



Bureaucrat's Political Activities in the 2020 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Indonesia: What They Express on Social Media?

M. Yusuf¹, Dimas Subekti¹, Makmun Wahid¹ and Maratun Saadah¹

¹Universitas Jambi, Jambi, Indonesia

myusuf@unja.ac.id

Abstract . The politics-bureaucracy relationship in Indonesia, especially post-reform, has been discussed widely by scholars concerning the non-compliance of bureaucrats to the principle of neutrality. Related to the issue, the development of technology and the emergence of social media as a platform used to show the users' existence are widely used by apparatus. Even though officials are prohibited from engaging in politics or involved in political activities during the election phase, they openly express their political preferences through social media. Therefore, this research aims to classify the content of the apparatus' political activity and its narrative distribution on social media during the 2020 simultaneous regional elections in Indonesia. The apparatus' political expressions are very striking, such as posting about candidates with narratives of support for the candidate on Twitter. On the other hand, they also follow team or candidate accounts on FB, and dominant narratives emerge, such as neutrality and violation. These two social media are popular platforms for expressing political preferences during the election stages with different political orientations and narratives.

Keywords: Social Media, Bureaucracy, 2020 Regional Election, Indonesia

1 INTRODUCTION

The bureaucracy has a strategic role because it holds the power to achieve state goals through decision-making and public services. Success or failure in achieving state goals depends on the role of the bureaucracy as administrators who run the government affairs[1]. Therefore, the bureaucracy is required to be professional and neutral in conducting its duties and functions. These two aspects are essential to implement because the apparatus must provide public services to the community without discriminating between political sects, ethnicities, religions, and interests[2].

The bureaucracy must reinforce the principle of neutrality, where they must not be part of group interests because this is prohibited by the regulation concern on state civil apparatus (SCA). However, many officials are affected by personal interests and influenced by group interests. In fact, they openly show their involvement and express their political choices through social media, which, according to these rules, disobey the

principle of neutrality. The development of technology and information, such as social media, provides a platform for expression, participation, interaction, and promoting ideas so that various groups widely use this platform[3] [4].

SCA often expresses its political views in various ways, especially during the regional election stages. In the 2020 regional elections, for example, there were 112 cases related to disobeying neutrality in the form of providing support to candidates via social media, 81 officials approaching or registering with a political party, and 34 facts that apparatus socializing potential candidates through campaign props[5]. Interestingly, the apparatus supports candidate pairs who will run or are competing during the contest via social media, either by posting content, commenting, or using features on the application.

Researchers have concerned to the politicization of bureaucracy in Indonesia in various contexts. Bureaucratic politicization in Indonesia still occurs often, and this can come from the legislature or the executive to perpetuate power. The symptoms can be seen from the use of state facilities, mobilization of civil servants, compensation for positions, commercialization of positions, recruitment of civil servants, and depromotion[6]–[9]. Implementing the merit system aims to increase independence and neutrality, competence, performance, integrity, welfare, and quality of public services, as well as supervision and accountability of state civil servants. However, the bureaucratic structure in the regions is still huge, not professional yet, incompetent, and there is no good service ethic. Apart from that, the actual condition of existing human resources and the socio-political constellation that occurs in the region. As a result, the endless politicization of bureaucracy cannot be avoided[10]. Meanwhile, the relationship between political power and bureaucratic elites at the local level shows that, apart from being politicized, bureaucrats are also active in politics, especially during regional elections[11].

These previous studies discuss how the bureaucracy is politicized and how the apparatus plays politics practically where they ignore neutrality and professionalism norms, while this paper offers novelty by explaining the apparatus' political activities on social media in the contestation of power. This study is necessary because, in the 2020 simultaneous local elections, social media was used as a forum for SCA to express their political preferences or views on candidates.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative methods [12] with a case study approach[13]. The case analysed in this research is the bureaucrat's political activity on social media in the 2020 simultaneous regional elections. The data source for this research is collected from two social media, Twitter, and Facebook, which is elaborated with credible online news such as CNNIndonesia, detiknews.com, Kompas.com, merdeka6.com, tempo.co and so on. Then, this research uses data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman with stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions [14]. Furthermore, the various data obtained were coded using QDA with NVivo 12 plus software to assist in

data analysis and visualization. The features used in NVivo 12 plus are crosstab query and word frequency.

This article uses four indicators to determine SCA's political activities on social media during the Pilkada implementation stages: posting about candidates, liking and sharing candidate content, following team or candidate accounts, and comments about candidates. After the systematic coding process has been conducted, this article will present an overview of the percentage of SCA's political activity on social media, both Twitter and Facebook. Furthermore, this paper also identifies the distribution of political narratives that are dominant among social media users by the apparatus.

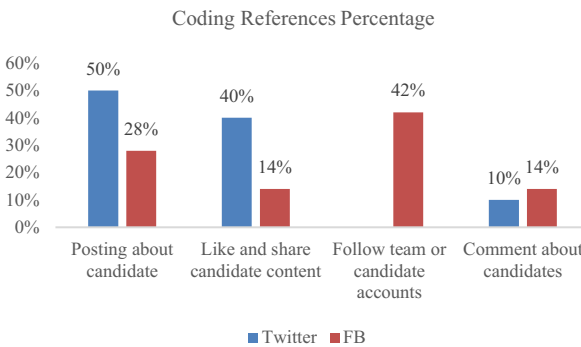
3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The content of bureaucratic's Political Activity on Social Media

An interesting phenomenon in the contestation of power in the regions is the emergence of SCA, which is active in political activities, especially during the simultaneous local elections. Officials' political expressions can be easily identified, especially their activities on social media because they usually use this platform to convey political views or opinions. They speculate by showing partiality or affiliation with politicians who are in power contests during the election period. The forms of support can usually support one of the candidates, showing loyalty to the incumbent candidate, or even political maneuvering in the form of an open statement challenging the candidate. These actions were expressed privately and openly in forums and social media.

Fig. 1. percentage of SCA's political activity on social media



Source: processed

The presented bar chart (fig.1) compares the percentage of apparatus political activity on social media in the 2020 simultaneous local elections, which consists of four criteria, including posting about candidates, liking and sharing candidate content, following team or candidate accounts, and comments about candidates. It can be seen that the highest SCA political activity is posting about candidates via Twitter at 50%, while

on Facebook, it shows that they follow team or candidate accounts at 42%. Then, the lowest political activity on Twitter is following team or candidate accounts (no data), while political activity on Facebook shows that comments about candidates and likes and shares of candidate content each amount to 14%.

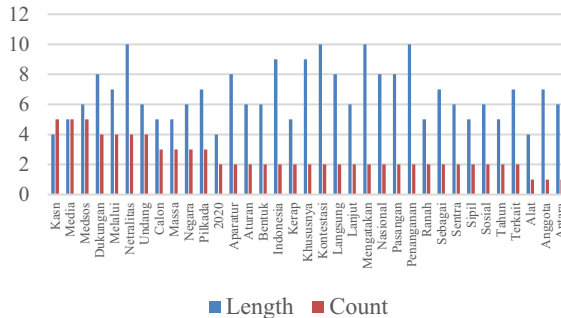
Distribution of SCA Political Narratives on Social Media
Narration on Twitter

Fig. 2. Apparatus's political narrative on Twitter



Source: processed

Fig. 3. Dominant word in Twitter



Source: processed

The two provided figures, Fig.2 and Fig.3, present the spread of narratives related to bureaucrat's political activities on Twitter. Some dominant words arise such as "KASN(State Civil Apparatus Commission)", "Media", "Sosmed(Social Media)", "dukungan (Support)". The official carried out political activities by showing the tendency of their partisanship during the 2020 elections, especially during the campaign period; this is seen in the word that emerged, namely "dukungan (support)". Bureaucrats who use social media to display their political activities are extreme and become significant political socialization agents in the success of the elections for political parties and politicians involved[15], [16].

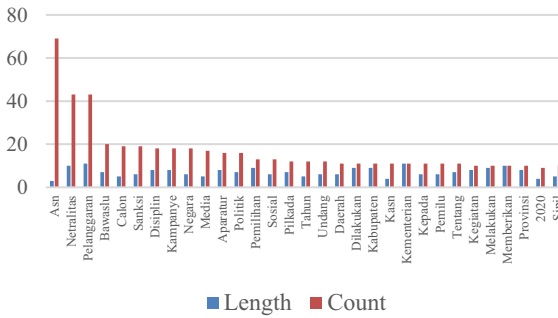
a. Narration on Facebook

Fig. 4. Apparatus's political narrative on Facebook



Source: Processed

Fig. 5. Dominant word in Facebook



Source: Processed

The two provided figures, Fig.2 and Fig.3, present the distribution of narratives of SCA's political activities on Facebook during the 2020 regional elections. It can be seen that the dominant words that appear include "ASN", "netralitas (Neutrality)", "pelanggaran (disobey)", "Bawaslu (the Election Supervisory Agency)". This illustrates that the narrative spread on Facebook focuses on the socialization of agency as the election supervisor towards SCA not to involved in the election, in 2020.

3.2 Discussion

Civil servants must be impartial towards the interests of political parties, groups, or interests that conflict with the state's goals. This is the principle of neutrality, where the apparatus is required to act and behave for all citizens without discrimination and not prioritise interests that do not follow the state's goals[17]. Unfortunately, the development of social media as a forum for widespread interaction is used as an instrument to spread support to election participants in local power contestation[18].

SCA's partiality on social media in the 2020 regional elections disobeys neutrality. Posting, sharing political news, taking sides, and even liking and commenting on posts

violate apparatus neutrality. If this is done on social media, officials will receive several sanctions, including a moderate or severe disciplinary punishment. The rules regarding neutrality in holding elections are regulated in detail, including the use of social media. SCAs are prohibited from uploading, commenting, sharing, liking, or joining or 'following' election participants' winning groups/accounts.

This form of political activity does not comply with neutrality because it includes showing one's partiality towards one of the candidates. On the political side, posting about candidates is a form of a political campaign with a significant influence, especially on social media. Today, Twitter social media has become a very effective tool used by success teams and candidates directly to socialize themselves with the public. Candidates and teams affiliated with these candidates who actively use social media to provide information about their candidacy or simply spread their activities will naturally increase their popularity and electability[19]. The presence of Twitter as a tool for disseminating information aimed at the public or voters in elections is considered an effective and important step, especially in forming opinions and setting political agendas[20], [21]. Likewise, bureaucratic political activity on Twitter by posting content about candidates has become a real form of helping candidates contest the 2020 regional elections.

Meanwhile, on Facebook, following the winning team's or candidates' accounts has become a prominent bureaucratic political activity. There are advantages of Facebook as a political campaign media. First, Facebook provides easy access for potential voters, candidates can directly interact with potential voters on a scale and intensity that is easier than through traditional campaign patterns such as door-to-door, brochures, and even coverage by print or television media. Second, apart from being easy to access, Facebook is also cheap to reach for its users, who currently reach 132 million people in Indonesia[22]–[24].

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper investigates the political activities of SCA in the two social media platforms, Twitter, and Facebook, in simultaneous local elections in Indonesia, in 2020. It can be concluded that social media is a popular media used by apparatus to express its political stance in this era. stages of implementing regional head elections. It is very clear that Twitter is very popular for posting about candidates and the dominant narrative is 'support'. On the other hand, Facebook is very dominantly used to follow team or candidate accounts and dominant narratives emerge such as SCA, neutrality, and violations. This shows that the two social media are used with different orientations and the narratives constructed are also different. This short research only reveals SCA's political activities on social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the distribution of narratives that always appear during the 2020 simultaneous regional elections. While other aspects such as their motivation, background of support or affiliation, and post-election consequences were not covered, we convey that these issues need to be studied specifically and paid attention to so that the SCA is not polarized during elections and changes that could hinder public services after contestation.

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