Review of Thematic Bureaucratic Reform Policy Changes in Efforts to Accelerate Local Development in Indonesia

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Abstract: Bureaucratic reform has become the Indonesian government's strategic agenda to create better, more adaptive and responsive governance. In the context of bureaucratic modernization, the Weberian bureaucratic model which emphasizes hierarchy, professionalism and standard rules is seen as less effective in dealing with global dynamics and local complexity. Therefore, thematic bureaucratic reforms have emerged that focus on improving the quality of public services, infrastructure development, and accelerating community welfare. This research examines the impact of implementing thematic bureaucratic reform on accelerating development at the local level, especially in three main aspects: public services, infrastructure development, and improving the quality of life of the community. It is hoped that thematic bureaucratic reform can build a bureaucracy that is responsive, fast and adaptive, in accordance with the directions of the President of Indonesia. Although the concept of thematic bureaucratic reform is promising, its implementation still faces challenges at the regional level. Many local governments view these reforms as an additional burden, with little understanding of their implementation. Therefore, further efforts are needed in the form of outreach, assistance and technical training for local governments, so that the Thematic RB can be implemented more effectively and sustainably.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Reform, Thematic Bureaucracy, Public Service.

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucracy, in the classical Weberian perspective, is built with the aim of creating rationality, professionalism, and order in government work relations. Weber (1968) identified six main characteristics inherent in the bureaucratic model, namely a hierarchical chain of command, specialization based on function, uniform policies, standard procedures, a competency-based career system, and impersonal work relations (Capano, 2015; Creighton & Campbell, 1999). Although this model has long been the foundation of governance, demands for bureaucratic modernization continue to grow along with global dynamics and increasingly complex local development challenges.

Bureaucratic reform has become one of the priority agendas in the Indonesian government's efforts to improve governance. In this case, thematic bureaucratic reform emerged as an innovative step to address various bureaucratic problems in a more focused and effective manner. As one of the government's main agendas, thematic bureaucratic reform focuses on three main aspects, namely improving the quality of public services, infrastructure development, and accelerating the improvement of the quality of life of the community at the local level. This reform aims to encourage governance that is more responsive and adaptive to various changes, and has a real impact on development in the regions.

Figure 1. National Bureaucratic Reform Implementation Flow

2014	2019	2024	Visi
Rule Based Bureaucracy	Performance Based Bureaucracy	Dynamic Governance	Terwujudnya Pemerintahan Berkelas Dunia
Birokrasi cenderung kaku dan berorientasi pada aturan	Birokrasi cenderung kaku dan berorientasi pada aturan	Birokrasi semakin efektif, efisien, dan bersih, dengan ciri agile dan adaptif sehingga setara dengan birokrasi kelas dunia	Birokrasi semakin efektif, efisien, dan bersih, dengan ciri agile dan adaptif sehingga setara dengan birokrasi kelas dunia

Source: Perpres 81, 2010

The shift from general bureaucratic reform to thematic bureaucratic reform not only seeks to accelerate the resolution of existing bureaucratic problems, but also aims to address increasingly pressing local development challenges. This is very important considering that the success of bureaucratic reform at the local level will have a direct impact on the acceleration of development in the region, especially in the areas of public services, infrastructure, and improving community welfare.

The direction of the President of Indonesia regarding thematic bureaucratic reform emphasizes the importance of building a bureaucracy that produces policies that can be directly felt by the community, as well as a bureaucracy that is fast, adaptive, and responsive (Gunderson et al., 2016; Holling, 1986). However, the extent to which this policy has had a significant impact on local development is still a question that requires further study. This study aims to examine the real impact of the implementation of thematic bureaucratic reform on the acceleration of development at the local level, with a focus on three main aspects, namely public services, infrastructure development, and improving the quality of life of the community.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with the theory of Governance Networks with the system thinking method, especially the stages of soft system methodology (SSM) analysis which aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of the implementation of thematic bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, especially in the context of local development.

The position of SSM in social science research is examined through two paradigm streams, namely the hard paradigm and the soft paradigm. SSM as a method in the soft paradigm has the basic idea that the real-world situation that we are exploring is a system of individual activities, in which we can choose one or several relevant human activity systems. From the picture above, it can be explained that the standard SSM cycle has 7 stages of activity divided into 2 domains, namely the real-world domain and the domain of thinking systems about the real world. The following is a research design using SSM from stages 1-7:
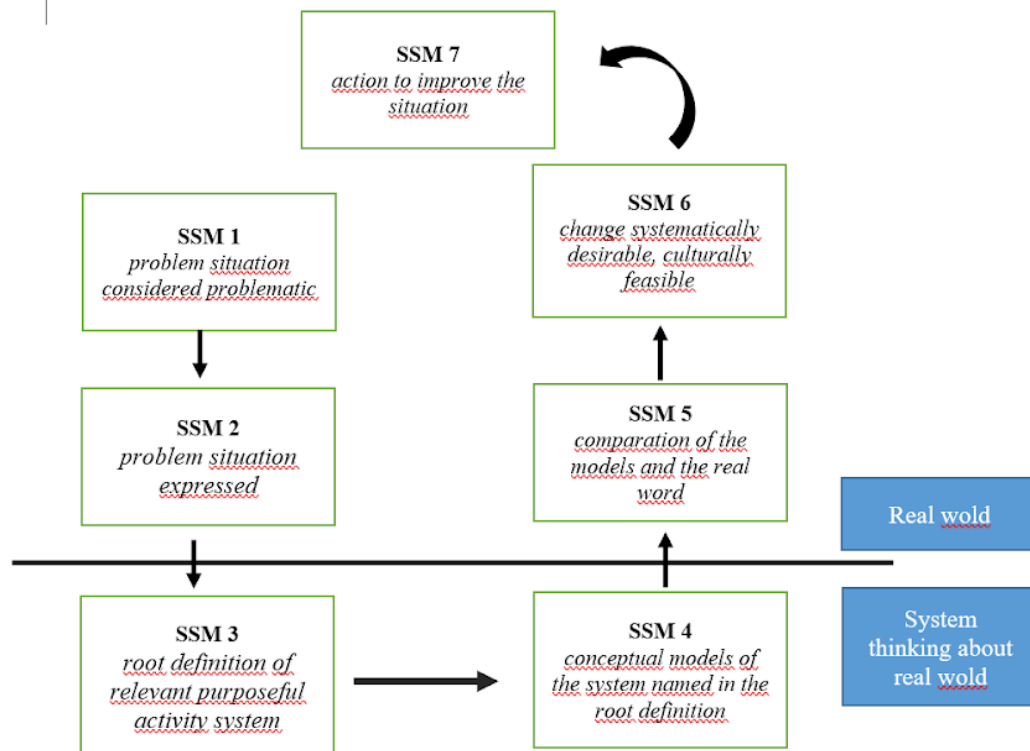
Figure 2. *Soft System Methodology*
Source: (Checkland, 1990)

1. Problem situation considered problematic.

   At this stage, the researcher maps the object of study through observation, interviews and scientific literature studies. In this study, the researcher conducted observations, interviews and documentation of various stakeholder problems involved. This stage is the basic stage for determining the existing model or condition of the research object. This stage is very important because it is related to the decision to determine the problems, which are then used as a basis for improving or perfecting the problematic situation. At this stage, the researcher describes the existing conditions of the bureaucratic reform system in Malang City, Yogyakarta City and Banyuwangi Regency. The results of the first stage include the basic concept of thematic bureaucratic reform and how the challenges faced by each region with different characteristics. Furthermore, from this problematization, the researcher conducts identification to then compile a problem framework in the second stage.

2. *Problem situation expressed.*

   Where researchers express the problems that occur through rich pictures. In making rich pictures, researchers describe the existing conditions of the bureaucratic reform policy change model. The presentation of rich pictures at this stage is in the form of images showing stakeholders. In the presentation of this rich picture, the structure, process, relationship between the structure and the process, and the main concerns are described. In an effort to reconstruct the model with rich pictures, researchers use the theory of policy change as a theoretical basis. This effort is realized through images and illustrations of social elements ranging from institutional structures, government relations, regulations, conflicts and issues that are currently occurring from all stakeholders involved. At this stage, researchers describe the problems that have been obtained in the first stage through the rich picture display. At this stage, researchers begin to model the problems that will then be used as the basis for social engineering. In the case studies explained in the 3 regions, each will describe different modeling, but have the same essence, namely thematic bureaucratic reform.

3. Root definition of relevant purposeful activity system.

   At this stage, the researcher begins to analyze the problem from upstream to downstream with CATWOE analysis (Customer, actors, transformation, word view, owner, environmental) which aims to find the root of the problem. Root definition is processed based on all information and data collected in the previous stage. By using CATWOE as a data analysis tool at this stage, the researcher describes and explains in depth the interests of all stakeholders involved in the change of the bureaucratic reform system.

4. Conceptual models of the system named in the root definition.

   From the results obtained in the third stage, the researcher created a conceptual model of system transformation which was realized through the activities of the actors and institutions involved.

5. Comparison of the models and the real word.

   This stage is a combination of the results of the rich picture which are then compared through FGD activities. In the fifth stage, researchers have made efforts to improve and modify the institutional system as an effort to improve the problems.

6. Change systematically desirable, culturally feasible.

   At this stage, researchers analyzed the results of the FGD and built a digital model as an effort to facilitate the governance and implementation of thematic bureaucratic reform.

7. Action to improve the situation.

   This stage is a follow-up effort from the results of the conceptual and empirical models that have been created. This stage is the implementation stage of the model that has been compiled from stages 1-5 SSM. The results of this study will produce a policy brief and digital model through the application. The creation of the application is an effort to facilitate networking at the macro, meso and micro levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Changes in the Bureaucratic Reform Model

Bureaucratic Reform (RB) in Indonesia has experienced significant developments along with the dynamics of government needs in responding to global and local challenges. Based on Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2010 concerning the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2025, the government has divided RB into three Road Map periods, namely 2010-2014, 2015-2019, and 2020-2024. However, the implementation of the 2020-2024 RB Road Map shows that the expected results, especially in accelerating national and local development, are still not optimal. At this stage, changes in the bureaucratic reform model are the main focus, considering that existing policies have not been able to effectively accelerate development.

One of the important changes stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (PANRB) Number 25 of 2020 concerning the 2020-2024 Bureaucratic Reform Road Map, later updated by the Regulation of the Minister of PANRB Number 3 of 2023, is the sharpening of a more adaptive strategy that focuses on results. This change aims to answer national strategic challenges, increase government competitiveness, and accelerate poverty alleviation and increase investment. This model change focuses on several things. First, the substance of the objectives, targets, and indicators of success of bureaucratic reform in the previous Road Map did not fully reflect national and international strategic needs. The Road Map, which previously focused more on improving the internal bureaucracy, must now be changed to be more oriented towards the benefits felt directly by the community. This change was also triggered by the President's direction demanding that the bureaucracy not only produce policies, but also ensure that these policies provide real and direct benefits to the community (making delivered). In addition, the bureaucracy is also expected to be more agile and quick in responding to needs.

Second, there are efforts to overcome the problem of fragmentation between agencies that hinder the implementation of RB. Cross-sectoral policies that are *cross-cutting* often run separately, so that synergy between government agencies is less than optimal. This causes the implementation of RB policies to be unable to fully support the achievement of strategic national development goals that are cross-sectoral. Therefore, the change in the new RB model emphasizes the importance of stronger cross-agency collaboration, with an emphasis on simplifying and integrating similar performance indicators.

Third, this change also encourages RB management that focuses on accelerating the achievement of strategic goals and targets, with an emphasis on solving root problems through improving internal systems and management. This new policy direction, as stipulated in Presidential Regulation Number 18 of 2020 concerning the 2020-2024 RPJMN, specifically highlights priority issues such as poverty alleviation, increasing investment, and job creation as the main targets that must be achieved by the bureaucracy. Thus, bureaucratic reform is no longer seen only as an internal administrative improvement, but as a key instrument to accelerate the achievement of national development targets.

Fourth, the change in the RB model also encourages the sharpening of more relevant and significant performance indicators in measuring the success of RB. Indicators that were previously fragmented between agencies must now be more integrated and synergistic to ensure more effective measurement. This policy aims to ensure that every government agency, both at the central and regional levels, has clear responsibilities in achieving national strategic targets, such as improving public services and reducing the practice of Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism (KKN). In terms of regulation, the change in the RB model is supported by several relevant legal regulations, including Law Number 17 of 2007 concerning the 2005-2025 National Long-Term Development Plan which states that the development of the state apparatus must be carried out through bureaucratic reform. In addition, Presidential Regulation Number 18 of 2020 concerning the 2020-2024 RPJMN reaffirms the importance of bureaucratic reform as a top priority in national development. These regulations demonstrate the government's commitment to realizing an adaptive, responsive, and results-oriented bureaucracy.

However, the evaluation of the implementation of RB so far still shows a gap between planning and results. Although the implementation of RB has entered the final Road Map stage of the 2010-2025 RB Grand Design, the achievements made have still not met public expectations. There is still a gap between the policies made and the real benefits that can be felt by the community, especially in terms of improving the quality of public services and reducing corruption practices. Therefore, the change in the bureaucratic reform model carried out in the 2020-2024 period emphasizes improvements that touch the root of the problem.

Mapping of Strategic Issues in Bureaucratic Reform Changes

Thematic bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, especially in the context of accelerating local development, has a very significant role. In this study, it is seen that reform efforts are directed at poverty alleviation by prioritizing more optimal policies and minimizing obstacles such as bureaucratic malpractice and corruption. The government hopes that this reform will produce a bureaucracy that is professional, has integrity, is free from KKN (Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism), and is able to serve the public well.

1) Lampung Province

One of the areas that is the focus of this research is Lampung Province, which emphasizes thematic bureaucratic reform in the economic sector to reduce poverty rates. In the implementation of thematic bureaucratic reform in Lampung, there are a number of strategic issues that have been identified and influence policy changes:

(1) Poverty Reduction as a Priority: Thematic bureaucratic reform in Lampung Province is focused on poverty alleviation efforts through strategic sectors such as the creative economy and tourism. Between 2018-2022, the poverty rate in this province decreased from 13.01% to 11.44%. This shows that the policies implemented have been able to provide a positive impact, especially in reducing the number of poor people by 1.57% or around 96,010 people. One of the main factors supporting this achievement is programs such as the Successful Farmer Card, Successful Fisherman, Smart Village, and village development assistance.

(2) Obstacles in Implementation: Although significant achievements have been achieved, there are several obstacles faced in the implementation of bureaucratic reform in Lampung Province, namely:
(a) Minimal support for updating poverty data.
(b) Lack of online integration of poverty alleviation program data.
(c) Slow information and technical instructions from the central government regarding poverty alleviation programs.
(d) Difficulty in identifying budgets for poverty alleviation programs at the regional apparatus level.

(3) Interventions and Acceleration of Development Efforts: To overcome these obstacles, Lampung Province has implemented several interventions, including:
(a) Reducing the Burden of the Poor: Through social assistance and social security programs based on households, families, or individuals.
(b) Increasing Capabilities and Income: Strengthening the capacity of poor community groups and empowering micro and small economic businesses.
(c) Strengthening Policy Synergy: Involving integrated policies between the central, provincial, and district/city governments to create harmony in poverty alleviation.
(d) Data Updating: Efforts to update more accurate village-based data, as well as strengthening coordination with the Regional Poverty Alleviation Information System (SIPKAD).
(e) Mentoring and Evaluation: Intensive mentoring of regional apparatuses to synchronize poverty alleviation programs.

Thematic bureaucratic reform in Lampung Province shows significant strategic efforts to reduce poverty levels by utilizing local economic potential. The implementation of programs such as Kartu Petani Berjaya and Smart Village are proof that more efficient and integrated bureaucratic management can provide real results for the community. However, it should be noted that the problem of unintegrated data and slow technical information from the central government are still major obstacles in accelerating regional development. Therefore, the emphasis on improving the monitoring, reporting, and evaluation systems in bureaucratic reform is very important to ensure that development goals can be achieved optimally. Synergy between the central government, regions, and local business actors is also a key factor in the success of thematic bureaucratic reform that focuses on poverty alleviation. This strategic issue mapping shows that thematic bureaucratic reform has a positive impact on accelerating local development, especially in the economic sector and poverty alleviation. However, improvements are needed in terms of data management and communication between governments so that these efforts can provide maximum benefits in the future.

2) Tangerang Regency

In Tangerang Regency, the poverty problem shows a relatively low figure, namely 6.23% in 2020. However, data from the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS) shows that there are still around 925,793 people from households with the lowest level of welfare. This figure illustrates the deep inequality at the household level, although the poverty rate generally appears low. The conventional view that considers poverty only as a problem of lack of capital and ignores the role of the poor in decision-making has proven to be less effective. Therefore, a more holistic and participatory approach is needed in poverty alleviation that involves all stakeholders, including the community itself, to create more targeted and sustainable solutions. The problem of stunting in Tangerang Regency is a serious issue influenced by factors such as unbalanced food consumption patterns and poor parenting patterns. Although efforts to increase animal protein consumption and improve parenting patterns have been made, challenges still exist in terms of low exclusive breastfeeding coverage and less than optimal psychosocial parenting patterns. These issues require increased coverage of activities at integrated health posts and further education on the importance of nutrition for stunting prevention. The community needs to be provided with adequate knowledge through various formal, non-formal, and informal education channels to raise awareness of the importance of good nutritional intake.

In terms of inflation, Tangerang Regency has succeeded in keeping the inflation rate low compared to other regions in Banten Province. Innovations such as Puskagro and the Tangerang Mantap Program which focus on increasing food availability and agricultural productivity are effective strategies to control inflation. The 4K policy which includes Availability of Supply, Affordable Prices, Smooth Distribution, and Effective Communication shows a comprehensive approach to managing inflation. Cooperation with Tangerang Raya and the use of Puskagro helps in overcoming the problem of inflation by increasing food availability and reducing barriers in the economic sector.

In the field of Use of Domestic Products (P3DN), Tangerang Regency faces challenges such as the low number of domestic products that have TKDN certificates and the less than optimal dissemination of information on inputting PDN reports. To overcome this problem, the local government needs to conduct socialization and technical guidance to MSMEs and increase the dissemination of information on the procedures for inputting PDN reports. This effort aims to improve the quality of domestic products and ensure that the use of these products can be realized better.

The unemployment rate in Tangerang Regency is a major concern, with the main problems including low workforce competency, limited job opportunities, and industrial relations disputes. Although there has been a decrease in the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT), the unemployment problem persists due to the imbalance between the number of job seekers and available job opportunities. Solutions to this problem include increasing workforce competency through training, counseling on job vacancies, and improving the management of industrial relations disputes. In addition, problems in the agriculture, fisheries, trade, and social sectors also affect employment and must receive attention.

In terms of investment, Tangerang Regency has experienced fluctuations in investment realization, with a decline in 2021 due to changes in the licensing system. However, in 2022 there was a positive recovery along with the post-pandemic economic recovery. Problems faced include the unavailability of investment potential map studies, suboptimal investment promotion, and a less conducive investment climate. To increase investment, local governments must improve the licensing system, conduct more effective investment promotion, and create a more conducive investment climate.

3) Magelang City

The Magelang City Government has set five priority themes in thematic bureaucratic reform based on priority scores, namely Inflation Control, Poverty Alleviation, Investment Increase, Increased Use of Domestic Products (PDN), and Government Digitalization (Stunting).

Table 2. Determination of Thematic Bureaucratic Reform Friends of Magelang City

No	Annual Target	RPJMD Priority Compliance	Severity of the Problem	Impact on Community Welfare	Potential Possessed	Performance Acceleration	Total
		Skala 1- 10					
1	Poverty Alleviation	10	4	9	7	2	32
2	Increased Investment	10	5	7	7	2	31
3	Digitalization of Government (Stunting)	10	4	2	7	6	29
4	Increased Use of Domestic Products (PDN)	10	1	10	8	1	30
5	Inflation Control	10	5	10	8	1	34

Source: Data processed by the author, 2023.

Although all themes remain priorities, inflation control is at the top with a total score of 34, followed by poverty alleviation with a score of 32. Increasing investment and the use of domestic products have scores of 31 and 30 respectively, while digitalization of government, which is related to stunting, has a score of 29. The performance targets of thematic bureaucratic reform will direct the focus on key issues that affect public welfare and economic growth in Magelang City. With this priority setting, it is hoped that the local government can overcome existing challenges and improve the quality of life of the community as a whole.

Thematic Bureaucratic Reform as an Adaptive Governance Effort

Thematic Bureaucratic Reform (RB Thematic) is a government effort to realize adaptive governance that focuses on a fast and flexible response to the dynamics of social, economic, and environmental problems. Through the implementation of RB Thematic, the government can overcome various obstacles that arise in the bureaucratic system, such as overlapping policies, slow decision-making, and lack of coordination between institutions. The adaptive governance framework in the context of RB Thematic allows the government to not only act reactively, but also proactively in facing challenges, which are important characteristics in adaptive governance (Cookey et al., 2016).

The concept of adaptive governance applied in RB Thematic functions as a mechanism that combines decision-making based on previous experience with rational evaluation of current policies (Walker et al., 2004). This involves continuous learning and flexibility to adjust policies in order to achieve desired conditions, both at the local and national levels (Wang et al., 2021). This adaptability is also seen in how RB Thematic is designed to solve strategic problems that are priority issues for national development, such as poverty, unemployment, and development inequality.

Thematic RB implements a multilevel governance system that covers various levels of government, from the central to the regional, with a focus on the active involvement of regional heads, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), and Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD). Each OPD is expected to prepare an action plan that is aligned with regional strategic issues, which will ultimately contribute to achieving national development targets. This principle of adaptive governance reflects the importance of social networks and social capital in strengthening cooperation between government actors (Schröter et al., 2014). One of the main principles of adaptive governance is increasing community participation and the involvement of various actors in the policy-making process (Dietz et al., 2003). Thematic RB allows local governments to collaborate intensively with local communities and non-government actors, thus creating a more inclusive environment in formulating policies. This is in line with the concept of social capital which emphasizes the importance of cooperation between government and society to create more effective and sustainable solutions. In its implementation, Thematic RB is expected to increase social capital by increasing community participation in various stages of policy-making, especially in the regions. Wider participation not only strengthens the flow of information but also encourages innovation and the creation of alternative policies that are more relevant to local needs (Folke et al., 2005). Although Thematic RB is designed as an adaptive solution to the dynamics of change, its implementation still faces various challenges. One of the main challenges faced is the lack of assistance and coordination between the central and regional governments in preparing and implementing Thematic RB. Several regions feel confused about how to integrate Thematic RB with existing strategic policies, as expressed in an interview with Bappeda (August 2023). Regional governments also often face limitations in terms of adaptive capacity, especially related to the ability to absorb change and adapt to new policies without sacrificing the basic functions of the bureaucracy (Armstrong & Kamieniecki, 2017). The lack of support from the central government in terms of technical assistance and resources is one of the factors that slows down the acceleration of the implementation of Thematic RB in various regions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The establishment of Thematic Bureaucratic Reform (RB) aims to create effective, efficient, and measurable governance, and support the acceleration of national development. Thematic RB emphasizes the preparation of clear, measurable action plans, and involves various parties with distributed coordination and responsibility. This aims to ensure integrated governance from upstream to downstream processes, with a focus on solving strategic problems collaboratively. However, in its implementation, Thematic RB still faces several challenges, especially at the regional level. Many regional governments still consider it as an additional burdensome task, not as an urgent need. In addition, the lack of understanding of Thematic RB, especially in terms of its preparation and implementation, has resulted in a less than positive response from various regional apparatuses. Therefore, further studies are needed to clarify the implementation model of Thematic RB, explore the resilience of regional governments in implementing it, and ensure that Thematic RB is not just a central instruction, but rather an instrument that is beneficial to the region. In addition, there needs to be intensive socialization, assistance, and technical training so that regional governments better understand and are able to implement Thematic RB properly.

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