

Changes in the Design of Simultaneous Elections after Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024: Implications for Constitutional Democracy and the Law-Making Authority

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyse the redesign of simultaneous elections after Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 and its implications for constitutional democracy and the law-making authority in Indonesia. The issue is important because the decision changes the electoral simultaneity model by separating national elections from local elections, thereby affecting democratic representation, electoral management, legislative discretion, and the institutional role of the Constitutional Court. This study uses a qualitative legal research method with a normative-judicial approach. The analysis applies statutory, case, and conceptual approaches by examining the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, election laws, regional election laws, Constitutional Court decisions, and recent scholarly literature on electoral design, constitutional democracy, judicial review, and legislative authority. The findings show that Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 represents a constitutional reorientation of electoral simultaneity from a single-day five-ballot model into a differentiated electoral architecture. The separation of national and local elections may strengthen democratic participation, reduce electoral complexity, improve the visibility of local issues, and support more meaningful representation. Yet the decision also narrows legislative discretion and creates transitional challenges regarding electoral scheduling, office terms, legal certainty, and institutional readiness. This study contributes by framing the decision as constitutional electoral engineering that must be followed by transparent, participatory, and accountable legislative reform.

Keywords: simultaneous elections; Constitutional Court; constitutional democracy; legislative authority; electoral design

1. Introduction

The redesign of electoral simultaneity after Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 marks an important constitutional moment in Indonesia's electoral democracy. Since the implementation of the five-ballot simultaneous election model in 2019 and 2024, Indonesia has faced recurring concerns regarding electoral complexity, voter fatigue, administrative burden, ballot management, and the reduced visibility of local political issues within a nationally dominated electoral cycle. The original logic of simultaneous elections was closely connected to the effort to strengthen presidentialism, improve electoral efficiency, and create a more coherent relationship between presidential and legislative mandates. Yet the practical implementation of the five-ballot model revealed that simultaneity does not automatically produce democratic effectiveness. Electoral design must be assessed not only from the perspective of administrative efficiency, but also from its capacity to protect popular sovereignty, meaningful voting, legal certainty, and the constitutional quality of democratic representation (Asmara, 2022; Habibi & Kusuma, 2023).

Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 changes the constitutional direction of electoral simultaneity by separating national elections from local elections. Under the new constitutional interpretation, elections for the DPR, DPD, and President/Vice President are to be conducted first, while elections for provincial and regency/municipal DPRD members, governors, regents, and mayors are to be conducted later within a constitutionally prescribed interval. This judicial intervention is significant because

it does not merely correct a technical electoral schedule. It redefines the constitutional meaning of electoral simultaneity, the relationship between national and local democratic mandates, and the scope of legislative discretion in designing future elections. The decision places the Constitutional Court at the centre of electoral institutional engineering, while leaving important transitional questions to the legislature, particularly concerning the term of office of regional representatives and regional heads.

The main constitutional problem arises from the tension between judicial constitutional interpretation and the authority of the law-making institutions. On one side, the Constitutional Court has the authority to review statutes and protect constitutional principles such as popular sovereignty, equality before the law, fair legal certainty, and democratic elections. On the other side, electoral design is traditionally regarded as part of legislative policy because it involves complex political, administrative, fiscal, and institutional choices. Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 therefore raises a fundamental question: how far may the Court determine the architecture of electoral simultaneity without replacing the constitutional function of the legislature? This question is especially important in Indonesia because the Court's electoral jurisprudence has repeatedly shaped the structure of elections, including presidential thresholds, electoral systems, regional elections, and the timing of electoral contests. The issue is not whether judicial review is legitimate, but whether judicially mandated electoral redesign can be harmonised with democratic constitutionalism and the open legal policy of the legislature (Dixon & Tushnet, 2021; Wiratraman, 2022).

Recent studies have examined simultaneous elections, constitutional adjudication, and Indonesia's democratic trajectory from different perspectives. Asmara (2022) analyses simultaneous elections after Constitutional Court Decision Number 55/PUU-XVII/2019 and highlights their implications for Indonesian constitutional law. Asriana, Rosmini, and Ventyrina (2022) discuss the separation of national and regional simultaneous elections, showing that the issue had already emerged before the 2024 decision. Habibi and Kusuma (2023) examine simultaneous elections in relation to multiparty presidentialism and coattail effects, finding that simultaneity does not always generate the expected consolidation of party support. Kelibay, Boinauw, Rosnani, and Kalagison (2022) analyse the dynamics of simultaneous regional elections and the problem of regional head tenure. Dad (2023) discusses the reconstruction of elections in a digital world, which is relevant because contemporary electoral design must also account for administrative complexity and voter experience. Dixon and Tushnet (2021) emphasise the constitutional role of electoral commissions in Asian democracies, while Kotzé (2023) examines electoral management as a key element of democratic maturity. These studies show that electoral design is not a purely technical matter; it is a constitutional mechanism for organising representation, accountability, and democratic legitimacy.

Other related works provide broader insights into constitutional democracy, judicial power, and democratic backsliding. Wiratraman (2022) argues that constitutional courts may become deeply entangled in authoritarian political institutionalisation when judicial power operates within cartelised politics. Satrio (2023) examines Indonesia's constitutional transformation and warns against attempts to restore authoritarian constitutional ideas under the rhetoric of constitutional authenticity. Baker (2023) identifies structural drivers of democratic decline in Indonesia during Jokowi's second term, while Petlach (2025) analyses the shift from popular leadership to power consolidation in Indonesian politics. Kureshi (2025) offers a comparative framework showing that courts may either reinforce representative institutions or replace them in ways that can affect democratic stability. Adamidis (2024) revisits the relationship between democracy, populism, and the rule of law, which is useful for evaluating judicial interventions in politically sensitive electoral matters. These works provide an important analytical foundation, yet they do not specifically address how Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 restructures the constitutional relationship between electoral design, democratic representation, and legislative authority in Indonesia.

This study positions itself within that gap. While previous scholarship has examined simultaneous elections, electoral management, constitutional adjudication, and democratic regression separately, this article focuses specifically on the constitutional implications of changing the design of electoral simultaneity after Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the decision as a form of constitutional electoral engineering that simultaneously affects three dimensions: the substance of democratic representation, the constitutional authority of the legislature, and the institutional role of the Constitutional Court. This study aims to examine how the redesign of electoral simultaneity after Decision

Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 affects Indonesia's constitutional democracy and the law-making authority of the DPR and the President. It argues that the decision should be understood not only as a correction of electoral scheduling, but as a constitutional recalibration of Indonesia's electoral architecture that must be followed by careful legislative design, transitional legal certainty, and institutional safeguards against excessive judicial or political domination of electoral reform.

2. Methodology

This study employs a **qualitative legal research method** with a **normative-juridical approach**. The research is qualitative because it does not seek to test statistical variables or measure electoral behaviour numerically, but to interpret legal norms, constitutional principles, judicial reasoning, and institutional implications arising from Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024. The study is normative because it examines law as a system of rules, principles, doctrines, and constitutional values. It is juridical because the analysis is grounded in positive legal materials, particularly constitutional provisions, statutory regulations, and Constitutional Court decisions. This method is appropriate because the central issue of the study concerns the constitutional validity and implications of redesigning simultaneous elections, rather than the empirical measurement of voter preference or electoral outcomes.

This research applies three main approaches: the **statutory approach**, the **case approach**, and the **conceptual approach**. The statutory approach is used to examine the constitutional and legislative framework governing elections in Indonesia, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections, Law Number 10 of 2016 on Regional Elections, and other relevant election-related regulations. The case approach is used to analyse Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 as the main legal object of the study, including its ratio decidendi, constitutional reasoning, operative ruling, and implications for the future design of electoral simultaneity. The conceptual approach is used to examine theoretical concepts such as constitutional democracy, popular sovereignty, electoral simultaneity, open legal policy, judicial review, constitutional engineering, legislative discretion, and the separation of powers.

The study is designed as a **constitutional case study of Indonesia's electoral system after Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024**. Indonesia is selected as the case study because its experience with simultaneous elections represents a complex interaction between constitutional adjudication, legislative policy, democratic representation, and electoral administration. The decision is particularly significant because it changes the constitutional interpretation of simultaneous elections by separating national elections from local elections. National elections for the DPR, DPD, and President/Vice President are placed in one electoral cycle, while local elections for provincial and regency/municipal DPRD members, governors, regents, and mayors are placed in a later electoral cycle. This case is important because it directly affects the architecture of Indonesian democracy, the workload of election management bodies, the visibility of local political issues, and the authority of the legislature in determining electoral design.

The primary data in this research consist of **primary legal materials**, especially the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024, relevant previous Constitutional Court decisions on electoral simultaneity, election laws, regional election laws, and implementing regulations issued by electoral institutions. Previous Constitutional Court decisions are used to trace the development of constitutional reasoning on simultaneous elections, including the Court's jurisprudence on the relationship between presidential elections, legislative elections, regional elections, and democratic constitutional principles. Election laws and related regulations are examined to identify the extent to which the legislature retains discretion after the Court's decision.

The secondary data consist of **secondary legal materials**, including peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, legal commentaries, policy papers, and academic studies published within the last five years concerning simultaneous elections, constitutional democracy, electoral management, judicial review, legislative authority, open legal policy, and democratic constitutionalism. Priority is given to academic sources with active DOI records and publications from reputable journals. These materials are used to compare the findings of this study with previous research and to evaluate whether the Court's decision

should be understood as constitutional correction, judicial electoral engineering, or a limitation on legislative discretion.

The data collection technique used in this research is **documentary legal research**. Legal materials are collected through official legal databases, Constitutional Court documents, statutory compilations, election regulations, journal databases, and academic indexing platforms. The collected materials are classified into several analytical categories: constitutional norms on elections, judicial reasoning in electoral cases, legislative discretion in electoral design, democratic representation, electoral management, national-local electoral separation, and transitional legal certainty. This classification allows the research to examine the decision systematically and to connect the Court's reasoning with broader constitutional principles.

The data are analysed using **qualitative legal analysis** through legal interpretation, doctrinal analysis, and normative evaluation. Legal interpretation is used to identify the constitutional meaning of electoral simultaneity after Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024. Doctrinal analysis is used to assess the consistency of the decision with previous Constitutional Court jurisprudence and the doctrine of open legal policy. Normative evaluation is used to examine whether the decision strengthens or limits constitutional democracy and whether it appropriately balances judicial authority with the law-making authority of the DPR and the President. Through this analytical framework, the study seeks to formulate a constitutional assessment of the redesign of simultaneous elections and its implications for Indonesia's democratic electoral architecture.

3. Results and Discussions

1) Constitutional Reorientation of Electoral Simultaneity after Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024

The first finding of this study shows that Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 creates a constitutional reorientation of electoral simultaneity in Indonesia. Prior to this decision, the design of simultaneous elections was largely understood through the five-ballot model, in which elections for the President and Vice President, DPR, DPD, provincial DPRD, and regency/municipal DPRD were held on the same day. This model was initially justified as a constitutional design to strengthen presidentialism, reduce electoral fragmentation, and create a more efficient electoral cycle. Yet its implementation in 2019 and 2024 revealed substantial constitutional and administrative problems, including excessive complexity, a heavy burden on election organisers, voter fatigue, weak public attention to local legislative elections, and the domination of national political narratives over local democratic issues.

Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 alters this model by separating national elections from local elections. National elections consist of elections for the DPR, DPD, and President/Vice President, while local elections consist of elections for provincial and regency/municipal DPRD members, governors, regents, and mayors. This separation indicates that the Constitutional Court no longer treats simultaneity as a single-day, all-in-one electoral arrangement. Instead, electoral simultaneity is reconstructed as a differentiated constitutional design that distinguishes national representation from local representation. This finding is important because it shows that simultaneity is not merely a matter of electoral timing, but a constitutional instrument for structuring political representation, voter attention, and democratic accountability.

From a statutory and case-based analysis, the Court's decision can be read as a correction of the weaknesses of the previous electoral model. The five-ballot system created a situation in which voters were required to make several complex political choices at once, while election organisers were required to manage extensive administrative procedures within a compressed timeframe. This condition affected the quality of democratic participation because voters could focus more on presidential and national legislative contests while paying less attention to local legislative candidates. Such a situation weakens the constitutional value of meaningful voting, because electoral participation should not be reduced to the formal act of casting ballots. It should also ensure that citizens have a reasonable opportunity to understand candidates, political programmes, representative functions, and the consequences of their electoral choices.

This finding is consistent with previous studies that questioned the effectiveness of the five-ballot simultaneous election model. Asmara (2022) argues that the design of simultaneous elections after

Constitutional Court Decision Number 55/PUU-XVII/2019 produced important implications for Indonesian constitutional law because the Court recognised several possible models of simultaneity. Asriana, Rosmini, and Ventyrina (2022) also emphasise that the separation between national and regional simultaneous elections had already become a relevant constitutional option before Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024. Habibi and Kusuma (2023) further show that simultaneous elections do not automatically create a strong coattail effect or a more stable multiparty presidential system. These studies support the finding that the redesign of electoral simultaneity should be assessed not only through the logic of efficiency, but also through democratic quality, institutional feasibility, and constitutional representation.

The Court's reasoning also reflects a broader constitutional concern regarding the relationship between national and local democracy. When national and local elections are merged into one electoral day, local issues can be absorbed by national political competition. Voters may prioritise presidential candidates, national party coalitions, and central political narratives, while local accountability becomes less visible. The separation of national and local elections may create a better democratic space for evaluating regional leadership, local legislative performance, regional development programmes, and the political responsibility of local elites. In this sense, Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 strengthens the constitutional position of local democracy by giving it a more distinct electoral forum.

Yet this reorientation also creates new constitutional challenges. The separation of national and local elections requires careful synchronisation with the five-year electoral cycle, the term of office of regional representatives, the tenure of regional heads, budget planning, electoral logistics, and the institutional workload of the KPU, Bawaslu, and DKPP. Kelibay, Boinauw, Rosnani, and Kalagison (2022) have shown that simultaneous regional elections already created problems concerning the dynamics of regional head tenure. After Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024, this issue becomes more complex because the legislature must design a transitional framework that avoids arbitrary extension or reduction of elected office. The constitutional value of electoral periodicity must be preserved, because democracy requires not only elections, but regular elections held under predictable and legally certain rules.

The result of this analysis indicates that the decision should be understood as constitutional electoral engineering. It does not merely invalidate or modify a statutory provision; it directs the future architecture of Indonesian elections. Such judicial engineering may be justified when the previous model produces constitutional burdens that affect popular sovereignty and democratic representation. At the same time, it requires careful boundaries so that judicial correction does not become judicial domination over electoral policy. The main constitutional task after this decision is to translate the Court's ruling into legislation that preserves electoral certainty, institutional feasibility, and democratic accountability.

2) Implications for Constitutional Democracy and the Quality of Representation

The second finding of this study is that the redesign of electoral simultaneity has significant implications for constitutional democracy. Constitutional democracy requires more than electoral regularity. It requires elections that are meaningful, competitive, accountable, inclusive, and capable of translating popular sovereignty into representative institutions. The separation of national and local elections can strengthen constitutional democracy if it improves voter comprehension, reduces electoral complexity, increases the visibility of local issues, and allows citizens to evaluate public officials more carefully. Electoral design must therefore be understood as a constitutional mechanism that affects the substance of democratic representation.

The five-ballot simultaneous election model tended to concentrate public attention on presidential and national party competition. This concentration could weaken the deliberative quality of local elections because voters might have limited time and cognitive capacity to evaluate local legislative candidates. In a constitutional democracy, citizens must be able to make informed choices not only at the national level, but also at the local level. Local legislatures and regional heads play important roles in public services, budget allocation, regional regulation, spatial planning, education, health, and local economic development. If local contests are overshadowed by national political competition, the constitutional function of local democracy becomes less effective.

The separation of national and local elections may also improve accountability by creating different political moments for evaluating different levels of government. National elections can focus on national leadership, presidential accountability, national legislation, and central policy direction. Local elections can focus on regional governance, local development, public service delivery, and the performance of regional political actors. This design has the potential to strengthen the link between voters and representatives because electoral evaluation becomes more specific. It also allows political parties to develop different campaign strategies and policy platforms for national and local issues.

This finding is connected to Dixon and Tushnet's (2021) view that constitutional democracy depends not only on constitutional courts, but also on the institutional design of electoral governance. Electoral commissions, courts, legislatures, and political parties interact in shaping democratic outcomes. Kotzé (2023) also argues that electoral management is central to democratic maturity because election quality depends on administrative capacity, legal clarity, and institutional trust. In the Indonesian context, Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 creates an opportunity to improve electoral management by reducing the complexity of election-day administration. Yet this opportunity can only become a democratic gain if the legislature provides a clear and stable legal design.

The decision also has implications for political parties and electoral competition. A separated electoral schedule may reduce the dominance of presidential coattail effects in local legislative elections. Habibi and Kusuma (2023) argue that the coattail effect in Indonesia's multiparty presidential system is not always consistent or strong. This study extends that argument by showing that separating national and local elections may allow voters to assess political parties and candidates at the local level more independently from presidential competition. Such independence may support a more programmatic local democracy, although it may also increase campaign costs and prolong political contestation if not carefully regulated.

The redesign of electoral simultaneity also raises concerns about democratic fatigue. While the separation of elections may reduce voter fatigue on a single election day, it may also increase the frequency of electoral mobilisation. Citizens, parties, election organisers, and state institutions may face a prolonged electoral cycle if national and local elections are separated by two to two and a half years. This creates a trade-off between reducing ballot complexity and avoiding continuous political contestation. The legislature must therefore design the new electoral calendar in a way that does not transform Indonesia into a permanently campaigning democracy. Constitutional democracy requires both electoral participation and effective governance between elections.

The Court's decision may also influence the balance between procedural and substantive democracy. Procedurally, the separation of elections creates a clearer electoral schedule and more manageable administrative tasks. Substantively, it may enhance voter attention, representation, and accountability. Yet the substantive benefit depends on legislative follow-up. If the transition is poorly regulated, the new model may create legal uncertainty, especially concerning office terms, electoral budgeting, candidate nomination, and regional governance continuity. Baker (2023) warns that Indonesia's democratic decline is shaped by structural political conditions, including elite consolidation and weak accountability. In this context, electoral redesign will not automatically strengthen democracy unless it is accompanied by safeguards against elite manipulation of electoral rules.

For that reason, the constitutional-democratic implication of Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 is ambivalent. It offers a path toward more meaningful and manageable elections, but it also creates risks of legal uncertainty and political engineering. The decision strengthens democratic constitutionalism when it is implemented through transparent legislation, public participation, respect for electoral periodicity, and institutional independence. It may weaken democratic constitutionalism if it becomes a tool for extending political tenure, rearranging electoral competition for partisan advantage, or reducing the role of public deliberation in electoral reform.

3) The Law-Making Authority and the Boundary of Judicial Electoral Engineering

The third finding of this study concerns the impact of Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 on the authority of the law-making institutions. Electoral design is generally located within the authority of the DPR and the President as legislators because it involves policy choices, institutional coordination, budgetary

consequences, and political compromise. The doctrine of open legal policy recognises that certain matters are constitutionally permitted to be regulated by the legislature as long as they do not violate the Constitution. In electoral matters, this doctrine is important because there are often several constitutionally acceptable models, and the choice among them may depend on political, administrative, and social considerations.

Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 narrows the legislature's discretion by determining that the constitutionally valid model of future elections must separate national and local electoral cycles. This is different from a judicial decision that merely declares a statutory provision unconstitutional and leaves the legislature to choose among several alternatives. The Court's decision gives a stronger constitutional direction regarding the architecture of electoral simultaneity. This finding raises an important question about the proper boundary between constitutional interpretation and electoral policy-making. The Court has the authority to protect constitutional rights and democratic principles, but the legislature has the constitutional authority to design legal instruments within the constitutional framework.

This tension can be analysed through the relationship between judicial review and democratic legitimacy. Judicial review is necessary when legislative policy violates constitutional principles, especially in matters affecting political rights and electoral fairness. Yet excessive judicial specification of electoral design may reduce the deliberative space of the legislature and the public. Kureshi (2025) argues that courts can either reinforce or replace representative institutions in contexts of democratic backsliding. This distinction is useful for analysing Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024. The decision reinforces democracy if it corrects an electoral design that weakens meaningful voting and representation. It risks replacing legislative authority if it determines too much of the electoral architecture without leaving adequate room for democratic law-making.

The Indonesian context makes this issue more complex because the Constitutional Court has played a major role in shaping electoral law. The Court has decided issues concerning electoral systems, presidential thresholds, candidacy requirements, regional elections, and electoral simultaneity. Wiratraman (2022) warns that constitutional courts may become entangled in political institutionalisation when judicial power operates within a political environment marked by elite cartelisation. Satrio (2023) also shows that constitutional interpretation in Indonesia cannot be separated from broader struggles over constitutional identity and institutional power. These studies suggest that judicial intervention in electoral design must be evaluated carefully, not only based on its formal authority, but also based on its institutional consequences for democracy.

The key issue is not whether the Court may intervene in electoral design. The Court may intervene when the existing design violates constitutional principles or produces unconstitutional consequences. The more precise issue is how far the Court may go in prescribing the future model. Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 appears to move from constitutional review toward constitutional prescription. It does not only identify constitutional defects in the previous model; it also provides a binding direction for separating national and local elections. This may be justified as a form of constitutional engineering, but it must be followed by legislative deliberation that respects the Court's ruling while preserving the legislature's role in regulating technical, transitional, and institutional details.

The legislature's responsibility after the decision is therefore substantial. The DPR and the President must revise the electoral legal framework in a way that translates the Court's ruling into a workable statutory design. This includes determining the precise electoral calendar, regulating the transition of office terms, adjusting the stages of election administration, ensuring budgetary readiness, protecting the independence of electoral management bodies, and guaranteeing equal political competition. Legislative follow-up must not be treated as a mere technical adjustment. It is a constitutional duty to maintain legal certainty and democratic legitimacy after judicial intervention.

The doctrine of separation of powers requires a balanced relationship between the Court and the legislature. The Court establishes constitutional limits and corrects unconstitutional legislative choices, while the legislature formulates democratic policy within those limits. If the legislature ignores the decision, constitutional supremacy is weakened. If the Court controls too much of the policy design, democratic law-making is weakened. A balanced approach requires what may be called dialogic constitutionalism: the Court

provides constitutional direction, and the legislature responds through open, participatory, and accountable law-making. This approach allows judicial review and legislative authority to function as complementary mechanisms rather than competing sources of constitutional control.

This study finds that Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 creates both an opportunity and a warning. The opportunity lies in the possibility of building a more rational, manageable, and representative electoral system. The warning lies in the possibility that electoral redesign may become a field of institutional tension between the Court and the legislature. The future quality of Indonesia's constitutional democracy will depend on how the legislature responds to the decision. If the response is transparent, participatory, and consistent with constitutional principles, the decision may strengthen democratic representation. If the response is closed, partisan, or oriented toward tenure manipulation, the decision may produce new constitutional problems.

Overall, the results of this study show that the redesign of electoral simultaneity after Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 cannot be understood as a simple change in election scheduling. It is a constitutional transformation that affects democratic representation, institutional accountability, electoral management, and the distribution of authority between the Constitutional Court and the law-making institutions. The decision redefines the meaning of electoral simultaneity, strengthens the constitutional visibility of local democracy, and imposes a new duty on the legislature to design a legally certain transition. Its success will depend not only on the correctness of the Court's reasoning, but also on the quality of legislative implementation and the integrity of Indonesia's democratic institutions.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 represents a constitutional reorientation of Indonesia's electoral simultaneity design. The decision changes the meaning of simultaneous elections from a single-day, all-in-one electoral model into a differentiated electoral architecture that separates national elections from local elections. This shift should not be understood merely as a technical adjustment to the electoral calendar. It constitutes a deeper constitutional transformation because it affects the structure of democratic representation, the visibility of local political accountability, the workload of electoral management bodies, and the boundaries of legislative discretion in designing elections.

The findings show that the previous five-ballot simultaneous election model created significant democratic and administrative burdens. Although the model was originally intended to strengthen presidentialism and electoral efficiency, its implementation generated voter fatigue, excessive ballot complexity, administrative pressure, and the marginalisation of local electoral issues. The separation of national and local elections may improve the quality of democratic participation by allowing voters to evaluate national and local political actors in distinct electoral moments. It may also strengthen local democracy by giving regional issues, local candidates, and regional governance performance a clearer space within the electoral process.

This study also finds that Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 has important implications for the relationship between the Constitutional Court and the law-making institutions. The decision narrows the scope of legislative discretion by prescribing a new constitutional direction for electoral simultaneity. This creates a constitutional tension between judicial review and open legal policy. The Court has a legitimate role in correcting electoral designs that undermine constitutional democracy, yet the legislature retains the authority and responsibility to translate the Court's ruling into detailed, workable, and democratically legitimate legislation. The success of the decision will therefore depend on whether the DPR and the President can formulate a transitional and permanent electoral framework that respects legal certainty, electoral periodicity, institutional feasibility, and public participation.

The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 as a form of constitutional electoral engineering. Previous studies have discussed simultaneous elections, electoral management, coattail effects, regional election dynamics, and constitutional adjudication separately. This study connects those debates by showing that the redesign of electoral simultaneity simultaneously affects three constitutional dimensions: democratic representation, the authority of the law-making institutions, and

the institutional role of the Constitutional Court. This contribution is significant because it places electoral scheduling within the broader framework of constitutional democracy, rather than treating it as a merely administrative matter.

The findings also refine previous scholarship on simultaneous elections in Indonesia. Earlier studies questioned the effectiveness of the five-ballot model and highlighted the need to separate national and local electoral cycles. This study strengthens those arguments by showing that the separation is now no longer only a policy recommendation, but a constitutional mandate arising from judicial interpretation. At the same time, this study adds a critical perspective by warning that judicially mandated electoral redesign may create new constitutional risks if it is not followed by transparent and accountable legislative implementation. Electoral reform may strengthen democracy when it improves representation and legal certainty, but it may weaken democracy if it becomes a vehicle for tenure manipulation, elite bargaining, or closed political engineering.

This study has several limitations. It relies on normative legal analysis and documentary research, so it does not empirically measure the practical impact of electoral simultaneity on voter behaviour, election organiser workload, campaign costs, or party strategies. It also does not include interviews with Constitutional Court judges, legislators, election management bodies, political parties, civil society organisations, or voters. As a result, the analysis provides a constitutional and doctrinal assessment rather than an empirical evaluation of how the new electoral design will operate in practice. These limitations indicate that the legal reconstruction offered in this study should be complemented by future empirical and socio-legal research.

Future research should examine the implementation of Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 after the legislature revises the electoral legal framework. Further studies may analyse whether the separation of national and local elections actually improves voter comprehension, strengthens local accountability, reduces administrative burdens, and enhances the quality of representation. Empirical research may also assess the impact of the new design on political party behaviour, campaign financing, electoral management capacity, voter turnout, and regional governance stability. Comparative studies may examine how other constitutional democracies regulate the timing of national and local elections, especially in presidential and decentralised systems. Further doctrinal research should also focus on the development of the open legal policy doctrine in electoral cases, particularly to clarify the boundary between constitutional review and legislative authority in designing Indonesia's democratic institutions.

In conclusion, the redesign of electoral simultaneity after Constitutional Court Decision Number 135/PUU-XXII/2024 opens an important opportunity to improve Indonesia's democratic electoral architecture. Yet this opportunity will only produce constitutional value if it is followed by careful legislative design, transparent public deliberation, respect for electoral periodicity, and safeguards against political manipulation. The decision should be implemented not as a narrow technical adjustment, but as a constitutional mandate to build elections that are more meaningful, manageable, accountable, and consistent with Indonesia's democratic constitutional order.

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