

Research Article

Strengthening The Presidential System Through Mechanisms of Public Oversight of The President

Adinda Rachman ^{1*}, Nadir ², Yuni Puspitasari ³, Erfan Arisandi ⁴

¹ Mahasiswa Magister Hukum, Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Madura, Indonesia; email: adinda.rachman01@gmail.com

² Dosen, Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Madura, Indonesia; email: nadir@unira.ac.id

³ Mahasiswa Magister Hukum, Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Madura, Indonesia; email: yunipuspitasari705@gmail.com

⁴ Mahasiswa Magister Hukum, Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Madura, Indonesia; email: erfanarisandi9@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author: adinda.rachman01@gmail.com

Abstract: This research aims to analyze Indonesia's presidential system of government through mechanisms of popular control over the president. In a presidential system of government, the president holds full executive power, separate from the legislative and judicial branches. This power must be balanced with strong control mechanisms to prevent abuse of power. One important form of oversight that often receives insufficient attention is direct popular control over the president. The method employed in this research is a juridical-normative method with statutory and conceptual approaches, supported by primary and secondary legal sources, with legal materials collected through literature study. The findings of this research indicate that mechanisms of popular control over the president remain weak, both through legal and political instruments. The impeachment mechanism stipulated in Article 7A of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia is extremely complex. Meanwhile, the oversight function of the House of Representatives (DPR) as the people's representative also does not operate optimally due to the dominance of oversized coalitions, which cause parliament to tend to favor the government. Strengthening popular control functions is not intended to weaken presidential power, but rather to ensure that executive power operates in an accountable and transparent manner while remaining subject to the principle of popular sovereignty, so that Indonesia's presidential system becomes more democratic and enjoys strong legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

Keywords: Checks Balances, Democracy, President, Presidential Government, People's Control.

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1. Introduction

Constitutionally, Indonesia adheres to a presidential system, which means that the holder of control and responsibility for running the state government machinery (chief executive) is the President, while ministers serve merely as assistants to the President. This is enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The presidential system of government positions the President as both head of state and head of government, placing upon the President an enormous obligation to realize the state's objectives.

The presidential system of government cannot be separated from the active role of the people as holders of supreme sovereignty. According to Jimly Asshiddiqie, if a state adheres to the principle of popular sovereignty, then the source of constitutional legitimacy is the people. Article 1, paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution states that "Sovereignty is in

the hands of the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution." This principle of popular sovereignty means that the people have a constitutional right to monitor and control the administration of government, including the performance of the president as a representative of the people.

Various legal instruments have regulated mechanisms for public control over the president within Indonesia's constitutional system. Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections grants the people the right to directly elect the president as a form of political control. Meanwhile, Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure guarantees the people's right to access information about public policies as a prerequisite for effective oversight.

The effectiveness of public control mechanisms over the president still faces various challenges in implementation. In practice, since the Old Order regime, the New Order, and subsequent periods, opportunities have opened for the emergence of authoritarian, corrupt, and undemocratic governments. This is because the system provides opportunities to build a political structure that grants excessive power to the President (executive heavy).

The tendency toward authoritarianism in past regimes, stemming from the strong position of the President, needs to be prevented through a system of checks and balances and strengthened by control institutions, both from parliament and from society. This demonstrates the need for strengthening public control mechanisms not only through formal-legal instruments, but also through capacity building in society and strengthening the culture of participatory democracy.

A sound presidential system requires both horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms. Public participation will help address problems arising from differences in ethnicity, culture, social and economic status, religion, and so forth. Therefore, a comprehensive study is needed regarding forms of public control mechanisms over the president, both direct and indirect, as well as efforts to optimize the effectiveness of these mechanisms in order to strengthen Indonesia's democratic, accountable, and just presidential system of government.

2. Literature Review

Presidential System of Government

The presidential system of government is a system in which executive power is led by a president who is elected directly by the people or through an electoral college. The main characteristics of a presidential system include: the direct or semi-direct election of the president by the people, a fixed presidential term that cannot be terminated by parliament through a vote of no confidence, and a president who has the authority to form and lead the cabinet.

The presidential system applies the principle of separation of powers strictly among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. This separation differs from the parliamentary system, which applies a more flexible division of powers. In the Indonesian context, the presidential system has been adopted with distinctive characteristics, where the president cannot dissolve the House of Representatives (DPR), and conversely, the DPR cannot remove the president except through a very stringent impeachment mechanism.

Popular Sovereignty and Democracy

The concept of popular sovereignty serves as the philosophical foundation of modern democratic systems. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his social contract theory, emphasized that state power originates from the general will (*volonté générale*) of the people. In this context, the people are not merely subjects who are governed but also sovereign subjects in determining the direction of state policy.

Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as "government of the people, by the people, for the people," affirming that government must originate from the people, be administered by the people, and be directed toward the people's interests. This principle requires mechanisms that enable the people not only to participate in the election of leaders but also in the oversight and control of governmental administration.

Good Government

To achieve good and clean governance, the concept of good government must be applied comprehensively. Good government is a system that regulates the relationship and roles of stakeholders. Good governance is also defined as a transparent process for determining governmental objectives, achieving them, and evaluating performance. The essence of good government emerges from governmental practices and norms that are incorporated into unwritten law.

In Indonesia, good government is embodied in the principles of governmental administration stipulated in Law No. 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government, Article 20, Paragraph (1): "Governmental administration is guided by the General Principles of State Administration," which consist of the principles of legal certainty, orderly state administration, public interest, openness, proportionality, professionalism, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The implementation of good government can enhance governmental performance and provide added value for all parties, which is expected to protect public welfare. The objective of good government is to realize solid and responsible state governance that is efficient and effective by maintaining the synergy of constructive interactions among the domains of the state, private sector, and society.

3. Materials and Method

The author employs a normative juridical approach method, which is research that utilizes literature studies to collect primary data classified as secondary data. This normative juridical approach method was selected due to its relevance and appropriateness in examining legal phenomena that are normative in nature and do not directly involve field observation. In this paper, the author applies a statute approach and a conceptual approach. The statute approach is conducted by examining relevant legislation; in this paper, this pertains to the presidential system of government and public control over the president. Furthermore, this paper adopts a conceptual approach, derived from doctrines in legal science, aimed at producing legal understanding, concepts, and principles that are relevant to constructing legal arguments in order to address the issues raised in this paper.

4. Results and Discussion

People's Sovereignty and the Presidential System in Indonesia

People's sovereignty constitutes a fundamental element of Indonesia's constitutional system, as explicitly stated in Article 1(2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which provides that "Sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is exercised according to the Constitution." This provision represents not merely a formal norm but a philosophical foundation affirming that all legitimacy of state power originates from the will of the people. Jimly Asshiddiqie emphasizes that in people's sovereignty, the general will and spirit of the people constitute a unified entity entitled to lead and to refuse to be led. This principle positions the people as holders of supreme power, whereby the state derives its mandate from the people and must remain accountable to them.

However, this supreme power is not absolute and unlimited. The concept of people's sovereignty must be situated within the framework of constitutionalism, wherein power is constrained by the constitution as a collective agreement. The constitution regulates and limits the manner in which people's sovereignty may be expressed, implemented, and exercised in state affairs. Consequently, although the people are sovereign, the exercise of that sovereignty must proceed through procedures and mechanisms collectively agreed upon in the constitution. This is essential to prevent people's sovereignty from degenerating into tyranny of the majority or anarchy that would threaten the principle of the rule of law.

In essence, people's sovereignty must ensure that all forms of power exercised by the state whether legislative, executive, or judicial originate from the people's will, are managed by the people, and are utilized to the fullest extent for the people's benefit. The people possess the right to plan, regulate, implement, supervise, and evaluate the execution of these governmental functions. However, given practical necessities in modern states with large and complex populations, the idea of direct sovereignty is considered unrealistic. Consequently, modern democracy exercises people's sovereignty through a representative system, wherein

the people elect representatives to serve in representative institutions. Through regular elections, the people may replace their representatives if they are deemed to have failed to advance the people's interests. Thus, democracy, representative institutions, and elections constitute three interrelated and inseparable elements in realizing government of, by, and for the people.

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of people's sovereignty is manifested through the presidential system of government. Miriam Budiardjo explains that the presidential system has distinctive characteristics: the executive is directly elected by the people, serves a fixed term, and cannot be removed through a vote of no confidence. This system provides stability and continuity in governance because the president possesses direct legitimacy from the people without depending on parliamentary support. The choice of a presidential system was not without reason. Post-reform Indonesia adopted the presidential system to provide governmental stability and avoid the political crises that frequently occurred under parliamentary systems, wherein governments could fall at any time due to parliamentary votes of no confidence. The experience of the parliamentary democracy period (1950-1959), marked by frequently changing cabinets, provided important lessons regarding the need for political stability to sustain national development.

The Indonesian presidential system following the amendment of the 1945 Constitution was designed with robust checks and balances mechanisms through the separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. This separation of powers is intended to prevent excessive power in any single branch. The president cannot enact legislation unilaterally and must coordinate with the House of Representatives (DPR) in the legislative process through a mutual approval mechanism as regulated in Article 20(2) of the 1945 Constitution. This mechanism embodies the principle that although the president holds strong executive power, in lawmaking the president must cooperate with the DPR, which represents the people's will. Thus, the system is designed to ensure that power is exercised in accordance with the constitution and the people's aspirations, not based on the unilateral will of the ruler.

Although the president possesses very strong legitimacy from being directly elected by the people, the constitution still regulates mechanisms for presidential removal during the term of office. This represents a logical consequence of the principle of accountability in democratic systems, considering that it is not impossible for a president to commit serious violations or to no longer meet the requirements to continue in office. Article 7A of the 1945 Constitution regulates the presidential removal mechanism, stating that the president and/or vice president may be removed by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) upon motion by the DPR if proven to have committed treason against the state, corruption, bribery, other serious criminal offenses, disgraceful conduct, or to no longer meet the requirements as president. However, this removal process must comply with procedures stipulated in the constitution as the nation's supreme law.

Theoretically, the method of presidential removal according to the 1945 Constitution employs a hybrid system between impeachment and *forum privilegium*. That is, the president is removed by a political institution reflecting representatives of all the people through political assessment and decision, but subject to very strict impeachment requirements and mechanisms. Meanwhile, the impeachment procedure and mechanism must proceed through a *forum privilegium* (special court) of constitutional jurisdiction based on serious legal violations determined in the constitution through a legal judgment. This hybrid system is intended to maintain balance between presidential accountability and governmental stability. On one hand, the president must be held accountable when committing serious violations, but on the other hand, the removal mechanism must not be easily used for purely political purposes that could disturb governmental stability.

This impeachment mechanism faces various substantial obstacles that render it almost inoperative. Saldi Isra criticizes that the impeachment procedure is designed so difficultly as to be nearly impossible to implement, even when the president commits acts clearly detrimental to the people. The procedural complexity includes several lengthy and convoluted stages: beginning with a DPR motion that must be supported by at least two-thirds of DPR members present at a plenary session attended by at least two-thirds of DPR members, then examination, trial, and judgment by the Constitutional Court, and finally a removal decision by the MPR that also requires support from at least two-thirds of MPR members present at a plenary session attended by at least three-fourths of MPR members.

Beyond the impeachment mechanism, control over the president is also exercised through the DPR's oversight function as regulated in Article 20A(1) of the 1945 Constitution, which grants the DPR legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions. In theory, the DPR's oversight function should be a more effective control mechanism that can be exercised routinely to ensure that the president implements policies in accordance with the people's interests and applicable legal provisions. The DPR possesses various oversight instruments such as the right of interpellation, the right of inquiry, and the right to express opinion that can be used to monitor presidential performance. However, the effectiveness of this oversight function heavily depends on the configuration of political forces in parliament and the independence of DPR members in exercising their control function.

In practice, when the president has majority support in the DPR, the DPR's oversight function tends to weaken because political parties supporting the government lack freedom to conduct critical oversight of the president. Conversely, government-supporting parties tend to defend presidential policies even when those policies receive criticism from society. This results in the DPR's control function over the president becoming ineffective, as the DPR loses its independence as a representative institution that should balance executive power. This condition is exacerbated by political phenomena wherein DPR members prioritize party or group interests over the interests of the constituents they represent.

The phenomenon of fat coalition in Indonesia's presidential system further structurally weakens parliamentary control over the president. Elected presidents tend to form large coalitions by accommodating various political parties in the cabinet to ensure political support in parliament. This coalition-building practice actually represents a strategy in multiparty presidential systems to ensure smooth implementation of governmental programs. However, when the coalition formed becomes too large and encompasses nearly all political parties in parliament, this practice results in the loss of a healthy opposition function in parliament. Without strong opposition, the checks and balances mechanism between executive and legislative branches does not function effectively because no political force in parliament serves as a critical overseer of government policy.

The implications of fat coalition are extremely serious for the principle of people's sovereignty. Parliament, which should counterbalance executive power, instead transforms into a protective fence for the president. Consequently, politics shifts from what it should be legislative control over the executive to dynamics internal to the coalition itself, such as negotiations over power distribution and position allocation. The people become victims of this imbalance because the essence of sovereignty manifested through parliamentary control fails to function. People's representatives who should voice aspirations and oversee governmental operations are instead preoccupied with internal coalition political interests. Thus, although Indonesia formally adheres to a presidential system with checks and balances mechanisms, in practice these mechanisms do not function as intended due to political dynamics that distort the functions of state institutions.

Limitations of People's Control Mechanisms over the President

In political conditions where parliament does not effectively exercise its control function, the people as holders of supreme sovereignty lose the means of indirect control through their representatives in parliament. Ideally, in a representative democratic system, the people can control the president through their representatives in the DPR who exercise oversight functions. However, when people's representatives are more loyal to their party or the government coalition than to the constituents who elected them, this indirect control mechanism becomes dysfunctional. This creates a contradiction in Indonesia's presidential system: on one hand, the people directly elect the president, which grants strong legitimacy to the president, but on the other hand, the people lack adequate mechanisms to control the president once elected.

People's control over the president in the presidential system seems to stop at the ballot box during elections. After the president is elected and inaugurated, daily direct control mechanisms by society feel extremely minimal, almost nonexistent. The people can only wait five years to return to the ballot box to elect a new president or reelect the same president. During that five-year term, the people lack effective formal instruments to demand presidential accountability for policies adopted. Although rights to express opinions and

obtain information are constitutionally guaranteed, these rights lack binding force that can compel the president to change policies or account directly to the people.

It is true that in modern democratic systems, the people can express their aspirations through various means such as demonstrations, petitions, or public campaigns. Civil society, mass media, and non-governmental organizations can also play roles in monitoring and criticizing government policies. However, these forms of participation are unstructured and not legally binding. Consequently, policy changes or presidential accountability often remain imperceptible, especially when the president has strong political support in parliament. The president can easily ignore demands or criticism from society because there are no clear and firm legal or political consequences for failing to respond to people's aspirations. Thus, although the people theoretically are the holders of supreme sovereignty, in practice the people lack coercive power to ensure that their sovereignty is respected and exercised by the president.

This absence of direct people's control mechanisms over the president creates what may be termed a "control vacuum" in Indonesia's presidential system. This vacuum is highly susceptible to opening wide opportunities for abuse of power. As Lord Acton stated in his famous adage: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." In Indonesia's presidential system, the president holds critically important executive power, encompassing authority to make policy, conduct day-to-day governance, appoint state officials, and lead the bureaucracy. When such substantial power is not balanced with direct control mechanisms from the people, opportunities arise for the president to abuse power for political and personal interests.

This condition is aggravated by the structure of Indonesia's presidential system, which concentrates power in the president. The president serves not only as head of government but also as head of state, supreme commander of the armed forces, and possesses authority in various strategic areas such as economy, security, and foreign relations. Such massive concentration of power in a single office, without being balanced by control mechanisms, creates space for authoritarian, unaccountable practices of power vulnerable to political and personal interests. Presidents who feel unthreatened by people's control can act arbitrarily, ignore people's aspirations, and even violate principles of democracy and constitutionalism.

Concerns about abuse of power due to weak people's control are not mere theory but have manifested in various concrete cases in Indonesian constitutional practice. One of the most striking examples is the enactment of the Job Creation Law (Omnibus Law) in 2020. This law was swiftly passed by a DPR majority supporting the government, despite widespread rejection from various civil society elements, academics, labor unions, and environmental organizations. The problem lay not only in the controversial substance of the law but also in the process deemed highly problematic from the perspective of deliberative democracy.

The discussion and enactment process of the Job Creation Law was deemed to have minimal public participation and lack transparency. Society as the primary stakeholders who

would be directly impacted by this law were instead not given sufficient space to participate in the legislative process. The bill's draft changed repeatedly and was not easily accessible to the public, discussion proceeded very rapidly without allowing sufficient time for society to understand and provide input, and aspirations conveyed by various community groups tended to be ignored. The law's enactment occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited society's ability to conduct massive protest mobilizations. This case demonstrates how a president supported by a parliamentary majority can enact policies deemed unfavorable to the people or even controversial without needing to seriously consider the aspirations and interests of affected communities.

After the Job Creation Law was enacted, rather than opening dialogue space to respond to society's criticism, the government instead tended to use repressive approaches toward protest actions rejecting the law. Thousands of people who demonstrated against the Job Creation Law were arrested by security forces on various charges, from health protocol violations to anarchic acts. This repressive approach demonstrates that when the president feels politically strong in parliament, there is no perceived need to respond constructively to people's criticism and demands. Instead, criticism is viewed as a threat to be suppressed, not as part of a healthy democratic control mechanism.

Beyond the Job Creation Law case, the potential for abuse of power is also clearly apparent in the criminalization practice against activists and citizens who criticize government policies using rubber-band articles, particularly in the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE). Since the implementation of UU ITE, hundreds of cases have occurred wherein citizens were reported to police, arrested, or even imprisoned merely for voicing opinions or making social media posts deemed insulting to the president, government, or state apparatus. Articles in UU ITE, particularly Article 27(3) regarding defamation and Article 28(2) regarding hate speech, have become instruments to silence public criticism.

These criminalization cases are certainly concerning because they target matters that should be protected in a democratic state, namely freedom of opinion and freedom of expression. Several cases that emerged publicly demonstrate how rubber-band articles in UU ITE are used disproportionately against political expression that should be protected as part of public discourse in democracy. For instance, citizens have been reported for complaining about public services, criticizing government policies, or even merely criticizing the president or state officials. This phenomenon shows that rather than opening space for criticism and strengthening people's control mechanisms, presidential power is instead protected from public oversight through repressive legal instruments.

More disturbingly, in several criminalization cases based on UU ITE, legal processes tend to be unfair and discriminatory. Law enforcement authorities are often too swift and proactive in taking action against citizens who criticize the government, while being slow or even failing to take action against parties spreading hoaxes or hate speech supporting the

government. This discrimination in law enforcement further confirms that UU ITE has become a tool of power to silence opposition and criticism, not to protect citizens' rights in digital space. This practice clearly contradicts the principle of people's sovereignty, which requires that the people have freedom to voice opinions and oversee governmental operations.

The limitations of people's control mechanisms and various cases occurring in Indonesia regarding the president not only impact abuse of power but have also triggered a public trust crisis toward governmental institutions. Empirical data show significant declines in public trust toward representative institutions, which should be at the forefront of overseeing executive power. This trust crisis becomes an important indicator that existing control systems are not functioning as they should.

A survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) in October 2019 showed public trust levels toward the DPR reached only 40 percent, with 45 percent of the public stating they did not trust the work of parliamentary members. This situation has not shown meaningful improvement in subsequent years. An Indonesian Political Indicators survey in January 2023 recorded public trust in the DPR at only 66.5 percent, then declining to 65 percent in January 2024. Even when a slight increase to 69 percent occurred in January 2025, the DPR remained ranked 10th out of 11 surveyed institutions, only better than political parties, which received 62 percent trust. These figures sharply contrast with trust in the president, which reached 86-97 percent during the same period.

The decline in trust toward the DPR is certainly very concerning given that this institution should be closest to the people and serve as the primary channel for conveying aspirations and overseeing governmental operations. A researcher from the Indonesian Forum of Concerned Communities for Parliament (Formappi), Lucius Karus, assessed that low trust in the DPR stems from this institution no longer being considered significant by society. This phenomenon is reinforced by a Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) survey in December 2023 showing only 56.2 percent of respondents trusted the DPR, while 42.8 percent did not trust it.

Several factors causing this trust decline relate to the failure of the DPR's control function over the president. First, poor legislative performance that often prioritizes political and party interests over people's interests. Second, rampant corruption cases involving DPR members, demonstrating that the institution that should oversee is instead involved in practices detrimental to the state. Third, low transparency in decision-making processes, wherein much bill discussion occurs in closed sessions without adequate public participation. Fourth, the hedonistic lifestyle of DPR members, some even involved in corruption cases. Former Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Mahfud MD stated that corruption in Indonesia today is far worse than in 1998, indicating that political reform has not succeeded in creating an effective oversight system.

This trust crisis is not merely a national phenomenon but also a global trend. The Edelman Trust Barometer 2024 revealed that global trust in government has declined, with only 50 percent of respondents worldwide stating they trust the government to do what is right. However, conditions in Indonesia show special characteristics: trust in the president remains high while trust in oversight institutions (DPR) is very low. This indicates that the main problem lies not with executive power alone but with the failure of control mechanisms that should maintain the balance of power.

The impact of this trust crisis is extremely serious for Indonesia's democratic ecosystem. When the people lose trust in representative institutions, participation in democratic processes tends to decline, institutional legitimacy is questioned, and social dynamics emerge that divide society into two or more camps with vastly different views, values, or interests that are difficult to reconcile. The phenomenon of viral "#DisbandDPR" calls on social media triggering plans for massive demonstration actions represents an emergency signal that the people feel they no longer have effective channels to convey their aspirations. Although constitutional dissolution of the DPR is impossible and not a constructive solution, such calls must be read as signs that the system of people's control over the president through representative institutions has experienced serious failure.

Based on analysis of existing control mechanism limitations, manifestations of power abuse in practice, lessons from historical experience, and the concerning public trust crisis, strengthening people's control mechanisms over the president becomes an extremely urgent need. Strengthening control mechanisms does not mean weakening the presidential system or reducing governmental effectiveness; rather, it aims to strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of the presidential system itself. A strong presidential system is one that not only has effective executive power but also has clear accountability mechanisms to the people as holders of supreme sovereignty.

All forms of government decisions and actions must be based on people's sovereignty and law, which reflect Pancasila as the state ideology, not based on power inherent in the position of government administrators themselves. This principle requires that the president in exercising power must not act arbitrarily based on personal will or group interests but must always refer to the people's will and applicable legal provisions. The people cannot be treated arbitrarily as objects of power but must be viewed and treated as subjects possessing fundamental rights that must be respected and protected by the state. Thus, the relationship between president and people is not a relationship between ruler and ruled but between mandatory and mandator, wherein the president must always account for mandate execution to the people.

The extensive scope of governmental administrative tasks encompassing nearly all aspects of social life from economy, education, health, to infrastructure makes people's control over the president increasingly important. The broader the power held by the president, the

greater the need for effective control mechanisms to ensure that such power is used for the people's interests and not abused. Therefore, regulations and people's control are needed that can direct governmental administration to become more aligned with society's hopes and needs (citizen-friendly). Good governance is governance that is responsive to people's aspirations and needs, not governance that merely pursues its own agenda and interests.

Effective people's control will also encourage the president to make quality policies oriented toward public interests. When the president knows that policies will be closely monitored by the people and accountability will be demanded, the president will be more careful and thorough in policymaking. The president will be more inclined to conduct extensive public consultation, consider various perspectives, and ensure that policies adopted genuinely align with the people's interests. Thus, people's control mechanisms function not only as oversight against abuse of power but also as mechanisms to improve public policy quality.

People's control mechanisms over the president are no less important for maintaining public trust in the governmental system. When the people feel they have effective channels to convey aspirations and oversee presidential performance, governmental legitimacy will be strengthened. Conversely, when the people feel their voices are unheard and the president cannot be held accountable, a trust crisis will occur that can threaten political and social stability. The experience of various countries shows that authoritarian and unaccountable governance will ultimately face popular resistance that can lead to political instability. Therefore, strengthening people's control mechanisms actually represents the most effective means and investment for long-term stability of Indonesia's presidential system.

5. Conclusion

People's sovereignty constitutes the primary foundation of Indonesia's constitutional system, as affirmed in Article 1(2) of the 1945 Constitution, positioning the people as holders of supreme power. However, in its implementation through the presidential system, serious problems exist regarding people's control mechanisms over the president that threaten the substance of people's sovereignty itself.

Indonesia's presidential system following the amendment of the 1945 Constitution was indeed designed with checks and balances mechanisms through separation of powers among executive, legislative, and judicial branches. However, in practice, existing control mechanisms face various fundamental weaknesses. The impeachment mechanism regulated in Article 7A of the 1945 Constitution is designed so complexly as to be almost inoperative, even when the president commits serious violations. The DPR's oversight function, which should provide routine control, also does not function effectively, especially when the president has majority support in parliament. The phenomenon of fat coalition further structurally weakens this

control function, as parliament, which should counterbalance executive power, instead transforms into a protective fence for the president.

This condition creates a "control vacuum" that is extremely dangerous for democracy. The people as holders of supreme sovereignty lose means of control both directly and indirectly through their representatives in parliament. People's control over the president seems to stop at the ballot box during elections, and during the five-year term, the people practically lack effective formal instruments to demand presidential accountability. This absence of adequate control mechanisms has manifested in various cases of power abuse, such as enactment of the Job Creation Law with minimal public participation, criminalization of activists using rubber-band articles of UU ITE, and various other controversial policies that ignore people's aspirations.

Historical lessons from the New Order era demonstrate that a presidential system without effective people's control is highly vulnerable to transformation into authoritarianism. Formal legitimacy through elections alone is insufficient to guarantee a democratic and accountable system. This concern is reinforced by empirical data showing a public trust crisis toward representative institutions. Surveys show trust in the DPR continues to decline, even ranking second-lowest among all state institutions, while trust in the president remains high. This paradox demonstrates serious failure of control mechanisms that should maintain the balance of power.

Based on this analysis, strengthening people's control mechanisms over the president becomes an extremely urgent need. This strengthening is not intended to weaken the presidential system but rather to strengthen its legitimacy and accountability. A strong presidential system is one that not only has effective executive power but also has clear accountability mechanisms to the people. This requires comprehensive reform in the legal field to create more effective control instruments, political reform to build healthy opposition and an independent parliament, economic reform to reduce money politics practices, and sociocultural reform to build a democratic political culture.

Only by strengthening people's control mechanisms over the president can the ideals of democracy and people's sovereignty be substantively realized. The president must have sufficient power to govern effectively, but simultaneously must be subject to control mechanisms ensuring that power is not abused. Thus, Indonesia's presidential system will become more democratic, accountable, and legitimate in the eyes of the people as holders of supreme sovereignty.

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