

Integrating Islamic Political Ethics as a Foundation for Bureaucratic Reform: A Narrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Political development and bureaucratic reform are two interrelated strategic agendas in the effort to realize democratic, accountable, and public interest-oriented governance. This article aims to examine political development as a conceptual framework for bureaucratic reform through a review of the latest literature. This research uses a qualitative approach with library research methods and a narrative literature review design enriched with thematic analysis. Data were obtained from scientific books, reputable national and international journal articles, and relevant policy documents from the past five years. The results of the study indicate that political development is understood as a process of institutionalizing democratic values, the rule of law, public participation, and political accountability, which play a crucial role in shaping a professional and neutral bureaucracy. The literature also reveals the development of bureaucratic reform paradigms, ranging from New Public Management, New Public Governance, to Public Value Governance, which emphasizes that bureaucratic reform cannot be separated from the political context and the quality of democracy. Further analysis shows a reciprocal relationship between political development and bureaucratic reform, where both can either strengthen or weaken each other. However, this study also identified a research gap in the form of a lack of integrative conceptual models that operationally link political development to bureaucratic reform, particularly in developing countries. The findings suggest that Islamic political ethics—centered on the principle of Maslahah (public interest) and the accountability of leaders to both God and society—provide a robust framework for creating a professional, transparent, and service-oriented bureaucracy. This study concludes that integrating these transcendental values into modern administrative systems can strengthen the moral integrity of bureaucrats and ensure more sustainable institutional transformations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Political development and bureaucratic reform are two concepts frequently discussed in public administration and political science studies because they are closely related to efforts to improve the quality of government and public services. Bureaucratic reform is defined as a systemic transformation of the structure, processes, and culture of the bureaucracy to make it more effective, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the community, and free from the practices of corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN), which undermine the legitimacy of government. In the context of a developing country like Indonesia, bureaucratic reform has become a strategic agenda to address the demands of good governance in a post-New Order democratic government system. Contemporary studies show that without a mature political foundation for development in the form of deeper democratization, consistent rule of law, and progressive state-society relations, administrative change alone is insufficient to guarantee the success of bureaucratic reform. This positions political development as a crucial conceptual framework that not only underpins administrative reform but also determines its direction and impact on government practice (Nasura, n.d.).

In recent literature reviews, the dynamics of the relationship between political development and bureaucratic reform have received increasing attention due to their interconnectedness in realizing democratic and accountable governance. Political development not only describes the political process of value and institutional transition but also encompasses the evolution of political structures that influence bureaucratic organizations in carrying out their public functions. For example, the literature shows that efforts to realize bureaucratic professionalism and meritocracy are closely related to the quality of democracy, where political rules provide space for neutrality, competence, and accountability of state officials. (Putra, 2024) study shows that bureaucratic professionalism is a foundation that supports stronger democratic practices, and that the politicization of bureaucratic positions is often a major obstacle to the consolidation of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia.

However, the main challenge identified in the literature is the gap between the normative ideals of political development and the reality of bureaucratic reform implementation on the ground. Many public administration studies highlight how political factors such as the influence of political elites, political patronage, and dominant political power influence the direction and intensity of bureaucratic reform. A literature analysis by (Hidayat, 2023) shows that although bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has resulted in several substantial changes in governance, political factors such as political intervention and policy resistance remain significant obstacles.

Furthermore, several systematic literature reviews have identified that bureaucratic reform becomes less effective when it is not aligned with strong and consistent political development mechanisms. For example, (Nugroho, 2024) systematic literature review noted that structural barriers such as strong organizational culture and internal resistance are key factors in the failure of bureaucratic reform in various developing country contexts. This research also confirms that without the support of political legitimacy and the space for civil society to monitor and evaluate the reform process, bureaucracies tend to revert to old, inefficient and unaccountable practices.

Current bureaucratic reform initiatives in many Muslim-majority contexts predominantly rely on technocratic and neoliberal frameworks imported from Western administrative models. While these reforms succeed in streamlining digital processes and organizational structures, they often fail to address deep-seated systemic issues such as corruption, nepotism, and the erosion of public trust (Biygautane, M., & Kiernan, 2023). This failure stems from a "normative vacuum" where administrative reforms are treated as purely mechanical exercises, detached from the socio-religious values and moral aspirations of the stakeholders. Consequently, there is a profound disconnection between secular administrative procedures and the ethical consciousness of the bureaucrats tasked with implementing them.

This research addresses the critical need to bridge this gap by exploring Islamic political ethics specifically the principles of amanah (trustworthiness), 'adalah (justice), and maslahah (public interest) as a foundational pillar for governance (Zulkifli, N., & Rosli, 2023). Existing literature frequently overlooks how transcendental values can serve as a potent internal motivation for integrity and accountability, choosing instead to focus on external surveillance mechanisms. By conducting a narrative literature review, this study seeks to synthesize a new conceptual framework that integrates these Islamic ethical imperatives into modern bureaucratic reform, providing a culturally resonant and morally grounded approach to achieving good governance.

A theoretically integrated literature study would provide a deeper understanding of how political values and democratic mechanisms influence the process, implementation, and final outcomes of bureaucratic reform. This unified framework for political development and bureaucratic reform would enrich academic dialogue and provide a valuable reference for policymakers in designing more effective and contextualized reform strategies (Hidayat, 2023).

Against this backdrop, this study aims to fill this conceptual gap by offering a comprehensive literature review, mapping how political development can serve as a primary conceptual framework for bureaucratic reform. This approach goes beyond merely addressing administrative reform in a fragmented manner but also understands the phenomenon of reform as a political process involving the interaction of values, power, and institutions. This type of analysis is important to expand on because it can provide new directions for efforts to strengthen governability in developing countries, where political dynamics and government administration often interact in complex ways (Putra, 2024).

Modern bureaucratic reform is predominantly driven by Western, technocratic paradigms that heavily emphasize procedural efficiency, structural leanings, and digital transformation. While these approaches improve systemic output, they frequently fail to address the deeply rooted moral and behavioral crises within public administration, such as corruption, nepotism, and a lack of public trust. This is because contemporary reforms often separate administrative procedures from intrinsic moral values. In many Muslim-majority societies, imposing purely secular and procedural models creates a disconnect between the state's apparatus and the community's cultural and spiritual ethos (Amin, 2020). Therefore, there is an urgent need to re-evaluate bureaucratic reform not merely as a mechanical or structural adjustment, but as a value-driven transformation anchored in a solid ethical foundation.

Literature on bureaucratic reform extensively discusses structural agility, digital governance, and Weberian rationalization, this study offers a distinct contribution by bridging the gap between modern public administration and classical Islamic political thought (*Siyasah Syar'iyah*) (Safitri, 2022). The novelty of this paper lies in its comprehensive synthesis of how transcendental values such as Amanah (divine trust), Maslahah (public welfare), and 'Adalah (justice) can be operationalized as concrete, non-secular ethical benchmarks for modern civil service. Unlike previous studies that treat Islamic administration as a purely historical or theoretical concept, this literature review presents a fresh paradigm: viewing Islamic political ethics as a functional, foundational framework to solve contemporary behavioral pathologies in modern bureaucracy.

The novelty of this research lies in its departure from viewing Islamic values merely as cultural descriptors; instead, it utilizes them as a rigorous conceptual framework to redefine the foundational pillars of bureaucracy. While conventional literature focuses on external compliance and structural restructuring, this study explores how transcendental ethical imperatives can provide a more sustainable internal motivation for accountability and public service excellence. Through a narrative literature review, this research seeks to bridge the gap between secular professionalism and spiritual-ethical consciousness, offering a decolonial alternative that rehabilitates the "moral soul" of the bureaucracy in alignment with the goals of good governance (Tlaiss, H. A., & McAdam, 2021).

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a library research approach. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research is directed at exploring, reviewing, and critically analyzing

concepts, theories, and previous research findings related to political development and bureaucratic reform (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). The library study allows researchers to deeply examine the development of scientific thought and the conceptual dynamics emerging in academic literature without directly collecting field data.

The research design used is a narrative literature review with elements of thematic analysis. This narrative literature review was chosen to provide a comprehensive and reflective analysis of various scientific perspectives. In this context, the literature was analyzed to: 1) Identify concepts and definitions of political development; 2) Examine paradigms and models of bureaucratic reform; 3) Examine the conceptual link between political development and bureaucratic reform; and 4) Map research gaps in the current literature.

This research employs a narrative literature review methodology, prioritizing a qualitative synthesis over a systematic approach to accommodate the profound philosophical and interdisciplinary complexities inherent in both Islamic political thought and public administration. Unlike a systematic review which often restricts its scope to empirical data and rigid inclusion criteria the narrative approach provides the necessary flexibility to critically integrate classical Islamic texts with contemporary governance theories, fostering a more nuanced "intellectual storytelling." This methodological choice is strategically aligned with the study's objective to position Islamic ethics not merely as a data point, but as a robust analytical lens, allowing for a comprehensive re-evaluation of bureaucratic reform that transcends the limitations of Western technocratic paradigms.

The data in this study are secondary data, obtained from various relevant and credible scientific sources. Data sources include: 1) Scientific books discussing political development, democratization, good governance, and bureaucratic reform; 2) Articles from reputable national and international journals (SINTA, Scopus, and other indexed journals); 3) Relevant scientific proceedings and academic reports; and 4) Policy documents and institutional reports supporting the conceptual analysis.

The data collection technique was carried out through a systematic literature search, with the following stages: 1) Identification of keywords, such as political development, bureaucratic reform, good governance, democracy, and public administration; 2) Searching scientific databases, including Google Scholar, Garuda, SINTA, DOAJ, and Scopus; 3) Selection of literature based on the criteria of topic relevance, academic quality, and year of publication; 4) Classification of literature based on the theme and focus of the study; and 5) Recording of bibliographic data to facilitate citation and compilation of bibliographies.

Table Research Replication Framework

RESEARCH STAGE	REPLICATION PROCEDURE	INSTRUMENT / REFERENCE
SEARCH STRATEGY	Utilize standardized keywords: " <i>Islamic Ethics</i> ", " <i>Bureaucratic Reform</i> ", " <i>Public Administration</i> ", and " <i>Administrative Ethics</i> " across global databases.	Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR.
INCLUSION CRITERIA	Prioritize literature from the last 5–10 years for contemporary trends and primary classical texts for foundational value derivation.	(Snyder, 2019)
ANALYTICAL LENS	Apply the tripartite ethical framework— <i>Amanah</i> (Divine Trust), <i>Adalah</i> (Justice), and <i>Maslahah</i> (Public Interest)—as the primary evaluative filter.	(Amanullah, M., & Al-Mubarak, 2022)
DATA SYNTHESIS	Conduct a Thematic Analysis to bridge the conceptual gap between Islamic ethical imperatives and identified systemic bureaucratic failures.	(Braun, V., & Clarke, 2021)

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Concept and Definition of Political Development in Contemporary Literature

Contemporary literature studies indicate that political development is understood as a process of transforming the political system aimed at increasing the state's capacity to manage power democratically, legitimately, and accountably. In the literature of the past five years, political development is no longer defined narrowly as an effort to create political stability or orderly rule, but rather as a sustainable process of institutionalizing democratic values. This process includes strengthening the rule of law, increasing public participation, protecting civil rights, and developing political accountability mechanisms in governance (Diamond, 2020). Thus, political development is positioned as a dynamic process that touches not only the procedural dimensions of democracy but also the substantive quality of the relationship between the state and its citizens.

Table 2: Operationalization of Islamic Political Ethics in Bureaucratic Reform

ISLAMIC ETHICAL CONCEPT	ANALYTICAL DIMENSION	OPERATIONAL INDICATORS (CIVIL SERVANTS & INSTITUTIONS)	BUREAUCRATIC REFORM OBJECTIVE
AMANAHAH (DIVINE TRUST)	Moral Integrity & Accountability	Adherence to strict ethical codes and anti-corruption standards. Internalization of self-oversight (<i>Muraqabah</i>). Transparency in performance reporting and data integrity.	Strengthening Integrity & Combatting Corruption
'ADALAH (JUSTICE & EQUITY)	Distributive & Procedural Fairness	Equitable access to public services regardless of status. Merit-based recruitment and promotion (Anti-Nepotism). Inclusive policies for vulnerable or marginalized groups.	Social Equity & Service Standardization
MASLAHAH (PUBLIC INTEREST)	Public Service Orientation	Effectiveness of programs in solving critical societal issues. Administrative flexibility for the urgent welfare of citizens. Service innovations focused on collective social value.	Effectiveness & Policy Impact
SHURA (CONSULTATION)	Participation & Deliberation	Citizen engagement in decision-making processes.	Accountability & Democratization

Robust feedback loops
and grievance redress
mechanisms.
Collaborative and non-
authoritarian
organizational culture.

Explain that these indicators serve as the primary criteria during your literature review. For example, when analyzing "Digital Governance" literature, you will use the Amanah indicator to evaluate whether digital systems increase transparency or merely hide old corrupt practices. From this perspective, political development encompasses the strengthening of formal political institutions such as parliament, political parties, and the judicial system, as well as representation mechanisms that ensure fair and inclusive representation of public interests. The literature also emphasizes the importance of responsive and dialogical state-society relations as a key indicator of successful political development. This relationship is reflected in the openness of the policy process, civil society participation, and the state's ability to incorporate public aspirations into the decision-making process. Therefore, political development is not solely oriented toward power structures but also toward the processes of political interaction that foster public trust in state institutions.

Furthermore, several studies place political development as a primary prerequisite for the realization of effective governance (governable state). Within this framework, political development serves to improve the quality of public decision-making processes by institutionalizing transparent and accountable procedures, while also reducing the dominance of personal power, which often leads to irregularities in governance. (Fukuyama, 2022) asserts that mature political development enables the establishment of a healthy system of checks and balances between political institutions and the bureaucracy, thereby preventing the concentration of power and strengthening institutional accountability. Thus, political development has a normative dimension related to democratic values and principles, as well as a structural dimension that directly influences the capacity of public administration to carry out service and regulatory functions professionally.

In the context of developing countries, including Indonesia, political development is often associated with efforts to consolidate democracy after a political transition. The literature shows that the transition to democracy does not automatically result in effective governance and a professional bureaucracy. Conversely, weak political development often results in fragile bureaucratic institutions, high politicization of public office, and low accountability of state officials. (Mietzner, 2020) This situation suggests that procedural democracy, unaccompanied by strong political development, has the potential to perpetuate practices of patronage and clientelism within the bureaucracy.

Therefore, contemporary literature emphasizes that political development cannot be separated from the agenda of state institutional reform, particularly bureaucratic reform. Political development is not merely an electoral political agenda or a matter of power competition, but also serves as a normative foundation for the formation of a professional, neutral, and public-interest-oriented bureaucracy. In other words, the quality of political development determines the extent to which the bureaucracy can fulfill its role as an instrument of the state that serves citizens fairly and accountably. This understanding positions political development as a key conceptual framework in analyzing the success or failure of bureaucratic reform in developing countries.

2. Paradigms and Models of Bureaucratic Reform in Contemporary Literature

A literature review shows that bureaucratic reform does not develop linearly, but rather through several key paradigms reflecting changing perspectives on the role of the state, bureaucracy, and the relationship between government and society. One of the most influential paradigms is New Public Management (NPM), which emphasizes efficiency, effectiveness, performance measurement, and the adoption of market mechanisms in public sector management. This paradigm encourages results-

oriented management, competition, and the use of private sector managerial principles to improve public service performance. However, contemporary literature assesses that NPM has fundamental limitations because it tends to reduce bureaucracy to a technocratic entity and ignores the political dimension, public values, and the democratic context in which it operates (Hood & Dixon, 2021).

Criticism of NPM has primarily focused on its tendency to overemphasize economic efficiency and managerial rationality, potentially neglecting aspects of legitimacy, social justice, and democratic accountability. In many cases, the implementation of NPM has led to organizational fragmentation, weak inter-agency coordination, and reduced public control over service delivery. These conditions have encouraged the development of alternative paradigms that are more sensitive to the complexities of modern governance, particularly in the context of a pluralistic and interconnected democratic society.

In response to these limitations, the literature then introduced New Public Governance (NPG) as a paradigm that emphasizes collaboration, policy networks, and the involvement of non-state actors in the governance process. NPG views the bureaucracy no longer as a single, dominant actor, but rather as part of a governance ecosystem involving the private sector, civil society, and local communities. In this paradigm, bureaucratic reform is directed at strengthening coordination capacity, dialogue between actors, and the bureaucracy's ability to facilitate cross-sector cooperation. The literature emphasizes that NPG is more relevant to addressing complex public policy challenges (wicked problems), which cannot be resolved through a hierarchical approach alone.

Further developments in bureaucratic reform studies indicate a shift toward the Public Value Governance (PVG) paradigm. This paradigm views the bureaucracy not merely as a policy implementer or network coordinator, but as a strategic actor in creating public value. (Bryson et al., 2022) emphasize that public value is generated not only through service efficiency but also through a legitimate, participatory, and common-interest-oriented political process. Within this framework, the success of bureaucratic reform is measured by the extent to which the bureaucracy is able to build public trust, maintain democratic legitimacy, and balance diverse interests within society. This paradigm reinforces the argument that bureaucratic reform cannot be separated from the context of political development and the quality of democracy.

In the context of Indonesia and other developing countries, bureaucratic reform generally adopts a good governance-based administrative reform model. This model emphasizes institutional restructuring, merit-based human resource management reform, digitalization of public services, and strengthening performance accountability and internal oversight systems. Dwiyanto (2021) emphasized that bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is aimed at building a professional, transparent, and service-oriented bureaucracy. Similarly, (Prasojo & Kurniawan, 2023) highlighted the importance of digital transformation and bureaucratic innovation as part of the modern administrative reform agenda.

However, the literature also consistently notes that the implementation of various bureaucratic reform models often faces serious political obstacles. Political elite intervention in filling positions, patronage practices, and weak long-term political commitment are key inhibiting factors that cause bureaucratic reform to be partial and inconsistent. This situation demonstrates that although bureaucratic reform paradigms and models continue to develop conceptually, their success is highly dependent on a political development context that supports professionalism, accountability, and bureaucratic neutrality. Therefore, contemporary literature increasingly emphasizes the need to place bureaucratic reform within a broader political development framework so that administrative change does not stop at the procedural level but instead produces sustainable institutional transformation.

3. Conceptual Linkages between Political Development and Bureaucratic Reform

The literature analysis reveals a close, mutually reinforcing, and reciprocal conceptual relationship between political development and bureaucratic reform. Political development provides the normative and institutional framework that is a prerequisite for the sustainability of bureaucratic reform. Consolidated democracy, strong rule of law, and effective public participation create a political

environment conducive to the growth of a professional, neutral, and accountable bureaucracy. Within this framework, the bureaucracy functions not only as an administrative instrument of the state but also as a public institution politically accountable to citizens (Fukuyama, 2022).

Normatively, political development provides a valuable foundation for bureaucratic reform through the institutionalization of the principles of democracy, accountability, and justice. Institutionally, political development strengthens the checks and balances mechanism between political actors and the bureaucracy, thereby limiting the dominance of personal power and excessive political intervention. The literature confirms that when the political system is able to guarantee legal certainty and public oversight mechanisms operate effectively, the bureaucracy tends to be more oriented towards meritocracy and performance, rather than political loyalty. Thus, political development serves as a framework that allows bureaucratic reform to progress beyond procedural changes and develop into sustainable institutional transformation.

Conversely, the literature also shows that an unreformed bureaucracy has the potential to hinder political development itself. A corrupt, unresponsive, and politicized bureaucracy can weaken democratic legitimacy and erode public trust in political institutions. In this context, the failure of bureaucratic reform often results in poor quality public services, increased inequality in access to services, and negative public perceptions of the state and the democratic process (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2022). This situation demonstrates that a dysfunctional bureaucracy is not only an administrative problem but also a political one that can hinder democratic consolidation.

This reciprocal relationship between political development and bureaucratic reform demonstrates that the two form a mutually reinforcing relationship. Strong political development encourages effective bureaucratic reform, while a professional and accountable bureaucracy, in turn, strengthens the legitimacy of the political system and increases public trust. From this perspective, bureaucratic reform cannot be positioned as a standalone sectoral agenda, but rather as an integral part of the broader political development process. The success or failure of one will directly impact the outcomes of the other.

Furthermore, political development acts as an enabling condition for bureaucratic reform by creating a political climate that supports meritocracy, transparency, and accountability. A healthy, competitive political environment, accompanied by consistent law enforcement, provides incentives for the bureaucracy to operate professionally and free from short-term political pressures. Conversely, without adequate political development support, bureaucratic reform tends to be trapped in an administrative-procedural approach that emphasizes formal compliance with regulations but fails to address the root of structural problems such as bureaucratic politicization, patron-client practices, and a non-performance-oriented organizational culture (Mujahidin & Kusuma, 2025).

These findings strengthen the argument that bureaucratic reform must be understood as a political-administrative process, not simply a technocratic agenda. Bureaucratic reform always takes place within the context of complex power relations, political interests, and democratic dynamics. Therefore, reform efforts that ignore the political development dimension risk producing shallow, symbolic, and unsustainable changes. Conversely, by placing political development as the primary conceptual framework, bureaucratic reform has a greater chance of producing a professional, democratic, and public-interest-oriented bureaucracy.

Discussion

The literature review identified several key research gaps that demonstrate the need for a more integrative conceptual approach to examining bureaucratic reform and political development. The first gap lies in the dominant tendency of bureaucratic reform studies to focus on technical-administrative aspects. Most research focuses on issues such as performance measurement, organizational efficiency, digitalization of public services (Azis, 2018), and administrative innovation, without explicitly linking them to political development as a broader conceptual framework. This approach tends to view bureaucratic reform as a managerial and technocratic issue, thus ignoring the political context that influences the direction, sustainability, and outcomes of the reform process itself (Dwiyanto, 2021).

Consequently, many studies of bureaucratic reform fail to explain why well-designed administrative reform efforts often fail to produce substantive changes in government practices. When political dimensions such as power relations, elite interests, and the quality of democracy are not integrated into the analysis, bureaucratic reform risks being reduced to mere formal compliance with new regulations and procedures. This gap highlights the need for an approach that not only measures bureaucratic performance but also understands the political conditions that enable or hinder sustainable bureaucratic reform (Hood & Dixon, 2021).

The second gap relates to the direction of political development research, which tends to discuss democratization and political institutions at the macro level, such as electoral systems, political parties, and power dynamics between state institutions (Prakosa, 2022). While these studies provide important insights into the quality of democracy and political governance, the literature has relatively little exploration of the concrete implications of political development for the bureaucracy, a key state institution. As a result, the relationship between democratic quality, political power dynamics, and bureaucratic performance has not been systematically integrated into a coherent analytical framework (Diamond, 2020).

This disconnect between the study of political development and bureaucratic reform has created a fragmented literature, with bureaucracies often treated as neutral administrative entities separate from the political arena. However, bureaucracies essentially operate in a political environment fraught with vested interests and power relations. This gap hinders a comprehensive understanding of how consolidated or, conversely, weakened democracy affects the professionalism, neutrality, and accountability of state officials.

The third identified gap is the limited literature in developing an integrative conceptual model that explains how political development can be operationally implemented as a framework for bureaucratic reform (Elvira, 2021). Most studies remain normative, emphasizing the importance of democracy, the rule of law, and good governance, without clearly formulating the relationship between these political variables and the process and outcomes of bureaucratic reform. This limitation is particularly pronounced in the context of developing countries with high political complexity, characterized by bureaucratic politicization, patronage, and weak law enforcement institutions.

Therefore, this literature review attempts to fill this gap by positioning political development as the normative, structural, and institutional foundation for sustainable and democratic bureaucratic reform. This approach asserts that political development serves not only as an external context but also as a key analytical framework influencing the design, implementation, and evaluation of bureaucratic reform. By integrating the political and administrative dimensions within a single conceptual framework, this study makes a theoretical contribution to the development of public administration and political science studies, and offers a new perspective for understanding the dynamics and success of bureaucratic reform in developing countries.

The discussion reveals that while modern bureaucratic reform emphasizes efficiency through digitalization, the Islamic political perspective introduces a 'spiritualized bureaucracy.' By synthesizing Al-Mawardi's (Al-Mawardi, 2020) concept of *Wizara* (ministry/administration) with contemporary public management, this study argues that the root of bureaucratic failure is not merely systemic but ontological. The integration of *Amanah* transforms the bureaucrat from a mere state agent into a moral guardian of *Maslahah* (public interest) (Biygautane, 2023). Consequently, reform should not only be measured by the speed of service but by the alignment of administrative outputs with ethical and justice-based standards.

From a policy perspective, this study advocates for a localized transformation of the Indonesian Civil Service (ASN) management. It recommends integrating "Ethical-Based Competencies" derived from *Amanah* and 'Adalah into the Core Values "BerAKHLAK", moving beyond its current slogans toward a deeper ontological commitment. For the implementation of *Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik* (SPBE), this research provides a safeguard to ensure that technological innovations do not exacerbate the digital divide among the Indonesian archipelago's diverse populations, but instead

promote equitable service delivery. By institutionalizing Shura as a deliberative consultation mechanism in local policymaking, Indonesia can bridge the gap between rigid central mandates and the diverse socio-religious aspirations of its regions, ultimately achieving a model of Good Governance that is both technically proficient and morally grounded.

Table 3: Critical Paradigm Comparison

PARADIGM	PRIMARY FOCUS	CRITICAL FAILURE (THE "GAP")	ISLAMIC ETHICAL INTERVENTION
NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT	Efficiency, Market Logic	Ethical thinning; focus on "the price of everything, value of nothing."	Maslahah: Realigns efficiency with collective social benefit.
NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE	Networking, Collaboration	Power imbalances; elite capture of collaborative processes.	'Adalah: Ensures equitable representation and justice for the marginalized.
DIGITAL/E-GOVERNMENT	Technological Automation	Technocratic isolation; the "digital divide" and lack of human empathy.	Amanah: Reintroduces human and divine accountability into digital systems.

This research critically evaluates the shift from Western-centric paradigms, such as New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG), toward a decolonial administrative framework tailored for the Indonesian context. While NPM and NPG have successfully introduced market efficiency and collaborative networking, they often suffer from "ethical thinning," where procedural compliance is prioritized over substantive moral integrity, leading to persistent systemic corruption and a crisis of legitimacy. By positioning Islamic Political Ethics specifically the constructs of Amanah (divine trust), 'Adalah (justice), and Maslahah (public interest) as the primary analytical lens, this study intervenes in the Indonesian Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap to bridge the normative vacuum. Based on the overall results and discussion, it can be emphasized that effective bureaucratic reform cannot be separated from mature political development. This study makes a conceptual contribution by emphasizing that political development is not merely a background or contextual variable, but rather a central analytical framework for understanding the dynamics, challenges, and successes of bureaucratic reform (Abuznaid, 2022). Thus, this research opens the door to further, more empirical and comparative studies to more deeply examine the relationship between political development and bureaucratic reform in various political and institutional contexts (M. Al-Ghazali, 2005).

The prevailing paradigm of bureaucratic reform in many Muslim-majority nations has long been dominated by Western technocratic models that prioritize instrumental efficiency and market-oriented metrics. However, these initiatives often fall into the trap of "isomorphic mimicry," where administrative structures adopt modern facades while remaining functionally hollow due to a persistent normative vacuum (I. Al-Ghazali, 2001). This research intervenes by positioning Islamic Political Ethics anchored in the pillars of Amanah (divine trust), (justice), and Maslahah (public interest) not merely as cultural descriptors, but as a rigorous analytical lens (Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, 2017). By utilizing a semi-systematic narrative review, this study critically deconstructs the failures of purely secular frameworks and argues for a decolonial turn in public administration that rehabilitates the "moral soul" of the bureaucracy.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the global discourse on Decolonizing Public Administration by demonstrating how indigenous ethical frameworks can provide more sustainable accountability mechanisms than imported neoliberal models (Ali Imron Mashadi, 2025). By expanding traditional Agency Theory to include a transcendental dimension of accountability, this study redefines

the role of the civil servant from a mere administrative agent to a moral trustee of the public. Furthermore, it reconstructs the concept of Public Value through the lens of Maslahah, shifting the measure of bureaucratic success from fiscal efficiency to the substantive achievement of social equity and collective spiritual-material wellbeing (Hasna Firdaus et al., 2025).

From a policy perspective, this study advocates for a fundamental transformation of civil service management and governance protocols. It recommends the integration of value-based indicators into the recruitment and performance evaluation of state actors, ensuring that technical competence is inseparable from ethical integrity. In the realm of digital governance, the application of 'Adalah is proposed as a safeguard to ensure that technological innovations do not exacerbate the digital divide but instead promote inclusive service delivery. Ultimately, by institutionalizing Shura (deliberative consultation), bureaucratic institutions can move beyond rigid proceduralism toward a participatory model that is deeply resonant with the socio-religious aspirations of the community, thereby achieving authentic Good Governance.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, this study concludes that political development is a fundamental conceptual framework for understanding and promoting bureaucratic reform. Political development is not only related to the process of democratization and political stability, but also encompasses the strengthening of political institutions, the rule of law, public participation, and accountable and inclusive state-society relations. The literature over the past five years demonstrates that the quality of political development significantly determines the direction, depth, and sustainability of bureaucratic reform.

This study also emphasizes that bureaucratic reform cannot be understood solely as a technocratic or administrative agenda. Modern bureaucratic reform paradigms and models, such as New Public Governance and Public Value Governance, demonstrate that the success of reform is strongly influenced by a political context that supports professionalism, meritocracy, and accountability of state officials. Without mature political development, bureaucratic reform tends to be procedural, partial, and vulnerable to politicization and patronage practices.

Furthermore, the analysis shows a reciprocal relationship between political development and bureaucratic reform. Political development creates a climate that enables effective bureaucratic reform, while a professional and accountable bureaucracy strengthens democratic legitimacy and public trust in the political system. However, the literature review also reveals research gaps, particularly the lack of integrative conceptual models that explicitly position political development as the primary foundation of bureaucratic reform, particularly in the context of a developing country like Indonesia.

Ultimately, this study concludes that for bureaucratic reform to be both sustainable and culturally resonant within Muslim-majority societies, a synthesis between modern administrative frameworks and perennial Islamic ethical values is required. This holistic approach offers a robust foundation for establishing a professional, transparent, and service-oriented bureaucracy that genuinely serves the public interest.

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