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Policy implementation and strategic effects: Assessing the impact of parliamentary thresholds on Indonesia's political system and governance

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of parliamentary thresholds on the Indonesian political system through the lens of the Routine Policy Implementation Model and the Strategic Policy Implementation Model. The main objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of parliamentary thresholds in managing political fragmentation, assess their impact on stability and representation in the legislative system, and understand their implementation's technical and strategic implications. Using a qualitative approach supported by interview studies and field observations, this research combines analysis of election data in the 2009, 2014, and 2019 elections with a qualitative assessment of policy changes and political dynamics. The Routine Policy Implementation Model focuses on the technical aspects of threshold implementation, including vote counting procedures and seat allocation efficiency. Meanwhile, the Strategic Policy Implementation Model examines the broader implications of these thresholds for political consolidation, government effectiveness, and the representation of minor parties. The results show that the parliamentary threshold has significantly reduced political fragmentation by consolidating the number of parties in Parliament, resulting in a legislative system that is cleaner and easier to administer. However, this consolidation has also marginalized small parties and limited political diversity. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of how parliamentary thresholds affect administrative efficiency and strategic political stability in Indonesia, compared to democratic countries in transition, such as Slovenia and Montenegro. In conclusion, although parliamentary thresholds have increased political stability and government effectiveness, they have also raised concerns about the reduced representation of small and regional parties. The study recommends maintaining balanced thresholds that ensure stability and diversity, implementing mechanisms to review thresholds periodically, and involving diverse stakeholders in adjusting policies to reflect evolving political dynamics. This approach will help balance the need for a stable legislative environment with broad representation.

Keywords: routine policy implementation; strategic policy impact; political fragmentation; legislative stability; parliamentary threshold

1. Introduction

This paper offers a different perspective on the potential causes of democratic decline internationally, referencing Huntington's (1991) view that during the third wave of regime change, major global actors—such as the United States (US), the European Union (EU), and the Vatican—applied pro-democratic pressure worldwide (Anonymous, 2023; Samuel, 2023). In democratic countries, the legislative electoral system plays a crucial role in upholding the principles of fair representative democracy.

Elections serve as a primary instrument in a representative democracy system (Risky et al., 2023), where one key indicator of a democratic state is a government formed through elections.

In Indonesia, after the fall of the New Order regime on 21 May 1998, the government and society sought to establish a democracy-oriented state, hoping to create political stability and improve economic conditions. However, between 1998 and 2023, the multiparty system evolved from 3 political parties to 48, with 24 currently registered, which many experts argue has disrupted political and economic stability. Therefore, this article aims to review, identify, and compare the factors influencing the establishment of government resilience and stability in Slovenia and Montenegro after adopting a multiparty system and undergoing democratic transitions, focusing on the impact of fragmentation and the general characteristics of party systems (Krašovec and Batrićević, 2020).

In Indonesia, implementing the proportional system tends to produce a multiparty model. The 1999–2019 elections resulted in a simplified multiparty system. In a multiparty system, political parties often compete with other parties of similar ideologies. To distinguish themselves, parties with the same ideology highlight issues that set them apart from their direct competitors (Van der Brug, 2017, p. 531). This system also allows predictions about the significance of party coalitions in elections, such as the likelihood of coalition parties gaining a majority of seats and parties passing the electoral threshold (Stoetzer et al., 2019). In comparative political system studies, intense affective polarization is linked to lower satisfaction with democracy (Wagner, 2021), increased perceptions of ideological polarization (Ward and Tavits, 2019), and decreased interpersonal trust (Westwood et al., 2018).

The proportional system in Indonesia later evolved by adopting the presidential threshold, which aims to simplify the multiparty system by implementing higher electoral thresholds and narrowing electoral districts (Sunarso et al., 2022). The presidential threshold is a rule regarding the minimum national vote share a political party must obtain to place representatives in Parliament. This rule is considered more effective in Parliament's decision-making process within a multiparty system. This article presents a framework for comparing the rights of parliamentary opposition policymaking in parliamentary democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine (Kovalchuk and Sofinska, 2022).

The problem arises because implementing a proportional electoral system often produces an extreme multiparty system. The classic classification is between the plurality (first-past-the-post) or majority electoral system and proportional representation (Bochsler et al., 2024; Duverger, 1951). Indonesia's 1999 and 2004 elections resulted in an extreme multiparty system. Tomsa (2014) analyzed the extent of party system fragmentation in provincial and local parliaments in Indonesia, focusing on the first three elections after the New Order: 1999, 2004, and 2009. This analysis also highlights that conceptual categories from the United States need adjustment when applied to the multiparty system in Canada, particularly in terms of the differences between Quebec and other regions of Canada (Jonathan, 2023).

An extreme multiparty system is considered to reduce the effectiveness of Parliament in Indonesia. This article explores the role of government coalition

composition in the 2014 European Parliament elections, showing that this factor differs from economic performance (Camatarri and Zucchini, 2019). The similarity of policy preferences between political parties has been critical in forming coalition governments (Dumont et al., 2024). The article also examines coalition governments in the Arab world (Cavatorta and Kraetzschmar, 2023). Another issue is the inconsistency of the presidential threshold across democratic countries that apply a proportional system. Based on a new dataset covering 24 European democracies in the postwar period, the study shows that political parties merge to overcome the electoral threshold or to form one of the two or three largest parties, playing a crucial role in coalition government formation (Ibenskas, 2016).

This research aims to examine the implementation of the Parliamentary Threshold and its impact on decision-making effectiveness in Parliament. Additionally, this study seeks to understand the effect of the Parliamentary Threshold on political parties in Parliament.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach supported by in-depth interviews and field observations (Aspers and Corte, 2019; Ugwu and Eze, 2023). A qualitative study is more suitable for discussing the parliamentary threshold topic because this approach allows for a deep exploration of how the policy affects political dynamics and party systems. Election results data from the Indonesian General Election Commission and observations support the study in capturing nuances, motivations, and perspectives that are only sometimes visible through quantitative methods (Rutledge and Hogg, 2020). The qualitative approach allows for methodological adjustments based on initial findings, providing a broader context for implementing policies within a specific political environment (Sumada, 2019). Data from observations provide in-depth insights into the policy's impact on political strategies and coalition formation. Additionally, this approach supports the use of triangulation to ensure the validity of findings by combining data from various sources. Therefore, qualitative studies are suitable for explaining complex social and political phenomena and understanding how the parliamentary threshold policy affects party structures and government stability (Samudra et al., 2024).

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques by analyzing relevant policies and reports. Observation techniques involved direct observation of events related to the research topic. Field observation were conducted with 18 political party selected through purposive sampling (Ames et al., 2019), or 75% of the total election participants (Bans-Akutey and Tiimub, 2021).

3. Literature review

3.1. Policy implementation model

In public policy studies, the routine policy implementation model and the strategic policy implementation model offer different perspectives on policy application (Marume et al., 2016). The Routine Model focuses on administrative and technical aspects, emphasizing operational procedures to ensure policies are

implemented according to regulations. It includes the necessary technical and administrative steps outlined by Anderson in *Public Policymaking* and expanded upon by Lynn, Hill, and Perry in *Public Management: Thinking and Acting in Three Dimensions* (Ferlie and Ongaro, 2015). On the other hand, the Strategic Model adopts a more comprehensive approach oriented toward the policy's long-term impacts and systemic goals (Ramírez, 2023). Lipsky, in *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, and Evans, in *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*, discuss how policies are translated into practice and their effects on society and political systems (Lotta and Pires, 2019). Sabatier also provides a theoretical framework that includes strategic factors influencing policy implementation in his book *Theories of the Policy Process* (Weible et al., 2012). Combining these two models provides a comprehensive view of public policy implementation, as seen in the case of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia. The Routine Model is relevant for technical and procedural aspects, such as vote counting and determining the Quotient of Voter Representation (Krimmer et al., 2020), while the Strategic Model is important for understanding the long-term impact on party structures and political stability (Joyce, 2022). Evaluating systemic impacts and policy synergies helps assess the contribution of the threshold to government efficiency and stability.

In analyzing the application of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia, both the Routine Policy Implementation Model and the Strategic Policy Implementation Model offer valuable insights. The Routine Model provides perspectives on the technical and administrative procedures necessary for policy implementation. At the same time, the strategic model provides an understanding of the policy's long-term impacts and systemic contributions (Rani, 2019). By integrating both models, the analysis can cover technical aspects and the broader impacts of the policy, providing a more complete picture of the effectiveness and implications of the parliamentary threshold policy in Indonesia.

3.2. Parliamentary threshold in Indonesia

Implementing the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia is regulated by various legislative election laws that have undergone several significant changes. Initially, Law No. 10 of 2008 on the Election of House of Representatives, Regional Representative Council, and Regional People's Representative Assembly members established a threshold of 2.5% of the total valid national votes for political parties wishing to participate in the election (Rannie et al., 2024). This provision did not apply to the allocation of seats in the Regional People's Representative Assembly at the provincial regency and city levels. Article 203 of the law specifies that political parties failing to meet the threshold will not be considered in allocating House of Representatives seats in each electoral district (Sardjana et al., 2020).

The regulations were amended by Law No. 8 of 2012, which raised the threshold to 3.5% of the national votes. Article 208 of this law stipulates that the threshold applies to all levels of government, including the House of Representatives, provincial Regional People's Representative Assembly, and regency and city Regional People's Representative Assembly. Political parties that do not meet the threshold will not be counted in the allocation of seats at any level of government, as detailed in Article 209,

Paragraph (1). Articles 209, Paragraphs (2) and (3) explain that the calculation of the Voting Quotient is done by subtracting the valid votes of parties that did not meet the threshold from the total valid votes, then dividing by the number of available seats (Wiraguna et al., 2023).

The threshold was introduced to simplify the party system and improve governmental efficiency. The explanation of the 2012 Legislative Election Law mentions that this provision aims to strengthen representative institutions and the presidential system by the 1945 Constitution (Nugroho et al., 2022). Implementing the threshold is expected to create healthy political competition, ease the determination of elected parties, and enhance the synergy between central and regional governments. The government and the House of Representatives argue that this provision is consistent with the Constitution and human rights, providing equal opportunities for all political parties to compete democratically (Wutoy et al., 2022). To comprehensively analyze the implementation of the parliamentary threshold, it is essential to consider routine and strategic policy implementation models. The routine model focuses on technical and administrative aspects, while the strategic model assesses the long-term impact and contribution of the policy to systemic goals. Combining these models provides a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and implications of the parliamentary threshold policy in Indonesia.

4. Results and discussion

This study compares the conduct of the 1999 and 2004 general elections, which did not implement a Parliamentary Threshold, with the 2009, 2014, and 2019 elections, where it was enforced. There was no parliamentary threshold in the 1999 and 2004 elections, allowing many political parties to gain seats, with 20 and 15 parties securing seats, respectively. For example, in the 1999 election, of 48 participating parties, 20 gained seats in Parliament. Meanwhile, in the 2004 election, of the 24 participating parties, only 15 parties won parliamentary seats.

After introducing the Parliamentary Threshold, in the 2009 election with a 2.5% threshold, only 9 parties gained seats. In the 2014 election, with a 3.5% threshold, 10 parties secured seats; in the 2019 election, with a 4% threshold, 9 parties entered Parliament. These results show the impact of the threshold policy in limiting the number of political parties that can sit in Parliament (See **Table 1**).

Table 1. Parliamentary threshold and number of parties in parliament.

Election Year	Election Participants	Parliamentary Threshold	Number of Parties in Parliament
1999	48 parties	-	20 parties
2004	24 parties	-	15 parties
2009	38 parties	2.5%	9 parties
2014	15 parties	3.5%	10 parties
2019	14 parties	4%	9 parties

Explanation (of the 28 parties listed below, 24 parties are participating in the 2024 election):

PDIP	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan)
Golkar	Party of the Functional Groups (Partai Golongan Karya)
Gerindra	Great Indonesia Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya)
PKB	National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa)
Nasdem	National Democratic Party (Partai Nasional Demokrasi)
PKS	Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera)
PD	Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat)
PAN	National Mandate Party (Partai Amanah Nasional)
PPP	United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan)
Hanura	People's Conscience Party (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat)
PBR	Reform Star Party (Partai Bintang Reformasi)
PBB	Crescent Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang)
PKPB	Concern for the Nation's Care Party (Partai Karya Peduli Bangsa)
PKPI	Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia)
Perindo	Indonesian Unity Party (Partai Persatuan Indonesia)
PNI	Indonesian National Party Marhaenism (Partai Nasional Indonesia Marhaenisme)
PKN	Archipelago Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Nusantara)
PGPI	Party of Change Movement Indonesia (Partai Garda Perubahan Indonesia)
Masyumi	Masyumi Party
PDR	People's Democratic Party (Partai Demokratik Rakyat)
PSI	Indonesian Solidarity Party (Partai Solidaritas Indonesia)
PU	Ummat Party (Partai Ummat)
PB	Labor Party (Partai Buruh)
PGRI	Indonesian People's Wave Party (Partai Gelombang Rakyat Indonesia)
PNA	Aceh's Nation Party (Partai Nangroe Aceh)
PAS	Fair and Prosperous Aceh Party (Partai Adil Sejahtera Aceh)
PA	Aceh Party (Partai Aceh)
PGABTT	Atjeh Generation of Faith and Taqwa Party (Generasi Atjeh Beusaboh Tha'at-Taqwa)

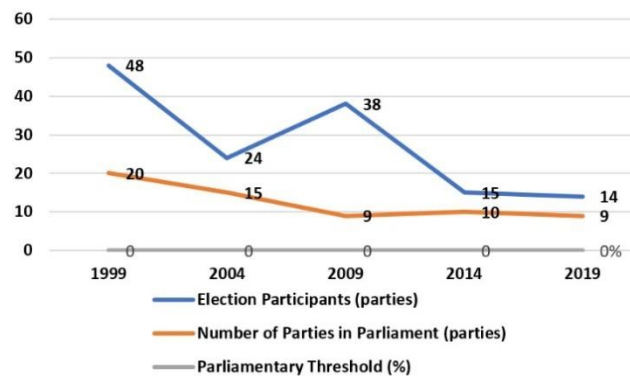


Figure 1. Impact of parliamentary threshold on political party representation in Indonesia.

The data in **Figure 1** illustrate the relationship between the introduction and increase of the Parliamentary Threshold and the reduction in the number of political parties represented in the Indonesian Parliament over time. The key observations are:

- 1) 1999 and 2004 Elections (No Parliamentary Threshold):
 - In the absence of a Parliamentary Threshold in 1999 and 2004, more political parties could secure seats in Parliament. In 1999, 20 out of 48 parties secured seats, and in 2004, 15 out of 24 parties won representation.
 - It reflects a more fragmented political landscape where smaller parties had more opportunities to enter Parliament.
- 2) 2009 Election (Introduction of 2.5% Parliamentary Threshold):
 - Implementing a 2.5% threshold in 2009 led to a sharp reduction in the number of parties in Parliament, dropping to 9 parties, despite an increase in the number of participants to 38.
 - The threshold filtered out smaller parties, allowing only those with more significant public support to gain representation.
- 3) 2014 and 2019 Elections (Increased Threshold):
 - As the threshold increased (3.5% in 2014 and 4% in 2019), the number of parties in Parliament remained limited to around 9 or 10.
 - The rising threshold consolidated political representation, making it increasingly difficult for smaller parties to win seats.

The lack of a threshold before 2009 allowed a wide range of parties to enter Parliament, resulting in a highly fragmented political system. As thresholds were introduced and raised, political consolidation occurred, reducing the number of parties in power. This shift could promote more stable and effective governance by limiting the need for complex coalitions with numerous small parties. However, implementing a Parliamentary Threshold poses significant challenges for smaller parties, as they need to surpass a minimum vote share to gain seats. While this promotes efficiency, it also restricts political diversity, potentially marginalizing smaller groups and reducing their representation in Parliament.

With fewer parties in Parliament, larger parties become more dominant, making coalition-building between more minor actors a critical aspect of governance. It can streamline decision-making but may also centralize power within a limited number of political entities. In conclusion, the introduction and subsequent increase of the Parliamentary Threshold in Indonesia has led to a more streamlined and stable political landscape, though at the cost of limiting representation for smaller political parties.

Additionally, this research discusses the dynamics of coalitions in Parliament. From 2014 to 2019, Koalisi Merah Putih's opposition coalition initially dominated Parliament, supported by Golkar, Gerindra, PKS, PD, and PAN. However, after several political shifts, PPP, PAN, and Golkar joined the government coalition, increasing parliamentary support from 37.14% to 68.93%. In the 2019–2024 period, the PDIP, Golkar, PPP, and Nasdem government coalition controlled 60% of parliamentary seats, while the opposition coalition, comprising Gerindra, Democrat, and PKS, held 40% of the seats. The entry of Gerindra into the government coalition significantly weakened the opposition, further strengthening the government's position in Parliament. The majority support in Parliament plays a crucial role in

implementing government programs, such as budget approvals and strategic national infrastructure projects.

5. Discussion

The concept of the Parliamentary Threshold emerged in the 20th century as part of the development of proportional representation electoral systems, particularly in Europe (Colomer, 2004). The fundamental idea behind the parliamentary threshold is to create political stability by limiting the number of parties allowed to enter Parliament, thereby preventing excessive fragmentation in government. In the post-World War II era, many European countries, such as Germany, faced political instability due to too many parties in their parliaments (Lijphart and Gibberd, 2006). It made it difficult to form coalitions and led to legislative gridlock. Several countries introduced vote thresholds to limit the number of parties eligible to receive parliamentary seats to address this. For example, in 1949, Germany introduced a 5% threshold in its legislative elections to stabilize its political system and prevent the rise of extremist parties (Taylor, 2017). In the late 20th century, the concept spread to Eastern and Central Europe, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union (Zhu, 2023). As these countries transitioned to democracy, they adopted proportional representation systems and implemented parliamentary thresholds to regulate the proliferation of parties. Countries like Poland and Hungary used these thresholds to prevent an overwhelming number of small parties from entering Parliament, thus facilitating the formation of stable governing coalitions (Burean, 2014). During the same period, Asia and Latin America adopted parliamentary thresholds as they embraced democratic systems. In Indonesia, for example, a parliamentary threshold was introduced during the 2009 elections to reduce party fragmentation and foster more effective governance (Sitter and Bakke, 2013).

Then, the parliamentary threshold evolved, with countries applying different threshold levels depending on their political context. Some countries use relatively low thresholds of around 2%–3%, while others, such as Germany, maintain higher thresholds at 5% (Antonyuk, 2019). The goal, however, remains the same: to create political stability by simplifying the multiparty system and making it more manageable. The concept of the Parliamentary Threshold originated as a response to the challenges posed by party fragmentation in proportional systems. Since its adoption after World War II, it has spread globally, promoting stable governance and practical parliamentary function.

In the discussion of the Parliamentary Threshold concept, at least four theories are applied by government policymakers and political experts related to electoral systems and party systems. These theories are: a) Duverger's Law, which argues that the type of electoral system influences the number of political parties in a country (Rich, 2014). Proportional representation systems—such as those implemented in Indonesia—tend to produce multiparty systems, while majoritarian or first-past-the-post systems result in two-party systems (Schlesinger and Schlesinger, 2006). Introducing a parliamentary threshold can serve as a corrective measure within proportional systems to limit fragmentation and create a more manageable number of parties in Parliament. b) Electoral System Design Theory, which suggests that

institutional rules, such as the parliamentary threshold, are tools to shape the party system. By setting a minimum vote percentage for parliamentary representation, the threshold filters out smaller parties, creating a more stable and cohesive legislative body (Raabe and Linhart, 2018). It helps prevent excessive fragmentation and instability, which are common in systems with low or no thresholds. c) Rational Choice Theory, which suggests that political actors (parties, voters, and others) make decisions based on their interests (Opp, 2021; Whiteley, 1995). A parliamentary threshold encourages smaller parties to merge or form coalitions with larger ones to surpass the vote threshold. At the same time, voters may shift their support to parties they believe have a chance of passing the threshold. Finally, d) Democratic Consolidation Theory, which focuses on the stability and effectiveness of democratic systems. This theory proposes that mechanisms like the parliamentary threshold can promote more stable governance by reducing the number of parties in Parliament, helping to avoid coalition deadlock, and promoting more effective decision-making (Kumbaracibasi, 2018).

Among the four theories mentioned, Duverger's Law is the most frequently used by scholars when analyzing the impact of electoral systems, including the parliamentary threshold, on party systems. This law is well-known in political science for observing that different electoral systems produce different party structures. Specifically, it indicates that proportional representation (PR) systems tend to result in multiparty systems, while majoritarian systems usually lead to two-party systems. Duverger's Law has been extensively studied and applied in various democratic contexts to explain how institutional rules shape political behavior and party dynamics. Scholars often reference this law to justify using the parliamentary threshold as a corrective mechanism in PR systems to prevent excessive party fragmentation and promote governance stability. This theory forms the foundation for discussions on the design and effects of electoral systems and the study of party systems and electoral thresholds.

Before adopting the Parliamentary Threshold provision, Indonesia's proportional representation system created an extremely fragmented multiparty system. In the 1999 election, 20 out of 48 political parties secured seats in Parliament; by 2004, only 15 parties managed to do so. This phenomenon demonstrates that the proportional system, often theorized to result in a highly fragmented political landscape, requires further examination, particularly in the Indonesian context (Stoetzer et al., 2019). Indonesia's Parliamentary Threshold, set between 2.5% and 4%, can be considered moderate compared to other democracies, where the threshold varies from 1% to 5%. A higher threshold, such as 5%, would likely increase the number of discarded votes, potentially impacting voter representation.

The parliamentary threshold in Indonesia is aimed at limiting the number of political parties that can enter Parliament. This measure is necessary in a multiparty system like Indonesia's to control the growth of political parties and prevent extreme fragmentation. It helps reduce friction between the executive and legislative branches, supporting a stable presidential system. The specifics of the parliamentary threshold in each country are generally influenced by the country's cultural and historical context. There is no universal standard for the threshold amount; it varies from country to country. The objectives of implementing a parliamentary threshold include: a).

Simplifying the party system; b). Creating a solid presidential system supported by an effective representative body (Aulia et al., 2021). The effectiveness of the representative body is related to the number of political factions in the House of Representatives. Fewer political parties in the representative body typically lead to better functioning of the legislative body; and c). Eliminating the practice of party reincarnation for parties that fail to meet the electoral threshold encourages the formation of healthier political parties (Monteiro, 2023).

In Indonesia, the parliamentary threshold is outlined in Article 414, Paragraph 1 of the Election Law. According to this provision, political parties must meet a minimum threshold of 4% of the total valid national votes to participate in the determination of House of Representatives seats. It is important to note that total valid national votes refer to the votes counted for the House of Representatives. Parties not meeting the 4% threshold are not included in the seat allocation calculations for the House of Representatives in each electoral district. When calculating House of Representatives seats, the valid votes for each qualifying party are divided by a series of numbers starting with 1 and followed by the odd numbers 3, 5, 7, and others (Kholis, 2020).

For the 2024 elections, the threshold remains at 4%, as stipulated in Article 414 of the Election Law. However, all participating political parties are included in determining seats for the Regional People's Representative Assembly at the provincial, regency, and city levels (Fithor and Afrizal, 2022). It means that even if a party does not meet the 4% national threshold, it still has a chance to obtain seats in the Regional People's Representative Assembly. The Constitutional Court's Decision No. 116/PUU-XXI/2023 has addressed this threshold (Sinukaban, 2020). The Court ruled that the threshold norm in Article 414, Paragraph 1 of the Election Law is constitutional for the 2024 House of Representatives elections. However, it is conditionally constitutional for the 2029 House of Representatives elections and beyond. The threshold must be reviewed and potentially adjusted according to the established requirements (Li and Zhang, 2024). The Constitutional Court highlighted the need for thoughtful consideration in adjusting the parliamentary threshold, including a). Ensuring that changes are designed for long-term use; b). Maintaining proportionality in the electoral system to prevent disproportionate results; c). Facilitating the simplification of the party system; c). Implementing changes before the start of the 2029 election preparation; d). Engaging all stakeholders, including political parties without House of Representatives representation, in decision-making (Mietzner, 2010). The Court noted that inadequate or unsubstantiated changes to the threshold could result in disproportionate election outcomes, and thus, adjustments must be made before 2029.

The negative impact of the Parliamentary Threshold on smaller parties became evident in the 2009, 2014, and 2019 elections. With thresholds in place, the number of political parties represented in Parliament was reduced, simplifying the legislative landscape (Ibenskas, 2016). For instance, in the 2009 election, only 9 out of 38 parties secured seats, while in 2019, 9 out of 14 parties made it into the House of Representatives. This consolidation has led to a streamlined multiparty system that is easier to manage but potentially limits smaller voices.

Comparing Indonesia’s journey toward a simplified multiparty system with other transitioning democracies, such as Slovenia and Montenegro, provides a richer context. After adopting multiparty systems during their democratic transitions, Slovenia and Montenegro experienced political fragmentation similar to that of Indonesia. However, the critical difference lies in how their party systems and parliamentary thresholds have influenced the resilience and stability of their governments (Siregar et al., 2022).

In Slovenia and Montenegro, government resilience and political stability were established after adopting multiparty systems hinged on managing fragmentation while ensuring adequate representation (Krašovec and Batričević, 2020). Like Indonesia, they faced challenges balancing the need for stability with the inclusivity of their political systems. Fragmentation in these countries often resulted in coalition governments, which were both a stabilizing and destabilizing factor depending on the coalition’s cohesion. It is comparable to Indonesia’s experience, where parliamentary coalitions during the 2014–2019 and 2019–2024 periods were crucial in pushing through key legislation, including the national budget, Omnibus Law, and the relocation of the national capital.

The common thread between these nations is the gradual consolidation of their political landscapes. Indonesia’s introduction of the Parliamentary Threshold and its subsequent impact on reducing fragmentation echoes similar trends in Slovenia and Montenegro, where fragmentation gave way to more streamlined and stable political systems over time. However, Indonesia’s relatively moderate threshold has allowed for a balance between political consolidation and the representation of diverse voices. It could be a valuable lesson for other countries navigating their post-transition party systems. While the Parliamentary Threshold has reduced political fragmentation in Indonesia, much like in Slovenia and Montenegro, the key challenge remains in ensuring that this consolidation does not marginalize smaller parties or limit the diversity of political representation, as seen in other transitioning democracies. The following is a comparison **Table 2** between Indonesia, Slovenia, and Montenegro regarding the impact of the multiparty system and the implementation of the Parliamentary Threshold on political stability and fragmentation.

Table 2. Comparison of the impact of the multiparty system and the adoption of the PT.

Aspects	Indonesia	Slovenia	Montenegro
Transition to Democracy	After the fall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesia transitioned to democracy by implementing a multiparty system.	Slovenia transitioned to democracy after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, adopting a multiparty system.	Montenegro transitioned in 2006 after independence from Serbia, adopting a multiparty democracy.
Initial Political Fragmentation	Highly fragmented; 20 out of 48 parties won seats in the 1999 election.	Experienced fragmentation but with fewer parties represented initially compared to Indonesia.	Experienced moderate political fragmentation, particularly after independence, with multiple parties represented.
Parliamentary Threshold	Introduced in 2009 at 2.5%, then raised to 4%.	Introduced at varying levels between 2% and 4%.	Introduced a threshold to manage fragmentation, typically around 3%–5%.
Impact of Parliamentary Threshold	Reduced the number of parties in Parliament from 20 (1999) to 9 (2019), streamlining the political system.	Helped consolidate political parties and limit fragmentation, fostering more stable coalitions.	Reduced fragmentation but maintained enough diversity to represent various interests, allowing for coalition-building.

Table 2. (Continued).

Aspects	Indonesia	Slovenia	Montenegro
Number of Parties in Parliament	1999: 20 2004: 15 2009: 9 2019: 9	Initially, 12 major parties were reduced to a more manageable number.	Experienced fluctuations; around 8–10 parties typically represented in Parliament.
Effect on Smaller Parties	Significant challenges for smaller parties; many still need to pass the threshold, limiting diversity.	Smaller parties found it difficult to enter Parliament, but coalitions allowed them to participate in governance.	Smaller parties were affected but managed to form coalitions to remain politically relevant.
Government Resilience	Improved government resilience due to larger parties' dominance and more stable coalitions.	Strong coalitions helped maintain political stability despite initial fragmentation.	Political stability was enhanced by forming coalitions with moderate parties, fostering effective governance.
Majority Coalition	Formed effective coalitions for 2014–2019 and 2019–2024, passing critical legislation such as the national budget and Omnibus Law.	Coalition-building became a norm for governance, focusing on compromise among parties.	Coalitions provided necessary support for legislative processes and maintaining government stability.
Comparison to Democratic Theories	Challenges the theory that proportional representation leads to unmanageable fragmentation, as thresholds streamline the system.	Fits the democratic theory of proportional representation with thresholds balancing diversity and governance.	Similar to Slovenia, where proportional representation with a threshold stabilized the system.

This comparison highlights how each country while undergoing democratic transitions, managed political fragmentation through the introduction of parliamentary thresholds, which played a crucial role in stabilizing their political systems.

5.1. Discussion about policy models

Based on the Routine Policy Implementation Model and the Strategic Policy Implementation Model, the analysis of the implementation of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia can be approached from two complementary perspectives: technical-administrative aspects and long-term strategic impacts.

5.1.1. Routine policy implementation model

This model emphasizes the technical and administrative aspects of policy implementation. This approach can analyze several vital elements in the case of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia. One critical aspect is the vote-counting procedure and seat allocation. The parliamentary threshold requires calculating the Voting Quotient to determine how many seats each political party secures in the House of Representatives (Pukelsheim, 2018). This technical procedure ensures that only parties meeting the threshold are included in the seat distribution.

Another critical point is the establishment of the threshold itself. From the initial threshold of 2.5% introduced in Law No. 10 of 2008 to its increase to 3.5% under Law No. 8 of 2012, the administrative processes involved in adjusting regulations and counting mechanisms have been followed according to the law. It demonstrates how the Routine Model plays a role in maintaining administrative continuity and ensuring compliance with regulations. Additionally, the threshold has contributed to the efficiency of election management. Reducing the number of political parties eligible for parliamentary representation makes the system less fragmented and more manageable. This results in a smoother vote counting process and more efficient seat allocation. The Routine Policy Implementation Model helps us understand that the

parliamentary threshold in Indonesia has been effectively implemented from a technical and administrative standpoint. The policy provides a straightforward process for filtering political parties based on vote share while improving efficiency in elections and seat distribution.

5.1.2. Strategic policy implementation model

The Strategic Policy Implementation Model takes a broader view, focusing on how policies influence social, political, and institutional structures over time (Sager and Hinterleitner, 2022). In the context of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia, several strategic impacts can be identified that the policy has contributed to the consolidation of political parties. One of the primary strategic goals of the parliamentary threshold is to reduce political fragmentation in Parliament, allowing only parties with significant public support to enter the House of Representatives. This has resulted in political consolidation, where fewer but more robust and better-organized parties dominate the political landscape. Consequently, the national political system becomes more stable and focused, as only larger parties can compete effectively.

Moreover, the threshold has improved governance effectiveness. By limiting the number of parties in Parliament, the threshold reduces the reliance on small parties for coalition-building, which often leads to political instability. This also strengthens governance continuity, as larger parties can better reach consensus on government policies.

However, one downside is the marginalization of smaller political parties. As the threshold increases, smaller parties struggle to secure seats in Parliament, which may reduce political diversity and limit the representation of minority voices. While the policy encourages smaller parties to merge or form coalitions, it also risks excluding local or minority groups from representation. The impact on political coalitions is also significant. The rising threshold has affected the dynamics of political coalitions in Indonesia. For instance, during the 2014–2019 period, the ‘Koalisi Merah Putih’ opposition coalition weakened after several small parties shifted their allegiance to the government side. It shows that with fewer parties in Parliament, coalition dynamics become more crucial in shaping national politics. Thus, the Strategic Policy Implementation Model reveals that the parliamentary threshold has profoundly affected Indonesia’s political structure. It has reduced fragmentation and strengthened larger parties, contributing to political stability and more effective governance. However, it also poses challenges to including smaller political parties, potentially limiting political representation for diverse groups.

5.1.3. Combined analysis of routine and strategic models

By combining the Routine Policy Implementation Model and the Strategic Policy Implementation Model, we can comprehensively understand the implementation of the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia. From a routine perspective, the policy has been effectively implemented technically and administratively, ensuring compliance with electoral laws and improving the efficiency of elections. From a strategic perspective, the policy has significantly reshaped the political landscape by consolidating larger political parties, enhancing stability and governance effectiveness while also marginalizing smaller parties. So, the parliamentary threshold has

contributed to Indonesia's more consolidated and stable political environment. However, it has also raised concerns regarding including smaller political parties and minority voices in the political system.

6. Conclusion

Implementing the Parliamentary Threshold in Indonesia during the 2009, 2014, and 2019 elections streamlined the political landscape by limiting the number of parties in Parliament. This shift promoted the formation of more stable government and opposition coalitions, improving decision-making on critical issues like budget approvals and significant legislation, such as the Omnibus Law and the relocation of the national capital. Compared to Slovenia and Montenegro, Indonesia followed a similar path, where thresholds helped reduce political fragmentation and enhance coalition-building. However, the gradual threshold increase should be managed carefully to maintain diverse political representation and avoid marginalizing smaller parties. Policies that support emerging parties, such as financial aid and capacity-building programs, should be strengthened to ensure fairer competition without sacrificing the benefits of a simplified multiparty system. Transparent coalition agreements and potential electoral reforms, like mixed-member proportional representation, could also improve governance. Continuous evaluation of the threshold's impact is crucial to balancing political representation and operational efficiency in Indonesia's evolving democracy.

Implementing the parliamentary threshold in Indonesia has significantly shaped the political landscape. Technically, it has been efficiently applied, improving electoral processes and seat allocation. Strategically, the threshold—starting at 2.5% in 2009, rising to 3.5% in 2014 and 4% in 2019—has reduced political fragmentation by limiting the number of parties in Parliament, enhancing governance stability and decision-making efficiency. However, it also marginalizes smaller parties, reducing political diversity and the representation of minority groups. The threshold has contributed to political consolidation and stability, though it challenges smaller parties striving for parliamentary representation.

6.1. Recommendation

To further enhance the effectiveness of Indonesia's parliamentary system and governance, it is recommended that the Parliamentary Threshold be gradually increased, but with caution, to avoid excessively excluding smaller political groups. A balanced approach is necessary to reduce political fragmentation while maintaining diverse representation. Additionally, policies to support smaller and emerging political parties should be strengthened. These policies involve financial assistance, political education, and capacity-building programs to ensure fair competition and a more robust party system without diminishing the benefits of a simplified multiparty model.

Coalition agreements between political parties should also be more transparent and formalized. It would lead to more predictable and accountable government coalitions, improving governance stability. Electoral reforms, such as preferential voting or mixed-member proportional representation, could create a fairer system for smaller parties while maintaining the operational efficiency of Parliament. Finally,

continuous monitoring of the Parliamentary Threshold's impact on political stability, representation, and governance efficiency is essential. Adapting these policies in response to real-time data and political changes would help preserve Indonesia's democratic resilience while ensuring balanced representation in Parliament.

6.2. Limitations

- This study primarily focuses on the 2009, 2014, and 2019 elections. This study does not include data from previous elections, which may limit understanding of current political dynamics and trends.
- This study analyzes the impact of the Parliamentary Threshold in Indonesia but only compares it with two European countries. A more in-depth comparative analysis is needed with other countries that have similar electoral systems. A broader comparison could provide a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of thresholds in different contexts.
- External factors are limited considered: This study has not thoroughly explored other external political, social, and economic factors that might influence party consolidation and coalition formation, such as regional autonomy, public sentiment, or international political influence.
- Although the Parliamentary Threshold is essential in reducing party fragmentation, other elements, such as the role of electoral laws, voter behavior, and internal party organization, need to be studied in depth, which can limit a holistic understanding of party system change.
- Reliance on particular data sets and theoretical frameworks may lead to bias, as such data may only partially capture the complex dynamics of the Indonesian political system, especially at the local and regional levels.

6.3. Benefits for theory, practice, and researchers

Theoretically, the results of this study confirm that the Parliamentary Threshold effectively limits the number of parties in Parliament and produces a simplified multiparty model. This, in turn, leads to the formation of two coalitions: a government-supporting coalition and an opposition coalition. For practitioners, to surpass the 4% Parliamentary Threshold in elections requires significant resources, making it more realistic for new or lower-tier political parties to form coalitions with mid- or top-tier political parties. For researchers, the findings of this study can be further developed and deepened into future research on the contribution of the simplified multiparty model in Parliament to the effectiveness of the presidential system of governance.

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