



Presidential Candidate and Term of Office and Vice President in Indonesia

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Received: 15-02-2025

Reviewed: 26-03-2025

Accepted: 15-04-2025

Abstract

Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia still has weaknesses. Its formulation can still *be interpreted* differently from *the original intent*, which emphasized the term limits of the president and vice president. The formulation of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia reads "The President and Vice President hold a term of office for five years, and can be re-elected to the same office, only for one term". In the future, so that it is not interpreted differently, the formulation of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia should read "The President and Vice President hold a term of office for five years, and can be re-elected for only one term".

Keywords: Term of Office, Limitations, President and Vice President.

Introduction

One of the important things in the amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD NRI 1945) is regarding the election of the president and vice president, from previously being elected through the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), shifted to being elected directly by the people (Ramadhan et al., 2022). This further strengthens the presidential system adopted by Indonesia, although it used to adopt a parliamentary system (Indarja, 2018. P.63).

In a presidential system, the position of a president (executive) with the people's representative council (legislative) is balanced and equally strong (Saraswati R, 2012. P.138). and the president is positioned as head and as head of government. Article 4 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia explains that the president holds the highest power in government according to the Constitution. This means that the president, the highest head of government, has broad powers (Vicki Dwi Purnomo et al., 2023). The president is also assisted by a vice president who is elected together in the general election (election) which is held every five years. (Iriani et al., 2023)

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Article 6A of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia regulates the requirements to become President and Vice President, as follows:

- (1) The President and Vice President are elected as a pair directly by the people.
- (2) The presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs are proposed by political parties or a coalition of political parties participating in the general election before the general election is held.
- (3) The pair of presidential and vice presidential candidates who obtain more than fifty percent of the total votes in the general election, with at least twenty percent of the votes in each province spread across more than half of the total number of provinces in Indonesia, are inaugurated as President and Vice President.
- (4) In the event that no pair of Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates are elected, the two pairs of candidates who obtain the first and second highest number of votes in the general election are directly elected by the people and the pair who obtain the most votes are inaugurated as President and Vice President.
- (5) The procedures for implementing the election of the President and Vice President are further regulated by law.

Based on Article 6A paragraph (1) of the 1945 NRI Constitution above, which explains that the President and Vice President are elected directly by the people in one pair, meaning that they must be paired as presidential and vice presidential candidates, and cannot be separated (Muhammad Ali Farhan, 2022). This pair of presidential and vice presidential candidates are nominated by political parties or a coalition of political parties in the election (Article 6A paragraph (2) of the 1945 NRI Constitution).

Satya Arinanto put forward a number of reasons for holding the presidential election (directly), namely (Abdul Latif, 2009):

- a. The elected president will have a very strong mandate and legitimacy because he is supported by the votes of the people who cast their votes directly;
- b. The president-elect is not tied to the concessions of the political parties or factions that have elected him. This means that the president-elect is above all interests and can bridge these various interests;
- c. This system is more " *accountable* " compared to the system currently used (during the New Order era), because the people do not have to cast their votes through the MPR, whose members are not all elected through general elections;
- d. The criteria for presidential candidates can also be assessed directly by the people who will cast their votes.

Furthermore, Article 6A paragraph (5) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia above states that the procedures for implementing the election of the President and Vice President are further regulated in the law . The *a quo Law* is Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which is the basis for holding the election of the President and Vice President from 2019 until now. General elections (Pemilu) are implemented simultaneously to elect members of the DPR, DPD, DPRD, and President/Vice President. This is following the provisions of Article 1 number 1 which states "Elections are a means of people's sovereignty

to elect members of the DPR, DPD, President/Vice President, and DPRD, which are carried out directly, generally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. (Abrillioga et al., 2022)v

The mechanism, procedures, and requirements to become a presidential and vice presidential candidate have been regulated in Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, and these are the guidelines for implementing the Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections in Indonesia today. In the Election Law, the requirements for presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs must meet the nomination threshold (*presidential threshold*). As stated in Article 222 of Law No. 7 of 2017, Candidate Pairs are proposed by Political Parties or Coalitions of Political Parties Participating in the Election that meet the requirements of obtaining at least 20% (twenty percent) of the total number of DPR seats or obtaining 25% (twenty five percent) of valid votes nationally in the previous DPR member elections.

The implication of the provision raises the first problem, for new political parties where the new party does not yet have a seat in the DPR or has not received votes in the 2014 election, it cannot nominate Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates. Second, with the provision also closes the way for Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates from individual elements. (Fidyansyah & Rohmah, 2021)

This is certainly contrary to the function of general elections, namely that general elections are a consequence of a democratic state, where elections are one of the main pillars of a process of accumulating the will of the people. Elections are also a democratic procedure for electing leaders. Elections are the process of electing people to fill certain political positions (Sukimin, 2020).

Literature Review

In the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election, candidates must obtain more than 50% of the national vote and spread across 1/3 of the provinces in Indonesia. If the vote limit has not been reached, the two highest votes will be re-elected and the highest votes will win. This number is not easy to get, so a re-elect can occur for the two contestants with the highest votes. The provisions above interpret that the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates must be supported by at least 50% of the voters (Sumono, 2020).

Normatively, the existence of legislation on presidential elections illustrates that Indonesia has attempted to realize the filling of presidential and vice presidential positions more democratically through direct elections by the people (voters). Democratic values are reflected through the freedom and involvement of political parties or coalitions of political parties participating in the election to nominate presidential and vice presidential candidates as long as they meet the requirements specified in the legislation (Umbu Rauta, 2014).

Research Method

This research employs a normative legal research method with a statutory and conceptual approach (Sholehudin, 2022). The study aims to analyze the weaknesses in the formulation of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and propose a normative reformulation to prevent multiple interpretations. The statutory approach is used to examine the formulation of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution and compare it with similar provisions in various countries. Meanwhile, the conceptual approach is applied to study the concept of term limits within constitutional systems and explore how legal norms should be formulated to avoid ambiguous interpretations.

The data sources utilized in this study include primary legal materials, such as the 1945 Constitution, relevant statutory regulations, and Constitutional Court decisions. Secondary legal materials include books, law journals, and academic articles discussing presidential term limits and constitutional dynamics in Indonesia. Tertiary legal materials, such as legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference materials, support the legal analysis.

Data collection is conducted through document study (library research), involving the review of legislation, legal literature, and relevant court decisions. The collected data are analyzed qualitatively using a deductive method, which derives conclusions from the analysis of existing legal norms, constitutional theories, and comparative legal studies. The findings are systematically structured and analyzed to provide legal solutions to the identified issues.

The expected outcome of this research is to offer recommendations for reformulating Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution more precisely, eliminating the potential for multiple interpretations, and strengthening democratic principles in Indonesia's constitutional system.

Result and Discussion

Democracy is a system of government in which the people run the government by sending representatives. Meanwhile, elections are a way of choosing a representative who is sent to become a part of the government that functions to convey aspirations and hold power steadfast in the people's mandate to achieve prosperity and prosperity. By General elections are a representation of the concept of democracy which guarantees people's sovereignty, freedom of opinion, equality in all things and justice that must be implemented by state officials (Daud Liando, 2016).

There is a close connection between democracy and elections. Democracy is always described as a government organized by the people, by the people, and for the people. The emphasis here is how to realize broad community participation in running government, both directly and indirectly. Nowadays, indirect democracy is increasingly chosen considering the increasing area of the country and the increasing complexity of social problems. Democracy indirectly requires community representatives in government who are usually elected in a general election. Elections are seen as a democratic method for electing people's representatives in representative bodies, and are a constitutional institution for changing power relations (Dodi Haryono, 2014).

Conceptually, elections in different political systems can be distinguished according to their significance and function and the nature and extent of competition. The significance and function of elections in countries with democratic political systems, basically recognizes that without elections and open competition between social forces and political groups, there is no democracy (Abrillioga et al., 2022). As a source of legitimacy for political leadership, a democratic election opens up opportunities to question existing power relations, in addition to being a fundamental form of people's participation, in the sense of "*constitutionally institutionalized participation*". Thus, elections in democratic countries prioritize their function as an instrument to strengthen the established power structure, or as a means to strengthen the political and moral unity of the people and the mobilization of social forces, both for the sake of legitimizing the power structure and in the context of adjusting the power structure to stabilize the political system.

Based on Article 1 paragraph (1) of the 1945 NRI Constitution, it states that Indonesia is a unitary state in the form of Republic of Indonesia is a country with a democratic system. his government is a government system Presidential. Republic and presidential options make the elected leader will be chosen by many people, for a certain period of time, is not hereditary, and is tied to a number of rules.

The presidential system adheres to a separate President holding power. with the institution of Parliament. The separation is reinforced by the same political legitimacy between the President and Parliament, namely both are elected by the electorate (Janedri M Goffar, 2012). In the office of President there is an element of people's representation to carry out government. Election of President and Vice President in constitutional practice in Indonesia has fulfilled the presidential system through General Elections, as an implementation of the principle democracy in the life of the nation and state. For that reason, the President and Vice President The president must strive for the welfare of his people.(Maychellina et al., 2023)

Institution The presidency is given a very strong position according to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The President of Indonesia is the Head of State as well as Head of Government. Along with the aspirations politics through the 1998 reforms, the 1945 Constitution experienced changes four times, within a span of 1999 to 2002. For this reason, it is necessary given restrictions by the state so as not to there is abuse of power. One of them Limitation of state power, namely Limitation regarding the terms of office of the President and Vice President.

Initially, the terms of office of the President and Vice President were contained in Article 7 UUD 1945. The regulation is not followed by the regulation of the term limits of the President and Vice President in Indonesia, so that in practice it creates a condition where the same President is re-elected continuously, without paying attention to the system of limiting power as a basic principle of the state based on the Constitution (Constitutionalism). An example is the election of President Soekarno and President Soeharto for more than two consecutive terms. This continuous leadership of the President and Vice President not only hinders leadership regeneration but also has the potential to be misused (Dede Sri Kartini, 2017).

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Indonesia is now free from the shackles of the New Order which seemed not to realize sovereignty for the people. After the Reformation, Indonesia aspired to be a democratic country. uphold the values of sovereignty in the nation and state. Will However, the transition period with several elections that have been held turned out to be has not been able to make Indonesia a democratic country with good and well established. This is evident from the weakness of the legal system in Indonesia, regarding the election law, which changes every time an election is held. Indonesia has not been able to realize the ideals of democracy according to the country's constitution.

Holding general elections to elect people's representatives who sit in parliament or to elect certain officials who sit in the government environment such as the Election of the President and Vice President is one of the requirements for the ongoing democratization in social and state life. General elections are actually one of the means to realize the sovereignty of the people in state life. The Republic of Indonesia since its inception by *the founding Fathers* wanted it to be a democratic country, as reflected in the meaning of the 4th principle of Pancasila, the formulation of the fourth paragraph of the Opening of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and other laws and regulations relating to general elections (legislative and executive), the existence of representative institutions, public participation and public openness (Umbu Rauta, 2014).

Legal regulation of general elections or abbreviated as elections is a state agenda in Indonesia, both constitutionally and the rules it carries. Indonesia regulates election provisions through Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections. Election regulations as an order for Article 22E paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution that "General elections are carried out directly, generally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly every five years". In this problem, there is turmoil over amendments to the election of the Head of State in terms of term of office and opportunity to serve, which has experienced multiple interpretations in the public sphere. The Applicant through Constitutional Court Decision Number 36/PUU-XVI/2018 assessed that the norms contained in Article 169 letter n and Article 227 letter i of the Election Law, as long as the phrase "for 2 (two) terms of office in the same position" is not clear and can actually provide doubt and result in legal uncertainty if juxtaposed in Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution as long as the phrase and thereafter can be re-elected which means "consecutively³. Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution states that "The President and Vice President hold office for five years, and may thereafter be re-elected to the same office for only one term"(Delfina, 2023).

Analyzing the 5 (five) phrases in Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution, there is the potential for new interpretations of the position of head of state. Where in the phrase "Can be Re-elected and One Term". Where in Article 169 letter n of the Election Law stipulates that the requirements to become a candidate for President and Vice President are never having served as President or Vice President for 2 (two) terms in the same position. The constitution limits the position of head of state as a way of avoiding full power (oligarchy), which threatens the democratic order of a country. Indonesia which glorifies the rule of law (*rechtsstaat*) as all actions are carried out based on law and are limited by law. In principle, *rechtsstaat* or *rule of law* can only grow in a country that adheres to democracy.

Historically and textually, Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution does not experience multiple interpretations of the phrase. Rather, to look textually at the phrase in Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution in relation to the current situation that has changed. It is clearly recorded in the Comprehensive Manuscript of the minutes of the discussion session of the Constitution at that time which requires that the formulation of Article 7 must refer to Tap XIII/MPR/1998, where the President and Vice President can be re-elected to the same position for one term, elected consecutively or intermittently. The term of office of the President and Vice President in Indonesia has a difference from the beginning of independence to the present. The difference in question is that the implementation of the term of office of the head of state is not in accordance with the provisions of the written Constitution. Such as the term of office of President Soeharto with a term of 32 (thirty-two) years. However, Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution from the beginning of independence to the reform era has not been amended because it can still be accommodated well. The power limitation on the president and vice president is very important to maintain the spirit of democracy so that there is no arbitrariness and new leaders are regenerated. Not only the regeneration process, but also the role of the rule of law in the election of the head of state in accordance with the mandate of the constitution and providing an opportunity for the Indonesian people to convey their constitutional rights both to be elected and to have for the sovereignty of the Indonesian nation.

Starting from that, the election of the President and Vice President in Indonesia must be carried out democratically. Democratization is more viewed at the level of the presidential election, which is related to filling the position, as one of the elements in constitutional law. According to Harun Alrasid (Harun, 1990) in a democratic country, in general the filling of the presidential position is carried out through elections by the people (voter corps), which is regulated by law. Presidential candidates in democratic countries are generally determined through selections carried out by political parties.

For Maurice Duverger, in his book *L'Es Regimes des Politiques*, the way to fill democratic positions is divided into two parts, namely direct democracy and representative democracy. Direct democracy is a way to fill positions with the people directly electing someone to occupy certain positions in government, while representative democracy is a way to fill positions with the people electing someone or a political party to elect someone to occupy certain positions in order to carry out state (institutional) tasks such as legislative power, executive power and judicial power (Marzuki, 2007).

Related to democratization in filling the presidential and vice presidential positions, another instrument that is quite fundamental and relevant in the implementation of Indonesian governance is the choice of a republican form of government and not a monarchy. Fundamentally, in Bagir Manan's view, the concept of republicanism *contains* the meaning of government organized by and for the public interest (the people). Therefore, state institutions *in the republic* must always reflect the implementation by and for the public interest. The head of state as one of the office holders in the republican government must reflect the general will and be determined based on the general will (public) (Bagir Manan, 1999).

The government system adopted by Indonesia is a presidential system. The presidential system is a government system that is centered on the power of the president as head of

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government and head of state. The executive body does not depend on the legislative body in this system. The position of the executive body is stronger in facing the legislative body. Jimly Asshiddiqie considers the existence of a presidential system to have advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that the presidential system guarantees more stability of government, while the disadvantage is that this system tends to place the executive as a very influential part of power because the power is quite large. Therefore, constitutional arrangements are needed to reduce the negative impacts or weaknesses that are carried from birth by this system (Ghofar, 2009).

If we look at the comparative systems in several countries that adopt the Presidential system, several Presidential systems in the world are divided into the following:

1. Only one re-election: Limiting one additional term of office, as adopted by the United States, Bolivia, Madagascar, Malawi, Indonesia
2. No re-election: No re-nomination is possible. As adopted by South Africa, Brazil, Philippines and Guatemala.
3. No Immediate re-election: Limiting immediate candidacy after the end of the term of office, as adopted by Peru and Venezuela, and
4. No Limitation re-election: There is no limit to presidential re-election, as adopted by Nicaragua and Benin.

Talking about the Limitation of a position aims to avoid authoritarian actions through the position held and provide an opportunity for the new generation to be able to occupy the position based on the principles of democracy. The choice of republic and presidency means that the elected leader will be chosen by the people for a certain period of time, not hereditary, and bound by a number of rules.

According to Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, "The President and Vice President hold office for five years, and thereafter can be re-elected to the same office, for only one term". The written constitution has explicitly regulated the Limitation of the President's office in Indonesia, however, the existence of slightly deviant state customs has resulted in problems that have resulted in the presidential office being occupied by someone who has previously served. Reflecting on the state deviation of the issuance of TAP MPRS No. III / MPRS / 1963 concerning the appointment of the Great Leader of the Indonesian Revolution, Soekarno became President of the Republic of Indonesia for life. Speaking of the MPR Decree, it aims to provide recognition and legal status to the MPR Decree which does not have the authority to issue regulations but only *beschikking*.

Based on the provisions regarding the Presidential and Vice Presidential Offices through the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, it states that the Limitation of the term of office remains in effect based on Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution. According to Hidayat Nur Wahid, the three-term presidential term is unconstitutional so that all parties who propose President Jokowi for 3 terms are in conflict with the 1945 Constitution. Suppose the practice is contrary to the provisions of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution. In that case, it violates the provisions of the constitution or agreements that the community has mutually

agreed upon through the written constitution regarding the Limitation of the presidential and vice presidential terms in Indonesia.

Even though it has been amended, Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia still has weaknesses. Its formulation can still *be interpreted* differently from *the original intent*, which emphasized the term limits of the president and vice president. The formulation of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia reads "The President and Vice President hold a term of office for five years, and can be re-elected to the same office, only for one term". In the future, so that it is not interpreted differently, the formulation of Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia should read "The President and Vice President hold a term of office for five years, and can be re-elected for only one term".

Conclusion

The nomination and term of office of the President and Vice President in Indonesia have undergone continuous constitutional transformations aimed at strengthening democratic principles and political stability. Over time, the constitutional framework has evolved to ensure a more structured and accountable leadership transition. The most significant reform is the Limitation of the presidential and vice-presidential terms to two periods, as stipulated in Article 7 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This provision serves as a concrete safeguard against prolonged power concentration, reinforcing democratic values and maintaining a system of checks and balances. The comparative analysis of these constitutional changes highlights Indonesia's commitment to upholding democratic governance while adapting to political dynamics and legal developments. Moving forward, ensuring the clarity and consistency of constitutional provisions remains essential to prevent misinterpretation and uphold the integrity of the electoral and governmental systems.

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