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# Bureaucracy, Leadership and People Characteristics

(A Review of Communication Public Official After Political Reformation)

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**Abstract—** in the developing countries, bureaucracy can be described as the culture of feudalism in the ruling government. On the other side, the true meaning of bureaucracy is the ideal model to achieve the objectives in the government or state power. The bureaucracy indeed is directly related to the expansion of the division of labor in all lines of works. There are hierarchy, clear procedural rules and others ideal criteria, which functioned as the foundation to manage an organization. In order for a government to move the bureaucracy, the government needs a leadership pattern from public officials that's holding to the ideal meaning of bureaucracy as its ground base, which also focuses to measurable activities. But in fact, public officials tends to placing themselves as an elite group that always have privilege and the right of being served. However, the problems arise because people nowadays still thinks and positioning public officials as superior entities in social, economy and politic aspects. As the result, social distance now exists and has a potential to alienate people from its leader. Even though when Indonesia enter the era of politic reformation, it is proper for public officials to run the government institution within the framework of democratization that give the same opportunity for its entire people.

**Keywords—** *bureaucracy, leadership, communication patterns, people's characteristic.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1998 the government bureaucracy that's been rooted firmly in the political system in Indonesia experienced fundamental change formally. However, the essence of the bureaucracy which supposed to serve the people has not yet been realized. The ideal bureaucracy should be very useful to form a good organization and able to achieve its goals. In fact, government bureaucracy feels superior in this country. Bureaucracy has always been related to in-efficiency either does not take sides to public. To elect government officials are usually based on collusion, nepotism which the foundation of communalism, sectarianism and ethnocentrism.

As a result, even though the political reform has been rolling over almost two decades and yet the bureaucracy in this country has not changed much. Bureaucracy still remains repressive, linear and has tendency to ignore the public. On the other hand, people feel inferior when dealing with bureaucratic apparatus. Thus, there is a communication distance between the apparatus who has the power and the people.

Whereas the mandate of political reform, the bureaucracy must take sides to the people and strive for the country

prosperity. Many post-regulation reforms have provided space for the public to be active in monitoring and to cooperate with government without the distance.

This condition is not in line with the spirit of reformation. The ideal bureaucracy should be capable of providing service to the public. The government has been trying to do bureaucracy reform in order to form effective, efficient, professional and good governance. To achieve ideal expectations of bureaucracy, therefore democratic leadership within the bureaucracy is necessary.

The pattern of bureaucracy's leadership in Indonesia tends to build the government apparatus power in order to control the people in social, economic and political life. Accordingly the government's efforts in implementing bureaucracy reforms are not achieved yet. Can be compare to a cycle model that moved forward while being backwards.

Problems of bureaucracy in Indonesia are not only coming from the bureaucratic elites. And yet Characteristic of Indonesian society should be taken into account. People tend to feel inferior when dealing with government bureaucracy. The condition is understandable given the fact that Indonesians suffered during the colonial period. In the perspective of development in the third world countries, people when dealing with the state power is usually referred as a victims of pyramid development [1].

Indonesia society has characteristic that can hampers development. On the one hand the government is attempting to reorganize the bureaucracy, but on the other hand the society views the government bureaucracy as a superior who must be obeyed. Therefore, the ideal bureaucracy is difficult to achieve. This is an ideal bureaucracy execution challenges in Indonesia.

Bureaucracy can be analogy as the culture of feudalism in the Indonesian government. Whereas according to Timasheff & Nicholas [2], bureaucracy essentially is the ideal model to achieve organizational goals. Etzioni supported Timasheff & Nicholas by saying that bureaucracy often refer to the ideal factor in running an organizations including as a reference to govern well [3].

Progress of bureaucratization in the modern world is related to the expansion of division of labor in every sphere of social life that done by democratic countries consistently [4].

Here are some concepts associated with bureaucracy:

- 1) Bureaucratization related to the expansion of the division of labor in all fields of social life in order to achieve prosperity [4].
- 2) The characteristics of bureaucracy by Max Weber are (a) the existence of division of labor, (b) the existence of hierarchy (c) including rules and procedures (d) a professional qualification in implementation of work (e) relationship in organization is not personal [5].
- 3) The Functions of Bureaucracy: (a) specialization that enables productivity, (b) structure that gives shape to the organization (c) Predictability (a condition which can be foreseen) and workable stability (d) Rationality that can be tested and presented in the act of creating synergies to maximize profits [4].

This paper thus will discuss the connection between public communications by bureaucrats in Indonesian society after post reform political era. The society that Emile Durkheim can categorized as a "mechanistic and tied to tradition and the value of the collectivity" [6].

## II. CRITICS AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

Warren Bennis [5] argues although bureaucracy has always been associated with regularity in the administration of one particular organization, but it was not fully able to make an effective bureaucracy. Why is that happened?

Factors that make the bureaucratic system can't run properly:

- 1) Bureaucracy does not provide opportunities sufficiently for personal growth and development of mature personality because bureaucracy has too many procedures and structural rigidity.
- 2) Bureaucracy develops compromise (conformity) with various obligation that is hard to do.
- 3) Bureaucracy does not calculate the informal organization neither unexpected issues that arise in the implementation of activities.
- 4) Supervision system and authority of the bureaucracy is very outdated. This can be occurs because there is an irregularities pattern of running accordingly with the development of science and technology. On the other hand, bureaucracy established monitoring procedures which take a long time.
- 5) Bureaucracy does not have a judicial process which means bureaucracy is only able to give administrative sanction against irregularities and abuse of power.
- 6) Bureaucracy does not have adequate tools to resolve the differences and conflicts between various levels. The solution pattern refers to the central guidelines that cannot able to resolve the conflict properly.
- 7) Communication and renewal of ideas blocked or deviated because of the hierarchical division. The idea that made to the surface and used in organizations is often claimed as a leader's success.

- 8) In the bureaucracy human resources are not used because there is distrust, fear of retaliation and feeling of jealousy, which is supported by the behavior "to safe our self".
- 9) Bureaucracy cannot combine new technologies with the job at hand. If new technologies were adopted then it need a long negotiation and approval based on the organization structure ignoring the urgent needs.

It can be concluded that bureaucracy change the structure of human personality in the organization. The employees become dull and they must obey to a variety of organizational rules which is rigid and mandatory. As a result, employee interaction and service to the public are becoming less attractive, monotonous, easily taking repressive measures and feeling superior.

## III. PEOPLE'S CHARACTERISTIC

Hamijoyo categorized that Indonesians have the characteristics of static mentality society [7]. Static mentality by Daniel Chirot depicted as people who are:

- Backward oriented, being dazzled by the glittering past as the long his/hertory, but it is less responsive to the future which more factual as a challenge.
- Fatalistic. Give up on fate is a product from the his/hertory of poverty and misery usually, which usually tend to be chronic.
- Lacking the spirit of innovation and creativity. It is hard to innovate and be creative, it is difficult to innovate and create something meaningful to the welfare of society at large scale.
- Indolent characteristic, slow or lazy, many people do not feel pressed by time. Moving in speed is useless because the whole social system does not support or provide a stimulus for individual.
- For the static society, attitude to the problems that arise in the environment is to "face" but does not solve or find a way out the problem. Thus the problem cannot be resolved.
- Harmony with the environment is maintained properly by static society. The mindset of harmony, suppress people who are different. In order to maintain harmony, people avoids challenge, instead they tend to use euphemisms or even completely taboo to talk about it, for example, the problem of poverty.
- Irrational attitude. Rational attitude is has a less role in static society. The distinction between what is real and what is symbolic or shadow are not clear [8].

In addition to static mentality and static attitude, the Indonesian society can be described also as traditional society. According to Satapathy [9] characteristic of traditional society as follow:

- Social organization is based on hierarchy
- Individual identifies herself/himself with primary groups and kinship relations predominate in interaction
- In individual is given more importance in social relations than his position
- In individual identifies himself with primary groups and kinship relations predominate in interaction
- People are conservative

Those traditional and static society characteristics, makes the bureaucracy had to work hard to encourage individual or groups of people to be able to work effectively to achieve adequate welfare. In the other hand, bureaucracies in Indonesian government tend to exploit conditions of the society. As the result differentiation appears between the bureaucratic apparatus of government as a super body, holding of state power while the public does not have the power to balance.

Bureaucracy in its application in Indonesia has a tendency to not function accordingly to the ideal type as Max Weber stated above. It is caused by a variety of complex factors that related to the characteristics of static and traditional society.

#### IV. PATERNALISTIC CULTURE: TENDENCY IN BUREAUCRACY

According to Hamijoyo [7] the mentality and paternalistic culture is characterized as follow:

- 1) Orientation to superiors or authorities, preventing the emergence of independent attitude, innovative and creative [10].
- 2) Desire to become a figure. Society learning from daily social life about how the leader enjoyed his/her position so that people slowly become conscious or unconscious personifying his/her superiors.
- 3) Responsible attitude also become blurred because in a paternalistic society many leadership are only symbolic [11].
- 4) Disobedient to discipline rooted in fear and obedience only exists if the supervisor around.
- 5) Kinship is misused. Family interest is often applied to solve a problem in government organizations, although public interest and legislation roles should be put forward.
- 6) Pseudo-mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation as helping each other activities with the principle of reciprocity between fellow citizens has long been recognized. However the influence of paternalistic system that is reinforced by the colonial practice eventually turns into compulsion or half coercion.
- 7) Public participation is less inferior. Society does not know why it is necessary to participate and was not sure the results. They feel only become a labor. Society participation is also less continuous usually due to: (a). The management depend to the sudden needs of the

leader and (b). People are less invited to participate with their roles and responsibilities are unclear [12].

#### V. METHODS

The study of bureaucracy, leadership and characteristics of society are conducted using study libraries, documents through internet. Researchers also did observations.

#### VI. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Bureaucracy in Indonesia has been developing within the static society with traditional attitude and paternalistic culture. Therefore it will be difficult for the government officials to perform its ideal function in government management that have a tough task to define public policy. Though a wide range of government products in the national or local level seeks to ensure the welfare of the people morally and materially.

With a paternalistic mentality that has orientation toward superior, government bureaucracy has a potential to create *pseudo welfare* through quantification calculations. Highlight the number as success calculation in develop public policy in social, economic and political and these quantification numbers are very well-liked by the authorities of state power.

Nevertheless numeral cultural in performing state's performance creates an attitude of "snobbery success". For example the habit to measure per capita income in money size. The ideal is to stay focused on how the distribution of income spread to the entire region or to the society.

On the other hand, culture which uses numbers or digit to claim the success of public policies and its results are not perceived by most people who are always argue about the social facts that they have to deal with.

In fact people in Indonesia do not care about the numbers. But the one needed in the post-reform era (after the New Order regime) is a new approach on leadership that can break down the bureaucratic system of government.

The general understanding of leadership involves the "process of social interaction where the leader's ability to influence the behavior of followers can strongly influence performance outcomes" [13].

Based on this understanding, then what is needed by the people of Indonesia is a charismatic leadership, the leadership ability which includes heroic or extraordinary leadership in a particular behavior.

A charismatic leader has the following characteristics: (1) Confident, (2) Have a clear vision and believe, (3) Unconventional (4) Agents of Change (5) Sensitive to the environment.

The tables below will show the data from the poling results and also poling about the considerations of choosing a leader and the expected characteristics of a leader [14].

**TABLE I. CONSIDERATIONS IN CHOOSING A LEADER**

Littbang Kompas Polling on 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> Mei 2012		Soegeng Sarjadi Syndicate Survey on 14 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> Mei 2012	
Integrity	66,2 %	22,1 %	Assertive
Experience	15,4 %	14,3 %	Pro - People
Intellectuality	10,9 %	14,1 %	Honest
Ideology/ Party Background	2,5 %	13,6 %	Leadership Ability
Age	1,7 %	12,2 %	Smart

Table I shows that integrity is the main consideration when people choose their leader.

While the data in Table II shows that the main characteristic of leader is dare to face the risk of his/her/her actions and political decisions.

**TABLE II. CHARACTERISTIC OF LEADERS**

No	Karakter	Banyak	Cukup Banyak	Sedikit
1	Dare to face the risk of his/her/her actions and political decisions.	15,8%	17,1%	52,8%
2	Integrity and Credible.	26,2%	18,3%	43,5%
3	Sensitive to the problems that occurred	25,0%	20,7%	42,7%
4	Good at playing his/her role in resolve the problems that occurred.	25,0%	20,7%	42,7%
5	Master in joining together differences of political views	21,7%	19,4%	45,5%
6	Makes the party as a tool to make nation future dream comes true.	25,0%	16,4%	38,7%

Data from both the table indicates that right now Indonesian society need a leader figure with high integrity and a courage to face the risks thus not just a leader who follow bureaucratic rules that had been set up all this time. He or she

must able to break down all of the old system are detrimental to society.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Bureaucracy in Indonesia has been developing within the static society with traditional attitude and paternalistic culture. This phenomenon will not produce a synergistic force in order to achieve prosperity. Nevertheless the pattern of paternalistic, traditional and static mentality of society should not always be the scapegoat which ended with pessimism and skepticism attitude. What is most important now is how to minimize the negative characteristics with absolute real effort. The effort that must be presented by the government elites, which have the authority in the government. Bureaucracy should be led by someone who work hard, have a clear vision and sensitive to the environment.

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