

Corruption Cases in Government Institutions: Abuse of Rules from the Perspective of Weber and Wilson's Theory

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of corruption in Indonesian government institutions through the theoretical perspectives of Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson. Corruption cases are viewed not only as individual actions, but also as the result of structural and cultural weaknesses in government bureaucracy. Using qualitative research methods based on literature studies, this study analyzes the abuse of rules (rule manipulation) in the public administration system that should be rational and legal, but is instead used for personal or group interests. From Weber's perspective, the ideal rational-legal bureaucracy aims to create efficiency and legal certainty. However, in practice, the bureaucracy in Indonesia is often too rigid and formalistic, thus obscuring moral values and the purpose of public service. This opens up opportunities for deviation and corruption that are legitimized by formal procedures. Meanwhile, Wilson's theory highlights the importance of separating the political and administrative realms and the need for flexibility in public service. The inability of the apparatus to maintain professionalism and neutrality from political intervention is one of the factors driving the emergence of bureaucratic corruption. The results of the study indicate that corruption in government institutions is the result of an imbalance between compliance with rules (rule-based system) and the application of public service ethics (value-based administration). The synthesis of Weber's and Wilson's theories asserts that overly formal bureaucracies devoid of moral values, as well as overly flexible bureaucracies lacking regulatory control, both create space for abuse of power. Therefore, bureaucratic reform must be directed at striking a balance between legal rationality and administrative ethical integrity to prevent corruption sustainably.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a democratic country and a country of law, meaning that power in government is held by someone who has been appointed by the Indonesian people to implement the government system as well as possible in accordance with applicable laws and regulations [1]. A person who occupies a structure within the government is an official who has a position or status and a role that must be carried out according to their position within the government structure. The division of these roles is intended to be able to carry out government functions in various fields such as social, economic, educational, cultural, political, and so on, properly [1].

One of the programs in these areas is a development that brings prosperity and equality to all regions of Indonesia. The existence of ministers within the government structure makes it easier for Indonesia to achieve its goals. The ideals of the Republic of Indonesia are stated in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, including: protecting all Indonesians and all Indonesian territory; advancing general welfare; improving the life of the nation; and participating in maintaining world order [2].

Abuse of power is the action of officials or authorities who have special interests, whether for individual or group interests [3]. When the actions of these officials or authorities have caused losses to the state economy, this clearly falls under the category of corruption. According to the ICW report, in 2021, there were 533 corruption cases that were successfully prosecuted. This figure increased to 579 cases, which were successfully prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office, the National Police, and the Corruption Eradication Commission [4]. The greater the power of an official, the greater the opportunity for corruption, which ultimately impacts society.

Corruption in the social sciences is usually referred to as a structural crime, but structure here is interpreted as something that is restrictive beyond the control of the perpetrator. As a structural crime, the perpetrator does not feel like he is committing a crime because the structure allows or approves [5].

Based on the above background, corruption remains a major structural problem in Indonesian government institutions. Many cases occur not only due to weak oversight but also due to the abuse of bureaucratic regulations for personal or group gain. This research is relevant because it uncovers the roots of this problem from both the theory and practice of public administration.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Bureaucracy Concept

A bureaucracy is a government organization that implements policies and is generally associated with public service functions. It consists of appointed officials, whose primary function is to implement policies adopted by decision-makers. Bureaucracy is a crucial factor in the success of government programs because it serves as a medium for achieving state policy goals. The importance and strategic nature of the existence of bureaucracy so that Lane, as quoted by [6], states that the allocation of various public resources (*public resources allocation*) is impossible to exist without bureaucracy. Allocating a budget for goods and services in their distribution requires a bureaucratic structure. The role of bureaucracy is to implement decisions and provide goods and services in certain quantities to the public and consumers. Therefore, it can be concluded that the success or failure of a country can be seen from one of its *performance* aspects. The bureaucracy that supports it. Thus, it can be said that the bureaucracy is an extension of the government, playing a crucial role in implementing established decisions and policies.

Many scientists and researchers have studied bureaucracy. These studies generally refer to the bureaucratic model proposed by Max Weber. For Weber, bureaucracy is not a type of government, but rather an administrative system that is continuously run by competent employees based on established regulations (Atlay 1999). In his work, Weber introduced the ideal type of bureaucracy through the rational-legal bureaucracy model. According to Evers and Schiel (1992), Weber's view of bureaucracy is a typical organization that emphasizes the use of formally and rationally constructed rules and regulations, the separation between public and private life, the emergence of new forms of legality that are rationally based, the spread of rational ways of acting, and the institutionalization of all these factors into a modern administration [7].

Corruption in Public Services

One of the key elements of an effective bureaucracy is that it must be free from corruption. Corruption is an act deliberately carried out to gain an advantage for the public themselves, their families, or colleagues, which is carried out illegally. According to Quah, as quoted by [8], corruption is defined as deviant behavior by civil servants to obtain things that are socially and/or legally prohibited (page 24). Activities that can be categorized as acts of corruption according to the Transparency Society [9] are:

- a) Involving more than one person.
- b) This not only applies to civil servants or members of the state bureaucracy, but also occurs in private business organizations.

- c) It can take the form of accepting bribes, coffee money, greetings, Polish money, facilitation money, either in the form of cash or objects, or women.
- d) Generally, it is all secret unless it has become part of the culture.
- e) Involves elements of obligation and mutual benefit that are not always in the form of money.
- f. Every act of corruption contains fraud, usually against a public body or the general public. Corruption in bureaucracy and its prevention strategies - Fatkhuri 70 | Scientific Journal of Public Management and Social Policy - Vol. 1 No. 2 Year 2017
- f) Every act of corruption violates the norms of duty and responsibility in the social order.
- g) In the private sector, corruption can take the form of accepting payments, etc., to reveal secrets of the company where people work, or taking commissions that should be the company's right.

Power can be interpreted as a way for someone to influence other individuals in an organized structure. In Contract Theory, with its figures Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, it is explained that "government is created through contract mediation or the formation of agreements between individuals." These agreements are stated in laws and regulations so that society can be regulated or organized. In the contract, it is specifically stated that people must be willing to be regulated or ruled [10].

Methods and strategies for influencing others are pre-planned to achieve the stated goals. The goals to be achieved must be in accordance with mutual agreement, including the goals desired by the people led by those in power. According to Ramlan Surbakti, with power, a person has the power to influence others through ways of thinking and behaving that align with the wishes of those in power. The democratic system of government places greater emphasis on the people, meaning that all government systems come from and are for the people and are implemented by the people themselves. Because Indonesia's territory is vast, the Indonesian government can't handle all issues entrusted to a single person. Therefore, there is something called the division of power. It is only right that those who hold the baton of power contribute to building the nation and state (Thaus, 2022).

Within the ministry, there are ministers who hold power. These ministers are included in the executive power. Executive power is exercised by the president, vice president, and ministers (Kosmas, 2020). The authorities within the scope of the executive body are called state administrative officials or public officials who are appointed and given positions to carry out government duties properly [11]. One of the public officials who did not carry out their duties according to their roles and functions was Juliari Batubara, as minister of social affairs in the advanced Indonesian cabinet, before being replaced due to acts of abuse of power. Power that is deliberately not exercised properly by public officials because of their own interests is an abuse of power. Abuse of power, if it harms state finances, is a form of corruption [3].

Corruption can be said to be the abuse of office or authority that is detrimental to society, and is carried out for personal interests or those of a group of people or groups. In addition, corruption can be defined as the abuse of power by state officials or other parties affiliated with them to become rich for personal gain, contrary to morality, values that exist in society, and the law. Corruption is a white-collar crime that can occur as long as the opportunity and desire to do it are very high. Corruption is one of the abuses of power that can be carried out by anyone, including public officials [12].

The theory of power has been discussed by sociologists, including Max Weber. Unlike Karl Marx, who focused on competition in the economic sphere and the means of production for groups to gain power, Weber believes that class, status, and political parties are some of the factors that contribute to power. With this power, a person can easily achieve what they desire.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method. The qualitative method is a type of research in which the discussion is described using descriptive words [13]. The method of collecting data from this research is by means of a literature study by collecting data from various scientific articles,

reports, and reliable news, then reading and recording, and processing it into a discussion of this scientific article [14]. The object of this research is the acts of corruption carried out by public officials.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Bureaucracy According to Max Weber

Bureaucracy is an administrative or management system within an organization, especially a large organization such as a government or corporation. A bureaucratic system is characterized by clear rules, procedures, and hierarchy. The principles of bureaucracy include a specific division of tasks, written rules, impersonality, a well-structured hierarchy, and rationality (Solong & Yadi, 2021). Bureaucracy aims to create order, efficiency, and consistency in decision-making and task execution within the organization. Although bureaucracy has its benefits, it is sometimes considered to have a tendency to be overly complex and slow in responding to change (Haning, 2018).

The concept of bureaucracy, as defined by Max Weber, is an important framework for understanding modern organizations. Bureaucracy refers to an administrative or management system characterized by written rules, a specific division of labor, impersonality, a structured hierarchy, and rationality. Weber developed this concept in the early 20th century and outlined its principles, which can be applied to various types of organizations, including governments, corporations, and other institutions (Munafaroh & Masyhuri, 2019). First, one of the main characteristics of bureaucracy is a clear division of labor. In a bureaucratic system, work is divided into specific tasks, and each member of the organization has a defined role. This allows for increased specialization and efficiency in carrying out tasks. For example, in a government agency, there are officials responsible for tax revenue, who are different from those responsible for licensing. With a clear division of labor, work can be carried out better and more efficiently (Putera et al., 2013).

Bureaucracy in Modern Educational Organizations

Bureaucracy is a well-known element in the context of modern educational organizations. The concept of bureaucracy, defined and developed by Max Weber, has become a primary framework for the organization, management, and operation of educational institutions worldwide. Max Weber's concept of bureaucracy refers to a well-organized administrative structure based on a clear division of labor, hierarchy, rational rules, and standard procedures (Sawir, 2020). In the context of modern educational organizations, bureaucracy plays a role in creating a framework that enables educational institutions to carry out their operations efficiently. A clear division of labor allows for well-defined tasks and responsibilities, while hierarchy facilitates coordinated decision-making. Rational rules and standard procedures help ensure that day-to-day operations are carried out according to established guidelines. One of the primary benefits of bureaucracy in education is its ability to create a well-organized administrative structure. This is particularly important in educational institutions with large staffs, such as schools and colleges. In a bureaucratic environment, each staff member has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and communication is structured. This ensures that day-to-day operations run smoothly and efficiently (Setiyono, 2023)

Power Structure in Weber's Theory

The concept of power structure, as explained by Max Weber, is a central element in understanding organizational theory and power structures. In Weber's view, power structure is a crucial part in explaining how power is defined, distributed, and used in organizational contexts. Weber's theory distinguishes between various forms of authority and outlines their influence in modern organizations. Weber identified three main forms of authority that define power structures: traditional authority, rational-legal authority, and charismatic authority. Traditional authority is a type of authority based on traditions, customs, and norms accepted in society. This is an authority that is often inherited from generation to generation and is

rooted in history. An example of traditional authority is a monarchy that is based on royal lineage (Salim, 2023).

2. Bureaucracy According to Wilson

According to Woodrow Wilson, bureaucratic block politics in public administration is generally carried out by politicians who are the result of an election and bureaucrats in normative policy criteria to allocate policy-making tasks by non-bureaucratic politicians in delegation and shows the continuous field of bureaucratic work that both can generally differ in general, called career and non-career positions in the form and order that contains structure and culture, a structure that presents a composition of an order and culture that contains values, a system of habits carried out by the actors that can reflect the behavioral patterns of various human resources (<http://id.wikipedia.org>).

Wilson's opinion is reinforced by Frank J. Goodnow in his book "Politics and Administration." According to Goodnow, there are two distinct functions of government: politics and administration. According to Goodnow, politics is the task of creating state policies to meet the needs of the people. Meanwhile, administration is the implementer of policies in the form of public services to the community (Henry, 1988:34).

The separation of powers provides the basis for the distinction between politics and administration. The separation of politics and administration is intended to allow the public bureaucracy to work professionally, serving the public interest, without being burdened by political issues (Kumrotomo, 2005:157).

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that corruption cases in government institutions are not only caused by individual factors, but are also the result of structural and cultural weaknesses in the bureaucracy itself. The phenomenon of abuse of rules (*rule manipulation*) is a real form of how an administrative system that should be rational and legal is actually used for the interests of certain individuals or groups.

1. Weber's Theory Perspective

In Max Weber's view, rational-legal bureaucracy ideally functions objectively, hierarchically, and based on formal rules to ensure efficiency and legal certainty. However, in bureaucratic practice in government institutions, the rules created are often too rigid, closed, and oriented towards procedures, rather than moral values and the goals of public service. This rigidity causes the bureaucracy to lose its essence of substantive rationality, so that rules that should be a means of control become instruments of deviation. Corruption occurs because officials use formal procedures and authority to legitimize unethical actions, such as budget mark-ups, bribes, or manipulation of administrative documents.

2. Wilson's Theory Perspective

Meanwhile, Woodrow Wilson emphasized the importance of separating politics and administration and the need for flexibility in public service. However, in many government institutions, these boundaries have become blurred. Bureaucratic officials are often influenced by political pressures and personal interests, neglecting the values of professionalism, neutrality, and public service.

From Wilson's perspective, corruption arises when officials fail to maintain integrity and neutrality in implementing public policy. The bureaucracy's dependence on political power reinforces a culture of patronage that encourages the abuse of rules as a means of rewarding favors or maintaining power.

3. Synthesis of Weber–Wilson Analysis

When combined, Weber and Wilson's theories show that bureaucratic corruption is the result of an imbalance between compliance with rules (rule-based) and flexibility of administrative ethics (value-based).

- From Weber: an overly formalistic system creates a rigid and closed bureaucracy.

- From Wilson: the behavior of officials who do not uphold public service ethics exacerbates deviations.

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