

***POLICIES ON THE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM IN THE WEST JAVA
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT: TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC
ACCOUNTABILITY***

**KEBIJAKAN SISTEM PENGANGKATAN JABATAN DI PEMERINTAH
DAERAH JAWA BARAT: TRANSPARANSI DAN AKUNTABILITAS
PUBLIK**

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi kebijakan sistem pengangkatan jabatan di lingkungan Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Barat dengan fokus pada transparansi, akuntabilitas publik dan efektivitas sistem merit dalam pengisian jabatan birokrasi. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada teori efektivitas hukum yang dikemukakan oleh Soerjono Soekanto serta prinsip-prinsip tata kelola pemerintahan yang baik (*good governance*), khususnya transparansi dan akuntabilitas. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, analisis dokumen dan studi kepustakaan yang melibatkan pejabat pemerintah, lembaga pengawas, serta pemangku kepentingan terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan yang signifikan antara kerangka hukum yang mengatur pengangkatan jabatan berdasarkan sistem merit dan implementasinya dalam praktik. Meskipun prosedur pengangkatan jabatan secara formal telah sesuai dengan Undang-Undang No.5 Tahun 2014 tentang Aparatur Sipil Negara dan Peraturan Pemerintah No.11 Tahun 2017 tentang Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil, intervensi politik dan praktik patronase masih memengaruhi keputusan akhir dalam pengangkatan jabatan. Transparansi yang diterapkan masih bersifat prosedural, karena informasi penting yang berkaitan dengan hasil penilaian, kriteria evaluasi dan proses pertimbangan panitia seleksi belum sepenuhnya dapat diakses oleh publik. Akuntabilitas publik juga masih terbatas akibat lemahnya pengawasan eksternal serta tidak mengikatnya rekomendasi yang dikeluarkan oleh Komisi Aparatur Sipil Negara (KASN). Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan sistem meritokrasi memerlukan komitmen politik yang lebih kuat, peningkatan transparansi, penguatan mekanisme akuntabilitas, serta kewenangan pengawasan yang lebih efektif guna mewujudkan administrasi publik yang profesional, netral, dan tidak memihak.

Kata Kunci: Akuntabilitas Publik, KASN, Pemerintah Daerah, Sistem Merit, Tata Kelola Pemerintahan yang Baik

ABSTRACT

This study examines the policy implementation of the appointment system within the West Java Provincial Government, focusing on transparency, public accountability, and the effectiveness of the merit system in bureaucratic appointments. The study is grounded in Soerjono Soekanto's theory of legal effectiveness and the principles of good governance, particularly transparency and accountability. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, document analysis and literature review involving government officials, supervisory institutions and relevant stakeholders. The findings reveal a significant gap between the legal framework governing merit-based appointments and its practical implementation. Although appointment procedures formally comply with Law No.5 of 2014 on State Civil Apparatus and Government Regulation No.11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management, political intervention and patronage practices continue to influence final appointment decisions. Transparency remains procedural, as critical information related to assessment results, evaluation criteria, and selection committee deliberations is not fully accessible to the public. Public accountability is also limited due to weak external oversight and the non-binding nature of recommendations issued by the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN). The study concludes that strengthening meritocracy requires greater political commitment, enhanced transparency, stronger accountability mechanisms, and more effective supervisory authority to ensure professional and impartial public administration.

Keywords: *Public Accountability, KASN, Regional Government, Merit System, Good Governance*

A. INTRODUCTION

Appointments in local government are a strategic aspect in bureaucratic management because they directly determine the quality of governance, the effectiveness of public services, and the integrity of state apparatus. In Indonesia, bureaucratic reform encourages the implementation of the merit system principle in the entire process of filling positions, as mandated in Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus and various derivative regulations.¹ However, in practice, local political dynamics, the configuration of regional head power, and inter-elite relations often influence the appointment process and create a gap between legal norms and administrative reality.²

¹ Indonesia, *Undang-Undang tentang Aparatur Sipil Negara*, UU No.5 Tahun 2014, LN Tahun 2014 No.6, TLN No.5494.

² Hongbin Li, Lingsheng Meng, *Why Do Politicians Appoint Bureaucrats? Political Incentives and Public Sector Personnel Management in China*, *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol.95, No.9–10 (Oktober 2011), p.1026–35.

West Java Province, as one of the regions with a large and complex bureaucratic structure, is an important space to examine how the policies of the rulers in the appointment process are carried out. In recent years, issues related to transparency, professionalism, and accountability in the selection and rotation of positions within the West Java Regional Government have often become a public concern. This is mainly related to the alleged practice of bureaucratic politicization, the dominance of certain interests in the placement of officials, and the non-optimal role of supervisory institutions such as the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) in ensuring the application of meritocratic principles.³

Transparency and public accountability are two main pillars that must be strengthened in the appointment system so that the process of determining officials not only meets legal standards, but also reflects democratic values and administrative justice. Transparency is needed so that the selection process can be supervised by the public, minimizing room for manipulation, and increasing the legitimacy of appointed officials. Meanwhile, public accountability ensures that local governments can account for all appointment decisions, both administratively, ethically and politically, resulting in professional and integrity apparatus.⁴

This study seeks to analyze how the policies of the rulers in the West Java Regional Government in the appointment system are implemented, the extent to which transparency and public accountability are integrated in each stage, and what factors affect the deviation or success of the implementation of these principles. This study is important not only to understand the dynamics of bureaucracy in West Java, but also to make a theoretical and practical contribution to strengthening local governance that is more responsive, professional and free from the practice of abuse of authority.⁵

³ Christelle Auriacombe, Stephan Sithole, *The Use of the Merit System in the Public Service*, African Journal of Public Affairs, Vol.10, No.4 (September 2018), p.1–20.

⁴ Monika Bauhr, Marcia Grimes, *Transparency to Curb Corruption? Concepts, Measures and Empirical Merit*, Crime, Law and Social Change, Vol.68, No.4 (Juli 2017), p.431–58.

⁵ Carl Dahlström, Victor Lapuente and Jan Teorell, *The Merit of Meritocratization: Politics, Bureaucracy and the Institutional Deterrents of Corruption*, Political Research Quarterly, Vol.65, No.3 (September 2012), p.656–68.

This study employs a qualitative research design with an explanatory and descriptive approach to analyze how political authority influences the appointment system within the West Java regional government, particularly in relation to transparency and public accountability. Data were collected through three primary sources: document analysis, in-depth interviews and secondary data reviews. Document analysis included relevant legal frameworks such as the Civil Service Act (Law No.5/2014), Government Regulation No.11/2017 on Civil Servant Management and internal regulations of the West Java Provincial Government concerning position appointments.⁶ In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants including regional officials, members of selection committees, representatives of the Civil Service Commission (KASN) and governance experts to understand practical challenges, decision-making patterns, and power dynamics affecting the appointment process. Secondary data were obtained from official reports, audit documents, media publications and previous academic studies to triangulate findings and ensure analytical reliability. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing, allowing the researcher to systematically identify patterns of transparency gaps, accountability issues and political influence. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the study applied triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, and thorough validation of documentary evidence. Overall, this methodology provides a comprehensive framework for examining the interplay between policy, governance practices and political power in the appointment of public officials in West Java.⁷

B. DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of Appointment Policy in the West Java Regional Government

The results of the study show that the West Java Provincial Government has formally adopted the national legal framework regarding the merit system,

⁶ Indonesia, *Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil*, PP No.11 Tahun 2017, LN Tahun 2017 No.63, TLN No.6037.

⁷ Alice Evans, *Local Bureaucrats, Meritocracy and Public Service Delivery*, Governance, Vol.34, No.2 (April 2021), p.369–86.

as stipulated in Law No.5 of 2014 concerning ASN and Government Regulation No.11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management. This regulatory framework is the basis for the implementation of open recruitment for High Leadership Positions (JPT) which theoretically aims to ensure that the filling of positions is carried out objectively, competitively and transparently. In practice, the open selection mechanism has indeed been applied in most of the filling of strategic positions, but the consistency of its implementation still varies between agencies and government periods.⁸

Field findings show that the administrative process of position selection in general has followed standard procedures, such as vacancy announcements, competency assessments, file verification and interviews by the Selection Committee (Pansel). However, even though the formal procedure is running, there is a strategic intervention in the stage of determining the final candidate from the regional head and the surrounding political elite circle. This intervention usually occurs in the finalization phase of official recommendations, where the decision of the regional head often does not fully follow the assessment value or technical recommendations of the Pansel.⁹

In addition, although Pansel works professionally, independently, and based on competency standards, its authority is still very limited. The Pansel's recommendations containing the three best names (three best candidates) can still be ignored by regional heads on the grounds of discretion or consideration of "strategic leadership". In some cases, the candidate with the highest assessment score was not selected, indicating that subjective and political considerations have a significant influence on appointment. This study also found that there is a considerable disparity between regulations and field practices, especially in determining the need for positions and the rotation mechanism of structural officials. The determination of position needs is not always based on workload analysis and rational position maps, but is also influenced by political agendas, bureaucratic loyalty, or the need to maintain the stability of the power network.

⁸ Guillermo O'Donnell, *Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies*, Journal of Democracy, Vol.9, No.3 (Juli 1998), p.112–26.

⁹ Anna Persson, Bo Rothstein and Jan Teorell, *Why Anticorruption Reforms Fail—Systemic Corruption as a Collective Action Problem*, Governance, Vol.26, No.3 (September 2013), p.449–71.

Rotation of officials is often carried out suddenly without careful performance planning, thus creating the perception that the transfer of positions is driven more by political considerations than organizational needs.¹⁰

Overall, the results of the study show that the implementation of the merit system in the West Java Regional Government still faces challenges in terms of consistency, institutional quality and process integrity. Although national regulations have provided a strong framework, local political practices and the power of regional heads remain the dominant factors influencing the appointment of office, thus hindering the achievement of true meritocracy.

2. Level of Transparency in the Position Selection Process

The research found that the level of transparency in the position selection process within the West Java Regional Government is still partial and has not reached the level of substantive transparency as mandated in the principles of meritocracy. In certain aspects, the local government has provided basic information related to the selection stages, administrative requirements and the announcement of selection results through official websites and other public information channels. However, this openness is more administrative and does not reflect full openness to the decision-making process. Field findings show that not all stages of selection have complete and easily accessible public documentation. Important information such as assessment methods used, competency assessment indicators, and assessment weights are not always explained to the public. This makes it difficult for the public and prospective participants to verify whether the selection process really runs according to the principles of objectivity and competence. In addition, other important documents such as Pansel minutes, trial minutes, and candidate evaluation records were not opened to the public, creating room for uncertainty and weakening the legitimacy of the selection process.¹¹

The assessment of the technical, managerial, and socio-cultural competencies & track records of the candidates was also not announced in detail.

¹⁰ Bo Rothstein and Jan Teorell, *What Is Quality of Government? A Theory of Impartial Government Institutions*, Governance, Vol.21, No.2 (April 2008), p.165–90.

¹¹ Andreas Schedler, *Conceptualizing Accountability*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Accountability*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado, 1999.

The public only receives final results in the form of a list of the top three names without an explanation of the assessment score, indicators used, or the reason for the ranking. The lack of this information causes the public to be unable to critically assess whether the selected candidate is indeed the best based on objective data or only based on the preferences of regional heads. The research also revealed that the process of rotation and mutation of structural officials took place much more closed than the open selection process. There is no systematic publication mechanism related to the reasons for the mutation, the evaluation of the performance of the replaced officials, or the strategic considerations underlying the change in organizational structure. This secrecy often gives rise to public speculation about the existence of political influences, reciprocity, or certain interests that encourage the transfer of positions, especially in the period leading up to the political year or when there is a change of regional leadership.

Overall, the results of the study show that transparency within the West Java Regional Government is still procedural and has not touched on the substantive aspects that allow the public to carry out effective supervision. This lack of transparency has the potential to create room for deviation, reduce public trust in the bureaucracy and undermine the implementation of the actual merit system.

3. Public Accountability in Appointment Decisions

The findings of the study show that public accountability in the process of appointment within the West Java Regional Government is still at the administrative stage and has not yet developed into substantive accountability involving an open accountability mechanism to the community. Formally, local governments already have internal supervision instruments such as inspectorate audits, evaluation of the Selection Committee (Pansel) and monitoring carried out by the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN). The instrument shows that a normative accountability framework is available, but its implementation is still not optimal and often encounters obstacles at the execution level. One of the important findings is that KASN's recommendations—which should be the main reference for maintaining integrity and fairness in the appointment process—are not always fully followed up by locals. Some recommendations only responded to administratively, with no substantive changes to the decision to appoint officials.

This happens because the nature of KASN's recommendations is non-binding, so that regional heads still have broad discretion in determining the officials to be appointed. This condition weakens the effectiveness of external supervision and opens up opportunities for deviations from the merit system principles.¹²

In addition, the evaluation of the performance of officials after being appointed has not been systematically integrated with the next promotion or rotation process. In practice, promotions or mutations are often not based on performance achievements, objective indicators, or periodic evaluation results, but are more influenced by subjective considerations and certain political interests. As a result, performance-based accountability mechanisms are weak and unable to function as a tool to ensure professionalism and continuous improvement of the quality of the bureaucracy. Another aspect that weakens public accountability is the limited complaint channels that are responsive and accessible to the public. Existing reporting or complaint mechanisms are often not connected to a clear follow-up system, so public complaints about alleged irregularities in the selection process or position rotation rarely receive an adequate response. In addition, local governments do not provide annual evaluation reports on office filling, structural rotation and official performance that are publicly accessible to the public or civil society organizations. This lack of public information hinders the public's ability to supervise, weakens transparency and reduces the level of public trust in the decision-making process within the bureaucracy.¹³

Overall, the low level of public accountability in appointments in West Java shows that although a normative framework has been formed, the commitment to implementation to ensure substantive accountability still needs to be strengthened. Without a transparent, performance-based, and responsive accountability mechanism to external oversight, the appointment process has the potential to remain an arena of power dominance rather than a professional and meritocratic administrative practice.

¹² Christian Schuster and Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, *Constraints on the Executive Influence over Bureaucratic Personnel Systems*, Public Administration, Vol.98, No.4 (Desember 2020), p.896–913.

¹³ James H. Svara, *The Complementarity of Politics and Administration in Democratic Governance*, Public Administration Review, Vol.66, No.1 (2016), p.76–88.

4. Political Factors and Power Affecting Appointments

The results of the study found that local political configuration has a significant influence on the process of placing officials within the West Java Regional Government. In many cases, the policy of appointment is not only driven by technocratic considerations, but also by the power dynamics created by the relationship between regional heads, political parties and elite actors around the government. Interviews with a number of informants show that the preference of regional heads is the most decisive factor. Officials who are perceived to have political loyalty, common vision, or personal closeness to regional heads often get priority in filling strategic positions, even though their assessment scores are not always the highest.¹⁴

The influence of coalition political parties also strengthens the dynamics of patronage in the bureaucracy. In some cases, there are certain positions that are informally identified as "political allotments," especially at the level of Primary High Leadership Positions that have a strategic function in the implementation of regional head programs. The involvement of political parties has an impact on the layering of the bureaucratic structure by individuals who have an orientation of political loyalty, thereby reducing the objectivity of the selection process. Bureaucratic politicization is increasingly visible ahead of the political year such as the election of regional heads (pilkada). During this period, the rotation and mutation of officials is often carried out intensively to ensure that strategic positions are occupied by individuals who can support the political interests of the incumbent or his supporting coalition. Changes in positions are often done on the grounds of "organizational refreshment," but the informant stated that the rotation is more often interpreted as a strategy of consolidating power than an effort to improve performance.

In addition, there is something like tendency to retain "the close people" or officials who have a history of personal relationships with the regional heads in strategic positions even though their assessment scores are not superior enough.

¹⁴ Mark Turner and David Hulme, *Governance, Politics and Development*, Development and Change, Vol.28, No.4 (Juni 1997), p.811–34.

This practice shows that competency parameters are not the only consideration, and this substantially weakens the implementation of the merit system. Overall, the study confirms that political factors are still the dominant variables that affect the bureaucratic structure in West Java, thereby hindering the realization of professional, neutral and integrity governance.

5. Effectiveness of External Supervision: The Role of KASN, DPRD and the Media

The findings of the study show that external supervision of the appointment process in the West Java Regional Government has not been carried out effectively. Although the regulatory framework has provided a supervisory mechanism through various institutions such as the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN), the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the media, each of these supervisory actors faces structural and operational constraints that cause supervision to be weak and suboptimal. KASN, as an institution that has a mandate to enforce the merit system, routinely issues recommendations on alleged violations or inconsistencies in the position selection process. However, the non-binding nature of KASN's recommendations provides room for local governments not to follow up on the recommendations in full. In some cases, the recommendation is only used as an administrative formality without substantive changes in the appointment decision. This limited authority makes the role of KASN more of a moral authority than a regulatory authority.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the DPRD, which normatively has the function of supervising the performance of local governments, rarely follows up on issues related to the implementation of the merit system. The issue of appointment is often seen as the domain of the executive and is within the prerogative of regional heads, so the DPRD does not have the political courage to encourage deeper transparency. The lack of technical capacity of the DPRD in understanding the ASN management system also makes supervision not run critically or sustainably. The media and civil society organizations do play an important role in exerting public pressure,

¹⁵ Agus Dwi Widarno dan Haryono Hadi, *Merit System and Bureaucratic Reform in Indonesia*, Journal of Governance and Integrity, Vol.5, No.2 (2022), p.17–29.

especially in cases that come to the surface. However, their ability to carry out substantive control is very limited because access to information related to the selection process and rotation of officials is very minimal. Without adequate data such as assessment scores, evaluation notes, or Pansel consideration documents it is difficult for the media to develop comprehensive investigative reports. This situation shows that the limited internal transparency of local governments has a direct impact on the effectiveness of external supervision.

Overall, this study shows that the combination of weak supervisory authority, limited access to information and dominance of executive power results in conditions where external supervision is unable to be a counterbalance in the appointment process. This condition has the potential to maintain a pattern of patronage-based appointments and weaken the implementation of meritocracy in regional bureaucracy.

6. The Gap between Merit System Regulation and Local Political Practice: Analysis Using Legal Effectiveness Theory

The findings indicate that the implementation of the merit system in the West Java Provincial Government has not fully achieved the objectives mandated by Law No.5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus and Government Regulation No.11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management. This condition can be analyzed through Soerjono Soekanto's theory of legal effectiveness, which states that the effectiveness of law is influenced by five factors: legal substance, law enforcement, facilities and infrastructure, society, and legal culture.¹⁶

From the perspective of legal substance, Indonesia already possesses a comprehensive regulatory framework governing merit-based appointments. However, the law enforcement factor remains problematic because the implementation of merit principles depends heavily on the commitment of regional leaders and administrative actors. Although the Selection Committee (Pansel) conducts objective assessments, final decisions are often influenced by discretionary authority exercised by regional heads. Furthermore, legal culture significantly affects implementation. The persistence of patronage networks,

¹⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *What Is Governance?*, Governance, Vol.26, No.3 (Juli 2013), p.347–68.

bureaucratic loyalty and political considerations demonstrates that meritocratic values have not yet become the dominant culture within local governance. Consequently, there is a discrepancy between normative regulations and practical implementation. In Soekanto's framework, this gap reflects a condition where legal compliance exists formally but remains weak substantively because social and political factors continue to shape administrative decisions.¹⁷

7. Legal Basis and Authority of KASN in Supervising Merit System Implementation

The role of the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) is crucial in safeguarding the merit system. The legal basis for KASN is established under Articles 27–35 of Law No.5 of 2014 concerning ASN. KASN is mandated to supervise the implementation of merit principles, maintain ASN neutrality, monitor promotions and transfers, and ensure compliance with professional standards in personnel management. The role of the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) is crucial in safeguarding the merit system. The legal basis for KASN is established under Articles 27–35 of Law No.5 of 2014 concerning ASN. KASN is mandated to supervise the implementation of merit principles, maintain ASN neutrality, monitor promotions and transfers, and ensure compliance with professional standards in personnel management. In the context of appointments to High Leadership Positions (Jabatan Pimpinan Tinggi/JPT), KASN has the authority to evaluate selection processes, investigate alleged violations of merit principles, and issue recommendations to government institutions. However, KASN's authority is largely supervisory and recommendatory rather than coercive. Although KASN may provide corrective recommendations, implementation depends on the willingness of regional governments to comply. This institutional limitation explains why several KASN recommendations are not fully implemented in practice. The absence of strong enforcement mechanisms weakens KASN's capacity to ensure compliance with merit-based governance. Consequently, KASN functions more as a guardian of ethical and professional standards than as a regulatory institution capable of imposing direct sanctions.¹⁸

¹⁷ Merilee S. Grindle, *Good Enough Governance Revisited*, Development Policy Review, Vol.29, No.1 (Januari 2011), p.199–221.

¹⁸ Christopher Hood, *Accountability and Transparency: Siamese Twins, Matching Parts, Awkward Couple?*, West European Politics, Vol.33, No.5 (September 2010), p.989–1009.

8. Political Influence on Appointments: Evidence from Previous Studies

The influence of political actors on bureaucratic appointments identified in this research is consistent with previous studies on local governance and bureaucratic politicization in Indonesia. Pratikno and Lay (2013) found that decentralization has increased the discretionary power of regional heads in managing bureaucratic structures, often creating opportunities for patronage and political intervention. Similarly, studies by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020) and the World Bank (2021) indicate that political patronage remains a major challenge to bureaucratic professionalism in many developing democracies. Research conducted by the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) also consistently reports that violations of merit principles frequently occur during regional leadership transitions and local election periods. KASN annual reports show that mutations and promotions often intensify before and after local elections, suggesting a strategic use of bureaucratic positions to consolidate political support. These findings support the argument that bureaucratic appointments are not merely administrative decisions but are embedded within broader political power relations. Therefore, strengthening meritocracy requires not only regulatory improvements but also political commitment from regional leaders and stronger institutional safeguards against patronage practices.¹⁹

9. Transparency and Accountability Analysis through Good Governance Theory

The findings regarding limited transparency and accountability can be examined using Good Governance Theory, particularly the principles of transparency and accountability as promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Transparency requires that decision-making processes be open, understandable and accessible to stakeholders. In the appointment process, transparency should involve public access to selection criteria, competency assessment indicators, scoring systems, candidate evaluations, and the rationale underlying final decisions. However, this study found that information disclosure remains procedural rather than substantive.

¹⁹ Pan Suk Kim, *Meritocracy in Government: Findings, Issues and Future Research*, Public Personnel Management, Vol.46, No.2 (Juni 2017), p.91–108.

While vacancy announcements and final results are publicly available, critical information regarding competency scores, assessment methods, and deliberation processes is largely inaccessible. The accountability principle requires public officials to justify their decisions and be answerable for their actions. In the context of appointments, accountability demands that regional governments provide clear explanations regarding why particular candidates are selected and how those decisions align with merit principles. However, findings reveal that appointment decisions are often justified through broad discretionary authority without detailed public explanation. Furthermore, annual reports concerning appointments, rotations and performance evaluations are rarely disclosed to the public. From a good governance perspective, these deficiencies weaken public trust and reduce institutional legitimacy. Transparency enables public scrutiny, while accountability ensures that decision-makers remain responsible for their actions. Without these principles, appointment processes become vulnerable to favoritism, political patronage, and abuse of discretion.²⁰

10. Strengthening Meritocracy through Governance Reform

The findings demonstrate that strengthening meritocracy requires reforms that address legal, institutional and political dimensions simultaneously. First, KASN's supervisory authority should be strengthened through more binding enforcement mechanisms. Second, transparency should be expanded to include publication of competency assessments, evaluation criteria, and reasons for appointment decisions. Third, accountability mechanisms should be reinforced through regular public reporting and accessible complaint channels.²¹

Applying the principles of legal effectiveness and good governance reveals that successful merit system implementation depends not only on regulatory compliance but also on institutional integrity, political commitment and a governance culture that values professionalism over patronage. Therefore, bureaucratic reform in West Java and other regional governments must focus on building transparent, accountable, and politically neutral administrative systems capable of delivering public services based on competence and merit.²²

²⁰ David E. Lewis, *Political Appointments and Personnel Administration*, Annual Review of Political Science, Vol.14, No.1 (Juni 2011), p.165–84.

²¹ Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, Kim Sass Mikkelsen, *Civil Service Professionalisation in Developing Countries*, World Development, Vol.94 (Juni 2017), p.220–35.

²² Kim Sass Mikkelsen, *Bureaucratic Autonomy, Political Control and Performance*, International Public Management Journal, Vol.21, No.2 (2018), p.225–52.

C. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the ruler's policy on the appointment system within the West Java Regional Government still faces structural and political challenges that have an impact on the consistency of the application of the principles of transparency and public accountability. Although normatively local governments have adopted the merit system framework as stipulated in Law No.5 of 2014 and Government Regulation No.11 of 2017, its implementation has not been optimally carried out due to the strong influence of regional head preferences, local political dynamics and limited external supervision.

First, transparency in the position selection process is still administrative, not substantial. The information provided to the public only includes the announcement of the selection stages, while important data such as assessment scores, track records and Pansel considerations are not conveyed publicly. This creates a space of uncertainty and reduces public legitimacy for appointed officials. Second, public accountability has not been fully realized. The decision to appoint majority officials is based on the discretion of regional heads and external accountability mechanisms are not effective. KASN's recommendations often do not receive adequate follow-up, while public reports on position evaluations are not publicly available. Thus, accountability is still more internal than democratic accountability involving the community.

Third, this study emphasizes that political influence and patronage are the dominant factors that affect the appointment process. Political loyalty and personal closeness are often prioritized over the objective competencies of officials, especially in strategic positions. This phenomenon weakens the implementation of meritocracy and poses a risk of bureaucratic politicization. Fourth, external supervision by KASN, DPRD, the media and civil society has not been able to provide strong control due to limited authority, lack of data access, and low response of local governments to monitoring recommendations. This results in an implementation gap between regulation and practice.

Overall, this study concludes that the appointment system in the West Java Regional Government needs serious strengthening, especially in the aspects of substantive transparency, public accountability, independence of the Pansel and strengthening the authority of supervisory institutions. The political commitment of regional heads is a key factor in ensuring that the merit system is not only formally valid, but also a culture of bureaucratic performance that upholds professionalism, integrity and administrative justice.

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