

BENCHMARKING

JURNAL MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM

CONFLICT AND INTEGRATION IN THE 2024 MAKASSAR CITY REGIONAL HEAD GENERAL ELECTION

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Abstract

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This study examines conflict and social integration in the 2024 Regional Head Election (Pilkada) of Makassar City. Elections in democratic societies function not only as mechanisms for leadership recruitment but also as arenas that potentially generate social conflict while simultaneously opening opportunities for social integration. This research aims to identify empirical factors that trigger conflict, analyze factors that encourage integration, and describe the role of conflict resolution institutions particularly the Election Organizers Honorary Council (DKPP) in managing post-election disputes. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants consisted of election organizers (KPU and Bawaslu), law enforcement officers within Gakkumdu, academics, and political observers. Data were analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source triangulation. The findings reveal that conflict during the Makassar Pilkada was driven by sociological factors such as emotional attachment to candidates, dissatisfaction with vote-counting results, and social segregation among supporters, as well as institutional factors including perceptions of organizer neutrality, electoral violations, and internal party disputes. Conversely, social integration emerged through acceptance of election results, effective voter participation, security stability, post-election collaboration, and public trust in electoral institutions. The study concludes that the effective functioning of social and electoral institutions plays a crucial role in transforming electoral conflict into social integration, thereby maintaining democratic stability at the local level.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern democracy places general elections as the primary instrument for realizing popular sovereignty and the legitimacy of political power. Thru elections, citizens not only participate in the political process but also democratically determine the direction of public policy and government leadership. In the context of a democratic country, general elections ideally serve as a means of social integration that strengthens societal unity. However, at the same time, elections also carry the potential for conflict due to differences in interests, political choices, and power dynamics at both the local and national levels (Vhalery, 2020).

In Indonesia, the direct election of regional heads is a consequence of political reform aimed at expanding public participation and strengthening local democracy (Rusmanto, 2012). Direct regional head elections provide space for the community to freely, honestly, and fairly determine their own regional leaders, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. However, empirical reality shows that the implementation of regional head election is often accompanied by the emergence of social tensions, political polarization, and horizontal conflict within society, particularly during the pre-election phase, the campaign, and even after the election results are announced (Mirsel, 2004; Pendidikan & Teknologi, 2022).

Social conflict in general elections cannot be separated from the pluralistic nature of society and increasingly intense political competition (Fahrimal & Safpuriyadi, 2018; Sadikin, 2005; Sari, 2011). Emotional attachment to candidate figures, differences in political preferences, and perceptions of the integrity and independence of election organizers are factors that often trigger conflict at the grassroots level. From a conflict theory perspective, differences in interests and the distribution of power are conditions inherently present in social and political life (Coser, 1956). Conflict is not always destructive rather, it can serve as a mechanism for social adjustment if managed thru legitimate institutions and democratic procedures.

Conversely, social integration is the process of reuniting various elements of society that were previously fragmented due to conflict. Integration occurs when norms, values, and institutional mechanisms are able to constructively manage differences, leading to stability and social cohesion. In the context of electoral democracy, the success of post-election integration is highly dependent on public trust in election results, the effectiveness of election management and supervisory bodies, and the role of legal and social institutions in resolving disputes fairly and transparently (Sudirman et al., 2025).

The 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election is a concrete example of the dynamics of conflict and integration in local democracy. This selection process not only sparked competition between candidate pairs but also led to social segregation among their supporting communities. Debates in the public sphere, social media, and everyday social environments reflect increasing political polarization that could potentially disrupt social harmony. On the other hand, after the election results were announced, various integrative efforts also emerged thru the acceptance of election results, security stability, and the role of election dispute resolution institutions.

Within the framework of structural functionalism theory, society is understood as a system composed of various institutions, each with its own function to maintain social balance. Talcott Parsons emphasized that the sustainability of a social system is highly determined by the functioning of four functional imperatives: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and pattern maintenance (AGIL). In the context of elections, election management bodies, legal institutions, security forces, and other social institutions play a strategic role in managing conflict and promoting social integration to maintain societal stability (Farakhiyah & Irfan, 2019; Syafrudin & Telaumbanua, 2021).

Based on this background, this research is important to deeply examine the empirical factors that trigger conflict and promote integration in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election. Additionally, this research also aims to analyze the role of election conflict resolution institutions, particularly the Election Organizers Ethics Council (DKPP), in carrying out their core functions to maintain the quality of democracy and social harmony at the local level. This study is expected to contribute theoretically and empirically to the development of studies on democracy, conflict, and social integration in the context of elections in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Makassar City, focusing on the social dynamics that emerged during and after the 2024 local head elections. The research location was chosen based on the consideration that Makassar City is one of the areas with a high level of political competition and social complexity that has the potential to cause conflict and integration at the community level. The research subjects were determined purposively, considering the informants' involvement and relevance to the research problem (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Sugiyono, 2012). The research involved seven people, including academics or lecturers, election organizers from the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Body, law enforcement officials from the Integrated Law Enforcement Center or Gakkumdu from the police and prosecutor's office, and a political observer. The selection of informants was intended to obtain comprehensive data from various institutional and social perspectives.

Data collection techniques in this study include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured with interview guidelines developed based on the research focus, namely conflict factors, integration factors, and the role of election dispute resolution institutions. Observation was used to observe social dynamics and community interactions related to the election process, both directly and thru public spaces and social media. Data analysis techniques are conducted qualitatively thru three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation is done by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data obtained from the field. Subsequently, the data is presented in a systematic descriptive narrative form to make it easy to understand and analyze. The final stage is drawing conclusions, which is done continuously throughout the research process, taking into account the interconnections between the data findings. The validity of the data in this study is ensured thru source triangulation techniques, which involve comparing and rechecking data obtained from various informants and different data sources. This is expected to result in data with a high level of credibility that accurately reflects the reality of conflict and integration during the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

On the other hand, post-election social integration is supported by the official acceptance of election results, relatively stable public political participation, the maintenance of public safety and order, and increasing public trust in election organizers and supervisors. The role of conflict resolution institutions, particularly the Election Organizers Ethics Council (DKPP), also contributes to maintaining the integrity of election organizers thru the enforcement of ethical codes and the imposition of sanctions for violations.

Table 1.
Summary of Research Findings

No.	Study Aspects	Key Findings
1	Sociological Conflict Factors	Emotional bond of supporters toward the candidate, dissatisfaction with election results, social polarization in society and social media
2	Institutional Conflict Factors	Perception of organizer bias, administrative and

3	Factors of Social Integration	ethical violations, election disputes.
4	The Role of Election Institutions	Acceptance of election results, voter turnout, security stability, public trust. KPU and BAWASLU in organizing and supervising the DKPP in enforcing ethics.
5	Social Impact	Conflict can be managed institutionally and transformed into post-election integration.

The research shows that conflict in the 2024 Makassar City regional head election was uneven and largely concentrated among groups directly tied to candidate networks (volunteers, core supporters, informal teams), where political loyalty strengthened exclusive in-group attitudes, while youth-driven conflict tended to be symbolic and verbal in digital spaces rather than physical in public arenas. Preventive measures by security forces and election organizers—rule socialization, dialogical patrols, community engagement, and strong coordination among KPU–Bawaslu–DKPP, local government, and security actors—helped contain escalation, especially by enabling rapid clarification of fraud/manipulation issues and improving transparency. Accessible complaint channels increased perceptions of procedural justice, encouraging people to pursue formal reporting rather than confrontation, while post-election integration was reflected in the resumption of shared social, religious, and economic activities that repaired strained relationships. Non-state actors (community and religious leaders, civic organizations) provided informal mediation and political education, producing a layered resolution pattern where interpersonal disputes were settled through kinship-based mechanisms and structural disputes through legal-institutional routes. Economic conditions mainly played a latent role by shaping perceptions of fairness rather than directly triggering open conflict, and overall conflict was rational-instrumental (interest and power distribution) rather than ideological, making it easier to cool once electoral incentives faded. Consistent with Coser's conflict theory, tensions rose situationally during campaign and counting phases but remained largely non-destructive because they were channeled institutionally; in Parsons' structural-functional view, integrative institutions preserved social equilibrium; and under legitimacy theory, public trust in procedures—not substantive satisfaction with outcomes—was the decisive prerequisite for acceptance, reconciliation, institutional learning, and the strengthening of local democratic maturity.

Discussion

The findings of this research confirm that conflict is an inseparable phenomenon of the electoral democracy process. From a conflict theory perspective, differences in political interests and the distribution of power are the primary source of social tension (Coser, 1956). The conflicts observed in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election reveal the latent nature of the conflicts that surfaced during the period of political competition (Ernita Krisandi, Budi Setyono, 2013; Suharko, 2017; Thomas et al., 2015). However, this research also shows that conflict does not always have a destructive impact if managed thru legitimate institutional mechanisms. The channeling of conflict thru Bawaslu, DKPP, and the Constitutional Court reflects the functioning of democratic institutions in mitigating the potential for social disintegration. This aligns with the

structural functionalist perspective, which views social institutions as essential elements in maintaining the balance of the social system.

Post-election social grace occurs when society accepts the election results and trusts the process and institutions that administer the election. This finding strengthens the argument that integration does not mean the absence of conflict, but rather the ability of a social system to manage conflict fairly and transparently. In this context, the Election Organizers Ethics Council (DKPP) plays a strategic role as the guardian of election organizers' ethics, which directly impacts public trust and social stability.

The research findings indicate that conflict in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election cannot be understood solely as a form of democratic failure, but rather as a logical consequence of political competition in a pluralistic society. Conflict arises primarily during the campaign and vote-counting stages, when the intensity of political interaction increases and political preferences are openly expressed. This finding indicates that conflict is situational and directly related to the dynamics of the election stages. The research results also show that election conflicts trigger temporary social polarization. This polarization was evident in the formation of strong supporter group identities during the campaign period, but weakened after the election stage ended. This weakening of polarization indicates the presence of internal social mechanisms that promote the return of social balance, particularly thru daily interactions that are no longer politically oriented (Chandra et al., 2020; Joni, 2018).

This research found that the role of election organizers and supervisors is not only administrative but also symbolic. The actions of the organizers in responding to violation reports and disseminating public information shape public perception of election integrity. Positive perceptions of the institution contributed to reduced social tensions and accelerated the post-election integration process.

Another finding indicates that electoral conflict serves as a means of political learning for the public. The public discourse that emerged after the election reflects a growing critical awareness of issues related to political ethics, the professionalism of organizers, and the quality of local democracy. Thus, conflict not only impacts social tensions but also strengthens society's reflective capacity in assessing democratic practices. This research found that local political elites play a strategic role in framing conflict and integration. The elite's acceptance of the election results and their message of reconciliation significantly influenced the attitudes of grassroots supporters. Conversely, narratives that perpetuate conflict have the potential to exacerbate social polarization. This finding suggests that elite-mass dynamics are an important factor in managing electoral conflict.

The research findings also indicate that the sustainability of local democracy after elections is significantly influenced by the performance of the elected government. A government capable of demonstrating inclusive policies and fair public services strengthens public acceptance of election results and reduces the residue of political conflict (Goa, 2017; Suharko, 2017). Thus, social integration does not stop at the election stage, but continues into daily governance practices.

This research specifically focuses on analyzing the dynamics of conflict and social integration in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election as part of the local democracy process. The main focus of the research is not only on identifying the forms and sources of conflict, but also on the social, institutional, and cultural mechanisms that play a role in managing these conflicts toward post-election social integration. The first focus of the research lies in the character of electoral conflicts that emerge during the election stages. This research explains how conflict develops during the campaign phase, voting, and the announcement of results, and how this conflict is influenced by perceptions of procedural justice, political communication, and the intensity of competition between political actors. With this focus, the research aims to show that electoral conflicts are

contextual and temporary, not structural conflicts that permanently threaten social cohesion.

The second focus is directed toward the role of democratic institutions in managing conflict. This research explains the functions of the General Election Commission, the Election Supervisory Body, and the Election Organizer Ethics Council as key actors in maintaining the legitimacy of the election process. The analysis focuses on how the institution's professionalism, transparency, and responsiveness shape public trust and function as a conflict buffer mechanism within the context of local democracy. The third focus of the study is the response and rationality of voters in dealing with conflict and election results. This research examines the differences in attitudes between rationally oriented voters and emotionally oriented voters, as well as how political literacy levels influence the way people interpret the election process and results. This focus is important for explaining the variation in conflict intensity and the speed of social integration at the grassroots level.

The fourth focus is directed toward the role of local political elites in framing conflict and integration. This research explains how the post-election narratives, attitudes, and actions of the elite influence the behavior of their supporters. Elites who promote reconciliation contribute to the acceleration of social integration, while elites who maintain conflict narratives have the potential to prolong polarization. This focus underscores the close relationship between elite dynamics and social stability in local democracies. The fifth focus of the research emphasizes the post-election social integration process as a gradual and multidimensional phenomenon. This research explains that integration does not happen instantly, but rather thru interpersonal, community, and institutional stages. The analysis focuses on how non-political social relations, local cultural values, and the sustainability of public services play a role in restoring social cohesion after political competition ends. The sixth and final focus is directed toward the medium-term implications for the quality of local democracy. This research explains how conflict experiences and their resolution influence the legitimacy of democracy, political participation, and public trust in political institutions. This focus suggests that electoral conflicts, if managed fairly and institutionally, can contribute to the sustainable strengthening of local democracy.

Based on the research findings, it can be said that conflict in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election is an inherent phenomenon in the electoral democratic process and is situational. Conflict primarily arose during the campaign and the announcement of election results as a consequence of the intensity of political competition, but it did not escalate into structural conflict that threatened social cohesion within the community. The research findings confirm that public perception of procedural justice is a determining factor in conflict management and the formation of social integration post-election. When the electoral process is perceived as transparent and in accordance with legal provisions, the election results tend to be accepted as legitimate decisions, even if they do not always align with the political preferences of individuals or specific groups.

This research also states that election organizers and supervisors play an important role as a conflict buffer mechanism. The professionalism and responsiveness of the General Election Commission, the Election Supervisory Body, and the Election Organizer Ethics Council contribute to strengthening institutional legitimacy and preventing post-election conflict escalation. This research also shows that electoral conflict forms a cycle of conflict-adaptation-normalization in the social life of the community. After the conflict phase, society gradually readjusts social relations thru non-political activities, indicating that post-election social integration is a gradual and multidimensional process.

The conflict and integration in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election are a dialectical process that shapes the quality of local democracy. Conflict is not merely a

disruption to stability, but rather a part of the dynamics of democracy which, if managed transparently, fairly, and institutionally, can strengthen the legitimacy of democracy, social integration, and the sustainability of local democracy. The analysis results indicate that the conflict in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election is a manifestation of increased political competition during crucial election stages. Analysis of conflict dynamics shows that conflict does not arise randomly, but is concentrated in the campaign and results announcement phases, when political interests reach their most intense point. This indicates that conflict is contextual and triggered by specific political momentum, rather than by permanent social divisions. The analysis results also show that election organizers and supervisors play a role as social stabilization actors. Analysis of institutional responses shows that information transparency, clarity of dispute resolution mechanisms, and enforcement of organizer ethics directly contribute to reducing conflict tension. In this context, conflict actually serves as a means of institutional evaluation that strengthens the legitimacy of local democracy.

Analysis of voter behavior shows a differentiation of conflict responses based on levels of rationality and political literacy. Voters with high political literacy tend to view conflict as part of the democratic process and choose legal or institutional channels to express dissatisfaction. Conversely, voters with low political literacy are more easily influenced by emotional narratives, potentially exacerbating social polarization. Analysis of the role of local political elites shows that they function as conflict direction setters. Elites who prioritize a narrative of reconciliation effectively reduce the intensity of conflict at the grassroots level, while elites who maintain a narrative of delegitimizing election results have the potential to prolong conflict symbolically, although this is not always manifested in open conflict.

The analysis also shows that election conflicts have medium-term implications for the legitimacy of democracy and political participation. Conflicts that are managed fairly and institutionally tend to strengthen public trust in the democratic system, while conflicts perceived as unfair have the potential to create latent distrust toward local political institutions. The analysis results confirm that conflict and integration in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election are interconnected dialectical processes. Conflict not only reflects political tensions but also serves as a social and institutional mechanism that continuously shapes legitimacy, social integration, and the quality of local democracy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding conflict and integration in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election, several conclusions can be drawn as answers to the research problem formulation. Conflict in the 2024 Makassar City Regional Head Election is influenced by sociological and institutional factors. Sociological factors include the community's emotional attachment to the candidate pairs, dissatisfaction with the election results, and social polarization within the community and digital space. Meanwhile, institutional factors encompass perceptions of the neutrality and professionalism of election organizers, the occurrence of election violations, and disputes channeled thru legal mechanisms and election supervision. Social integration after the general election in Makassar City is realized thru public acceptance of the officially determined election results, relatively stable political participation, the maintenance of public safety and order, and increased public trust in election organizers and supervisors. This integration demonstrates that conflicts arising during the election process can be managed and transformed into social stability thru effectively functioning democratic mechanism. Election conflict resolution institutions, particularly the Election Organizers Ethics Council (DKPP), play a strategic role in maintaining the quality of democracy and social integration. By enforcing the code of ethics for election organizers, DKPP

contributes to increasing accountability, professionalism, and public trust in the election process, thereby mitigating the potential for broader conflict in society.

SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings and conclusions that have been outlined, there are several recommendations that can be considered by relevant stakeholders and for further study development. Election organizers, particularly the General Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Body, are advised to continue strengthening professionalism, transparency, and accountability in every stage of the general election. This effort is important to minimize negative public perception of the neutrality of election organizers and prevent conflicts arising from public distrust. The Election Organizers Ethics Council (DKPP) needs to continue optimizing the function of enforcing the election organizers' code of ethics thru an open, objective, and consistent examination process. Strict enforcement of ethics is expected to have a deterrent effect, increase the integrity of organizers, and strengthen public trust in the electoral democracy system.

Local governments and security forces are advised to enhance cross-sectoral coordination in maintaining security and public order during and after the general election. A persuasive and dialogical approach with community leaders, religious figures, and traditional leaders needs to be optimized as a preventive measure to mitigate potential horizontal conflicts. Political parties and candidate pairs are expected to uphold healthy political ethics by avoiding provocative and divisive campaign practices. Political education oriented toward democratic values, tolerance, and unity needs to be enhanced so that political competition does not lead to social disintegration. For future researchers, it is recommended to develop this study with a more diverse methodological approach, such as quantitative or mixed methods, and to expand the research location to obtain a more comprehensive picture of conflict and integration dynamics in Indonesian elections.

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