Portrait of the Politicization of Indonesian Bureaucracy in the 2024 Election

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Keywords	ABSTRACT
Politicization, Indonesian Bureaucracy, Election.	This study delves into the intricate relationship between the state and government, with a specific focus on bureaucracy as a pivotal component of government policy. Against the backdrop of political science, the article investigates the politicization of bureaucracy during the 2024 elections in Indonesia. By tracing the historical trajectory of bureaucratic politicization from the New Order to Reformasi, the research sheds light on the evolution of this phenomenon. Emphasizing bureaucratic neutrality as a cornerstone of good governance, the study employs a qualitative-critical descriptive approach through literature reviews. Qualitative data, derived from expert statements and scientific perspectives, undergoes rigorous analysis using discourse and content analysis methods. The historical analysis exposes the enduring link between bureaucracy and politics, notably during the New Order era, characterized by Golkar's absolute dominance. Despite post-1998 bureaucratic reforms, the persistent challenge of bureaucratic politicization looms large, especially in anticipation of the 2024 elections. The research underscores that achieving bureaucratic neutrality encounters obstacles rooted in the political system and socio-political conditions. Conceptual and theoretical discussions, though robust, falter in implementation. Effectuating bureaucratic neutrality mandates stringent adherence to rules, commitment from all bureaucracies, and robust supervision and law enforcement. The imperative for bureaucratic neutrality in the 2024 elections necessitates comprehensive socialization across bureaucracies and active stakeholder engagement, particularly from political parties. Fostering awareness of bureaucratic integrity and neutrality is indispensable for upholding public service duties and advancing the principles of good governance in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

State and government are two interrelated concepts as they are both important elements in political science. For this reason, many political scholars make the state the object of study so that various understandings of the concept of the state are born. The study of the state and its relationship with the bureaucracy is important to explain for two reasons, namely: (i) all bureaucracies in the general sense are closely related to the state because the existence and purpose of the bureaucracy is to carry out government and political policies of the state, and (ii) the state is the main home of the bureaucracy to safeguard the public interest. The existence of the state formally allows the bureaucracy to work for the state.

To carry out its policies, the state needs a bureaucracy because bureaucracy is an essential institution in the political life of a country that functions to carry out government policies. One of the good governance arrangements is the form of a democratic government. This is because democracy,

good governance is a concept that was born in line with the ideas of democracy, civil society, people's participation, human rights, and community development (Adam, 2019; Azzahra, 2023).

In a government that follows a democratic system, including Indonesia, the presence of political parties is important. After Vice President Mohammad Hatta issued Declaration X on October 16, 1945, the people established many political parties simultaneously. From then on, the cabinet, which is the executive organization of the government, is headed by a political party.

As head of state, President Soekarno chose a leader from a particular political party to lead the cabinet as the Prime Minister (PM). Likewise, some Ministers are appointed not because they represent a specific political party but because of their capacity and ability. After President Sukarno was overthrown by the events of 30 September 1965, the government was replaced by the New Order government under the leadership of Suharto.

To carry out the mission of the New Order government, in 1970, before the 1971 elections were held, Suharto proposed grouping political parties into three, namely the United Development Party (PPP), the Work Group (Golkar), and the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). In this grouping, PPP and PDI cannot be active in governments other than Golkar.

In previous studies, the Golkar party's development doctrine remained largely unchallenged, resulting in its establishment as the predominant political force without substantial opposition. This hegemony persisted for 32 years during the New Order regime, compelling government bureaucracy to align exclusively with Golkar. The situation endured until the 1998 wave of reforms, leading to the downfall of Suharto. Post-Suharto, Indonesia experienced leadership under five Presidents: Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Soekarno Putri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Joko Widodo.

The upcoming article seeks to explore the politicization of bureaucracy in the context of the 2024 elections, examining whether it tends towards neutrality or partisanship. This study builds on an introductory section and delves into the politicization of bureaucracy in both developed and developing nations. The analysis extends from the New Order era to the Reformation Order, aiming to depict the Indonesian bureaucratic landscape as either neutral or partisan. Additionally, the article investigates the current state of bureaucracy politicization during the 2024 elections and explores effective supervision methods to achieve bureaucratic neutrality. The study concludes by summarizing its findings. This comprehensive approach highlights the novelty of the research, offering a unique perspective on the evolution of bureaucratic politicization in Indonesia and its implications for the 2024 elections.

METHODS

The research method of this article is based on literature studies or library research. Library research is a study that utilizes library sources to obtain research data (Creswell, 2020). In this article, the author uses a qualitative-critical descriptive research method by emphasizing the power of analysis of sources and data that rely on existing theories and texts to be translated based on writings that lead to the main discussion.

The data needed to write this article is qualitative textual, using a foothold based on statements and scientific proportions put forward by experts closely related to the discussion. The data source in this article uses personal documents, which are personal documents in the form of materials that people say in their own words (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Personal documents as the essential source or primary data, in this case, are books related to this article.

Data analysis techniques are carried out with discourse analysis so as not to overlap in conducting analysis (Ngulube, 2015). After all the data is collected, the data is analyzed to obtain conclusions, where the analysis technique used is descriptive analysis. In addition, a content analysis

was also carried out, which compares one study with another study in the same field as this article, based on differences in writing time and the ability of these studies to achieve the targets that are the object of this study.

RESULTS
Politicization of Bureaucracy in Developed and Developing Countries

This section highlights political parties' intervention in bureaucracies in developed and developing countries. In developed countries, an interesting study conducted by Mizgala et al. (2007) in Spain examines the intervention of the ruling party elite in the bureaucracy and its impact on the government bureaucracy. Mizgala's study found that political parties in Spain controlled the bureaucracy to maintain the power of the political elite and financial resources for political parties. According to Mizgala (2007), this co-optation corrupts the bureaucracy. It makes it inefficient to implement government policies, resulting in bureaucratic services becoming unobjective and not optimal in safeguarding people's interests. For this reason, Mizgala rejects the notion that political parties in Spain are better than developing countries.

Cole (2006, p. 56) also examines the interaction between political parties and bureaucracy. His studies in Italy focused on political parties, especially right-leaning parties, influencing government policy. His study found that right-leaning parties in Italy greatly influenced the primary discussion of government bureaucratic policies. Decisive political intervention by political parties makes the government bureaucracy not neutral in policies and providing services to the people. This can happen because bureaucrats allow political party elites to intervene in the bureaucracy in hopes of gaining the support of political party elites for essential positions in the bureaucracy.

An exciting study of the interaction of bureaucracy and political parties was also conducted by Lewis (2004, pp. 195–196) in the United States (USA). Lewis's study is essential for several reasons. First, the role of political parties in the US is to control the government. In a sense, political parties have a moral responsibility to create a government that can realize the goals and interests of the people. Therefore, political parties that win elections must inevitably play a significant role in organizing and running the government. Second, political parties in the US are responsible for managing the government bureaucracy so that their existence can provide good services to the people. Third, the bureaucracy must carry out the strong foundations set by political parties and not become a threat to the governing political party.

Lewis's study of bureaucratic and political interactions in the US is complemented by Galvin's (2006) study. Galvin stated that in the US since President Andrew Jackson, there has been politicization by political parties in the bureaucracy, causing the absence of bureaucratic neutrality in the country. According to Galvin's analysis, the dangerous thing when bureaucracy is involved in politics, namely the involvement of political parties in the US, results in a loss of neutrality in bureaucratic institutions caused by three things. First, the emergence of political intervention in placing positions in the bureaucracy will damage the existing system because the recruitment and placement process is based more on political relations than the merit system. Second, the involvement of bureaucrats in politics leads to the misuse of financial resources and public facilities and the abuse of authority, such as assistance to political parties that are their political affiliates. Third, the involvement of the bureaucracy in politics causes a preference for groups that are politically aligned with the bureaucracy. This is because the bureaucracy can divide financial resources and power. The involvement of political parties in the bureaucracy will undermine the existence of the bureaucracy as a public institution (Galvin, 2006).

In line with Lewis's study, Yonish (2007, p. 110) examines the role of political parties in the administration of government bureaucracy and its impact on grassroots people in the US. Yonish said

the bureaucracy should separate the roles between the government's political and administrative aspects. This is because political people are policymakers, while bureaucracy is the executor.

Studies by Mizgala (2007), Cole (2006), Lewis (2004), and Yonish (2007), on the relationship between political parties and bureaucracies in developed countries show mixed findings. One thing that becomes a "common thread" in the study of these scholars is that political parties in developed countries (still) interfere in bureaucratic affairs that should be neutral. What happens in developed countries also happens in Indonesia. This happens because political parties that win elections and get a majority begin to control and control the government bureaucracy. Based on this fact, several important issues related to the relationship between political parties and bureaucracy in Indonesia will also arise.

The question is, how do political parties intervene in developing countries? The intervention of political parties in the bureaucracy in developing countries is undoubtedly different from that in developed countries. This distinction has been studied by many scholars, such as Randall (2005) in India, Serrano (2007) in Mexico, and Herbst (2008) in Ghana, to name just a few scholars. According to the author, the selection of the three countries in this article is based on the following: First, the three countries are located on different continents, so their existence can provide a (relatively) comprehensive picture of the politicization of political parties against the bureaucracy. Second, all three countries are developing countries. Third, these countries are multi-ethnic and resemble Indonesia, so they can help understand the politicization of political parties against bureaucracy in a country with diverse societies.

Randall (2005) discusses the Congress Party (CP) in India and some matters related to the politicization of political parties in the bureaucracy. Randall stated that to eradicate poverty, including other social problems and development in India, CP was forced to intervene in the bureaucracy's activities and implement various projects. This is because CP leaders see political intervention as essential to the success of government policies to safeguard the larger interests of the people (Randall, 2005, p. 68).

Jacob (2008) rejected a significant study for his PhD, Internal Party Politics and Development in India. According to Jacob (2008, pp. 172–173), the intervention of CP as the ruling party into the bureaucracy under the pretext of helping the poor is unacceptable because the intervention was carried out to seek popular support in the elections. Jacob (2008, p. 178) disagrees with Major's contention that politicization of the bureaucracy is essential to create stability for the country. For Suraj, CP's hidden agenda to gain people's sympathy was what CP did to the bureaucracy to eradicate poverty. In Suraj's view, assisting the people through bureaucratic apparatus can be done if there is no political element behind the assistance but rather the government's obligation to help its people.

Serrano (2007, pp. 217–218) also examines the politicization of political parties in the bureaucracy in Mexico. Serrano said the main actors in Mexico's bureaucracy are a small group of elites known as the revolutionary family. The strength of this elite influence can be seen from the elite selection of officials in the Mexican government bureaucracy determined by this group. As a result, political parties according to what this family wants. As a result, a small elite hegemonizes political parties and the bureaucracy while gripping the bureaucracy so that implementing government policies leads to their interests. As a result, political parties and bureaucracies are controlled by a group of elites, so political party policies in government bureaucracy depend on the elite. This situation makes the government bureaucracy no longer objective to safeguard the interests of the people but rather to protect the interests of the elite.

The intense politicization of the power elite in the bureaucracy makes Mexico an unstable country. As a result, bureaucracies and political parties prefer to side with the interests of the elite rather than the interests of the people. This opportunity resulted in the emergence of an elite group of

revolutionary families to take over the role of the bureaucracy by utilizing the resources available to be used together with the political elite.

According to the author, Serrano's analysis of political parties and bureaucracy has advantages. First, it provides a new understanding of how a small group of elites influence the political parties they control to control the bureaucracy. Second, Serrano explains a different pattern of the relationship between political parties and bureaucracy, where bureaucracies and political parties prefer to side with the interests of the elite rather than the interests of the people. However, according to the author, Serrano's (2007) study has flaws. First, it does not explain why there is bureaucracy in Mexico. However, the government does not control the bureaucracy completely and still does not manage to be neutral from the clutches of political parties. Second, despite Mexico's dominant party system, why is public policy more oriented toward safeguarding the interests of the minor political elite rather than the prevailing political party?

The case in Indonesia is almost the same as that in Mexico. In Indonesia, due to the multi-party system of the Reformation Order era, the bureaucracy is complicated to get out of the clutches of political parties. Instead, it always safeguards the interests of the tiny ruling elite while safeguarding the interests of the dominant political party. This happens because of the vital interests of the ruling elite against the bureaucracy to guard the interests of political parties in the government for the interests of the political elite.

Herbst (2008) also examines the army's intervention of political parties in the bureaucracy in Ghana. At least three army rulers ruled Ghana from 1966 to the 1990s. Since the beginning of Ghana's independence, the ruling party has been the Convention People's Party (CPP), founded by Kwame Nkrumah.[1] At this time, de jure, what happened was a one-party system, so the bureaucracy was dominated only by CPP members. After that, the government was ruled by the army regime led by General Acheompong and General Akuffo between 1972 and 1979. There was now a transition from a one-party to a two-party system, and the Progress Party (PP) led by Kofi Abrefa Busia controlled the government.

During the leadership of Kofi Abrefa Busia, the government did not run well because the existing political parties competed to govern the bureaucracy and wanted to include their respective ethnicities to dominate the country's management. Al-Hassan (2004) supported Herds' argument in his PhD dissertation Politicized Soldier: Military Intervention in The Politics of Ghana, 1966-1993. According to Al-Hassan (2004, pp. 264–265), internal political competition in Ghana for government control between civilian groups and the army is very sharp. As a result, there are often coups, so the government period often changes and does not live long. Finally, Ghana is under the rule of Air Lieutenant Rawlings, whose ruling political party is the People's National Party (PNP).

Under the army's leadership, Ghana was managed very authoritarian, and the military controlled all government policies, so the bureaucracy was forced to support the government leadership. The management of the bureaucracy is no longer neutral because bureaucrats are forced to follow the wishes of political parties as rulers supported by the army. This resulted in Ghanaian politics becoming very authoritarian, and the bureaucracy became the only instrument for implementing all the interests of the political parties and the ruling army.

According to the study's author above, the interaction of political parties and bureaucracy in developed and developing countries is very diverse. However, one thing that scholars have in common is that political parties in developed and developing countries still intervene in the bureaucracy. This is because political parties assume that after winning elections, the entire management of the country, including placing people affiliated with the ruling political party, controls its power.

Politicization of Bureaucracy in Indonesia: New Order to Reform Order

In the author's opinion, the interaction of bureaucracy and political parties in Indonesia is not much different from the pattern that occurs in other developing countries. The only slight difference

between developing countries such as India, Mexico Ghana and Indonesia is that local political cultures in these countries have grown and rooted for a long time, while in Indonesia, when referring to Hartatik (2022), Anderson (2006), Lindsey (2012), Baker J (2018), Ricklefs (2001), and Goss (2009) the political culture that dominates is feudal. In India and Mexico, the intervention was carried out by political figures and local elite groups, while in Ghana, the intervention was carried out by the army.

Some scholars researching the relationship between bureaucracy and political parties in Indonesia include Jackson (1980) and Crouch (1988). Jackson, a professor of political science at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote a study entitled Bureaucratic Polity: A Theoretical Framework for The Analysis of Power and Communications In Indonesia (1980). Riggs originally developed Jackson's model of bureaucratic politics under the title Thailand: The Modernization of A Bureaucratic Polity (1966) to explain the political system in Thailand in the mid-1960s, which Jackson later used in his studies in Indonesia. Jackson's study of bureaucratic politics is one of the most frequently used theoretical models in understanding the characteristics of politics and bureaucracy in Indonesia during the New Order era. This is because the concentration of political power is only in the hands of a small group of bureaucratic elite civilians or soldiers in administrative management and policy making, and no elite outside the bureaucracy can influence these policies.

Jackson's study shows how political parties intervene in government policymaking, even though it is monopolized by only a small group of soldiers, bureaucratic elites, and technocrats. For Jackson, this happened because of the dominance of the political power of the New Order government at that time, which other forces could not penetrate.

Crouch (2007) also examines bureaucratic politics in Indonesia. Crouch argued that bureaucratic political societies should be distinguished from army rule because the basic virtues of government were bureaucratic and technocratic rather than aggressive. In his analysis, Crouch (2007) stated that the bureaucracy is the dominant political institution in Indonesia. This is because other political institutions, such as parliament, political parties, and interest groups, are so weak that they cannot control the bureaucracy's power. This situation makes the bureaucracy dominant in controlling political forces and interest groups.

This has a bad impact because the main task of bureaucracy as a public service is not carried out; it only performs services for the government. Therefore, Crouch stated the need for bureaucratic neutrality and the separation of interests of the political elite so that the bureaucracy is free from political interference. Separation must be done because both have different backgrounds, experiences, and professions. Political parties have a strong desire to seize power to govern (to govern), while the bureaucracy has the ability of professionalism and expertise to carry out government policies (Noer, 2014)

Another interesting study of politics and bureaucracy during the New Order era was conducted by Rasyid (1994). He stated that the government bureaucracy was the prominent supporter of the New Order government led by Golkar. This was because every government employee during the New Order period was obliged to support Golkar. If the bureaucracy does not do this, they can be demoted and even fired as government employees. Government employees fear this if they do not support Golkar (Rasyid, 1994).

As a result, the New Order government could intervene in the government bureaucracy freely, making the bureaucracy powerless to provide good services to the people, but only to the New Order government controlled by Golkar. This situation makes the bureaucracy 'stamped' as an extension of the government in carrying out all the wishes of the Golkar party. Even the bureaucracy is where Golkar gets financial resources to campaign every time elections are held. Thus, although Indonesian politics seems democratic with more than one political party, the reality is different because only one party is

in power in the government, namely Golkar, which carries out the mission of the New Order government (Noer, 2014).

Rashid's study reinforces an earlier survey by Lederer (2021) that examined the bureaucratic New Order regime. King stated that in choosing members of parliament, the role of the Golkar government was too dominant, so the election process did not take place honestly and fairly because of the clear support from the government bureaucracy for Golkar. As a result, government employees from the centre to the regions only work to maintain the voice of Golkar. This strong control of the bureaucracy caused many 'wild voices' to make Golkar win every election. As for the involvement of political parties such as PPP and PDI in the election, they are only a complement to the sufferers of the democratic 'party stamp'.

Four years after the Reformation Order, many foreign scholars studied Indonesia. One of them is O'Rourke (2002), who studied Indonesian politics about democratic transition. O'Rourke analyzes the post-Suharto political era, where various public demands marked Indonesia for massive changes in all areas of political life. In the face of these popular demands, President Habibie, who succeeded Suharto, had no choice but to put reform at the top of his administration's agenda.

Habibie explained that in creating a good, authoritative, and clean government, the position of the government bureaucracy in political life needs to be revisited. Namely, the government bureaucracy must be returned to its function and position as an institution that provides services and safety to the people. For this reason, a neutral government bureaucratic institution is needed and is not a political instrument of any political party. If the government bureaucracy becomes an instrument of political power of a particular political party, then in carrying out its duties and functions, the government bureaucracy will be subjective and not neutral (O'Rourke, 2002).

To ensure the government bureaucracy is neutral, O'Rourke explained that Habibie has taken several important steps in his leadership. Among them are giving freedom to establish political parties, reviving print media that were once shut down, such as Tempo, Editor, and Detik, providing unprecedented freedom of expression, and freeing political prisoners during the New Order era.

In the constitutional field, Habibie produced three political laws, namely the Election Law, the DPR/MPR Composition and Position Law, and the Party System Law, and replaced several laws in the New Order era that were undemocratic to support the Reform Order era that wanted change (O'Rourke, 2002).

Bourchier & Hadiz (2014) then continued O'Rourke's analysis and examined Habibie's government and the changes made in its administrative policy. Among other changes made by Habibie was abolishing five political laws in 1985 that did not allow opposition parties other than the Golkar party to win elections. In the New Order era, political parties were limited to only three parties, namely the United Development Party (PPP), the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), and the Working Group (Golkar). However, after the reform era, political parties grew, and democratic space began to open. Bourchier & Hadiz (2014) explain that in the era of the Reformation Order at that time, the issue of whether to justify or reject government bureaucracy involved in politics was an issue that became a hot debate.

The results of the analysis have different views on this matter. Government Regulation (PP) No. 5 and No. 12 of 1999, strengthened by Law No. 43 of 1999 concerning the neutrality of civil servants, states that bureaucracy must be neutral and cannot be used as a political tool for certain political forces. Therefore, bureaucrats involved in political parties must resign their positions so that their attention is not divided in carrying out their duties. At first, Golkar rejected this PP. It would harm the party because some of its leaders were bureaucratic employees. Then, with a tough debate in parliament, most MPs supported the proposal that the bureaucracy should be neutral from politics; eventually, Golkar accepted it, and the proposal was passed into law.

Thoha (2003) also studied political parties and bureaucracy in Indonesia during the Reformation Order era. Thoha said political party intervention in the government bureaucracy at the beginning of the reform was inevitable because of the difficulty of drastically changing the habits left by the New Order government after 32 years of rule. Thoha stated that if the government bureaucracy is to be changed, then the way of thinking of political leaders needs to be changed from only prioritizing personal and party interests to the interests of the people (Thoha, 2003). Thoha continued that this change needs to be done so that the question of who controls who and who is in power to lead and dominate whom does not arise. This problem is a classic problem as a form of dichotomy between politics and administration. Therefore, an important question arises: is bureaucracy as subordination to political parties or bureaucracy the same as politics? (Thoha, 2003).

Ellis further sharpened Thoha's analysis in his book Indonesia's Constitutional Change Reviewed (2007). According to Ellis (2007), the direct impact of political intervention in the bureaucracy is that the burden of bureaucracy becomes heavier, bureaucratic services become impartial, and bureaucracy becomes unobjective. This causes the bureaucracy to tend to be 'masters' rather than providing services to the public, which is inefficient and wastes excessive resources on power.

Therefore, the entry of party people into the bureaucracy causes the professionalism of employees to be a tool to be sacrificed in favour of political matters. Finally, bureaucratic professionalism becomes weak, which results in low quality of service to the community. The lack of bureaucratic professionalism and the strong influence of political elites result in bureaucrats being unable to avoid external pressure, so they favour certain political groups. Such phenomena show the non-neutrality of the government bureaucracy.

Portrait of Indonesian Bureaucracy: Between Neutrality or Partisanship?

Listening to the theoretical ideas above, we know that bureaucracy, as an important instrument that bridges state and community relations, also explains that its position in governance or taking care of state and people's affairs is also important.

In Indonesia, bureaucracy is an indisputable instrument. However, an interesting thing that needs to be reviewed and related to this article's writing is how the bureaucracy's position in the governance practice takes care of the state and people's affairs. The question is, is the bureaucracy neutral or partisan? In this last point, the author will discuss this subsection.

Believe it or not, believe it. Agree or disagree. Many studies and research conducted on the position of bureaucracy in government administration in dealing with state and people's affairs show that the Indonesian bureaucracy has always been an engine of power politics. In practice, the Indonesian bureaucracy tends not to be neutral; the bureaucracy always sides with the ruler—the political party that wins the election and its group. The government bureaucracy has not been placed in its position, function, and role as a neutral organization or institution that manages the state professionally and is not politically or apolitically discriminatory. According to Noer (2014), Bureaucracy is a relatively political instrument or tool to achieve the logic of power, namely obtaining, increasing, maintaining, and expanding the power of certain political actors, elites, or factions. This differs from Weber's ideal bureaucratic model of bureaucratic neutrality.

The tendency of Indonesian bureaucratic practices that are not neutral has been illustrated since the Indonesian government was formed during the Old Order period. In its development, the cabinet was filled with political elites. So, the presence of political parties in the bureaucracy in Indonesia began to occur since then. In other words, the politicization of the bureaucracy occurs when the political party elite becomes a Minister and leads the institution of the Ministry in the existing cabinet structure.

The presence of the minister who leads the ministry is natural when we review our country's presidential system of government. With this system, the President in power has full authority to

determine people he can trust to assist the President in carrying out the governance duties. Unfortunately, in his large and absolute role, the President sometimes does not consider the factors of competence and commitment of the candidate for Minister but rather finds the services of the candidate minister when the Presidential election process is carried out.

As a result, the political elites who had contributed to him became the President's choice to lead the Ministry in the cabinet composition. It is common knowledge that Ministerial posts are appointed based on political party membership, especially political party chairmen and close people who helped or volunteered with Jokowi during the presidential election.

The above is logically justifiable and limited to the top leadership of a Ministry because the Minister is in a political position. However, the ruling political party also takes the practice that occurs up to seasons I and II in the bureaucracy that bureaucratic career officials should occupy. Or at least, the politicization of the ruling political party towards the determination of the position is very strong, causing internal conflicts in the bureaucracy between individuals who have long careers in the bureaucracy and officials who occupy the position.

The politicization of the bureaucracy eventually flourished in the Indonesian government bureaucracy. This politicization of the bureaucracy occurs not only at the central government level but also in some regions. Political parties contest the bureaucracy. The implication is that at the regional level, positions in the bureaucracy are also held by political parties in power in the central government. We can give an example of this in the Old Order era, when the Ministry of Home Affairs, whose Ministers were from the Indonesian National Party (PNI), then the position structure ranging from Minister to Lurah in the Village was PNI people (Noer, 2014).

The most vulgar process of politicization of the bureaucracy can be seen in the era of the New Order government. At that time, the bureaucracy was positioned as one of the instruments to mobilize the masses, emphasizing mono loyalty to the government. Even the bureaucracy in the New Order era was considered one of the teachers of power of the Suharto regime and ABRI and Golkar. In every election, the bureaucracy and its families are not only required to vote for Golkar but also to be a powerful political machine that garners support from the people in their respective regions.

The bureaucracy at the time was used as a tool of interest for the Suharto regime to maintain its power, thus giving rise to the blockage of the circulation of a competitive elite. Logically and in practice, absolute power not contested regularly, correctly, and competitively tends to experience decay in the government bureaucracy. Indications of bureaucratic decay include; There is discrimination, collusion, nepotism in employee recruitment, career path barriers for non-partisans, political party intervention in terms of who gets facilities, position and obstacles to public services, use of facilities, and state program funds for the benefit of Golkar, and even corruption. The bureaucracy becomes a "cash cow" or a tool for political parties to achieve their goals. The New Order bureaucracy was affected by symptoms of Parkinsonization, which is the process of making the bureaucracy function to accommodate the political cadres of the ruler or regime.

As a result of the intense politicization of political parties towards the bureaucracy, with various consequences indicated above, the professionalism of the bureaucracy in working is not seen optimally and even tends to be wrong. The bureaucracy is ultimately labeled as underperforming and causing misery to many people because the money intended for the community is misused for personal interests and those of particular groups or groups in power. The bureaucracy became a field for rent-hunting by these bureaucrats. The impact of it all is a loss of public trust (public untrust) in the bureaucracy.

With the bureaucracy being so intensely politicized by political parties or, in other words, the loss of neutrality of the government bureaucracy, it encouraged the growth of a movement to seek bureaucratic neutrality as initiated by Weber and other state theory thinkers. This movement began to feel strongly echoed in the period leading up to the fall of the New Order and the birth of the Reformation Order era.

Unfortunately, even in this reform era, the expected neutrality of the bureaucracy is, in practice, increasingly far from expectations. Bureaucratic alignments even developed relatively quickly. Especially when those who win the presidential election and/or governor election, mayor, and regent are directly political parties in coalition. As a result, bureaucracy became very colorful, and professionalism in work became "far from the fire." As a result, in the practice of governance, we can conclude that government bureaucracy is rarely neutral in the true sense, even from several studies and studies show that in that position, our government bureaucracy has failed in carrying out the duty of service to the public (to serve the public), which should be the 'spirit' of bureaucratic activities and tasks.

This movement of bureaucratic neutrality, when referring to the thoughts of Antlov & Cederroth (2014) was carried out to avoid bureaucratic partiality in one political party, and political discontent and considering the preoccupation bureaucracy plays in politics at some point will result in a bureaucracy that is corrupt, inefficient, unprofessional, and immoral.

Ideally, according to Thoha (2003) in a country with the implementation of a democratic system of government, including in Indonesia today, bureaucrats should serve the public or "civil servants devote their lives to the service of community", not to the interests of certain groups that are momentary. Therefore, in their professional role, bureaucrats should treat politicians and political parties equally rather than preferentially.

Bureaucrats ideally base the implementation of their policies on objective judgment. That is, once the government or elite government political officials determine a policy, bureaucrats implement the policy without being influenced by the ruling party's or opposition party's interests. This confirms that bureaucratic neutrality means that bureaucrats can express their partiality, aimed at the synergy of work with political officials (policy formulation), but not when carrying out bureaucratic tasks.

Bureaucratic neutrality also needs to be done because it considers that the society affected by our bureaucracy is a paternalistic or patrimonial culture that always serves those with large economic, social, and political resources. The implication is that in governance, if bureaucratic neutrality is not enforced from the beginning, then bureaucracy will always favour the strong majority.

As a result, partisanship that is momentary and for the benefit of the moment can continue to occur in our bureaucracy. In other words, our bureaucracy will always not be neutral in government administration and in dealing with the state and service to society. The implication is that the public's expectation that the government bureaucracy can be impartial and professional in serving the community in a quality manner has yet to be realized optimally because the bureaucracy is still partisan to its superiors who also come from political parties or parties that won the Presidential Election or Pilkada.

Bureaucracy in the 2024 elections: can it be neutral?

On various occasions leading up to the elections including the Regional Head Election (Pilkada), the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) which includes Civil Servants (PNS) and Government Employees with Work Agreements (P3K) who work in government agencies, are always reminded not to be involved or maintain neutrality in campaigning for the winner of one of the pairs of presidential and vice presidential candidates or legislative candidates in the simultaneous elections to be held on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Likewise, the simultaneous regional elections, which have been held since 2015, 2017 and 2018, will be held on Wednesday, November 27, 2024.

Bureaucratic neutrality (ASN) is an essential gamble in every election. This, referring to Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning Civil Servants, Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning the Second Amendment to Law No. 1 of 2015 concerning the Stipulation of PP No. 1 of 2014 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents and Mayors into Law, and Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, it is stated that bureaucracy must be neutral from politics. The Minister of Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (Menpan RB) emphasized this in its implementation, reminding all Ministries/Institutions and provincial/Regency

Governments that the bureaucracy is neutral in holding simultaneous regional, legislative, and presidential elections.

While regulations governing the neutrality of civil servants (read: bureaucracy) already exist, there is still bias in the field despite an appeal from the General Election Supervisory Board of the Republic of Indonesia (Bawaslu RI). As the Chairman of Bawaslu RI stated, bureaucratic neutrality was again in the spotlight during the 2019 simultaneous elections; at least 93 City Districts (18.1%) in Indonesia had a vulnerability index for bureaucratic neutrality (Ryu & Virindra, 2023). Therefore, efforts to suppress the bureaucratic neutrality vulnerability index need to be carried out consistently and resistantly by election stakeholders, both government institutions and bureaucratic professional institutions.

The public assumption suggests that the partiality of several Regional Heads to one of the candidates in the 2024 Presidential Election will be feared to affect bureaucratic neutrality because it can bring bureaucracy to practical political activities and encourage bureaucratic politicization practices. According to Prasojo, the alignment of some regional heads in each Presidential Election and Regional Elections will have an impact on the bureaucratic position, namely that the role of regional heads as Civil Service Development Officials is very central, in addition to being political officials as well as government officials who are required to be able to distinguish the two positions. On the one hand, a regional head has political rights. On the other hand, he must maintain neutrality towards the apparatus under him so there is no potential conflict of interest in the bureaucratic realm. In these conditions, the bureaucracy is in a difficult position because it is prone to the influence of political interests (Prasojo, 2020).

For example, based on field identification at the simultaneous regional elections in 2018 and the last presidential election, more than 900 bureaucracies were allegedly involved in violations in conducting campaigns. These violations are moral and disciplined, including Taking pictures with the candidate's spouse, campaigning on social media, following the declaration, and becoming a successful team. Meanwhile, it was also found that many bureaucracies were not neutral in implementing the 2019 election (Nadjib et al., 2022).

Likewise, in Central Java, as many as 16 civil servants were recommended to be sanctioned by the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu); this is because they were declared not neutral in the 2019 election. This impartiality occurred from before the campaign until the campaign period in 14 regencies/cities in Central Java. In another case in South Sulawesi, the former Governor and 15 sub-districts in Makassar City supported the pair of presidential candidates, Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin (Zainuddin et al., 2022). During the 2019 election campaign, there were at least 20 daily reports on bureaucratic neutrality in Indonesia. The most frequently reported bureaucratic officials associated with bureaucratic neutrality were Regional Secretaries and Service Heads. According to the Chairman of KASN, Prof. Agus Pramusinto, based on data as of September 30, 2020, 694 bureaucracies were reported for neutrality violations (Atmojo et al., 2023).

In one of the author's discussions with Prof. Agus Pramusinto, at least according to him, three things, in general, are most often violated by civil servants, especially those related to social media, namely in every election, during my time as Chairman of KASN, many violations were committed by the bureaucracy (ASN), especially those related to social media such as: (i) being directly involved in supporting activities that lead to the alignment of one of the candidate spouses, (ii) disseminate any opinions both in print and online media and (iii) respond to politically nuanced content both orally and in writing in print and online. There are indications of bureaucratic impartiality in important election events (Pramusinto, 2023).

If you look at Law No. 7 of 2017, it is clear that the position of ASN (bureaucracy) in facing elections and their series, especially in 2024 which is held simultaneously to elect the President/Vice President, Members of the People's Representative Council (DPR) / Regional People's Representative

Council (DPRD) Province/Regency / City DPRD and Regional Representative Council (DPD) has been explained about the prohibitions that the bureaucracy cannot carry out. It is emphasized that the bureaucracy, including village heads, cannot participate in presidential or legislative election campaigns. Criminal sanctions have also been explained, such as if an ASN directs a candidate, it will be subject to one-year imprisonment and a fine of Rp. 15 million rupiah. What the village government apparatus did in holding an event entitled "Village National Gathering 2023" at the Indonesia Arena, Jakarta, on Sunday (11/19/2023) is to violate Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, as well as Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning Elections with the threat of imprisonment and fines if they are not neutral in the Election or Presidential Election (Kompas.com, 2023).

However, the bureaucracy has the political right to choose to channel its voting rights during the next election by freely selecting the pair of President/Vice Presidential candidates or legislative candidates according to their conscience. Bawaslu must supervise all bureaucracies and village heads because their positions are very vulnerable to the influence of invitations from the candidates' camp to direct certain candidates or candidates to be elected. In this position, it is sometimes difficult to refuse because of invitations or influence from successful teams or even from direct superiors who are not neutral.

In the 2024 election, the position of the bureaucracy is unique; on the one hand, the bureaucracy is given the right to vote, but on the other hand, it must be neutral. Must not be involved in campaigning, supporting, or being a successful team participating in the election, whether candidates for President / Vice President, candidates for regional leadership councils, or candidates for legislative members both Central, Provincial, or Regency / City. The position of the bureaucracy is different from that of the TNI/Polri, which does not have the right to vote, while the bureaucracy has the right to vote but does not favor one of the election participants. Bureaucratic neutrality is essential to avoid divisions among the bureaucracy that should serve all elements of society, from political parties, mass organizations, NGOs, and so on.

As the executor of the daily wheels of government, the bureaucracy must maintain neutrality in elections because if there is politicization among the bureaucracy, such as supporting certain candidates, it will interfere with the democratic process and potentially abuse power for political interests. If this happens, then elections with the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair are difficult to achieve, in addition to hampering services to the community, and this will impact the instability of state political life.

Regarding the provisions above, formalistic bureaucratic neutrality can be maintained, especially accompanied by intensive supervision. However, the situation on the ground can be said otherwise because, with the number of bureaucracies nationally reaching around 4.5 million people, it becomes interesting to be approached by presidential and legislative election participants. That, when we expect the bureaucracy to be neutral, is like a "hump longing for the moon". Because the position of the bureaucracy is different from the TNI / Polri, which adheres to the line of command from top to bottom and does not have voting rights, its neutral attitude is relatively easy to maintain. However, it is suspected that many 'police officers' side with certain candidates. Unlike the position of the bureaucracy that works for the government, the helm is determined by the number of votes from the results of elections both in the regions and the centre.

Such conditions cause his neutral attitude to be shaken because of the orders of his superiors. Then, what happens is that the bureaucracy can spread its partisan influence in a chain and secretly to its work environment, the lower levels, and even the environment where it lives. It is difficult to free the bureaucracy from its vacillation and be neutral during the election because its voting rights are contested by-election participants as power seekers, especially their superiors or leaders. How do we expect the bureaucracy to be neutral in the presidential or regional elections if such a situation occurs?

In maintaining neutrality, according to the author in the name of neutrality, the state is immersed in its political paranoia. Bureaucratic neutrality is no longer to ensure public services but is far stuck on controlling the body and mind of the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is regulated not to comment on social media, like, post, etc. Not only the body but the political mind of the bureaucracy is also set to serve the word "neutrality". Neutrality aims to keep the spirit of the bureaucracy to remain professional and focus on its duties. However, in practice, which happens although not openly, in several cases, there is always a phenomenon of bureaucratic impartiality even though it is still categorized at a moderate level.

The bureaucracy as a public servant must not show its partiality; there must be no different community treatment because of various political choices. The bureaucracy may freely use its voice in elections. However, the bureaucracy must maintain neutrality and not side with any political party. In this political year and before the 2024 elections, the bureaucracy must behave neutrally to hold hands, fingers, gestures, and words expressing certain candidate pairs. Uploads of content related to support for election participants, such as pictures, photos, comments, and liking posts that smell of partiality to certain candidates, will be sanctioned.

The number of neutrality violations is not followed by the firmness of implementing sanctions/penalties against the violating bureaucracy. Sanctions/penalties against non-neutral bureaucracy have yet to be implemented optimally so that there is no deterrent effect for those who violate them. In addition, there are often delays in imposing sanctions for bureaucracy that are proven to break. Under certain conditions, for example, in regional elections, the bureaucracy and the candidates work together to win the regional elections, especially if the candidates come from the incumbent or the bureaucracy. As a result of the support process carried out by bureaucratic officials and provincial bureaucracy, regional head elections will significantly influence bureaucratic institutions.

The situation is well known to the passion that the bureaucracy must be neutral, but the reality still uses bureaucracy to support it. Violations of bureaucratic neutrality still occur because there are weak points in policies and constraints on implementing regulations, so bureaucratic neutrality does not have clear standards and criteria, resulting in weak law enforcement. Therefore, the need for supervision to realize bureaucratic neutrality will be discussed in the next sub-discussion.

Supervision Realizing Bureaucratic Neutrality

One essential aspect of enforcing bureaucratic neutrality is the supervisory aspect. An effective bureaucratic supervision system is needed to ensure that the bureaucracy, in carrying out its duties, complies with applicable laws and regulations and creates a professional and accountable bureaucracy.

According to Laski (2017), bureaucracy is considered to have such great power, and large official power can threaten bureaucratic freedom. Likewise, with a control system entirely in the hands of bureaucratic officials, it is important to limit and supervise. In line with Laski, according to Husain (2001), it is necessary to build a cultured bureaucracy and rational-egalitarian structure, not an irrational-hierarchical. You do this by training to appreciate the use of common sense and use the results of science. It is necessary to have a pioneering spirit, not maintain a culture of 'asking for guidance' from superiors.

Therefore, it is necessary to get used to finding new practical ways of public service, initiative, anticipatory and proactive, intelligently reading the state of general needs, looking at everyone as equal before the law, respecting the principle of human equality, everyone who deals is treated with equal importance. Related to bureaucratic supervision, Bach T (2021) provide an overview of methods of bureaucratic control from political, administrative, internal, and external aspects (see Table 3).

Table 3. Bureaucratic Control Methods

Political	External

Supervision by political officials	Media surveillance
Oversight by the legislature	NGO Supervision
	Supervision of CSOs
	Student Supervision
	Public opinion
Administrative	**Internal**
Judicial supervision	Professional norms and ethics
Ombudsman	Conscience
Interagency competition	
System administration	
Standard performance	
Internal auditor	

Source: Adopted from Nadel & Rouke (1975).

The method offered by Bach T (2021) is very good for controlling bureaucratic power both from the political aspect of carried out supervision by political and legislative officials, from the administrative aspect of legal and judicial oversight, from the internal aspect on the side of professional norms and ethics, and the external element of supervision also by the public, students, and the media.

However, the obstacle that sometimes arises is the issue of implementation. In political control, for example, how can it be controlled by political authority if bureaucracy and politics are 'cheating' for a particular interest in elections? Candidates need the support of a majority of votes to win an election. This forces certain activities to influence the bureaucracy and various groups of society that are considered to have significant influence (see Table 4).

Table 4. Bureaucratic Destructive Factors from Political Aspects

No	Shape	Negative Effects
1	Great power	Abuse of authority
		Monopoly of authority
		Arrogance attitude
		No balanced control
2	Centralization of Command	Dependence of subordinates on superiors
		Orientation not to society
		Undeveloped local potential
		Difficult to solve problems
		Inflict domino damage
3	Closed organization	No direct control
		The Emergence of KKN
		Irrational recruitment patterns

Source: Setiyono (2012).

The table describes several damaging factors in the bureaucracy, including Great power, centralization of command, and closed organization. But some issues that are no less important and of concern are recruitment problems. One factor that influences the performance and public service of the bureaucracy is not optimal due to public positions or bureaucratic officials who are not their experts. However, how can the merit system be appropriately run when the system is politicized in such a way that some positions are occupied by people involved in electoral activities?

This will be a public concern when almost all post-election bureaucratic positions are carried out with considerable mutations. However, it is done with a job auction package. However, the public still questioned whether it was true that the names entered as officials were purely auctions for office. Or will it be that after the 2024 presidential election, professional bureaucrats will fill the positions in the bureaucracy, not those supported by the winning political party? This question often becomes a fear and becomes unfair competition within the bureaucracy. This was the beginning of the bureaucracy,

which began to encounter the people of the political parties that won the presidential election to secure their positions in the government bureaucracy.

The hope for bureaucratic professionalism today has not been seen in the reform era until now. However, corruption, collusion, and nepotism are still rife in Indonesia. Regulations and rules on bureaucratic neutrality and professionalism are just procedural symbols of bureaucracy. Bureaucratic impartiality is displayed by 'single' bureaucrats in every election. The State Civil Apparatus (bureaucracy) ignores various regulations on bureaucratic neutrality, which should be important in keeping elections running democratically and fairly.

There is hope that an inseparable part of efforts to realize good governance and bureaucratic reform is the establishment of a non-structural institution as regulated in Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, namely the existence of the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN). Article 27 of the ASN Law states that "KASN is a non-structural institution that is independent and free from political intervention to create professional and performing civil servants, provide services fairly and neutrally, and become the glue and unifier of the nation".

The presence of KASN provides evidence that the fields of state administration are increasingly developing and varied. It is needed to carry out the duties and functions of the state. The equipment or institutions established through the constitution often cannot accommodate the development of state administrative needs. Increasingly varied developments often require a special forum with the appropriate abilities and expertise to realize a constitutional expectation and mandate. Thus, forming new fittings or organs (institutions) such as KASN borrowing the theory of Von Buri (1873) is a condition sine qua non for the country's growth in the third millennium era.

One of the objectives of establishing KASN is to create neutral bureaucratic employees. The biggest focus for KASN is to maintain the dignity of the bureaucracy and always act neutrally for the state's interests. Of course, this is not easy for KASN, but the framer of the Law has given the authority. High hopes are placed on KASN to be able to enforce various laws and regulations consistently and realize a neutral bureaucracy.

Often, civil servants are afraid to avoid intervention from their superiors because of concerns about the fate of their sustainability in the government bureaucracy. With the existence of KASN, all policies and bureaucratic management are always monitored so that someone is not easily demoted (demoted) or increased (promotion) without a clear basis and under the criteria. This is because bureaucratic management uses a merit system, "that bureaucratic management policies based on qualifications, competencies, and performance are fair and reasonable without distinction of political background, race, colour, religion, origin, sex, marital status, age or record conditions" (Article 1 paragraph 22 of the ASN Law).

The existence of KASN is expected to be a bulwark for the bureaucracy that has been upholding the spirit of bureaucratic neutrality over bureaucratic politicization that harms the state. Conversely, if a bureaucracy conducts political practices or is loyal to parties that harm the state, KASN can recommend sanctions to the Civil Service Development Officer and authorized officials for follow-up (Article 32 paragraph 3 of the ASN Law).

In conducting supervision, KASN is authorized to decide on violations of the code of ethics and code of conduct of bureaucratic employees. The supervision results are submitted to the Personnel Development Officer and authorized officials for follow-up. For Personnel Development Officers who need to follow up on the decisions of the results of KASN's supervision, KASN recommends to the President to impose sanctions on Personnel Development Officers and authorized officials who violate the principles of the merit system and the provisions of laws and regulations.

Following the regulations in the ASN Law, the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (Kemenpan-RB) and the State Apparatus Commission (KASN) have considerable authority in maintaining and supervising the issue of bureaucratic neutrality in Indonesia at every

election event. Independent institutions free from political interference have existed, and the rules on bureaucratic neutrality have been completed. The question is, can the bureaucracy be neutral from political politicization? And does bureaucracy need constant scrutiny? It's up to actors, political elites, and bureaucracies to position themselves.

CONCLUSION

The expectation of bureaucratic neutrality, although it has been discussed conceptually and theoretically by various groups of scholars, still faces challenges in its implementation. Factors such as the political system of government and the socio-political conditions of society are the main determinants that hinder the achievement of these goals. The history of the Indonesian bureaucracy also shows that the close relationship between bureaucracy and politics has damaged the mentality and performance of the bureaucratic apparatus for some time. Although bureaucratic reform has been initiated since 1998, challenges continue to arise, primarily related to the politicization of the bureaucracy, which is still rampant. In facing the 2024 elections, it is essential to remember the bureaucracy's strategic role and the community's political rights in choosing leaders with leadership capacity and commitment to prosper the people and better organize the country. To overcome the politicization of bureaucracy, strict enforcement of bureaucratic neutrality rules is needed, as commitment from all bureaucracy, as well as strict supervision and law enforcement. Comprehensive socialization to all bureaucracies and the active role of other stakeholders, such as political parties, is the key to maintaining bureaucratic integrity and neutrality in public service duties.

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