

# Characteristic of Weber Bureaucracy and Its Relevance in Indonesia

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# Characteristic of Weber Bureaucracy and Its Relevance in Indonesia

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## Abstract

Bureaucracy is a concept as well as an organization that connects between the government on one side and the other side. As the machine organization, functioning bureaucracy is not primarily reflect the interests of the government, but more than that the interests of society at large. In this connection, it is often experienced dissociative and associative fabric, depending on how much bureaucracy to play a role and ideally positioned existence. The problem is, if the characteristics of the bureaucracy to find relevance in the reality on the ground? Questions are answered by projecting the reality of bureaucracy in Indonesia. Characteristics of bureaucracy just might be applied in a way to adapt based on the needs and characteristics of bureaucracy wherever he touched, both central and local levels. In the positive and negative relevance not only can eliminate, but also in some organizations may also be retained, modified, replaced, even developed according to the needs of bureaucratic organization. In the Indonesian context, the challenge of change in a particular characteristic of bureaucracy faced with socio-cultural issues, the high authority in the implementation of the autonomy and influence of globalization. All it requires a change in the characteristics of bureaucracy through changes in systems and resources that are designed in such a way that the bureaucracy seemed more dynamic, flexible and able to answer the challenge question.

**Keyword:** bureaucracy, positive and negative relevance

## 1 Background

In general, the behavior of the bureaucracy in the organization through the public administration described has symptoms of high levels of corruption; widespread collusion and nepotism rife least adequately describe the bureaucratic problems elsewhere, including Indonesia. Note Toha (1999), Setiono (2002), Tjokrowinoto (2004) and Kompas (2010), shows the problem of bureaucracy not only applicable in the center administrative, as well as in the region as a sub-national government. In fact, the further it gets from central government control, bureaucracy in the region show a more concerned condition. This condition is maintained not only by the socio-cultural aspects of the role, but also the contribution of political aspects as the system implemented, in addition to the low quality of the bureaucracy itself. Cultural aspect is a difficult historical legacy that weakened in strong spirit of passion and desire for autonomy. The burden of the past as *Pangreh Praja* was enough to contribute in shaping the attitudes and traditions in the service of local bureaucracy. On that culture before, emerged one system that almost perfected complications of all symptoms of digression bureaucracy. One of the most instrumental contribution systems is a direct presidential election. At the local level is a direct local election. This system has bridged the politicians for deep interventions to infect the bureaucracy as a neutral institution for the society. Politicization of the bureaucracy has changed its position from the reflection of the interests of the public (bottom up) to become the interests of the ruler (top down). In the context of government, bureaucracy relations experienced of a distance of dissociation between the interests of society and government. On the other hand, the quality of the bureaucracy that is required in the formation of associative relationship between government and society are not shown toward better stage. This condition can be seen from the lack of ability as a public servant (skills), lack of knowledge of government, and low innovation and creativity that shows the development in the context of reinventing bureaucratic. Another aspect of weakness is classic bureaucratic civil servant trapped in bureaucratic rigidity as the limited understanding of the value of the bureaucracy. Completing the description of this writing, is also described about the conclusion about the practice of Weber bureaucracy in Indonesia as it was written by Sudirman in the Journal of Government (2009), there is a strong tendency that the public bureaucracy in practice in Indonesia is not likely as a public executing instrument but rather as an

instrument of power (authority). In addition, the lack of control of the bureaucracy has created a growing phenomenon of corruption. According to him, both of these things are separated from the culture in each country that makes bureaucracy changed according to the conditions in where it is adapting. Theoretical study is not yet sharp enough to draw the relevance of Weber's bureaucratic characteristics, particularly in the context of Indonesia after decentralization. The conclusion seems to need a further elaboration through the mainstream of power and administration. Starting from birth mainstream bureaucracy by Setiono (2002), this paper will discuss the characteristics of bureaucracy Weber and contemporary relevance of the locus Indonesia after decentralization with emphasis on mainstream bureaucratic power as the uterus, as well as draw conclusions and suggestions of the synthesis question.

## 2. Characteristics of Bureaucracy and Its Relevance

Writer uses library research methods and descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of bureaucracy in Indonesia. The concept refers to the notion prevalent bureaucratic by Maximilian Weber (1864-1920). Similarly with Albrow, was developing the concept of bureaucracy from different angles. Etymologically, the bureaucracy comes from the word *burocratie* (Germany), *burocrazia* (Italy) and *bureaucratie* (France), which means table or office. The term was raised again by the French philosopher, Baron de Grimm on record of Vincent de Gournay. Cracy (kratos) alone means power or rule. In another equivalent term is often associated with governance (process), most likely because the government has the power to make rules, or even the process and the source of all the rules in the relationship between the governing and those who are governed. This statement is at least in line with the thoughts of Gornay and Laski (1930), which defines bureaucracy as a system of government in which control is fully in the hands of officials who are to some extent able to delay or reduce the freedom of ordinary citizens. Two other examples are result of the assimilation of words such as the concept of democracy and oligarchy. If the source of power comes from the people of many, is commonly known as democracy. Similarly, if the power source is controlled by a bunch of smart people (professionals) known as oligarchy. In fact, through provocative sentence, Michel (1962) stated that those who talk about the organization must be talking about the oligarchy. At the pragmatic level, the more detailed affairs must relate to what we commonly call a bureaucracy.

In the perspective of Weber, bureaucracy is a rational organization with all the characteristics inherent therein. Characteristics among these are a position, duties, authority, hierarchy, system, formality, discipline, professional skills and seniority. These characteristics form the bureaucracy as a means to achieve collective goals. Bureaucracy, in the sense of concrete is an organization that has a pyramidal-shaped chain of command, where more people are at the bottom than the top level, both military and civilian agencies. The higher it gets, the fewer the stake holders, because he cemented his leadership with broader powers. Instead, as you go down more and more people, but it continued to show a more limited authority. Power is eventually completely distributed in the form of specialization and smaller structures. Such power flows according to the laws of nature (natural of law). He starts from a superior power then flows into a shared structure in particular. Bureaucracy can ultimately be seen as a reflection of the institutionalization of power flowing from top to bottom. From a practical aspect of this bureaucracy is the instrument / tool of power to achieve a common goal leader and carried by the leader. On a more concrete example, a president is chosen by the people, has broad powers. The hierarchical power flowed through the Minister, the Governor, the Regent / Mayor, Head, village chief to chief. At the level of the governor, the power divided by the number of received authority, and instituted the formal structures such as government agencies, the government and so on, similarly, the flow of power at the level of district / mayor to the village government, Power in this context having a detailed formalization and clearly justified. This is called the authority In that regard, sociologically the present of bureaucratic refers to how government implements the rules and make it socially legitimate, it makes the bureaucracy needs an authority as the flow of the power of the people.

## 3. Negative Relevance

If we discover the characteristics of Weber's bureaucracy, it appears that some of these characteristics almost lost its relevance in the world of modern bureaucracy. Firstly, the centralization, a principle that is not so popular when it faced with a democratic system where the foundation of a decentralized becomes an approach to the organization of modern government. Decentralization is viewed has many positive advantages both from a political, economic and administrative services. The more political power flowed to the government bureaucracy at a lower level through certain preconditions; it is likely encouraging more decisions to be taken both for economic and public service. This directly increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy. If opposite arised, maybe the system and the necessary resources become less serious concerned. Secondly, seniority. This principle is going backwards since the adoption of the principle of fairness in the policy that

allows officials from various levels of the bureaucracy drove rapidly to gain prestigious and strategic positions. These policies include the provision of learning opportunities for young bureaucrats so as to obtain higher education as a key condition, the formation of a system that facilitates the promotion and position quickly, and the increased desire for a for some of bureaucrats to maintain position through nepotism and symptom that describes the principle of seniority is normative note which can be violated with ease. Seniority is also considered as an addition to the form of bureaucratic arrogance, is also a threat to the growth of competitive value and most effective way to maintain the status quo. In this context the nature of bureaucracy is often stuck in slow, arrogant and difficult to change. Third, the principle is written (formalistic). Bureaucracy is essentially identical to the formalization so that whatever the action is always in the standardized in the form of normative. This term is nearly similar word formalin, which is a kind of chemicals in order to preserve the look stays fresh even in fact is the opposite. It may be understood in the field, where the bureaucracy even hoard so many problems, but there is almost no other alternative for the public to certain matters that only served by the public bureaucracy, such as ID / Identity Card or Birth Certificate. It makes bureaucracy is glimpsed even more convoluted, high cost, arrogant, full of mafia once distressing. We often hear the phrase that the government is a formal institution in which all its action is formal. This statement confirms that the bureaucracy as an instrument of government is always based on the rules set, in such a structural aspect is how the ideal description of bureaucracy show its formality nature, Once again in the notes by Rahardjo (2010), that the solution to the problem does not always have to go through a formal mechanism that requires time, money and energy cost. Service should be resolved in unwritten way which met the functional utility in which answering the main issue towards the society. This approaches, in many cases in both central and local levels to be a relatively reliable, even more lasting than taking any problems into the space where bureaucracy is not able to solve. For example, problem solving through a subpoena, the right of reply, mediation by deliberation and consensus with society is the preferred way to solve any problem before dealt with the bureaucracy that is loaded by the mechanisms and procedures that grueling yet convoluted. Fourth is the lack of consideration of relationships with community organizations. The high accentuation by Weber on bureaucratic rationalization aspects unwittingly obscures the relationship between the organization and culture of the people in the bureaucracy. In fact, the bureaucracy contains a group of people who have different cultures. Bureaucracy in the United States, Japan and Indonesia tend to differ in its application even if they are mean to have the same purpose as a machine of bureaucracy in achieving goals. In this context, the rationalization of the bureaucracy cannot be carried out accurately. In connection with the exercise of power, for example, those who are at the circle cortex of power are the ones who are a trusted and at least have a sociological relationship and even ideological. It certainly would not be accepted by the characteristics of bureaucracy that bases itself on the professional aspect. In the case of Indonesia, for example, those in the government bureaucracy at the central and local levels have a relationship in at least two aspects above. Moreover, especially at the system that makes the bureaucracy as an instrument of power alone. Politicization of the bureaucracy, for example, is a symptom that tends to get the perfect spot on a system that deliberately accommodated. The Practice of direct presidential election, and a direct election in Indonesia was a clear example where the bureaucracy was use for political interests. Bureaucratic positions at the central level for the first echelon are not perfectly sterile of normative political intervention despite that it's a career position. At the local government level, mention almost all positions are risky by a political intervention. This shows that most of the domestic system plus the local culture is a challenge for Weber bureaucracy characteristics. Fifth, the characteristics of bureaucracy Weber have lost the humanity touch. As said Arif and Putra, transformation efforts towards the quality of the bureaucracy that strap on morality as a matter of transformation is significant, despite the fact that morality seem abstract and hard to find its relevance in the modern concept of public organizations. Without the moral and humanitarian considerations, it will undoubtedly resulting a counter-productive to with the nature of its existence. Morality becomes abstract when merely meant as ethics, efficiency and effectiveness as its applied in the private sector. When morality is directed at the concept of human bureaucracy, the bureaucracy is expected to respect the rights of the people to the fullest, not exploiting it subtly for efficiency and effectiveness reasons. However, in general there is a problem in which the bureaucracy should reflect the interests of the people but in reality fail represent the humanity and morality content in a reality of daily services.

In developing countries, morality and humanity considerations are quite dominating. The strength of cultural factors in organizational bureaucracy is relatively influence the services and the process of recruitment bureaucracy. In many cases in Indonesia, the contents of the bureaucracy met by a group of employees who are appointed based on moral / humanitarian consideration. It is considered more effective and efficient, although the appointment of officials in government bureaucracy often unsuited the necessity. Most of them appointed more for moral / humanitarian consideration. Cases in village secretary appointment as civil servants, government officials, and the village teacher and honorary teacher appointment more as moral-humanitarian



consideration. Those are what Weber discovered negative relevance for his characteristics of bureaucracy.

#### 4-Positive Relevance

Now we will see the positive relevance of the characteristics of bureaucracy by Weber. **First** is the hierarchy. When we talk about the power flow from the top to the bottom level it creates what we call hierarchy. The creation of the task specialization of the power that naturally general turns out it requires a hierarchical system for the purpose of monitoring and control of all power flows from the top down and the bottom up. Hierarchical system is needed to get the most out of the flow of power in society as the ultimate goal. From top to bottom, the whole idea (vision and mission) by the top leadership (political) formalized by a number of managers (career officers) in the form of detailed policy. Programs and activities as the substance of the policy flow away to the society, forming the output, outcome, benefits and impact. In general, it leads to satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction. Satisfaction would form a respond in the form of a strong support; the possibility of power continued with the same input or may be developed. Otherwise, dissatisfaction will form a residue that can lead to apathy and attitude towards the more extreme demands, which are repairing or replacing the policy. From the bottom up, the whole power is detailed through specialization in bureaucratic system that flow the responsibility while providing a new input that reflects the expectations of the people. Hierarchical system is important as a characteristic that allows the whole idea as a manifestation of the very broad powers that can be selected and institutionalized. And conversely, the whole idea grow and develop through the uptake of bureaucracy in the lowest level, experienced a stages of selections to form the most fundamental purpose for the needs of the community itself. A characteristic of hierarchical is not without notes; in many cases the most hierarchical system is used by the authorities at the top level to bridge the particular interest. Immense power in the peak level is often authorized number of policies that cannot be avoided by organizational bureaucracy at the bottom level. This is where the interests of the authorities often hide, while on the other hand the executive has no choice but to accept, before the stamp insubordination became a frightening report cards. But we just want to emphasize that this is a role that Weber hierarchical characteristics relatively can be maintained, especially in the government that practice authoritarian and even totalitarian. In fact, this characteristic has prompted many experts who considered that the hierarchical systems tend to be the ideal pattern in the military bureaucracy. **Second** is a technical skill (Specialization). Technical skills become essential characteristic of bureaucracy. One of the main reasons for the declining of bureaucracy during recent time is the low of human resources who became the main instrument of bureaucracy. If the bureaucracy is expected to serve as a reflection of the expectations of the people, it should be able and even required to have a number of capabilities that allow the whole hopes to be realized effectively. The high expectations and demand of the people urged the need for bureaucratic recruitments the can melt the ideas of the top leaders who are democratically elected. Without technical skills, it will be no more than bureaucratic political institutions with a habit of selling promises without implementation. Here is the meaning of specialized recruitment is at stake in bureaucracy. Technical skills needed to melt the big ideas into programs and activities that are more detailed and eventually executed. Overall expectations and demands of society can only be realized if the bureaucracy has a set of machines that work in technically in the field. That's where those skills are needed. **Third** is impersonality. Through Weber's characteristics of bureaucracy, it described the bureaucracy seemed stands firmly by a relationship that is impersonality. This confirms the need for professionalism to separate the tasks in positions carried to be separated by personal interests. Because one of the goals of the power flow is to create justice in society, the bureaucracy must stand on the principle of neutrality. If the bureaucracy is assumed to serve all, the bureaucracy required to not be discriminative in services. As a rational organization that is how bureaucracy should be presented, far from the emotional ties that develop a culture of nepotism. In developing countries, the bureaucracy often experience a variety of problems such as the lack of a system that neutralizes bureaucracy and strong cultural aspect that led to the birth the symptoms of nepotism. The widespread of collusion enables the creation of symptoms of nepotism. Eventually, collusion fosters corruption in the bureaucratic world. The pattern of separation of relationship between personal and professional would turn bureaucracy as a function to realize the expectations and demands of the community. Thus, the bureaucracy can serve with honesty, not on subjective choices that can lead to discrimination and jealousy. Fourth is job clarity and job title. Clarity of tasks and positions would direct the bureaucracy to able to achieve the goals set. Without clarity of tasks and positions, bureaucratic would be nothing but a heap of problems. The Clarity of tasks and responsibilities of each position would ensure in the official duties. Each person in the bureaucracy are given duties and responsibilities as part of the power that have been distributed. The tasks and positions given would clear authority to be run. Everything is accounted cumulatively, hierarchical and abstractive. Cumulatively make the whole task and positions established by the bureaucracy accountable for it. In the hierarchy, tasks and positions accounted for through a certain extent from the lower level up to the top of the institution. While the abstractive shows that even in tasks

and positions are technical, but the pattern of responsibility carried in abstractive way from bottom layer to the top management institutions. **Fifth** is the creation of a system that has clear information. Through hierarchical and professionalism characteristics, Weber bureaucracy itself invented a system of clear information. Hierarchical system opened space for the rise of information systems from the bottom layer to top. The stricter hierarchical system is applied the easier to obtain information through the established mechanism. Those who are trying to be creative or out of the available mechanisms must deal with the approach of *reward and punishment* as the norm developed in the bureaucracy. Professionalism encourages the creation of a mechanism that allows the responsibilities of each person measured by the resulting performance. All the responsibilities referred, can be evaluated while at the same time become an important source of information in decision-making by top management of bureaucracy.

### 5. The Portrait of Bureaucracy in Indonesia

As the engine of government organizations, civil bureaucracy not only guarantee all efforts towards the realization of the vision and mission of the head of the region, but also directly touch the interests of the community in the form of services from a citizen since they were born until they are taken to cemetery. However, how could the bureaucracy to [serve](#) the public with honesty and sincerity when the burden exceeds its own capacity. In the simplest way, at least bureaucracy represents duties and functions of the government both at central and regional levels to resolve the problem, not become the source of the problem. So, if the government intended to resolve the problem amongst the people, it seems like that the government would be stirred for initially cleaning the tool (bureaucracy) before expect any reduction of problem facing the society. In a note by Yudhoyono, Indonesia's bureaucracy even can become a problem for many reasons, among others: first, the tendency to maintain the problem rather than solve it. This trend can be seen in the various activities of the bureaucracy through the instrument of the government unit. In such areas, the problems deliberately maintained and preserved in order to extend the project activities. In the list of local government work plan we can find a number of project activities that never changed, even the location and the budget have been plotted in such a way. We should not be surprised that every year the government has pumped billions of rupiahs through the general allocation fund; it seems that nothing has changed except the cars and houses of office officials in the bureaucracy and the number of members of the legislature. Budget allocation is like a drop of water falls over the vast ocean, almost without a trace. If it's anything, it more because it wants to be judged as a ruler who was able to build, but in reality it's no more than a self-interest activity trough his cronies by conducting a full scale projects. Secondly, business of conducting a self-interest activity has abandoned the intention of finding the solution of the problem in the first place. This is one of the [factors](#) why the bureaucracy had been impressed as "without claws" in answering every problem of society. The [high personal interest in bureaucratic organization is known by how much wealth can be collected after the implementation of the project](#). Even before the events conducted the illegal transactions to profit as much as possible in the form of the agreement has occurred outside formal consensus built under without following any rule. Almost no solution in the product by the bureaucracy but the idea is in line with personal interests. In fact, the wealth of the officials in the region is increasing along with the positions they hold. Third, the bureaucratic tendency to look for survivors (safety player), so they tend to run away from problems. This condition is recorded clearly in the elections to the local atmosphere. The mentality of the bureaucrats seems to be very opportunistic. They took place in a distance and position that are politically advantageous for the future. Bureaucratic politics is much more viscous than the real actual legislators. In many cases, the bureaucracy often conducts a psy war towards the legislature. We easily find the optimal service bureaucracy that far from the expectations of society, but occasionally the service was only for the purpose of conducting a formality. Fourth, the lack of innovation to make the bureaucracy lost in a dull routine, making the bureaucracy seem like a robot. Look at how many bureaucrats in the area caught on their administrative activities. In some cities they take off boredom by going shopping during office hours. In some areas, most bureaucrats spend time to read the newspaper, drinking coffee and discussing at the corner shop until playing cards. This condition is indicated that there's no other work except wait for routine duty as supervisor. In some areas, the bureaucracy that has no innovation looked similar like archives office and museum. The lack of idea, jammed in routines that make them less developed, eventually retiring with the proudest expertise of folding paper to make envelopes. **Fifth** is the weak of recruitment and promotion system. The high impact immediate elections made the system of recruitment and promotion in the bureaucracy becomes blurred. Bureaucratic recruitment's pattern is based on the kinship system, not by career path (merit system). Here it appears that the content bureaucracy is away from become professional, but rather a collection of families of the ruling elite through the development of a culture of nepotism. The picture can be seen in a number of cases of recruitment, for example, it can be seen from some cases of recruitment system that can be easily altered for the favour of the ruling regime or the family. In connection with the promotion patterns, emphasizing on how close



the candidate to the board (personal relation), rather than using the usual stratification according to the rank used by bureaucratic promotion system. One of them argued that most of the recruits of the bureaucracy after recruitment consisted of two groups: those with low quality because they didn't accepted by the private sectors and the second group are those who graduated as a bureaucrat for bribery. Logically, the content is a collection of mostly unqualified bureaucratic and mentally corrupts. Sixth, there is still widespread type of apparatus who ought to be served rather than to serve, so in certain situations the questions that will come up is "what will I get?" Rather than "how may I help?" This trend appears in the transaction services of the office of the village / sub-district till the top at the central government. These conditions appeared because of the dominance of self-interest in community service. So, why post in the bureaucracy extremely valuable for grabs, not with the aim to serve the community, but rather an instrument as much as to control a personal interest, as well as how to gather wealth as much as possible. The difference with the politicians is only a matter of duration. Bureaucrats have up to tens of years for that purpose, while politicians have five to ten years. But do not forget those who only seat in the legislature for five years could be richer much faster than the bureaucrats who work for years. It happened because activities in the government through bureaucratic instrument are neither used to serve nor to prosper the society, but to serve the personal welfare bureaucrats and politicians themselves. Here's the problem as well as the burden of the Indonesian bureaucracy that must be solved.

## 6. Conclusions

Through an understanding of the characteristics of bureaucracy above, as well as the reality of the Indonesian bureaucracy, it seems difficult to completely applying the characteristics of Weber bureaucratic style, the recovery bureaucracy is necessary that address today's challenges without letting go of the principles of ideal bureaucracy itself. Adaptation is needed to each characteristic that has positive relevance, and yet can be maintained according to the needs and characteristics of the Indonesian bureaucracy. Negative relevance can be eliminated, modified and developed according to the needs of bureaucratic organizations. In the Indonesian context, recovery bureaucracy must at least able to answer three fundamental challenges; the strength of the local culture after decentralization, the extent of regional autonomy, and the impact of globalization. The strengthening of the local culture after decentralization has affected the characteristics of bureaucratic organizations in the region in particular. Bureaucratic organizations tend to be more representative of the family rather than a government organization. This can be seen in the patterns of recruitment ranging from the emergence of native son sentiment to a certain ethnic tension resulting bureaucracy that turned into small kingdoms. In addition to the development of culture of nepotism in the local bureaucracy, a model of service oriented upward (vertical) is still maintained. Those who behave that way get a place because of the head area is usually born out of the community that has such tradition. The regional head from native son, especially those who were born from the local royal family are subjected of a place at the government. Or even the head of the region is not born of such communities, in fact they were even elected from the *grassroots* really enjoy when the service is done vertically. Thus, it was necessary that bureaucracy is to be really professional, competitively selected, educated and has a standard sufficient experience and competence. The next challenge is the extent of the autonomy of the managed the local government, this allows the need for bureaucratic characteristics that address the needs and interests of the community. During this time, by the fully decentralized autonomy conducted, bureaucracy is often designed for the favor of the regime who won the elections. The high politicization of the bureaucracy is relatively fades the merit mechanisms in the pattern of promotion, demotion and transfer. The authority has also made a huge bureaucracy symptom of obesity in which it is so difficult to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. A final challenge relates to the impact of globalization which allows the characteristics of bureaucracy to be adaptive to the changing environment. This requires the bureaucracy to change the way they work and preparing resources to respond to the issues of today. The three above challenges requires a positive response by strengthening effective system for reducing the spread of negative culture within the bureaucracy. Moreover, the system is expected to control the impact of the extent of autonomy that is run by the head of the region, in the sense to reduce the politicization of bureaucracy that could ultimately reduce bureaucracy functions as a reflection of the interests of not only the government, but society at large. In the end, the superior characteristics of bureaucracy is bureaucracy that is able to adapt to the environment, because it required a system that allows the bureaucracy to develop the entrepreneurial spirit over the basic functions that serve the people.

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