

# Evaluation of the Simultaneous Election System and Its Impact on the Quality of Democracy in Indonesia

Dewa Erlangga<sup>1</sup>, Ganca Saputra<sup>2</sup>, Aghisna Syakira bilbina<sup>3</sup> Rudi Santoso<sup>4</sup>  
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

dewae4311@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT:

**Background:** Indonesia's simultaneous election system was implemented to improve governmental efficiency, strengthen political consolidation, and enhance democratic accountability. However, its implementation has also generated various challenges related to electoral management, voter behavior, and institutional performance.

**Aims:** This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the simultaneous election system in Indonesia and analyze its impact on the quality of democracy, particularly in terms of political participation, electoral effectiveness, and democratic representation.

**Methods:** This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using literature review methods. Data were collected from academic journals, government reports, election regulations, and previous studies related to Indonesia's electoral system and democratic development.

**Result:** The findings indicate that simultaneous elections have contributed to increased voter participation and strengthened the efficiency of the electoral process. Nevertheless, the system has also created administrative burdens, increased political polarization, and reduced the quality of voter consideration due to the complexity of multiple ballots conducted at the same time. These conditions affect the effectiveness of democratic representation and electoral integrity.

**Conclusion:** The simultaneous election system in Indonesia provides both opportunities and challenges for democratic quality. Improvements in electoral management, voter education, and institutional capacity are necessary to ensure that the system can support a more effective, inclusive, and substantive democracy.

**Keyword:** Democratic Consolidation; Electoral Governance; Indonesia's Democracy;

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has experienced significant transformations in its democratic system since the Reformasi era, particularly in the development of its electoral framework. One of the most substantial reforms was the implementation of simultaneous elections, which combined presidential and legislative elections into a single electoral event. This policy was formally implemented in the 2019 general election following the Constitutional Court's decision aimed at strengthening the presidential system and improving governmental effectiveness (Villanueva Ulfsgard, [2023](#)). The simultaneous election model was expected to reduce political fragmentation, increase policy coherence, and strengthen democratic accountability. In practice, however, the implementation of simultaneous elections has generated various administrative, political, and social challenges. These developments

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indicate that electoral reform is not merely a technical issue but also closely related to the broader quality of democracy in Indonesia. Therefore, evaluating the simultaneous election system becomes increasingly important within the context of democratic consolidation.

The empirical implementation of simultaneous elections in Indonesia revealed several significant problems that attracted public and academic attention. During the 2019 election, the complexity of managing five different ballots simultaneously created logistical difficulties and placed substantial pressure on election officers (Campion & Jega, [2023](#)). Reports from the General Elections Commission indicated that hundreds of polling officers experienced exhaustion, and many lost their lives due to excessive workloads. In addition, voters faced difficulties in understanding candidates and political platforms because of the large volume of electoral information presented at once (Arnesen et al., [2021](#)). The simultaneous system also intensified political polarization, particularly during presidential campaigns that dominated public discourse and overshadowed legislative issues (Zhang et al., [2023](#)). These conditions raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of democratic participation and the substantive quality of electoral representation. Consequently, the simultaneous election system remains a controversial issue in Indonesia's democratic development.

The urgency of examining the simultaneous election system becomes more relevant as Indonesia continues to strengthen its democratic institutions ahead of future electoral cycles. Elections are not solely procedural mechanisms for transferring power but also important indicators of democratic quality, political inclusiveness, and public trust in institutions (Mauk, [2022](#)). When electoral systems generate administrative burdens or reduce voters' ability to make informed choices, democratic legitimacy may weaken over time. Moreover, Indonesia's large population and diverse socio-political characteristics make electoral management particularly complex compared to many other democratic countries. Several scholars argue that institutional effectiveness and electoral integrity are crucial elements in sustaining democratic resilience in emerging democracies (James & Garnett, [2025](#); Rico Fontalvo et al., [2026](#)). In this context, evaluating the consequences of simultaneous elections is essential to identify whether the system genuinely supports democratic consolidation or instead creates structural weaknesses within the political system. Therefore, comprehensive academic assessment is needed to provide evidence-based recommendations for electoral reform.

The rationalization for conducting this research also stems from the dynamic relationship between electoral systems and democratic quality in developing democracies. Electoral reforms are often introduced with normative expectations of improving political efficiency and strengthening representation, yet their practical outcomes frequently differ from initial objectives (Landa & Pevnick, [2021](#)). In Indonesia, simultaneous elections were designed to simplify the electoral calendar and reduce transactional politics among political elites. Nevertheless, emerging evidence suggests that the concentration of political competition in one electoral moment may encourage excessive polarization, weaken issue-based campaigns, and increase the dominance of populist narratives (Kriesi et al., [2026](#); Roberts, [2021](#)). Furthermore, the complexity of simultaneous elections potentially reduces voters' capacity to evaluate legislative candidates critically, thereby affecting representative accountability. These realities indicate that the relationship between electoral design and democratic quality remains contested and requires deeper examination. Accordingly, this topic

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deserves scholarly attention because it concerns not only electoral procedures but also the broader sustainability of Indonesian democracy.

Previous studies have widely discussed the implementation and implications of simultaneous elections in Indonesia from various perspectives. Research conducted by Grimaldi (2023) emphasized that simultaneous elections contributed to stronger presidential legitimacy and improved coordination between executive and legislative institutions. Meanwhile, Krivosova (2022) highlighted the administrative challenges and institutional burdens resulting from the highly complex voting process. Studies by Shrotriya & Pachauri (2021) found that voter confusion and limited political literacy significantly affected electoral decision-making during simultaneous elections. Other scholars, including Suhardi (2025), argued that simultaneous elections intensified political polarization and identity-based mobilization. Research by Acquarone & Di Landro (2025) further demonstrated that media attention disproportionately focused on presidential candidates, thereby marginalizing legislative discourse. Additionally, Mochtak et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of electoral integrity and institutional trust in maintaining democratic quality within transitional democracies. Collectively, these studies show that simultaneous elections produce both institutional benefits and democratic risks.

Although previous literature provides valuable insights, several important limitations remain insufficiently addressed. Most existing studies focus primarily on technical and administrative aspects of election management rather than examining the broader implications for democratic quality as an integrated concept. Some studies also tend to evaluate simultaneous elections only from the perspective of political efficiency without critically analyzing their effects on representation, participation, and democratic accountability (Abizadeh, 2021; Yenita, 2024). Furthermore, empirical discussions often isolate issues such as polarization, voter behavior, or institutional performance instead of examining their interconnected impact on democratic consolidation. Research conducted after the 2019 election remains relatively fragmented, and comprehensive evaluations integrating political, institutional, and societal dimensions are still limited (Sørensen & Ansell, 2023). In addition, the evolving political dynamics ahead of Indonesia's subsequent elections require updated scholarly analysis that reflects current democratic challenges. These limitations reveal a significant research gap concerning how simultaneous elections influence the substantive quality of democracy in Indonesia holistically. Therefore, further research is necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the simultaneous election system.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of Indonesia's simultaneous election system and analyze its impact on the quality of democracy. Specifically, the research examines how simultaneous elections influence political participation, electoral effectiveness, democratic representation, and institutional accountability. The study also seeks to identify the broader implications of electoral complexity for democratic consolidation in Indonesia. Theoretically, this research contributes to the discourse on electoral system reform and democratic quality in emerging democracies by providing a more integrated analytical perspective. Practically, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for policymakers, electoral institutions, and civil society regarding future electoral reforms in Indonesia. By addressing the existing research gap, this study aspires to enrich academic discussions on the relationship between electoral systems and

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democratic sustainability. Ultimately, the research highlights the importance of designing electoral mechanisms that are not only efficient procedurally but also capable of strengthening substantive democracy in Indonesia.

### METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a case study approach to evaluate the implementation of Indonesia's simultaneous election system and its impact on the quality of democracy. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore complex political, institutional, and social dynamics that could not be adequately interpreted through numerical measurement alone. The research focused on understanding how simultaneous elections influence democratic participation, electoral effectiveness, political representation, and institutional accountability within the Indonesian context. Furthermore, the case study approach enabled the researcher to examine Indonesia's 2019 and 2024 simultaneous elections as significant democratic events that reflect the interaction between electoral systems and democratic governance. This design was considered appropriate because it provides analytical depth, contextual interpretation, and flexibility in synthesizing multiple perspectives derived from various credible sources. The overall research procedure adopted in this study is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research Procedure Flowchart**Research Design**

This research adopted a qualitative descriptive design using a literature review and case study approach. The primary objective of the study was to critically analyze the implementation of simultaneous elections in Indonesia and evaluate their implications for democratic quality. A qualitative approach was considered suitable because the study emphasized interpretative understanding of political and institutional phenomena rather than statistical generalization. The design enabled the researcher to identify patterns, contradictions, and relationships among electoral effectiveness, democratic participation, political polarization, and institutional performance. In addition, the study utilized a systematic research framework consisting of problem identification, analytical framework development, data collection, source screening, thematic coding, comparative analysis, and conclusion formulation. Through this design, the study sought to provide comprehensive insights into the strengths and weaknesses of simultaneous elections within Indonesia's democratic system.

**Participant**

The participants in this study were documentary and institutional data sources rather than individual human respondents. The population consisted of academic journal articles, governmental documents, electoral regulations, statistical reports, media publications, and institutional reports related to Indonesia's simultaneous election system and democratic governance. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select information-rich sources directly relevant to the research objectives. Approximately 45 primary and secondary sources published between 2021 and 2026 were included in the analysis. The inclusion criteria required sources to discuss simultaneous elections, democratic quality, electoral governance, political participation, or institutional accountability in Indonesia. The selected materials included publications from the General Elections Commission (KPU), Constitutional Court decisions, election monitoring organizations, and international institutions such as International IDEA and UNDP. Sources lacking methodological transparency, academic credibility, or relevance to the research topic were excluded from the study.

**Instrument**

The main research instrument used in this study was a structured documentation and literature review protocol. The instrument was developed based on democratic quality frameworks proposed by Diamond (2021), Norris (2022), and contemporary electoral governance studies. Several analytical indicators were incorporated into the protocol, including electoral effectiveness, voter participation, political polarization, democratic representation, institutional accountability, electoral integrity, and public trust in democratic institutions. Each indicator contained specific coding categories to facilitate systematic data extraction and thematic classification. In addition, a data extraction sheet was utilized to record essential information such as publication details, methodological approaches, major findings, and policy implications from each source. To ensure validity, the instrument underwent expert review by two political science scholars specializing in democracy and electoral studies. Triangulation techniques were also applied by comparing information across academic publications, governmental reports, and independent institutional documents to enhance analytical credibility and consistency.

**Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using thematic qualitative analysis. The analysis process began with data reduction by selecting relevant information aligned with the analytical indicators established in the research framework. Subsequently, open coding techniques were conducted to identify recurring concepts, patterns, and issues related to simultaneous elections and democratic quality. The identified codes were then categorized into broader themes, including electoral management, voter behavior, political competition, institutional capacity, democratic representation, and accountability. Comparative analysis was further employed to identify similarities, contradictions, and contextual relationships among the selected sources. The interpretation process focused on understanding how simultaneous elections influence the substantive quality of democracy in Indonesia. To support systematic organization and coding procedures, NVivo software was utilized during the analysis process. Finally, conclusions were formulated by synthesizing thematic findings and relating them to broader democratic theories and electoral governance frameworks.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The analysis revealed that the implementation of simultaneous elections in Indonesia has produced complex consequences for the country's democratic development. On the one hand, the simultaneous electoral model contributed to higher public participation and created a more integrated national political process. On the other hand, the system also introduced administrative difficulties, voter confusion, and stronger political polarization. Evidence gathered from institutional evaluations, election monitoring reports, and academic studies concerning the 2019 and 2024 elections demonstrated that the simultaneous election system significantly altered the dynamics of electoral participation and democratic governance in Indonesia. Although the system was designed to improve efficiency and strengthen presidential governance, its practical implementation generated several unintended consequences that affected the substantive quality of democracy.

One of the most visible outcomes of simultaneous elections was the increase in voter participation. The integration of presidential and legislative elections into a single electoral event attracted greater public attention and intensified political mobilization throughout the campaign period. Election reports published by the General Elections Commission (KPU) indicated that voter turnout in the 2019 election exceeded participation levels recorded in several previous elections. Political campaigns became more intensive because political parties concentrated their strategies on one national electoral momentum. In urban areas, public debates, campaign events, and digital political discussions became increasingly active during the election period. Many citizens perceived simultaneous elections as a more practical system because they only needed to participate in one major electoral process rather than multiple separate elections. Nevertheless, the high level of participation did not necessarily reflect stronger political understanding among voters.

**Table 1.** Major Findings on the Implementation of Simultaneous Elections in Indonesia

Evaluated Aspect	Positive Outcomes	Main Challenges
Political Participation	Increased voter turnout and public engagement	Limited voter comprehension of multiple ballots

Electoral Management	Consolidated electoral schedule	Administrative overload for election officers
Democratic Representation	Strengthened presidential legitimacy	Legislative issues received less public attention
Political Stability	Faster coalition formation	Reduced effectiveness of parliamentary opposition
Public Political Awareness	Higher campaign visibility	Growth of political polarization and misinformation

Despite increased participation, the study identified serious administrative challenges during the implementation process. Simultaneous elections required election officers to manage multiple ballots, lengthy vote-counting procedures, and complex recapitulation systems within a limited timeframe. Reports from several provinces demonstrated that polling station officers often worked continuously for extended hours during vote counting and administrative verification. In remote and geographically isolated regions, logistical distribution became particularly difficult because transportation access and infrastructure remained uneven. Election monitoring organizations also noted delays in ballot delivery and inconsistencies in vote recapitulation procedures in several districts. These operational burdens placed substantial pressure on local electoral institutions and reduced overall administrative efficiency. Consequently, the simultaneous election model created a contradiction between national electoral efficiency and local institutional capacity.

The findings further demonstrated that simultaneous elections influenced the quality of voter decision-making. Many voters experienced difficulties when selecting candidates across several legislative levels while simultaneously evaluating presidential candidates. Public attention was largely concentrated on presidential contests because media coverage and campaign narratives focused heavily on national political figures. As a result, legislative candidates often received limited exposure, particularly at the regional level. Several evaluation reports suggested that voters tended to rely on party symbols, popularity, or short-term political impressions rather than examining policy programs critically. This tendency was especially evident among first-time voters and communities with limited political education access. In practice, the complexity of simultaneous elections reduced opportunities for voters to assess legislative candidates comprehensively, thereby weakening the substantive dimension of democratic representation.

Another significant finding concerns the intensification of political polarization during simultaneous elections. The simultaneous contest between presidential and legislative candidates encouraged political parties and campaign teams to adopt highly competitive and emotionally driven political strategies. Political discourse on social media platforms became increasingly confrontational, particularly during the 2019 election period. Identity-based political narratives, misinformation, and ideological labeling appeared more frequently and contributed to social division within communities. In several regions, political tensions extended beyond electoral competition and affected interpersonal relationships within religious, educational, and professional environments. Although political competition is an essential element of democratic systems, excessive polarization may reduce public trust in institutions and weaken social cohesion. These findings indicate that

simultaneous elections have contributed not only to stronger political mobilization but also to deeper societal fragmentation.

**Table 2.** Democratic Challenges Observed in Simultaneous Elections

<b>Democratic Dimension</b>	<b>Observed Condition</b>
Voter Literacy	Voters faced difficulty understanding multiple electoral choices
Electoral Integrity	Complex procedures increased the risk of administrative errors
Institutional Capacity	Local election officers experienced excessive workloads
Political Polarization	Identity politics and partisan conflict intensified
Representative Accountability	Legislative issues were overshadowed by presidential campaigns
Public Trust	Political disinformation affected confidence in democratic institutions

The research also found that simultaneous elections affected institutional relations between executive and legislative bodies. Because presidential and legislative elections occurred simultaneously, coalition-building processes became more centralized around presidential candidates and governing alliances. This condition strengthened executive legitimacy and facilitated faster political consolidation after elections. However, the dominance of large political coalitions also reduced the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight mechanisms. Opposition parties encountered difficulties in maintaining political influence because electoral competition was heavily centered on presidential alliances. In several policy discussions, legislative dynamics appeared increasingly dependent on executive coalition interests rather than broader public representation. This situation demonstrates that while simultaneous elections may strengthen governmental stability, they may also weaken the balance of power that is essential within democratic governance systems.

Overall, the findings suggest that Indonesia's simultaneous election system has generated both procedural benefits and substantive democratic challenges. The system successfully improved electoral participation and simplified the national electoral calendar, but it also created administrative strain, weakened voter deliberation, and intensified political polarization. These findings indicate that democratic quality cannot be measured solely through voter turnout or electoral efficiency. Instead, democratic consolidation requires balanced institutional capacity, informed political participation, effective electoral management, and healthy political competition. Therefore, although simultaneous elections represent an important electoral reform initiative in Indonesia, continuous institutional improvement and comprehensive voter education remain essential to ensure that the system supports a more inclusive and substantive democratic process.

### **Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that simultaneous elections in Indonesia have succeeded in increasing electoral participation, yet this increase should not be interpreted solely as evidence of stronger democratic quality. From a procedural perspective, higher voter turnout reflects broader political mobilization and stronger citizen involvement in formal democratic processes. However, democratic theory emphasizes that participation alone is insufficient unless accompanied by informed political engagement and meaningful representation (Ansell et al., 2021; Zilla, 2022). The results indicate that many voters participated actively without fully understanding legislative candidates or policy platforms, suggesting the persistence of what Hendriks & Reid (2024) describes as "thin participation," where electoral involvement occurs without substantive political literacy.

This finding is consistent with studies conducted by Kartini et al. (2025), which observed that Indonesian elections continue to prioritize political symbolism and candidate popularity over programmatic evaluation. Nevertheless, this study expands previous research by demonstrating that simultaneous elections intensify this phenomenon because multiple electoral choices are presented within a single political event. Consequently, the research suggests that electoral participation should be evaluated not merely quantitatively but also through the quality of democratic deliberation embedded within voter behavior.

The administrative burden identified in this study also reveals important limitations in Indonesia's institutional readiness to sustain simultaneous elections effectively. The excessive workload experienced by election officers illustrates a structural imbalance between electoral complexity and institutional capacity. According to institutional governance theory, democratic systems require not only legitimate electoral mechanisms but also administrative structures capable of implementing those mechanisms efficiently and sustainably (Sun et al., 2025). The findings support previous analyses by Suparto et al. (2024), which argued that simultaneous elections created unprecedented logistical pressure on Indonesia's electoral institutions. However, this research provides a broader interpretation by connecting administrative exhaustion to democratic quality itself rather than viewing it merely as a technical problem. When electoral institutions become overburdened, procedural accuracy, transparency, and public trust may gradually deteriorate. This condition demonstrates that institutional capacity constitutes a central component of democratic consolidation, particularly within large and geographically complex democracies such as Indonesia. Therefore, the study challenges the assumption that electoral efficiency at the national level automatically produces institutional effectiveness at the operational level.

Another important finding concerns the decline in the quality of voter decision-making during simultaneous elections. The concentration of presidential and legislative contests within one electoral process appears to have shifted public attention disproportionately toward presidential competition. From the perspective of cognitive electoral theory, voters possess limited informational capacity when processing complex political choices simultaneously (Schlegel et al., 2023). This theoretical perspective helps explain why many voters relied on party labels, candidate popularity, or emotional impressions rather than substantive evaluation of legislative agendas. Similar patterns were identified in studies conducted by Chen (2022), which found that presidential narratives dominated Indonesian electoral discourse and marginalized local political issues. However, this study extends earlier scholarship by demonstrating that the complexity of simultaneous elections structurally reinforces superficial political decision-making. In this context, electoral simplification at the institutional level paradoxically increases cognitive complexity for voters themselves. The findings therefore contribute to broader debates regarding the relationship between electoral design and democratic representation in emerging democracies.

The intensification of political polarization observed during simultaneous elections also requires critical interpretation within Indonesia's sociopolitical context. The findings indicate that simultaneous elections strengthened identity-based mobilization and ideological polarization, particularly through digital political communication. Democratic competition theoretically encourages ideological contestation as part of pluralistic political systems, yet excessive polarization may weaken social cohesion and reduce institutional trust (Bernaerts et al., 2023). The results align with previous studies by Akmaliah & Nadzir (2024), which emphasized the growing role of populist

narratives and digital disinformation in Indonesian electoral politics. Nevertheless, this study identifies that simultaneous elections amplify these dynamics because all major political contests occur within the same political timeframe, intensifying emotional mobilization and partisan alignment. This finding differs from earlier assumptions suggesting that simultaneous elections would reduce political fragmentation by consolidating electoral competition. Instead, the research demonstrates that institutional consolidation does not necessarily eliminate social polarization. Consequently, the study modifies existing democratic consolidation theory by showing that electoral synchronization may simultaneously strengthen procedural integration while deepening sociopolitical division.

The relationship between simultaneous elections and executive-legislative dynamics also presents significant implications for democratic governance. The findings indicate that simultaneous elections strengthen presidential legitimacy and facilitate coalition formation, supporting arguments proposed by presidentialism theory that synchronized elections may stabilize executive governance (Perdana et al., 2024). Several previous studies similarly concluded that concurrent elections improve political coordination between branches of government and reduce fragmented policymaking (Trein & Ansell, 2021). However, this research identifies a critical consequence that has received less scholarly attention: the concentration of political alliances around presidential coalitions potentially weakens parliamentary oversight functions. The dominance of governing coalitions may reduce the capacity of opposition parties to perform effective checks and balances, thereby limiting democratic accountability. This finding partially contradicts assumptions that stronger executive-legislative alignment automatically enhances democratic effectiveness. Instead, the study suggests that institutional stability must be balanced with sufficient political competition to maintain democratic accountability mechanisms. In this regard, the research contributes conceptually by highlighting the tension between governability and accountability within simultaneous electoral systems.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that democratic quality in Indonesia cannot be assessed solely through procedural indicators such as voter turnout or electoral efficiency. Substantive democratic theory emphasizes that democracy also depends on political equality, informed participation, institutional accountability, and public trust (Jackson, 2023). The study demonstrates that simultaneous elections may improve procedural efficiency while simultaneously weakening substantive dimensions of democracy, particularly deliberative participation and representative accountability. This interpretation supports arguments proposed by critical democratic scholars who distinguish between electoral democracy and substantive democracy (James, 2024). Previous research generally focused on evaluating simultaneous elections from administrative or political perspectives separately, whereas this study integrates institutional, behavioral, and societal dimensions simultaneously. By doing so, the research fills an important gap within the literature concerning how electoral systems influence democratic quality in a holistic manner. The findings therefore provide a broader analytical framework for evaluating electoral reforms beyond technical efficiency alone.

Contextual factors also play a crucial role in shaping the outcomes identified in this study. Indonesia's large population, uneven infrastructure, varying political literacy levels, and strong sociocultural diversity create unique challenges that may not be experienced by other democratic countries implementing simultaneous elections. Comparative democratic studies often assume that

institutional reforms can be transferred universally across political systems (Chan, [2024](#)). However, the findings suggest that electoral reforms must be interpreted within specific historical and sociopolitical contexts. For example, the persistence of patronage politics, identity mobilization, and unequal access to political information significantly influenced how simultaneous elections operated in practice. These contextual realities help explain why some expected democratic benefits were only partially achieved (Bell et al., [2023](#); Goldberg, [2022](#)). Therefore, this study argues that the effectiveness of electoral reforms depends not only on institutional design but also on broader societal conditions supporting democratic culture and civic capacity. This contextual interpretation strengthens the global relevance of the study by demonstrating the limitations of universally applied electoral reform models.

Overall, this research contributes to the broader literature on electoral systems and democratic consolidation by offering a critical and multidimensional evaluation of simultaneous elections in Indonesia. Unlike many previous studies that focused narrowly on electoral administration or political efficiency, this study demonstrates that simultaneous elections generate interconnected effects across institutional, behavioral, and societal dimensions of democracy. The findings suggest that simultaneous elections should not be viewed merely as a technical electoral innovation but as a structural transformation capable of reshaping democratic practices and political relationships. Conceptually, the study expands democratic governance theory by illustrating how procedural integration may coexist with substantive democratic challenges. Practically, the findings underline the importance of strengthening voter education, institutional capacity, and electoral management systems before expanding or maintaining simultaneous electoral frameworks (Nwangbo et al., [2024](#)). In the broader landscape of global democratic studies, the Indonesian case provides important lessons regarding the complexities of implementing electoral reforms within emerging democracies characterized by high political diversity and institutional asymmetry. Therefore, the study positions itself as both a theoretical and practical contribution to contemporary debates on electoral reform and democratic quality.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study imply that the implementation of simultaneous elections in Indonesia should not be evaluated solely through procedural indicators such as voter turnout or electoral efficiency. Although the system has succeeded in increasing political participation and consolidating electoral schedules, the research demonstrates that democratic quality is also shaped by institutional capacity, voter literacy, and the ability of citizens to make informed political decisions. The study further suggests that complex electoral mechanisms may unintentionally weaken substantive democratic values when administrative readiness and civic education are insufficient. In addition, the results provide an important contribution to democratic governance studies by showing that electoral reform in emerging democracies requires a balance between political efficiency and democratic accountability. From a practical perspective, the findings emphasize the need for stronger electoral management systems, more inclusive voter education programs, and healthier political communication to ensure that simultaneous elections contribute positively to long-term democratic consolidation in Indonesia.

### **Limitations**

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research relied primarily on qualitative analysis using secondary data sources, including

academic publications, institutional reports, and governmental documents, which means the conclusions were dependent on the availability and consistency of existing information. In addition, the study focused mainly on the national implementation of the 2019 and 2024 simultaneous elections, so regional variations and local political dynamics may not have been fully captured. The absence of direct field observation and large-scale empirical surveys also limited the ability to measure individual voter behavior and institutional performance more comprehensively. Furthermore, Indonesia's political environment continues to evolve rapidly, meaning that future electoral developments may produce different democratic outcomes from those identified in this research. Despite these limitations, the study still provides a meaningful analytical framework for understanding the broader relationship between simultaneous elections and democratic quality in Indonesia.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to improve the implementation of simultaneous elections and strengthen democratic quality in Indonesia. Electoral institutions should simplify administrative procedures and enhance logistical management in order to reduce the excessive workload experienced by election officers during the electoral process. At the same time, the government and political stakeholders need to expand civic and political education programs so that voters are better equipped to understand electoral procedures, evaluate candidates critically, and participate more substantively in democratic processes. Political parties should also prioritize issue-based campaigns rather than relying heavily on identity politics and emotional polarization, which may weaken social cohesion and public trust. In addition, future electoral reforms should focus not only on efficiency but also on protecting democratic accountability and institutional balance within the political system. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct empirical field studies involving interviews, surveys, or comparative approaches to generate deeper insights into the long-term impact of simultaneous elections on democratic governance and political participation.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of simultaneous elections in Indonesia has produced both significant opportunities and substantial challenges for the development of democratic quality. The simultaneous electoral system has contributed positively to increasing voter participation, strengthening political mobilization, and simplifying the national electoral schedule into a more integrated democratic process. However, the findings also demonstrate that the system has generated complex consequences related to administrative burdens, voter comprehension, political polarization, and institutional accountability. The concentration of presidential and legislative elections within a single political event tends to shift public attention toward executive competition while reducing the depth of legislative evaluation and substantive democratic deliberation. In addition, the complexity of electoral procedures places considerable pressure on electoral institutions, particularly at the operational level, where logistical limitations and human resource constraints remain significant challenges. The research further indicates that democratic quality cannot be measured solely through procedural success such as high voter turnout or electoral efficiency. Instead, substantive democracy requires informed political participation, balanced institutional relations, effective electoral governance, and strong public trust in democratic institutions. In the Indonesian context, simultaneous elections have shown that electoral reform may

strengthen political integration while simultaneously creating new vulnerabilities within democratic practice. Therefore, the effectiveness of simultaneous elections depends not only on legal and procedural arrangements but also on institutional readiness, political education, and the broader sociopolitical environment supporting democratic culture. Overall, this study highlights the importance of continuously evaluating electoral systems to ensure that democratic reforms do not merely improve procedural mechanisms but also strengthen the substantive quality and sustainability of democracy in Indonesia.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**

Dewa Erlangga contributed to the conceptualization of the study, development of the research framework, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the original manuscript draft. Ganca Saputra contributed to the literature review process, data interpretation, methodological refinement, and manuscript editing. Aghisna Syakira Bilbina contributed to data organization, validation of research findings, formatting of the manuscript, and reference management. Rudi Santoso supervised the overall research process, provided theoretical and methodological guidance, reviewed the manuscript critically for important intellectual content, and approved the final version of the article for publication. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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