

## Institutional engineering and political fragmentation: a critical evaluation of the parliamentary threshold policy in Indonesia

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### Abstract

*This article examines the democratic consequences of Indonesia's parliamentary threshold as an instrument of electoral institutional engineering. Its urgency lies in the growing tension between efforts to simplify parliamentary fragmentation and the constitutional imperative to protect meaningful political representation in a plural society. Using a descriptive qualitative design and a structured literature review informed by PRISMA reporting principles, the study analyzes regulatory developments, official election results, academic literature, and comparative experiences from Germany, Turkey, and Thailand. The article's novelty lies in evaluating the parliamentary threshold not only as a mechanism for party-system simplification, but also as a democratic filter that affects proportionality, inclusion, and legitimacy. The findings show that the threshold has reduced the number of parties entering the Indonesian House of Representatives, yet has not resolved weak party institutionalization, coalition fluidity, or elite-centered politics. The 2024 election illustrates this dilemma, as 17,304,303 votes, or approximately 11.40 percent of valid national legislative votes, were not converted into seats. Drawing on Dahl, Lijphart, Duverger, Pitkin, and Mainwaring and Scully, this article contributes a normative-institutional framework for reassessing Indonesia's threshold policy and recommends evidence-based recalibration following the Constitutional Court's conditional ruling.*

**Keywords:** *parliamentary threshold, institutional engineering, political fragmentation, democratic representation, electoral system design*

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### Introduction

Electoral thresholds are widely used in proportional representation systems as institutional mechanisms to regulate the conversion of votes into legislative seats (Flis et al., 2025). In comparative politics, thresholds are often understood as part of electoral engineering, namely the deliberate design of formal rules to shape party competition, manage fragmentation, and support the formation of workable governments (Romeo & Mostacci, 2024). Their democratic value, however, remains contested. On the one hand, thresholds are defended as instruments for preventing excessive party proliferation and promoting governmental stability (Daly & Jones, 2020). On the other hand, they are criticized for reducing proportionality, excluding smaller parties, and generating wasted votes that weaken the representative function of elections (Babeck, 2025).

This debate becomes more complex in post-authoritarian democracies. In such settings, electoral institutions are expected to perform two functions at once: stabilizing democratic governance and preventing the excessive concentration of political power (Teehankee & Calimbahin, 2020). Indonesia illustrates this dilemma clearly. Following the 1998 Reformasi, political liberalization opened the electoral arena to a wide range

of political parties (Hizbullah et al., 2025). The 1999 election was contested by 48 parties, 21 of which gained seats in the national parliament (Aminuddin & Ramadlan, 2022). This development was normatively significant because it restored political freedom, party pluralism, and electoral participation after decades of authoritarian control. Yet the same openness also produced concerns about legislative fragmentation, unstable coalition-building, and weak party institutionalization (Hall, 2020).

The parliamentary threshold was introduced as a response to these institutional challenges (Kholis, 2020). It is important to distinguish it from earlier electoral threshold rules in the post-Reformasi period (Hermanto et al., 2024). The earlier electoral threshold primarily concerned the eligibility of political parties to contest subsequent elections, whereas the parliamentary threshold determines whether a party's national vote share can be converted into seats in the House of Representatives (Siboy & Al-Fatih, 2025). Since its first application in the 2009 House of Representatives election, the threshold has increased from 2.5 percent to 3.5 percent in 2014 and subsequently to 4 percent in the 2019 and 2024 elections (Qolbu & Wulandari, 2024). These increases were justified as efforts to simplify the party system and strengthen governmental effectiveness within Indonesia's multiparty presidential framework (Kodiyat, 2025).

The 2024 election renewed the urgency of this debate. Several parties failed to pass the 4 percent threshold, including the United Development Party, the Indonesian Solidarity Party, Perindo, Gelora, Hanura, the Crescent Star Party, the Labour Party, the Ummat Party, the Nusantara Awakening Party, and Garuda (Budiono, 2024; Palguna, 2024). The exclusion of PPP was particularly significant because the party had maintained parliamentary representation since the early post-authoritarian period (Power & Warburton, 2020). Based on the national vote results certified by the General Elections Commission, parties below the 4 percent threshold collectively obtained 17,304,303 valid votes in the House of Representatives election. These votes represented legally valid political preferences, yet they were not translated into legislative seats because of the threshold rule (Saptohutomo, 2024).

This condition shows that the parliamentary threshold is not merely a technical electoral formula (Sorace, 2021). It is a constitutional and democratic design issue that affects the value of votes, the proportionality of election results, the access of new and smaller parties to parliament, and the balance between governability and representation (Nwokora, 2022). Constitutional Court Decision Number 116/PUU-XXI/2023 further strengthens the need for reassessment. Although the Court did not annul the 4 percent threshold for the 2024 election, it required lawmakers to redesign the threshold for subsequent elections on a more rational, proportional, and evidence-based basis (Firdaus et al., 2025). The decision places threshold reform not only within the domain of political preference, but also within the broader constitutional obligation to ensure electoral justice and meaningful representation (Mau, 2025).

The existing literature on Indonesia's parliamentary threshold policy generally follows two main lines of argument (Sumada et al., 2024). The first emphasizes governability, party system simplification, and the need to make the presidential system more effective (Pelizzo, 2020). The second highlights the democratic costs of threshold rules, particularly the exclusion of smaller parties, the increase in wasted votes, and the weakening of proportional representation. However, these two perspectives are often discussed separately (Boyle, 2024).

The research gap lies in the limited analysis that connects institutional design, empirical indicators of fragmentation, and normative evaluation of representation

within a single analytical framework. This article addresses that gap by examining the evolution, effectiveness, and democratic implications of Indonesia's parliamentary threshold policy from the post-Reformasi period to the 2024 election. Specifically, it analyzes how the threshold has developed as an instrument of electoral engineering, assesses the extent to which it has reduced parliamentary fragmentation and supported governmental effectiveness, and evaluates its implications for representational justice and the quality of democracy. By integrating institutional, empirical, and normative perspectives, this article contributes to the study of electoral system design in post-authoritarian democracies and offers policy reflections for recalibrating Indonesia's parliamentary threshold after the 2024 election.

### **Research Methods**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach supported by a structured literature review (Villamin et al., 2025). The literature review is informed by the logic of systematic review reporting, particularly in terms of transparency in search strategies, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, and synthesis procedures (Phillips & Barker, 2021). However, this article does not claim to be a full PRISMA-based systematic literature review, as it does not conduct a meta-analysis, a formal risk-of-bias assessment, or a complete PRISMA flow diagram. Therefore, the method used in this study is more accurately described as a structured qualitative literature review guided by the PRISMA 2020 principles and the general principles of systematic review (Campra et al., 2021).

The literature search was conducted through academic databases and institutional sources. Academic searches were carried out in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Garuda, and Sinta using combinations of keywords such as "parliamentary threshold," "electoral threshold," "Indonesia," "institutional engineering," "party system fragmentation," "presidential multipartism," "representational justice," and "electoral design." Institutional searches focused on official election results, legislative materials, and court decisions, particularly decisions of the General Elections Commission, election tables published by Statistics Indonesia, relevant electoral laws, and decisions of the Constitutional Court.

The inclusion criteria in this study consisted of: (1) publications or official documents published between 2000 and 2024, except for classic theoretical works that remain foundational; (2) academic journal articles, scholarly books, book chapters, theses, official election documents, legislation, or court decisions; (3) explicit relevance to electoral thresholds, party system fragmentation, proportional representation, or Indonesian electoral law; and (4) clear authorship, place of publication, or institutional origin. The exclusion criteria included: (1) opinion pieces without analytical or empirical grounding; (2) references that could not be traced; (3) duplicate sources; (4) sources with unclear bibliographic information; and (5) references with future publication years or unverifiable publication status.

The screening process resulted in 52 documents for analysis. These documents were not treated as having equal evidentiary weight. Official election data and regulatory or judicial documents were used as the primary sources for legal and numerical claims. Academic literature, including journal articles and scholarly books, was used to develop the theoretical and comparative analysis. Policy reports and theses were used selectively, particularly when they provided contextual information or case-specific details. This weighting is important because numerical claims, such as wasted votes and the number of parties entering parliament, must be based on official data rather than secondary commentary.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, the legal development of the threshold was mapped from post-Reformasi electoral reforms to the 2024 election. Second, the impact of the threshold on fragmentation was assessed using descriptive indicators, namely the number of parties entering parliament, wasted votes, the percentage of wasted votes, and the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP). ENPP was calculated using the Laakso-Taagepera formula, namely  $N = 1 / \sum(pi^2)$ , where pi represents the proportion of seats in the House of Representatives held by each party. Third, the democratic implications were analyzed through the theories of polyarchy, electoral system design, party system institutionalization, and political representation.

Comparative materials from Germany, Turkey, and Thailand were used as triangulation, rather than as a full comparative research design. These three cases were selected because each demonstrates a different relationship between thresholds, party system management, and representation. Germany illustrates a relatively institutionalized party system with a 5 percent threshold. Turkey demonstrates the representational costs of a historically high national threshold, which was later reduced from 10 percent to 7 percent. Thailand shows how frequent changes to the electoral system can create uncertainty and distort representational outcomes. These comparisons help clarify the Indonesian case, although the main empirical focus of this study remains Indonesia.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Evolution and Objectives of the Parliamentary Threshold Policy in Indonesia**

The threshold policy in Indonesia has developed within a broader transformation from authoritarian party control to democratic multiparty competition. The opening of political space after 1998 produced a highly plural party system. In the 1999 election, 48 parties competed, and 21 parties succeeded in gaining seats in the House of Representatives. From the perspective of party system institutionalization, this pattern not only reflected democratic openness but also indicated weak social roots of political parties, high electoral volatility, and elite-centered competition.

The parliamentary threshold was introduced to manage this fragmentation. A legal distinction is important here. Earlier post-Reformasi rules contained an electoral threshold, which was related to party eligibility to contest subsequent elections, whereas the parliamentary threshold, which determines the conversion of national votes into seats in the House of Representatives, was first applied in the 2009 election. Article 202 of Law Number 10 of 2008 established a threshold of 2.5 percent of the national valid votes for the allocation of seats in the House of Representatives. The threshold was later increased to 3.5 percent in the 2014 election under Law Number 8 of 2012 and to 4 percent under Law Number 7 of 2017 for the 2019 and 2024 elections.

The objective of this policy is institutional simplification. In a presidential system, excessive legislative fragmentation can complicate coalition formation, executive-legislative bargaining, and programmatic policymaking. Therefore, the threshold was designed to reduce the number of parties in the House of Representatives and encourage party consolidation. However, Indonesia's experience shows that formal simplification does not automatically produce stronger party institutionalization. The number of parties in parliament may decline, but coalition politics can remain fluid, pragmatic, and weakly programmatic.

**Table 1.** Evolution of the Parliamentary Threshold, Wasted Votes, and ENPP in Indonesia

<b>Year</b>	<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Parties in the House of Representatives</b>	<b>Wasted Votes</b>	<b>Wasted Votes (%)</b>	<b>Seats in the House of Representatives</b>	<b>ENPP</b>
<b>1999</b>	None	21	N/A	N/A	500	N/A
<b>2004</b>	None	16	N/A	N/A	550	N/A
<b>2009</b>	2.5%	9	19,047,481	18.31%	560	6.21
<b>2014</b>	3.5%	10	2,964,975	2.37%	560	8.16
<b>2019</b>	4.0%	9	13,595,842	9.71%	574	7.46
<b>2024</b>	4.0%	8	17,304,303	11.40%	580	7.26

*Source: processed by author*

Table 1 demonstrates that the parliamentary threshold has contributed to the formal simplification of Indonesia's party system, although its effects have not been entirely consistent across electoral periods. In the early Reformasi period, when no parliamentary threshold was applied, the number of parties entering the House of Representatives was relatively high: 21 parties in 1999 and 16 parties in 2004. After the threshold was introduced in 2009, the number of parliamentary parties declined significantly to nine. This indicates that the threshold produced a clear mechanical effect by limiting the ability of smaller parties to convert votes into seats.

However, the table also shows that the relationship between the threshold level and wasted votes is not linear. In 2009, when the threshold was set at 2.5 percent, wasted votes reached 19,047,481, or 18.31 percent of valid votes. This figure declined sharply in 2014 to 2,964,975 votes, or 2.37 percent, despite the increase in the threshold to 3.5 percent. The decline suggests that many parties had adjusted to the new electoral rules, either by consolidating their support or by failing to compete effectively. Nevertheless, wasted votes increased again in 2019 and 2024, reaching 13,595,842 votes and 17,304,303 votes respectively. This pattern indicates that a higher threshold does not automatically produce a more proportional or more stable electoral outcome; instead, it may increase representational loss when several parties obtain substantial votes but remain below the required threshold.

The ENPP figures further indicate that the simplification of the party system has been only partial. Although the number of parties in the House of Representatives declined to eight in 2024, the effective number of parliamentary parties remained at 7.26. This means that parliamentary power was still distributed among several relevant parties rather than concentrated in a small number of dominant parties. Therefore, the parliamentary threshold has reduced the number of parties formally represented in parliament, but it has not fully eliminated fragmentation within the parliamentary party system.

The 2024 election illustrates this dilemma most clearly. The United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP) obtained 5,878,777 votes, or 3.87 percent, but failed to pass the 4 percent threshold. The Indonesian Solidarity Party (Partai Solidaritas Indonesia, PSI) obtained 4,260,169 votes, while Perindo obtained 1,955,154 votes. Together with other parties below the threshold, these votes formed a significant portion of valid electoral preferences that were not translated into seats in the House of Representatives. This result shows that the parliamentary threshold has a dual impact: it supports institutional simplification, but at the same time it produces representational exclusion. In the Indonesian context, this finding confirms that the threshold should be evaluated not only from the perspective of governability, but also from the perspective of proportionality and democratic inclusion.

## **The Impact of the Parliamentary Threshold Policy on Political Fragmentation and Representation**

Indonesia's parliamentary threshold policy demonstrates a direct relationship between electoral system design and the structure of the party system. From Duverger's perspective, electoral rules shape party systems through two main mechanisms: mechanical effects and psychological effects. The mechanical effect is clearly visible in the implementation of Indonesia's parliamentary threshold, as parties that fail to reach a certain percentage of the national vote are excluded from the conversion of votes into seats in the House of Representatives. In other words, the votes obtained by these parties remain electorally valid, but they do not produce political representation in parliament.

This mechanical effect is reflected in the declining number of parties entering parliament after the threshold was introduced. In the 1999 election, before the parliamentary threshold was applied, 21 parties obtained seats in the House of Representatives. This number declined to nine parties in the 2009 election after the 2.5 percent threshold was introduced, and to eight parties in the 2024 election when the threshold stood at 4 percent. This finding indicates that the parliamentary threshold has been relatively effective in formally reducing the number of parties in parliament. However, this effectiveness must be interpreted carefully, because a decline in the number of parties does not necessarily mean a substantive reduction in political fragmentation.

The effective number of parliamentary parties, or ENPP, shows that the party system in parliament remains relatively fragmented. Although only eight parties entered the House of Representatives in the 2024 election, the ENPP remained at 7.26. This figure indicates that political power in parliament is still distributed among several relevant parties, rather than being concentrated in one or two dominant parties. Thus, the parliamentary threshold has narrowed party access to parliament, but it has not fully created a simple, disciplined, and programmatically stable party system.

From the perspective of governability, the parliamentary threshold provides certain advantages because the number of political actors in parliament becomes more limited. Theoretically, this condition may facilitate coalition formation, decision-making, and executive-legislative relations. However, in the Indonesian context, the reduction in the number of parties has not automatically produced more effective government. Political coalitions are still often formed pragmatically rather than on the basis of ideological proximity or shared policy programs. This suggests that Indonesia's political fragmentation is not caused solely by the number of parties, but also by weak party institutionalization, limited internal discipline, and the persistence of elite-centered politics.

The more problematic impact lies in the dimension of representation. The parliamentary threshold causes votes cast for parties below the threshold to be excluded from seat allocation. In the 2024 election, for example, several parties received substantial electoral support but still failed to enter parliament because they did not pass the 4 percent threshold. This condition shows that the threshold policy not only simplifies the party system, but also produces representational exclusion. As a result, some citizens' political preferences are absent from the national legislative process.

Within Pitkin's theory of representation, this issue is significant because representation does not merely refer to the formal procedure of electing representatives, but also concerns the extent to which social and political aspirations

are reflected in representative institutions. The parliamentary threshold may strengthen the formal dimension of representation by allowing only parties with a certain level of electoral support to enter parliament. At the same time, however, it may weaken substantive and descriptive representation, particularly when smaller parties articulate the interests of specific social, religious, generational, regional, or ideological groups that are not fully represented by larger parties.

Lijphart's distinction between consensus democracy and majoritarian democracy also helps explain the direction of this institutional change. In the early Reformasi period, Indonesia was closer to the consensus model, as the multiparty system was seen as a means of accommodating social and political diversity. The gradual increase in the parliamentary threshold, however, indicates a shift toward a more majoritarian model, because the electoral system increasingly benefits larger parties and reduces the opportunity for smaller parties to gain seats. This shift is not necessarily undemocratic, but it must be justified by evidence showing that its benefits for governmental stability outweigh its costs to proportionality and democratic inclusion.

Based on this analysis, the parliamentary threshold has a dual impact. On the one hand, it has reduced the number of parties entering the House of Representatives and contributed to institutional simplification. On the other hand, it has not fully addressed political fragmentation in a substantive sense and has generated representational problems through the increase in votes that are not converted into seats. For this reason, merely raising the threshold is not an adequate solution. Party system reform should instead be directed toward strengthening party institutionalization, internal party democracy, ideological differentiation, cadre development, and the formation of more programmatic coalitions.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications for Democratic Consolidation**

From the perspective of Dahl (2008) theory of polyarchy, the quality of democracy is not measured solely by the holding of elections, but also by the breadth of participation and the openness of political contestation. The parliamentary threshold does not eliminate citizens' right to vote, as every voter may still cast a ballot for any legally registered political party. However, this policy affects the political consequences of such participation. When valid votes cast for certain parties cannot be converted into seats, electoral participation continues to operate procedurally, but loses part of its substantive meaning as a mechanism for producing political representation.

This issue became particularly significant in the 2024 election. The large number of votes that were not converted into seats shows that the parliamentary threshold is not merely an instrument of party system simplification, but also a mechanism that determines the extent to which citizens' votes gain representation in representative institutions. This condition cannot automatically be described as a crisis of political trust, as such a claim would require survey evidence from credible institutions. Nevertheless, the high number of wasted votes may be understood as a potential risk to legitimacy. If voters repeatedly see that their votes do not produce representation, public confidence in the fairness and responsiveness of the electoral system may weaken.

Constitutional Court Decision Number 116/PUU-XXI/2023 reinforces the need to evaluate the threshold policy more seriously. The Court did not annul the 4 percent threshold for the 2024 election, but ordered lawmakers to redesign the threshold for subsequent elections on a more rational, proportional, and evidence-based foundation.

This decision indicates that the threshold issue can no longer be understood merely as a political choice of lawmakers, but as part of a constitutional obligation to guarantee electoral justice and meaningful representation.

The practical implication of this finding is the need for threshold reform that is not oriented solely toward reducing the number of parties, but also takes into account its effects on proportionality and inclusion. The first option is to retain a national threshold while recalibrating its percentage through transparent empirical simulations. The advantage of this option lies in system continuity, as the principle of party system simplification is maintained. However, the risk remains that a large number of votes may still be wasted if several parties obtain significant electoral support but fail to reach the threshold.

The second option is to adopt a more differentiated threshold. Under this model, a national threshold could be combined with special consideration for parties that demonstrate strong support in particular regions. This option is relevant for Indonesia because political diversity is not only national in character, but also related to territory, social identity, and local interests. Its advantage is that it provides greater space for the representation of geographically concentrated constituencies. However, such a design must be formulated carefully so that it does not encourage regionally based fragmentation or complicate the seat allocation process.

The third option is to strengthen compensatory mechanisms within the electoral system. Reform does not always have to take the form of raising or lowering the threshold, but may instead focus on improving the seat allocation formula so that wasted votes and disproportionality can be reduced. The advantage of this approach lies in its ability to balance party system simplification with representational justice. The challenge lies in its greater technical complexity, requiring clear rules, strong electoral administration, and sufficient public understanding.

In addition, non-threshold reforms also need to be strengthened. Indonesia's political fragmentation is not caused solely by the number of parties, but also by weak party institutionalization. For this reason, improving internal party democracy, funding transparency, accountability in candidate recruitment, cadre development, and ideological differentiation should become part of the reform agenda. Without improvements in these areas, changes to the threshold percentage will address only the symptoms of fragmentation, not its structural causes.

Proposals concerning reserved seats for minority groups or the adoption of a mixed electoral system also require careful discussion. Reserved seats may serve as an affirmative instrument for groups experiencing structural exclusion, but their design must be consistent with the principle of equal citizenship and must not stop at symbolism. A mixed electoral system may strengthen the relationship between representatives and their constituencies, but it may also produce representational imbalance if it is not accompanied by compensatory mechanisms. For this reason, every institutional alternative should be tested through election data simulations and in-depth constitutional analysis.

The direction of threshold reform in Indonesia should not be trapped in a narrow debate over whether the correct figure is 3 percent, 3.5 percent, or 4 percent. The more important focus is to ensure that the threshold operates consistently with the principles of proportionality, equality of votes, party institutionalization, and citizens' right to meaningful representation. In the context of constitutional democracy, governmental effectiveness remains important, but it should not be achieved by neglecting representational justice and political inclusion.

### **Comparative Triangulation: Germany, Turkey, and Thailand**

The comparison with Germany, Turkey, and Thailand is important in showing that the effectiveness of a parliamentary threshold cannot be separated from each country's institutional context. A threshold does not operate in a vacuum. Its impact on stability, fragmentation, and representation is strongly shaped by the level of party institutionalization, electoral system design, constitutional tradition, and public trust in electoral administration. For this reason, the experiences of other countries cannot be directly copied, but they can serve as a useful reference for assessing the direction of threshold reform in Indonesia.

Germany is often cited as a reference because it applies a 5 percent threshold in Bundestag elections. In the German context, this threshold is understood as an instrument to prevent extreme fragmentation and maintain the stability of parliamentary government. However, Germany's success is not determined solely by the 5 percent figure. Its effectiveness is supported by a relatively institutionalized party system, programmatic political parties, strong constitutional safeguards, and electoral administration that enjoys public trust. The German experience shows that a threshold can be democratically accepted when it is embedded in a stable institutional ecosystem and does not produce excessive political exclusion.

Turkey illustrates the opposite side of threshold policy. The national 10 percent threshold that applied for a long period was widely criticized for excluding a large number of voters' preferences and strengthening the advantage of larger parties. The reduction of the threshold to 7 percent in 2022 reflected an acknowledgment that an excessively high threshold may create serious representational problems. The Turkish case shows that a threshold may limit the number of parties entering parliament, but if it is too high, it can weaken political pluralism, particularly in a polarized political environment and when opposition parties or minority-based parties face structural barriers.

Thailand offers a different lesson. The Thai experience shows that frequent changes to the electoral system can create political uncertainty and generate debates over the legitimacy of electoral outcomes. The mixed-member apportionment system used in the 2019 election, for example, demonstrates how institutional engineering can significantly affect the conversion of votes into seats. This lesson is relevant for Indonesia because threshold reform must be carried out transparently, consistently, and in the long-term interest of democracy, rather than as an instrument to benefit incumbents or particular major parties.

The comparison of these three countries indicates that parliamentary thresholds produce different consequences depending on the context in which they are applied. In an institutionalized system such as Germany, a threshold can help maintain stability without seriously undermining representational legitimacy. In Turkey, an excessively high threshold can produce political exclusion and weaken plural representation. In Thailand, frequent changes to electoral rules can make electoral design appear as a strategic political tool rather than a neutral democratic mechanism.

For Indonesia, the main lesson from this comparison is that threshold reform should not focus only on the numerical level of the threshold. The debate over whether the threshold should be 3 percent, 3.5 percent, or 4 percent needs to be accompanied by a broader analysis of proportionality, wasted votes, party institutionalization, and the legitimacy of the rule-making process. Threshold reform should also apply prospectively, be evidence-based, and be designed through an open legislative process

so that it is not perceived as a manipulation of electoral competition. In this way, the threshold can remain an instrument for simplifying the party system without sacrificing the principles of fair and inclusive representation.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion, Indonesia's parliamentary threshold policy has proven capable of simplifying the number of parties entering the House of Representatives, but it has not fully resolved the problem of political fragmentation. The decline in the number of parliamentary parties indicates the mechanical effect of the threshold, namely the exclusion of parties that fail to reach a certain percentage of the national vote. However, the ENPP indicator and the practice of political coalition-building show that fragmentation persists in other forms, particularly through fluid coalitions, weak party institutionalization, and a limited programmatic orientation.

In addition to its effect on institutional simplification, the parliamentary threshold also raises problems of representation. Votes cast for parties below the threshold are not converted into seats, leaving some public political preferences unrepresented in the legislature. The 2024 election illustrates this problem clearly, as several parties obtained significant numbers of votes but still failed to enter parliament because they did not pass the 4 percent threshold. This finding shows that the threshold has a dual impact: it supports the formal effectiveness of the party system, while at the same time potentially reducing proportionality and democratic inclusion.

The comparative discussion of Germany, Turkey, and Thailand also shows that the success of a threshold depends heavily on each country's institutional context. A threshold can operate democratically when supported by a strong party system, stable rules, and a legitimate law-making process. Conversely, a threshold that is too high or too frequently changed may produce political exclusion and reduce public trust in the electoral system. Therefore, reform of Indonesia's parliamentary threshold should be evidence-based, proportional, and not focused solely on the numerical percentage, but also on its impact on wasted votes, party institutionalization, and representational justice.

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