

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY IN THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE GENERAL ELECTION AT THE CENTRAL SULAWESI PROVINCIAL BAWASLU

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Abstract

The implementation of the process dispute resolution policy in the 2024 Legislative General Election at the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu is a crucial effort in achieving electoral *justice* and maintaining democratic integrity. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the policy based on the provisions of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022 concerning Procedures for Dispute Resolution in the Election Process. The research method employed is a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing data collection techniques that include documentation studies, interviews, and observations of the dispute resolution process among election participants, legislative candidates, and election organizers. The study's results indicate that the policy implementation has been carried out in accordance with legal procedures; however, obstacles remain in terms of human resources, limited completion time, and disparities in legal understanding among the parties. Nevertheless, the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has demonstrated institutional independence, process transparency, and commitment to the principles of procedural justice. This research emphasizes the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, improving election law literacy, and harmonization between organizing institutions to realize effective and fair dispute resolution in the future.

Keywords: Bawaslu, public policy, process dispute resolution, legislative elections, electoral justice

INTRODUCTION

General elections (elections) are the main instrument for a democratic country to channel the sovereignty of the people. Through elections, citizens have the opportunity to directly, freely, and secretly determine their representatives in the legislature. However, in practice, each stage of elections often presents complex political dynamics and potential conflicts of interest. This condition necessitates a robust, swift, and impartial dispute resolution system to ensure that the democratic process remains consistent with the principles of law and public morality (Amalia et al., 2021; Virananda et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) plays a central role in maintaining the integrity of the election administration. This institution is not only tasked with supervising, but also handling various forms of disputes that arise between participants or between participants and election organizers. One of the primary functions of Bawaslu is to handle conflicts in the election process, specifically those that occur during the stages preceding the determination of the voting results. This function renders Bawaslu a quasi-judicial institution with the necessary adjudicative authority in the Indonesian election system (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Fossati, 2020; Suparto et al., 2023).

The dispute resolution policy is regulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and strengthened through Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022. These two regulations provide a legal basis for Bawaslu to mediate, adjudicate, and enforce decisions that are final and binding at the administrative level. The regulation emphasizes that dispute resolution is not solely a matter of law, but also part of democratic governance (Efendi et al., 2023; Kusdarini et al., 2022; Suryanagara et al., 2025).

The 2024 Legislative Election presents an essential opportunity for Bawaslu to demonstrate its institutional capacity, including at the provincial level. The Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu is an interesting example because this region has diverse social, political, and geographical complexities. The competition between parties in this area is quite fierce, with a high number of participants and intense campaign dynamics. This condition raises many potential disputes, both related to candidacy, campaigning, and vote recapitulation results.

The implementation of dispute resolution at the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has shown progress, particularly in the introduction of more transparent mediation and adjudication procedures. However, challenges still arise in the form of limited human resources, high workload, and differences in legal understanding between the parties to the case. In many cases, election participants did not fully understand the dispute resolution procedures set by Bawaslu, which slowed down the process and reduced the effectiveness of policy implementation.

From the perspective of public policy implementation, the successful implementation of dispute resolution policies is highly dependent on effective communication models between actors, adequate resources, and clear policy objectives. The policy implementation model developed by Van Meter and Van Horn serves as an essential theoretical framework for analyzing the extent to which the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu can effectively translate national policies into regional institutional practices. This analysis examines the interplay between legal, administrative, and socio-political factors that mutually influence one another (McRae & Robet, 2020; Nuribadah & Muksalmina, 2024; Siboy et al., 2023). In addition to regulatory and institutional aspects, the social dimension is also a determinant of the success of implementation. In the context of Central Sulawesi, local cultural factors, political patronage relationships, and pressure from party elites often influence the dynamics of dispute resolution. Bawaslu faces a dilemma between maintaining institutional independence and meeting high public expectations for electoral justice (Efendi et al., 2023; Kusdarini et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study highlights that dispute resolution policies are not only legal instruments, but also a means to strengthen the legitimacy of local democratic systems. By resolving disputes in a transparent, professional, and accountable manner, Bawaslu can enhance public trust in the election results and mitigate potential post-election conflicts. This success will contribute directly to regional and national political stability.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the dispute resolution policy in the 2024 Legislative General Election in the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu. The focus of the research is directed at the implementation of procedures, challenges faced, and institutional strengthening strategies within the framework of public policy. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the literature on the implementation of election policies and a practical contribution to improving more efficient, transparent, and fair dispute resolution governance.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the dispute resolution policy for the 2024 Legislative Election process at the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu. This approach was chosen because the problems studied are complex and contextual, requiring the interpretation of actions, policies, and interactions between actors during their implementation. The primary focus of this qualitative research is to describe the empirical reality of how policies are implemented in the field, the obstacles faced, and the adaptive strategies carried out by Bawaslu in ensuring that the principles of electoral justice are maintained (Geels et al., 2021; Gren & Leuschner, 2024; Wang et al., 2022).

Types of research. This is included in the study of public policy by focusing on the aspect of policy implementation according to the model of Van Meter and **Van Horn (1975)**. The model emphasizes six main variables that affect the success of implementation, namely: (1) policy standards and objectives, (2) resources, (3) interorganizational communication, (4) characteristics of implementing agents, (5) social, economic, and political conditions, and (6) the disposition of policy implementers. Using this model, the researcher can assess the extent to which these variables contribute to supporting or hindering the implementation of dispute resolution policies in the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu (Khatibi et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2022; Yıldız, 2023).

The location of the research was determined at the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu Office as the primary analysis unit, by involving observation of the dispute resolution process that occurred during the 2024 Legislative Election stage. The selection of this location is based on the consideration that Central Sulawesi is one of the regions with high political dynamics, a significant intensity of disputes, and a variety of cases that can comprehensively represent the implementation of policies. Additionally, Bawaslu at the provincial level plays a crucial role as a liaison between national policies and their technical implementation at the district/city level.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, including members of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu, secretariat staff, district/city election supervisory committees, and representatives of political parties participating in the election. Meanwhile, secondary data are collected through the analysis of official documents, including reports on the results of dispute handling, laws and regulations, minutes of adjudication hearings, minutes of events, and publications issued by Bawaslu RI. The selection of informants was conducted through purposive sampling, considering their relevance and experience in the policy implementation process.

Data collection techniques It is carried out through three main stages, namely: (1) **In-depth interviews** to obtain direct views from the implementer and related parties, (2) **Participatory Observation** on dispute resolution activities within Bawaslu, and (3) **Documentation Studies** of official archives related to regulations and dispute resolution

results. To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher applied the **Triangulation of sources and methods**, that is, comparing the results of the interviews with document data and the results of field observations. This approach is used to make data interpretation more objective and avoid subjective bias. (Helmert, 2022; Viaggi et al., 2020).

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model, as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which comprises three main components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. At the data reduction stage, the researcher selects relevant information based on the research focus. The data presentation stage involves grouping themes and patterns based on policy implementation variables. Meanwhile, the conclusion stage is carried out by conducting theoretical reflection on empirical findings in the field. The results of this analysis are then interpreted within the framework of policy implementation theory and the principles of electoral justice to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of implementing dispute resolution in the election process at the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu (Sharma & Chakraborty, 2022; Shoman & Imine, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal and Institutional Framework in Dispute Resolution of the Electoral Process

The legal framework for dispute resolution in the General Election process in Indonesia is regulated by Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and further detailed in **Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022**. The regulation serves as the primary guideline for Bawaslu in carrying out its dispute resolution function, which includes registration, examination, mediation, and adjudication. This rule ensures that all stages of the dispute are carried out in accordance with the principle of due process of law, with precise deadlines and established procedures. At the provincial level, Bawaslu has functional autonomy to adapt national regulations to the regional context, without compromising the principles of fairness and neutrality.

Institutionally, Bawaslu has a strategic role in connecting two critical domains: election law and public administration. This institution serves not only as a supervisory body but also as the implementer of quasi-judicial dispute resolution policies. This means that Bawaslu functions as a mediation institution that has the authority to decide administrative cases. This role emphasizes Bawaslu's position in the electoral structure, which requires high professionalism and sensitivity to the region's social and political context.

In the context of Central Sulawesi, the provincial Bawaslu faces a typical institutional challenge. The significant topography of the area, the large number of election participants, and the high level of political participation are factors that affect the intensity of the dispute. This condition requires strong coordination between the provincial Bawaslu, districts/cities, and the District Supervisory Committee (Panwascam) to ensure that the dispute resolution process runs smoothly. Institutional success is measured not only by its ability to resolve disputes but also by its capacity to adapt to local political dynamics.

In terms of policy, implementation at the provincial level must align with national policies while maintaining local sensitivity. The Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has successfully implemented national regulations by adapting its communication approach to election participants. This is particularly important considering the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of the political actors in this area. This local adaptation is the institutional strength in maintaining the legitimacy of Bawaslu in the eyes of the public.

In addition to regulation, the legitimacy factor also plays a significant role in the effectiveness of implementation. The public has high expectations of Bawaslu as an independent institution that upholds justice without political intervention. Therefore, any institutional action must reflect integrity and accountability. Bawaslu's decision has not only legal implications but also political implications, so every step must be taken based on strong legal arguments and valid evidence.

However, in practice, there is still an overlap between the authority of Bawaslu and the KPU, particularly in the legal interpretation of implementing regulations. These differences in interpretation sometimes create tensions between institutions, especially in determining the boundaries of their respective jurisdictions. However, inter-agency coordination continues to be improved through technical meetings and election law communication forums.

Thus, it can be concluded that the legal framework for dispute resolution has been sufficiently strong normatively; however, the institutional capacity and coordination between actors in the field largely determine its effectiveness. Legal force without adaptive institutional support will only result in formalistic policies. Therefore, improving institutional structure and communication is a strategic need in the future.

The Process of Implementing Dispute Resolution Policies at the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu

The process of implementing the dispute resolution policy at the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu reflects the dynamics between formal regulations and administrative practices. Implementation begins with the registration of dispute reports, checking the completeness of files, and proceeds through mediation and adjudication. Each stage has a tight deadline, typically between three and five business days, which requires effective time management and coordination among departments within the institution. This is a challenge considering the number of reports that have been submitted in proximity.

The initial stage of implementation, specifically registration and verification of reports, is crucial to successful dispute resolution. Central Sulawesi Bawaslu implements a file digitization system using the *SIPS (Dispute Resolution Information System) application*, developed by Bawaslu RI. This innovation streamlines the administrative process and accelerates the handling of reports. However, not all election participants are familiar with this system, so direct assistance is necessary to ensure the process runs smoothly and does not lead to misinterpretation.

In the mediation stage, Bawaslu seeks to prioritize a persuasive and non-litigation approach. Based on interview data with Bawaslu staff, around 60% of cases can be resolved through mediation without the need to proceed to adjudication. This indicates that the effectiveness of communication and the ability of mediation facilitators play a crucial role in mitigating conflict escalation. Nonetheless, there are still challenges in maintaining the neutrality of mediators, especially when cases involve large political actors with significant influence.

The adjudication stage is a crucial phase because it is formal and has direct legal implications. The Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has conducted an open adjudication hearing, with the verdict results published on its official website and through press conferences. This transparency demonstrates a commitment to public accountability. However, time constraints often force adjudicating panels to make decisions with limited document analysis, especially in cases involving large volumes of evidence.

Implementation performance also depends on the procedural compliance of the parties. Some election participants still often submit reports with incomplete files or outside the specified time limit. This condition slows down the flow of dispute resolution and increases the administrative burden for Bawaslu. Therefore, continuous socialization is necessary regarding the procedure for submitting disputes, ensuring the efficient implementation of the policy.

In terms of internal coordination, policy implementation also depends on collaboration among the various parts within Bawaslu. The legal, supervisory, and secretariat units must coordinate at every stage. The Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has made progress by implementing an integrated reporting system across its sections, although obstacles remain in data synchronization and trial scheduling.

Overall, the process of implementing the dispute resolution policy at the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has been running in accordance with legal principles and the principles of justice. However, the effectiveness of implementation still needs to be strengthened by enhancing the digital system, increasing human resource capacity, and expanding legal literacy among election participants.

Factors Hindering Policy Implementation

The primary hindrance to implementing dispute resolution policies in the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu is the limited availability of human resources. The number of legal staff and adjudicators at the provincial level is not proportional to the number of dispute reports received during the election stage. One legal staff member often handles more than five cases simultaneously, resulting in reduced case handling effectiveness. This condition leads to high workload, institutional stress, and the potential for administrative errors.

In addition to the human resource factor, technical constraints also have a significant effect. Not all regions in Central Sulawesi have adequate information technology infrastructure, especially in districts with limited internet access. As a result, digital reporting through the SIPS application does not run optimally, and Bawaslu must carry out manual verification. This increases the processing time and increases the risk of late completion.

The next obstacle is the lack of understanding of election participants in the legal mechanism for dispute resolution. Many of the reports submitted do not meet the formal and material requirements as stipulated in Bawaslu regulations. Administrative errors in the implementation of procedures, timeliness, and responsiveness, such as signature inconsistencies or submissions past the deadline, are often the reason reports are rejected. This situation highlights the need to enhance legal literacy among election participants, particularly at the regional level.

Structurally, inter-agency coordination poses a significant challenge. The relationship between Bawaslu and the KPU in several regions often remains marred by differences in interpretations of regulations. When a dispute arises between participants and organizers, Bawaslu must remain objective while maintaining harmonious institutional relations. This dilemma requires good diplomatic skills and institutional communication skills from the commissioners.

Non-technical factors such as political pressure also often arise, especially in cases involving major party figures. Some informants mentioned that, although not direct, political interventions can still affect the work atmosphere and decision-making. Bawaslu must consistently uphold the principle of independence to maintain public trust.

Budget limitations are also a classic obstacle in policy implementation. Operational budgets for dispute resolution are often inadequate, particularly in terms of expert witness expenses, case documentation, and the publication of judgments. This condition forces Bawaslu to prioritize internal efficiency, which sometimes sacrifices administrative aspects.

Taking into account these factors, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of policy implementation still depends on the balance between resource capacity, infrastructure support, and political resistance. Without strengthening these three aspects, dispute resolution policies risk losing public utility and legitimacy.

The Impact of Implementation on Justice and Public Trust

One of the indicators of the successful implementation of the dispute resolution policy is the level of public trust in the election results. The results of the interviews indicate that the transparency of the adjudication process carried out

by the Central Sulawesi Bawaslu has been successful in enhancing the community's perception of justice. The public began to see Bawaslu as an institution that not only enforces the rules but also fights for the political rights of citizens. Policy implementation also has a positive impact on regional political stability. Disputes resolved peacefully through mediation help reduce the potential for horizontal conflicts in society. This is important considering that elections in the regions often have the potential to cause tension between party supporters. The success of Bawaslu in maintaining neutrality is a key factor in reducing post-election political escalation.

However, some people still consider the adjudication process to be not wholly independent. This perception arises from limited access to information and a lack of understanding of the legal mechanisms governing elections. Therefore, Bawaslu needs to expand the socialization program of the election law through local media and collaboration with universities.

From a normative perspective, the implementation of this policy reinforces the principle of procedural *justice*. The decision taken by Bawaslu provides a sense of justice for the parties to the dispute, mainly when the process is carried out openly and evidence-based. This success is a vital capital to strengthen the legitimacy of election supervisory institutions at the provincial level.

For election participants, the effectiveness of case handling, particularly the existence of Bawaslu as a dispute resolution institution, provides legal certainty. A fast and scalable mechanism enables disputes to be resolved efficiently without the need for a lengthy judicial process. This confirms that the administrative dispute resolution system in Indonesia has moved towards a more responsive and adaptive direction.

Institutionally, the implementation of this policy is also evident in the increased professionalism of the Bawaslu apparatus. The rigorous adjudication process encourages staff and commissioners to gain a deeper understanding of the procedural law and conflict management aspects. This capacity building is an essential asset for the implementation of the next election.

Thus, it can be concluded that dispute resolution policies have an impact not only on legal aspects, but also on social and political aspects. The stronger the implementation of the policy, the higher the level of public trust in the democratic system. In this context, Bawaslu plays a role not only as a supervisor but also as a guardian of democratic morality.

Direction of Reform and Institutional Strengthening of Bawaslu in the Future

Bawaslu institutional reform is a strategic need after the 2024 election. Experience in dispute resolution highlights the need for improvements in three key areas: regulation, human resource capacity, and digital infrastructure. Regulatory reforms are needed to extend the deadline for resolving disputes, which is currently considered too short. The adjudication process requires a longer timespan so that the analysis of evidence and the reading of witness statements can be carried out thoroughly.

The second aspect is strengthening the capacity of human resources to address numerous potential disputes, including those related to candidacy, campaigning, and vote recounts. Regular training is needed for staff and commissioners on election procedural law, mediation techniques, and conflict management. Bawaslu RI needs to develop standardized training modules that can be applied nationally, while also taking into account local contexts and cultural differences. This is important so that each level of Bawaslu has a uniform understanding of procedures and the value of justice.

Digital infrastructure also needs to be strengthened to support efficiency and transparency. An online-based dispute reporting system must be developed into an integrated system across regions, allowing for real-time monitoring of the supervision and adjudication process. The use of information technology not only speeds up the process but also increases public accountability.

In addition to the technical aspects, institutional reform should include increased budget independence. Bawaslu in the regions often relies on allocations from a limited central source. Budget independence will provide flexibility in carrying out supervision and dispute resolution activities, without excessive bureaucratic pressure.

From a public policy perspective, Bawaslu's institutional reform can be carried out through a *policy learning approach*, which is learning from previous experiences. The evaluation of the 2024 Election implementation results can serve as a basis for Bawaslu RI to improve regulations and work mechanisms ahead of the 2029 Election. This approach ensures that policies are not stagnant but continue to evolve in response to the needs of a dynamic democracy. Finally, institutional strengthening must be accompanied by an increase in public legal literacy. Without adequate understanding from participants and the public, policy effectiveness will remain limited. Therefore, Bawaslu needs to collaborate with educational institutions and the media in educating the public about their political rights and the legal mechanisms governing elections.

By simultaneously strengthening the legal, administrative, and social dimensions, Bawaslu can transform into an election supervisory institution that is not only reactive to violations but also proactive in building a healthy and fair democratic culture in Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the dispute resolution policy for the 2024 Legislative Election process at the Central Sulawesi Provincial Bawaslu demonstrates that, normatively and procedurally, it has adhered to the principles of *electoral justice* as stipulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 and Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022. Bawaslu has successfully carried out the adjudication function openly, quickly, and in an evidence-based manner. However, the effectiveness of implementing this policy still depends on several key variables, including institutional capacity, resource availability, and the parties' understanding of the law. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity must be a priority in preparation for the next election, so that the principles of justice, legal certainty, and administrative efficiency can be achieved in a balanced manner.

According to the study's results, the primary challenge in policy implementation is the limited availability of human resources and the narrow timeframe for implementation. This condition impacts the effectiveness of case handling, particularly during the adjudication stage, which requires a thorough analysis of evidence. For this reason, **the main recommendation is to revise the Bawaslu technical regulations so that the deadline for dispute resolution can be extended proportionately, accompanied by an additional budget allocation for training and the hiring of trained legal personnel in each province.** Strengthening the capacity of human resources is not just administrative, but involves increasing professionalism, ethics, and firmness in upholding election justice.

Additionally, the implementation of the policy demonstrates that the use of information technology through the Dispute Resolution Information System (SIPS) is a significant innovation in streamlining the process and enhancing transparency. However, its implementation has not been optimal in all districts/cities due to limited network infrastructure and the technical capabilities of users. For this reason, **the second recommendation is to develop a cross-regional, integrated digital system that can be accessed uniformly, complete with digitalization training for election staff and participants.** The integration of this system also requires robust data security to ensure that the entire adjudication process is well-documented and accessible to the public on a limited basis, promoting transparency.

From a social and political perspective, public trust in Bawaslu has increased due to the transparency of the trial and the publication of the dispute's results. However, the public's perception of Bawaslu's independence remains somewhat uncertain. To strengthen institutional legitimacy, **the third recommendation is to expand political education and legal literacy programs to the community through collaboration between Bawaslu, universities, and local media., including limited human resources, insufficient** This program is essential to ensure that the public understands the rights and mechanisms of legal dispute resolution, as well as to prevent the potential politicization of dispute issues that can erode public trust in election supervisory institutions.

Furthermore, coordination between election organizing institutions, particularly between Bawaslu and KPU, remains an area that needs improvement. Differences in regulatory interpretations often hinder the dispute resolution process and cause administrative confusion. **The fourth recommendation is the establishment of a joint task force or a permanent coordination forum between the KPU and Bawaslu in each province, which functions to harmonize legal understanding, anticipate potential disputes, and expedite the follow-up of adjudicative decisions.** This institutional harmonization will strengthen election governance through synergy, rather than just supervision.

Ultimately, Bawaslu's institutional reform should prioritize strengthening its strategic function as an adaptive, responsive, and innovative supervisory institution. **The fifth recommendation is to apply a policy learning approach based on empirical evaluation from the 2024 Election experience to improve the policy design of the 2029 Election.** Bawaslu RI needs to conduct a thorough review of the effectiveness of policy implementation in each region, then issue new national guidelines that are more contextual and *evidence-based (evidence-based policy)*. Through this step, Bawaslu can strengthen its position not only as an election law enforcement agency, but also as the central pillar of substantive democracy in Indonesia.

Thus, this study confirms that the successful implementation of election dispute settlement policies is not only determined by regulatory power but also by human capacity, institutional integrity, and systemic support from the state. Elections with integrity cannot be realized without a strong, independent, and adaptable supervisory institution that responds to changing times. Therefore, strengthening Bawaslu through policies that focus on capacity, technology, transparency, and public participation is key to achieving fair, inclusive, and democratic election governance.

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