

How Local Bureaucrats Utilize Non-Governmental Political Actors in Their Struggle to Reach Political Post

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ABSTRACT

The opportunity for local bureaucrats to transform into public officials through local elections in Indonesia is wide open. With technical-administrative expertise, control over financial resources and personnel development, high social status in the community, and roles in formulating public policies within government organizations, bureaucrats can easily rally political support from both governmental and non-governmental political actors. Effective political communication links with regional heads and deputies, as well as legislators, can be more easily established by relying on these sources of power. However, under certain conditions, these variables are not sufficient to convince the political parties to immediately provide support, particularly when the bureaucrat touted as a candidate is known to have a poor image and performance record in the eyes of political authorities. Using a descriptive-phenomenological research method, this study seeks to explore and find other factors utilized by bureaucrats to convince political parties to support their candidacy for deputy head of region. Through interviews with key informants and significant others, as well as a literature review relevant to the research substance, it was found that in addition to political actors within the government, there are other political actors outside the government such as charismatic community leaders and heads of social organizations in a paternalistic society that can help bureaucrats gain political party support in their candidacy as deputies head of region in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

The bureaucracy harbors at least two interests: idealistic-normative and realistic-pragmatic. In the former, the bureaucracy aims at the collective public interest, while in the latter, it pursues its own subjective benefits. The provision of public facilities such as roads, bridges, hospitals, school buildings, and mass transportation facilities falls into the first category, while increasing budget allocations, organizing competency education and training, enhancing employee performance allowances fall into the second category.

In order to fulfill these interests, the bureaucracy establishes relationships and interacts with stakeholders, especially political and administrative officials at various levels. Relying on the skills it possesses, the experience it has, and the authority it holds according to statutory regulations, the bureaucracy tries to influence decision-making to align with its interests, both idealistic-normative and realistic-pragmatic.

The interaction of bureaucracy with political stakeholders is dynamic. Its movements are influenced by many variables, ranging from shifts in political power (Zhang, Zhao, & Krott, 2023; Christensen, et al., 2014; Boyne, et al., 2010; Dahlstrom & Holmgren, 2019), the type and level of required administrative-technical expertise (Christensen, 2024; Christensen & Forato, 2022; Peters & Pierre, 2022; Dijkstra, 2017; Ege, et al., 2021), to the bureaucracy's attitude towards political interventions (Bersch & Lotta, 2024). Changes in the regime often lead to consequences such as the reorganization of structures and personnel within the bureaucracy. This impacts the promotion of those seen as accommodating and supportive towards the policies of the new rulers. Conversely, transfers or even demotions are applied to personnel within the bureaucracy who are seen as hindering or even resisting against the succeeding government.

Additionally, the level of individual expertise within the bureaucracy also affects the actions of the new rulers towards bureaucrats in a work unit. Those who possess the necessary skills are relatively safe from marginalization, while those who have not such skills have a high chance of being transferred to minor units. However, under certain circumstances bureaucrats who were not in line with the new government choose not to remain silent about the changes made. They may openly criticize the policy, or even sabotage the decisions of political officials.

Most of these studies discuss the political dynamics that occur between bureaucracy and political officials within

governmental organizations. Meanwhile, interactions between the bureaucracy and political actors outside government organizations have not been extensively studied, especially those examining how high-level bureaucracy attempts to influence non-governmental political actors to support their attainment of political positions.

This research aims to develop studies on political and administrative dynamics by expanding the scope of study to the efforts of high-level administrative officials at the district/city level in Indonesia to hold political office as deputies head of region by influencing non-governmental political actors, both individual and institutional.

The research was conducted in two areas: North Lombok District in West Nusa Tenggara Province and Sukoharjo District in Central Java Province. The choice of these two districts was based on several reasons. First, in both districts, there are high-level administrative officials, namely the regional secretaries, who have managed to hold their positions beyond the normal term limit of five years. Regulations regarding the tenure of regional secretaries in Indonesia stipulate that a regional secretary holds office for a maximum of five years. This term can be extended if approved by the Personnel Development Official, which is the regent at the district level and the governor at the provincial level, after first coordinating with the National Civil Service Commission. In other words, to continue serving as a regional secretary after five years, one must convince the regent that they are not problematic in terms of performance and are able to cooperate with the regional head who is their superior. Therefore, the ability of the Regional Secretaries of North Lombok and Sukoharjo to remain in their positions for more than five years is a phenomenon worth studying.

North Lombok's Regional Secretary SU was able to maintain his position as regional secretary for 10 years (2010-2020) despite changes in the political leadership of the North Lombok government. SU was not dismissed or transferred from his position even though the coalition of political parties supporting the regional head and deputy regional head changed formation. The same goes for AS. He held the position of Regional Secretary of Sukoharjo for more than eight years, from January 21, 2012, to August 1, 2020. However, unlike SU, who had to navigate through changes in political leadership and supporting party coalitions, AS had a relatively smooth tenure in carrying out his duties. During his term as regional secretary, AS served a regent supported by the PDI Perjuangan party, namely WW.

Secondly, both SU and AS in Sukoharjo ran as candidates for deputy regent in the 2020 local elections. SU partnered with the incumbent regent candidate NA in North Lombok, while AS accompanied ES, the Sukoharjo regent candidate who was also the wife of the incumbent regent WW, who could no longer run due to regulatory constraints.

The phenomenon of SU and AS running for deputy regent in the 2020 local elections shows that the opportunity for transformation from administrative officials to political post is wide open. With all the authority attached to the position of regional secretary, SU and AS sought to gain support from the political parties, to occupy political positions. In addition, SU and AS also utilized their administrative expertise to garner appreciation from political actors within the government such as regional heads, deputy regional heads, and legislators in the DPRD. The satisfaction level of these actors was then exchanged for support in their nominations as deputy regional heads.

Besides rallying support from political actors within the local government organizations, local bureaucrats also rely on external political actors to act as guarantors in the process of rallying political support. This study aims to gather information on which external political actors are utilized by bureaucrats to convince political parties to support their candidacy as deputy regional heads. It also details how these bureaucrats utilize the said political actors to cover their weaknesses while convincing political parties to provide support in their nomination.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between politics and bureaucracy is reciprocal. At times, politics influences bureaucracy, and at other times, the reverse occurs bureaucracy influences politics. Some scholars refer to the first condition as the 'red zone,' while the second is called the 'blue zone.' When both meet and influence each other in a strategic conversation, a situation called the 'purple zone' arises, which is a scenario where politics and bureaucracy engage in reciprocal dialogue to produce a strategic policy (Bello & Spano, 2015).

The dynamics of the relationship between politics and bureaucracy are influenced by many factors, including the character and nature of the ruling regime, whether it is populist or technocratic. Populist political rulers, who are opportunistic and rely on leadership strength based on the personality aspects of their figures, tend to dominate the executive and sideline the ideological aspects of organizations and institutions (Weyland, 2021). Populist governments often ignore and even attack experts and scientists within the bureaucracy, which

generally does not occur in democratic-technocratic administrations (Lockwood, 2018). Furthermore, populist leaders sometimes recruit outsiders who lack an understanding of the duties and issues faced by an institution. As a result, rather than solving institutional performance problems, what happens instead is a disruption of the existing work system and a reduction in the performance that has been achieved. In short, with the inclusion of these outsiders, populist governments face resistance from career bureaucrats within the organization who feel threatened by the presence of outsiders appointed directly by politicians (Moynihan, 2022).

However, under certain conditions, technocratic-populist collaboration may occur. Populist politicians will invite bureaucracy to collaborate when they receive a positive image of performance and loyalty from the bureaucracy and believe that the bureaucrats can be utilized and relied upon to implement the desired changes. Conversely, if the existing bureaucracy is viewed as not beneficial to the interests of populist rulers, then sabotage, removal, ostracism, and even institutional dissolution become inevitable (Bauer & Becker, 2020).

After enjoying stable democracy from the early 2000s until the early 2010s, Indonesia is now part of the global surge in populism (Mietzner, 2020). Scholars have different classifications regarding the types of populism in Indonesia. Mietzner (2020) divides it into three main currents of populism: chauvinism, Islamism, and technocratic developmentism, while Hadiz & Robison (2017) categorize it into two: secular-nationalist and Islamist. Meanwhile, Ahmad (2020) adds to the classification made by Hadiz & Robison by dividing the Islamist group into two: those who accept Pancasila as the national ideology and those who advocate for Islam as the state ideology while rejecting the views of pluralist-liberals in the context of state governance.

Furthermore, Mietzner states that these groups vie for influence through various narratives, from threats to religious and ethnic identities to economic disparities and injustices. In the context of the interaction between bureaucracy and both governmental and non-governmental political actors, which is the main focus of this research, the characteristics of populist regimes as outlined above also serve as a framework for explaining how bureaucracy employs its strategies to advocate for its interests in gaining political support. This is done primarily by leveraging Islamism as a key tool.

The interests of bureaucracy, according to Macalou (2010), can be explained from two perspectives: pursuing public interest (social welfare maximizer) and chasing personal interests (self-interest seekers). The first perspective believes that every bureaucrat desires the realization of general welfare and collective good. Scholars who adhere to this view include Bentham, Von Mises, Weber, Bardhan, and Das (Macalou, 2010). Weber's principle of impersonality in the ideal type of bureaucracy, for example, clearly asserts that personal aspects including personal interests are typically not involved in the bureaucracy's operational behavior.

Similarly, the spirit of advancing public welfare in bureaucracies of newly independent countries is prominent. Bardhan found that bureaucrats in these countries generally prioritize the ideals of collective good over personal gain. Various studies they conducted indicate that this motive of public interest serves as a guideline and compass directing every movement, attitude, and action taken and decision made.

Contrary to Weber, Bardhan, and other aforementioned scholars, other researchers like Tullocks, Downs, Niskanen, and Bates believe that instead of championing public interests, every bureaucrat essentially places their personal interests at the top of their priority list for motives and reasons behind every chosen attitude and action. Bates, in his study in sub-Saharan Africa, found that bureaucrats extensively profited from the industrialization process in the region by imposing costs more akin to bribes for each service provided to citizens. Meanwhile, Tullock, Niskanen, and Krueger found that every bureaucrat is a rational individual who consistently strives to maximize personal interests, including salary, power, reputation, patronage, and ease of work.

This second perspective is the substance echoed by public choice theory. Combining the logic of economics with political science, this theory assumes that every person, including bureaucrats and political agents, is rational. This means that every attitude taken and action performed typically aims to maximize personal benefits, with as little cost as possible in return.

Bureaucratic Interaction with Political Actors

A political actor refers to individuals who have obtained at least some measure of political power and/or authority in a particular society and engage in activities that can significantly influence decisions, policies, media coverage, and outcomes associated with a given conflict (Wolfsfeld, 2015).

Political actors can be divided into two categories: governmental political actors and non-governmental political

actors. Governmental political actors are unique entities that perform at least one of three functions: executive, legislative, and judicial. In the context of district government in Indonesia, these political actors are represented by the district local government and the District Leadership Communication Forum (FORKOPIMDA).

The district local government is the organizer of local government affairs at the district level, consisting of the regent and the district DPRD (District People's Representative Council), while FORKOPIMDA is a deliberative forum of government leaders in the region formed with the goal of accelerating the resolution of multidimensional general government affairs in the region that require quick handling. This forum is led by the regent and includes the chair of the district DPRD, the Chief of Police of the Area, the District State Prosecutor, the territorial military unit leaders in the region, and other agencies as needed.

Meanwhile, non-governmental political actors manifest in the form of individuals or civil society organizations that include various groups such as labor unions, religious organizations, social organizations, or professional organizations (Sintos & Kontos, 2024) that work to influence public policy or the direction of political development. Smith & Yackee (2024) summarize these actors interacting with bureaucracy as key political principals, consisting of elected executives, legislators, and interest groups.

Regarding which actors have the most significant influence on the substance of public policy and political decisions produced, this can be analyzed using four approaches: majoritarian electoral democracy, economic-elite domination, majoritarian pluralism, and biased pluralism (Gilens & Page, 2014).

Majoritarian pluralism argues that public policy and political decisions are influenced by one or a combination of organized interest groups that most represent the communities in society. This is contested by the perspective of biased pluralism, which states that public policy and political decisions are influenced by a handful of organized interest groups that more significantly represent corporations, professionals, and other business groups.

Research conducted by Gilens & Page (2014) on 1,779 public policy issues found that economic elites and groups representing business interests have the greatest influence on the substance of public policy in the United States. According to Domhoff (in Gilens & Page, 2014), these economic elites operate through various means, including foundations, think-tank consulting firms, political lobbyists, public opinion leaders, to funded politicians. Despite elections with observable vote results, in essence, it is still the economic elites who truly influence the substance of the public policies that are formulated and implemented. The findings of their research strengthen the theoretical basis of economic-elite domination and biased-pluralism theory.

If the formation of public policy and political decisions are heavily influenced by economic elites and business interest groups, what about political decision-making during the nomination stages for deputy heads of region in North Lombok District and Sukoharjo District? Which political actors are most decisive in shaping the final stance and opinions of political parties?

Dynamics of Political and Bureaucratic Relationships

In interactions with political officials, bureaucracy has two strategic options: cooperative-collaborative and coercive-confrontational. When government administrative officials fully support the policy process from planning to evaluation, bureaucracy is engaging in a cooperative-collaborative strategy. Conversely, if senior bureaucrats acting as managers of government administration ignore, oppose, or even sabotage policies decided by political officials who are both partners and superordinates, then bureaucracy is choosing a coercive-confrontational strategy.

The cooperative-collaborative strategy can be implemented in various forms, including politics of ideas, politics of public service distribution, politics of budget allocation, and politics of personnel policy.

Politics of ideas involves contributing ideas and thoughts for the initiation and innovation of policies aimed at improving organizational performance and enhancing the quality of public services. An example of substantive politics of this model was during the New Order era when observers, thinkers, and economists in Indonesia proposed the concept of economic deregulation that maximized opportunities for actors other than the state to participate and be involved in economic activities. This idea was proposed to replace dirigisme policies that assumed an absolute role of the government in controlling and driving the economy (Mallarangeng, 2000).

Meanwhile, the politics of public service distribution are carried out by allocating certain goods, services, and public services to specific groups desired through the mechanism of political decision-making (Golden and Min, 2013). A similar approach can be taken in the stages of determining priorities and allocating public budgets. If

the politics of public service distribution includes goods, services, and services, then the politics of budget allocation, which Fregetto (1997) refers to as distributive politics, includes providing specific budgets for programs, activities, or support for certain parties or specific community groups.

Another cooperative-collaborative strategy is through personnel policy politics. The mode is done by choosing one of two models of personnel recruitment policy, namely whether to apply the principle of pure meritocracy based on competence or to give opportunities for affirmative policies that consider not only competence but also the aspect of representation of underrepresented community groups in the bureaucracy organization (Kuipers, 2022).

Meanwhile, the coercive-confrontational strategy in bureaucracy politics, according to Iraulo & Boateng (2023), can include bargaining for more authority, challenging the political class, using the threat of resignation, or bureaucratic acquiescence. This strategy, under certain conditions, can be justified, especially when the ruling government threatens the values of democracy that are already in place (Bauer, 2023). Bureaucratic disagreement with political decisions issued by political officials is sometimes manifested by demanding to expand or add authority to the bureaucratic unit in one or more provisions of legislation. The claim of insufficient authority is often presented as a reason for not implementing the policies of political officials, thus the expansion of authority is made a prerequisite for the implementation of a policy. In certain situations, the threat of resignation by administrative officials becomes one of the most frontal forms of expression to state their disagreement with the policies taken by political officials. In other conditions, bureaucratic disagreement is manifested silently, not because they lack the capacity and competence to criticize, oppose, or reject the policy substance, but because the institutional structure, organizational norms, and material resources available do not support them to take a different stance.

Facing 'resistance' from bureaucracy, which is broadly defined as action or inaction within the executive branch that hinders executive movement (Ingber, R. (2018), the ruling government can apply several strategies, including bashing bureaucrats (Caillier 2020), centralizing structures and resources, politicizing staff and norms (Story et al. 2023), forcing new budget cuts, reducing organizational autonomy, and interfering in technical decisions (Bauer and Becker 2020; Bauer et al. 2021; Caillier 2020; Hassan 2020; Drapalova, 2023), and even in some cases targeting the mental and health conditions of bureaucrats (Lotta & Tavares, 2024). In simpler terms, politicians have three strategic options for dealing with and controlling bureaucracy: sidelining, ignoring, or using it (Bauer et al. 2021; Peters and Pierre 2019; Rockman 2020).

Political control over bureaucracy aims to ensure bureaucratic compliance with the policies made by political officials (Bersch & Lotta, 2024). Examples of how political officials attempt to control bureaucracy can be observed in several countries, including Hungary, Venezuela, Mexico, and Brazil.

Populist leader Viktor Orban in Hungary targeted bureaucratic control as a policy priority at the beginning of his term. He abolished career bureaucracy positions, allowed for the dismissal of administrative officials without cause, eliminated stratification, disregarded expertise in positions, and implemented centralized government budgeting and spending. Similar actions were taken by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, as well as the ruling regimes in Mexico. They restructured state institutions, and some were even dissolved. They also forced their officials to resign and reduced budget allocations to some institutions. In Brazil, Bolsonaro even repealed various policies related to the previous government and replaced them with new policies that paved the way for military elements to fill civil positions in the bureaucracy.

One variable that can neutralize political influence and intervention into bureaucracy is a meritocratic recruitment system based on expertise (Bersch & Lotta, 2024). This system can even reduce the rate of employee transfers from one unit to another. This is supported by research conducted by Suzuki & Hur (2024) and Askim, et al. (2024), which found that public servants working in more closed and regulated bureaucracies exhibit lower turnover intention. Conversely, public servants working in more politicized bureaucracies where personnel decisions are made via political connections have higher turnover intentions than those working in more merit-based systems. To prevent political intervention in bureaucracy from worsening the quality of democracy, Yesilkagit et al. (2024) propose a concept called The Guardian State, which is the strengthening of institutional instruments to protect the principle of bureaucratic neutrality.

How Bureaucrat Influences Political Actors?

Expertise is the main capital for bureaucrats to increase their bargaining power in front of political officials. Politicians need the expertise of civil service bureaucrats to produce effective and accommodating public

policies. The type of expertise required by these politicians can change over time, space, and the substance of the policies formulated. This change opens opportunities for the establishment of understanding through expertise transactions between politicians and bureaucrats in a situation called 'expertise bargains' (Christensen, 2024; Christensen & Forato, 2022).

Besides professional expertise, according to Guy Peters, the strength of the bureaucracy lies in its status as the personification of the state, its control over data and information, its strategic role in public decision-making, its high social status in the community, and its permanent and stable institutional nature (Setiyono, 2016). Further, Setiyono (2016) reveals that bureaucracy becomes politically powerful due to three things: ownership of power resource assets, a special role in the community, and a strategic position in the relations between the people and the rulers.

Complementing the views of Peters and Setiyono, Smith (2009) in his research in North Maluku found that the control of state resources is a determining factor in the success of political-government figures in the region in maintaining their status and position amidst the dynamics of power transition from the New Order to the Reform era. With control over resources, including control over government aid contracts for communities in conflict areas, government elites can expand their political support base both within government organizations and in the community. Therefore, it is natural for politicians to try various ways to influence and control the bureaucracy. Without bureaucratic support, politicians would struggle not only in communicating their power visions but also face many obstacles during the implementation of their policies.

Similarly, the social status of bureaucrats in the community plays a crucial role. With the designation of government administration managers and public service managers who handle all the needs and necessities of the community, bureaucrats enjoy social privileges that facilitate their interactions with various community components. Moreover, if coupled with a particular social identity that shares similarities with the local community, the chances of bureaucrats being accepted into certain communities become even easier. In the context of policy, social identity similarity will influence the distribution of policy benefits (Favero, 2024).

Expertise, control of resources, social status, and roles in public decision-making become the main capital for bureaucracy in influencing political actors both within and outside government organizations. This research expands the study not only on the description of how these variables work but also on how this capital is exchanged for political gains in efforts to achieve political office through local elections.

3. METHOD

The researcher uses a qualitative type of research method with a case study approach, namely interpretive research where the researcher makes an interpretation of what is seen, heard, and understood from a phenomenon that exists in society at one time and event (Creswell, 2012). The research informants included former regents, DPRD leaders, political party leaders, Chairman of the North Lombok Regency KPU and parties or individuals who knew about this research event. The researcher uses Miles and Huberman's theory (1994; 10-12) with the first step of collecting research data, then the data is displayed, followed by data processing until a conclusion is obtained from the interview. Record what is produced in the field and provide codes in the form of narratives and tables so that the data is easy to record and search. In this process, at the same time, data is matched between one informant and another informant in support of this research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in two regions, each with its own uniqueness. North Lombok District, with its high ethnic, cultural and political dynamics, and Sukoharjo District, which is relatively homogeneous with milder political dynamics.

North Lombok District is located between the islands of Bali and Sumbawa. Its population is dominated by the Sasak tribe, whose customs are formed from a blend of two cultures: Balinese and Malay. The Balinese influence comes from the Karangasem Kingdom, which ruled Lombok for approximately two centuries, while the Malay influence comes from Islamic preachers who arrived later.

Most of the Sasak population practices Islam, with some groups particularly in the Bayan District still practicing syncretic ancestral traditions known as Islam wetu telu. This tradition differs from the mainstream Islamic groups that practice Islamic teachings according to sharia (fiquhiyyah) known as Islam wetu lima. In addition to Islam wetu telu and Islam wetu lima, the Sasak community also has a tradition known as Sasak Boda, which is heavily influenced by animism, dynamism, and phantasm.

The social structure of the Sasak community is divided into three groups: nobility (menak), religious scholars (tuan guru), and ordinary people (jajarkarang). The existence of nobility in Sasak society has roots in the history of Lombok, which was once ruled by several kingdoms, including the Kingdoms of Lombok, Langko, Pejanggik, Parwa, Sokong, Bayan, and Karangasem. The heritage of aristocratic cultural traditions and customs still reasonably permeates the daily life of Sasak society, such as in matters of marriage and inheritance.

Meanwhile, the presence of tuan guru has historical roots when Islam first entered Lombok through the intermediary of the preacher Prince Prapen, the son of Sunan Giri. The title tuan guru is a combination of two terms: tuan, an honorific title for those who have performed the Hajj pilgrimage, and guru, a term for someone who teaches religious and other sciences. Tuan guru is an honorary title conferred by the community to religious scholars in West Nusa Tenggara (Oktara, 2015). Therefore, a tuan guru is typically a religious leader, owner and/or teacher at educational institutions such as pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools) and/or madrasahs, has many followers (study group members, students), and possesses charisma in the community.

The communication between a tuan guru and their followers is paternalistic, characterized by father-like communication, protective, and demanding obedience (Putrawan, 2014). The relationship between a tuan guru and the community is that of a leader (imam) to the led (makmum) and is asymmetric because the former exerts greater influence on the latter, but not vice versa. With their charisma, tuan gurus perform various roles and functions, ranging from a leader, a liaison, to a figurehead in the community.

Like the title kyai in Java, tuan guru is also closely associated with the ownership of religious educational institutions such as pesantrens and madrasahs. Besides impacting their social status in the community, tuan gurus' involvement in education also brings opportunities and challenges in the realm of political power. The charisma and social networks of tuan gurus are particularly attractive to political actors and power-seekers competing for support in Indonesia's current populist political system. Consequently, tuan gurus are drawn into the political arena, both directly as election participants and indirectly through endorsements and blessings.

The 'jajarkarang' represents the ordinary people who do not inherit noble blood and lack extensive and in-depth knowledge of religious sciences. They constitute the majority of the Sasak tribal community.

In terms of political and governmental affairs, including bureaucratic organizations, the noble and tuan guru groups have significant roles and influence compared to the jajarkarang community. This is understandable considering that traditionally, these two community groups are seen as meeting both technical and experiential qualifications to manage public and governmental affairs.

Politics in North Lombok is relatively dynamic. The distribution of political party seats in parliament is not dominated by one or two specific political forces. If the initial formation of the North Lombok District government's parliament was based on the election results of its parent district, West Lombok, then the actual electoral political map of North Lombok was only revealed during the 2014 elections.

In the 2014 legislative elections, the Democratic Party emerged as the winner with five seats, followed by the Golkar Party in second place with four seats, and then PDI Perjuangan, Gerindra Party, PAN, and Hanura, each sharing three seats equally.

A different outcome occurred in the 2019 legislative elections. The Democratic Party lost one seat, ceding the top parliamentary position to the Gerindra Party, which gained an additional two seats, rising from three to five seats. Meanwhile, the runner-up position was still held by the Golkar Party with four seats. PAN, PKB, and PBB each gained one seat, while Hanura lost all of its three seats.

In North Lombok District, the social structure of the community consists of three levels: menak, tuan guru, and jajarkarang, whereas in Sukoharjo District, the social stratification is relatively simpler. The social community is only divided into two groups: the nobility along with government bureaucracy employees in the upper position, and ordinary people in the lower position. In terms of religiosity specifically Islam, the Sukoharjo community can be categorized into two groups: Abangan Islam and Puritan Islam. The former group consists of community members who identify or are administratively recognized as Muslims but do not fully practice the rituals of Islamic teachings as taught by religious doctrine, while the latter group identifies their Islam not only on an administrative aspect but also on the substantive aspect of daily ritual worship. If political dynamics in North Lombok are dynamic, this is not the case in Sukoharjo. The politics of government in Sukoharjo is relatively mild. The parliament is dominated by one political force based on the Abangan group, namely PDI Perjuangan. From one election to the next conducted post-reform, PDI Perjuangan has consistently emerged as the winner with a convincing number of seats.

Table 1. Political Party Seat Results for Sukoharjo District DPRD Elections 2004-2019

Party	2004	2009	2014	2019
PDI Perjuangan	17	19	22	20
Partai Golkar	7	6	5	5
PKB	1	1	3	3
Demokrat	4	4	2	1
Gerindra	-	-	5	5
PPP	3	2	0	0
PKS	5	4	1	5
PAN	7	5	5	5
Nasdem	-	-	2	1
Hanura	-	1	0	0
PBB	-	3	0	0
PKPI	1	-	-	-
Jumlah	45	45	45	45

To explore information on how bureaucracy influences political actors both within and outside government organizations, the following will discuss the interaction of high-level administrative officials in each region with the parties representing political entities in each area.

Interaction of Bureaucrats with Government Political Actors

The close relationship between Regional Secretary SU and Regent DS and Deputy Regent NA began with the formation of the committee for establishing North Lombok District. SU, who was then a support staff member of the committee, assisted them with administrative and budgeting matters. Due to his highly supportive role in all activities of the North Lombok District formation committee, SU was trusted to hold several positions, eventually reaching the peak as the regional secretary when Deputy Regent NA was promoted to Regent of North Lombok District in the subsequent term.

Although SU succeeded in reaching the highest peak of the administrative government position, his journey was not without obstacles. The DS-NA duo as the head and deputy head of the region for the 2010-2015 term was disrupted midway when DS suspected NA of intending to run for regent for the 2015-2020 term. NA's intention threatened DS's position as regent. In that situation filled with mutual suspicion, SU tended to side more with NA than with DS. He did so for a rational reason: NA had closeness with NTB Governor Tuan Guru Bajang H.M. Zainul Majdi. As fellow leaders of Nahdlatul Wathon (NW), NA could communicate with Governor TGB H.M. Zainul Majdi anytime and about almost anything with almost no obstacles. This fact was important for SU because, at the same time, the regulations for the appointment and dismissal of regional secretaries stipulate that the governor has the authority to approve or reject someone for the position of regional secretary at the district/city level. As a result, even though DS did not receive enough support from SU in administrative affairs, DS failed to shift SU's position from his role as regional secretary. In fact, SU's position became even more solid when NA was later elected as the Regent of North Lombok District for the 2015-2020 period.

In contrast to the dynamic interaction between SU and the district head and deputy district head, AS's interaction with Regent WW was smooth. In his capacity as a bureaucratic official, AS had already frequently interacted with WW, who at the time was serving as the Chairperson of the DPRD (District Legislative Council) of Sukoharjo for the 2004-2009 period. In the meetings and formal sessions held by the DPRD, AS often represented the local government. From these meetings, WW assessed that AS had good technical-administrative capabilities and maintained a solution-oriented, accommodative communication style without neglecting the relevant legal regulations. This assessment led WW, at one point publicly, to state that if he became the regent, he would appoint AS as the regional secretary. WW proved this statement in 2012, about two years after he took office as the Regent of Sukoharjo for the 2010-2015 period.

In terms of interactions with the DPRD, it is known that SU was not a 'DPRD darling'. On many occasions, SU appeared arrogant and often 'belittled' DPRD members through his diction and tone during several meetings with the DPRD. SU also never sat through a full DPRD meeting session; he stayed at most for only 30 minutes before delegating the continuation of the substantive discussion to another unit while he left the room. Because

of his attitude, the DPRD even issued an ultimatum on one occasion that they would not continue the budget discussion meeting if SU was not present in the room.

SU was also known to be rigid in political communication and policy. He did not compromise on aspirations that he believed had the potential to violate regulations. He disliked the DPRD's communication model, which he considered laden with transactional politics. He did not want to be involved in matters that he thought would burden him when held accountable in the afterlife. Therefore, whenever there was contact with the DPRD that smelled of transactional dealings, he always directed it straight to the regent or deputy regent.

SU's attitude was interpreted by some in the DPRD as an inability to find solutions for several issues faced by DPRD members, especially those related to accommodating constituent aspirations and election financing reciprocity. Instead of being an effective communication channel, SU instead became a bottleneck that hindered the communication of DPRD aspirations with the regent and deputy regent. SU was complained about for often filtering DPRD aspirations before presenting them to the regent and deputy regent. Aspirations from the DPRD that were advantageous to SU were forwarded to the regent and/or deputy regent, while those that did not benefit him were not communicated. As a result, the DPRD of North Lombok Regency generally viewed SU as a figure who, although not an 'enemy', could also not be called a 'friend'.

The situation faced by AS in Sukoharjo was different. The dominance of the PDI-P in the DPRD facilitated political communication and policy carried out by AS. Moreover, both the district head and the DPRD chairperson came from the same political party. Practically, AS did not need to exert much effort to smooth the implementation of programs and activities desired by both the local government and the DPRD. The mild dynamics of the relationship between the local government and the DPRD later paved the way for AS to occupy a political position in Sukoharjo District.

Interaction of Bureaucrats with Non-Government Political Actors

In a region with mild political dynamics, bureaucrats do not require many maneuvers to pursue their political interests to attain positions such as district head or deputy district head. Thanks to good communication with internal political actors of the local government organization, AS successfully garnered support easily in his candidacy as deputy district head. Moreover, there was only one dominant political force controlling the political and policy direction in Sukoharjo, namely PDI Perjuangan. Coupled with AS's tangible, effective, and solution-oriented expertise in administrative government management, AS's path to the political office of deputy district head became easier and widely open.

In contrast, in areas with high political dynamics, bureaucrats who wish to transform into political officials must exert more effort to convince political parties to support them. SU in North Lombok could not solely rely on his network within the government organization but also needed additional efforts to lobby political actors outside the government. When SU's relationship with the legislators was problematic due to his perceived rigidity and lack of accommodation, political parties that hold the authority to support nominations for district head and deputy district head demanded a guarantor to ensure SU's commitment to the political agreements. In this context, Haji Abdul Karim, also known as Tuan Guru Bayan or Tuan Guru Karim, became the guarantor who recommended SU to partner with the incumbent regent NA as a candidate for deputy district head.

Tuan Guru Karim is the founder and caretaker of the Nurul Bayan Islamic Boarding School located in Bayan District, North Lombok. After completing his education at Darussalam Gontor Islamic Boarding School, he served at Al-Amin Madura Islamic Boarding School. He also went to Baghdad to continue his studies before delving into other religious sciences at the Salaf Islamic Boarding School Miftahul Muftadi'in in Nganjuk, East Java. Tuan Guru Karim's stature is recognized by the people of North Lombok. Although there were rumors that he would run for regent, the lack of endorsement from Gontor made Tuan Guru Karim reconsider his candidacy for district head. However, he recommended SU to partner with the incumbent regent NA. This recommendation from Tuan Guru Karim convinced NA and several political party leaders in North Lombok to support SU's candidacy with NA as deputy district head.

Furthermore, SU also added an identity as an NW activist to expand his political support base, even though the public previously knew him as a Muhammadiyah activist. This move was made by SU to affirm his political position amidst the feud between the Muhammadiyah-background regent DS and NW-background NA. It was later revealed that joining NW facilitated SU in conducting political communication both to maintain his position as regional secretary and for his candidacy as deputy district head.

The recommendation from Tuan Guru Karim and SU's joining NW significantly influenced the success of SU

in garnering political party support for his candidacy as deputy district head. These two external political entities strengthened the confidence of political parties to issue recommendations for SU to run as deputy district head alongside NA as the candidate for district head. Doubts and disappointments regarding SU's performance as regional secretary could be overlooked with the presence of these two external political entities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The power resources owned by bureaucrats within local government organizations create opportunities for administrative government managers in regions to attain political office through elections for deputy district head. Technical-administrative expertise, resource control, social status, and roles in public decision-making are crucial assets that can be exchanged for political support in the form of recommendations for nominations for deputy district head. However, under certain conditions, such as when the profile and performance of a bureaucrat are not sufficient to convince political parties to offer their support, non-government political actors can help strengthen the candidate's position. Non-government political actors, such as charismatic community figures or socio-religious organizations in a paternalistic society, can serve as guarantors to ensure not only voter support but also the candidate's adherence to commitments made with political parties.

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