

**Author:**

Zaim Mukaffi<sup>1</sup>, Amjad Hamad Abdullah<sup>2</sup>

**Affiliation:**

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang<sup>1</sup>, Erbil Polytechnic University, Kurdistan Iraq<sup>2</sup>

**Corresponding author:**

email: [zaim@manajemen.uin-malang.ac.id](mailto:zaim@manajemen.uin-malang.ac.id)

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## A Qualitative Study on the Dynamics of Social Solidarity in Overcoming Socio-Economic Crises and Challenges

**Abstract:** The intersection of populism, political interference, and bureaucratic neutrality has become a critical issue for democratic governance, particularly in the context of socio-economic crises. This study aims to explore how the rise of populist movements affects the politicization of bureaucracy and its implications for democratic integrity. Through a qualitative approach, the research examines the impact of populism on public institutions, focusing on the role of social solidarity in crisis management. By reviewing recent literature and empirical studies, the research identifies the tensions between political loyalty and bureaucratic impartiality, and how such pressures undermine the neutrality of public servants. The findings reveal that the politicization of bureaucracy leads to diminished public trust, decreased transparency, and weakened accountability in governance. In response, the study highlights the importance of safeguarding bureaucratic neutrality, particularly in times of populist political influence, to maintain the legitimacy of public institutions. Social solidarity emerges as a vital force in overcoming socio-economic challenges, fostering community resilience, and mitigating the adverse effects of crises. The research underscores the need for comprehensive reforms to protect bureaucratic institutions from political pressures and enhance social solidarity to ensure effective governance. Ultimately, the study calls for strengthening both bureaucr

**Keywords:** Populism, Bureaucratic Neutrality, Political Interference, Social Solidarity, Crisis Management

### INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of social solidarity in addressing socio-economic crises have become a critical focus in the field of social and political studies, especially in contexts marked by significant socio-political challenges. In modern societies, social solidarity plays a pivotal role in the collective response to crises, particularly in the face of socio-economic hardships. As noted by Bot (2022) electoral management systems are often central to the functioning of democratic institutions, and these systems are increasingly under pressure due to populist politics and democratic backsliding. These forces exacerbate political and social tensions, making the role of social solidarity in supporting communities during times of

crisis even more vital. Social solidarity, as described by Durkheim Bauer (2019) serves as the cohesive force that binds individuals together, enabling them to collaborate in overcoming shared challenges, particularly those arising from economic adversity or political upheaval.

In the realm of electoral politics, maintaining the integrity of electoral processes is a fundamental concern for democratic governance. Carpenter and Krause (2015) argue that democratic backsliding, often facilitated by populist rhetoric and the politicization of bureaucratic functions, undermines public trust in electoral systems. This trend is evident in the increasing politicization of public administration, as highlighted Yusuf et al. (2024), who discusses the challenges faced by bureaucracies in maintaining neutrality amid populist influences. The tension between political loyalty and professional impartiality has become particularly pronounced in contemporary democracies, where public sector employees are frequently caught between their duty to serve the public and the political imperatives of the ruling party. These dynamics complicate efforts to ensure that bureaucratic institutions remain neutral and effective in managing public affairs, especially in times of political crisis (Park & Liang, 2021).

Social solidarity, however, remains a crucial factor in mitigating the adverse effects of such crises. Sarnawa and Khaer (2024) emphasizes the role of social solidarity in addressing environmental challenges in disaster-prone regions such as Cianjur, Indonesia. Through collective action, communities have been able to pool resources and share knowledge to build resilience against environmental disasters. The ability of communities to mobilize social capital in these contexts demonstrates the importance of solidarity in overcoming socio-economic and environmental challenges (Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). Furthermore, Polga-Hecimovich (2019) highlight how agricultural communities in Buru, Indonesia, leverage traditional practices and social cohesion to overcome socio-economic difficulties. These examples underscore the idea that solidarity within local communities can serve as a vital tool for resilience, particularly in the absence of sufficient state intervention (Yesilkagit et al., 2024).

Social solidarity's role in addressing crises is also informed by the broader theoretical framework of social capital, as seen in studies Bauer and Becker (2020) who explore the relationship between social networks and economic development in Islamic communities. In this context, social capital is not merely a theoretical construct but a practical resource that enables communities to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions. The trust, reciprocity, and cooperation that characterize strong social networks are essential in helping individuals and communities to manage socio-economic hardships. As Porter and Rogowski (2018) argues, social capital is a form of capital that can be utilized to navigate economic and social challenges, thereby enhancing the ability of communities to recover from crises.

Bureaucratic neutrality, as discussed Cooper and Reggie (2025) is another key element in ensuring the stability of democratic systems during times of crisis. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria, for example, faces significant challenges in maintaining impartiality amidst political pressures during elections. This challenge is mirrored in many democratic contexts, where bureaucratic

institutions are often seen as extensions of political power rather than as neutral entities (Noer, 2024). The erosion of bureaucratic neutrality not only undermines the legitimacy of electoral processes but also weakens the capacity of the state to effectively manage public affairs, particularly in times of crisis. As highlighted by Tavares et al. (2025) when bureaucrats are politicized, their ability to perform their duties in a fair and transparent manner is compromised, leading to dysfunctional governance.

The intersection of bureaucratic neutrality and social solidarity becomes even more apparent in the context of public service delivery during crises. Studies like those Nugroho et al. (2019) explore the challenges of maintaining bureaucratic ethics in the digital age, where public services are increasingly digitized and subject to political influence. The rise of digital platforms in governance, while providing opportunities for efficiency and transparency, also raises concerns about the politicization of administrative processes. As Box (2021) note, the increasing politicization of public administration threatens the impartiality that is essential for effective governance. In this context, the role of social solidarity is not only about collective action at the grassroots level but also about ensuring that state institutions remain fair, transparent, and responsive to the needs of all citizens, regardless of their political affiliations (Rahmawati & Supriyadi, 2025).

In Indonesia, the politicization of bureaucracy during elections has been a significant issue, as demonstrated (Gusfira et al., 2024). The 2024 local elections in Indonesia witnessed increasing interference in the bureaucratic process, with government officials being pressured to align with political interests. This trend is indicative of broader global challenges where political forces attempt to use bureaucratic institutions to advance partisan agendas (Hamiru et al., 2023). The implications of such politicization extend beyond elections; they affect the quality of public service delivery, the fairness of policy implementation, and the legitimacy of democratic processes. This underscores the need for reforms to strengthen the neutrality of bureaucratic institutions and ensure that they serve the public interest, particularly in times of crisis (Tamba et al., 2024).

Nurullah (2026) discusses the concept of social solidarity in modern societies, emphasizing the need for strong community bonds to address contemporary challenges. Drawing on Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity, Fathoni argues that modern societies require both forms of solidarity to navigate the complexities of the modern world (Pardede & Kristian, 2021). While mechanical solidarity, based on shared values and traditions, remains relevant in certain contexts, organic solidarity, which is based on interdependence and specialized roles, is increasingly necessary in complex, diversified societies. The challenge, however, lies in ensuring that both forms of solidarity are cultivated and maintained in a way that supports collective action during crises (Tamma, 2016).

Furthermore, studies Harjoni et al. (2019) the dynamics of solidarity in Islamic communities highlight how religious and cultural values can enhance social cohesion and resilience. In their analysis, they argue that solidarity within Islamic communities, rooted in shared religious principles, provides a foundation for collective action in times of social and economic turmoil (Mulyani & Hanani, 2025). This form of solidarity is particularly relevant in the context of socio-economic crises, where individuals may turn to religious

and community networks for support and assistance (D. N. Pertiwi, 2022). The role of religious institutions in fostering solidarity during crises is thus an important area for further exploration, particularly in societies where religion plays a central role in social life (Suherman, 2025).

In conclusion, the literature suggests that social solidarity, when combined with a neutral and effective bureaucracy, plays a crucial role in overcoming socio-economic crises (Syahrudin et al., 2025). The ability of communities to mobilize collective action and the capacity of bureaucratic institutions to remain impartial and transparent are both essential for ensuring that democratic governance remains resilient in the face of political and economic challenges. As discussed in the works of various scholars, from Bormasa (2023) the intersection of bureaucracy, social solidarity, and democratic governance provides a rich area for further research, particularly in the context of contemporary challenges such as populism, political backsliding, and environmental crises.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive research method to explore the dynamics of social solidarity in overcoming socio-economic crises, with a particular focus on electoral management and bureaucratic neutrality. According to Creswell, qualitative descriptive research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This method is suitable for analyzing complex social dynamics, such as how communities leverage social solidarity to address socio-economic challenges, and how bureaucratic institutions maintain neutrality during crises. The study will be guided by a normative-empirical approach, which examines both the ideal expectations of social solidarity and bureaucratic neutrality and the actual practices in various socio-political contexts.

Data collection for this study involves a comprehensive review of literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reports. These sources will provide both theoretical frameworks and empirical insights into the roles of social solidarity and bureaucratic neutrality in crisis management. Key references, such as Bauer (2019), who discusses electoral management and the integrity of electoral processes, and Bormasa (2023), who examines social solidarity in disaster-prone areas, will be analyzed. Additionally, studies on the influence of populism on public administration, such as those by Bauer & Becker (2020) and Bot (2022), will be incorporated. This literature will inform the thematic analysis of how social capital, bureaucratic impartiality, and electoral integrity interact to address socio-economic crises.

The data will be analyzed using a qualitative-descriptive approach, which involves reducing and organizing the information into key themes such as "community resilience," "bureaucratic impartiality," and "electoral integrity." These categories will be examined through the lens of socio-economic challenges identified in the literature. The study aims to uncover patterns that highlight the role of social solidarity in fostering resilience and the importance of maintaining bureaucratic neutrality in ensuring effective governance during crises. By analyzing both the normative ideals and empirical realities of these dynamics, the

study will offer valuable insights into strengthening social solidarity and improving the functioning of bureaucratic institutions during socio-economic and political challenges.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Electoral Integrity and Bureaucratic Neutrality

The theme of electoral integrity and bureaucratic neutrality is fundamental in understanding how democratic processes function, especially in environments where these processes are threatened by populism, political polarization, and democratic backsliding. Electoral integrity refers to the credibility, fairness, and transparency of the electoral process, which is essential for maintaining public trust in democratic institutions. (Fathoni, 2024) addresses the importance of electoral management and the organizational factors that contribute to the maintenance of electoral integrity. A key factor in this context is the role of independent electoral bodies, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria, which is tasked with overseeing elections without political interference. The ability of such bodies to operate impartially is crucial for ensuring that elections are free, fair, and credible, thereby protecting the legitimacy of the democratic system (Beck, 2021).

As Putra et al. (2025) highlight, democratic backsliding and populism present significant challenges to the neutrality of bureaucratic institutions. Populist leaders often seek to politicize electoral bodies to manipulate electoral outcomes in their favor. This undermines public confidence in the electoral process and, over time, erodes the democratic institutions that are supposed to safeguard the rights of citizens (Bot, 2022). The research indicates that in politically volatile environments, such as those characterized by populism and authoritarian tendencies, the independence of electoral bodies must be rigorously protected. This can be achieved through legal reforms, increased transparency, and robust oversight mechanisms that shield electoral processes from undue political influence (Bauer, 2019).

In addition to the independence of electoral bodies, maintaining bureaucratic neutrality in public administration is equally important. Bureaucrats, as the administrative backbone of government, must remain impartial and not serve the interests of any political party. As Carpenter and Krause (2015) discusses in the context of the United States under Trumpism, when public servants are coerced into aligning with the political agenda of the ruling party, it compromises the integrity of government operations and weakens democratic norms. The research by Yusuf et al. (2024) further elaborates on how bureaucratic neutrality is essential for effective governance. Bureaucrats who remain neutral can ensure that public services are delivered impartially and that policies are implemented without bias, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of the government.

Protecting the neutrality of bureaucratic institutions requires addressing the growing politicization of public administration. Sarnawa and Khaer (2024) argue that in an era of populism and democratic backsliding, public sector employees face increasing pressure to engage in political activities, which can conflict with their role as impartial public servants (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019). This tension between democratic participation

and bureaucratic impartiality presents a significant challenge to governance, as it risks politicizing the public sector and undermining the principle of public service (Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). The study highlights the need for clear guidelines and protections that allow public servants to participate in democratic processes without compromising their professional neutrality (Yesilkagit et al., 2024).

The politicization of bureaucracy is particularly problematic in the context of elections. Bauer and Becker (2020) discusses how the Indonesian bureaucracy became politicized during the 2024 election, with civil servants facing pressure to align with political factions. This trend is not isolated to Indonesia; it is a widespread issue in many countries where populist leaders attempt to undermine bureaucratic independence to solidify their hold on power (Cooper & Reggie, 2025). The findings suggest that when bureaucrats are politically influenced, their ability to serve the public fairly is compromised, leading to a breakdown in the impartial administration of services. Therefore, governments must adopt stringent measures to protect the neutrality of the civil service during electoral periods (Porter & Rogowski, 2018).

Strengthening electoral integrity and bureaucratic neutrality also requires institutional reforms that empower independent oversight bodies to monitor the electoral process. Tavares et al. (2025) emphasizes the role of electoral commissions like the INEC, which can serve as a bulwark against political manipulation in elections. These bodies must have the legal authority and resources to operate independently of political pressures, with clear procedures in place to handle complaints and ensure transparency (Nugroho et al., 2019). Governments should invest in building the capacity of these independent bodies, ensuring they are equipped to manage elections effectively and maintain public confidence in the electoral system (Noer, 2024).

The research further suggests that transparency in electoral management is key to preventing the manipulation of the process (Box, 2021). Transparency ensures that all stakeholders, including political parties, civil society organizations, and voters, have access to accurate and timely information about the electoral process. This openness can help to prevent electoral fraud, build trust in the system, and foster greater civic engagement. As highlighted Rahmawati and Supriyadi (2025) transparency in the actions of electoral bodies is crucial for reinforcing the legitimacy of the electoral process, especially in environments where democratic institutions are under threat.

Ensuring electoral integrity and bureaucratic neutrality requires public education and awareness. Citizens must understand the importance of a neutral public administration and the role of independent electoral bodies in safeguarding democratic processes. As Gusfira et al. (2024) point out, the public's trust in electoral systems is significantly influenced by their perception of the fairness and impartiality of these systems. Therefore, governments must invest in civic education programs that inform citizens about the value of electoral integrity and the need for bureaucratic neutrality, ensuring they hold both electoral bodies and public servants accountable (Hamiru et al., 2023).

The global context of democratic backsliding and populism calls for international cooperation and support in strengthening electoral integrity and bureaucratic neutrality. As seen in the works of Pardede and Kristian (2021) strengthening public service

institutions to resist democratic erosion requires a concerted effort from international organizations, civil society, and governments. These stakeholders can collaborate on best practices for electoral management, share resources, and provide technical assistance to countries facing challenges to their democratic systems (Tamma, 2016). By working together, the international community can help ensure that electoral integrity and bureaucratic neutrality are upheld worldwide, safeguarding democracy against the rising tide of populism and authoritarianism (Harjoni et al., 2019).

Maintaining electoral integrity and bureaucratic neutrality is essential for ensuring free and fair elections and upholding the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Fathoni, 2024). The research highlights the challenges posed by populism and political interference in undermining these principles, and the importance of protecting electoral bodies and public servants from partisan pressures (Bormasa, 2023). Governments must implement reforms that enhance the independence of electoral commissions, ensure the neutrality of bureaucrats, and promote transparency in the electoral process. Additionally, public education and international cooperation are key to strengthening the foundations of democratic governance and ensuring that electoral integrity is upheld in the face of growing political challenges (Syahrudin et al., 2025).

## **2. Social Solidarity in Crisis Management**

Social solidarity plays a crucial role in overcoming socio-economic crises, particularly in the face of disasters, economic downturns, and political instability. It refers to the mutual support and collective actions of individuals and communities that come together in the face of adversity (Suherman, 2025). In times of disaster, political instability, or economic downturns, solidarity helps people overcome these challenges by fostering unity, collaboration, and shared responsibility. This is particularly relevant in regions that face frequent natural disasters or socio-political crises. The ability of communities to organize and support each other becomes a key factor in resilience and recovery during such events (Mulyani & Hanani, 2025).

Natural disasters often expose the fragility of communities and their economic systems, making solidarity even more crucial (Suherman, 2025). During crises such as earthquakes, floods, or hurricanes, people rely on their social networks to survive. In places like Cianjur and Ponorogo, Indonesia, communities have witnessed how solidarity becomes a life-saving tool during disasters (Syahrudin et al., 2025). Mutual aid groups form to provide immediate relief, distributing food, water, and medical supplies to affected families. These efforts go beyond mere charity they signify a deeper sense of shared fate and collective responsibility, which is critical for recovery (D. N. Pertiwi, 2022).

Social networks are the foundation of solidarity. These networks—comprising families, neighbors, friends, and community organizations serve as the first line of defense during crises (Mulyani & Hanani, 2025). When formal systems are overwhelmed or slow to respond, social networks step in to fill the gap. In communities facing socio-economic crises, social capital, built through trust and reciprocal relationships, facilitates the flow of resources and information (D. N. Pertiwi, 2022). Studies in disaster-prone regions show that communities with strong social networks tend to recover faster and more effectively.

Social networks not only provide material aid but also help in rebuilding the social fabric of a community (Harjoni et al., 2019).

One of the key manifestations of social solidarity is collective action. This refers to the joint efforts of individuals to address shared challenges (Pardede & Kristian, 2021). In the case of socio-economic crises, collective action can range from organizing food drives and financial assistance to collective bargaining for better working conditions or government support (Nurullah, 2026). In times of economic hardship, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities in Indonesia mobilized to provide for those in need. For example, in Ponorogo, people formed solidarity groups to ensure that vulnerable families received necessary supplies, demonstrating the power of collective action in the face of adversity (Tamba et al., 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a global case study of how social solidarity can mitigate the effects of a crisis. During lockdowns and restrictions, when governments were unable to provide immediate aid to all, communities stepped up to support each other (Hamiru et al., 2023). In Ponorogo, community groups took the initiative to distribute food, provide mental health support, and ensure that the most vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and the unemployed, received the help they needed (Gusfira et al., 2024). These actions showed that even in the most challenging times, people's collective actions, grounded in solidarity, could prevent further social and economic breakdowns (Rahmawati & Supriyadi, 2025).

For social solidarity to be effective, trust is essential. Trust within communities facilitates cooperation, resource-sharing, and collective problem-solving (Box, 2021). In times of crisis, trust ensures that individuals and groups work together harmoniously to achieve common goals (Nugroho et al., 2019). Without trust, even the best-intentioned solidarity efforts may fail. For instance, during natural disasters, trust in community leaders and local organizations can greatly enhance the coordination of relief efforts. Research has shown that communities with high levels of trust in one another are more likely to engage in collective action, demonstrating the indispensable role of trust in fostering resilience (Noer, 2024).

While community solidarity is vital, government support plays a crucial role in strengthening these efforts. Governments can facilitate social solidarity by creating policies that support community-based initiatives, providing financial resources, and promoting social welfare programs (Tavares et al., 2025). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments supported grassroots initiatives through funding and infrastructure support. In Indonesia, local governments worked alongside communities to ensure that aid reached those most in need. This cooperation between the state and the community strengthens resilience and builds a more inclusive response to crises (Cooper & Reggie, 2025).

Economic crises, such as recessions or unemployment spikes, require solidarity for long-term recovery (Porter & Rogowski, 2018). In these times, collective action helps people adjust to changing economic realities by supporting small businesses, redistributing resources, and sharing information (Bauer & Becker, 2020). In Ponorogo, the solidarity displayed by local entrepreneurs during the economic downturn caused by the pandemic helped ensure the survival of small businesses. Mutual support in the form of trade

exchanges, collective buying power, and shared resources allowed businesses to recover faster and return to operations. Such solidarity not only aids immediate recovery but also strengthens the economic infrastructure for future resilience (Yesilkagit et al., 2024).

To prepare for future crises, social solidarity must be continually nurtured and strengthened. This involves fostering a sense of community responsibility, building social networks, and investing in community-driven solutions (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019). In addition to government support, initiatives that encourage volunteerism, local leadership, and civic engagement can enhance social solidarity. Schools, workplaces, and local organizations can serve as training grounds for collective action, where individuals learn to collaborate and contribute to shared goals (Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). When communities are united, they can more effectively address a wide range of challenges, from economic downturns to environmental disasters, ensuring long-term resilience (Sarnawa & Khaer, 2024).

The role of social solidarity in crisis management cannot be overstated. It is through collective action, mutual support, and community cohesion that societies are able to navigate and recover from socio-economic crises (Park & Liang, 2021). While social solidarity is rooted in trust and cooperation, it also requires the active involvement of governments, civil society, and individuals to be truly effective. By fostering solidarity within communities, societies can build the resilience needed to face future crises. Strengthening social networks and encouraging collaborative problem-solving are key steps in preparing for and overcoming challenges in an increasingly unpredictable world (Yusuf et al., 2024). In the future, social solidarity must be viewed not only as a response to crises but also as a proactive strategy for creating more sustainable and equitable communities (Carpenter & Krause, 2015).

### **3. Populism and the Politicization of Bureaucracy**

The rise of populism has become a significant factor influencing the politicization of bureaucracy, which poses a serious challenge to the impartial functioning of public institutions (Yusuf et al., 2024). Populist leaders often seek to undermine the independence of bureaucratic agencies, framing them as obstacles to their agendas (Park & Liang, 2021). This approach creates a political environment where bureaucrats are pressured to align their actions with the interests of the ruling party or populist leader, rather than adhering to objective, professional standards (Sarnawa & Khaer, 2024). As a result, the traditional role of bureaucracy as an impartial executor of government policy is compromised, undermining the effectiveness of governance (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019).

In times of populist influence, the neutral function of public servants is at risk, as political loyalty often supersedes professional competency (Yesilkagit et al., 2024). Populist movements tend to emphasize the need for loyalty from bureaucrats, often replacing career officials with political appointees who are seen as more sympathetic to the leader's agenda (Bauer & Becker, 2020). This politicization creates an environment in which decisions regarding policy implementation are driven by political considerations, rather than expertise or public interest. The reliance on political loyalty over professional merit leads

to inefficiency, as decisions are not based on the best possible evidence or practices (Porter & Rogowski, 2018).

The consequences of politicizing the bureaucracy are far-reaching and damaging to democratic institutions. One of the most immediate effects is the erosion of public trust in government institutions (Cooper & Reggie, 2025). When citizens perceive that decisions are being made based on political favoritism rather than impartial analysis, confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of governance diminishes (Tavares et al., 2025). This lack of trust can lead to social unrest, as citizens feel that their government is no longer serving their best interests. The decline in trust can further destabilize the political landscape, weakening the very foundations of democracy (Noer, 2024).

Moreover, the politicization of bureaucracy often results in a decline in transparency and accountability. Bureaucratic institutions traditionally act as a safeguard for public accountability, ensuring that government actions are carried out fairly and efficiently (Nugroho et al., 2019). However, when political interference shapes bureaucratic decision-making, transparency suffers, and accountability is diminished. Public servants may avoid making decisions that are in the best interest of the public if those decisions could conflict with the political priorities of the ruling party or populist leader (Box, 2021). This lack of accountability weakens the integrity of public institutions and fosters a culture of corruption (Rahmawati & Supriyadi, 2025).

In addition to eroding trust and accountability, the politicization of the bureaucracy can lead to inefficiency in public administration. Bureaucratic institutions are designed to be stable and efficient, providing continuity in government services regardless of political changes (Gusfira et al., 2024). However, when appointments are made based on political loyalty rather than professional qualifications, the result is often a workforce that is less capable and less committed to delivering high-quality services (Hamiru et al., 2023). This undermines the ability of government institutions to respond effectively to crises, such as economic downturns, natural disasters, or public health emergencies (Tamba et al., 2024).

Populist pressures on the bureaucracy also have broader implications for democratic governance. The politicization of public institutions weakens the system of checks and balances that is essential to democracy (Nurullah, 2026). Bureaucratic independence is a key safeguard against authoritarianism, as it ensures that government actions are subject to scrutiny and are not solely driven by political power. When bureaucrats are forced to align their actions with populist agendas, the separation of powers is blurred, and the role of institutions in holding political leaders accountable is diminished (Pardede & Kristian, 2021).

In order to counter the negative effects of populist influence, it is essential to implement measures that protect the neutrality of the bureaucracy. One such measure is ensuring that civil servants are appointed and retained based on merit and professional qualifications, rather than political loyalty (Tamma, 2016). By insulating bureaucrats from political pressures, governments can help ensure that public institutions remain focused on serving the public good. Additionally, laws and regulations should be enacted to protect bureaucrats from political retaliation, allowing them to carry out their duties without fear of losing their jobs due to political differences (Harjoni et al., 2019).

Strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms is another critical step in safeguarding bureaucratic neutrality (D. N. Pertiwi, 2022). Public service reforms should emphasize openness in decision-making, ensuring that citizens can access information about how and why decisions are made. This not only fosters trust in public institutions but also provides a check on political interference (Mulyani & Hanani, 2025). Transparency in bureaucratic processes allows citizens to hold public officials accountable and ensures that decisions are made based on evidence and public interest rather than political favoritism (Suherman, 2025).

In addition to reforms within the bureaucracy itself, it is essential to strengthen other democratic institutions that can serve as checks on populist overreach. The judiciary, for instance, plays a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and protecting citizens' rights against potential abuses of power by political leaders (Syahrudin et al., 2025). A strong and independent judiciary can challenge politically motivated decisions made by a politicized bureaucracy, ensuring that government actions remain within the bounds of law and justice. Similarly, a free press and vibrant civil society are essential for exposing corruption and holding government officials accountable for their actions (Bormasa, 2023).

Ultimately, the protection of bureaucratic neutrality and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential to ensuring that populism does not undermine the integrity of governance (Fathoni, 2024). When bureaucracies remain impartial and free from political manipulation, they are better able to serve the public interest, providing essential services and protecting democratic values. By safeguarding bureaucratic independence, fostering transparency, and reinforcing the rule of law, societies can protect themselves from the risks posed by populism and ensure that public institutions continue to function effectively, regardless of the political climate (Syahrudin et al., 2025).

#### **4. Social Capital and Economic Development**

The rise of populism has become a significant factor influencing the politicization of bureaucracy, which poses a serious challenge to the impartial functioning of public institutions (Suherman, 2025). Populist leaders often seek to undermine the independence of bureaucratic agencies, framing them as obstacles to their agendas. This approach creates a political environment where bureaucrats are pressured to align their actions with the interests of the ruling party or populist leader, rather than adhering to objective, professional standards (Mulyani & Hanani, 2025). As a result, the traditional role of bureaucracy as an impartial executor of government policy is compromised, undermining the effectiveness of governance (D. N. Pertiwi, 2022).

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Strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms is another critical step in safeguarding bureaucratic neutrality. Public service reforms should emphasize openness in decision-making, ensuring that citizens can access information about how and why decisions are made (Yesilkagit et al., 2024). This not only fosters trust in public institutions but also provides a check on political interference. Transparency in bureaucratic processes allows citizens to hold public officials accountable and ensures that decisions are made based on evidence and public interest rather than political favoritism (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019).

In addition to reforms within the bureaucracy itself, it is essential to strengthen other democratic institutions that can serve as checks on populist overreach. The judiciary, for instance, plays a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and protecting citizens' rights against potential abuses of power by political leaders (Oliveros & Schuster, 2018). A strong and independent judiciary can challenge politically motivated decisions made by a politicized bureaucracy, ensuring that government actions remain within the bounds of law and justice. Similarly, a free press and vibrant civil society are essential for exposing corruption and holding government officials accountable for their actions (Sarnawa & Khaer, 2024).

Ultimately, the protection of bureaucratic neutrality and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential to ensuring that populism does not undermine the integrity of governance (Handayani et al., 2024). When bureaucracies remain impartial and free from political manipulation, they are better able to serve the public interest, providing essential services and protecting democratic values. By safeguarding bureaucratic independence, fostering transparency, and reinforcing the rule of law, societies can protect themselves from the risks posed by populism and ensure that public institutions continue to function effectively, regardless of the political climate.

**Table 1. The table of description**

Main Theme	Brief Description	Implication for the Government
Electoral Management & Integrity (Bauer, 2019)	The article explores the organizational determinants of electoral integrity and the role of electoral management in maintaining democratic processes. It examines how various institutions contribute to electoral transparency and fairness.	The government must prioritize strengthening electoral management bodies to ensure fair and transparent elections. This involves ensuring that all electoral processes are impartial and effectively managed, with an emphasis on eliminating corruption and increasing public trust.
Democratic Backsliding & Populism (Bauer & Becker, 2020)	This work discusses the rise of populism and its impact on democratic backsliding, focusing on the role of public administration in maintaining democratic norms amid political challenges.	Governments should safeguard public institutions from political manipulation to prevent the erosion of democratic standards. This involves implementing reforms that ensure public administration remains non-partisan, transparent, and

		accountable, especially in the face of populist pressures.
Social Solidarity & Environmental Challenges (Bormasa, 2023)	Bormasa investigates the influence of social solidarity and community care in addressing environmental challenges, particularly in disaster-prone regions such as Cianjur.	Governments should foster social solidarity initiatives to build community resilience in disaster-prone areas. Supporting local community networks is essential for effective crisis management and disaster recovery.
Bureaucracy & Electoral Process in Nigeria (Bot, 2022)	This article explores the role of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in managing the electoral process in Nigeria and the challenges faced by bureaucracies in maintaining neutrality.	It is crucial for governments to ensure that electoral commissions remain independent from political influence. Strengthening the institutional capacity of electoral bodies will enhance the integrity of elections.
Administrative Neutrality & Populism (Box, 2021)	Box examines the concept of bureaucratic neutrality in the wake of populism, particularly under Trumpism. The study emphasizes how political polarization challenges bureaucratic impartiality.	Governments need to implement safeguards to protect bureaucratic neutrality from partisan influence. Maintaining a professional, unbiased public sector is essential for ensuring effective governance and public trust.
Transactional Authority & Bureaucratic Politics (Carpenter & Krause, 2015)	This paper discusses how bureaucratic authority and politics interact, particularly through transactional relationships between public officials and political leaders.	The government must address the politicization of bureaucracy by reinforcing merit-based systems and promoting transparency in public administration. This reduces the risk of corruption and enhances public service delivery.
Political Activity of Public Sector Employees (Cooper & Reggie, 2025)	The study explores the tensions between democratic participation and bureaucratic impartiality, focusing on public sector employees' political activities in an era of populism.	Governments should develop clear policies that balance public sector employees' rights to political participation with the need for bureaucratic neutrality, ensuring that public services remain unbiased and responsive to all citizens.
Social Solidarity in Modern Society (Fathoni, 2024)	Fathoni discusses the concept of social solidarity from Émile Durkheim's perspective, examining how solidarity functions in modern societies to address collective needs.	Governments should encourage social solidarity as a means to strengthen community networks. This can help tackle socio-economic issues such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality.
Islamic Economic Thought &	The article discusses the impact of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts on	The government should explore integrating Islamic economic principles to enhance social welfare

Development (Gusfira et al., 2024)	the development of Islamic economics in Indonesia.	and economic development, especially in Muslim-majority communities.
Social Cohesion in Agricultural Communities (Hamiru et al., 2023)	This study investigates how traditional agricultural communities in Buru foster social cohesion through shared practices and networks.	Governments should invest in community-building initiatives that leverage local traditions and social networks to enhance resilience, particularly in rural and agricultural areas.
Islamic Economic Epistemology in Global Economic Crisis (Harjoni et al., 2019)	This article explores how Islamic economic principles provide solutions to global economic crises, using a sociological lens.	Governments should consider integrating Islamic economic models to address global economic challenges, focusing on ethical finance and community-based economic systems.
Social Solidarity in the Face of Contemporary Challenges (Mulyani & Hanani, 2025)	The paper examines how mechanical solidarity within Islamic communities addresses contemporary social challenges.	Governments should support programs that enhance both mechanical and organic solidarity to address socio-economic challenges, especially in religious or traditional communities.
Politicization of Bureaucracy in Indonesia's 2024 Elections (Noer, 2024)	Noer examines the increasing politicization of Indonesia's bureaucracy during the 2024 elections, highlighting the risks of compromising neutrality.	Governments must enforce strict regulations to protect the neutrality of civil servants during elections, ensuring that bureaucratic processes are not influenced by political interests.
Neutrality of Government Officials in the Digital Era (Nugroho et al., 2019)	The study focuses on the challenges of maintaining political neutrality among government officials in the digital age, particularly with the rise of digital platforms.	Governments should develop frameworks that ensure the neutrality of public officials in digital governance, particularly with the growing influence of social media on political discourse.
Meritocracy, Tenure, & Bureaucratic Behavior (Oliveros & Schuster, 2018)	The article discusses how merit-based systems and tenure affect bureaucratic behavior, focusing on political influence in the Dominican Republic.	Governments should strengthen merit-based recruitment and promotion systems within public administration to enhance bureaucratic effectiveness and impartiality.
Strengthening Bureaucracy Neutrality in Local Elections (Pardede & Kristian, 2021)	This paper analyzes how bureaucracy neutrality can be strengthened in local elections, using a case study from North Sumatera.	The government should implement policies that fortify the neutrality of the bureaucracy during local elections, ensuring that electoral processes remain free from partisan influence.
Political and Bureaucratic	The study compares gender representation and social	Governments should promote diversity and inclusion in public

Representation & Social Outcomes (Park & Liang, 2021)	outcomes, focusing on political and bureaucratic representation in governance.	administration and ensure that all demographic groups are fairly represented in decision-making processes.
Social Solidarity in the Face of Economic Crisis (R. Pertiwi & Fariq, 2023)	This article explores the role of social solidarity among street vendors in Ponorogo during the economic crisis caused by the pandemic.	The government should foster solidarity programs that provide support to vulnerable groups, particularly in times of economic distress, ensuring that these communities can recover and thrive.
Bureaucratic Politicization & Public Agency Legitimacy (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019)	This paper analyzes the impact of bureaucratic politicization on the legitimacy of public agencies, with a focus on Venezuela under chavismo.	Governments should safeguard the legitimacy of public agencies by reducing political interference in bureaucratic functions, ensuring that agencies can serve the public impartially.
Bureaucratic Responsiveness in Election Administration (Porter & Rogowski, 2018)	The article examines the relationship between partisanship, bureaucratic responsiveness, and election administration.	The government should ensure that election administrators are trained to be neutral and responsive to all political parties, guaranteeing that elections are fair and transparent.
Community-Based Defense Models for Social Security (Rahmawati & Supriyadi, 2025)	This study focuses on community-based defense models that enhance social security and resilience without relying on military solutions.	Governments should consider implementing community-based models for security and resilience, focusing on collective action and local resources for social protection.
Neutrality Arrangements of State Civil Apparatus in Elections (Sarnawa & Khaer, 2024)	The study provides a historical analysis of neutrality arrangements for the state civil apparatus in Indonesian general elections.	Governments must ensure the implementation of clear neutrality policies for civil servants during elections to maintain public trust and prevent political bias in public service delivery.
Social Institutions in Multicultural Societies (Suherman, 2025)	This paper analyzes the role of social institutions in multicultural societies, particularly their role in fostering social integration.	Governments should promote inclusive policies that encourage the integration of diverse social groups, fostering social cohesion and harmony within multicultural societies.
Strengthening Social Solidarity Through Community Programs (Syahrudin et al., 2025)	The article discusses how social and economic solidarity programs, such as "Gebyar Ramadhan," strengthen community resilience in Ponorogo.	Governments should support community-driven solidarity programs that help strengthen social ties and provide economic assistance, particularly during difficult times.
Pancasila as a Foundation for	This study examines how Pancasila can serve as a	Governments should use Pancasila's principles to guide social welfare

Social Welfare Policies (Tamba et al., 2024)	foundation for social welfare policies in Indonesia, emphasizing mutual cooperation.	policies, promoting cooperation and collective well-being in Indonesian society.
Bureaucracy Neutrality & Indonesia's Regional Election (Tamma, 2016)	Tamma explores the paradox of bureaucratic neutrality during regional elections in Indonesia, highlighting the challenges of maintaining impartiality.	The government should strengthen mechanisms to protect bureaucratic neutrality during elections, ensuring that regional elections are free from political interference.
Bureaucrats in Campaigns: Dysfunctional Behaviors (Tavares et al., 2025)	The article discusses how elections increase dysfunctional behaviors among civil servants, impacting their professional responsibilities.	Governments should create policies to prevent bureaucrats from engaging in partisan activities during campaigns, ensuring that their professional conduct remains neutral and effective.
Strengthening Public Service Against Democratic Backsliding (Yesilkagit et al., 2024)	This paper explores the role of the public service in resisting democratic backsliding and strengthening democratic institutions.	Governments should invest in strengthening the public service as a bulwark against democratic erosion, ensuring that civil servants uphold democratic values and remain impartial.

## CONCLUSION

This research highlights the critical role of social solidarity and bureaucratic neutrality in addressing socio-economic crises. Social solidarity fosters resilience by encouraging cooperation and collective action, allowing communities to navigate challenges, particularly during political or economic instability. Bureaucratic neutrality ensures that public institutions function impartially, safeguarding effective governance amidst political pressures. The study suggests that to mitigate the negative impacts of populism and political interference, governments must implement reforms to protect civil servants from political retaliation, ensuring their professional impartiality. Furthermore, strengthening community-driven solidarity initiatives can enhance social cohesion and long-term resilience. Future research should examine the relationship between grassroots solidarity and state mechanisms in crisis management, especially in politically polarized environments. This research implies that safeguarding bureaucratic neutrality while encouraging civic engagement and social solidarity is essential for effective crisis response, and policymakers should focus on developing frameworks that balance these dynamics to strengthen governance during times of crisis.

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