

Coalition Configuration and Five-Year Government Stability: Indonesia in Comparative Presidential Perspective

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Abstract

This article examines how presidential election coalition configurations relate to government stability over five-year terms, focusing on Indonesia and comparing Brazil and the Philippines. It employs qualitative, document-based research, reconstructing coalitions through scholarly literature, electoral and constitutional legislation, and Constitutional Court decisions. Government stability is assessed through three dimensions: cabinet durability, legislative support, and executive-legislative conflict, evaluated categorically rather than through a composite index. The findings indicate that coalition size alone does not determine governing capacity. Oversized coalitions formed primarily to satisfy presidential candidacy requirements encompass broader ideological differences, increasing bargaining costs that may manifest in cabinet reshuffles and inconsistent legislative discipline. Conversely, coalitions with narrower ideological ranges and clearer executive office distributions appear to sustain legislative cooperation more consistently. Coalition behaviour also varies throughout presidential terms, with cooperation stronger initially and electoral repositioning more prominent toward the final phase. Finally, the article argues that removing Indonesia's presidential candidacy threshold through Constitutional Court Decision No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024 changes incentives underlying oversized pre-electoral coalitions. It identifies conditions under which this institutional change may strengthen or weaken governing coherence, particularly in coalition formation, legislative coordination, and executive-legislative relations.

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1. Introduction

Presidential elections in multiparty democracies rarely produce a single party capable of governing alone. They instead generate coalitions that bring together parties with different ideological traditions, electoral interests, and strategic calculations. These alliances do not dissolve on election day. They continue to shape the direction, effectiveness, and durability of government throughout the presidential term. Coalition configuration, understood here as the structure, composition, and governing logic of the alliance that supports a president, includes the number of parties involved, their relative legislative strength, the ideological range they span, and the way executive office is distributed among them.¹

In presidential systems, stability is often assumed to follow from the constitutional strength of the executive. Comparative scholarship suggests otherwise. Presidents are elected separately from legislatures, yet they depend on legislative cooperation to pass laws, approve budgets, and implement reform, which makes coalition management a central and continuous task of presidential leadership rather than an episodic one.² Research on coalition politics developed first in parliamentary settings, where coalition formation is tied directly to government survival, and coalitions in presidential systems were long treated as temporary electoral instruments. More recent work has challenged that assumption by showing that pre-electoral alliances in presidential regimes carry measurable consequences for the composition and survival of cabinets.³

Three features of coalition configuration recur in this literature. The first is size. Broad alliances may secure legislative majorities and reduce the risk of executive deadlock, but oversized coalitions can raise coordination costs and dilute policy coherence, and the determinants of cabinet size in presidential systems are themselves contested.⁴ The second is ideological range. Alliances composed of parties occupying adjacent positions tend to experience fewer internal disputes, whereas alliances spanning a wide range may survive electorally yet struggle to govern once confronted with divisive choices. The third is the distribution of executive office. The allocation of ministries is not merely administrative; it is a political signal, and the way portfolios are distributed carries consequences for partners that extend to their own electoral prospects.⁵

Timing matters as well. Whether an alliance is assembled before or after an election shapes its later composition, and the conversion of pre-electoral coalitions into governing cabinets

¹ Wolfgang C. Müller, Hanna Bäck, and Johan Hellström, "Coalition Dynamics: Advances in the Study of the Coalition Life Cycle," *West European Politics* 47, no. 1 (2024): 1–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2023.2249316>.

² Joris Alberdingk Thijm, "Coalition Governance under Separation of Powers: Shadowing by Committee in Coalitional Presidentialism," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12451>.

³ 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 (2023): 64–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481211056852>.

⁴ Adrián Albala, "Determinants of the Cabinet Size in Presidential Systems," *Governance* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12803>.

⁵ Mariana Batista, Timothy J. Power, and Cesar Zucco, "Be Careful What You Wish For: Portfolio Allocation, Presidential Popularity, and Electoral Payoffs to Parties in Multiparty Presidentialism," *Party Politics* 30, no. 4 (2024): 622–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688231168603>.

is uneven across cases.⁶ Electoral rules condition these patterns: thresholds, district magnitude, and the choice between plurality and runoff systems all influence how many parties enter the system and how strong the incentive to combine before polling day becomes.⁷ Comparative work on presidential systems treats these incentives as a principal driver of pre-electoral alliance formation.⁸ In Indonesia these incentives were, until recently, unusually explicit. A statutory presidential candidacy threshold required parties or coalitions of parties to control a specified share of legislative seats or national votes before they could nominate a presidential ticket, which made pre-electoral coalition-building a legal precondition of candidacy rather than a strategic option.⁹

That requirement has been the subject of sustained legal and political debate in Indonesia, with scholars disagreeing over whether it strengthened the presidential system by narrowing the field or weakened it by encouraging cartel-like alliances assembled for qualification rather than programme.¹⁰ The debate was transformed by Constitutional Court Decision No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024, which removed the threshold and thereby altered the structural incentive that had produced Indonesia's oversized pre-electoral coalitions.¹¹ The institutional question that follows is immediate and unresolved: if coalitions are no longer compelled to form before an election in order to qualify a candidate, what happens to the configuration of the alliances that govern afterwards, and to the stability they are supposed to deliver?

Existing scholarship leaves a gap at precisely this point. Comparative work on coalitional presidentialism has established that pre-electoral alliances affect cabinet stability, but it has been built largely on Latin American evidence and has given limited attention to Southeast Asian cases where coalition formation was legally mandated.¹² Indonesian legal scholarship, for its part, has examined the presidential threshold intensively, but has concentrated on its constitutionality, on its effect on electoral competition, and on its consequences for democratic quality,¹³ rather than on what the resulting coalition

⁶ Lucas Couto and Adrián Albala, "Question of Timing: Pre-Electoral Coalitions in Multiparty Presidential Regimes," *Brazilian Political Science Review* 17, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1590/1981-3821202300010001>.

⁷ Gianluca Passarelli and Matthew Bergman, "Runoff Comebacks in Comparative Perspective: Two-Round Presidential Election Systems," *Political Studies Review* 21, no. 3 (2023): 608–24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14789299221132441>.

⁸ André Borges, Mathieu Turgeon, and Adrián Albala, "Electoral Incentives to Coalition Formation in Presidential Systems," *Party Politics* 27 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068820953527>.

⁹ Titon Kurnia, "Presidential Candidacy Threshold and Presidentialism Affirmation in Indonesia," *Padjadjaran Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 7, no. 3 (2021): 353–79, <https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v7n3.a4>.

¹⁰ Rahmat Muhajir Nugroho, "Implications of the Presidential Threshold Implementation on the Formation of Cartel Coalitions," *Kosmik Hukum* 24, no. 1 (2024): 14, <https://doi.org/10.30595/kosmikhukum.v24i1.14521>.

¹¹ Arifudin and Susi Dian Rahayu, "Redesign of the Presidential Threshold System Following the Constitutional Court Decision Number 62/PUU-XXII/2024," *The Digest: Journal of Jurisprudence and Legislation* 6, no. 1 (2025): 107–32, <https://doi.org/10.15294/digest.v6i1.29019>.

¹² Albala, Borges, and Couto, "Pre-Electoral Coalitions and Cabinet Stability."

¹³ Yasinta Dyah Paramitha Hapsari and Retno Saraswati, "Dampak Pelaksanaan Presidential Threshold pada Pemilu Serentak terhadap Demokrasi di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pembangunan Hukum Indonesia* 5, no. 1 (2023): 70–84, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jphi.v5i1.70-84>.

configurations mean for governing capacity across a full term.¹⁴ The two literatures have therefore addressed adjacent questions without meeting: one asks how coalitions affect stability, the other asks whether a coalition-forcing rule is constitutional. Neither has asked how a legally induced coalition configuration performs as a governing arrangement.

This article addresses that gap. It asks two questions. First, how are the coalition configurations formed during presidential elections associated with government stability across a five-year term? Second, what do the Indonesian experience and its recent institutional change suggest about the conditions under which coalition configuration supports or undermines governing capacity? The contribution is interpretive and comparative rather than statistical. The article brings the comparative literature on coalitional presidentialism into contact with Indonesian constitutional and electoral scholarship, and reads the removal of the candidacy threshold as a natural turning point whose likely effects can be anticipated from what is already known about how coalition configurations behave.

The empirical scope is stated here deliberately, because it bounds every claim that follows. The primary case is Indonesia across the two presidential terms between 2014 and 2024. Brazil between 2011 and 2016 and the Philippines between 2016 and 2022 serve as comparative references, selected because each is a multiparty presidential system in which coalition-building is necessary for governing but in which the institutional route to coalition differs. The study does not claim to cover presidential democracies generally, and it does not generate new quantitative measurement. It is a document-based comparative analysis, and Section 2 sets out what that design can and cannot support.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative, document-based comparative design. It is important to state plainly what this means, because the design determines the strength of the claims the article is entitled to make. The study does not collect original quantitative data, does not construct a dataset of presidential administrations, and does not estimate statistical models. It reconstructs coalition configurations and governance outcomes from published sources and interprets them comparatively. Accordingly, every finding reported below is interpretive and associational. No causal effect is estimated, and no claim of statistical significance is made anywhere in this article.

The approach combines two established modes of enquiry. The first is legal-institutional analysis of the rules that structure coalition formation, drawing on constitutional provisions, electoral legislation, and Constitutional Court decisions, in the manner conventional to normative legal research in Indonesia.¹⁵ This is the mode in which the legal

¹⁴ Djayadi Hanan, Tri Sulistianing Astuti, and Luthfi Widagdo Eddyono, "Electoral Reform Through the Indonesian Constitutional Court: Constitutionality of Presidential Candidacy Threshold in Indonesia," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 22, no. 2 (2025): 260–92, <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk2223>.

¹⁵ Tunggul Ansari Setia Negara, "Normative Legal Research in Indonesia: Its Origins and Approaches," *Audito Comparative Law Journal* 4, no. 1 (2023): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.22219/aclj.v4i1.24855>.

configuration of Indonesia's electoral system has generally been examined.¹⁶ The second is structured focused comparison, in which a small number of cases are examined through an identical set of questions so that similarities and differences become visible without requiring numerical equivalence between them.

The unit of analysis is the presidential administration, defined as a single executive term supported by an identifiable alliance of parties. Three cases were selected purposively. Indonesia under Joko Widodo across 2014–2019 and 2019–2024 is the primary case, chosen because coalition formation was legally compelled by a candidacy threshold and because the subsequent removal of that threshold provides an institutional turning point. Brazil under Dilma Rousseff across 2011–2016 is included as a case of coalitional presidentialism in which a broad governing alliance deteriorated to the point of rupture. The Philippines across 2016–2022 is included as a case in which legislative majorities assemble after an election around the incumbent rather than through pre-electoral bargaining. The selection criteria were therefore: a presidential executive, a fragmented legislature in which no single party holds a majority, a completed or substantially completed term permitting observation across its phases, and sufficient published scholarship to support documentary reconstruction. Cases without adequate published coverage were excluded, since the design depends entirely on the documentary record.

Government stability is treated as a composite condition examined through three dimensions that correspond to the broader definition used in this article. Cabinet durability captures the capacity to maintain an executive team and thus to sustain programme implementation. Legislative support captures the capacity to secure the legislative decisions on which policy depends. The frequency of executive-legislative conflict captures predictability in decision-making. These three are deliberately not combined into a single index and are not weighted against one another. They are examined separately, because the cases show that they can move in different directions, and an index would conceal precisely the divergence that is analytically interesting.

Coalition configuration is examined through coalition size relative to legislative seats, the ideological range spanned by partners, and the pattern of executive office allocation. Ideological range requires a particular caveat. This study does not compute ideological distance from manifesto datasets or expert surveys. It assesses range qualitatively, using published classifications of the parties concerned and the substantive policy divisions identified in the case literature.¹⁷ Where the text describes a coalition's range as wide or narrow, that is a categorical judgement grounded in cited scholarship, not a measured quantity.

Sources comprise peer-reviewed scholarship on coalition politics and on the three cases, Indonesian electoral legislation, and decisions of the Indonesian Constitutional Court. Temporal analysis divides each term into three phases: an early phase covering roughly the

¹⁶ Saiful Risky, Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, and Mabarroh Azizah, "Political Configuration of Electoral System Law in Indonesia from State Administration Perspective," *Volksgeist: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Konstitusi* 6, no. 1 (2023): 119–30, <https://doi.org/10.24090/volksgeist.v6i1.7940>.

¹⁷ André Borges and Lisa Zanotti, "Authoritarian, but Not Nativist: Classifying Far-Right Parties in Latin America," *Political Studies* 73, no. 4 (2025): 1569–91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217241301317>.

first two years, a mid phase covering the middle of the term, and a late phase covering approximately the final eighteen months before the next national election, when positioning for that election becomes a visible consideration. These boundaries are analytical conventions adopted for comparison, not measured breakpoints.

Three limitations follow directly from the design and should be weighed when reading the findings. First, reliance on secondary literature means the analysis inherits the interpretive judgements and coverage gaps of the sources on which it draws. Second, three cases cannot support generalisation to presidential democracies as a class; they can establish plausibility and identify mechanisms worth testing. Third, because the indicators are categorical, the analysis can identify patterns of co-occurrence but cannot establish their relative weight. Testing the propositions set out in Section 3.1 against a larger set of administrations with measured indicators remains a task for subsequent quantitative research, and the article is written to make such testing possible rather than to pre-empt it.

3. Discussion

3.1. Analytical Framework and Propositions

Coalition theory distinguishes three motivations that lead parties into alliances. Office-seeking parties pursue positions and the resources attached to them. Policy-seeking parties pursue programmatic goals and therefore value proximity to partners. Vote-seeking parties pursue electoral advantage and evaluate alliance membership by its effect on their own standing. These categories are familiar, but in much applied work they remain descriptive labels. To function analytically they must generate expectations that the evidence can disappoint.

The framework is therefore stated as three propositions. The first holds that where office-seeking predominates, coalition cohesion should track the distribution of executive positions, so that partners receiving few or peripheral portfolios should display weaker legislative discipline than those receiving central ones; comparative evidence on portfolio allocation and its electoral consequences supports treating this relationship as consequential rather than trivial.¹⁸ The second holds that where policy-seeking predominates, cohesion should track ideological proximity, so that alliances spanning a narrow range should show steadier legislative support and fewer public disputes than alliances spanning a wide one. The third holds that where vote-seeking predominates, cohesion should vary with the electoral calendar, so that support should be highest early in the term and should weaken as the next election approaches, particularly among partners whose prospects are not tied to the president's standing.

These propositions are not mutually exclusive, and the analysis below treats them as competing emphases rather than rival theories. Their value lies in specifying what would count as evidence against each. If partners holding central ministries defected while peripheral partners remained loyal, the first proposition would be in difficulty. If

¹⁸ Batista, Power, and Zucco, "Be Careful What You Wish For."

ideologically distant alliances proved as cohesive as proximate ones, the second would be. If support remained flat across the term, the third would be.

3.2. Case Selection and Descriptive Characteristics

Table 1 summarises the three cases on the dimensions set out in Section 2. The entries are categorical assessments drawn from the cited literature rather than measured values, and they should be read as an organising device for the comparison that follows rather than as data.

Table 1. Coalition configuration and stability dimensions across three presidential administrations.

Dimension	Indonesia (2014–2024)	Brazil (2011–2016)	Philippines (2016–2022)
Coalition type	Oversized, expanded after election	Oversized, formed at government stage	Post-electoral legislative supermajority
Ideological range	Wide	Wide	Wide but weakly programmatic
Executive office allocation	Broad distribution across partners	Broad but contested	Concentrated around the president
Formal legislative support	High and sustained	High then eroding	High and fluid
Cabinet durability	Continuity with periodic reshuffles	Declining, culminating in rupture	Continuity under personal authority
Stability outcome	Formal stability, reduced contestation	Breakdown of governing alliance	Formal stability, weak institutionalisation

Source: compiled by the authors from the published scholarship cited in Sections 3.3 to 3.7. Entries are categorical assessments, not measured values.

The Indonesian case is distinctive because coalition formation was legally compelled. The candidacy threshold obliged parties to assemble alliances capable of meeting a statutory share of seats or votes before a presidential ticket could be registered, which meant that the configuration of the governing coalition was shaped by a qualification requirement before it was shaped by governing considerations.¹⁹ Indonesian scholarship has debated whether this requirement simplified the party system as intended or instead encouraged alliances assembled for arithmetic rather than programme, with several accounts describing the resulting pattern as cartel-like.²⁰ The alliance supporting the president was subsequently enlarged during the term, and the broader literature on the period describes a political configuration in which organised legislative opposition became unusually small.²¹

The Brazilian case represents the pattern from which the concept of coalitional presidentialism was originally derived: a president elected with a limited legislative base assembling a broad governing alliance after the election, sustained through portfolio distribution and continuous bargaining. The erosion of that arrangement during the period examined here coincided with wider changes in the Brazilian party system, including the

¹⁹ Kurnia, “Presidential Candidacy Threshold and Presidentialism Affirmation.”

²⁰ Nugroho, “Implications of the Presidential Threshold Implementation.”

²¹ Thomas B. Pepinsky, “Cleavages, Institutions, and Democracy in Indonesia: The 2024 Elections in Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034251349467>.

weakening of established parties and the rise of alternatives outside the traditional spectrum,²² a realignment whose depth became apparent in the polarised contest of 2022.²³ The Philippine case differs again: legislative majorities there have tended to assemble around an incumbent after the election rather than through pre-electoral negotiation, producing formally large but weakly programmatic alliances, a pattern that recent analyses connect to the personalisation of electoral competition²⁴ and to the entrenchment of dynastic networks that operate across party lines.²⁵

3.3. Coalition Size and Government Stability

Across the three cases, size behaves as a weak indicator of governing capacity. Each administration commanded a nominal legislative majority for most of its term, yet the three differed substantially in the stability they achieved. Indonesia maintained formal support that was both large and durable. Brazil began with a comparable arithmetic advantage and nonetheless experienced progressive erosion. The Philippines sustained large majorities that reorganised readily around the incumbent. If size alone determined stability, this variation would be difficult to explain.

The comparative literature offers a reason for the weak relationship. Cabinet size in presidential systems responds to several pressures at once, including the need to accommodate partners, and is not a simple function of legislative arithmetic.²⁶ Enlarging an alliance brings additional partners whose cooperation must be purchased and coordinated, so the marginal legislative seat is obtained at a bargaining cost that does not appear in seat counts. Where alliances are assembled to satisfy a threshold, this cost is incurred by design: partners are recruited for the seats they contribute rather than for their fit with the president's programme, and Indonesian scholarship has questioned on these grounds whether threshold-driven coalition formation strengthened the presidential system at all.²⁷ The underlying difficulty is that the rule addressed the number of candidacies rather than the number of parties, leaving the fragmentation that generates bargaining costs largely

²² André Borges, "The Illusion of Electoral Stability: From Party System Erosion to Right-Wing Populism in Brazil," *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 13, no. 2 (2021): 166–91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X211005164>.

²³ Mario Fuks and Gabriel Avila Casalecchi, "When Democracy Divides the Electorate: Voting in the 2022 Brazilian Presidential Election," *Brazilian Political Science Review* 19, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1590/1981-3821202500020003>.

²⁴ Ronald A. Pernia and Rogelio Alicor L. Panao, "Electing the Dictator's Son: The 2022 Philippine Election in an Era of Authoritarian Nostalgia and Democratic Decline," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 52, no. 1 (2025): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.2025.2461822>.

²⁵ Richard Javad Heydarian, "The Philippines' Dynastic Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 36, no. 3 (2025): 146–55, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2025.a964570>.

²⁶ Albala, "Determinants of the Cabinet Size."

²⁷ Mahesa Rannie, Retno Saraswati, and Fifiana Wisnaeni, "Does the Reform of the Parliamentary and Presidential Threshold Strengthen the Presidential System in Indonesia?," *Sriwijaya Law Review* 8, no. 1 (2024): 133–51, <https://doi.org/10.28946/slrev.Vol8.Iss1.3157.pp133-151>.

untouched.²⁸ Proposals to reduce that fragmentation have instead focused on party regulation, where the constitutional constraints are themselves demanding.²⁹

A corollary follows that the cases support. Smaller alliances spanning a narrow ideological range may govern as effectively as larger ones, because what they forgo in seats they recover in lower coordination costs. The evidence assembled here cannot establish where that trade-off balances, and the comparison is not designed to locate it. What it does show is that treating size as the primary variable obscures more than it reveals.

3.4. Ideological Heterogeneity and Legislative Cohesion

The second proposition expects cohesion to track ideological proximity. The cases are broadly consistent with it, though with an important qualification concerning what cohesion means in practice. Alliances spanning a wide range experienced more visible internal disagreement over contested policy, and in Brazil such disagreement eventually translated into legislative resistance from parties that remained formally within the governing alliance. The Indonesian alliance also spanned a wide range, yet formal legislative support remained high throughout, which at first sight appears to count against the proposition.

The qualification resolves the apparent tension and is central to the argument. Formal support and genuine programmatic agreement are distinct, and conflating them produces misleading conclusions about stability. Where an alliance is wide but cohesion is maintained through distribution of office and accommodation rather than through shared commitments, the resulting stability is real but conditional: it rests on the continued availability of the resources used to sustain it. Indonesian accounts describing the governing alliance as cartel-like capture exactly this condition, in which breadth of support coincides with thin programmatic content.³⁰ The Brazilian case illustrates what occurs when the resources that sustain such an arrangement become scarce and accommodation can no longer substitute for agreement.

This distinction also indicates why ideological range matters even when it does not produce visible defection. A wide alliance held together by accommodation is more vulnerable to shocks than a narrow one held together by agreement, because it has fewer reasons for cohesion that survive a downturn in the president's political position. The proposition is therefore supported, but the evidence it is supported by is the conditionality of stability rather than the level of legislative support.

3.5. Power-Sharing and Cabinet Durability

The first proposition expects cohesion to track the distribution of executive office, and the cases support it with reasonable consistency. Where ministries were distributed across partners in a manner they regarded as proportionate, alliances sustained cooperation;

²⁸ Sulistyani Eka Lestari and Ahmad Siboy, "The Alternative Designs Effort to Simplify the Number of Political Parties in Indonesia," *Jurnal Pembaharuan Hukum* 8, no. 2 (2021): 257, <https://doi.org/10.26532/jph.v8i2.16147>.

²⁹ Ana Fauzia and Fitria Esfandiari, "Political Party Deliberation: Mechanism for Safeguarding Constituent Rights against Vacancies in House of Representatives Affected by Political Party Dissolution," *Jambura Law Review* 6, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v6i2.24110>.

³⁰ Nugroho, "Implications of the Presidential Threshold Implementation."

where executive power concentrated among a narrow group, marginalised partners disengaged. The mechanism is not merely material. Portfolio allocation signals a partner's standing within the alliance, and comparative evidence indicates that allocation carries consequences for partners' own electoral fortunes, which makes it a matter they have reason to treat as significant rather than symbolic.³¹

Cabinet durability accordingly functions as an early indicator of coalition strain. Reshuffles are often presented as performance management, but in coalition settings they frequently register unresolved bargaining, and each change interrupts administrative continuity and the implementation of longer-term policy. Recent work on coalition governance under separation of powers suggests that partners also monitor one another through legislative mechanisms rather than relying on cabinet positions alone, which implies that strain may become visible in committee behaviour before it appears in ministerial turnover.³² Party-level analyses of coalition governance in presidential democracies point in the same direction, treating governance institutions rather than cabinet seats as the locus of coalition management.³³ A reasonable reading of the three cases is therefore that cabinet changes mark a relatively late stage of deterioration rather than its onset.

The Indonesian pattern merits particular attention here. Cabinet continuity was maintained alongside periodic reshuffles, and executive office was distributed broadly across the enlarged alliance. On the first proposition this is what should be expected: broad distribution sustained loyalty. It also indicates the price of that strategy, since an executive assembled to accommodate partners is constrained in ways that an executive assembled for programmatic coherence is not.

3.6. Cross-Case Comparison

Reading the three cases against one another produces a pattern that no single case displays on its own. Indonesia and the Philippines both achieved formal stability with wide, weakly programmatic alliances, but by different routes: Indonesia through a legally compelled pre-electoral coalition subsequently enlarged, the Philippines through post-electoral consolidation around the incumbent. Brazil, with a comparable breadth of alliance, did not achieve the same outcome. The difference lies less in configuration at the outset than in whether the resources sustaining accommodation remained available as the term progressed.

Two observations follow. The first is that the relationship between configuration and stability is not linear, and features compensate for one another. A wide alliance with broad office distribution may achieve stability comparable to a narrow alliance with high programmatic agreement, but the two are stable for different reasons and are vulnerable to different shocks. The second is that formal stability and governing quality are separable. An administration facing little organised legislative opposition may pass legislation efficiently while subjecting it to limited scrutiny, and analyses of the Indonesian period connect

³¹ Batista, Power, and Zucco, "Be Careful What You Wish For."

³² Alberdingk Thijm, "Coalition Governance under Separation of Powers."

³³ Joris Thijm and Jorge M. Fernandes, "Parties and Coalition Governance in Presidential Democracies," *Political Research Quarterly* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241309092>.

precisely this configuration to a decline in the quality of democratic contestation.³⁴ The concern is not confined to Indonesia; comparative constitutional scholarship has documented cases in which large and compliant legislative majorities became the instrument through which institutional checks were dismantled.³⁵ Stability measured as the absence of visible conflict can therefore coexist with a weakening of the deliberative functions that make legislative support meaningful, which is why this article treats stability as a condition requiring interpretation rather than as a straightforward good.

3.7. Temporal Dynamics across the Presidential Term

The third proposition expects cohesion to vary with the electoral calendar, and the cases are consistent with it. In the early phase, cooperation was highest in all three: electoral success was recent, portfolios had just been allocated, and partners had not yet accumulated grievances. The mid phase introduced differentiation, as policy performance and public standing began to shape partners' assessments of the alliance; this is the phase in which the Brazilian alliance began to deteriorate, while the Indonesian alliance was instead enlarged.

The late phase displays the clearest evidence for the proposition. As the next election approached, partners whose prospects were not tied to the president's standing had incentives to differentiate themselves, and the characteristic form this took was reduced practical cooperation while formal membership was retained. This matters for how stability should be assessed: an alliance can appear intact on paper while the cooperation that gives it substance has already diminished, which is why formal membership is an unreliable indicator in the final phase of a term. The Indonesian case adds a further dimension, since the approach of the 2024 election involved not only repositioning among existing partners but the construction of new alliances cutting across previous divisions.³⁶ The temporal pattern is therefore not simply decay; it is reconfiguration in anticipation of the next contest.

3.8. Institutional Context and Theoretical Implications

The Indonesian debate over the candidacy threshold has been extensive, and its principal lines can be summarised before the implications of its removal are considered. One strand defended the requirement as an instrument for simplifying a fragmented party system and affirming presidentialism.³⁷ A second questioned whether a numerical qualification could be reconciled with the constitutional right to stand for office, tracing the Constitutional Court's shifting treatment of the question across successive petitions.³⁸ A third examined the requirement as an instance of open legal policy, in which legislative discretion

³⁴ Mouliza Kristhopher Donna Sweinstani et al., "The Jokowi's Decline of Democracy Era and Its Impact to the Indonesian 2024 Presidential Election," *SAGE Open* (2026), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440261456980>.

³⁵ Javier Martin-Reyes, "Democracy Dismantled: Mexico's Constitutional Path to Autocracy," *Comparative Constitutional Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 24–30, <https://doi.org/10.4337/ccs.2025.01.04>.

³⁶ Rendy Wadipalapa and Adam Tyson, "Cross-Party Presidential Dynasticism in Indonesia: Evidence from the 2024 Presidential Elections," *Pacific Affairs* 98, no. 1 (2025): 79–102, <https://doi.org/10.5509/2025981-art4>.

³⁷ Kurnia, "Presidential Candidacy Threshold and Presidentialism Affirmation."

³⁸ Ummu Hanie, Sidik Adi Purnama, and Faiz Rahmanto, "Examining the Constitutional Court's Changing Approach to the Presidential Threshold," *Yurispruden: Jurnal Fakultas Hukum Universitas Islam Malang* 8, no. 2 (2025): 245–65, <https://doi.org/10.33474/yur.v8i2.23836>.

constrained the scope of judicial review.³⁹ A fourth assessed its practical effects, including its interaction with simultaneous elections.⁴⁰ Comparative treatments set the Indonesian rule alongside nomination requirements in other presidential systems and found no consistent relationship between such thresholds and governing stability,⁴¹ while further work examined the legal design of nomination requirements more generally⁴² and compared the Indonesian provision with arrangements elsewhere.⁴³ What this literature did not address is the question pursued here, namely how the alliances produced by the requirement behaved once in government.

The Indonesian case gains analytical interest from an institutional change occurring at the end of the period examined. The candidacy threshold required coalition-building as a condition of nomination, and Indonesian scholarship has been divided over its effects, with some accounts treating it as a device for simplifying an otherwise fragmented system and others arguing that it narrowed competition without improving governance.⁴⁴ Constitutional Court Decision No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024 removed the requirement, and subsequent legal scholarship has begun to consider how nomination should be regulated in its absence.⁴⁵ That scholarship has examined the reasoning through which the Court reversed its earlier position,⁴⁶ the constitutional implications of removal for the electoral

³⁹ Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "Interpretation of Open Legal Policy by the Constitutional Judges in Judicial Review of Parliamentary Thresholds," *Diponegoro Law Review* 6, no. 2 (2021): 231–46, <https://doi.org/10.14710/dilrev.6.2.2021.231-246>.

⁴⁰ Rizki Bagus Prasetyo and Febri Sianipar, "The Relevance of the Application of the Presidential Threshold and the Implementation of Simultaneous Elections in Indonesia," *Jurnal Penelitian Hukum De Jure* 21, no. 2 (2021): 267–84, <https://doi.org/10.30641/dejure.2021.V21.267-284>.

⁴¹ Ahmad Siboy and Sholahuddin Al-Fatih, "Indonesian Presidential Election on Presidential Threshold Policy: Evidence from Various Countries," *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System* 5, no. 3 (2025): 949–81, <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v5i3.639>.

⁴² Josef Mario Monteiro, "Presidential Threshold and Parliamentary Threshold Setting in Elections," *Journal of Progressive Law and Legal Studies* 1, no. 2 (2023): 75–87, <https://doi.org/10.59653/jppls.v1i02.32>.

⁴³ Muhammad Ali Farhan, "Application of Presidential Threshold in Indonesia and Comparison with Several Countries," *Yurisdiksi: Jurnal Wacana Hukum dan Sains* 18, no. 1 (2022): 56–67, <https://doi.org/10.55173/yurisdiksi.v18i1.124>.

⁴⁴ Songga Aurora Abadi and Fitra Arsil, "Mekanisme Penetapan Ambang Batas (Threshold) terhadap Stabilitas Sistem Presidensial dan Sistem Multipartai Sederhana di Indonesia," *Jurnal Konstitusi dan Demokrasi* 2, no. 1 (2022): 11–35, <https://doi.org/10.7454/JKD.v2i1.1202>.

⁴⁵ Harimurti Adi Nugroho, O. Djunaedi, and Ismail Ismail, "Formulation of Coalition Threshold for Political Parties Based on Proportionality Principles in the Presidential Election Post Constitutional Court Decision No. 62/PUU-XXII/2024," *Asian Journal of Social and Humanities* 3, no. 5 (2025): 997–1009, <https://doi.org/10.59888/ajosh.v3i5.496>.

⁴⁶ Achmad Zuhdi, Serhii Ablamskyi, and Arya Anggara, "Judicial Review of Presidential Threshold Decisions: The Dynamics of Constitutional Injury," *Kosmik Hukum* 25, no. 1 (2025): 48, <https://doi.org/10.30595/kosmikhukum.v25i1.24476>.

system,⁴⁷ and the legal consequences that had already become apparent under the previous regime.⁴⁸

The framework used here supports a conditional expectation rather than a prediction. Removing the threshold removes the legal compulsion to assemble broad pre-electoral alliances, so coalitions formed afterwards should reflect strategic rather than qualifying considerations. On the second proposition, this should tend to narrow ideological range, since parties no longer need partners recruited purely for arithmetic. On the first, it should reduce the number of partners holding claims on executive office, which should ease the distributive pressure on cabinet formation. Both effects point towards governing alliances that are smaller and more coherent. The countervailing possibility is equally consistent with the framework: without a pre-electoral requirement, alliances may form only after results are known, shifting the Indonesian pattern towards the Philippine one, in which support consolidates around a winner without programmatic negotiation. Which tendency prevails is an empirical question that the next electoral cycle will answer, and the comparative literature on how pre-electoral alliances convert into cabinets provides the appropriate framework for examining it.⁴⁹

For coalition theory more generally, the three cases suggest that the office-seeking, policy-seeking, and vote-seeking motivations are best understood as operating simultaneously with varying prominence across the term, rather than as characterising whole alliances. Office-seeking is most visible at formation, when portfolios are allocated. Policy-seeking becomes salient in the mid phase, when contested decisions expose the limits of accommodation. Vote-seeking dominates the late phase, as the next election approaches. Treating the three as a temporal sequence rather than as a typology of parties is the principal theoretical implication the comparison supports, and it is a claim that subsequent quantitative work could test directly.

4. Conclusion

This article has examined how coalition configurations formed during presidential elections are associated with government stability across a five-year term, using Indonesia as its primary case alongside Brazil and the Philippines. Consistent with its document-based design, its conclusions are interpretive and associational. They identify patterns and propose mechanisms; they do not estimate effects.

Three findings emerge. Coalition size is weakly associated with stability, because additional partners bring coordination costs that offset the legislative advantage additional seats provide. Ideological range and the distribution of executive office appear more closely associated with sustained cooperation, though in wide alliances held together by

⁴⁷ Hedwig Adianto Mau, "Constitutional Implications of Abolishing the Presidential Threshold on Democracy and the Electoral System in Indonesia," *Legal Standing: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 9, no. 3 (2025): 669–78, <https://doi.org/10.24269/lis.v9i3.11579>.

⁴⁸ Imawan Sugiharto and Erwin Aditya Pratama, "Examining the Legal Impact of Presidential Threshold Implementation in the 2024 Presidential Election," *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum* 22, no. 2 (2022): 430, <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jdh.2022.22.2.3429>.

⁴⁹ Couto and Albala, "Question of Timing."

accommodation rather than agreement, stability is conditional on the continued availability of the resources that sustain it. Coalition behaviour varies systematically across the term, with cooperation highest early and electoral repositioning most visible late, so that formal membership becomes an unreliable indicator of practical support in a term's final phase.

A further conclusion concerns interpretation rather than measurement. Formal stability and governing quality are separable, and an administration facing little organised opposition may combine legislative efficiency with limited scrutiny. Stability is therefore not self-evidently desirable, and assessments of coalition performance that treat the absence of conflict as success risk mistaking the suppression of contestation for effective government.

For Indonesia, the removal of the presidential candidacy threshold alters the incentive that produced the coalition configurations examined here. The framework developed in this article suggests this change may yield smaller and more programmatically coherent governing alliances, but it is equally consistent with a shift towards post-electoral consolidation around the winner, which would reproduce the weaknesses of threshold-era coalitions by a different route. Which tendency prevails cannot be determined in advance and should be treated as an open question.

The limitations stated in Section 2 bound these conclusions. Three cases cannot establish generalisation, categorical indicators cannot establish relative weight, and reliance on secondary sources means the analysis inherits the judgements of the literature it draws upon. The propositions set out in Section 3.1 are formulated so that they can be tested against a larger set of administrations with measured indicators of ideological distance, portfolio distribution, and legislative cohesion. Such testing, together with examination of Indonesia's first post-threshold electoral cycle, would establish whether the patterns identified here hold more widely.

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