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From Digital Vote Recapitulation to Democratic Legitimacy: Electoral Governance Innovation in Serang Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

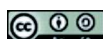
Digitalization of electoral administration offers opportunities to improve the transparency and traceability of election results, but its effectiveness remains dependent on process integrity and institutional capacity. This study aims to analyze the role of the Recapitulation Information System (Sirekap) in administering the results of the 2025 re-voting in the Serang Regency local election and its relationship with procedural quality and democratic legitimacy. The study employs a qualitative approach using an explanatory case study design. Data were collected through an analysis of the Constitutional Court's decision and its summary, official documents from the General Elections Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), and relevant news reports. Data analysis was conducted in NVivo using thematic coding, Crosstab Query, and thematic similarity visualizations across four main categories: Electoral Governance, Digital Electoral Governance, Procedural Quality, and Legitimacy. The findings indicate that Electoral Governance and Procedural Quality are relatively dominant coding categories. The KPU is more prominently associated with rule application, whereas the Constitutional Court is more strongly associated with rule adjudication, procedural fairness, and administrative neutrality. Sirekap was used to support the documentation, transmission, and publication of re-voting results. However, technology does not automatically guarantee data accuracy or enhance public trust. This study concludes that digitalization contributes to democratic legitimacy indirectly through procedural quality, verification, oversight, and institutional accountability.

Keywords: Digital electoral governance, SIREKAP, procedural quality, democratic legitimacy, re-voting

Abstrak

Digitalisasi administrasi pemilu menghadirkan peluang untuk meningkatkan transparansi dan keterlacakan hasil pemilihan, tetapi efektivitasnya tetap bergantung pada integritas proses dan kapasitas kelembagaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran Sistem Informasi Rekapitulasi (Sirekap) dalam administrasi hasil Pemungutan Suara Ulang (PSU) Pilkada Kabupaten Serang tahun 2025 serta keterkaitannya dengan kualitas prosedural dan legitimasi demokratis. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus eksplanatori. Data diperoleh melalui analisis dokumen putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi, ikhtisar putusan, dokumentasi resmi KPU dan Bawaslu, serta pemberitaan yang relevan. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan NVivo melalui thematic coding, Crosstab Query, serta visualisasi kemiripan tema berdasarkan empat kategori utama, yaitu Electoral Governance, Digital Electoral Governance, Procedural Quality, dan Legitimacy. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan

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bahwa Electoral Governance dan Procedural Quality merupakan kategori yang relatif dominan. KPU lebih menonjol dalam penerapan aturan (rule-application), sedangkan Mahkamah Konstitusi menonjol dalam penyelesaian sengketa (rule-adjudication), keadilan prosedural, dan netralitas administratif. Sirekap digunakan untuk mendukung dokumentasi, transmisi, dan publikasi hasil PSU. Namun, teknologi tidak secara otomatis menjamin akurasi data maupun meningkatkan kepercayaan publik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kontribusi digitalisasi terhadap legitimasi demokratis berlangsung secara tidak langsung melalui kualitas prosedural, verifikasi, pengawasan, dan akuntabilitas kelembagaan.

Kata Kunci: Tata kelola elektoral digital, SIREKAP, kualitas prosedural, legitimasi demokratis, pemungutan suara ulang

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Serang Regency Regional Election faces a much more fundamental problem than just a dispute over vote acquisition. The main problem lies in the integrity of the election process, especially when the political process and local government structure allegedly intersect to support certain electoral interests. The issue then brought into dispute the results of the Serang Regency Regional Election, leading to the cancellation of the previous results and an order to carry out Re-Voting (PSU) at all polling stations. The contestation became a concern because the alleged violations included the involvement of state officials and the support of several village heads for one of the candidate pairs (Hibar et al., 2025; Paskarina et al., 2025).

This problem means the Serang case cannot be read only as a failure to defend the election results, but as a question of how the electoral process is carried out when actors with positions in the government structure intersect with political interests. In such a situation, the dispute over the results is essentially an opportunity to reassess the quality of the process that produced them. The settlement of the Serang Regional Election case shows that consideration of violations and their impact on the electoral process is an important part in determining the need for correction to the election results (Maulana et al., 2025).

Such integrity issues have consequences for the way the public views the credibility of elections. Experience with practices considered unfair, such as intimidation, vote-buying, or other forms of intervention, can lead to a negative perception of the integrity of the electoral process. This perception, in turn, is related to citizens' attitudes towards democracy more broadly. This means that the legitimacy of election results cannot be separated from people's experience of the process that produced these results (González et al., 2024).

This credibility is also greatly influenced by how the organizing institution carries out its administrative functions. Public trust in elections depends not only on formal rules but also on whether the election process is carried out competently, transparently, and accountably. When the organizing institution is perceived as unable to maintain process quality or fails to provide adequate explanations for problems that arise, confidence in the results can also weaken (Kerr et al., 2024).

In this context, PSU refers to a corrective mechanism for the electoral process that was previously in question. Reorganization is not just about repeating the vote, but also about reopening the entire series of administrative processes that accompany the election process, including documentation, counting, recapitulation, and the delivery of results. The re-election mechanism is primarily related to efforts to improve the credibility of the process when previous results cannot be maintained without institutional correction (Clover, 2025).

After the PSU is implemented, the next issue is how to manage the new results so they can be traced and checked. In the context of Serang Regency, the implementation of the PSU took place at 2,355 polling stations with a large administrative scale. The voter list for the 2024 Regional Elections included 1,227,094 voters across 29 sub-districts and 326 villages. In the implementation of the PSU, as many as 2,355 documents (C. Results) and 29 documents (D. Results) at the sub-district level were reported to have been transmitted through Sirekap. This scale shows that the administration of results is an important part of the reorganization process because the voting results must be reproduced, consolidated, verified, and published.

It is at this stage that the digitization of recapitulation gains an analytical position in the Serang case. Sirekap is not placed as an instrument to resolve the alleged partiality of the government apparatus, which is the initial problem of the PSU. Its relevance lies in the stage of result administration after the voting process is reorganized. Digitization allows polling station results to be processed and disseminated more quickly, while providing a trail of information that can be used for examination and comparison with source documents. The use of Sirekap in the context of Indonesian elections has also been understood as part of a shift in how transparency and the recapitulation of results are managed at the local level (Nasuhaidi et al., 2025).

However, the digitalization of election administration cannot be understood simply as a change from manual procedures to digital applications. Technology is changing the way data is produced, transmitted, accessed, and checked, but at the same time creates a new dependence on infrastructure, technical capacity, and institutional arrangements. This issue is becoming increasingly important because errors or ambiguities in digital systems can take on political significance in election results. Therefore, digital transformation in elections needs to be understood as a governance issue that includes technological aspects as well as authority, regulation, and protection of citizens' political rights (Dad & Khan, 2023).

Indonesia's experience in the 2024 election shows that the use of Sirekap is also inseparable from issues of accuracy, information readability, changes in data appearance, and institutional communication. When digital information is not easy to understand or is perceived as inconsistent with the source document, technology originally designed to expand transparency can actually raise suspicion and reduce trust. Therefore, the effectiveness of e-recapitulation is not only about whether the system can receive and process data, but also about how the information generated is explained, verified, and held accountable to the public (Paskarina et al., 2025).

This dimension is important for the Serang case because the corrected election process requires the administration of results that have an adequate level of openness and traceability. The public, election participants, witnesses, and supervisors need not only the final figure but also certainty about how the numbers are obtained and whether the displayed data is related to the source documents. In such conditions, technology can provide administrative value when expanding access to information, speeding up examinations, and providing traceable data trails. However, these benefits depend heavily on how the organizing institution manages the system and implements correction mechanisms when problems are found.

Institutional capacity is therefore an integral part of electoral digitalization. Digital systems require actors who can operate technology, verify, handle errors, maintain information security, explain information to the public, and account for decisions made. Digital electoral governance thus does not stop at an application's technical capabilities but also encompasses operational capacity, information security capacity, institutional authority, coordination, verification, correction, and information disclosure (Hidayat et al., 2026).

The framework clarifies the relationship between electoral administration and democratic legitimacy. Legitimacy has to do not only with who participates in the political process or who wins the election, but also with the quality of the process that connects citizens' choices to the political decisions made. Perspective *Legitimacy* Placing transparency, accountability, openness, and procedural quality as important elements in assessing how legitimacy is formed in the governance process. With this perspective, recapitulation digitization can be seen as having democratic meaning insofar as technology helps create a more open, traceable, and accountable process (Caby & Frehen, 2021a; Schmidt & Wood, 2019).

Previous studies show that the discussion on Sirekap has evolved from technological innovation to issues of integrity, transparency, accountability, ethics, and public trust. (Tinanto et al., 2024), Placing the diffusion of Sirekap in the context of electoral integrity at the local level, while Paskarina et al. (2025) emphasize the dimensions of ethics and public trust in the use of e-recapitulation. More recent studies also show that Sirekap needs to be read in the context of the debate on election integrity and governance, not merely as a technical instrument of recapitulation (Mustofa et al., 2026). On the other hand, research on the Serang Regency Regional Election focuses more on disputes over results, process violations,

adjudication considerations, and the implementation of PSUs (Hibar et al., 2025; Maulana et al., 2025).

However, the two literatures have not been widely gathered to explain the position of recapitulation technology after an electoral process has undergone institutional correction. The literature on Sirekap generally discusses how digital innovation is applied and its relationship to transparency or trust. In contrast, the literature on the Serang PSU emphasizes the issue of integrity in the implementation and resolution of disputes. The space that has not been widely explained lies in the relationship between the two: how a digital system works when the results of previous elections have been questioned, the voting process must be reorganized, and the administration of new results must be built through procedures that the public can examine. This gap makes the Serang case relevant not because Sirekap caused the PSU, but because it is used during the administration of results after the electoral process has been completed.

This position also yields a different argument from studies that view technology linearly as a source of transparency that automatically generates legitimacy. In the case of Serang, the process is actually layered. The initial problem concerns the integrity of the political process and the neutrality of government actors; the dispute then provides a corrective mechanism; the PSU reopens the election stage; and Sirekap becomes part of the administration of the results in the reorganized process. The analytical value of technology lies in its ability to support information disclosure, document traceability, verification, and correction in these stages. Therefore, the question of legitimacy is not about whether the use of Sirekap directly generates trust, but about how the quality of the administrative process supported by technology can provide additional procedural conditions for the acceptance of election results.

On that basis, this study views electoral digitalization as part of governance that operates amid pre-existing political and institutional problems. The case of Serang Regency shows that technology is present not in a completely normal electoral situation, but in a process that has experienced disputes, corrections, and re-implementation. This context provides an opportunity to assess whether and how Sirekap can support the management of election results in a more transparent, traceable, and verifiable manner, after the initial process has lost credibility. This approach also avoids the overly simplistic notion that digital innovation is a solution to the problem of electoral integrity, because the issues of integrity and results administration are in different but interrelated domains within overall electoral governance.

Based on the problems and gaps in the research, this study aims to analyze how the digitization of vote recapitulation through Sirekap functions in the administration of the results of the Serang Regency Regional Election Re-Vote after a dispute over the integrity of the election process, by examining transparency, data traceability, verification, correction mechanisms, institutional capacity, and accountability as aspects that shape procedural quality and its contribution to democratic legitimacy at the local level.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Electoral Governance Theory

This study uses Electoral Governance Theory (Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002) as the main framework to analyze the relationship among election integrity, dispute resolution, the implementation of Re-Voting (PSU), and the use of digital technology in the administration of election results. This theory views elections as a series of institutional processes that include rule-making, rule-application, and rule-adjudication. These three functions determine the procedural certainty and credibility of elections (Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002; Pal, 2021).

This framework is relevant to the 2024 Serang Regency Regional Elections, when the issue of the integrity and neutrality of the apparatus becomes a source of disputes that lead to PSUs. In this context, rule-adjudication refers to the dispute-resolution process, while rule-application encompasses the implementation of PSUs and the administration of the results. This relationship allows Sirekap to be analyzed institutionally, not as the cause of PSU but as a digital instrument in the implementation and administration of election results (H. A. Garnett, 2019). The rule-making dimension concerns the formation of rules and procedures, and the division of authority in the implementation of elections (James et al., 2019; Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002). Although not the main empirical focus, this dimension shows that Sirekap operates within a predetermined framework of authority and lacks independent authority to determine the election outcome.

The main focus of the research is rule application, namely the application of rules in voting, counting, documentation, verification, recapitulation, and the delivery of results. The quality of elections is determined not only by the existence of rules but also by the consistency of their application (Lehoucq, 2002; Norris, 2019). In Serang Regency, the implementation of PSU covers 29 sub-districts, 326 villages, 1,227,094 voters, and 2,355 polling stations. A total of 2,355 documents (C. Results) and 29 documents (D. Results) at the sub-district level were reported to have been transmitted through Sirekap. This scale emphasizes the importance of managing accurate, traceable, verified, and accountable outcome information.

Thus, Sirekap is analyzed as a digital instrument for rule application. The evaluation is based not only on the system's ability to receive data but also on the accuracy, traceability, verification, transparency, correction, and accountability of electoral administration. The quality of its implementation is also influenced by organizational capacity and by organizers' ability to exercise their authority in practice (James et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, rule-adjudication explains the dispute-resolution mechanism through institutional procedures that provide certainty in electoral disputes (Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002; Schedler, 2002). In this study, this dimension is used to understand the context of correction through PSU, not to re-examine the substance of the decision. PSU serves as the point of connection between rule adjudication and rule application. After the dispute is

resolved through a legal mechanism, the organizer reimplements the selection procedure, including managing and summarizing the results through the administrative system used.

Digital Electoral Governance, Election Integrity, and *Legitimacy Throughput*

To deepen the *analysis of rule application*, this study employs three supporting concepts: *digital electoral governance*, *electoral integrity*, and *throughput legitimacy*. These three are not presented as the main theory but as a conceptual tool to explain the role of technology in election administration, the quality of the electoral process, and its relation to democratic legitimacy.

Digital electoral governance: Explain the changes in election administration due to the use of digital technology in data management, documentation, verification, transmission, and publication of results. Digitalization does not simply replace manual procedures, but also affects institutional capacity, coordination patterns, and oversight mechanisms. Technology can improve efficiency and access to information, but its benefits depend on institutional capacity, data management quality, and verification mechanisms (Holly Ann Garnett & James, 2020; Haque & Carroll, 2020). In this context, Sirekap is understood as an instrument in *Rule Apply* that supports the administration of results, not as a substitute for institutional authority.

Such understanding needs to be put into perspective, *Electoral integrity*. Election integrity includes the overall quality of the electoral process, not only the accuracy of the results, but also fairness, compliance with the rules, supervision, and protection of the process from manipulation (van Ham, 2015). Oversight mechanisms become important because integrity depends on the institution's ability to detect, control, and correct irregularities (Birch & Ham, 2017; Rump, 2026). In this study, the concept of *electoral integrity* is used to understand the problems behind the Serang Regency PSU as a matter of electoral process quality. Thus, the problem of process integrity is not equated with the problem of recapitulation technology.

Furthermore, *Legitimacy* is used to explain the relationship between the quality of the administrative process and democratic legitimacy. This concept emphasizes the importance of transparency, accountability, openness, and procedural quality in a process that links political preferences to governance outcomes (Caby & Frehen, 2021b; Haggart & Keller, 2021; Schmidt & Wood, 2019). In election administration, these principles can be reflected through information disclosure, data traceability, verification, and correction mechanisms. However, the quality of procedures does not automatically result in legitimacy. Therefore, Sirekap's contribution to legitimacy is not understood directly, but rather through its ability to support a more transparent, verifiable, and accountable administrative process (Iusmen & Boswell, 2017; Steffek, 2019).

Thus, the three concepts complement each other. *Digital electoral governance* explains how Sirekap works in the administration of results; electoral integrity explains the context of

electoral process quality; while *legitimacy throughput* explains the relevance of procedural quality to democratic legitimacy. The relationship between these concepts is then synthesized with Electoral Governance Theory in the next section to build a framework for research analysis.

Research Framework

This study adopts Electoral Governance Theory as the main framework for explaining the relationship between rule application and rule adjudication. The issue of integrity in the implementation of the Serang Regency Regional Election is framed within the context of electoral integrity. At the same time, PSU is understood as a corrective mechanism through the adjudication of rules. After the correction, the process returns to *rule-application*, especially in the administration of re-voting results.

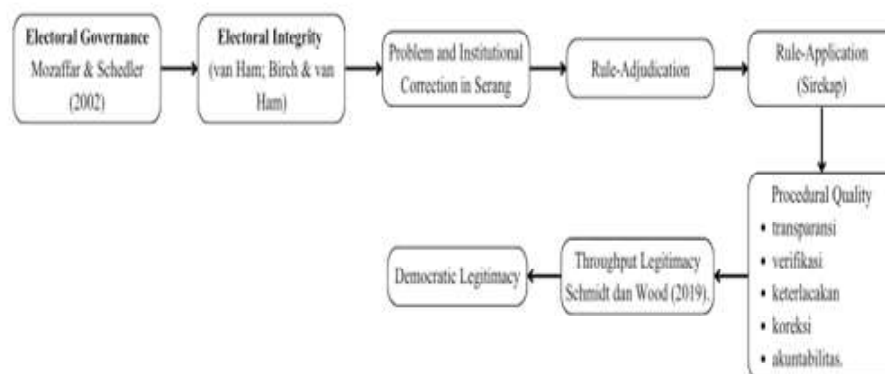


Figure 1. Research Framework

At the *rule-application stage*, *Sirekap* is understood as part of digital electoral governance that supports the documentation, transmission, verification, correction, and publication of results. The existence of technology alone does not judge its contribution, but by the quality of the administration it produces. Transparency, traceability, verification, correction, and accountability are procedural qualities that are then read through the concept of legitimacy throughout.

Thus, this study does not establish a direct relationship between *Sirekap* and legitimacy. The relationship analyzed is how the digitization of the administration of results supports the quality of the electoral process, which can further contribute to democratic legitimacy. The framework treats PSUs, *Sirekap*, and legitimacy as part of a single set of electoral governance, but at different stages and with distinct institutional functions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with *an explanatory case study design* to explain the governance process of digital vote recapitulation through Sirekap in the context of the Election of Regents and Deputy Regents of Serang Regency. The selection of cases is based on local characteristics that bring together the use of Sirekap and the issue of electoral process integrity, which leads to the implementation of re-voting (PSU). Therefore, the research is not directed at statistically testing the influence of technology, but at understanding how Sirekap is applied in the election administration process, how actors run and supervise the process, and how procedural quality relates to democratic legitimacy. The unit of analysis for the research is the governance process of vote recapitulation, particularly at the *rule-application stage*.

The research data was sourced from primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with informants who had knowledge of or direct involvement in the implementation and supervision of elections, including members of the Serang Regency KPU and Bawaslu. Informants were purposively selected based on the relevance of their experience to the implementation of Sirekap and the recapitulation process. Secondary data were obtained from recapitulation documents, publication of results, supervision reports, results determination documents, PSU-related documents, and relevant scientific literature.

Data collection was carried out through interviews, document analysis, and *digital data tracing*. Interviews were used to explore experiences with Sirekap, problems in recapitulation, verification, and correction mechanisms, and perceptions of the transparency and accuracy of procedures. Document analysis was used to compare informant information with electoral records and documents. In contrast, *digital data tracing* was used to trace the publication of results and recapitulation documentation in the digital system.

Data analysis was carried out using NVivo through *thematic analysis*. Interview data, documents, and digital information were imported into NVivo and gradually coded using the mother-node and child-node *structure*. *Mother nodes* were grouped into four main categories: Electoral Governance, Digital Electoral Governance, Procedural Quality, and Legitimacy. Each *child node* has empirical indicators and coding criteria used to maintain consistency in the coding process. The operational framework is presented in

Table 1. Operationalization and NVivo Coding Framework

Mother Node	Child Node	Empirical Indicators	Theoretical Basis	NVivo Coding Criteria
ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE	Rule-making	Electoral rules, administrative procedures, institutional arrangements, and technical provisions	Mozaffar & Schedler (2002)	Encoded when data describe rules, institutional arrangements, or formal procedures governing electoral administration and vote recapitulation.
	Rule application	Sirekap implementation, vote recapitulation, documentation, verification, correction, result publication	Mozaffar & Schedler (2002)	Encoded when data show how electoral rules are implemented in practice during the vote-recapitulation process.
	Rule-Adjudication	Electoral disputes, objections, institutional review, dispute resolution, PSU	Mozaffar & Schedler (2002)	Encoded when data refer to mechanisms for reviewing contested electoral processes or results and implementing corrective measures, including PSU.
DIGITAL ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE	Sirekap Implementation	System operation, operator practices, digital documentation, data entry and transmission	Haque & Carroll (2020); Garnett & James (2020)	Encoded when data describe the practical operation and implementation of Sirekap in electoral recapitulation.
	Digital Transparency	Online publication, public access, visibility of electoral information	Haque & Carroll (2020)	Encoded when data indicate that digital mechanisms facilitate access to and disclosure of electoral information.
	Verification and Traceability	Source-document comparison, data consistency, audit trail, result tracking	Haque & Carroll (2020); Garnett & James (2020)	Encoded when data refer to the ability to verify digital information against source documents or trace changes in electoral data.

PROCEDURAL QUALITY	Procedural Fairness	Compliance with procedures, fairness, equal treatment, absence of manipulation	van Ham (2015); Birch & van Ham (2017)	Encoded when data indicate whether electoral procedures are conducted fairly, consistently, and without manipulation. Encoded when data describe neutrality, impartiality, political intervention, or partisan influence in electoral administration. Encoded when data indicate that electoral procedures and information are open and accessible to relevant stakeholders. Encoded when data describe mechanisms for validating electoral information and correcting discrepancies or errors. Encoded when data indicate institutional responsibility, oversight, explanation, or responsiveness concerning electoral administration.
	Administrative Neutrality	Administrative impartiality, neutrality, absence of political intervention	van Ham (2015); Birch & van Ham (2017)	
	Transparency	Openness, accessibility of information, procedural clarity	Schmidt & Wood (2019)	
	Verification and Correction	Cross-checking, validation, discrepancy identification, error correction	Schmidt & Wood (2019)	
	Accountability and Oversight	Institutional responsibility, supervision, explanation, responsiveness	Birch & van Ham (2017); Schmidt & Wood (2019)	
LEGITIMACY	Throughput Legitimacy	Procedural openness, accountability, transparency, trust	Schmidt & Wood (2019); Steffek (2019)	Encoded when data connect procedural quality with perceptions of fairness, credibility, or trust in the electoral process.

Acceptance of Electoral Outcomes	Acceptance of results, recognition of elected candidates, confidence in outcomes	Norris (2019); Schmidt & Wood (2019)	Encoded when data describe acceptance, rejection, or contestation of electoral outcomes in relation to process credibility.
Institutional Credibility	Confidence in KPU, Bawaslu, electoral institutions, and the elected government	Norris (2019); Schmidt & Wood (2019)	Encoded when data refer to perceptions of institutional credibility or trustworthiness arising from electoral administration.

Source: Author's Elaboration based on the Theoretical Framework

After the coding process, the data in each *child node* are compared across sources to identify patterns, relationships, and differences in actors' perspectives. The analysis is then followed by *process tracing* to examine the relationship among electoral integrity issues, correction mechanisms through PSUs, reapplication of recapitulation procedures, the use of Sirekap, procedural quality, and legitimacy. This approach allows the research to explain the mechanisms linking administrative digitalization to legitimacy, rather than simply demonstrating the existence of relationships between concepts.

The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation of sources and documents. The information from the KPU was compared with information from Bawaslu, candidate-pair witnesses, election participants, the public, and available electoral documents. The comparison was used to reduce dependence on a single source and to produce a more balanced interpretation of the implementation of recapitulation and the quality of the electoral process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Electoral Governance Pattern in the Implementation of the Serang Regency Regional Election PSU

NVivo analysis was used to identify electoral governance patterns in dispute documents on the results of the 2024 Serang Regent and Deputy Regent Elections. Coding was carried out using four mother nodes: *Electoral Governance*, *Digital Electoral Governance*, *Procedural Quality*, and *Legitimacy*. The four categories are arranged within a research framework that positions *Electoral Governance Theory* (Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002) as the main theory, with support from the concepts of *Digital Electoral Governance*, *Electoral Integrity*, and *Legitimacy*. Through this framework, the analysis is not only directed at identifying the most frequent themes, but also at understanding how the application of rules, supervision, dispute

resolution, and procedural quality are related in the governance of the Serang Regency Regional Elections.

The results of the *Crosstab Query* show that the distribution of coding differs between the Serang Regency Bawaslu, the Serang Regency KPU, and the Constitutional Court. In the *Electoral Governance* category, the KPU recorded 60 coding references, while the Constitutional Court recorded 43 and Bawaslu 42. In the *Procedural Quality* category, the KPU and the Constitutional Court each received 49 references, while Bawaslu received 40. The *Digital Electoral Governance* received 39 references from the KPU, 20 from Bawaslu, and 5 from the Constitutional Court. The *Legitimacy* category recorded 20 references to the KPU, 15 to Bawaslu, and 10 to the Constitutional Court.

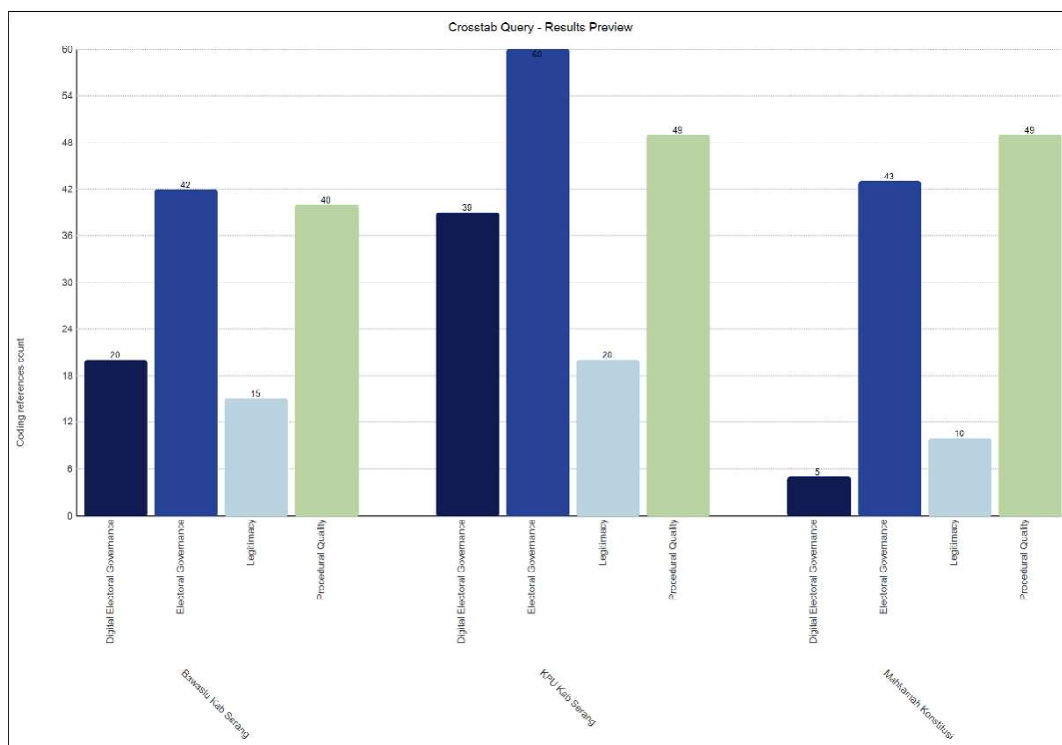


Figure 2. Distribution of Coding References by Mother Nodes and Institutions
Source: NVivo processing results, *Crosstab Query*.

The dominance of Electoral Governance within the KPU indicates that it is the most prominent aspect in the coding of the institution's documents. Meanwhile, the similarity in the number of Procedural Quality references to the KPU and the Constitutional Court confirms the importance of procedural quality in the implementation and settlement of election disputes, according to Mozaffar & Schedler (, electoral governance encompasses three functions, namely rule-making, rule-application, and rule-adjudication. In this context, the frequency of coding reflects the document's emphasis on the role of individual institutions, rather than measures of institutional performance.

At the child nodes level, the Serang Regency Bawaslu is dominated by Rule-application (20 references) and Rule-making (19 references). The Serang Regency KPU shows a similar pattern, with 30 Rule applications and 20 Rule-making references. In contrast, the Constitutional Court is dominated by Rule-adjudication (30 references), followed by Procedural Fairness (24) and Administrative Neutrality (23).

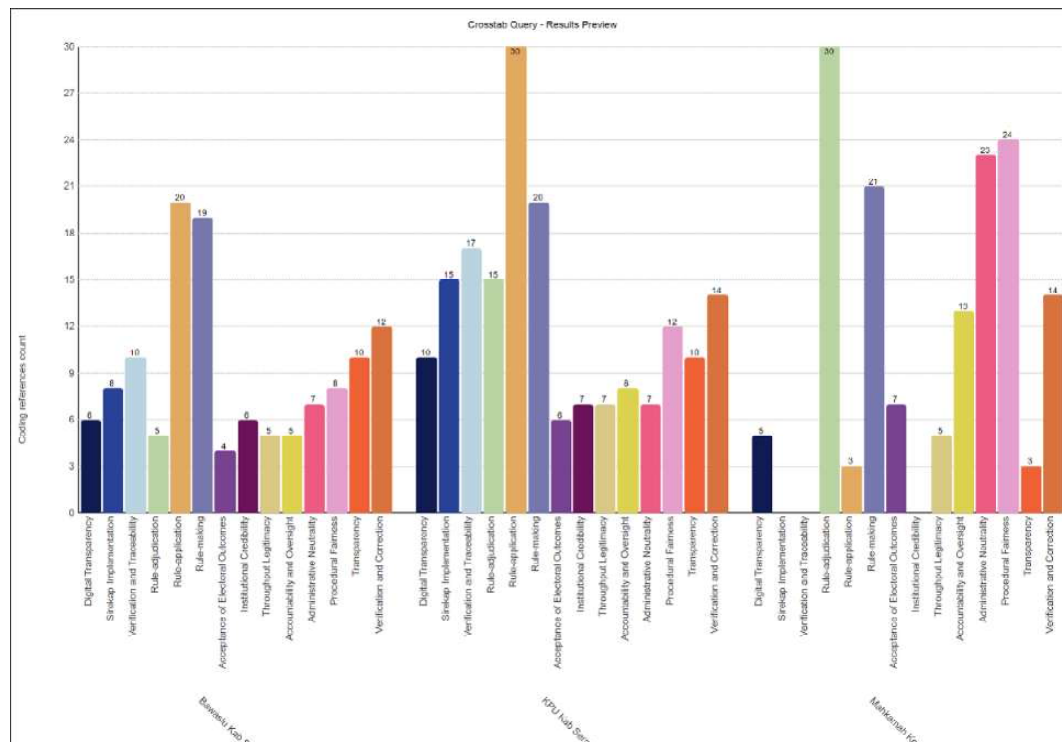


Figure 3. Distribution of Coding References by Child Nodes and Institutions
Source: NVivo processing results, *Crosstab Query*.

This pattern shows the difference in emphasis between institutions. In the KPU, rule application pertains to the implementation of election rules. At the same time, in the Constitutional Court, Rule-adjudication reflects the function of dispute resolution through the examination of evidence and legal considerations.

In Electoral Governance Theory, the two functions are interrelated, but differ in their authority and implementation stage. In the case of Serang Regency, this connection can be seen in the KPU's determination of the results, candidate pairs' submissions of disputes, the Constitutional Court's examinations, and the re-voting order (PSU). Radar visualization reinforces this pattern: rule application stands out in the KPU, while rule adjudication is dominant in the Constitutional Court. The codification of Procedural Fairness and Administrative Neutrality also demonstrates attention to these principles in dispute resolution.

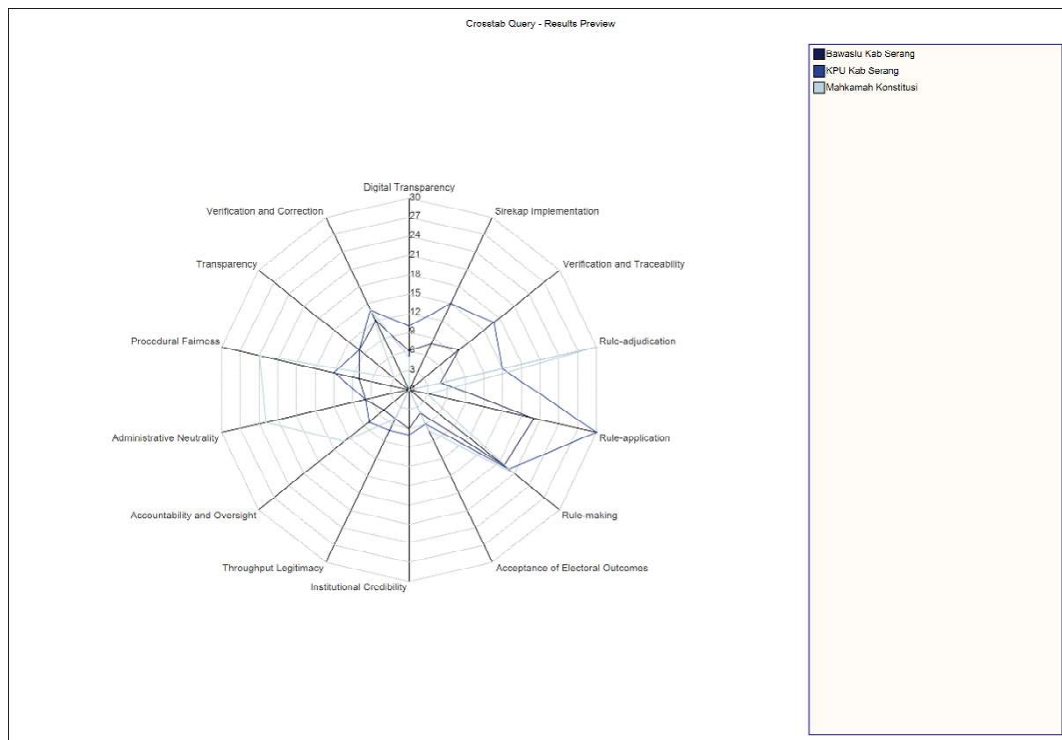


Figure 4. Comparison of Distribution by Institution through Radar Visualization
Source: NVivo processing results, *Crosstab Query*.

These findings show that electoral integrity is not only related to the application of rules, but also to the proof and assessment of violations. In the Serang Regency case, the non-neutrality of several village heads was considered to have a significant effect on the election results. At the same time, the postulate of money politics was rejected because the available evidence was inadequate. In the rule-adjudication perspective, corrective decisions are determined by examining evidence and the relevance of violations to election integrity. In the Digital Electoral Governance dimension, the KPU recorded 39 references, Bawaslu 20, and the Constitutional Court 5. At the child node level, the KPU recorded 15 references to Sirekap Implementation and 17 to Verification and Traceability, while Bawaslu recorded 8 and 10 references, respectively. The absence of references to these two categories in the Constitutional Court's coding shows that the digital aspect is not identified in the documents analyzed, but this does not mean that the institution does not use or consider digital technology.

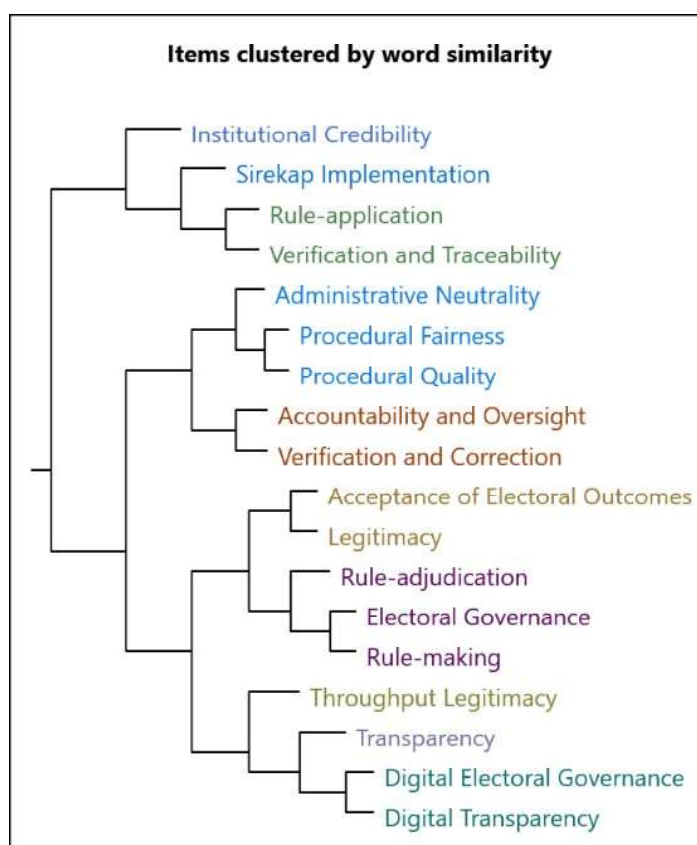


Figure 5. Clustered by Word Similarity
Source: NVivo Processing Results

From the perspective of digital electoral governance, technology, transparency, and verification are integral to election governance and require institutional oversight and accountability (Holly Ann Garnett & James, 2020; Haque & Carroll, 2020). However, because the decision and the summary of the analyzed decision do not explicitly discuss the implementation of Sirekap, the references to Sirekap Implementation, Verification, and Traceability need to be re-verified. The frequency of encoding cannot be used as evidence of the use of Sirekap or its contribution to the quality of the recapitulation of the Serang Regency PSU. The same applies to Digital Transparency, which a quote on digital information disclosure must support. Meanwhile, the closeness between themes in the similarity visualization indicates a conceptual relationship that warrants further examination, not a causal one.

The proximity of Administrative Neutrality, Procedural Fairness, and Procedural Quality can be analyzed through the concept of electoral integrity (Birch & Ham, 2017; van Ham, 2015). In the case of Serang Regency, this concept is relevant to understanding the Court's assessment of the political support of several village heads for one of the candidate pairs. These issues concern not only individual behavior but also government neutrality, equal competition, and the potential influence of power structures on people's political choices.

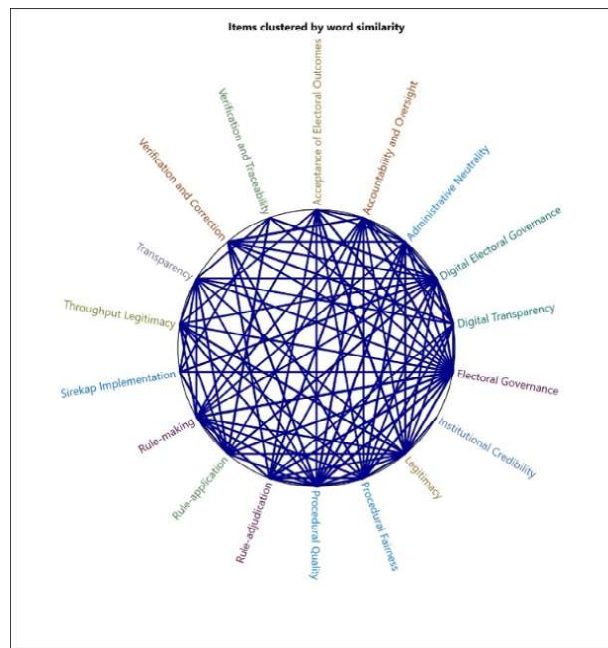


Figure 6. Word Similarity Network
Source: NVivo processing results.

Visualization of the word similarity network shows the interconnectedness of various themes in the coding structure. However, the large number of intersecting lines limits the graph's ability to show the strongest relationship specifically. Therefore, the visualization serves as a complement to the analysis, while the substantive explanation remains grounded in the document's content and the theoretical concepts employed.

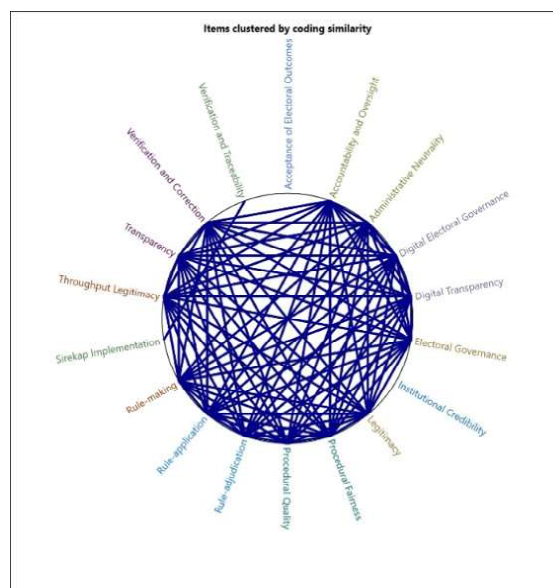


Figure 7. Items Clustered by Coding Similarity
Source: NVivo Processing Results

Coding similarity shows the closeness of coding patterns that can help examine the relationship between electoral governance, procedural quality, and legitimacy. In the Procedural Quality dimension, the KPU and the Constitutional Court each recorded 49 references. In the Constitutional Court, Procedural Fairness obtained 24 references and Administrative Neutrality 23 references. These two themes are relevant to electoral integrity, especially in assessing the fairness of the process and the neutrality of electoral actors. In the case of Serang Regency, the Court assessed that the non-neutrality of a number of village heads significantly affected the election results. This assessment became the basis for the cancellation of the determination of PSU results and orders at all polling stations. These findings show that procedural quality is not just a coding category, but also related to the basis for taking corrective action against the election results.

Procedural quality needs to be distinguished from legitimacy. In the concept of legitimacy throughput, (Schmidt & Wood, 2019), emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the decision-making process. Meanwhile, the Legitimacy distribution recorded 15 references to Bawaslu, 20 to the KPU, and 10 to the Constitutional Court. The themes of Acceptance of Electoral Outcomes, Institutional Credibility, and Throughput Legitimacy can be used to examine how legitimacy is placed in the coding structure, but the frequency is not a direct measure of public acceptance. The PSU order can be understood as an institutional effort to protect voting rights and improve the electoral process that is considered problematic. However, corrective actions do not automatically prove the restoration of legitimacy because the analyzed documents do not provide data on public trust or acceptance of PSU results.

Overall, the findings show a link between the implementation of rules, the handling of integrity violations, procedural quality, and institutional correction. Electoral Governance Theory explains the division of functions for the implementation of rules and dispute resolution, electoral integrity helps examine the neutrality and fairness of the process, while legitimacy throughput explains the relevance of decision-making quality to democratic legitimacy. In the case of Serang Regency, PSU is a correction mechanism for results that are considered to be affected by integrity violations. Meanwhile, the relationship between digital governance and legitimacy cannot be ascertained without direct evidence of the role of technology in the process.

Quality of Digital Electoral Governance and Institutional Correction Mechanism in the Implementation of the Serang Regency Regional Election PSU

The quality of electoral governance is determined by the ability of institutions to implement rules, maintain process integrity, and improve problems that affect election results. In the case of the 2024 Serang Regency Regional Elections, the Constitutional Court considered that the non-neutrality of a number of village heads had significantly affected the election

results so that the determination of the results was canceled and a re-vote (PSU) was ordered. In perspective *Electoral Governance Theory*, this condition indicates that the credibility of the election is not sufficiently guaranteed through the application of administrative procedures, but also requires a dispute resolution mechanism capable of assessing violations and establishing corrective actions (Mozaffar & Schedler, 2002). Thus, *Rule Apply* and *Rule-Adjudication* are two complementary functions: the implementation of rules shapes the electoral process, while dispute resolution allows corrections when the integrity of the process is questioned.

The use of Sirekap in the implementation of the Serang Regency Regional Election PSU on April 19, 2025 shows the role of technology in supporting the administration of election results. The Serang Regency KPU stated that the application was used as a recapitulation tool and was operated by KPPS officers (Antaranews.com, 2025b, 2025a). The official release of the KPU RI further noted that 2,355 forms C. TPS results and 29 forms D. sub-district results have been sent through Sirekap after the implementation of PSU (Kpu.go.id, 2025). This data shows that digital technology is used to support the documentation and transmission of election results at the district scale. In perspective *Digital Electoral Governance*, such use is part of the application of the rule (*Rule Apply*) through information system support. However, the successful delivery of documents does not in itself prove the accuracy of all data. The quality of governance remains dependent on the examination of source documents, the capabilities of the operator, and the correction mechanism when disagreements are found (Haque & Carroll, 2020; James et al., 2019).

The verification aspect is important because digitalization does not eliminate the possibility of errors in documents and information processing processes. KPU Decree Number 1763 of 2024 regulates technical instructions for the use of Sirekap in the implementation of the Regional Elections, so that the use of the system remains within the framework of institutional procedures. The relevance of this issue can be seen in Bawaslu's evaluation of the implementation of PSU in a number of regions in 2025, which noted that there were errors in writing *tally* marks on the form C. Results and writing errors that were later corrected. The report does not identify all of these errors as specific incidents in Serang Regency, but shows that the risk of administrative errors still needs to be considered. In the framework of *electoral integrity*, the findings confirm that the reliability of governance does not only depend on the use of technology, but also on the ability of institutions to check and correct non-conformities. Therefore, digital transparency only has substantive value if the available information can be examined and accounted for.

The next finding is related to the division of authority and accountability in the implementation of the PSU. The Constitutional Court ordered the Serang Regency KPU to carry out a re-vote, with the supervision and coordination of the KPU RI and the Banten Provincial KPU. Supervision is carried out by Bawaslu according to its level of authority, while security is the

responsibility of the police. In the perspective of *Electoral Governance Theory*, the division shows the relationship between decisions at the *rule-adjudication stage* and the implementation of corrections through *rule-application*. Legal decisions are only the starting point; their implementation requires coordination and accountability between institutions. These findings also make it clear that electoral governance accountability is not only about who is in authority, but also how each institution carries out its responsibilities in ensuring corrective decisions can be implemented.

The relationship between verification, transparency, and accountability can be explained through the concept of *legitimacy throughput*. Schmidt and Wood (2019) place transparency, accountability, openness, and inclusivity as dimensions to assess the quality of government processes. In the context of the Serang Regency PSU, the publication of documents through Sirekap has the potential to expand access to information on election results, while document checks and monitoring mechanisms provide a basis for accountability of the process. However, the availability of information does not automatically guarantee that the public is able to verify all data, as the implementation of correct procedures also does not automatically prove that public trust has been restored. On that basis, Sirekap's contribution to electoral governance needs to be understood proportionately. The KPU data proves the use of the system in the delivery of PSU results documents, while *the digital electoral governance framework* explains how technology can support the documentation and dissemination of information. Meanwhile, *electoral integrity theory* emphasizes the importance of data accuracy, actor neutrality, and correction mechanisms, while *legitimacy throughput* helps explain the relevance of procedural quality to democratic legitimacy. These three perspectives show that technology, integrity, and legitimacy do not form an automatic relationship. The use of Sirekap is part of the governance process, but its impact on the accuracy of results and public trust must be proven through data that directly measures these two aspects.

Thus, the case of Serang Regency shows that the quality of digital electoral governance depends on the interconnectedness between the implementation of rules, technological support, information verification, supervision, and correction mechanisms. Sirekap assists in the process of documentation and transmission of results, while institutional mechanisms provide a basis for examination and accountability. PSU itself is a corrective action against integrity issues that are considered to affect election results. This series explains how procedural quality can provide conditions for strengthening democratic legitimacy, without assuming that the use of technology or the implementation of PSU itself has restored public trust.

Procedural Quality and Democratic Legitimacy in Digital Electoral Governance at the Serang Regency Regional Election PSU

Democratic legitimacy is not only related to the pair of candidates who received the most votes, but also to the quality of the process that produces electoral decisions. The findings in the previous section show that the integrity issue of the 2024 Serang Regency Regional

Election will lead to the cancellation of the election results and the implementation of re-voting (PSU). In this context, the use of Sirekap at PSU on April 19, 2025 is part of the administration of the re-held election results. The Serang Regency KPU stated that the application was used as a recapitulation aid, while the KPU RI reported that 2,355 forms C. TPS results and 29 forms D. District results had been submitted through Sirekap (Antaranews.com, 2025b, 2025a; Kpu.go.id, 2025). This fact shows the use of technology in the management of PSU result information, but it has not been proven that technology directly increases public trust in election results.

In the perspective of *Electoral Governance Theory*, Mozaffar and Schedler (2002) place election credibility in the relationship between *rule-making*, *rule-application*, and *rule-adjudication*. The case of Serang Regency shows the interconnectedness of the last two functions. The issue of election integrity is examined through a dispute resolution mechanism, while the PSU order requires the organizer to re-implement the election procedure and determine the results through the applicable mechanism. In this series, Sirekap functions as an administrative tool, not as a mechanism that determines the legitimacy of the results independently. This means that technology gains democratic relevance when its use supports the implementation of rules and the management of information that can be examined.

The relationship can be deepened through the concept of *Digital Electoral Governance*. The use of Sirekap supports the documentation and transmission of results, but the quality of digital administration still depends on the accuracy of source documents, operator competence, data consistency, and correction mechanisms. (Holly Ann Garnett & James, 2020) and (Haque & Carroll, 2020), placing the use of electoral technology in relation to electoral integrity and institutional capacity. From this perspective, the availability of digital information is not synonymous with ensuring the accuracy of information. Transparency only has substantive value when available information can be checked and when inconsistencies can be addressed through clear procedures.

The principle also explains the relationship between procedural quality and *Legitimacy*. (Schmidt & Wood, 2019), developed this concept to assess legitimacy through the character of the governance process, especially accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, and openness. In election administration, the principle can be used to assess whether outcome information is available to the public, whether the process is traceable, and whether institutions are accountable for decisions made. The use of Sirekap has the potential to support information disclosure through the documentation and publication of results, while oversight and correction mechanisms help ensure that the process can be accounted for. However, information disclosure alone is not enough if the public does not have adequate access to check information or if institutions do not provide explanations when discrepancies arise.

The case of Serang Regency shows that the institutional correction mechanism is an important part of maintaining the credibility of the electoral process. The Constitutional Court

did not immediately designate another pair of candidates as the winner, but ordered the PSU to protect the rights of voters and allow re-elections to be held. The decision shows that legitimacy is sought through the restoration of the process, not solely through the determination of administrative results. However, the existence of a correction mechanism does not in itself guarantee that all integrity issues have been resolved. The final result still depends on the neutrality of the apparatus, the consistency of supervision, the ability of the organizers to carry out procedures, and public acceptance of the election process and results.

Thus, the relationship between digital electoral governance and democratic legitimacy in the case of Serang Regency is more appropriately understood as a relationship mediated by procedural quality. Sirekap provides technical support for the administration of results, but its contribution to legitimacy depends on how information is managed, examined, and accounted for by institutions. On the other hand, PSU provides a correction mechanism for integrity issues that have been assessed in decisions. These two processes have different functions, but they are interrelated in an effort to rebuild electoral credibility.

The findings yield one theoretical implication: digital innovation cannot be positioned as a direct cause of democratic legitimacy. The contribution of technology is more appropriately placed on its ability to support the quality of administration, while the acceptance of results and institutional credibility also depend on the integrity of actors, the effectiveness of supervision, and the legitimacy of the correction process. Using *Electoral Governance Theory* as the main theory, *digital electoral governance* explains the role of technology in the administration of results, *electoral integrity* explains the importance of neutrality and fairness of competition, while *throughput legitimacy* helps assess the relevance of transparency, accountability, and procedural openness to democratic legitimacy.

However, this study has not been able to conclude that the use of Sirekap increases public trust or leads to acceptance of PSU results. Available sources prove that Sirekap is used in the administration of results and that PSU is implemented as a correction mechanism, but it has not provided a direct measurement of changes in public trust. Therefore, the contribution that can be affirmed is a conceptual contribution regarding the mechanisms that enable digital electoral governance to support legitimacy, not empirical evidence of the magnitude of the influence of technology on actual legitimacy.

Based on the overall findings, this study proposes an analytical model that places digital electoral governance as part of the process of establishing procedural quality, with democratic legitimacy as a possible outcome dependent on institutional conditions. This model confirms that the use of technology, administrative quality, and legitimacy are not three things that are automatically related. The relationship between the three is influenced by the integrity of the actors, the capacity of organizers, supervision, and the ability of institutions to provide accountability and correction mechanisms.

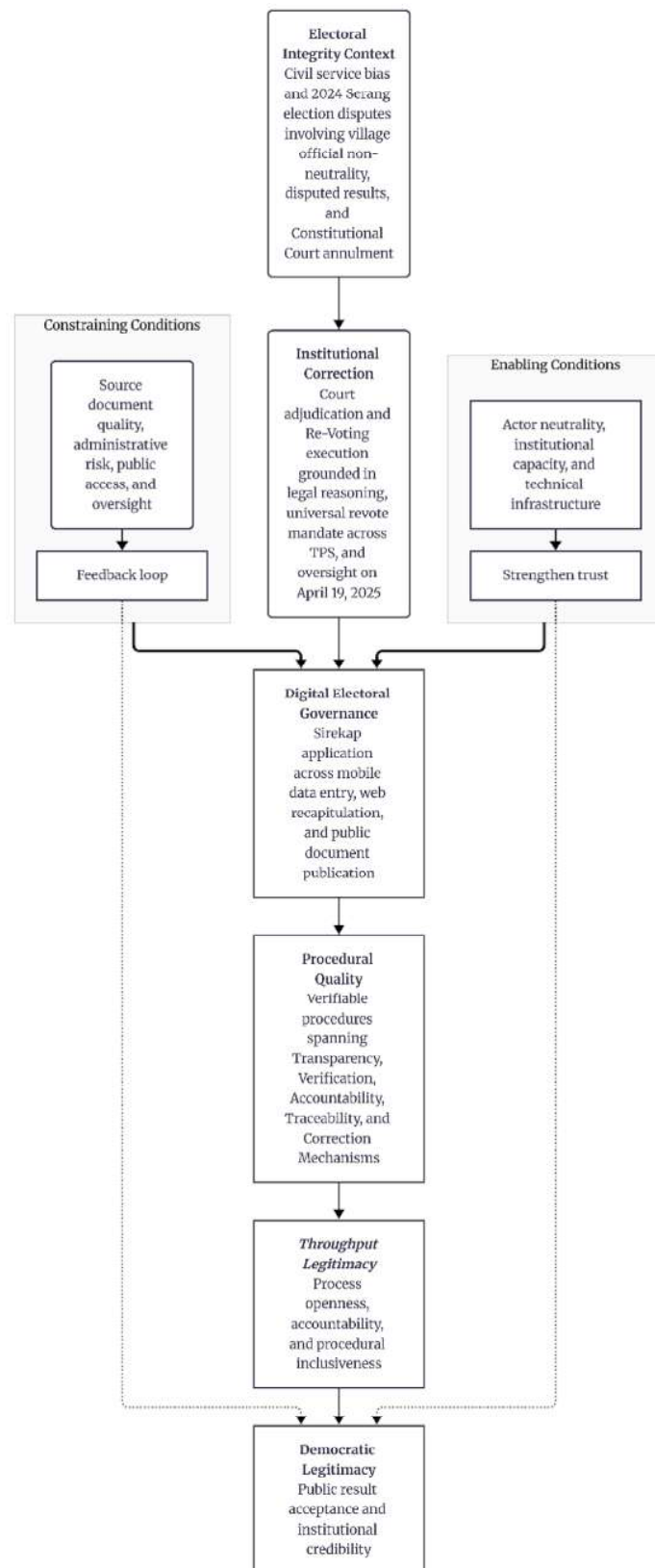


Figure 8. Analytical Model of the Relationship between Digital Electoral Governance, Procedural Quality, and Democratic Legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the use of Sirekap in the PSU of the Serang Regency Regional Elections supports the documentation, transmission, and publication of election results. However, the contribution of technology to the quality of electoral governance depends on data accuracy, operator competence, verification, supervision, and institutional accountability. The results of NVivo show that *Electoral Governance* and *Procedural Quality* are relatively dominant categories, with a difference in emphasis between the application of rules by the KPU and dispute resolution by the Constitutional Court.

Thus, Sirekap does not automatically generate democratic legitimacy. In the perspective of *Electoral Governance Theory* and *throughput legitimacy*, the contribution of technology to legitimacy takes place through procedural quality and institutional correction mechanisms. PSU is a form of correction to the issue of electoral integrity, while transparency and accountability can support the credibility of the process. However, this study has not proven that the use of Sirekap directly increases public trust or acceptance of election results.

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