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## BUREAUCRATIC REPRESENTATION IN A MULTINATIONAL COMMUNITY OF KENDARI BETWEEN 2007 AND 2017

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**Abstract.** Local government personnel is expected to implement a merit-based staffing system. Therefore, this research aims to compile a model of regional staffing system according to the conditions of Kendari City people using a thinking method. Data was collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews with high, middle, and low officials in Kendari City government. The data was analyzed using Coyle's Dynamic System Analysis, which includes problem recognition, understanding and system description, qualitative analysis, simulation modelling, as well as policy testing and design. The results show that the management of regional personnel is inefficient due to tribal elements. Therefore, bureaucratic representation enables local wisdom to create a conducive performance atmosphere in impacting harmonization of social life.

**Keywords:** local government, personnel system, local wisdom, representative bureaucracy, Coyle analysis.

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## Introduction

Personnel or staffing system of a country is inseparable from the government. In this context, reform can optimize the achievement of goals to create good intergovernmental relations (Bukharskiy and Lavrov, 2021).

Staffing reform affects employee and organizational performance, as well as determines a good bureaucracy, resulting in professional civil servants (Huber and Ting, 2021).

At local and central level, there are conflicts of interest that have the potential to involve each other in power struggles. These conflicts can be prevented by establishing rules for the benefit of society (Rishi, 2020). An honorary institution is established to maintain the stability and compliance of the government with regulations to avoid conflicts of interest. In addition, conflicts of interest cause dissatisfaction among local governments in staffing management. This discontent arises from the desire of the centripetal forces to centralize personnel system. For the central government, a unified system is the power to avoid the disintegration of the country (Serikkaliyeva and Makhanov, 2021).

Local government personnel system is inseparable from the best practices in an area. In this context, local wisdom is a synthesis of knowledge, perspectives, and community strategies to solve generational life problems and integrate into existing customs.

The practice of understanding in communities can be achieved by integrating values, aesthetics, and customs (Hidayati et al., 2020). The synergy of different institutions in formulating policies can be supported by human resources imbued with the principles of local wisdom. Therefore, local wisdom in an area is the key to maintaining social stability and harmonization. The adoption of local wisdom is also practiced in Southeast Sulawesi Provincial and Kendari City staffing management.

In provincial and municipal governments, staffing management represents several tribes, religions, races, and groups. Few institutions practice substantive representation of the interests of indigenous peoples due to limitations of social harmonization (Newland and Liu, 2021). The practice of bureaucratic representation occurs in many countries, such as Taiwan. The country practices representation as essential in securing concessions to achieve state goals.

In reality, few regions implement good bureaucracy. Poor governance has failed in bureaucratic reforms, reducing public confidence and affecting national development. Bureaucratic reforms, such as in Lampung and South Sumatra, became ineffective due to competition between civil servants and politicians. In Indonesia, the concept is fraught with challenges and administrative change can be a buzzword of reform (Zanko, 2021).

The transfer of authority from the regions to the center in recruiting employees affects the achievement of bureaucratic representation. The authority of the central government is transferred to local regarding human resource management and administrative governance. In practice, local government authorities have engaged in maladministration of personnel governance, particularly in processes such as employee recruitment. The dominance of the mayor

as a political official in determining the placement of structural officials does not support the implementation of merit-based staffing. However, a high sense of tribalism dominates the implementation of staffing since there is no harmonization in the work environment (O'Connor et al., 2021).

This research aims to determine implementation practices as well as compile a policy model of regional civil service system in the multi-ethnic Kendari City government. The city is inhabited by several ethnicities with increased conflicts. Therefore, the policy scenario must consider bureaucratic representation based on ethnicity as an alternative solution appropriate for the city government. This research is important because ethnic representation has been a practice of local wisdom for generations. For example, the dominant ethnicity was given the position of the highest career official in the government. The practice can ensure the creation of social stability and harmonization. Representation of people and ethnicities is important in bureaucracy of the public as a reflection of democratic government and influences people to obey government rules (Ricucci and Van Ryzin, 2017).

## Research Method

A system thinking method was used to select Kendari City as the research location and the four dominant ethnicities are Bugis, Tolaki, Muna, and Buton. Ethnic diversity influences the implementation of local staffing and determines the officials of a region considering the representation of tribes and groups.

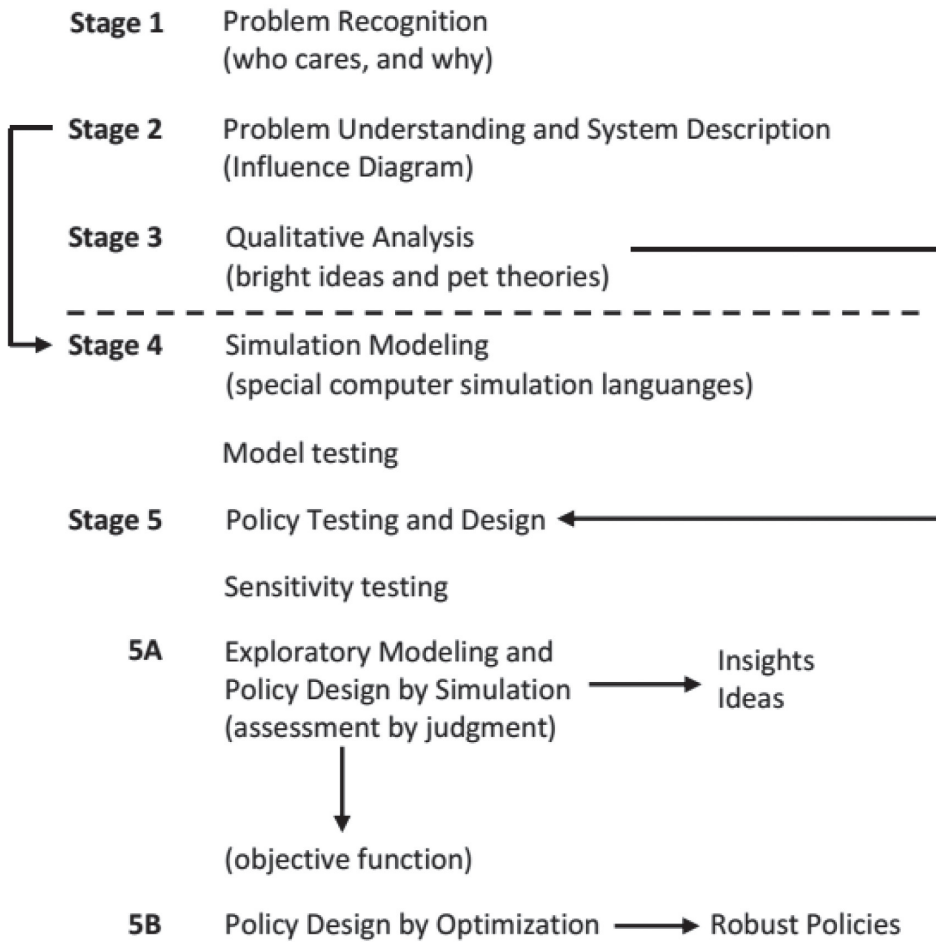
Table 1

**Profile of research informant**

Anonymized initials	Age (years)	Informant status	Length of stay at the research site (years)
AE	56	Top management (Tolaki)	9
MM	48	Top management (Bugis)	9
SA	55	Middle management (Tolaki)	28
AS	50	Middle management (Tolaki)	20
IS	41	Low management (Tolaki)	12
SI	42	Low management (Bugis)	15
HM	26	Civil servants (Muna)	2
KR	30	Civil servants (Buton)	2

**Source:** Personal interview.

The instruments used are questionnaires, in-depth interviews, observations and documentation. The data was analyzed using Coyle's Dynamic System Analysis presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Coyle analysis**

*Source:* (Coyle, 1996).

Coyle analysis is one of the tools of dynamic systems. This method was selected to accommodate qualitative data as a social reality difficult to measure. The data collection process is subjected to several methods, including interviews, observations, and Forum Group Discussions. The five-stage steps of Coyle are (i) problem recognition, the introduction describes the problems in regional personnel system that are complex, and the inappropriate solutions, (ii) problem understanding and system description, describe regional staffing based on previous theories and research presented in the introduction. Subsequently, a causal loop diagram known as conceptual research is carried out, (iii) qualitative analysis, pet theories method is used to interview people who are experienced in the implementation of local personnel system, (iv) simulation modelling is used to build a model, and (v) designing policies to determine the most sensitive elements to the performance of regional personnel system. Therefore, alternative policies are known to increase the objectives of regional personnel system in line with Kendari City government (Coyle, 1996).

## Result and Discussion

This section contains a discussion of data and analysis on personnel management carried out by local government organizers to consider bureaucratic representation. Therefore, a multiethnic society supports local government policies to harmonize social life.

### **Local government personnel system**

Staffing system has been subjected to several paradigm shifts. During the New Order period, the system was controlled centrally to serve the interests of the group. This old paradigm controlled the apparatus by establishing strict regulations and carrying out efficiency. Meanwhile, the new paradigm improves bureaucracy and broader community services. This shift applies a centralization pattern to decentralization by giving authority to local government. Changes in authority between the central and local governments have not been harmonious, and there tends to be a tug-of-war of interests. The results of interviews with low-level officials in Kendari City government is reported as follows:

*Kendari City Government, at the time of the preparation of civil servant needs, proposed honorary human resources, but the central government approved not all proposals. Previously, the determination of the formation of this employee was entirely given authority to local government. But now, the decision of employee formation is determined directly by the central government (IS, 41 years old).*

The above statement is inseparable from the policy in Law No. 43/1999, which gives authority to Regional Civil Service Supervisory Officer, namely the mayor, in implementing appointments, transfers, and dismissals. In addition, the existence of Regional Personnel Agency (BKD) that organizes staffing in the regions is a reflection of the will to conduct decentralization in the field of personnel. This is because local government is considered to be more aware of the needs of the number, qualifications, and workload of employees in the area, including the ability of the region to provide welfare for employees. In public personnel management, giving authority to local leaders will lead to fairer decisions. Personnel management in the public sector must consider such factors as the needs and expectations of citizens and other stakeholders to improve public personnel management and support the mission of the government (Cho et al., 2023). However, Law No. 32/2004 and Law No. 5/2014 on local government and bureaucratic reform were developed with the policy agenda of the Reform Order government after the end of the New Order regime, respectively. Some of these policies have implications for staffing management. Local government was dissatisfied because staffing management was under central government control. The authority of the central government in the process of determining the formation is shown in the statement:

*The central government controls the formation because it pays attention to the needs of employees and expenditures. If the authority is given to the regions, do not let the regions arbitrarily determine the number of employees without paying attention to the budget needs for development (AS, 55 years old).*

The explanation confirms that the decision to form regional apparatuses lies with the central government. The Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment-Bureaucratic Reform (PAN-RB Indonesia) considers the opinion of the Ministry that organizes the financial affairs and technical considerations of the Head of the State Civil Service Agency. In this context, the central government determines the formation of civil servants.

### **Kendari City Government Bureaucracy**

The Law No. 5/2014, regulates the management of civil servants. Professional and bureaucratic employees correlate with the success or failure of government management. In the public sector, good performance management is essential for efficient and sustainable service delivery to the public (Thusi, 2023). Meanwhile, personnel management plays an important role in the success of public organizations. The high-ranking officials of Kendari City government made a statement regarding the formation of employees:

*The format central government determines the formation reality, the central government determines the formation of civil servants, while local governments only propose. Previously local officials could add to the formation by “cornering” the central government. Local government asks for additional employee formations and budgets in Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. Local government officials offer certain parties a certain amount of remuneration. With the enactment of the new rules, the determination of employee formations has been strict, where local government only proposes, but the decision is the authority of the central government (MM, 48 years old).*

The official's statement shows that several years ago, the process of designing and establishing the formation was subject to collusion, corruption, and nepotism. Collusion between agencies forced local governments to tolerate the creation of bad employees (Wu et al., 2020). However, this fraud was minimized because the central government monitors the change of power by checking three agencies (the Minister of PAN-RB, the Minister of Finance, and the State Civil Service Agency).

The preparation of the formation of employees is continued with the recruitment of civil servants. Kendari City government uses two methods for recruiting civil servants, namely appointing honorary personnel who have served for at least five years and through the general recruitment process. The interviews with civil servants received from the honorary labour line state the following:

*Many fictitious workers do not teach in schools. Usually, officials enter their family names. The fictional teaching staff made a Service Decree as if they had become honorary workers when they had never served or even in other areas. Another way they can enter as honorary workers is at the expense of their undergraduate diploma by using a high school diploma to get a recommendation for a more extended service period (KR, 30 years old).*

According to the informant, this method was implemented to facilitate the approval of applications from candidates in the honorary personnel line. This practice constitutes collusion and corruption to abuse public office for personal and group gain. The next stage is the selection of civil servants. For this, the government uses two methods in the selection process, namely manual and comput-

erized tests. The test is conducted manually in writing, with participants circling the answer sheet. An employee from the BKD of Kendari City government stated:

During the entrance test, there are some participants who are prospective civil servants and who are helped to answer the exam questions for various reasons, such as their age, their inability to circle the answer, or kinship factors. Such practices are common (SI, 42 years old).

City government officials also reported the fraudulent practice:

*The implementation of the admission of honorary employees has not been merit-based, both the process of collecting data on who is entitled to be honorary and their selection. It can be seen from the same exam questions, while those with different educational classification tests, some graduate from junior high school, high school and undergraduate. Finally, we do not get the best and most professional employees (MM, 48 years old).*

The information violates the merit system because the concept is not objective in conducting assessments (Stančetić, 2020). Subsequently, prospective civil servant participants use Computer Assisted Test (CAT) by conducting a series of tests through answers on a computer. In Chile and Kosovo, merit-based recruitment is also done through a written examination procedure (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2021). Participants who graduated from the honorary staff and public line were 607 and 28 people in Kendari City based on the Mayor's Decree. Civil servant candidates who passed were recruited by government officials to obtain Employee Identification Number (NIP). The employee information received from the honorary line through in-depth interviews stated:

*Participants who passed 607 people were gathered in the hall by certain officials, and then it was conveyed that we had to do maladministration to get NIP. We did not dare to refuse because we wanted to get an endorsement as civil servants immediately (KR, 30 years).*

The statement was affirmed by the employee who was accepted through the general channel, stating:

*Participants who passed the test were 28 people gathered in BKD room. We were asked to do maladministration to collect NIP. We agree to have our NIP published soon. Participants who refuse to do the same get NIP (HM, 26 years old).*

Based on the information, there is an illegal levy on prospective civil servants who want to obtain ratification as civil servants. According to Purwanto et al. (2020), illegal levies also occur in other institutions to obtain legality endorsements. This act is a collusion by raising high costs for personal or group interests. The practice dismisses civil servants as stipulated in Law No. 5/2014 Article 87 paragraph (4) point b. However, there are no sanctions against the actions taken by the government officials.

The inclusion of the leadership is visible in the placement of structural officials. This can be seen in forming a selection committee to fill high primary or echelon II posts. An official in Kendari City government stated the following:

*Civil Service Officer, i.e. the mayor, formed a selection committee consisting of 5 people: Regional Secretary as the chairman of the selection committee, the Head Badan Kepegawaian Daerah as the secretary. Meanwhile, in academics, there are as many as two people. Meanwhile, the professional is the former Regional Secretary of Kendari City (SI, 42 years old).*

In the placement of echelon III and IV structural officials, the authority is fully exercised by Civil Service Supervisory Officer (PPK) with consideration from Position and Rank Consideration Agency (Baperjakat = Badan Pertimbangan Jabatan dan Kepangkatan). The dominance is seen from the frequent mutation of officials in the government before and after regional head elections. A shocking statement from one of the lowly officials is as follows:

*Before and after the elections, there were many mutations of officials starting from echelons II, III and IV, and even many principals in Kendari City were also affected by regional elections. Officials caught playing two legs, supporting the incumbent and other candidates will be dismissed from office. It is the ugly of politics, the winner of the election will bring the ethnic entourage and its supporters into bureaucracy (SI, 42 years old).*

Considering ethnocentrism and primordialism, certain tribes must fill the placement of structural officials. Empirically, ethnic considerations are essential in the system of structural position placement in bureaucracy in the Municipality of Kendari. As political leaders, mayors who reduce bureaucratic power in the government must confront the reality of relying on the skills of employees to govern effectively (Peters, 2020).

### **Representative Bureaucracy**

Some local government organizations cannot realize good bureaucracy due to identity politics. Competition is a complex and dynamic phenomenon inherent in society, where individuals and groups compete for limited resources (Hos et al., 2021). In this context, identity politics includes the creation of policies as a unifying force (Börzel and Risse, 2020). There is a surprising statement from the high officials of Kendari City Government.

*Admission with online system test (CAT) cannot be made without considering local wisdom. For example, in other areas, some of them were demonstrated by their citizens because those who graduated were mainly from Java. The central government should consider making the passing grades in Java and outside Java different. If the passing rate is the same as in Java, it will be difficult for people in the area to pass the civil servant test, and it will be a problem for the region (AE, 56 years old).*

The statement shows that the local government wants local wisdom to be a consideration in staff admissions. Local communities have access to positions in the bureaucracy to minimize potential conflicts (Newland and Liu, 2021). As shown in Kendari City, the community is heterogeneous. Overall, four ethnic groups dominate in Kendari City, including the Tolaki, Bugis, Muna and Buton tribes.

Lousy bureaucracy is caused by problem-solving patterns, resulting in inefficient and ineffective bureaucracy (Sarker and Zafarullah, 2020). A city government official reported the following statement:

*The government bureaucracy of Kendari city is considered to belong to Tolaki ethnicity because they are natives here. They want the majority of officials from the tribe. Therefore, in selecting officials, the ethnic factor becomes one of the considerations. This allows nongovernment conflicts to impact society (SI, 42 years old).*



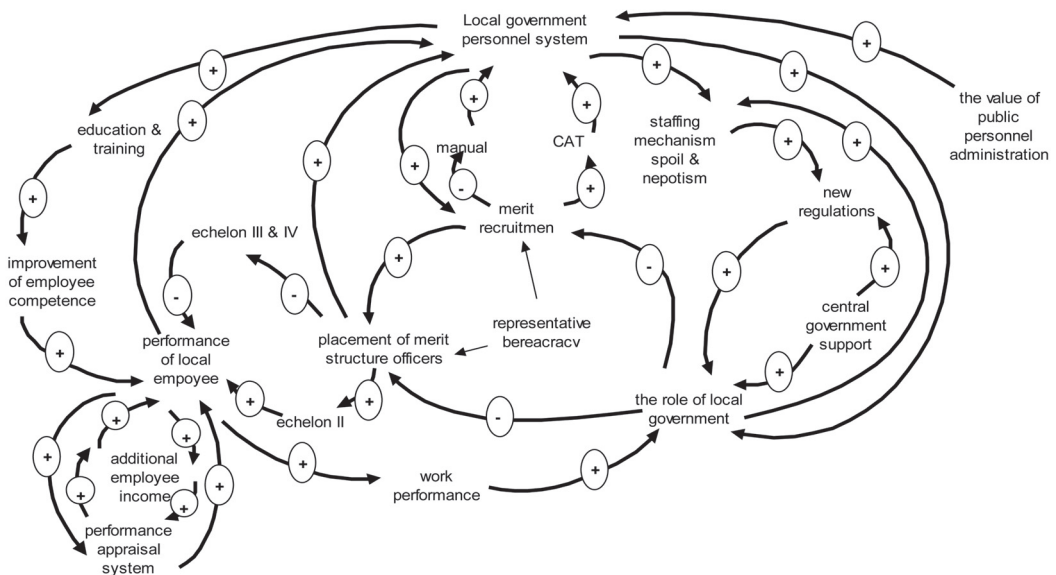
Local wisdom is essential in determining policy because the concept influences the stability of the social order. In the USA ethnic, religious, political, birth, educational, and gender differences are considered in bureaucracy to support policies (Yang and Charles, 2021).

Meanwhile, in Taiwan, the consideration of local wisdom in state policy significantly influences overcoming the development of divisions.

According to the theory of representative bureaucracy, the quota system is considered to protect the interests of groups. This system is considered to be detrimental to public services and the representative bureaucracy makes government performance effective. Bureaucratic representation should be a consideration in the public sector, reflecting the interests of all groups and influencing decision-making. Representative democracy reflecting social groups leads to inclusive policies (Cingolani, 2022). Kendari City government official stated the following:

*Local governments must consider the sons of the regions in the admission of candidates for civil servants and those who will occupy structural positions because they feel the owners of this area, hence the inclusion in bureaucracy is a form of local wisdom (SA, 55 years old).*

Governments exercise a bureaucratic arrogance affecting local wisdom. This leads to underrepresentation, feelings of exclusion and discrimination. However, the local government must consider sociocultural factors such as customs and local wisdom in formulating policies. The presence of ethnic representatives accommodates the interests of the community. Ethnic representation can be seen in the composition of employees reflecting structural diversity. This is because the diversity of employee composition increases bureaucratic legitimacy and fairness in the provision of public services (Campbell, 2021).



**Figure 2: Model of causal loop diagram policy scenario**

**Note:** + reinforcing; - balancing.

**Source:** Primary data is processed with PowerSim Studio10 Express software.

Local government has a role in the regional staffing system to minimize decay and nepotism. In this context, a representative bureaucracy is needed to place structural officials (Kennedy and Bishu, 2022). Local wisdom is considered while emphasizing the application of the merit system, as shown in Figure 2. Government policies obtain support from all segments of society and minimize ethnic conflicts in Kendari City. Representative bureaucratic theory suggests that a diverse public sector workforce leads to policy outcomes reflecting the interests of all groups. This concept can modernize the response of public organizations to create harmonious relationships (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2021). Ethnic diversity positively influences employee and organizational performance. The experiences of different employees based on race and ethnicity have different perspectives on the solution of social problems.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Kendari government in personnel management implemented bureaucratic representatives since the policies received support from a multi-ethnic community. Ethnic representation included the Tolaki, Muna, Buton and Bugis tribes ranging from top middle and low control. The concept also applied to all agencies and departments in the city government. Bureaucratic representation in human resource governance was the best practice in controlling potential conflicts between ethnicities and groups. The application of the policy in staffing created a harmonious life in Kendari City. This policy was constructive for the government to remain stable in governance. The bureaucratic representation policies could mute potential conflicts.

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