



# Reinventing Government in Local Administration: Structural, Functional, and Cultural Perspectives

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## Abstract

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### Article history:

Received: January 7, 2025  
Revised: February 25, 2025  
Accepted: April 9, 2025  
Published: June 30, 2025

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### Keywords:

Decentralization,  
Good Governance,  
Local Government Management,  
Regional Autonomy,  
Reinventing Government.

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### Identifier:

Zera Open  
Page: 74-93  
<https://zeraopen.com/journal/igr>

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This study investigates the transformation of local government management within the Reinventing Government paradigm, which emphasizes structural, functional, and cultural reforms. Structural reform seeks to establish lean, transparent, and accountable institutions; functional reform focuses on optimizing human resources, planning, finance, logistics, and conflict management; while cultural reform highlights the shift in values, mindsets, and bureaucratic culture toward greater responsiveness and service orientation. The research applies a descriptive-analytical method with a combined approach grounded in library research, drawing upon academic literature published over the last five years. The findings indicate that although various reform efforts have been implemented, persistent challenges remain, including limited human resource capacity, fiscal constraints, and resistance within the bureaucracy. These barriers often slow progress and hinder the realization of reform objectives. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that integrate structural, functional, and cultural dimensions, enabling local governments to enhance service delivery, strengthen institutional accountability, and promote the principles of good governance.

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## 1. Introduction

Changes in local government management are inevitable in the context of modernization and democratization demands. Local governments are required to transform to respond to the challenges of globalization, decentralization, technological developments, and increasing public awareness of civil rights. Regional decentralization and autonomy not only provide flexibility for regions to regulate their own households, but also demand bureaucratic reform that is more responsive, transparent, and accountable.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the transformation of local government is not just an administrative change, but a paradigm shift in governance towards a more participatory and public service-oriented system.

There are three dominant factors that affect changes in local government management, namely structural, functional, and cultural factors. Structural factors are related to the structuring of government organizations to be more lean, efficient, and not overlap. Functional factors are related to strengthening the role and function of the bureaucracy, including in the aspects of planning, finance, and conflict management. Meanwhile, cultural factors emphasize the importance of changing the mindset, values, and work culture of the apparatus to be in harmony with the demands of the times. These three factors complement each other in forming effective governance. This transformation is becoming increasingly important as the public's demands for fast, efficient, and quality public services increase.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nasrun Annahar, Ida Widianingsih, Entang Adhy Muhtar, and Caroline Paskarina. "The road to inclusive decentralized village governance in Indonesia." *Sustainability* 15, no. 11 (2023): 8616.

<sup>2</sup> Daxin Sun, Saixing Zeng, Hongquan Chen, Xiaohua Meng, and Zhizhou Jin. "Monitoring effect of transparency: How does government environmental disclosure facilitate corporate environmentalism?" *Business strategy and the environment* 28, no. 8 (2019): 1594-1607.

In the academic context, the Reinventing Government (REGOM) paradigm introduced by Osborne and Gaebler has become an important reference in public management reform.<sup>3</sup> This paradigm emphasizes the need for the bureaucracy to adopt the spirit of entrepreneurship with five core strategies, namely core strategy, consequences strategy, customer strategy, control strategy, and culture strategy. These five strategies direct the government to reduce its role as the sole controller, and instead empower the community as the main actor of development. This approach is in line with the concept of people-centered development which places the community as the center of decision-making and with the principle of public service neutrality, where the bureaucracy plays a neutral role as the neutral implementer of public policy.<sup>4</sup>

Although this new paradigm has been widely adopted, the reality on the ground shows that there is a gap between ideal theory and implementation practice. Local governments still face various fundamental problems, ranging from limited quality human resources to inefficient organizational structure problems. Many apparatus do not fully understand the vision and mission of the region, and there is a gap between the development program and the regional planning document (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah/ RPJMD*). Limited budgets and infrastructure facilities are also significant obstacles in providing optimal public

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<sup>3</sup> Faradillah Hasan and Rizal Yaya. "Governance of Village Owned Enterprise from The Perspective of Reinventing Government." *Riset Akuntansi dan Keuangan Indonesia* 4, no. 3 (2019): 146-155.

<sup>4</sup> Xia Zhiqiang, and Tan Yi. "Publicness: The basis of constructing a public administration discipline in China." *Social Sciences in China* 41, no. 4 (2020): 105-125.

services.<sup>5</sup> This condition shows that local government management reform efforts are still facing serious challenges.

Furthermore, recent research confirms that regional bureaucracies are not fully able to provide transparency, effectiveness, and accountability as demanded by the principles of good governance.<sup>6</sup> There are still bureaucratic practices that are slow, procedural, and do not prioritize the public interest. This creates a distance between local governments and the community, thereby reducing the level of public trust. Therefore, the implementation of the Reinventing Government paradigm requires not only structural changes, but also profound cultural and functional transformations.

The formulation of the problem in this study focuses on how the strategy for reforming local government management can be implemented through a back to basics approach, what are the main obstacles in the implementation of the strategy, and how efforts are made to overcome the obstacles that arise. The purpose of this study is to describe the factors of change in local government management, analyze the implementation of the Reinventing Government paradigm, and identify obstacles and solutions in the reform of local government management. Academically, this research is expected to enrich the literature on public management, especially in the context of decentralization and bureaucratic reform in Indonesia. Meanwhile, practically, the results of this research can provide valuable

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<sup>5</sup> Loukas Glyptis, Michael Christofi, Demetris Vrontis, Manlio Del Giudice, Salomi Dimitriou, and Panayiota Michael. "E-Government implementation challenges in small countries: The project manager's perspective." *Technological Forecasting and social change* 152 (2020): 119880.

<sup>6</sup> Armenia Androniceanu. "Transparency in public administration as a challenge for a good democratic governance." *Revista» Administratie si Management Public «(RAMP)* 36 (2021): 149-164.

input for local governments in improving the quality of bureaucracy, strengthening public services, and building a government that is more responsive and oriented to the interests of the wider community.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the reform of local government management is a must in order to realize effective, efficient, and democratic governance.

## **2. Literature Review**

A literature review on local government management reform emphasizes the importance of bureaucratic reform, decentralization, and the application of the Reinventing Government (REGOM) paradigm in improving public sector performance. This paradigm, as described by Osborne and Gaebler, places the government as a facilitator that empowers communities and emphasizes efficiency, accountability, and innovation.<sup>8</sup> In the Indonesian context, various studies show that regional autonomy requires local governments to be more adaptive to the needs of the community, improve governance, and improve the quality of public services.<sup>9</sup> Recent literature also highlights the relationship between decentralization and the application of good governance principles. Purwanti<sup>10</sup> emphasized that the success of regional autonomy is not only determined by the authority given by the central

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<sup>7</sup> Julizar Idris. "Indonesia's Public Administration Reform Policy." *Journal of Hunan University Natural Sciences* 48, no. 3 (2021): 116-121.

<sup>8</sup> Faradillah Hasan and Rizal Yaya. "Governance of Village Owned Enterprise from The Perspective of Reinventing Government." *Riset Akuntansi dan Keuangan Indonesia* 4, no. 3 (2019): 146-155.

<sup>9</sup> Jusuf Madubun. "Public services in island sub-districts: Towards geography-based governance." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 83, no. 3 (2024): 308-327.

<sup>10</sup> Ari Purwanti. "Implementation of Good Governance in Local Government Systems in Indonesia." *Journal of Governance* 7, no. 2 (2022): 482-490.

government, but also by the ability of the regions to carry out transparency, accountability, and public participation. Therefore, government management reform needs to integrate a good governance approach with public service innovation.

In addition, the study by Afrijal et al.<sup>11</sup> confirms that the Reinventing Government approach can strengthen regional bureaucracies to be more competitive by focusing on community-based strategies (customer strategies) and performance-based control strategies (control strategies). However, the study also found that structural and cultural barriers are still a challenge in the application of this concept at the local level. This shows that there is a gap between the ideal conceptual framework and the empirical conditions of bureaucracy in the field. Thus, the literature shows that local government management reform must be understood as a complex process. Transformation not only touches structural and functional aspects, but also cultural aspects, by involving changes in the mindset, values, and behavior of the apparatus. This literature review also emphasizes the need for further research on the implementation strategy of Reinventing Government in accordance with the social, political, and cultural context in Indonesia.

### **3. Methods**

This study uses a descriptive-analysis method with a mixed approach based on library research. The descriptive-analysis method was chosen because it is suitable

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<sup>11</sup> Afrijal Afrijal, Herizal Herizal, Fabri Yanza, Helmi Helmi, Nurul Kamaly, and Bustami Usman. "Realization Of Competitive Government Bureaucracy Through The Reinventing Government Approach." *Journal of Social Politics and Governance (JSPG)* 6, no. 1 (2024): 1-12.

for systematically describing the phenomenon of change in local government management and analyzing its relationship with relevant theories. Meanwhile, the combination approach allows this research to combine findings from various academic sources, both in the form of books, journal articles, and research reports published in the last five years. The literature study was carried out by browsing the literature related to the themes of decentralization, regional autonomy, good governance, and the Reinventing Government paradigm. These sources are obtained through academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and reputable national journals.

The literature selection criteria used are publications with relevant topics, published in the last five years, and have a significant contribution in explaining the issue of local government management reform. In its implementation, this research follows the stages of literature analysis. First, data collection is carried out from various relevant sources. Second, the data is categorized based on research dimensions, such as structural, functional, cultural, implementation barriers, and renewal strategies. Third, a comparative analysis was carried out between conceptual theory and empirical findings from various previous studies to find a gap between ideality and reality.

The analysis technique used is qualitative, where text data in the form of previous research results are read, interpreted, and linked to the theoretical framework of Reinventing Government. The combination approach is applied by combining normative-theoretical analysis (based on theories and concepts of public management) with empirical analysis (based on the results of previous research on

regional bureaucracy). This aims to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the problem being studied. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources, which is comparing the results of studies from several literature with different theoretical perspectives. This process is important to ensure that the conclusions produced do not just reflect one particular point of view, but rather represent the current scientific consensus. With this method, the research is expected to provide a clear, comprehensive, and critical picture of the strategy for reforming local government management through the application of the Reinventing Government paradigm and the obstacles faced in practice.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Structural Changes in Local Government Management**

Structural changes in local government management are the main foundation for the implementation of bureaucratic reform that is more adaptive, lean, and responsive to the needs of the community. The organizational structure of local government has often been considered fat, bureaucratic, and inefficient, thus hindering the public service process. Institutional structuring is needed so that there is no overlap of authority, emphasizing the functions of lines and staff, and developing organizational patterns that are in accordance with the real needs of the region. An effective organizational structure is believed to improve the performance

of the apparatus, accelerate decision-making, and support the implementation of the vision and mission of the local government.<sup>12</sup>

One of the directions of structural reform is the application of the principle of reinventing government which requires a lean and results-oriented bureaucracy. Osborne and Gaebler emphasized the importance of reducing the role of government as the sole controller and encouraging community engagement. This is in line with the view of Zhiqiang and Yi<sup>13</sup> who show that regional bureaucracies can become more competitive if they adopt core strategies such as core strategy and control strategy. Structural change concerns not only the form of the organization, but also the working mechanisms that promote accountability and transparency.

However, other research found that there are still major challenges in realizing structural reforms in the regions. Hamid<sup>14</sup> highlights that although organizational structures have adapted to the demands of decentralization, their implementation is often hampered by limited human and financial resources. This condition causes overlapping tasks and functions between work units, as well as the emergence of a bureaucracy that is slow in responding to the needs of the community. Thus, structural reform requires strong institutional capacity support, including planning, budgeting, and oversight.

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<sup>12</sup> Nasrun Annahar, Ida Widianingsih, Entang Adhy Muhtar, and Caroline Paskarina. "The road to inclusive decentralized village governance in Indonesia." *Sustainability* 15, no. 11 (2023): 8616.

<sup>13</sup> Xia Zhiqiang, and Tan Yi. "Publicness: The basis of constructing a public administration discipline in China." *Social Sciences in China* 41, no. 4 (2020): 105-125.

<sup>14</sup> Shradha Scott Hamid. "Regional Government Management. Jatinangor": IPDN Press, (2020).

The link between structural change and good governance is also an important concern. Sun<sup>15</sup> explained that efficient institutional structuring can increase accountability and transparency in the local government system. A clear and measurable organizational structure will strengthen accountability mechanisms, minimize abuse of authority, and ensure that public services run according to the principles of participation and effectiveness. Therefore, structural changes cannot be separated from the good governance agenda. Furthermore, research by Bauhr and Carlitz<sup>16</sup> found that structural reforms in regional bureaucracies have a significant impact on increasing transparency of public services.

However, challenges still arise in the form of resistance from some apparatus who feel that they have lost their authority due to restructuring. This shows that structural reform requires a comprehensive approach involving cultural and functional strategies, so that the apparatus can accept change more openly. Thus, it can be concluded that structural changes in local government management are strategic steps that must continue to be taken. A lean, efficient, and accountable institutional arrangement will support the realization of a modern bureaucracy that is able to provide quality public services. However, this change needs to be accompanied by strengthening resource capacity and political commitment so that transformation can run optimally.

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<sup>15</sup> Daxin Sun, Saixing Zeng, Hongquan Chen, Xiaohua Meng, and Zhizhou Jin. "Monitoring effect of transparency: How does government environmental disclosure facilitate corporate environmentalism?" *Business strategy and the environment* 28, no. 8 (2019): 1594-1607.

<sup>16</sup> Monika Bauhr and Ruth Carlitz. "When does transparency improve public services? Street-level discretion, information, and targeting." *Public Administration* 99, no. 3 (2021): 500-516.

## **4.2. Functional Changes in Local Government Management**

In addition to structural changes, bureaucratic reform at the regional level also requires functional reform. Functional changes are related to optimizing the role of local government management in managing human resources, development planning, finance, logistics, and conflict management. These functions determine the extent to which local governments are able to exercise their authority effectively and provide quality public services. According to Rusdia,<sup>17</sup> the essence of decentralization lies in the implementation of authority through regional offices, so that improving managerial functions is an absolute requirement so that regional autonomy can run well. Strengthening the human resource management function is an important concern. Tian and Christensen<sup>18</sup> emphasized that a professional and public service-oriented apparatus is the main pillar in realizing a competitive bureaucracy.

However, the reality is that many regions still face limitations in the quality and quantity of apparatus, so that it has an impact on low service performance. This condition is exacerbated by the practice of employee placement that is not always in accordance with their expertise, causing a mismatch between organizational functions and individual performance. The management function of development planning is also a crucial aspect in functional reform. Glyptis et al.<sup>19</sup> explained that

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<sup>17</sup> Ujud Rusdia. "Local Government Management Towards a New Indonesia." *JISIPOL | Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 3, no. 3 (2019): 32-42.

<sup>18</sup> Xiaolong Tian and Tom Christensen. "Myths, instrumental reality, or cultural change? Modern service-oriented government reforms in China." *International Public Management Journal* 24, no. 2 (2021): 269-286.

<sup>19</sup> Loukas Glyptis, Michael Christofi, Demetris Vrontis, Manlio Del Giudice, Salomi Dimitriou, and Panayiota Michael. "E-Government implementation challenges in small countries: The project manager's perspective." *Technological Forecasting and social change* 152 (2020): 119880.

although community participation mechanisms such as Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang) have been implemented, their implementation is often not optimal. Planning is often out of sync with the regional strategic document (RPJMD), so the resulting programs are less relevant to the real needs of the community. This shows the importance of cross-sector coordination and consistency between regional visions and development programs. Regional financial management also needs to be considered.

Transparency and accountability in the management of the public budget are an important part of good governance. Purwanti<sup>20</sup> emphasized that the success of decentralization is not only determined by the availability of the budget, but also the ability of the regions to manage local original revenues effectively. However, many regions still face fiscal limitations, so development programs run on a strict priority scale. In addition, the conflict management function is an important aspect that is often overlooked. Bauhr and Carlitz<sup>21</sup> found that bureaucratic reform that is not accompanied by good conflict management can cause resistance from the apparatus and the public. Internal conflicts within organizations as well as between the government and the community can weaken the effectiveness of public services.

Therefore, the conflict management function must be strengthened through a deliberative, participatory, and family-based approach that has long been a local wisdom in Indonesia. Functional changes in local government management play an

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<sup>20</sup> Ari Purwanti. "Implementation of Good Governance in Local Government Systems in Indonesia." *Journal of Governance* 7, no. 2 (2022): 482-490.

<sup>21</sup> Monika Bauhr and Ruth Carlitz. "When does transparency improve public services? Street-level discretion, information, and targeting." *Public Administration* 99, no. 3 (2021): 500-516.

important role in increasing the effectiveness of regional autonomy. A well-run management function will strengthen institutional capacity, improve the quality of public services, and strengthen public trust in local governments. However, the success of functional change is highly dependent on the support of quality human resources, consistent planning, transparent financial management, and the government's ability to manage conflicts constructively.

### **4.3. Cultural Change in Local Government Management**

Cultural change in local government management is an aspect that is no less important than structural and functional changes. Bureaucratic reform is not only concerned with organizational structuring and function optimization, but also touches on the realm of values, norms, and the mindset of the apparatus. The failure of many reform programs is often not due to weak structural design, but rather to the inherent cultural resistance of the bureaucracy. According to Madubun,<sup>22</sup> cultural change must begin with the renewal of the vision and mission of the local government initiated by the regional head, as well as supported by the commitment of the apparatus as implementers. One of the biggest challenges is to abandon old habits that are no longer relevant to the demands of modern society. Afrijal et al.<sup>23</sup> emphasized that the reinventing government approach will not succeed if the apparatus is still trapped in a slow and hierarchical administrative work pattern.

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<sup>22</sup> Jusuf Madubun. "Public services in island sub-districts: Towards geography-based governance." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 83, no. 3 (2024): 308-327.

<sup>23</sup> Afrijal Afrijal, Herizal Herizal, Fabri Yanza, Helmi Helmi, Nurul Kamaly, and Bustami Usman. "Realization Of Competitive Government Bureaucracy Through The Reinventing Government Approach." *Journal of Social Politics and Governance (JSPG)* 6, no. 1 (2024): 1-12.

Therefore, a bureaucratic cultural transformation is needed that emphasizes customer orientation, innovation, and the courage to take the initiative. This cultural change requires the apparatus to be more adaptive, responsive, and results-oriented. Hamid<sup>24</sup> stated that the biggest obstacle in cultural reform is the tendency of the bureaucracy to maintain the status quo. This can be seen from the placement of apparatus that is not in accordance with their expertise, inefficient work practices, and lack of awareness of the importance of public services. Cultural changes in the bureaucracy must be directed at the formation of the values of integrity, professionalism, and the spirit of public entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Tavares and da Cruz<sup>25</sup> highlights the importance of building a culture of transparency and accountability in local government. An organizational culture that emphasizes public information disclosure will strengthen public participation and increase trust in the government.

Thus, cultural change does not only concern the internal aspects of the bureaucracy, but also builds a more harmonious relationship between local governments and their citizens. Androniceanu<sup>26</sup> added that changes in organizational culture in the bureaucracy can strengthen the transparency of public services. Cultural reform encourages the apparatus to abandon convoluted bureaucratic practices, while opening up a wider space for participation for the community.

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<sup>24</sup> Shraddha Scott Hamid. "Regional Government Management. Jatinangor": IPDN Press, (2020).

<sup>25</sup> António F. Tavares and Nuno F. da Cruz. "Explaining the transparency of local government websites through a political market framework." *Government Information Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2020): 101249.

<sup>26</sup> Armenia Androniceanu. "Transparency in public administration as a challenge for a good democratic governance." *Revista» Administratie si Management Public «(RAMP)* 36 (2021): 149-164.

However, the study also found that cultural change takes a long time because it touches on fundamental aspects of human behavior.

Therefore, the right strategies such as breaking habits, touching hearts, and winning minds need to be adopted to ensure that cultural change can be accepted by the apparatus and society. Thus, cultural changes in local government management serve as the moral and ethical foundation of the overall bureaucratic reform agenda. A work culture oriented towards integrity, transparency, and public service will complement structural and functional reforms. Without cultural change, bureaucratic reform will only become an administrative formality without producing a real impact on society.

## **5. Discussion**

The results of the study show that the reform of local government management through the Reinventing Government approach has produced a number of achievements, but at the same time faces various significant obstacles. From a structural aspect, institutional reforms have been directed to create a leaner and more efficient organization. However, practice on the ground shows that restructuring has not completely eliminated overlapping authority and uneven workloads. This indicates that structural transformation must be accompanied by increasing institutional capacity to be better able to respond to the dynamics of local government.

From the functional side, strengthening human resource management, development planning, and financial management is the key to the success of

regional autonomy. Although there have been efforts to improve the participation mechanism through the Musrenbang forum, many development programs are still not aligned with strategic planning documents. In addition, the limitation of the quality and quantity of apparatus is a real obstacle that slows down the realization of bureaucratic reform. As emphasized by Rusdia,<sup>27</sup> the core of decentralization lies in the implementation of authority by regional offices, so that the quality of management of government functions must be really improved so that it is not only a formality.

The cultural aspect shows that bureaucratic reform cannot be separated from changes in the mindset and values of the apparatus. A bureaucratic culture that is sluggish, hierarchical, and tends to maintain the status quo is often a major obstacle to the implementation of the new paradigm. Tian and Christensen<sup>28</sup> emphasized that reinventing government can only be effective if it is accompanied by a change in organizational culture, where the apparatus begins to be customer-oriented, transparent, and innovative. This cultural change requires a long-term strategy, as it touches on fundamental aspects of organizational and individual behavior.

Furthermore, the application of the principle of good governance requires integration between structural, functional, and cultural reforms. Transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and community participation can only be realized if

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<sup>27</sup> Ujud Rusdia. "Local Government Management Towards a New Indonesia." *JISIPOL | Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 3, no. 3 (2019): 32-42.

<sup>28</sup> Xiaolong Tian and Tom Christensen. "Myths, instrumental reality, or cultural change? Modern service-oriented government reforms in China." *International Public Management Journal* 24, no. 2 (2021): 269-286.

these three aspects go hand in hand. Purwanti<sup>29</sup> shows that the success of regional autonomy is not only measured by how much authority is given, but also by the extent to which local governments are able to implement the principles of good governance. This emphasizes that local government management reform is a multidimensional process that requires synergy between institutional changes, optimization of management functions, and bureaucratic cultural transformation.

In addition, the discussion on barriers also shows that fiscal, infrastructure, and human resource constraints are a classic problem that keeps receiving. Recent studies have even shown that although there are public service innovations in a number of regions, the impact is still limited because it is not supported by adequate structural and cultural capacity. Thus, the bureaucratic reform strategy must consider the sustainability aspect, where local governments not only focus on institutional restructuring, but also on developing the capacity of the apparatus and forming a progressive organizational culture. This discussion emphasized that the implementation of Reinventing Government at the regional level requires a holistic approach. Bureaucratic reform cannot be achieved only by changing the formal structure, but must also touch the managerial function and work culture pattern of the apparatus. With this synergy, local governments are expected to be able to realize efficient, responsive, and community-oriented governance.

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<sup>29</sup> Ari Purwanti. "Implementation of Good Governance in Local Government Systems in Indonesia." *Journal of Governance* 7, no. 2 (2022): 482-490.

## 6. Conclusion

The reform of local government management is an urgent need in order to realize effective, efficient, and democratic governance. The results of the study show that structural, functional, and cultural changes are the three main pillars that are interrelated in the process of regional bureaucratic reform. Structural change emphasizes the importance of an institutional arrangement that is lean, clear, and free from overlapping authority. Functional changes highlight the optimization of human resource management functions, development planning, financial management, and transparent and accountable conflict management. Meanwhile, cultural change emphasizes the transformation of the value and work culture of the apparatus to be more responsive, innovative, and oriented towards public services.

Despite a number of positive achievements, the implementation of the Reinventing Government paradigm at the regional level still faces major challenges in the form of limited human resources, fiscal limitations, and bureaucratic cultural resistance. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is needed that not only focuses on organizational restructuring, but also on increasing the capacity of the apparatus and establishing a progressive bureaucratic culture. Thus, the renewal of local government management can be a driving force for the realization of a more transparent, accountable, and sustainable local government.

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