



The Interrelationship Between the Presidential Threshold and the Parliamentary Threshold in Indonesia's Electoral System: Weighing the Balance Between Governmental Stability and Democratic Representation

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Article	Abstract
<p>Keywords: Presidential Threshold; Parliamentary Threshold; Constitutional Law; Electoral Law; Democratic Representation;</p> <p>How to cite: Hasanah, Ichwan Ahnaz Alamudi, and Rabiatal Afwaliah. "The Interrelationship Between the Presidential Threshold and the Parliamentary Threshold in Indonesia's Electoral System: Weighing the Balance Between Governmental Stability and Democratic Representation." <i>Adil Ka'Talino: Jurnal Hukum dan Wacana Keadilan</i> 2, no. 1 (2026) 1-19.</p>	<p>This study examines the interrelationship between the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) within Indonesia's electoral system under Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections. Unlike previous studies that predominantly analyse these threshold mechanisms separately, this research investigates their interaction as an integrated institutional design. It evaluates their combined impact on the simplification of the political party system, democratic representation, and governmental stability. Employing a normative legal approach grounded in library research, the study analyses constitutional provisions, statutory regulations, judicial decisions, academic literature, and Sinta-indexed legal journals to assess the legal and political consequences of Indonesia's dual-threshold framework. The findings demonstrate that the interaction between PT and ParT has significantly influenced party coalition formation, presidential nomination, legislative representation, and the overall competitiveness of elections. While the dual-threshold mechanism helps reduce excessive party fragmentation and strengthen the effectiveness of the presidential system, it also limits political inclusiveness by restricting the participation of smaller parties and reducing the number of electoral alternatives available to voters. Consequently, political decision-making becomes concentrated among larger political parties, potentially affecting legislative representation, policy formulation, and the constitutional principle of equal political participation. The study further argues that Indonesia's electoral system cannot achieve effectiveness through threshold mechanisms alone but requires a comprehensive institutional design that balances party system simplification with democratic inclusiveness. It concludes that the current dual-threshold arrangement should be periodically re-evaluated to ensure proportionality between governmental stability, constitutional democracy, and fair political representation in accordance with the principles of Indonesia's constitutional order.</p>



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INTRODUCTION

General elections in Indonesia are a fundamental pillar of the democratic system, enabling citizens to elect their leaders and representatives. Since the 1998 Reform Era, Indonesia has undergone significant transformations in its political system, including substantial changes in the administration of elections (Wahdini et al., 2025). Elections serve not only as a mechanism for selecting political leaders but also as an arena for political competition involving various political parties. Within this context, Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections regulates various aspects of electoral administration, including the provisions governing the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT).

The Presidential Threshold (PT) is the minimum electoral support required for a presidential candidate or a nominating political party to be eligible to contest the presidential election (Prasetio & Sianipar, 2021). In contrast, the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) denotes the minimum percentage of valid votes that a political party must obtain to secure representation in the national legislature (Kholis, 2020). The interaction between these two electoral thresholds has significant implications for Indonesia's political dynamics and electoral system.

Since the enactment of Law Number 7 of 2017, the provisions governing the Presidential Threshold and Parliamentary Threshold have become the subject of extensive debate among scholars, policymakers, and the broader public. Under the law, presidential candidates must be nominated by political parties or coalitions holding at least 20% of the seats in the House of Representatives (DPR) or 25% of the valid national votes obtained in the previous legislative election. In comparison, political parties must secure at least 4% of the valid national vote to obtain parliamentary representation. These dual-threshold requirements pose particular challenges for smaller political parties, limiting their ability to nominate presidential candidates independently and to gain representation in the legislature (Jerzyk, 2025). Consequently, the regulations may reduce the number of viable presidential candidates, narrow electoral competition, and restrict voters' choices.

In this context, a study by Yasinta and Retno argues that a high electoral threshold may significantly limit voters' choices, as only large political parties possess sufficient electoral strength to nominate presidential candidates. Their findings suggest that stringent threshold requirements can generate public dissatisfaction, which may ultimately affect voter participation (Hapsari & Saraswati, 2023). Likewise, research on political party consolidation and the Parliamentary Threshold shows that smaller parties tend to form alliances or merge with larger parties to meet the threshold for parliamentary representation. While such arrangements may contribute to party system consolidation, they also have the potential to reshape Indonesia's political landscape by reducing political diversity and weakening the representation of smaller political interests (Adiwira, 2020).

The significance of this study lies in providing a deeper understanding of how the interaction between the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) shapes the dynamics of general elections in Indonesia. In a healthy

democratic system, the diversity of political parties and presidential candidates is essential to ensure that voters have meaningful electoral choices. However, the imposition of high electoral thresholds risks concentrating political competition among a limited number of major parties, thereby reducing political pluralism and weakening the representation of citizens' diverse interests.

The presidential system established under the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD 1945) is fundamentally a pure presidential system, in which the President cannot be removed solely through the political will of parties represented in the House of Representatives (DPR), even when those parties hold a parliamentary majority (Zanibar, 2018). According to Syamsuddin Haris, the legitimacy of a president in a presidential system is theoretically derived from a direct electoral mandate rather than from the political composition of the legislature. Accordingly, the presidency and the legislature constitute two distinct constitutional institutions, each possessing an independent source of democratic legitimacy. From this perspective, the effectiveness and stability of Indonesia's presidential system do not inherently depend on the existence of a Presidential Threshold, particularly in the context of simultaneous elections. Instead, the 1945 Constitution's constitutional design provides sufficient institutional safeguards to ensure a strong and effective presidency, distinguishing Indonesia's presidential model from systems in which executive authority is more closely tied to parliamentary support (Prasetyoningsih, 2017).

Indonesia's policy of political party simplification has produced significant results in reducing the number of political parties, both in terms of legal registration and electoral participation. Historical data indicate a substantial decline in the number of parties obtaining legal entity status, from 141 (95%) in 1999 to only 3 (2.6%) in 2011, largely due to increasingly stringent administrative and legal requirements. A similar trend can be observed in electoral participation. In the 1999 General Election, 48 of the 110 registered political parties (43.6%) qualified to compete. By the 2014 General Election, only 12 of the 54 registered parties (22.22%) met the eligibility requirements. In the 2019 General Election, the number of participating parties increased slightly to 14 of the 27 registered parties (51.85%). However, in the 2024 General Election, although 24 political parties, including both national parties and Aceh's local parties, registered to participate, only eight parties (44.4%) succeeded in surpassing the parliamentary threshold and securing seats in the House of Representatives (DPR-RI), while the remaining 55.6% failed to obtain parliamentary representation (Ardipandanto, 2021). These developments demonstrate that the parliamentary threshold policy has been effective in simplifying the party system within the legislature. Nevertheless, this outcome has also resulted in a considerable number of votes cast for parties that failed to meet the threshold being excluded from parliamentary representation.

Despite these achievements, the implementation of electoral threshold policies, including the Electoral Threshold (ET), Parliamentary Threshold (ParT), and Presidential Threshold (PT), has generated diverse legal and political consequences.

The Electoral Threshold (ET), which was in place until the 2004 General Election, determined which political parties were eligible to participate in subsequent elections. However, it was widely regarded as insufficiently restrictive, thereby contributing to political fragmentation (Basista, 2025). The Parliamentary Threshold (ParT), introduced in the 2009 General Election, has reduced the number of parties represented in parliament but has also raised concerns about the exclusion of votes cast for smaller political parties (Barqi et al., 2024). Likewise, the Presidential Threshold (PT), which requires political parties or coalitions to hold at least 20% of DPR seats or 25% of the national valid vote to nominate presidential candidates, has been criticised for limiting the number of nominations available to smaller parties and narrowing voters' electoral choices. These findings underscore the need to periodically evaluate Indonesia's threshold policies to ensure they remain consistent with the country's evolving democratic and political landscape. A recalibration of the Parliamentary Threshold, for example by lowering it below the current 4%, could promote more inclusive political representation, while reducing the Presidential Threshold would provide greater opportunities for political parties to establish more flexible electoral coalitions and foster a more competitive and representative democratic system.

The electoral thresholds established under Law Number 7 of 2017 not only affect the number of presidential candidates and political parties eligible to participate in elections but also influence voter behaviour. Research by Muhammad Ibrahim Rantau suggests that high electoral thresholds may lead voters to feel politically marginalised, as they perceive that their votes have little or no meaningful impact on electoral outcomes. Such perceptions can contribute to declining voter turnout, which constitutes a key indicator of democratic participation. Over time, this dissatisfaction may foster political apathy, whereby citizens become increasingly disengaged from political processes and less willing to participate in elections (Rantau, 2019).

Furthermore, the interaction between the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) carries significant implications for political representation in Indonesia. High threshold requirements tend to marginalise smaller political parties, unable to meet the prescribed electoral criteria, thereby limiting the representation of the social groups and political interests they seek to represent. As a consequence, the electoral system risks concentrating political power in a limited number of dominant parties, reducing political pluralism and weakening the inclusiveness that is essential to a representative democratic system.

The significance of this study extends beyond a theoretical understanding of electoral thresholds to their practical implications for policymakers, legislators, and political parties. By examining the interaction between the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) as an integrated institutional framework, this study seeks to identify legal and policy alternatives that can enhance political participation, strengthen democratic representation, and improve the quality of Indonesia's electoral system. Furthermore, this research contributes to the

development of constitutional and electoral law scholarship by offering a more comprehensive perspective on the relationship between dual-threshold mechanisms and democratic governance. It is also expected to serve as a valuable reference for future studies on electoral system reform, political party institutionalisation, and democratic consolidation in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employs a normative juridical approach grounded in statutory regulations, legal theories, and legal concepts governing the administration of general elections and the political party system in Indonesia. The research relies on library-based data, with secondary sources serving as the primary basis for analysis. These data were obtained through an extensive review of legal materials relevant to the research problem, including legislation, judicial decisions, academic literature, and previous studies concerning the Presidential Threshold, Parliamentary Threshold, and Indonesia's electoral system (Marzuki, 2016).

The legal materials are classified into primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections, and relevant Constitutional Court decisions concerning the judicial review of the Presidential Threshold and Parliamentary Threshold provisions. Secondary legal materials consist of scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and other academic publications, while tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other supporting reference works. The collected legal materials were analysed qualitatively using a statutory, conceptual, and case approach to examine the interrelationship between the two threshold mechanisms and to evaluate their implications for Indonesia's presidential system, political party consolidation, and the quality of democratic representation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of General Elections in Setting Thresholds

General Elections in Indonesia constitute the primary mechanism through which citizens elect their representatives to both the legislative and executive branches of government. Elections represent the practical manifestation of popular sovereignty, in which every vote plays a crucial role in shaping the direction of national governance and public policy (Arifin et al., 2025). In a country characterised by extensive ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, such as Indonesia, general elections also serve to preserve democratic stability while ensuring equitable political representation for diverse segments of society (Sudarmanto et al., 2025). Conducted regularly, elections provide an institutional mechanism for evaluating incumbent governments and strengthening political accountability.

In the administration of elections, Indonesia applies two principal electoral threshold mechanisms, namely the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT). These thresholds serve distinct yet interconnected functions within the country's electoral system (Siboy & Al-Fatih, 2025):

1. Presidential Threshold (PT). The Presidential Threshold is the minimum level of electoral support a political party or coalition of political parties must have to nominate a presidential and vice-presidential candidate. Its primary objective is to ensure that only candidates with substantial political backing are eligible to contest the presidential election, thereby promoting governmental stability and facilitating effective governance.
2. Parliamentary Threshold (ParT). The Parliamentary Threshold is the minimum percentage of valid national votes a political party must obtain to secure representation in the House of Representatives (DPR). This mechanism is intended to simplify the party system by reducing the number of political parties represented in parliament, thereby enhancing legislative effectiveness, improving decision-making processes, and supporting a more stable parliamentary configuration.

The legal framework governing electoral thresholds in Indonesia has evolved progressively through several legislative reforms. The Presidential Threshold (PT) was first introduced under Law Number 23 of 2003 concerning the Election of the President and Vice President, while the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) was initially regulated under Law Number 10 of 2008 on General Elections (Mas'udah, 2020). Both mechanisms were subsequently consolidated and revised under Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections, which currently serves as the principal legal framework governing Indonesia's electoral system.

Under Law Number 7 of 2017, political parties must obtain at least 4% of the valid national vote to be eligible for the allocation of seats in the House of Representatives (DPR) (Fauziah & Esfandiari, 2024). The parliamentary threshold was introduced to strengthen political stability by simplifying the party system and preventing excessive fragmentation in parliament. Given Indonesia's multiparty system, this mechanism seeks to limit the proliferation of political parties in the legislature, thereby reducing potential conflicts between the executive and legislative branches and supporting the effective operation of the presidential system.

The Parliamentary Threshold has been implemented since the 2009 General Election, with its percentage gradually increasing over time. It was initially set at 2.5% in the 2009 election, raised to 3.5% in the 2014 election, and further increased to 4% beginning with the 2019 election. Pursuant to Article 414 of Law Number 7 of 2017, political parties contesting the 2024 General Election were required to secure at least

4% of the valid national vote to participate in the allocation of seats in the DPR (Angela & Novrizal, 2025).

Nevertheless, the parliamentary threshold applies exclusively to elections for the national legislature (DPR). All political parties participating in the election remain eligible to compete for seats in the Provincial Regional Representative Councils (DPRD Provinces) and Regency/Municipal Regional Representative Councils (DPRD Regencies/Municipalities). Consequently, political parties that fail to satisfy the 4% national threshold may still obtain representation at the provincial and local legislative levels, thereby preserving opportunities for regional political representation despite their exclusion from the national parliament (Sebastian et al., 2014).

More recently, the Constitutional Court introduced an important development regarding the Parliamentary Threshold by partially granting a petition challenging the constitutionality of the 4% threshold. The Court held that Article 414(1) of Law Number 7 of 2017 remains constitutional for the 2024 General Election, but declared it conditionally constitutional for the 2029 General Election and subsequent elections (Sirait et al., 2024). The Court further required the legislature to amend the statutory provision governing the parliamentary threshold, including reconsidering the threshold percentage in accordance with objective, rational, and constitutionally acceptable criteria before it can be applied in future elections. This decision reflects the Court's effort to balance the objectives of governmental stability, political representation, and the constitutional principle of democratic inclusiveness.

The Constitutional Court further outlined several constitutional guidelines that must be taken into account in revising the parliamentary threshold provisions. First, the revised threshold should be designed as a sustainable mechanism that can be applied consistently across future elections. Second, any modification to the parliamentary threshold, including its numerical percentage, must preserve the proportional character of Indonesia's proportional representation electoral system, particularly by minimising the number of valid votes that cannot be translated into seats in the House of Representatives (DPR). Third, the revised threshold should continue to support the objective of simplifying the political party system without undermining democratic representation. Fourth, all legislative amendments must be completed before the commencement of the 2029 General Election stages. Finally, the legislative process must ensure meaningful public participation by involving all relevant stakeholders, including academics, civil society organisations, election experts, and political parties, particularly those participating in elections but currently lacking representation in the DPR.

The formulation of Indonesia's electoral legislation, including provisions governing electoral thresholds, falls within the legislative authority of the Government and the House of Representatives (DPR) (Rannie et al., 2024). The enactment and amendment of electoral laws involve extensive deliberation with

constitutional law experts, academics, electoral management bodies, political parties, and civil society organisations to ensure that the resulting framework reflects democratic principles and constitutional values. Despite these efforts, the regulation of electoral thresholds remains one of the most contested issues in Indonesia's constitutional and electoral law. In its recent decision, the Constitutional Court reaffirmed that the 4% Parliamentary Threshold would remain applicable for the 2024 General Election, while simultaneously directing the legislature to comprehensively review and redesign the threshold for implementation beginning with the 2029 General Election. This ruling underscores that electoral thresholds should not merely function as instruments for achieving governmental stability and party system simplification but must also accommodate the evolving demands of democratic representation, electoral fairness, and political inclusiveness. Through a balanced recalibration of the threshold mechanism, Indonesia can continue to strengthen its constitutional democracy while ensuring its electoral system remains both effective and representative of its citizens' diverse aspirations.

The rationale for adopting the Parliamentary Threshold and Presidential Threshold cannot be separated from Indonesia's commitment to a multiparty political system. A multiparty system enables broad political participation by accommodating diverse ideological orientations, regional interests, and social groups within the democratic process. However, such inclusiveness also carries the inherent risk of political fragmentation, in which electoral support is dispersed across numerous political parties, making it difficult to form stable governing coalitions and to achieve effective legislative decision-making. Excessive fragmentation may weaken policy coherence, increase political bargaining, and create tensions between the executive and legislative branches. Consequently, electoral thresholds function as institutional instruments designed to balance two competing constitutional objectives: preserving political pluralism while preventing excessive party fragmentation that could undermine governmental stability. Nevertheless, when threshold requirements are set excessively high, they may have the opposite effect, disproportionately benefiting large political parties, restricting electoral competition, and diminishing the representation of smaller parties and minority interests. Accordingly, the constitutional challenge is not merely whether electoral thresholds should exist, but rather how they should be calibrated to achieve an appropriate balance between democratic inclusiveness, effective governance, and the consolidation of Indonesia's presidential system.

Indonesia's Political Party System: Dynamics of Party System Simplification

Indonesia's democratic system has undergone a fundamental transformation since the Reform Era, with the political party system emerging as a critical element of the country's democratisation. The complexity of the post-1998 political landscape

has produced a highly dynamic and multidimensional party system (Anantadjaya, 2020). This development reflects not only the expansion of political freedoms but also the fundamental challenges associated with democratic consolidation in Indonesia.

From a historical perspective, Indonesia's multiparty system is the product of a long process of political transformation. The transition from authoritarianism to democracy created broad opportunities for the establishment of political parties representing diverse ideological orientations and societal interests (Ulum, 2020). This phenomenon is inseparable from Indonesia's pluralistic social and political context, characterised by significant ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity that requires an inclusive system of political representation.

Efforts to simplify the political party system should therefore not be viewed merely as an administrative or technical reform but as a strategic component of democratic consolidation. A fragmented party system may complicate coalition-building, reduce governmental effectiveness, and hinder coherent policymaking within a presidential system. As noted in comparative studies of Indonesia's democratic development, including the work of Aspinall and Mietzner, excessive party fragmentation can undermine governance effectiveness and increase political instability. Consequently, institutional mechanisms aimed at simplifying the party system, such as electoral thresholds, have been introduced to balance political pluralism with the need for stable and effective government. The central challenge, however, lies in ensuring that these mechanisms strengthen governability without undermining democratic representation and political inclusiveness (Aspinall, 2011).

Legal regulation has become a key instrument in Indonesia's efforts to simplify its political party system. Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections establishes two interrelated electoral threshold mechanisms—the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT)—which are intended to strengthen the presidential system while promoting a more streamlined party system.

Chapter VIII (Nomination of the President and Vice President), Part Three (Requirements for the Nomination of the President and Vice President), Article 222 provides that:

"A pair of presidential and vice-presidential candidates shall be nominated by a Political Party or a Coalition of Political Parties participating in the General Election that has obtained at least 20% (twenty percent) of the total seats in the House of Representatives (DPR) or 25% (twenty-five percent) of the valid national votes in the previous election for members of the House of Representatives."

Meanwhile, Chapter XVI (Determination of Election Results), Part Two (Determination of Election Results for Members of the DPR, Provincial DPRD, and Regency/Municipal DPRD), Article 414(1)–(2) stipulates that:

(1) *Political parties participating in the General Election must obtain at least 4% (four percent) of the total valid national votes to be included in the allocation of seats in the House of Representatives (DPR).*

(2) *The allocation of seats in the House of Representatives shall be determined only after taking into account the votes obtained by political parties that have satisfied the national parliamentary threshold.*

These two provisions establish an integrated legal framework in which the outcome of legislative elections directly influences the presidential nomination process. The Parliamentary Threshold determines which political parties are entitled to representation in the DPR, while the Presidential Threshold requires parties or coalitions to possess substantial parliamentary strength or electoral support before they may nominate presidential candidates. Consequently, political parties that fail to satisfy the Parliamentary Threshold lose opportunities to participate effectively in presidential nominations, resulting in political competition becoming increasingly concentrated among larger parties. Although this institutional design contributes to the simplification of Indonesia's party system and supports governmental stability, it simultaneously raises concerns regarding political inclusiveness, equal electoral competition, and the constitutional guarantee of democratic representation for smaller political parties.

From a sociological perspective, political party simplification cannot be understood as a linear or purely regulatory process. Rather, it is shaped by the interaction of institutional structures, elite interests, political networks, and patterns of social mobilisation. Studies on Indonesian party politics emphasise that the internal dynamics of political parties are influenced not only by electoral regulations but also by patronage networks, organisational capacity, and the distribution of political resources. Consequently, efforts to simplify the party system require a multidimensional approach that considers institutional design, political culture, and leadership structures alongside formal legal reforms (Mietzner, 2009).

From a constitutional law perspective, the simplification of the party system must remain consistent with the principles of democratic representation, political equality, and proportionality (Mahfud, 2009). Electoral threshold mechanisms should therefore be designed not only to improve governmental effectiveness but also to ensure that restrictions on political participation remain constitutionally justified and proportionate. The constitutional objective is to strike an appropriate balance between enhancing the efficiency of the presidential system and preserving the inclusiveness that characterises a representative democracy.

Institutionally, the quality of political parties is equally important as their number. The effectiveness of party system simplification depends on political parties' capacity to develop sustainable cadre recruitment, maintain transparent financial management, strengthen internal accountability, and promote democratic decision-

making (Andrianto, 2020). Accordingly, electoral thresholds should not be viewed merely as instruments for reducing the number of political parties, but also as mechanisms for encouraging stronger, more institutionalised political organisations capable of supporting democratic governance.

Furthermore, Indonesia's social and cultural diversity requires that any reform of the political party system be carefully considered in light of the country's pluralistic character. As a multicultural and decentralised state, Indonesia's electoral system must accommodate regional diversity, local political aspirations, and minority representation while simultaneously promoting political stability. This demonstrates that the constitutional debate surrounding the Presidential Threshold and Parliamentary Threshold extends beyond questions of electoral engineering to encompass broader issues of democratic inclusion, constitutional justice, and the long-term consolidation of Indonesia's constitutional democracy.

Studies on Indonesia's party system further emphasise that political party simplification should be understood as a dynamic, ongoing process rather than a fixed institutional arrangement. As argued by Djayadi Hanan, strengthening Indonesia's multiparty presidential system requires not only the implementation of simultaneous elections but also the integration of electoral system design, party system engineering, and coalition formation. Consequently, electoral reforms must remain adaptive to changing political, social, and constitutional developments. The ultimate objective is not merely to reduce the number of political parties but to establish a political system that is more responsive, effective, and capable of advancing the public interest within a democratic constitutional framework (Hanan, 2016).

In summary, the simplification of Indonesia's political party system seeks to improve the quality of democracy by strengthening both the institutional structure and the functional capacity of political parties. Although the multiparty system that emerged following the Reform Era reflects the expansion of political freedom and democratic participation, it has also posed challenges regarding governmental stability, coalition management, and legislative effectiveness. To address these challenges, Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections introduced two complementary electoral mechanisms: the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) and the Presidential Threshold (PT).

The Parliamentary Threshold requires political parties to obtain at least 4% of the valid national vote to secure representation in the House of Representatives (DPR). In contrast, the Presidential Threshold requires political parties or coalitions to control at least 20% of the seats in the DPR or 25% of the valid national vote from the previous legislative election to nominate presidential candidates. The interaction between these two thresholds has contributed to the concentration of political competition among larger political parties, thereby promoting party system

consolidation and enhancing governmental effectiveness. At the same time, however, this institutional design has reduced opportunities for smaller political parties to participate meaningfully in both legislative representation and presidential nominations, raising concerns regarding political inclusiveness and electoral competitiveness.

Accordingly, political party simplification should not be measured solely by the reduction in the number of political parties represented in parliament. It must also be evaluated in terms of the institutional quality of political parties, including their internal democracy, organisational capacity, accountability, transparency, and ability to aggregate and represent public interests. Achieving these objectives requires a comprehensive approach that integrates constitutional principles, legal reform, sociopolitical realities, and Indonesia's cultural diversity.

Ultimately, any policy aimed at simplifying the political party system must remain grounded in the principles of substantive democracy rather than merely procedural electoral engineering. The constitutional challenge is therefore not only to create a more efficient party system but also to ensure that electoral regulations preserve political pluralism, protect equal political participation, and enable political parties to function as genuine vehicles for representing the sovereignty and aspirations of the Indonesian people within a democratic state governed by the rule of law.

The Evolution of Electoral Threshold Regulations in Indonesia

The relationship between the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) constitutes a fundamental issue in Indonesia's electoral system, particularly in shaping the interaction between legislative and presidential elections. Under Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections, these two threshold mechanisms were introduced as complementary institutional instruments intended to simplify the political party system, strengthen the presidential system, and promote governmental stability. Nevertheless, their implementation has generated significant constitutional and political implications for democratic representation, electoral competitiveness, and political participation.

From a legal perspective, the Presidential Threshold constitutes the statutory requirement that a political party or coalition of political parties must possess at least 20% of the seats in the House of Representatives (DPR) or have obtained 25% of the valid national vote in the previous legislative election before being eligible to nominate presidential and vice-presidential candidates, as stipulated in Article 222 of Law Number 7 of 2017. Together with the Parliamentary Threshold, which requires political parties to secure at least 4% of the valid national vote to obtain representation in the DPR, these mechanisms are intended to simplify the party

system, reduce political fragmentation, and promote governmental stability by encouraging political party consolidation rather than excessive electoral competition.

The evolution of electoral thresholds in Indonesia has become one of the most debated issues in constitutional and electoral law since the democratic reforms of the late 1990s. Both the Presidential Threshold and the Parliamentary Threshold were introduced as institutional mechanisms to reduce party fragmentation while enhancing the effectiveness of Indonesia's presidential system. However, their implementation has also generated persistent debates concerning political equality, constitutional rights, and democratic inclusiveness. Although electoral thresholds may strengthen governmental stability by limiting excessive fragmentation, they simultaneously create substantial barriers for smaller political parties, restricting both parliamentary representation and opportunities to nominate presidential candidates.

As observed by Aprilian Sumodiningrat in his study *"Meninjau Ulang Ketentuan Presidential Threshold dalam Pemilihan Presiden dan Wakil Presiden"* (*Reconsidering the Presidential Threshold in the Election of the President and Vice President*), the Presidential Threshold is intended to ensure that only presidential candidates supported by sufficiently strong political parties or coalitions may contest the election (Sumodiningrat, 2021). At the same time, this mechanism may marginalise the political preferences of voters whose parties fail to meet the prescribed threshold requirements. Consequently, the constitutional debate surrounding electoral thresholds extends beyond questions of institutional efficiency to encompass broader concerns regarding political representation, electoral fairness, and the protection of democratic rights within Indonesia's constitutional democracy.

The Presidential Threshold (PT) in Indonesia requires political parties or coalitions of political parties to secure at least 20% of the seats in the House of Representatives (DPR) or 25% of the valid national votes cast in the previous legislative election to nominate presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Although this requirement is intended to promote stable governing coalitions and strengthen the presidential system, it has also generated significant constitutional and political concerns. In particular, the threshold has tended to marginalise smaller and newly established political parties by limiting their ability to nominate presidential candidates independently. As noted by Armia et al., *"Second, newly established political parties are unable to nominate presidential and vice-presidential candidates even if they form coalitions and satisfy other presidential threshold requirements."* This observation illustrates that a high presidential threshold may restrict political competition by preventing emerging political parties from participating effectively in the presidential election, thereby narrowing the range of electoral choices available to voters (Armia, 2017).

Similarly, the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT), currently set at 4% of the valid national vote, has exerted a substantial influence on Indonesia's political landscape. While this mechanism is intended to simplify the party system by limiting the number

of political parties represented in the national legislature, it may also reduce political pluralism by excluding smaller parties from parliamentary representation. As a consequence, political parties are increasingly encouraged to form strategic coalitions to secure legislative representation, which may ultimately diminish the diversity of political voices in parliament. In this regard, Rizky Aditya, in "*Legal Loopholes in Indonesia's Electoral System: An Analysis of the Presidential Threshold and Parliamentary Threshold*," argues that the interaction between these threshold mechanisms significantly affects political representation and public participation by determining which political actors can compete effectively within Indonesia's electoral system (Perdana & Imam, 2023).

Despite their legitimate objective of promoting governmental stability and reducing excessive party fragmentation, the implementation of both threshold mechanisms demonstrates the need for continued constitutional evaluation and legislative reform. Numerous scholars contend that excessively high electoral thresholds may undermine democratic legitimacy by limiting electoral competitiveness, reducing political inclusiveness, and weakening public confidence in the electoral process. Accordingly, the threshold provisions should be periodically reassessed to ensure that they remain consistent with the constitutional principles of democracy, equality, and political representation. Several academic studies further suggest that recalibrating the Presidential Threshold and Parliamentary Threshold could provide greater opportunities for smaller political parties to participate meaningfully in electoral competition while preserving governmental stability. Such an approach would contribute to a more inclusive, representative, and constitutionally balanced democratic system in Indonesia.

The development of electoral thresholds in Indonesia reflects the evolving relationship between democratic representation and governmental stability. Since the democratic transition of 1998, Indonesia has adopted a highly fragmented multiparty system, with 48 political parties contesting the 1999 General Election (Ulum, 2020). While this expansion reflected greater political freedom, it also created challenges for legislative effectiveness and executive stability. To address these issues, the government gradually introduced electoral threshold mechanisms designed to simplify the party system and strengthen Indonesia's presidential democracy.

The Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) was first introduced in the 2004 General Election and formally implemented in 2009 with a threshold of 2.5% of the valid national vote for representation in the House of Representatives (DPR). The threshold was subsequently increased to 3.5% in the 2014 Election and 4% beginning with the 2019 Election, as currently provided under Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections (Angela & Novrizal, 2025). These reforms were intended to reduce excessive party fragmentation and encourage the consolidation of political parties.

The Presidential Threshold (PT) likewise evolved as an institutional mechanism to strengthen the presidential system by requiring political parties or coalitions to possess sufficient electoral support before nominating presidential candidates. Initially requiring 10% of DPR seats or 20% of the national vote, the threshold was later increased to 20% of DPR seats or 25% of the valid national vote, thereby significantly limiting the number of eligible presidential candidates. As a result, the 2019 and 2024 General Elections featured only a limited number of presidential tickets, illustrating the practical impact of the threshold on political competition.

Although these threshold mechanisms have contributed to party system consolidation and governmental stability, they have also generated significant constitutional concerns. The increasing threshold requirements have reduced opportunities for smaller political parties to obtain parliamentary representation or nominate presidential candidates, thereby limiting political pluralism and narrowing electoral choices. Furthermore, experience since the Reform Era demonstrates that raising electoral thresholds alone has not fully resolved the problem of party fragmentation, as coalition politics remains a dominant feature of Indonesia's presidential system.

The transition from the Electoral Threshold, which regulated eligibility for participation in subsequent elections, to the Parliamentary Threshold also reflects an important shift in Indonesia's electoral policy. The Electoral Threshold proved ineffective in encouraging political party mergers, as many parties reorganised under new names rather than consolidating institutionally. Consequently, the Electoral Threshold was replaced by the Parliamentary Threshold under Law Number 10 of 2008, with subsequent amendments further increasing the threshold percentage.

Overall, Indonesia's experience demonstrates that electoral threshold mechanisms should not be regarded as stand-alone instruments for achieving political stability. Their effectiveness depends upon broader institutional reforms, including political party institutionalisation, electoral system design, and constitutional safeguards for democratic representation. Excessively high thresholds risk increasing wasted votes, reducing proportional representation, and limiting political participation. Therefore, future electoral reforms should seek a more balanced threshold design that simultaneously promotes governmental stability, effective governance, political inclusiveness, and democratic representation within Indonesia's constitutional framework.

Finally, the interaction between the Presidential Threshold and the Parliamentary Threshold illustrates the enduring tension between governmental stability and democratic inclusiveness. While these mechanisms have simplified Indonesia's party system and strengthened the presidential system, they have also raised concerns about political equality and minority representation. Accordingly,

future reforms should focus not only on adjusting threshold percentages but also on developing a more coherent institutional design capable of balancing effective governance with the constitutional principles of democracy and political representation.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of the Presidential Threshold (PT) and the Parliamentary Threshold (ParT) demonstrates Indonesia's continuing efforts to balance governmental stability with democratic representation. Although various threshold mechanisms have been introduced to simplify the party system and strengthen the presidential system, their implementation has not always achieved the intended objectives. High levels of party fragmentation and electoral disproportionality remain persistent challenges, indicating that electoral thresholds alone are insufficient to ensure political stability. The gradual increase in threshold requirements has also led to substantial wasted votes, raising concerns about the proportionality and inclusiveness of Indonesia's electoral system.

The open-list proportional representation system, which continues to be applied in Indonesia, allows voters to cast ballots directly for individual legislative candidates rather than merely selecting political parties. While this system enhances voter choice and strengthens the accountability of elected representatives, it also intensifies intra-party competition and weakens party cohesion. Moreover, the coexistence of an open-list electoral system with relatively high electoral thresholds has produced contradictory outcomes: voters enjoy greater freedom to select candidates, yet many votes ultimately fail to translate into parliamentary representation because the supporting political parties do not meet the Parliamentary Threshold. The experience of the 2019 and 2024 General Elections illustrates that increasing the Parliamentary Threshold to 4% has not eliminated political fragmentation, but instead encouraged strategic coalition-building among larger parties while limiting the electoral prospects of smaller parties. Consequently, the effectiveness of electoral thresholds should not be assessed solely by the reduction in the number of parliamentary parties, but also by their ability to preserve political representation, electoral fairness, and democratic inclusiveness.

Accordingly, future electoral reform should adopt a more comprehensive institutional approach rather than relying exclusively on higher electoral thresholds. This includes strengthening political party institutionalisation, periodically reviewing the electoral system's design, and recalibrating both the Presidential Threshold and the Parliamentary Threshold to achieve a more appropriate balance between effective governance and the constitutional principles of democratic representation. A more proportionate threshold framework would reduce wasted votes, improve political inclusiveness, and enhance the legitimacy of Indonesia's constitutional democracy while maintaining governmental stability.

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