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THE ESSENCE OF SIMULTANEOUS GENERAL ELECTIONS IN INDONESIA'S PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM: A STUDY OF CONSTITUTIONAL COURT DECISION NO. 135/PUU-XXII/2024

ESENSI PEMILIHAN UMUM SERENTAK DALAM SISTEM PRESIDENSIAL DI INDONESIA: STUDI PUTUSAN MAHKAMAH KONSTITUSI NOMOR 135/PUU XXII/2024

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the essence of simultaneous general elections as well as shifts in the Constitutional Court's interpretation through Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013, Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, and Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. This study employs a normative legal method using a statutory approach and a case-based approach through a literature review. The results of the study indicate that simultaneous elections are not only related to the uniform timing of their conduct but also serve as an instrument to realize popular sovereignty and strengthen the presidential system. Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 demonstrates a shift in the Court's interpretation by distinguishing between national and local elections based on considerations of administrative efficiency. This shift reflects the evolution of constitutional interpretation but also raises concerns regarding the consistency of case law and legal certainty. Therefore, the design of elections must remain oriented toward constitutional objectives, namely ensuring popular sovereignty and strengthening the presidential system.

Keywords : Simultaneous Elections, Presidential System, Constitutional Court, Constitutional Interpretation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis esensi pemilu serentak serta pergeseran penafsiran Mahkamah Konstitusi melalui Putusan Nomor 14/PUU-XI/2013, Putusan Nomor 55/PUU-XVII/2019, dan Putusan Nomor 135/PUU-XXII/2024. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode yuridis normatif dengan pendekatan perundang-undangan dan pendekatan kasus melalui studi kepustakaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemilu serentak tidak hanya berkaitan dengan kesamaan waktu pelaksanaan,

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tetapi juga merupakan instrumen untuk mewujudkan kedaulatan rakyat dan memperkuat sistem presidensial. Putusan Nomor 135/PUU-XXII/2024 menunjukkan adanya pergeseran tafsir Mahkamah dengan memisahkan pemilu nasional dan pemilu lokal berdasarkan pertimbangan efektivitas penyelenggaraan. Pergeseran tersebut menunjukkan perkembangan penafsiran konstitusi, tetapi juga menimbulkan persoalan mengenai konsistensi yurisprudensi dan kepastian hukum. Oleh karena itu, desain pemilu harus tetap berorientasi pada tujuan konstitusional, yaitu menjamin kedaulatan rakyat dan penguatan sistem presidensial.

Kata Kunci : Pemilu Serentak, Sistem Presidensial, Mahkamah Konstitusi, Penafsiran Konstitusi.

1. INTRODUCTION

General elections are a prerequisite for the functioning of a democratic system. According to (Ghafur & Wardana Gani, 2019), a democratic state regards elections as a process useful for realizing the will of the people, which is explicitly enshrined in the 1945 Constitution. This means that the will of the people is manifested by electing their representatives to hold seats in both the executive and legislative branches. In the practice of democracy in Indonesia, as affirmed in Article 1, Paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution, the concept of popular sovereignty embraced by the Indonesian people is not sovereignty in the sense of absolute freedom; the exercise of popular sovereignty must also be understood as subject to and compliant with the rule of law.

Democracy is a form of government that originates from the people and is intended for the benefit of the people. It is a system based on the principles of popular sovereignty, freedom, and equality as its two core values. Freedom here means having the right to act and take responsibility within the framework of the constitution, the law, and moral norms. Furthermore, equality encompasses various aspects such as politics, law, economics, and society.(Hasibuan, 2023) As a political system, it can be said that democracy is the appropriate way to manage state affairs, although it cannot be considered the most ideal system for governing human life. Currently, the embodiment of popular sovereignty is evident in the filling of certain positions through the general election process. The realization of popular sovereignty in the conduct of general elections today is equivalent to the implementation of democracy in this country.

One of the Constitutional Court's key duties is to review laws against the 1945 Constitution. According to Asshidiqie, fundamentally, lower-level norms must not contradict higher-level norms to maintain consistency between them; thus, a mechanism is needed to review laws known as judicial review against higher-level norms. In a system of checks and balances based on the principle of separation of powers, this process of legal review is often associated with an additional role undertaken by the judiciary, namely the Supreme Court. However, as times have changed, an increasing number of new democracies have tended to establish a Constitutional Court as a judicial body to oversee legislation.

The Constitutional Court's Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, which separates the schedules for national and local elections, is particularly noteworthy because the Court appears to have ruled on this matter beyond its authority as a "negative legislator." Nevertheless, the Court's decision is binding on all (erga omnes), and there is no legal recourse to overturn it.

To contribute to the field of scholarship, the author conducted a literature review of works discussing Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. After conducting this review, the author found several articles that examine the same issue as this paper. The first is by (Suryana dkk., 2025) titled "A Legal-Political Analysis of Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 on the Separation of National and Local Elections" , which examines the legal policy aspects of Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. Second, (Andana & Amin, 2025), titled "Legal Implications of Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 on Regional Elections" ; this paper examines the impact of the Court's decision on vacancies in the offices of regional heads and deputy regional heads and discusses the transition period resulting from the decision. Third, (Baehaki, 2025) paper

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titled “The Future of Elections in Indonesia: Legal and Political Implications of Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XII/2024” This paper discusses the impact of the decision on the legislative and judicial branches.

Among the works cited above, there are several similarities with what the author will write namely, they all examine Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024; however, in this paper, the author does not limit the research to this decision alone; other Constitutional Court decisions related to simultaneous elections will also be examined. For this reason, the author uses the title “The Essence of Simultaneous Elections” to re-examine the existence of general elections as a manifestation of popular sovereignty.

Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 has sparked both support and opposition among the public. Those in favor of the decision view it as consistent with the mandate of the amendments to the 1945 Constitution, while those opposed believe it could weaken Indonesian democracy and increase the costs of conducting elections. Based on this, the author is interested in examining and researching this issue; this research will culminate in an academic paper titled “The Essence of Simultaneous General Elections in Indonesia’s Presidential System: A Study of Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024.”

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a normative legal research approach, focusing on the analysis of legal norms, legal principles, and court rulings as primary legal materials (Mahmud Marzuki, 2008). This approach was selected because the issues under examination namely constitutional interpretation, the consistency of Constitutional Court jurisprudence, and a theoretical analysis of shifts in constitutional interpretationplace the subject matter within the realm of "law in books" rather than "law in action." Normative research enables the researcher to evaluate the quality of legal arguments, methods of interpretation, the emergence of inconsistencies, and the impact of Constitutional Court rulings on legal certainty and the electoral system.

The data collection method employed in this study is a literature review, intended to establish the direction of thought and research objectives by examining and analyzing sources relevant to the subject matter and gathering data from various forms of secondary literature. This process involves studying, reading, citing, and analyzing literature, legal principles, legal theories, statutory regulations, and other scholarly materials pertinent to the issues addressed in this research.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-deductive qualitative approach, wherein collected data were presented descriptively and analyzed qualitatively; the process involved categorizing data according to research issues, systematically organizing the resulting categories, and analyzing the organized data to serve as the basis for argumentation in drawing conclusions.

3. RESULT AND DISCCUSSION

The Essence of Simultaneous General Elections in Indonesia’s Presidential System

Simultaneous general elections are essentially a constitutionally mandated tool to strengthen the presidential system of government in Indonesia. The idea of simultaneous elections was first put forward by the Constitutional Court in Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013, which stated that separating legislative and presidential elections has the potential to weaken the presidential system. Simultaneous elections aim to foster harmony between the executive and legislative branches, ensuring that the elected president has sufficient political support in parliament coattail effect (Al Basith dkk., 2025).

From the perspective of popular sovereignty as stipulated in Article 1, paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, simultaneous elections directly represent the will of the people, expressed simultaneously and efficiently. The people not only elect their representatives but also simultaneously determine the direction of policy at both the national and local levels through a single democratic process. Therefore, the essence of simultaneous elections lies not only in the technical aspects of their implementation but also in their role in maintaining the stability of the presidential system and

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strengthening the legitimacy of the government (Pahlevi dkk., 2015). However, the implementation of simultaneous elections also requires consistency in the interpretation of the Constitution to avoid legal confusion. Inconsistency in interpreting the concept of simultaneity can diminish the meaning of popular sovereignty and create problems in the practice of state administration.(Rayhan, 2025.)

Furthermore, the essence of simultaneous elections is also linked to the principles of legal certainty and simplicity within the electoral system. Conducting elections simultaneously at a fixed time can reduce the complexity of the electoral stages and minimize potential conflicts of interest between election organizers and participants. Within the framework of the rule of law, legal certainty is a vital element so that every stage of the election can be understood and anticipated by all parties involved—whether organizers, participants, or voters. Therefore, consistency in the regulations and interpretation regarding simultaneous elections is a fundamental requirement for maintaining democratic stability within the constitutional framework. However, simultaneous elections also present certain challenges, particularly regarding management and the heavy administrative burden. The complexity of simultaneous elections requires readiness from existing institutions, clear regulations, and sufficient human resources. If not supported by sound planning, simultaneous elections could actually undermine the quality of democracy and place a heavy burden on voters. Therefore, understanding simultaneous elections should be viewed as a balance between strengthening the presidential system, protecting citizens' rights, and ensuring the effective conduct of elections. In other words, simultaneous elections represent a strategic constitutional choice within Indonesia's presidential system. Understanding of simultaneous elections should be placed within the broader context of constitutional democracy, not merely as a technical or administrative issue. Consistency in the constitutional interpretation of simultaneous elections is key to ensuring that the goals of strengthening the presidential system and exercising popular sovereignty can be optimally achieved.

The term "simultaneously," as defined in Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, is a direct legal consequence of Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013. In that decision, the Constitutional Court ruled that separating legislative elections from the election of the President and Vice President is inconsistent with the nature of the presidential system enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The Court explicitly stated that holding separate elections has the potential to weaken the effectiveness of government because the elected President has no guarantee of adequate political support in the legislature.

In the author's view, the essence of simultaneous elections as articulated in Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 cannot be narrowly interpreted as merely synchronizing the timing of voting. Simultaneous elections must be understood as a constitutional instrument to strengthen the presidential system by aligning political legitimacy among the executive and legislative branches (Asshiddiqie, 2006). By holding elections simultaneously, the people grant their political mandate in a single, cohesive moment, so that election results reflect the people's political will in a more consistent and integrated manner.

Strengthening the presidential system through simultaneous elections is also linked to the "coattails effect" the tendency for voters to align their support across both the presidential and legislative elections. This effect is considered crucial for reducing political fragmentation in parliament and fostering governmental stability. In this context, simultaneous elections serve not only as a democratic mechanism but also as a tool of constitutional engineering to establish an effective government.

The implementation of the Constitutional Court's ruling was subsequently accommodated by the legislature through Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections. This law consolidates the conduct of elections for the President and Vice President, the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional Representatives Council (DPD), and Regional People's Representative Councils (DPRD) into a single voting day. Normatively, this provision indicates that the legislature has accepted and adopted the Constitutional Court's view regarding the importance of synchronizing national elections as part of the design of the presidential system of government (Huda, 2010).

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However, in the author's view, the essence of simultaneous elections becomes problematic when linked to the regulations governing regional head elections. Law No. 10 of 2016, through Article 201(8), does indeed stipulate the conduct of simultaneous national regional head elections in November 2024. However, the temporal separation between national elections and the simultaneous national regional head elections indicates that this simultaneity was not designed as a single, cohesive electoral system, but rather is divided into a national electoral regime and a local electoral regime.

Furthermore, this separation of regimes has the potential to obscure the constitutional significance of simultaneous elections. If simultaneous elections are intended to strengthen the presidential system and simplify the party system, then the fragmentation of election timelines risks reigniting political dynamics that are out of sync between the central government and local regions. This could lead to sustained political instability and weaken the effectiveness of the government resulting from the elections.

This issue has become increasingly prominent following the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, which explicitly separates the schedules for national and local elections. In that decision, the Constitutional Court emphasized considerations of the effectiveness of election administration and the technical complexity of elections as the basis for separating the schedules (Mayasari, 2025). In the author's view, these considerations indicate a shift in the Court's interpretation of the concept of simultaneous elections, which was previously framed within the context of strengthening the presidential system. The difference in interpretation between Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 and Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 reveals an inconsistency in the Constitutional Court's jurisprudence regarding the essence of simultaneous elections (Tanjung dkk., 2022).

Inconsistency of the Constitutional Court in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024

The Constitutional Court is one of the branches of an independent judiciary. Pursuant to Article 24C (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the Constitutional Court has the authority to adjudicate, in the first and final instance, with decisions that are final, to review the constitutionality of laws. In exercising this authority, the Constitutional Court not only assesses the conformity of statutory provisions with the Constitution but also engages in constitutional interpretation as the basis for determining the meaning and scope of application of a given provision. Therefore, the Constitutional Court's rulings play a significant role in shaping constitutional understanding and contribute to the development of constitutional law in Indonesia, although this influence must still be understood within the limits of the authority granted by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and other laws.

One interesting issue in the development of constitutional interpretation is the shift in the Constitutional Court's stance regarding the design of simultaneous elections. This issue is evident in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024, which essentially calls for the separation of national elections from regional or local elections. This decision has far-reaching implications as it encompasses the organizational framework of elections as well as the relationship between national and regional elections (Afandi, Amboro, & Seroja, 2025).

Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024 cannot be separated from the development of previous Constitutional Court decisions, particularly Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 and Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019. Both of these decisions played a crucial role in establishing the legal framework regarding the simultaneous holding of elections in Indonesia. Therefore, the Constitutional Court's shift in stance in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024 must be thoroughly examined through the ratio decidendi of each decision. In Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013, the Constitutional Court developed the concept of simultaneous elections. This simultaneity, among other things, combines legislative and executive elections (five-box elections). Furthermore, in Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, the Court proposed several election models after reviewing the minutes of the amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, including:

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a. Simultaneous elections to elect the President/Vice President, as well as members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD.
b. Simultaneous elections to elect the President/Vice President, members of the DPR, DPD, Governors, and Regents/Mayors.
c. Simultaneous elections to elect the President/Vice President, members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD, as well as Governors and Regents/Mayors.
d. National simultaneous elections are held to elect the President and Vice President, as well as members of the House of Representatives (DPR) and the Regional Representatives Council (DPD); shortly thereafter, local simultaneous elections are held to elect members of the Provincial People's Representative Council (DPRD), members of the Regency/Municipal People's Representative Council (DPRD), as well as governors and regents/mayors.
e. National simultaneous elections to elect the President/Vice President, members of the DPR and DPD; followed some time later by provincial simultaneous elections to elect members of the Provincial People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the governor; and some time after that, regency/city simultaneous elections to elect members of the Regency/City People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the regent/mayor.
f. Other options are permissible as long as they maintain the simultaneous nature of the elections to elect the President and Vice President, as well as members of the DPR and DPD.

The Constitutional Court does not, in principle, rigidly limit the form of simultaneous elections to a single model. The Court allows the legislature to determine the design of simultaneous elections as long as it adheres to the constitutional principles of (Hantoro, 2023) . However, through Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024, the Constitutional Court set a new direction by separating national elections from regional elections. This change indicates that the Court's interpretation of election design has undergone a significant evolution. The question that then arises is whether this change can be categorized as an evolution in constitutional interpretation or, conversely, constitutes a form of inconsistency with the Constitutional Court's previous rulings. Inconsistency in court rulings can essentially be identified when there is a discrepancy between the legal reasoning and the legal conclusion in cases involving related constitutional characteristics or issues. In the context of Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024, this inconsistency can primarily be analyzed through the shift in the legal framework regarding the simultaneous holding of elections.

Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 framed the simultaneous holding of elections as a design linked to the strengthening of the presidential system of government. The simultaneous holding of legislative and presidential elections was viewed as having implications for the political configuration and the effectiveness of governance (Ariviani dkk., 2016). Meanwhile, Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024 establishes a different framework by separating national elections from regional elections. Under this separation, the presidential election, the House of Representatives (DPR), and the Regional Representatives Council (DPD) elections are held during a single national election cycle, while the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and regional head elections are held during a separate regional/local election cycle.

This difference reflects a shift in the Constitutional Court's perspective regarding the relationship between the simultaneous holding of elections and the effectiveness of governance. simultaneous elections were viewed as an instrument to strengthen the presidential system of government, in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024 the Court places greater emphasis on the need to separate elections based on the level of government (Andana & Amin, 2025). On the one hand, this change can be understood as a form of legal development. The Constitution is not a norm that can only be interpreted statically. The Constitutional Court, as the guardian of the Constitution, has the authority to adapt its interpretation of the Constitution to developments in the political system and the needs of society (Suryana dkk., 2025).

However, this shift in position also raises issues from the perspective of the consistency of rulings. The Constitutional Court needs to provide adequate reasoning regarding why the legal

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framework previously established is no longer relevant. The more fundamental the changes made to a system of government, the greater the need for reasoning that can explain the basis for those changes. Thus, the issue of inconsistency does not lie solely in the fact that the Constitutional Court issues a ruling that differs from a previous one. Inconsistency is more accurately assessed based on whether there are sufficient constitutional grounds for making such a change in position.

Article 22E of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia serves as the primary constitutional basis for the conduct of elections. This article stipulates that elections shall be held directly, universally, freely, by secret ballot, honestly, and fairly every five years. Article 22E(2) further stipulates that elections are held to elect members of the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional Representatives Council (DPD), the President and Vice President, and Regional People's Representative Councils (DPRD). These provisions serve as a crucial basis for evaluating the " " design of simultaneous elections. The issue at hand is whether the listing of various elected offices within a single provision Article 22E(2) requires all such elections to be held simultaneously or allows the legislature to determine their timing.

Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024 interprets that national and regional elections may be held at different times. Thus, the Constitutional Court interprets Article 22E of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia by distinguishing the nature of elections at the national and regional levels. Issues then arise when this interpretation is compared with the framework established in previous rulings. This change in interpretation must systematically explain the relationship between Article 22E and the principles of democracy, the presidential system of government, regional autonomy, and the principle of popular sovereignty (Galang Asmara, 2022).

If the change in interpretation is based solely on considerations of the technical effectiveness of election administration, there is a risk that the Constitutional Court will enter the realm of "open legal policy," which is essentially the domain of the legislature. Conversely, if the separation of elections is truly necessary to ensure the implementation of constitutional principles, then the Court must demonstrate a clear connection between the electoral design and the norms of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, inconsistency can be observed in the shift in the focus of interpretation. Previously, the Court placed greater emphasis on the relationship between simultaneous elections and the presidential system of government , whereas in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024, attention was directed more toward the need to distinguish elections based on levels of government (Fatullah dkk., 2025).

Legal certainty is one of the fundamental principles of a state governed by the rule of law. Article 1, paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that Indonesia is a state governed by the rule of law. Consequently, the exercise of state power must be based on laws that are clear, predictable, and consistently applied. In the context of Constitutional Court rulings, legal certainty relates not only to the statutory norms being reviewed but also to the consistency of constitutional interpretation. The public and lawmakers require a comprehensible framework for interpretation so that the Court's rulings can serve as guidelines in formulating legal policies.

The Constitutional Court's change in position in Decision No. 135/PUU-XXI/2024 has the potential to raise issues of legal certainty, as the electoral framework previously established through the Court's decisions has undergone a fairly fundamental change (Indrati, 2007). In the context of a democratic state governed by the rule of law, inconsistent interpretations of fundamental electoral principles have the potential to undermine public trust in the design of electoral democracy. Therefore, the author argues that the essence of simultaneous elections must be restored to its constitutional purpose namely, as a means of realizing the people's sovereignty in a comprehensive, consistent manner, and oriented toward strengthening the presidential system. The Constitutional Court, as the guardian of the constitution, should ideally ensure the continuity of constitutional interpretation so that simultaneous elections are not reduced to merely pragmatic technical policies but remain the primary instrument for the consolidation of Indonesian democracy (Asshiddiqie, 2005).

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Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 holds strategic significance in the debate over simultaneous elections in Indonesia because this decision not only affirms the constitutionality of simultaneous elections but also provides greater flexibility in interpreting the design of such elections. In this decision, the Constitutional Court held that the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia does not rigidly prescribe a specific model for simultaneous elections, provided that the constitutional principles of elections are upheld (Amir, 2020).

In its legal reasoning, the Constitutional Court emphasized that the essence of general elections under the 1945 Constitution lies in the fulfillment of the fundamental principles of elections as stipulated in Article 22E(1) of the 1945 Constitution, namely that elections must be conducted directly, universally, freely, by secret ballot, honestly, and fairly. Thus, according to the Court, the simultaneous holding of elections is not an end in itself, but rather a means to ensure the effective and high-quality implementation of these constitutional principles. In the author's view, Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 offers a new perspective on understanding the essence of simultaneous elections. While Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 emphasized simultaneous elections as an instrument for strengthening the presidential system, Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 places simultaneous elections within the framework of safeguarding the quality of democracy and the effectiveness of election administration. The Court explicitly states that the design of simultaneous elections must take into account the capacity of election administrators, the rationality of the workload, as well as the safety and constitutional rights of voters and election administrators (Hantoro, 2023).

However, in the author's view, the flexibility granted by Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 must be interpreted carefully to avoid creating relativism regarding the meaning of simultaneous elections. Although the Court allows for variations in election models, it continues to emphasize that every election design must be consistent with the principle of popular sovereignty and the adopted system of government. Therefore, this flexibility cannot be used as a basis for setting aside the constitutional objectives of simultaneous elections as formulated in Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 (HAKIM, 2021). In this context, the author argues that Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 should be understood as a supplement to, rather than a correction of, Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013. The essence of simultaneous elections remains rooted in efforts to strengthen the presidential system, but their implementation must be aligned with the principles of effectiveness, safety, and the quality of democracy. In other words, simultaneous elections represent a meeting point between constitutional interests and the practical realities of conducting elections.

The relevance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 becomes even more significant when considered in conjunction with Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024. In the author's view, the separation of national and local elections in that decision appears to align more closely with the logic of Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, which emphasizes the effectiveness and rationality of election administration. However, the issue lies in whether such a separation still preserves the essence of simultaneous elections as an instrument for strengthening the presidential system and fully realizing popular sovereignty. In the author's view, Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 risks prioritizing technical effectiveness as the dominant consideration, while the constitutional dimensions of simultaneous elections are inadequately articulated in a manner. This risks shifting elections from a forum for democratic consolidation to merely a periodic administrative agenda. In fact, as emphasized in Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, elections must still be regarded as the primary mechanism for the exercise of popular sovereignty, oriented toward the quality of democracy, not merely procedural efficiency.

Thus, the author concludes that the essence of simultaneous elections, according to Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019, lies in the balance between the principle of popular sovereignty, the strengthening of the system of government, and the effectiveness of election

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administration. This decision provides a more flexible normative framework, yet still requires constitutional consistency in every electoral design. Therefore, in evaluating Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024, the essence of simultaneous elections must not be separated from the framework of values established by the Constitutional Court through Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 and Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019.

4. CONCLUSION

Simultaneous general elections are, in essence, a constitutional framework designed to fully realize the sovereignty of the people while simultaneously strengthening the presidential system of government in Indonesia. Constitutional Court Decision No. 14/PUU-XI/2013 affirms that the simultaneous nature of elections is intended to align the political legitimacy of the President and the legislative branch in order to create an effective and stable government. Furthermore, Constitutional Court Decision No. 55/PUU-XVII/2019 places simultaneous elections within the framework of fulfilling constitutional principles governing elections and allows for flexibility in electoral design as long as it does not disregard these constitutional objectives. However, Constitutional Court Decision No. 135/PUU-XXII/2024 indicates a shift in interpretation by emphasizing technical effectiveness through the of separating national and local elections, which results in inconsistent jurisprudence and has the potential to diminish the constitutional significance of simultaneous elections. Therefore, the essence of simultaneous elections must be restored to its constitutional purpose as an instrument for realizing popular sovereignty and strengthening the presidential system, while still taking into account the effectiveness of their administration without sacrificing the consistency of constitutional interpretation.

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