

Explaining Indonesia's Democratic Regression: Structure, Agency and Popular Opinion

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After almost two decades of praise for Indonesia's democratic achievements, a scholarly consensus has begun to emerge that Indonesian democracy is in regression. In this article, we consider the sources of that regression. Drawing upon the comparative literature on democratic decline, we propose that Indonesia is an illiberal democracy, and argue that a constellation of structural, agential and popular forces has led to an incremental deterioration in democratic quality. We first reaffirm arguments that trace the origins of contemporary democratic weakness to the nature of Indonesia's transition, and the incorporation of anti-democratic elites into the governing structures of its democracy. We then show how Indonesia's two most recent presidents each eroded democratic norms and institutions in pursuit of political security. Finally, we cast a critical eye on the widely shared view that Indonesia's population is a bulwark of democratic strength. While most Indonesians support democracy as an abstract concept,

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significant parts of the population show limited support for the protections, checks and freedoms that underpin a liberal democracy. We suggest there is a significant constituency for illiberalism in Indonesia, and point to the presence of a conducive electoral environment for further democratic erosion.

Keywords: democratic decline, illiberal democracy, populism, democratisation.

For much of the last two decades, comparativists and country experts have praised Indonesia's democratic progress and stability. Free, fair and competitive elections are held regularly throughout the country, ensuring that officeholders from village heads to the president are chosen directly by citizens. Indonesia boasts rich associational life and its media is largely free. Writing in 2009, noted democracy scholar Larry Diamond applauded Indonesia for achieving the status of a "stable democracy — with no obvious threats or potent anti-democratic challenges on the horizon".¹ Diamond also described Indonesia as "a relatively liberal democracy". Like Diamond, other comparativists continue to see Indonesia as a healthy democracy, where public support for democratic government remains among the highest and most stable in Asia.²

Events since 2014, however, have cast doubt upon this characterization of Indonesia's democracy. A new consensus is emerging that Indonesia is now in the midst of democratic regression. Analysts have documented the rise of a xenophobic brand of populist politics, an illiberal drift in the regulation of civil liberties and protection of human rights, and the government's manipulation of state institutions to entrench itself in power. These trends amount to the "relatively fine-grained degrees of change" that comparative scholars argue are symptomatic of democratic backsliding.³

While observers present mounting evidence that Indonesia's democracy is in decline, few have grappled with the question of why this is so. In this article, we reflect on Indonesia's evolution from democratic success to incipient regression. Specifically, we ask: Why was a decade of relative democratic stability followed by a decade of stagnation and, now, growing signs of regression? What underlying processes might account for the accumulating forces in favour of democratic illiberalism? Why has Indonesia's democracy persisted but not, it seems, consolidated?

To answer these questions, we re-examine the arc of Indonesia's democratic evolution, drawing on contemporary theories of democratic decline that emphasize interactions between structural, agential

and attitudinal factors. In doing so, we reaffirm a prominent position in the Indonesia literature that emphasizes how authoritarian elites integrated into democratic institutions, embedding anti-democratic potential within the new system. We then show how the agency of specific political elites—notably of Indonesia's two most recent presidents—has contributed to democratic stagnation and then decline, in response to changing political environments. However, we also suggest greater attention should be paid to the popular context in which democratic decline is taking place. For years, analysts viewed the Indonesian public and civil society as bulwarks against undemocratic elites; we suggest this characterization needs revising. Populist and sectarian campaigns have attracted significant public support in recent years, and there has been little public backlash against what is now a well-documented deterioration in the state's protection of individual rights and freedoms. Drawing on recent polling data, we show that although public support for democracy as an abstract concept remains high, strong support does not extend to the institutions and values that underpin a liberal democratic order. The illiberal sensibilities of a large slice of the public provide a conducive context for elites to erode Indonesia's young democracy.

We develop this argument in four parts. In the first section, we set the scene by reviewing recent signs of democratic regression, notably the rise of populism, and increasing illiberalism in the regulation of individual freedoms and democratic checks and balances. In the second section, we review possible explanations for Indonesia's democratic trajectory. We first consider structural factors, revisiting Indonesia's democratic transition, and explain how that process planted the seeds for contemporary problems. We then move to consider the agency of political elites, with a particular focus on Indonesia's two directly-elected presidents—Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–14) and Joko Widodo, or “Jokowi” (2014–present). Finally, we turn to popular opinion, and attempt to identify constituencies favouring an illiberal political order.

Signs of Democratic Regression

The Populist Challenge

One defining characteristic of the wave of democratic regression occurring worldwide over the last decade is that “most democratic breakdowns have been caused not by generals and soldiers but by

elected governments”.⁴ Events like the 2014 coup in Thailand—in which authoritarian actors move from outside a country’s democratic system to overthrow it—are now relatively rare. A more common pattern occurs when an elected leader bends democratic institutions to his (or her) anti-democratic agenda, gradually creating an illiberal democracy or an electoral authoritarian regime. Such leaders often do so by promising strong and decisive leadership and presenting themselves, in populist style, as a personification of the popular will.⁵ Vladimir Putin in Russia, Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey are among the most obvious recent examples.

Prabowo Subianto’s presidential bids in 2014 and 2019 have shown that Indonesia, too, is vulnerable to authoritarian-populism. Prabowo, a former general, Special Forces Commander, and son-in-law of Indonesia’s long-serving authoritarian leader, Suharto, was one of the few authoritarian-era political figures who became virtually a political persona-non-grata after the democratic breakthrough of 1998–99. He had been implicated in the disappearance of anti-Suharto activists, had a well-known history of personal brutality, was suspected of complicity in violent rioting that preceded Suharto’s resignation in 1998, and was discharged from the military in such disgrace that he went into a period of self-imposed political exile in Jordan.⁶ Yet, by 2014 his political image had been rehabilitated to such a degree that he was twice able to mount a convincing presidential campaign.

One of the authors of this article has previously characterized Prabowo’s campaign as a “classically authoritarian populist challenge”.⁷ In both his 2014 and 2019 election bids, Prabowo condemned Indonesia’s exploitation at the hands of foreigners and corrupt political elites and presented himself—and the tough leadership he offers—as the remedy to Indonesia’s problems. The tone of both his campaigns was far outside emerging norms of Indonesian democracy. For example, his condemnation of Indonesia’s self-interested “elite”—even its “oligarchy”—which he blames for Indonesia’s subjugation to exploitative foreigners, contrasts sharply with the emphasis on elite cooperation characteristic of preceding governments. His advocacy of a return to the authoritarian 1945 Constitution also breaks with the preceding consensus that post-Suharto political and constitutional reforms had benefitted Indonesia.

In 2014, Prabowo lost by a margin of 6 per cent to Jokowi; in 2019 he lost by 11 per cent. Both elections thus brought Indonesia

dangerously close to severe authoritarian regression. After his defeats, Prabowo initially refused to accept the results, demonstrating his willingness to violate core democratic norms. After his 2014 loss, his coalition was able to briefly command a majority in Indonesia's national parliament and pass a law that rolled back one of the major post-Suharto political reforms—direct elections of heads of regional governments (President Yudhoyono was so daunted by the public backlash that he quickly moved to annul this change). After his second defeat, Prabowo again rejected the official results, this time with violent consequences. He claimed the election had been stolen, the results were fraudulent and encouraged his supporters to take to the streets. On 22 May, a day after the Election Commission formally announced that Jokowi had been re-elected with 55.5 per cent of the vote, thousands of pro-Prabowo supporters organized rallies around Jakarta. While initially peaceful, the protests later turned deadly as a violent mob attacked police and government buildings, leading to seven deaths and hundreds of injuries.⁸ Prabowo's sustained attacks on Indonesia's democratic process, and the violence that occurred in the wake of the 2019 elections, demonstrate the immense threat that authoritarian populism poses to Indonesian democracy.⁹

A different kind of challenge was evinced by the 2016–17 Islamist mobilizations against Jakarta's Chinese Christian governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (also known as Ahok). The details of this case have been the focus of much scholarly and media attention, and have been documented elsewhere.¹⁰ During his campaign for the governorship in late 2016, Ahok spoke against the misuse of a Quranic verse that allegedly prevents Muslims from supporting non-Muslim leaders, prompting charges of blasphemy. What ensued were the largest street protests of the democratic era. The protests were organized by a coalition of Islamist groups and conservative Islamic leaders and organizations, with the backing of mainstream political elites—including Prabowo, whose party sponsored one of Ahok's rivals, Anies Baswedan. The sectarian campaign was successful: while over 70 per cent of Jakartans were satisfied with Ahok's performance, only 42 per cent voted for him, delivering Anies a resounding victory with 58 per cent of the vote.¹¹ Ahok, still a sitting governor, was then found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to two years in prison.

The campaign against Ahok was not an overtly authoritarian movement: none of the key figures advocated doing away with elections or with the protection of civil liberties writ large. It did,

however, indicate the limits to Indonesia's *liberal* democracy. The mobilization against Ahok of what some observers describe as a form of Islamic populism demonstrated that there are limits to the degree to which many members of Indonesia's majority religion, Islam, are prepared to accept non-Muslims holding important political positions.¹²

The Ahok crisis had significant repercussions for national politics. The coalition of Islamist organizations and figures that helped bring down Jakarta's popular governor re-grouped in 2019 and played a prominent role in Prabowo's campaign for president.¹³ While by no means a pious Muslim figure, Prabowo was willing to court the support of hardline Islamists to a degree that was unprecedented from such a mainstream presidential nominee. So, while Prabowo's brand of authoritarian-populism represented an out-and-out threat of democratic regression, the political mainstreaming of sectarian campaigns and fringe Islamist groups points towards Indonesia's increasingly illiberal form of democracy—a point we return to below.

The Illiberal Drift

Less immediately visible than the challenge of populism has been a broader illiberal evolution in the laws and regulations governing civil liberties in Indonesia, and in their enforcement. The mobilization of draconian laws on defamation and blasphemy, for example, has become almost routine in contemporary Indonesia. Indonesia's Criminal Code, which dates back to the colonial era, the 1965 Blasphemy Law, and the 2008 Law on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE), all proscribe defamatory or insulting statements, including statements that spread hate about religious, racial or ethnic groups.¹⁴ For most of the democratic era, there was no systematic or state-sanctioned application of these laws aimed at silencing government critics. In many instances, those prosecuted for defamation had committed banal acts, such as criticizing an ex-husband or complaining about poor customer service.

However, there is mounting evidence that people in positions of power, and politicians at the highest level, are now deploying the Criminal Code, Blasphemy and ITE laws to ward off and contain criticism by citizens, opposition figures and anti-corruption activists.¹⁵ For example, government actors deployed the ITE law with increasing regularity in the lead-up to the 2019 presidential elections. Thomas Power documents how police harassed and

threatened anti-Jokowi activists with prosecution under the ITE law for their involvement in the “Ganti Presiden” or “Change the President” campaign.¹⁶ In early 2019, a high-profile musician associated with the political opposition, Ahmad Dhani, was sentenced to one and a half years in prison for a series of tweets in 2016 in which he admonished Ahok and all those who supported “the blasphemer”. Other members of the public have been charged with spreading “insulting” comments or memes about the president, while supporters of Prabowo Subianto have been threatened with *makar* (rebellion) charges. As Power argues, the Jokowi administration, far more than its predecessors, has proved willing to leverage the ITE law and other legal mechanisms for partisan advantage.¹⁷

There are new restrictions on freedom of organization, too. A regulation introduced in 2017 gives the government broad powers to disband community organizations. This regulation was the work of President Jokowi. The Islamist mobilizations against Ahok and a general rise in sectarian activism unnerved the president. In response, Jokowi “forged a tool for repression” in the form of a Regulation in Lieu of Law (Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang/Perppu) that enables the government to disband any organization it deems a threat to Pancasila, the state-sanctioned ideology.¹⁸ Jokowi’s first move was to ban Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), a radical but non-violent Islamist group that had been active in the anti-Ahok movement. In fact, the government already had a means of banning such groups: the 2013 Law on Societal Organization prohibited organizations from “holding, promoting, as well as disseminating teachings or concepts which contradict Pancasila”. The Jokowi government, however, wanted to avoid the legislative and judicial checks built into this law. The Perppu drew directly on traditions and discourses of political control used during the Suharto era, when authorities deployed Pancasila as an ideological justification for suppressing dissent.

Many Indonesians, including liberals and pluralists, have welcomed Jokowi’s heavy-handed approach to groups like HTI, which are themselves undemocratic and illiberal. Opinion polls show that a majority of Indonesians support the government’s Perppu, while many members of Jokowi’s pluralist coalition see themselves under threat from the rise of groups such as HTI and accordingly support its suppression, and others move to curb the influence of hardline Islamism. It is striking, however, that neither Jokowi nor other leaders frame their rejection of radical agendas as

a defence of Indonesia's democracy or civil liberties. Instead, they justify it as a defence of Pancasila—the same tactic used by President Suharto when cracking down on opposition to his rule. As Marcus Mietzner puts it, President Jokowi chooses to fight “illiberalism with illiberalism”.¹⁹

Finally, alongside these illiberal regulatory tools, there has also been an incremental deterioration in the protection of minority rights. This deterioration, though ultimately state-sanctioned, is driven by community-led vilification of minority groups, and reflects the influence of Islamic majoritarianism: belief in the primacy of the interests and values of the Islamic majority, as defined by its conservative spokespersons. At its most extreme, this attitude gives rise to attacks on groups portrayed as “deviant”. Robin Bush argues that “especially during [Yudhoyono's] second term, minority groups such as Ahmadiyah, Shi'a and even Christian groups experienced sustained and repeated attacks—increasingly involving the use of violence”.²⁰ President Jokowi is associated with Indonesia's pluralist political traditions, and, as noted above, his unwinding of democratic liberties has been partly aimed at constraining Islamists. His presidency has in some instances brought relief for minorities (for example, allowing followers of unorthodox religious beliefs to list those beliefs, rather than one of a restricted range of monotheistic religions, on their national identity cards), but in other cases the situation for minority groups has markedly worsened. From 2016 there was an upswing in homophobic attacks by politicians, religious organizations, vigilante groups and police. Triggered by debates about Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transsexual (LGBT) student support groups on campus, a chorus of anti-gay rhetoric poured from high-profile public figures. Senior government leaders even claimed that gay activism was part of a proxy war by foreign forces bent on destroying Indonesia from within.²¹ These harmful narratives appear to resonate with the Indonesian public: surveys indicate that almost 90 per cent view LGBT citizens as a threat.²² Against this backdrop, President Jokowi failed to condemn the attacks on Indonesia's LGBT community.

These trends demonstrate that as Indonesian democracy evolves, it tends to entrench certain limits to the expression of individual conscience and identity. In many parts of the world, including in parts of Northeast Asia, democratic consolidation has been accompanied by growing recognition of individual liberty, gender equality, and religious and sexual freedom. On the whole, this development has not occurred in Indonesia. As Jeremy Menchik

has persuasively argued, mainstream Islamic opinion—as sanctioned by government policy—recognizes a system of religious, or even communal, democracy in which the major monotheistic religious groups are accorded state recognition and support, including in policing their own boundaries.²³ The result is that groups such as sexual minorities, atheists and members of non-conforming sects continue to be subject to state repression.

Explaining Democratic Regression

Where does our analysis suggest we should place Indonesia on the spectrum of regime types? On the one hand, it is obvious that Indonesia cannot be considered a liberal democracy, which mainstream democratic theory defines as a regime in which free and fair elections are accompanied by guarantees of a wide range of civil liberties, including for minority groups, and institutions that uphold an impartial rule of law.²⁴ On the other hand, Indonesian national governments have not yet engaged in systematic manipulation of state institutions to entrench themselves in power, nor have they systematically manipulated electoral processes or restricted the space for opposition actors. The country therefore cannot be considered to be an electoral authoritarian regime. Instead, Indonesia must still be regarded as democratic if, by that term, we adopt a minimalist definition that emphasizes the ability of a citizenry to choose its leaders through free and fair electoral processes.²⁵

It follows that Indonesia is today best classified as an *illiberal democracy*: a system in which the population can effectively choose their own leaders but in which there are serious constraints on civil liberties and the rule of law.²⁶ Nor can further democratic backsliding be ruled out. The electoral playing field has not yet been tilted dramatically such as to severely constrain competitiveness and thus amount to full authoritarian backsliding.²⁷ However, there have been both overt threats (such as Prabowo's occasional condemnation of direct elections) and more subtle erosion (such as the legal moves against supporters of the 2019 "Change the President" movement).

Moving from classification to causation, how can the incremental deterioration in the quality of Indonesia's democracy be explained? Theorizing on the causes of the contemporary global democratic recession is still in its infancy, with the new literature being "empirically, theoretically and methodologically fragmented".²⁸ Much of this literature, drawing on earlier theories of democratization, stresses that causes of democratic decline are never singular, and

instead involve a complex mixture of structural, institutional, agential and socio-cultural factors. In this section, we consider a range of forces that have contributed to Indonesia's current political moment, from structural problems inherited from the democratic transition, to the agency of particular elites, to the public's weak embrace of liberal norms. Our intention is not to isolate *the* most proximate cause of Indonesia's democratic decline; rather, our objective is to identify the complex of factors that have coalesced to produce the "incremental and multidimensional regressive change" that is characteristic of democratic backsliding.²⁹ In particular, we argue that a three-part dynamic has driven Indonesia's democratic decline: first, political structures were predisposed towards regression by the inclusion of non-democratic actors in government during the country's democratization process; second, senior political elites, notably two of Indonesia's post-Suharto presidents, calculated that they could benefit politically by eroding civil liberties, albeit while responding to very different political incentives; and third, public opinion failed to act as a check on the drift towards illiberalism because while the majority of the public is supportive of democracy as an abstract principle, it is less so with regard to the full range of protections associated with liberal democracy.

Structural Explanations: Legacies of Inclusion

In the comparative literature, a large number of structural conditions has been conjectured to explain democratic backsliding and breakdown. Such factors include low levels of economic development, wealth and income inequality, poorly-designed political institutions, ethnic fractionalization and fractious governing coalitions.³⁰ The literature on Indonesia is replete with descriptions of the shortfalls of Indonesian democracy—entrenched corruption and patronage politics, oligarchy and wealth inequality, ineffective political parties and so on—many of which might lend support to these wider explanations. We lack space to review each in detail, and instead propose that a historical institutionalist argument best captures the structural forces underpinning Indonesia's democratic decline. In particular, we foreground the nature of Indonesia's democratic transition. The regime change that occurred in 1998–99 is best viewed in retrospect as being a critical juncture which laid the seeds of both the ensuing democratic stabilization *and* the subsequent period of democratic stagnation.

Indonesia's democratic success was sudden and unexpected. For just over three decades, between 1966 and 1998, the country was ruled by one of the most resilient and effective authoritarian regimes of the Cold War era. To be sure, there were elements of the Indonesian experience that in retrospect facilitated democratization: for example, civil society was able to expand through the Suharto years,³¹ and authoritarian restrictions helped generate evolution away from anti-democratic variants of Islamism among mainstream Islamic organizations.³² Overall, however, the regime was ruled in a manner that undercut rather than built a foundation for the subsequent democratic system: the military played a pre-eminent role in political life and developed a self-image as saviour of the nation from fractious political interests—an image that has been maintained up to the present day; incessant political intervention and corruption undermined the integrity of the judiciary and civil service; memories of a massive anti-communist massacre that had accompanied the birth of the regime in 1965–66 crippled the resurrection of political organizations along class lines, and in particular among poor Indonesians; and the regime's neo-patrimonial features produced a fusion of economic and political power that gave rise to a group of oligarchs whose wealth depends on the capture of state institutions.

The democratic transition combined a sudden political opening, which compelled the adoption of democratic institutions and procedures, with the incorporation into the new ruling class of a group of holdovers from the authoritarian regime whose values and interests were shaped by the benefits they had accrued from Suharto's system of rule. In other words, potential spoilers were integrated into the new distribution of power.³³ For example, former military leaders continued to occupy key defence and security posts. While the system of "dual function"—under which the military was expected to play an explicitly political as well as a defense role—was ended, its territorial structure, by which it shadows civilian administration at every level, survived.³⁴ Similarly, in the wake of decentralization and the devolution of political authority and financial resources to the regions, local bureaucratic and business elites who first established their dominance during the New Order proved very capable at reinventing themselves as democratic politicians, capturing local-level state power throughout much of Indonesia.³⁵ It should be stressed that Indonesia's experience in this regard hardly makes it unique; on the contrary, it has been argued that recent democratic transitions have frequently produced

“elite-biased democracy”, in which the interests of authoritarian-era economic and political elites are structurally protected.³⁶

In Indonesia’s case, the combination of pressure for reform from below with accommodation from above was the context in which Indonesia’s new democratic institutions emerged. Though the extent of change surpassed early expectations, by the beginning of the Yudhoyono presidency in 2004, the impetus for reform was largely exhausted. Indonesia’s new democratic system was widely accepted, but the mass movements that had impelled regime change in 1998–99 had dissipated and were unable to transform themselves into political vehicles, compete in elections and capture political office.³⁷

We can therefore trace the origins of many of the contemporary problems of Indonesian democracy—including the rise of populist challengers and creeping illiberalism—to the dynamics that accompanied its birth. For example, the endemic corruption which Indonesians routinely identify in opinion polls as one of the country’s major problems is linked to the continuing political and economic influence of the New Order oligarchs.³⁸ Public disquiet about corruption in turn undermines trust in political parties and other democratic institutions. Prabowo understood this and placed the attack on corruption at the centre of his populist critique of Indonesia’s elite and his call for strong leadership. Indeed, as Paul Kenny argues in his comparative study of populism in Asia, Indonesia’s patronage-style of democracy and low levels of party loyalty have made it vulnerable to populist threats. As in other patronage democracies such as the Philippines, Kenny argues, presidential candidates cannot rely upon party machines to mobilize votes, and “the effect at the national level has been the promotion of increasingly populist presidential campaigns”.³⁹

The design of Indonesia’s system of government also plays a role, though it is difficult to be definitive (as is often the case with understanding the role of institutional factors in democratic decline).⁴⁰ Indonesia adopted a political system that combines presidentialism, which is generally seen as deleterious to democratic consolidation, with highly inclusionary patterns of party participation in governing coalitions. At the same time, the country’s proportional representation electoral system has dispersed power among parties and so avoided the debilitating polarization that contributed to democratic reversals in countries such as Thailand. But that very same system has also removed from Indonesia the

disciplining presence of an effective opposition, and contributed to the dynamic of all-inclusive patronage sharing that undermines democratic performance. Indonesia's constitutional design thus facilitated democratic transition by providing a broad range of parties and actors with a stake in government, but arguably undermined its longer-term consolidation by encouraging patronage-based politics, weakening party machines and preventing the clear alternation of government seen elsewhere, such as in South Korea and Taiwan.⁴¹ This pervasiveness of patronage, in turn, has motivated some of the discontent that fuels anti-democratic challengers.

Of course, other structural factors, often raised in comparative large-N studies of democratic regression, are also relevant for the Indonesian case. For instance, Indonesia was a relatively poor country when it transitioned to democracy in the late 1990s. It was also experiencing one of the most severe economic downturns of modern times; serious economic contractions frequently trigger regime change.⁴² Since the early post-crisis years, Indonesia's economic growth has consistently hit rates of over 5 per cent per annum, meaning that Indonesia has become a lower middle-income country, experiencing an increase of GDP per capita from US\$1,076 (current US dollars) in 2003 to US\$3,847 in 2017.⁴³ Even so, its GDP per capita is a fraction of the more successful democratic consolidators in Northeast Asia such as South Korea (US\$29,743 in 2017). There is growing consensus among scholars that economic modernization does not explain the timing of democratic transitions very well, though it does help explain which democratic regimes remain stable once they have been established. In this regard, Indonesia arguably fits a general pattern as a country in which political factors impel a transition to democracy, but where the economic and social base is insufficiently developed to sustain a high-quality, liberal democracy.⁴⁴

Overall, we argue that structural explanations of Indonesia's democratic decline need to emphasize the influence of historical institutional change and the nature of Indonesia's transition from authoritarian rule. This transition integrated into the democratic system actors and forces that, over time, have produced regressive political outcomes for Indonesia's democracy.

Elite-agency Explanations: From Inclusion to Polarization

Agency-based theories locate political leaders as the key actors in democratic decline, emphasizing the significance of elite actions

and choices. To some extent, any analysis of democratic regression needs to take account of elite agency, because regression necessarily involves reducing the scope of political participation and expression to a narrower band of people, and empowering a country's rulers at the expense of their political opponents and the mass public. Democratic regression is, by definition, an elite project.

However, agent-focused analyses suffer from well-known defects: they assume leaders make decisions in the absence of structural constraints, and their conclusions are often based upon "relatively ad hoc analyses of decision making relying on inductive judgments that defy falsification".⁴⁵ Elite choices are, in reality, never unconstrained, and we argue that the actions of Indonesia's political leaders can only be understood within the structural context sketched out in the previous section. That context, which facilitated the survival of undemocratic actors and undermined the strength of democratic institutions, constitutes what David Waldner and Ellen Lust term a "background vulnerability" to democratic backsliding; however, specific moments or episodes of backsliding are almost always the work of political decision-makers.⁴⁶

In the literature on Indonesia, many analysts apportion blame for the country's democratic problems to the political class in general. Marcus Mietzner, for example, holds the "elite, as a collective" responsible for a host of institutional changes that have narrowed the field of electoral competition and undermined democratic checks and balances.⁴⁷ Of course, the historical legacy and pathway sketched above is a critical part of the background. The prominent place of New Order military and politico-business figures in the new democratic polity helped to maintain patterns of thought that justify authoritarian and illiberal behaviour among the political elite writ large. Routine attacks on the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) by political parties and the police, and parliamentarians' attempts to roll back direct local elections, demonstrate that some key reform-era institutions enjoy little support in elite circles. The failure of consecutive governments, and the political elite in general, to pursue transitional justice and reckon with Indonesia's history of human rights violations has also helped to legitimate the continuing political role of past human rights abusers such as Prabowo Subianto, or Jokowi's Coordinating Minister for Politics, Law and Security, retired General Wiranto, and has made possible future political roles by similar military figures.

Analysts have also homed in on the actions and decision of specific individuals. In particular, Indonesia's two directly-

elected presidents have loomed large in scholarly explanations for the country's democratic stagnation and more recent decline. Reflecting on Yudhoyono's decade in power from 2004 to 2014, many analysts argued that Yudhoyono himself and his style of leadership played a critical role in Indonesia's lack of democratic progress and, in some arenas, regression.⁴⁸ He was an instinctively conservative politician, and he sought broad coalitions that ensured his government suffered few destabilizing attacks from potential sources of opposition. Indeed, he can be thought of as personally embodying the all-inclusive character of Indonesia's democratic transition which we have described as being a key facilitating factor in democratic regression; his presidency was marked by an attempt to embrace all political tendencies and groups, from the most conservative, even reactionary, to the more consistently democratic. This posture also meant President Yudhoyono avoided reforms that might have harmed established interests and invited political conflict. As a result, justice for victims of past human rights abuses, systematic reform of the military and police, and the deep institutional changes needed to stamp out political corruption, all fell off the president's agenda.

President Yudhoyono's stabilizing impulse also led him to appease, and even court, Islamist organizations and "assertive advocates of conservative legal Islamization".⁴⁹ He provided Islamic organizations—particularly the Indonesian Ulama Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, or MUI)—with patronage and institutional support in order to gain favour with conservative Muslim constituencies and avert political division, pushing Indonesia's drift towards the legal and political majoritarianism described earlier. Towards the end of his presidency, observers also increasingly focused on Yudhoyono's personal failure to protect minority groups from persecution and criticized his submission to conservative Islamic demands.⁵⁰

Yudhoyono's ambivalence towards reform, and particularly on matters of human rights, should not be surprising given his roots in the New Order military. And, as the previous section explained, Indonesia's change-within-continuity pattern of democratic transition ensured the sustained political dominance of individuals such as Yudhoyono, whose commitment to a liberal democratic order had clear limits. The pattern of democratic stagnation in the Yudhoyono years was shaped, above all, by the inclusive nature of Indonesia's democratic transition. This was not a period in which democratic regression flowed from a deliberate government agenda; instead,

stagnation was an unintended effect of the incorporation of a wide array of anti-democratic actors into the government, and the failure of senior leadership to press forward with democratization.

The irony is that democratic regression accelerated under a president who is *not* from the New Order elite, and whose election was initially widely lauded as signalling a major step forward in Indonesia's democratization. Jokowi's popularity was enabled by the post-Suharto political reforms, especially decentralization and direct elections of local government heads. Jokowi won office in 2014 on a largely democratic and inclusive platform, and with the support of volunteers and progressive civil society activists. His campaign contrasted with the divisive and neo-authoritarian platform of his rival, Prabowo Subianto. Some of his supporters had hoped that Jokowi would bring a fresh approach to the country's democratic institutions, reversing years of neglect.

Such hopes proved misplaced. Jokowi is a highly circumspect politician. Despite having a broad governing coalition and strong public approval for much of his first term, he often behaved like a deeply insecure president. He balked at pursuing the kind of democratic reforms that his more liberal supporters had expected and, instead, allied with conservative figures and forces in order to shore up his political coalition. Of particular note has been Jokowi's cultivation of close ties with military figures, and the accompanying trend towards greater military involvement in civilian affairs.⁵¹ In the lead-up to the 2019 elections, reports emerged that Jokowi instructed village-level military commands to actively promote his policies and close down attempts by opposition actors to spread "fake news" about him and his government.⁵² The president's campaign for re-election also involved the mobilization of bureaucratic institutions: government employees, governors, district heads and even village leaders, were rallied to support Jokowi, and some were allegedly coerced into doing so.⁵³ This combination of bureaucratic mobilization, and the manipulation of legal and security apparatus for political purposes, is typical of how regional incumbents run campaigns for re-election in contemporary Indonesia. Jokowi has brought to the presidency some of the undemocratic behaviours common to local-level politics.⁵⁴

At the same time, while he continued to represent the pluralist wing of Indonesian politics, over the course of his first term, Jokowi also made a series of concessions to political Islam. Anxiety about Islamist opposition moved Jokowi closer to mainstream Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, and to

the MUI. Ma'ruf Amin, former Chair of MUI and the Rais 'Aam (supreme leader) of NU, has been a key beneficiary of Jokowi's moves to undercut the conservative Islamic opposition. According to Greg Fealy, following the anti-Ahok protests, in which Ma'ruf's endorsement was crucial, Jokowi "began assiduously courting" the conservative cleric, providing him with patronage resources and eventually—albeit at the insistence of his coalition partners—the offer of a vice presidential nomination.⁵⁵ By elevating Ma'ruf to such an influential position, the president endorsed a figure who openly condemns pluralism, secularism and the rights of the country's minorities.

It is important to highlight the context in which Jokowi operated, especially the polarizing political conflict that became evident from 2014. If democratic stagnation under Yudhoyono reflected the pattern of all-embracing inclusivity of the post-Suharto political settlement, under Jokowi the underlying dynamic shifted to reflect a new pattern of political polarization between Islamist and pluralist groups.⁵⁶ In both the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, Prabowo allied with hardline Islamist forces to try to defeat Jokowi's more pluralist political coalition. The street mobilizations against Ahok in 2016 and 2017 further ignited the president's anxiety about the damage Islamist activism might do to his political position.

This more divided atmosphere prompted Jokowi to move closer to those mainstream conservative Islamic organizations and figures described above. But the sustained threat of Islamic opposition also motivated the president's heavy-handed approach to political antagonists and Islamist groups—for example, the Perppu on mass organizations and the use of the ITE laws to criminalize opponents.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, growing polarization between pluralists and Islamists prompted many of the president's supporters to accept repressive measures that they would likely have opposed earlier in the democratic transition. Comparative studies have observed that growing oppositional strength is often a trigger for democratic regression, because it "may produce, as a reaction, a concentration of power within an incumbent government with authoritarian tendencies".⁵⁸ Studies of political polarization make a similar point. Murat Somer and Jennifer McCoy argue that polarization can erode democratic quality when incumbents attempt to contain or repress undemocratic "others" by "undertake[ing] actions or employ[ing] discourses that end up undermining democracy and advancing authoritarianism".⁵⁹ This has certainly been the path taken in Indonesia, and helps to explain the shift

from democratic stagnation under Yudhoyono to regression under Jokowi. If stagnation under Yudhoyono resulted from the pattern of inclusiveness in government and Yudhoyono's caution, under Jokowi regression largely resulted from concerted government action against opponents.

In sum, the role of elite agency in Indonesia's democratic backsliding needs to be understood in the context of the underlying structural context. The two presidents adopted political styles that matched the differing historical circumstances in which they operated. Yudhoyono's caution—an attitude that had served him well as the most successful political survivor of the late Suharto military elite—ultimately prevented him from dismantling fundamental democratic procedures and institutions. He was highly attentive to public and international opinion, and was always concerned to maintain the image of a democratic statesman. Yudhoyono was thus reluctant to explicitly reverse Indonesia's democratic reforms, even while he incorporated into his governing coalition a range of undemocratic and illiberal forces.

Jokowi and his administration are less constrained by such concerns, but are also spurred on by accelerating polarization. As one of us has argued elsewhere, Jokowi has few ideological convictions that guide his approach to government and no personal commitment to a liberal democratic order; he is best characterized as a narrow developmentalist, whose concern for a limited set of socio-economic and developmental objectives trumps all other problems of government.⁶⁰ His attitudes, in short, are those of a small-town, problem-solving mayor, who finds himself astride the national stage but remains fixed on practical issues. Jokowi was not a player in the transition to democratic rule, and though he is a product of the new electoral politics, he apparently wears the democratic values that gave rise to it only lightly, having had little engagement with matters of democratic principle and political reform through his career.

Attitudinal Explanations

We have so far emphasized elite agency, the nature of Indonesia's democratic transition and the structural conditions which have enabled anti-reformist and illiberal actors to gradually chip away at the quality of Indonesia's democracy. But the traction of populism in recent years, and popular support for Jokowi despite his increasingly illiberal agenda, should also prompt more critical

assessment of societal preferences, and of public commitment to democratic norms. Scholarship on democratization frequently assumes that popular support is fundamental to democratic persistence. Some of the major debates on the global democratic recession have been prompted by analyses drawing attention to declining popular preferences for democracy worldwide.⁶¹

The literature on Indonesia specifically argues that strong public support for democracy has been an important defence against the ambitions of illiberal elites.⁶² Indeed, polling suggests that Indonesians have, in the two decades since the transition from authoritarianism, maintained consistently high levels of support for democracy.⁶³ Yet data also suggest that many Indonesians demonstrate only weak support for the liberal norms and precepts that underpin democratic quality. In this final section, we re-examine the liberal sensibilities of the Indonesian electorate. To do so, we draw upon the Asian Barometer (AB) survey, which regularly asks Indonesians (and citizens of other Asian countries) about democracy, authoritarianism and the values and preferences associated with both systems of government. In January 2019, Asian Barometer released the results of its most recent Fourth Wave survey on Indonesia, which was conducted in January 2016. The results suggest Indonesians hold complex views about democracy, and in many cases express ambivalence towards liberal democratic values.

To be clear: we do not make the case for a causal link connecting changing mass attitudes to democratic decline; in fact, such a linkage remains problematic in the comparative literature.⁶⁴ For example, we do not detect evidence of either a dramatic or gradual decline in support for democracy or liberal values over time, nor suggest that such a decline might be driving the political changes we have considered in this article. Instead our case is more modest: we simply suggest that mass attitudes in Indonesia are more conducive to, at least, an illiberal form of democracy than is typically recognized in the literature, and may not pose the challenge to more serious authoritarian backsliding that is normally assumed.

Asian Barometer surveys have consistently shown that a majority of Indonesians agree with the statement that, "While not perfect, democracy is still the best form of government." Back in 2011, 77 per cent of Indonesians agreed, and in 2016, the number remained high at 82 per cent.⁶⁵ However, other questions reveal that Indonesians hold much more varied views about democracy.

For example, the 2016 AB data show that Indonesians generally do not conceive of democracy in liberal terms—that is, as a system for protecting individual rights, electoral competition, and institutional checks and balances. Instead, they associate democracy with good governance and socio-economic outcomes, as measured by a series of questions on what constitutes the most “essential characteristic” of a democracy. Table 1 shows the results for this set of questions.

Table 1
Meaning of Democracy*

<i>Percentage of respondents that chose each option</i>	
Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor.	13.81
People choose the government leaders in free and fair elections.	41.68
Government does not waste any public money.	11.68
People are free to express their political views openly.	20.90
The legislature has oversight over the government.	7.48
Basic necessities, like food, clothes, shelter are provided for all.	27.10
People are free to organize political groups.	10.71
Government provides people with quality public services.	40.84
Government ensures law and order.	21.87
Media is free to criticize the things government does.	8.19
Government ensures job opportunities for all.	44.90
Multiple parties compete fairly in the election.	10.26
People have the freedom to take part in protests and demonstrations.	10.77
Politics is clean and free of corruption.	41.42
The court protects the ordinary people from the abuse of government power.	13.68
People receive state aid if they are unemployed.	20.32

* Respondents were asked, “If you have to choose only one from each four sets of statements that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential characteristics of a democracy?”

Source: 2016 AB Wave 4 data, <http://www.asianbarometer.org/data/data-release>.

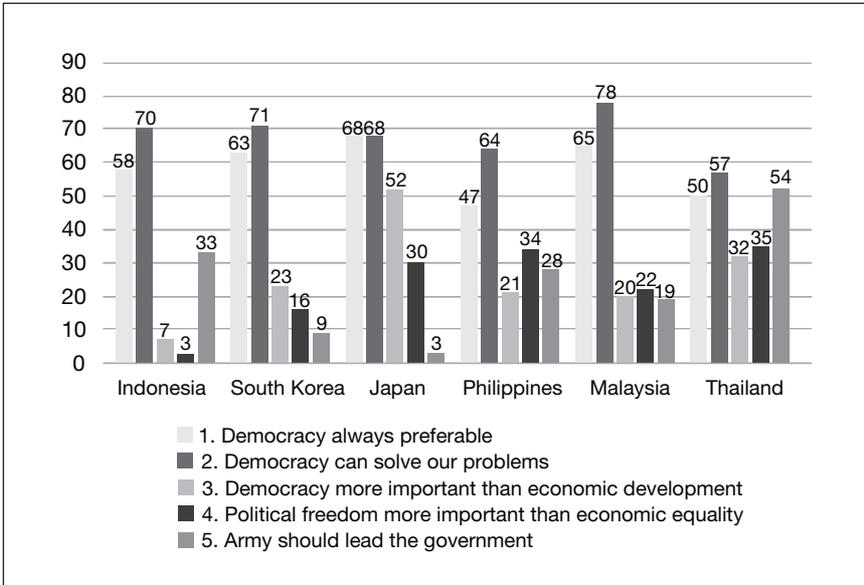
Respondents were asked to choose from four possible options. These options reflect different conceptions of democracy that are grounded in democratic theory: liberal interpretations emphasize democratic procedures or individual rights, and illiberal interpretations emphasize economic equality and delivery of public services.⁶⁶ The answers marked in bold indicate the most popular response in each cluster of four options.

The results indicate that while many Indonesians view elections as an essential element of a democracy, the other most popular answers were those that characterized democracy in terms of the government's socio-economic programmes and performance. In other words, for many Indonesians, democracy is a system for delivering substantive economic outcomes, rather than a system that protects people's rights and liberties. This finding reflects one of the conclusions that Saiful Mujani, R. William Liddle and Kuskridho Ambardi came to in their important study of voter behaviour. Their study finds that Indonesians' commitment to democracy is often closely tied to their satisfaction with government performance. If citizens are unhappy with the government, they suggest, democracy as a regime risks losing popular support and legitimacy, and "in that situation democracy becomes vulnerable to antidemocratic behaviour, both from elites and from ordinary citizens".⁶⁷

The AB survey also asked a series of other questions designed to measure citizens' preferences for democratic government, and support for the values that underpin a liberal democratic system. On these questions, Indonesians displayed immense variation. Figures 1 and 2 show the results for several questions included in the AB's "preference for democracy" and "democratic values" indexes, and we compare them with results from Northeast Asian countries that are generally regarded as "full" or consolidated democracies (Japan and South Korea) and countries of Southeast Asia which have experienced major democratic deficits (the Philippines, generally regarded as a low-quality patronage democracy; Malaysia, then under an electoral authoritarian regime; and Thailand, which at the time of the survey was ruled by the military). The figures show that democratic attitudes in Indonesia are generally much closer to those held in the country's less democratic Southeast Asian neighbours than in the more consolidated democracy of Japan (with South Korea as an intermediate case).

The results in Figure 1 allow us to make tentative observations about public perceptions of, and support for, democratic government. First, compared to citizens from Japan, South Korea and Malaysia,

Figure 1
Democratic versus Undemocratic Preferences*



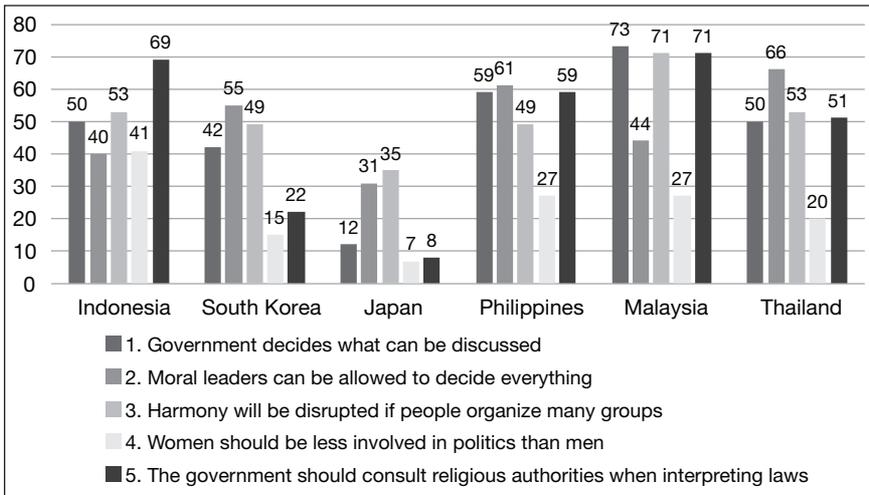
Note: * 2016 AB data; figures indicate percentage that *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with each statement.

fewer Indonesians (58 per cent) felt democracy was always preferable to authoritarian forms of government; this was nevertheless still more than citizens in Indonesia’s politically-troubled neighbours, the Philippines and Thailand. However, almost *all* Indonesians—and far more than in any other country—valued economic development and economic equality over democracy. This implies that, under circumstances of economic recession or hardship, or even extreme inequality, Indonesians may be willing to sacrifice democratic rights and procedures in return for promises of prosperity. In this context, it is worth recalling that Prabowo drew heavily on narratives of economic injustice and exploitation to rally support for his neo-authoritarian brand of populism in 2014 and 2019; and Jokowi’s erosion of democratic protections has occurred while his government has maintained a single-minded focus on infrastructure and economic development that is, stylistically at least, reminiscent of the New Order’s developmentalist orientation.

Figure 1 also reveals that a substantial minority of around a third of Indonesian respondents are willing to accept forms of government other than democracy, and to let the military run the country. Only Thailand, under junta rule at the time of the survey, had a higher level of support. Indeed, support for military rule has been consistently high in Indonesia across all the Barometer surveys, and in comparison to other countries.⁶⁸ Other domestic polls have shown that Indonesians consistently trust the military more than almost any other state institution, including the parliament, courts, political parties and even the KPK.⁶⁹

The AB results also indicate that many Indonesians exhibit a paternalistic and illiberal sensibility when it comes to questions about how society should be governed. Figure 2 shows that between 40 and 50 per cent of respondents expressed views that are at odds with liberal democratic values, such as the freedom to organize and the freedom to publicly discuss a range of ideas. On some of these questions, Indonesia was similar to its flawed democratic neighbours, the Philippines and Malaysia, and to junta-controlled Thailand. But Indonesia stood out as particularly illiberal when it came to supporting the equal political rights of women and men, and a

Figure 2
Democratic versus Undemocratic Values*



Note: * 2016 AB data; figures indicate percentage that *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with each statement.

striking majority of almost 70 per cent believe religious authorities should play a role in interpreting state laws. These results raise questions about the nature of Indonesians' commitment to democratic government, and to liberal democracy in particular. While Mujani et al. have characterized Indonesians as "critical democrats", such figures suggest "illiberal democrats" might be a more apt descriptor for a large slice of Indonesian voters, who value electoral procedures and their right to directly choose their political leaders, but who do not support a range of liberal democratic norms and institutions associated with a high-quality, consolidated democracy.

Other sorts of data also indicate that support for illiberalism is especially strong among urban and middle-class groups. Such findings contradict the expectations of derivatives of modernization theory, which assume that primarily urban and middle-class groups are the bulwarks of democracy. For example, on the day of the 2014 presidential election, Indikator Politik Indonesia administered an exit poll that showed that better educated voters tended to support Prabowo (he led Jokowi by 46 to 34 per cent among university graduates) while the less educated tended to support Jokowi (by 47 to 39 per cent among voters with only an elementary school degree). Prabowo trailed Jokowi by 37 to 47 per cent among voters with an income less than Rp 1 million (US\$83) per month, but led him by 45 to 39 per cent in the higher-income bracket (above Rp 2 million, or US\$167). Prabowo was also behind Jokowi in rural areas, by 38 to 47 per cent, but led narrowly in urban areas by 42 to 40 per cent.⁷⁰ Broadly similar, but less stark, differentials were visible in the 2019 election.⁷¹

Likewise, in an important recent study, Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi have analysed several years' worth of survey data on social and religious intolerance among Indonesian Muslims.⁷² While they find a general trend of decline in radicalism and certain types of intolerance, there is a clear socioeconomic division, with middle-class Muslims consistently more intolerant than lower-income Indonesians from lower-class professional categories. They conclude that the "main socio-demographic trend among Indonesian Muslims between the early 2010s and 2016 was therefore not rising conservatism, but a shift of the epicentre of conservative-radical attitudes from the lower classes to the middle classes and elites".⁷³

We believe that, taken together, such data point towards a broad-based illiberal constituency that helps account for public acquiescence to the slide in democratic quality currently underway. Our review of past AB results indicates similar levels of illiberalism

over time, from 2006, 2011 and 2016, which suggests that ambivalence towards liberal norms is a stable and important feature of the Indonesian electorate. However, the greatest danger lies not simply in the existence of such a constituency, but for the potential coalescence between illiberal segments of the Indonesian population with a reemergent and reinvigorated authoritarian-populist leadership. The 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, the 2016–17 mobilizations against Governor Ahok, and the Jokowi government's erosion of democratic norms and institutions, already indicate that large segments of the Indonesian public either favour, or are willing to accept, an increasingly illiberal political landscape.

Conclusion

In this article, we have examined the arc of Indonesia's post-Suharto democratic history, and the country's evolution from democratic success to regression. In identifying the sources of the country's illiberal turn, we did not seek to be exhaustive (had we done so we would have considered other factors, including the less conducive international climate for democratic progress now compared to when Indonesia began its transition 20 years ago). Instead, drawing on comparative literature on democratic decline, we focused on three key factors: political structures, elite agency and public attitudes.

Drawing on a reading of Indonesia's recent past, we identified both a pathway of historical development and an array of contextual factors that contributed to rapid democratic change of 1998–2001, but then conspired to forestall democratic deepening over the subsequent period. Indonesia's democratic breakthrough was largely driven from below, by mass mobilizations; after 1998, the country's democracy was partly built by actors associated with the preceding authoritarian system. We can trace in this circumstance the origins of both the rapidity of Indonesia's initial transition to democracy, *and* the accumulating problems of democratic rule once the initial impetus for regime change had exhausted itself. When early reform pressures dissipated, many leading figures in the new regime edged back towards politically conservative positions: witness the great political caution of President Yudhoyono and his reluctance to push forward reform. The current Jokowi administration aroused hopes in some quarters for a revival of the lost impetus of the *reformasi* years, but Jokowi instead compromised with authoritarian elements, and accelerated the drift toward illiberalism in an effort to contain opposition actors.

As we have argued, it is reasonable to categorize Indonesia today as an *illiberal democracy*. This category describes a regime in which free and fair elections persist alongside denial of substantive political rights, such as freedom of speech or freedom to choose and practise one's religion. For Diamond, Indonesia today falls into the category of "less than liberal democracies" along with Mexico, Columbia and Thailand (prior to the 2014 coup).⁷⁴ These countries remain exposed to authoritarian risks and are susceptible to democratic failure.⁷⁵ Overall, Indonesia has not yet experienced systematic abuse of citizens' rights at the hands of a strongman or single political party. Instead, the dominant pattern has been the ad hoc and arbitrary application of arcane laws that infringe upon citizens' freedoms and their access to justice, and that narrow the space for democratic debate, political mobilization and freedom of expression, alongside abuses of citizens' rights by powerful actors embedded in, or connected to, the state at the local level. Over the last five years, however, the executive has become increasingly concentrated and strategic in its use of coercion, and this trend could accelerate in Jokowi's second term.

Democratic erosion, when carried out by incumbents, is inherently an elite project. To that extent, Indonesia's political class is indeed responsible for the democratic regression described in this article. However, the considerable traction of divisive and Islamist-inspired populist campaigns, and a muted public response to the Jokowi administration's authoritarian interventions, should prompt more reflection about the popular base of Indonesian illiberalism. For many years, analysts have cited polls that demonstrate strong public satisfaction with democracy and direct elections. However, our review of recent data suggests that Indonesians hold complex and ambivalent views about the liberal norms that underpin representative government. Illiberal views are shared by a relatively large proportion of the population, and such attitudes provide a conducive environment for the incremental erosion of Indonesia's democracy.

NOTES

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- ⁵⁴ On bureaucratic mobilization in local elections, see Edward Aspinall and Ward Berenschot, *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2019), pp. 176–201.
- ⁵⁵ Greg Fealy, “Ma’ruf Amin: Jokowi’s Islamic Defender or Deadweight?”, *New Mandala* (blog), 28 August 2018, <https://www.newmandala.org/maruf-amin-jokowis-islamic-defender-deadweight/>.
- ⁵⁶ On this polarization, see, for example, Jamie S. Davidson, *Indonesia: Twenty Years of Democracy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 40–54; Eve Warburton, “Polarisation in Indonesia: What If Perception is Reality?”, *New Mandala* (blog), 16 April 2019, <https://www.newmandala.org/how-polarised-is-indonesia/>; Edward Aspinall, “Indonesia’s Election and the Return of Ideological Competition”, *New Mandala* (blog), 22 April 2019, <https://www.newmandala.org/indonesias-election-and-the-return-of-ideological-competition/>.
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- ⁵⁸ Tomini and Wagemann, “Varieties of Contemporary Democratic Breakdown and Regression”, p. 708.
- ⁵⁹ Murat Somer and Jennifer McCoy, “Déjà vu? Polarization and Endangered Democracies in the 21st Century”, *American Behavioral Scientist* 62, no. 1 (January 2018): 6.

- ⁶⁰ Eve Warburton, "Indonesian Politics in 2016: Jokowi and the New Developmentalism", *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 52, no. 3 (February 2016): 297–320.
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- ⁶³ Saiful Mujani, R. William Liddle, and Kuskridtho Ambardi, *Voting Behaviour in Indonesia since Democratization: Critical Democrats* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- ⁶⁴ Waldner and Lust, "Unwelcome Change", pp. 98–99.
- ⁶⁵ These and other Asian Barometer figures presented in this article are based on an analysis of the survey data in which "do not understand", "can't choose" or "decline to answer", are treated as valid responses, and are not coded as missing.
- ⁶⁶ For a discussion of different popular conceptions of democracy, and how to measure such differences, see Russell J. Dalton, Doh C. Shin, and Willy Jou, "Popular Conceptions of the Meaning of Democracy: Democratic Understanding in Unlikely Places", *Centre for the Study of Democracy Working Paper Series*, no. 07'03 (2007), University of California, Irvine, https://sites.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Books/Democratic%20Deficit/Articles/Dalton_Shin_Jou.pdf.
- ⁶⁷ Mujani, Liddle, and Ambardi, *Voting Behaviour in Indonesia since Democratization*, p. 18.
- ⁶⁸ Chu et al., "Re-Assessing the Popular Foundations of Asian Democracies".
- ⁶⁹ Yoga Sukmana, "Survei LSI: DPR, Lembaga Negara Dengan Tingkat Kepercayaan Terendah" [LSI Survey: DPR, State Institution with the Lowest Level of Public Trust], *Kompas.com*, 31 July 2018, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/07/31/17242921/survei-lsi-dpr-lembaga-negara-dengan-tingkat-kepercayaan-terendah>.
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