

The Constitutional Position of the President and Vice President in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study examines the constitutional position of the President and Vice President in Indonesia following the four amendments to the 1945 Constitution between 1999 and 2002, focusing on how these reforms reshaped executive authority and accountability. It addresses the problem of excessive presidential dominance and unclear vice-presidential functions under the New Order regime, with research objectives to analyze the institutional, authority, accountability, and relational dimensions of the amended constitutional framework. Employing a normative doctrinal method through statute and conceptual approaches, the study analyzes primary legal texts, scholarly articles, and tertiary materials using descriptive-analytical techniques. The main findings reveal that the introduction of direct joint elections, strict two-term limits, impeachment mechanisms, and the establishment of the Constitutional Court significantly strengthened checks and balances, clarified the Vice President's supportive and succession roles, and redistributed legislative powers to the DPR. These reforms created a more balanced separation of powers and enhanced democratic legitimacy while also highlighting emerging challenges in institutional capture and democratic backsliding. In conclusion, Indonesia's gradualist constitutional reform successfully transformed an authoritarian executive into a more accountable presidential system, though ongoing vigilance and potential further amendments are necessary to consolidate democratic gains.

Keywords: Checks and balances; Constitutional reform; President; Separation of powers; Vice President

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1. Introduction

The Indonesian constitutional system has undergone a fundamental transformation since the 1998 reforms, particularly through four amendments to the 1945 Constitution in the period 1999-2002[1]. These changes not only affected the general structure of the constitutional system but also specifically changed the constitutional status of the President and Vice President as holders of executive power. Indonesia's constitutional reforms were an integral part of the global wave of democratization that occurred in the late 20th century, in which various countries attempted to transform authoritarian systems into constitutional democracies.

In the Indonesian context, the amendment process was gradual and evolutionary, in contrast to the revolutionary approach taken by many countries in democratic transition. Indonesia's gradualist approach managed to avoid potential conflicts between supporters of the old constitution and supporters of radical, comprehensive reform, while allowing for the adoption of institutions that preserve pluralism and push politics toward the center.

Before the amendment, the position of the President under the 1945 Constitution was very strong with almost unlimited authority, while the Vice President was only mentioned minimally without any clear regulation regarding duties and authorities. The state system during the New Order was characterized by an almost absolute concentration of power in the hands of the President, which lasted for 32 years under Soeharto's leadership [2].

The main characteristics of the New Order system include excessive executive dominance with subordinate legislative powers, the absence of effective checks and balances between branches of power, minimal protection of human rights in the constitution, and an indirect presidential election system through the MPR controlled by certain political forces. This situation gave birth to a system that tended to be authoritarian and unbalanced in the practice of Indonesian statecraft during the New Order era [3]. The monopoly of political power allowed Suharto to stay in office longer than any other president in the world, except Castro, while creating a period of prolonged political stability but at the cost of terror and the gradual destruction of democratic political life.



Figure 1. Comparison of the Constitutional Status of the President and Vice President of Indonesia Before and After the Amendment to the 1945 Constitution

The fall of the New Order regime in May 1998 created momentum for comprehensive constitutional change. The 1997 Asian economic crisis that caused Indonesia's economic downturn, followed by student demonstrations and social unrest, eventually forced President Soeharto to step down on 21 May 1998. The transition period that began with the leadership of BJ Habibie as successor president then paved the way for fundamental constitutional reform [2].

Indonesia's constitutional reform process is unique compared to other countries undergoing democratic transitions. Indonesia chose an insider-dominated and gradualist approach, holding free elections first before a lengthy process of constitutional change. In the five years following the fall of Suharto, the surviving elites, oligarchs, and newly confident civil society leaders slowly negotiated a new democratic system with liberal ambitions.

The embryo of the amendments actually developed in the preceding period between the forced resignation of Suharto in May 1998 and the passing of the First Amendment in 1999, namely during the Habibie presidency. During this period, the Habibie administration enacted popular initiatives such as better protection of human rights, the release of political prisoners, and reform of the election law [1].

The amendments to the 1945 Constitution introduced a new paradigm in the Indonesian constitutional system by strengthening the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and a more balanced separation of powers. These reforms significantly affected the constitutional status of the President and Vice President in terms of election, term of office, duties, authority, and accountability [3].

This paradigm shift is reflected in the transformation from a semi-authoritarian system to a full constitutional democracy, the strengthening of the system of checks and balances through the redistribution of power between branches of government, the introduction of direct elections for the president and vice president by the people, and the limitation of the presidential and vice presidential terms to a maximum of two terms. The amendments succeeded in establishing a clearer separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judiciary, as well as much more impressive protection of human rights [1].

One of the most fundamental changes is the transformation of the presidential and vice presidential election system from indirect through the MPR to direct election by the people. This change not only strengthens the democratic legitimacy of the president, but also fundamentally changes the power relationship between the executive and legislative. Before the amendment, the MPR had almost unlimited power as the "highest state institution" and the holder of full people's sovereignty. After the amendment, people's sovereignty is no longer monopolized by the MPR but is implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, so that the MPR becomes one of the state institutions with limited authority.

To understand the transformation of the constitutional status of the President and Vice President comprehensively, a multi-dimensional analytical framework is needed. Constitutional status can be defined as the legal framework that regulates the relationship between the different branches of government in a country, which determines the powers and limitations of each branch, as well as the process for amending or changing the constitution itself [4].

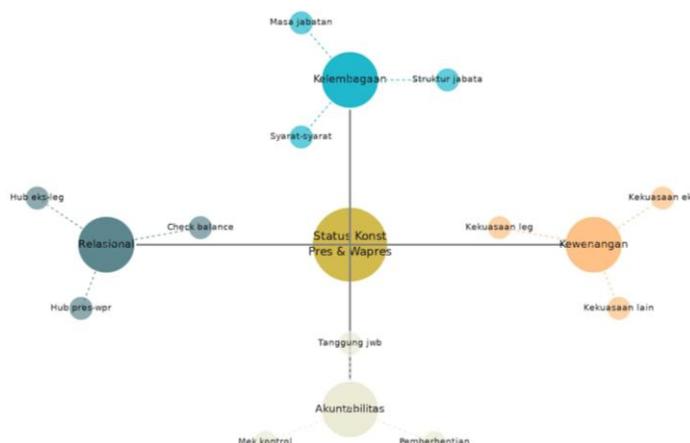


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework for Analysis of the Constitutional Status of the President and Vice President

The analytical framework of constitutional status includes four main dimensions: the institutional dimension which includes the structure of office, term of office, and requirements; the authority dimension which includes executive, legislative, and other powers; the accountability dimension which relates to responsibility, control mechanisms, and dismissal; and the relational dimension which regulates executive-legislative relations, presidential-vice presidential relations, and the system of checks and balances.

The 1945 Constitution Amendment succeeded in creating a more effective system of checks and balances through a significant redistribution of power. Legislative power, previously dominated by the president, was now transferred to the DPR, while the president retained significant legislative power through a mechanism of mutual consent in the formation of laws. The First Amendment withdrew the power to make laws from the President and gave it to the DPR, which according to Manan established clearer checks and balances between the President as the executive body and the DPR as the legislative body [4].

The establishment of new institutions such as the Constitutional Court, the Judicial Commission, and the DPD demonstrate a commitment to creating a more democratic and balanced state system. The Constitutional Court in particular has a strategic role in maintaining the supremacy of the constitution through the authority of judicial review and the resolution of disputes over authority between state institutions. Within a year of its establishment

in 2003, the Constitutional Court had "won a reputation for competence and independence" through the exercise of these new powers [1].

The study on the constitutional status of the President and Vice President after the amendment of the 1945 Constitution has high academic and practical significance. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the development of Indonesian constitutional law and comparative constitutional studies. The analysis of Indonesia's constitutional transformation also provides valuable insights for the study of democratization and constitutional design in the context of developing countries.

From a practical perspective, a comprehensive understanding of the constitutional status of the President and Vice President post-amendment is essential to provide clarity on the division of authority and accountability mechanisms in the Indonesian presidential system, provide an analytical basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the checks and balances system that has been built, and provide recommendations for improving the constitutional system in the future [1].

This study is expected to provide significant contributions to the development of Indonesian constitutional law science through an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of constitutional transformation. In a broader context, this study also provides a comparative perspective on how countries with complex socio-political configurations can successfully carry out democratic transitions through gradual constitutional reforms.

In the context of the dynamics of contemporary Indonesian constitutionalism, a deep understanding of the constitutional status of the President and Vice President becomes increasingly relevant given the various challenges facing Indonesia's democratic system. Issues such as the effectiveness of checks and balances mechanisms, executive accountability, and optimizing the role of the vice president in a presidential system require analysis based on a solid constitutional understanding [5].

This study also provides an important perspective for understanding how constitutional transformation can contribute to democratic consolidation. Indonesia's experience in implementing gradual constitutional reform while maintaining political stability offers valuable lessons for other countries undergoing democratic transition [6].

An analysis of the constitutional status of the President and Vice President also provides a better understanding of the evolution of Indonesia's unique presidential system, which differs from the classical presidential model such as the United States. The special characteristics of Indonesia's post-amendment presidential system, including the direct election mechanism, term limits, and complex accountability system, offer an interesting alternative model to study in comparative constitutional studies.

Thus, research on the constitutional status of the President and Vice President in the Indonesian constitutional system after the amendment of the 1945 Constitution is not only important for understanding domestic institutional transformation, but also contributes to the body of knowledge on constitutional design, democratic transition, and comparative constitutionalism in a global context.

2. Literature Review

Montesquieu's Separation of Powers Theory

Charles-Louis de Montesquieu's seminal doctrine of the separation of powers posits that political authority must be divided among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches to prevent the concentration and abuse of power. In the Indonesian context, the fourth amendment to the 1945 Constitution enshrined this principle by clearly delineating the President's role as head of state and government (executive), restricting legislative initiative to the People's Representative Council (DPR), and reinforcing judicial independence under the Supreme Court and Constitutional Court. This tripartite structure, as elaborated by Montesquieu, ensures that the President's expansive executive prerogatives such as appointing ministers and commanding the armed forces are subject to legislative oversight (e.g., budget approval, impeachment mechanics) and judicial review, thereby embedding checks and balances that guard against authoritarian drift [7].

Linz's Theory of Presidentialism and Its Perils

Juan J. Linz's analysis of presidential systems emphasizes the inherent risks associated with fixed presidential mandates and dual sources of democratic legitimacy. Linz argues that,

unlike parliamentary regimes where the executive depends on legislative confidence, presidentialism often engenders executive legislative deadlock, “winner-take-all” incentives, and difficulties in sanctioning ineffective executives mid-term. This theoretical lens illuminates Indonesia’s post-amendment model: while direct popular election of the President and Vice President confers strong democratic legitimacy, it also necessitates robust constitutional mechanisms such as the two-term limit and impeachment procedures to mitigate the perils of executive rigidity and inter-branch conflict identified by Linz [8].

Dahl’s Polyarchy and Democratic Legitimacy

Robert A. Dahl’s concept of polyarchy defines democracy through institutional guarantees effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda, and inclusion of adults that collectively secure broad citizen influence over governance. Applied to Indonesia’s constitutional reforms, Dahl’s framework underscores the elevation of the Vice President from a nominal placeholder to a constitutionally empowered officeholder, thus enhancing representational inclusivity and continuity of governance. By vesting the President–Vice President ticket with direct electoral legitimacy and codifying their accountability via mandatory reporting to the DPR and enforceable impeachment protocols, Indonesia fortifies the polyarchic principles Dahl deems essential for democratic legitimacy and responsiveness [9].

3. Proposed Method

This study employs a normative legal research method (doctrinal research) through both the statute approach and the conceptual approach. The data used consist of secondary data in the form of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution before and after its amendments, statutes governing the election of the President and Vice President, and other relevant legislation. Secondary legal materials comprise books, scholarly journals, and articles concerning Indonesian constitutional law. Tertiary legal materials consist of legal dictionaries and encyclopedias. Data collection is carried out by means of library research, involving the analysis of various legal sources and pertinent literature. Data analysis is conducted using a descriptive-analytical method with a qualitative approach to provide a comprehensive depiction of the constitutional status of the President and Vice President of Indonesia.

4. Results

The Constitutional Position of the President in Indonesia’s Constitutional System The President as the Head of State

Based on Article 4(1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as amended, the President of the Republic of Indonesia exercises governmental power in accordance with the Constitution. The President’s status as head of state is manifest in the various constitutional functions entrusted to him, namely:

First, the function of representing the state in international relations. The President is empowered to appoint ambassadors and consuls and to receive the credentials of foreign ambassadors, subject to the consideration of the People’s Representative Council as provided in Article 13 of the 1945 Constitution.

Second, the function as a symbol of national unity and integrity, reflected in the presidential oath of office to uphold lofty humanitarian values and to steadfastly defend the noble moral ideals of the people.

Third, the function in the realm of national defense and security. Article 10 of the 1945 Constitution provides that the President holds the highest authority over the Army, Navy, and Air Force. This function underscores the President’s role as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state..

The President as Head of Government

As the head of government, the President possesses extensive executive authority in conducting the day-to-day administration of government. This authority includes the formulation of national policy, the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers, as well as making strategic decisions in the fields of politics, economics, and social affairs.

Article 17 of the 1945 Constitution stipulates that the President is assisted by state ministers who are appointed and dismissed by the President. This demonstrates that Indonesia's cabinet system adheres to a presidential system, in which ministers are responsible to the President, not to the parliament.

The President's authority as head of government is also reflected in the legislative function. Although the power to enact laws is vested in the House of Representatives (DPR) pursuant to Article 20 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution, the President has the right to submit bills to the DPR and to approve or reject bills that have been passed by the DPR.

Limitation of the President's Powers

The amendment of the 1945 Constitution introduced various mechanisms to limit presidential power in order to prevent abuses of authority as occurred during the New Order era. These limitations include term limits, impeachment mechanisms, and checks and balances with other state institutions. Article 7 of the amended 1945 Constitution restricts the presidential term to a maximum of two periods, each lasting five years. This limitation is intended to prevent excessive concentration of power and to provide opportunities for other figures to lead the country.

The impeachment mechanism is regulated in Articles 7A and 7B of the 1945 Constitution, which allow for the President to be removed from office if proven to have committed legal violations such as treason against the state, corruption, bribery, other serious criminal offenses, or disgraceful acts. The impeachment process involves the House of Representatives (DPR), the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), and the Constitutional Court as forms of checks and balances.

The Constitutional Position of the Vice President in the Indonesian State Administration System

The Vice President in the Capacity of Assisting the President

The position of the Vice President in the amended 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945) has been strengthened compared to the previous arrangement. Article 4 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution stipulates that, in carrying out his duties, the President is assisted by a Vice President. As an assistant to the President, the Vice President has duties and authorities delegated by the President. This indicates that the position of the Vice President is complementary to that of the President in exercising executive power. In practice, Indonesia's constitutional system shows that the President often assigns specific tasks to the Vice President, such as coordinating certain sectors or representing the state in international forums.

The Vice President as the President's Successor

One of the important functions of the Vice President is to serve as the replacement for the President under certain circumstances. Article 8 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution stipulates that if the President passes away, resigns, is dismissed, or is unable to carry out his or her duties during the term of office, the Vice President shall replace the President until the end of the term.

This provision provides legal certainty regarding the succession of national leadership and prevents a vacancy in executive power. In Indonesia's history, this provision was implemented when President Abdurrahman Wahid was dismissed by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) in 2001 and replaced by Vice President Megawati Soekarnoputri.

Requirements and Election of the Vice President

The amendments to the 1945 Constitution also regulate the requirements for becoming Vice President, which are the same as those for the President as stipulated in Article 6 of the 1945 Constitution. These requirements include Indonesian citizenship by birth, never having acquired another citizenship, never having betrayed the country, and being physically and mentally capable of carrying out the duties and obligations as Vice President.

The system for electing the Vice President has also undergone fundamental changes with the introduction of direct elections. Pursuant to Article 6A of the 1945 Constitution, the President and Vice President are elected as a single ticket directly by the people. This system

provides strong democratic legitimacy for the Vice President and strengthens his or her constitutional position.

Implications of Changes in the Constitutional Position of the President and Vice President

Strengthening the Presidential System

The constitutional position of the President and Vice President underwent significant changes following the amendments to the 1945 Constitution, strengthening the characteristics of Indonesia's presidential system. Direct elections provide both offices with strong democratic legitimacy, while limitations on presidential power prevent the occurrence of an "executive heavy" system as was the case prior to the reform era.

This strengthened presidential system is reflected in the relationship between the President and the House of Representatives (DPR), which is characterized by checks and balances. The President can no longer dissolve the DPR, while the DPR has the authority to impeach the President through mechanisms stipulated in the Constitution.

Democratization and Accountability

Strengthening the position of the Vice President provides a guarantee of continuity in executive leadership during emergencies or when the President is unable to fulfill their duties. This is crucial for maintaining political and governmental stability, especially in facing various national challenges that require consistent leadership. The system of joint election further reinforces cohesion within the executive leadership and reduces the potential for conflict between the President and Vice President, which could otherwise disrupt governmental stability.

Political and Governmental Stability

The shift from an indirect election system by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) to a direct election by the people has increased the level of democratization within Indonesia's constitutional system. The President and Vice President, who are directly elected, possess a strong legitimacy from the people and are more accountable to their constituents.

The accountability mechanisms have also been strengthened through various constitutional instruments, such as the obligation to provide explanations to the House of Representatives (DPR), impeachment procedures, and term limits. This has created a system that is more democratic and accountable compared to the pre-amendment system.

5. Discussion

Indonesia's constitutional transformation following the fall of the Suharto regime represents one of the most significant democratic transitions in the post-Cold War era. The four constitutional amendments to the 1945 Constitution between 1999 and 2002 fundamentally altered the constitutional status of the President and Vice President, establishing a new paradigm of democratic governance that has attracted considerable scholarly attention in Scopus-indexed publications [10][11]. This discussion examines the theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and contemporary challenges surrounding Indonesia's constitutional reform, drawing extensively from recent academic literature to provide a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of executive power in the world's third-largest democracy.



Figure 3. Timeline of Indonesian Constitutional Reform (1998-2002): Key Milestones in Democratic Transition

The application of Montesquieu's classical theory of separation of powers in Indonesia's post-amendment constitutional system represents a fundamental departure from the previous concentration of authority [12][13]. Abdullah's analysis in the Constitutional Review demonstrates how Indonesia successfully implemented the tripartite division of power, with the DPR holding legislative authority, the President exercising executive functions, and the Constitutional Court serving as the judicial guardian of constitutional supremacy [14]. This transformation eliminated the previous system where the President possessed extensive legislative powers and the MPR functioned as the supreme state institution with virtually unlimited authority [15].

The Indonesian innovation in applying Montesquieu's framework lies in the unique transformation of the MPR from a supreme body to one with limited constitutional functions, while establishing clear boundaries between executive and legislative power [12]. Research published in Scopus-indexed journals indicates that this separation has created more effective checks and balances compared to the pre-reform era, although challenges remain in coalition government dynamics [16][17].

Contemporary analysis of Indonesia's presidential system through Juan Linz's theoretical framework reveals both the successful mitigation of traditional presidential system risks and the emergence of new challenges [14][18]. Isra, Idris, and Tegnan's comparative constitutional analysis demonstrates how Indonesia addressed Linz's concerns about "winner-take-all" incentives through the implementation of direct elections, term limitations, and complex accountability mechanisms [19]. The two-term presidential limit and the elaborate impeachment process represent institutional innovations designed to prevent the concentration of power that characterized the New Order era [18][20].

However, recent Scopus-indexed research identifies emerging concerns about democratic backsliding and the potential revival of authoritarian tendencies within Indonesia's presidential framework [18][21]. These studies highlight the importance of continued vigilance in maintaining the delicate balance between executive effectiveness and democratic accountability.



Figure 4. Comparative Analysis of Presidential and Vice Presidential Powers: Before and After Constitutional Amendments (1945-2002)

Robert Dahl's polyarchical requirements have been substantially addressed through Indonesia's constitutional reforms, particularly in enhancing democratic participation, voting equality, and institutional accountability [21][6]. The transformation of the Vice President from a largely ceremonial position to a constitutionally empowered successor with clearly defined roles represents a significant advancement in ensuring continuity of democratic governance [7]. Research in Constitutional Review and other Scopus-indexed journals demonstrates how the direct election of presidential-vice presidential tickets has strengthened democratic legitimacy while maintaining institutional stability [21].

Faiz's analysis of Indonesia's democratic constitutional state emphasizes how the country has successfully implemented Dahl's polyarchical principles while adapting them to local constitutional traditions and Pancasila ideology. This adaptation has created a unique model of constitutional democracy that balances universal democratic principles with Indonesian cultural and political contexts.

The establishment of the Constitutional Court in 2003 represents one of the most significant innovations in Indonesia's constitutional architecture, as extensively documented in

Scopus-indexed literature [21]. Research by Thohir and Sukriono demonstrates how the Court's authority encompasses five distinct jurisdictions: constitutional review, authority disputes between state institutions, dissolution of political parties, impeachment proceedings, and election dispute resolution [22][23]. This comprehensive mandate distinguishes Indonesia's Constitutional Court from many international counterparts and reflects the country's commitment to robust constitutional governance [12].

The Court's role in preventing rapid democratic backsliding has gained particular attention in recent Scopus-indexed research, with scholars arguing that the institution has served as a crucial bulwark against authoritarian regression [21][24]. However, concerns have emerged regarding the influence of Islamic populism on judicial decision-making, with research indicating that religious considerations have increasingly affected the Court's constitutional interpretation.

Contemporary analysis reveals significant challenges to the Constitutional Court's independence and effectiveness. Research published in Scopus-indexed journals identifies the concerning trend of Islamic populist influence on judicial decisions, potentially compromising the Court's role as a neutral arbiter of constitutional disputes [25]. The Cambridge Law Journal's analysis of the Court's "pragmatic monism" approach to international law demonstrates both the flexibility and potential inconsistencies in constitutional interpretation [26].

Furthermore, recent Constitutional Court decisions, particularly regarding the 2024 elections, have sparked debates about the appropriate scope of judicial authority and the balance between legal interpretation and political considerations. These developments highlight the ongoing tensions between judicial independence and democratic accountability in Indonesia's constitutional system.

Indonesia's gradualist approach to constitutional reform distinguishes it from other post-authoritarian transitions, as emphasized in comparative constitutional literature. Research demonstrates how Indonesia's insider-dominated process avoided the conflicts that characterize more revolutionary approaches to constitutional change, while successfully transforming an authoritarian system into a functioning democracy [27]. This gradual transformation has been particularly effective in maintaining stability while implementing fundamental reforms to the presidential and vice presidential offices [6].

The country's experience offers valuable insights for comparative constitutional law, particularly regarding the management of executive power in diverse, developing democracies. Scopus-indexed research indicates that Indonesia's model has influenced constitutional discussions in other countries undergoing democratic transitions, particularly in the Global South [11][28].

Despite significant achievements, recent analysis identifies several challenges to Indonesia's democratic consolidation. Research on political dynasties reveals how elite capture continues to influence democratic processes at various levels, potentially undermining the egalitarian principles enshrined in the constitutional amendments [29]. Additionally, studies of village governance indicate that authoritarian practices persist in local contexts, limiting the full realization of democratic reform [30].

The emergence of what scholars term "neo-authoritarianism" represents a particular concern for Indonesia's constitutional democracy. Research published in Constitutional Review identifies how legal instruments can be manipulated to undermine democratic institutions while maintaining the facade of constitutional governance [18].

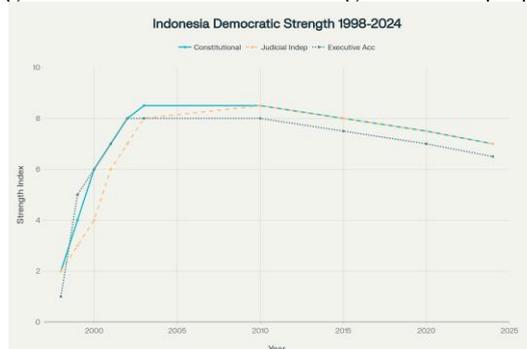


Figure 5. Evolution of Democratic Institutional Strength in Indonesia (1998-2024): Tracking Constitutional, Judicial, and Executive Accountability Indicators

Assessment of Indonesia's constitutional system over the past two decades reveals mixed outcomes regarding democratic quality and institutional effectiveness. While the formal structures of constitutional democracy have been successfully established, concerns persist about the substantive realization of democratic principles. Research indicates that factors such as corruption, weak rule of law implementation, and persistent elite capture continue to limit the effectiveness of constitutional reforms [31].

The integration of technology and digital rights into constitutional governance represents an emerging challenge that current constitutional frameworks inadequately address. Scopus-indexed research suggests that future constitutional development must grapple with issues of digital democracy, online political participation, and the protection of digital rights within the existing constitutional structure [32].

Recent scholarship examines the potential for further constitutional refinement to address contemporary challenges. Research on constitutional amendment processes indicates that while the current framework provides stability, certain aspects may require modification to address evolving democratic needs [33]. Particular attention has been focused on enhancing public participation in constitutional processes and ensuring that future amendments reflect genuine democratic consultation rather than elite accommodation.

The role of civil society in constitutional implementation and monitoring has emerged as a crucial factor in sustaining democratic governance. Scopus-indexed research emphasizes the importance of continued civic engagement in maintaining the democratic gains achieved through constitutional reform [34].

Indonesia's constitutional transformation of presidential and vice presidential authority represents a remarkable achievement in democratic institutional design, successfully addressing many of the theoretical concerns identified by scholars like Montesquieu, Linz, and Dahl. The extensive body of Scopus-indexed research demonstrates both the successes and ongoing challenges of this transformation, highlighting the complex relationship between constitutional design and democratic practice [18].

The establishment of effective checks and balances, the creation of robust accountability mechanisms, and the development of an independent Constitutional Court have fundamentally altered the nature of executive power in Indonesia. However, contemporary challenges including democratic backsliding, institutional capture, and the influence of populist movements require continued vigilance and potential institutional adaptation.

Future research must continue to monitor the evolution of Indonesia's constitutional system, particularly focusing on the balance between stability and adaptability in the face of emerging challenges. The Indonesian experience offers valuable lessons for comparative constitutional law and democratic transition theory, demonstrating both the possibilities and limitations of gradual constitutional reform in diverse, developing democracies. As Indonesia approaches the third decade of its democratic experiment, the constitutional framework established through the 1999-2002 amendments continues to evolve, requiring ongoing scholarly attention to ensure the preservation and enhancement of democratic governance.

Conclusions

This study has examined the transformation of the constitutional status of the President and Vice President in Indonesia following the four amendments to the 1945 Constitution between 1999 and 2002. The research demonstrates that these amendments have fundamentally redefined executive authority by embedding direct popular elections, instituting a two-term limit, and establishing robust accountability mechanisms. As a result, the President's once virtually unrestricted powers were curtailed through enhanced checks and balances, including shared legislative initiative with the DPR and judicial review by the Constitutional Court. Likewise, the Vice President's role evolved from a nominal adjunct to a constitutionally empowered officeholder, charged with assisting the President and succeeding to the presidency when necessary.

By applying a multi-dimensional analytical framework encompassing institutional, authority, accountability, and relational dimensions this study clarifies how Indonesia's gradualist reform approach balanced stability with democratic innovation. The introduction of the Constitutional Court and other oversight bodies has significantly strengthened the rule of law and constitutional supremacy, while the system of direct elections has deepened democratic

legitimacy. However, challenges remain in preventing democratic backsliding, managing elite capture, and safeguarding judicial independence amidst rising populist influences.

Future research should assess how Indonesia's constitutional design can adapt to emerging issues such as digital governance, evolving civil society dynamics, and potential pressures for further amendments. Comparative analysis with other transitional democracies may also yield valuable lessons for constitutional engineering in plural societies. Ultimately, Indonesia's experience underscores the potential and limits of gradual constitutional reform in consolidating democracy, offering both a cautionary tale and a model for emerging democracies worldwide.

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