Public Administration Challenges in a Multicultural Society

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Abstract—**The role of public administration in multicultural governance, as happened in Indonesia, has the higher dynamics of governance rather than in monoculture society. These dynamics often cause problems that can weaken the governance process, even becoming threat of national disintegration if not managed according to the principles of good governance. The implementation of these principles needs to begin with a comprehensive understanding of the multicultural characteristics of the local community, to find dimensions of diversity and dimensions of unitary as the basis for managing the governance system. In this case, the challenge of public administration needs to be expanded to the other dimensions of governance; the socio-cultural and spiritual dimensions. It is also necessary to adapt to the development of digital inclusiveness (e-inclusion) to support the realization of the effectiveness and accountability of governance.**

Keywords—multicultural; challenges to democratic governance; e-inclusion

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of public administration in multicultural governance, as happened in Indonesia, has the higher dynamics of governance rather than in monoculture society. The dynamics can be positive, if there is harmonization among stakeholders in encouraging and realizing people welfare; on the contrary it can be negative if prolonged conflict among stakeholders happened and does not have a comprehensive solution. The prolonged conflict can be caused by the governance that unable to realize a healthy democratic process starting at the national level until the local level, the fragility of economic development that is unable to encourage welfare, or government management that cannot realize the effectiveness and efficiency of public services.

As one of the countries that has the characteristics of a multicultural society, experience in Indonesia shows the high dynamics in the governance process, both positively and negatively. Positive dynamics include the 1998 governance reform which was followed by the issuance of Law No. 22 of 1999 concerning local government, until it was revised with the enactment of Law No. 32 of 2004 and Law No. 23 of 2014. Some of the principles in this law are: there is a greater delegation of authority through political decentralization to local governments for government administration; the central

government only handles 5 (five) government affairs as a pillar to maintain the existence of a unitary state. The objectives of this policy include encouraging the realization of regional independence based on local wisdom, reducing disparities among regions, and increasing the effectiveness of public services.

The impact of these reforms is that local governments are more independent in government administration; direct election processes at the local, provincial and national levels run far more democratic than before. The selection of people's representatives at the local and national levels, local head elections and presidential elections has been held directly (direct vote) as a manifestation of community participation in the democratic process. Each region has also set a vision, mission, policy direction, various development programs and public services that show an increase in the quality of governance. Through this reform process, incrementally the administration of government and development in Indonesia to date has begun to show significant results. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that until now there are still negative sides that arise due to the process of reform or the dynamics of governance. As an illustration, in Indonesia relations among local governments are coordinate as an embodiment of autonomy or independence, while the relationship between the central and regional governments is subordinate as a consequence of a unitary state system [1].

The implementation of a constitutional system that has a balance between sub-ordination and coordination, centralization and decentralization cannot be fully realized. The results of Supriyono's research show that in terms of policy formulation there has not been a significant shift from representative democracy towards participatory democracy [2]; means that still many local government policies in various forms of legislation that do not involve the participation of various levels of society determined not in accordance with the wishes and interests of citizens. In addition, the role of local government is still very dominant in the provision of public services, while the involvement of the private sector and community is limited. Due to the severity of the burden on local governments in service and development provision, quality services in the fields of education, health, infrastructure, or other services have not been fully realized.

The administration of government in Indonesia is in a pluralistic or multicultural society context. Horizontal plurality is characterized by the diversity of ethnic groups, languages, religions, cultures, customs and potential of the region. In addition, there is also a vertical plurality characterized by differences in economic, social, or political stratification. This understanding of plurality and multicultural dimensions does not seem to fully color the administration of local government. The diversity of local potential cannot be explored optimally to realize the local-self-governance or the local-governing community), because the local spirit raises ethnocentrism or even separatism.

II. METHODS

This paper uses literature review as an approach in exploring and analyzing the challenges faced by public administration in multicultural societies.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Dynamics of Multicultural Society

Multicultural society is a dynamic society, consisting of groups with characteristics of differences ethnic, geographical, religious, and cultural that has equal positions among these groups. In a multicultural society there are also differences between non-equal positions because of the socio-economic coating. Various studies ranging from classical social theory to the latest development theories show that the occurrence of this coating is triggered by development policies that have not been able to increase employment opportunities and public welfare. Inefficient bureaucratic culture also influences the increase in socio-economic inequality, *relationships between economy and society forms the cornerstone for our contemporary understanding of the cultures of a bureaucracy* [3].

The reality of the horizontal structure or vertical structure as described, still faces many problems concerning prolonged conflict. Efforts to eliminate or solve conflicts rooted in vertical and horizontal structures require government involvement with the support of all levels of society. Government involvement in the formulation and implementation of development policies and public services must be based on plurality or multicultural societies. On the one hand the government has an interest in uniting various differences into an integrated unity of power in nation-building, on the other hand each region (local community) has an interest in realizing independence in the administration of the community's choices and desires. Burrell and Morgan used the term pluralist society in referring to multicultural society and distinguishing it from a unitary society [4]. On the basis of this distinction, bureaucracy perspective in the administration of government, then there is a different concept between pluralist and unitary concept.

In unitary point of view: interests, conflicts, and power are a unit that needs to be managed simultaneously through an appropriate managerial approach to achieve the goals. While pluralist schools view that differences in interests and conflicts among groups are fundamental and always occur in society; the use of power must be built on agreement among groups in a democratic manner. It can also be said that unitary views emphasize managerial values in an effort to achieve common goals, while pluralist notions emphasize the importance of democratic values so that inter-group conflicts can be eliminated in order to achieve common goals. Observing the two views above, efforts to achieve a common goal in a multicultural society can only be realized if there is a government system that is able to integrate a unified perspective that puts forward managerial values and pluralism views and optimally promote democratic values [2].

B. Challenges of Public Administration in Multicultural Society

After examining several theories, concepts and dynamics of multicultural society, then the challenges of public administration can be explained in solving problems. The first step that needs to be done is to re-map the multicultural characteristics, from ethnic diversity, local potential, behavioral and socio-cultural changes and socio-economic stratification to changes in the pattern of power in the center and regions. Administrative development or economic development will not be possible to improve the quality of human life, unless it is carried out within the framework of cultural development. Cultural development is: an essential dimension of the overall development of peoples [5]. This approach places the cultural aspect not only as an auxiliary value, but as an intrinsic value for administrative and economic development.

The role of public administration in the administration of government has tended to be more focused on legislative, executive and judicial institutions through the dimensions of its approach. Rosenbloom mapped the existence of three approaches in public administration, namely political approach, managerial approach, and legal approach. At the implementation level [6]; political approaches related to legislative performance in the context of policy formulation, managerial approaches related to the performance of the executive in terms of policy implementation, and legal approaches related to the performance of judicial institutions in law enforcement. In the political approach the values put forward are democracy; while managerial needs to prioritize the values of efficiency, effectiveness, and economic value; and in the legal approach the values that must be realized are equality and justice. This mapping illustrates that the role of public administration includes at least the scope of politics in legislative institution, managerial in executive institution, and the law enforcement judiciary institution.

The mapping done by Frederickson shows that the scope of public administration studies includes political contexts that oriented towards the meaning of democratization and how to govern that develops from old theory (bureaucracy) to new theory (governance) [7]. In another work, Frederickson suggests the existence of the main theories that become studies in public administration such as *political control of bureaucracy, bureaucratic politics, institutional theory, public management, post-modern theory, decision theory, rational choice theory, and governance* [8]. In a broader scope Gerald E Caiden suggests a framework for developing public administration theory and its application to 25 studies [9]. Public administration is understood as a study of the state in

carrying out actions, which is focused on the political, economic, or social dimensions through the institutionalized collective power.

Scrutinize the various dimensions of the study and the dynamics of governance in a multicultural society in Indonesia, the challenges of public administration in the future is needs to expand the dimensions of the study. Mapping from Gedeon M. Mudacumura revealed that the challenges of the scope public administration study, especially in developing countries, involved several dimensions, namely [10]: structural dimension, political dimension, administrative dimension, economic dimension, social dimension, and spiritual dimension.

1) Structural dimension: is intended to ensure that the arrangement and management of governance by the legislative, executive and judicial institutions can realize their accountability and at the same time checks and balances in carrying out their functions. Political dimension is related to the effectiveness of a decentralized system to the lowest governance structure that can guarantee the ongoing democratic process and effectiveness of government administration.

2) Administrative dimensions: are related to the effectiveness of the public sector management system; development policies need to be translated into programs and activities that have an impact on improving people's welfare. Economic dimension, oriented to improving the welfare of society both at the local, regional, national, even to the global level. Welfare can be realized if there is a dynamic process of structural change, including changes in cultural values and upholding human dignity.

3) Social and cultural dimensions: can be understood as consisting of a participatory decision-making system in the framework of community empowerment strategies aimed at realizing justice while preserving local culture (localized and local wisdom) in order to protect the welfare of future generations.

4) Spiritual dimension: can be a transcendental value system that is directly related to productive work culture, bureaucrat ethics and morality, as well as overall accountability in the administration of government and development.

Based on this mapping, it seems that the social and cultural dimensions, as well as the spiritual dimension, are challenges that must be followed up in realizing the effectiveness of governance in multicultural societies. The development of public administration studies that are closely related to the social dimension, or the involvement of professional community development interventions, has also been suggested by Henderson [11]: ..... The range is wide: socio-cultural development, community education, the fight against poverty / exclusion, social / community planning, social action, pressure groups, community-based economic development, multicultural mediation, civil society development. Even the term used to refer to community development varies from country to country - community action, community

organizations, community social work, community work, social-cultural animation.

Another challenge in public administration is adaptation to the advancement of science and technology, especially regarding digitalization. The developments that have taken place during this time, the administrative of ideology often cannot adjust to the administrative of technology, therefore the implementation of digitalization-based governance is a necessity that must be met in the practice of public administration. Digital divides are about expanding access, skills and capacities to utilize information and communications technologies (ICT) for the benefit of the government and society [12]. Digital divides or digital inclusiveness (e-inclusion) are not only needed in a social perspective, but also for government, financial, public service and development perspectives.

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IV. CONCLUSION

The challenge of public administration in the administration of governance in multicultural societies has a higher escalation compared to the society who tends to be monocultural. Responding to these dynamics, it is necessary to practice public administration which does not only prioritize the importance of structural dimensions (government systems), political dimensions, economic dimensions and administrative dimensions; but it needs broader scope, namely the social-cultural dimension and the spiritual dimension. In addition, the development of administrative of ideology needs to be balanced with administrative of technology, by utilizing digitalization or digital inclusiveness (e-inclusion) technology for social interests, effectiveness and efficiency in administration, finance, public services and development.

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