

**THE ROLE OF BOYOLALI DISTRICT BAWASLU IN SUPERVISING VILLAGE
HEADS' NEUTRALITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE 2024 REGIONAL HEAD
ELECTIONS**

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ABSTRAK

Pemilihan Kepala Daerah (Pilkada) merupakan salah satu instrumen penting dalam sistem demokrasi di Indonesia. Namun, dalam pelaksanaannya, netralitas kepala desa kerap menjadi permasalahan yang dapat memengaruhi integritas Pilkada, terutama melalui penggunaan media sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis: 1) Peran Badan Pengawas Pemilu (Bawaslu) dalam menjaga netralitas kepala desa selama Pilkada, dan 2) Peran Bawaslu Kabupaten Boyolali dalam mengawasi netralitas kepala desa di media sosial. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah yuridis empiris yang mengkaji ketentuan hukum serta melakukan wawancara dengan anggota Bawaslu Kabupaten Boyolali. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bawaslu memiliki peran strategis dalam mengawasi netralitas kepala desa melalui sosialisasi, pengawasan langsung, serta koordinasi dengan pemerintah daerah dan Pemberian Sanksi Terhadap Kepala Desa yang Melanggar. Namun, pengawasan ini menghadapi kendala berupa keterbatasan sumber daya dan rendahnya kesadaran kepala desa mengenai aturan netralitas, serta dalam mengawasi netralitas kepala desa di media sosial, Bawaslu Kabupaten Boyolali menerapkan strategi pemantauan digital, deteksi dini pelanggaran, Kordinasi dengan pihak terkait, Sosialisasi kepada kepala desa, serta Penyuluhan Kepada masyarakat untuk memantau dan melaporkan pelanggaran. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, penguatan regulasi dan teknologi pengawasan, peningkatan literasi politik bagi kepala desa, serta sinergi antara pemerintah,

Bawaslu, dan masyarakat diperlukan guna memastikan Pilkada yang adil, transparan, dan demokratis.

Kata Kunci: *Bawaslu, Kabupaten Boyolali, Netralitas Kepala Desa, Media Sosial*

ABSTRACT

Regional Head Election (Pilkada) is one of the important instruments in the democratic system in Indonesia. However, in its implementation, the neutrality of village heads often becomes a problem that can affect the integrity of Pilkada, especially through the use of social media. This study aims to analyze: 1) The role of the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) in maintaining the neutrality of village heads during the Pilkada, and 2) The role of Bawaslu Boyolali Regency in overseeing the neutrality of village heads on social media. The research method used is empirical juridical which examines legal provisions and conducts interviews with members of Bawaslu Boyolali Regency. The results showed that Bawaslu has a strategic role in overseeing the neutrality of village heads through socialization, direct supervision, as well as coordination with local governments and giving sanctions to violating village heads. However, this supervision faces obstacles in the form of limited resources and low awareness of village heads regarding neutrality rules, and in overseeing the neutrality of village heads on social media, Bawaslu Boyolali Regency implements a digital monitoring strategy, early detection of violations, coordination with related parties, socialization to village heads, and counseling to the public to monitor and report violations. Based on the research results, strengthening regulations and monitoring technology, increasing political literacy for village heads, and synergy between the government, Bawaslu, and the community are needed to ensure fair, transparent, and democratic elections.

Keywords: Bawaslu, Boyolali Regency, Village Head Neutrality, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) are one of the important elements in the democratic process in Indonesia, especially at the regional level. Through Pilkada, the public is given the right to directly elect leaders at the provincial and district/city levels, namely governors, regents, and mayors.(1). This process is not only a reflection of the sovereignty of the people, but also an arena for improving the quality of leadership and governance in the regions.(2).

However, the implementation of the Pilkada is not free from various challenges, one of which is ensuring the integrity and neutrality of the parties involved in the process. One issue that often arises is the violation of the neutrality of the village head. The village head, who should act as a neutral government official, is often involved in practical political activities. As a leader at the village level, the village head has significant influence in the community. This makes the neutrality of the village head a strategic issue that needs serious attention in the implementation of the Pilkada(3).

Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors explicitly prohibits village heads from being involved in campaign activities or providing support to one of the regional head candidates. Violation of this rule can damage public trust in the regional election process and threaten social stability at the regional level. Therefore, supervision of the neutrality of village heads is a very important task for the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu)(4).

In the era of digital transformation, monitoring the neutrality of village heads faces new challenges. Social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram often become a means for village heads to openly declare support for certain candidates. The use of social media for practical political purposes not only violates the principle of neutrality, but also has the potential to spread unhealthy political influence in society.(5)

One of the cases of violation that has become a highlight is a viral video on social media showing the village head in Sambu District, Boyolali Regency, declaring support for a regional head candidate.(6). This case is a real example of how social media can be a medium for violations of neutrality that is difficult to monitor conventionally. This incident raises public

concerns and emphasizes the importance of more active supervision from Bawaslu, both directly in the field and in cyberspace. In this context, it is necessary to further examine the role of Bawaslu in maintaining the neutrality of village heads during the implementation of the Pilkada, as well as the extent to which Bawaslu Boyolali Regency contributes to ensuring that village heads remain neutral in their activities on social media.

METHOD

The approach used in this study is an empirical legal approach. This approach examines the applicable legal provisions and relates them to the facts in the field to find solutions to the identified problems. The empirical legal method aims to reveal how the law is applied in real practice.(7). In the context of this research, the focus is directed at the supervision of the neutrality of village heads by the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) of Boyolali Regency, both in the field and on social media, during the implementation of the Pilkada. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with members of Bawaslu Boyolali Regency as the main sources. This interview aims to obtain clear information about the strategies, challenges, and effectiveness of the supervision carried out.

This research is also equipped with a literature study, involving the analysis of Law No. 10 of 2016, related regulations, journals, and other official documents. The combination of primary and secondary data is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of supervision by Bawaslu. The collected data were analyzed descriptively qualitatively to assess the effectiveness of supervision and law enforcement in maintaining the neutrality of village heads during the Pilkada. The analysis process was carried out by comparing facts in the field with applicable legal regulations, so that appropriate conclusions and recommendations can be produced.(8). The main focus of this study is on the role of Bawaslu Boyolali Regency in minimizing violations of village head neutrality, both in the real world and on social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Bawaslu's Role in Maintaining Village Head Neutrality During Regional Elections

As the body responsible for supervising the regional elections, Bawaslu plays an important role in ensuring that the elections are fair and free from illegitimate influence. One of the main challenges is to ensure that village heads remain neutral. Village heads have great influence over political decisions at the village level, and their involvement in practical politics can lead to unfairness in the election process.(9).

The role of Bawaslu in ensuring that village heads are not involved in campaigns or support certain candidate pairs is regulated in Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning the Election of Governors, District Heads, and Mayors. Article 70 paragraph (1) regulates the obligation of village heads to maintain neutrality, while Article 71 paragraph (1) explains the administrative sanctions for village heads who violate these provisions. To carry out these supervisory duties, Bawaslu has taken strategic steps, including:

a. **Socialization and Counseling to Village Heads and Village Apparatus**

One of the initial steps taken was intensive socialization to all village heads and village officials. Bawaslu conducted legal training related to neutrality in elections and the legal consequences for village heads involved in practical politics. However, the major challenge faced was the lack of understanding of the importance of neutrality and the lack of political education at the village level. Some village heads even considered neutrality as an unimportant issue, so counseling became very important to clarify their role.

b. **Direct Supervision and Formation of Village Supervisory Team**

To improve the effectiveness of supervision, Bawaslu has formed a supervisory team spread across all sub-districts. This team is tasked with supervising all activities carried out by village heads, both those seen directly and those that occur on social media. For example, when a village head is indicated to support a particular candidate through flyers or announcements, the supervisory team immediately monitors and imposes sanctions if violations are found.

c. **Coordination with District and Sub-district Governments**

Bawaslu also works with district and sub-district governments to supervise village heads, especially in identifying and handling potential violations.

d. **Imposition of Sanctions on Village Heads Who Violate**

In the event of a violation, Bawaslu will issue a written warning, revocation of the village head's position, or other administrative sanctions. For example, a village head who is proven to support a particular candidate can be temporarily dismissed or banned from running again in the next election.

Despite various efforts, supervision of village heads faces many challenges. One of them is the problem of low legal awareness among village heads. Many feel that they can get involved in supporting certain candidates without major consequences. For example, many village heads use indirect approaches, such as spreading political messages through private messages on WhatsApp, social media statuses, or even conveying messages indirectly during village meetings.(10). Another major challenge faced by Bawaslu is limited resources. Effective supervision requires more supervisors, especially with the large number of villages that must be monitored. Many supervisors in the field also work with limited budgets, making it difficult for them to carry out maximum monitoring.(11).

2. The Role of Bawaslu Boyolali Regency in Maintaining the Neutrality of Village Heads on Social Media

In this digital era, social media has become a very effective platform for delivering information. For village heads, social media is a means of communication that is often used to convey policies, information, and even to interact with the community. However, social media also poses new challenges in terms of neutrality, especially during the regional elections. Village heads, as public officials who interact directly with villagers, are very vulnerable to being involved in practical politics that can influence election results. Therefore, monitoring social media activities is very important to maintain the neutrality of village heads.(12).

Bawaslu Boyolali Regency, as an institution that functions to supervise the Pilkada, has an important role in maintaining the neutrality of village heads on social media. This

refers to the provisions contained in the Pilkada Law, especially regarding the prohibition on public officials, including village heads, from being involved in political campaigns during the implementation of the Pilkada(13).

Bawaslu Boyolali Regency utilizes several strategies and approaches to monitor the village head's social media. Among them are active monitoring of online activities, coordination with village officials, and socialization about the use of neutral social media. Based on an interview with Mr. Agus Marwanto as the Coordinator of the Division of Handling Violations, Data, and Information. Social Media Monitoring Strategies by Bawaslu Boyolali Include:

a. **Monitoring and Early Detection of Violations on Social Media**

One of the first steps taken by Bawaslu Boyolali in order to maintain the neutrality of the village head is to conduct proactive monitoring of social media. This monitoring is not only carried out on social media accounts officially managed by the village head, but also on their personal accounts, be it on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or WhatsApp.

This monitoring is done using social media monitoring technology devices that can detect various types of posts that contain elements of political support, both explicit and hidden. This technology allows Bawaslu to monitor certain keywords related to candidate pairs or political symbols.

b. **Coordination with Related Parties**

In addition to conducting direct monitoring, Bawaslu Boyolali Regency also collaborates with village governments, sub-district governments, and local political parties to facilitate supervision. Bawaslu considers that active community participation in reporting violations that occur on the village head's social media is very important. Therefore, Bawaslu is also active in socializing how to report violations to the community through reporting applications such as Lapor Pemilu provided by Bawaslu.

By working together with various parties, Bawaslu can detect violations more quickly and take swift action if violations of the village head's neutrality on social media are found.

c. **Socialization to Village Heads regarding the Use of Social Media**

One of the approaches taken by Bawaslu Boyolali is to hold training and socialization

to village heads regarding the use of neutral social media. This socialization includes an understanding of the campaign ban that applies during the Pilkada, as well as the legal consequences for village heads involved in practical politics.

In addition, Bawaslu also educates village heads on how to avoid political bias in every upload on their social media. For example, Bawaslu provides an example that spreading images or content that indirectly supports a particular candidate pair can be considered a form of violation of neutrality. This socialization is very important to increase legal awareness of village heads so that they are more careful in using their social media during the Pilkada period.

d. Public Education to Monitor and Report Violations

In addition to focusing on village heads, Bawaslu also plays a role in educating village communities to be more active in monitoring village head activities on social media. The community is given an understanding of their rights to report violations that may be committed by village heads related to neutrality.(14)

Bawaslu also provides incentives for people who actively report violations through the Laporan Pemilu application, which allows for fast and seamless reporting. People can report suspicious uploads or other actions that are suspected of violating the principle of village head neutrality.

Several cases of neutrality violations found on social media show how social media can be an effective means for village heads to campaign or support certain candidates indirectly. Several cases of Village Head Violations on Social Media:

a. Case in Nogosari District

In the 2024 Pilkada, the village head in Tegalgiri Village, Nogosari District, Boyolali Regency, was suspected of violating neutrality. This case began with the massive spread of information on social media regarding the alleged lack of neutrality of the Tegalgiri Village Head. They allegedly made a declaration of support for one of the candidate pairs. This information went viral on the TikTok platform and attracted public attention. The alleged violation of neutrality was then reported to the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu).

Boyolali Regency Bawaslu followed up on this report by checking the accuracy of the information and issuing warnings to the relevant parties, to ensure that the implementation of the Pilkada runs in accordance with legal provisions and democratic principles.(15)

b. Cases in Tamansari District

The Village Head in Jemowo Village, Tamansari District, Boyolali Regency, is suspected of violating Neutrality in the Pilkada. The Village Head was accused of not being neutral after a video circulated on social media showed him wearing a T-shirt with a picture of one of the candidate pairs for regent and vice regent in the Boyolali Pilkada. In addition, he was also seen giving support to the candidate pair.

The Boyolali Regency Bawaslu followed up on this report by referring the case to the Boyolali Regency Government as the official in charge of personnel development for further follow-up in accordance with its authority, because the violation did not fulfill the elements of an election crime, because there was no evidence strong enough to prove a criminal violation.(16)

These cases serve as important examples that in the fast-paced digital and social media era, monitoring the neutrality of village heads and other public officials is becoming increasingly complex. In this case, the circulating video could easily influence voters and create the impression of non-neutrality, even though no criminal violations were identified. This also emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of the use of social media by village heads, actions seen on social media can quickly spread and trigger allegations of violations. Furthermore, the Boyolali Regency Bawaslu has made various efforts to monitor the social media activities of village heads. However, there are several challenges that need to be overcome:

a. Limited Resources

Supervision of thousands of social media accounts owned by village heads across sub-districts requires significant resources. Bawaslu needs more supervisors and sophisticated technology to be able to carry out supervision effectively and efficiently.

b. Lack of Awareness from Village Head

Not all village heads realize that their activities on social media can affect neutrality in

the Pilkada. Although Bawaslu has conducted socialization, many village heads still do not fully understand the legal consequences of political activities on social media. Supervision of village heads on social media is very important to ensure the implementation of a fair and transparent Pilkada. Bawaslu Boyolali Regency has taken various preventive and responsive steps in maintaining the neutrality of village heads, but challenges remain.(14)

CONCLUSION

The General Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) has a very important role in supervising the neutrality of village heads so that they are not involved in practical politics during the Regional Head Election (Pilkada). Efforts made include socialization, counseling, the formation of village supervisory teams, and coordination with local governments. However, this supervision faces various challenges, such as the low awareness of village heads regarding regulations regarding neutrality and the limited human resources owned by Bawaslu in monitoring all villages in its area.

In the digital era, social media has become a new challenge in maintaining the neutrality of village heads. Not a few village heads have openly or implicitly expressed political support through various digital platforms. To overcome this problem, Bawaslu Boyolali Regency implemented a social media monitoring strategy, established coordination with various related parties, and provided education to village heads and the community. However, this supervision still faces obstacles, including limited monitoring technology and a lack of understanding by village heads regarding the limits of their activities on social media that can affect neutrality in the Pilkada.

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