

## Transparency of the Vote Counting Recapitulation for the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province

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### ABSTRACT

*The vote count recapitulation is a crucial stage in the election process because it determines the conversion of voters' votes into official election results. Transparency at this stage is a crucial prerequisite for maintaining the integrity and legitimacy of election results. This study aims to analyze the transparency of the vote count recapitulation for the 2024 Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) Legislative Election in West Java Province. The study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were obtained through literature and documentation studies, including laws and regulations, official documents from election organizers and supervisors, and relevant scientific literature. Data analysis was conducted descriptively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the transparency of the vote count recapitulation in West Java Province has been implemented in accordance with normative provisions, but is not yet fully substantive. The transparency of the process is still limited to the internal scope of election administration, while public access and publication of recapitulation documentation are not yet evenly distributed. The use of information technology in vote count recapitulation also does not fully guarantee the transparency of the process. This study concludes that strengthening the transparency of the vote count recapitulation is necessary to improve the quality of election governance and public trust in the results of the Legislative Election.*

**Keywords:** *Transparency<sup>1</sup>, Vote Count Recapitulation<sup>2</sup>, Legislative Elections<sup>3</sup>, Election Governance<sup>4</sup>*

### INTRODUCTION

General elections are the primary instrument in a democratic system for realizing popular sovereignty, as through elections the people periodically delegate their mandate of power to their representatives in legislative institutions as well as to holders of executive offices such as the president, regional heads, and other public officials (Ruhdiara et al., 2022). Within the framework of the 1945 Constitution, elections are defined as a means of exercising popular sovereignty and are conducted in a direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair manner as an expression of constitutional democracy in Indonesia (Rikardo, 2020). In the

Indonesian context, legislative elections are conducted through a multi-tiered and complex set of stages, ranging from vote casting at polling stations to the determination of national results by the General Elections Commission. One of the most decisive stages in this process is the recapitulation of vote counting.

In electoral governance, vote counting and recapitulation constitute the most strategic stages, as they culminate in the determination of final results and the identification of election winners (Prahasti et al., 2024). This process is carried out in a tiered manner from polling stations to the national level, so that any change in figures at each level can alter the distribution of votes among candidates or political parties. Research on electoral malpractice in Waropen in 2019 shows that manipulation frequently occurred at the regency-level recapitulation stage, for example through the inflation of voter turnout figures and alterations to the numbers of ballots used or unused, which had direct implications for the final vote results (Wopari & Ohoiwutun, 2021). Such practices underscore that recapitulation is not merely an administrative procedure but a highly politicized arena of power contestation. Accordingly, vote recapitulation is not only administrative in nature but also carries significant political dimensions, as it constitutes the process through which voters' ballots are converted into official state results. In an open-list proportional system, any shift or discrepancy in figures at this stage can have a direct impact on seat allocation and political representation. Therefore, transparency in the recapitulation stage is a fundamental prerequisite for safeguarding electoral integrity.

In democratic governance, transparency refers to the openness of information and processes that enables the public to know, assess, and oversee the actions of election administrators (Androniceanu, 2021). Transparency encompasses ease of access to information for all stakeholders, the availability of complete, accurate, and timely official documents, the publication of decisions along with their underlying rationales, and the provision of space for public participation and oversight. Within the framework of electoral governance, transparency functions both as a mechanism for preventing irregularities and as a means of building the legitimacy of election results. The concept of good electoral

governance emphasizes that transparency should not be understood merely as compliance with administrative procedures, but must also enable the public to meaningfully verify the vote recapitulation process. Accordingly, transparency contributes directly to electoral integrity and public trust.

West Java Province is a region with a high level of electoral complexity. In the 2024 Legislative Election, West Java was recorded as the province with the largest number of registered voters (Permanent Voter List / DPT) in Indonesia, totaling approximately 35.7 million voters distributed across more than 140,000 polling stations. The large scale of the election requires a vote recapitulation system that is transparent and can be effectively monitored. However, data from the implementation of the 2024 Legislative Election indicate problems at the vote-count recapitulation stage in West Java. According to reports from the West Java Provincial General Election Commission, as of February 2024 the progress of vote recapitulation had reached only about 43.85 percent of the total polling stations, indicating significant delays in the tiered recapitulation process. These delays were partly caused by discrepancies between the physical documents of vote-count results and the data displayed in the Recapitulation Information System (Sirekap).

In addition to delays, the vote recapitulation process in West Java has also faced challenges in terms of transparency. At the subdistrict level, most recapitulation plenary meetings were not widely publicized to the public. Public access to recapitulation documentation, such as official minutes and vote-count results, remains limited and largely depends on the initiative of local election administrators. As a result, transparency in the recapitulation process is predominantly accessible to formal electoral actors, such as party witnesses and election supervisors, while the general public has limited space for oversight. The use of information technology through the Recapitulation Information System (Sirekap) was intended to enhance transparency and accuracy in vote recapitulation. However, research findings indicate that the use of this technology has not fully guaranteed process openness. Discrepancies between data recorded on vote-count result forms and the information displayed in the digital system have generated

public doubts and demonstrate that technology-based transparency still faces significant implementation challenges.

These conditions indicate a gap between the normative framework of transparency as stipulated in electoral regulations and the practical implementation of vote-count recapitulation in the field. Transparency is often understood merely as compliance with formal procedures, rather than as a substantive mechanism that enables the public to directly verify and oversee the vote recapitulation process.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the transparency of vote-count recapitulation in the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province. The research focuses on how the principle of transparency is applied in the practice of vote recapitulation and the extent to which such openness supports democratic electoral governance.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach that focuses on understanding phenomena holistically within their natural context, without the use of statistical procedures, and emphasizes meaning and process through in-depth descriptions based on qualitative data (Adlini et al., 2022). This approach was chosen to systematically describe the implementation of vote-count recapitulation in the 2024 DPR RI Legislative Election in West Java Province, with a focus on the application of transparency principles at each stage of the recapitulation process. The research data were obtained through library research and document analysis. Data sources include laws and regulations as well as technical guidelines governing election administration, official documents issued by election management bodies and supervisory institutions, and scholarly literature relevant to transparency and electoral governance. These data were used to understand both the normative framework of transparency in vote recapitulation and its practical implementation in the field. Data collection was conducted by tracing, identifying, and classifying documents related to the vote-count recapitulation process of the 2024 Legislative Election. The documents analyzed

include legal provisions, technical guidelines, and officially available recapitulation result documents.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively, with an emphasis on presenting phenomena and general trends related to the transparency of vote-count recapitulation. The stages of analysis included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting information relevant to the research focus, namely the openness of the process, access to information, and the availability of recapitulation documentation. Data presentation was carried out in the form of narrative descriptions, while conclusions were drawn based on patterns and general findings that emerged from the analysis. This method is expected to provide a clear and systematic overview of the transparency of vote-count recapitulation in the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province as part of efforts to realize democratic electoral governance.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The Results and Discussion section presents the empirical findings of the study along with an analytical discussion on the transparency of vote-count recapitulation in the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province. This section focuses on how the principle of transparency, which is normatively regulated in electoral laws and regulations, is translated and implemented in the practical conduct of vote recapitulation across different levels. Accordingly, this section not only describes the factual conditions observed in the field but also situates them within the theoretical framework of electoral governance and electoral integrity.

The research findings are presented by positioning vote-count recapitulation as a strategic arena in election administration, as it is at this stage that voters' ballots are consolidated into official results that determine the distribution of political power. Therefore, the discussion emphasizes the openness of the process, public access to information and recapitulation documents, and the roles of electoral actors in ensuring transparency. The analysis is carried out by comparing the normative design of vote recapitulation with the realities of its implementation at the

operational level, particularly within the context of West Java Province, which is characterized by a high degree of electoral complexity.

By integrating empirical findings with theoretical perspectives, this Results and Discussion section aims to provide a deeper understanding of the quality of transparency in vote-count recapitulation and its implications for democratic electoral governance. The discussion also seeks to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in the implementation of transparency in vote recapitulation, thereby offering a critical reflection to strengthen good electoral governance practices and enhance public trust in election outcomes in the future.

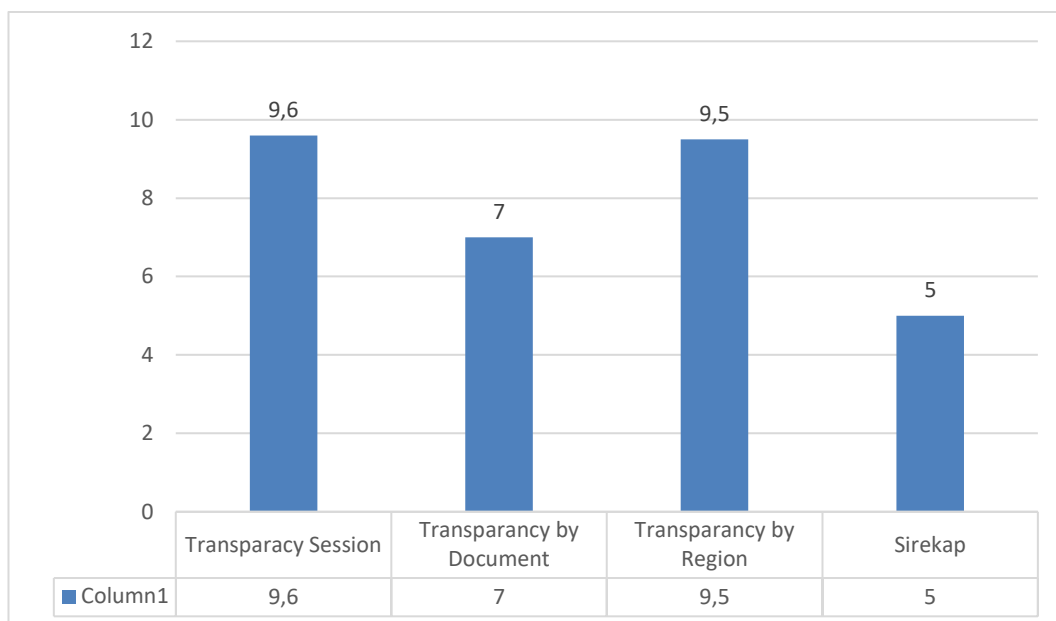
### **Transparency of the Vote-Count Recapitulation Process**

The Transparency of the Vote-Count Recapitulation Process constitutes an important part of this study's findings, as vote recapitulation represents a critical stage in the overall electoral process. At this stage, voters' ballots collected at polling stations are consolidated in a tiered manner to produce the state's official election results. Therefore, the quality of transparency in the recapitulation process not only determines the administrative validity of election outcomes but also significantly influences public trust in election administrators and the legitimacy of the electoral results.

The discussion on the transparency of vote-count recapitulation in this subsection is directed at examining the extent to which the principle of openness is applied in the practice of election administration, particularly in West Java Province. Transparency is understood not merely as compliance with formal regulatory procedures, but as a substantive mechanism that enables the public to access adequate information, comprehend the ongoing process, and conduct direct oversight. Accordingly, the analysis in this subsection positions transparency as an integral component of democratic electoral governance.

Through this introduction, the subsequent results and discussion subsection elaborates on the research findings concerning the dynamics of openness in the vote-count recapitulation process, the actors involved, and the obstacles encountered in its implementation. This exposition is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how transparency is practiced in the field, while also

serving as a basis for a critical analysis of the gap between the normative framework and the actual practice of vote recapitulation in the 2024 Legislative Election.



**Figure 1.** Analysis Transparency

Source: Data Processed by the Author 2025

Figure 1 is the level of transparency in the vote-count recapitulation process as measured by four main indicators: transparency of recapitulation sessions, document-based transparency, regional transparency, and transparency through the Sirekap system. Overall, the chart shows that transparency is uneven across indicators, with noticeable variation among different aspects. This variation indicates that transparency in vote recapitulation is still implemented in a partial manner and has not yet been fully integrated across all stages and mechanisms of election administration.

The indicator of transparency in recapitulation sessions records the highest score, at 9.6, suggesting that the recapitulation process is formally open to key electoral actors such as election officials, party witnesses, and supervisors. This score indicates that plenary recapitulation meetings are generally conducted in accordance with established procedural requirements. However, a high score in this indicator does not necessarily reflect substantive openness to the broader public, as public presence and participation remain limited by information and access constraints.

Regional transparency also shows a high score of 9.5, indicating that the recapitulation process is carried out in a tiered and relatively consistent manner across different territorial levels. This finding reflects the existence of standardized procedures governing vote recapitulation in various regions. Nevertheless, procedural uniformity does not automatically guarantee uniform transparency practices, particularly with regard to information disclosure and data publication at the local level.

In contrast, document-based transparency receives a moderate score of 7, indicating that public access to official recapitulation documents—such as minutes of meetings and vote-count result forms—remains limited. This condition suggests that the availability of documents is not yet fully open and often depends on the initiative of local election administrators. Limited access to such documentation restricts the public's ability to independently verify the results of vote recapitulation.

The lowest score is observed in transparency through the Sirekap system, which records a score of 5. This result indicates that the use of information technology as a transparency instrument continues to face significant implementation challenges. Discrepancies between physical documents and digital displays, delays in data updates, and limited mechanisms for public clarification contribute to reduced public confidence in technology-based transparency. These findings underscore that digital systems alone do not automatically ensure transparency and must be supported by stronger governance, technical capacity, and accountable public communication.

### **Transparency of the Vote Counting Recapitulation for the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province**

Elections, as the primary instrument of democracy, require administration grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity in order to ensure the legitimacy of outcomes and public trust. One of the most critical stages in election administration is vote-count recapitulation, as this is the phase in which voters' choices are consolidated and formally determined. Therefore, the quality of vote recapitulation governance serves as an important indicator for assessing the



extent to which the principles of good electoral governance are implemented in practice, particularly in the context of the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province.

The findings of this study indicate that the vote-count recapitulation process in the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province was conducted in accordance with the normative, tiered, and multi-layered design of election administration, beginning at polling stations (TPS) as the most basic unit, and subsequently proceeding to the subdistrict, regency/city, provincial, and national levels. This tiered structure is designed to maintain consistency and continuity of vote-count data at each level, while also minimizing the potential for administrative errors or result manipulation. From a theoretical perspective, this mechanism aligns with the concept of electoral governance proposed by Mozaffar and Schedler, particularly at the stage of rule application, where consistent enforcement of rules is central to ensuring electoral integrity.

Interview findings with election administrators at the subdistrict and regency levels reveal that the tiered mechanism is understood as an “administrative filter” intended to ensure data consistency across levels. One member of the Subdistrict Election Committee (PPK) stated that layered recapitulation is meant to prevent errors at the polling station level from being carried over to higher levels; however, in practice, this process is often constrained by limited time and a heavy administrative workload. This condition suggests that while the system design meets governance principles, its effectiveness is highly dependent on institutional capacity and the resources available to election administrators at the lower levels.

Within the normative framework, transparency in vote recapitulation in West Java Province is regulated through electoral laws and technical guidelines issued by election management bodies. These regulations specify in detail the stages, procedures, and actors involved in each recapitulation process. At every level, recapitulation is conducted through open plenary meetings involving election administrators, party witnesses, and election supervisors. This mechanism is intended to provide space for scrutiny, the submission of objections, and corrections

to vote-count results before they are formally finalized, thereby fulfilling procedural standards as stipulated in electoral regulations.

However, interviews with party witnesses and election supervisors reveal that openness in plenary meetings is largely understood as openness to formal electoral actors rather than to the general public. One party witness noted that members of the public face difficulties accessing recapitulation processes at the subdistrict level due to limited space and the absence of open publication mechanisms. This finding indicates that the openness practiced thus far remains procedural in nature and has not fully reflected substantive transparency.

From the perspective of Good Electoral Governance (Norris, 2015), transparency constitutes a core pillar that demands openness of processes, public access to information, and the ability of citizens to conduct independent verification. The findings of this study show that, at a formal level, the principle of transparency has been accommodated through open plenary meetings and the involvement of formal electoral actors. However, when analyzed further through the lens of electoral integrity (Norris, 2015), transparency in West Java remains predominantly procedural and has yet to reach the level of substantive openness.

Substantive transparency requires not only the existence of formal forums but also broad public access to recapitulation processes and documents. At the subdistrict level, this study finds that recapitulation generally takes place in limited forums accessible only to election administrators, party witnesses, and supervisors, without consistent public dissemination mechanisms such as live broadcasts or easily accessible documentation archives. This condition highlights a gap between transparency as a regulatory norm and transparency as an effective practice of public oversight.

The use of the Recapitulation Information System (Sirekap) in the 2024 Legislative Election was normatively designed as a technological instrument to support transparency. Within the framework of good governance, information technology should enhance openness, efficiency, and data accuracy in electoral processes. However, the findings indicate that the presence of Sirekap has not fully strengthened substantive transparency. Interviews with election administrators

suggest that discrepancies between physical documents and data displayed in Sirekap are often perceived by the public as a lack of transparency, even though in some cases they result from data entry errors or delays in uploading. This finding is consistent with Alamsyah et al. (2020), who argue that election information systems without robust public verification mechanisms may undermine public trust.

From the perspective of new institutionalism (North, 1990), this condition can be understood as the result of an imbalance between formal and informal institutions. Formally, electoral regulations provide detailed arrangements for transparency mechanisms. In practice, however, informal norms, institutional work culture, and local political dynamics also shape how these rules are implemented. Several informants indicated that time pressure, heavy workloads, and concerns over potential conflicts with local political actors often lead election administrators to prioritize administrative completion over broad process openness.

Furthermore, the management of recapitulation documentation that remains neither open nor sustainable reinforces the finding that transparency is still largely internal. Not all stages of recapitulation are systematically documented and published, whether through live broadcasts or accessible digital archives. This condition limits the function of transparency as a mechanism of social accountability. In the context of West Java Province, which is characterized by territorial complexity and high levels of political competition, such limitations in transparency may affect public perceptions of electoral integrity and the legitimacy of election outcomes.

In conclusion, this study confirms the existence of a gap between the normative framework of transparency as regulated in electoral laws and its practical implementation in the field. The transparency of vote-count recapitulation in the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province has been implemented formally and procedurally, but has not yet fully met the standards of substantive openness as required by the theories of Good Electoral Governance and electoral integrity. Strengthening publication mechanisms, ensuring consistent documentation, and integrating technology that allows for independent public verification are essential

prerequisites for improving the quality of electoral governance and reinforcing public trust in election outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the transparency of the vote-count recapitulation in the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java Province has been implemented in a formally compliant and procedurally structured manner, yet it has not fully achieved substantive transparency as required for robust democratic electoral governance. While the tiered recapitulation mechanism and open plenary meetings demonstrate adherence to regulatory frameworks and involve formal electoral actors, public access to information, documentation, and meaningful oversight remains limited. The reliance on procedural openness without comprehensive publication of recapitulation documents and inconsistent accessibility of digital data through the Sirekap system reflects a persistent gap between normative transparency and practical implementation. These conditions indicate that transparency continues to function primarily within the internal sphere of election administration rather than as an inclusive mechanism for public verification. Therefore, strengthening documentation disclosure, improving the governance and reliability of election information technology, and expanding public access to recapitulation processes are essential to enhance electoral integrity and reinforce public trust in future elections.

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