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## **The Implementation of Bureaucracy Neutrality Policy in Local Elections (A Case Study of North Sumatra)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The issue of bureaucratic neutrality is a serious problem that continues to recur in implementing local elections (Pilkada) in Indonesia. Reflecting on what happened in the 2015 and 2017 North Sumatra Simultaneous Pilkada, this study aims to revive bureaucratic and political relations. Public services. This study uses a qualitative approach with data obtained through in-depth interviews with bureaucratic apparatus in the local government, The North Sumatra Election Provincial Commission (KPUD), The North Sumatra Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), Independent Monitoring Institutions, Lecturer of Public Administration Universitas Sumatera Utara, observation and documentation. The results of this study emphasize the importance of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) to return to neutrality in increasing public trust in the bureaucracy. The results of this study emphasize the importance of ASN to return to neutrality in improving public confidence trust in the bureaucracy. This article argues for collaborative supervision conducted by various elements of government and society as an alternative strategic step to maintain the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The discourse of bureaucratic political interests towards the elite in the local elections (Pilkada) in several districts/cities leaves residues in Indonesia's democratic process. Indonesia, despite undergoing a stunning democratic transition after the fall of the Suharto regime (Chen, 2021). Pilkada, which in the findings of (Buehler, Nataatmadja, & Anugrah, 2021), succeeded in preventing the establishment of an authoritarian regime

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at the local level but still leaves a complicated problem realizing a professional bureaucracy free from political intervention. During the local head elections, polarization gave birth to fragmentation caused by interest factors at the bureaucratic level. This condition needs to be deconstructed that the quality of democracy remains maintained. This social fragmentation affects the social order and the involvement of the bureaucracy in pursuing the interests of the ruling elite in every election so that the neutrality of the bureaucracy becomes a prolonged test in carrying out its functions as a government or public service provider. Admittedly, the high intensity of interests has repelled our bureaucracy's integrity, especially in the neutrality of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN).

The reforms that have taken place in Indonesia have had a direct impact on political governance and governance, including regional management. The decentralization policy and local autonomy brought changes to the bureaucratic system of the provincial government and the political process in the regions. The direct election of regional heads is one of the consequences of political decentralization (Malik, Supriyono, & Mindarti, 2020). Apart from that, the districts were given authority and extensive powers in managing their respective regions. The political constellation in the area will increase due to fighting for the top leadership and power in the region.

For the community, the intensity of interests in local government administration, the tendency of political temperature to always increase before the election allows the tug of war of benefits as a form of preference for political elites who want to rule. Political democratization at the local level then makes the competition for political power stronger. The mobilization of kinship, ethnic, religious networks to the bureaucracy through the State Civil Apparatus was then created to win the political competition by utilizing the State Civil Apparatus network itself.

The Director-General of Regional Autonomy of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Sumarsono, said 1,527 State Civil Apparatus in Indonesia were declared non-neutral in the election. This figure is the findings of the Ministry of Home Affairs during the 2018 simultaneous regional head elections. (Ayuwuragil, 2018) Meanwhile, ahead of the simultaneous local elections as of September 2020, the issue of bureaucratic neutrality continues to grow. The Bawaslu of the Republic of Indonesia recorded 1800 violations of State Civil Apparatus neutrality. This escalation indicates that the root cause of the State Civil Apparatus neutrality problem has not yet received the proper formulation and concrete solution. In the 2020 Local Election (Pilkada) Vulnerability Index (IKP), the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus is at the top, which is 167 regencies/cities out of 270 regions. It is an issue for partiality strategic government officials in support and facilitates the participants. As part of a citizen, State Civil Apparatus also has the right to vote. In contrast to other citizens, the restrictions to show a political preference are due to neutrality. While at the time granted suffrage the, means make room for the deal not neutral. Then if they vote, when they are supporting one candidate and ignored other candidates, which means it will push them into bureaucrat's partisan.

State Civil Apparatus is not an interest-free party, but their fate should not be at stake on their political logic. The neutrality of State Civil Apparatus in practical politics is part of implementing the State Civil Apparatus function as the glue and unifier of the nation. Thus, even though State Civil Apparatus has the right to vote, it must still uphold neutrality as mandated by the State Civil Apparatus Law (no 5 of 2014 on the state civil

apparatus). Normatively, the concept of neutrality has been applied, but in practice, it is not easy to apply (Mariana, 2006). The discourse of bureaucratic neutrality in the Pilkada needs to be discussed because it will illustrate how the point of view in understanding why the bureaucracy needs to be neutral on the one hand. On the other hand, political intervention is needed, bureaucratic neutrality is essential in realizing the quality of government.

The bureaucratic life that is boarded, and dominated by political interests by the ruling elite, clearly drives the bureaucratic orientation to deviate from the ideals of the expected reform (Bratakusumah, 2017). The performance of a large bureaucracy with political content will give birth to a public service orientation that shifts towards politics, transactional and creates unhealthy competition that is not in the public interest (Ranito, 2019). It happened not only in Indonesia but in Bangladesh administrative reform failed to achieve its goals due to the dominance of bureaucratic interests over public interests due to intense political pressure (Huque & Ferdous, 2019). The same thing happened in Andhra Pradesh, India, when the bureaucracy from the center to the regions (clientelism) was pressured by an alliance of politicians and parties to politicize the flagship program of the Janmabhoomi government for political gain (Konkipudi & Jacob, 2017). It is in line with the finding that the spirit of clientelism makes bureaucracy difficult for professionals (Cruz & Keefer, 2015). The ideal portrait occurs in Denmark when the bureaucracy can balance itself from political influence to work very rationally and professionally for the public interest (Konkipudi & Jacob, 2017).

Judging from the experience of the elections held in North Sumatra in 2015, almost all incumbents mobilized State Civil Apparatus in practical politics. At least Bawaslu noted indications of abuse of authority by State Civil Apparatus in the form of Local Government Budget (APBD) funds to procure banners for the candidate for the regent of Incumbent. The distribution of nine basic necessities containing cash accompanied by stickers for regional head candidates by individual sub-district heads. The intervention of incumbent regional head candidates towards the district head ahead of the elections involves teaching higher education teachers to promote regional head candidates in lecturing activities (Prakoso, 2006).

The State Civil Apparatus phenomenon involved in practical politics ethically is undoubtedly against the law. Because according to Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus Article 9, paragraph 1 states, "Civil Apparatus must be free from the influence and intervention of all groups and political parties." It means that the State Civil Apparatus position must not take sides and limit themselves from political justification and be free from political intervention. State Civil Apparatus must be neutral because, if not, it can become a stumbling block for the implementation of public services.

The idea of Weberian bureaucracy illustrates that, on the one hand, bureaucrats are considered to have to be neutral so that they can act rationally (Brannigan & Perry, 2016; Jensen, 2018; Khan, 2020; Kovač, 2021; Selgert, 2014; Gao, Baik, & Arkoudis, 2015; Duvanova, 2017). Bureaucrats must work professionally and be fully responsible for the duties and responsibilities that become their obligations (Lee & Park, 2020; Balla, 2015). On the other hand, a critical perspective places the bureaucracy as an instrument of power, where office intervention raises the politicization of bureaucracy in government.

Interventions on civil servants' positions occur at the Regional Organization (OPD) bureaucratic levels, such as the Regional Secretariat, Agencies, Regional Inspectorates, Sub-districts, and city-level (*Kelurahan*). The utilization of structural positions in the bureaucracy and public facilities for the interests in the elections provides space for the SKPD to intervene in the abuse of authority. The politicization of the bureaucracy caused some bureaucratic elements (ASN) to declare the political preferences that are inevitable openly. This perspective considers that there will never be a neutral bureaucracy. As the originator of the concepts of "ideal bureaucracy" and "bureaucratic rationality," even Max Weber acknowledged the bureaucracy's neutrality see Max Weber, 1947; 1968. The bureaucracy should carry out its main tasks to implement laws and regulations or implement public policies as a form of governance. However, the development of the organization's environment will inevitably affect every organization, including the bureaucracy in government institutions. The most critical response to this change is the need to inject innovation into the state civil apparatus's mindset and action patterns. Innovation allows each organization to be able to adapt and win whatever changes occur.

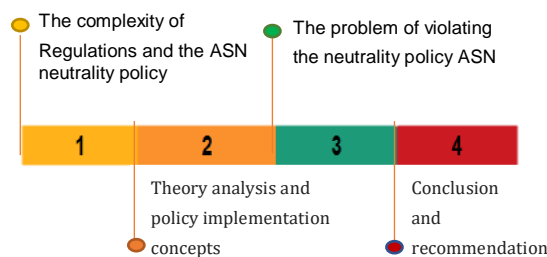
Bureaucracy is an essential instrument in a country whose presence is inevitable because bureaucracy is a logical consequence of accepting the hypothesis that the state has a mission to provide services to the community. The bureaucracy stipulated in Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus previously has been described in the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation No. 53 regarding Discipline of Civil Servants of the Republic of Indonesia concerning Discipline of the 2010 Civil Servants. It contained the ability of State Civil Apparatus to comply with obligations and avoid restrictions prohibited by regulations. The legislation means that State Civil Apparatus must maintain its neutrality as a government administration institution, especially not being involved in practical politics, including not providing direct political support to candidates who participate in elections. It is also contained in Government Regulation No. 42 of 2004 concerning the Development of the Soul Corps and Code of Ethics for Civil Servants, which explained that civil servants should uphold one of the fundamental values is professionalism, neutrality, and high morals.

The idea of the Weberian bureaucracy model of bureaucratic neutrality considers the bureaucracy's position as executors of public policies made by political elites as policymakers. Bureaucracy must be neutral because bureaucracy is a public institution built and financed by public money to serve all levels of society. Therefore the bureaucratic apparatus must be free from political parties or specific groups (Setiyono, 2012). Bureaucratic neutrality is needed to ensure the interests of the state and the public are oriented to the service. Without being bound by the political power that governs, the bureaucracy must continue to provide excellent service to the people. This reason is sufficient to emphasize that the bureaucracy must not be involved in practical politics because it would damage the bureaucracy's mission.

Various products and policy regulations related to bureaucratic neutrality in elections continue to be issued by various government institutions and institutions such as Bawaslu, State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN), and Ministry of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform (KemenPAN- RB) as a form of supervision the state apparatus in maintaining its neutrality. However, leading the policy is not yet fully

optimal, still finding various cases of violation of neutrality State Civil Apparatus. The local elections (Pilkada) is a mandate for reform that should be carried out with integrity.

The involvement of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in practical politics with various modes will undoubtedly harm the integrity of democracy that might occur in the upcoming 2020 elections, like the phenomena that co-occurred in the 2015 and 2017 elections. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the implementation process that is not optimally ensured the neutrality policy of State Civil Apparatus. Thus, the purpose of implementation in the scope of public policy knowledge calls for a policy delivery system to achieve the desired goals and objectives.



**Figure 1.** Discuss research thinking

Several studies have discussed the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus in elections in Indonesia. (Sudrajat, 2015) found that in the 2015 local elections, there were general cases of politicization of the bureaucracy. (Wahyuni, 2019) stated that by using Edwards III theory about bureaucratic implementation that the primary key to government lies in communication, resources, disposition or behavior, and bureaucratic structure (Larasati & Musfirah, 2021) showed that there was a violation of administrative ethics in the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus in the form of order, efficiency, productivity, and moral awareness in the implementation of the 2020 Pilkada. (Ajiprasetyo & Sarnawa, 2020) concluded that the limitations of Human Resources owned by Bawaslu in Yogyakarta make it challenging to monitor overall violations of State Civil Apparatus neutrality in the 2019 election. The findings (Asbudi, 2020) show that although the Palopo City Bawaslu has made all preventive and enforcement efforts to minimize violations of State Civil Apparatus neutrality, in fact, violations still occur. Finally, in the findings in a study conducted (Berenschot, 2018) that bureaucratic mobilization in elections mainly occurs when the incumbent re-runs himself and takes advantage of the bureaucratic dilemma position whether professional or subject to power/superior (Döhler, 2018).

This study takes a different point of view from the research above. First, it aims to analyze the portrait of State Civil Apparatus neutrality in the 2015 and 2017 simultaneous local elections in North Sumatra, which has not been done before. Second, using Edward III's concept to explain the implementation of State Civil Apparatus neutrality enforcement to work rationally and professionally as described by Max Weber.

## METHOD

This study explores the challenges of implementing bureaucratic neutrality policies in regional head elections (Pilkada) in North Sumatra. The focus is on analyzing theories, concepts, and regulations regarding strategies for strengthening the State Civil



Apparatus neutrality policy in elections. This research is based on a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach where the data analysis process is obtained in the narrative thinking process and the results of contextual observations. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, case studies, and observation.

Research informants consisted of bureaucratic apparatus in his study uses a qualitative approach with data obtained through in-depth interviews with bureaucratic apparatus in the local government, The North Sumatera Election Provincial Commission (KPUD), The North Sumatera Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), Independent Monitoring Institutions, Lecturer of Public Administration Universitas Sumatera Utara, observation, and documentation. According to Edward III, the analysis is carried out based on the deepening of the theory/concept of policy implementation by identifying those four critical variable factors: communication, resources, attitudes of bureaucratic agents, and organizational structure, with the perspective of the ideal bureaucratic model according to Weber.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Neutrality of the State Civil Apparatus in the Influence of Direct Local Election.**

The State Civil Apparatus neutrality discourse in Indonesia is an underlying and complex problem. The complexity of the bureaucracy's position needs to be resolved and fit the government's functions. It can be arranged in the interests of the public and the public, without complexity for political interests. Bureaucracy is considered an essential instrument in the implementation of democracy, which it takes cannot be completed in the democratic process because bureaucracy is a logical thought from being accepted to make an ideal bureaucracy.

The neutrality of this bureaucracy refers to the concept of bureaucracy proposed by Max Weber, which states that the bureaucracy formed must be independent of political forces (neutral). As an illustration, the embodiment of bureaucratic culture is helpful, and the community has used an institutional program. This approach directs the bureaucracy to achieve neutrality and not get caught up in practical political interests. Clause 2 of Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus explains neutrality as one of the principles in implementing State Civil Apparatus policy and management. Clause 9 paragraph 2 State Civil Apparatus needs free from intervention from all parties. Political groups and parties, Clause 12 State Civil Apparatus, act as planners, implementers, and supervisors in the implementation of public government responsibilities and national development through the application of professional policies and public services, free from political intervention and KKN Clause 87 paragraph 4, civil servants are dishonorably dismissed because is becoming a member and administrator of a political party. Directly confirms that one of the fundamental values that State Civil Apparatus should uphold is professionalism, neutrality, and high moral standards.

Based on North Sumatra Bawaslu evaluation report on violations of State Civil Apparatus neutrality in simultaneous local elections in North Sumatra in 2015 and 2017, Bawaslu found the most significant indication of abuse of authority by State Civil Apparatus in Gunung Sitoli City, where there were 23 cases of violations of the use of APBD funds in the 2015 Pilkada. There were 14 cases of violations in procuring banners for candidates for regent, followed by the motive of distributing necessities containing

Rp. 50,000.00- to the community-driven by the sub-district head. In Simalungun Regency, Regent JR Saragih collected 21 sub-district heads in one place ahead of the 2015 election. In Toba Samosir Regency, there were 5 cases with the motive of collecting sub-district heads in winning. Henry Sitinjak, the Legal Coordinator of the North Sumatra Bawaslu, explained that in the 2015 local elections, 10 State Civil Apparatus were given sanctions from dozens of cases that were processed because they were proven to be involved in practical politics, 2 of which were State Civil Apparatus in the civil service environment in the province of North Sumatra.

In implementing the Tebing Tinggi local election, Bawaslu received 43 reports on using State Civil Apparatus authority employing the Tebing Tinggi municipality program facilitated by OPDs such as the Head of Service Sub-District Head in the form of installing advertisements, banners and also using APBD funds. The OPD also attended the declaration, registration process and were seen during the campaign procession of incumbent City cliff leaders. Whereas at the North Sumatra Governor and Vice Governor Election in 2018, Bawaslu also examined the head of the North Sumatra Education Office for alleged violations of State Civil Apparatus neutrality with a report inviting State Civil Apparatus to the education service to support one of the candidates for Governor and Vice Governor of North Sumatera.

The General Election Commission (KPU) of North Sumatra local elections in 2018 recorded ten civil servants who were sanctioned from dozens of cases processed by the State Civil Apparatus Committee because they were determined to be involved in practical politics, 2 of whom were State Civil Apparatus in the North Sumatran Civil Service Environment. The latter violated Government Regulation Number 53 of 2010 concerning Discipline. Civil Servants, and article 4 paragraph 15 letter A related to providing support to candidates for regional heads.

Whereas during 2018, based on the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) report there were 985 violations. Some of the violations. There are at least 16 types of violations that have been committed. The five types of violations with the highest number are: Conducting activities that lead to alignments (meetings, invitations, appeals, appeals, and giving of goods) (270 State Civil Apparatus), social media campaigns/outreach (post, comment, share, like) (218 State Civil Apparatus ), involved in campaign activities (150 State Civil Apparatus), attended the declaration of the pair candidate (83 State Civil Apparatus), and participated in the campaign using party attributes / PNS attributes (82 State Civil Apparatus)—and distorting the essence of State Civil Apparatus neutrality in Indonesia.

In the context of policy implementation, the licensed products in the legislation cannot ensure the neutrality of the bureaucracy in the series of local elections in North Sumatra. It can reduce public support in State Civil Apparatus as a public service provider and weak support for the bureaucracy.

Bureaucratic competence is vulnerable in internalizing the moral and legal aspects of existing policy regulations. State Civil Apparatus neutrality, which is tested through bureaucracy politicization, is likely to disorder towards criminality. The inability of the apparatus to distinguish criminal competence and administrative competence means that even though the neutrality policy of State Civil Apparatus has been issued, the

authorities often cannot recognize the responsibilities of the office, acts against the law, and acts of abuse of power.

Bureaucratic neutrality is crucial to ensure that bureaucrats will not change public services; whoever becomes the ruler of the government (Thoha, 2003). In other words, the bureaucracy will continue to carry out its duties and functions to provide professional and quality public services without political intervention from the government's leadership during the implementation of the elections.

## **Local Elections and Implementation of Bureaucratic Neutrality at the Local Level.**

### **1. Communication.**

Success in implementing policies implies that the implementers know what to do and what the goals and objectives of the group are so that the implementation of policies can work. If the goals and objectives are not known, resistance will appear from the goals to be achieved.

The need for coordination between policy implementers will form a systematic work system to realize State Civil Apparatus neutrality in the elections can be carried out. In George Edward III's theory of implementation model, which supports policy implementation if the policy is transmitted well or has clear group goals and objectives, the policy provides consistency.

Based on the findings and analysis related to the regulation of State Civil Apparatus neutrality, regulations that are the formal basis for bureaucratic neutrality issued by state institutions such as Bawaslu, KemenPAN-RB, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ombudsman, and State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) should be transmitted by the ranks of the bureaucracy as a legal umbrella in enforcing State Civil Apparatus neutrality. Imperatively, these regulations emphasize the principle of neutrality, which focuses a lot on the context of elections. So, there is no gap (legal) justification for the bureaucracy that wants to get involved in practical politics. The answer is if the bureaucratic apparatus who wants to do politics must resign. It means that everyone is free to enter politics. Therefore, the existing legal rules do not, in principle, restrict human rights in a democracy. In other words, the individual rights of State Civil Apparatus are not lost; it is just that they need to maintain their expression and attitude by professional norms and ethics in the public sphere to maintain the spirit of publicity as a public servant.

In policy communication, bureaucratic neutrality needs to be encouraged with a model for controlling bureaucratic devices as well as State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) non-structural institutions that function as supervision of basic norms, codes of ethics, codes of behavior, and merit system principles in State Civil Apparatus policy and management so that they run on the track. State Civil Apparatus neutrality policy is a provision that applies absolutely and must be characterized by consistent State Civil Apparatus behavior to be directly involved in practical politics. Because there are things that are vulnerable when the bureaucracy is involved in politics, especially concerning public services, namely the fear of misuse of financial resources and public facilities controlled by the bureaucracy. As a public institution, the bureaucracy has various facilities, including financial resources, to provide public services. So, when bureaucrats are involved in politics, it is feared that there will be an abuse of their authority.



The still open space for State Civil Apparatus politicization informs that policy communication within the bureaucracy is still weak and has not been able to stem the involvement of bureaucratic apparatus in practical politics. As stated above, the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus is a message, program, and idea that the bureaucratic apparatus does not take sides with the political decisions of regional head candidates in elections. The partiality of the State Civil Apparatus will interfere with its function. The spearhead of public services and the unifying glue of the nation. So that neutrality is part of the fundamental values/norms and code of conduct that State Civil Apparatus must uphold. It is stated in the State Civil Apparatus Law, one of the basic values/norms that State Civil Apparatus must carry out is to carry out their duties professionally and impartially (Article 4 letter d). The State Civil Apparatus Law also states that one of the codes of conduct prevents conflicts of interest in carrying out their duties (Article 5 paragraph 2 letter h).

## **2. Policy Facilities and Resources.**

According to George Edward III, the determination of policy targets is influenced by how well policy resources can provide policy content and objectives. The implementation of this policy will produce outputs that can be felt from the implementation process.

Implementing policies regarding the completeness of facilities and policy resources must support administrative implementers in building a good workflow. Therefore, in implementing this policy, the bureaucracy needs supporting facilities and infrastructure to realize the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus in elections.

Based on the findings outlined earlier, the massive flow of State Civil Apparatus's involvement in the regional head elections in North Sumatra indicates that professionals increasingly demand State Civil Apparatus's human resources to carry out their duties as public servants. Improvement and fulfillment of competencies is the biggest issue of State Civil Apparatus management based on a merit system, as mentioned in Government Regulation No. 11 of 2017 concerning State Civil Apparatus Management. Competence is an ability to carry out a job based on skills and knowledge and is supported by the work attitude required by the situation.

Therefore, improvement and fulfillment of competencies related to the substance of neutrality are carried out through the implementation of technical guidance related to regulations and their implications by involving resource persons from agencies within the scope of State Civil Apparatus development, such as private facilities developing a code of ethics that must be based on justice, fair recruitment and Cleanliness, Placement and Performance Skills (Professional), Training and primary education (DIKLAT) for State Civil Apparatus plus capacity building and experience.

Prof. Erika Revida Saragih, Public Administration Academician, said that the low capacity of State Civil Apparatus to transfer positions caused State Civil Apparatus's alignment with one of the regional rulers, always associated with superior services and subordinate loyalty so that personality characteristics obscured State Civil Apparatus's competence. Personality is not something that cannot be changed because humans respond and interact with forces and the surrounding environment. Due to the similarity of political lines, ethnicity, vision, and class, partisanship became the forerunner of State

Civil Apparatus's alignment with election participants. It ultimately violates the principle of neutrality.

### **3. Disposition/Attitudes of Implementing Agents**

In George Edward III's theory, which is analyzed based on Weber's view, the relationship between bureaucracy and electoral politics implies that the politicization of bureaucracy creates a considerable distortion in the polarization of government administration. It was indicated by the lack of commitment, honesty, and democratic attitude in carrying out the government's administration before and after the elections to reflect the neutrality of the bureaucracy.

The bureaucratic apparatus needs to understand a series of policy regulations that regulate the neutrality of the bureaucracy to encourage the attitude of government administrators to be able to organize government towards good governance. State Civil Apparatus is given the right to vote but may not convey his choice to others. Must not influence other people for specific candidates. It means that he must be able to "kill his expression" against the candidate he will choose.

The involvement of structural officials in the State Civil Apparatus environment in North Sumatra in 2015, 2017, and 2018 local elections regarding the abuse of authority carried out by State Civil Apparatus occurred on the influence and instructions of incumbent candidates. The painful conditions experienced by the State Civil Apparatus carry out what superiors instruct because the OPD bureaucracy has a hierarchy from top to bottom. If the State Civil Apparatus wants to get a promotion quickly and practically or wants to occupy a position in the OPD, they must be loyal and submit to incumbent candidates.

State Civil Apparatus's attitude to using position authority to provide elite interests is a sign of bureaucratic politicization; this will bring up patrimonial relations between political elites as patrons and bureaucrats as clients. (Emmerson, 1983), who explained the case of bureaucratic patrimonialism in Indonesia, fields of control, and administration of the royal government lay in the strength and stability of the bureaucracy. Nationalism refers to the centralization of power, centered on absolute rulers (kingship rulership's).

The politicization of the bureaucracy will also have implications for the completion of the function of state facilities. Therefore, it is crucial for the bureaucratic apparatus to always ask for their right to conduct themselves using their agreed political rights. The State Civil Apparatus must support creating a trusting-trusting relationship as good for communication to reduce the gap. If previously, it has been a priori, it will weaken the connection (Terry, 2008).

### **4. Bureaucratic Structure**

The bureaucracy's positions will be increasingly thick with the influence of political aspects, especially during direct elections where the natural election system is vulnerable to making State Civil Apparatus a political force to get support. The opportunity for State Civil Apparatus to be involved in practical politics is enormous because the career position is determined by the official above it, namely the Regional Head.

The weakness of the bureaucratic structure is influenced by the intervention (authority) of the regional head in controlling policies at the bureaucratic level so that

the relationship in the bureaucratic system is strengthened by the leadership's power in determining policies. The phenomenon of abuse of State Civil Apparatus involvement in politics is driven by the influence and instructions of incumbent candidates. In depressed conditions, State Civil Apparatus will carry out what superiors instruct because structurally, the State Civil Apparatus bureaucracy has a hierarchy from top to bottom.

It happened in the 2015 Nias local election based on the 2015 – 2020 Pilkada Evaluation Research Report (Prakoso, 2006), where State Civil Apparatus supported and won the Regional Head candidate to get a strategic position in the government. One of the factors that cause State Civil Apparatus to often participate in the election of regional heads in North Sumatra is the involvement or kinship relations, relatives, and wanting strategic positions in local government. However, the career of a State Civil Apparatus who is neutral, law-abiding, and professional is sometimes unclear because he is accused of not sweating and being classified as a stowaway and has no role.

Edward III explained that the determinant of the effectiveness of policy implementation is related to the bureaucratic structure. Although it requires extensive processes and powers to maintain neutrality, the bureaucracy has sufficient capital to deal with various neutrality issues. Capital in the form of a bureaucratic organizational structure that tends to be multilevel is because, in a bureaucratic organizational form, it is suitable for planning changes as in Weber's bureaucratic model (Albrow, 1970). The formulation of Weber's proposition on the preparation of legal authority is based on the conception of legitimacy that continuous rules regulate tasks and relations between tasks, bureaucratic functions are divided according to service. They are equipped with authority requirements and sanctions. Positions must also be organized according to a hierarchy and control system; This can train State Civil Apparatus in understanding the legal rules. It is just that the weakness in terms of State Civil Apparatus neutrality, handling mechanisms that have not been distributed, is still centralized in several organizations. This condition will affect the effectiveness of handling cases of violation of neutrality.

### **Reinforcing the implementation and supervision of bureaucratic neutrality**

The bureaucracy that is not neutral will regulate the democratic system and the process of public service, moreover, if there are some aspects of State Civil Apparatus who participate in practical politics. Practical politics will be a challenge for developing governments. Amid bureaucratic reform in good governance, practical politics inflamed in the body of the state can undermine the lives of the people's social cohesion.

So far, regulations in the form of laws and regulations issued about neutrality have been mass-issued. The enactment of Law number 5 of 2014 has succeeded in preventing State Civil Apparatus from being involved in practical political activities, be it a member of a political party or being part of the regional head's winning team during elections or local elections. Likewise, Government Regulation (PP) RI No. 53 of 2010 concerning the discipline of civil servants, but the above data referred to by the bureaucracy turned out to be unable to stem the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus in the implementation of the elections.

The data findings and reports of the State Civil Apparatus violations in the 2015 simultaneous regional elections and the 2018 North Sumatra governor and deputy

governor elections provide solid reasons for building strenuous efforts to restore ANS neutrality. From these findings, it can be concluded that the politicization of bureaucracy is reciprocal, meaning that the relationship supports each other politically, both from the politician and the bureaucracy itself. Politicians need bureaucracy as a political machine, and the bureaucracy needs the support of politicians as a means of launching a career.

The strengthening of civil servant supervision is a crucial effort to monitor the neutrality and attitude of State Civil Apparatus still rests on the Election Supervisory Institution or Bawaslu in controlling every election violation activity. The Indonesian government has a State Civil Apparatus Commission (State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN). State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) is a non-structural institution free from political mainstreaming and responsible to the president. Still, State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) only oversees the implementation of basic norms, codes of conduct, codes of conduct, and the merit system process in State Civil Apparatus management, not in the field of supervision. However, if we leave the control of State Civil Apparatus so that it is not involved in practical politics only on the shoulders of Bawaslu, the achievement of neutrality will not be sufficient. The government needs to increase the oversight power also commanded by KemenPAN-RB and collaborate with the National Civil Service Agency (BKN), the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, the Bawaslu, the Media, NGOs, and of course the active participation of the community. Participatory oversight from the public can encourage bureaucracy to be more socially responsible to the community.

**Table 2.** Bureaucratic Control Method

<b>Politics</b>	<b>External</b>
Supervision by political officials (KPU, Bawaslu, KemenPAN-RB, and the Ministry of Home Affairs)	Media surveillance, NGO's, Community organizations, Monitoring agencies, public opinion
<b>Administrative</b>	<b>Internal</b>
Judicial oversight, State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN), BKN, Ombudsman, Competition between agencies, Administration system, Performance standard, Internal auditors	Professional norms and ethics Responsibility

*Source:* Author, 2020

Furthermore, other recommendations for simultaneous elections of 2020 with integrity need to reform State Civil Apparatus management (proper sizing) as a form of seriousness in coaching and education for State Civil Apparatus. It can be done by changing the culture set and bureaucratic mindset, increasing the competency-based education curriculum (DIKLAT) by reinforcing an understanding of policy regulation, risk management, critical education about leadership and commitment, and understanding the use of technology (social media). With these efforts, it is supposed to create a new habitus for State Civil Apparatus in Indonesia. So, State Civil Apparatus can think objectively and not easily get caught up in the sensation of position, emotion, and populism. Then no less critical, State Civil Apparatus can actively stem, even against practical and transactional politics in a bureaucratic environment.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that State Civil Apparatus's neutrality in post-conflict local elections in North Sumatra is influenced by several factors, including State Civil Apparatus loyalty, regulatory ambiguity, weak law enforcement, and low public awareness participate in reporting State Civil Apparatus involved in election contestation.

State Civil Apparatus neutrality has a strategic position because it is a precondition for increasing State Civil Apparatus professionalism in public services that are fast, transparent, fair, and impartial to one party. To become a professional, one of the efforts is the application of a merit system. The implementation of a comprehensive merit system in the Indonesian bureaucracy is an urgent need. A transparent and compatible platform will strengthen the neutrality of State Civil Apparatus from politicizing efforts. It will be better if it is supported by an HR management process that strictly follows the recruitment pattern until it is clear, descriptive, and a fair evaluation. Its objectives are independence and neutrality, competence, work performance/productivity, integrity, prosperity, quality of public services, supervision, and accountability.

The bureaucracy must focus on providing services to the community in a professional manner. Alignments to political elites and group interests make the bureaucracy unprofessional and even lead to various bureaucratic malpractices, ultimately harming society. Bureaucratic neutrality aims to ensure that elections are free from practical political involvement. It is hoped that it can be improved to strengthen the position of bureaucratic administration so that it remains neutral to realize a substantial and integrity post-conflict local election in North Sumatra in December 2020.

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