

A Comparative Analysis of Party Coalition Systems in Indonesia's Presidential Government and Australia's Parliamentary Tradition

Rahmadani

University of Mataram, Indonesia

rahmadanishmh@unram.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article examines the comparative dynamics of party coalitions within Indonesia's presidential system and Australia's parliamentary system, focusing on how coalition structures shape legislative functions and the quality of democratic governance. Using a qualitative comparative approach and descriptive-analytical methods, the study finds that in Indonesia's multiparty presidential system, coalition formation tends to be pragmatic in the pursuit of stability, yet it often weakens parliamentary oversight and undermines substantive public representation. In contrast, Australia's parliamentary coalitions are more stable and ideologically aligned, allowing legislative functions to remain deliberative and accountable despite the integration of executive and legislative powers. The findings demonstrate that institutional design and political culture significantly shape coalition outcomes; Indonesia's coalitions tend to foster legislative capture due to weak opposition, whereas Australia's coalition arrangements coexist with strong accountability mechanisms. The article recommends reforms to strengthen Indonesia's party system and coalition practices, including reinforcing parliamentary opposition and promoting policy-based coalition platforms, so that political stability does not come at the expense of oversight and democratic representation.

Keywords: Political Coalitions; Indonesian Presidentialism; Australian Parliamentarism; Legislative Oversight; Democratic Representation

Introduction

In modern democratic governance, party coalitions are virtually unavoidable, particularly within multiparty systems operating under either presidential or parliamentary traditions. (Isnaini, 2020) In countries such as Indonesia, which adopts a presidential model, and Australia, which follows a parliamentary model, party systems tend to be plural and fragmented, making coalition formation an essential prerequisite for stable government. In Indonesia's presidential system, the president is directly elected and wields executive power separate from the legislature, yet still depends on parliamentary support to advance the government's agenda. (Rahmadani et al., 2024) In contrast, in a parliamentary system such as Australia's, executive authority rests on majority support in the legislature, making coalition-building an inherent part of government formation. (Taflaga, 2023)

The pursuit of governmental stability through coalitions, however, generates a serious dilemma for substantive democratic functioning. In Indonesia, coalition practices have tended to produce party cartels that weaken the House of Representatives' oversight of the executive. Legislative processes consequently become less responsive to public needs, dominated instead by the interests of party elites within the governing coalition. (Asrinaldi A, 2013) Meanwhile, although parliamentary systems such as Australia's incorporate more integrated mechanisms of checks and balances, coalition politics there also produce compromises that may dilute the quality of public representation in legislation. (Taflaga, 2023)

One defining feature of contemporary democracy is the plurality of political parties that mirror diverse societal preferences.(Lijphart, 2012) In this context, coalition formation becomes a pragmatic solution for countries operating multiparty systems. In constitutional practice, coalitions function not only as a political instrument for securing stable government but also as a mechanism for distributing power and resources among political actors.(Fitriani, 2022) Thus, in both Indonesia's presidential system and Australia's parliamentary system, coalition-building has become a routine element of contemporary political dynamics. Despite fundamental structural differences between the two systems, particularly in the executive-legislative relationship, both confront similar challenges concerning coalition durability and its implications for democratic governance.

Although Indonesia's president is elected directly, parliamentary support remains essential for governing. Coalitions therefore serve as a crucial tool to secure legislative approval for government policies and bills. In practice, however, Indonesia's coalitions often evolve into political cartels in which supporting parties focus more on power-sharing and cabinet posts than on advancing policies rooted in public interest.(Ambardi, 2009) This phenomenon weakens legislative oversight, as the parliament tends to adopt a permissive and accommodating stance toward the executive in order to maintain coalition stability. Such dynamics undermine deliberative democracy and distance the legislative process from substantive representation.

In Australia's parliamentary system, the relationship between the executive and legislature is more functionally intertwined because the head of government, the Prime Minister, comes from the party or coalition holding a parliamentary majority.(Parliament of Australia, n.d.-a) Coalitions are often formed prior to elections through alliances among parties with relatively aligned ideological platforms, exemplified by the longstanding Liberal-National coalition.(Parliament of Australia, n.d.-b) Although coalitions in Australia tend to be more structured and stable, they still generate compromises that may weaken the distinctiveness of legislative agendas and complicate the implementation of public-oriented programs.(Taflaga, 2023) In the other word, even within parliamentary systems, coalition practices leave space for elite bargaining that can undermine accountability and governmental effectiveness.

In the broader theoretical debate on systems of government, comparative literature has long examined the classic contrast between presidential and parliamentary models. Arend Lijphart argues that parliamentary systems generally achieve greater political stability and governmental effectiveness because of their direct link between the legislature and the executive.(Lijphart, 2012) Presidential systems, by contrast, offer advantages through clearer separation of powers and potentially stronger checks and balances. Problems arise, however, when a presidential system is coupled with a fragmented multiparty structure, as in Indonesia, where governing coalitions may exert excessive control over the legislature and undermine its oversight function.(Ferricha, 2020) This shows that structural differences between the two models do not automatically produce superior democratic quality. Institutional design must be complemented by political ethics, party transparency, and healthy public participation.

This article departs from the empirical reality that Indonesia's representative democracy has experienced stagnation and even regression, particularly concerning the legislature's role as an oversight body and lawmaker within the context of coalition politics. The issue is analytically significant because legislation produced by the parliament often fails to reflect substantive public needs, instead embodying political compromises among coalition parties.

Moreover, strategic government policies with far-reaching societal impact are frequently approved without adequate scrutiny due to coalition dominance within the legislature.

Such conditions indicate the possibility of legislative capture, in which the legislature's core functions are compromised by the governing coalition's dominance. As Neil Peterson states, "*Political decision-making is often influenced through the lobbying of strong interest groups. This is not per se a problem for democracy. It becomes a problem if political decisions are primarily motivated by the intention to grant certain interest groups a favor,*" (Peterson, 2014) that political decision-making often responds to the lobbying of powerful interest groups, which only becomes democratically problematic when decisions are primarily designed to benefit these groups. In the context of pro-government coalitions, this concern is highly relevant. A parliamentary majority controlled by the governing coalition can weaken oversight if legislators prioritize coalition interests, such as maintaining governmental stability, over objective scrutiny of the executive. Legislative capture occurs when the governing coalition effectively "captures" or dominates the legislative process, thereby disrupting checks and balances. Given this background, the article formulates two research questions:

1. How do coalition dynamics and characteristics differ between Indonesia's presidential system and Australia's parliamentary system?
2. To what extent do government coalitions influence the legislature's oversight function over the executive in these two systems?

Through a qualitative-comparative and descriptive-analytic approach, this article offers a critical examination of coalition practices in two contrasting political systems and analyzes their theoretical and practical implications for legislative oversight and political representation. The study aims to contribute to the development of more democratic, accountable, and representative constitutional systems in Indonesia and other democracies.

Methods Research

This study employs a qualitative method with a comparative research design focusing on the cases of Indonesia and Australia. The approach is descriptive-analytical, aiming first to depict the actual configuration of party coalitions in both countries and then to undertake a deeper comparative assessment. Research data were gathered through an extensive literature review of credible secondary sources, including constitutional texts and relevant statutory frameworks, prior scholarly studies, journals, academic books, and official government websites containing information on governmental systems, party coalitions, and legislative performance in Indonesia and Australia.

Results and Discussion

Party Coalitions in Indonesia's Presidential System: Between the Need for Stability and the Challenge of Accountability

Indonesia's post-reform presidential system grants the executive considerable independence from the legislature, since constitutionally the president does not rely on a parliamentary majority to remain in office. In practice, however, political dynamics reveal that presidents still assemble party coalitions in the legislature to secure governmental stability and ensure smoother legislative processes. (Ferricha, 2020) This pattern has been evident from the administrations of Abdurrahman Wahid through Joko Widodo. Coalitions are typically constructed through the allocation of cabinet positions, the distribution of strategic

parliamentary posts, and budget negotiations. These arrangements often produce political compromises that blur the lines of accountability between the executive and the legislature.(Asrinaldi A, 2013)

Observing the configuration of executive-legislative relations in the period of democratic consolidation, it becomes clear that nearly every administration has formed coalitions, and under a multiparty structure these tend to evolve into oversized coalitions in the DPR. The composition of the House of Representatives in the 2014–2019 and 2019–2024 terms illustrates this tendency: the Jokowi administration assembled an expansive coalition that incorporated nearly all parties, including those previously in opposition.(Rishan, 2020) Such a configuration risks weakening the system of checks and balances, as no substantial opposition remains to scrutinize government actions. In this context, coalitions function not merely as instruments to facilitate legislation but as mechanisms of political cooptation. The result is diminished oversight of executive policymaking and a top-down legislative process, with the DPR acting more as a legitimizing agent of government proposals than as a body that exercises meaningful control over power.(Slater, 2018)

According to Ward Berenschot and Edward Aspinall, these coalitions reflect a pattern of pragmatic power-sharing driven by access to state resources rather than ideological affinity or programmatic alignment (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). This dynamic undermines the representational function of political institutions. Representation shifts away from articulating public aspirations and instead becomes a negotiation of elite interests within the arenas of power. This produces a core dilemma in Indonesia's presidential system: how can political stability be maintained without undermining legislative accountability and representation? One clear consequence of this coalition pattern is the erosion of legislative oversight over the implementation of statutes and public policy. The rapid passage of the 2020 Omnibus Law on Job Creation, for example, with minimal public consultation, demonstrates how an oversized coalition can streamline government-backed legislation without substantive debate. This exemplifies the concern that an excessively large coalition may produce a rubber-stamp parliament, one that forfeits its deliberative, representative, and supervisory roles.

In this regard, Indonesia's coalition model faces a fundamental challenge. While coalitions can enhance short-term political stability, they simultaneously weaken the legitimacy and critical capacity of the legislative branch. Oversight of the president becomes compromised and highly conciliatory.(Rishan, 2020) A structural re-evaluation is therefore necessary, potentially through electoral system reforms that reduce party fragmentation, the institutional strengthening of parliamentary opposition, and the reorientation of coalitions from instruments of power-sharing to democratic mechanisms that reinforce legislative accountability and representation. In his study, Idul Rishan recommends recalibrating executive-legislative relations through constitutional adjustments to legislative authority, restructuring the legal framework governing president-party relations, simplifying the party system to align more closely with presidentialism, and consolidating ideological platforms around nationalist, religious, and moderate streams.(Rishan, 2020)

Classical presidentialism, as articulated by Juan J. Linz, is characterized by a firm separation of powers between the executive and the legislature. The president is directly elected and possesses independent legitimacy, meaning that, in theory, executive governance does not depend on majority support in the legislature.(Linz, 1990) Yet the Indonesian experience demonstrates that in a multiparty and patronage-oriented political environment, presidents

strategically build legislative coalitions to safeguard the continuity of their policy agenda. This indicates that practical political considerations frequently override the normative principles of institutional design. The president's tendency to build large coalitions is also shaped by the highly fragmented party system. Indonesia's relatively low parliamentary threshold ensures that the DPR is consistently populated by multiple parties with diverse ideological orientations and interests. Under such conditions, presidents are compelled to coalesce with as many parties as possible to secure support for legislation and the national budget. (Rishan, 2020) However, this approach often produces a rainbow coalition, an oversized and heterogeneous bloc that dilutes policy coherence and undermines consistent governance principles. (Slater, 2018)

These dynamics not only weaken legislative oversight but also create moral hazards within the bureaucracy. When numerous coalition parties demand cabinet representation, ministerial appointments are frequently determined by political compromise rather than technocratic competence. This undermines bureaucratic performance and intensifies the politicization of public office. (Ambardi, 2009) In the Indonesia Maju Cabinet (2019–2024), for instance, several ministries were led by party figures whose expertise did not align with their portfolio, resulting in a system where political loyalty outweighs performance accountability. The weakness of the opposition further exacerbates these issues. In recent years, nearly all major parties have joined the governing coalition, leaving only a small number of minor parties outside government. Consequently, critical evaluations of government policies disproportionately emerge from civil society and academia rather than from parliament. This raises serious concerns about the DPR's representational function. Do political parties truly represent their constituents, or merely the interests of elites negotiated within coalitional power-sharing?

Moreover, this coalition system has undermined the quality of legislation. Previous studies show that many statutes passed by the DPR are not rooted in long-term legislative planning but are driven by the short-term interests of governing coalition partners. (Ichwanuddin, 2012) and do not necessarily improve legislative performance. (Rishan, 2020) For instance, the accelerated deliberations of the KPK Law revision, the Job Creation Law, and the Criminal Code Bill demonstrate how majoritarian power in parliament has been used to pass controversial policies without adequate public engagement. This illustrates how Indonesia's presidential coalition system has produced a form of procedural authoritarianism under the veneer of electoral democracy. Theoretically, this phenomenon aligns with the concept of legislative capture, where the legislature ceases to function as a check on executive authority and instead becomes an instrument for legitimizing governmental power. (Petersen, 2014) This dynamic is rooted in patrimonial relations between parties and the state, in which access to state resources serves as the principal incentive for joining coalitions. As a result, opposition logic becomes nearly absent, and critical parliamentary voices grow exceedingly rare. (Slater, 2018)

As previously noted, reconstructing the coalition system within Indonesia's presidential framework is essential. Strengthening political parties so that they are anchored in ideological platforms and accountable to the public is one crucial step. Institutional incentives must also be redesigned to ensure that parties remaining outside government still possess meaningful roles, for example through enhancing minority rights in parliament such as interpellation and inquiry powers. Strengthening independent oversight bodies such as the Audit Board, the Anti-

Corruption Commission, and the Ombudsman is also vital to complement weakened legislative scrutiny.

In sum, Indonesia's presidential coalitions have strayed from the foundational principle of separation of powers and instead entrenched patterns of patronage that diminish democratic effectiveness. While large coalitions may promise stability, they often come at the cost of public trust and legislative legitimacy. Over time, this may foster political apathy and erode democratic accountability. Transforming the coalition system must therefore become part of a broader institutional reform agenda, aimed at producing a more deliberative, substantive, and representative democracy.

Coalition Politics in Australia's Parliamentary System: Stable yet Competitive

Australia's parliamentary system is founded on the principle of parliamentary supremacy and the direct accountability of the executive to the legislature. The Prime Minister, as head of government, is selected from the party or coalition of parties that commands a majority in the House of Representatives. (Parliament of Australia, n.d.-a) This institutional design naturally encourages coalition formation, especially when no single party wins an outright majority. Yet unlike Indonesia, coalition politics in Australia is more structured, more stable, and grounded in relatively coherent ideological alignment. A clear illustration of coalition stability in Australia is the long-standing Liberal-National Coalition, which has endured since the early twentieth century and continues to shape federal politics today. The coalition, composed of the Liberal Party of Australia and the National Party of Australia, governs whenever it jointly secures a parliamentary majority. (Parliament of Australia, n.d.-b) Its durability is not the product of ad hoc bargaining but instead reflects deep-seated commonalities in economic, agricultural, and fiscal policy orientations. Coalition arrangements in Australia therefore tend not to be improvised, as frequently occurs in Indonesia's presidential system, but are built on long-term strategic and ideological foundations.

Despite their stability, Australian coalitions are inherently competitive. Each party within the coalition maintains its own identity, organizational structure, and electoral base. This configuration allows coalition partners to openly critique one another on specific issues even while serving in government. (Taflaga, 2023) Differences between the National and Liberal parties on matters such as climate policy, agricultural subsidies, and regional development often generate visible tension. However, such disagreements do not fracture the coalition because established internal mechanisms manage conflict and maintain balance institutionally. Coalition politics in Australia is further reinforced by the preferential voting system, also known as instant-runoff voting, which allows voters to rank candidates and ensures that their secondary preferences are redistributed if their first choice fails. This electoral design incentivizes strategic alliances before election day, including through preference deals among parties. The system helps stabilize inter-party relations and provides clear incentives for forming accountable and transparent coalitions. In this sense, coalition legitimacy is not merely elite-driven but is rooted in voter preferences transmitted through a transparent electoral mechanism. (Reilly, 2007)

Another defining feature is the strength of the opposition, which remains institutionalized and influential. When one coalition forms the government, the remaining party or coalition assumes the role of Official Opposition, with formally recognized rights and responsibilities in parliament. (Parliament of Australia, n.d.-d) The opposition is empowered to

form a shadow cabinet, develop alternative policy platforms, and scrutinize the government's actions vigorously. (Parliament of Australia, n.d.-c) This arrangement sustains a competitive and deliberative political ecosystem in which governing coalitions cannot dominate without robust accountability. An effective opposition thus serves as a counterweight and maintains democratic dynamism. In comparison with Indonesia, the effectiveness of coalition politics in Australia is closely linked to programmatic political culture, strong party organization, and electoral mechanisms that reinforce both horizontal and vertical accountability. In this context, the parliamentary system appears to facilitate more meaningful public participation: voters can observe a direct causal link between their electoral choices and the composition of government. In Indonesia's loosely structured multiparty presidential system, by contrast, the relationship between voter preferences and the configuration of executive power is often obscure.

Nonetheless, Australian coalitions are not free from challenges. In recent decades, declining public trust in major parties and the rise of minor parties and independents have reshaped the political landscape. (Roy Morgan, 2025) Major parties have been compelled to negotiate with emerging actors who do not always share their core values. (Cameron et al., 2025) This trend is evident in the growing influence of parties such as The Greens and independent candidates in both federal and state elections. Yet due to a transparent parliamentary structure and deliberative political mechanisms, these pressures are typically managed constructively. Institutions such as the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC, n.d.) and the High Court of Australia, (Role and Functions of the High Courts, n.d.) also play a crucial role in safeguarding the legal and democratic integrity of political competition. Their authority ensures that coalition dynamics operate within a regulated framework that discourages transactional, policy-insensitive coalitions. This stands in contrast to Indonesia, where legislative accountability is often weakened by informal and undocumented political transactions.

All in all, coalition politics in Australia's parliamentary system demonstrates that stability does not require the weakening of opposition or oversight. Value-based coalitions, supported by representative electoral mechanisms and anchored in robust checks and balances, can produce government that is both effective and accountable. The Australian experience underscores the importance of building political coalitions not merely as instruments for power accumulation but as mechanisms for political representation and inclusive policymaking.

Impact of Coalition Politics on Legislative Functions and Public Representation in Parliament

Political coalitions, whether in presidential or parliamentary systems, have a direct impact on legislative quality and the broader capacity of parliament to represent public interests. The effect of coalitions extends beyond the formation of a stable government. It shapes how effectively the legislature performs its core responsibilities, which include lawmaking, executive oversight, and articulating the preferences of citizens. Coalitions formed on the basis of short-term power arrangements rather than shared policy platforms tend to weaken deliberative lawmaking and erode the representative role of parliament.

In Indonesia, the rise of oversized coalitions that incorporate nearly all major parties, particularly after the 2014 and 2019 elections, has created structural challenges for maintaining institutional checks and balances. Legislative functions have become blunted because the policy agenda and the drafting of laws are driven largely by the executive and its allied parties, leaving the opposition marginal and sometimes politically irrelevant. The passage of the

Omnibus Law on Job Creation and other contentious statutes illustrates this dynamic. Parliament increasingly acts as an extension of the executive branch, offering little substantive critique. Legislative processes that ought to rely on public participation and rigorous academic review are frequently accelerated with minimal deliberation, generating a democratic deficit in lawmaking. (Ichwanuddin, 2012)

The dominance of coalitions also degrades the quality of public representation. Legislators from governing-coalition parties often face a conflict between promoting the interests of their constituencies and adhering to party discipline aligned with executive preferences. This tension is exacerbated by the absence of strong internal accountability mechanisms within political parties. Loose and pragmatic coalitions, which frequently characterise Indonesian politics, lead to a mode of representation grounded not in programmatic commitments but in political loyalty and transactional incentives. (Rishan, 2020) As a result, legislation is often shaped more by the interests of political elites and economic oligarchies than by societal needs.

In Australia's parliamentary system, the impact of coalitions on legislative performance and public representation exhibits a different texture. Although executive-legislative boundaries are more fluid, coalition dynamics still preserve deliberative spaces and robust oversight. The Liberal-National Coalition, for instance, maintains distinct ideological identities and voter bases, enabling substantive policy debate within the coalition itself. Moreover, the presence of an organised opposition with a shadow cabinet, particularly the Labor Party, provides sustained scrutiny of government policy, ensuring that legislation remains publicly accountable. Parliament remains a genuine arena for contesting ideas and interests rather than a venue for procedural formalities.

Public representation in Australia is further strengthened by the preferential voting system, which enhances the prospects of alternative candidates and curtails domination by a single party or coalition. In both federal and state elections, smaller parties such as the Greens and numerous independents regularly secure seats because voter preferences are distributed more diversally. This produces a more varied parliamentary composition that mirrors a wider spectrum of public interests. Major parties must negotiate openly with smaller actors, including minority groups, to build legislative consensus. These dynamics contribute to higher legislative quality and bolster the legitimacy of political processes. (Reilly, 2007) Australia's system is not immune to criticism. Some observers argue that coalition stability may entrench conservative tendencies, particularly on issues such as climate policy, Indigenous rights, and immigration reform. Large coalition parties can avoid pursuing legislation that risks upsetting internal equilibrium, causing them to lag behind rapidly evolving public expectations. (Tsebelis, 2002) Independent institutions and civil-society pressure therefore play a crucial role in keeping parliament responsive.

A comparative view of Indonesia and Australia shows that the effectiveness of coalitions in supporting legislative functions and public representation depends heavily on four factors: the structure of the party system, the electoral mechanism, the strength of external oversight institutions, and the depth of deliberative political culture. Indonesia continues to struggle in all four domains. Open-list proportional representation fuels party fragmentation, political parties lack ideological discipline, and oversight bodies such as the Constitutional Court and Audit Board often fall short of exercising full independence. Australia illustrates how stable institutional design and entrenched deliberative norms can keep parliamentary functions intact

even under coalition governments. Additionally, the worsening trend of legislative capture in Indonesia, where lawmaking is increasingly shaped by political and business interests embedded in the governing coalition, further weakens the legislature's oversight role. This deepens public perceptions that parliament no longer represents citizens but serves the interests of ruling elites. Unless Indonesia undertakes fundamental reforms of its coalition model, its procedural democracy will continue to face declining public trust and eroding policy quality.

Evaluating Coalition Models and Their Implications for Democratic Quality

A theoretical evaluation of coalition systems in presidential and parliamentary governments requires a nuanced understanding of the foundational logic behind coalition formation and how these models shape the quality of democracy. In political science literature, coalitions are not merely alliances of parties seeking to form a government. They also represent the architecture of power, ideological configurations, and the electoral incentives embedded in a given political system. Any evaluation must rest on a theoretical approach that accounts for the internal logic of coalition-building in these two institutional models and their consequences for core democratic principles, namely accountability, transparency, representation, and deliberation.

In parliamentary systems, classical theory as articulated by William Riker in *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (1962) holds that rational actors tend to form minimal winning coalitions, meaning the smallest majority possible, to maximize power distribution and avoid unnecessary resource expenditure. (Riker, 1962) In practice, however, parliamentary systems often produce coalitions that are more stable and programmatic because parties are incentivized to maintain a functioning government and avoid confidence-related disruptions. Australia illustrates this pattern. Its parliamentary framework allows coalitions to evolve institutionally within a relatively stable ideological landscape. The Liberal-National Coalition, for instance, is shaped not merely by electoral arithmetic but by enduring commonalities in economic and social platforms. This stability creates space for coherent legislative processes and sustained policy development.

In contrast, presidential systems such as Indonesia's operate under a structurally different logic. The president, as head of government, is elected directly and serves a fixed term that is theoretically independent of parliamentary majorities. Yet in practice, to secure legislative support and ensure smooth governance, presidents frequently assemble parliamentary coalitions. Coalition-building in presidential systems is often transactional and grounded in the distribution of offices or political projects rather than ideological alignment or shared policy programs. (Cheibub, 2007) (Rishan, 2020) This transforms coalitions into instruments of executive consolidation, weakening the role of opposition and the legislature's oversight function. Scholars have criticized this tendency as producing a kind of "rainbow coalition" that amplifies executive power without regard for democratic quality. (Slater, 2018) The implications of these divergent coalition models for democratic quality are substantial. In parliamentary systems, coalitions generally foster governments that are directly accountable to the legislature. Horizontal accountability is strengthened through mechanisms such as votes of no confidence and routine parliamentary scrutiny. Legislative deliberation tends to improve because decisions depend heavily on negotiation among coalition members and with the opposition. Political representation is also better safeguarded, as each party brings the preferences and demands of its constituents into the policy-making process.

Meanwhile, in presidential systems such as Indonesia's, coalition-building often results in an executive-legislative cartel. Oversight weakens because coalition parties dominating the legislature have incentives to support government policies with minimal critique. This erodes checks and balances and reduces opportunities for public deliberation. When coalitions are assembled pragmatically without shared vision or ideological coherence, legislating becomes a transactional process in which laws are crafted to satisfy short-term political interests rather than long-term public needs. Under such conditions, a presidential system requires a robust opposition and strong external oversight mechanisms from civil society, the media, and the judiciary to preserve democratic integrity.

Theoretically, a healthy democracy requires a functioning system of representation and strong accountability. Political coalitions, in principle, should broaden participation, enrich policy-making, and enhance governmental legitimacy. When coalitions operate merely as vehicles for distributing power and facilitating elite transactions, they obstruct substantive democracy. A theoretical appraisal of coalition models must therefore assess the extent to which they facilitate deliberative policy formation, enable effective checks on power, and guarantee authentic popular representation. Given Indonesia's contemporary political context, fundamental reforms in the party system and in coalition-building mechanisms are necessary. Potential steps include strengthening parliamentary opposition through resource allocation and expanded legislative initiative rights, encouraging platform-based rather than purely electoral coalitions, clarifying internal responsibility-sharing rules among coalition members in the cabinet, and increasing transparency through public participation and media oversight. These measures can transform coalitions from instruments of elite domination into democratic tools that reinforce the representative and deliberative functions of parliament.

Conclusion

The study examines the dynamics of party-coalition systems across two distinct models of government, namely Indonesia's presidential system and Australia's parliamentary system. Using a comparative approach that focuses on coalition formation, executive-legislative relations, and the implications for lawmaking and democratic quality, the analysis shows that coalitions are not merely alliances between parties. They are expressions of each country's political power configuration and institutional architecture. In Indonesia's presidential system, coalition building is predominantly pragmatic and often gravitates toward power cooptation, with the primary aim of securing governmental stability and ensuring the smooth passage of legislative agendas. This tendency, however, carries significant costs. It weakens parliamentary oversight, narrows substantive public representation in legislative processes, and marginalizes the function of opposition. The resulting dominance of the executive, coupled with transactional political practices, erodes effective checks and balances and contributes to legal products that fall short of serving broad public interest.

In contrast, Australia's parliamentary system exhibits a more stable and structured pattern of coalition formation, generally rooted in ideological or policy alignment. The long-standing Liberal-National Coalition illustrates how a programmatic coalition can function as an integrated governing arrangement that supports deliberative lawmaking. Because executive and legislative powers are institutionally fused in a parliamentary system, policy coordination becomes more coherent, while accountability remains strong due to the ever-present possibility of a vote of no confidence. Coalition quality in both settings is shaped by the underlying

institutional design and political culture. A presidential system without a robust opposition risks legislative capture, while a healthy parliamentary model provides space for substantive policy dialogue and more representative political participation. Coalition formation and performance therefore cannot be separated from the broader design of the governing system, including electoral rules, parliamentary structure, and the independence of oversight institutions.

Bibliography

- AEC. (n.d.). *The AEC's role*. Australian Electoral Commission. https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/
- Ambardi, K. (2009). *Mengungkap Politik Kartel: Studi tentang Sistem Kepartaian di Indonesia Era Reformasi* (Vol. 1). Gramedia.
- Asrinaldi A. (2013). Koalisi Model Parlementer dan Dampaknya Pada Penguatan Kelembagaan Sistem Presidensial di Indonesia. *Jurnal Penelitian Politik*, 10(2).
- Cameron, S., McAllister, I., Jackman, S., & Sheppard, J. (2025). *The 2025 Australian Federal Election Results from the Australian Election Study*. Australian Election Study. <https://australianelectionstudy.org/wp-content/uploads/The-2025-Australian-Federal-Election-Results-from-the-Australian-Election-Study.pdf>
- Cheibub, J. A. (2007). Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy: What Makes Presidential Democracies Fragile? *Cambridge University Press*.
- Ferricha, D. (2020). Meneguhkan Kabinet Presidensial di Era Multi Partai. *Al-Ahkam*, 16(1), 34-42.
- Fitriani, N. A. (2022). *Analisis Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Koalisi Partai Politik Berkaitan dengan Sistem Presidensial Menurut Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945*. 6(1).
- Ichwanuddin, W. (2012). Pengawasan DPR dan Politik Kartel Era Reformasi: Studi Kasus Interpelasi dan Abgket Tahun 1999-2011. *Masyarakat Indonesia*, 38(2), 251-268.
- Isnaini, I. (2020). Koalisi Partai Politik Dalam Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Indonesia. *CIVICUS: Pendidikan-Penelitian-Pengabdian Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*, 8(1), 93. <https://doi.org/10.31764/civicus.v8i1.1920>
- Lijphart, A. (2012). *Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries* (2nd ed). Yale university press.
- Linz, J. J. (Juan J. (1990). The Perils of Presidentialism. *Journal of Democracy*, 1(1), 51-69. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2005.0026>
- Parliament of Australia. (n.d.-a). *About the House of Representatives*. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/About_the_House_of_Representatives
- Parliament of Australia. (n.d.-b). Infosheet 20-The Australian system of government. *Parliament of Australia*. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/00_-_Infosheets/Infosheet_20_-_The_Australian_system_of_government?
- Parliament of Australia. (n.d.-c). Shadow Ministry [Gov.au]. *About Parliament*. [https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/Practice7/HTML/Chapter2/The_\(official\)_Opposition](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/Practice7/HTML/Chapter2/The_(official)_Opposition)

- Parliament of Australia. (n.d.-d). The (official) Opposition [Gov.au]. *About Parliament*.
[https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/Practice7/HTML/Chapter2/The_\(official\)_Opposition](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/Practice7/HTML/Chapter2/The_(official)_Opposition)
- Petersen, N. (2014). The German Constitutional Court and legislative capture. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 12(3), 650-669. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/mou040>
- Rahmadani, Khairul Umam, Muh. Alfian Fallahiyah, & Riska Ari Amalia. (2024). Inkompatibilitas Kewenangan Legislasi Lembaga Eksekutif dalam Sistem Pemerintahan Presidensial Indonesia. *Jurnal Kompilasi Hukum*, 9(2), 133-143. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jkh.v9i2.180>
- Reilly, B. (2007). Political Engineering in the Asia-Pacific. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(1), 58-72. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2007.0015>
- Riker, W. H. (1962). *The Theory of Political Coalitions*.
- Rishan, I. (2020). Risiko Koalisi Gemuk Dalam Sistem Presidensial Di Indonesia`. *Jurnal Hukum Ius Quia Iustum*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol27.iss2.art1>
- Role and Functions of the High Courts*. (n.d.). High Court of Australia. <https://www.hcourt.gov.au/about/overview-high-court/role-high-court>
- Roy Morgan. (2025). *Preference flows are vital in a Federal Election with support for minor parties and independents over 32%* [Findings]. Roy Morgan. <https://www.roymorgan.com/findings/9882-federal-voting-intention-preferences-the-key-may-1-2025?>
- Slater, D. (2018). Party Cartelization, Indonesia-Style: Presidential Power-Sharing and The Contingency of Democratic Opposition. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 18(1), 23-46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jea.2017.26>
- Taflaga, M. (2023). Not parliamentary Australian semi-parliamentarism and the role of the Australian Senate. *Papers on Parliament*.
- Tsebelis, G. (2002). *Veto Players: How Political Institution Work*. Princeton UP and Russell Sage Foundation.