

LEGAL DYNAMICS OF THE USE OF PRESIDENTIAL THRESHOLD IN THE INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

Arman Koedoeboen

Universitas Doktor Husni Ingratubun Papua, Jayapura, Indonesia
koedoeboenarman@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the legal framework of the Presidential Threshold (PT) as stipulated in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, analyzing its effects on political stability, democratic representation, and the inclusiveness of the political process. Using a qualitative approach through literature study, the research reveals that while the PT mechanism, which requires a party or coalition to hold at least 20% of parliamentary seats or 25% of the national vote, contributes to reducing electoral fragmentation and promoting political stability, it also limits the diversity of candidates and political ideologies, potentially undermining democratic principles. The study highlights how this statutory provision restricts the participation of smaller political parties and independent candidates, consolidating power within larger political coalitions. It also raises constitutional concerns regarding the right to political participation under the 1945 Constitution and the fairness of the electoral system. The findings suggest that reforms to the legal basis of the PT, such as lowering the threshold or exploring alternative electoral systems, could enhance the inclusivity and representativeness of Indonesia's presidential election process. Future research should focus on assessing the long-term effects of the PT's legal design on voter engagement and political trust in Indonesia.

A. INTRODUCTION

Since its first implementation in 2009, the Presidential Threshold (PT) in Indonesia's electoral system has attracted increasing public and academic attention. As a legal provision enshrined in the election law, the PT establishes a minimum threshold either in terms of the percentage of the national vote or the number of legislative seats that a political party must meet or be eligible

to nominate a presidential candidate.¹ Contextually, this mechanism was designed as an instrument of political rationalization, aimed at achieving a presidential election process that limits the number of candidates and prevents excessive fragmentation of political representation. The primary criticism focuses on the PT's potential to limit political inclusivity, with small parties and marginal political ideas being marginalized from the presidential contest arena. Furthermore, this mechanism is fundamentally questioned regarding equal opportunity in competition, which in turn has implications for the legitimacy and fairness of the electoral system as a whole.²

Research in the field of electoral systems, particularly concerning the Presidential Threshold (PT), has predominantly centered on its theoretical foundations and comparative analysis with similar mechanisms in other countries, with a primary emphasis on how it influences political party dynamics and voter behavior. This approach has yielded valuable insights into the institutional logic behind threshold implementation and the strategic responses of political actors at both elite and mass levels.³ While these studies have shed light on various facets of the PT, gaps remain in understanding its legal dynamics, its implications on democratic principles in Indonesia, and how it influences the broader political system. Moreover, research on the impact of the Presidential Threshold (PT) on the participation of smaller political parties in elections remains limited, particularly in comparison to larger, more established parties. This research gap highlights the need for a comprehensive legal and political analysis to evaluate the ramifications of the PT on Indonesia's evolving political landscape.

The Presidential Threshold (PT) is a legal provision in Indonesia that determines the minimum support a political party or coalition must have to nominate a candidate for the presidency. Introduced through Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections, the PT was designed to streamline the presidential election process and reduce the number of candidates, thereby

¹ Mohammad Akbar Maulana Rahman, Reinaldo Francisco Luis, and Ahmad Sholikhin Ruslie, "Indonesia's Presidential Threshold: An Analysis of Legal and Political Dynamics," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (2023): 249. See too, Sidi Ahyar Wiraguna, and Zudan Arief Fakrulloh, "Legal reforms in Indonesia related to" presidential threshold" of presidential candidate in Law No. 7/2017 concerning general elections," *Ius Positum: Journal Of Law Theory And Law Enforcement* (2023): 59.

² Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 47. See too, Harimurti Adi Nugroho, O Djunaedi, and Ismail Ismail, "Formulation of Coalition Threshold For Political Parties Based on Proportionality Principles In The Presidential Election Post Constitutional Court Decision No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024," *Asian Journal of Social and Humanities* 3, no. 5 (2025): 998.

³ Noor Hamid Khan Mabsud, and Husnul Amin, "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Voting Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis," *Sjesr* 3, no. 3 (2020): 68.

promoting political stability.⁴ Originally established at 20% of seats in the People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR*) or 25% of the national vote, this threshold has significantly influenced political parties' strategies and shaped the broader dynamics of the electoral process. By requiring substantial political backing, PT aims to prevent fragmented political contests, ensuring that only candidates with considerable support can contest for the presidency.⁵ However, the PT has also raised concerns about its potential to limit the diversity of presidential candidates, as smaller parties or coalitions may find it difficult to meet the threshold. This can create a political environment dominated by major parties and limit the range of choices available to voters, thus questioning the representativeness of the electoral system.⁶

The implementation of the Presidential Threshold has considerable implications for the principles of democracy and political inclusivity in Indonesia. One of the main critiques of PT is that it tends to consolidate power among a few large political parties, marginalizing smaller parties and limiting the diversity of voices in the presidential race. This undermines the democratic ideal of providing voters with a wide range of choices and prevents minor parties from participating in the presidential election, even if they have significant public support.⁷ Furthermore, PT can result in political coalitions that are driven by pragmatic considerations rather than ideological alignment, with smaller parties joining larger coalitions merely to meet the threshold requirement.⁸ Although the Presidential Threshold (PT) is designed to promote political stability by limiting the number of candidates, it can unintentionally curb political diversity and hinder the development of alternative political platforms, thereby restricting authentic democratic competition. As a result,

⁴ Evi Karunia Putri, "Urgensi pengaturan kenaikan ambang batas bagi partai politik (*Studi Undang-Undang Nomor 8 Tahun 2012 perbandingan Undang-Undang Nomor 7 Tahun 2017*)", (Yogyakarta: Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2018). See too, Mahesa Rannie, Retno Saraswati, and Fifiana Wisnaeni, "Does the Reform of the Parliamentary and Presidential Threshold Strengthen the Presidential System in Indonesia?" *Sriwijaya Law Review* 8, no. 1 (2024): 136.

⁵ Achmad Hariri, "Implications of the Abolition of the Presidential Threshold for the Realization of Substantial Democracy," *Lambung Mangkurat Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (2025): 13. See too, Dani Amran Hakim, and M. Yasin Al Arif, "Questioning Presidential Threshold in Indonesia: Constitutional Analysis and Democracy Implementation," *Veteran Law Review* 7, no. 1 (2024): 77.

⁶ Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 48.

⁷ Ibraheem Oladipo Muheeb, "The Legislature, the Rule of Law, and the Politics of Impeachment in Nigeria's Fourth Republic," In *The Legislature in Nigeria's Presidential Democracy of the Fourth Republic: Power, Process, and Development*, (Berlin: Springer, 2023), 215. See too, Angga Eka Setiawan, Leony Fatmawati, and Ievgenii Shulga, "Understanding Indonesia's Presidential Threshold: A Study on Political Rights," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 85.

⁸ Margit Tavits, "Principle vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition," *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 1 (2007): 151.

PT's influence on the electoral system raises important questions about the extent to which it aligns with democratic values such as political fairness, voter representation, and inclusivity.⁹

While much has been written about the political and electoral implications of the Presidential Threshold, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding its legal dimensions and how it functions within Indonesia's constitutional and electoral framework. Existing studies primarily focus on the effects of PT on political strategies and electoral outcomes, but few have examined the legal rationale behind its implementation and its alignment with Indonesia's democratic principles.¹⁰ Moreover, the existing body of research lacks a comprehensive legal analysis of how PT interacts with the broader constitutional principles of equality and political participation. The legal framework governing PT is still evolving, and questions regarding its constitutionality and its compatibility with the principle of universal suffrage remain largely unaddressed in scholarly discourse.¹¹ This research gap is particularly important because PT's legal implications have significant consequences for political inclusivity and the functioning of democracy in Indonesia. By addressing this gap, this study aims to offer a legal perspective on how PT influences the Indonesian electoral system and propose potential reforms that could make the system more democratic and inclusive, in line with constitutional values.

The urgency of this study stems from the need to assess the implications of PT on Indonesia's democracy, given the increasing fragmentation of political parties and the rising influence of coalitions in presidential elections. This is particularly relevant in light of the 2019 and 2024 elections, where PT continued to dominate political strategy and discourse. The existing literature provides valuable insights into the mechanics of PT, but it does not sufficiently address the dynamic interaction between the legal

⁹ Tommy Gjesdal Tjensvold, *Do Electoral Systems Influence Political Equality?-A Multimethod Thesis on the Relationship Between Electoral Systems and Political Equality*, (Norwegia: The University of Bergen, 2024), 34. See too, Indra Muchlis Adnan, "The Conceptual And Historical Review Of Constitutional Law In Indonesia," *Jurnal Pembaharuan Hukum* 10, no. 1 (2023): 46.

¹⁰ Maichel Wutoy, Eliyunus Waruwu, Ayler Beniah Ndraha, and Alwi Al Hadad, "Application of the Presidential Threshold Concept in the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election System and Its Impact on the Indonesian Constitutional System," *Journal of Digitainability, Realism & Mastery (DREAM)* 1, no. 03 (2022): 48. See too, Imam Sukadi, Jundai Jundai, Syabbul Bachri, Mohamad Sinal, and Ahmad Qiram As-Suvi, "Presidential threshold in the election of the President and Vice President from a Constitution and Human Rights Perspective," *Mimbar Keadilan* 17, no. 2 (2024): 89.

¹¹ Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 49. See too, Mohammad Akbar Maulana Rahman, Reinaldo Francisco Luis, and Ahmad Sholikhin Ruslie, "Indonesia's Presidential Threshold: An Analysis of Legal and Political Dynamics," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (2023): 250.

framework and its effects on the actual political processes and voter engagement.

This study aims to fill this gap by offering a detailed legal analysis of PT's role within the presidential system in Indonesia, examining its potential to influence both electoral fairness and political inclusivity. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of legal frameworks and electoral outcomes, proposing potential reforms that could better align the PT with democratic ideals without undermining political stability. Unlike previous studies that have concentrated primarily on quantitative data regarding electoral outcomes, this paper will integrate legal analysis and political theory to offer a multidimensional perspective on PT's effects.

The primary objective of this research is to critically analyze the legal dynamics surrounding the use of PT in Indonesia's presidential election system, considering its implications on the political system and democracy. This study also seeks to provide recommendations for improving the electoral framework to ensure greater political inclusivity and fairness. The benefits of this research are manifold: it contributes to the broader discourse on electoral system reform, provides policymakers with insights into how PT influences democratic processes, and offers political parties a more nuanced understanding of how PT shapes their strategies and coalitions.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study was formulated to answer three main research questions. These questions were designed to investigate the policy dynamics, legal dimensions, and political implications of the implementation of the Presidential Threshold in Indonesia.

1. How does the Presidential Threshold (PT) affect political stability and democratic inclusiveness in Indonesia's presidential election system?
2. What are the legal and constitutional implications of the implementation of the PT on the right to political participation and equality before the law?
3. How does the PT shape political party coalition strategies and influence the quality of representation and voter choice?

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach with a literature study (literature review) as the primary method of inquiry. The nature of this research allows for a comprehensive examination of existing scholarly works, legal documents, and primary sources to analyze the legal dynamics and implications of the Presidential Threshold (PT) in Indonesia's presidential system. The goal is to provide an in-depth understanding of the topic by synthesizing various perspectives on PT from the fields of law, political science, and electoral studies. This approach is particularly useful for understanding

the legal implications of PT, which are often complex and multifaceted, involving the intersection of electoral law and democratic principles.

The data sources for this research primarily consist of secondary data, including academic articles, books, legal texts, government reports, and case law. Relevant scholarly articles were sourced from reputable journals and publications that discuss the Indonesian electoral system, the legal framework surrounding PT, and the effects of PT on democracy and political inclusivity.¹² Additionally, legislative documents such as the 2017 Election Law (Law No. 7 of 2017) and various constitutional amendments provide crucial legal insights into the institutionalization of PT in Indonesia. These sources allow for a thorough examination of the law's application and interpretation, enabling the identification of its impact on political processes and democratic engagement. The data collection for this study was conducted using content analysis, a systematic approach for analyzing textual data in a way that allows for the identification of patterns, themes, and relationships within the literature.¹³ The literature review was conducted by examining both primary and secondary sources, with a focus on academic journals, books, and government publications related to the implementation of PT. A selective approach was taken to ensure that only the most relevant and up-to-date sources were included, providing a robust foundation for the analysis of PT within the broader context of Indonesian electoral law and political systems.

Data analysis for this research followed the principles of thematic analysis, which involves identifying and analyzing key themes that emerge from the collected data.¹⁴ Thematic analysis was chosen because it enables the researcher to organize and interpret the data in a way that highlights critical issues, such as the legal implications of PT, its impact on democratic practices, and the political and electoral consequences. Each source was carefully reviewed to identify recurring patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the existing literature. The findings were then synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the legal dynamics of PT in Indonesia, while also addressing the identified research gaps and proposing recommendations for potential reforms. This method ensures that the study contributes valuable

¹² Angga Eka Setiawan, Leony Fatmawati, and Ievgenii Shulga, "Understanding Indonesia's Presidential Threshold: A Study on Political Rights," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 89. See too, Umarwan Sutopo, Achmad Hasan Basri, and Hilman Rosyidi, "Presidential Threshold in The 2024 Presidential Elections: Implications for The Benefits of Democracy In Indonesia," *Justicia Islamica* 21, no. 1 (2024): 155.

¹³ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, (Washington: Sage publications, 2018), 23.

¹⁴ Sirwan Khalid Ahmed, Ribwar Arsalan Mohammed, Abdulqadir J Nashwan, Radhwan Hussein Ibrahim, Araz Qadir Abdalla, Barzan Mohammed M Ameen, and Renas Mohammed Khdir, "Using Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health* 6 (2025): 100198.

insights into the complex relationship between legal frameworks and political processes in Indonesia's presidential election system, offering a well-rounded analysis that is both theoretically grounded and practically relevant.

C. DISCUSSION

1. The Impact of the Presidential Threshold on Political Stability and Democratic Inclusiveness

The examination of Indonesia's Presidential Threshold (PT) in the presidential election system uncovers several important insights, emphasizing both its benefits and the difficulties it creates for the democratic process. One of the primary objectives of PT is to ensure political stability by limiting the number of presidential candidates. By establishing a threshold that requires candidates to have significant backing from political parties, PT effectively filters out marginal candidates, which could otherwise lead to fragmentation in the political system.¹⁵ This design aims to prevent instability and encourages the formation of broader, more stable coalitions that can effectively govern. According to Rizki Bagus Prasetyo¹⁶, the PT has succeeded in reducing the occurrence of highly fragmented presidential elections, providing voters with clearer choices between the major candidates. However, this benefit of political stability comes with trade-offs, as PT also restricts the diversity of candidates who can represent alternative or lesser-known political ideologies. While the original intent of PT was to create a streamlined election process, its implementation has nonetheless led to a narrowing of the political spectrum, diminishing the representation of smaller political parties.¹⁷

The imposition of PT has led to the exclusion of smaller parties from the presidential race, significantly altering the dynamics of Indonesia's political landscape. Smaller parties that struggle to meet the threshold are forced into coalition with larger parties, primarily to increase their chances of meeting PT requirements. This dependency on larger parties has effectively marginalized smaller but potentially influential political actors, pushing them into coalition arrangements that often lack ideological coherence. Ratna Rosanti¹⁸ highlight

¹⁵ Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 50.

¹⁶ Rizki Bagus Prasetyo, and Febri Sianipar, "The Relevance of the Application of the Presidential Threshold and the Implementation of Simultaneous Elections in Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure* 21, no. 2 (2021): 267.

¹⁷ Singgih Manggalou, and Ferdous Jannatul, "Unveiling the Consequences of Parliamentary Thresholds on the Quality and Quantity of Political Representation in Multi-Party Systems," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 138.

¹⁸ Ratna Rosanti, "Political Pragmatics in Indonesia: Candidates, the Coalition of Political Parties and Single Candidate for Local Elections," *Jurnal Bina Praja* 12, no. 2 (2020): 153. See too, Mohammad Akbar Maulana Rahman, Reinaldo Francisco Luis, and Ahmad Sholikhin Ruslie, "Indonesia's Presidential Threshold: An Analysis of Legal and Political Dynamics," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (2023): 252.

that this has led to pragmatic coalitions, where political alliances are based less on shared policy goals and more on electoral necessity. This scenario diminishes the diversity of political discourse, as these coalitions tend to focus on consolidating power rather than advancing distinctive political agendas. As a result, the political scene in Indonesia has increasingly become dominated by a few large parties, which further limits the political choices available to voters and curtails the vibrancy of political competition.

The PT's implementation also has raised concerns regarding its impact on democratic representation. As the number of viable presidential candidates is effectively reduced, voters are left with fewer choices, many of which are aligned with large coalitions that may not adequately represent the diverse preferences of the electorate. Achmad Hariri¹⁹ argue that the exclusion of smaller parties and independent candidates from the presidential race compromises the democratic ideal of political inclusivity. This limitation of choices not only undermines voter representation but may also lead to voter apathy, as citizens feel less engaged in a system that appears to favor a few dominant political entities. As a result, the PT's impact on democracy is twofold: it reduces the breadth of electoral options available, and it diminishes the responsiveness of political candidates to the diverse needs of the electorate.

2. Legal Implications and Constitutionality of the Presidential Threshold

From a legal perspective, the PT's constitutionality and alignment with democratic principles remain contentious. Critics of PT argue that it violates constitutional guarantees related to equality and the right to run for public office. The Indonesian Constitution enshrines the right of citizens to stand for election, yet PT effectively excludes many from participating in the presidential race, particularly those from smaller political parties.²⁰ Thomas Schwartz²¹ points out that the threshold may be inconsistent with the principle of equal political opportunity, as it disproportionately benefits larger, more established parties while curtailing the ability of smaller parties to compete. While the legal framework currently upholds the PT, there is ongoing debate among scholars and legal experts about whether the law infringes upon fundamental democratic rights. The constitutional impact of the Presidential Threshold (PT) indicates a need for legal reforms to maintain a fair and inclusive electoral

¹⁹ Achmad Hariri, "Implications of the Abolition of the Presidential Threshold for the Realization of Substantial Democracy," *Lembang Mangkurat Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (2025): 11. See too, Mubarik Rahmayant, and Irfan Amir, "Juridical Analysis of Implementing the Presidential Threshold in the Presidential Election of Indonesia," *Jurnal Al-Dustur* 4, no. 1 (2021): 86.

²⁰ Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 51.

²¹ Thomas Schwartz, "Parties," *Constitutional Political Economy* 32, no. 4 (2021): 462.

system, upholding the principles of equal participation and representative democracy.²²

The implementation of PT has also reshaped the political strategies of parties and coalitions in Indonesia. In the face of the threshold requirement, parties are more inclined to form large coalitions, sometimes driven more by the necessity of meeting PT than by shared ideological goals. Jordan Mansell and Michael Bang Petersen²³ argue that this strategic behavior compromises the ideological purity of these coalitions, as smaller parties often align themselves with larger parties simply to meet electoral requirements rather than out of a genuine political alignment. This trend of forming coalition governments based on electoral pragmatism rather than ideological coherence has diminished the clarity of political platforms, making it more difficult for voters to distinguish between candidates based on their policy positions. The political landscape is thus shaped by necessity rather than vision, potentially reducing the quality of democratic competition.

The analysis also highlighted concerns regarding the integrity of the electoral process. By favoring larger, established parties, the PT creates an electoral environment that some perceive as exclusionary, particularly for smaller parties and independent candidates. Seth Chizeck et al.²⁴ highlights that such exclusion contributes to a sense of disenfranchisement among voters who feel their political preferences are underrepresented. This sense of exclusion erodes public trust in the electoral system and raises questions about the legitimacy of elections. Moreover, the perception that PT is designed to benefit the political elite undermines the broader democratic framework, as citizens may feel that their political choices are limited by a system that prioritizes established power structures. Public dissatisfaction with the electoral process could lead to lower voter turnout and less engagement in the political system, thus further challenging the democratic ideals that the system is supposed to uphold.

In light of these findings, many scholars and political observers have called for reforms to the PT system. Some argue for lowering the threshold to

²² Ahmad Siboy, and Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "Indonesian Presidential Election on Presidential Threshold Policy: Evidence from Various Countries," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 5, no. 3 (2025): 951. See too, Aprilian Sumodiningrat, "Reviewing the Presidential Threshold Provisions in the Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections in Indonesia," *Jurnal Kajian Pembaruan Hukum* 1 (2021): 49; Ali Yusran Gea, "Problematics of Legal Politics in the Formation of Legislation in Indonesia," *Jurnal Akta* 11, no. 4: (2024): 1394.

²³ Jordan Mansell, and Michael Bang Petersen, "Political Ideologies as Social Strategies: Does Ideological Variation Predict Behavioral Variation in Cooperative Dilemmas?" *Current Psychology* 42, no. 26 (2023): 22605.

²⁴ Seth Chizeck, Kelley Fong, Rebecca Goldstein, and Ariel R White, "Political Underrepresentation Among Public Benefits Recipients: Evidence from Linked Administrative Data," *Urban Affairs Review* 60, no. 1 (2024): 420. See too, M. Syaiful, "Antinomi Penerapan Presidential Threshold Dalam Sistem Pemilu Presiden dan Wakil Presiden," *Jurnal Litigasi Amsir* 10, no. 1 (2022): 24.

allow smaller parties and independent candidates a fairer chance at competing in the presidential election. Manggalou and Jannatul²⁵ suggest that reducing the PT could foster a more competitive political environment, with greater representation for a diverse range of political views. Alternatives such as proportional representation or a lower eligibility threshold are often proposed as solutions to enhance inclusivity and provide voters with a broader selection of candidates. These reforms could help restore public confidence in the electoral process and strengthen the legitimacy of Indonesia's democratic system by ensuring that it is more representative of the electorate's diverse interests. To further clarify and substantiate the findings, the following table presents a summary of the key impacts of the Presidential Threshold (PT) on various aspects of Indonesia's electoral system.

Table 1 are intended to demonstrate the main effects of the Presidential Threshold (PT) on Indonesia's electoral system, as revealed through the analysis in this study. By assessing various dimensions of the electoral process, we can better understand how PT influences political stability, inclusivity, voter representation, legal concerns, political strategy, and electoral integrity. Each category is rated based on the extent to which PT affects that particular aspect, with ratings ranging from 1 (low impact) to 5 (high impact). The visual representation helps in summarizing these findings and clarifying the broader implications of PT on Indonesia's political landscape.

Table 1. Impact Analysis of Presidential Threshold

Category	Impact Value (1-5)
Political Stability	4
Political Inclusivity	2
Voter Representation	3
Legal Concerns	3
Political Strategy	4
Electoral Integrity	3

Table 1 summarizes the different impacts of PT on key areas of Indonesia's electoral system, providing a clear representation of how PT affects various aspects of the political process. Each category is rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing low impact and 5 representing high impact.

Table 1 summarizes the key areas impacted by the Presidential Threshold (PT) in Indonesia's electoral system, with each category

²⁵ Singgih Manggalou, and Ferdous Jannatul, "Unveiling the Consequences of Parliamentary Thresholds on the Quality and Quantity of Political Representation in Multi-Party Systems," *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 137. See too, Ahmad Siboy, and Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "Indonesian Presidential Election on Presidential Threshold Policy: Evidence from Various Countries," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 5, no. 3 (2025): 953.

representing a specific aspect of the political process and its corresponding Impact Value indicating the extent of PT's influence on a scale from 1 to 5. The analysis reveals that PT exerts a strong positive impact on Political Stability, rated at 4, as it effectively reduces electoral fragmentation and encourages the formation of broader, more stable coalitions by limiting the number of viable presidential candidates. Conversely, PT demonstrates a notably low impact on political inclusivity, with a rating of 2, due to its disproportionate exclusion of smaller political parties and independent candidates.²⁶ This restriction significantly limits the diversity of political views in presidential contests and raises fundamental concerns regarding the representativeness of the entire electoral system.

Furthermore, the threshold exerts a moderate influence on several other critical dimensions. Voter Representation receives a rating of 3, as PT reduces the range of candidate choices available to the electorate, potentially leaving voters with options that do not fully align with their political preferences despite ensuring competition only among major coalitions. Similarly, Legal Concerns are rated at 3, primarily centered on PT's alignment with constitutional guarantees of equality and the right to public office, as the mechanism may violate these fundamental rights by systematically excluding smaller actors. The integrity of the electoral process itself, categorized as Electoral Integrity, also scores a 3, since PT's structural favoritism toward larger parties can foster a perception of exclusion among certain voter blocs, thereby potentially eroding public trust in the process and the legitimacy of its outcomes.

A particularly pronounced impact is observed in the realm of Political Strategy, which receives the highest rating of 4 alongside Political Stability. The PT fundamentally shapes party behavior, compelling parties to form pragmatic, threshold-driven coalitions often at the expense of ideological coherence, which subsequently obscures political platforms and alters the nature of electoral competition.²⁷ Collectively, these impact ratings provide a structured and clear overview of the PT's multifaceted consequences, underscoring the inherent trade-offs between the benefit of enhanced political stability and the significant challenges posed to democratic inclusivity, legal principles, and the quality of political representation.

²⁶ Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, and Fitria Esfandiari, "Presidential Threshold in Indonesian Election: An Islamic Law Perspective," *Yurispruden: Jurnal Fakultas Hukum Universitas Islam Malang* 5, no. 1 (2022): 57.

²⁷ Imam Sukadi, Jundiani Jundiani, Syabbul Bachri, Mohamad Sinal, and Ahmad Qiram As-Suvi, "Presidential threshold in the election of the President and Vice President from a Constitution and Human Rights Perspective," *Mimbar Keadilan* 17, no. 2 (2024): 90. See too, Biantara Albab, Nanik Prasetyoningsih, and Alma Fuji Anugrah, "Mitigating the Impact of the Presidential Threshold's Abolition in Indonesia: A Policy Approach," *Jurnal Media Hukum* 32, no. 2 (2025): 269.

3. The Influence of the Presidential Threshold on Coalition Strategy and the Quality of Political Representation

The findings of this study underscore the complex and multifaceted role of the Presidential Threshold (PT) in Indonesia's electoral system.²⁸ The PT was originally designed to ensure political stability by limiting the number of candidates and encouraging larger political coalitions, which are more likely to offer stable governance. Our analysis shows that PT has, to some extent, succeeded in achieving this goal. The reduction in the number of presidential candidates has led to fewer fragmented political contests, with major coalitions dominating the race.²⁹ However, this stability comes at a cost: the exclusion of smaller parties from the presidential race has narrowed the diversity of choices available to voters, which can undermine the very democratic ideals that PT was supposed to protect.

The exclusion of smaller parties due to PT is particularly concerning because it reduces the representativeness of the electoral system. As smaller parties are forced to join larger coalitions, they often sacrifice ideological purity for electoral survival.³⁰ This trend has created a political landscape dominated by a few large parties, thus limiting the range of political ideologies that are represented in the presidential race. This outcome contradicts the foundational principles of democracy, where the right to participate and the freedom to run for public office should be guaranteed to all political actors, regardless of their size or popularity. The reduction in ideological diversity due to PT also weakens the responsiveness of candidates to the electorate's diverse needs, as parties are more likely to form coalitions for electoral purposes rather than to advance distinct political platforms.³¹ This phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia, as other countries with similar electoral thresholds, such as Brazil and South Korea, have faced challenges related to political consolidation at the expense of inclusivity.³²

²⁸ William Mateu, "The Presidential Threshold Dilemma: Constitutional Legitimacy Versus Democratic Erosion in Indonesia," *International Journal of Law and Society (IJLS)* 4, no. 3 (2025): 368. See too, Al Mas'udah, "The presidential threshold as an open legal policy in general elections in Indonesia," *Prophetic Law Review* (2020): 39.

²⁹ Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 52. See too, Ahmad Siboy, and Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "Indonesian Presidential Election on Presidential Threshold Policy: Evidence from Various Countries," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 5, no. 3 (2025): 954.

³⁰ Paris Aslanidis, "Coalition-Making under Conditions of Ideological Mismatch: The Populist Solution," *International Political Science Review* 42, no. 5 (2021): 631.

³¹ Peter Thisted Dinesen, Malte Dahl, and Mikkel Schiøler, "When Are Legislators Responsive to Ethnic Minorities? Testing the Role of Electoral Incentives and Candidate Selection for Mitigating Ethnocentric Responsiveness," *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 450.

³² Brendan Howe, *Consolidating Democracy: Resilience and Challenges in Indonesia and South Korea*, (Berlin: Springer Nature, 2022), 23.

The findings also highlight significant concerns regarding the PT's impact on voter choice and democratic representation. As the number of viable candidates is constrained, voters often face limited options, which may not fully reflect their political preferences. This narrowing of choices can lead to voter disenchantment, as individuals feel their views are not represented in the political arena.³³ In Indonesia's case, this limitation is compounded by the fact that many of the largest coalitions do not necessarily represent a single political ideology but rather reflect pragmatic alliances formed to meet the PT. This creates a disconnect between the electorate and the political elite, potentially eroding public trust in the electoral system.

The legal implications of PT also warrant closer scrutiny, as its application raises questions about the fairness and constitutionality of the electoral system. The principle of equal political participation is enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution, yet PT has effectively excluded smaller parties from the presidential race.³⁴ Critics argue that this limitation violates constitutional rights and creates an uneven playing field where only large parties with significant financial and organizational resources are able to compete. This issue is compounded by the perception that PT disproportionately benefits the political elite, which could exacerbate feelings of political alienation among the public.³⁵ Legal scholars have pointed out that while PT serves a functional purpose in preventing fragmented elections, it might need to be reconsidered to ensure that it aligns with the democratic principles outlined in the Indonesian Constitution.³⁶

The strategic behavior of political parties, driven by the need to meet the PT, has altered the way coalitions are formed. Parties are increasingly motivated by the need to secure sufficient support to cross the threshold rather than by shared political or ideological goals. Mabutho Shangase³⁷ argue that this trend toward electoral pragmatism over ideological consistency can dilute the clarity of political messages, making it difficult for voters to make informed

³³ Cédric M. Koch, Carlos Meléndez, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasse, "Mainstream Voters, Non-Voters and Populist Voters: What Sets Them Apart?" *Political Studies* 71, no. 3 (2023): 893.

³⁴ Ribkha Octovina Annisa, "Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Bandung: Cosmogov Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 4, no. 2 (2018): 53.

³⁵ Maxwell B. Allamong, "Political Alienation and the Trump Vote in the 2016 and 2020 US Presidential Elections," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2024): 11. See too, William Mateu, "The Presidential Threshold Dilemma: Constitutional Legitimacy Versus Democratic Erosion in Indonesia," *International Journal of Law and Society (IJLS)* 4, no. 3 (2025): 369.

³⁶ Rifqi Hamdani, "The Dynamics of Indonesian Presidential Threshold: A Legal Perspectives," *Harmonization: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Ilmu Hukum, dan Ilmu Ekonomi* 1, no. 2 (2023): 124. See too, Umarwan Sutopo, Achmad Hasan Basri, and Hilman Rosyidi, "Presidential Threshold in The 2024 Presidential Elections: Implications for The Benefits of Democracy In Indonesia," *Justicia Islamica* 21, no. 1 (2024): 159.

³⁷ Mabutho Shangase, "Local Government Elections and the Illusion of Pragmatism," *Politikon* 49, no. 4 (2022): 382.

decisions based on policy positions. The result is a political system in which coalition-building is more about meeting numerical requirements than fostering genuine policy debate. This shift is concerning because it diminishes the quality of democratic discourse, as parties focus less on policy and more on power consolidation.

The implications for the integrity of the electoral process are equally troubling. As PT favors larger parties, the electoral system can appear exclusionary, particularly to those voters who support smaller parties or independent candidates. This perception can undermine public trust in the election results, as citizens may feel their votes are not truly represented in the final outcome. Mila Versteeg et al.³⁸ underscores that such exclusion can lead to political disengagement, particularly when voters perceive the system as skewed toward the political elite. Public trust in the democratic process is essential for maintaining political stability and legitimacy. If voters feel their voices are not heard or represented, it could lead to lower voter turnout and a more apathetic electorate.

In response to these concerns, there is a growing call for reforms to the PT system. Some scholars suggest lowering the threshold to allow for greater political competition and inclusivity.³⁹ This could help smaller parties and independent candidates to have a fairer chance of participating in the presidential race, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the system. A more inclusive electoral system could also help rejuvenate democratic participation by offering voters a wider range of candidates who better reflect the diversity of political views in Indonesia. While the PT was designed to promote political stability, its current form risks undermining the democratic foundations of the electoral process. As such, reforms to lower the PT threshold could strengthen democracy by providing a more competitive and representative political environment.

D. CONCLUSION

This study critically examines the Presidential Threshold (PT) in Indonesia's presidential election system, revealing its significant impact on political stability, democratic representation, and the inclusivity of the electoral process. While PT has succeeded in reducing electoral fragmentation and

³⁸ Mila Versteeg, Timothy Horley, Anne Meng, Mauricio Guim, and Marilyn Guirguis, "The Law and Politics of Presidential Term Limit Evasion," *Colum. L. Rev.* 120 (2020): 173. See too, Asep Wijaya, and Poppilea Erwinta. "Problematika hukum penerapan presidential threshold dalam pemilihan umum di indonesia," *Risalah Hukum* (2020): 47.

³⁹ Achmad Hariri, "Implications of the Abolition of the Presidential Threshold for the Realization of Substantial Democracy," *Lambung Mangkurat Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (2025): 15. See too, Rifqi Hamdani, "The Dynamics of Indonesian Presidential Threshold: A Legal Perspectives," *Harmonization: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Ilmu Hukum, dan Ilmu Ekonomi* 1, no. 2 (2023): 125.

fostering stable coalitions, it has also led to the exclusion of smaller political parties and limited the diversity of candidates, thereby narrowing voter choices and undermining democratic principles. The analysis highlights the constitutional concerns surrounding PT, particularly its potential violation of the right to equal political participation. In light of these findings, the study suggests that the current implementation of PT may require reform to better align with the democratic values enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution. Future research should focus on exploring alternative electoral systems, such as a lower threshold or proportional representation, to enhance political inclusivity and ensure a more representative electoral process. Additionally, further studies should investigate the long-term effects of PT on voter engagement and political trust to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on Indonesia's democracy.

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