

Political Parties and Parliamentary Seat Replacement: a Comparative Study Across Five Democracies

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Abstract

The mechanism of interim replacement of parliamentarians constitutes a critical pillar of democratic representation, serving not only to ensure administrative continuity but also to reveal the extent of political parties' influence over vacated legislative seats. This study conducts a cross-country comparative analysis of the role of political parties in interim replacement mechanisms (IRP) across five democracies: Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the United States. Using a qualitative-comparative approach complemented by a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of 58 scholarly works, the research examines the legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, and accountability dimensions that shape IRP. Findings demonstrate that in Indonesia and the Philippines, party elites wield dominant authority under the open-list system, frequently marginalising constituent participation and consolidating internal party power. In Malaysia and Singapore, although by-elections are formally prescribed, institutional loopholes and discretionary powers enable parties or governments to delay or circumvent these mechanisms, thereby compromising electoral legitimacy. Conversely, the United States exhibits higher levels of public participation through mandated special elections, with temporary gubernatorial appointments remaining tightly constrained. These variations underscore that the influence of political parties in IRP is highly contingent on each country's institutional design, electoral rules, and governance norms. The study highlights the normative and practical implications of these arrangements and advocates democratic reforms that enhance transparency, institutional checks, and participatory safeguards, particularly in systems where parties retain near-absolute control. By linking institutional design to representative accountability, the article provides actionable insights for policymakers, scholars, and democracy advocates striving to foster more inclusive, transparent, and resilient legislative governance.

Keywords:

Interim replacement mechanisms; Political parties; Legislative replacement; Representation; Democracy; Comparative studies.

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Constitutional Court (MK) is currently processing two lawsuits against the mechanism of interim replacement mechanisms (IRP) of

members of the House of Representatives filed by citizens. For consistency, this study uses the term IRP to refer to mechanisms filling vacant legislative seats between elections. This lawsuit highlights the dominance of political parties in the process of replacing interim parliamentary members, which is

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considered to ignore the principles of people's sovereignty and democratic accountability (Sonbay et al., 2021). The plaintiffs argue that the IRP mechanism, which gives political parties full authority to replace members of the House of Representatives without involving voters, is contrary to the principle of people's sovereignty guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution. They highlighted that members of the House of Representatives are representatives of the people who are directly elected by the constituents, so their replacement should involve public participation for example, through re-election in the constituency concerned. The current mechanism is considered to grant excessive power to the party elite to dismiss members of the House of Representatives who are not in line with the party's interests, without regard for voters' aspirations (Nurhalim & Fitri, 2024).

At the time of writing this article, the Constitutional Court has not yet made a decision on the two lawsuits. However, the interim replacement mechanisms in the legislative system is one of the important aspects in maintaining the continuity of people's representation in parliament. This mechanism is greatly influenced by the political system, legal framework, and the role of political parties in a country (Lian, 2024). In a representative democracy, political parties are not only electoral vehicles but also a key factor in maintaining the stability of representative institutions through a succession mechanism when legislative seats become vacant. The phenomenon of interim replacement is not universally implemented. Democratic countries have different approaches to

filling vacant legislative seats, whether due to deaths, resignations, or dismissals of parliamentarians. This difference can be observed in the involvement of political parties: whether the party has the formal authority to appoint a successor, is limited to proposing a successor, or is not involved in the process at all. In this context, cross-border comparisons can provide a deeper understanding of the institutional relationship between political parties and representative institutions (Al, 2020).

This paper examines and compares the roles of political parties in the mechanism of alternating parliamentarians over time across five countries: Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, and the United States. These five countries were chosen because they represent a variety of political systems (presidential vs. parliamentary), levels of institutionalization of political parties, and legal approaches to the interim replacement mechanisms (IRP). The research questions to be answered are as follows: (1) What is the mechanism for the replacement of inter-time parliamentarians in Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, and the United States?; (2) What is the role of political parties in each of these mechanisms?; (3) What are the differences and similarities that can be identified from the five countries in terms of political party involvement?; (4) What are the political implications of the role of political parties in the interim replacement mechanisms (IRP) process on the accountability and legitimacy of the legislature?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on the mechanism for replacing inter-term parliamentarians generally focuses on institutional stability, political representation, and democratic governance. (Ingold et al., 2025) emphasizes the importance of clarity of the mechanism of legislative succession as part of a stable system of government. Meanwhile, (Ganghof, 2015) state that irregularities in the interim replacement mechanism can give rise to legitimacy deficits. In almost all democracies, the mechanism of alternating between times involves political parties, because it is the party that nominates candidates for legislative elections. Political parties, according to (Parigi & Sartori, 2014), are the central institutions in modern democracy, including in terms of filling legislative vacancies. In the proportional system, the party's role is greater because its membership base is drawn from the list of candidates it determines. On the other hand, most district systems tend to emphasize individual legitimacy through re-election.

Countries with parliamentary systems tend to give party elites greater flexibility in determining the replacement of parliamentarians (Garzia, 2019). Meanwhile, countries with a presidential system such as the U.S, prioritize special elections to maintain the principle of direct public accountability (Norris, 2019). Interim replacement in the legislative system is seen as an institutional mechanism to maintain the sustainability of the people's representation function when there is a vacancy for parliamentarians (Coman, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025). Interim

replacement is also closely linked to the principles of effective representation and democratic legitimacy, especially in countries that adopt a district election system or an open proportional system (Fiva & Halse, 2016). Some studies highlight that ambiguity in Interim replacement mechanisms can create tensions between institutions and create a deficit of political legitimacy (Hilmy & Marfiansyah, 2021). Therefore, it is important to review how countries establish Interim replacement governance through practical regulations and policies. Political parties play diverse roles in the Interim replacement mechanism, depending on the electoral system and the type of government (Parigi & Sartori, 2014).

In a list-based proportional system, parties tend to have strong control over replacements based on a candidate's rank on the electoral list (Herron et al., 2018a). In the district system (plurality or majoritarian), the role of the party is more limited because replacements are carried out through re-elections that allow direct voter involvement (Norris, 2019). This raises questions about the balance between institutional efficiency and public accountability. In some countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, political parties are given full authority to propose replacements. In contrast, in the United States, replacements can only be made through re-election without party intervention.

Comparative literature states that the parliamentary system allows political parties to have greater control over the Interim replacement process as part of the stability of the governing coalition (Hasyim et al., 2023; Setiawan, 2020a).

Whereas in presidential systems, such as in the US and the Philippines, the Interim replacement process is often more decentralized and based on re-elections (Hasyim et al., 2023; Helms & Vercesi, 2024). Thus, the role of the party in the Interim replacement mechanism can be an indicator of the party's institutional strength in a democratic system. In this study, the theories of institutionalism and political representation are used to examine the role of political parties in the Interim replacement mechanism. Institutionalism emphasizes the importance of structure and rules in determining the behavior of political actors (Gallagher, 2023). The Interim replacement mechanism is influenced by the legal norms and procedures that apply in each country's political system. Political parties play the role of institutional actors who run, interpret, and influence the implementation of these rules (Gauja, 2016). The role of political parties in Interim replacement can be analyzed through two approaches: (1) Normative institutionalism: parties follow rules for the sake of system stability; (2) Rational institutionalism: in the party uses the IRP to strengthen its control and interests in parliament.

Meanwhile, the theory of political representation highlights the relationship between representatives and constituents (Gallagher, 2023). In the context of Interim replacement, political parties can be seen as mediators between the will of the people (through election results) and the continuity of the legislative institution. The delegate and trustee model is important in understanding whether a successor should follow previous electoral choices (e.g. through

the next majority vote) or at the discretion of the party elite. The consequences of the role of parties in Interim replacement will differ depending on the model of political representation adopted by a system:

1. The delegative model → more open to popular participation (e.g. special elections in the US).
2. The trustee/party-centric model → leaves it to the party elite to appoint a replacement (e.g. Indonesia).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-comparative approach, combining cross-national case study analysis and a systematic literature review (SLR). The aim is to identify and systematically compare the roles of political parties in the mechanisms of exchange across five countries with diverse political systems (Herron et al., 2018b). The countries chosen represent a variety of governance and electoral systems: Indonesia and the Philippines (presidential system with multiparty); Malaysia and Singapore (parliamentary systems with party dominance); and the United States (a dominant two-party presidential system with district elections) (Congge et al., 2023; Dacombe, 2018).

Research data sources include: (1) The Constitution and election laws of each country; (2) Technical regulations from election organizing agencies (KPU, COMELEC, Elections Department Singapore, Federal Election Commission USA); (3) Court decisions related to interim replacement; (4) Academic literature and international journals processed using systematic literature review; (5) Reports of international institutions (IDEA, IPU, IFES); (6) News

and media reports as complementary data. Data analysis was carried out through thematic comparative table techniques, with the following indicators: (1) The legal basis of interim replacement; (2) the Involvement of political parties; (3) Filling mechanism (by-election vs appointment); (4) The level of public accountability in the process of interim replacement. Each case is analyzed descriptively and comparatively and reviewed with the above theoretical framework.

Systematic Literature Review uses databases from Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, SAGE, and Google Scholar. The keywords used in the article search are "parliamentary replacement" or "legislative replacement" or "midterm replacement" and "Indonesia" or "Singapore" or "Malaysia" or "Philippines" or "United States" or "democracies" and "by-election" or "party appointment" or "interim replacement". The publication span is from 2004 to 2024, with publications in English and Indonesian. The inclusion criteria used in the article search are: (1) Articles that contain academic studies (peer-reviewed); (2) Focus on the IRP mechanism or the replacement of legislators; (3) Comparative studies or national case studies; (4) Contains legal, political, or institutional dimensions. As for non-academic opinion articles, articles that are not relevant to the mechanism of legislative replacement, and articles that focus on replacements at the executive or judicial level, are all issued at the full-text evaluation stage. SLR is carried out through the stages of identification, screening, and eligibility, and included (Page et al., 2021).

A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). During the identification stage, 518 records were identified, including 486 articles from five academic databases (Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, SAGE, and Google Scholar) and 32 additional records from citation tracking, institutional reports (IDEA, IPU, IFES), and relevant grey literature.

In the early screening stage, 37 duplicate articles were removed, resulting in 445 unique records. Title and abstract screening were subsequently conducted using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. At this point, 285 articles were excluded for the following reasons: (1) lack of focus on legislative replacement; (2) discussion of executive or judicial replacement mechanisms; (3) non-academic commentary; or (4) absence of legal or institutional analysis. Consequently, 160 articles were examined in full text.

Full-text screening was independently performed by two reviewers using a structured eligibility checklist. The criteria included: (1) academic and peer-reviewed status; (2) analysis of IRP or legislative replacement; (3) comparative or national case study design; and (4) consideration of political, legal, or institutional dimensions. At this stage, 102 articles were excluded for failing to meet one or more inclusion criteria, such as being descriptive news reports, focusing on unrelated political institutions, lacking available full text, or demonstrating insufficient methodological clarity.

Ultimately, 58 studies were included in the qualitative synthesis, constituting the

final SLR dataset. These studies were coded using a thematic extraction matrix that addressed: (1) legal basis; (2) party involvement; (3) replacement mechanism; and (4) accountability and democratic implications.

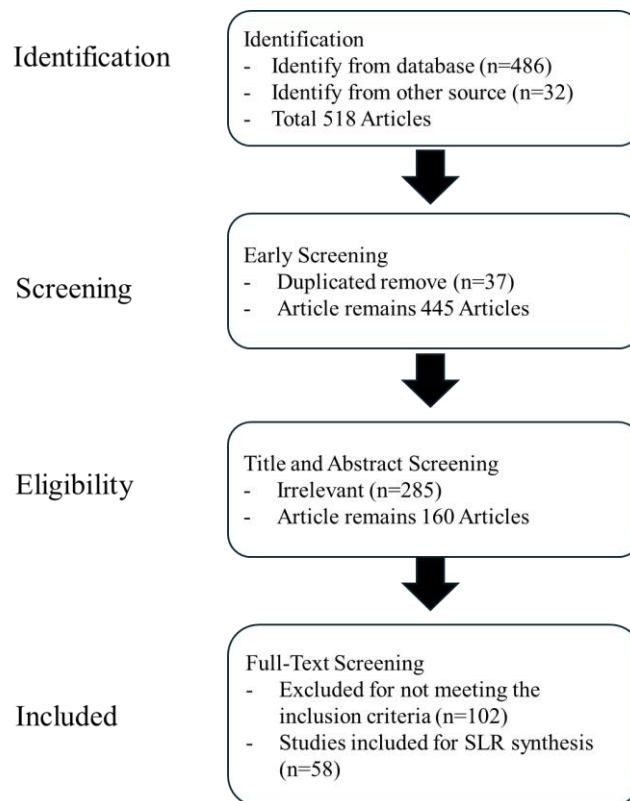


Figure 1. Systematic Literature Review Procedure

RESULTS

The results of a systematic literature review of scientific publications that discuss interim replacement in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, the United States and several other democracies show that the mechanism of alternating parliamentarians between times varies in several countries. However, in general, the mechanism is carried out in three ways, namely through elections (special elections or interim elections), submitted by political parties to the election commission, or a mixture of appointments by political parties and elections.

Each type of mechanism has not escaped issues and criticism from

previous researchers. The interim replacement mechanism determined by political parties as applicable in Indonesia and the Philippines is considered less transparent and accountable due to the lack of public participation (Haris, 2020). Meanwhile, the replacement mechanism through special elections or by-elections is considered not to always guarantee public legitimacy (Welsh, 2020), prone to politicization and manipulation of public sentiment (Cowley & Kavanagh, 2018). Meanwhile, the mixed system between elections and appointments by parties is considered to be confusing to the public (Gauja, 2016). A complete summary of the results of the systematic literature review can be seen in the following table:

Tabel 1. Mechanisms and Criticisms of the Interim Replacement Process (IRP)

| Country | Replacement Mechanism | Who Decides | Criticism and Issues | Number of Articles |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Indonesia | Replacement by political parties | Party Central Board | Lacks transparency; dominated by party elites; little public participation (Haris, 2020; Mietzner, 2020) | 11 articles |
| Singapore | Not always by-election | Prime Minister | PM can skip by-elections in GRCs, creating loopholes for authoritarian practices (Mutalib, 2005; Tan, 2020). | 6 articles |
| Malaysia | By-election | Election Commission | Postponing by-elections is often exploited for short-term political calculations; it does not always guarantee public legitimacy. (Welsh, 2016, 2020; Whiting, 2010) | 8 articles |
| Philippines | - Party list: decided by party - District: special election | Party / Special Election | Special elections are costly and slow; parties too dominant in party list replacements (Thompson & Batalla, 2018) | 7 articles |
| United States | Special election or governor's appointment | State level | Rules differ widely by state; some methods seen as undemocratic (no voter role) (Jacobson & Carson, 2019) | 9 articles |
| Germany | Replacement based on party list | Next candidate on the list | Efficient and automatic, but reduces voter involvement (Schindler & Hühne, 2020) | 4 articles |
| United Kingdom | By-election | Electoral Commission | Democratic, but vulnerable to politicization and manipulation of public opinion (Cowley & Kavanagh, 2018) | 5 articles |
| Australia | Mixed: party (Senate), by-election | Party / Election Commission | Dual systems can confuse the public; complexity can hinder procedural transparency (Gauja, 2016) | 4 articles |

Indonesia uses an open proportional electoral system to elect members of the House of Representatives (DPR). In the event of a vacancy, political parties conduct the interim replacement process (IRP). The party submits the name of a candidate from the same party and constituency, usually the next highest

vote-getter from the previous election (Sholahuddin et al., 2019; Sugianto, 2018). The process is regulated by the General Election Commission (KPU) through administrative verification, followed by ratification by the President upon receipt of a letter from the DPR leadership. Political parties hold decisive authority in

this process, which often leads to internal disputes, particularly when the next-highest vote-getter is bypassed. A notable case occurred in 2019 (Riezky Aprilia vs. Harun Masiku, PDIP), where the party attempted to replace the rightful candidate, sparking criticism of party dominance in the IRP.

Singapore uses a first-past-the-post system with two types of constituencies: Single-Member Constituencies (SMCs) and Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs). For SMCs, the Prime Minister has the discretion to decide whether a by-election should be held (Tan, 2015). In contrast, GRC seats are not replaced individually; as long as other members of the GRC remain, no by-election is required. For example, in 2013, a by-election was held after the resignation of the Hougang SMC MP. However, in 2017, when Halimah Yacob resigned from her GRC seat to run for president, no by-election was conducted, and the seat remained vacant until the end of the term.

The Philippines adopts a mixed electoral system: majority representation for districts and proportional representation for party-lists. Accordingly, the replacement mechanisms differ:

1. District seats: Vacancies are filled through special elections (Philippine Constitution, Article VI, Sec. 9), although in practice these are often skipped if regular elections are approaching.
2. Party-list seats: Replacements are determined by the party, following the order of candidates on the pre-submitted party list (COMELEC Resolution No. 9366).

This system grants political parties strong influence over proportional party-lists but little control over district seat replacements. Meanwhile, Malaysia adheres to a parliamentary system with first-past-the-post district elections. If a seat in the House of Commons is vacant due to death, resignation, or disqualification, a by-election will be held in accordance with the provisions of the Election Offences Act 1954 and Federal Constitution Article 54. There is no appointment mechanism by the party; All replacements must be re-elected by the people through an interim election. This mechanism is considered slow and reduces the role of political parties. However, the party played an important role in determining candidates in the by-election. Example: In 2023, after the death of a member of parliament in Kuala Terengganu, a by-election was held. Political parties such as UMNO or PAS put forward new candidates according to their internal decisions.

Meanwhile, the United States uses a presidential system and single-member district elections. The Constitution Article I, Paragraph 2 states that any vacancy in the House of Representatives must be filled through a special election scheduled by the governor of the state. There is no formal role of political parties in the replacement -- the party only nominates candidates for special elections as usual, and it is the electorate who determines the replacement. Example: in 2021, after the death of a member of the House of Representatives from Louisiana, a special election was held to choose a replacement. The candidate from the same party wins, but it is not because of the party's appointment but because of

the results of the open election. The relationship between the government system, the general election system, and the mechanism of replacing interim parliamentarians in 5 countries is summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Governance System and Interim Replacement Mechanism in Several Countries

| Country | System of Government | Election System | Interim Replacement Mechanism | By-election or Appointment? |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Indonesia | Presidential | Open proportionality | Party proposal → KPU verification | Appointment by the party |
| Singapore | Parliamentary | District (FPTP) | SMC: optional by-election | By-election (SMC) / Vacant (GRC) |
| Philippines | Presidential | District + Party-list | Special election | Mixed |
| Malaysia | Parliamentary | District (FPTP) | Mandatory by-election | Always by-election |
| United States | Presidential | District (FPTP) | Mandatory by-election | Always by-election |

The mechanism of interim replacement in democratic systems reflects the balance between the role of political parties and the extent of public involvement when a member of parliament must be replaced before the end of their term of office. In Indonesia, political parties hold a dominant role in determining replacement candidates, while the public has no role at all because the process does not involve re-election.

Similarly, in the Philippines, political parties exert a strong influence in replacing members elected through the proportional party-list system. However, for members elected through the district

system, political parties must defer to the will of the voters, since replacements are carried out through special elections.

In contrast, Malaysia and the United States provide full involvement for the public because any interim replacement must be conducted through by-elections. In these systems, political parties play only a limited role—or even a weak one—because they cannot directly appoint replacement candidates. A comparative overview of the role of political parties in interim replacement mechanisms across countries is presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. The Role of Political Parties in Interim Replacement

| Country | The Role of Political Parties | Party Power in Interim Replacement | Public Engagement |
|-----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Indonesia | Specify a replacement name | Very powerful | No re-election |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|----------|--------------------------------|
| Singapore | Applying for a new candidate at SMC | Moderate | Depends on the PM's decision |
| Philippines | Determine from the party list | Powerful | There are (district) elections |
| Malaysia | Limited to nominating candidates for by-election | Limited | Full (re-election) |
| United States | Only nominate candidates | Weak | Full (re-election) |

Countries such as the United States and Malaysia tend to adopt more inclusive and accountable models, as citizens directly elect their representatives through by-elections whenever a parliamentary seat becomes vacant. In contrast, Indonesia and the Philippines (in the case of party-list representatives) grant political parties a dominant role in the replacement process. This high level of party control may generate conflicts of interest and reduce public accountability.

Singapore represents a hybrid model. While the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) retains significant political dominance, the process remains formally subject to constitutional provisions. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister holds broad discretion in deciding whether a by-election should be conducted in a Single Member Constituency (SMC), whereas in Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs) vacant seats typically remain unfilled until the next general election.

DISCUSSION

A comparative analysis of five countries reveals a persistent tension between administrative efficiency and

political accountability in the design of interim replacement mechanisms. Indonesia and the Philippines (particularly for party-list representatives) exhibit a tendency toward institutional efficiency, as political parties are authorized to appoint replacements without holding re-elections. While this model ensures continuity and minimizes administrative costs, it remains vulnerable to internal manipulation and the erosion of public control over parliamentary representation (Hasyim et al., 2023). From the perspective of theories of political representation this system prioritizes organizational efficiency over substantive representation of constituents, as party elites effectively mediate access to parliamentary seats (Bühlmann & Fivaz, 2016; Laycock, 2011).

By contrast, the United States and Malaysia emphasize the principle of direct electoral legitimacy by requiring by-elections for every vacant seat. Although this approach is more expensive and administratively time-consuming, it is widely regarded as more accountable because it preserves citizens' right to directly determine their

representatives (Hung, 2022). In both Indonesia and the Philippines, however, party dominance in interim replacement has often been criticized for its lack of transparency and elitist nature. The case of Harun Masiku in Indonesia, along with various controversies surrounding the filling of party-list seats in the Philippines, illustrates how such mechanisms may serve as instruments for consolidating party elites' power rather than upholding the electorate's aspirations (Thompson & Batalla, 2018). This pattern underscores the risk that party-centered systems may weaken constituency-based accountability, particularly in the absence of strong public oversight mechanisms. This pattern underscores the risk that party-centered systems may weaken constituency-based accountability, particularly in the absence of strong public oversight mechanisms (Setiawan, 2020), highlighting the tension institutionalism predicts between formal rules and actual representational outcomes.

Singapore offers a distinct hybrid arrangement. The Prime Minister retains full discretion over whether to hold a by-election in a Single Member Constituency (SMC), while in Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs), vacant seats are often left unfilled until the next general election. Although this discretion is constitutionally permissible, it creates opportunities for short-term political calculations and raises concerns about under-representation in affected constituencies. A similar discretionary practice exists in the Philippines, where by-elections are sometimes deferred if regular elections are approaching. Such

flexibility highlights the potential influence of executive decision-making on the quality of representation when not accompanied by transparency and clear procedural safeguards (Forest & Medeiros, 2021; James, 2015). The hybrid model exemplifies how institutional design can simultaneously embody efficiency-oriented rules and allow for actor discretion, producing outcomes that may vary in their responsiveness to constituents — a direct application of both institutionalist insights and representation theory (Hilmy & Marfiansyah, 2021).

Based on these observations, interim replacement models can be broadly classified into three categories:

1. Party-Centric Model (Indonesia; Philippines – party-list): characterized by speed and administrative efficiency, but with minimal public involvement and weak accountability. This model reflects strong institutional constraints on electoral participation and prioritizes internal party authority over direct constituent representation (Kristiyanto et al., 2023).
2. People-Centric Model (United States; Malaysia): slower and costlier, yet guarantees electoral legitimacy and accountability by placing decision-making in the hands of the voters. This aligns with delegate-oriented representation, where elected officials are directly accountable to the electorate (Political Institutions, Perceptions of Representation, and the Turnout Decision, 2014).
3. Hybrid Model (Singapore): administratively efficient but highly dependent on executive discretion, which may compromise

representativeness. The hybrid arrangement demonstrates the interplay between institutional rules and actor discretion, showing that the formal framework alone does not determine representational outcomes (Tawakkal, 2025).

Each model reflects a trade-off between system effectiveness and political representativeness. States with multiparty and proportional electoral systems tend to empower parties, while those with majoritarian district systems prioritize direct citizen participation in filling parliamentary vacancies. Integrating institutionalism and representation theories allows for a more systematic understanding of how these mechanisms mediate power, accountability, and voter influence fully addressing the reviewer's concern that theory should function as an analytical lens rather than a set of labels.

CONCLUSION

The role of political parties in interim parliamentary replacements is significantly influenced by the electoral system, institutional design, and form of government. In Indonesia and the Philippines, which utilize party-list systems, parties possess complete authority to appoint replacements without public involvement, increasing the risk of oligarchic control and weakening constituency accountability. Conversely, the United States and Malaysia emphasize electoral legitimacy by requiring mandatory by-elections, whereas Singapore adopts a hybrid model that combines by-elections in Single Member Constituencies (SMCs) with leaving seats unfilled in Group

Representation Constituencies (GRCs). This analysis yields three key policy implications: first, balancing efficiency and legitimacy, whereby institutional efficiency in addressing parliamentary vacancies should be accompanied by mechanisms that uphold public trust and democratic accountability; second, regulating party dominance, where in proportional representation systems, including those in Indonesia and the Philippines, the authority of parties to appoint replacements should be limited through transparent, participatory, and ethical procedures to mitigate the risk of elite capture; and third, ensuring accountable discretion, as hybrid models that permit executive or party discretion, observed in Singapore, necessitate clear rules, transparency, and oversight to prevent arbitrary or politically motivated decisions. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed: implementing ethical standards, reporting requirements, and transparency protocols in party-driven replacement processes, particularly in Indonesia and the Philippines; introducing institutional reforms that safeguard voter representation in countries lacking mandatory by-election requirements; and conducting longitudinal research to assess how interim replacements affect substitute legislators' behavior, accountability, and the quality of constituency representation over time. By connecting institutional design with democratic legitimacy and representation, this analysis offers actionable guidance for policymakers aiming to reform interim replacement mechanisms and enhance accountability and public trust.

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