

Pilkada 2015 and Patronage Practice among Bureaucrat in West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Ngusmanto Ngusmanto¹

¹ Department of Public Administration, Tanjungpura University, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Correspondence: Ngusmanto Ngusmanto, Department of Public Administration, Tanjungpura University, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Jalan Prof. Dr. H. Hadari Nawawi, Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat, 78124, Indonesia. Tel: 62-812-5711-773. E-mail: ngusmanto@fisip.untan.ac.id

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Abstract

Majority studies on electoral dynamics in Indonesia are reinforce patronage as a pattern of relationships between candidates, winning team, and voters. One of winning team element which have little attention from scholars is bureaucrat. Although, normatively, bureaucrats are required to neutral in all type of general election, but in fact bureaucrats is very involved deeply in general elections. Based on empirical research in Sintang District and Ketapang District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, we found that bureaucrats have a significant role as a winning team in *pilkada* (direct election for local leader). Patronage is a keyword to explain political relation between bureaucrats and candidate in *pilkada*. This situation was triggered by the fact that there are many candidates who have social background as civil servant and, consequently, have direct access to bureaucracy. Bureaucrats have high motivation to participate in *pilkada* as a broker due to protecting their vested interest. In our cases, the vested interest of bureaucrat is career stability which is promising additional personal revenue and social status. Consequently, staffing (circulation of position) within bureaucracy does not followed by auction mechanism (merit system), but following nepotism mechanism (spoil system). The winner of *pilkada* is socially pressured to accommodate all bureaucrats who has become their winning team. Finally, we discuss our finding and propose future agenda research to understanding this phenomenon.

Keywords: politician-bureaucrat nexus, *pilkada*, patronage, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

1. Introduction

Indonesia has many general elections such as legislative election (to vote senator and member of house of people in representative three level government), presidential election (to vote president and vice president), *pilkada* or head district of general election (to vote head of district in province and district government), and *pilkades* or head village of general election (to vote head of village government). *Pilkada* was introduced in 2005 as an integral part of decentralization policy in Indonesia.

As an object of scientific study, *pilkada* has been examined by several researchers who promoting several issues such as little king, money politics, party machinery that overshadowed by candidate personal network, ordinary citizens were not easily manipulated elite, ethnic and religious rivalry (Erb & Sulistiyanto, 2009). *Pilkada* is considered to reduce the responsiveness of local governance, improving public and issuing fiscal discipline, but burdening society because of the tendency of elected regional heads through *pilkada* to seek new sources of revenue (Farfan-Vallespín, 2012). *Pilkada* is also encourages political elite and voters to political pragmatism that opposing to spirit of *Reformasi* (Ida, 2014). *Pilkada*, said Choi (2009), is triggering destabilization of local politics due to the coincidence of formal democratic institutions, patrimonial domination and emotional mass mobilization.

Pilkada is an autonomous phenomenon because it is not influenced by ideological polarization (Baswedan, 2007) and context of political institution (Buehler, 2013) at the national level. Although officials party at national level still have great influence to determining who will have contested as candidate in *pilkada*, but political parties do not affect the process of coalition formation and the struggle of local actor to winning *pilkada* (Choi, 2007b) at the local level. At the same time, *pilkada* has produce new political actor that affect voters' preference such as election polling institution (Trihartono, 2014), social organization and local mass media (Choi, 2007a). Local mass media are often adopting elements of the language of traditional politics to make a claim on leadership in

terms derived from local tradition (Macrae & Nyoman Darma Putra, 2007). In some cities, *pilkada* is allowing Chinese ethnic to appear as a candidate and win the election (Tanasaldy, 2015).

In candidate-voters level, *pilkada* was marked by the strengthening of patron-client relations. Simanjuntak (2013) has showed that how political elites maximize sign of superiority in the form of wealth and physical appearance (authority) to seek political support from voters through various practices of patronage and clientelism. This trend is also occurred largely and equally in all regions of Indonesia in the 2014 Legislative Election (Aspinall & Mada, 2016). These findings seemed to reject Tadjoeidin's (2012) argument who says that the less mature local democracy tends to be experienced by districts with lower income, higher poverty incidence and less urbanized.

Almost all findings in the above are ignoring the role of bureaucrats as a political actor in *pilkada* contestation. In fact, as shown by Ismail et al. (2014), local bureaucrats are frequently involved in *pilkada* as the winning team to protect their interest. However, Ismail et al. (2014) does not explain more detail how the pattern of bureaucrat involvement as a political actor in *pilkada*. This article seeks to fill this gap by focusing on two questions: (a) how do we understanding the pattern of bureaucrat's involvement in *pilkada*? (b) what is the effect of this involvement to staffing process in local bureaucracy?

Theoretically, intellectual debate on administration and politics relations has been started since Woodrow Wilson (1887) wrote the Study of Administration. In this article, Wilson (1887) asserted that bureaucracy (the symbol of the administration world) should be separated from politics. Because, said Wilson (1887), both of them is running different functions: politics is how to make policy decisions and administration is how to implement policy decisions. In shortly, Woodrow Wilson requires neutrality of bureaucracy. However, this argument has been abandoned due to the development of administrative practice that increasingly put bureaucrats as one of the key actors in the public policy making. Bureaucratic neutrality is a myth, said Riggs (2009). In the background of a modern democratic system, bureaucracy has administrative and political role (Meier & O'Toole Jr., 2006). According to Peters (2001), bureaucracy is one of political actor because he has capital and political strategy to protect their vested interests. Bureaucracy as political actor is confirmed by public choice approach and bureaucratic-politics approach (Grindle & Thomas, 1991). Although these approach is more widely used to explain the roles of the bureaucracy in public policy process, but it can also be used as a theoretical perspective to explain the roles of bureaucracy in electoral democracy. This study adopts these approach to explain research problem.

2. Method

We choose qualitative approach as guidelines for research process. Data collection is carried out by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions in Sintang District and Ketapang District for twelve months (January – December 2015). We apply snow-ball method to choose and recruit key informants. As a starting point, we choose key informants as follows: candidate of *pilkada*, local bureaucrat at various level (top, middle, and street-level), party official at local level, and member of winning team from various element. We are also using official publication of local government and formal statement of key informant in mass media (offline and online) as primary data. We use triangulation technique to validate research data.

3. Results

3.1 Sintang District

Sintang is one of districts in West Kalimantan province. In 2014, Sintang District has 390.796 inhabitants with population growth has been reached 1.76 percent. Structure of Sintang's Gross Domestic Product still dominated by agricultural sector (26%), general trade (18%), and manufacturing industry (10%). However, the highest economic growth rate is located in construction sector (20%), financial and insurance service (17%), electricity and gas (15%). Local economy of Sintang District is driven by domestic consumption (56%) and government consumption (13%). Administratively, Sintang District consist of 14 sub-district and 407 villages. Based on people religion, Sintang District has moslem people (40%), Catholic (32%), Protestan (27%), Buddhists (12.32%), Hindus (0.24%), and Confucianism (0.16%) (BPS Sintang, 2015).

Heterogeneity of demographic composition in Sintang District, in terms of ethnicity and religion, has influencing candidate strategy to choosing their partners in *pilkada* (see Table 1). For example, Agrianus is Dayak and choose Muhammad C. Wabah from Aceh. This couple is also representing two social attribute: occupation background (bureaucrat-politician) and religion (Catholic-Islam). Meanwhile, Ignatius Juan – Senen Maryono has attribute as follow: Dayak-Java (ethnic), politician-bureaucrat (occupation background), Catholic-Islam (religion). The last candidate, Jarot Winarno – Askiman, has combine social attribute as follow: Java-Dayak (ethnic), bureaucrat-bureaucrat (occupation background), and Islam-Protestant (religion). Based on this data, we

can conclude that religion, ethnic, and occupation background is still important variable for all candidate to winning *pilkada* in Sintang District. It is show how candidate perceived their environment and apply the politic of representation to approaching Sintang's voter who have pluralistic characteristic. However, without patronage practice, this strategy cannot bring a candidate to win *pilkada*. In our case, patronage is keyword to organize bureaucrat as a political machine.

Table 1. Social attribute of candidate in 2015 Sintang's *Pilkada*

No.	Candidate	Ethnic	Occupation background	Religion	Incumbent	
					Yes	No
1	Agrianus	Dayak	Local bureaucrat	Catholic		No
	Muhammad C. Wahab	Aceh	Local politician (previously: member of Regional House of People Representative Sintang District, 2014-2019)	Islam		No
2	Ignasius Juan	Dayak	Local politician (previously: Vice Head of Sintang District)	Catholic	Yes	
	Senen Maryono	Java	Local bureaucrat	Islam		No
3	Jarot Winarno	Java	Local bureaucrat (an doctor in Health Agency of Sintang District)	Islam		No
	Askiman	Dayak	Local bureaucrat	Protestant		No

There are three pairs of candidate in 2015 Sintang's *pilkada*: Agrianus – Muhammad Chomain Wahab (*Gerakan Indonesia Raya/Gerindra* or The Great Indonesian Movement Party and *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/PKB* or Nation Awakening Party), Ignatius Juan – Senen Maryono (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan/PDIP* or Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, *Partai Demokrat/PD* or Democrat Party, *Partai Keadilan dan Pembangunan Indonesia/PKPI* or Indonesian Development and Justice Party, *Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat/Hanura* or People's Conscience Party, and *Partai Amanat Nasional/PAN* or National Mandate Party), and Jarot Winarno – Askiman (*Partai Nasional Demokrat/Nasdem* or National Democrat Party, *Partai Golongan Karya/Golkar* or Golkar Party, and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan/PPP* or United Development Party). Theoretically, Ignatius Juan – Senen Maryono has a big opportunity to win election. First, they build a big party coalition (led by PDIP). This coalition has 32 percent vote of the number of DPT (literally: *Daftar Pemilih Tetap* or Fixed Voters List) in 2015 Sintang's *pilkada*. Second, they get political supported from the Governor of West Kalimantan who also serve as Chairman of PDIP in this province. Third, in the early of election phase, Ignatius Juan and Senen Maryono more popular than other candidate because Juan Ignatius has incumbent status. However, the winner of Sintang's *pilkada* is Jarot Winarno – Askiman who have supported by 93.778 voters (41.70 percent). Ignatius Juan – Senen Maryono has achieve the third place with 63.811 votes.

In 2010, Jarot Winarno has become a candidate in 2010 *Pilkada*'s Sintang District. He failed to be a winner, but he gets popularity. As a doctor in Sintang District, Jarot Winarno often gives free health service for poor people. As a Javanese, he fights face to face with Senen Maryono to get political support from Javanese voters in Sintang District. Meanwhile, as representation of Dayak ethnic, Askiman does not have negative track record and controversial discourse so that he can build political communication with all Dayak voters. In the same time, voters have subjective judgment on Ignatius Juan as Vice Head of Sintang District. Voters who is not like Ignatius Juan tend to give their vote for Askiman and Agrianus as representing of Dayak ethnics. Askiman is more powerful than Agrianus. As a Chief of Public Work Agency in Sintang District, Askiman has communication access to local businessman who is usually get infrastructure project from government of Sintang District.

Domination of candidates who have occupation background as bureaucrat in 2015 Sintang's *pilkada* makes neutrality of bureaucracy more difficult to be achieved. "A few bureaucrats are choosing neutral position in this *pilkada*. Most of them are mainly involved in this *pilkada* as a member of candidate winning team. There is various trigger for this phenomenon such as friendship, family, and similarity in religion, ethnicity, place of

residence, and work experience”, said AN, local politician from PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* or United Development Party) (interview, 20 June 2015). “Almost 70-80 percent bureaucrat has become member of candidate winning team”, said PO, a bureaucrat and member of the winner candidate (interview, 16 Juni 2016). However, the main factor for this phenomenon is that local bureaucrat has to protect their career stability. “Being a winning team in *pilkada* is a common thing in the era of regional autonomy. If bureaucrats do not become a player, then he has one option: the sacrifice of politics. Conversely, if he joins to a candidate winning team, then he gets two options: (a) if her candidate is loser, then he will not get a job position in local bureaucracy or he will be send to remote area; (b) if his candidate is winner, then he will get job promotion and big budget for his job”, said SI, local bureaucrat in Sintang District (interview, 15 April 2015). SN, local bureaucrat in Sintang District, said that “structural position in bureaucracy does not only promises additional revenue for bureaucrat, room facilities and vehicles, but also give power, influence, and social prestige. If a bureaucrat does not have structural position, he does not have opportunity to get this facility. Without structural position, a bureaucrat will get a variety of psychological and social pressure” (interview, 16 April 2015).

Contribution of bureaucrats in candidate winning team are very varied, depending on his positions in bureaucracy and his social roles in public life. However, in general, every bureaucrat has primary task to mobilize all voter who have family relationship with him. “I give order to my winning team in simple word: securing vote in your family and neighborhood. Do not enter area where you do not know who is people stay there”, said AS, one of candidate in 2015 Sintang’s *pilkada* (interview, 17 April 2015). Not all bureaucrat loyal to one candidate. To minimize political risk, they are usually applying strategy of *dua kaki* (two foot). It is mean that bureaucrat give political support or joining into two or more candidate winning team. “It is very difficult to predict the final result of *pilkada*. All bureaucrats, I think, tend to apply this strategy. So, whoever the winner, they always becoming a part of the winner team”, said SN (interview, 16 April 2015).

Several bureaucrats give ideas, money, or goods to support their candidate. They do it silently and secretly to avoid the officer of *Panwas Pilkada* (*Panitia Pengawas Pemilihan Kepala Daerah/Panwas Pilkada* or Head District Election Supervisory Committee). In candidate views, it is does not matter to recruit bureaucrat as a part of their winning team. “All candidate involving bureaucrat in their winning team. I think, it is human and civilized. All bureaucrat will be influenced by *pilkada* result. Off course, we never involve civil servants formally. They are operating in underground area. We ask them to mobilize voters that have kindship relation and neighborhood only”, said SM (interview, 18 April 2015). In different point of view, AS, other candidate, said that “whoever win *pilkada*, she needed support from loyal, smart, and brave bureaucrat. *Pilkada* is the best momentum and natural process that selecting bureaucrat who have fulfillment this criteria” (interview, 17 April 2015).

This situation, then, strengthening spoil system in local bureaucracy, especially in the case of officer rotation (promotion or demotion). Government of Sintang District has 736 structural position within their bureaucracy, that is: Echelon IV (531), Echelon III (171), and Echelon II (34). While total number of civil servant in Sintang District has been reach 6,122 people. It is mean that market for structural position is very highly competitive because high rate in demand side and lower rate in supply side. However, this competitive market tends to become oligopolistic market when new elected head of district come into office and applying spoil system to rearrangement personnel of local bureaucracy.

According to Government Regulation to Replace Law Number 1/2014 on *Pilkada*, the winner of *pilkada* should be waiting for six months to rotate structural position in local bureaucracy. “Officer rotation within bureaucracy is not a big issue. It is a legal mechanism to refreshing bureaucracy. Do not think to correlate this event to *pilkada*”, said AS (interview, 17 April 2015). Even though the winner does not rotation personnel bureaucracy, but there are many civil servants resign from Government of Sintang District and move to others district in West Kalimantan before the winner of *pilkada* stay in their office. “We fail to win election. Here, under new regime, it is impossible for me to get a good position in government structure. I think, it is time to move to province government” said MN, a bureaucrat and member of winning team of loser candidate (interview, 30 Augustus 2015). PO, a bureaucrat and member of the winner candidate, said that “there is three Echelon II officer who has been removed from his job after *pilkada*. It is punishment for them. But, it is a reward for bureaucrat who gets this job” (interview, 16 June 2016).

3.2 Ketapang District

Ketapang District is the largest district in West Kalimantan province. Its area covers 31,588 km², or 21.28 percent of the total area of West Kalimantan province (146,807 km²). In 2015, Ketapang District has 464,227 peoples and 2.04 percent population growth rate. Administratively, it consists of 20 sub-districts and 249 villages.

Ketapang was inhabited by Dayak, Malay, Chinese, Java, and Madura ethnic. The religion of people is Islam, Protestant, and Catholic (BPS Ketapang, 2016). Regional economy of Ketapang District is still dominated by agricultural sector (29.64%), mining, oil and gas (13.57 %), and manufacturing industry (14.47%). In 2015, its economic growth has reached 2.92 percent and the average income of Ketapang residence is Rp34.42 million per year (BPS Ketapang, 2015).

In 2015 election, Ketapang District has four candidates: (a) Andi Djamiruddin – Chanisius Kuan (*Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat/Hanura* or People’s Conscience Party, *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/PKB* or National Awakening Party; (b) Boyman Harun – Gurdani Achmad (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan/PDIP* or Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, *Partai Amanat Nasional/PAN* or National Mandate Party, *Partai Nasional Demokrat/Nasdem* or National Democrat Party); (c) Darmansyah – Uti Rushan (non-party candidate); and (d) Martin Rantan – Suprpto (non-party candidate). Ketapang election turnout has reached 343,251 vote with 56.73 percent participation rate. The final result of Ketapang election as follows: Martin Rantan – Suprpto (18.87%), Andi Djamiruddin – Chanisius Kuan (18.16%), Boyman Aaron – Gurnadi Achmad (17.69%), and Darmansyah – Uti Rushan (5.73%). It is clear that Martin Rantan – Suprpto is the winner of 2015 Ketapang’s *pilkada*.

Table 2. Social attribute of candidate in 2015 Ketapang’s *Pilkada*

No.	Candidate	Ethnic	Occupation background	Religion	Incumbent	
					Yes	No
1	Martin Rantan	Dayak	Local politician (member of Regional House of People Representative West Kalimantan Province from Golkar)	Catholic		No
	Suprpto	Java	Local bureaucrat	Islam		No
2	Andi Djamiruddin	Bugis	Local bureaucrat	Islam		No
	Chanisius Kwuan	Chinese	Local businessman	Protestant		No
3	Boyman Harun	Aceh	Local politician (previously: Vice Head of Ketapang District)	Islam	Yes	
	Gurdani Achmad	Malay	Local bureaucrat	Islam		No
4	Darmansyah	Malay	Local bureaucrat	Islam		No
	Uti Rushan	Malay	Local entrepreneur	Islam		No

Martin Rantan – Suprpto is non-party candidate. They can defeat incumbent (Boyman Harun). Martin Rantan is senior politicians in Ketapang District. He works as member of *DPRD Ketapang* (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah/DPRD* or District House of People Representative) for three periods. He is also served as secretary of Golkar Party at Ketapang District. He chooses non-party candidate because Golkar Party has leadership dualism at national level. In 2010 election, Martin Rantan was become candidate, paired with Yasir Ansari. He was defeated in the second round by Henrikus - Boyman Aaron. Meanwhile, Soeprpto, vice of Marin Rantan, is a bureaucrat who had served twice as head of agency in Ketapang District Government. In 2015 Ketapang’s *pilkada*, Golkar Party cannot nominate a candidate because of leadership dualism. As a result, Golkar Party gives their machine and direct political support to Martin Rantan - Soeprpto. All grassroots elements of the Golkar Party are joining to a winning team labeled as *Team Pro-Independent*. This situation cannot be separated from Martin Rantan as a senior and rooted figure in Ketapang Golkar Party.

Similar to Sintang elections, constellation of Ketapang elections is also tinged by political marriage between religion, ethnicity, and background of occupation. This is part of political strategy of candidate who try understanding political context at voter level. However, in terms of occupation background, candidate who has work experience as a bureaucrat is still dominant. In other words, each candidate has access to bureaucracy. Although Boyman Aaron has status as incumbent candidate, but he was not fully able to condition bureaucrats as political machine. "During this time, the loyalty of bureaucrats not to the vice head of district, but to head of district only. When head of district fails to nominate as candidate, bureaucrats are relatively free to seek a new

patron for the next five years", said IM, chief of candidate winning team and local business elite (interview, 5 May 2015).

In 2015 Ketapang's *pilkada*, all candidate who has working experience in bureaucracy tend to drive their personal networking (friendship and community organization) as political machine. AD, for example, has led the *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (ICMI or *Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals*), *Kerukunan Keluarga Sulawesi Selatan* (KKSS or *Association of South Sulawesi Family*), Pengurus Atletik Seluruh Indonesia (PASI or *Indonesian Athletic Board*) at Ketapang. He is also build intensive communication to all bureaucrat who have worked as his colleague in several government offices (i.e: Head Office of Sukadana Subdistrict, Head Office of Matan Hilir Subdistrict, Sanitation Agency of Ketapang District, and Revenue Agency of Ketapang District). "I thinks, it is very normal if I ask for political support from people who know me and I know them", said AD (interview, 5 May 2016). The same strategy is also performed by SS who had been worked as Chief of Population and Civil Registry Agency and Chief of Ketapang Inspectorate Office. However, said SS, "I never request my best friend who works as a civil servant to join into our winning team. I just ask them to vote me. I think, it is very natural, because of I am a candidate and they are a voter (interview, 7 May 2015).

KP, the head of one candidate winning team, said that they never seek to involving bureaucrat as winning team. "It is high risk to involving bureaucrat in our team. Furthermore, the number of civil servants was very small when compared to Ketapang population. We are focused on our work to approaching non-bureaucrat voters scattered in 20 sub-districts and 249 villages. This voter is more real than voter in bureaucracy," said KP (interview, 9 May 2015). Different with KP is DB, one candidate winning team that works at the level of villages, said that "teacher and midwives have strategic position during *pilkada* because they have direct interaction with people in the village. However, I do not see they invite people openly to choose certain candidate. In my mind, street level bureaucrats tend to stand up in safety zone", said DB (interview, 10 May 2015).

From bureaucrat's point of view, for example KO, *pilkada* is an opportunity to change the destiny. "I am well acquainted with one candidates. We make friendship since our work in bureaucracy. Five years ago, I support my friend in *pilkada*, but he loses. As a result, my career is stuck for over 5 years and I did not get structural position in bureaucracy. My position in the office is just a regular staff. Today, I am a part of the group who win the election. I have all administrative requirements to become heads of office. I am just waiting political from the executive" said KO (interview, 10 November 2015). Similar to KO, TM, an Echelon III officer and member of candidate winning team, said that "*Pilkada* is politics. Politics is take and give process. There is no free lunch in politics. During this election, I struggled with the various ways to support my candidate. Now, my candidate is the winner of *pilkada*. I am waiting to take something from my candidate. I believe he will remember who is the fighter in *pilkada* and who is not", TM (interview, 7 November 2015).

In Ketapang District, the number of civil servants has been reached 6,840 people. Government of Ketapang District has 763 structural position with composition as follows: Echelon II (23 positions or 3 percent), Echelon III (146 positions or 19 percent), Echelon IV (584 positions or 76 percent), and Echelon V (10 positions or 1 percent) (BPS Ketapang, 2015). Similar to Sintang District, this situation means that structural position market is very competitive. There is administrative and political consideration for the executive to select and recruit an officer in certain position. After their inauguration as Head and Vice Head of Ketapang District, Martin Rantan – Suprpto makes bureaucratic reform as one of strategic action for their government. This reform has already started by Kartius, ad interim Head of Ketapang District, who is promoting and demoting 135 personnel in Government of Ketapang District. "This rotation is not like or dislike discourse. It is not about discrimination. It is part of bureaucratic reform so that you will be achieved high performance in public service" (Anonymous, 2015). However, rotation policy by Kartius has produced controversy in bureaucrat level. "Ad interim officer does not have authority to make rotation policy. It is pure politics and deal with *pilkada*. We know that ad interim officer has been sent by our governor to protect certain candidate. Everybody know it", said HK, senior bureaucrat in Government of Ketapang District (interview, 15 September 2015). Furthermore, Martin Rantan said that he will not give structural position to bureaucrats who are not visionary and does not support the achievement of their vision. "We will replace all bureaucrat who is not understand how to transform our vision into policy" said Martin (Anonymous, 2016).

One of the winning team Martin Rantan – Suprpto revealed that process of personnel rotation in Government of Ketapang District has been prepared systematically. "We have already get their names, including bureaucrat who has been mutation by ad interim Head of Ketapang District. However, we have to very extra careful. We do not let this rotation process cause social jealousy among bureaucrats who is involved as the winning team. It is not easy task to choose the officer who are loyal, able to work, and dare to make a breakthrough to realize

Martion-Prapto vision. Additionally, this process must also be adjusted with internal mechanism in bureaucracy," said KP (interview, 9 May 2016). Important role played by the winning team in selecting and promoting bureaucrat in line with the spirit of Martin Rantan. "All the winning member will organize into mass organization. This organization will serve as think tank, watchdog, and government partners in accelerating development process. We will not leave our fighters", said Martin Rantau (Anonymous, 2016).

4. Discussion

This study confirms that patronage practice does not only occur between political elite to their voters and their winning team (Aspinall & Mada, 2016; Simanjuntak, 2013), but also relation between politicians and bureaucrat. This finding also strengthen Peters's (2001) argument who see bureaucrat as a political actor. It is in line with the idea of bureaucratic neutrality (Riggs, 2009), public choice, and bureaucratic-politics argument (Grindle & Thomas, 1991) in understanding the political behavior of bureaucracy and bureaucrats at local government. Based on our case, we can conclude that (a) in the supply side, bureaucracy is still important source of political elite in *pilkada*. Bureaucrat as a professional worker is still perceived by local politicians as an instrument to approaching the voters; (b) in the demand-side, bureaucrat highly motivated to participate in *pilkada* as a part of candidate winning team due to protect their vested interest.

Consequently, all effort by central government to reform local bureaucracy through a variety instruments (i.e: increasing salary, job auction, and new rules in personnel management) will be faced with patronage atmosphere at local level. Spoil system will be maintained by local political elite and local bureaucrat as a mechanism to execute staffing within bureaucracy. However, because of the necessity of political elite to maintain their popularity and electability in front of the voters, spoil system is not a reason for bureaucrat to abandoning high performance. When bureaucrats do not work optimally, then their patron could be threatened in the next election. At this point, particularly in the context of Indonesia, it is becoming important to investigate whether spoil system and merit system has a positive/negative impact to performance of bureaucracy. We suspect that, spoil system positively affects the performance of bureaucracy at the local level because it is in tune with the characteristics of people, political elite, bureaucracy elite at local level (as shown by Sintang District and Ketapang District). We can also investigate how and what is prerequisite for merit system under patronage circumstances. Off course, this allegation is still need to be proven by empirical research.

Last but not least, we suggest that it is important to investigate what is the effect of patronage relation between politician and bureaucrat on public interest. Theoretically, bureaucracy was born as a guardian of public interest. But, spoil system makes bureaucracy as a tool for certain group to controlling the power of state only. In this situation, it is urgent to ask what is happening to public interest. Is there still a room for public interest in spoil government? At policy level, we can ask how many policies which is produced by spoil government will promote and enhance public interest? How do the elected candidate and local bureaucrat compromise their interest to public interest? We believe, answering these question is important to increasing scientific knowledge on dynamic of local politics in Indonesia.

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