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# **An Analysis of Indonesian Public Service Reform Through National Public Service Complaint Management Policy**

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**Abstract:** The concept of Good Governance through involving the active participation of the community in the process of making and implementing policies in the reform era and public openness is a demand for government administration to realize bureaucratic reform. Public services quality is one indicator to determine the realization of this concept. This essay aimed to analyze decision-making-theories in Indonesia public service reform concerning instrumental, cultural, and neo-institutional theories through Public Service Complaint Management Policy implemented by the Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform since 2018. This essay also intends to recognize the challenges of this policy and the pattern of Indonesian bureaucratic reform policies in improving the quality of public service. After analyzing instrumental, cultural, myth, and isomorphism approaches in Indonesian public service complaint management policy, hybrid organization form showed by the public organization when adapting old public administration, NPM, and post NPM for realizing accountable public service governance. A combination of vertical and horizontal specialization showed during the formulation and implementation of this policy. While some public organizations often use mythical and isomorphism and rely on path-dependency towards Javanese culture and strong hierarchy in bureaucracy. Those decision-maker theories in the organization are various aspects of the Indonesian Public Service Complaint Management Policy.

**Keywords:** Instrumental, Cultural, Myth, Isomorphism, Indonesia, Public Service Complaint Management Policy, LAPOR-SP4N

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## **1. Introduction**

The phenomenon of poor public services due to low compliance towards service standards implementation of public organizations resulted in high mal-administration practices in a government institution and becoming an obstacle in realizing sustainable development goals, such as inclusive public organization. In 2020, most public reports to the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia were complaints about poor local government services from 7,204 reports that came in, 39.97% addressing local government performance [18]. The existence of the government through the existing bureaucracy is to serve the people, not serve oneself or superiors or rulers. Therefore, the public has the right to use the complaint media when the government's performance does not meet their expectations, and the government must provide it. Public services must be implemented clearly and responsibly by every service unit of state institutions because

the performance standards of public service documents have broad implications for the legitimacy of government in society.

Good governance is the active and productive cooperation between the State and citizens' participation in policy-making, administration, and supervision is the key to this concept [26]. Realizing good governance requires an active role of a bureaucrat in providing quality public service by ensuring the community accomplishes accountable, transparent, and equitable rights while accessing public service. However, a public organization in Indonesia often faces pathology bureaucracy due to hierarchy, regulation, and management that becomes a habit of bureaucrat and culture of the organization. Dysfunctional bureaucracy in the public organization causes the disease bureaucracy due to the inefficiency of the government organization [2]. Resources and effort should make to think about the bureaucracy could function better in carrying out its duties, a change of thinking

on maintaining the old model, which significantly nests from various diseases bureaucracy [3].

Even though the bureaucratic reform concept in Indonesia has been well-known since 1998, the management of public service and structure of public organizations still follows the feudalism-patrimonial culture. The institutional environment of public organizations has been characterized by the prevalence of values that shape and interact with the public servant's identities, beliefs, and actions [6]. Bureaucrats tend to work to secure their position and dedicate their work to supervisor interest. This condition develops a patron-client relationship that hinders community-oriented service. The patron-client relationship ties involve a predominantly instrumental friendship that an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a lower position person (client). Meanwhile, the client reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron [23].

New Public Management (NPM) key concept management refers to a separate and distinct activity that brings together plans, people, and technology to achieve desired results in public sector organizations to be more competitive [19]. Based on the initial conditions of the public service complaint management system in the Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 03 of 2015, conditions of public service complaint management in Indonesia 90% of public organizations do not yet have an institution for managing public service complaints. Meanwhile, only 10% of the organizers already have a complaint management system using internet-based technology. In addition, inadequate human resources to manage complaints from public servants, the inefficiency of mechanisms and procedures, and the lack of ICT led to unaccountable management complaints in public services. The complexity of public service encouraged the central government to formulate a national public service complaint management policy in December 2018. Therefore, management of information technology-based public service complaints can integrate among public organizations at the central and local levels. This condition showed a post-NPM feature that strengthened the capacity of the central government politically and administratively as well as structurally reintegrating state, private, and civil society [4].

Public service reform through this policy can be assumed to show a hybrid organizational pattern whereby governments combine Old Public Administration, NPM, and post-NPM that adopt from another ASEAN government in the framework of the ASEAN Political-Security Community. Through analyzing the reform process to combine an analytical lens looking at reforms as myths/symbols, cultural characteristics, and instrumental action [9]. This paper will focus on analyzing how Indonesia overcame mal-administration through a national public service complaint management policy. This study will address two specific research questions. Firstly, how is instrumental, cultural, myth, and isomorphism relevant to Indonesia's public

service complaint management policy? Secondly, what are the challenges of those theories to realize transparent and accountable public service governance? This paper intends to determine the relation of isomorphism, cultural, myth, and instrumental approach towards Indonesian reform policies in public service to accomplish reliable and modern bureaucratic institutions.

This study will be classified into four sections as follows. After the introduction, the foundation for this study will explain in section 2, the literature review concerning normative basis and organization theory. Then, A research method in this paper to accomplish the purpose of this paper will point out in section 3. Subsequently, the discussion in section 4 will divide into two sub-section. In the first subsection, a brief explanation about public service reform implemented through the Indonesian Public Service Complaint Management Policy. Secondly, the policy will compare isomorphism, myth, cultural, and instrumental theories in Indonesian Public Service Management policy. These theories also will use to analyze challenges in bureaucratic reform of national public service to understand the social, political condition and actors around Public service management policy. The conclusion in section 5 will conclude this whole paper.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

The pattern of reorganization and reform spawned a movement in many countries either curtail government authority and replace it with private activity or make government operations more like those of private business firms [5, 20]. This theory showed that private and public organizations have different management systems. The public-private organization also has two main component distinctions, ownership, and funding [25], that affect public service and decision-making in both organizations. Political intervention is differentiating factor in the decision-making process of public organizations and private organizations, which showed that the instrumental-structural perspective in this process is that leaders have the ability for rational calculation and political control [8, 21]. An instrumental-structural theory has two assumptions concerning the actor behavior, organization form, and power capacity in a public organization: As a homogenous organization, the hierarchical form political actor has the power to achieve their goals by the leading organization in the identical method. On the other hand, various sub-unit, actors, and positions in the negotiation version make no one has full authority because the decision will make in a heterogenous approach by negotiations and compromises between many actors [8]. Based on these viewpoints, this study will analyze public service reform policies in Indonesia that involve various public organizations from regional, national, and international.

The institutional, cultural perspective finally perceives

public organizations as institutions reflecting norms and values that develop standards and values across time although structural of organization change [7]. The significance of an organizational culture often becomes apparent when the public administration goes through reform processes and reorganizations, particularly if these processes threaten dominant informal norms and values [8]. In cultural theory, even though path-dependency has an essential concept in continuous transformation through reflection towards the initial value of the organization but turbulence from outside organizations sometimes prompts them to embark on a new path but one with a lot of continuity [14, 24]. Therefore, this study will discuss the reflection of path-dependency and cultural intervention towards existing organization values and norms in public service reform.

According to the mythical perspective in neo-institutional theories, Myths are institutionalized and widely spread norms and recipes about appropriate, legitimate organizing – such as what kinds of formal structures, technologies, processes, procedures, and ideologies a modern organization should contain [8]. Leaders of public organizations can talk about reforms in a way that causes people to believe they are putting reforms into practice while the leaders are doing little to make that happen [16]. Isomorphism often follows this theory through public organization vision and mission but neglect in implementation of these vision. Public leaders use myths and symbols in political-administrative decision-making processes to enhance their legitimacy [17].

The institutional theory argues that organizations aim to pursue legitimacy in their field to survive and gain resources while conforming to societal expectations [10, 17]. This situation encourages organizations to adopt practices and procedures of organizational work and institutionalized society [13]. An organization that resembles another organization's behavior, management, and regulation to tackle uncertainty conditions and public demand refers as isomorphism [10]. Among three forms of isomorphism are coercive, mimetic, normative in organizations that require adapting quickly to national policy and program. The outcome of such legitimating behavior in this theorizing in some public organizations showed decoupling and ceremonial display [15]. Another organization implements these societal values and expectations into their daily organization as a coupled response [1]. Mimetic isomorphic change occurs when an organization wants to reduce uncertainty with a low-cost and minimum time [1, 11]. However, the outcome and output of the organizations that tend to imitate another management and program are sometimes irrelevant towards local issues. This paper will use coercive and mimetic isomorphisms to investigate the decision of public service reform through national public service complaint management policy.

## 2.2. Normative Foundation

Indonesian Law No. 14 of 2008 on information disclosure, public information should be quickly accessible, dependable, and affordable when the community requires it. Accordingly,

the national public service complaint management policy has an essential role in synergizing communication between citizens and government. Presidential Regulation No. 76 of 2013 on National Public Service complaint, each organizer is required to provide a means of complaint public services that have information on direct, indirect, and or electronic complaint mechanisms. Therefore, every public organization must have a complaint facility to manage public service complaints.

Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No 62 of 2018 on guidelines public service complaints aims to ensure that complaint management can be processed effectively, efficiently, and transparently to follow-up complaints. This study will focus on instrumental perspectives concerning this ministry, as coordinator of this policy, and its relation to another public organization vertical and horizontal. Then, the Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No 46 of 2020 on Road Map of National Public Service Complaint Management System from 2020 to 2024 is a medium-term reference for public organizations in realizing evidence-based public services policy and achieving national development targets in reforming the public service bureaucracy and governance in 2024. Based on the regulation above, this article assumes some decision-making theories in public organizations adopted in this national policy.

## 3. Method

This paper uses descriptive qualitative research with an inductive approach to describing events systematically and objectively. Thus, this study can understand every fact and solve existing problems using the scientific method. The scope of research is to analyze public service reform in Indonesia. The operationalization of this study had based on the theories of decision-making in public sector organizations, specifically instrumental, cultural, and neo-institutional theories.

Data collection techniques of this study used observation and documentation for collecting data. The observation method used is a non-participative observation that is not directly involved but only records all activities according to the desired focus or indicator. In the first phase of bureaucratic reform, the researcher observed the National Public Service Complaint Management Policy at the Indonesian Ministry of Bureaucratic Reform. Then in the second phase, the researcher collects data through documentation, especially concerning national planning, program, public reports, news, recent research, and theories related to this policy. Then analyzed, compared, and synthesized to form a systematic, unified, and complete study result.

This research uses an exploratory approach which uses data collection through observation and documentation. Therefore, the techniques used include writing memos, coding, categorization, interpretation, verification, and presentation. Triangulation of sources and methods had used to verify the information in the writing of this paper.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Public Service Reform and Indonesian Complaint Management Policy

Public service reform and rapid developments in technology and the global environment are a phenomenon that requires every country to adapt itself to be a party that is not backward. Implementation of e-government in public administration is one form to adjust community demand and achieve accountable government. Effective complaint handling and providing settlements for the community contribute directly to improving governance to improve the function of public services. Community participation in development shows a positive indication of the government's aspirations in realizing good government. Therefore, the government is now trying to facilitate public cooperation by establishing a communication bridge between the government and the public through public complaints services to make it easier for the public to submit complaints or reports to service providers.

Previously, complaint management in several regions was still carried out manually and partially, thus increasing maladministration practice. Management of national public service complaints using a social media-based online complaint and aspiration service called LAPOR (People's Online Aspiration and Complaint Service) as an instrument in handling public complaints formulated by the Indonesian government. LAPOR accommodates the aspirations and complaints of the people for later disposition to the relevant institutions. The principle of this media is that it is easily accessible, responsive, accountable, and sustainable to build two-way communication between the government and the people.

Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 62 of 2018 regulates the mechanisms in integrating LAPOR into the National Public Service Complaint Management System (SP4N). Accordingly, whole public organizations that do not have a management complaint system and have organized the management of service complaints information technology-based in public services must integrate with LAPOR. This integration includes complaints between agencies, across agencies, from units bottom to top unit. In the context of integration, the Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic builds and develops SP4N. As coordinator of this policy, this ministry coordinates with the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (ORI), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), another ministry, agencies, and local governments to implement this policy.

### 4.2. Comparative Analysis of Decision-Making Theories

Transforming government patterns in public service management from one-way services towards two-way communications among government and citizens is one mechanism in realizing good governance through community participation in restructuring public policy and programs to accomplish global and national targets. Thus, the management

of public service complaints is the main alternative to start service improvement. Public service reform through this policy could divide into two medium-term national programs. Between 2015 and 2019, the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform conduct an intensive focus group discussion with USAID, the Presidential Staff Office, and Ombudsman in formulating legal protection and integrating the system and human resource development. Seen neo-institutional or isomorphism approach, the first phase of this policy Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform adopt existing mechanism public service complaint and LAPOR system version two previously managed by Presidential Staff Office. Adaptation policy made by the government as mimetic isomorphism approach to reduce cost and time for developing a new system, socializing in the community, and legitimacy.

According to the instrumental-structural perspective, a negotiation approach sees organizations as coalitions, where each actor acts in an instrumentally rational way, is motivated by interests, and can also enter integration with actors outside the organization who, according to their interests, act in similar ways [8]. Therefore, a collaboration between the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform and USAID based on the same program and interest in digitalizing public service reflection of this approach. During the transition phase, USAID act as a donor agency to develop applications LAPOR and outreach to communities and local governments that have not yet integrated. When formulating this policy, the role of international organizations in national complaint management system for selecting national admin based on their criteria and paying their salaries in the first semester of transition. Socializing with regional admins is also conducted by those organizations through an e-learning program of USAID had followed up by the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform, where the local government assigned a government employee in the whole public organization to participate in this program.

In 2019, Presidential Staff Office (PSO) handed overall activities and the responsibility for administering LAPOR-SP4N to the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform. On the other hand, PSO maintains servers and information technology (IT) infrastructure and security systems protected by the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (NCCA). Then, Ombudsman has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy and follow-up reports from the community. Implementing this policy involves the homogenous organization in a shifting environment that almost 623 government institutions from ministry, agency, and local government integrated into this policy during the first medium-term program.

Regarding the instrumental-structural perspective, pathology bureaucracy in Indonesia has been in the worst condition who reflected in national reports of public service that have not received follow-up around 16.650 in 2019. Commitment and political support of ministries/institutions/regions are only symbols integrated with the system. While, leadership actors in an agency have

not optimally used the results of the complaint report to become a consideration in decision making, program formulation, and policy strengthening. The combination of placing a high value on rational calculation and a medium or low value on political control proposed changes risk remaining on the drawing board [8].

Analyzing a cultural-institutional perspective, convoluted and slow public service is a systemic problem from rigid public service mechanisms. Based on the Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform No. 62 of 2018, the maximum time assumption to get a response from national, on the 6th day that the report has received. This verification time can consider too long. Even though the national complaint management system is a technology-laden policy, decision-makers tend to implement a traditional approach and rely on patron-client culture. The feudalism culture of a public organization that prefers the conventional response of reacting to a community complaint also becomes the main feature of the Indonesian bureaucratic system. A similar pattern from central and local government in answering community complaints also disappointed the community that there is no progress concerning their problems.

In terms of mythical-symbolic perspective, traditional political power cultures cultivate a belief that leaders are never guilty. What leaders do has been considered correct according to the measure of subjectivity they use. This assumption causes a lack of transparency in the public service complaint management policy due to the exclusivity symbol of elite bureaucracy. Complaint report data submitted through SP4N-LAPOR not published in real-time concerning the overall status of the number of community reports whether receiving, handling, or finished. The phenomenon of bureaucratic culture has resulted in the emergence of petty kings in lower-level bureaucratic groups who often accuse the public of being the party that causes service lags because they cannot understand the rules and wishes of the bureaucracy. In 2019, the government archived almost 7.969 mal-administrations reports because public organization assumes that is the unclear report. The government also considers that the community lacks an understanding of the digital complaint system and the mechanism.

From 2020 to 2024, the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform (MoABR) focus on improving the public, private, and NGO's role in this policy implementation. The development of SP4N is divided into three levels from macro to micro level of this policy consist of actor MoABR, ORI, PSO, and MoHA. While analyzing from vertical and horizontal specialization in instrumental perspective, Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform combine that specialization in this public policy implementation. This ministry allocates tasks at the macro-level depending on the organization's duties, such as developing SP4N positive branding through mass media and influencers below Ministry of Communication and Informatics control. Policy synergy and an institutional arrangement of SP4N organizers in local government under the supervision of MoHA are also a reflection of combined management of local autonomy and

division of responsibilities according to the duties of each ministry in the national program. This condition showed, whether horizontal or vertical, can be accomplished via the exertion of authority from the top in a hierarchical structure, where command-and-control orders pass down the hierarchical line [12].

During this medium-term program, every public organization that already has a public service complaint media and does not yet have it must integrate with LAPOR-SP4N. Regarding neo-institutional theories or isomorphism perspective, external pressure, both formal and informal, demand public organizations to implement national policy and answer cultural expectation from society about digital public service. Administrative sanctions from the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform also force public organizations to implement this policy and follow up on public service complaints from society. Meanwhile, A lack of human resources and technology in some local government affect the implementation of this policy in a public organization and lead to a decoupling response due to coercive pressure where leaders often use myth to express reform in their organization. Re political and administrative leaders frequently oversell new reforms by promising more than can deliver, intensifying the symbolic character and decoupling of reforms [8]. Although this medium-term reform program demands the whole public organization adopt a national public service complaint management policy, structure, and cultural value in the organization is still a constraint in modifying its management.

Going back to the instrumental-structural perspective, patterns in formulating policy during this second period remained to implement a hierarchical form of organization Max weber and Javanese culture in public organization management. The hegemony of Javanese culture strengthens vertical control despite horizontal communication developed by the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform in increasing LAPOR-SP4N position as one resource for formulating national public policy. In the service system, this tendency in reinforcing bureaucratic patterns actualize through continuing to use the hierarchies standard procedure from the central or the province to public service in local government and mechanism community complaint in LAPOR-SP4N. Nevertheless, The decision-maker in this policy elaborates centralization and decentralization in public service reform. The leader of a public organization can formulate and determine an action plan, target, program, and activities in a year relevant to local conditions in managing public service complaints in respective institutions based on the Indonesian Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No 62 of 2018.

## 5. Conclusion and Future Research

This paper explains the correlation of decision-making theories in transforming Indonesian public service. After analyzing instrumental, cultural, myth, and isomorphism approaches in Indonesian public service complaint management policy, hybrid organization form showed by the

public organization when adapting old public administration, NPM, and post NPM in mechanism technology-based national policy. First, the instrumental-structural perspective showed a combination of vertical and horizontal specialization and negotiation approaches among homogenous organizations in shifting environments during the formulation and implementation of this policy. The hegemony of Javanese culture strengthens vertical control despite horizontal communication developed by the Ministry of Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform in increasing LAPOR-SP4N position as one resource for formulating national public policy. Meanwhile, Implementing this policy involves the homogenous organization in a shifting environment that almost 623 government institutions from ministry, agency, and local government integrated into this policy during the first medium-term program.

Second, the cultural-institutional viewpoint reveals path dependency of Javanese culture and hierarchy form in this national program became an obstacle in resolving mal-administration and realizing good governance. Even though the national complaint management system is a technology-laden policy, decision-makers tend to implement a traditional approach and rely on patron-client culture. Last, mythical and isomorphism perspectives in neo-institutional theories public organizations often use symbols in implementing this policy to attain public legitimacy when the internal organization is not ready to adopt this policy. Traditional political power cultures cultivate a belief that leaders are never guilty, while the community lacks an understanding of the digital complaint system and the mechanism.

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