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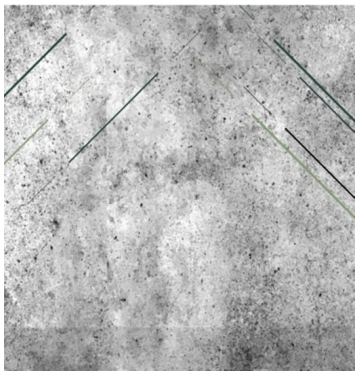
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Andi Suwarko*, Slamet Muliono Redjosari

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia

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Progressive Seat Accumulation in Indonesia's Volatile Multiparty Democracy: Comparing Gerindra and Nasdem

Andi Suwarko*, Slamet Muliono Redjosari

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Abstract

This article examines progressive seat accumulation in Indonesia's volatile multiparty democracy by comparing the legislative trajectories of the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra) and the National Democrat Party (NasDem). The study distinguishes progressive seat accumulation from generic party survival and party institutionalization: it is defined here as a non-declining sequence of DPR seat totals across at least three consecutive legislative elections after a party's national entry, accompanied by an increase in the party's share of DPR seats over the observation period. The analysis covers four post-Reformasi legislative elections (2009, 2014, 2019, and 2024), while recognizing that Gerindra and NasDem entered the DPR in 2009 and 2014 respectively. A sequential mixed-method design is used. First, descriptive longitudinal analysis maps party-seat trajectories; second, document-based qualitative process tracing examines organizational leadership, candidate recruitment, electoral positioning, presidential alignment, and resource mobilization. The evidence shows that Gerindra and NasDem satisfy the operational definition of progressive seat accumulation, but through different organizational pathways. Gerindra combines centralized personal leadership with cadre and candidate recruitment around Prabowo Subianto, whereas NasDem combines centralized leadership, open candidate recruitment, and a documented "politics without dowry" strategy with flexible presidential alignment. The article argues that these cases are better understood as forms of hybrid organizational institutionalization rather than evidence that two parties have transformed the Indonesian party system as a whole. The findings refine, rather than refute, scholarship on party institutionalization, presidentialization, catch-all adaptation, and oligarchic resource mobilization.

Keywords: Progressive Seat Accumulation; Party Organization; Presidentialization; Coattail Effect; Political Resources.

Introduction

Indonesia's post-Reformasi party system is characterized by competition, fragmentation, electoral volatility, and repeated organizational turnover. The relevant empirical puzzle is not simply why some parties survive, but why a small number of parties have been able to increase their parliamentary representation across successive elections while other established parties fluctuate and many new entrants disappear. The six legislative elections held after the fall of the New Order 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, and 2024 provide an unusually useful longitudinal setting for examining this variation. The present study focuses on Gerindra and NasDem because their DPR seat trajectories meet a stricter criterion than ordinary survival. Gerindra entered the DPR with 26 seats in 2009 and subsequently increased its representation to 73 in 2014, 78 in 2019, and 86 in 2024. NasDem entered the DPR with 35 seats in 2014 and increased to 59 in 2019 and 69 in 2024. The unequal number of observed elections is analytically important: Gerindra is

*Corresponding author: Andi Suwarko. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia.
Jl. Ahmad Yani No. 117, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia, 60237
Email: andisuwarko@uinsa.ac.id

observed over four legislative elections, whereas NasDem is observed over three. The comparison therefore does not claim identical exposure time. Instead, both parties qualify because each records non-declining seat totals over at least three consecutive national legislative elections after parliamentary entry.

We use the term "progressive seat accumulation" as an empirical descriptor rather than assuming that it represents a new form of party institutionalization. The concept has three boundaries. First, the dependent indicator is parliamentary representation in absolute DPR seats. Second, seat share is used as a complementary measure because the size of the DPR changed between 2009 and 2024. Third, the concept requires a non-declining sequence of seat totals across at least three consecutive elections after entry. This differentiates progressive accumulation from (a) a one-election surge, (b) survival with fluctuating gains and losses, and (c) organizational institutionalization, which is multidimensional and cannot be inferred from electoral growth alone.

The literature provides several explanations that are relevant but not sufficient to account for this pattern. Work on aliran and dealignment explains the weakening of stable sociological linkages between parties and voters (Ufen, 2008; Mujani et al., 2018). Research on cartelization emphasizes party cooperation, access to state resources, and party–state relations (Ambardi, 2008; Katz & Mair, 1995). Studies of presidentialization highlight the increasing importance of leaders and executive-centered electoral competition (Poguntke & Webb, 2005; Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019). Research on oligarchy and political business points to the importance of concentrated economic and communicative resources in Indonesian politics (Winters, 2013; Tapsell, 2015). Yet these perspectives do not by themselves specify why two relatively new parties can convert centralized leadership and elite resources into repeated seat growth while other parties possessing some of the same resources fail to do so.

The contribution of this article is therefore narrower and more testable than the original formulation. It asks how organizational configuration and resource mobilization help explain sustained seat accumulation in two Indonesian parties. We develop the concept of hybrid organizational institutionalization to describe a combination of centralized leadership and routinized organizational mechanisms. The concept is not used as a synonym for party-system institutionalization. We further distinguish two pathways: Gerindra's leader-centered continuity, in which the party's organizational identity remains closely connected to Prabowo Subianto, and NasDem's strategic flexibility, in which centralized leadership is combined with open recruitment and flexible alignment with nationally salient presidential candidates.

The research question is: Why have Gerindra and NasDem achieved non-declining parliamentary seat accumulation across successive elections, whereas comparator parties have experienced fluctuation, contraction, or parliamentary exit? Three analytical expectations guide the study: (1) centralized leadership becomes electorally durable when it is supported by routinized organizational mechanisms; (2) candidate recruitment and presidential alignment can provide mechanisms for translating personal or external electoral appeal into party-level representation; and (3) autonomous or concentrated resources may increase organizational capacity, but resources alone are insufficient without mechanisms for recruitment, branding, and territorial organization.

Method

The study employs a sequential mixed-method design consisting of descriptive longitudinal electoral mapping followed by qualitative document-based process tracing. The first stage identifies party trajectories using DPR seat totals and seat shares across the six post-Reformasi legislative elections. The second stage examines documentary evidence to identify organizational mechanisms associated with the two progressive cases. The design is explanatory in purpose but descriptive rather than inferential in its quantitative component; no statistical causal effect is estimated.

The quantitative unit of analysis is a party-election observation. The primary indicator is the number of DPR seats won by each party; the secondary indicator is the party's share of total DPR seats in that election. Parties are classified as: (1) Electoral Exit, when parliamentary representation is not sustained; (2) Fluctuating Survival, when a party remains represented but records both gains and losses; and (3) Progressive Accumulation, when the party meets the non-declining three-election criterion. The classification is descriptive and should not be interpreted as a causal typology.

The use of both absolute seats and seat share is necessary because legislative representation is partly a function of institutional scale. A party that gains seats while the total number of DPR seats also increases may appear to grow more strongly in absolute terms than in relative terms. Conversely, a stable number of seats can represent a larger share when the chamber becomes smaller. The dual indicators therefore provide a simple robustness check for the descriptive classification. The classification rule is intentionally transparent: a party must maintain or increase its absolute DPR seats across at least three consecutive national legislative elections following entry. Seat share is then examined to determine whether the pattern remains substantively visible after accounting for changes in chamber size. This rule does not measure organizational institutionalization, ideological coherence, or voter attachment; it identifies only a particular form of repeated parliamentary expansion.

Gerindra and NasDem are the primary cases because they meet the operational criterion for progressive seat accumulation. The comparative cases are selected to represent contrasting trajectories rather than to provide a statistically representative control group. The Democratic Party is used as the principal fluctuating comparator because it remained nationally represented while declining sharply after its 2009 peak. PPP is used as an example of parliamentary exit associated with failure to meet the national threshold in 2024. PDIP and Golkar are referenced as established parties with fluctuating trajectories. PSI and Perindo are used selectively as recent entrants that did not reproduce the progressive trajectories of Gerindra and NasDem. This selection directly aligns the empirical comparisons with the claims made in the introduction.

The quantitative dataset is based on official national legislative election results reported by the General Elections Commission (KPU). The qualitative corpus consists of publicly available party documents, including party organizational materials, official candidate and campaign information where available, party statements on presidential nominations and recruitment, published studies of candidate selection and cadreization, and scholarly literature on Indonesian parties. The analysis does not claim access to confidential internal party records, private campaign expenditure records, or original interview transcripts.

The documentary strategy is designed to maintain a clear distinction between evidence and interpretation. Official electoral results are used for the dependent outcome because seat totals are directly observable and comparable across elections after recalculation of seat shares. Party documents are used to establish formal organizational positions, nomination strategies, and public statements, while scholarly studies provide independent interpretations of recruitment, cadreization, political communication, media ownership, and party organization. Where these sources describe a strategy but do not demonstrate its electoral effect, the manuscript treats the strategy as a mechanism or enabling condition rather than a proven cause. This distinction is especially important in the study of political parties because organizational practices may be publicly announced without being implemented uniformly across all districts. The analysis therefore avoids inferring implementation quality beyond what the documentary corpus can support.

Qualitative evidence was selected when it directly addressed one of four mechanisms: (1) leadership centralization and organizational authority; (2) candidate recruitment and cadreization; (3) presidential alignment and electoral branding; and (4) mobilization of financial and communicative resources. The materials were read comparatively and coded by mechanism and case. Claims are retained only where documentary or scholarly evidence is available; claims requiring unpublished internal data are treated as hypotheses or removed. This procedure also

explains why the earlier unsupported claims concerning a mandatory 50% campaign-allocation rule, a 4–6% provincial lift effect, and exact proportions of migrant candidates are not retained in the revised manuscript.

Results

Longitudinal Pattern of Seat Accumulation

The longitudinal data establish a clear descriptive distinction between the two focal cases and the principal fluctuating comparator. Gerindra increased from 26 seats in 2009 to 73 in 2014, 78 in 2019, and 86 in 2024. NasDem increased from 35 seats in 2014 to 59 in 2019 and 69 in 2024. The Democratic Party moved in the opposite direction, from 148 seats in 2009 to 61 in 2014, 54 in 2019, and 44 in 2024. The progressive classification therefore rests on the observed sequence rather than on a claim that either party is generally "more institutionalized" than all competitors.

Table 1. DPR seat accumulation and seat share, 2009–2024.

Election year	Gerindra seats	Gerindra seat share	NasDem seats	NasDem seat share	Democratic Party seats	Democratic Party seat share
2009	26	4.64%	—	—	148	26.43%
2014	73	13.04%	35	6.25%	61	10.89%
2019	78	13.57%	59	10.26%	54	9.39%
2024	86	14.83%	69	11.90%	44	7.59%

Source: KPU election results, recalculated by the researcher. Seat shares are calculated against the total DPR seats in each election (560 in 2009 and 2014; 575 in 2019; 580 in 2024).

Gerindra's absolute seat increase from 26 to 86 represents a 230.8% increase over its 2009–2024 sequence. NasDem's increase from 35 to 69 represents a 97.1% increase between 2014 and 2024. These figures refer to absolute seats; the accompanying seat-share series confirms that the pattern is not simply an artifact of changes in the size of the DPR. Nevertheless, the descriptive data do not establish why the growth occurred. That question is addressed through the qualitative analysis.

The magnitude of the two trajectories is substantively meaningful, but the pattern should be read in relation to the electoral sequence rather than as a simple linear trend. Gerindra's largest increase occurred between its first and second DPR elections, followed by smaller but still positive gains in 2019 and 2024. NasDem also experienced a substantial first observed increase between 2014 and 2019 and then a further increase in 2024. Thus, progressive accumulation does not mean that the rate of growth must be constant. The defining characteristic is persistence without a decline in the observed sequence. This distinction matters because party growth often occurs in bursts, after which organizations may lose representation when leadership changes, candidates defect, or electoral coalitions shift. The two cases are notable precisely because their later elections did not reverse the initial expansion.

Organizational Mechanisms: Leadership and Recruitment

The qualitative evidence suggests that both parties combine centralized leadership with mechanisms that routinize electoral organization, but they do so differently. Gerindra's organization remains closely associated with Prabowo Subianto, while the party has also developed formal cadre and organizational structures. Research on Gerindra's recruitment indicates an open or semi-open recruitment pattern in which non-traditional entrants can be considered for legislative candidacy, while the party's youth wing TIDAR functions as an important cadreization structure (Ferdian et al., 2020). The relevant mechanism is therefore not personalism

alone, but personalism linked to organizational routines.

Gerindra's trajectory indicates the importance of converting personal leadership into organizational continuity. Prabowo Subianto provides a highly recognizable national identity around which party branding, presidential competition, and legislative organization can be coordinated. Yet a leader-centered party cannot rely on visibility alone if legislative candidates and territorial organizations are unable to reproduce the party label at constituency level. The evidence concerning cadre structures and recruitment therefore matters because it suggests an organizational bridge between national leadership and electoral competition. TIDAR, as a party wing associated with youth cadreization, illustrates the broader point that personal authority may be supplemented by organizational channels that cultivate activists and prospective candidates. The mechanism proposed here is consequently cumulative: recognizable leadership supplies an anchor, while repeatable recruitment and organizational practices help preserve that anchor between elections.

NasDem presents a different combination. Its leadership is centralized around Surya Paloh, but its recruitment strategy has been documented as relatively pragmatic and open to candidates with varied political backgrounds. Windharti and Nurhandjati (2021) identify party-switching opportunities, pragmatic screening, and the use of candidate electability as important features of NasDem's legislative candidacy process. NasDem also formally promoted a "politics without dowry" principle in its organizational rules and public statements, including a 2019 organizational regulation prohibiting the collection or acceptance of political dowry in candidate nomination. This evidence supports the claim that recruitment costs and gatekeeping were organizational concerns, but it does not justify the stronger original claim that the policy alone caused seat growth.

NasDem illustrates a more flexible route to organizational continuity. Its centralized leadership under Surya Paloh coexists with a pragmatic approach to legislative candidacy, including the recruitment of individuals from varied political backgrounds. This can be analytically significant in a volatile party system because a new party does not necessarily possess the dense local networks accumulated by older organizations. Recruitment that emphasizes candidate electability can compensate, at least in part, for the absence of inherited territorial or sociological attachments. The "politics without dowry" principle is relevant because it publicly frames candidate nomination as an organizational process rather than simply a financial transaction. Nevertheless, the available evidence does not show that this principle independently generated votes or seats. Its more defensible interpretation is that it forms part of an institutional repertoire through which NasDem attempts to widen recruitment and reduce barriers to candidate entry.

Table 2. Documentary comparison of organizational mechanisms.

Mechanism	Gerindra	NasDem	Interpretation
Leadership	Centralized authority associated with Prabowo Subianto	Centralized authority associated with Surya Paloh	Personalized authority provides a national organizational anchor
Recruitment	Open/semi-open recruitment and cadre structures, including TIDAR	Pragmatic/open recruitment and documented "politics without dowry" principle	Recruitment broadens the candidate pool beyond inherited party networks
Organizational effect	Leader-centered continuity supported by routines	Leader-centered flexibility supported by recruitment and electoral branding	Hybrid organization connects personal authority with repeatable practices

Source: Ferdian et al. (2020); Windharti and Nurhandjati (2021); party organizational materials.

Presidential Alignment: Association, Not Proof of Causation.

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The two parties also followed different presidential-alignment strategies. Gerindra repeatedly presented Prabowo Subianto as the party's presidential face in 2014, 2019, and 2024. NasDem supported Joko Widodo in 2014 and 2019 and formally nominated Anies Baswedan for 2024. NasDem's official declaration of Anies demonstrates the strategic flexibility of its presidential positioning. The legislative trajectories and presidential alignments occurred in the same electoral periods, but the available evidence does not permit the stronger conclusion that presidential coattails caused the seat increases.

Table 3. Presidential alignment and legislative seat trajectories, 2014–2024.

Election	Gerindra presidential alignment	Gerindra seats	NasDem presidential alignment	NasDem seats
2014	Prabowo Subianto	73	Joko Widodo–Jusuf Kalla	35
2019	Prabowo Subianto–Sandiaga Uno	78	Joko Widodo–Ma'ruf Amin	59
2024	Prabowo Subianto–Gibran Rakabuming Raka	86	Anies Baswedan–Muhaimin Iskandar	69

Source: KPU election results, recalculated by the researcher. The table documents temporal alignment; it does not estimate a coattail effect. NasDem's 2024 nomination of Anies is documented in official party material.

The comparison nevertheless suggests two analytically distinct mechanisms. Gerindra's mechanism can be described as direct leader-centered continuity: the presidential candidate and the party label are closely fused. NasDem's mechanism is strategic presidential flexibility: the party can align with nationally salient candidates outside its own leadership while retaining organizational continuity. These mechanisms are consistent with presidentialization theory, but they should be treated as process-tracing interpretations rather than causal estimates.

The contrast between the two parties helps clarify what is meant by hybrid organizational institutionalization. The concept does not imply that either party has achieved the organizational depth associated with highly institutionalized parties in more stable party systems. Rather, it points to the coexistence of personal authority and routinization. In Gerindra, continuity is closely tied to the persistence of a nationally dominant leader and a party identity built around that leadership. In NasDem, continuity is less dependent on reproducing the same presidential candidacy and more dependent on the ability to adapt its alliances while retaining organizational control. The comparison therefore suggests that centralized leadership need not produce identical organizational forms. Personalization can be combined with either continuity or flexibility, depending on how recruitment, branding, and electoral alliances are organized.

Geographic and Programmatic Adaptation

The revised analysis does not treat regional categories such as "Islamic strongholds" and "outer islands" as mutually exclusive, because several provinces can belong to both descriptions. Nor does the available evidence justify the original numerical table assigning seats simultaneously to overlapping categories. Instead, the evidence is interpreted more cautiously: both Gerindra and NasDem have achieved parliamentary representation across diverse regions and have not remained confined to a single sociological constituency. This is compatible with the literature on dealignment and catch-all adaptation, but it does not demonstrate that traditional cleavages have been dissolved.

The same caution applies to programmatic vagueness. The original manuscript described a formal content analysis of manifestos but did not report the corpus, unit of analysis, coding protocol, or comparative frequencies. The revised article therefore treats broad valence-oriented rhetoric as a qualitative feature that warrants further systematic study rather than reporting

unsupported frequency rankings. The broader interpretation is that both parties have displayed considerable flexibility in electoral messaging, enabling them to appeal beyond narrowly defined ideological constituencies.

Resource Mobilization

Resource concentration is relevant to both cases, but the evidence supports a mechanism of organizational capacity rather than a direct causal estimate. NasDem is closely associated with Surya Paloh and the broader Media Group ecosystem, while Gerindra has benefited from the economic and political resources associated with its founder and elite networks. Existing scholarship on Indonesian political business, media, and oligarchy provides the theoretical basis for treating such resources as enabling conditions (Apriliyanti & Kristiansen, 2019; Tapsell, 2015; Winters, 2013).

Table 4. Resource mechanisms and comparative electoral trajectories.

Case	Resource mechanism	Evidence used	Analytical interpretation
Gerindra	Concentrated founder-centered political and organizational resources	Party leadership, cadre structures, public organizational materials, existing scholarship	Resources strengthen organizational coordination around a stable national leader
NasDem	Founder-centered financial and media resources	Surya Paloh's political role, public party materials, scholarship on media and political business	Resources facilitate organizational insulation, communication, and recruitment flexibility
Democratic Party	Declining organizational and electoral capacity after founder's presidency	Longitudinal seat trajectory and comparative literature	Personalized party organization can be vulnerable when organizational routines do not compensate for leadership transition
PPP	Fragmented organizational resources and threshold failure	Longitudinal seat trajectory; electoral threshold rules	Resource weakness and threshold exposure increase the risk of parliamentary exit

Source: compiled from various sources by researchers. The table does not claim that resource concentration is sufficient or that it independently causes seat growth.

Discussion

The findings support a narrower theoretical claim than the original manuscript proposed. Gerindra and NasDem demonstrate that sustained parliamentary growth can coexist with strong personal leadership. This does not challenge the multidimensional literature on party-system institutionalization. Instead, it suggests that organizational professionalization and party-level routinization can occur without the deep societal roots traditionally associated with more institutionalized party organizations. The two cases therefore illustrate a possible pathway of top-down organizational institutionalization, not a replacement for the broader concept of party-system institutionalization.

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This interpretation also helps distinguish party-level institutionalization from party-system institutionalization. A party can develop stable internal procedures and repeatedly win representation even while the broader party system remains volatile. The institutionalization observed in these cases is therefore partial and organizational rather than systemic. It concerns the capacity to reproduce electoral organization, candidate recruitment, leadership communication, and strategic positioning over time. Such capacity can coexist with weak ideological anchoring or fluid voter loyalties. The implication is important for comparative party research: repeated electoral success should not automatically be treated as evidence that a party has acquired deep social roots. Conversely, the absence of traditional social roots does not necessarily mean that a party is organizationally fragile. The cases occupy an intermediate position in which organizational routines can stabilize an otherwise fluid electoral enterprise.

The concept of hybrid organizational institutionalization captures this combination. It differs from simply labeling the parties "personalistic" because the analysis identifies mechanisms through which personal authority is converted into repeatable organizational practices. It also avoids the unnecessary introduction of a second concept such as "Symbiotic Hybridity." The relevant analytical question is whether centralized leadership is embedded in recruitment, cadreization, communication, and electoral routines that persist across election cycles.

The concept can be further specified through four observable dimensions. First is leadership anchoring, meaning the existence of a recognizable authority structure capable of coordinating national party identity. Second is recruitment routinization, meaning repeated procedures through which candidates and cadres enter the organization. Third is electoral translation, meaning mechanisms that connect national branding or presidential visibility to legislative candidacy. Fourth is resource coordination, meaning the capacity to sustain communication, organization, and recruitment across election cycles. The two parties display these dimensions in different configurations. Gerindra places greater analytical weight on leader-centered continuity and cadre structures, whereas NasDem places greater weight on recruitment flexibility and strategic alignment. The concept therefore functions as a comparative heuristic rather than as a claim of complete institutionalization.

Second, the cases refine rather than overturn the literature on dealignment. Ufen (2008) and Mujani et al. (2018) provide evidence that older sociological alignments have weakened and that Indonesian voters are less consistently anchored to traditional party identities. The present cases are consistent with that environment because their organizational strategies appear capable of recruiting candidates and voters beyond narrow historical constituencies. However, the study cannot claim that Santri–Abangan cleavages have been systematically dissolved, nor can it directly measure a "floating mass" or candidate-mediated party identification.

Third, the findings qualify rather than refute the literature on coattail effects. Presidential alignment coincides temporally with the seat trajectories of both parties, but the present evidence cannot distinguish presidential effects from party organization, candidate quality, campaign resources, regional dynamics, or broader electoral shifts. The appropriate contribution is therefore to identify two organizationally distinct ways of attempting to convert presidential visibility into legislative advantage: direct leader-centered convergence in Gerindra and flexible external alignment in NasDem. A stronger causal test would require district-level election returns, presidential and legislative vote comparisons, and ideally survey or individual-level evidence.

Fourth, the analysis suggests a productive modification of the Cartel Party perspective for Indonesia. The classic cartel thesis emphasizes party–state collusion and public resources. Indonesian parties also operate through private resource hubs, media ownership, business networks, and elite-controlled campaign capacity. The cases therefore suggest that resource autonomy can supplement state-centered explanations of party resilience. This is a refinement rather than a rejection of cartel theory.

Finally, the study's systemic implications must be treated as propositions rather than demonstrated outcomes. The 4% parliamentary threshold under the 2017 Election Law was applicable to the 2024 DPR election, and the Constitutional Court subsequently required the rule

to be reconsidered for future elections. The threshold can shape the competitive environment for smaller parties, but the present two-case design cannot establish that it caused "oligarchic consolidation" or the displacement of grassroots parties. Those claims should be tested through broader party-level and district-level research.

A further implication concerns the relationship between organizational capacity and the institutional rules governing entry into parliament. The parliamentary threshold can affect the consequences of electoral fragmentation because parties that obtain votes without sufficient national support may fail to translate those votes into DPR representation. However, the two focal cases already satisfy the progressive criterion and therefore cannot by themselves reveal how the threshold distributes advantage across all parties. The Democratic Party and PPP provide contrasting trajectories, but a larger population of parties would be required to test whether threshold exposure systematically favors parties with concentrated resources, broad geographic support, or stronger national brands. The present evidence consequently supports a research proposition rather than a systemic conclusion: institutional rules and organizational capacity may interact in shaping which parties convert electoral competition into durable parliamentary representation.

Conclusion

This study has examined why Gerindra and NasDem achieved non-declining DPR seat accumulation across successive elections in Indonesia's volatile multiparty democracy. The evidence supports the classification of both parties as progressive accumulators under the operational definition used here: Gerindra increased from 26 seats in 2009 to 86 in 2024, while NasDem increased from 35 seats in 2014 to 69 in 2024. The unequal observation periods are acknowledged and addressed by requiring at least three consecutive elections after parliamentary entry. The comparative evidence points to hybrid organizational institutionalization as a useful mechanism for understanding the two cases. Gerindra combines centralized leadership around Prabowo Subianto with cadre and recruitment structures; NasDem combines centralized leadership around Surya Paloh with pragmatic recruitment and flexible presidential alignment. Concentrated financial and communicative resources appear to enable these strategies, but the evidence does not justify treating resources as sufficient causes of electoral growth.

The comparison also indicates that the concept should be understood as conditional rather than universal. Progressive accumulation is not produced by centralized leadership in isolation. The two cases show additional organizational mechanisms that make leadership electorally reproducible: candidate recruitment, cadre or network development, communication, strategic presidential positioning, and access to resources. These mechanisms can reduce the risk that a party's electoral fortunes depend entirely on a single campaign cycle. At the same time, the Democratic Party's contrasting trajectory illustrates the vulnerability of a personalized organization when the conditions supporting its founder-centered appeal weaken. This comparison does not prove a single causal sequence, but it strengthens the argument that leadership durability becomes more consequential when it is connected to organizational routines capable of surviving changes in the electoral environment.

The study makes three bounded contributions. First, it introduces a transparent operational definition of progressive seat accumulation that distinguishes electoral growth from survival and institutionalization. Second, it identifies two different organizational pathways through which personal leadership can be converted into repeated legislative representation. Third, it proposes that resource autonomy deserves greater attention alongside party–state relations when explaining party resilience in Indonesia. The findings should not be generalized from two parties to the Indonesian party system as a whole. Nor do they demonstrate that coattail effects, oligarchic consolidation, or ideological hollowing are established systemic outcomes. Instead, they generate propositions for future research using district-level electoral data, candidate-level data, party finance records, manifesto coding, and voter surveys. The broader implication is therefore

conditional: in a volatile and presidentialized electoral environment, parties with centralized leadership may sustain electoral expansion when personal authority is coupled with organizational routines, recruitment capacity, strategic flexibility, and concentrated resources.

Several limitations define the contribution. First, seat totals cannot identify district-level mechanisms or geographic concentration. Second, the qualitative evidence excludes confidential party records and interview transcripts. Third, presidential alignment is treated as temporal association rather than a coattail effect. Fourth, resource mobilization is interpreted as an enabling condition because comparable campaign-finance data are not used to estimate effects. Finally, the criterion does not assess party democracy, ideological consistency, membership density, internal competition, or societal rootedness. Accordingly, future research should extend the design.

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