas of change, which is also a big problem in Indonesia, is the sectoral egoism between ministries, institutions, and regions (Gertler, 2010).

Sectoral egoism occurs in one ministry, one government agency, and one particular regional apparatus organization. This problem is often known as silo mentality. In fact, according to available data, there are still more than 100 regions in Indonesia that still need to implement the Bureaucratic Reform program (Volden & Andersen, 2018). Reports from various international institutions also show that the condition of the Indonesian bureaucracy is still apprehensive. The value of Indonesia's ease of doing business was still below Malaysia, Thailand, and even Vietnam in 2016-2019. This caused the competitiveness of Indonesia's investment in the ASEAN region to suffer quite a bit. Another concerning indicator is the corruption perception index, which has undergone a change even though not significant. The last indicator that can be used to assess the quality of the Indonesian bureaucracy is the government effectiveness index (GEI), which still needs to be improved despite the continuous improvements. The first and second phases of Bureaucratic Reform leave a lot of 'homework'

that must be completed quickly and thoroughly by the government of Joko Widodo (Kosandi & Wahono, 2020).

What are the challenges faced by Indonesia and various governments in the world in the future? In a book entitled *government in 2071* (Djalante et al., 2020), the governments worldwide, including Indonesia, are faced with an era of sophisticated technological development (artificial intelligence). Indonesia must anticipate a period of broader openness between countries, which will lead to the ability to compete to attract credible potential investors. Indonesia faces significant climate change, impacting several big cities like Jakarta. Indonesia is facing a world citizen whose mobility is increasing, as well as a substantial increase in population. Indonesia is lagging in terms of the welfare of its people, especially in the fields of education and health. Only now, the government has been able to make regulations related to solving online taxi problems.

For this reason, a high-quality bureaucracy is needed, supported by excellent professionalism, toughness, productivity and integrity. Then, what is the Bureaucratic Reform strategy that must be built for the 3rd phase of Bureaucratic Reform? First, following the objectives of Bureaucratic Reform set out in the 2010-2015 Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform, is the realization of good governance (Afrilinda et al., 2022).

Therefore, the government must do various things to shift the mindset through the management of changes. The Indonesian bureaucracy has been moving with the old paradigm, often called as the old public administration paradigm. Even though there have been changes in Indonesian public administration, it must be realized that there is a need for a change in the way of thinking (a paradigmatic change) in managing the state and government. Through significant change-management activities, the orientation of the bureaucrats can be renewed, from the direction of power to the law of providing excellent public services, as well as from the exposure to working alone (assuming the government knows everything) to the orientation of working with various components of society (stakeholders). This new paradigm changes the direction of how to work known as the networked government, or the collaborative governance. The government can no longer work and solve the problems of the public alone (Kadarisman et al., 2022).

Second is regarding the scope of Bureaucratic Reform. The eight areas of change in Indonesia's current Bureaucratic Reform need to be narrower or more focused. This burdens the ministries/agencies, especially the regions (Wihantoro et al., 2015). The government can reduce the eight existing areas of change, thus Bureaucratic Reform becomes more concentrated and has priority. Since the achievement target in 2019 (the second phase of

bureaucratic Reform) is a performance-oriented bureaucracy, the primary homework that must be completed is an area of change that will encourage the realization of performance-oriented bureaucratic targets. For this reason, reforms related to the government agency performance for accountability system, performance-based budgeting, performance-based organizations (institutions), and performance-oriented apparatus resource systems must be a top priority. If this is conducted properly and correctly, it will be easier to reform public services that perform well in the following areas of Bureaucratic Reform in the issues related to integrity and supervision (Diprose et al., 2019).

Thus, the eight areas of change are regrouped into three groups. The next is the sense of belonging. Another essential aspect to be focused-on in the Bureaucratic Reform program in Indonesia is the sense of belonging from all ministries/agencies and regions toward the Bureaucratic Reform program. Many government organizations see and feel that Bureaucratic Reform is a program of the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform that has been entrusted to them (Crozier & Friedberg, 2017). The common sense of belonging toward the Bureaucratic Reform program from various parties lead to the implementation of Bureaucratic Reform being a burden, not a necessity. Also, it is implemented 'half-heartedly.' This is one of the essential things that must be included in the change-management of Bureaucratic Reform. The last aspect that is important to be focused-on in the Bureaucratic Reform program is the handling system of this program. Up to these days, the responsibility and burden to implement Bureaucratic Reform lie only within the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (Asyikin, 2020).

The government must arrange the responsibility for burden issues and the implementation of the program to various relevant ministries and institutions as well as become the key to the success of the Bureaucratic Reform program. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs must be involved in all areas of change related to the regions. For areas related to HR, for example, the State Administration Agency and Civil Service Agency must be included. For the SAKIP area and performance-based budgeting, it is best to have the Ministry of Finance and Bappenas (the National Development Planning Agency). The Financial and Development Supervisory Agency along with the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) are involved in the integrity and supervision areas of change. The participation of these various institutions is not merely about coordinating, but also being given responsibility on the issues related to their duties and functions. The bureaucratic reform program can run well through the clear paradigm of reasonable scope and targets as well as a good management in implementing Bureaucratic Reform (Anggraeni, 2014).

### **Bureaucratic Reform Inconsistency**

How far have we reformed our bureaucracy? Has there been a good, clean, efficient, and productive governance? Alternatively, as stated by many observers, the reforms go stalemate. What we encounter is that Bureaucratic Reform is still limited to slogans in government offices. Most are banners, billboards, and mass media advertisements (Akib & Ihsan, 2017). For the government, Bureaucratic Reform is fail in two main aspects. First is the failure of bureaucratic Reform to change the mentality and character of the state bureaucrats. The thing needed here is a mental revolution. Bureaucratic Reform should produce a bureaucrat who is honest, clean, dedicated, and eager to work for the people.

What happens is that corruption, collusion, and nepotism are still entrenched in our bureaucracy. In many respects, our bureaucracy still needs to be faster and even tends to be negligent in responding to various needs and complaints from the masses. The figure of our state apparatus has not yet become a 'service machine' for the interests of the groups. The most recent incident is the arrest of a tax official by the Corruption Eradication Commission for being caught red-handed in a bribery transaction related to tax management. We continue to be haunted by the endless "taxi mafia." Second, bureaucratic Reform still needs to make our bureaucracy lean and effective. Thus far, our bureaucracy is still very fat, even getting fatter. The President has too many assistants, including Special Staff, *Wantimpres* (the Presidential Advisory Council of the Republic of Indonesia), and others. After all, the performance of the President could have improved. The ministry is too complicated as well. There are already deputy ministers, exceptional staff, and others. So, what does the Directorate General of the Ministry do? (DeVries, 2010).

There is an alarming symptom here. The President has responded to various criticisms, especially from academics and NGOs, by absorbing them into power. Indeed, they only make a little noise out of control. Also, there is a tendency for the President who wants to use these 'additional positions' as additional lifeboats to avoid various public criticisms or attacks from the opposition (Kettl, 2016). For example, the Special Staff of the President for Legal Affairs and the Eradication of corruption, collusion, and nepotism will deal with multiple issues in corruption and law enforcement. The Minister's position is even more chaotic. Most of the ministerial posts are filled with the parties supporting the government. Also, sometimes to tame the opposition parties, one of their leaders is offered the post of Minister. This happened to Golkar, the party that supposed to be the opposition after the 2009 election (Hilton, 2018).

This is called as the strategy of co-optation of the opposition. The President tries to co-opt various political forces, influential critical figures, the most vocal academics, and others.

How? they are accommodated in political positions around the President (Ramírez de la Cruz et al., 2020). Hence, a unique phenomenon emerges: job seekers pretend to be a critical opposition, if necessary, they take part in the street demonstration against the government. The fattening of the bureaucracy has the consequence of wasting the state budget. The state must allocate additional budgets to pay for the salaries and operations of these new political positions. This thing causes the funding for our bureaucracy to grow continuously. In the 2012's State Budget, most of the state budget was spent on financing the bureaucracy. This is the bitter fruit of neoliberalism-style Bureaucratic Reform. For us, the most pressing thing at the moment is a 'mental revolution'—a change in the way of thinking, way of working/fighting, and way of life (belief in oneself, optimism, joy at work, new soul and new enthusiasm) among the state apparatus. However, this will not be easy if it is not accompanied by a fundamental overhaul of our current political-economic structure (Brierley, 2020).

### **Challenges in Government Reform**

An effective collaboration between the pillars of *good governance* can be shown concretely through the implementation of local governance, which is a *street-level bureaucracy*, referring to the closest bureaucratic unit to the community, considering that in this era of decentralization, most public services are managed by the Regional Government (Xue & Liou, 2012). For this reason, according to Mangindaan, reforming the local government bureaucracy is one of the *critical success factors*. Reform in a government institution is something that absolutely must be accomplished as a form of responsiveness and adaptation to the demands of developments and environmental changes. The arrangement of regional apparatus organizations as part of the Reform in the provincial government bureaucracy will determine the success of the decentralization policy and efforts to realize a *good local governance*. With these efforts, it is expected that the regional government institutions can support the achievement of the regional autonomy goals (Moonti, 2019).

On this basis, the government establishes a policy regarding the arrangement of regional apparatus organizations that is more directed to *rightsizing efforts*, referring to the efforts that simplify the government bureaucracy, thus it becomes more proportional, flat, transparent, has a short hierarchy, and decentralizes its authority (Indriyati et al., 2020). Organizational change, both in the Central Government institution and Regional Government institution, is the first area of change that must be carried out in the 8 (eight) areas of change which become the objectives of Bureaucratic Reform as stipulated in Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2010 concerning the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2025. The



change must be followed up with consistency and high commitment from all parties. Undeniably, obstacles in reforming the bureaucracy often emerge within, either due to the weak capacity or low will. For this reason, the implementation of regional bureaucratic reform must be balanced with the increased organizational capacity in formulating policy decisions and public services as well as in building the human resource capacity of the regional apparatus. Efforts to reform the bureaucracy must include gradual changes to the values (*shared values*) and culture of the local government officials, which bring implications to work ethics, quality of public services, as well as to the changes of behavior from ruling to serving and protecting (Afrilinda et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, Sitokdana (2019) said that West Nusa Tenggara Province had succeeded in implementing more realistic and proportional arrangement of the regional apparatus organizations. Therefore, we hope that West Nusa Tenggara Province can be a reference for "*best practices*" for other regional apparatus institutions. The institutional experience of West Nusa Tenggara Province can also be used as material for important consideration in improving legislation, such as the revision of Government Regulation (PP) No. 41 of 2007 concerning the Regional Apparatus Organizations. In terms of drafting regional apparatuses, each region is expected to be able to build an organization that is more aligned with the needs of their respective areas, responsive to the interests of the wider community, as well as exploring and utilizing the potential of their resources. In this context, the arrangement of regional apparatus organizations as part of the regional government bureaucratic reform will determine the success of decentralization policies and efforts to realize a *good local governance*. Law Number 32 of 2004 along with its implementing regulations, especially the Government Regulation number 41 of 2007 concerning the Regional Apparatus Organizations, also have regulated the arrangement of regional apparatus organizations as an effort to adjust to the demands of needs and dynamic developments in the implementation of provincial Government (Darmi & Suwitri, 2017).

### **The technological challenge of state apparatus**

Globalization and digitalization necessitate the State Civil Apparatuses (ASN), especially the millennials, to become lifelong learners. They shall not only accept, but also modify and react positively to the occurred changes. State Civil Apparatus faces both a challenge and an opportunity to compete successfully on a global scale due to the massive advancements in science and technology (Mackey & Nayyar, 2017). State Civil Apparatus cannot simply continue doing business as usual or carrying out routine tasks to meet the

challenges posed by the global competition. Kaur et al. (2020) put the Covid-19 pandemic as an example of where the State Civil apparatuses must be flexible, responsive, creative, and innovative in facing changes. Even after the Covid-19 pandemic, State Civil Apparatus will need to be able to adjust to the new normal. Therefore, Boland-DeVito (2019) states that as a speaker at State Civil Apparatus, we have to realize the existence of the new normal as we enter the office. We have to adapt, thus our productivity is maintained.

Kaewunruen et al. (2016) adds that global challenges require the use of smart strategies (innovative power). The millennial generation, also known as the "digital natives," can use the technology to broaden their perspectives and see it as an opportunity to enhance their competences, including knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. Millennials are also confronted with an overload of information in addition to the massive technological advancements and digitization of information. This situation frequently results in a paradox of abundance, in which much information is used improperly or even inappropriately. As public servants, the State Civil Apparatus must be able to sort this wealth of information into useful information. Therefore, "do not allow technology to rule us," he added. Aside from having relevant intellectual abilities and skills, millennial State Civil Apparatus must be able to work in a team. Consequently, members of the millennial generation - who value a fast, versatile, and dynamic work style - must be able to work together with members of the previous generations who have different work schedules. Millennial ASNs frequently come up with the novel/newest concepts or the concepts that can support the improvement of organizational performance. However, a lack of dialogue or communication makes it difficult for the other generations to comprehend the issues raised by the millennials.

## **Conclusion**

In the final part of this study, it is emphasized that the main objective of this study is to gain a profound understanding on the role and challenges of local government in the technological era that has transformed the government services to the community, as outlined in the law of administrative rights and public services. Through evidences and supported by previous studies, the findings have answered the problem of the study qualitatively and found a high validity and reliability. As gathered from several studies, Bureaucratic Reform refers to a strategy taken by the government to provide public services. However, in selecting the bureaucratic reform strategy certainly brings many challenges and obstacles that require commitment from the involved parties, especially the government, and shall be implemented by its apparatus, thus the local governance can run optimally as required by the public

regulations and the technological era. On the other hand, it is also obtained an understanding that in conducting bureaucratic reform, inconsistencies are often found by the implementing parties. This is because the government, in carrying out the reform, deviates from the original description as there are a lot of obstacles and challenges that potentially cause the failure of the reform to operate, mainly due to the character and the mentality of the bureaucrats.

Furthermore, the government also faces the challenge of Bureaucratic Reform related to the critical success factors that must be implemented, such as the issue of decentralization regarding policy, and also the efforts made by local governments that encounter obstacles thus do not match the expectations of the program arranged by the central government. On the other hand, the apparatus also faces challenges in providing public services, including the constraints with various technical matters such as technology and also other obstacles such as pandemics and financial crises, which hinder the performance of the government especially the state apparatus in providing the public services. Productivity and other impacts brought by the faced obstacles become the reason why it is tough enough for the apparatus to implement bureaucratic reform policies. Hence, the methodology and the design of this study may require suggestions as well as criticism, thus any improvements can be made in the future.

According to the results of this study on the challenges and roles of local government in Indonesia, the inconsistency in implementing bureaucratic reform becomes the issue that continue to get the public attention, along with all the emotional problems that make the regional apparatus unable to carry out their role properly. The author recommends that more studies shall be conducted and focused on increasing the capacity of the local government officials through supports in the form of training and binding regulations, thus every product of public service provided by the local government gets a regular evaluation and appreciation. Thus, by conducting studies and evaluations that can develop the capacity and responsibility of the government officials at the regional level, it will improve and increase the role of the apparatus in solving all the problems and challenges faced in the implementation of public services.

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