

ELECTORAL THRESHOLD: PROS AND CONS AND POLITICAL PARTY CONSENSUS IN INDONESIA

Azka Abdi Amrullobbi,¹ Donis Daviska,² and Alam Mahadika^{3*}

¹Government Science, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Serang, Indonesia

²Faculty of Law, Bangka Belitung University, Bangka, Indonesia.

³Department of Political Science, Kazan Federal University, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia.*

*Corresponding E-mail author: azka.abdi@untirta.ac.id

ABSTRACT. The debates surrounding the parliamentary threshold and presidential threshold have become a recurring phenomenon, particularly in the period leading up to general elections in Indonesia. This paper aims to examine the pros and cons of the implementation and determination processes of both thresholds. Employing a qualitative research method and library research as the primary data collection technique, to validate the data then this research used data triangulation technique. In the Indonesian context, the thresholds applied constitute a form of formal threshold, namely thresholds determined through political and legislative processes in parliament. Consequently, threshold policies are heavily influenced by the configuration of political power among parties. This study finds several key points: First, the discourse on the parliamentary and presidential thresholds has generated intense debate among political scholars, ranging from those who support to those who oppose it, each with their own rationales. Second, the application of formal thresholds as a political product is largely shaped by the position of political parties and the results of previous elections. Consequently, political parties' responses to the thresholds are inherently dynamic and subject to change over time.

Keywords: Parliamentary Threshold; Political Party; Presidential Election; Legislative Election.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of thresholds is not a new issue in political and electoral discourse. Numerous scholars have elaborated on this concept. In this article, the term threshold is classified into two forms, the first being the parliamentary threshold. Lijphart and Gibberd (1977) simply define the threshold as the share of votes required to win a certain number of seats in parliament. Similarly, Reynolds et al (2016) regard the threshold as the minimum percentage or vote requirement that a candidate or political party must obtain in order to secure a seat and/or achieve other predetermined objectives.

Several scholars have developed mathematical formulas to calculate the effective parliamentary threshold. Taagepera (1998), for instance, proposed a model using three key variables: the average district magnitude, the total number of seats, and the number of electoral districts. Building upon this, Lijphart (1994), through a simplification of the formula proposed by Taagepera and Shugart (1994), argued that the effective threshold serves as a middle ground for determining threshold values, situated between the lower threshold (Tlower) and the upper threshold (Tupper). Meanwhile, Rae, Loosemore, and Hanby, as cited in Nohlen (1984), explained that in order to obtain the first seat, a political party must secure votes above the upper threshold, while to obtain subsequent seats, it must surpass the lower threshold. These three mathematical approaches

may be applied and selected according to the specific needs and agreements of an electoral system.

The second type is the presidential threshold. The definition of the threshold for nominating presidential and vice-presidential candidates remains subject to debate. However, in general terms, it refers to the minimum requirement that a political party must meet in order to nominate a pair of candidates for President and Vice President to compete in the general election (Pamungkas, 2009; A. Wijaya et al., 2020).

Reynolds et al, (2016) further classified thresholds into two types. The first is the formal threshold, defined as a threshold established through political decision-making and codified in electoral regulations. The second is the effective threshold (also referred to as the natural threshold or hidden threshold), which is determined through mathematical calculation, particularly when electoral regulations do not explicitly stipulate a politically determined threshold.

Additionally, studies on the parliamentary threshold can be found across various strands of literature. Panadés, as cited in Ruiz-Rufin (2007), explains that thresholds are often used to predict the number of seats a party will win based on the distribution of votes. Furthermore, Nohlen, in Baldini and Pappalardo (2009), notes that the threshold levels vary across countries—for instance, 3% in Spain, 5% in Germany, 0.67% in the Netherlands, and 10% in Turkey. Jati (2013) however, emphasizes that the

parliamentary threshold, which was initially intended to enhance the effectiveness of elections, has instead become a mechanism of discrimination against smaller political parties. In a similar vein, Purnama (2021) argues that the implementation of the parliamentary threshold is inconsistent with the spirit of unity in diversity, as it may hinder the representation of regional political aspirations and contradict the pluralism and distinctive political expressions found across Indonesia's regions. Meanwhile, Putra's (2019) study on the 2014 and 2019 general elections concludes that the parliamentary threshold system has not been effective in simplifying Indonesia's multiparty system. More recent work by Sukmajati and Amrurrobi (2022) highlights that the application of thresholds in Indonesia has produced mixed consequences—on one hand, it contributes to party system simplification, yet on the other hand, it discriminates against smaller parties. Moreover, the parliamentary threshold may also contribute to the emergence of political cartelization within the policymaking process. According to Katz & Mair (2009), cartel parties or cartelization within political parties emerge as a result of the increasingly close relationship between political parties and the state. Political parties no longer rely primarily on members or mass bases to obtain resources, but rather on access to the state, such as public funding, political offices, electoral regulations, and institutional facilities. Consequently, established parties possess significant advantages compared to smaller or newly established parties.

Conversely, studies on the presidential threshold are also found in existing literature. Lehoucq (2004), for instance, observes that Costa Rica applies a 40% threshold for a presidential candidate to win in the first round. In Bolivia, Payne et al (2007) explain that when no candidate obtains a majority vote (over 50%), members of Congress are responsible for electing the president. In the Indonesian context, several studies have examined the presidential threshold. Anggara (2019) argues that the threshold is ineffective in strengthening the presidential system and tends to undermine citizens' rights to vote. Similarly, Wijaya et al. (2020) contend that the presidential threshold concept restricts individuals' equal opportunities to participate in government. Conversely, Fitri and Setiadi (2022) suggest that the implementation of the presidential threshold can contribute to a stronger presidential system, although it must still respect the rights of all political parties.

Research on thresholds within political and electoral systems has predominantly focused on conceptual aspects, the numerical magnitude of

thresholds, their effectiveness in shaping party systems, and their impact on democracy and political representation. Various studies have shown that the implementation of parliamentary thresholds and presidential nomination thresholds produces diverse consequences, ranging from the simplification of multipartite party systems to the emergence of discrimination against smaller political parties and restrictions on citizens' political rights. Nevertheless, previous studies have paid limited attention to the political dynamics, debates, and negotiation processes among political parties in determining these thresholds, particularly in Indonesia. In fact, the determination of electoral thresholds is not merely a technical electoral issue, but also the result of political compromises involving the interests of political parties and power holders.

Furthermore, the decisions of the Constitutional Court through Decision Number 116/PUU-XXI/2023 concerning the parliamentary threshold and Decision Number 62/PUU-XXII/2024 concerning the presidential threshold have generated new dynamics in debates surrounding legitimacy, political interests, and the direction of electoral system reform in Indonesia. However, there has been no specific study that maps the political parties' pro and contra positions as well as the political configurations formed before and after these decisions were enacted.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer the following questions: How are the dynamics of political parties' support and opposition toward the implementation of parliamentary and presidential thresholds in Indonesia? Furthermore, how do political alignments and coalition patterns among political parties evolve in the process of determining electoral thresholds before and after the Constitutional Court Decisions Number 116/PUU-XXI/2023 and Number 62/PUU-XXII/2024?

METHOD

This article employs a qualitative research method with library research (literature study) as the primary data collection technique. Zed (2008) defines the library research technique as a method of collecting research data based on literary sources through reading, note-taking, and data processing. In this study, the data are drawn from books, academic journals, previous research, regulations, news articles, and other relevant documents related to the topic of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the approach employed in this article is Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), a text analysis method that systematically identifies,

codes, and interprets patterns of meaning within textual documents (Mayring, 2014; Schreier, 2012). The QCA approach was chosen because this study focuses on analyzing meanings, political arguments, and power relations reflected in various documents, such as decisions of the Constitutional Court, political party statements, electoral regulations, and media reports. Through this method, the researcher identifies and categorizes forms of support, opposition, and political coalition patterns before and after Decision Number 116/PUU-XXI/2023 and Decision Number 62/PUU-XXII/2024 in order to understand how political interests shape the determination of electoral thresholds in Indonesia.

This article also employs Comparative Political Mapping (CPM) as the primary analytical technique to map the political positions of parties and policy actors regarding the issue of electoral thresholds. CPM is an analytical technique rooted in the traditions of comparative politics and policy analysis, enabling researchers to systematically and comparatively illustrate the landscape of political positions (Mahoney & Thelen, 2015; Peters, 1998).

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, a cross-verification between media strategy was employed as a data validation mechanism. Cross-verification is a source-based triangulation procedure that compares identical or similar information across various media outlets differing in editorial stance, ownership, and news orientation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2017).

From the perspective of social constructivism, mass media are not merely channels for delivering information, but arenas in which political reality is actively constructed and reproduced (Fairclough, 1995; Hall, 2003). Electoral policy issues such as electoral thresholds do not simply emerge within the public sphere; rather, they are shaped, debated, and negotiated through publicly disseminated news coverage and opinion pieces. In this study, eleven media platforms were used as data sources, namely Kompas.com, DetikNews, Republika.co.id, CNN Indonesia, Kompas.id, Tirto.id, TEMPO.co, Merdeka.com, Rmol.id, Liputan6, and MetroTV News.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Thresholds: Between Concepts and Electoral Dynamics

Indonesia is one of the largest multiparty democracies in the world, which since the 1998 Reformasi has adopted an open-list proportional electoral system while also implementing

presidential and parliamentary thresholds to limit political fragmentation, thereby creating structural tensions that are relevant for analysis.

According to Maurice Duverger (1954), electoral systems fundamentally shape the behavior of political parties and voters in a structural manner. In the context of post-Reformasi Indonesia, the adoption of an open-list proportional system encouraged the growth of a highly competitive multiparty system. The large number of political parties participating in elections subsequently created challenges for the effectiveness of the presidential system and governmental stability.

This is where thresholds emerged as a form of electoral engineering intervention. The parliamentary threshold (PT), initially implemented at 2.5% in the 2009 Election, then increased to 3.5% in 2014 and 4% in 2019, can be interpreted through Duverger's framework as an attempt by the state to artificially create effects similar to the mechanical effect of plurality systems, namely filtering smaller parties out of parliament without altering the basic formula of the proportional system. In other words, Indonesia has attempted to gain the advantages of both systems simultaneously: representative pluralism from proportional representation and political consolidation through threshold mechanisms resembling the simplifying effects of majoritarian systems.

In the case of the presidential threshold (20% of parliamentary seats or 25% of the national vote, as applied until it was abolished by the Constitutional Court in January 2025), Duverger's perspective becomes even more interesting. The presidential threshold effectively compelled political parties to form coalitions before presidential elections, creating what may be described as pre-electoral coalition pressure. Although this mechanism was not anticipated by Duverger, whose theory was formulated within the context of parliamentary systems, it remains consistent with the spirit of his logic: thresholds encourage consolidation and penalize fragmentation.

Furthermore, through the perspective of Arend Lijphart (2012), Indonesia occupies a paradoxical position because it formally adopts consensus democracy through proportional representation, multipartism, and coalition governments, while simultaneously promoting the concentration of power through threshold mechanisms with majoritarian characteristics.

According to Lijphart's (1994) perspective, district magnitude and electoral thresholds are

two important variables in Indonesia's electoral system. District magnitudes ranging from 3 to 10 seats already produce selective effects on smaller parties. However, the addition of a national parliamentary threshold of 4% intensifies these effects and potentially reduces the proportionality of political representation.

In a plural society such as Indonesia, Lijphart argues that consensus democracy with proportional representation is more suitable than a majoritarian approach. Therefore, increasing the parliamentary threshold risks marginalizing minority groups and regions with localized support bases. Meanwhile, the presidential threshold is viewed as an attempt to overcome the risks of multiparty presidentialism, although according to Lijphart's logic, a more ideal solution would be to build post-electoral political coalitions organically through appropriate institutional design.

In another study, Gary W. Cox (1997) introduced the concept of strategic coordination to explain how the existence of thresholds encourages political parties and voters to engage in strategic calculations. Small parties at risk of failing to surpass the threshold face pressure to merge, form coalitions, or dissolve, while voters sympathetic to smaller parties tend to shift their votes to larger parties, a behavior that Cox refers to as strategic desertion.

Overall, the implementation of parliamentary and presidential thresholds in Indonesia demonstrates the state's effort to balance the need for broad political representation with the demand for governmental stability within a multiparty presidential system. From the perspective of Maurice Duverger, thresholds are understood as instruments of electoral engineering intended to reduce party fragmentation and encourage political consolidation, both by filtering smaller parties from parliament and by promoting coalition formation before presidential elections. Meanwhile, according to Arend Lijphart, the implementation of thresholds in Indonesia reveals a paradox between the commitment to consensus democracy characterized by proportional representation and the regulatory tendency toward majoritarian concentration of power.

These conditions have generated extensive debates regarding the effectiveness and legitimacy of threshold implementation in Indonesia. On the one hand, thresholds are considered important for simplifying the party system, strengthening presidential governance, and creating political stability. On the other hand, such policies are viewed

as potentially reducing proportional representation, limiting opportunities for smaller parties and minority groups, and narrowing political competition. Therefore, the debates surrounding parliamentary and presidential thresholds ultimately reflect not only differing perspectives on electoral system design, but also broader struggles over political interests and the future direction of Indonesian democracy.

Pros and Cons in The Implementation of The Parliamentary Threshold

The implementation of the parliamentary threshold is commonly found in countries that adopt a proportional electoral system. In mixed electoral systems, however, the threshold is typically applied as part of the proportional component—for instance, in Germany, it functions as a mechanism to prevent small political parties from gaining representation (Alexy, 2010).

Debates over the parliamentary threshold are inevitable. Numerous scholars and researchers hold favorable views toward its implementation, while many others strongly oppose it.

Arguments in Favor of the Parliamentary Threshold

Scholars and researchers who support the implementation of the parliamentary threshold generally base their arguments on three main objectives underlying its adoption. First, the threshold serves to limit the entry of small parties into parliament within a proportional system, thereby fostering the creation of an effective government (Alexy, 2010; Supriyanto & Mellaz, 2011). Second, it acts as a filtering mechanism for political parties eligible to participate in elections, thus reducing the number of parties represented in parliament (Supriyanto & Mellaz, 2011). Third, it functions as a tool to predict the number of seats a political party may win based on the distribution of votes (Panades dalam Ruiz-Rufino, 2007).

Arguments Against the Parliamentary Threshold

On the other hand, several arguments explain why some scholars and observers oppose the implementation of the parliamentary threshold. First, it is often perceived as a political strategy employed by major parties to prevent smaller parties from participating in governance processes, particularly in parliamentary decision-making (Firdaus, 2011; Putra, 2019; Strata, 2016). Second, the determination of the parliamentary threshold in practice tends to be driven by political interests rather than mathematical or empirical calculations (Putra, 2019). Third, the implementation of the parliamentary threshold

carries the potential to trigger horizontal conflicts, as candidates who fail to meet the threshold are consequently excluded from parliamentary representation (Firdaus, 2011).

Pros And Cons in The Implementation of The Presidential Threshold

In principle, the presidential threshold should not disadvantage any political party or social group, particularly minority groups. Its determination must take into account societal diversity as reflected in the plurality of political aspirations (I. D. M. P. Wijaya, 2014). Although the presidential threshold is often viewed optimistically as a means to strengthen the presidential system through more effective policy coordination between the President and Parliament, it has generated a wide range of scholarly responses—both supportive and critical.

Arguments in Favor of the Presidential Threshold

On one hand, several scholars and researchers support the implementation of the presidential threshold for various reasons. First, the threshold is believed to strengthen democratic governance by fostering an effective presidential system, as the elected President and Vice President would likely be strong figures with solid political backing in parliament (Antameng, 2019). Second, the threshold is expected to encourage the formation of coalitions that enhance governmental stability and effectiveness (I. D. M. P. Wijaya, 2014). Third, a relatively high presidential threshold compels political parties or coalitions to carefully select their presidential and vice-presidential candidates, thereby increasing the likelihood of producing qualified and capable leadership (Ansori, 2017).

Arguments Against the Presidential Threshold

On the other hand, a considerable number of scholars and researchers oppose the implementation of the presidential threshold for several reasons. First, it is seen as an infringement on citizens' constitutional rights and as a mechanism that limits voters' choices in elections (Antameng, 2019; Wells, 2015). Second, the threshold is believed to contribute to social polarization and promote transactional politics among party coalitions (Ruppert & Savage, 2011; Wilson, 2015). Third, it may lead to the emergence of so-called "puppet presidents," patron-client relationships, and oligarchic tendencies within the political system (Sukmajati & Amrullohi, 2022). Fourth, the threshold can influence party ideology, as political parties are pressured to adopt pragmatic, vote-oriented strategies aimed at maximizing electoral gains rather than pursuing ideological principles (Al-Hamdi, 2021).

Political Agreements and Party Responses Before and After Constitutional Court Decisions

Reynolds Reynolds et al. (2016) explain that electoral thresholds may result from political agreements, which they refer to as formal thresholds. Indonesia is among the countries that determine both its parliamentary and presidential thresholds through political negotiation and consensus.

On 29 February 2024, the Constitutional Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi, MK) delivered its ruling regarding the regulation of electoral thresholds, as stipulated in Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023. In this decision, the Court declared that the 4% parliamentary threshold, as set out in Article 414 (1) of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, remains constitutional for the 2024 parliamentary elections but will be conditionally constitutional for the 2029 elections and beyond. The Court emphasized the necessity of revising both the normative framework and the numerical value of the parliamentary threshold, suggesting that future determinations should be grounded in theoretical or methodological justification.

This decision has sparked a variety of responses from political parties in Indonesia. The debate over revising the parliamentary and presidential thresholds—particularly in the aftermath of the 2019 and 2024 elections, as well as Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023—has reflected a political divide. Some parties have expressed support for maintaining or even raising the thresholds, arguing that it promotes system stability, while others have called for lowering or abolishing them to ensure broader political participation.

Subsequently, the Constitutional Court issued another landmark ruling—Decision No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024—on 3 December 2024, concerning the presidential threshold. The Court declared that Article 222 of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, which required presidential and vice-presidential candidates to be nominated by a political party or coalition holding at least 20% of parliamentary seats or 25% of the national vote in the previous election, was unconstitutional and therefore no longer legally binding. This ruling has opened the possibility of significant changes in future presidential elections, including an increase in the number of candidates and greater political competition within Indonesia's multi-party presidential system.

MaHFud MD (2017), conceptualizes political law (politik hukum) as the state's "legal policy," meaning the official direction or framework for the creation, modification, or replacement of laws in pursuit of national objectives. In this context,

the political consensus emerging from these Constitutional Court decisions will play a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of Indonesia's legal and institutional reforms, particularly in determining the future of parliamentary thresholds during the 2024–2029 transition period (Mahfud MD, 2017).

In a democratic context, rights represent the moral promise of the majority to the minority, in line with the principle of equal respect and concern, which asserts that every individual deserves recognition and protection (Kurnia, 2025). This principle underscores that even the smallest groups in society must be regarded as significant because they possess inherent rights. Ignoring such rights implies a failure of law and governance. Dworkin (Dworkin, 2000) further argues that the legitimacy of a government can be evaluated through its commitment to upholding this principle. As he states, “No government is legitimate if it does not show equal concern for the fate of all those citizens over whom it claims dominion and from whom it claims allegiance. Equal concern is the sovereign virtue of political community; without it, government is only tyranny.” In short, according to Dworkin, when the concept of rights is neglected within a democracy, governance devolves into authoritarian and arbitrary rule.

The Discourse on Revising the Parliamentary Threshold After the 2019 and 2024 Election

Under Indonesia's Election Law, the parliamentary threshold applied in both the 2019 and 2024 general elections was set at 4%, an increase from 3.5% in the 2014 election. Article 414, paragraph (1) of the Election Law stipulates that “political parties participating in elections must obtain at least 4% of the total valid national votes to qualify for seat allocation in the House of Representatives (DPR)”.

The 4% threshold in the 2019 election resulted in several political parties failing to secure representation in parliament, effectively excluding them from the legislative process. The following table presents the distribution of political party vote shares in the 2019 and 2024 general elections.

Table 1. Vote Shares of Political Parties in the 2019 and 2024 General Elections.

No.	Political Party	Vote Share	Passed Parliamentary Threshold
2019 Election			
1.	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	19,33%	Yes
2.	Great Indonesia Movement (Gerindra)	12,57%	Yes

3.	Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)	12,31%	Yes
4.	National Awakening Party (PKB)	9,69%	Yes
5.	National Democratic Party (NasDem)	9,05%	Yes
6.	Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	8,21%	Yes
7.	Democratic Party	7,77%	Yes
8.	National Mandate Party (PAN)	6,84%	Yes
9.	United Development Party (PPP)	4,52%	Yes
10.	Indonesian Unity Party (Perindo)	2,67%	No
11.	Beringin Karya Party	2,09%	No
12.	Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI)	1,89%	No
13.	People Conscience Party (Hanura)	1,54%	No
14.	Crescent Star Party (PBB)	0,79%	No
15.	Indonesian Change Movement Party (Garuda)	0,50%	No
16.	Justice and Unity Party (PKPI)	0,22%	No
2024 Election			
1	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	16,72%	Yes
2	Great Indonesia Movement (Gerindra)	15,29%	Yes
3	Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)	13,22%	Yes
4	National Awakening Party (PKB)	10,62%	Yes
5	National Democratic Party (NasDem)	9,66%	Yes
6	Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	8,42%	Yes
7	Democratic Party	7,43%	Yes
8	National Mandate Party (PAN)	7,24%	Yes
9	United Development Party (PPP)	3,87%	No
10	Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI)	2,80%	No
11	Indonesia Unity Party (Perindo)	1,29%	No
12	People Wave Party (Gelora)	0,84%	No
13	People Conscience Party (Hanura)	0,72%	No
14	Labor Party	0,64%	No
15	Ummat Party	0,42%	No
16	Crescent Star Party (PBB)	0,32%	No
17	Indonesian Change Movement Party (Garuda)	0,27%	No
18	Nusantara Awakening Party (PKN)	0,21%	No

Source: Recapitulation vote election 2019 (Kompas.com, 2019) and Election 2024 (Kompas.com, 2024e)

Prior to the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023 regarding

the parliamentary threshold, various debates and responses emerged among political parties concerning the modification or adjustment of the parliamentary threshold. The author has summarized and mapped political parties according to their proposed positions: those advocating an increase in the parliamentary threshold, those supporting the maintenance of the threshold at 4%, those proposing a decrease, and parties that had not yet determined their stance. This information is presented in the table below. (Table 2)

Following the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023, a variety of political party responses to the parliamentary threshold have emerged. The decision appears to have served as a reflective moment for various parties—both well-established and developing—to evaluate their political positions and strategies. The range of responses from each political party to this decision is presented in the table below. (Table 3)

Table 2. Political Party Responses to the Parliamentary Threshold Before Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023

Party Response	Political Party	Proposal	Reasoning
Parliamentary threshold should be increased	National Democratic Party (NasDem)	Increase to 7%	With a higher threshold, it is expected that there will not be too many parties in parliament. Too many parties are perceived to create chaos and mutual obstruction.
	Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)	Increase to 7%	Can simplify the party system and avoid repeated revisions of the Election Law close to the five-yearly democratic event. One reason for revising the Election Law is to adjust the parliamentary threshold.
	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	Increase to 5%	Based on PDIP’s national working meeting, the aim is to strengthen presidentialism, ensure effective governance, simplify the party system, and create a low-cost election. PDIP suggests a tiered threshold at national, provincial, and district/city levels
	National Awakening Party (PKB)	Increase to 5%	To simplify the party system and party politics; however, this should be implemented gradually rather than drastically.
	Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	Increase to 5%	To simplify the party system and party politics; however, this should be implemented gradually rather than drastically.
Maintain threshold at 4%	United Development Party (PPP)	Maintain 4%	Raising the parliamentary threshold would waste more votes because Indonesia uses a proportional system
	National Mandate Party (PAN)	Maintain 4%	At 4%, voters’ and constituents’ voices are sufficiently represented, even if some are not fully accommodated
	Democratic Party	Maintain 4%	4% is realistic and prudent as a parliamentary threshold. A higher threshold would result in more wasted votes.
Undecided	Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra)	-	-

Source: Analysis From Online Media (CNN Indonesia, 2021a, 2021b; DetikNews, 2021; Kompas.com, 2020a, 2020b; Republika.co.id, 2021a)

Table 3. Political Party Responses to the Parliamentary Threshold After Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023.

Party Response	Political Party	Proposal	Reasoning
Parliamentary threshold should be increased	Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra)	Should be increased, but no specific threshold defined	To simplify the party system.
	National Awakening Party (PKB)	Increase to 7%	To strengthen political consolidation
	National Democratic Party (Nasdem)	Increase to 7% for DPR, 5% for Provincial DPRD, 3% for Regency/ City DPRD	To accommodate political inclusivity while maintaining government stability
	Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	Increase to 5%	To create a simplification of the party system
Maintain threshold at 4%	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	No change	4% is an ideal figure for screening candidates and ensuring budget efficiency if all parties enter the DPR
	Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	Maintain 4%	Moderate figure that can simplify the party system
Threshold should be lowered	Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)	Supports the MK decision but no specific threshold defined	No specific explanation given why the parliamentary threshold should still exist
	Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI)	Supports the MK decision but no specific threshold defined	To prevent votes from being wasted
	Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)	Lowered as much as possible or abolished	As a form of democratic justice

Threshold should be abolished	National Mandate Party (PAN)	Agree with abolition or minimum reduction	As a form of democratic justice
	United Development Party (PPP)	Agree with abolition	Particularly related to PPP's lawsuit in the 2024 election and future elections
	Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat (Hanura)	Agree with abolition	Contradicts citizens' constitutional rights and the spirit of a multi-party system
	People's Wave Party (Gelora)	Agree with abolition	Threshold only creates distance from the people
	Labor Party	Agree with abolition	To ensure workers' votes are not wasted
Undecided	Crescent Star Party (PBB)	Agree with abolition	Provides an opportunity for PBB to appear in society
	Democratic Party	-	No MK decision explicitly requesting a change in the parliamentary threshold
	Indonesian Unity Party (Perindo)	-	-
	Ummat Party	-	-
	Nusantara Awakening Party (PKN)	-	-

Source: Analysis From Online Media (CNN Indonesia, 2024d, 2024b, 2024c, 2024a; DetikNews, 2024, 2025b, 2025a; Kompas.com, 2024c, 2024d, 2025, 2024a, 2024f, 2024b; Kompas.id, 2024a, 2024b; Tirto.id, 2025)

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that several major parties welcomed the continuation of the parliamentary threshold as a mechanism to simplify the party system. They argued that this threshold could prevent excessive political fragmentation in parliament, thereby producing a more stable and effective government. This perspective reflects concerns over potential instability arising from an overly fragmented multi-party system, in which numerous small parties compete without any clear dominance. According to Maurice Duverger (1959), extreme multi-party systems in presidential contexts tend to generate political instability due to weak parliamentary support for the executive. In his view, the imbalance between legislative and executive power in a presidential system can be problematic if the parliament is fragmented by many small parties, as no single party holds sufficient strength to sustain government policy. Therefore, major parties perceive the parliamentary threshold as an important instrument to encourage political power consolidation and create a more coherent and responsive government.

Conversely, smaller and newer parties generally voiced concerns regarding the continuation of the parliamentary threshold. They argued that this rule de facto narrows the space for political representation and may exclude legitimate minority voices from the national legislative process. For these groups, the threshold is not merely an administrative hurdle but also a mechanism of systematic political exclusion against citizens whose aspirations are not represented by major parties. Within the framework of deliberative democracy, as emphasized by Jürgen Habermas (1998), political legitimacy depends not only on the efficiency or stability of the system but also on the system's capacity to accommodate diverse

viewpoints and ensure inclusivity in the deliberative process.

Furthermore, according to Arend Lijphart (2012), parliamentary thresholds essentially create manufactured majorities, namely parliamentary majorities that do not accurately reflect the actual distribution of voters' preferences. Political parties that fail to surpass the threshold effectively carry with them votes that remain unrepresented, thereby creating wasted votes that systematically distort the proportionality of electoral outcomes. Kenneth Benoit (2002) demonstrates that increasing the parliamentary threshold has asymmetric effects: it does not automatically strengthen already dominant major parties, but instead primarily eliminates parties in the middle zone, namely medium-sized parties that often play pivotal roles in coalition formation. Consequently, raising the threshold frequently results not in stabilization, but rather in greater coalition volatility due to increasingly limited coalition options.

From the perspective of the rule of law, as discussed by Tamanaha, the state has two primary functions: to impose legal restraints on government officials and to maintain order and coordinate behavior and transactions among citizens. Loosely translated, this entails the imposition of legal limitations on the government in exercising its authority, aimed at ensuring that public officials act in accordance with the law and do not abuse their power. The restrictions described above constitute "legal constraints on the substantive content of regulations" that the government may enact. In addition to these substantive limits, procedural limitations are also available in the formation of legislation (Sunarno, 2025).

The Discourse on Revising the Presidential Threshold After the 2019 and 2024 Elections

In addition to the parliamentary threshold, the presidential threshold has also been a topic of discussion for potential revision. As stipulated in Law No. 17 of 2017 on General Elections, the presidential threshold requires a political party to hold at least 20% of parliamentary seats or secure 25% of the valid national vote in the previous general election. Such a high threshold undeniably benefits parties with a large voter base, allowing them to position themselves as dominant political players in every presidential election. In simple terms, the implementation of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election is largely controlled by major parties. These parties can also easily form coalitions with other parties aligned with their interests.

Coalitions become necessary when no single political party meets the presidential threshold. Referring to the 2019 General Election results, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) obtained only 19.33% of the valid national vote, the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra) received 12.57%, Golongan Karya Party (Golkar) 12.31%, and the remaining parties garnered less than 10% (Kompas.com, 2019). This means that for these three parties, it was relatively easy to nominate candidates and form a coalition for the 2024 Presidential Election.

However, in practice, forming a coalition is not that straightforward. This is because parties do not merely aim to meet the presidential threshold; they must also calculate the political costs and benefits. In other words, a coalition is formed when the optimism or the potential for winning is genuinely high. For smaller parties, the 20% threshold significantly complicates their ability to form coalitions. Small parties cannot simply ally with other small parties and often lack the political influence that larger parties or their key partners possess. This can be seen in the coalition map for the 2024 Presidential Election: the majority of parties allied with the Prabowo Subianto – Gibrang Rakabuming Raka ticket, which secured 46.09% of the national vote, whereas the Anies Baswedan – Muhaimin Iskandar ticket obtained 29.04%, and the Ganjar Pranowo – Mahfud MD ticket received 28.06% (Tirto.id, 2023). It is therefore understandable why the House of Representatives (DPR) has recently been actively discussing the pros and cons of the presidential threshold and possible solutions. Additionally, several proposals from political parties have been put forward, which are summarized in the table below.

Table 4. Political Party Responses to the Presidential Threshold Before Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023

Political Party	Proposal	Reasoning
National Awakening Party (PKB)	Lower to 10%	To allow more than two presidential candidate pairs to emerge, provide citizens with more choices for leadership, reduce polarization, and avoid a divided society.
Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	Lower to 7–9%	Any party that enters the parliament can propose a presidential-vice presidential candidate pair. Additionally, PKS felt disadvantaged as it could not freely nominate candidates.
National Democratic Party (Nasdem)	Maintain at 20% or 15%	A 0% threshold would create too many candidates. A 20% threshold ensures an initial selection process, requiring candidates to obtain adequate support.
Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra)	No objection to 20%	In principle, Gerindra is willing to accept any presidential threshold.
Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	No objection to 20%	The threshold is clearly intended to create effective governance.
National Mandate Party (PAN)	Abolish presidential threshold	The presidential threshold would only give rise to practices of corruption, collusion, and nepotism
United Development Party (PPP)	Lower to 10%	If the threshold is 0%, many politically untested parties may nominate presidential candidates; however, the threshold should be lowered to prevent an oligarchy of wealthy individuals.
Democratic Party	Lower to 0%	The current presidential threshold is irrelevant because legislative and executive elections are held simultaneously and to eliminate transactional politics..
Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)	20% is sufficient; threshold must remain	Although some dispute the figure, 20% is considered adequate; the presidential threshold should remain to ensure the functioning of political parties and to prevent chaos if the threshold were 0%.

Source: Analysis From Online Media (CNN Indonesia, 2020, 2022; Merdeka.com, 2021b, 2021a; Republika.co.id, 2021b, 2022; Rmol.id, 2022; TEMPO.CO, 2022; Tirto.id, 2021)

Following the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023, the landscape of political party opinions regarding the discourse on abolishing the presidential threshold appeared to shift. The majority of parties expressed their intention to respect the Court's ruling; interestingly, however,

none explicitly stated an ideal numerical value for the presidential threshold. This stance reflects the parties' caution in reading post-Decision political dynamics while simultaneously opening space for a more flexible discourse regarding the rules for nominating presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

Nonetheless, several parties maintained a clearer position. For instance, PKB, PKS, and the Democratic Party advocated lowering the presidential threshold to 0%. This position reflects their view that a more open democracy requires competition without numerical barriers, while also providing broader opportunities for alternative national leadership to emerge.

Table 5. Political Party Responses to the Presidential Threshold After MK Decision 116/PUU-XXI/2023

Political Party	Proposal	Reasoning
National Awakening Party (PKB)	Lower to 0%	To allow more than two presidential candidate pairs, provide citizens with more choices, reduce polarization, and avoid a divided society.
Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)	Lower to 0%	Any party that enters parliament can propose a presidential-vice presidential candidate pair. PKS felt disadvantaged otherwise.
National Democratic Party (Nasdem)	Not specified	Abolishing the presidential threshold needs to be regulated again but not completely removed.
Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra)	Not specified	In principle, Gerindra respects the MK decision and will focus on the Prabowo Subianto administration until 2029.
Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP)	Not specified	Respects MK decision but cautions against excessive liberalization of democracy.
National Mandate Party (PAN)	Not specified	Respects MK decision; all stakeholders can discuss together, and all citizens have equal rights to nominate and be nominated.
United Development Party (PPP)	Not specified	Democratic breakthrough to provide more leadership options for the people.
Democratic Party	Lower to 0%	The current presidential threshold is irrelevant because legislative and executive elections are held simultaneously, eliminating transactional politics.
Golongan Karya Party (Golkar)	Not specified	Surprised by the decision but still respects the MK ruling.

Source: Analysis From Online Media (Antara, 2025; CNN Indonesia, 2025; KBR.id, 2025; Kompas.id, 2025; Liputan6, 2025; Metrotvnews, 2025; TEMPO.CO, 2025; Tempo, 2025)

The dynamics of the presidential threshold in Indonesia demonstrate that the policy functions not only as a technical electoral instrument, but also as a mechanism closely related to the distribution

of political power among parties. The threshold requirement of 20% of parliamentary seats or 25% of the national vote effectively positions major parties as dominant actors in presidential nominations, while simultaneously limiting the political maneuverability of smaller parties. In practice, coalition formation is not solely based on ideological proximity, but also on calculations of electability, access to power, and the distribution of political resources. Consequently, the presidential threshold reinforces asymmetric power relations, in which major parties possess stronger bargaining positions compared to smaller parties that depend on coalition arrangements.

This condition can be explained through the cartel party concept proposed by Richard S. Katz dan Peter Mair (2009), which argues that major political parties tend to develop increasingly close relationships with the state and utilize political regulations to maintain their dominance. In the Indonesian context, the presidential threshold has become one of the instruments that indirectly benefits established parties, as only parties with substantial electoral strength possess easier access to presidential nominations and coalition formation. This situation has consequently produced a tendency toward semi-presidential cartelization, namely a condition in which a multiparty presidential system continues to maintain electoral competition, while at the same time the space for competition becomes increasingly controlled by major party elites through pragmatic coalition mechanisms, control over political resources, and regulation of access to presidential nominations. Thus, the presidential threshold functions not only as a mechanism for party system simplification, but also as an instrument that potentially strengthens the concentration of political power in the hands of dominant parties.

CONCLUSION

The debate surrounding parliamentary thresholds and presidential thresholds demonstrates that the issue of electoral thresholds is not merely a technical matter in electoral system design, but also part of the struggle over political interests within Indonesia's democratic system. The various arguments for and against thresholds indicate that each political party interprets electoral thresholds differently according to its electoral position and political interests. In the Indonesian context, the thresholds applied constitute a form of formal threshold, namely thresholds determined through political and legislative processes in parliament. Consequently, threshold policies are heavily influenced by the configuration

of political power among parties. Various judicial review efforts submitted to the Constitutional Court further demonstrate that this issue continues to be debated both constitutionally and politically because it concerns the balance between governmental effectiveness and the quality of democratic representation.

Approaching the 2024 General Election and following the issuance of Constitutional Court Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023, the political dynamics surrounding electoral thresholds increasingly reflected divisions of interest among political parties. Major parties such as PDIP, Golkar, NasDem, PKB, Gerindra, and PKS tended to maintain and even support increasing the thresholds because their electoral positions were relatively secure and dominant. In contrast, parties such as PPP, PAN, and the Democratic Party advocated lowering or even abolishing the thresholds in order to broaden political competition. These differing positions indicate that electoral thresholds are never politically neutral; rather, they function as strategic instruments that may be used either to maintain or to challenge the distribution of power within the political system.

From an institutional perspective, the implementation of electoral thresholds indeed has positive implications for the stability of a multiparty presidential system. Thresholds can encourage party system simplification, strengthen coalition consolidation processes, and reduce political fragmentation that may hinder governmental effectiveness. The presidential threshold, for example, encourages parties to build coalitions before elections, thereby creating more stable political support for the elected government. However, when thresholds are set excessively high, such policies may also generate political exclusivity, reduce the proportionality of representation, and narrow opportunities for the emergence of alternative national leadership.

Furthermore, these dynamics reveal a tendency toward political party cartelization as explained by Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair. Major parties tend to utilize electoral regulations, including thresholds, to maintain political dominance and limit competition from smaller parties. Within the context of Indonesia's multiparty presidentialism, this condition has given rise to the phenomenon of semi-cartelization presidentialism, namely a situation in which electoral competition formally continues to exist, while access to presidential nominations, coalition formation, and the distribution of political power become increasingly concentrated among the elites of major parties.

As a result, democracy risks moving toward a more closed and pragmatic pattern of political competition.

Therefore, institutional reform of the threshold system becomes important to consider in a more proportional and democratic manner. Such reform concerns not only the determination of threshold percentages, but also how the electoral system can maintain a balance between governmental stability and democratic inclusiveness. A presidential system indeed requires stable political support, but stability should not be achieved at the expense of political representation, public participation, and equal opportunities for political parties to compete. Ultimately, the debate over parliamentary and presidential thresholds reflects the broader direction of Indonesian democracy in the future: whether democracy will move toward a more inclusive and competitive system, or instead become increasingly concentrated under the dominance of certain political party elites.

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