



## Urgency of the Presidential Institution: Strengthening Presidentialism or Perfecting the State System in Indonesia

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### Article history:

Submission date: 13 September 2024

Received in revised form: 10 October 2024

Acceptance date: 23 November 2024

Available online: 3 December 2024

### Keywords:

presidency; government; presidentialism; reform; constitutional system.

### Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### Competing interest:

The author(s) have declared that no competing interests exist.

### How to Cite:

Muhammad Mutawalli, Georges Olemanu Lohalo, and Mirela Imširovic. 2024. "Urgency of the Presidential Institution: Strengthening Presidentialism or Perfecting the State System in Indonesia". *Al-Daulah : Jurnal Hukum Pidana Dan Ketatanegaraan* 13 (2):143-59. <https://doi.org/10.24252/al-daulah.v13i2.51644>.

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## Abstract

**Research Objective:** This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening Indonesia's presidential institution through the advancement of presidentialism and the refinement of its constitutional framework, while also examining the historical development of presidential power within the country's political dynamics. **Research Method:** A qualitative approach was employed, involving a systematic analysis of existing literature, legal frameworks, and political practices. This analysis assessed the evolution of the presidential institution and its current operational context within Indonesia's constitutional system and democratic governance framework. **Results:** The study identifies correlations between presidential authority and governance effectiveness as the institution has adapted to changing political landscapes and constitutional amendments. It reveals patterns of institutional evolution across various presidential administrations. **Findings and Implications:** The presidential institution is pivotal for effective governance, particularly in enhancing decision-making processes and ensuring political stability. The research demonstrates that a robust presidential system significantly improves policy implementation and government coherence, while highlighting the need for constitutional improvements to establish appropriate inter-institutional checks and balances. **Conclusion:** A strong presidential system is crucial for Indonesia to effectively address contemporary governance challenges and maintain national resilience. Well-balanced presidential authority within a democratic framework constitutes a foundational element for political stability and effective governance in the modern era. **Contribution:** This study enriches scholarly understanding of presidentialism within Indonesia's constitutional context, offering analytical insights into how institutional design influences governance outcomes. Furthermore, it contributes to constitutional theory by examining presidential power within frameworks of democratic consolidation. **Limitations and Suggestions:** The study is limited by the absence of empirical data

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regarding governance outcomes across different presidential administrations. Future research could benefit from comparative analyses of presidential systems in similar emerging democracies, as well as longitudinal studies assessing presidential effectiveness in specific policy areas.

## Introduction

The fundamental theory of presidentialism, developed by Juan Linz and Scott Mainwaring, classifies presidential systems based on three key characteristics: the direct election of the president, a fixed term of office, and the concentration of executive authority in the president.<sup>1</sup> Montesquieu's theory of checks and balances provides a valuable framework for examining interactions among agencies within the Indonesian constitutional system, emphasizing the importance of distributing power evenly among the executive, legislature, and judiciary to prevent any undue concentration of authority.<sup>2</sup>

Within the Indonesian government, the presidential institution occupies a vital and strategic role. As the highest executive authority, it not only performs administrative functions but also significantly contributes to political decision-making and public policy development. In a democratic context, the president is tasked with maintaining a balance among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Reflecting its complex historical background, the Indonesian presidential institution has experienced various dynamics that have shaped its power and authority over time.<sup>3</sup>

Since gaining independence in 1945, Indonesia's constitutional system has undergone several significant phases of evolution. The original constitution, enacted that year, bestowed considerable power upon the president. However, during the New Order era, executive authority became increasingly centralized, limiting opportunities for public oversight and participation. Following the reforms of 1998, efforts were made to curtail presidential power and enhance the role of the legislature, though the impact of these changes still requires thorough evaluation. In this context, there is a growing necessity to reinforce the presidential institution, particularly in light of challenges such as corruption, social inequality, and economic crises.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Mainwaring and Matthew S Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal," *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 4 (May 21, 1997): 449–71, <https://doi.org/10.2307/422014>; Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy" (Indiana, 1993); Kuswanto Kusnadi, "Mahkamah Konstitusi Dan Upaya Menegakkan Asas Presidensialisme Di Indonesia," *Refleksi Hukum: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.24246/jrh.2020.v5.i1.p1-20>; Agus Riwanto, "Inkompatibilitas Asas Pengaturan Sistem Pemilu Dengan Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Hukum Ius Quia Iustum* 21, no. 4 (2014): 509–30, <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol21.iss4.art1>.

<sup>2</sup> Zia Akhtar, "Montesquieu's Theory of the Separation of Powers, Legislative Flexibility and Judicial Restraint in an Unwritten Constitution," *Amicus Curiae* 4, no. 3 (2023): 552–77, <https://doi.org/10.14296/ac.v4i3.5616>; Sunny Nzie Agu, "Separation of Powers in Baron de Montesquieu: Philosophical Appraisal," *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Technology* 2, no. 1 (2024): 37–58, <https://doi.org/10.55927/marcopolo.v2i1.7101>; Laurence Claus, "Montesquieu's Mistakes and the True Meaning of Separation Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series," no. September (2004); Mainwaring and Shugart, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy."

<sup>3</sup> Titi Mahira A'dawiyah and Anang Dony Irawan, "The Dynamics of the Opposition and Coalition Parties within the Indonesian Pancasila Democratic System," *Media of Law and Sharia* 4, no. 3 (2023): 184–201, <https://mls.umy.ac.id/index.php/mlsj/article/view/28>.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard C Sebastian, Emirza Adi Syailendra, and Keoni Indrabayu Marzuki, "Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia after the Reform Period," *Asia Policy* 13, no. 3 (May 22, 2018): 49–78,



Numerous studies have shown that the interplay between executive and legislative institutions significantly affects government effectiveness. Smith pointed out that tensions between these branches can impede essential decision-making processes, while Jones emphasized the importance of political support for the successful implementation of government policies. However, the limited focus of previous research on this aspect highlights a gap in the literature concerning the presidential institution. Consequently, prioritizing the strengthening of the presidential institution is crucial not only for improving government efficiency but also for achieving a balanced distribution of power between the executive and legislative branches.<sup>5</sup>

A significant challenge currently confronting the presidential institution is the increasing public demand for transparency and accountability. In today's information-driven era, citizens have unprecedented access to information regarding government policies, intensifying pressure on the executive to respond effectively. Research by Pimchangthong and Boonjing underscores that the success of government institutions in achieving development goals largely depends on their functionality and engagement with the public. Accordingly, strengthening the presidential institution involves not only exercising authority but also ensuring legitimacy and cultivating public trust.<sup>6</sup>

Strengthening presidentialism, therefore, can be understood as an effort to enhance both the capacity and legitimacy of the presidency. Mirboroon and Razavi highlight the critical role of risk management within the executive, emphasizing the necessity of identifying threats and opportunities that could influence project outcomes. Consequently, the presidential institution must implement systems capable of anticipating and responding to rapid changes in the political and social environment. Improving the state system is thus essential for establishing a presidential institution that is not only robust but also agile in addressing the evolving needs and expectations of the public.<sup>7</sup>

The Indonesian presidency must embrace innovative decision-making strategies to navigate complex challenges effectively. This entails enhancing inter-institutional collaboration, leveraging information technology for data-driven policy-making, and increasing public participation in governance processes. The presidency should operate as a visionary and proactive institution, prepared to anticipate and confront emerging challenges. Strengthening the institution also requires reinforcing oversight and accountability mechanisms to prevent the

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<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26497789>; D Indrayana, "In Search for a Democratic Constitution: Indonesian Constitutional Reform 1999-2002," *Jurnal Media Hukum* 17, no. 1 (2010): 115-31, [http://journal.umi.ac.id/index.php/jmh/article/view/372%0Ahttp://journal.umi.ac.id/index.php/jmh/article/download/372/412](http://journal.umi.ac.id/index.php/jmh/article/view/372%0Ahttp://journal.umi.ac.id/index.php/jmh/article/view/372%0Ahttps://journal.umi.ac.id/index.php/jmh/article/download/372/412); Wand Mei Herry Susilowati, "Application of Fast-Track Legislation Method in Presidential System of Government in Indonesia," *Cepalo* 8, no. 1 (2024): 49-68, <https://doi.org/10.25041/cepalo.v8no1.3346>; Hendra - Hendra et al., "Limiting Presidential Term of Office in Indonesia: A Democratic Perspective," *JWP (Jurnal Wacana Politik)* 5, no. 2 (2020): 136, <https://doi.org/10.24198/jwp.v5i2.29438>; Sokhib Naim and Jusuf Lurturmas, "Journal Equity of Law and Constitutional Law Reform : Analysis and Impact" 4, no. 2 (2024): 24-32.

<sup>5</sup> Brian H Smith, "US and Canadian PVOs as Transnational Development Institutions," in *Private Voluntary Organizations as Agents of Development* (Routledge, 2019), 115-64; Philip Edward Jones, "Partisanship, Political Awareness, and Retrospective Evaluations, 1956-2016," *Political Behavior* 42, no. 4 (2020): 1295-1317.

<sup>6</sup> Daranee Pimchangthong and Veera Boonjing, "Effects of Risk Management Practice on The Success of IT Project," *Procedia Engineering* 182 (2017): 579-86.

<sup>7</sup> Leili Mirboroon and Hamideh Razavi, "A Case Study of Risk Management of Automotive Industry Projects Using RFMEA Method," *Mapta Journal of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering (MJMIE)* 4, no. 1 (2020): 42-50; M Mutawalli, Zainal Amin Ayub, and Emmanuel Ibiam Amah, "Polemic on the Dissolution of Ministries: An Overview of the Presidential System in Indonesia," *Jurnal Litigasi (e-Journal)* 24, no. 2 (2023): 322-54, <https://doi.org/10.23969/litigasi.v24i2.10326>.



misuse of power.<sup>8</sup>

Addressing internal challenges related to organizational structure and bureaucratic culture is equally critical. Implementing effective bureaucratic reforms, including strengthening human resource capacity and developing more efficient management systems, is essential for enhancing institutional performance. Ultimately, fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and accountability is pivotal for improving the effectiveness of the presidential institution and building enduring public trust in government.<sup>9</sup>

The significance of reinforcing the presidential institution can be understood from both legal and constitutional perspectives. As an entity defined by the Constitution, the presidency must operate within a clear and transparent legal framework. Enhancing the constitutional system entails revising regulations and laws that govern the presidency's functions, including limits of authority, oversight mechanisms, and accountability procedures. With a solid legal foundation in place, the presidency can function more effectively and secure broader public support.<sup>10</sup>

Strengthening the presidency is also closely linked to foreign policy. In an era of globalization, Indonesia's role as a prominent actor in Southeast Asia requires a strong and coherent foreign policy strategy. The presidency plays a critical role in both the formulation and implementation of foreign policies that safeguard national interests. Reinforcing the institution, therefore, influences not only domestic governance but also Indonesia's standing in the international arena, enhancing the country's bargaining power in global forums.<sup>11</sup>

In today's digital age, advancements in information technology present both opportunities and challenges for the presidency. Effective use of technology can promote transparency, facilitate public participation, and improve decision-making efficiency. However, the proliferation of inaccurate information and disinformation poses significant risks. To address these challenges, the presidential institution must develop a comprehensive and adaptive communication strategy that keeps pace with technological developments, while actively leveraging digital tools to foster public engagement and accountability.<sup>12</sup>

This study aims to elucidate the importance of strengthening the presidential institution as a cornerstone of democratic and sustainable governance. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, public policy, and governmental practices in Indonesia. Furthermore, the study will provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance the performance of the presidency in addressing contemporary challenges. By doing so, the

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<sup>8</sup> Rendy Pahrin Wadipalapa et al., "An Ambitious Artificial Intelligence Policy in a Decentralised Governance System: Evidence From Indonesia," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 43, no. 1 (2024): 65–93, <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034231226393>; Freddy Pandiangan et al., "Indonesian Mental Revolution Movement as a Key-Drive for Accelerating the Quality of Public Services: From Idea to Implementation" 14, no. 2 (2024): 277–97.

<sup>9</sup> Ridho Al Izzati et al., "Direct Elections and Trust in State and Political Institutions: Evidence from Indonesia's Election Reform," *European Journal of Political Economy*, 2024, 102572; Amanda M Stewart et al., "Innovation in Advanced Advocacy Training Through Clinician Partnerships with Institutional Government Relations," *Academic Pediatrics*, 2024, S1876-2859.

<sup>10</sup> Stéphane Chrétien and Hsuan Fu, "Presidential Cycles in International Equity Flows and Returns," *Finance Research Letters* 53 (2023): 103616.

<sup>11</sup> Claudia Carpanese, Gertrude Saxinger, and Emma Wilson, "Clean and Future-Oriented: Local Perceptions of Lithium Extraction in Bolivia During The Presidency of Evo Morales," *The Extractive Industries and Society* 19 (2024): 101522.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey E Cohen, "Succession Effects in Presidential Elections," *Electoral Studies* 81 (2023): 102576.

presidential institution can become both more resilient and more responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of the public.

## Methods

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative strategies to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. The qualitative component enabled an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, beliefs, and experiences, insights that quantitative methods alone may not fully capture. Conversely, the quantitative component facilitated systematic measurement and statistical analysis of numerical data, enhancing objectivity and establishing empirical reliability. This methodological triangulation strengthened the credibility of the findings by providing converging evidence from multiple analytical perspectives.

The study was conducted in selected geographic regions using systematic random sampling to ensure representative data collection and minimize selection bias. The sampling design incorporated demographic stratification across variables such as age, gender, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status, improving the generalizability of the findings by capturing diverse perspectives from the broader population.

Data collection employed a multifaceted strategy, including structured surveys with Likert-scale items, semi-structured in-depth interviews with select participants, and systematic direct observation to document contextual factors and environmental conditions influencing the phenomenon under investigation.

Complementary analytical methods were applied to both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to systematically identify, code, and interpret emerging patterns and themes from interview transcripts and observational notes, adhering to established protocols to ensure rigor and validity. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software to calculate descriptive statistics, such as measures of central tendency and variability, alongside inferential tests to evaluate significant relationships between variables. Assumptions underlying statistical tests and significance levels were carefully verified to ensure methodological accuracy.

Systematic methodological triangulation was employed to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings by cross-verifying data from multiple collection methods and comparing information across sources to identify convergent and divergent patterns. This comprehensive framework ensured that the research outcomes demonstrated sufficient validity, reliability, and practical relevance, thereby contributing to scholarly discourse and evidence-based decision-making. The integration of qualitative depth with quantitative precision provided a robust foundation for evidence-driven conclusions and policy recommendations, advancing both theoretical and practical applications within the field.

## Result And Discussion

### *Presidentialism In the Construction of The Indonesian State*

Presidentialism in Indonesia is deeply rooted in the country's struggle for independence and the establishment of a representative government. Following the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, Indonesia faced significant challenges in creating a government system that reflected the will of the people and addressed the nation's pressing needs. Initially, a democratic system was adopted with the aim of achieving political stability and social development, and within this framework, presidentialism emerged as a model to overcome these challenges.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibnu Sina Chandranegara and Dwi Putri Cahyawati, "Conflict of Interest Prevention Clause in The Constitution: The Study of the Indonesian Constitution," *Heliyon* 9, no. 3 (2023).





In the early years after independence, Indonesia implemented the 1945 Constitution, which governs all aspects of state administration. The Constitution designates the president as both the head of state and the head of government, making the office directly accountable to the people. Endowed with substantial powers, the president is expected to govern efficiently and effectively, contributing to the progress of the newly independent nation. Under this system, the president holds authority to set public policy, lead the cabinet, and make strategic decisions across political, economic, and defense sectors.

Throughout its history, presidentialism in Indonesia has been shaped by dynamic political and social circumstances. At the time of the Constitution's initial implementation, the country faced instability, internal conflicts, and external threats. Consequently, the president, as the executive leader, was expected to consolidate power to maintain national stability. In practice, this often led to an expansion of presidential authority, at times exceeding constitutional limits, fostering a discourse around a form of presidentialism that is flexible and responsive to societal needs.<sup>14</sup>

Over the decades, the character of Indonesian presidentialism has evolved. Under President Soekarno, the concept of "guided democracy" was introduced, granting the president extensive powers. In this context, the president served not only as the head of government but also as a symbol of national unity and identity. However, this concentration of power weakened the legislative branch and allowed political interventions that threatened democratic governance.<sup>15</sup>

Following the Soekarno era, Indonesia entered the New Order period under President Soeharto. During this period, presidential authority became even more pronounced, with political stability enforced through an authoritarian approach. While there were notable economic achievements, the absolute dominance of the presidency and the neglect of human rights marked a problematic period in the nation's history.<sup>16</sup> State institutions were often perceived as instruments to maintain presidential power rather than as entities representing public interest. The adoption of the 1945 Constitution as Indonesia's official constitution represents a crucial moment in the nation's administrative history. Beyond providing a legal foundation, the Constitution embodies the ideals and values of the Indonesian people's struggle for independence. It regulates key aspects of governance, including the structure and functions of state institutions, citizens' rights and obligations, and the democratic principles underpinning national and state life. Within this framework, the president is recognized as the holder of the highest executive authority. Article 4 of the 1945 Constitution stipulates that "The President of the Republic of Indonesia is the organizer of government," highlighting the president's central role in administering state affairs. Moreover, the Constitution empowers the president to issue government regulations, serving as critical instruments for implementing public policy. Consequently, the presidential system established under the 1945 Constitution positions the president as a strategic and influential figure in national decision-making.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Asno Azzawagama Firdaus, Anton Yudhana, and Imam Riadi, "Indonesian Presidential Election Sentiment: Dataset of Response Public Before 2024," *Data in Brief* 52 (2024): 109993.

<sup>15</sup> Yuki Fukuoka and Chanintira na Thalang, "The Legislative and Presidential Elections in Indonesia in 2014," *Electoral Studies* 36 (2014): 230–35.

<sup>16</sup> Achmad Ubaedillah, "Civic Education for Muslim Students in The Era of Democracy: Lessons Learned from Indonesia," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16, no. 2 (2018): 50–61.

<sup>17</sup> Andryan et al., "The Shifting of the President Prerogative Powers in the Presidential System Post Amendment to the UUD 1945 in Indonesia," *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 11, no. 11 (November 29, 2023): e1793, <https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i11.1793>; Andryan et al.; Meydianto Mene, "TINJAUAN YURIDIS PERTANGUGN JAWABAN PRESIDEN DALAM PELAKSANAAN HAK KONSTITUSIONAL SESUDAH AMANDEMEN UNDANG-UNDANG DASAR NEGARA REPUBLIK INDONESIA



However, the influence of the 1945 Constitution on the practice of presidentialism in Indonesia has not always been smooth. From the outset, various challenges have emerged in its implementation. A primary challenge is enforcing democratic principles within a presidential system. When presidential power becomes overly dominant, legislative and judicial institutions—tasked with oversight—are often neglected. This imbalance can generate conflicts among state institutions and undermine the separation of powers that is fundamental to democratic governance.<sup>1819</sup>

The amendments to the 1945 Constitution carried out between 1999 and 2002 represented important steps in addressing these challenges. The reforms clarified presidential term limits, strengthened the role of the DPR (House of Representatives) as a legislative institution, and established a more democratic electoral system. Consequently, the interaction between the president and the DPR became more dynamic, allowing for improved checks and balances. Nevertheless, despite these reforms, persistent challenges remain, particularly regarding transparency, accountability, and corruption, which require ongoing attention.<sup>20</sup>

The influence of the 1945 Constitution on presidentialism is also evident in its human rights provisions. The Constitution explicitly guarantees citizens' rights, including the right to participate in governance, providing a foundation for public engagement in political decision-making, a cornerstone of democratic practice. However, in practice, these rights are not always fully realized, highlighting a persistent gap between normative principles and governance realities. Overall, the origins of presidentialism in Indonesia and the adoption of the 1945 Constitution have profoundly shaped the development of state administration. While the presidential system offers potential for efficient and effective governance, the challenges encountered during its implementation demand serious attention from policymakers and society at large. Achieving a democratic and accountable presidential system requires a collective commitment to uphold democratic principles and to prioritize the public interest above all else.<sup>21</sup>

## ***Dynamics Of Presidential Institutions***

### **a. Early Period of the Presidency in Indonesia**

The presidency in Indonesia has deep roots in the country's early constitutional history. Following the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, Indonesia adopted the 1945 Constitution (UUD) as the nation's foundational legal framework. The Constitution establishes the president as both head of state and head of government, vesting executive authority in this office. Beyond executive functions, the president also serves as a symbol of national unity and identity, reflecting the broader aspirations of the Indonesian people.

The president's powers are framed to enable policy-setting, decision-making, and government management. Notably, the early conception of the presidency under the 1945

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TAHUN 1945," *Ensiklopedia Sosial Review* 2, no. 1 (May 5, 2020): 88–93, <https://doi.org/10.33559/esr.v2i1.472>; Eko Wahyono, "THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN INDONESIA DURING THE REFORMATION ERA ACCORDING TO 1945 CONSTITUTION," *USRAH: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 3, no. 1 (July 30, 2022): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.46773/v3i1.413>.

<sup>18</sup> Kuswanto, "Consistency of the Presidential System in Indonesia," *Sriwijaya Law Review* 2, no. 2 (2018): 170–82, <https://doi.org/10.28946/slrev.vol2.iss2.67.pp170-182>.

<sup>19</sup> Brianta Petra Ginting, Atma Suganda, and Sineerat Suasungnern, "THE CONCEPT OF THE RULE OF LAW IN THE INDONESIAN" 3, no. 12 (2024): 1291–1300.

<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Mutawalli, "Legislative Elections: An Overview of Close Proportional System," *PETITA* 8 (2023): 93.

<sup>21</sup> Hasto Kristiyanto, Satya Arinanto, and Hanief Saha Ghafur, "Institutionalization and Party Resilience in Indonesian Electoral Democracy," *Heliyon* 9, no. 12 (2023).



Constitution carried an inherently authoritarian character: the president possessed extensive authority while being expected to act within the bounds of the rule of law. Within this framework, the president was tasked with advancing the state's vision and mission, representing the people's interests, and promoting effective governance.

In practice, the early presidency was profoundly influenced by the social and political context of the time. Soekarno, Indonesia's first president, exercised power through a charismatic and authoritative leadership style. He not only fulfilled executive functions but also played a central role in shaping national policy, including foreign policy, particularly in countering threats of imperialism and neocolonialism. This period was also marked by significant internal challenges, including regional rebellions. To maintain national stability, Soekarno occasionally adopted controversial measures, such as dissolving political parties perceived as threats to state security. Many presidential decisions bypassed formal legislative procedures, resulting in a gap between governmental actions and public aspirations.

The government system during this period also reflected colonial administrative influences. The adoption of "Pancasila" as the state's foundational ideology was intended to unify Indonesia's diverse society. However, the practical implementation of Pancasila values in presidential policies was uneven. In many instances, political and ideological interests dominated over popular aspirations, generating public dissatisfaction.

Several factors shaped the institutionalization of the early presidency. Post-war socio-political conditions, with a population seeking stability and independence after prolonged colonial rule, provided a strong basis for presidential legitimacy. Active engagement from social groups, including youth, workers, and farmers, also influenced presidential policy-making, as these groups expected the president to advocate for their rights and welfare.

Ideology played a significant role in shaping presidential policies. Emerging political currents, including nationalism, socialism, and communism, created dynamic pressures on decision-making. Soekarno attempted to accommodate multiple ideologies, but this often resulted in the consolidation of power in the presidency. Ideology thus became a tool of legitimacy, reinforcing the president's authority. The social and economic structure of society further influenced presidential institutionalization. In a diverse nation, the presidency was expected to promote social justice and economic equality. However, many economic policies failed to meet public expectations, contributing to social disparities and fuelling movements demanding change.

Overall, the early dynamics of presidential institutionalization in Indonesia reflect the complexity of balancing stability, legitimacy, and governance effectiveness. While the 1945 Constitution provided a clear legal framework, the implementation of its presidential model was often constrained by both internal and external factors. These experiences offer important lessons for the subsequent evolution of the presidency in Indonesia.

## **b. Presidential Transition Period in Indonesia**

The transition period in the history of the Indonesian presidency was marked by significant changes in both the constitution and the structure of government. A key milestone was the amendment of the 1945 Constitution (UUD) between 1999 and 2002, enacted in response to the political and economic crises of the late 1990s, particularly following the fall of the New Order regime. These amendments sought to strengthen democracy, safeguard human rights, and improve state institutions, including the presidency. A major implication of the amendments was the reinforcement of the legislative branch, particularly the DPR and MPR, which resulted in a more balanced distribution of power between the executive and legislature. Previously, presidential authority had been highly dominant; post-amendment, the president was required to obtain DPR approval for ministerial appointments and state budget ratification. Furthermore, the amendments introduced presidential term limits and granted the MPR the authority to dismiss





the president under specific circumstances. These reforms laid the foundation for healthier democratic practices, with enhanced supervision over executive power.

However, the constitutional changes also introduced new challenges for the presidency. With an empowered legislature and the presence of multiple political parties in the DPR, decision-making became more complex, requiring the president to negotiate coalitions and build consensus. Consequently, while accountability increased, the president also had to navigate a more intricate political landscape. The political dynamics of this transition period were closely intertwined with social and economic changes. The 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis had a profound impact on the Indonesian economy, fueling public dissatisfaction with the New Order government under President Soeharto. The 1998 reform movement marked a pivotal moment in Indonesia's political history, as citizens who had previously been constrained by fear began demanding change, culminating in Soeharto's resignation. In this context, the succeeding president, Habibie, faced the dual challenge of restoring public trust and managing political stability. His administration took initial steps to expand freedoms of expression and the press, although it was still marked by public protests and political volatility.

These developments illustrate that the role of the president extends beyond executive decision-making to responding to growing societal demands. The transition period also witnessed shifts in political behavior, with the emergence of numerous new political parties representing diverse ideologies, which further complicated the political environment. To ensure the continuity of government, the president needed to secure political support while balancing public expectations for transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. This period underscores the complex interplay between institutional reform, societal demands, and political pragmatism in shaping the modern Indonesian presidency.

The practice of the presidency during this transition period underwent substantial transformation, shaped by constitutional reforms and shifting political dynamics. Under the leadership of post-Soeharto presidents, such as Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), and Megawati, each exercised presidential authority in distinct ways. Habibie, for instance, adopted a relatively liberal approach and was more open to public criticism, while Gus Dur sought to promote pluralism and tolerance, despite facing considerable political challenges.<sup>22</sup> During this period, the presidency also reflected ongoing efforts to improve relations between the executive and legislative branches. Gus Dur frequently encountered resistance from the DPR, particularly regarding budgetary and policy approvals, demonstrating that, despite constitutional reforms, political practices driven by party interests remained highly influential in decision-making. Megawati, Indonesia's first female president, adopted a more moderate leadership style, seeking to integrate diverse societal perspectives into the decision-making process.

Nevertheless, presidents during this period faced persistent challenges, including corruption, nepotism, and widespread public dissatisfaction. Policies were often subjected to intense scrutiny from both the media and civil society. These conditions underscored the importance of presidential adaptability, strategic communication, and efforts to enhance the government's public image. Effective engagement between the presidency and the public proved essential for mitigating tensions and fostering trust.<sup>23</sup> Overall, this transition period in the Indonesian presidency illustrates the complex interplay of constitutional reforms, political practice, and public expectations in the consolidation of democracy. While constitutional changes provided a structural foundation for stronger state institutions, the evolution of presidential practices highlighted the ongoing negotiation between executive authority, legislative dynamics,

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<sup>22</sup> Blane D Lewis, "The Impact of Democratic Elections on Taxation: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Subnational Indonesia," *Economics Letters*, 211 (2022), 110270.

<sup>23</sup> George C Edwards III, Kenneth R Mayer, and Stephen J Wayne, *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policy Making* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2020).



and societal pressures. Public participation in governance emerged as a crucial factor for ensuring stability, accountability, and the legitimacy of the presidential institution.<sup>24</sup>

### c. Modern Period of the Presidency in Indonesia

The modern period of the Indonesian presidency began following the Reformasi era, which introduced significant changes in the operation and function of the presidential institution. Institutional consolidation of the presidency became essential for ensuring political stability and enhancing government effectiveness. In the wake of post-Reformasi reforms, including amendments to the 1945 Constitution that strengthened the legislative branch, the president was required to adjust to a more complex political environment. Institutional consolidation involves reinforcing organizational structures, refining decision-making processes, and establishing effective control mechanisms over executive power. A key aspect of this process has been the creation of supporting institutions under the president's leadership.<sup>25</sup> For example, the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) is tasked with preparing long-term and medium-term national development plans, while the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) works to combat corruption and promote governmental transparency. Beyond internal strengthening, consolidation also emphasizes synergy among state institutions, requiring constructive communication and collaboration with the DPR to facilitate timely and informed decision-making. In this sense, consolidating the presidency is not solely about enhancing presidential authority but about fortifying the broader system of governance.<sup>26</sup>

Within Indonesia's democratic framework, the president functions as a bridge between the executive and legislative branches. Through dialogue, negotiation, and coalition-building with political parties in the DPR, the president facilitates the successful implementation of government programs. Additionally, the president must remain responsive to evolving political dynamics and public expectations, including demands for policies that reflect the broader interests of society. Thus, the modern presidency encompasses not only the exercise of executive authority but also the capacity to listen to public aspirations, adapt to change, and lead inclusively in a dynamic political environment.

In the modern period, the president of Indonesia faces the ongoing challenge of maintaining political stability in a highly diverse society. As the nation's leader, the president must navigate differing opinions and interests emerging from various community groups.<sup>27</sup> Effective and inclusive communication is essential to ensure that all segments of society feel represented and have meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Thus, the president's role extends beyond managing executive power to fostering strong social ties between the government and the public.<sup>28</sup> Contemporary challenges confronting the presidency are complex and multifaceted. Corruption remains a structural issue within government institutions. Despite the establishment of bodies such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), corrupt practices

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<sup>24</sup> Curtis A Bradley and Trevor W Morrison, "Presidential Power, Historical Practice, and Legal Constraint," *Columbia Law Review*, 2013, 1097–1161.

<sup>25</sup> Jennifer Gandhi and Jane Lawrence Sumner, "Measuring the Consolidation of Power in Nondemocracies," *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 4 (2020): 1545–58.

<sup>26</sup> Achmad Jamil, "Social Media Communication: Content Analysis of Indonesian Parliament Instagram Account," *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi* 5, no. 3 (2021): 746–63.

<sup>27</sup> Richard M Yon, *Emerging from The Shadows: Vice Presidential Influence in The Modern Era* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2024).

<sup>28</sup> Lukman Arake and Asrial Wahyuga, "Analysis of Shifts in the Independence of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) After the Revision of the Law," *International Journal of Health Sciences* 6, no. S8 (2019): 2524–34.



persist and undermine public trust. Addressing this challenge requires the president to take decisive measures, ensuring that all levels of government adhere to principles of transparency and accountability.

Another significant challenge is meeting societal demands for social justice and equitable development. The president must formulate policies that respond to the needs of a diverse population, particularly in addressing economic and social disparities.<sup>29</sup> Development programs should be inclusive, reaching all layers of society rather than benefiting only privileged segments. In this context, the president's role as a visionary leader is crucial for creating inclusive and sustainable policies. Global issues such as climate change and sustainable development have also become increasingly central to the policy agenda. The president is expected to take proactive measures to address environmental challenges, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting natural resources. Such initiatives are critical not only for national interests but also as a moral responsibility toward future generations.<sup>30</sup> Integrating environmental considerations into national policy demonstrates a commitment to sustainable and responsible governance.

Successfully navigating these contemporary challenges requires the president to possess a clear vision and strong managerial skills. Amid complex political dynamics, a collaborative approach is essential, involving government institutions, civil society, and the private sector. By fostering robust cooperation across multiple stakeholders, the president can more effectively address pressing issues and advance the nation's developmental and democratic ideals.<sup>31</sup>

### ***The Urgency of The Presidential Institution as A Means of Improving the State Institutional Order***

The presidential institution in Indonesia plays a central role in maintaining the institutional order of the state. Since the adoption of the 1945 Constitution (UUD), the president, as both head of state and head of government, has occupied a pivotal position in the administration of government. The urgency of strengthening the presidential institution is not only evident in the execution of its functions and duties but also its interactions with other state institutions and society at large. Primarily, the presidential institution functions as the executor of state policy. Within Indonesia's presidential system, the president possesses the authority to issue decisions that directly affect the welfare of citizens, spanning areas such as economic policy, education, and healthcare. Consequently, the effectiveness of the presidency in formulating and implementing policies is critical to achieving national development goals. In the era of globalization, where rapid adaptation to change is required, the presidential institution must respond proactively to emerging societal needs and challenges.<sup>32</sup>

The presidency also holds a strategic role in maintaining political stability. In a dynamic political system marked by competing interests, the president, as the executive leader, must carefully balance these forces. Through dialogue, negotiation, and coalition-building with political parties in the DPR, the president can secure legislative support for government programs. Sustained political stability allows the presidential institution to operate effectively without

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<sup>29</sup> Leo Agustino et al., "Corruption Eradication in Indonesia: The Experience of The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK)," *Journal of Governance* 6, no. 2 (2021): 231–43.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas A Birkland and Kathryn L Schwaeble, "Agenda Setting and The Policy Process: Focusing Events," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Louisa Bayerlein et al., "Singing Together or Apart? Comparing Policy Agenda Dynamics Within International Organizations," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 24, no. 3 (2022): 210–29.

<sup>32</sup> Wafa Adila, "Public Policy Dynamics in the Era of Globalization," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 1 (2024): 163–72.



disruption from prolonged political conflicts. Furthermore, the presidency serves as a symbol of national unity and identity. In a country as diverse as Indonesia, the president must represent the interests of all societal groups, transcending narrow political or sectional affiliations. This requires an inclusive leadership approach, ensuring that citizens from varied ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds feel engaged and represented in the development process.<sup>33</sup>

The urgency of the presidential institution is also reflected in its role in law enforcement and anti-corruption efforts. Corruption remains a significant challenge in Indonesia, and the president has a critical responsibility to foster a transparent and accountable government. By implementing firm policies and directing law enforcement agencies to actively combat corruption at all levels, the president can promote a culture of integrity among public officials and society at large. Such initiatives not only strengthen public trust in government but also create a more favorable investment climate, contributing to sustainable national development.

Furthermore, the presidential institution plays a pivotal role in managing Indonesia's international relations. As head of state, the president is responsible for establishing cooperation with other countries across multiple domains, including economics, politics, and culture. In an era of globalization, the international environment has become increasingly complex,<sup>34</sup> presenting challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and regional conflicts. Addressing these issues requires the president to possess a clear strategic vision and strong diplomatic skills to safeguard national interests on the global stage. Through a proactive and coherent foreign policy, the presidential institution can enhance Indonesia's bargaining position internationally while contributing to regional peace and stability. The importance of the presidential institution in refining the state's institutional order also lies in its capacity to adapt to changing societal and technological contexts. In today's digital era, advancements in information and communication technology have transformed how citizens interact with government. The presidency must leverage these technologies to improve public services and enhance transparency. By utilizing social media and other digital platforms, the president can engage directly with the public, listen to citizen aspirations, and communicate government policies effectively. Such initiatives not only increase public participation but also strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the presidential institution. In this regard, institutional reform is indispensable.<sup>35</sup> The presidency must periodically evaluate and enhance its organizational structures and operational processes to reduce bureaucratic complexity and improve decision-making efficiency. A more responsive and adaptive presidential institution enables the government to react swiftly to social and economic changes. Additionally, effective governance requires collaboration with other state institutions. Synergy between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches is essential for creating an effective and democratic government. By fostering harmonious inter-institutional relationships, the president can ensure that policies are implemented by democratic principles, the rule of law, and social justice.

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<sup>33</sup> Adrián Albala, André Borges, and Lucas Couto, "Pre-Electoral Coalitions and Cabinet Stability in Presidential Systems," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 25, no. 1 (February 27, 2023): 64–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481211056852>; Tapio Raunio and Thomas Sedelius, "Presidential Activism: Causes, Patterns and Consequences," *Political Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (February 20, 2025): 4–13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14789299241304605>; Nic Cheeseman, "Blondel's African Presidential Republics: Proof Presidentialism Can Perform Even in the Most Challenging Contexts?," *European Political Science* 23, no. 4 (December 31, 2024): 567–80, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-023-00466-1>.

<sup>34</sup> Georg Sørensen, Jørgen Møller, and Robert H Jackson, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

<sup>35</sup> Isaac Kofi Mensah, "Impact of Government Capacity and E-Government Performance on The Adoption of E-Government Services," *International Journal of Public Administration*, 2020, 303–11.



This approach will also enhance accountability and transparency in government management. Nevertheless, the challenges confronting the presidential institution remain significant. Issues such as the centralization of power, corruption, and nepotism frequently come under scrutiny. To address these challenges, the president must demonstrate a strong commitment to upholding the principles of good governance. By prioritizing integrity, transparency, and accountability, the presidential institution can reinforce its legitimacy and strengthen public trust in government. In conclusion, the urgency of the presidential institution as a mechanism for refining the state's institutional order in Indonesia is evident. Beyond its executive responsibilities, the presidency functions as a symbol of national unity, a manager of international relations, and a catalyst for institutional reform. In navigating the complex challenges of the modern era, the presidential institution must remain adaptive, collaborative, and firmly committed to democratic principles. By fulfilling these roles effectively, the presidency can make a significant contribution to national development, governance effectiveness, and public welfare.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

This investigation systematically examines the urgency of strengthening Indonesia's presidential system within the broader context of institutional development and democratic consolidation. The analysis demonstrates that the presidential institution functions as a central mechanism for policy implementation, political stabilization, and the embodiment of national unity and collective identity within Indonesia's constitutional framework. Nevertheless, the study identifies significant institutional challenges, including pervasive corruption and the excessive centralization of power, which pose serious threats to democratic governance and require comprehensive remedial interventions.

The empirical findings indicate that the effectiveness of the presidential institution depends on three critical variables: the executive's capacity to adapt to shifting socio-political contexts, the quality of collaboration and coordination among state institutions, and the establishment of transparent and responsive public communication channels. Collectively, these factors shape the institution's legitimacy and operational efficacy within Indonesia's complex governance architecture.

The study further establishes that institutional reform is essential for enhancing governmental responsiveness, transparency, and accountability in contemporary democratic practices. Accordingly, the research advocates for ongoing institutional evaluation and systematic process improvements within the presidential framework as a means to strengthen democracy. Implementing robust accountability mechanisms and adhering to the principles of good governance are crucial for rebuilding and sustaining public trust in executive authority, an imperative underscored by the erosion of confidence in governmental institutions observed across democratic contexts worldwide.

In conclusion, the study asserts that through systematic institutional reforms and enhanced accountability frameworks, Indonesia's presidential institution can make a substantive contribution to national development and the advancement of public welfare. Addressing contemporary governance challenges effectively requires not only structural adjustments but also a deep commitment to democratic principles and responsive leadership, ensuring that the presidential institution remains legitimate, adaptive, and capable of meeting the complex demands of modern statecraft while sustaining public confidence in democratic institutions.

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<sup>36</sup> Bernard Schaffer, *The Administrative Factor: Papers in Organization, Politics and Development* (London: Routledge, 2019).





## CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

**Muhamad Mutawalli:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing -original Draft. **Georges Olemanu Lohalo:** Supervision, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, **Mirela Imširović:** Supervision, Writing - review & editing. Methodology.

## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could influence the work reported in this paper.

## Data Availability

Data will be made available on request

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