



Strengthening the Supervision Authority of Election Socialization through Collaboration Between KPU, Bawaslu, and Regional Governments

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ABSTRACT

The background of this study focuses on the challenges faced by the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) in supervising election socialization, including limitations in human resources, insufficient funding, and inadequate infrastructure. Effective supervision of election socialization is crucial for ensuring voter awareness, understanding their rights and responsibilities, and fostering public participation in the electoral process. The aim of this study is to strengthen Bawaslu's supervisory authority through a collaborative approach involving the General Election Commission (KPU) and regional governments. Collaboration among these institutions is expected to address challenges and enhance the effectiveness of election socialization efforts. This study employs a qualitative research method to analyze existing collaborative practices and identify strategies for improving Bawaslu's authority and performance in supervising election socialization in Indonesia. The results indicate that collaborative efforts can create better synergy between Bawaslu, KPU, and regional governments, leading to improved supervision quality and increased public engagement in the electoral process. In conclusion, collaboration is a key strategy for addressing resource limitations and ensuring effective election socialization supervision. Strengthening Bawaslu's authority requires continuous support and engagement from all stakeholders.

Keywords: Bawaslu, Collaboration, Electoral Process, Election Supervision, KPU

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INTRODUCTION

Elections are an instrument to realize the will of the people in governance, making elections a demand for the sovereignty of the people (Saad & Sannusi, 2023). Therefore, it is essential to ensure that elections are conducted directly, universally, freely, secretly,

honestly, and fairly, so that the will of the people is not overlooked (Mulrooney & McGinn, 2022). The conduct of direct elections serves as a means of realizing the sovereignty of the people to produce a democratic government based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Lee & Repkine, 2022).

In addition, elections are a dynamic political process that can only proceed smoothly and orderly if conducted in accordance with existing laws and regulations (Lopes, 2023). In order to realize the sovereignty of the people and apply democratic principles and values, elections need to be carried out with careful preparation (Hale et al., 2024). The conduct of elections requires independent agencies to carry out supervision (Chauhan et al., 2023). Without strong supervision, the conduct of elections is at risk of negative impacts, such as the loss of voting rights for the public, rampant money politics, black campaigning, and the organization of elections that do not comply with existing regulations (Cottrell et al., 2022).

According to Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections (hereinafter referred to as Law No. 7/2017), there are three election organizers, namely the General Election Commission (KPU), Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), and the Honorary Council of Election Organizers (DKPP) (Eguskiza-Sesumaga et al., 2021). Bawaslu plays the role of a supervisory body tasked with overseeing the conduct of elections throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia (Chandra & Saini, 2021). In addition to the supervisory function, Bawaslu is also responsible for formulating and producing regulations, carrying out oversight practices in both preventive and follow-up forms, and has the authority to resolve disputes that arise during the electoral process (Evans et al., 2023).

One of the stages in the conduct of elections is campaigning. Election campaigning is defined as activities carried out by election participants or other parties designated by participants to persuade voters by offering their vision, mission, programs, and/or self-image (Seabo & Nyenhuis, 2021). This stage aims to serve as part of the political education of the populace, which must be carried out responsibly (Denver & Garnett, 2021). Election campaigns must be held with accountability, where penalties can be imposed if the campaign is conducted outside the applicable rules or norms in society (Smith, 2021).

However, experiences from previous election implementations have shown various violations during the campaigning stage (Silvester et al., 2021). During the 2019 election, negative campaigning (black campaign) had begun to proliferate on social media prior to the official campaign phase (Rehmert, 2023). This negative campaigning included issues related to SARA (ethnic, religious, racial, and inter-group relations), human rights violations, insults, and various similar actions. Individuals supporting both presidential candidates in the 2019 election began engaging in negative campaigning against their political opponents (Galiano-Coronil et al., 2021).

Therefore, an independent agency is needed to oversee the conduct of election stages, especially during the campaign phase. Based on Law No. 7 of 2017, Bawaslu's authority includes overseeing the conduct of election stages, including campaigns and

campaign financing (Msughter, 2024). The supervision performed by Bawaslu can be preventive or preventive in nature. Given the experiences from previous elections, Bawaslu needs to improve its performance in preparing for the 2024 election (Fisher et al., 2024). The campaign stage for the 2024 elections, both for Legislative Elections and the Presidential Election, is scheduled to take place from November 28, 2023, to February 10, 2024. KPU has also set a schedule for the presidential campaign if a second round occurs, from June 2 to June 22, 2024. However, Bawaslu faces various internal challenges in preparing for the 2024 elections (Sambo et al., 2024).

One of Bawaslu's main functions during the campaign stage is to supervise the campaign activities conducted by legislative candidate participants and presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs (Batool, 2024). Bawaslu's role is to ensure that all election participants comply with the rules set out in Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and other relevant laws and regulations (Shino et al., 2022). This includes supervision of the time and place of campaign implementation, the use of campaign aids, and conducting campaign activities that do not violate social norms and political ethics. Through strict supervision, Bawaslu aims to prevent violations such as black campaigns, money politics, and the dissemination of false information that can undermine the integrity of the election (Thies & Yanai, 2023).

Bawaslu is also responsible for overseeing the media and social media during the campaign. In this digital era, social media has become one of the most effective tools for delivering campaign messages (Siregar, 2022). Therefore, Bawaslu needs to monitor the content circulated through these platforms to prevent the spread of false news, slander, or hate speech that could influence public opinion and harm other election participants. Bawaslu collaborates with the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) to ensure that the information circulating in the community is accurate and not misleading. Thus, oversight of the media becomes a key aspect in creating a clean and healthy election atmosphere. The function of law enforcement also constitutes an integral part of Bawaslu's role in overseeing election campaigns (Pratiwi et al., 2023). If violations occur, Bawaslu has the authority to follow up by conducting examinations and investigations. Bawaslu can impose administrative sanctions on election participants proven to have committed violations, ranging from warnings to the annulment of their status as election participants. These stringent measures are expected to provide a deterrent effect and raise awareness among election participants to conduct campaigns ethically and responsibly. Thus, Bawaslu plays an active role in maintaining the quality of democracy in Indonesia through comprehensive oversight and firm law enforcement (Masseti, 2023).

As the simultaneous elections of 2024 approach, Bawaslu faces significant challenges that could hinder the effectiveness of its supervision in the conduct of elections. One of the main challenges is the shortage of human resources, as Bawaslu requires more trained and competent supervising staff to manage the complexities of supervision in various regions, especially in hard-to-reach areas. Additionally, funding issues also pose a barrier, as the budget allocated to Bawaslu is often insufficient to meet

optimal supervisory needs, including training and providing necessary tools and infrastructure to support oversight activities. Facilities that are inadequate, such as information technology resources, also limit Bawaslu's ability to monitor and analyze data in real-time, which is crucial for early detection of violations and the dissemination of incorrect information. The combination of these three challenges—shortages in human resources, funding, and facilities—can negatively impact Bawaslu's ability to carry out effective supervisory functions and prevent violations during the electoral process.

This research aims to analyze and explore collaborative strategies that can be implemented in the supervision of election socialization by Bawaslu RI, as well as identify the challenges faced in carrying out these supervisory tasks. By focusing on the importance of collaboration between Bawaslu, the General Election Commission (KPU), and regional governments, this study seeks to find effective solutions to improve the quality and integrity of election socialization oversight. In addition, this research will also delve into various challenges faced by Bawaslu RI, such as limitations in human resources, funding, and infrastructure that can hinder the agency's capacity to perform its supervisory function optimally. Thus, the results of this research are expected to provide useful recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of election oversight and supporting the realization of a democratic and high-quality election in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The normative legal research method is utilized in this legal study, focusing on document and legal norm studies (Grünberger, 2022). This method aims to analyze existing legal rules and how these regulations are applied or interpreted in a specific context (Townsend & Reiss, 2022). In normative legal research, the primary sources used are regulations as well as other legal literature. This approach is highly relevant for examining legal issues that are theoretical and conceptual, such as the need to explore collaborative strategies for supervising the socialization of elections as well as the challenges faced by Bawaslu RI in the supervision of election socialization (Fu, 2022). One of the approaches used in this method is the statutory approach and the conceptual approach. The statutory approach is conducted by reviewing and analyzing various rules governing a specific issue, such as Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and related regulations (Socher, 2023). Through this approach, researchers can discuss the need to explore collaborative strategies for supervising election socialization and the challenges faced by Bawaslu RI in the supervision of election socialization (Loddo, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Supervision Authority of Election Socialization Through Collaboration Between KPU, Bawaslu, and Regional Governments

Elections, often referred to as elections, are a democratic festivity that is held every five years for all citizens of Indonesia, as stipulated in Article 22E paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Elections are conducted directly, universally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly, serving as a channel for the sovereignty

of the people that enables selected candidates to become legitimate representatives of the people (Hopkins et al., 2022). Thus, the candidates elected have a moral bond with voters and obtain clear legitimacy because they are elected through the electoral process. Over time, the concept of simultaneous elections was introduced, which was first implemented in 2019 to elect the President and Vice President, legislative members, as well as Provincial and District/City DPRD members (Townsend et al., 2023). This concept will also be applied in the 2024 elections with the addition of regional head elections (Maynard, 2022).

The conduct of elections involves several elements, including election participants and election organizers. The election participants consist of political parties participating in various types of elections, such as legislative elections, presidential and vice-presidential elections, DPRD elections, and individuals for DPD membership elections. Meanwhile, the election organizers include the authorized institutions, namely the General Election Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), and the Honorary Council of Election Organizers (DKPP). All these institutions must collaborate to create an electoral process that adheres to the electoral principles upheld, namely direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair. Nevertheless, the concept of simultaneous elections brings numerous challenges for electoral organizers, particularly for Bawaslu as the institution responsible for overseeing the conduct of elections throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, as stipulated in Article 1 number 17 of Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections (Law on Elections), which defines Bawaslu as the election supervisory institution.

Bawaslu's position becomes crucial given its role and authority as regulated in the Election Law (Meredith & Kronenberg, 2023). Bawaslu's authority is outlined in Article 95 of the Election Law, detailing its powers related to the supervision of the conduct of elections. In the same article, Bawaslu is also authorized to establish Provincial Bawaslu and Regency/City Bawaslu aimed at overseeing the conduct of elections at the provincial and regency/city levels (Meeks, 2022). Although Bawaslu should be able to carry out its duties and authority optimally due to the decentralization powers that allow it to have representatives at every provincial and regency/city level, in practice, this is often not in line with the implementation of existing norms (Kernallegenn et al., 2023). The campaign stages organized by KPU are also part of Bawaslu's responsibility, as regulated in Article 93 letter d point 5 of the Election Law. This article states that Bawaslu has the task of overseeing the conduct of election stages, including campaign implementation and campaign financing (Nwagwu et al., 2022).

The challenges faced by Bawaslu in carrying out this function include various obstacles such as a lack of human resources, limited budget, and inadequate supervisory infrastructure, which hinder supervision effectiveness in ensuring that campaign stages proceed fairly and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. This supervision also encompasses electoral supervisory apparatus at the neighborhood level. Campaigns carried out by campaign participants can be conducted in several ways, as regulated in Article 275 paragraph (1) of the Election Law, which includes limited meetings, face-to-

face meetings, dissemination of campaign materials, the installation of campaign aids in public places, the use of social media, advertisements in printed media, debates among candidate pairs, and other activities that do not violate existing regulations. In the 2024 simultaneous elections, the campaign schedule is set to take place from November 28, 2023, to February 10, 2024, and the conduct of this campaign is facilitated by KPU with funding sourced from the state budget. Bawaslu's oversight also includes campaign implementation down to the neighborhood level, in accordance with its duties and authority.

Each state institution has its own budget and expenditure revenues, including the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) which has its own budget. In the implementation of the first simultaneous elections held in 2019, Bawaslu obtained a budget of IDR 8.6 trillion allocated specifically for the program of supervising the conduct of elections. This fund allocation is not only intended for Bawaslu RI, but is also provided to all Provincial Bawaslu and Regency/City Bawaslu to support the conduct of their tasks and authorities at each level. Thus, the allocated funds aim to strengthen the implementation of Bawaslu RI's authority in overseeing the conduct of the 2019 simultaneous elections. However, along with the upcoming simultaneous elections of 2024, which also include the regional head elections, it is necessary to increase the fund allocation for Bawaslu to optimize all elements as well as its tasks and authorities in overseeing the conduct of elections. This increase in budget is expected to support the implementation of Bawaslu RI's duties and powers to run more effectively and accurately.

The Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) RI can improve the effectiveness of election supervision through the implementation of collaborative strategies with various parties (Fieldhouse et al., 2023). One form of collaboration that can be done is the implementation of Gakkumdu (Integrated Law Enforcement). Gakkumdu is a collaboration between Bawaslu, the Police, and the Attorney General's Office in enforcing the law related to electoral violations. With the synergy between these institutions, violations occurring during the electoral stages can be addressed quickly and efficiently. Through the Gakkumdu mechanism, Bawaslu can report identified violations to the police for further processing, thus enabling comprehensive preventive actions and enforcement against electoral violations (Oyewole & Omotola, 2022). This also has a positive impact on creating a more just and transparent electoral atmosphere (Rossini et al., 2024).

In addition, Bawaslu can establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) and the General Election Commission (KPU). This collaboration aims to optimize media monitoring and public information during the campaign period. With the growing dominance of social media in influencing public opinion, Bawaslu needs to collaborate with Kominfo to monitor content circulated on social media platforms. This is important to prevent the spread of misleading information, false news, or negative campaigns that could undermine electoral integrity. Through this MoU, Bawaslu, Kominfo, and KPU can coordinate to educate the public about valid information, as well as provide a space for the public to report content deemed to violate election regulations.

Challenges Faced by Bawaslu RI in Supervising Election Socialization

The limitation of human resources (HR) is one of the main challenges faced by the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) in carrying out its supervisory tasks during the election socialization. Bawaslu has extensive responsibilities in overseeing the conduct of election stages, including campaigns and socialization. However, there is often a shortage of trained and experienced personnel to effectively perform this function. In complex elections, where various elements must be considered, a lack of HR can obstruct Bawaslu's ability to conduct comprehensive and timely oversight.

This situation becomes more critical in remote and less developed areas. In these regions, access to resources, training, and capacity development for Bawaslu personnel is often limited. As a result, oversight may not be optimal compared to urban areas, where facilities and resources are more adequate. This limitation can lead to many violations going undetected or unaddressed, creating an environment that is less conducive to fair and transparent election conduct.

A shortage of personnel also results in a high workload for existing supervisors. With a limited number of personnel, they are required to oversee vast and diverse areas, leading to fatigue and reduced quality of oversight. This may result in Bawaslu's inability to respond quickly and effectively to reports or violations that occur. Therefore, improving the quality and quantity of HR in Bawaslu becomes essential to ensure that election socialization oversight can be carried out effectively. Strategic efforts should be undertaken to enhance training and capacity development for Bawaslu officers. Additionally, it is also important to recruit new personnel with relevant skills and knowledge in election supervision. This way, Bawaslu can strengthen its position as an independent and effective institution in overseeing the conduct of elections, including accurate and timely socialization to the public.

Limited funding poses a significant challenge faced by the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) in performing its election supervision tasks. Although Bawaslu receives budget allocations from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN), the available funds often fall short to support all necessary supervision activities. This inadequacy can negatively impact oversight effectiveness, as Bawaslu needs sufficient funds to conduct various programs and activities related to socialization, training, and provision of adequate facilities.

Funding limitations affect Bawaslu's ability to carry out election socialization effectively. Effective socialization is critical to increasing public participation in elections and ensuring voters understand their rights and obligations. However, with limited funds, Bawaslu may be unable to conduct sufficiently extensive and deep socialization campaigns, especially in remote areas. This can result in a lack of accurate and timely information for the public, thereby impacting low voter participation rates. Limited funds also hinder Bawaslu from carrying out training programs for election supervisors. High-quality training is essential for enhancing the skills and knowledge of Bawaslu personnel, enabling them to conduct supervision more effectively. Funding constraints may result in

inadequate training, leaving election supervisors unprepared to face challenges that arise during the electoral process.

Inadequate facilities and infrastructure at Bawaslu, particularly at the regional level, constitute a significant challenge in the performance of election supervision tasks. Many Bawaslu offices in the regions still face issues related to insufficient infrastructure, which could hinder their effectiveness in executing oversight responsibilities. Inadequate office facilities, such as cramped workspaces, lack of administrative equipment, and other supporting facilities, can disrupt work processes and collaboration among Bawaslu personnel. A non-supportive working environment can negatively affect productivity and the morale of election supervisors.

A lack of optimal information technology tools also poses a serious issue. In this digital era, election supervision relies not only on conventional methods but also on technology to collect data, analyze information, and communicate effectively. Without adequate technological infrastructure, Bawaslu would struggle to access and process the necessary information for supervising campaigns and other election stages. Subpar technological tools can also delay decision-making, which is crucial for prompt responses to electoral violations. Infrastructure limitations also affect Bawaslu's ability to conduct socialization and training. Socialization with the public regarding voting rights and obligations as well as the electoral process is critical in enhancing public participation. However, without adequate facilities to hold socialization events, Bawaslu may not effectively reach the public. Similarly, training for election supervisors that occurs in suboptimal locations can diminish the quality of such training, thus failing to effectively improve the skills and knowledge of the supervisors.

One significant challenge faced by Bawaslu in carrying out supervision of election socialization is the difficulty in enforcing laws against violations that occur. This is often caused by loopholes in the law or ambiguities in regulations governing the actions that can be taken against violators. For instance, ambiguous legal provisions can result in uncertainties regarding the determination of violations and the appropriate sanctions. This situation complicates Bawaslu's ability to act decisively in following up on violations that arise, which can lower the effectiveness of its supervision. Legal loopholes may also create the impression that electoral violations can occur without significant consequences. If violations go unaddressed legally, this could impact public trust in the integrity of elections. The public may perceive that violations can occur without risk, ultimately undermining the quality of democracy and political participation. Therefore, it is essential for Bawaslu to collaborate with legislative institutions in evaluating existing regulations and proposing necessary improvements to strengthen the legal framework governing the conduct of elections.

Bawaslu also frequently faces challenges related to political involvement and pressure from certain parties, including political parties and prospective election participants. These political pressures can affect Bawaslu's independence and objectivity in performing oversight tasks. In elections, where many political interests intersect, Bawaslu often becomes the target of various forms of pressure, both direct and indirect.

For example, certain parties may attempt to influence Bawaslu's decisions through lobbying, public criticism, or even threats that could shake the position of the institution. This political pressure not only has the potential to disrupt Bawaslu's performance but can also tarnish the reputation of the election supervisory body in the eyes of the public. When the public doubts Bawaslu's independence, it may reduce public confidence in the overall electoral process. In efforts to maintain integrity and objectivity, Bawaslu needs to prioritize transparency and accountability in every oversight action it takes. Additionally, Bawaslu must have adequate protection mechanisms for its members to perform their duties free from intimidation or pressure from any party.

In addressing the legal challenges and enforcement of regulations faced by Bawaslu, it is important for this institution to evaluate and revise existing regulations. This can be done by proposing changes or additions to election law provisions that are clearer and more definitive, thereby reducing legal loopholes that hinder the enforcement of penalties for violations. Bawaslu also needs to build close partnerships with legislative institutions in the regulatory revision process, ensuring that the voices and needs of oversight are well accommodated. Furthermore, capacity building for Bawaslu HR in understanding and effectively applying regulations is equally essential. Through periodic legal training and education, Bawaslu members are expected to be better prepared to face complex situations and make appropriate decisions in enforcing election laws.

In facing challenges of political involvement and pressure from certain parties, Bawaslu needs to uphold principles of transparency and accountability in every oversight activity undertaken. One strategic step that can be taken is to build a good communication system with the public and the media to ensure that every action and decision made by Bawaslu is well understood by the public. This way, Bawaslu can enhance public trust in its independence and integrity as an election supervisory institution. Additionally, Bawaslu should also implement protection mechanisms for its members who carry out oversight tasks to prevent influence from political pressures. This may include internal policies that provide legal support and physical protection for members who may face intimidation. With these measures, Bawaslu is expected to optimally execute its functions and contribute to maintaining healthy democracy in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The conduct of elections in Indonesia, as a democratic festivity held every five years, is strictly regulated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and conducted through a process that is direct, universal, free, secret, honest, and fair. With the introduction of the concept of simultaneous elections that encompass presidential elections, legislative elections, and regional head elections, the challenges faced by the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) have become more complex. Bawaslu, as the institution tasked with overseeing the conduct of elections, plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, despite facing various constraints such as limited human resources, inadequate funding, and infrastructure challenges. To address these issues, collaborative strategies with various institutions, including integrated law

enforcement through Gakkumdu and cooperation with the Ministry of Communication and Information and the General Election Commission, are important steps in enhancing oversight effectiveness. With appropriate efforts and synergy among institutions, it is hoped that the conduct of the 2024 simultaneous elections can proceed in a more transparent, fair manner, and in accordance with applicable laws, thereby creating public trust in electoral outcomes and strengthening democracy in Indonesia.

The Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) faces several significant challenges in performing its supervision of election socialization, including limitations in human resources, restricted funding, inadequate infrastructure, legal challenges in enforcement, and political pressures from certain parties. The lack of human resources impacts the effectiveness of supervision and the quality of responses to violations, while insufficient funding limits Bawaslu's capacity to conduct essential socialization and training programs. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure hinders work processes and collaboration, while legal loopholes may diminish Bawaslu's power to act against violations. Furthermore, political pressures faced can undermine the independence and integrity of the institution. Therefore, to ensure fair and transparent elections, it is crucial for Bawaslu to evaluate and revise existing regulations, build partnerships with legislative institutions, and enhance human resource capacity through training. By prioritizing transparency and accountability and implementing protection mechanisms for its members, Bawaslu can strengthen its position as an independent and effective supervisory institution, thereby contributing to the sustainability of healthy democracy in Indonesia.

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