

## Ethical Challenges and Bureaucratic Impartiality of Civil Servants in the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Bima City

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**Abstrak:** This study investigates the phenomenon of political pressure on civil servants (ASN) during the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada Serentak) in Bima City, emphasizing the ethical dilemmas that challenge the neutrality and impartiality of the bureaucracy. Despite their mandate to act professionally and neutrally, ASN often face coercion from local political elites, forcing them into a conflict between adherence to regulations and demands to support specific candidates. Such dynamics undermine the credibility and integrity of the bureaucracy. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research draws on in-depth interviews with ASN, government officials, election monitors, and political observers, alongside participatory observations of Bima City's political landscape. The findings reveal that ASN frequently encounter substantial political pressures, leading to ethical conflicts that compromise bureaucratic independence. Career threats against those who resist these pressures further intensify the dilemma. Moreover, limited awareness among ASN of neutrality regulations exacerbates the issue, negatively affecting public service quality and the integrity of local democratic practices. This study underscores the urgent need for robust bureaucratic reforms to safeguard neutrality, enhance public service delivery, and support the realization of fair and transparent democratic processes in Bima City.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Impartiality, Bureaucracy, Civil Servants, Simultaneous Elections.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini meneliti fenomena tekanan politik terhadap PNS (ASN) pada Pilkada Serentak 2024 di Kota Bima, menekankan dilema etika yang menantang netralitas dan ketidakberpihakan birokrasi. Terlepas dari mandat mereka untuk bertindak secara profesional dan netral, ASN sering menghadapi paksaan dari elit politik lokal, memaksa mereka ke dalam konflik antara kepatuhan terhadap peraturan dan tuntutan untuk mendukung kandidat tertentu. Dinamika seperti itu merusak kredibilitas dan integritas birokrasi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengacu pada wawancara mendalam dengan ASN, pejabat pemerintah, pemantau pemilu, dan pengamat politik, di samping pengamatan partisipatif lanskap politik Kota Bima. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa ASN sering menghadapi tekanan politik yang substansial, yang mengarah pada konflik etika yang membahayakan independensi birokrasi. Ancaman karier terhadap mereka yang menolak tekanan ini semakin mengintensifkan dilema. Selain itu, terbatasnya kesadaran di antara ASN tentang peraturan netralitas memperburuk masalah ini, berdampak negatif pada kualitas pelayanan publik dan integritas praktik demokrasi lokal. Studi ini menggarisbawahi kebutuhan mendesak akan reformasi birokrasi yang kuat untuk menjaga netralitas, meningkatkan penyampaian layanan publik, dan mendukung terwujudnya proses demokrasi yang adil dan transparan di Kota Bima.

**Kata kunci:** Etika, Imparsialitas, Birokrasi, PNS, Pemilu Serentak.

## 1. Introduction

The regional elections (Pilkada) in Indonesia are frequently characterized by significant challenges, particularly in upholding bureaucratic impartiality, especially among civil servants (Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2021); (Noer, 2024). The neutrality of ASNs is a recurring concern in political events at both local and national levels, often dominating discussions surrounding electoral integrity (Frans, 2021); (Pariangu, 2020). During the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, this issue has gained renewed attention due to various ethical dilemmas and political conflicts of interest emerging in different regions, including Bima City (Faedlulloh & Duadji, 2019); (Amer et al., 2024).

In this context, neutrality is defined as the commitment of civil servants to perform their duties professionally and without bias, while avoiding conflicts of interest (Hidayatullah, 2024). This principle entails refraining from misusing official duties, authority, or positions for personal or group benefit, particularly during electoral processes (Harits Anugrah, Lambali, & Nur indar, 2022). Ensuring civil servant neutrality is critical to maintaining equitable and non-discriminatory public service delivery (Park & Han, 2018).

Despite its importance, the practice of civil servant neutrality is frequently undermined (Lotta, Tavares, & Story, 2024). In the context of simultaneous regional elections, numerous civil servants have openly supported particular candidates and even participated in campaign activities (Christensen & Opstrup, 2018). Such violations are attributed to various factors, including pressures exerted by superiors, the pragmatism of elite power dynamics, and emotional or primordial connections between civil servants and candidates (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008); (Fernandes et al., 2019).

Pressure from superiors is often the predominant factor compelling civil servants to breach neutrality (Faedlulloh & Duadji, 2019). Many civil servants feel coerced into partisanship, fearing repercussions or threats to their positions if they do not support candidates endorsed by political authorities (Surbakti & Nugroho, 2015). Additionally, the pragmatism of power often drives civil servants to align with prevailing political forces as a means of securing their positions or ensuring future benefits (Indiahono, Satyawan, & Yamin, 2022).

Addressing these challenges necessitates the reinforcement of mechanisms to prevent political neutrality violations, particularly through more comprehensive and participatory policy dissemination (Indiahono, 2022). Such initiatives are expected to enhance civil servants' awareness of the importance of neutrality while mitigating the political pressures they face during elections (Nadjib, Bafadhal, & Santoso, 2022). Furthermore, institutional collaboration is essential to effectively address cases of political interference among civil servants (Harits Anugrah et al., 2022). Strengthening partnerships between the Ministry of Home Affairs, the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory

Agency (Bawaslu), and law enforcement agencies is critical for ensuring decisive action against violators (Fernandes et al., 2019).

In the broader context of civil servant professionalism, ethical conduct is pivotal in maintaining the credibility and integrity of the bureaucracy (Nadjib et al., 2022). As public servants, civil servants must operate within a robust ethical framework that prioritizes the public interest above personal or group agendas (Harits Anugrah et al., 2022). Fundamental ethical principles such as honesty, fairness, and accountability serve as cornerstones for the civil service profession (Monteiro & Adler, 2022).

The professional environment of civil servants is often intertwined with complex socio-political dynamics (Hidayatullah, 2024). These dynamics frequently present ethical dilemmas, particularly when political interests exert influence over decision-making processes (Lynn, 2001); (Peters, 2024). Consequently, it is imperative for civil servants to possess a thorough understanding of their ethical rights and responsibilities. Ethics, therefore, serve as a critical foundation for navigating the political pressures and challenges that arise during electoral periods (Tri Haryani & Sutrisno, 2022).

In the context of elections at both national and local levels, civil servant neutrality remains a critical issue (Sossin, 2006); (Noer, 2024). The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) identifies three models of electoral bodies globally: independent, government-affiliated, and mixed (Persson & Goldkuhl, 2010). The independent model prioritizes the absence of executive government intervention, ensuring the electoral body operates autonomously (Noer, 2024). Historically, Indonesia has experienced all three models at various points in its electoral evolution (Nurfarhati Nurfarhati, Mukhlis Ishaka, & Haeril Haeril, 2024).

During the New Order era, Indonesia's electoral body was placed under the Ministry of Home Affairs, illustrating the deep connection between the bureaucracy and the ruling government (Lotta et al., 2024). Post-reform, significant efforts were made to separate the electoral body from government influence to safeguard the impartiality of electoral processes (Park & Han, 2018). Despite this structural independence, the bureaucracy, particularly civil servants, remains deeply embedded within Indonesia's electoral framework (Spiller & Urbiztondo, 1994); (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008); (Christensen & Opstrup, 2018).

The ethical dilemmas faced by civil servants during the 2024 simultaneous regional elections highlight the challenges of maintaining neutrality in politically charged environments (Grube, 2017). On one hand, regulations explicitly prohibit civil servants from engaging in practical political activities (Veit & Vedder, 2023). On the other hand, they often experience significant pressure to support particular candidates to protect their positions or secure future political benefits (Staronova & Rybář, 2021).

These challenges indicate that civil servant neutrality is not merely an ethical issue but also a structural problem within Indonesia's bureaucratic system (Brans, Pelgrims, & Hoet,

2005). The interplay between politics and bureaucracy creates a scenario where civil servants frequently face conflicting responsibilities and ethical dilemmas (Caron & Giauque, 2006). While civil servants, as public servants, are expected to operate independently of political influence (Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016), they often find themselves torn between adhering to professional duties and maintaining favorable relations with politically influential actors (Rohr, 2024).

Addressing the issue of civil servant neutrality requires strategic measures encompassing bureaucratic reform and the reinforcement of oversight mechanisms (Nahtigal & Haček, 2013). Continuous dissemination of the importance of neutrality and ethics must extend beyond the election period to instill these values as part of bureaucratic culture (Harits Anugrah et al., 2022). Furthermore, stricter enforcement policies, including imposing severe sanctions on civil servants found violating neutrality, are essential to deter misconduct and uphold professional standards (Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2017).

Enhancing the capacity of civil servants to understand and embody ethical principles is equally critical (Amer et al., 2024). Regular education and training programs tailored to address ethical dilemmas can empower civil servants to navigate political pressures while maintaining their impartiality (Fernandes et al., 2019). By fostering a deep understanding of professional ethics and the consequences of political engagement, civil servants can better fulfill their roles without succumbing to the temptation of practical politics (Lovita & Adnan, 2021).

In Bima City, during the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, civil servants encounter multifaceted ethical dilemmas that test their commitment to neutrality and impartiality. Political pressures, often emanating from superiors or local political actors, challenge their ability to maintain a professional distance from electoral processes. This situation is compounded by the pervasive influence of digital platforms, such as social media, which facilitate direct and indirect involvement in political activities. The Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) has documented numerous reports of civil servants engaging in such activities, underscoring the urgency of addressing this issue. The entanglement of civil servants in political interests not only compromises the quality of public services but also erodes public trust in the bureaucracy (Surbakti & Nugroho, 2015).

This study aims to examine the phenomenon of political pressure faced by civil servants in Bima City during the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, with a specific focus on ethical dilemmas that threaten bureaucratic neutrality and impartiality. The findings highlight the tension between the expectation for civil servants to act professionally and the realities of political interference that compel them to support specific candidates. This conflict undermines bureaucratic credibility and hampers the delivery of equitable public services.

The research contributes novel insights by analyzing the vulnerabilities of civil servant neutrality within the intricate dynamics of local politics and its implications for democratic integrity. By identifying the key challenges confronting civil servants, this study aims to propose actionable reforms to reinforce their impartiality, thereby promoting the implementation of free, fair, and honest democratic practices in Bima City.

## 2. Result

The 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (*Pilkada Serentak*) in Bima City provide a critical lens through which the role of Civil Servants (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*, ASN) in preserving the neutrality and impartiality of the bureaucracy can be examined (Tudor, n.d.). ASNs, as public servants, are mandated to uphold core values such as neutrality, impartiality, and professionalism in the execution of their responsibilities (Fadilah & Saepudin, 2024). However, these ideals often clash with the realities of political pressures exerted by influential elites with vested interests in regional elections (Smirna, 2021); (Jusman Iskandar, Alfiah, Amalia Nur Fajriah, Anggun Dwi Rahmawati, & Anisa Soiani, 2019).

The impartiality of the bureaucracy is a cornerstone of democratic integrity, serving as a safeguard against the undue influence of political actors. Nevertheless, on-the-ground practices reveal the persistent ethical dilemmas faced by ASNs (Cuddon, J, 2013). Torn between adhering to regulatory frameworks and acquiescing to demands from superiors involved in practical politics, civil servants frequently find their neutrality compromised (Xv et.al, 2019). Such political pressures often lead to ASNs' direct or indirect participation in campaign activities, diminishing the credibility of the bureaucracy and eroding public trust in its institutions (Platon, n.d, 2020).

This analysis seeks to further illuminate the phenomenon of political pressure faced by ASNs during the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Bima City. By examining the ethical dilemmas and systemic challenges in upholding bureaucratic impartiality, this discussion aims to uncover the implications for the broader democratic process. Understanding these dynamics is essential for proposing targeted reforms that strengthen the neutrality and integrity of the bureaucracy, thereby ensuring the fair and transparent conduct of elections.

### 2.1 Political Pressure on ASN

The persistent political pressure faced by Civil Servants (ASN) during local elections (*Pilkada*) reveals a systemic challenge within Indonesia's bureaucracy. This pressure not only compromises the neutrality of ASN but also risks undermining public trust in democratic institutions. Political interference often manifests through subtle or overt demands, such as attending campaign events, leveraging administrative influence, or providing logistical

support to favored candidates (Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2021). ASN, which theoretically functions as a neutral and professional bureaucracy, often becomes the target of political pressure that can undermine bureaucratic integrity (Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2021). Such actions contravene the ethical standards and professional expectations of ASN, further blurring the line between politics and bureaucracy. In Bima City's 2024 Simultaneous Pilkada, this interplay between political actors and civil servants underscores the vulnerabilities within the bureaucratic framework. ASNs are frequently caught in a tug-of-war, balancing their professional obligations against the personal and political interests of their superiors (Kernaghan, 2000); (Monteiro & Adler, 2022).

In the context of regional elections, Civil Servants often face significant dilemmas due to political pressures exerted by officials or superiors with vested interests in securing the victory of specific candidates. These pressures manifest through indirect directives, covert requests for support, or explicit instructions to participate in campaign activities. When ASN fail to uphold their mandated neutrality, they may become entangled in political activities, such as attending campaign events or leveraging their influence to favor candidates endorsed by political elites.

Moreover, ASNs who lack prospects for advancing to senior positions within the bureaucracy prior to retirement often exhibit diminished effectiveness in fulfilling their professional duties. The pervasive political pressures place ASN in challenging situations, forcing them to choose between resisting such influences to uphold neutrality or succumbing to them to safeguard their careers, job security, and prospects for promotion. This dynamic undermines the foundational principles of a neutral and professional bureaucracy. Consequently, institutional reforms and rigorous oversight mechanisms are essential to preserve ASN impartiality, particularly during the Pilkada process.

Empirical evidence highlights that the 2024 Simultaneous Pilkada in Bima City has placed the bureaucracy, especially ASN, in a highly sensitive position. As the backbone of state administration, ASN is expected to maintain neutrality and refrain from engaging in practical political activities. However, field observations indicate that political pressures frequently compromise this neutrality. These pressures emanate from diverse sources, including political officials and sociopolitical environments that compel ASN to support particular candidates.

The politicization of ASN during the Pilkada is often associated with their mobilization as a political support base, as noted by Urcan and Costel (Urcan, 2011); (Costel, 2017). In Bima City, such pressures intensify as the election day approaches. ASN face a critical dilemma: either uphold their neutrality or acquiesce to political demands from superiors or specific groups. A recurring form of coercion involves explicit or implicit requests for ASN to support candidates backed by political parties. These demands are frequently accompanied

by threats, ranging from job transfers and stalled promotions to outright dismissal, creating a climate of fear and further jeopardizing bureaucratic neutrality.

Regulations governing the neutrality of Civil Servants (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*, ASN) are explicitly outlined in Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections, Law No. 20 of 2023 on Civil Servants, Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*, PP) No. 94 of 2021, and the Mayor of Bima's Circular No. 317 of 2024. These legal frameworks unequivocally prohibit ASN from engaging in campaign activities or utilizing state facilities for political purposes. Despite these regulations, political pressures persist. Reports from the Bima City Election Supervisory Body (*Bawaslu*) have documented instances of ASN involvement in political declaration events and the registration of mayoral candidate pairs. In response, *Bawaslu* has issued reprimands and dismissed the ASN implicated in these violations.

A lack of clarity regarding the scope of ASN responsibilities during the *Pilkada* often contributes to confusion. Some ASN claim ignorance of regulations prohibiting their participation, particularly when the candidates they support have not yet been officially confirmed by the Election Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*, KPU). This reflects both a lack of understanding of the regulatory framework and the influence of political pressures that compel ASN to engage in political activities despite prohibitions.

The political pressure exerted on ASN in the 2024 Simultaneous *Pilkada* in Bima City raises significant ethical concerns, jeopardizing the impartiality and professionalism of the bureaucracy. The ASN Neutrality Vulnerability Index places West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), including Bima City, among the top five most vulnerable regions in Indonesia. This alarming ranking underscores the urgency for preventive measures to mitigate neutrality violations. *Bawaslu NTB* has highlighted nepotism as a key factor contributing to the erosion of ASN neutrality. The challenge extends beyond addressing past infractions; it involves ensuring adherence to ethical standards and regulations to preclude future violations. Upholding the principles outlined in the ASN code of ethics is critical, as violations can result in severe consequences for individual ASN and the integrity of governmental institutions.

From a broader perspective, the most detrimental impact of political pressure on ASN is the potential division within the bureaucracy. When ASN are coerced into taking sides in political contests, it fosters mistrust and discord among colleagues, thereby cultivating an unhealthy work environment. In such circumstances, ASN may feel compelled to support specific candidates, even at the expense of compromising their commitment to neutrality and professionalism. This situation not only undermines the ethical foundations of the bureaucracy but also erodes public trust in its ability to function impartially.

The Bawaslu of Bima City has confirmed that 12 cases of violations are currently under investigation, underscoring the gravity of the situation. In response, Bawaslu has called on the Acting Mayor of Bima to act as a mediator in ensuring the neutrality of civil servants (ASN) during the *Pilkada*. The signing of an Integrity Pact on ASN neutrality is anticipated to

provide both legal and ethical guidance, enabling civil servants to perform their duties without undue influence. However, the success of preventive measures and disciplinary actions promised by the government relies on their implementation being fair and transparent. Neutral ASNs who resist political pressure often face severe repercussions, including threats of dismissal or demotion. The lack of robust legal protections for neutral ASNs further exacerbates this issue, creating an environment of uncertainty.

Persistent political pressure not only undermines the morale of ASNs but also diminishes their motivation to deliver optimal public services. When civil servants perceive their work as being subject to external political interference, their commitment to serving the public wanes, thereby adversely affecting the quality of public services—a critical government priority. Furthermore, the polarization of ASNs can have lasting negative effects on bureaucratic integrity and public trust. A politicized bureaucracy risks eroding public confidence in the government's ability to operate professionally and impartially. Thus, mitigating political pressure and safeguarding ASN neutrality should remain central objectives, not only to ensure the smooth execution of Pilkada but also to preserve the long-term integrity and efficacy of the public administration.

The Bima City government has demonstrated its commitment to promoting ASN neutrality by taking decisive action against violations of this principle. These measures aim to foster a conducive work environment and reduce internal divisions among civil servants. However, the sustainability of such efforts depends on the collective commitment of all stakeholders to uphold integrity and professionalism in public service. This commitment must ensure that measures taken during the Pilkada do not compromise the ethical principles that should underpin ASN conduct.

This situation highlights the precarious position of ASNs, who are expected to maintain neutrality yet often become entangled in a political system that demands loyalty. Civil servants face a dilemma: adhering to their professional duties and regulations or navigating a political reality where allegiance significantly influences career security and advancement. Within the context of bureaucratic reform, the challenge of ensuring ASN neutrality in politically charged climates, such as during Pilkada, remains pressing. Insights from successful reform initiatives in European countries suggest that transparency and integrity are pivotal to fostering effective bureaucracies. In contrast, in many developing countries, including Indonesia, such reforms are hindered by entrenched patronage systems and pervasive political pressures.

Research on ASNs during electoral periods in developing nations, such as Ghana and the Dominican Republic, reveals that meritocratic recruitment practices can mitigate corruption and enhance work motivation. However, job security among ASNs can inadvertently facilitate their involvement in political activities, particularly in voter mobilization efforts. Civil servants with secure employment are often more susceptible to political



mobilization due to the perceived absence of job-related risks, even when such actions contravene established regulations. This dynamic is particularly evident in Bima City, where some ASNs, feeling secure in their positions, engage in political activities despite regulatory prohibitions. Weak enforcement mechanisms and inadequate oversight of ASNs' political involvement further compound this challenge.

Ensuring the neutrality of civil servants (ASN) in the 2024 Bima City Pilkada requires a comprehensive and systematic approach. First, the regulatory framework governing ASN neutrality must be strengthened, with clear enforcement mechanisms and appropriate penalties for violations. This would provide a robust legal basis to deter misconduct and reinforce accountability. Second, efforts should be directed toward increasing ASN awareness and understanding of the regulations that delineate their permissible roles during Pilkada. Clarifying these guidelines will help mitigate ambiguities that could lead to unintentional violations.

Third, the supervisory mechanisms of Bawaslu and the Civil Service Commission must be enhanced to provide vigilant oversight of ASN conduct. Rigorous monitoring would ensure adherence to neutrality standards while promoting accountability. Additionally, the government must foster a political environment that supports ASN impartiality. By minimizing political pressures from officials and parties, ASNs would be better positioned to execute their duties without undue influence or interference.

Public and media involvement is also crucial in maintaining ASN neutrality. Public scrutiny and media coverage can serve as effective deterrents to violations, fostering transparency throughout the Pilkada process. Lastly, prioritizing political education for the community is essential to build awareness of the significance of ASN neutrality in upholding good governance and delivering high-quality public services. By cultivating a politically informed citizenry, broader support for impartial governance can be secured. Through these concerted efforts, the neutrality of civil servants can be preserved, thereby ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process that upholds the principles of democracy and integrity.

## 2.2 Bureaucratic Impartiality

The concept of bureaucratic impartiality in Indonesia underscores the principle that civil servants (ASN) must act neutrally, avoiding favoritism towards any political faction or vested interest to preserve public integrity and trust (Syarbaini, 2019). However, a significant challenge to this impartiality arises from political pressures, particularly during election periods, which often compel ASN to align with specific interests (Sandy, 2024). The theory of representative bureaucracy suggests that the inclusion of civil servants from minority groups can effectively advocate for the interests of marginalized populations. Nevertheless, in Indonesia, critical factors such as the incentives and risks associated with such representation remain underexplored (Faedlulloh & Duadji, 2019). While Weberian

bureaucracy theory posits that efficient bureaucracies contribute to economic growth, empirical evidence suggests this relationship may be overstated, especially in developing nations like Indonesia (Pariangu, 2020). Furthermore, systemic barriers, including political pressures and internal organizational risks, persist as major impediments to achieving an impartial and effective bureaucracy (Andersen, 2021).

Empirical studies indicate that bureaucratic characteristics, including representativeness and professionalism, are directly linked to public trust. A robust body of research demonstrates that citizens exhibit greater trust in public administration systems characterized by impartiality and representativeness. However, in Bima City, this issue is further compounded by insufficient incentives for ASN to maintain neutrality, particularly during elections when political interests dominate. Data analysis suggests that the failure of ASN in Bima City to uphold impartiality could have far-reaching consequences, including systemic governance failures, heightened corruption, and reduced public engagement in political processes.

For comparative analysis, a study on law enforcement practices in the United States reveals that while officers from minority groups do not necessarily favor their communities, they play a crucial role in mitigating racial disparities within law enforcement (Windari, 2021). This example highlights that bureaucratic impartiality can be achieved through professional conduct that transcends political influences. Conversely, the absence of impartiality risks fostering injustices in public decision-making, where outcomes are shaped by political considerations rather than the broader public interest (By, 2005).

In the context of Bima City, the representation of diverse communities within the civil service is a critical factor in fostering bureaucratic impartiality. However, existing research highlights that variations in bureaucratic characteristics across nations significantly influence public trust. In Bima, the failure of civil servants (ASN) to uphold impartiality risks diminishing public trust, which subsequently undermines the legitimacy of the government. A decline in trust can engender public apathy and skepticism toward the political process, manifesting in reduced electoral participation.

Over time, the repercussions of inadequate bureaucratic impartiality become increasingly severe. Studies indicate that a lack of impartiality within the bureaucracy can precipitate political corruption, as civil servants collude with politicians to advance personal interests. This aligns with corruption definitions that frame it as a violation of impartiality norms. Should such conditions persist, they are likely to erode public trust further, potentially destabilizing the political climate. Distrustful communities often become more critical of the government, exacerbating social and political tensions in the region.

To address these challenges, local governments in Bima City must prioritize reinforcing the principle of bureaucratic impartiality, particularly in preparation for the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections (Pilkada). This can be achieved through targeted training

programs and the strengthening of ethical codes for civil servants. Additionally, rigorous oversight mechanisms should be implemented to deter power abuse. Encouraging public participation in decision-making processes is equally vital to ensuring that community voices are effectively represented in policy formation. Strengthening bureaucratic impartiality can enhance public trust, fostering regional stability and progress.

The implications of bureaucratic impartiality in Bima City extend beyond governance to encompass broader political processes and socio-economic development. Failure to uphold this principle increases the likelihood of bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, reduced political engagement, and heightened social instability. Therefore, concrete measures must be enacted to ensure that civil servants operate as neutral agents serving the public interest, thereby contributing to community well-being and regional advancement.

### 3. Conclusion

The complex political landscape places civil servants (ASN) in a precarious position, often subject to substantial pressure from political elites to endorse specific candidates. While ASN are mandated to uphold neutrality and professionalism, in practice, they are frequently coerced into participating in political activities, either overtly or covertly. This pressure creates ethical dilemmas that compromise the integrity of the bureaucracy and blur the boundaries of ASN responsibilities during election periods. Research highlights that the threat to the careers of ASN who resist political pressures further complicates their position. Evidence suggests that such pressures from political officials and colleagues undermine the principles of bureaucratic independence, reducing its effectiveness as a public service institution. Additionally, the limited comprehension of neutrality regulations among ASN exacerbates the problem, contributing to a decline in the quality of public service delivery.

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