



THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTY WITNESSES IN SUPERVISING VOTE COUNTING IN INDONESIA



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Abstract

Elections in Indonesia are a cornerstone of democracy, but the complexity of vote counting often presents challenges in maintaining the integrity of election results. Political party witnesses play a strategic role as supervisors to ensure transparency and accuracy in the vote counting process at polling stations (TPS). This research aims to analyze the strategic role of political party witnesses in maintaining the integrity of vote counting, identify the challenges they face, and recommend strategies to enhance their effectiveness. The study uses a qualitative – descriptive approach with in – depth interviews and document analysis. Data was obtained from political party witnesses, election organizers, and relevant documents. The findings indicate that witnesses play an essential role in preventing vote manipulation and reporting violations. However, they face challenges such as political pressure, limited technical training, and logistical issues, especially in remote areas. The study recommends intensive training, the use of technology, better legal protection, and collaboration with independent institutions to improve the effectiveness of witnesses. In conclusion, political party witnesses are a key element in ensuring the transparency and legitimacy of election results, and adequate support is needed to strengthen democracy in Indonesia.

Abstrak

Pemilu di Indonesia merupakan pilar utama demokrasi, namun kompleksitas penghitungan suara sering menjadi tantangan dalam menjaga integritas hasil pemilu. Saksi partai politik berperan strategis sebagai pengawas untuk memastikan transparansi dan akurasi penghitungan suara di tempat pemungutan suara (TPS). Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran strategis saksi partai politik dalam menjaga integritas penghitungan suara, mengidentifikasi tantangan yang dihadapi, serta merekomendasikan strategi untuk meningkatkan efektivitas peran mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode wawancara mendalam dan studi dokumen. Data diperoleh dari saksi partai politik, penyelenggara pemilu, dan dokumen terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa saksi memiliki peran penting dalam mencegah manipulasi suara dan melaporkan pelanggaran. Namun, mereka menghadapi kendala seperti tekanan politik, keterbatasan pelatihan teknis, dan masalah logistik, terutama di daerah terpencil. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pelatihan intensif, pemanfaatan teknologi, perlindungan hukum yang lebih baik, dan kolaborasi dengan lembaga independen untuk meningkatkan efektivitas saksi. Kesimpulannya, saksi partai politik adalah elemen kunci dalam menjaga transparansi dan legitimasi hasil pemilu, dan dukungan yang memadai diperlukan untuk memperkuat demokrasi di Indonesia.

INTRDUCTION

General elections in Indonesia are one of the main pillars of democracy, allowing the people to directly elect their leaders and representatives. However, the complex election process, particularly at the vote counting stage, often poses challenges in maintaining the integrity and honesty of the election results. In this context, political party witnesses play a strategic role as observers to ensure transparency and accuracy in vote counting at each polling station (TPS). The presence of political party witnesses is an important element in preventing potential vote manipulation that could undermine the legitimacy of election results. However, political party witnesses often face various obstacles, such as political pressure, limited resources, and a lack of adequate technical training. (Ruhdiara et al., 2022)

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This article aims to fill this gap by offering a more holistic approach. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the analysis of the role of political party witnesses by considering technical, social, and political aspects simultaneously. In addition, this study also discusses the influence of post – pandemic environmental changes, such as the application of technology and health protocols, on the dynamics of supervision in the field. This approach provides a new perspective that has not been widely explored in previous studies. (Nurul Khalifah et al., 2025)

The main issues raised in this study include: the role of political party witnesses in maintaining the transparency and integrity of vote counting, the obstacles faced by witnesses in the field, and strategies that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of witnesses in the future. (Nurul Khalifah et al., 2025)

The purpose of this study is to analyze the strategic role of political party witnesses in monitoring vote counting in Indonesia, identify the challenges they face, and provide strategic recommendations to strengthen their capacity and effectiveness. Thus, this article is expected to contribute to improving the quality of election monitoring and strengthening democracy in Indonesia. (Sinaga et al., 2025)

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative – descriptive approach to explore the role of political party witnesses in vote counting supervision. This approach was chosen because it provides a deep understanding of the socio – political phenomenon involving witnesses in the context of vote counting in Indonesia. With a focus on descriptive analysis, this study aims to explain in detail the roles, challenges, and strategies of political party witnesses based on empirical data (Khairunnisa; Nugroho, 2025)

Data collection was conducted through interviews and document studies (Prof. Dr. Sugiyono, 2016). In – depth interviews were conducted with various parties, including political party witnesses, election organizers such as the KPU and Bawaslu, and political observers. These interviews aimed to explore the direct experiences of the witnesses,

understand their role in maintaining the transparency of vote counting, and explore the challenges they faced in the field. In addition, additional data was collected from document studies, such as election regulations, violation reports, and vote counting results documents. This document study was used to provide a broader context and strengthen the validity of the findings from the interviews (Kurniawan et al., 2017)

This study was conducted in several representative regions in Indonesia, covering urban and rural areas. These locations were selected to observe the differences in conditions and challenges faced by political party witnesses in regions with different characteristics. The research subjects included witnesses from various levels of the party, election organizers, and figures with direct experience in election monitoring. (Syafei & Darajati, 2020)

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Sugiyono, 2015). This process involved identifying the main themes from the data, such as the patterns of witnesses' roles in vote counting monitoring, the obstacles encountered, and the proposed solutions to improve the effectiveness of monitoring. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a comprehensive narrative, describing the relationship between the main findings and the broader socio-political context. With this method, the study is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of election monitoring in Indonesia. (Ansar & de Vries, 2024)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The Role of Political Party Witnesses in Vote Counting

This study reveals that political party witnesses play a very important role in maintaining the transparency and integrity of the vote counting process at polling stations (TPS). The majority of witnesses interviewed (Supardi, December 3, 2024) acknowledged that their presence contributed directly to the supervision of the vote counting process, particularly in ensuring that the data recorded on Form C matched the actual results in the field. In one of the urban areas studied, political party witnesses reported discrepancies in the vote counting data, which were then corrected after joint verification with the election organizers. (Iskandar & Hadad, 2024)

In addition, witnesses also actively recorded and reported potential violations that occurred during the vote counting process. Based on interviews and analysis of Bawaslu reports (BAWASLU Padang City, 2019), it was found that most reports of violations at polling stations came from political party witnesses, such as attempts to inflate votes or manipulate the filling out of forms. This shows that the role of witnesses is not only to act as observers, but also as active reporters who assist election organizing agencies in following up on violations. (Amalyah et al., 2025)

The strategic role of witnesses underscores the importance of their presence at polling stations to maintain the integrity of the electoral process. Not only are they tasked with ensuring that votes are counted correctly, they also serve as the front line in preventing and reporting any violations that could potentially undermine the fairness and integrity of the election. Thus, the contribution of political party witnesses is an important part of realizing clean, transparent, and fair elections..

first, Challenges Faced by Witnesses (Fauzi & Habibi, 2023)

Despite playing an important role in maintaining the transparency and integrity of the vote counting process, political party witnesses often face a variety of complex challenges. One of the main obstacles is the political pressure and intimidation they often experience

in the field, especially in rural areas. In some cases, witnesses have reported verbal and even physical threats from local political actors who seek to influence the vote counting results (Ikhsan, December 3, 2024). This pressure not only creates fear among witnesses but also has the potential to undermine the integrity of the electoral process as a whole. Unfortunately, legal protection for witnesses is still very limited, so they often do not have adequate mechanisms to report these threats or obtain proper protection. The inability to deal with these threats systematically reveals a loophole in the regulations that needs to be addressed immediately by the government and election organizers. (Singgih Alfiyahya & Tantina Haryati, 2024)

In addition to political pressure, limited training and technical knowledge became significant obstacles for witnesses. Most of the witnesses interviewed admitted that they did not receive special training on vote counting procedures and the mechanisms of work at polling stations. As a result, many witnesses found it difficult to understand the administrative process and were unable to identify technical errors or manipulation that occurred during the vote counting process. This situation was exacerbated by logistical challenges, especially in remote areas. Difficulties in accessing polling stations, limited transportation, and a lack of supporting facilities such as documentation tools also affected the witnesses' ability to perform their duties optimally (Andini, December 3, 2024). With minimal training and these logistical obstacles, witnesses often had to rely on their intuition and personal experience to carry out their duties, which was certainly

not enough to deal with the complexity of the modern electoral system.

Overall, the various challenges faced by political party witnesses demonstrate the need for capacity building and legal protection for them. Election organizers, political parties, and the government need to work together to provide comprehensive training, ensure the availability of logistical facilities, and strengthen regulations to protect witnesses from intimidation or political pressure. Only then can political party witnesses function optimally as observers and reporters who help realize a fair and transparent election process.

Effective Strategies in Witness Surveillance

Based on these findings, this study recommends several strategies that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of political party witnesses in the vote counting process. One step that can be taken is through intensive training and election simulations before election day. This training should cover various aspects, ranging from a deep understanding of the technical procedures of vote counting to how to deal with political pressure in the field. In addition, the training also needs to cover effective methods of reporting violations, so that witnesses can convey their findings systematically and follow up with the relevant authorities. (Fadli Muhamad & Agus Hermawan, 2023)

The use of technology has also emerged as a highly relevant solution in supporting the role of witnesses. Several political parties have begun using technology-based applications to document and report vote counting results in real time. These applications allow witnesses to directly upload photos or data from Form C from polling stations, thereby reducing the risk of data manipulation in the subsequent recapitulation process. This technology can also provide a fast communication mechanism between witnesses and party teams at the control center, so that any obstacles in the field can be responded to immediately. In this way, technology becomes a very helpful tool in improving the efficiency and transparency of the monitoring process by witnesses.

In addition, collaboration with independent supervisory bodies, such as the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), is also an effective strategy. Data shows that witnesses who

collaborate with independent supervisory bodies tend to be more successful in identifying and reporting violations than witnesses who work independently. This cooperation can be carried out through joint reporting, coordination in the field, or the implementation of integrated technical training before the election. By strengthening the synergy between political party witnesses and independent supervisory agencies, potential violations can be identified and followed up more quickly, thereby better ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. These strategies, if implemented consistently, can enhance the effectiveness of political party witnesses as credible election observers. Better support from political parties, election organizers, and related institutions will be key factors in creating a more transparent, honest, and credible election process..

DISCUSSION

The results of this study directly answer the main questions posed in the introduction, namely regarding the strategic role of political party witnesses, the obstacles they face, and strategies that can improve their effectiveness. The role of political party witnesses as guardians of transparency and honesty in vote counting has proven to be important in preventing election result manipulation. However, the challenges they face, such as political pressure, limited training, and logistical problems, indicate the need for more serious attention from political parties and election organizers to support them to the fullest extent possible.

These findings reinforce previous studies showing that political party witnesses are a key element in maintaining election integrity. However, this study makes an additional contribution by emphasizing the importance of a multidimensional approach to strengthening the role of witnesses. This approach includes strengthening technical capacity through training and simulation, protecting against political pressure through legal and policy support, and utilizing technology as a tool for documentation and reporting. These three aspects are interrelated and necessary to create a more efficient and reliable monitoring system. (Putra Disantara et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this study also highlights the importance of collaboration between political party witnesses and independent supervisory institutions, such as Bawaslu, and civil society communities. This collaboration not only increases the effectiveness of supervision in the field but also builds public trust in the electoral process. With good cooperation, political party witnesses can be more empowered in identifying violations and ensuring accurate reporting.

In addition, this study emphasizes the need for policy innovation to support the role of witnesses, especially in remote areas. Providing incentives for witnesses, allocating adequate budgets for training and logistics, and developing digital infrastructure that supports technology-based reporting processes are concrete steps that can be taken by political parties and election organizers.

With the implementation of the proposed strategies, political party witnesses are expected to play an increasingly optimal role in overseeing the vote counting process in Indonesia. This will not only strengthen clean and fair democracy, but also increase the legitimacy of election results in the eyes of the public. This research, with its focus on a holistic approach, provides a foundation for further studies that can explore the relationship between the effectiveness of monitoring by witnesses and the level of public trust in the democratic system in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed the important role of political party witnesses in maintaining the transparency and integrity of the vote counting process in Indonesia. They not only act as direct observers at polling stations (TPS) but also serve as the front line in reporting potential violations that could undermine the integrity of the elections. This strategic role makes witnesses a key element in ensuring fair, accountable election results that reflect the will of the people.

However, witnesses also face significant challenges, such as political pressure, limited technical training, and logistical constraints, especially in remote areas. Political pressure in the form of intimidation or threats often causes witnesses to work under severe psychological pressure. On the other hand, a lack of training makes it difficult for them to understand the technical procedures for vote counting, thereby reducing their effectiveness in monitoring the process in the field. Logistical problems, such as accessibility to polling stations and a lack of supporting facilities, further exacerbate the situation.

This situation underscores the need for more serious attention from political parties, election organizers, and the government to provide maximum support to witnesses. Efforts to increase capacity through training, the provision of adequate logistical facilities, and stronger legal protection need to be a priority. With adequate support, political party witnesses can perform their roles optimally and contribute more significantly to realizing elections that are credible, transparent, and trustworthy.

Based on the results of this study, several suggestions can be made to improve the effectiveness of political party witnesses in monitoring vote counting in Indonesia. First, political parties and election organizers need to provide intensive training and election simulations to witnesses before election day. This training should cover an understanding of technical procedures, strategies for dealing with political pressure, and how to report violations correctly. Second, it is important to provide adequate legal protection for political party witnesses so that they can carry out their duties without fear. This can be done through strict law enforcement against perpetrators of intimidation and violence against witnesses. Third, the use of technology can facilitate and increase the effectiveness of witnesses' roles.

Political parties and election organizers can develop special applications to document vote counting results in real time and simplify the reporting process. Fourth, it is important to build close collaboration between political party witnesses and independent supervisory institutions, such as Bawaslu. This collaboration can increase the effectiveness of supervision and build public trust in the election process. Finally, policy innovations are needed to support the role of witnesses, especially in remote areas. This can take the form of providing incentives for witnesses, allocating adequate budgets for training and logistics, and developing digital infrastructure that. By implementing the proposed strategies, it is hoped that the role of political party witnesses can be optimized in overseeing the vote counting process in Indonesia. This will not only strengthen clean and fair democracy, but also increase the legitimacy of the election results in the eyes of the public.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Muhammad Safwan Saufi independently compiled and completed the entire research process. He designed the conceptual framework, wrote the background and literature review, and developed the methodology used in the research. In addition, he collected and analysed the data, interpreted the findings, and compiled the discussion and conclusion sections. In the final stage, he also conducted a thorough editing process to ensure that this manuscript complies with academic standards and scientific publication ethics. The entire content of this article is the work and full responsibility of Muhammad Safwan Saufi, and he has approved the manuscript for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article.

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