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## Implementation of Bureaucratic Simplification within the Mahakan Ulu Regency Government

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**Abstract:** Various efforts have been made by the government to improve the quality of public services to the community. One thing that was implemented was a bureaucratic simplification policy. In its implementation, not only the central government has to do it, but it also has an impact on regional governments. In fact, Mahakam Ulu Regency, which incidentally is an expansion area, does not receive an exception. This article uses a qualitative approach with data collected through literature study which is then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. In terms of type, this research is descriptive research because it explains various information related to the title of the article written. The results of the analysis show that the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government welcomes the idea from the central government regarding bureaucratic simplification policies with the hope of implementing an efficient and effective bureaucracy so as to provide optimal service to the community. The Mahakam Ulu Regency Government is rushing to realize the mandate of the bureaucratic simplification policy by appointing several administrative officials to be converted into functional officials. In fact, in order to further improve the quality of the bureaucracy so that the idea of simplifying the bureaucracy becomes more optimal, the Regent of Mahakam Ulu gave four instructions oriented towards empowering functional positions. However, the implementation of bureaucratic simplification within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government encountered various problems which resulted in the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government not being ready for the impacts arising from the bureaucratic simplification policy.

**Keywords:** Policy Implementation, Bureaucratic Simplification, Local Government.

### INTRODUCTION

The bureaucratic reform agenda has been in the works for a long time. One of the components for realizing effective and efficient governance is simplifying the bureaucracy. The main aim of simplifying bureaucracy is to increase government effectiveness and speed up decision making in order to improve public services (Asogawa, 2013; Sipayung et al., 2022; Daryono, Kusuma, & Saropah, 2023). The goal is a more dynamic, agile and professional bureaucracy to increase effectiveness and efficiency in supporting the performance of government services to the community. In the current state of development,

the hierarchical system is no longer appropriate. This is because what is needed is speed in service (Marthalina, 2021).

In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo's inauguration speech at the Plenary Meeting of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia on 20 October 2019, along with the inauguration of the elected president and vice president for the 2019-2024 government period in Jakarta, became a driving force for simplifying the bureaucracy in Indonesia. President Joko Widodo in his speech said that bureaucratic simplification must be carried out at two levels, namely by reclassifying structural positions (administrative positions) into functional positions based on expertise and competency (Maulana, Indriati, & Hidayah, 2022). Theoretically, this embodies the importance of simplifying bureaucracy because the organizational structure reflects the strategy for achieving organizational goals. Fat bureaucracy can slow down operations and affect their efficiency. This is because the bigger and longer the bureaucracy, the more it will have an impact on increasing government spending.

As a form of implementing bureaucratic simplification, the government issued various regulations related to this matter which contain strategic and concrete steps that must be carried out by all leaders of Ministries, Institutions with leadership at the Ministry level, Non-Ministerial Government Institutions, Secretariats of State Institutions, Secretariats of Non-Structural Institutions, Broadcasting Institutions Public, Provincial and Regency/City Governments. Some of these regulations include regulations regarding the Equalization of Administrative Positions into Functional Positions which are regulated in the Regulation of the Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Number 28 of 2019 which was later changed to Regulation of the Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Number 17 of 2021, regulations regarding Simplification of Structures. Organizations in Government Agencies for Bureaucratic Simplification as regulated in the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 25 of 2021 concerning, regulations governing Amendments to Government Regulation Number 11 of 2017 concerning Management of Civil Servants as regulated in Government Regulation Number 17 of 2020 concerning, and regulations regarding Work Systems in Government Agencies for Bureaucratic Simplification which are regulated in the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 7 of 2022.

The various rules governing bureaucratic simplification above will lead to three stages carried out in bureaucratic simplification, namely simplification of organizational structure, equalization of positions and adjustment of work systems. Through these three stages, it is hoped that the bureaucracy will become more dynamic and professional. Various complicated and lengthy levels and procedures were cut through simplifying bureaucracy. The hope is that the economy can be built easily and business can be carried out smoothly through simplifying the bureaucracy. Apart from that, it is also hoped that it can create a more collaborative, proportional and agile government organization.

In the context of management of the state civil service/aparatur sipil negara (ASN), the birth of a bureaucratic simplification policy is expected to improve the management of ASN towards a merit system. After the policy was established, various processes for adjusting ASN management continued to be carried out by both the central government and regional governments. All agencies must start implementing various ASN management substances in their respective organizations, starting from simplifying the structure, equalizing positions and adjusting work mechanisms.

In some regional apparatuses, as a form of simplifying bureaucracy at the regional government level, supervisory positions or Echelon IV structural positions have been removed. The results show that in 32 Provincial Regional Governments and 465

Regency/City Regional Governments there has been a simplification of the structure of administrative positions by 2022 by 90% (LAN RI, 2022).

The Mahakam Ulu Regency Government, which in fact is an expansion area, is also inseparable from the mandate of the bureaucratic simplification policy. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the implementation of bureaucratic simplification within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government.

## **METHOD**

This article uses a qualitative approach to answer the purpose of writing the article. Various secondary data and statements from interested parties were collected and presented in writing this article. The collected data was then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. In terms of type, this research is descriptive research because it explains various information related to the title of the article written.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The simplification of the bureaucracy cannot be separated from the reality of the bureaucracy which shows that it often gets red marks from the public because the government system does not meet the needs of the community, lack of professionalism in providing public services (Setini et al., 2021; Aminah & Saksono, 2021), there is an acute problem of corruption (Yulianita, Nurrahmawati, & Maryani, 2020; Latif & Roespinoedji, 2021), apparatus inefficiency (Sihidi, Sugiharto, & Nurkhanifah, 2021), and there are effectiveness problems (Rusliandy, 2022). Apart from that, various weaknesses in organizational performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness, and equality of treatment (non-discrimination) are still far from expectations (Maryudi et al., 2022; Turner, Prasajo, & Sumarwono, 2022). Referring to these matters, it is necessary to realize that public services still show many weaknesses. In addition, there is a problem in the form of lack of reach of various service delivery units which are located far from the reach of the community, making it difficult for those who need these services (Putkowska-Smoter & Niedziałkowski, 2020).

Bureaucratic simplification is nothing new in public administration. Simplifying the bureaucracy is one component of broader public sector governance reform efforts which cover four thematic areas: reform of the role of the state, central government functions, accountability and supervision mechanisms, as well as bureaucracy and management of public service organizations (Nurhestitunggall & Muhlisin, 2020). Restructuring with a model like this was popularly implemented in various parts of the world in the 1990s. At that time, the restructuring model commonly known as layering involved cutting the structure and transferring structural positions to functional positions (Wulf, 2012).

Although bureaucratic simplification has been identified as providing benefits to organizations, an appropriate strategy for implementing bureaucratic simplification is essential. As in Tumanggor and Wibowo's (2021) research, the strategy for implementing bureaucratic simplification policies is more precise and conducive so that it does not have a negative impact on the motivation and performance of civil servants in the central and regional government environments. Supported by research by Ristala and Rahmandika (2022), if the implementation of bureaucratic simplification is not carried out seriously it will have an impact on organizational performance. Public services and community affairs require agile organizations to engage in cross-sector collaboration by leveraging functional roles. According to Bramantyo and Mardjoeki (2020), simplifying bureaucracy is a very positive thing to do to increase the efficiency of government bureaucracy. Bureaucratic simplification must be planned, well prepared, and not rushed without a clear concept. It is hoped that

bureaucratic simplification will be comprehensive and able to change the mindset of state civil servants and the work culture of government organizations.

## Discussion

In May 2021, as a follow-up to the circular letter of the Ministry of Home Affairs Number 130/1970/OTDA dated March 26 2021 concerning Simplification of Bureaucracy in Administrative Positions within Provincial and Regency City Governments, the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government immediately rushed to hold a Simplification Identification Meeting Bureaucracy within the Mahulu Regency Government, led by the Deputy Regent of Mahulu Drs. Yohanes Avun, M.Sc.

The Deputy Regent at this time, in his direction, commented on the idea of simplifying bureaucracy within the regional government with a statement of support. On this occasion, the Deputy Regent said: *"If we look at the goal of simplifying bureaucracy, it is very good, for self-development for each employee in the Regional Government, the existence of this regulation can further encourage us to work more disciplined and orderly. So I think this is very good, especially since there are budget savings here."*

Not long ago, namely in December 2021, the Regent of Mahakam Ulu appointed 71 administrative officials to be converted into functional officials. The mechanism is carried out both onsite and virtually. What the Regent of Mahakam Ulu did was an embodiment of the concrete changes desired by the President of the Republic of Indonesia in the context of government bureaucratic reform. Moreover, the equalization of positions is given a deadline that must be carried out by the regional government within a deadline of 31 December 2021. Of course, the Regent delivered his remarks at the inauguration by giving a statement regarding the implementation of this bureaucratic simplification: *"As a manifestation of compliance with the issuance of Legislative Regulations which regulate the equalization of administrative positions into functional positions, the Mahulu Regency Government has carried out a series of activities, starting with simplifying the organizational structure, analyzing functional positions in accordance with the affected administrative positions, up to proposing administrative officials who will be transferred to functional positions."*

In connection with the implementation of simplifying bureaucracy within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government, the Regent continues to strive to support steps to encourage transparency, efficiency and adaptability in the governance of ASN positions. Therefore, in 2023 there will be instructions given by the Regent of Mahakam Ulu so that the bureaucracy is efficient and effective, including:

1. Mapping and grouping each existing executive position into only operator, technician and clerk positions as instructed to the Head of the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) and sub-district head.
2. Every ASN within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government is oriented to have readiness and understanding in inputting data in SIMONA ANJAB ABK and the SIASN application.
3. The proposal for the formation of functional positions in the context of the mechanism must be understood by every official within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government.
4. The formation for recruiting ASN candidates must be owned by all OPDs who, in the mechanism of each functional position supervisor, must provide recommendations for approval.

The implementation of bureaucratic simplification within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government is not as smooth as expected. After simplifying the bureaucracy which has been running for approximately two years since December 2021, no significant changes have occurred in its implementation. Even in its progress, the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government had difficulties in managing ASN Management and the Career Patterns of Officials who were affected by bureaucratic simplification. This is evident from the fact that several officials who

were affected by the bureaucratic simplification proposed transfers, either transfers from positions resulting from bureaucratic simplification or transfers to other regional governments. This is certainly a signal that the implications of simplifying the bureaucracy in Mahakam Ulu Regency are not in line with the concept the policy was developed.

The structural elimination of Echelon IV was identified as indicating the existence of a new function-based work pattern which in general has not been able to adapt to this work pattern at the regional government level, thus having implications that are not simple. The changes that occurred apparently targeted technical matters such as granting approval and initialing letters, apart from of course changing the accountability process and coordination of task areas (Rustan, 2022). One of the most crucial aspects of the not-so-simple implications is the urgency of competence as the basis for transitioning into functional positions (JF) which were originally made up of "former" structural officials. Therefore, stakeholders must try to find ways to meet the various JF competency standards.

Apart from that, the process of transitioning to JF also shows complicated problems such as not having the appropriate level of educational qualifications as a JF requirement, the lack of understanding of those who switch to JF regarding the activities they have to carry out and the tasks they carry out, age which also shows problems because there are quite a few who when being JF is no longer productive, JF's choices show limitations, including the issue of rank held by former structural officials when they became JF. Not to mention other things that have quite a big impact, namely those related to the careers of the new JFs, thus questioning the clarity of their career development. This is because the existing position map is no longer a reference for the need for functional personnel, so it becomes a complicated problem because there is an accumulation of the number of JFs resulting from the equalization, especially at the JF Junior Expert level.

One of the things that needs to be thought about ahead is because ASN has an important career orientation for them to pursue. Because, the clarity of JF's career is still a question of whether it is sufficient to have formations up to the highest JF level, Main Expert, or only limited to the Junior JF Expert level (Rustan, 2022). The reason is, if it is accommodated well, it is possible that until retirement the JF holder will occupy a similar position. Moreover, there are conditions where JF's authority and scope of duties are faced with the situation of collecting credit figures according to his abilities.

The various dynamics that occur provide identification of the implementation of bureaucratic simplification policies in the aspects of organizational structure simplification, aspects of equalization of positions and changes in work mechanisms which show several obstacles including: (1) In the aspect of structure simplification, there are problems in determining the appropriate structure; (2) In the aspect of equalization of positions, there are obstacles to the suitability of the position occupied and the existing structural position; (3) In the aspect of changing work mechanisms, there is an obstacle that local governments are not yet ready. These findings lead to the main obstacle which is seen in the regional government's unpreparedness for various changes in bureaucratic simplification policies. Regional governments are not yet ready for bureaucratic simplification policies in the aspects of simplifying organizational structures, aspects of equalizing positions and changing work mechanisms.

## CONCLUSION

The Mahakam Ulu Regency Government welcomes ideas from the central government regarding bureaucratic simplification policies. The hope is that in Mahakam Ulu Regency an efficient and effective bureaucracy will be implemented so as to provide optimal service to the community. Therefore, efforts were made by the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government which culminated in the appointment of several administrative officials to be converted into functional officials. In fact, in order to further improve the quality of the bureaucracy so that



the idea of simplifying the bureaucracy becomes more optimal, the Regent of Mahakam Ulu gave four instructions oriented towards empowering functional positions. However, the implementation of bureaucratic simplification within the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government is not as smooth as expected. Various problems surround the implementation of bureaucratic simplification, which boils down to the Mahakam Ulu Regency Government not being ready for the impacts resulting from the bureaucratic simplification policy.

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