

## COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AS A MODEL FOR FULFILLING PLANTATION WORKERS' VOTING RIGHTS IN THE 2024 ELECTION IN PELALAWAN REGENCY, RIAU PROVINCE

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**ABSTRACT.** The low awareness among migrant workers of the need to exercise their voting rights is rarely highlighted. This research addresses how the General Elections Commission (KPU) and companies can realize the voting rights of these workers. One solution offered is the establishment of TPS in unique locations, namely within companies. This article views the successful establishment of TPS in these particular locations as an application of the collaborative governance concept. This article uses a qualitative research approach of the case study type. This research collected data through in-depth interviews with several sources from the KPU and Bawaslu of Pelalawan Regency, PT. Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (PT. RAPP), labor unions, and other stakeholders. This article finds that the collaborative governance implemented by the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP to fulfill the political rights of workers follows several key stages. These stages reflect the process of collaborative governance, namely collaborative initiatives, the parties involved, the collaborative process, the collaborative result, and the collaborative impact. By adhering to the principles of collaborative governance, the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP have established a more effective and harmonious partnership, ultimately leading to better and more sustainable outcomes for all parties involved.

**Keywords:** Collaborative; Political rights; Worker'; Polling station; Election

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, studies on collaborative governance have predominantly been associated with addressing environmental issues, poverty, rural development, and public health (Samsara, 2022). Scholars generally concur that the application of a collaborative governance approach yields positive outcomes for governments in resolving societal challenges. In the environmental sector, large-scale exploitation by businesses—including state-backed projects—has resulted in severe ecological degradation. However, the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in monitoring, advocating for community rights, and providing scientific data for environmental policymaking has proven beneficial in enhancing policy implementation. The integration of NGOs in collaborative governance frameworks, particularly in mitigating environmental damage caused by the food estate program in Kalimantan, has had a significant impact on curbing environmental degradation (Hendra & Ismunarta, 2024).

Beyond environmental concerns, collaborative governance has also been explored in rural development. Febrian's (2016) study on rural development found that adopting a collaborative governance model accelerates and enhances the quality of public services, infrastructure development, and community empowerment through participatory mechanisms. Notably, the study emphasized leadership as a crucial element in shaping village

development planning. A recurring theme in research on collaborative governance is the identification of key success factors in its implementation. However, an essential question arises: how would this concept function in a dynamic political landscape characterized by diverse and often competing interests? Can the principles of collaborative governance be effectively applied in such a context?

One institutional example of collaborative governance in practice is the General Elections Commission (KPU), which oversees electoral and local election administration. The KPU operates through a secretariat that also serves as a bureaucratic service provider, facilitating the application of collaborative governance principles. Teka (2021) investigated whether the KPU, as an election management body (LPP), has implemented collaborative governance through intergovernmental institutional cooperation. The study concluded that while collaboration among government agencies is legally mandated under administrative governance laws, it is often ad hoc rather than systematically planned within a formalized framework. This lack of structured collaboration has, in some instances, led to electoral malpractices, as observed in the East Nusa Tenggara region.

Nevertheless, not all collaborative governance efforts encounter significant challenges. Some have yielded promising results. For instance, Sulastris et al. (2022) examined stakeholder collaboration in promoting environmentally sustainable elections in Yogyakarta. Their findings indicated that multi-stakeholder collaboration aligns with Ansell and

Gash's (2008) theoretical model of collaborative governance. Furthermore, their study highlighted that divergent perspectives among stakeholders during the governance process can, in fact, strengthen commitments to achieving shared objectives.

A critical aspect of successful collaborative governance is the equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders. Imbalances in stakeholder participation can lead to ineffective governance implementation. Qoyimah et al. (2023) underscored this issue, particularly in relation to participatory election monitoring involving women's groups. The absence of role equilibrium in follow-up action plans was found to hinder the effectiveness of collaborative governance in electoral oversight. These findings reaffirm that maintaining a balance of roles among stakeholders is paramount in ensuring the success of collaborative governance frameworks. Therefore, expanding the scope of collaborative governance, particularly within large-scale participatory frameworks, becomes imperative.

In this regard, local KPUs at the district and municipal levels—serving as the bureaucratic backbone of electoral administration—must take proactive steps to establish balanced and inclusive collaboration to uphold the integrity and quality of elections.

This study seeks to advance the discourse on collaborative governance by broadening its analytical scope beyond direct stakeholder interactions to include affected parties who may not be directly engaged in governance processes but are significantly impacted by their outcomes. A case in point is the facilitation of voting rights for workers through employer-supported mechanisms. Limited research has explored how to ensure voting accessibility for workers, many of whom face logistical barriers to participating in elections, thereby restricting their fundamental democratic rights. This study offers a novel contribution by demonstrating how collaborative governance can be effectively operationalized, even within the complexities of Indonesia's electoral system.

Fulfilling the voting rights of workers in elections is not solely the responsibility of the government or the General Elections Commission (KPU). Civil society groups and the private sector are also expected to show concern and play their roles. A good democracy requires the involvement of many parties according to their respective functions (Santoso & Budhiati, 2019). In every election held, there are always cases of company workers losing their voting rights. This potential arises because of the regulation that voters can only vote at polling stations (TPS)

according to the address listed on their electronic Identity Card (KTP-el). Recognizing this, the KPU, as the organizer, is responsible for accommodating the political interests of workers in casting their votes (Akmal & Madda, 2022). If workers cannot vote at their domicile, they can register as relocated voters to be included in the Additional Voter List (DPTb). Despite this convenience provided by the KPU, many workers still need to process their voting relocation due to the administrative hassles they are reluctant to go through.

The KPU recognizes this reality and anticipates the difficulties experienced by workers in exercising their voting rights by cooperating with the companies where they work. One policy that greatly facilitates these workers is the issuance of KPU Regulation Number 7 of 2022 on the Preparation of Voter Lists in the Administration of Elections and the Voter Data System. This regulation includes specific requirements that, if a polling station in a particular location is to be established, it must go through an agreement process with the authorized official at the particular location, in this case, the official designated by the company where the workers are employed. This requirement aims to ensure the company's commitment and support for every stage of the election. Of course, the KPU indirectly represents a tangible form of collaborative governance with stakeholders to ensure the election's success.

This article addresses how the KPU and companies realize workers' voting rights. On one hand, the government and the KPU are responsible for increasing public participation to strengthen its legitimacy. On the other hand, companies do not want to incur losses due to holidays set by the government during elections. Therefore, through a collaborative governance policy between the KPU and companies, polling stations (TPS) can be set up within companies without giving workers a holiday. This collaborative governance policy is crucial to explore to fulfill workers' voting rights while reducing voter abstention, which threatens public participation in elections (Lieber, 2020; Suwandi & Budiyanto, 2020).

According to its regulations, the KPU can establish Special Polling Stations (TPS) in companies and those in Correctional Institutions (Lapas) and Hospitals. The aim is to accommodate voters who cannot return to their domicile areas when casting their votes in elections. For instance, in Pelalawan Regency, which has many plantation workers, there are six particular TPS companies out of the eight provided by the KPU in Riau Province. Establishing TPS in particular company locations

aligns with the number of workers in Pelalawan Regency, which accounts for 62.86% of the total workforce. Generally, they are employed in the agriculture sector, including plantations, livestock, forestry, and fisheries. Therefore, this article assumes that the successful establishment of TPS in unique locations such as companies can be achieved due to the implementation of collaborative governance involving active stakeholders like the KPU and the companies.

Collaborative governance is a new paradigm in understanding the presence of multiple stakeholders in conducting public affairs (Ansell et al., 2020; Yigzaw, 2020). Specific characteristics in the relationship between actors in carrying out public affairs can be understood by observing their collaboration (Lee & Ospina, 2022). Collaborative governance arises from the need for a more inclusive and participatory decision-making process. The transformative policy-making process begins with the leadership of an actor as the commander and extends to interaction with stakeholders through collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Kinder et al., 2021).

The concept of collaborative governance has developed to address the awareness that many contemporary challenges and issues are complex and interconnected, often requiring the involvement of various stakeholders to provide effective solutions. It can be seen, for instance, in the policy-making process in national legislative bodies with the accompanying political dynamics (Asrinaldi & Valentina, 2022). One advantage of the collaborative governance paradigm is its orientation towards collective decision-making, resource sharing, or joint regulation in legislative relations (Amsler & Vieilledent, 2021). If examined more deeply, collaborative governance can be challenging to practice because it requires the involvement of institutions outside the government, as the two entities often have different orientations. Therefore, certain situations are needed for non-governmental institutions to be willing to engage in public affairs (Greenwood et al., 2021).

Collaborative governance as a collaborative management model aims to produce policies that address actual problems by involving collaborative actors directly engaged with those issues. An easily identifiable example is the role of regional leaders in conducting government functions after being inaugurated (Asrinaldi, 2023). The context of this collaborative governance is the involvement of stakeholders in joint policymaking, resource utilization, and collaborative efforts in implementing the policies made together (Taufik et al., 2023). However, more research is still needed to link

collaborative governance with elections. Why? Many parties see that the election execution has already been carried out by the organizers, namely the KPU and Bawaslu. However, democracy in elections should encourage the involvement of many parties, for instance, in the nomination of presidential candidates (Asrinaldi, 2023).

The government in this position merely facilitates the activities of the KPU and Bawaslu (Asrinaldi, 2021). Even if there are discussions about politics, they are limited to aligning the concepts of collaborative governance with deliberative democracy, which see both as interrelated, especially in terms of the formal institutional regulatory aspects of mechanisms that incorporate stakeholders into the policy-making process (Goffer, 2021). However, if explored further, the involvement of other stakeholders, such as companies or the private sector, is possible, as seen in the provision of polling stations in the companies studied. This phenomenon is a novelty that needs to be explored and analyzed to enrich the study of collaborative governance in the context of elections. Only a few studies have attempted to explore this aspect. Generally, studies on collaborative governance conducted by many scholars focus on policy-making processes (Saleh et al., 2021), digitalization of governance (Breagh et al., 2023), and transportation policy (B.E.Cain et al., 2020). This research is hoped to contribute to developing the concept of collaborative governance.

Governance is a form of governance arrangement that involves several public institutions outside the state directly engaged in collective decision-making within a formal context to achieve a joint agreement. Decisions based on this consensus are implemented in joint programs (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Furthermore, (Ansell & Gash, 2007) explain the stages in implementing this governance collaboration: the initial conditions required, the presence of facilitative leadership, the existence of institutional design, and the implementation of collaboration. The initial conditions stage explains the positions of each collaborator facing emerging issues, the availability of resources, and the background of cooperation previously conducted by the stakeholders involved. Meanwhile, the facilitative leadership stage refers to the characteristics or qualities that parties working together must possess, such as initiative, innovation, participation, and problem-solving. Similarly, the institutional design stage requires formal and informal arrangements to ensure commitment among stakeholders and the realization of common goals. Lastly, the collaboration process stage must be understood as a cycle to ensure

the process continues sustainably until the goals are achieved and evaluated for improvement.

The collaborative governance process reflects a more inclusive and participatory decision-making process that is transformative. (Shergold, 2008) explains that this decision-making process is evident from the leadership patterns exhibited by actors who can provide direct and indirect direction in their interactions with other stakeholders, manifesting as collaborative governance. This involvement converges on a common interest, resulting in more comprehensive and sustainable solutions. Collaborative governance aims to leverage the available resources possessed by each stakeholder and use them collectively to address complex problems holistically and effectively. Thus, collaborative governance serves as a response to the traditional approaches commonly used by governments, which tend to be top-down and hierarchical and, therefore, unable to address the issues faced by the public. In contrast, the collaborative governance paradigm is oriented towards collective decision-making and resource sharing, positively impacting society.

Collaborative governance addresses contemporary challenges and complex, interrelated issues among stakeholders, providing solutions relevant to overlapping problems (Emerson et al., 2012). Therefore, this collaborative governance can achieve its goals if it is strengthened by a shared motivation among stakeholders to work together to reach the desired objectives. So, what can strengthen the motivation and cooperation of these stakeholders? According to (Emerson et al., 2012), the stakeholders need to consider at least four aspects: mutual trust, shared understanding, internal legitimacy, and commitment. These are the foundations of the collaborative governance process to solve existing problems.

Although not the same, what Emerson explained above was previously discussed by (Ansell & Gash, 2007), who emphasized important aspects of the collaborative governance process. First, the forum between stakeholders is initiated by public institutions; second, there is the involvement of non-government actors; third, each stakeholder (collaborator) actively participates in the policy-making process and is not merely consulted by the government; fourth, the forum is formal, with regular and ongoing meetings; fifth, policies are made based on mutual consensus; and sixth, it focuses on public issues of common concern.

Another fundamental aspect to consider is examining how collaborative governance works in practice. It is essential to look at the reflection of the

implementation of collaborative governance, which reflects the participation, dialogue, and cooperation among various stakeholders to achieve better outcomes, whether in the form of policies or resource management. (Ostrom, 1990) provides a concrete example of how communities can effectively manage shared resources through jointly agreed-upon rules and institutions. However, the most critical aspect is that these shared resources are used collectively, without government domination and interference, allowing space for jointly designed institutions based on participation and agreed-upon rules.

Participation involving multiple stakeholders is key in this collaborative governance, underpinning the cooperation formed through networks. This phenomenon is also mentioned by (Sorensen & Torfing, 2007) as a form of network governance. They further explain that network governance, which emphasizes collaboration, characterizes non-state governance involving many actors, such as the public, private, and civil society, to achieve common goals. The involvement of actors outside the government (state) indirectly forms its governance model (meta-governance), which involves regulating and coordinating collaborative networks to ensure they function effectively and efficiently. The network governance decision-making process is participatory, inclusive, transparent, facilitative, and deliberative.

In reality, the practice of collaborative governance is more challenging than described. Inequality in the use of resources in making joint decisions also becomes an obstacle in implementing this collaborative governance concept, especially involving public participation in joint decision-making in the political sphere. Not all individuals see political activities as important; some are apathetic towards political activities, such as voting in elections. On the other hand, the KPU hopes to increase individual participation in elections to fulfill the meaning of procedural democracy that must be implemented. The same situation occurs in Pelalawan Regency, Riau Province, where the community generally works for companies, especially those engaged in agriculture and plantations. This reality aligns with the condition of workers in Indonesia, who are mostly absorbed by the agricultural sector. According to BPS data in 2023, agriculture remains the largest employment sector (Anggela, 2023; Pratiwi, 2023; Silfia, 2023). Unfortunately, workers in the agricultural sector, particularly those in private plantations, do not have the opportunity to exercise their voting rights in elections. Plantation workers usually come from outside the plantation's operational area, making it impossible to return to

their respective regions on election day. This situation has prompted the KPU to create policies addressing the potential loss of votes from these workers.

Referring to Article 180, paragraph (1) of KPU Regulation Number 7 of 2023 concerning Amendments to KPU Regulation Number 7 of 2022 on the Preparation of the Voter List in the Implementation of General Elections and the Voter Data System, it is possible to compile voters at particular locations, but the local district/city KPU must coordinate its implementation with the authorities at those particular locations. The coordination carried out by the district/city KPU with the authorities at particular locations illustrates the practice of collaborative governance in the political field. Usually, after this coordination is carried out, participation, facilitation, and deliberation regarding implementing elections at these particular locations are followed.

In the Pelalawan Regency, cooperation in collaborative governance is realized by establishing polling stations (TPS) at particular locations after compiling the voter list at those unique locations due to workers' difficulty in leaving their workplaces. The Riau General Election Commission (KPU Riau) also facilitates polling stations in these locations. Still, the category with the highest number of unique location polling stations in companies is in Pelalawan Regency, with a total of 6 polling stations in particular locations.

PT. Riau Andalan Pulp and Paper (PT. RAPP) has a total of 1,291 registered voters at its location. Given this significant number, the management of PT. RAPP took the initiative to establish a special polling station (TPS), facilitated by the Pelalawan Regency General Election Commission (KPU Pelalawan). The collaboration between KPU Pelalawan and PT. RAPP in setting up TPS in specific locations represents a form of collaborative governance aimed at ensuring the voting rights of plantation workers in the 2024 Election. PT. RAPP's initiative to establish this special TPS reflects its role as a non-governmental stakeholder, which is a key indicator of collaborative governance practices. This underscores the need to develop a model that serves as a foundation for advancing the concept of collaborative governance in the political sphere, particularly in relation to voter behavior.

Therefore, this article seeks to address the following questions: What are the stages of collaborative governance implemented by KPU Pelalawan and PT. RAPP? Furthermore, how is the collaborative governance model between KPU Pelalawan and PT. RAPP structured to ensure the successful realization of their cooperation objectives?

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research method. According to (Thomas, 2021), case study research is a qualitative approach that aims to explore a case within a bounded system or several bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports). It reports a case description and case-based themes. The election case related to collaborative governance involving private companies in providing polling stations becomes an interesting topic due to the commensal symbiosis in its practice.

The research data is divided into two parts. First, primary data is sourced from field data collected through in-depth interviews with several informants selected through purposive sampling, developed with the snowball sampling principle. The criteria for these informants include KPU Pelalawan officials who organize the elections and company representatives who provide polling stations at the company's work locations. Additionally, primary data is gathered from observations of the informants' behavior in their daily lives, particularly their social activities at the company site.

Second, secondary data that previous researchers have processed complements the primary data to sharpen the analysis. Informants in this study include commissioners from the Pelalawan Regency General Election Commission (KPU), the Subsection Head of KPU Pelalawan, and the Coordinator of CRA-ER Volunteers from PT. RAPP, PPS members, and KPPS Chairpersons. Data analysis is conducted by coding the field data based on transcripts and organizing the collected data. This data is grouped into main themes that align with the research objectives and are to be interpreted according to the patterns found. These patterns are then analyzed to draw coherent and meaningful conclusions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Fulfillment of Plantation Workers' Voting Rights in Pelalawan Regency

Countries that practice democratic systems pay attention to the political rights of their citizens (Rosanvallon, 2018). These political rights are part of human rights protected constitutionally, including the right to vote for their leaders and, on the other hand, to be elected as leaders if they meet the qualifications. Many must be aware that these political rights, particularly the right to vote, are often neglected. On

the one hand, society, especially workers, does not pay much attention to this voting right. Focusing on work and economic production is more critical for them than participating in political activities. There are no significant consequences for them if their voting rights are lost or removed due to some political action. The working-class community (labor) tends to be apathetic due to the burdens of daily life and the necessity to meet everyday economic needs (Asrinaldi, 2012).

On the other hand, the General Election Commission (KPU) recognizes the importance of involving eligible citizens to cast their votes in elections. The procedural democracy conducted by the KPU indeed requires participation. Many consider political participation, including voting, as one of the indicators of success in organizing elections (Kim, 2018).

This reality drives the General Election Commission (KPU) and other stakeholders to encourage increased political participation among the public, especially among workers in companies or factories. Not all workers are indifferent to their participation in elections. In reality, work is segmented according to their job types. The KPU is very aware of this situation, so methods for involving workers in elections vary. One of the most strategic approaches by the KPU is to implement collaborative governance strategies to engage companies where workers are active, encouraging them to come to the polling stations on election day to cast their votes.

The issue of workers' voting rights needing to be met arises in every election. Many factors contribute to this problem, such as limited accessibility to polling stations far from workplaces and regulatory constraints that do not always accommodate workers' interests. The KPU treats these issues as serious concerns. It can be seen from the statement of KPU RI Chairman Hasyim Asy'ari, who explains that Indonesian citizens might be unable to return home on election day due to strategic reasons like studying, being a student, or being in institutional care. Similarly, workers in offshore industries, mining, and plantations face the same difficulties. Even though they want to participate in the election, transferring their voting location to where they are situated takes much work. As a result, many cannot exercise their voting rights, highlighting the need for more practical and accessible solutions to ensure that all citizens can participate in elections (Nelfira, 2023).

The right to vote, which is part of the constitutional rights of citizens, including workers, has been outlined in Law No. 6 of 2023 on Job Creation, which can be linked to Law No. 7 of 2017

on Elections. It means that constitutionally, all citizens are entitled to their voting rights, which are used in elections as part of the government's agenda. No authority can obstruct this right except if penalized with criminal actions, such as removing citizens' political rights as guaranteed by law (Cerdas & Afandi, 2019). Therefore, the emphasis on workers' political rights highlights the importance of allowing them to participate in elections without hindrance from their work obligations.

The fulfillment of workers' voting rights in elections represents a critical governance challenge that necessitates a collaborative approach between state institutions and non-governmental stakeholders. As the electoral management body, the Pelalawan Regency General Election Commission (KPU Pelalawan) holds the formal mandate to administer elections, including ensuring that all eligible voters can exercise their political rights. However, given the geographic and logistical constraints faced by plantation and factory workers—many of whom are stationed in remote locations far from their registered domiciles—KPU Pelalawan alone cannot effectively address this issue.

While election laws provide the legal framework for facilitating voter participation, structural barriers such as limited leave time, long distances to polling stations, and low political efficacy among workers have resulted in voter absenteeism. Many workers perceive voting as a secondary concern, prioritizing their professional responsibilities over electoral participation. At the same time, PT. RAPP's management, despite recognizing the potential disenfranchisement of its workforce, initially lacked a structured mechanism to facilitate workers' access to the voting process.

In response to this challenge, KPU Pelalawan initiated a collaborative governance framework with PT. RAPP to institutionalize a mechanism that ensures workers' electoral participation. This partnership was built on the principles of collaborative governance, where multiple stakeholders engage in a structured, consensus-driven process to achieve a shared public objective. Within this framework, KPU Pelalawan and PT. RAPP delineated their respective roles: KPU provided the regulatory and procedural oversight, while PT. RAPP contributed logistical support to facilitate workers' participation.

By integrating collaborative governance principles into election administration, KPU Pelalawan and PT. RAPP successfully established a sustainable, inclusive electoral framework that mitigates logistical barriers and enhances workers' access to their voting rights. This model not only

exemplifies the role of multi-stakeholder cooperation in strengthening electoral democracy but also underscores the importance of balancing institutional mandates with private sector engagement in ensuring political inclusivity.

The KPU also tries to ensure workers' rights in the Pelalawan Regency. The large number of workers engaged in the agriculture and plantation sectors has drawn the attention of the KPU of Pelalawan Regency. The number of workers in Pelalawan Regency reaches 194,393 individuals, consisting of various main job statuses, most of whom are employed by others (BPS Kabupaten Pelalawan, 2024). Nevertheless, there are also those working as independent entrepreneurs, self-employed farmers, fishermen, and other professionals. Their presence significantly contributes to the local economy, reflecting the diversity of economic activities in the region. A substantial portion of these workers is employed by PT RAPP, one of the major companies in Pelalawan Regency.

PT. RAPP is a subsidiary of the Royal Golden Eagle (RGE) Group, the major shareholder in APRIL Group (Asia Pacific Resource International Holding Ltd.), one of the world's leading pulp and paper industry companies. The RGE Group has expanded into a global business group with over 60,000 employees, total assets worth USD 25 billion, and a worldwide sales reach. Headquartered in Singapore, APRIL has significant production areas in Indonesia and China. PT. RAPP, headquartered in Jakarta since 1989, was officially established in early 1992 through PT. RAPP, the APRIL Group, began developing plantations in Riau Province, Sumatra, and constructing a mill in Pangkalan Kerinci, Pelalawan Regency, in 1993. At that time, Kerinci was inhabited by only about 200 families. However, thanks to the development and business diversification of the APRIL Group, the population in this area has proliferated, reaching over 200,000 people by 2010. This transformation made Pangkalan Kerinci a social and commercial center in the province. In 2010, the APRIL Group's forestry operations contributed 6.9% of the total economy of Riau Province and created approximately 90,000 indirect jobs for the community (Samodra, 2022).

Recognizing the large number of workers in Pelalawan Regency, the local KPU has focused on developing strategies to increase voter participation, particularly at plantation company sites. According to the General Election Commission Regulation No. 7 of 2022 on the Preparation of Voter Lists in Election Administration and the Voter Data System, the KPU permits the establishment of polling stations

in particular locations to accommodate the voting rights of citizens who cannot vote at their domicile polling stations. The Pelalawan Regency KPU has responded to the policy of creating special polling stations to enhance voter participation in its work area. However, this policy of establishing special polling stations is an improvement upon previous KPU policies, which only prioritized the creation of polling stations in prisons and detention centers. Given the need to increase worker participation, the 2024 Election allows the establishment of polling stations in particular locations within company operation areas. This strategy represents a step forward for the KPU. It is trying to develop and apply collaborative governance theory to involve companies in facilitating workers' participation to exercise their voting rights in the 2024 Election.

### **Collaborative Governance Model for Fulfilling Workers' Voting Rights in Pelalawan**

They are establishing polling stations in particular locations, such as at PT. RAPP can serve as an illustration of the importance of understanding collaborative governance practices involving stakeholders. Typically, analyses using the concept of collaborative governance are applied to explain the success of development programs in a region with community involvement. However, few explanations delve into and enrich the discussion of collaborative governance in a political context. In reality, the scope of collaborative governance is vast and diverse (Doberstein, 2016; O'Flynn & Wanna, 2008; Purdy, 2012). For example, in the context of large companies facilitating their workers' voting rights in Pelalawan Regency, this can be understood as a form of collaborative governance in the political arena.

At least five variables describe the collaborative governance model implemented by the Pelalawan Regency KPU.

The relationship among these five variables—collaborative initiatives, the parties involved, the collaborative process, the collaborative result, and the collaborative impact—provides a comprehensive depiction of how collaborative governance is implemented to meet the specific needs of each stakeholder. Collaborative initiatives mark the initial stage, where shared interests and objectives are identified. The parties involved play a crucial role in shaping the governance structure, as their active engagement ensures inclusivity and legitimacy. As the collaborative process unfolds, dynamic interactions emerge, demonstrating that effective cooperation is built upon clearly defined roles and

a strong commitment from all stakeholders. This, in turn, leads to collaborative results, where collective decision-making and joint efforts address governance challenges. Ultimately, the collaborative impact reflects the long-term benefits and sustainability of the partnership, reinforcing the effectiveness of collaboration in achieving shared goals.

By understanding these five variables as interconnected components of the collaborative governance framework developed by previous scholars, this study not only enriches the theoretical discourse but also presents a distinctive example of collaborative governance in a political context—an area that has received limited attention from researchers.

First, the initiative to engage in cooperation is fundamental to implementing collaborative governance. Second, the parties involved. The more parties involved, the more comprehensive the jointly created policy will be, and stakeholder participation will increase, providing legitimacy to the decisions made. Third, the collaboration process is also essential in assessing the success of implementing collaborative governance strategies to enhance voter participation in particular locations within companies. Fourth is the expected outcome of collaborative governance that satisfies all parties involved. Fifth is the anticipated impact of implementing both short-term and long-term collaborative governance, as expected by all the stakeholders.

### 1. Collaborative Initiatives

The initiative to establish polling stations (TPS) in particular locations to facilitate workers voting during the 2024 General Election originated from the KPU (General Election Commission). This initiative arose due to the condition of workers in Pelalawan Regency who needed their voting rights facilitated, primarily since some workers reside on plantation company premises but have domicile identification outside of PT. RAPP. This policy is supported by several regulations, including the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2024 on the General Election Voting Day of 2024 as a National Holiday, which was enacted on 6 February 2024. Similarly, the Circular Letter of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2024 on the Implementation of Holidays for Workers/Laborers on the Voting Day and Date of the General Election and the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors. These regulations are further explained by the General Election Commission Regulation Number 7 of 2022 on the Compilation of the Voter List in the Implementation of General

Elections and the Voter Data System, which enabled the KPU Pelalawan to follow up by initiating the establishment of TPS in these particular locations.

The collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP was formalized in the Minutes of the Pelalawan Regency KPU Number 220/PL.07.1-BA/1405/2023 concerning the Compilation of the Voter List in Special Locations in the 2024 General Election, which contains agreements between the two parties. This agreement was carried out during the Coordination Meeting on Voter List Compilation Services in Special Locations for the 2024 General Election, held at the KPU Office of Pelalawan Regency on Saturday, 18 March 2023. The initiative to establish TPS in these particular locations came from the Pelalawan Regency KPU, which involved the management of PT. RAPP. Both institutions recognized their role in encouraging increased voter participation within the company's area. The roles of these two institutions are evident from their respective positions according to existing regulations. For instance, the primary responsibility for the election's implementation lies with the Pelalawan Regency KPU as the authorized body to conduct it—meanwhile, the company, in this case, PT. RAPP plays a role in providing facilities and ensuring smooth election logistics within the company's premises.

As stated by PT. RAPP's management representative, Ishak

the company is fundamentally committed to fully supporting government policies, as long as the requested requirements can be met. Moreover, the Pelalawan KPU team has been highly communicative, which we greatly appreciate. For instance, when determining the location of polling stations (TPS), certain areas needed to be kept sterile. The KPU team was very understanding of this as part of the company's policy and remained open to our input (Interview, 30 June 2024).

### 2. The Parties Involved

Participation in establishing polling stations in particular locations within the PT. RAPP area. Meanwhile, the supporting actors in this collaborative effort include the workers and the surrounding community. These two actors are also significant in pushing to fulfill workers' voting rights. After all, the polling stations established in these particular locations can only operate with the involvement of workers and the community as polling station officers. According to the regulations on the establishment of Polling Stations (TPS) in Special Locations, the officers (KPPS) at these TPSs should come from the

local community. However, if the required number of officers still needs to be met, KPU can recruit TPS officers from workers registered as voters at these particular TPSs.

This aligns with the statement made by Priyono, a member of the Pelalawan KPU, regarding the role of workers and the community in the establishment of polling stations (TPS) in designated special locations.

Of course, we cannot involve all workers who are eligible voters in these special polling stations. However, even during the initial stages of compiling the list of special voters, we had already invited worker representatives, such as supervisors and managers, to participate in coordination meetings. Following this, the actual establishment process was conducted exclusively between the KPU and the company's management. The involvement of workers and the community occurs primarily during the voting stage, where we engage local community members to serve as polling station officers (KPPS). In some cases, we had to assign relocated workers as KPPS because we faced difficulties in finding local individuals willing to take on the role (Interview, 6 July 2024).

Establishing polling stations in particular locations is an effort to fulfill workers' voting rights, prompting a collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP. Although these two institutions may have different perspectives on fulfilling the workers' voting rights, they work together toward a common goal. The Pelalawan Regency KPU aims to increase voter participation rates as a government body tasked by the state to serve and facilitate the fulfillment of every citizen's political rights. The KPU continues to develop policies to accommodate the diverse conditions of the community.

On the other hand, the management of PT. RAPP recognizes the challenges posed by election accessibility, mainly due to the rule that voters can only vote at polling stations corresponding to the domicile listed on their ID cards. Although the KPU has solutions for these challenges, changing voting locations can be difficult for workers, especially given the manual voter registration process and the requirement for numerous documents for workers who wish to vote elsewhere. However, there is a collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP can create a more inclusive election, enabling workers to participate. These two institutions facilitate the fulfillment of workers' political rights and strengthen social and economic stability in the region by enhancing worker satisfaction and

productivity, knowing that their rights are respected and protected.

### 3. Collaborative Process

The collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP began with successfully establishing a shared goal by both institutions, namely fulfilling workers' voting rights. The shared interests between these two key institutions facilitated the effective implementation of this collaborative governance. Moreover, the Pelalawan Regency KPU is mandated to promote the voting rights of every eligible citizen, including plantation workers, to ensure inclusive and fair democratic participation. On the other hand, PT. RAPP has a corporate social responsibility to support the welfare of its workers, which includes fulfilling their political rights, such as the right to vote in elections. With this common goal, the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP focuses on their individual interests and achieving more significant and beneficial outcomes for the worker community and the broader society.

The collaboration process between these two institutions was carried out by maximizing intensive communication, maintaining a transparent process, fostering mutual trust, and upholding a solid commitment to work together. In short, establishing clear, shared goals helps create a cohesive and synergistic working relationship, enabling both parties to overcome the challenges in the collaboration.

Fundamentally, as a company, we remain fully committed to supporting government policies, provided that the requested requirements are feasible for us to fulfill. Additionally, the Pelalawan KPU team has been highly communicative, which we greatly appreciate. For instance, when determining the location of polling stations (TPS), certain areas needed to remain sterile. The KPU team demonstrated a clear understanding that this was part of the company's policy and remained open to our input. (Interview with Ishak, management representative of PT. RAPP, June 30, 2024)

This collaboration process also involves the resources possessed by each institution involved. The utilization of resources by each stakeholder in this collaboration is crucial for smoothing the process of achieving the goals. The resource ownership of these two institutions can be seen in the table below.

However, the collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP began successfully establishing a shared goal by both institutions: the collaborative process between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP culminated in a partnership that respects each institution's role.

The leadership within each organization operated democratically, fostering a cooperative and solution-oriented relationship. The ability to accept and value input from all involved parties was the key to the success of this collaborative governance. Throughout the process, this collaboration provided direction and coordination and created a conducive environment for open and participatory dialogue. By listening to various perspectives and needs, both institutions endeavored to identify underlying issues and develop holistic and inclusive solutions for fulfilling workers' voting rights.

**Table 1. Resources of the Involved Actors**

No	Actor	Resources Owned
1	Pelalawan Regency KPU	Regulations, Funding, Logistics, Knowledge, and Personnel.
2	PT. RAPP	Access to Worker Data, Location, Facilities/Infrastructure, and Worker Mobilization.

Source: Processed data (2024)

Sensitivity to group dynamics and the ability to manage conflicts constructively enable stakeholders to build trust and create consensus in achieving shared goals—for example, the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP was open with their ideas and opinions in establishing polling stations in these locations, as evidenced by the communication that developed, including listening to PT. RAPP's input on strategic and accessible places for the polling stations. On the other hand, PT. RAPP supported the KPU's efforts by providing access and information needed to determine the optimal locations for polling stations, ensuring that workers could participate in the elections effectively.

#### 4. Collaborative Result

The collaboration involved the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP has had a positive impact on fulfilling workers' voting rights. The results of this collaboration are reflected in the establishment of several polling stations in particular locations, such as the polling station at Estate Ukui PT. RAPP is near the Lubuk Kembang Bunga Village Office and Town Site 1 PT. RAPP, located at Lapangan Merdeka. Additionally, on 27 May 2023, it was decided in the Plenary Meeting on Polling Station Designation (TPS) in particular locations for the 2024 General Election by the Pelalawan Regency KPU, as documented in the Minutes of the Pelalawan Regency KPU Number 726 /PL.01.2-BA/1405/2023 concerning the Designation of Polling Stations in Special Locations for the 2024 General Election as follows.

**Table 2. Voter List and Polling Stations in Special Locations in Pelalawan Regency for the 2024 General Election**

Sub-District	Polling Stations (TPS) in Special Locations and Voter	
	TPS	Total Voter
Pangkalan Kerinci	5	1201
Ukui	1	100
Total	6	1301

Source: Processed data (2024)

However, during the implementation of the voting process, another challenge emerged: determining who would serve as the Polling Station Organizing Group (KPPS). This issue relates to the polling stations within the company's operational area, specifically at PT. RAPP has several procedures for the general public entering the company's premises, such as needing to schedule an appointment with the relevant authorities. It is difficult for KPPS officers to navigate multiple procedures to establish polling stations. Nevertheless, this issue was effectively addressed by applying the principles of dialogue, communication, and mutual trust, which are essential in collaborative governance. The tolerance shown by the Pelalawan Regency KPU in accepting the proposal to relocate the polling stations to achieve the main goal—fulfilling workers' voting rights—was evident.

Similarly, the appointment of KPPS officers ultimately involved workers from PT. RAPP due to the absence of local community members registered as voters at the designated special polling station. Selpina Ayu, a member of the KPPS in Pangkalan Kerinci Timur, explained.

The recruitment process for KPPS at special polling stations follows the same procedures as regular polling stations. However, for the special polling station in Pangkalan Kerinci Timur, we encountered a challenge due to the limited number of local community members registering as KPPS officers. As a solution, we coordinated with the KPU and PT. RAPP to identify potential candidates. As a result, some of the appointed KPPS members were also special voters at that polling station (Interview, 5 July 2024).

Moreover, the principle of compromise by the Pelalawan Regency KPU adhered to procedures while considering field conditions and maintaining the integrity and fairness of the election process. To avoid disrupting the company, polling stations in these particular locations were established, taking into account the company's working hours. Activities such as coordination meetings or technical guidance for the election were conducted in the evenings or on weekends so as not to interfere with PT. RAPP workers' working hours.

Implementing the 2024 Simultaneous Elections at these unique location polling stations has successfully facilitated workers' voting rights at PT. RAPP has been conducted in line with the collaborative governance concept. However, voter participation at these locations must remain at the expected rate. The average voter turnout at these special location polling stations is only about 57.59%. This reality significantly differs from the KPU's target of a 77.5% voter turnout across Indonesia. The following table illustrates the voter participation figures for workers at these particular location polling stations.

**Table 3. Number of Registered Voters and Presidential Election Participation at Special Location Polling Stations for the 2024 General Election in Pelalawan Regency**

Polling Station	Number of Voters	Voters Present	Participation Rate
901	99	47	47,47%
902	234	114	48,71%
903	258	166	64,34%
904	253	146	57,70%
905	258	169	65,50%
906	189	105	55,55%
Total	1.291	747	57,59%

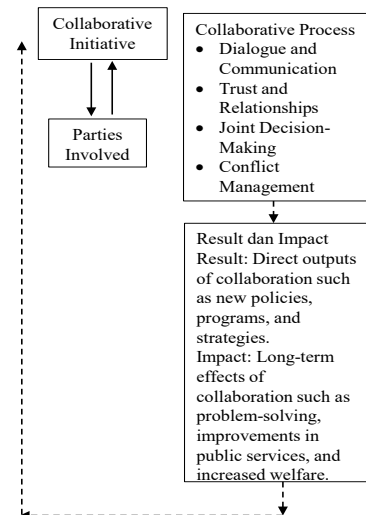
Source: Processed data (2024)

## 5. Collaborative Impact

Efforts to increase voter participation in elections are one way the government fulfills the political rights of its citizens. Moreover, the 1945 Constitution emphasizes that the state guarantees individual political rights, including voting rights. However, since conditions on the ground do not always align with expectations, fulfilling citizens' political rights must be facilitated according to these conditions—the collaborative governance implemented by stakeholders, in this case, the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP facilitates workers in exercising their voting rights in the 2024 General Election.

The collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP to ensure workers' voting rights are effective. Although this collaboration is in its early stages, it has already enriched the concept of collaborative governance many scholars use. This collaborative governance practice highlights essential variables that can influence its implementation. Among the key factors are the actors involved in the collaboration who initiate the cooperation. These stakeholders are intent on realizing the agreed-upon interests. For example, the Pelalawan Regency KPU aims to increase voter participation by fulfilling workers' voting rights,

while PT. RAPP facilitates workers' voting rights without reducing agreed-upon working hours. Both parties agreed to fulfill their respective roles, allowing for the establishment of polling stations in particular locations. By prioritizing dialogue, communication, and mutual trust in decision-making, the involved actors successfully address issues on the ground. This collaboration has yielded positive results for the development of procedural democracy.



**Figure 1. Collaborative Governance as a Model**

Indeed, this model can be adapted to address the issues at hand according to the variables described above. In Figure 1, this model results in a strategy for fulfilling workers' voting rights in the 2024 General Election by establishing polling stations in particular locations. Meanwhile, its impact is the resolution of issues that have been a concern for all parties, particularly the KPU and the company, which have had no concrete solutions previously. With this collaborative governance model, the desired outcomes and impacts for stakeholders are more likely to be achieved.

## CONCLUSION

This article describes the collaboration between the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP in efforts to fulfill workers' voting rights in Pelalawan Regency for the 2024 General Election. In this context, the concept of collaborative governance, developed by many scholars, can be applied as long as stakeholders' initiatives regarding the issues being addressed offer solutions to common interests through a more inclusive and responsive process. By involving various parties in the decision-making process, collaborative governance can enhance the legitimacy and accountability of the decisions made. It also helps reduce resistance and increase acceptance and support for the implemented policies.

The collaborative governance organized by the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT RAPP produced a more comprehensive solution: establishing polling stations in particular locations to fulfill workers' voting rights. By adhering to the principles of collaborative governance, the Pelalawan Regency KPU and PT. RAPP created a more effective and harmonious partnership, ultimately leading to better and more sustainable outcomes for all parties involved. Indirectly, what has been described above enriches the practice of collaborative governance through the model illustrated. This model is flexible and can be developed according to the issues addressed by the involved stakeholders.

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