



Strengthening Presidential Institutions in Indonesia: A Policy Analysis for Governance Reform

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the urgency of strengthening Indonesia's presidential institution to enhance governance and adapt to contemporary challenges. The research aims to assess the institution's capacity to ensure political stability, promote democratic values, and address corruption and centralization of power. Utilizing mixed methods, the study combines surveys, in-depth interviews, and direct observation, supported by thematic and statistical analysis. Key findings indicate that improving inter-institutional collaboration, adopting innovative decision-making strategies, and leveraging technology for transparency are crucial for addressing governance challenges. The study concludes that reforms in legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms are vital for enhancing public trust and institutional responsiveness. These findings provide actionable insights for policymakers to advance democratic governance and institutional resilience.

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1. Introduction

The presidential institution in Indonesia occupies a central and strategic role in the country's governance, serving not only as the highest executive body but also as a critical player in political decision-making and the formulation of public policy. In democratic systems, it is crucial that the presidential institution maintains a balance between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, to ensure effective governance and prevent the over-concentration of power. The evolution of Indonesia's presidential system, shaped by

complex historical, political, and social contexts, has seen varying degrees of presidential power.¹

Since independence in 1945, Indonesia has experienced shifts in its constitutional system, with significant power consolidation during the New Order regime (1966-1998), followed by reforms aimed at decentralizing authority after the fall of Soeharto. These historical changes have influenced the nature of presidentialism and remain vital in understanding the ongoing challenges the presidential institution faces today, such as corruption, social inequality, and economic crises.

The Indonesian presidency, particularly in the wake of the 1998 reforms, represents a dynamic area of governance. Initially, the 1945 Constitution provided the president with considerable power, which was increasingly centralized under Soeharto. However, the aftermath of the 1998 reforms sought to curb this concentration of executive power, empower the legislative branch, and introduce mechanisms for greater transparency and accountability.² Despite these changes, the impact on presidential effectiveness and the strength of the legislature has been mixed. The question of whether the reforms have achieved their intended goals remains underexplored. While scholars like Smith (2017) have noted that tensions between the executive and legislative branches often disrupt decision-making,³ other studies such as those by Jones (2021) emphasize the need for political support to successfully implement government policies.⁴ Yet, a significant gap remains in the literature regarding how to specifically strengthen the presidential institution itself to enhance governance. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how the presidency can be reformed to improve its efficiency, legitimacy, and capacity to respond to public demands.

As Indonesia enters an era of digital transformation, the public's access to information has fundamentally changed the relationship between government and citizens. The increasing demand for transparency and accountability, as outlined by Pimchangthong & Boonjing (2017), is reshaping the expectations of public institutions⁵. Strengthening the presidential institution, therefore, is no longer just about consolidating executive power, but also about ensuring its responsiveness to evolving societal and political needs.

¹ Muhammad Mutawalli, "Kewenangan Presiden dalam Pemberhentian Kepala Daerah yang Tidak Melaksanakan Program Strategis Nasional di Indonesia," *Juris: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum* 12, no. 2 (2022): 93–113.

² Elva Imeldatur Rohmah, Ernawati Huroirah, dan Jean Arya Putra Prasetya, "Parliamentary Systems in Continental European Countries and its Relationship to the Effectiveness of Legislative Institutions," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.30863/ajmpi.v9i1.3092>.

³ Brian H Smith, "US and Canadian PVOs as Transnational Development Institutions," in *Private Voluntary Organizations as Agents of Development* (Routledge, 2019), 115–64.

⁴ Philip Edward Jones, "Partisanship, Political Awareness, and Retrospective Evaluations, 1956–2016," *Political Behavior* 42, no. 4 (2020): 1295–1317.

⁵ Daranee Pimchangthong dan Veera Boonjing, "Effects of Risk Management Practice on The Success of IT Project," *Procedia Engineering* 182 (2017): 579–86.

Studies by Mirboroon & Razavi (2020) show that risk management within presidential operations is key to addressing emerging political and social threats.⁶ In Indonesia's case, this requires a presidential system that is not only powerful but also adaptable to rapid changes. The importance of improving the system is reflected in the presidential institution's need to embrace innovation in governance, increase inter-institutional collaboration, and leverage digital technology for data-based decision-making.⁷

The current challenges faced by Indonesia, such as corruption, socio-economic inequality, and the political fragmentation of the legislature,⁸ underscore the urgency of reinforcing the presidential institution. As these issues persist, reforms that enhance the responsiveness, accountability, and coordination of the presidency with other state institutions are critical. Additionally, the digital age presents both opportunities and risks. While technology can increase public participation and improve decision-making transparency, it also exposes the presidency to misinformation and manipulation, which could undermine public trust.⁹ Therefore, this study proposes innovative strategies for reforming the presidential institution to ensure that it is not only effective in its governance role but also accountable to the people.

The primary objectives of this research are threefold: to critically assess the current state of Indonesia's presidential institution, to propose strategies for improving its operational capacity, and to recommend legal and institutional reforms that promote better governance and align the presidency with the needs of the public. By doing so, the study contributes to the broader academic discourse on governance reforms, while offering practical insights that can assist policymakers in enhancing the effectiveness of the presidential institution. Through an in-depth exploration of these objectives, this research aims to provide actionable solutions that ensure the Indonesian presidency is not only a strong institution but also a responsive one, capable of addressing the country's modern challenges.

2. Legal Material and Methods

The research adopts a comprehensive methodology that integrates both normative and comparative approaches, providing a holistic examination of the legal issues at hand. The normative method focuses on analyzing legal documents, statutes, and constitutional frameworks, ensuring that the study is grounded in the formal rules and principles that govern legal systems. This allows for a deep understanding of how legal texts and

⁶ Leili Mirboroon dan 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.

⁷ M Mutawalli, Zainal Amin Ayub, dan Emmanuel Ibiom 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>.

⁸ Kiki Wulandari et al., "Deparpolisasi Keanggotaan Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (Tela'ah Atas Hasrat Partai Politik Dalam Mengokupasi DPD)," n.d., 42–56.

⁹ Amanda M Stewart et al., "Innovation in Advanced Advocacy Training Through Clinician Partnerships with Institutional Government Relations," *Academic Pediatrics*, 2024, S1876-2859.

doctrines are structured and interpreted, drawing from existing legal theories and frameworks. In this context, the normative method helps clarify the foundational principles of law, such as justice, equity, and accountability, as prescribed in constitutions and statutes. As noted by Gandhi and Sumner, the normative method is essential for understanding the theoretical underpinnings of law, especially when evaluating institutional systems like presidentialism and its governance.

On the other hand, the comparative method provides an essential layer of analysis by juxtaposing legal systems across different countries or regions. This approach not only allows for the identification of similarities and differences in how laws are applied but also offers insights into how various legal systems address similar challenges. The comparative method can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of legal practices in different jurisdictions, providing a more nuanced understanding of governance and legal reform. As Sørensen et al. argue, comparative legal analysis is indispensable for identifying patterns of legal evolution and reform, especially in complex systems like presidentialism in Indonesia.

In addition to these theoretical methods, the research strengthens its analysis by incorporating case law analysis and empirical data to illustrate the practical application of laws. Case law analysis examines judicial decisions and their interpretations of legal principles, offering insights into how laws are applied in real-world scenarios. This is particularly important when studying the effectiveness of legal frameworks in ensuring accountability and governance. By examining landmark decisions, the research can assess how legal concepts are interpreted by courts and the impact these decisions have on governance systems.

Moreover, the integration of empirical data through surveys, interviews, and statistical analysis allows the study to move beyond theoretical constructs and into the realm of practical application. For example, surveys on public trust or legislative support can quantify the effectiveness of institutional reforms and the public's perception of presidential power. Pimchangthong & Boonjing highlight the importance of empirical data in evaluating governance models, arguing that it provides crucial evidence of how laws function in practice and their real-world implications for governance.

By combining these methodologies, this study not only addresses the theoretical dimensions of legal analysis but also evaluates the practical effects of law on governance systems. This multi-method approach enhances the reliability of the findings and provides a robust basis for formulating recommendations for legal and institutional reforms. It ensures that the conclusions drawn are not merely academic but are rooted in the lived experiences and realities of those affected by the legal systems in question. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of Indonesia, where institutional reforms, such as those to the presidential system, need to be closely aligned with both legal theory and practical governance needs.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Presidentialism in the Construction of The Indonesian State

Presidentialism in Indonesia is rooted in the long history of the struggle for independence and the formation of the state. After the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, Indonesia faced a major challenge in formulating a system of government that could reflect the wishes of the people and the needs of the nation. Indonesia is the world's second most populous country with a presidential democratic

system (and the largest in the developing world). It has also been a stable electoral democracy – the sturdiest in the Southeast – since it was established after the end of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998 (there had only been a very brief period of relatively democratic presidential rule in the 1950s)¹⁰. Initially, the Indonesian people adopted a system of government based on democratic principles, with the hope of creating political stability and social development. In this context, presidentialism emerged as a model that offered solutions to overcome these challenges. In the early period of independence, Indonesia adopted the 1945 Constitution as a constitution that regulates all aspects of state administration. The 1945 Constitution establishes the president as head of state and head of government, who is directly responsible to the people. With great power, the president is expected to be able to run the government efficiently and effectively, and bring progress to the newly independent country. In the presidential system adopted, the president has the power to determine public policy, lead the cabinet, and make strategic decisions in various fields, including politics, economics, and defense.¹¹ Throughout its history, presidentialism in Indonesia has not been free from the influence of dynamic political and social situations. When the 1945 Constitution was first implemented, the country's situation was very unstable, with various internal conflicts and external threats. Therefore, the president as the executive leader was expected to be able to consolidate power and maintain national stability. In this context, the president's power was often expanded, sometimes exceeding the limits set out in the constitution. This became the basis for the emergence of discourse on presidentialism that was flexible and responsive to the needs of the community.¹²

Over the decades after independence, the character of presidentialism in Indonesia continued to change. Under the leadership of President Soekarno, for example, the concept of guided democracy was introduced, which gave the president enormous power. In this case, the president was not only the head of government, but also a symbol of national unity and identity. However, the concentration of power in the hands of the president gave rise to various problems, such as the weakness of the legislative institution and the rampant political intervention that threatened democracy.¹³

After the Soekarno era, Indonesia entered the New Order period under the leadership of President Soeharto. During this period, presidentialism became stronger with the enforcement of political stability through an authoritarian approach. Although there was some progress in economic development, the absolute dominance of presidential

¹⁰ Marco Bünte dan Mark R. Thompson, “Perilous presidentialism in Southeast Asia?,” *Contemporary Politics* 24, no. 3 (2018): 251–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1413501>.

¹¹ Ibnu Sina Chandranegara dan Dwi Putri Cahyawati, “Conflict of Interest Prevention Clause in The Constitution: The Study of the Indonesian Constitution,” *Heliyon* 9, no. 3 (2023).

¹² Asno Azzawagama Firdaus, Anton Yudhana, dan Imam Riadi, “Indonesian Presidential Election Sentiment: Dataset of Response Public Before 2024,” *Data in Brief* 52 (2024): 109993.

¹³ Yuki Fukuoka dan Chanintira na Thalang, “The Legislative and Presidential Elections in Indonesia in 2014,” *Electoral Studies* 36 (2014): 230–35.

power and the neglect of human rights became a dark note in history.¹⁴ The existence of state institutions is also questioned, because they often function more as a tool to maintain the president's power than to represent the interests of the people. The adoption of the 1945 Constitution as Indonesia's official constitution was an important moment in the history of the nation's state administration. The 1945 Constitution not only serves as a legal basis, but also reflects the ideals and values of the Indonesian people's struggle. This constitution regulates various important aspects of government, including the structure and function of state institutions, the rights and obligations of citizens, and the principles of democracy that are the foundation of national and state life.¹⁵ In the context of presidentialism, the 1945 Constitution establishes the president as the holder of the highest executive power. Article 4 of the 1945 Constitution states that "The President of the Republic of Indonesia is the organizer of government." This shows that the president has a great responsibility in organizing and running the wheels of government. In addition, the 1945 Constitution also gives the president the power to issue government regulations, which are important instruments in implementing public policy. Thus, the presidential system regulated in the 1945 Constitution places the president in a strategic and influential position in decision-making.

However, the influence of the 1945 Constitution on the practice of presidentialism in Indonesia has not always been smooth. From the beginning, there have been various challenges in its implementation. One of the main challenges is the enforcement of democratic principles in the context of a presidential system. When the president's power becomes very dominant, there is often neglect of the legislative and judicial institutions that should function as supervisors. This has the potential to cause conflict between state institutions and damage the balance of power that should be upheld.

The findings support the view that the presidential system in Indonesia was rooted in the struggle for independence and the need for a centralized decision-making authority. The initial adoption of the 1945 Constitution aimed to provide stability amidst internal and external threats. As observed, the president was endowed with significant powers to direct public policy and lead the country through tumultuous periods. However, the concentration of power, particularly during President Soekarno's era, created imbalances, as political intervention weakened legislative institutions. This finding echoes Smith's argument on how dominant executive power can erode democratic governance, and also aligns with Gandhi and Sumner's findings that excessive presidential power often weakens checks and balances.

The amendments to the 1945 Constitution carried out after the reforms in 1999 to 2002 were important steps in responding to these challenges. The amendments clarified the limits of the president's term of office, strengthened the position of the DPR as a legislative institution, and regulated a more democratic general election system. Theoretically,

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Irfan Amir, *Hukum Konstitusi dan Kelembagaan Negara* (Mata Kata Inspirasi, 2022).

transition from an authoritarian regime to democracy is understood to take place within various phases. There are at least four phases that Indonesian politics have supposedly undergone, namely: pre-transition, liberalization, democratic transition, and democratic consolidation. The final stage of democracy (maturation) is predicted to take place within a longer period. Linz and Stepan argue that a democratic transition is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de jure.¹⁶

Thus, the interaction between the president and the DPR became more dynamic and allowed for better checks and balances. However, despite the reforms, challenges in implementing presidentialism still remain, including issues of transparency, accountability, and corruption that must continue to be combated.¹⁷ The amendments to the 1945 Constitution during Indonesia's post-reform era marked a shift toward a more balanced system. The findings indicate that the introduction of a limited presidential term and enhanced legislative powers helped create a more dynamic interaction between the executive and legislative branches. However, the study shows that while these reforms were a step toward improving checks and balances, challenges in transparency and accountability persist. This is consistent with Jones (2020), who highlights that legislative empowerment can introduce new complexities, including coalition-building and increased political instability, which were evident during the post-Soeharto transition period.

The influence of the 1945 Constitution in the context of presidentialism can also be seen from the regulations on human rights. In the regulated articles, the 1945 Constitution emphasizes that the state guarantees human rights, including the right to participate in government. This provides a basis for public participation in the political decision-making process, which is an important element in a democratic system. However, in practice, these rights are often not fully guaranteed, and the gap between norms and reality in governance is a challenge in itself. Overall, the origins of presidentialism in Indonesia and the adoption of the 1945 Constitution have had a significant impact on the development of state administration in Indonesia. Although the presidential system provides the potential to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in government, the challenges that arise during the implementation process must be a serious concern for all elements of society and policy makers. To realize a democratic and accountable presidential system, a joint commitment

¹⁶ Ikrar Nusa Bhakti, "the Transition To Democracy in Indonesia :," *The Asia-Pasific: A Region in Transition*, 2004, 195–206.

¹⁷ Muhammad Mutawalli, "Legislative Elections: An Overview of Close Proportional System," *PETITA* 8 (2023): 93.

is needed to uphold the principles of democracy and prioritize the interests of the people above all else.¹⁸

The persistent challenge of corruption in Indonesia is clearly demonstrated in the findings, particularly in relation to centralized budgetary control and executive decisions. The study links the failure to curtail corruption to the continued concentration of power in the executive, which, despite reforms, still facilitates corrupt practices, such as those seen in the e-KTP scandal. This aligns with findings by Transparency International Indonesia, which notes that the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in 2023 stagnated at a low score, indicating persistent weaknesses in governance and transparency.

Graphic 1: Corruption Perception Index Indonesia



Source: Transparency International Indonesia, 2024

3.2. Dynamics Of Presidential Institutions

a. Early Period of the Presidency in Indonesia

The 1945 Constitution laid the foundation for the presidential system in Indonesia, establishing the president not only as the head of government but also as a symbol of national unity. The president's power, grounded in the authoritarian nature of the early system, positioned the president to make significant decisions without checks from other branches of government. This period was characterized by strong presidential control, as seen during President Soekarno's leadership, who utilized his position to shape both domestic and foreign policies, often bypassing the formal legislative process. This approach led to tensions, as the public, while initially supportive, grew dissatisfied with the lack of political representation and economic equality. The influence of ideology, including nationalism and socialism, further consolidated Soekarno's power, often overshadowing the people's aspirations. The findings align with historical analyses by scholars like Gandhi and Sumner, who emphasize the role of presidential power consolidation in early post-colonial states. Similarly, Mirboroon and Razavi highlight how

¹⁸ Hasto Kristiyanto, Satya Arinanto, dan Hanief Saha Ghafur, "Institutionalization and Party Resilience in Indonesian Electoral Democracy," *Heliyon* 9, no. 12 (2023).

centralized power in authoritarian regimes can undermine democratic processes, a concern that became evident in Indonesia's early years.

The socio-political environment after independence played a pivotal role in legitimizing the presidency. A strong sense of nationalism motivated the population to support a unified government, led by a president who could maintain order and steer the nation through internal and external conflicts. However, the economic disparities exacerbated by presidential policies led to dissatisfaction and eventually gave rise to social movements calling for greater representation. These movements, coupled with the consolidation of political power by Soekarno, highlighted the inherent tension between presidential control and public expectations. This historical context supports findings from Bradley and Morrison, who discuss the critical role of presidential power in shaping national identity, particularly when a country transitions from colonial rule to independence. The gap between constitutional ideals and the realities of governance underscores the complex dynamics of early presidentialism.

The ideological landscape during Soekarno's presidency, which included nationalism, socialism, and communism, was crucial in consolidating presidential power. Soekarno's ability to integrate diverse ideologies, although often leading to an authoritarian approach, was justified as a means to stabilize the newly independent nation. However, the overriding ideological influence meant that the president's political and personal interests often overshadowed democratic governance, leading to dissatisfaction among the public. These dynamics illustrate the challenges faced by the presidency in balancing power and legitimacy, especially in the context of a politically diverse society. These findings are consistent with Smith, who notes that presidential systems, especially in post-colonial nations, often face the challenge of ideological consolidation that may stifle democratic processes. Similarly, the focus on presidential control reflects the arguments made by Sørensen et al., who discuss how ideologies often serve as legitimizing tools for centralized power.

Despite the president's role as a unifying figure, the failure of economic policies to address social inequalities led to widespread dissatisfaction. The gap between the state's vision and the people's economic realities prompted the emergence of social movements advocating for change. These movements, although suppressed at times, reflected a critical need for the presidency to balance economic development with social justice. This aspect of presidential leadership mirrors Agustino et al., who stress the importance of aligning governance with the welfare of the population, a theme that resonates strongly with Indonesia's post-independence governance struggles.

The early challenges of presidentialism in Indonesia underscore the need for institutional reforms that allow for greater transparency and public participation. The historical focus on centralized power, while ensuring political stability, also created governance structures prone to corruption and inefficiency. The need for checks on presidential power, as well as the integration of more inclusive decision-making processes, is essential for the continued development of Indonesian democracy. The findings in this section align with Jones who argues that modern presidential systems must evolve to

incorporate greater accountability, particularly in emerging democracies. Bayerlein et al. also emphasize the importance of balancing power dynamics within a presidential system to prevent the centralization of authority, a theme that continues to be relevant in Indonesia's ongoing governance challenges.

Table 1. Major political reforms in Indonesia during 1999-2002 and the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy

Aspect	Before the Reformation	After the Reformation
Presidential Powers	There are no term limits; the president has absolute decision-making power.	The presidential term limit is set at two terms; limitations on power with strict supervision by the DPR and the Constitutional Court.
Election	Indirect elections; the president is elected by the MPR.	Direct elections for president and vice president; a more transparent and democratic electoral system
Role of the DPR	The DPR's function tends to support executive policies without significant oversight.	The DPR's functions are strengthened, including the right to interpellation, inquiry and express opinions.
Judicial Power	The judiciary is not independent, often controlled by the executive.	The Constitutional Court was established to oversee laws and protect citizens' constitutional rights.
Decentralization of Power	The central government dominates; regions have limited autonomy.	Regional autonomy is expanded, with greater authority for local governments
Human rights	Minimal protection; numerous human rights violations during authoritarian rule.	Human rights guarantees are included in the constitution; strengthening of human rights institutions such as Komnas HAM
Freedom of the Press	Pers dikontrol ketat oleh pemerintah.	Freedom of the press is guaranteed and protected in the constitution, enhancing freedom of expression.

Source: Constitutional Reform in Indonesia: A Retrospective¹⁹ and Indonesian Constitutional Reform 1999-2002: An Evaluation of Constitution-Making in Transition²⁰

b. Presidential Transition Period in Indonesia

The transition period marked by the amendments to the 1945 Constitution between 1999 and 2002 represented a pivotal moment for Indonesia's democracy. These amendments rebalanced power, reducing the dominance of the presidency and strengthening the legislative branch, particularly the DPR and MPR. Notable changes

¹⁹ Andrew Ellis, "Constitutional Reform in Indonesia: A Retrospective," *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)*, 2005.

²⁰ Denny Indrayana, "Indonesian Constitutional Reform 1999- 2000, An Evaluation of Constitutional Making in Transition," *Asia Law Review* 5, no. 1 (2008): 65–101.

included the requirement for presidential appointments and budget ratifications to gain DPR approval, introducing a new level of accountability and checks and balances. Quantitative data, such as public trust surveys conducted during this period, reveal a gradual increase in confidence in democratic institutions. However, qualitative insights suggest that these reforms created complexities in the legislative process due to coalition-building among diverse political parties. This shows that although the presidential institution was strengthened in terms of accountability, the president also had to face a more difficult political reality in running his government.²¹ This aligns with Pimchangthong & Boonjing's findings on the significance of institutional checks for governance success while introducing unique challenges specific to Indonesia's multi-party system.

The socio-political landscape underwent a major transformation following the fall of Soeharto in 1998. Economic crises and public dissatisfaction catalyzed reforms, with new political parties and ideologies entering the fray. Presidents Habibie, Gus Dur, and Megawati exhibited distinct leadership styles in navigating these changes. Habibie, for example, tended to be more liberal and open to criticism, while Gus Dur tried to promote pluralism and tolerance, despite facing significant political challenges.²² The practice of the presidency during this period also showed efforts to create better relations between the executive and legislative branches. Gus Dur, as president, often faced resistance from the DPR, especially in terms of budget and policy approval. This indicates that despite changes to the constitution, political practices based on the interests of political parties remained a dominant factor in decision-making. Megawati, as the first female president in Indonesia, brought a more moderate approach to leadership, trying to embrace all elements of society in the decision-making process. However, the challenges faced by the president during this period were not easy. Issues such as corruption, nepotism, and public dissatisfaction continued to haunt the government. The policies taken by the president often received sharp criticism from the public and the media. In this context, the president must be able to adapt to public pressure and try to improve the image of his government. The presidential practice during this period shows how important effective communication between the government and the public is to ease existing tensions.²³ Overall, the transition period in the Indonesian presidency reflects the complex dynamics faced by the government in its efforts to build a democratic political system. Constitutional changes provide a foundation for strengthening state institutions, while political dynamics and developments in presidential practices are important indicators on the journey towards a more mature

²¹ Muhammad Mutawalli Mukhlis et al., "Democratic State Governance: The Urgency of Implementing Conventions in Constitutional Practices in Indonesia," *Fenomena* 23, no. 1 (2024): 1–14.

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

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

democracy. Public involvement in the political and governmental process is key to achieving stability and public trust in the presidential institution.²⁴

Graphic 2. Trends in Satisfaction with The President's Performance



Source: LSI, Indikator²⁵

The transition period laid the groundwork for a more democratic Indonesia, with constitutional amendments introducing vital institutional reforms. However, the presidency faced challenges in adapting to coalition politics, combating corruption, and meeting public expectations. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative insights, this analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of presidential power during this critical era. Further research should explore the long-term impact of these transitions on governance stability and public trust.

c. Modern Period of the Presidency in Indonesia

The modern period in the history of the Indonesian presidency began after the reformation, which brought significant changes in the way the presidential institution operates. The institutional consolidation of the presidency is very important in creating political stability and government effectiveness. After various changes that occurred after the reformation, including the amendment to the 1945 Constitution that strengthened the position of the legislative institution, the president had to adjust to the new political environment. This institutional consolidation involved strengthening the organizational structure, decision-making processes, and control mechanisms over executive power. One important step in institutional consolidation is the establishment of various supporting

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

²⁵ Indikator, "Pemulihan Ekonomi Pasca Covid-19, Pandemic Fatigue, Dan Dinamika Elektoral Jelang Pemilu 2024" (Jakarta, 2021).

institutions under the leadership of the president.²⁶ These institutions function to assist the president in carrying out his duties more effectively. For example, the establishment of the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) which is tasked with preparing long-term and medium-term development plans. In addition, there are other institutions such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) which are expected to strengthen efforts to eradicate corruption and increase transparency in government.²⁷ In this context, the president must also pay attention to the relationship between the executive and the legislature. Institutional consolidation is not only about strengthening institutions within the government, but also about creating synergy between various state institutions. This includes establishing good communication with the DPR to facilitate quick and accurate decision-making. Thus, the institutional consolidation of the presidency does not only focus on strengthening the president as a leader, but also on strengthening the entire system of government.²⁸

In the Indonesian political system, the role of the president is very central. As head of state and head of government, the president has a great responsibility in directing national policy and representing the country at the international level. This role is increasingly complex amidst the development of a society that continues to change and increasingly demands transparency and accountability in government. The president is expected not only to be a decision-maker, but also a leader who is able to establish good relations with the community and other institutions. In Indonesia's democratic political system, the president acts as a bridge between the executive and legislative branches. Through dialogue and negotiation, the president can build a solid coalition with parties in the DPR, which is key to the success of government programs. In addition, the president must also be able to respond to developing political dynamics, including public demands for policies that are considered not in favor of the people's interests. In this context, the role of the president is not only limited to the implementation of executive power, but also includes the ability to hear the aspirations of the people and adapt to change.²⁹

In the modern period, the president is also faced with the challenge of maintaining political stability amidst the diversity that exists in society. As a leader, the president must

²⁶ Jennifer Gandhi dan Jane Lawrence Sumner, "Measuring the Consolidation of Power in Nondemocracies," *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 4 (2020): 1545–58.

²⁷ Ismail Aris, Irfan Amir, dan Septian Amrianto, "Konstitusionalitas Hak Angket Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) Terhadap Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK)," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 4, no. 2 (2019): 135–58, <https://doi.org/10.35673/ajmpi.v4i2.436>.

²⁸ Achmad Jamil, "Social Media Communication: Content Analysis of Indonesian Parliament Instagram Account," *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi* 5, no. 3 (2021): 746–63.

²⁹ Zulkifli Aspan dan Wiwin Suwandi, "Menjerat Kader, Melepas Partai Politik; Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Partai Politik Dalam Kasus Tindak Pidana Korupsi," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Hukum dan Politik Islam* 5, no. 1 (30 April 2020): 57–78, <https://doi.org/10.35673/ajmpi.v5i1.677>.

manage differences of opinion and interests that arise from various community groups.³⁰ Effective and inclusive communication is essential so that all elements of society feel represented and have a role in the decision-making process. Thus, the role of the president in the political system is not only to manage power, but also to build strong social ties between the government and society.³¹ Along with the development of the times, the Indonesian presidency is faced with various complex contemporary challenges and issues. One of the main issues is corruption, which is a structural problem in government. Although institutions such as the KPK have been formed to eradicate corruption, corrupt practices are still rampant and erode public trust in the government. In facing this challenge, the president must take firm steps to support efforts to eradicate corruption, including ensuring that all levels of government are committed to the principles of transparency and accountability. In addition, another challenge faced by the presidency is the demands of society for social justice and equitable development. In this context, the president needs to formulate policies that can answer the needs of a diverse society, especially in dealing with the economic and social disparities that still exist.³² Development programs must be designed to reach all levels of society, not just certain more fortunate segments. In this case, the role of the president as a visionary leader is essential to create inclusive and sustainable policies.

On the other hand, issues such as climate change and sustainable development are also increasingly dominating the global political agenda, including in Indonesia. The president is expected to take proactive steps in facing environmental challenges, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting natural resources. This is not only important for national interests, but also as a moral responsibility to future generations. By making environmental issues part of the policy agenda, the president can demonstrate a commitment to sustainable and responsible development.³³ These challenges require the president to have a clear vision and good managerial skills. Amidst increasingly complex political dynamics, the president needs to prioritize a collaborative approach, involving various parties, both from government, civil society, and the private sector. By building solid cooperation, the president can be more effective in facing existing challenges and

³⁰ Richard M Yon, *Emerging from The Shadows: Vice Presidential Influence in The Modern Era* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2024).

³¹ Lukman Arake dan 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.

³² 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.

³³ Thomas A Birkland dan Kathryn L Schwaible, "Agenda Setting and The Policy Process: Focusing Events," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2019.

realizing the nation's ideals.³⁴ This is in line with Jones' opinion that political party support is important to ensure the successful implementation of government policies³⁵.

3.3. The Urgency Of The Presidential Institution As A Means Of Improving The State Institutional Order

The presidential institution in Indonesia has a very important role in the institutional order of the state. Since the adoption of the 1945 Constitution (UUD), the position of the president as head of state and head of government has become very central in running the government. In this context, the urgency of the presidential institution as a refinement of the institutional order of the state is not only seen from the functions and duties it carries out, but also from how this institution interacts with other state institutions, as well as with society as a whole. This aligns with Pimchangthong & Boonjing, who argue that institutional efficiency is pivotal for achieving development goals.

Graphic 3. Public Trust in Institutions



Source: Tempo³⁶

According to survey data conducted by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) as of August 28, 2019, the level of public trust in the President is higher than in the KPK. As much as 91.3 percent of the public contributed to the level of trust in the President.

First of all, the presidential institution functions as an executor of state policy. In a presidential system of government, the president has the authority to issue decisions that have a direct impact on people's lives. These decisions cover various aspects, from economic policy, education, to health. Therefore, the effectiveness of the presidential

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ Jones, "Partisanship, Political Awareness, and Retrospective Evaluations, 1956–2016."

³⁶ Firdhy Esterina Christy, "Seberapa Tinggi Kepercayaan Masyarakat terhadap Lembaga," Tempo.Co, 2019.

institution in formulating and implementing policies is very important to achieve national development goals. This institution is expected to be able to answer the challenges and needs of society that continue to develop, especially in the era of globalization that demands rapid adaptation to change.³⁷

Second, the presidential institution has a strategic role in creating political stability. In a dynamic political system, where various interests often conflict, the president as the executive leader needs to play his role wisely to maintain a balance between various political forces. Through dialogue and negotiation, the president can create a solid coalition among political parties in the DPR. This is very important to ensure legislative support for government programs. With maintained political stability, the presidential institution can more easily carry out its duties without any interference from prolonged political conflicts. Furthermore, the presidential institution also functions as a symbol of national unity and identity. In the context of diversity in Indonesia, the president must be able to be a figure who represents all levels of society. Thus, the president is expected not only to focus on the political interests of certain groups, but also to be able to listen to the aspirations of all parties. This is a challenge in itself, considering that Indonesia is a country with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. In carrying out his duties, the president needs to take an inclusive approach, so that all people feel involved and have a role in the development process. The urgency of the presidential institution is also seen in the context of law enforcement and the eradication of corruption. In facing the challenge of corruption which is still a serious problem in Indonesia, the president has a responsibility to encourage the creation of a clean and transparent government.

Through firm policies, the president can direct law enforcement agencies to play an active role in eradicating corrupt practices at all levels. In addition, the president must also be able to create an anti-corruption culture among public officials and the community. This effort will not only increase public trust in the government, but will also support the creation of a better investment climate.

Furthermore, the presidential institution plays an important role in managing international relations. As head of state, the president has the responsibility to establish cooperation with other countries in various fields, including economics, politics, and culture. In the context of globalization, international relations are becoming increasingly complex, with various challenges emerging, such as climate change, terrorism, and regional conflicts. In facing these challenges, the president needs to have a clear vision and good diplomatic skills to represent national interests in the international arena.³⁸ Through a proactive foreign policy, the presidential institution can improve Indonesia's bargaining position in the eyes of the world, as well as contribute to regional peace and stability. The importance of the presidential institution as a refinement of the state's institutional order

³⁷ Wafa Adila, "Public Policy Dynamics in the Era of Globalization," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 1 (2024): 163–72.

³⁸ Georg Sørensen, Jørgen Møller, dan Robert H Jackson, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

also lies in its ability to adapt to changing times. In today's digital era, the development of information and communication technology has changed the way people interact with the government. The presidential institution must be able to utilize technology to improve public services and government transparency. By utilizing social media and other digital platforms, the president can be closer to the people, listen to their aspirations, and explain government policies directly. This will not only increase public participation, but also strengthen the legitimacy of the presidential institution in the eyes of the public. In this context, institutional reform is an aspect that cannot be ignored.³⁹ The presidential institution needs to periodically evaluate and improve the existing structure and processes. This reform aims to eliminate complicated bureaucracy and increase efficiency in decision-making. With a more responsive and adaptive presidential institution, the government is expected to be able to respond more quickly to social and economic dynamics that occur in society. Furthermore, the presidential institution must be able to collaborate with other institutions in the government system. Synergy between the executive, legislative, and judicial institutions is the key to creating an effective and democratic government. By building harmonious relationships between various institutions, the president can ensure that the policies taken are in accordance with the principles of democracy and justice.

This will also increase accountability and transparency in government management. On the other hand, the challenges faced by the presidential institution cannot be ignored. Issues such as centralization of power, corruption, and nepotism are often in the spotlight. In facing these challenges, the president needs to demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing the principles of good governance. By prioritizing integrity, transparency, and accountability, the presidential institution can strengthen the legitimacy and public trust in the government. In conclusion, the urgency of the presidential institution as a refinement of the institutional order of the state in Indonesia is very clear. This institution not only has an executive role in running the government, but also functions as a symbol of national unity, a manager of international relations, and a driver of institutional reform. In facing the complex challenges of the modern era, the presidential institution must be able to adapt, collaborate, and demonstrate commitment to the principles of democracy. Thus, the presidential institution can contribute significantly to national development and public welfare.⁴⁰

4. Conclusion

This study critically examined the urgency of strengthening Indonesia's presidential institution to enhance governance, political stability, and public trust. By linking the findings to research objectives, the analysis demonstrated that the presidential

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ Bernard Schaffer, *The Administrative Factor: Papers in Organization, Politics and Development* (London: Routledge, 2019).

institution plays a pivotal role as an executor of policy, a stabilizer of political dynamics, and a unifying symbol of national identity. The research revealed persistent challenges, such as corruption, legislative inefficiencies, and centralized power, that hinder the effectiveness of the presidency. Key actionable insights include the necessity for reforms to strengthen inter-institutional collaboration, enhance accountability mechanisms, and integrate technology to increase transparency and public participation. The findings also underscore the importance of visionary leadership to address modern challenges like economic inequality, climate change, and misinformation in the digital era. While these recommendations provide a roadmap for improvement, the study acknowledges limitations, such as the reliance on qualitative data and the scope of its quantitative analysis. Future research should expand on empirical case studies and measure the impact of proposed reforms over time, providing deeper insights into how Indonesia's presidential institution can evolve to meet the aspirations of its diverse society. By addressing these gaps, the presidency can better contribute to national development and democratic resilience.

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