

Is There a Real Technocratic Planning in Indonesia? and Is That Needed?

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Abstract—This paper analyzes how technocratic planning is actually operated and asking “is there real technocratic planning in Indonesia or is it only indicative of pseudo technocratic?” In-depth understanding gained through qualitative research through open and unstructured interviews, which are elaborated with the author's direct involvement in several planning processes situations. This study finds that technocratic planning operated in the application of logical framework for intervention plans, organizing coordinated forums, formulating data-based policies, and synchronizing policies. The situation do not represent a pseudo technocratic, but these are not strong enough to obscure the fragile planning. Technocratization has problems with the instrument itself, especially in the framework of bureaucratic and political relations and the relationship between different government structures. Dominant and excessive convergence, limited discourse or learning space for scientific journey and discovery media, and the cognitive mentality tradition and technocratic behavior that has not yet been massively formed, are crucial for technocratic planning work. While many critics call for planning based on pluralism and democracy, this study believes that the technocratic operation will also work to improve democracy quality.

Keywords—*technocratic planning, convergence, fragile technocratic*

I. INTRODUCTION: WHY TALKING TECHNOCRACY?

The interest to improve planning ability to produce and convert knowledge into strategic and programmatic interventions make technocratic popular for the planning role of bureaucracy, as Pastorella [1], Ribbhagen [2], Gilley [3] have paid attention. Much earlier, Roszak [4] called technocracy as an idealization when talking about modernization, rationalization, and planning.

Indonesia has concern in this discourse since technocratic is explicitly called as planning approach being practiced and is even identified with the need for bureaucratic work methods. Ironically, in practice, many issues are not representative to technocratic planning. Analysis of the results of the Kemenpan-RB assessment on the Performance Accountability System of Government Agencies raises hypothesis that the planning

architecture logic has not produced performance as expected [5]. The technocratic performance framework is questionable when some regions receive a "good" accountability rating but have problems with service quality. Otherwise, there is a "very good" institutional rating in public services even though the performance accountability is low. This is evidence that performance accountability has not led to an external outcome [6]. Another indication, studies by Blomkamp et al. [7] and Pellini et al. [8] regarding policy-making practice in Indonesia that cannot accurately be represented as a cycle underpinned by the rationality of applied problem solving. These facts emerges even though implementation of the performance measurement system which include the obligation of technocratic planning to the accountability mandate [9,10] has been running for more than 20 years [11].

The situation raises the question of the existence of technocratic planning to effectively solve planning problems in Indonesia. This paper is looking for an exploratory answer to how it is operationalized, is there real technocratic planning practice in Indonesia? or does it just indicate pseudo technocratic?

II. RESEARCH METHODS

Data were collected through document review, observation, in-depth interviews, then elaborated on the author's experience as a research instrument through Focus Group Discussions, Public Expose Seminar Forums, and Assistance Forums. Data were analyzed qualitatively by a process classified into cyclical ideographic and nomothetic analysis.

III. TECHNOCRACY AND TECHNOCRATIC PLANNING

Many concepts are associated to technocracy, such as scientific management, techno bureaucracy [12], technocratic governance [9], politics of expertise [13,14]; modern and technical government [15], Evidence-based policy and planning [3,16]. Planning and social engineering models are understood to be at the core of technocratic projects. Early in its emergence, technocracy was rooted in mechanical industrialism and developed an anti-democratic attitude of

bureaucratic planning. Fischer [12] reflects it as a state of technological control and regulatory enforcement that does not provide deliberative space to civic actors to enact change and learning. Technocracy is defined as government or public control by scientists, technicians, or the exercise of political authority based on technical competence and expertise for a neutrality of technical decisions against the political dimension.

The post-industrial era, technocracy has an anti-bureaucratic face by embracing democracy vocabulary [3,17,18] and put it as a representative principle and a source of power within a democratic framework. The governance paradigm in public sector reform constructs technocracy with mutually binding principles of connective governance, risk management, and performance management as standards of democratic legitimacy. This is started with the managerialism movement [19,20,21]. Technocracy refers to development of a balanced policy and program planning model based on connectivity, risk, and performance which are linked [9].

Technocracy is mostly described through its relationship with populism or democracy [3,17,22] as shown at Figure 1. Technocracy carries accountability and requires voters to entrust authority to experts on public interest identification from rational speculation, so it is minimum claim of responsiveness [17]. Akbar [23], Ahyaruddin and Akbar [24] illustrate with performance accountability versus performance responsibility. Technocracy creates a relationship with the concept of performance accountability [9,10,25] and Evidence-based policy [3,8,16,26] which relevant to the operationalization of technocratic planning. Technocratic control has a relatively tight correspondence to vertical relations, standardization of practice, and centralization of decision making. Meanwhile, socio-ideological control corresponds to lateral relations, practice differentiation, decentralization [27].

	Technocracy	Democracy
Values Emphasized	Authority and Loyalty	Fairness and Liberty
Strengths in Policy	Effectiveness, Efficiency	Responsiveness, context
Language of domination	Evidence-Based, Expert	Progressive, popular
Policy situation to be used	Complexity, Risk	Pluralism, ambiguity

Source : Gilley [3]

Fig. 1. Comparison of technocracy and democracy.

Jacob criticize technocracy for placing politics as inherent from planning choices and technical instruments limitations that distort knowledge for imposing a simple solutions on complex problems [28]. The problem is not just a lack of control over the technocrats, but the technology itself. The obsession with quantification and culture of objectivity is endemic to technocrats [9] and make it isolative with less attention to how value are articulated [29]. It fosters standardization in planning and evaluation that mitigates the exchange of ideas and fosters the convergence of a set of practices [30] but has potential to create risk of excessive convergence.

Technocracy faced the eternal question, what constitutes a technocrat, and what make it exist? Putnam [31] identifies a technocrat as someone with some ideal mentality which Ribbhagen [2] looks at two possibilities. First, the importance of educational background and Second, institutional context to levels of technocratic thinking. Organizational culture better explains and show that the technocratic mentality depending on organizational affiliation. It makes the explanation of institutional theory relevant [11,32], although Ilonszki and Stefan [33] explain the personal dimension.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Normative Themes of Indonesia's Technocratic Planning

Law No. 25/2004 mentions that technocratic approach is applied at planning stage as the first step, namely the preparation of a technocratic, comprehensive and measurable development plan design. Technocratic is implemented using scientific methods and frameworks by the institution that is functionally tasked with it. Regional development planning is also a material in local government regulations (Law 23/2014) that defines technocratic as the use of scientific methods and frameworks to achieve regional development goals and objectives.

In more detail, planning is contained in a regulation of the minister of home affairs, namely Permendagri 86 in 2017. It states that technocratic approach is intended to use scientific methods and frameworks to achieve regional development goals. Methods and scientific thinking frameworks are scientific processes to obtain knowledge systematically related to development planning based on physical evidence, data and information that are accurate and can be justified. Technocratic is used to formulate strategic issues that are identified through the analysis of information from various reliable sources, including central government policy. The technocratic approach is also used for: a) a comprehensive review of regional development performance; b) formulating opportunities and challenges that affect the achievement of development targets; c) formulating regional development goals, strategies and policies; d) projecting regional financial capacity; e) formulating priority programs and performance-based activities.

B. Technocratic Instruments and Problem of Operationalization

Technocracy refers to several characteristics of attitudes attributed to bureaucracy. However, it is insufficient. First, the needs for technocracy do not only come from within bureaucracy. Second, the behavior of political elite influences the technocratic process work. In some situations, the personal performance of political leaders is key to whether technocratic performance is running or not. A Senior official illustrates :

"...However, if regional head wants to learn planning and budgeting system, he will be sophisticated in formulating policies and put his agenda. If he doesn't want to, it would

seem that he never monitored the process, let alone was involved. This is the hard one, don't want to be involved, don't want to know the process, and then never control..."

Political leaders with a strong commitment to development tend to display high curiosity, then encourages them to create discursive forums and involve themselves intensively in many technocratic stages. Otherwise, granting discretion and trust to the bureaucracy by not intensifying self-involvement in the process and not activating the comprehensive control function, is elite behavior that make technocratic process undeveloped. The bureaucracy has no clear directions, and then interacts with its basic characteristics, reactive, business as usual, routine. Political leaders who are not only instructional but also give their time and commitment to involve in the technocratic process have more positive impact.

1) Stages of logical thinking procedures: When the blueprint of development plan is understood as a technocratic performance representation, logical thinking and behavior must be presented as the main part of the planning process and structure. Empirically, a familiar term is logical framework (logframe). LFA helps the thinking process, starting from accurately identifying strategic issues, formulating objectives, targets and indicators, to designing problems answer in the form of programs. The factual conditions describe the existence of planning personnel implementing this thought process and seeing it as a thinking tool but having difficulties. Planners often lose the ability to convince and prove the relation between the ideal framework and the right about the goals, actions, and consequences of selected actions. The general statements of informant and practice suggests that the concept and many of the key elements of this approach are no progress. Programs and activities are technocratic products of logical thinking patterns and represents the work of technocratic. The following general statement represents the empirical chronology of the creation of a development program:

"If it create a new program, don't go that much. Most of them are automatic. It's already given. Our space is a lot of activity by evaluating what we did before, we modify it, maybe increasing the scope, expand the location, reduce or add procedures. Space for change is in the activities, although not all of them are discussed."

Many terms describe how chronologically the program is presented and implemented along with the assumptions, such as national mandates, national priorities, SPM (minimum Service Standard), deconcentration programs, special allocation fund obligations (DAK), political priority programs, routine programs.

2) Discourse forum (coordination meeting), knowledge-learning space: The question is, does technocratic work with mechanism that mainstreaming the knowledge or does it have potential to bypass the knowledge? Conducive shared learning has not yet been developed. Learning is more personally

initiated by certain apparatus without a structured and systematic pattern, with minimal formal forum support. The learning subject for the creation and utilization of knowledge is very limited so that it is unable to guarantee the creation of processes, results, and impacts become joint ownership assets of organizational. Organizations have no much learning mechanisms that can bring together different backgrounds of problems, thoughts, abilities, or experiences. Organizations have limited ability to carry out the role of knowledge distribution to reduce gaps and asymmetrical information. It is not easy to say that the forum is an open discursive space. On the other hand, discourse space which is a lateral or horizontal partner is also normatively limited by various top down-sectoral policy which are an obligation for the regions to execute. This statement illustrated frustration and skepticism for technocratic :

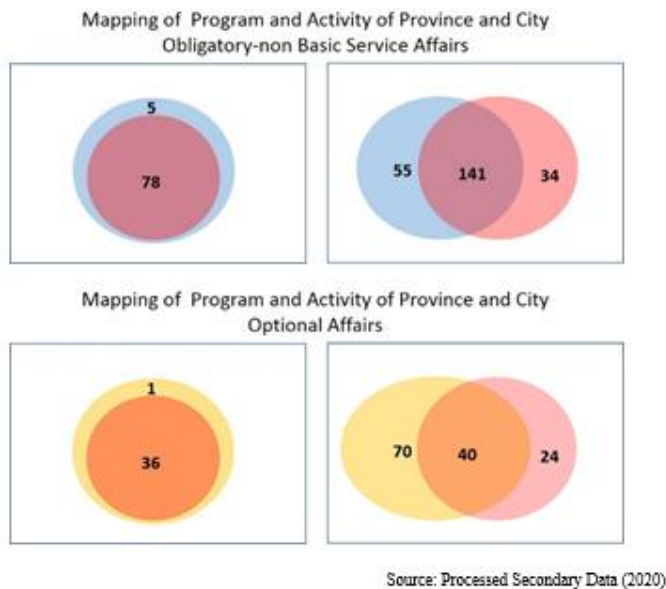
"..Do we need planning ? a lot of money is wasted, priority means nothing, technocratic means nothing. Poor areas waiting for DAK and DAU to make priorities are difficult because the money has a mandate. How come planning if the money is mandated from central. If the regions just have to carry out the mandate, can it still be called planning, let alone a technocratic label?"

Other staff opinion states:

For pragmatic regions, it just take the list and put all the existing programs, activities, and sub-activities without the need for lengthy analysis, without thinking whether it is logical or not, according to the realistic needs of the area or not. Is it technocratic? which is said to be scientific, data-based, research-based.

3) Data-based policy formulation: Planning begins with mapping strategic issues in the community, although it is admittedly not running ideally. The problem is the realities and public needs information are not ready to be presented in front of planners. It takes commitment and capacity to produce and analyze data, by research, policy analysis, or evaluation. The practice is strengthened by research and development affair as mandated by the Law. Another instrument is the evaluation of development performance which is based on the e-monev system. The object of the evaluation system is dominated by the results of program and activity implementation, focus on: a) the stages of achievement in program implementation (comparing targets and realization); and b) use of budget allocations (budget absorption). The information generated are what percentage of progress in the implementation of activities according to targets, how much budget has been spent, with very minimal additions to factors supporting and hindering the implementation of programs. Domination of vertical national mandates and automatically political programs do not give local governments strong reason to comprehensive evaluation.

4) *Synchronization and policy integration*: Integration, between sectors and levels of government, must go through technocratic to produce the expected planning performance. The goal is lossing of fragmentation and overlapping interventions and then emerge outcomes between interventions. The notion of integration, also known as synchronization, leads to the same intervention by multilevel government. Integration is defined as still having and intervening the same program nomenclature (shown at figure 2), without looking deeper into the synergy of the impact of two or more different interventions with mutual impact coherence. In this integrated role, Bappeda is admittedly still not performing enough, where there is no review and no comprehensive enough to examine OPD designs.



- 83 programs are run by the province, 78 of them are the same as the City program
- 37 programs are run by the province, 36 of which are the same as city programs

Fig. 2. Intersection of program and activity intervention at province and city level.

V. DISCUSSION: LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND THE FUTURE OF TECHNOCRATIC PLANNING

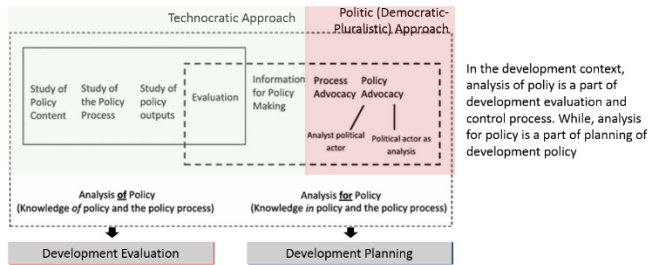
Is there real technocratic planning? without a doubt, the practice continues. Technocratic is understood and practiced as: a) all actions taken to provide empirical support for political decisions. It is called scientific only if it is under reality; b) any efforts to translate in detail the political leader policies into planning blueprint menus. It reinforces a technocratic mentality that is not only tolerant as Ribhagen [2] conceptualized, but also legal compliance, and it is not what Putnam [31] wants; c) any attempt to provide a legal basis for political will. Regulation becomes the main protection and bargaining ground facing political intervention, not logical arguments. It describes

regulatory enforcement [12], technocratic vertical control [27]; (d) carry out the procedural stages of preparing planning documents according to regulations, reflecting instrumental rationality [34], the rationality of procedures, methods, and programs to achieve value. Technocratic has not shown strong practice to (a) prove the rationality and irrationality of political policies; (b) provide an overview and the basis for the construction of a frame of vision and decisions that should be taken politically, not just interpreting operations.

Technocratic planning in Indonesia is operationalized in the application of the logical framework of intervention to guarantee the logic of accountability, like Pollit [35] and Esmark [9] thought, organizing coordination and synchronization forums for scientific discovery [35], data-based policy formulation to ensure the logic of reality and policy relevance [3,8,16,25]. The facts do not represent a pseudo technocratic, but it is not sufficient to obscure the fragile planning conditions. Technocracy has problems with its procedural operationalization, especially on bureaucratic and political relations and relations between different government structures. The logical framework that constructs the architecture of intervention plan from goals, policies, programs, to activities is reduced by convergence which is not only dominant but also excessive. The program rationalization process faces limitations, in data, analytical capacity, and technology including methods, procedural stages, forums, behavior, and planning organization. Carlsson-Wall et al. [27] is correct about the excessive risk of convergence. Excessive standardization has potential to shift the decentralization to centralization, and make technocratic not working optimally. Dominant convergence reduces the essence of technocratic because many components in the substantive area have been determined and do not lead to free discourse. Planners focus more on what programs are available and become a mandate to be implemented, what programs accommodate the political will of the regional head, not on what programs should be created to achieve the vision and mission, goals, and objectives of development. The accountability expectations from technocratic interventions as expected [9,25] are not always met. Planning becomes context insensitive [36], simplistic, routine, or generic as Jacob criticized [28].

Discourse space and learning forums for knowledge sharing that exchange and reconcile the various rationalities are not yet strong enough. This represents institutional condition which is criticized by Ribhagen [2] and Sofyani and Akbar [11]. Organizational mechanisms for learning capacity do not work with effective patterns and systems that can bridge knowledge gaps in planning and results in : 1) Organizations do not easily control the suitability of knowledge with normative demands; 2) the understanding of knowledge is less able to lead to a comprehensive understanding of the substance so that it is not uncommon to simplify solutions such as Jacob's criticism [28]; 3) Planning capacity is dominated by behavior with general knowledge and facing difficulties in solving detailed problems. The qualification of knowledge which are situated, tacit, dynamic [37] is not build up a lot.

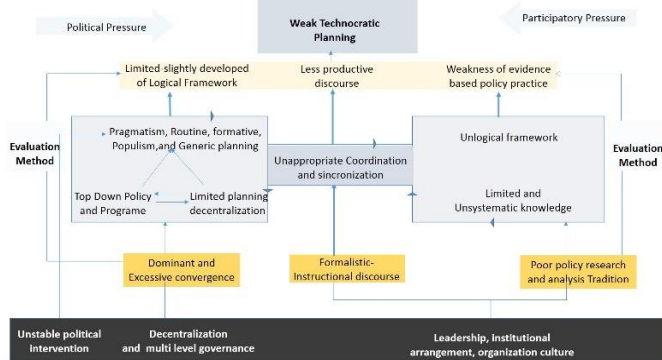
Evidence-based plan are practiced with a research tradition, cognitive mentality, and technocratic behavior that has not yet been massively formed by either certain elites or the apparatus. The existing evaluation instruments have not critically touched the substance of programs and activities resolve the strategic issues, especially the prescription of sustainability or the termination of constructed programs. Model as shown at Figure 3 can be developed in this discourse.



Adapted from: McCarthy-Cotter [38]

Fig. 3. Technocratic and political approach on development and policy process.

In some cases, technocratic planning is carried out with a more role as planning application operators, data collectors, planning communicators, data and information provider and document compilers. There is a lack of touch in the role and capacity as policy analysts and scenario designers of development programmatic interventions as idealized by Gilley [3]. The weakness and the causes of technocratic practice shown in Figure 4.



Source: Processed Primary Data (2020)

Fig. 4. The weakness of technocratic practice.

VI. CONCLUSION

Technocratic has been practiced even in limited conditions, and the quality of the practice will continue to be needed even when pluralism and democracy are the options. Both interventionist and non-interventionist political leaders have as much constructive as their destructive potential for technocratic performance. Thus, the capacity of the technocracy itself must continue to be built in a more recursive and inclusive. Quality technocracy will also work to improve the quality of democracy since the awareness of various knowledge sources

and the development of scientific discourse in public sphere pluralism. The planning system is not expected to be in a rigidly vertical, vertically standardized system and authority relation, converging dominantly and excessively. Technocratic planning must strengthen institutions by building traditions, cognitive mentality, and scientific behavior.

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