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## Negotiating Reform: Regulatory Heresy and the Cultural Politics of Public Service Delivery in Decentralized Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the implementation of bureaucratic reform within the One Stop Integrated Services (PTSP) Department in Bone Regency, Indonesia. The main objective is to analyze how regulatory frameworks and community behavior intersect in shaping the outcomes of public service reform. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research draws on primary data gathered through field observations, interviews, and documentation analysis. The study focuses on institutional arrangements governed by local regulations and the real-world practices within the PTSP service delivery system. The findings reveal that while the PTSP initiative has contributed to improved administrative efficiency and the standardization of licensing procedures, its effectiveness is challenged by persistent informal practices. In Bone Regency, social norms and community behaviors—typical of a transitional or “prismatic” society—often diverge from formal regulations. A notable phenomenon identified in this context is “regulatory heresy,” where citizens voluntarily offer additional incentives to expedite service, thus creating tension between formal bureaucratic standards and local cultural expectations. The novelty of this study lies in its critical analysis of how informal societal practices interact with formal public sector reforms, highlighting the complexities of achieving good governance in decentralized and culturally diverse settings. The research recommends strengthening institutional integrity mechanisms and promoting civic education to foster behavioral change among both service providers and recipients. These insights contribute meaningfully to the discourse on public administration, governance, and social transformation in developing regions.*

**Keywords:** Bureaucratic Reform, Local Governance, Public Service Delivery, Regulatory Heresy, Transitional Society

### INTRODUCTION

Research related to bureaucracy is anThis has complex aspects because it is related to various factors such as institutions, human resources, systems and procedures created and implemented by the bureaucracy. This also includes aspects of bureaucratic renewal which are called bureaucratic reform (Manurung et al., 2023; Saputra & Nursukma, 2023; Tondang et al., 2023). For this reason, the state will create a management system thatknown as bureaucracy, with the aim of serving the interests of the people. In the context of public services to achieve people’s welfare, the role of public bureaucracy is very large. All aspects related to state administration are closely related to the concept of public services and public affairs (Alim et al.,

2022; Anisyah & Harahap, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2022; Suaedi & Zulfikar, 2023). Management of public goods and services must be carried out efficiently and effectively, and the bureaucracy is responsible for this management. Therefore, the role of government is very dependent on the ability of the public bureaucracy to carry out their duties and functions.

Bureaucracies face significant challenges in carrying out their activities efficiently and effectively (Candranegara et al., 2020; Fitria, 2023; Sakir et al., 2021). Common problems in bureaucracy include complicated work flows, structures that are too large, collusion, corruption and nepotism, as well as a lack of clear standards. These obstacles are the main obstacles in achieving bureaucratic reform. As a result, the Indonesian bureaucracy has not reached the expected standards of governance. These obstacles include complicated and lengthy procedures, high costs including additional fees, and unfriendly service. Collusion, corruption and nepotism are also big challenges, but so far there has been no significant change in bureaucratic performance considering these obstacles.

With the need to respond quickly and efficiently to changes in society and the demands of the times, the need for bureaucratic reform has become increasingly urgent. The main reason for implementing bureaucratic reform is to bring about changes that are in line with current needs. First, reform needs to be implemented to introduce a new approach to the performance of public functions. This approach, which focuses on management and not just management, builds a strong foundation for providing services that are more effective and responsive to community needs. Second, bureaucratic reform is important as a response to the increasingly complex size and scope of government functions. By adapting more modern structures and processes, the bureaucracy can carry out its duties more efficiently.

In addition, changes in economic theory and problems are an important basis for carrying out bureaucratic reform. In the ever-changing dynamics of the global economy, the bureaucracy must be able to transform so that it remains relevant and can support sustainable economic growth. Finally, the increasingly significant role of the private sector in the delivery of public services is an important factor driving reform (Telsaç, 2022; Zainal & Fadila, 2022). The bureaucracy needs to accommodate the dynamics of partnerships between the public and private sectors in order to provide more efficient and innovative services. Overall, bureaucratic reform is not just a demand, but an urgent need to respond to societal dynamics and face the challenges of the times.

Licensing services in Bone Regency are the main focus regarding public services. One interesting phenomenon that has emerged is the tendency of people to prefer using intermediaries rather than making transactions directly at service locations by following established procedures and conditions. In the Bourne Regency community, the presence of these intermediaries raises various problems related to the effectiveness and efficiency of public services which is an essential basis for this research. License management services are considered an important issue that requires detailed consideration. In this framework, the study focuses on the bureaucratic environment regarding the authorization of public services. This is often only

analyzed from a legal perspective, without considering the administrative aspects of the system which can hinder the implementation of bureaucratic reform (Mthuli et al., 2023).

This research also highlights the tendency of previous studies to consider this only from a legal perspective. In response to this, this research examines the administrative aspects of the licensing management service system, including institutional aspects, human resources, systems and procedures. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will produce a more comprehensive and substantive understanding of licensing management service problems and potential improvements. Focusing on administrative aspects will provide space to describe in detail the internal dynamics of the bureaucracy, identify possible obstacles, and develop more targeted solutions in the context of bureaucratic reform.

The novelty of this research lies in the holistic approach which digs deeper into the administrative aspects of licensing administration services. It is hoped that the research results will be able to provide a significant contribution to understanding related to the bureaucratic dynamics of licensing administration services in Bone Regency. Overall, this research is considered an important new step in responding to and overcoming the challenges that arise in the delivery of public services at the local level.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative approach rooted in phenomenology. Through this approach, observations are carried out in a holistic and naturalistic manner. The analytical approach used is an interactive model (Bauer et al., 2021; Creswell, 2017). Primary data was obtained through interviews with employees who were directly involved in the implementation of public services and management of the Licensing and Integrated Services Agency (BP2T) of the Bone Regency Government. The opinions of the public who use public services provided by BPPT Bone Regency are also the main data source. Triangulation of observations was also carried out to ensure data accuracy. Notes also contain additional undocumented data. To ensure the credibility of our findings, we have taken steps from the start of the research, including careful observation, triangulation, peer review through discussion, providing detailed explanations, and conducting audits.

In the context of maintaining data validity, this research prioritizes accuracy and diversity in observations. Interviews were conducted with various parties involved, from implementing employees to the leadership of BP2T Bone Regency, as well as involving the community as service users. Triangulation of data through observation is a critical step to ensure compatibility between data collected from various sources. In addition, peer examination through internal discussions provides an additional form of validation, ensuring that the results of this research are reliable and provide an accurate picture of the condition of public services in Bone Regency. Presenting detailed descriptions and implementing audits are additional strategies to ensure the integrity and reliability of any data collected during the research. Thus, this research takes concrete steps

to minimize potential bias and maintain the accuracy and validity of the findings produced.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **From Regulation to Implementation: Institutional Dynamics of PTSP in Bone Regency**

One Stop Integrated Services (PTSP) is a reform initiative that aims to improve the efficiency and quality of public services, especially in the context of nationally regulated licensing services. The main legal basis for this PTSP policy is Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 24 of 2006 which provides guidelines for implementing PTSP throughout Indonesia. Through this regulation, the government provides a framework for regulating the licensing service system, with authority decentralized to various regions, including provinces, districts and cities. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 24 of 2006 provides a uniform legal basis for the implementation of PTSP throughout Indonesia.

Furthermore, the institutional aspects of PTSP are specifically regulated by Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 20 of 2008 concerning PTSP Institutions in the regions. This regulation details the organizational structure and governance of PTSP at the regional level, providing guidance regarding the institutional form that can be adopted, such as a regional agency, office or technical institution. Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 20 of 2008 aims to establish a clear framework regarding the organizational structure of PTSP organizers, so that each region has uniform guidelines and is in accordance with the principles of efficiency and openness.

In Bone Regency, regional regulations governing One Stop Integrated Services (PTSP) are contained in Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2008 concerning the Establishment of Regional Technical Institution Organizations in Bone Regency. Furthermore, institutional aspects are regulated through Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2013 concerning the Second Amendment to Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2008. Related regulations are also found in Regent's Regulation Number 42 of 2015 concerning Simplification of Licensing and Non-Licensing in Bone Regency, as well as in Regent's Regulation Number 52 2015 concerning Mechanisms and Procedures for Licensing and Non-Licensing Services at the Bone Regency Integrated Licensing Services Agency.

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Job design in One Stop Integrated Services (PTSP) Bone Regency is based on grouping jobs based on activities and customers. In general, the job design applied is less specialized. This means that PTSP employees involve themselves in large and routine tasks. In the observations of researchers at the Integrated Licensing Services Agency (BP2T) and related technical agencies, it appears that each employee has a relatively narrow range of duties. This means that they are involved in complex but routine work, and this is also reflected in the number of employees involved in each section at BP2T.

Monitoring is a crucial management function that is important to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency. In the management concept, supervision means control and supervision. Control is needed to ensure that the organization moves according to the expected goals. At Bourne County PTSP, the supervision process typically focuses on aftercare. This monitoring mechanism is generally based on complaints and complaints from the public. However, the preliminary and incidental aspects of supervision usually do not go well. Limitations of preliminary and concurrent monitoring mechanisms can present challenges in identifying potential problems or deficiencies before reaching the implementation stage. An oversight process that relies solely on community feedback can hinder an organization's ability to proactively identify and address potential problems.

### **Institutional Performance and the Human Resource Deficit: Evidence from Bone Regency BP2T**

The quality of human resources in public service organizations is an important factor that directly influences the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. The best public service organizations require qualified staff to meet organizational needs. In addition, it is necessary to balance the availability of human resources with the amount of work placed on the organization. The results of research conducted on The Bourne Regency Licensing and Integrated Services Agency (BP2T) found that compared to the workload that characterizes PTSP in large areas such as Bone Regency, the number of employees in this agency is still limited. BP2T's main obstacle is the limited number of employees. This is not in accordance with the duties and responsibilities that must be carried out, especially for a large area like Bone Regency.

To overcome this challenge, BP2T Bone Regency was forced to rely on honorary staff or Non-Permanent Employees (PTT). However, interpretation of the observation results shows that the challenges faced by this institution are not solely related to the limited number of employees,

but instead to the mismatch of the qualifications of existing employees with the needs of the organization. This has a significant impact on overall organizational performance.

Conditions where employee qualifications do not match with organizational demands can be detrimental to the expected efficiency and effectiveness of public services. Therefore, it is necessary to make efforts to improve the qualifications of human resources, both through training and skills development and recruiting employees who meet the specific needs of the organization. Only by having quality human resources that are balanced in number, public service organizations such as BP2T can provide optimal and responsive services to community needs.

The results of the observations highlight several critical aspects related to the discipline and responsibility of employees of the Bone Regency Integrated Licensing Services Agency (BP2T). Employee discipline is considered to be still low, especially seen in the behavior of counter staff who often leave the workplace during office hours, especially when the number of visitors decreases. Observations of employees' interactions with service users reveal a lack of attention, where they are sometimes involved in other activities such as taking personal telephone calls or talking to colleagues about matters unrelated to their main duties. This attitude reflects a low level of attention to the applicant or citizen being served.

In the context of capacity development, the presentation of technical training shows that the intensity of capacity development for Bone Regency BP2T personnel is still low. Technical training is only conducted once a year, with an average of one training session per training session. The tasks given to BP2T employees remain related to the main tasks and functions of each device and are in accordance with the technical tasks and functions of BP2T. However, the relationship between work and main duties creates gaps in the knowledge and skills of civil servants. Some technical fields may be given more tasks, while other fields may experience gaps in development. This phenomenon creates challenges in distributing knowledge and skills throughout the organization, especially in an institution that requires cooperation and collaboration between fields. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a more integrated approach in capacity development, by ensuring that assignments and training cover various aspects of the organization's tasks and functions, so that each employee can contribute optimally according to their primary duties and functions.

### **Service Irregularities and Informal Intermediaries: A Challenge to Procedural Integrity**

Researchers' observations show that the licensing process at the Integrated Licensing Services Agency (BP2T) of Bone Regency generally exceeds the time limit set in the standard operating procedures (SOP). Apart from that, the rampant behavior of brokers in licensing services at BP2T. There is a close relationship between brokers and BP2T officers as collaborative partners, creating a relationship that is sometimes not good for people who choose to process permits without the involvement of intermediaries. This phenomenon opens up opportunities for discrimination in services, the spotlight and triggers jealousy from residents who want to apply for permits directly.



The results of interviews with several informants from the BP2T agency revealed that although different treatment is procedurally not allowed, there are still gaps in service practices. This is in accordance with the insights of community members who face this reality. One of the factors causing this gap is the existence of solid kinship or kinship ties within the BP2T environment. Applicants who come alone without any contact within the BP2T environment must go through a formal procedure with various stages, thus requiring the involvement of certain contacts and personnel which can take quite a long time.

Not only that, through this stage of the process, applicants often face obstacles related to the completeness of files and the readiness of officers to provide services. In this situation, the role of brokers becomes important to overcome various obstacles that may arise during the licensing process. Even though the formal process takes a long time and involves several stages, the role of brokers is considered as a solution to expedite and shorten the process, thereby helping applicants overcome various obstacles that may arise during the licensing process.

The insensitivity and weak conscience of the apparatus in carrying out service activities gives rise to differences in treatment of applicants. In fact, it can be observed that the authorities have not been able to provide equal treatment and respect to all applicants as individuals who are entitled to respect. The ability of officers to interact with applicants who have different characteristics is still greatly influenced by remuneration factors and their level of understanding of community needs. This discriminatory treatment occurs in interactions between the authorities and the applicant, where the applicant is deemed not to have made a significant contribution contrary to the authorities' expectations. Applicants who are considered not to be of sufficient use to the authorities may find it difficult to contact the authorities directly to facilitate the licensing process or other services. On the other hand, applicants who have access or are accustomed to using the services of intermediaries (brokers) tend to find it easier to access services when they approach officials directly, especially those directly involved in the process.

### **Bureaucratic Reform in Practice: Deviations, Incentives, and the Erosion of Impersonality**

The identification results show that the implementation of bureaucratic reform at the Bone Regency Integrated Licensing Services Agency (BP2T) involves institutional aspects, human resources, as well as systems and procedures. Bureaucratic reform cannot be isolated as an independent entity, but rather as a series of causal actions. Therefore, to realize bureaucratic reform, a comprehensive and systemic approach is needed, in accordance with the concept stated by Widaninggar (2022). According to him, bureaucratic reform is an ongoing process to redesign the bureaucratic structure in the government context.

The results of this research highlight several complaints regarding licensing administration services, especially related to violations of permit completion times that exceed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). These inconsequences can hamper society as service users and create weaknesses that can be exploited by service providers and recipients to pursue personal interests by breaking the rules, harming other parties, especially service users who do

not use intermediaries (Mislawaty et al., 2022; Subekti & Pribadi, 2022). Research also shows that the tendency of civil servants to accept incentives can lead to discriminatory behavior towards service users. The practice of providing incentives to officials through intermediaries may make it easier for service users to achieve their goals, but may have a negative impact on other citizens who do not use intermediaries. This phenomenon is related to the nature of public services and reflects that incentives are a vital element for street-level bureaucracy to create service satisfaction for customers (Arwanto & Anggraini, 2020; Kurniawati et al., 2018).

In this context, the role of impersonality, a fundamental principle developed by Weber, faces obstacles in public services (Nani, 2022; Turner et al., 2022). The principle of impersonality is intended to encourage bureaucrats to act fairly and impartially in providing services to the community. Although this principle can build a direct and objective relationship between the bureaucracy and society, its excessive application can cause these devices to lose their humanity and turn them into robots that are insensitive to human aspects (Lanin & Hermanto, 2019; Nasution & Perekonomian, 2022). There is also a risk that the bureaucracy will lose its role as a tool for marginalized groups who need support to live dignified and meaningful lives. The quality of licensing services which shows signs of problems such as delays, offers the need for reform at all levels, including adjusting the number of employees and changing the mindset of bureaucrats to return to basic principles (Adnan et al., 2021; Azmi et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The One Stop Integrated Services (PTSP) initiative is a reform effort aimed at enhancing the efficiency and quality of public services, particularly in nationally regulated licensing services. In Bone Regency, the regional regulations governing PTSP are outlined in Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2008, addressing the Establishment of Regional Technical Institution Organizations in Bone Regency. Additionally, institutional aspects are discussed in Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2013, focusing on the Second Amendment to Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2008. The success of bureaucratic reform is influenced by community involvement, as service users voluntarily offer extra incentives to permit-processing employees. Despite the establishment of uniform operational policies, societal behavior in Bone Regency, characterized as a transitional (prismatic) society, reflects a tendency to exceed the standard payment rules for permit processing. This behavior, termed “regulatory heresy” in this paper, significantly impacts the dynamics of bureaucratic reform.

## ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants’ confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors



declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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