

Cozy Relationship between Bureaucrats and Politicians in West Aceh Regent Election

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Abstract: This research focuses on the relation between bureaucrats and politicians in West Aceh. The main goal of the study is to capture a comprehensive picture of the involvement of bureaucracy actors in Pilkada (regional head election). This research used a qualitative method. The data collections use through the in-depth interview and document analysis. Bureaucrats are required to be neutral in every election. However, the literature shows that the bureaucrats remain involved in political practices and have a cozy relationship with politicians. That is why the question comes up. Why are the bureaucrats still involved in politics even though it is not allowed by law? The results of this study are: (1) Direct election has been fertile ground for paternalism culture in bureaucracy; (2) Before and after the election, the strategic position in bureaucracy tend to be the gifts for the loyal person. It became the attraction for the bureaucrats to be the candidate supporters in the regent's election. On the other hand, many people in strategic positions lost their positions due to political reasons.

1 INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians after the autonomy implementation in West Aceh. Bureaucrats play a vital role in arranging, implementing, and supervising public policy as well as inevaluating. In this strategic position, it is common that there will always be an effort to involve bureaucrats in the administrative area. Consciously or subconsciously, the bureaucrats are the means of achieving, maintaining, or extending politician power. For that reason, this article focuses on the relation between bureaucrats and politicians who tend to seek a balanced position. Therefore, government bureaucrats, directly or not, are related to those with political interest, and a cozy relationship emerges between them after the individual autonomy.

Previous studies about the relation between bureaucrats and politics discuss the case in national level. However, this article focuses on the relation of the regional level. Bureaucracy and politician have a close relationship since the local autonomy is implemented in Aceh. It becomes worse by the direct system of regional head election. The direct regional head election is the implementation of Laws (UU)

No. 32/2004 which is operationalized through Government Regulation (PP) No. 6/2005. Unfortunately, in this direct regional head election, the bureaucracy tends to be a political machine, and it is likely to give bad impact to the realization of bureaucracy reformation.

The anomaly of bureaucracy relation also happens in other countries when the bureaucracy considered the more influential power than any other social groups. In Japan, for example, bureaucrats in particular department like in Ministry of International Trade and Industry, are regarded as permanent politicians who determine the realization of the 'economic miracle' (Heywood & Meyer-Sahling, 2013). In England, on the other hand, bureaucrats are referred to as Britain's ruling class because of the strong influential power that they wield more than those owned by the cabinet. In Europe, the bureaucrats are generally considered to be the real power wielders and executives.

The relationship between bureaucracy and politician in regional level in Indonesia, West Aceh is appropriate to serve as the object of study. West Aceh is one of the regencies in Aceh province. After the special autonomy, West Aceh owns exclusivity in both the implementation of administration and budgeting aspect. Regarding administration, special

autonomy offers the ex-Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (The Free Aceh Movement) members to be involved in local political parties, such as Partai Aceh. As a result, it enables the ex-GAM members to become a regent (regional head) or become a member of Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Kabupaten or DPRK Aceh Barat (West Aceh Regional Parliament). Meanwhile, the others are offered to work in the government as bureaucrats like a regional secretary, head of the department, and other government officers.

Bureaucracy and politics are two different, yet inseparable institutions in West Aceh because both of them contribute to the regional administration. The contribution is by administering check and balance process in order that the government administration is always on the right track, especially Aceh with its special autonomy that offers authority in politics and economy. The political autonomy is indicated by the emergence of the local political party like Partai Aceh as the union for ex-GAM after the conflicts ended. The economic autonomy is showed by the abundance of special autonomy budget to be managed by the regional government. In this special autonomy situation, the bureaucrats and politicians are supposed to create a dynamic and constructive interaction. However, instead of creating the dynamic and constructive interaction, these institutions develop a cozy relationship in regional level which at last sets aside public interest.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH FOCUS

Study about bureaucracy is inseparable from Weber's bureaucracy paradigm which focuses on structural and functional phenomena which characteristics are specific and formal (legal). This Weber's bureaucracy is classic or traditional (traditional paradigm) because its concept and application tend to be at the maximum development of organization and bureaucracy and less at humanity dimension. Interaction in the bureaucracy is hierarchical and formal. Max Weber, a prominent figure who illustrates modern bureaucracy concept, purposes Weberian bureaucracy model. It refers to a model that functions bureaucracy to fulfil ideal criteria of Weber bureaucracy. There are at least seven bureaucracy criteria described by Max Weber, namely clear work division, clear authority hierarchy, high formalisation, impersonal, decision making about employee placement that is based on competence, track record of the career for the employees, and

organisational life that is clearly separated from personal life (Fatah, 1994).

Weber in Latuconsina (2008) explains the difference between modern bureaucracy and patrimonial bureaucracy. The first element that distinguishes is the existence of clientism, namely the relationship of power that is built by rulers with the power of the surrounding environment. In the modern bureaucracy the loyalty center is in an impersonal order in this case the law that governs everything. But in clientism loyalty lies with superiors. Second, in the modern bureaucracy the relationship between rulers and their environment is more legal rational and open but in the patrimonial bureaucracy the relationship is patron client, so loyalty is in the boss and is built by the charisma of individual superiors or the influence of the material aspects of the leader. Third, according to modern bureaucracy is the separation of formal space and personal space while the patrimonial bureaucracy is based on emotional and non-formal relations (Latuconsina, 2008).

The emergence of patrimonial bureaucrats in Indonesia is a legacy of the traditional value system that grew in the past kingdoms and mixed with colonial-style bureaucracy. So, the current bureaucracy of Indonesia in addition to growing as a modern bureaucracy is also colored by the traditional bureaucracy of past inheritance. Like the courtiers and priyayi who also layered, state employees also consist of various ranks, groups and echelons. The state servant's slogan is a servant of the nation bearing the meaning of the above-oriented and very similar to the royal bureaucracy which emphasizes more on the leader (above) than the service to the community (bottom).

The development of patrimonial culture makes the growth of the spoil system in the bureaucratic body. The Spoil system is a system that prioritizes political interests, political struggles, a political stream, ideology and political beliefs, especially after winning votes after the election. Of course this is very dangerous. Ideally, the bureaucracy adheres to the merit system and career system, which is to avoid bureaucratic affiliation with politics (in terms of cooperation or symbiotic ties with political parties and politicians in it), or dare to make a sterile bureaucracy and dare to create distance with political parties and politicians so that the bureaucracy only give loyalty to the people, nation and state, instead of being a building block, "political machine" and lackeys of political interests and power. Thus, it can be minimized what is called abuse of power and rampant corruption for the benefit of a political party or a minor of politicians (Sunantara, 2006).

Weber expects the bureaucracy to maintain its neutrality; it does not involve in any party. Neutrality is also related to keeping the distance, uninvolved, unbiased, and impartial acts towards the existing political parties or particular groups because bureaucracy is supposed to be able to direct, empower, and create competition in public services to the society (Osborne and Gaebler, 2005). This neutrality challenge of bureaucracy becomes a significant issue and always appears in every election, either legislative or executive election. Because bureaucracy is expected to be able to work as a professional and neutral institution (Asmerom, Reis, 1996).

Nevertheless, there are always some challenges in realizing neutrality and professionalism of the bureaucratic officials in the government, one of them is the case of political officials' arbitrariness to the career officials (Fachruddin, 2012). Therefore, to sustain their neutrality, the bureaucrats are demanded to be professional by creating a balanced relation pattern between politics and bureaucracy. This relation balance needs to be clear and stable for the roles and responsibilities of those institutions (Kurniawan, 2009).

Carino (1994) offers a solution to this problem. He suggests that the politics-bureaucracy relation need to be in 'bureaucratic sublation' pattern. This type refers to the relation which is relatively equal and balanced between the politicians and bureaucrats. This pattern based on the conception that bureaucracy is not merely an instrument entity or a means of administrating public policies only. The argument of bureaucratic sublation states that despite being apolitical and non-partisan, bureaucracy also possesses power and its resources when it deals with political officials, especially concerning its professional abilities. As a consequence, bureaucracy is not only as a political subordination but also as balancing power (Carino, 1986).

In Indonesia, bureaucracy-politics relation has generated a vast number of studies. One of them is Jackson's study that considers bureaucracy in Indonesia belongs to bureaucratic polity model, where power accumulation happens in the state and sets aside society roles from political space and government (Jackson, 1980). On the other hand, Orwell's bureaucracy is a bureaucratization pattern as a process of government power expansion to control economic, political and social activities using some regulations even some forces (Thoha, 2012). Thus, bureaucracy in Indonesia does not improve and become more efficient. It becomes inefficient, complicated, and unsuitable with the formal

regulations. This might happen since the bureaucrats and politicians run 'politik balas budi' or ethical politics, where politicians choose bureaucrats. Indonesia still uses the system of patrimonial bureaucracy. Where any policies and regulations are issued within the framework of politicization. So that it creates a *political bureaucracy* like the one in the model above. This is a system that must be eliminated and corrected, because by remaining in this system the framework of the Indonesian bureaucracy will continue to inherit socio-economic diseases to the lower generations who are none other than relatives who have close ties with the previous generation of bureaucracy (Damanhuri, 2006).

This phenomenon underlies the questions of this study, which consist of: How is the relation between bureaucrats and politicians during West Aceh's regional-head election in 2017? In West Aceh's regional head election, can the bureaucrats (who are also civil servants) maintain their neutrality before the election process?

3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method uses a scientific procedure to obtain data for particular reasons (Craswell, 2014). This study uses the qualitative method with a case study approach. This type of research aims to attain the answer for the posed question using one's opinion, responses or perceptions, so it discusses the results in qualitative with the description. This study attempts to seek description from activities by examining problems, applicable procedures, applicable relations, attitude, view, and the ongoing process as well as its influence.

The data collection in this research applies in-depth interview and literature study. For the interview, the interviewees are determined by using purposive sampling method, where the number of interviewees is based on the needs of the data and the chosen interviewee is an individual who comprehends bureaucrats-politician relation in a regional head election in West Aceh. They are bureaucrats, election supervisory committee (*panwas pilkada*), society and politician. The data collection is administered through literature study, that is, by using primary and secondary sources (books, journals, research reports, mass media, and internet).

Qualitative data analysis is a systematic process of searching and constructing data from interviews, field notes, and documentation by organizing the data into categories, analyzing units, synthesizing, organizing into patterns, selecting the important and

useful parts for the study, and drawing conclusion, so the result is understandable for the researcher and other parties. Data analysis in qualitative studies is conducted before, during and after going to the research field.

4 THE RESULT OF THE STUDY

4.1 The Relation of Bureaucrats and Politicians: Learning from West Aceh

For West Aceh society, regional head election 2017 is the third election held in West Aceh after the implementation of special autonomy. Direct elections have some fundamental distinctions with those in the New Order era in which eligibility is determined by political elites in-district Legislative Council (DPRD). In the regime of the direct regional head election, political party supports are only needed in the candidacy process. To win the election, a candidate has to attain majority votes. It means that whoever wants to be the regional head of West Aceh s/he has to own the strong popularity and political machine.

In the West Aceh context, a political machine for winning the election is the political party of ex-*GAM* network, families, kinship, and bureaucracy. Bureaucracy becomes a vital political machine, especially for two candidates who had ever become West Aceh regional head, they are Ramli MS (2007-2012 period) and T. Alaidinsyah (2012-2017) who currently are competing for the seat of West Aceh regional head.

Table 1: Serial Number, Candidate Pairs, and Supporting Parties

No	Candidate names	Supporting Parties
1	HT Alaidinsyah / H Kamaruddin	Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), PDIP, Partai Golkar PPP, PKB, Partai Demokrat (PKS)
2	H Ramli MS/ Banta Puteh Syam	Partai Aceh (PA)
3	Fuad Hadi/ Muhammad Arif	Independent

Source: KIP Aceh Barat

The primary indication of the close bureaucracy and politician is that the bureaucracy politicization happens before and after the regional head election. For example, the transfer of 10 civil servants in

Education Board in 2012 who were suspected as loyalists of the former regional head, Ramli MS.

The transfer caused a presumption of civil servants' partiality towards one of the regional head candidates. Hence, it is necessary to 'clear' the bureaucracy ranks from this partiality. Another case

of transfers also occurred towards the regional head election in 2017. The massive transfer happened in 2016 that involved 234 civil servant officials. One of them is the Head of West Aceh Regional Office of Maritime and Fisheries, T. Helmi SP, MM, who was discharged by T. Alaidinsyah (West Aceh Regent) after being alleged to support Ramli MS.

Although the bureaucrat power is necessary for winning the election, a regional head candidate must have the support from political parties, either by national political parties or the local ones. Meanwhile, to run for West Aceh's regional head, every candidate must be supported by 20% of 25 seats in West Aceh Regional Parliament (*DPRK*). The final voter's data in the West Aceh regional head election is in the following table.

Table 2: The Number of Final Voters and Polling Station List in the West Aceh Regional Head Election

No	Districts	Final Voters List	Total of Polling Stations
1	Arongan Lambalek	8.004	28
2	Bubon	4.595	17
3	Johan Pahlawan	41.711	90
4	Kaway XVI	14.231	46
5	Mereubo	18.758	51
6	Pante Ceuremen	7.771	25
7	Panton Reu	4.475	20
8	Sama Tiga	10.780	39
9	Sungai Mas	2.879	18
10	Woyla	9.180	43
11	Woyla Barat	5.483	27
12	Woyla Timur	3.505	26
Total		131.372	430

Source: KIP Aceh Barat

An indication of the cozy relationship between bureaucrats and politicians is that the bureaucracy seems to support one of the candidates actively. The most dominant mode is employing state resources to elevate the supported candidate's image,

especially the softest resource mobilization is the installation of the prospective candidate banners all over the city and the advertisements in mass media. The banners and advertisements contain various messages, from “Ied Mubarak” (*Selamat Idul Fitri*), Happy Indonesian Independence Day, the description of any sector development success, to the anti-drug campaign. The messages brought by these media tend to highlight the candidates’ personality than the vision and mission of the government.

West Aceh election supervisory committee realizes that there are rules violation in it. However, the committees admitted that they face difficulties in controlling this covert campaign. At least, there are two reasons. First, the installation of various media cannot be categorized into the campaign because it is not campaign season yet. Thus, this kind of situation is not the area of electoral law enforcement. Civil servants could get sanction if they organize the campaign, while so far, the involvement of bureaucrats is hideous and rarely apparent in the official campaign. Second, due to limited authority, the supervisory committee can only warn without being able to take any further action.

The competition in the West Aceh regional head election was quite tricky. Although there were three pairs of candidates, an intense competition happened between Ramli MS and T. Alaidinsyah. It might occur because both figures were the ex-regents/regional heads in two different periods, 2007-2012 and 2012-2017. The results of final ballot counting are in Table 3.

Table 3: The Number of Votes for Each Candidate Pairs in West Aceh Regional Head Election 2017

No.	Candidate Pairs	The number of Votes
1	HT Alaidinsyah/ H Kamaruddin	48.201 (45.93 %)
2	H Ramli MS/ Banta Puteh Syam	52.538 (50.06 %)
3	Fuad Hadi/ Muhammad Arif	4.213 (4.01 %)

Source: KIP of West Aceh

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

Since decentralization policy, regional autonomy, and special autonomy in 2005, bureaucracy in West Aceh level is in the form of patrimonial bureaucracy, which is even worse than that in the New Order era. Patrimonial bureaucracy is characterized by (1) regional officials are selected based on personal and

political criteria; (2) position or function is regarded as a means to accumulate wealth; (3), the officials control everything, both political and administrative function.

A phenomenon appears after special autonomy in West Aceh is that bureaucracy and the bureaucrats are politicized and mobilized only for political interest, for instance, in the last 2017 regional head election, bureaucracy and the bureaucrats separated into two parts, those who supported Ramli MS (the regional head in 2007-2012) and those who supported T. Alaidinsyah (the regional head in 2012-2017). In other words, both of them were incumbent and owned their masses even in bureaucracy. In 2017 regional head election, bureaucrats were forced to make transparent choices in order to survive and did not lose their position in the future.

The relationship built in the bureaucracy during the direct regional head election in West Aceh was informal, personal, and caused several informal habits. Many official dismissals prove it before the election which followed by the emergence of some unusual special staff positions. Special staff positions are a subtle term for dismissing bureaucrats from their duties as civil servants. It might happen because they give their support to another politician in the election. Therefore, the regional head election becomes the occasion for a career promotion or position discharge.

An interview with one of the elementary school principals (48 years old) on November 12th, 2017 in West Aceh confirms this matter.

“In the regional head election period, we are on the horns of a dilemma. If our supported candidates win, we will get an important position, well at least we get transferred. However, if they lose, we should be ready to get transferred to remote areas.”

The bureaucrat-politician relation indicates a political intervention. Theoretically, political intervention is a close relationship between bureaucrats and politicians. There are some causes why this might occur.

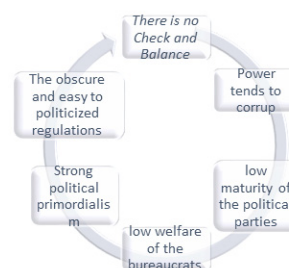


Figure 1: The Causes of Cozy Relationship between Bureaucrats and Politicians

There are six reasons for the close relationship between bureaucrats and politicians. The first is a robust political primordialism, where kinship, ethical politics, desires to develop family-based government, seeking security, and opportunist behavior of the bureaucrats exist. Second, check and balance mechanism has not been well-implemented yet. Third, the politicians' power tends to corrupt, as stated by Lord Acton. Fourth is the low maturity of the political parties and high dependency towards bureaucracy. Next, the low welfare of the bureaucrats or civil servants in the remote area is likely to rise rent-seeking activities through covert political activities in order to gain additional income. The last is the obscure and easy to politicized regulations, such as the vulnerable instruments for employee development, and ethic codes that have not been institutionalized, the existence of status for the regional head as staffing coach, and double position of the head region and the political party's chairman.

Viewed from Weber's professional bureaucracy concept, this close relationship does not fulfill the criteria. A very cozy relationship between bureaucrats and politicians during and after the head regional election might cause a patrimonial bureaucracy. As expressed by Eisenstadt in Latuconsina, patrimonial bureaucracy is characterized by: first, official recruitments are based on personal and political criteria; second, positions are regarded as the source of wealth and benefit; third, the officials control both political and administration functions; and fourth, every activity is directed by personal and political relation. This situation could construct the official behavior which is inclined to devote themselves to the power (Latuconsina, 2008).

The normal relation after the implementation of special autonomy is the dynamic one between politicians and bureaucrats without omitting relation balance between them. The balanced relation is not the one that co-opts or collaborates for their interests by discarding society interest. After the election is over, the co-opting relation can be identified through lobbying practices for seeking positions, political intervention in the regional political arena. The selection of public officials, such as Regional Secretary (*Sekda*) and Head of Department and other regional government officials, are not conducted based on skills and competencies, but on political party supports and personal closeness.

The cozy relationship between bureaucrats and politicians is indeed a serious issue in developing bureaucracy's professionalism. The West Aceh regent election also becomes an event for huge interest battle, and instead of a political party, the bureaucrats are frequently employed as a political machine by politicians to win the election. The increase of domination of political institution like

Partai Aceh, West Aceh Regional Parliament, and the elected West Aceh Regent, towards bureaucracy could perform control to the bureaucracy, and the bureaucracy enjoys the control. On the other hand, the masses outside bureaucracy are politically and economically passive, so it makes their roles weak to control the deviant behavior of the political institutions and bureaucracy. When politics-bureaucracy relations do not develop into a synergy towards development in West Aceh and only focus on the issue of position and project distribution, the district economic growth will stagnate. Regarding the topic, Junaidi (42 years old), a civil servant in West Aceh on September 20th 2017, said:

"The loyal ones will get a promotion, and those who are disloyal, no matter how good their achievement is, will be discharged from their position."

It makes bureaucracy as an instrument of power which is inseparable from the source of power itself. The changes of private interests will influence bureaucracy activities. Bureaucracy as political power is full of political interests, such as maintaining power. The officials of local bureaucracy in the government always conduct numerous strategies and innovations to protect their agents and political position. Three strategies can be used to achieve their political goals, they are, doing advocacy, decision making, budget-cutting, and performing innovation to anticipate the situation and condition as well as the processes faced by the government organizations (Wilson, 1989).

Bureaucrats-politician relation here shows the up-down pattern of relation, where bureaucrats act as subordinate. The political officials use this situation to manipulate them. The regional head could issue any policy towards bureaucracy which is a bureaucratic work area. Ramli MS, the Regent, could include and place his people from *Partai Aceh* or those linked with *GAM* to work in the bureaucracy. Individual autonomy, at last, generates new 'kings' who act freely to control bureaucracy. If the commands or instructions are not executed, it is common to transfer, recruit, or even place new trusted people as the replacement for the old bureaucrats.

Yusaini MS, S.Sos or Abu Yus, the head of *Partai Aceh* West Aceh, frequently asserts through the members of *Partai Aceh* during campaign period of the election that civil servants who did not vote for Ramli MS—who are supported by *Partai Aceh*—must be ready to be downgraded or transferred or moved to the remote area in West Aceh.

"So manteng yang hanapileh partai nanggroo akan kamoe pinah" which means, anyone who does not choose *Partai Aceh* will be moved or transferred.

Transactional practices in the election and placement of bureaucratic officials in West

Aceh compound the inferiority of bureaucrats. They offer a position with some particular deals which often cause the chaos in career coaching and create a primitive and disproportionate bureaucracy.

It is undoubtedly unfortunate because special autonomy aims to advance West Aceh with its efficient governance. However, what happens, in reality, is the contrary. Bureaucrats that are expected to become the spearhead of the central government regarding implementation of regional autonomy, including the management of special autonomy budgets that reach seven trillion per year, are shackled by political interests and together with politicians in the implementation of government.

This condition is unbearable to handle by the Supervisory Committee of West Aceh District because it is not the area for regional head election's law enforcement and also the weakness of authority owned by the committee. The engagement of bureaucracy in politics has driven apart this institution from the vision of developing a professional bureaucracy post-Reformation era. The findings in the election of the 2017 West Aceh Regent provide substantial grounds for rebuilding the civil servants' neutrality as before. From the findings, it can be concluded that the relationship of bureaucracy and politics is a cozy relationship, where both bureaucrats and politicians are reciprocal, which means the relationship makes both parties politically support each other, both from the politicians and bureaucrats. Politicians need bureaucracy as a political machine and bureaucrats need the support of politicians as a means of jumpstarting their careers.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Bureaucrats and politicians are two crucial elements in the formation of political systems in a nation. Politicians occupy the position of regional heads, deputy heads of regions, and leaders and members of the DPRK (regional parliament) who act as policymakers while bureaucrats act as policy implementers. Arrangement and policy-making are political processes while administrative processes are the responsibility of bureaucrats. So, the position of bureaucrats and politicians are equal and complementary and do not co-opt each other, let alone create a cozy relationship to gain advantages, such as positions.

In the election of 2017 West Aceh Regent, the cozy relationship between bureaucrats and politicians was stable. Bureaucracy is as if present to assist the process of winning the candidates, it is either incumbent or the other candidates. This relationship

is in the form of bureaucratic support to the victory of candidate pair of regents in the election. It is evident from the transfers before and after the election that does not reflect the aspect of professionalism but merely reflects the patrimonial relationship between bureaucrats and politicians. Another indication is the use of resources owned by the region to build the excellent candidate's image either overtly or covertly.

There are two attempts in the rules enforcement of neutrality for civil servants. First, the rules that bind and limit the bureaucrats in political involvement, that is by giving sanctions for those who commit it. Furthermore, the sanctions do not only apply to civil servants who campaign openly but also for those who support candidates covertly. Second, sanctions should be right on target. So, the cozy relationship between bureaucrats and politicians cannot happen. The service to the community becomes maximal because of every position in government occupied by individuals who are competent in their field.

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