

# Reforming the position of the coalition and opposition in the Indonesian constitutional system

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## Abstract

This study seeks to evaluate the roles of the coalition and opposition within the Indonesian constitutional framework as established by the 1945 Constitution, and to investigate the impact of political dynamics between the two on the efficacy of legislative supervision of the executive branch. In Indonesia's multiparty presidential system, the presence of a dominating coalition and a feeble opposition poses significant obstacles to upholding the notion of checks and balances. This study employs a normative legal research method using a normative descriptive approach to delineate the notion and status of coalition and opposition, alongside a juridical-analytical methodology to assess the legal and practical impediments impacting the efficacy of legislative oversight. Primary legal documents, including the 1945 Constitution, pertinent laws, and Constitutional Court rulings, are utilized in conjunction with secondary legal materials such as scholarly literature and comparative analyses of political systems in other nations. The findings indicated that while the 1945 Constitution did not expressly delineate the structure and function of coalitions and oppositions, political practice in Indonesia revealed a tendency for coalitions to prevail, whilst oppositions were frequently disjointed and less efficacious. This undermines the parliamentary scrutiny of executive policy, which frequently serves just as a formality. The formal regulation of the opposition's role, the enhancement of legislative ability, and the streamlining of the election system are the principal recommendations to enhance this political dynamic. The study's conclusion affirms the necessity of political and legal reforms to guarantee that democracy in Indonesia adheres to the principles of popular sovereignty and governmental accountability.

**Keywords:** *coalition, opposition, checks and balances, law*

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## 1. Introduction

The notion of politics in Indonesia is deeply embedded in the Pancasila democratic framework, as delineated in the 1945 Constitution (Muhtar et al., 2023). In this perspective, politics is described as a decision-making process executed by state institutions that possess legitimacy derived from public sovereignty. This sovereignty is manifested through elections, which serve as the primary method for establishing a legitimate and responsible government (Setiyawan & Muhtar, 2023). Consequently, politics encompasses not only the interactions among political players but also the processes of legislation, policy implementation, and oversight of power execution.

The Indonesian constitution is founded on the notion of power distribution as articulated by the Trias Politica doctrine (Razak et al., 2023). In this system, state power is divided into three main branches: executive, legislative and judicial. The executive, headed by the president as head of state and head of government, is in charge of implementing laws and public policies. The legislature, which consists of House of Representatives (DPR) and House of Regional Representatives (DPD), plays a role in making laws and supervising the implementation of policies by the executive. Meanwhile, the judiciary, represented by the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, serves to enforce laws and test legislation to remain in accordance with the Constitution (Mangesti et al., 2024).

The Indonesian constitution illustrates the dynamics of relationships among the various power forces. Political party coalitions are frequently established to bolster the administration, but the opposition serves a crucial function as a regulator and counterbalance (Butt & Lindsey, 2012). The existence of opposition is essential for maintaining a robust democracy and preventing the centralization of power that may result in authoritarianism (Abdussamad et al., 2024). The opposition in Indonesia frequently encounters difficulties due to the dynamic nature of political alliances, wherein parties who were once part of the opposition may subsequently align with the government following elections. This political dynamic within the state is also shaped by electoral procedures that establish a legal framework for the execution of democracy. Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections governs numerous technical and substantive elements pertaining to the electoral process. The Constitutional Court significantly contributes to the advancement of democracy by adjudicating election result disputes, evaluating legislation, and safeguarding citizens' constitutional rights (Indra et al., 2023).

Issues concerning the coalition and opposition within the context of Indonesian government are intricate matters that illustrate the often fluid and pragmatic dynamics of national politics. In Indonesia's presidential system, the president occupies a pivotal role as both head of state and head of government (Wiraguna & Fakrulloh, 2023). To execute its tasks, the president frequently assembles a cabinet comprised of a coalition of political parties that endorse him during or subsequent to elections. These coalitions, originally intended to establish governmental stability, frequently pose a significant challenge to the viability of an effective opposition within the democratic system.

A primary issue is the challenge of establishing a robust opposition owing to the characteristics of political pragmatism in Indonesia. Political parties typically pursue strategic roles within government, either by appointing ministers or via indirect political assistance, to secure political or electoral benefits. This phenomenon is observed in the establishment of government cabinets that frequently include parties that were formerly adversaries in the election. Consequently, the opposition becomes disjointed or even loses its fundamental nature, so undermining the executive's system of checks and balances. The lack of a robust opposition may jeopardize the integrity of democracy, as the opposition is essential for power regulation and the prevention of authority abuse.

A further issue is the connection between the legislature and the executive within the framework of the coalition. In constitutional practice, the DPR, as a legislative entity tasked with overseeing government operations, is frequently dominated by parties that are part of a coalition backing the president. This presents a dilemma, as the DPR, functioning as a supervisory entity, is inherently part of the government coalition, so casting doubt on its independence. This circumstance poses a critical inquiry: Is the legislature within the Indonesian Constitutional framework capable of efficiently fulfilling its supervisory role amidst the predominance of political coalitions in governance? In numerous instances, the legislative effectively serves as an extension of the administration, resulting in a limited or formal oversight of public policy.

Moreover, issues also emerge concerning the enforcement of the rule of law that regulates coalitions and oppositions. The lack of concrete regulations in the 1945 Constitution concerning the organization and operation of the opposition resulted in ambiguity in political practice. In numerous democracies, the opposition is acknowledged as a formal entity with well delineated rights and responsibilities. In Indonesia, opposition is only tacitly

acknowledged about parties that are not part of the government coalition. This undermines the safeguarding of opposition rights and diminishes their ability to articulate criticism or propose policy alternatives.

The dynamics of coalition and opposition pose issues within the judicial system and constitutional law. The Constitutional Court (MK), responsible for evaluating laws and adjudicating electoral disputes, frequently serves as the venue for political conflicts. In instances of disputes regarding election outcomes, the affiliation of political parties within a coalition or opposition frequently engenders a detrimental image of the legal process's independence. The dependence on the court system to address political disputes highlights the fragility of a democratic culture that values debate and negotiation. This issue illustrates that while coalitions and opposition are vital components of the democratic system, their implementation within the framework of Indonesian governance encounters numerous challenges. Consequently, political changes are necessary to enhance the opposition's function and elucidate its role within the governmental framework, so ensuring the proper operation of checks and balances. Only then can democracy in Indonesia evolve in alignment with the principles stated in the Constitution and the notion of people sovereignty. Hence, this paper aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the position of the coalition and opposition in the Indonesian Constitutional system according to the 1945 Constitution?
2. How do coalition and opposition dynamics influence the effectiveness of legislative oversight of the executive?

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The presidential system of government, the role of the coalition and the opposition are two fundamental elements in ensuring the sustainability of democracy. One of the theories that can be developed to analyze this dynamic is the Adaptive Coalition Theory in the presidential system. This theory explains how coalitions in the presidential system are pragmatic as well as adaptive to political change. This is different from the parliamentary system where the coalition has a more formal and stable function (Häusermann, 2010). In the Indonesian context, this theory is relevant because it shows how the coalition formed is not always based on a uniform political ideology, but is more influenced by political interests and pragmatism to gain power. This theory can refer to Giovanni Sartori's (1997) thinking about the party and coalition

system which states that in a multiparty system, coalitions are more likely to be formed on the basis of electoral needs rather than shared vision.

Meanwhile, in looking at the role of the opposition, the Structural Opposition Theory in the Presidential-Multiparty System can be developed. This theory departs from Robert Dahl's (2008) thinking about political pluralism, which states that a healthy democratic system requires strong opposition as a control mechanism for executive power (Isnaini, 2020). However, in a multiparty presidential system like Indonesia, the opposition is often fragmented and loses structural strength. The unclear role of the opposition in the constitution causes the opposition to be more informal than as a political entity that has legally recognized rights and obligations. As a result, the opposition often has difficulty in carrying out its supervisory function over the executive because it does not have sufficient access to the political and institutional resources necessary to carry out its duties effectively.

In another perspective, the dynamics of coalitions and opposition in the presidential system can also be analyzed through the Theory of Imbalance of Legislation in Presidential Democracy. This theory highlights how coalition dominance in parliament can reduce the effectiveness of oversight over the executive and transform the legislative function from a watchdog to a supporter of the government (Solum, 2018). Juan Linz's (1990) thinking about the failure of the presidential system in new democracies becomes relevant here, where Linz argues that the presidential system often suffers from dilemmas in maintaining a balance between the executive and the legislature (Miley, 2011). In Indonesia, the dominance of coalitions in parliament often leads to decision-making being more in favor of the interests of the executive, resulting in a weakening of the legislative oversight function. The House of Representatives, which is supposed to be a tool of control over government policies, often only functions as a tool of legitimacy for decisions that have been made by the executive.

Furthermore, in order to understand how checks and balances can be weakened by coalition dominance, it is necessary to develop the Theory of Checks and Balances in the Context of the Dominant Coalition. This theory highlights how the principle of separation of powers in the presidential system can be distorted when the legislature and executive are controlled by the same political group (Moravcsik, 2017). Montesquieu in his theory of separation of powers emphasizes the importance of a balanced distribution of power between branches of government so that tyranny does not occur (de Dijn, 2014). However, in practice, a coalition that is too strong in the presidential system creates conditions where the checks and

balances mechanism becomes ineffective. This phenomenon can be observed in Indonesia when the majority of political parties choose to join the government coalition, leaving a weak opposition and unable to carry out its control function optimally.

In addition, in further examining the relationship between the coalition and the opposition in the presidential system, the Theory of Political Pluralism in Presidential Government can be an interesting approach. This theory departs from Alexis de Tocqueville's (2010) thoughts on the importance of pluralism in democracy to ensure the representation of various political interests. In a multiparty presidential system like Indonesia's, political pluralism can provide opportunities for many political actors to be involved in the government process (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2011). However, excessive pluralism can also lead to fragmentation which actually weakens the effectiveness of the opposition. When there are too many political parties with different interests, it is difficult for the opposition to form a solid bloc in the face of executive power. This has an impact on the low effectiveness of the opposition in carrying out supervisory functions and voicing policy alternatives.

Based on these theories, it can be said that in a multiparty presidential system like Indonesia, the main challenge faced is how to create a balance between the coalition and the opposition so that the checks and balances mechanism can run effectively. Institutional reform that regulates the role of the opposition in the government system is one of the solutions that can be proposed. In addition, there is also a need for a change in the political culture where political parties are not only oriented towards short-term pragmatic interests, but also have a commitment to more substantial democratic values. Thus, the presidential system can function optimally and still maintain the principles of democracy and government accountability.

### **3. Methodology**

This research employs normative legal methodologies utilizing a thorough approach (Syarif et al., 2024) to examine the roles of the coalition and opposition within the Indonesian constitutional framework established by the 1945 Constitution, and their impact on the efficacy of legislative oversight of the executive branch. This research emphasizes doctrinal analysis through the use of primary legal sources, including the 1945 Constitution, pertinent legislation, and rulings from the Constitutional Court. The study utilized secondary legal documents, encompassing constitutional law books, scholarly publications, and comparative analyses of political systems in different nations. This study aims to address two primary issues. The

interpretation of the coalition and opposition's roles within the Indonesian constitutional framework can be analyzed through constitutional principles. Secondly, the influence of coalition and opposition dynamics on the efficacy of legislative supervision of the executive, particularly within the framework of Indonesia's presidential system.

This study employs a descriptive normative technique to address the formulation of the initial problem. This methodology seeks to systematically delineate the roles and functions of both the coalition and opposition within the constitutional framework established by the 1945 Constitution. This study investigates the function of legislative institutions, particularly the House of Representatives, in executing oversight responsibilities over the executive when the majority of legislative members belong to coalition parties. This method is crucial for comprehending the degree to which the notion of checks and balances is upheld inside the Indonesian presidential system.

This paper also employs a juridical-analytical approach to address the second problem formulation. This methodology is employed to examine the legal and practical impediments that emerge from the dynamics of coalition and opposition interactions in the execution of legislative oversight tasks. The paper examines potential issues stemming from dominating coalitions, including diminished legislative independence and insufficient opportunities for the opposition to function effectively. The research assesses the efficacy of legislative control of executive initiatives when the opposition holds a minority status. This systematic method aims to deliver a comprehensive examination of the constitutional issues encountered in the dynamics of coalition and opposition interactions, while proposing recommendations to fortify democratic values within the Indonesian governmental framework.

## **4. Findings and Discussion**

### ***4.1. The roles of the Coalition and Opposition within the Indonesian constitutional framework as delineated by the 1945 Constitution***

The Constitution in Indonesian Constitutional Law serves as a fundamental framework governing state administration, the interrelations among state institutions, and the rights and duties of citizens (Evanty, 2020). The 1945 Constitution, as Indonesia's fundamental legal document, occupies a unique status as the paramount source of law governing the nation's existence and governance. This Constitution aims to embody the identity of the Indonesian

nation, grounded in Pancasila as the state philosophy, while also serving as a legislative framework for the democratic governance system (Taufiqurrohman et al., 2024).

The 1945 Constitution was formulated by the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (PPKI) to pragmatically address the constitutional requirements of the newly independent nation. The 1945 Constitution, because to its provisional character, had numerous deficiencies, including ambiguity in the allocation of powers and an absence of regulations governing the checks and balances among governmental organs. In effect, these constitutions centralized authority in the president as both head of state and head of government, a structure markedly distinct from the parliamentary democracy prevalent at that period (Diharjo et al., 2024).

Subsequent developments reveal that the 1945 Constitution underwent numerous significant phases in the history of Indonesian sovereignty. In the Old Order, the Constitution was temporarily revised in 1949 to become the RIS Constitution, and subsequently in 1950, it was altered to the 1950 Constitution, which established a parliamentary system of governance. President Sukarno reinstated the 1945 Constitution via a Presidential Decree on 5 July 1959, asserting that the Constitution better aligned with the nation's requirements for political stability and growth (Ulum, 2019). Throughout the New Order era, the 1945 Constitution served as a tool to sustain the regime's authority. The government led by President Suharto construed the Constitution in a centralizing fashion, so augmenting the authority of the executive while diminishing the functions of the legislature and judiciary. The Constitution remained unamended during this period, and any criticism or proposed modifications were deemed a threat to national stability (Muhtar et al., 2024). This circumstance imposes limitations on political freedom and democracy, resulting in the emergence of authoritarian governments.

The 1998 reform marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Indonesian constitution. Public demand for a more inclusive democracy prompted a significant initiative to change the 1945 Constitution. The modification process occurred in four phases from 1999 to 2002. The amendments led to substantial alterations in Indonesia's constitutional framework, notably enhancing parliamentary powers (Hosen, 2007), limiting presidential authority, and instituting the Constitutional Court as the guardian of the Constitution. This amendment promotes human rights, governmental decentralization, and the enhancement of citizen engagement in the political process (Amer et al., 2024).



Significant alterations in the 1945 Constitution encompassed a more distinct framework for the separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, while preserving the notion of checks and balances. The revisions established a system for the direct election of the president, so enhancing the head of state's legitimacy. This amendment introduces new issues, including the possibility of conflicts among state institutions and concerns over the efficacy of legislative control over the executive branch. Consequently, the Constitution within Indonesian Constitutional Law perpetually adapts to the political dynamics and requirements of the nation. The 1945 Constitution, initially intended as a provisional constitution, has evolved into a legal framework that is increasingly aligned with the tenets of democracy, popular sovereignty, and the rule of law. This historical process demonstrates that the Constitution is a dynamic document that must continually be modified to maintain the relevance of the nation's fundamental ideals and address both global and local concerns.

The roles of the coalition and opposition within the Indonesian constitutional framework, as delineated by the 1945 Constitution, are not specifically defined; yet, their presence can be interpreted as integral to the democratic practices evolving within Indonesia's presidential system of governance. The 1945 Constitution, in both its initial version and subsequent changes, lacks a precise definition or specific provisions concerning coalition and opposition. The presence of these two entities is indirectly a result of Indonesia's multiparty political system (Mietzner, 2016).

In the presidential system established by the 1945 Constitution, the president is directly elected by the populace and possesses an administrative authority independent of the legislature. This indicates that the president is not directly reliant on the majority's support in the House of Representatives to sustain his administration. In political practice, presidents frequently establish coalitions of political parties to guarantee parliamentary support for policy enactment and to maintain political stability. These coalitions are not regulated by the Constitution, however they are a prevalent practice within Indonesia's multiparty system, as political fragmentation frequently hinders any single party from attaining an absolute majority (Wutoy et al., 2022). In the context of Indonesian statehood, coalitions serve a pragmatic function by bolstering legislative support for the government. Coalition participants typically acquire strategic roles, including cabinet positions, enabling them involvement in policy formulation.

This poses issues to the legislative function of executive oversight, as the house is frequently dominated by coalition parties, potentially undermining the independence and efficacy of oversight. Conversely, the opposition in Indonesia constituted a coalition of political groups that refrained from participating in the governing alliance. Despite lacking legislative regulation under the 1945 Constitution, the opposition plays a crucial role in preserving the equilibrium of power, particularly in executing the notion of checks and balances. The opposition functions as a regulator of governmental policy, providing alternative proposals and serving as an essential critic within a democratic framework. Nonetheless, in the absence of institutional structures, the opposition's participation is frequently ad hoc, contingent upon the political dynamics and the strength of the parties opting to remain outside the government. The presence of coalitions and oppositions in Indonesian constitutional practice creates a difficulty, particularly when political fragmentation fosters the formation of "grand coalitions" that encompass nearly all significant parties. In such circumstances, the opposition diminishes significantly or may even be nonexistent, so undermining the oversight mechanism over the administration.

This scenario prompts inquiries regarding the maintenance of checks and balances within a presidential system that significantly depends on political agreements beyond the constitutional framework. The dynamics of coalitions and opposition are impacted by the election system established by the 1945 Constitution and its subsequent regulations. The proportional electoral system in Indonesia facilitates the establishment of numerous political parties, hence influencing the composition of the DPR and the dynamics of coalitions. This presents issues in ensuring that coalitions and oppositions operate successfully in alignment with the democratic norms established by the Constitution (Harahap et al., 2023).

The primary challenge in comprehending the roles of the coalition and opposition within the Indonesian constitutional framework lies in the ambiguity of the formal stipulations in the 1945 Constitution, resulting in the execution of these entities frequently being dictated by pragmatic and situational political practices. While the coalition and opposition are vital components of a democratic government, Indonesian political practice demonstrates that their roles have not been effectively fulfilled in alignment with the notion of checks and balances. This presents several issues, both regarding the interactions among state institutions and the process of public policy formulation.

A primary issue is the predominance of the executive in Indonesia's presidential system, frequently bolstered by substantial coalitions in parliament. The president often establishes coalitions with the majority of political parties in the House of Representatives to secure backing for the government's agenda. This type of grand alliance, while intended to foster political stability, may undermine the legislative function of executive oversight (Muhtadi & Ridlwan, 2023). The House of Representatives, intended to be the governing authority for policy, frequently forfeits its autonomy due to the predominance of coalition party members. This diminishes the efficacy of the checks and balances system, so jeopardizing the thorough critical assessment of government decisions.

In the 2019-2024 administration, President Joko Widodo's coalition encompassed the predominant political parties in parliament, including PDIP, Golkar, Gerindra, PKB, and PAN. Consequently, the opposition comprised solely two principal parties, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the Democratic Party, whose seat count was significantly restricted in comparison to the coalition. In this context, the role of the opposition to critique government policy diminishes in importance due to the preeminence of coalition votes in legislative deliberations (Thompson, 2019). An illustrative instance of this issue is the enactment of several contentious laws, like the job creation law, which faced significant criticism from civil society yet was ultimately approved due to the backing of the coalition majority in the DPR. A further issue stems from the disjointed nature of the opposition, which frequently exhibits fragmentation and insufficient coordination. The Indonesian political system does not explicitly acknowledge the opposition as per the 1945 Constitution; thus, its function mostly relies on the initiative of parties that opt not to join the coalition. This fragmentation hinders the opposition's ability to formulate a cohesive alternative agenda or to conduct effective monitoring of the government. Moreover, the opposition frequently encounters obstacles in obtaining information or public backing, owing to a deficiency in political resources relative to the coalition.

In the 2024 election, the results indicated that several parties, initially in opposition, ultimately opted to join the coalition government of President Prabowo Subianto. The NasDem Party, although endorsing many presidential candidates during the elections, ultimately expressed support for the new government without appointing its MPs to the Cabinet. This indicates that fluid political processes frequently obscure the distinction between coalition and opposition, diminishing the efficacy of both positions within the constitutional framework. The

subsequent issue is the absence of institutional processes regulating the formation and operation of coalitions and oppositions inside Indonesia's presidential system. In contrast to certain parliamentary nations with established protocols for the opposition as a fundamental component of the political system, Indonesia lacks a definitive legal framework outlining the rights and responsibilities of the opposition. Consequently, the opposition is sometimes regarded as merely supplementary within the political framework, rather than as an entity with a constitutional obligation to monitor and offer policy alternatives.

In this context, the Constitutional Court (MK) has frequently served as a venue for resolving political disputes between coalitions and the opposition, particularly in cases concerning contested election outcomes. The Constitutional Court's function in adjudicating election result disputes is frequently influenced by political pressure from many parties, highlighting the absence of efficient political means to address such conflicts. Moreover, the supervision of government policy is sometimes delegated to the judiciary, particularly in instances of judicial review of legislation initiated by civil society organizations or opposition parties.

To address issues concerning the coalition and opposition's roles within the Indonesian constitutional framework, strategic measures are required, encompassing legal reform, institutional enhancement, and modifications in political culture. Muhtar et al.(2023) suggest the following potential solutions:

*Formal arrangements in the Constitution and legislation.* The 1945 Constitution of Indonesia must formally acknowledge the existence of the opposition as a vital component of the democratic system. This can be achieved through revisions to the 1945 Constitution or the enactment of organic legislation that explicitly delineate the rights and responsibilities of the opposition. The structure must encompass the opposition's authority in oversight, policy formulation, and legal safeguards for their role, ensuring the opposition have formal legitimacy to execute its tasks.

*Strengthening the legislative function as executive supervisor.* The DPR must enhance its autonomy in executing oversight tasks over the government, despite the predominance of coalition party members among its ranks. A potential method to do this is by amending the House's code of conduct to guarantee that specific commissions, such as the budget agency or the Oversight Commission, are led by MPs from the opposition. Consequently, the oversight of executive policy can be conducted in a more equitable and autonomous fashion.

*Regulation of the structure and functioning of coalitions in parliament.* Parliamentary coalitions must be regulated clearly by the House's internal regulations, necessitating an official announcement of the coalition's establishment, objectives, and length. This regulation will mitigate the fluid and pragmatic characteristics of political coalitions, ensuring that the alliances established are genuinely focused on endorsing public policies rather than merely distributing power.

*Opposition capacity building and resources.* The opposition frequently lacks strength owing to restricted political, financial, and informational resources. The administration and Parliament may implement a budget allocation system to facilitate opposition efforts in executing policy oversight and advocacy tasks. The opposition must be granted complete access to governmental policy material to ensure that their proposed critiques and policy alternatives are grounded on statistics and facts.

*Promote democratic education and political culture.* A transformation in political culture is essential to mitigate the pragmatism and opportunism that frequently pervade political practices in Indonesia. Political education for the populace and party cadres must underscore the significance of the opposition's role in preserving the equilibrium of power and averting the misuse of authority. Political parties must enhance their ideological commitment to ensure that the choice between coalition and opposition is grounded on values rather than merely transient interests.

*Reforming the electoral system.* Proportional electoral systems with minimal parliamentary thresholds have fostered the fragmentation of political parties, hence complicating the establishment of a robust opposition. Reforms to the electoral system, including raising the parliamentary threshold or implementing a mixed district system, might diminish the number of parties in parliament, thereby simplifying the political structure and consolidating the opposition.

*Increased role of the constitutional court.* The Constitutional Court, as the custodian of the Constitution, can enhance its function in maintaining the equilibrium of power among the executive, legislative, and opposition branches. The court may possess the authority to evaluate the legality of specific political acts, like the abuse of power by a dominant coalition or systematic efforts to undermine the opposition.

*Increased role of media and civil society.* Media and civic society should be urged to have a more proactive role in scrutinizing and assessing the performance of both the coalition

and the opposition. Independent media can deliver impartial information and foster openness, whilst civil society can champion policies aligned with the public interest.

By implementing these reforms, Indonesia's political system can achieve greater balance and accountability. An unequivocal enhancement of the coalition and opposition's roles will guarantee the preservation of checks and balances, so allowing democracy to advance significantly in alignment with the Constitution's intent.

#### ***4.2. Impact of Coalition and Opposition Dynamics on the Efficacy of Legislative Oversight of the Executive***

The dynamics between the coalition and opposition substantially impact the efficacy of parliamentary supervision of the executive within Indonesia's constitutional framework. In Indonesia's presidential system, the House of Representatives plays a crucial role as a legislative body that oversees government decisions (Bourchier, 2019). In practice, this function is frequently influenced by the political composition of Parliament, particularly the predominance of parties aligned with government-supporting coalitions. When coalition parties dominate House seats, the monitoring function is frequently compromised by political interests that favor executive programs without sufficient scrutiny. In these circumstances, parliamentary oversight is largely a formality rather than a substantive process, offering less opportunity to assess or reject government programs considered misaligned with the public interest (Pujayanti et al., 2024). Moreover, the volatile character of Indonesian politics further diminishes the efficacy of surveillance. Political parties frequently exhibit pragmatism, with politicians prioritizing immediate goals, such as securing governmental positions or garnering political support for upcoming elections. This phenomenon frequently deters coalition party lawmakers from adopting a critical position towards the government. Consequently, they often align with the goals of the party or coalition, resulting in a diminished independence of the oversight process. This reliance illustrates how a robust coalition in parliament can erode the fundamental notion of checks and balances that should govern the interaction between the administration and the legislature.

The disjointed role of the opposition also affects the dynamics of legislative supervision. In multiparty political systems like Indonesia, the opposition typically comprises minor parties lacking the political resources or adequate seat count to oppose coalition supremacy. This fragmentation hinders the opposition's ability to forge robust alliances or

present coherent critiques of government policies (Rishan, 2020). The absence of explicit acknowledgment of the opposition inside the Indonesian legal system frequently leads to their role being undervalued by both the government and the public. In numerous instances, opposition votes are regarded as political interference rather than an integral component of a robust democratic process.

An evident illustration of the impact of this dynamic is observed in the enactment of contentious legislation, such as the job creation law (Dungga & Muhtar, 2022) amendment of the legislation of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). During the legislative process, the parliament, predominantly composed of coalition parties, typically endorses the government's agenda, disregarding opposition critiques and public wishes. Notwithstanding significant public dissent, the majority of the legislature enacted the measure, asserting that it bolstered the government's initiative. This indicates that too robust coalition dynamics can undermine the legislative function as an executive overseer and disregard the idea of popular representation.

This dynamic also engenders potential conflicts of interest in the supervisory process. The presence of coalition party members in the legislature who concurrently hold ministerial or high-ranking governmental positions raises concerns over their independence in executing supervisory tasks. This circumstance frequently engenders a dual allegiance that results in ineffective supervision of executive policy. In this framework, the DPR functions primarily as a mechanism of legitimacy for the government rather than as an efficient regulator (Abqa et al., 2023). Nonetheless, not all effects of coalition and opposition dynamics are detrimental. In certain instances, the existence of even minimal resistance can significantly impact the advocacy for vital problems frequently neglected by governments and coalitions. Vocal dissent can shape public perception, thus exerting political pressure on governments to enhance transparency and accountability in their actions. This function is effective only if the opposition possesses a coherent plan and can construct a robust alternative narrative to the government's goals.

Enhancing the efficacy of legislative supervision of the executive within the framework of coalition and opposition dynamics in Indonesia necessitates a holistic and cohesive strategy. Initially, a more explicit formal structure is required inside the Indonesian legal framework, necessitating the amendment of the 1945 Constitution and other legislation, including the MD3 Law (Putra & Mahendra, 2022). The formal acknowledgment of the opposition's role as a

fundamental component of democracy will furnish a robust legal foundation for its efficient execution of supervisory duties. This may encompass the provision of specific rights, such as equitable access to information alongside the coalition, the chance to preside over key committees in Parliament, and assurances of legal protection for their acts in conducting surveillance.

It is essential to enhance the role of the DPR as a legislative entity. One measure that can be implemented is to guarantee that the framework of the House of Representatives enables the opposition to assume a strategic role (Putra & Mahendra, 2022). For instance, by mandating that the leadership of supervisory commissions, such as budgetary boards or anti-corruption commissions, be governed by the opposition. This would enhance transparency in the policy-making process and mitigate coalition dominance that could undermine oversight independence. Furthermore, it is imperative to implement an internal system of checks and balances within the DPR to guarantee that all members, including those from coalition parties, may perform oversight tasks free from executive influence.

Enhancing the opposition's capacity is a crucial solution. The opposition frequently encounters constrained political and financial resources, hindering its ability to compete with coalitions. Consequently, the state must allocate sufficient economic resources to facilitate opposition efforts, including policy study, monitoring, and elevating popular aspirations. This support enables the opposition to perform their tasks more efficiently and professionally. Furthermore, the introduction of an official communication platform between the opposition and the administration can facilitate constructive discourse and foster the development of more inclusive policies.

A reform in political culture is necessary to foster an awareness for political pluralism and the significance of opposition in sustaining democracy. Political education for the populace and political parties must underscore that the opposition is not an adversary of the government, but rather a strategic ally in fostering a transparent and responsible administration. The enhancement of this political culture necessitates the backing of an independent media, which may serve as an external monitor of legislative and executive efficacy and provide a platform for the opposition to express their perspectives (Muhtar et al., 2023). Ultimately, reforming the election system can foster a more constructive political dynamic between the coalition and the opposition. Less complex election systems, like the establishment of elevated parliamentary thresholds or hybrid district systems, can mitigate political fragmentation within Parliament.



A reduced number of parties can lead to more organized coalition and opposition organizations, hence enhancing the efficacy of the supervisory function. The integration of legal, institutional, political, and cultural solutions is anticipated to enhance the system of checks and balances in Indonesia, so ensuring that parliamentary oversight of the executive operates optimally in alignment with democratic norms.

## **5. Conclusion**

The interplay of coalition and opposition within Indonesia's constitutional framework presents considerable obstacles to upholding the notion of checks and balances, particularly in the context of a multiparty presidential system. While the 1945 Constitution establishes a fundamental framework for democracy, political practice indicates that too powerful coalitions can undermine the legislative's oversight role over the executive. The disjointed opposition and absence of legal regulation regarding its function resulted in structural deficiencies within the democratic system. In this context, congressional oversight often serves as a mere formality and proves worthless in evaluating government policies. Consequently, legal and institutional reforms, the enhancement of a democratic political culture, and the streamlining of the electoral system are imperative to guarantee that coalitions and the opposition can fulfill their roles effectively.

If these challenges are not promptly addressed, Indonesia risks a deterioration in the quality of democracy and government accountability. The predominance of coalitions without adequate control may facilitate power abuse, promote exclusionary policies, and diminish public trust in democratic institutions. Conversely, bolstering the opposition and restructuring the relationship between the Legislature and the administration will enhance transparency, elevate the quality of Public Policy, and reinforce the legitimacy of the governmental system. Consequently, extensive reforms will significantly enhance the sustainability of democracy in Indonesia, fostering a more responsive, accountable, and stable political system to address future issues.

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The author declares the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the author used Quillbot and ChatGPT for paraphrasing content. The author takes full responsibility in ensuring proper review and editing of contents generated using AI.

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