

Sipakatau as a Model for Conflict Resolution in Village Head Elections in Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi

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Abstract: Conflicts in village head elections continue to pose a challenge to local democracy in Indonesia, including during the 2022 simultaneous village elections in Luwu Regency. Interestingly, several disputes were not resolved through formal legal mechanisms but were instead settled by prioritizing local wisdom, particularly the Luwu philosophical principle of *Sipakatau*. This study aims to analyze how the humanistic values of *Sipakatau* are operationalized in resolving electoral disputes, while also highlighting its novelty as a reconciliatory model of political conflict resolution at the village level. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, this research finds that the operational mechanism of *Sipakatau* is implemented through the *tudang sipulung* (deliberative council), communal cooperation, and socio-religious activities involving various community stakeholders. Empirically, four out of six conflicted villages reached a consensus without escalating the dispute to the State Administrative Court, demonstrating the effectiveness of this local wisdom-based approach. These findings show that *Sipakatau* is not merely a cultural tradition but a contextual and effective model of conflict resolution that helps maintain the stability of local democracy.

Keywords: Local Political Conflict, Village Head Election, Conflict Resolution, *Sipakatau*.

Abstrak: Konflik dalam pemilihan kepala desa masih menjadi tantangan dalam demokrasi lokal di Indonesia, termasuk pada Pilkades serentak di Kabupaten Luwu tahun 2022. Menariknya, beberapa konflik tidak diselesaikan melalui jalur



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hukum formal, melainkan mengedepankan kearifan lokal masyarakat yaitu falsafah *Sipakatau*. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana nilai-nilai humanis *Sipakatau* dioperasionalkan dalam penyelesaian konflik Pilkades, sekaligus menegaskan kebaruannya sebagai model resolusi konflik politik desa yang bersifat rekonsiliatif. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa mekanisme operasional *Sipakatau* dijalankan melalui forum *tudang sipulung* (musyawarah), gotong royong, serta kegiatan sosial keagamaan yang melibatkan seluruh elemen masyarakat. Secara empiris, empat dari enam desa yang berkonflik berhasil mencapai konsensus tanpa melanjutkan proses ke PTUN, yang menunjukkan efektivitas model berbasis kearifan lokal. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa *Sipakatau* bukan hanya tradisi kultural, tetapi juga model resolusi konflik yang kontekstual dan efektif dalam menjaga stabilitas demokrasi lokal.

Kata Kunci: Konflik politik lokal, Pilkades, resolusi konflik, *Sipakatau*.

A. Introduction

Village head elections represent one of the most important instruments of local democracy within Indonesia's political system. In practice, however, Village Head Election often generates friction among citizens and, in some cases, escalates into open conflict. Conflicts are triggered not only by competition among village head candidates, but also by kinship ties, political loyalties, economic interests,¹ and the rejection of election results, a pattern that commonly occurs at the local, national, and even international levels.² In Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi, the 2022 simultaneous

¹ Kamaruddin et al., "Justice, Mediation, and Kalosara Custom of the Tolaki Community in Southeast Sulawesi from the Perspective of Islamic Law," *Samarah*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i2.13183>.

² Hertanto, "Conflict Resolution on Governor Election in Indonesia," *Res Militaris*, 2022.

Village Head Election sparked conflicts in several villages, some of which resulted in sharp social divisions. National data likewise indicate that village-level conflicts remain prevalent in various regions across Indonesia. In 2024, for example, there were 920 recorded cases of group clashes in rural areas, including incidents in 2019 in Talawe Village, Sidrap, South Sulawesi; in 2021 in Giri Kusuma Village, North Luwu; in 2022 during the Village Head Election in Pamekasan, East Java; and following the vote counting process in Mogoyunggung Village, Bolaang Mongondow, North Sulawesi. These facts illustrate that conflict resolution in Village Head Election continues to pose a serious challenge to the consolidation of local democracy.

Conflicts in village head elections in Luwu Regency have generated political frictions within the community. Such tensions are almost unavoidable, and when they intensify, they develop into broader social problems that weaken the democratic process at the village level. Interestingly, the persistence of these conflicts also reflects a cultural paradox,³ although the value of *Sipakatau* (treating others with dignity) serves as a core moral principle in Luwu society, it does not automatically prevent the emergence of tensions. This is because another cultural principle that is equally strong, *siri'* (honor and social dignity), can escalate when political rivalry is perceived as a threat to personal or family prestige. Consequently, *Sipakatau* functions more as a mechanism for restoring harmony after tensions rise and *siri'* is triggered, rather than as an early preventive measure.

³ Thaddeus Arkum Aasoglenang, “Legal Pluralism and Indigenous Conflict Adjudicatory Mechanisms: The Theory and Practice in North-Western Ghana,” *SN Social Sciences* 3, no. 10 (2023): 183, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-023-00764-x>.

Its effectiveness is activated only once deliberative and reconciliatory forums begin to operate.

There are several approaches employed in managing conflicts. These approaches include conflict prevention, conflict settlement, conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Each of these methods is necessary to achieve a common peace, ranging from preventive to repressive measures. Conflict prevention aims to avert the outbreak of violence, while conflict settlement seeks to end violent behavior by reaching a peaceful agreement. Conflict management focuses on limiting and avoiding the recurrence of violence in the future by encouraging positive behavioral changes among the parties involved. Meanwhile, conflict resolution addresses the root causes of disputes and attempts to build new and lasting relationships between conflicting groups. Finally, conflict transformation examines the broader political and social sources of conflict and endeavors to redirect adversarial energies into constructive social and political change.

A number of prior studies have explored conflicts in village head elections from multiple analytical perspectives.⁴ Among them is a study that identifies five patterns of conflict resolution in village head elections in Bantaeng Regency, namely competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating.⁵ The conflict in village head elections in South Halmahera was

⁴ Hamrun Taufik, Ahmad; Hamrun, “Tata Kelola Konflik Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa Di Kabupaten Bantaeng,” *Jurnal Politikom Indonesiana* 3, no. 1 (2018): 14–25.

⁵ Marno Wance and Abd Halil Hi Ibrahim, “Faktor Penyebab Konflik Pemilihan Kepala Desa Serentak Di Kabupaten Halmahera Selatan,” *Journal of Governance and Local Politics*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.47650/jglp.v1i2.20>.

precipitated by the lack of neutrality among election organizers and the intervention of local political elites.⁶ Other studies indicate that conflicts in village head elections can even extend into kinship relations among candidates, thereby necessitating a culturally grounded, local wisdom-based approach to resolution. Beyond the context of village head elections, several studies have also highlighted conflict resolution mechanisms rooted in local wisdom, such as Studies on *Islam Garassik*⁷ and the *To Sallang* community in Tana Toraja demonstrate how the integration of local values such as *sikamali* (mutual affection), *siangga'* (mutual respect), and *siangkaran* (mutual assistance) fosters peaceful coexistence between religion and culture.⁸ Meanwhile, research on social conflict in the Mancani settlement of Palopo City highlights the importance of a positive peace approach that emphasizes reconciliation and the restoration of social relationships.⁹ Similarly, studies on *Pela Gandong*

⁶ Ronaldison Ronaldison and Deni Hendrianto, “Penyelesaian Konflik Antar Keluarga Kandidat Kepala Desa Pasca Pemilihan Kepala Desa Tunggul Bulin Kecamatan Tabir Ilir Kabupaten Merangin Dalam Pendekatan Budaya Tahun 2020,” *Jurnal Politik Dan Pemerintahan Daerah*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.36355/jppd.v5i1.116>.

⁷ Baso Hasyim Et Al., “Islam Garassik: Double Minority Struggles And Survival Strategies In A Multicultural Society,” *Al-Qalam* 30, No. 1 (June 1, 2024): 50, [Https://Doi.Org/10.31969/Alq.V30i1.1401](https://doi.org/10.31969/Alq.V30i1.1401).

⁸ M. Ilham Et Al., “Theological And Cultural Construction: Resilience Strategies Of The To Sallang Minority In A Multicultural Society,” *Fitrah: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 9, No. 2 (December 31, 2023): 247–64, [Https://Doi.Org/10.24952/Fitrah.V9i2.8693](https://doi.org/10.24952/Fitrah.V9i2.8693).

⁹ Saifur Rahman Et Al., “Prolonged Conflict In Mancani Residen, Palopo City (Johan Galtung’s Peace And Conflict Studies),” *Al-Munzir* 16, No. 2 (December 7, 2023): 131, [Https://Doi.Org/10.31332/Am.V16i2.6860](https://doi.org/10.31332/Am.V16i2.6860).

in Ambon¹⁰, *Gawe Rapah* in Lombok¹¹ as well as the role of the *Siri'na Pacce* and *Sipakatau* philosophies in shaping the social interactions of South Sulawesi communities¹². However, these studies have largely discussed local wisdom in general and have not specifically examined how the *Sipakatau* philosophy can be operationalized as a model of local political conflict resolution, particularly in the context of Village Head Election in Luwu Regency.

Although mechanisms of local wisdom possess strong cultural legitimacy, their implementation operates within a framework of legal pluralism, where integration with formal state institutions faces challenges of jurisdiction and authority. *Sipakatau* can facilitate reconciliation, but its normative power is socio-moral rather than juridical, which means it cannot fully replace formal adjudication when disputes concern administrative legality or the validity of election outcomes. This study departs from the assumption that social conflicts can be resolved through the mobilization of locally embedded values within the community. Every social group possesses a form of local intelligence that functions as an indigenous

¹⁰ Hendry Bakri, “Resolusi Konflik Melalui Pendekatan Kearifan Lokal Pela Gandong Di Kota Ambon,” *The Politics: Jurnal Magister Ilmu Politik Universitas Hasanuddin* 1, no. 1 (2015).

¹¹ Mohammad Zaenul Kamar, Casmini Casmini, and Nurus Sa'adah, “Gawe Rapah Sebagai Model Resolusi Konflik Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Pulau Seribu Masjid, Lombok,” *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSAI)* 5, no. 3 (November 30, 2024): 479–92, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v5i3.6413>.

¹² Auliah Safitri and Suharno Suharno, “Budaya Siriâ€TM Na Pacce Dan Sipakatau Dalam Interaksi Sosial Masyarakat Sulawesi Selatan,” *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya* 22, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v22.n1.p102-111.2020>.

mechanism for addressing social problems. Numerous case studies demonstrate that local wisdom is capable of effectively reducing social tension. Therefore, it is essential to further examine how such local knowledge can be transformed into collective intelligence. These cultural practices need to be operationalized as potential solutions for communal dispute resolution, rather than being regarded merely as context bound social skills. Accordingly, it is crucial to understand how communities mobilize their cultural resources in conflict resolution, as observed in several villages in Luwu Regency.

Sipakatau, as a cultural philosophy of the Luwu people, emphasizes respect for human dignity, social solidarity, and the principle of mutual humanization. For centuries, this philosophy has served as the foundation of social relations and dispute resolution within the Luwu community. Although the *Sipakatau* philosophy provides a strong moral foundation for fostering social harmony, the political realities in many villages remain marked by practices of clientelism and patronage. Several studies indicate that hierarchical relationships between local elites and community members continue to dominate the dynamics of village politics. Within such structures, the loyalty of citizens to influential figures often obscures democratic values that are supposed to uphold free participation and equality. In these circumstances, locally rooted mechanisms grounded in moral ethics and communal solidarity become crucial for mitigating the negative effects of transactional politics.¹³ Similar research findings are also evident in fishing communities in Takalar,

¹³ Haryanto, “Adaptation and Continuities in Clientelism in a Fishing Community in Takalar, South Sulawesi,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs39-3f>.

where strong patron client relationships can be mitigated through cultural mediation and collective deliberation forums.¹⁴ Similarly, within the Baduy, Tengger, and Samin indigenous communities, deliberative traditions based on consensus have proven effective in restoring social justice and strengthening communal cohesion without relying on formal legal mechanisms.¹⁵ In this context, *Sipakatau* serves not merely as a cultural symbol but as a moral counterbalance to pragmatic and transactional political practices. This philosophy underscores that respect for human dignity, dialogue, and reconciliation are essential foundations for achieving a peaceful and sustainable form of village democracy.

However, in the context of contemporary politics particularly in *Village Head Election* studies examining how *Sipakatau* is operationalized as a mechanism of conflict resolution remain limited. This constitutes the research gap addressed in this article. The novelty of this study lies in examining *Sipakatau* not merely as a cultural heritage, but as a relevant and effective model of political conflict resolution for mitigating post *Village Head Election* tensions. This approach serves as an alternative to formal mechanisms that are often legalistic and procedural, by emphasizing social reconciliation through *tudang sipulung* (deliberative forums), communal cooperation, and socio-religious activities that

¹⁴ Supriyadi Arief and Rahmat Teguh Santoso Gobel, “Isu Hak Konstitusional Masyarakat Desa Terhadap Kewenangan Pengawasan Pemilihan Kepala Desa,” *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1946>.

¹⁵ Nofi Utami et al., “Conflict Resolution in the Customary Village Governance Administration of Baduy, Tengger, and Samin Ethnic Groups in Indonesia,” *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8 (August 12, 2024): 6371, <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i8.6371>.

strengthen social harmony. Based on this framework, the research question posed is: how are the values of *Sipakatau* implemented in resolving *Village Head Election* conflicts in Luwu Regency? Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the application of the *Sipakatau* philosophy as a model of conflict resolution in village head elections in Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi. This study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge not only theoretically by further developing theories on how local wisdom contributes to conflict resolution but also methodologically, by offering effective approaches that can be applied to address various conflicts arising during the organization of village head elections in Indonesia.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach was chosen because this research seeks to understand the lived experiences of informants in interpreting and applying the *Sipakatau* philosophy as a mechanism of conflict resolution which includes the stages of epoché (bracketing or suspending personal judgment toward the phenomenon), phenomenological reduction (organizing data based on essential meanings), imaginative variation (exploring possible interpretations and contextual meanings), and synthesis of meaning and essence (formulating a structural description that captures the essence of the lived experience).^{16,17} Meanwhile, a case study strategy

¹⁶ C Moustakas, “Moustakas, Clark, Phenomenological Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.,” Undefined, 1994.

¹⁷ Van Max Manen, Phenomenology of Practice Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing, 2023, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003228073>.

was employed to focus the analysis on a specific context, namely the village head election conflicts in Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi, particularly in villages that experienced disputes during the simultaneous *Village Head Election* in 2022¹⁸. The research sites were selected purposively, taking into account the history of *Village Head Election* conflicts and their relevance to the implementation of *Sipakatau* values. The research subjects included village government officials, community leaders, religious figures, and representatives from the Office of Community and Village Empowerment, as well as community representatives who had previously been involved in the conflicts. The informants were selected purposively, as they were considered to possess direct knowledge and firsthand experience of the issues under study.

Data were collected through in depth interviews and participatory observation of conflict resolution practices based on deliberation (*tudang sipulung*), as well as documentation in the form of official reports from local government, archives of *Village Head Election* administration, and local media coverage¹⁹. Data were

¹⁸ J W Creswell, “Research Design Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches,” Research Design Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches, 2003, <https://doi.org/10.3109/08941939.2012.723954>.

¹⁹ Uwe Flick, An Introduction to Qualitative Research (SAGE, 2018, 2018), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=P7ZkDwAAQBAJ&printsec=fro ntcover&hl=id&source=gb_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f =false; Michael Quinn Patton, Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods (SAGE, 2002, 2002), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=FjBw2oi8El4C&printsec=frontco ver&hl=id&source=gb_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f =false.

analyzed descriptively using an interactive analysis model²⁰ which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with phenomenological interpretation to explore the meanings of the informants' lived experiences. To ensure the validity of the findings, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques²¹ as well as member checking with informants, ensuring that the findings meet the standards *credibility, dependability, dan confirmability*.²²

C. The Role of Sipakatau Practices in Resolving Conflicts During Village Head Elections in Luwu Regency

²⁰ Jhonny Miles, Matthew B.; Huberman A. Michael; Saldana, Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook, ed. Helen Salmon, 3rd ed. (SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014), <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=p0wXBAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

²¹ Yvonna S. Denzin, Norman K.; Lincoln, The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research, ed. Yvonna S. Denzin, Norman K.; Lincoln, 5th ed. (SAGE Publications, Inc, 2017), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=AmPgDQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=id&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

²² Egon G. Lincoln, Yvonna S; Guba, Naturalistic Inquiry (SAGE Publications, Inc, 1985), [https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/Naturalistic_Inquiry/2oA9aWINeoC?hl=id&gbpv=1&dq=Lincoln,+Y.+S.,+%26+Guba,+E.+G.+\(1985\).+Naturalistic+inquiry.+Beverly+Hills,+CA:+Sage.&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/Naturalistic_Inquiry/2oA9aWINeoC?hl=id&gbpv=1&dq=Lincoln,+Y.+S.,+%26+Guba,+E.+G.+(1985).+Naturalistic+inquiry.+Beverly+Hills,+CA:+Sage.&printsec=frontcover).

The implementation of village head elections is a crucial democratic process within the context of local governance.^{23,24} The process through which village residents elect a head to lead and manage various local affairs.²⁵ Conflicts during the implementation of village head elections are a common issue in the democratic process at the village level.²⁶ Such conflicts may arise from various sources and can negatively affect the integrity of the election as well as social stability within a village.²⁷ To examine the conflicts occurring during village head elections in Luwu Regency, the researcher conducted a phenomenological qualitative analysis. The study began with a data reduction process to select information

²³ Alfrid Sentosa, Aston Pakpahan, and Della Eka Pratama, “Analisis Penyelenggaraan Pemilihan Kepala Desa Serentak,” *Jurnal Sociopolitico*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.54683/sociopolitico.v3i1.40>.

²⁴ Abdul Rohman, “Politik Birokrasi Pengangkatan Dan Pemberhentian Perangkat Desa Pasca Pilkades,” *Indonesian Governance Journal : Kajian Politik-Pemerintahan*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.24905/igj.v3i2.1571>.

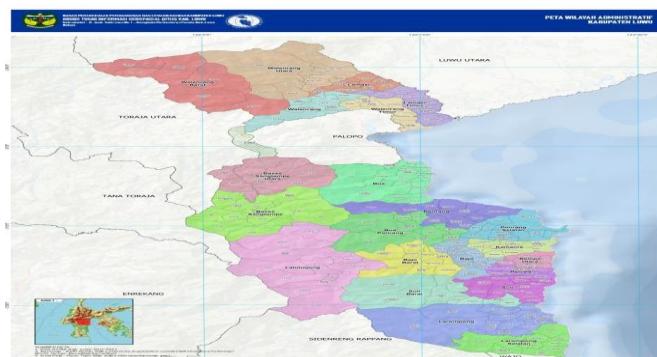
²⁵ Nur Hapipah, Inggit Nurahman, And Siti Tiara Maulia, “Demokrasi Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa,” *Civilia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*, 2023.

²⁶ Busyairi Ahmad, “Konflik Dalam Dinamika Politik Perdesaan (Studi Pada Pilkades Di Kecamatan Sikur Kabupaten Lombok Timur NTB),” *Gema Kampus IISIP YAPIS Biak* 11, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.52049/gemakampus.v11i1.14>.

²⁷ Frans Bapa Tokan, “Dinamika Politik Desa (Studi Tentang Relasi Kuasa Elit Desa Dan Politik Pilkades Di Kecamatan Witihama Kabupaten Flores Timur),” *Warta Governare : Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 2020.

more focused on the research problem, followed by a descriptive process.²⁸

Village head elections serve as a strategic democratic instrument in determining local leadership.²⁹ However, village head elections often generate conflicts that impact both the integrity of the election and social stability within the village.³⁰ A similar situation occurred in Luwu Regency, where the simultaneous village head elections in 2022 led to escalated conflicts in several villages. Interestingly, these conflicts were not solely resolved through formal legal mechanisms but also through mechanisms rooted in local cultural practices.



Comp https://doi.org/10.21012/2022.1.1.10. Dan, And Maulia, "Demokrasi Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa Serentak"; Hapipah, Nurahman, And Maulia, "Demokrasi Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa." Pemb Pratama, "Analisis Penyelenggaraan Pemilihan Kepala Desa Serentak"; Hapipah, Nurahman, And Maulia, "Demokrasi Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa." 25

³⁰ Busyairi Ahmad, "Konflik Dalam Dinamika Politik Perdesaan (Studi Pada Pilkades Di Kecamatan Sikur Kabupaten Lombok Timur NTB)"; Tokan, "Dinamika Politik Desa (Studi Tentang Relasi Kuasa Elit Desa Dan Politik Pilkades Di Kecamatan Witihama Kabupaten Flores Timur)."

Figure 1. Administrative Region of Luwu Regency

The administrative region of Luwu Regency is divided into 22 sub districts, 20 urban villages, and 207 villages. The northern area of Palopo City comprises six sub districts, while the southern area comprises sixteen sub districts. Of the 227 villages and urban villages in Luwu Regency, 15 are located in Bua Sub district. Meanwhile, Walenrang Barat Sub district contains only six villages/urban villages, with the remaining distributed across the other 20 sub districts, ranging from 8 to 13 villages/urban villages per sub district. Eleven sub districts border Bone Bay, and within these sub districts, 32 villages are classified as coastal areas. On the other hand, 15 sub districts have mountainous regions, encompassing 89 villages classified as highland areas.

According to data from the Luwu Regency Office for Community and Village Empowerment, 91 villages simultaneously held village head elections in 2022 for the 2022 - 2028 term. Among these village level contests, six villages reported conflicts, namely Buntu Matabing, Papakaju, Tallang Bulawang, Wiwitan Timur, Buntu Kamiri, and Tede. Of these conflicted villages, two Buntu Kamiri and Buntu Matabing had their disputes resolved through the Administrative Court.

Table 1. Village Head Election Conflicts in Luwu Regency, 2022

Village	Conflict Triggers	Forms of Escalation	Resolution Channels
Buntu	Misperceptions	Mass protests and objections to polling station results	State
Matabing	Regarding the Validity of Ballots	Mass protests and objections to polling station results	Administrative Court
Papakaju	Internal Conflicts Among Village Head Candidates	Tensions Between Candidate Factions	Deliberation (<i>tudang sipulung</i>)
Tallang	The two candidates are siblings.	Polarization Within Extended Families	Deliberation
Bulawang			(<i>tudang sipulung</i>)
Wiwitan	Issues Related to the Permanent	Administrative Objection	Deliberation
Timur	Voters List (DPT)		(<i>tudang sipulung</i>) + Committee Clarification
Buntu	Alleged Shortage of Ballots at Polling Stations	Protest Actions and Official Reports	State
Kamiri			Administrative Court
Tede	Many ballots were declared invalid	Objections to the Recapitulation Results	Deliberation (<i>tudang sipulung</i>)

Source: Office for Community and Village Empowerment (DPMD) of Luwu Regency, 2022.

Of the six villages experiencing conflict, only two cases proceeded to the State Administrative Court, Meanwhile, the other four were resolved through customary deliberation mechanisms. This pattern indicates that although formal channels are available, they are not always chosen as the primary means of resolution. Conversely, the people of Luwu tend to rely more on the *Sipakatau*

philosophy, which is deeply rooted in their social traditions. Historically, the *Sipakatau* philosophy constitutes one of the three core values of Bugis Makassar society: *siri' na pacce* (dignity and solidarity), *sipakatau* (mutual humanization), and *sipakalebbi* (mutual respect). These values have been inherited since the era of the Luwu Kingdom and serve as the foundation of social harmony.³¹ From a political anthropology perspective, *Sipakatau* embodies an ethic of equal treatment toward others, thereby rejecting any form of humiliation or demeaning behavior.³² In the contemporary context, this study³³ finds that *Sipakatau* continues to play an important role in maintaining social relations in South Sulawesi, including in the resolution of conflicts through deliberation. This philosophy is manifested in the *tudang sipulung* forum, which serves as a deliberative arena where the principle of mutual humanization is practiced in a concrete manner.

In practice, the operationalization of *Sipakatau* in communal deliberation (*tudang sipulung*) is guided by several key principles:

³¹ Rezky Juniarah Nur, Dadan Wildan, and Siti Komariah, “Kekuatan Budaya Lokal: Menjelajahi 3S (Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, Dan Sipakainge) Sebagai Simbol Kearifan Lokal,” MIMESIS, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.12928/mms.v4i2.8105>; Andi Halima, Asniar Khumas, and Kurniati Zainuddin, “Sipakatau, Sipakainge, Sipakalebbi: Sebuah Nilai Budaya Untuk Upaya Pencegahan Bullying Dengan Memaksimalkan Peran Bystander,” Indonesian Psychological Research, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.29080/ipr.v3i2.549>.

³²Christian Pelras, The Bugis (Wiley, 1996), https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/The_Bugis/X-4CEAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=1; H.A Rahman, Rahim, Nilai - Nilai Utama Kebudayaan Bugis, Invoice: Jurnal Ilmu Akuntansi, vol. 3, 2011.

³³ Safitri and Suharno, “Budaya Siriâ€TM Na Pacce Dan Sipakatau Dalam Interaksi Sosial Masyarakat Sulawesi Selatan.”

equality, mutual respect, and the restoration of social harmony. During these forums, disputing parties are encouraged to openly express their grievances and aspirations in the presence of respected community leaders, who act as moral guides and mediators. The process emphasizes listening, empathy, and the avoidance of humiliation (*pessa*), ensuring that each participant maintains dignity throughout the discussion. In many cases, Bugis cultural rituals and symbolic acts such as joint meals (*mappadendang*), collective prayers, or reconciliation ceremonies (*mappatettongeng*) accompany the deliberation. These rituals are not merely ceremonial but serve to reaffirm communal bonds and internalize the moral essence of *Sipakatan*, transforming conflict resolution into both a social and spiritual process.

The findings of this study indicate that *Sipakatan* is manifested in the *tudang sipulung* forum, a deliberative gathering that brings together conflicting parties mediated by community leaders, religious figures, and village officials. The *tudang sipulung* mechanism functions as a safe space to de-escalate emotional tensions and restore social relations. Traditionally, *tudang sipulung* literally means 'sitting together' to deliberate in search of a solution to a shared problem. Its essence lies in equality, openness, and respect for the dignity of all participants. In Luwu, forum participants are convened by community leaders and the head of the Village Consultative Body at the village hall. Those present typically include core campaign team representatives, village election committee members, BPD representatives, delegates from the Office for Community and Village Empowerment, as well as representatives of women and youth. The presence of police and military personnel serves a

protective role outside the venue as security buffers rather than as actors in the deliberation process

Procedurally, the *musyawarah* or *tudang sipulung* process follows three stages: (1) pre-deliberation (cooling-off period), (2) main deliberation, and (3) post-deliberation (relationship restoration).

1. Pre-deliberation: In this stage, the moderator reaffirms the *Sipakatan* principles, prohibits interruptions, and ensures that all parties have the opportunity to speak. During this phase, key issues are identified, such as disputes over the Permanent Voters List (DPT), objections to invalid ballots, alleged involvement of village officials at polling stations, and the evidence presented by the conflicting parties.
2. Main deliberation: The core session begins with the moderator's reading of the *Sipakatan* principle, which affirms that every individual possesses dignity (*siri'* or self-respect) that must be upheld, thereby prohibiting any humiliating remarks. The moderator allocates balanced speaking time to each conflicting party. The language used tends to be non-confrontational, for instance: 'Let us practice *sipakatan* please listen to your brother or sister first.' In practice, the moderator engages in reframing harsh accusations into expressions of need for example, transforming a statement such as 'the committee was dishonest' into 'we need assurance that the vote recapitulation procedures at the polling station comply with the relevant articles or regulations.'
3. Post-deliberation (relationship restoration): This stage is marked by a joint written and oral declaration outlining: (a) points of resolution, such as reopening ballot boxes at polling stations for cross-verification; (b) post-decision communication rules,

including prohibitions against statements that may provoke stigma on social media or in WhatsApp groups; (c) joint work agendas, such as community service activities at public facilities attended by both parties; and (d) monitoring mechanisms carried out by a small team of four to six members who report progress to the Village Consultative Body and the Office for Community and Village Empowerment.

Of the six cases, four villages: Papakaju, Tallang Bulawang, Wiwitan Timur, and Tede achieved full consensus. Indicators of de-escalation were reflected in the decline of: (i) the intensity of provocative social media posts, (ii) the number of new complaints submitted to the election committee, and (iii) the absence of further mass mobilization. The agreement also included a social recovery agenda, such as holding a joint prayer event to symbolize the end of the conflict and to restore social cohesion within the village community.

Informants described *Sipakatau* as a safeguard of dignity that allows the losing party to “return home with honor” without stigma. As expressed by a community informant, “*If someone is humiliated, tomorrow or the day after, they will no longer be willing to sit together at the same table. Sipakatau means preserving everyone’s face.*” (Interview, January 2025). Meanwhile, an informant from the supporters of the losing candidate stated, “*We can accept the result if it’s properly explained and verified. What matters is that we are not treated as if we are the enemy.*” (Interview, March 2025). An interview with a community leader reaffirmed the role of *Sipakatau* in protecting the dignity of all parties: “*We must practice sipakatau treat each other as human beings because if someone is shamed, the conflict will never end.*” (Interview, January 2025). A representative of the election committee also explained, “*Once the*

customary forum begins, the tension drops. People are more willing to listen when the words are not judgmental.” (Interview, March 2025).

From all observed cases, at least four core functions of *Sipakatau* can be identified:

1. Symbolic de-escalation, which reframes the narrative from winning and losing toward the shared preservation of dignity;
2. Redistribution of voice, ensuring that all parties are given equal opportunities to speak and be heard;
3. Joint verification of documents, such as the open re-reading of attendance lists or *Form C1* to foster public accountability; and
4. Restorative commitment, manifested in collective social work or customary rituals aimed at rebuilding social cohesion.

In conflict resolution theory, the practice of *Sipakatau* differs from the formal mechanisms of state law, which tend to be adversarial and oriented toward the victory of one side (Siregar, 2022). Conversely, *Sipakatau* emphasizes collective solutions that preserve long-term social relationships. This aligns with the findings of³⁴ which emphasizes the relevance of Bugis-Makassar local values in social mediation. However, this study further demonstrates that *Sipakatau* has specific operational functions in resolving village head election (Village Head Election) conflicts in Luwu. Thus, the *Sipakatau* philosophy is not merely normative in nature but can be positioned as a legitimate, effective, and contextually grounded model of local political conflict resolution. *John Haba*, as cited by *Irwan Abdullah*³⁵ asserts that local wisdom functions as a social

³⁴ Safitri and Suharno.

³⁵ Muhammad Sairi, “Hubungan Sosial Keagamaan Kaum Nahdliyin Dan Hindu Di Bali: Studi Kasus Desa Tuban Kecamatan Kuta Kabupaten Badung, Bali” (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2021).

adhesive that transcends the boundaries of citizenship, religion, and belief. Local wisdom fosters a sense of togetherness within a community, promotes solidarity and mutual appreciation, and serves as a collective mechanism to prevent potential conflicts that could undermine social integration. Thus, local wisdom plays a crucial role in building the pillars of peace within society, particularly as a means of conflict prevention.

In the study of conflict resolution,³⁶ explains that conflict resolution not only addresses the causes of conflict but also seeks to build new, more sustainable relationships among previously opposing groups. This perspective aligns with the findings of field research in Luwu Regency, where the community internalizes the *Sipakatau* philosophy as a cultural mechanism for reducing tensions in the aftermath of village head elections.

The practice of *Sipakatau* can be observed through the community's attitude in accepting differences in political choices and respecting the diversity of opinions. The ability to acknowledge others' choices without perceiving them as threats constitutes an essential aspect of maintaining social harmony and strengthening local democracy. Thus, *Sipakatau* is not merely a cultural heritage of normative value, but a functional instrument that guides communities to respond to political differences in a wise, dialogical, and inclusive manner. This demonstrates how local wisdom can serve as a contextual and relevant pillar of conflict resolution within the dynamics of village politics.

Essentially, the application of *Sipakatau* values also reinforces the principles of democracy, such as human rights, freedom of

³⁶ Sudira (2017)

expression, and justice. By respecting differences in political choices, the community fosters an inclusive environment that encourages active participation in the political process. Therefore, the *Sipakatau* philosophy can serve as a foundation for building a harmonious, just, and democratic society. In this regard, it becomes the primary capital for conflict resolution—by utilizing the role and function of local wisdom (*Sipakatau* philosophy) inherent within the village communities of Luwu Regency. One of its key principles is mutual understanding and mutual humanization, often expressed in local terms as *saling legowo* (mutual acceptance). This aligns with the character of rural communities whose daily lives are grounded in religious values and the richness of local wisdom embedded in their cultural environment.

D. Sipakatau as a Model of Conflict Resolution in Village Head Elections in Luwu Regency

Criminal The previous explanation illustrates how *Sipakatau* has been practiced in resolving village head election conflicts in several villages within Luwu Regency. This practice confirms that *Sipakatau* is not merely a normative philosophy but is genuinely implemented as a social instrument to ease local political tensions. However, to gain a deeper understanding of *Sipakatau*'s position as a conflict resolution mechanism, it is essential to examine how this philosophy operates in comparison with formal state mechanisms, and how it can be regarded as a distinctive model of conflict resolution at the village level.

Sipakatau is reflected in the formulation of Pancasila, specifically in the second principle, which emphasizes “*just and civilized*

*humanity.*³⁷ Etymologically, *Sipakatau* means “to make someone human.” It embodies the principle that every person must respect others in their inherent dignity and worth as “*Tau*” that is, as human beings.³⁸ The meaning contained therein is that human dignity must never be disregarded, and that every person is obliged to *sipakatau* to treat others according to their rightful position and status as human beings, as the most noble creation of God.³⁹ This is the fundamental nature embodied in the *Sipakatau* philosophy, which is also represented in the second principle of Pancasila: *just and civilized humanity*.

Village head election conflicts in Luwu Regency reveal two primary avenues for resolution the formal mechanism through appeals to the State Administrative Court and the local wisdom-based mechanism through the *tudang sipulung* forum. Each follows a different logic of resolution. The formal mechanism emphasizes legal certainty with standardized procedures, but its adversarial nature often positions parties in a win-lose scenario. In contrast, the *Sipakatau*-based mechanism prioritizes deliberation, equality, and

³⁷ Nur, Wildan, and Komariah, “Kekuatan Budaya Lokal: Menjelajahi 3S (Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, Dan Sipakainge) Sebagai Simbol Kearifan Lokal.”

³⁸ Vikriatuz Zahro, Reni Putri Anggraeni, and Vicko Taniady, “Internalisasi Nilai Kebudayaan Lokal Bugis (Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, Dan Sipakainge),” PAKAR Pendidikan, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.24036/pakar.v18i1.217>.

³⁹ Asni Zubair, Hamzah Hamzah, and Satriadi Satriadi, “Living Religious Moderation within the Sipakatau, Sipakainge’, and Sipakalebbi Cultures of the Bugis Community,” Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.30.2.13048>.

the restoration of social relations, resulting in outcomes that are more acceptable within village communities that highly value kinship solidarity.

The effectiveness of *Sipakatau* as a model of conflict resolution lies in its cultural legitimacy, restorative orientation, and emphasis on consensus rather than coercion. Its moral authority is derived from shared communal values deeply embedded in Luwu society, functioning as a socially accepted mechanism for rebuilding trust following electoral disputes. Although empirical documentation in Luwu remains limited, comparative evidence from other Indonesian communities such as the Baduy, Tengger, and Samin demonstrates that consensus based deliberation can effectively restore justice and social harmony. This reinforces *Sipakatau* as a relevant model for electoral conflict resolution. Thus, *Sipakatau* serves not only as a moral framework but also as a practical approach aligned with the principles of deliberative democracy and local legitimacy.

Data from the Office for Community and Village Empowerment of Luwu Regency records that, of the 91 villages that held simultaneous village head elections (*Village Head Election*) in 2022, 85 villages (93.4%) proceeded without conflict, while 6 villages (6.6%) experienced conflicts. Of these 6 villages, 4 (66.7%) successfully resolved their conflicts through customary mechanisms based on *Sipakatau*, whereas 2 villages (33.3%) proceeded to the State Administrative Court. The distribution is as follows:

Table 2. Distribution of Villages Experiencing Election Conflict and Resolution Mechanisms in the 2022 Village Head Election, Luwu Regency

Category	Number of Villages	Percentage (%)

Total Villages Conducting Elections	91	100
Villages Without Conflict	85	93
Villages Experiencing Conflict	6	6.6
Resolved through <i>Sipakatau</i>	4	66.7
Escalated to the State Administrative Court	2	33.3

Source: Office for Community and Village Empowerment of Luwu Regency, 2022.

These data show that village head election conflicts occurred in only a small number of villages, and the majority were mitigated through the *Sipakatau* mechanism. In other words, the cultural pathway proved to be the more commonly chosen and relatively effective approach, whereas the formal legal route serves as a last resort when the cultural approach fails to reach consensus.

Thus, *Sipakatau* can be regarded as a model of village political conflict resolution that is rooted in local culture yet remains relevant within the framework of modern democracy. This model operates with a logic distinct from formal mechanisms: while the State Administrative Court provides legal certainty, *Sipakatau* reinforces social cohesion through consensus and reconciliation. This study aligns with the idea of⁴⁰ regarding the importance of community-based reconciliatory approaches, while also contributing to contemporary literature that emphasizes the role of local wisdom in maintaining political harmony at the village level. The novelty of this study lies in highlighting that *Sipakatau* in Luwu Regency is not merely a cultural value, but a contextual, effective conflict resolution model that complements formal state mechanisms.

⁴⁰ Lederach (1999)

Sipakatan functions as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation. In Tallang Bulawang Village, for example, the rivalry between two candidates who were siblings was successfully de-escalated through a *tudang sipulung* forum led by community leaders. The forum concluded with a joint prayer, symbolizing peace and marking both the end of the conflict and the restoration of familial relations. This case demonstrates that *Sipakatan* not only resolves administrative disputes but also strengthens social cohesion following village head elections. In contrast, the case in Buntu Kamiri Village illustrates the limitations of *Sipakatan*. During the village head election held on March 24, 2022, candidates number 1 and number 3 raised objections to the election results. They suspected irregularities in the number of ballots, noting a discrepancy between the total ballots available and the sum of valid votes, invalid votes, and remaining ballots. Both candidates subsequently rejected the vote count at Polling Station 1 and filed a complaint with the Village Election Committee and the Office for Community and Village Empowerment of Luwu Regency, seeking dispute resolution in accordance with applicable regulations.⁴¹ The deliberative forum using a cultural approach failed to reach consensus, resulting in the conflict proceeding to the State Administrative Court. However, official documents regarding the case number and court decision are not yet publicly available in the

⁴¹ Chalik Mawardi, “Duga Ada Pemilih Siluman, Hasil Pilkades Buntu Kamiri Luwu Digugat Calon Kalah,” Tribun Luwu, 2022; Redaksi Koran SeruYa, “Klaim Ada Kejanggalan Saat Pilkades, Dua Calon Kades Buntu Kamiri Layangkan Gugatan Ke DPMD Luwu,” 2022, <https://koranseruya.com/klaim-ada-kejanggalan-saat-pilkades-dua-calon-kades-buntu-kamiri-layangkan-gugatan-ke-dpmd-luwu.html>.

online databases of either the State Administrative Court or the Supreme Court. This limits access to formal legal data, so the analysis in this study relies primarily on field sources. Emphasizing this methodological transparency is important to demonstrate that limited access to legal data does not diminish the validity of field findings regarding the role of *Sipakatau* in conflict resolution. While the formal legal pathway provides legal certainty, it often leaves residual social tension because one party feels “defeated.” The findings of this study confirm that the effectiveness of *Sipakatau* is contextual, highly dependent on the neutrality of mediators and the openness of the election committee during the verification process.

The case in Papakaju Village highlights another important factor: information transparency. The forum was effective because the village election committee was willing to make the Permanent Voter List publicly available, allowing all parties to accept the outcome of the deliberation. This underscores that committee transparency is a prerequisite for *Sipakatau* to function optimally as a conflict resolution mechanism. Comparing these three cases, it is evident that *Sipakatau* operates through a combination of moral and cultural values. This mechanism has the advantage of maintaining social legitimacy, although it has limitations when dealing with conflicts that have entered the formal legal domain. Therefore, *Sipakatau* can be regarded as a model of village political conflict resolution that complements formal state mechanisms: the legal pathway provides legal certainty, while *Sipakatau* ensures the continuity of social harmony.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that village head election conflicts in Luwu Regency cannot be separated from the complexity of local social, political, and cultural dynamics. The

practice of *Sipakatan* through the *tudang sipulung* forum has proven to be a crucial instrument for de-escalating tensions, maintaining social cohesion, and restoring relationships fractured by electoral contests. On the other hand, the effectiveness of this mechanism is contingent upon several factors, such as the neutrality of mediators, the transparency of the election committee, and symbolic support from the community. Comparisons with formal mechanisms reveal that *Sipakatan* operates under a different logic yet complements formal procedures: while formal mechanisms provide legal certainty, *Sipakatan* reinforces social legitimacy. Therefore, this study affirms that the *Sipakatan* philosophy can be regarded as a contextual model of village political conflict resolution, distinctive to Luwu, while also contributing to the strengthening of local democracy in Indonesia.

Although *Sipakatan* can serve as a model for conflict resolution, its implementation within formal electoral systems remains limited. The coexistence between customary and state mechanisms reflects a form of legal pluralism that presents both opportunities and challenges. While *Sipakatan* holds strong cultural legitimacy, it is often not legally recognized and lacks sufficient institutional support, making its integration difficult. Therefore, a hybrid approach that bridges local wisdom with formal legal frameworks may offer a more balanced solution. Such collaboration would preserve the moral and communal values of *Sipakatan* while ensuring justice, accountability, and institutional stability in electoral dispute resolution.

To clarify the pattern of village head election conflict resolution in Luwu Regency, this study presents a conceptual flowchart illustration depicting the differentiation between the *Sipakatan*-

based mechanism and the formal mechanism through the State Administrative Court.

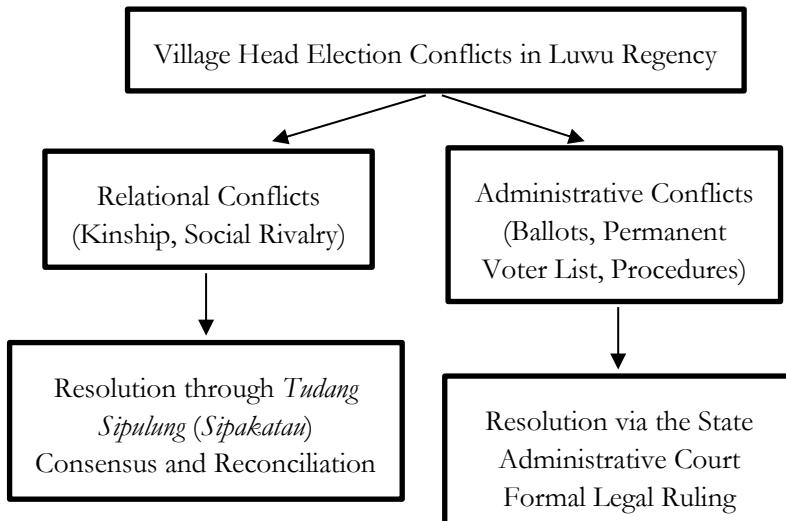


Figure 2. Conceptual Flowchart of Village Head Election Conflict Resolution in Luwu Regency

The pattern of village head election conflict resolution in Luwu Regency can be visualized through two main pathways. First, conflicts rooted in social relations such as rivalries between candidates, tensions arising from kinship ties, or polarization among supporters can generally be resolved through the *tudang sipulung* forum based on the *Sipakatan* philosophy. This mechanism emphasizes the principles of equality and respect for human dignity, thereby focusing on consensus and the restoration of social relations. The findings of this study indicate that local wisdom possesses a flexible capacity to mitigate social-relation-based conflicts due to the shared moral legitimacy it commands.

Second, conflicts of an administrative nature such as disputes over the permanent voter list, the number and validity of ballots, or technical voting procedures more often proceed through the formal route via the State Administrative Court. In such cases, the disputing parties seek legal certainty and procedural evidence, which can only be ensured through an adversarial legal mechanism. This underscores that the formal pathway remains dominant when conflicts involve the technical and administrative aspects of elections.

The visualized flowchart illustrates that *Sipakatau* is more effective in managing relational conflicts, whereas administrative conflicts tend to culminate in formal legal mechanisms. Accordingly, this study affirms the position of *Sipakatau* as a conflict resolution instrument that complements state law by maintaining social cohesion while also providing space for legal resolution in specific contexts. This contribution aligns with the literature on culture-based conflict resolution, which positions local wisdom as an instrument of contextual democracy in Indonesia.⁴² Thus, the illustration highlights both the limitations and strengths of each mechanism. *Sipakatau* can maintain social legitimacy, but without the support of formal state mechanisms, the resolution of administrative conflicts is difficult to achieve comprehensively.

Beyond differences in normative approaches, the comparison between the *Sipakatau* mechanism and formal resolution through the State Administrative Court can also be analyzed in terms of cost,

⁴² Zuhairi Misrawi, “Post Tradisionalisme Islam : Dari Teologi Teosentrisme Menuju Teologi Antroposentrisme,” Millah, 2002, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol2.iss1.art2>.

time, and social impact. Regarding cost, the *tudang sipulung* forum is relatively inexpensive, as it is conducted using local public spaces, such as village halls or traditional houses, without requiring legal administrative fees. Voluntary contributions from the community, in the form of food or logistical support, generally suffice to meet the forum's needs. In contrast, the State Administrative Court pathway entails court fees, transportation costs to the provincial capital, and legal service fees if the disputing parties hire lawyers. This cost difference makes *Sipakatau* more accessible to village communities, who generally have limited financial resources.

In terms of time, *Sipakatau* offers a relatively rapid process. In many cases, the deliberative forum can reach an agreement within days or even a few hours, depending on the complexity of the issue. This contrasts with the State Administrative Court, where court proceedings can take several months before a legally binding decision is issued. Such delays often prolong social tensions at the village level, as the status of leadership remains uncertain for an extended period.

Meanwhile, in terms of social impact, *Sipakatau* has proven more effective in maintaining social cohesion. Through the principle of mutual humanization, the forum not only resolves disputes but also restores damaged relationships among candidates' supporters. Cultural symbols, such as communal meals and collective prayers following the deliberation, reinforce the social legitimacy of the agreements reached. In contrast, the State Administrative Court tends to be adversarial, with one party emerging as the winner and the other as the loser. This pattern can prolong hostility, as the losing party often feels denied social recognition and respect.

Thus, this comparison highlights the advantages of *Sipakatau* as a conflict resolution mechanism that is fast, low-cost, and oriented toward social restoration. Nevertheless, the State Administrative Court remains relevant when conflicts require legal certainty and procedural evidence that cannot be resolved through customary deliberation. This complementary pattern represents a significant contribution of this study to the literature on local political conflict resolution in Indonesia. Resolving village head election conflicts through the *Sipakatau* mechanism is not only understood as culturally rooted local wisdom but also as a democratic practice oriented toward effectiveness, efficiency, and social sustainability. Compared to formal legal channels, which tend to be time-consuming and costly, the *tudang sipulung* forum provides a deliberative space that is faster, more affordable, and focused on restoring social relations among community members. This approach strengthens the legitimacy of election outcomes while enhancing public trust in the village democratic process, positioning *Sipakatau* as a local political innovation relevant to the strengthening of democracy in Indonesia.

More comprehensively, this research contributes to the growing scholarly discourse on the landscape of village election conflicts in contemporary Indonesia. From a political science perspective, conflict resolution constitutes the core of the discipline, while from a legal standpoint, the study of conflict resolution enhances the development of community based legal systems. Such systems have the potential to foster greater legal compliance and serve as a reference for examining how societies sustain social harmony in addressing national challenges in the era of globalization. Consequently, the findings of this study may serve as an academic

foundation for formulating legal and governance policies at both local and national levels.

E. Conclusion

This study asserts that the *Sipakatau* philosophy does not merely serve as a cultural identity of the Luwu community but functions as an effective model of political conflict resolution in village head elections (*Pilkades*). Through the practice of *tudang sipulung* (deliberative council), various tensions ranging from candidate rivalries and administrative disputes to supporter polarization can be mitigated by emphasizing equality, human dignity, and the restoration of social relations. This distinguishes *Sipakatau* from the formal mechanism of the State Administrative Court, which is legalistic and adversarial in nature. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of culturally based conflict resolution studies by demonstrating that *Sipakatau* can be operationalized as a contextual, restorative, and deliberative model. The findings expand the theory of legal pluralism and enrich the literature on local democracy in Indonesia. This study proposes a contextual model of conflict resolution integrating cultural wisdom (*Sipakatau*) and democratic governance principles. Practically, the study recommends that local governments integrate the *tudang sipulung* forum as an initial mechanism for resolving village election disputes and strengthen the capacity of community leaders and election committees to uphold transparency and independence. In doing so, *Sipakatau* can be positioned as a local political asset that not only sustains social harmony but also reinforces the continuity of democratic governance at the village level in Indonesia.

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