

1 The decline of Indonesian democracy

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Indonesia should feature prominently in any global account of democratisation. In a few heady years after the 1998 collapse of Suharto's autocratic New Order, Indonesia was transformed from one of the world's last and largest bulwarks of Cold War authoritarianism into one of Asia's most vibrant democracies. The details of this transition are well known, but bear repeating: the withdrawal of the armed forces from politics; the liberalisation of the party system; free and competitive elections; the proliferation of independent media; legal and judicial reform; expanded space for civil society; and a vast decentralisation program that devolved political power to elected local leaders. These achievements were yet more remarkable given they took place in an ethnically and religiously diverse country struggling to recover from the ravages of the Asian financial crisis. During this time, Indonesia appeared a democratic outlier (Carothers 2009; Diamond 2008; Lussier 2016): a rare case of successful transition and consolidation, not only within Southeast Asia, but globally amid the ebbing of democracy's third wave (Huntington 1991) and the onset of the democratic recession (Diamond 2015; cf. Levitsky and Way 2015).

Yet two decades after the landmark elections of 1999, a different—and far more pessimistic—scholarly consensus is taking shape. Where political analysts once lauded Indonesia as a beacon of democracy in a troubled region, most now agree that its democracy is in decline (Aspinall and Mietzner 2019; Diprose et al. 2019; Hadiz 2017). Recent studies have drawn attention to deterioration across an array of indicators: populist mobilisations, growing intolerance and deepening sectarianism (Mietzner et al. 2018; Warburton and Aspinall 2019); increasingly dysfunctional electoral and representative institutions (Aspinall and Sukmajati 2016; Muhtadi 2019); the deterioration of civil liberties (Marta et al. 2019); and

the executive's expansion of an authoritarian toolkit for suppressing opposition and curtailing criticism (Mietzner 2019; Power 2018).

In the early months of 2020, as we finalised this volume for publication, the COVID-19 pandemic was sweeping into Indonesia's population centres. The central government was struggling to contain the virus, the death toll was rising, and the administration's instructions on lockdowns and social distancing were being poorly articulated and unevenly implemented. The government proved far more proactive and capable, however, in clamping down on criticism of its response to the pandemic. In April, the national police issued a regulation instructing officers to arrest and charge citizens who 'insulted' the president or other government officials in relation to COVID-19. Police harassment and arrests of ordinary citizens, activists and opposition figures then became a prominent and disturbing feature of the Jokowi's government's pandemic response.

For example, a prominent government critic, Said Didu, was threatened with criminal charges after criticising the administration for prioritising the economy over public welfare amid the pandemic. This followed the arrest of a university student activist for a Facebook post that made similar criticisms of Jokowi's policy priorities (Nashr 2020). Ravio Patra, an activist and health policy researcher who penned an article detailing the shortcomings of the government's pandemic response, was arrested for attempting to incite riots through dubious private messages sent from one of his social media accounts. It soon emerged that his account had been hijacked, prior to the dissemination of these messages, using a phone number apparently belonging to a police officer. As of early May, more than 100 Indonesians had been arrested for spreading what authorities deemed 'hate speech' or 'misinformation' relating to COVID-19.

These arrests were not just a symptom of crisis politics; rather, they fit a broader trend of growing state intolerance towards dissent. During the first term in office of President Joko Widodo (Jokowi), defamation laws were used with increasing regularity by ordinary citizens, politicians and officials to silence and punish their detractors (see Chapter 13 by Ken Setiawan). At the start of Jokowi's second term, legislators and government elites sought even more restrictions on personal and political rights. Proposed revisions to the Criminal Code, for example, were set to impose hefty penalties for 'insulting' the president, incumbent government and state institutions, while also outlawing extramarital sex, cohabitation and most means of abortion. Although parliamentary deliberations on the controversial laws were delayed following mass demonstrations in September 2019, they were back on the table five months later amid a deepening health crisis and looming economic recession. As in other declining and fragile democracies, COVID-19 provided the Indonesian

government with an opportunity to pursue its illiberal policy agenda without fear of renewed opposition mobilisation.

What explains Indonesia's democratic regression? Which areas of democratic life are most affected? Where are the sources of democratic persistence and resilience? And how does Indonesia's experience compare with other countries in the context of a global democratic recession? This volume sets out to address these questions, and to provide a comprehensive and wide-ranging analysis of the health of Indonesian democracy.

In this introductory chapter, we map the contours of Indonesia's democratic decline and introduce the major themes and arguments put forward by each contributing author. We begin with a brief history of political developments since the end of the Suharto era. Here we trace the evolution of scholarly discourse, from cautious praise for Indonesia's dynamic—if imperfect—democratisation in the early and mid-2000s; to a growing emphasis on stalled reform and democratic stagnation in the late Yudhoyono years; to the present focus on democratic deterioration under Jokowi.

Section two revisits longstanding problems that have plagued Indonesian democracy throughout the post-New Order period, including the institutional and social legacies of authoritarian rule, entrenched political and material inequality, and weak rule of law and endemic corruption. All of these structural challenges have made democratic deepening difficult in Indonesia, and left it vulnerable to renewed illiberal threats.

The third and fourth sections of this chapter then turn to identify and assess the most proximate threats to Indonesia's democracy. Here we distinguish between those that emanate 'from above', in the form of anti-democratic actors within the political elite and formal state institutions, and those threats that come from 'from below', manifested in illiberal social movements and grassroots support for chauvinist or authoritarian agendas. Alarming, Indonesian democracy is beset from both directions, with few compelling advocates for liberal democracy able to check the current process of decline. We close by outlining the structure of the rest of the book.

FROM STAGNATION TO REGRESSION

Indonesia's sustained period of democratic reform and stability in the decade following the collapse of the New Order was surprising for students of comparative democratisation. As Diamond (2010: 25–7) notes, Indonesia's relatively low-income status, its high levels of corruption,

its experiences of ethnic and separatist violence, and the polarisation and political instability around the turn of the century echoed patterns common to many of the ‘the troubled and failed democracies of the third wave’. Yet despite these challenges, comparative indices showed substantial progress through Indonesia’s first democratic decade across various measures, including political rights and participation, freedom of expression and organisation, and government accountability and effectiveness (Freedom House 2009).

If these comparative analyses tended to emphasise the success of Indonesian democratisation, studies produced by close observers of Indonesian politics were more mixed in tone. Though some praised Indonesia’s post-authoritarian reform and forecast continued democratic consolidation through the 2010s (Liddle and Mujani 2013; MacIntyre and Ramage 2008: 53), many emphasised the shortcomings of its new democracy, drawing particular attention to the problems of corruption and ‘money politics’, a weak rule of law and the retention of patrimonial power structures (Aspinall 2010; Bhakti 2004; Dwipayana 2009; Indrayana 2008; Mietzner 2009; Webber 2006). One influential interpretation of Indonesian democratisation held that post-Suharto power structures remained beholden to an oligarchic class that had emerged under the New Order (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Winters 2011). Yet although these analyses disagreed as to the quality of Indonesia’s new democracy, they concurred in one important regard: all conceded that the *direction* of post–New Order change was towards relatively more open and competitive politics.

By the time of Yudhoyono’s 2009 re-election, the dominant paradigm in political analysis had started to shift. As reforms stalled through the latter part of the 2000s, a growing number of observers argued that Indonesian democracy had entered a period of stagnation. As one scholar put it, the waning of reform cemented Indonesia’s status as a ‘reasonably stable yet low-quality democracy’ (Tomsa 2010: 309). Then, during Yudhoyono’s second term, some leading analysts pointed to warning signs of democratic regression led by a broad coalition of forces within the political elite (Fealy 2011; Mietzner 2012). In one indication of this gathering trend, 2013 saw Indonesia slip from a Freedom House ranking of ‘free’—which it had held since 2005—to ‘partly free’ after the introduction of new restrictions on civil society organisations (Freedom House 2014). Although Yudhoyono preserved Indonesian democracy during his decade in power, his legacy was tarnished by his unwillingness to challenge emerging anti-democratic forces and his failure to consolidate important institutional gains (Aspinall et al. 2015).

The threat posed by these anti-democratic forces was embodied in the 2014 presidential bid of ex-general Prabowo Subianto, Suharto’s one-time

son-in-law. Prabowo's campaign, built on ultranationalist and neo-authoritarian rhetoric, brought Indonesia dangerously close to the kind of illiberal populist rule that threatens democratic norms and institutions in countries like Brazil, the Philippines and the United States. When Jokowi prevailed in that election—albeit by a relatively narrow margin—it was to the immense relief of Indonesia's reformist constituency and most academic observers. Aspinall and Mietzner (2019: 306), for example, argued that the 'survival of the country's democracy was at stake' in 2014. Though it is not clear that a majority of Indonesian voters viewed their electoral choice in such stark terms (Gammon and Berger 2014), the anti-democratic machinations of Prabowo's supporters in the aftermath of Jokowi's victory reinforced the view that Indonesia had been 'saved' from a would-be autocrat (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014). In addition, the end of Yudhoyono's increasingly aloof, lame-duck second term instilled some hope for renewed democratic reform led by a new president from outside the established political elite. Thus, despite the stagnation of the Yudhoyono years and an electoral flirtation with authoritarian populism, much political analysis in the mid-2010s retained a cautiously optimistic tone about the underlying robustness of Indonesian democracy (Case 2017; Chu et al. 2016; Horowitz 2013).

Yet it is under Jokowi—no doubt the more credible democratic choice in 2014—that the tenor of analysis has shifted, once again, for the worse. Writing on Jokowi's first year in office, Muhtadi (2015) observed a president who displayed an increasingly weak commitment to the promises of clean government that he made in his campaign. The following year, Warburton (2016) presented a more negative assessment of Jokowi's democratic credentials, casting the president as a narrow developmentalist with no deep dedication to the norms and institutions of liberal democracy. Following the Islamist-led mobilisations that swung Jakarta's 2017 gubernatorial election against the Christian, ethnically Chinese incumbent, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama ('Ahok'), Hadiz (2017) argued that Indonesia had entered a new phase of 'deepening illiberalism'. Then, as the 2019 presidential campaign got underway, Power (2018: 307) documented the government's 'increasingly open repression and disempowerment of political opposition' in order to secure re-election for the incumbent president, and argued the Jokowi administration was taking an 'authoritarian turn'.

By 2019, as Jokowi reached the end of his first term in office, Indonesia's democracy had sunk to its lowest point since the end of the New Order. Again, international indices were instructive: during Jokowi's first five years, the ratings produced by Freedom House, the Economist Democracy Index and V-Dem all tracked a deterioration in the quality of Indonesia's

democratic institutions and the protection of civil liberties. The Economist Intelligence Unit's 10-point scale, for example, had Indonesia scoring above 7 when Jokowi first came to office. That score sank to 6.39 in 2017–18. A marginal bump to 6.48 in 2019 was surprising, given the unprecedented violent riots that met the announcement of the presidential election results (Chapter 17 by Toha and Harish), the government's hollowing out of the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, KPK), and its subsequent clampdown on mass pro-democracy protests in the final months of 2019 (Chapter 14 by Power). Recent years have, nevertheless, seen a steady downwards trend. Although Indonesia is still considered a 'flawed democracy' (6–8) by the Economist Intelligence Unit, the democratic backsliding of the Jokowi era has moved it closer to the category of 'hybrid regime' (4–6) (EIU 2020).

The two chapters that follow this introduction delve into the comparative dimensions of Indonesia's present democratic decline. As Allen Hicken and Dan Slater emphasise, Indonesia is by no means alone in its democratic shortcomings. Indeed, against the backdrop of a global democratic recession and alarming trends in certain other Southeast Asian countries, Allen Hicken (Chapter 2) re-emphasises some of Indonesia's continuing democratic strengths. Indonesia's democratic decline has (so far) been less dramatic and wide-reaching than those of the Philippines and Thailand, for instance, where incumbents have more openly attacked core democratic institutions, including elections, courts and media freedom. Meanwhile, Dan Slater (Chapter 3) suggests that the source of Indonesia's relative democratic success in the post-Suharto period can be located in its unique historical inheritances—a plural nationalism and strong state institutions—which have helped prevent the kind of authoritarian reversal to which young democracies are often prone.

Yet these assessments also diagnose some of the major challenges to Indonesia's democratic health at the present time. Slater warns that illiberalism remains 'the main lingering threat to Indonesian democracy', and Hicken is especially concerned about deteriorations in the protection of individual freedom and civil society space, as well as the continued weakening of political parties and deepening political polarisation. The persistence of these forces means Indonesia remains vulnerable to renewed autocratisation.

These comparative contributions show that the patterns of backsliding described in this volume are not unique to Indonesia. Indeed, it is Indonesia's democratic successes—not its shortcomings—that have historically confounded the expectations of comparative democratisation scholarship. There can be little doubt, however, that most readers will

derive cold comfort from the conclusion that Indonesia is now 'catching up' to a global pattern of democratic regression.

THE STRUCTURAL SHORTCOMINGS OF DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Beyond the comparative context, this volume focuses on why Indonesia's democracy has fallen into retreat, and what has brought about the contemporary reversals taking place across multiple democratic indicators. One prominent stream of analysis emphasises structural features of Indonesia's political economy in explaining the deteriorating quality of its democracy. As noted above, Indonesia shares some of the structural conditions that have prevented the process of 'democratic deepening' (Heller 2009) in other countries: stable but low levels of economic growth, high wealth inequality, patronage politics, endemic corruption, and the political and social legacies of authoritarianism (Bourchier 2015; Hadiz 2018; Warburton and Aspinall 2019).

Several contributors examine how economic conditions can profoundly affect the health and depth of democratic consolidation. Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir (Chapter 7) focuses on the ways in which severe material disparities both undermine Indonesia's democratic quality and threaten its democratic institutions. He shows how Indonesia's economic growth has mostly concentrated wealth in the pockets of a narrow elite, leaving a large constituency of lower-middle class Muslims in economic precarity. In a country where formal class politics faces continued repression, he argues, these economic grievances have been more readily framed in religious terms and contributed to the surge of popular mobilisation behind Islamist political causes.

The relationship between economic conditions and democratic quality is also explored by Puspa Delima Amri and Mochamad Pasha (Chapter 12). Drawing on existing measures of democratic performance at the subnational level, they identify a positive association between the health of local democratic institutions and socioeconomic indicators such as urbanisation and literacy. These findings underscore the importance of investing in political institutions and participatory mechanisms in Indonesia's poorer and more rural regions. However, Amri and Pasha also emphasise the need for more rigorous, independent research into regional variations in democratic quality.

In addition to examining economic structures, students of Indonesian democratisation have emphasised how political compromises brokered during the post-Suharto transition wove institutional weaknesses

into the fabric of the new democratic regime. For instance, Aspinall (2010) argues that the inclusive character of Indonesia's transition from authoritarianism ensured reactionary elites and potential anti-democratic spoilers were integrated into the new political settlement. On one hand, this incorporation of ancien régime elements made for a relatively smooth and stable transition to electoral democracy; on the other, it allowed entrenched, illiberal powerbrokers to maintain authority over democratic institutions to which they had little commitment. Contemporary politics thus continues to be shaped by the institutional holdovers from authoritarianism, including ambiguous and malleable legal authority, widespread illegality and elite impunity. In this vein, Thomas Power (Chapter 14) draws attention to the ways in which these structural legacies—institutionalised corruption, a weak rule of law and the vulnerability of law enforcement agencies to politicisation—have provided fertile ground for the Jokowi administration's efforts to curtail criticism, tame opposition and dismantle democratic checks and balances.

There is little doubt that the structural conditions imposed by economic distribution and institutional arrangements have hampered Indonesia's democratic consolidation. Nevertheless, these structural shortcomings cannot wholly explain the present pattern of democratic deterioration. An array of political actors—elites, activists, organisations and ordinary citizens—are shaping and contesting Indonesia's present democratic trajectory, both from within the ruling elite and from the grassroots.

DEMOCRATIC REGRESSION FROM ABOVE

Given the extreme imbalances in wealth and power that structure post-New Order politics, it is unsurprising that the role of political elites features prominently in many analyses of Indonesia's post-Suharto shortcomings and stagnation (Ambardi 2008; Aspinall 2010; Mietzner 2012; Robison and Hadiz 2004; Slater 2004). Similarly, anti-democratic elites are central actors in Indonesia's present democratic deterioration (Hadiz 2017; Mietzner 2016; Power 2018; Warburton 2016; Warburton and Aspinall 2019). Political party leaders, elected politicians, state officials and wealthy capitalists have coalesced to erode the sorts of checks, balances and liberal guardrails that are critical to a healthy democracy, including an effective rule of law, diverse and critical media, robust human rights protections, and an open and representative political party system.

One clear indication of elite-led democratic deterioration is the declining quality of Indonesia's political parties. Parties are a crucial barometer of

a country's democratic health, and Hicken (Chapter 2) describes them as 'the symbolic face of democracy'. While Indonesian parties were at times excessively criticised in the 2000s—particularly when compared to their counterparts in other young democracies (Mietzner 2013)—the 2010s saw a marked decline across multiple indicators of party performance, including societal representation and internal accountability. As Marcus Mietzner documents in Chapter 10, the Jokowi presidency has seen a 'comprehensive' deterioration in the quality of Indonesia's party system. Prohibitive expense and rising parliamentary thresholds have made it virtually impossible to establish new parties, unless they are funded by powerful tycoons and oligarchs. Mietzner also diagnoses an illiberal turn within party organisations, characterised by the decline or abandonment of internal mechanisms for democracy and accountability.

Parties have also come under external attack from the Jokowi government. Most notably, the president and his allies have reactivated authoritarian-era executive powers in order to coerce opposition parties into supporting their coalition (Mietzner 2016). As Power explains in Chapter 14, this is one manifestation of the incumbent administration's efforts at executive aggrandisement, carried out through a wide-ranging assault on formal and informal mechanisms of democratic accountability. In addition to its suppression of party-based opposition, the Jokowi government has taken unprecedented steps to co-opt subnational administrations, and has defanged Indonesia's only credibly independent law enforcement agency—the KPK. It has simultaneously sought to repress its critics and opponents in civil society—ranging from the anti-democratic forces of intolerant Islamism to the overtly pro-democracy protests that mobilised to defend the KPK in late 2019.

Such efforts to restrict and repress free political expression within civil society are perhaps the most widely cited examples of the elite-led erosion of Indonesian democracy. During the latter part of Yudhoyono's tenure, analysts and activists began voicing concern about new regulations that stifled critical speech and public dissent. Ken Setiawan (Chapter 13) describes how the notoriously malleable Law No. 11/2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law), which criminalises 'defamatory' electronic media communication, has been wielded with growing regularity by powerful elites seeking to silence criticism from political opponents, journalists, activists and ordinary citizens. Drawing on detailed case data, she shows that ITE Law prosecutions have become more frequent and ostensibly more targeted under the Jokowi administration. More than any of its predecessors, the Jokowi government

has weaponised online surveillance and intimidation to cow political opponents and stymie popular criticism.¹

These trends have not been confined to the realm of social media. As Ross Tapsell details in Chapter 11, Indonesia's traditional and corporate media is also struggling to fulfil crucial democratic functions. Indonesia's media landscape, once regarded as among the freest in the region, is now dominated by an oligopoly comprising mostly government-aligned owners—several of whom are party chiefs and ministers within Jokowi's coalition. Building on his previous research (2017), Tapsell suggests that Indonesia's traditional media is under mounting pressure to curb critiques of the incumbent government, and describes how state interventions into media outlets are restricting space for 'diverse political conversations' and critical commentary.

These analyses beg the question of why Indonesia is falling prey to accelerated processes of elite-led democratic deconsolidation. Much recent comparative literature has emphasised the rise of populist politicians who come to power by challenging established power structures, then try to free themselves of institutional constraints in the name of governing for 'the people' (Kenny 2019; Norris and Inglehart 2019: 65–7; Pappas 2019). As Liam Gammon explains in Chapter 6, Jokowi, Prabowo and the Islamist '212 movement' have all been cast as manifestations of populism, and analysts have argued that each actor or group has contributed to Indonesia's current moment of democratic decline (Aspinall 2015; Mietzner 2020; Robison and Hadiz 2017). Yet Gammon shows that Indonesia's democratic deterioration has not followed the path of fragile democracies in Latin America, or in parts of Europe, where a populist outsider seeks to personalise power by dismantling core democratic institutions. Rather, Jokowi's erosion of Indonesian democracy is taking place 'in concert with a diverse coalition of incumbent non-populist political actors' and exhibits 'a broad level of elite buy-in'. In his analysis of Islamic populism, Mudhoffir (Chapter 7) draws attention to the ways in which self-interested elites have sought to manipulate channels of popular dissatisfaction for narrow electoral purposes, arguing that the Muslim populist constituency

1 These findings are important for comparative analyses of internet freedom, some of which significantly underestimate the extent of government efforts to control and censor online space. For example, Freedom House's 2019 Freedom on the Net report overlooked pro-government manipulation of online discussion and the expanded weaponisation of ITE Law cases against government critics. *Despite this*, Indonesia suffered a 3-point drop in its internet freedom score from 2018 to 2019—the equal highest in Southeast Asia (Freedom House 2019).

remains 'on the political margins, subordinated by opportunistic but powerful politico-economic elites'.

That the rollback of Indonesian democracy is a product of intra-elite cooperation rather than 'outsider' populism is by no means a reassuring finding. First, it reveals an absence of intra-elite resistance to Indonesia's present democratic regression. Second, it implies that contemporary trends are unlikely to be arrested with the conclusion of Jokowi's presidential tenure: he is, no doubt, a critical actor in this moment of democratic decline—but he has been aided and abetted by an ensemble cast of illiberal elite allies. Third, expansive elite buy-in contributes to the normalisation of deepening democratic deficits, both reflected in and reinforced by a largely uncritical and at times propagandist media.

Elite-led attacks on vital democratic rights and institutions may be the most overt expression of Indonesia's democratic predicament, but they do not wholly explain the shift from stagnant reform to gathering regression. To drill more deeply into the drivers of democratic decline, we now turn to the roles of non-state actors, social groups and ordinary citizens.

DEMOCRATIC REGRESSION FROM BELOW

Comparative scholars have long tied democratic consolidation and stability to particular social conditions, including the spread and depth of popular support for democratic institutions and the liberal norms that underpin them, and to the vibrancy of a liberal civil society (Graham and Svobik 2019; Helmke and Levitsky 2006). In the Indonesian context, scholars have historically contrasted the anti-democratic tendencies of political elites with civil society's role as a bulwark against renewed autocratisation (Mietzner 2012; Mujani and Liddle 2009). As Mietzner (2012: 209) put it, civil society was 'democracy's most important defender' against 'anti-reformist elites' during the Yudhoyono years.

Yet through the latter part of the 2010s, civil society organisations have struggled to live up to this billing, reflected in the rise of new political forces at the grassroots, the aggravation of existing sociopolitical cleavages, and evolving popular attitudes towards key aspects of democracy. Multiple contributions to this volume describe emergent challenges and threats to Indonesian democracy arising from the societal level, often showing how grassroots developments are encouraging or reinforcing the patterns of elite-led regression described in the previous section.

One prominent marker of Indonesia's democratic decline is a now well-documented deterioration in the protection of minorities. As Fealy and Ricci (2019: 2) point out, Indonesia's ethnic, religious and sexual

minorities have over the past decade faced growing ‘condemnation or denigration’—not just by political leaders, but also ‘by other sections of society’. Increasingly bold expressions of intolerance and majoritarianism were widely diagnosed during the Yudhoyono era (Bush 2015), but drew global attention with the 2016–17 Islamist mobilisations that swung Jakarta’s gubernatorial race. The anti-Ahok campaign—which consigned the incumbent to electoral defeat and imprisonment for blasphemy—was a watershed moment for Indonesian democracy. Not only did the 2017 Jakarta election reveal the reach and influence of intolerant, sectarian ideas and groups; it further exacerbated the religio-ideological polarisation that had riven national politics during a bitter presidential contest in 2014.

Many of the Jokowi administration’s repressive tactics have been framed as essential measures to contain the Islamist threat to Indonesia’s religiously pluralist foundations. As Eve Warburton emphasises in Chapter 4, the president’s supporters have proven willing to accept such illiberal measures when they are directed against ideological opponents. Popular support for key democratic values and norms is therefore rendered ‘contingent’ by polarisation, with partisans on both sides of Indonesia’s contemporary ideological divide willing to trade off the erosion of crucial institutions for the repression and coercion of their political enemies. As Warburton notes, there has been meagre pushback from traditionally pro-democracy civil society against the government’s efforts to silence and purge its ideological opponents.

The problem of polarisation is also taken up by Nava Nuraniyah (Chapter 5), who explores how the fractious political contests of recent years have been animated by a longstanding religious conflict between the traditionalist Muslim constituency exemplified by Indonesia’s largest Islamic organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and the rising forces of puritanical Islamism embodied in groups like the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS) and the now-banned Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). Nuraniyah’s analysis is a refreshing departure from much of the previous commentary on this issue, as she focuses her attention not on the threat of reactionary Islamism, but rather on how the illiberal and repressive tactics adopted by NU are exacerbating polarisation and hastening democratic regression. She thus argues that both Islamists and religious pluralists are ‘subordinating the preservation of democratic principles’ to a bitter rivalry between ‘competing visions of Indonesian Islam’.

As well as highlighting the increasingly polarised character of Indonesia’s popular politics, the 2017 Jakarta campaign revealed the expanding clout of intolerant organisations like the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI) and its leader, Habib Rizieq Shihab.

FPI's evolution from a relatively peripheral vigilante organisation into a vehicle for Islamic populism has provoked concern among many observers (Mietzner et al. 2018). Gammon (Chapter 6) notes that the types of populism associated with social organisations like FPI present a more proximate threat to Indonesia's democratic fabric than 'populism from above'.

In Chapter 15, Sana Jaffrey explores how the forces of religious vigilantism have been able to effectively expand their social legitimacy through the democratic era. Benefiting from close ties to state officials and law enforcement agencies, religious militias and vigilante groups now police a 'widening range of moral and religious offences', allowing these organisations—from FPI to the NU-affiliated Banser—to accrue deep reserves of social and political capital. Jaffrey argues that vigilantism is 'dismantling liberal rights' and 'basic democratic freedoms from the bottom up'. In this way, civil and political rights are beset on multiple fronts—threatened by the increasingly authoritarian exercise of power at both the apex of the political system and at the community level.

Despite the growth of violent vigilantism as a means to punish social and moral transgressions, Indonesia's post-Suharto elections have been overwhelmingly peaceful at both the national and local levels. As Risa J. Toha and S.P. Harish (Chapter 17) point out, the relative absence of violence in Indonesian elections sits in stark contrast to many young democracies of comparable size, diversity and development. However, their analysis of data from the National Violence Monitoring System—which tracked reporting of violent incidents until its unfortunate closure in 2014—suggests an uptick in some types of election-related violence during the latter part of the Yudhoyono presidency. They supplement this finding by tracing the post-2016 rise of mass opposition mobilisations as an electoral strategy, drawing attention to a steady increase in incidents of violence that culminated in the deadly Jakarta riots of May 2019. Toha and Harish note that the manipulation of religious sentiment, strategic mobilisation of protesters and aggressive deployment of security personnel threaten the traditionally peaceful character of elections—potentially eroding a longstanding strength of Indonesian democracy.

Many analyses of the 2019 post-election riots drew attention to the role of rumour and disinformation in inciting and spreading violence (Temby 2019). These patterns, while new at the level of national elections, are a longstanding problem in subnational regions shaped by ethnoreligious cleavages and historical cycles of conflict. As Irsyad Rafsadie, Dyah Ayu Kartika and Siswo Mulyartono detail in Chapter 16, the 2018 West Kalimantan gubernatorial election saw ethnically and religiously divisive rumours disseminated within an electorate already polarised by the

aftershocks of the 2017 Jakarta race and local legacies of ethnic violence. Following the defeat of the incumbent Christian Dayak coalition by a Muslim Malay ticket, supporters of the losing candidates mounted a campaign of intimidation that drove Muslim residents from their homes and threatened to spark renewed bloodshed. In a troubling echo of Toha and Harish's conclusions, Rafsadie, Kartika and Mulyartono argue that the increasingly widespread deployment of polarising political rumours for electoral advantage heightens the chances of violent outbreaks, especially in post-conflict areas.

These accounts present a relatively pessimistic view of the evolving role of civil society organisations and grassroots polarisation in Indonesia's democratic downturn. However, any analysis of 'bottom-up' drivers of democratic regression must also take account of popular support for democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996). Over almost two decades, national surveys of Indonesians have shown reliably high levels of satisfaction with, and support for, democratic government. From 2005 to 2019, the Indonesian Survey Institute (Lembaga Survei Indonesia, LSI) published 63 national surveys of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy; only one of these polls—published in mid-2012—found that more Indonesians were dissatisfied than satisfied with democracy (LSI 2019). While numbers have fluctuated, an overall picture since 2005 shows around two in three Indonesians are satisfied with democracy, with one-fifth to one-third indicating dissatisfaction. The number of Indonesians who endorse democratic government is higher again; according to a survey published in June 2019, 82 per cent of voters believed democracy to be the best system of government, compared to just 3 per cent who believed authoritarianism was acceptable 'under certain circumstances' (SMRC 2019: 57). Nevertheless, some analyses have questioned the robustness of these democratic commitments, both among civil society groups (Menchik 2019) and the broader voting public (Aspinall et al. 2020; Mujani et al. 2018). Indeed, support for and satisfaction with democracy can be contingent upon incumbent performance, perceptions of economic inequality, or ideological and partisan commitments.

Burhanuddin Muhtadi (Chapter 8) explores the contingency of democratic support in more detail. Noting the importance of buy-in from democratic losers for the maintenance of democratic legitimacy and stability, he investigates whether voters whose preferred candidate suffers electoral defeat express reduced satisfaction with democratic performance, or reduced enthusiasm for democracy as a regime. Using pre- and post-election survey data for each presidential election, Muhtadi finds that electoral losers are indeed more likely to show dissatisfaction with democracy. Notably, this effect grew significantly in the wake of the

divisive 2019 election, when Prabowo voters were also more likely to feel their civil liberties were under attack. Nevertheless, Muhtadi emphasises that a strong majority of Indonesians continue to prefer democracy over other forms of government—whether or not their candidates lose.

But this finding raises another important question: what does it mean when Indonesians say they support and prefer democratic government? How do citizens conceive of democracy and judge its quality? Diego Fossati and Ferran Martinez i Coma address these questions in Chapter 9. They find that Indonesians understand democracy in a variety of ways, with some seeing it in more liberal and egalitarian terms, and others understanding it in terms of participation. Echoing Muhtadi, they emphasise the need to scrutinise the diverse ways in which Indonesians perceive and judge democratic government. However, both chapters offer much-needed cause for optimism about the breadth and depth of popular support for democracy in contemporary Indonesia.

CONCLUSION AND OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This volume argues that Indonesian democracy is at its lowest point since the fall of the New Order. Despite 20 years of democratic government, Indonesia's democracy is not continuing to consolidate; rather, it is sliding into deepening illiberalism. Many of the achievements listed at the start of this chapter are under threat. Law enforcement and security agencies are undergoing a process of repoliticisation. The party system is compromised by illiberal state interventions and declining popular legitimacy, and its constituent parties are increasingly elite-dominated and unaccountable. Elections remain competitive, but the incumbent administration has sought to unbalance the playing field during campaigns and is stepping up efforts to wind back direct elections at the subnational level. The traditional media landscape is dominated by politico-business elites with close ties to government, while to publish critical comment in independent and social media means risk of state harassment and arrest. Longstanding shortcomings in the rule of law have been exacerbated with the politicisation of criminal cases and the government's dismantling of the KPK.

Expressive and associative freedoms are under attack from social forces as well. Civil society is increasingly polarised, to the extent that Indonesia's largest community organisations have actively endorsed the state's deployment of authoritarian tactics against their ideological rivals. Recent years have seen the hardening of old social cleavages and new manifestations of political violence.

Even Indonesia's regional autonomy program, long seen as the strongest institutional bulwark against a renewal of centralised authoritarian rule, is facing new threats. Recent months have seen proposals to phase out local elections and strengthen central government authority to replace local leaders, as well as the introduction of regulations investing the national executive with ultimate power to appoint, remove and relocate bureaucrats at all levels of state administration.

There are, still, some bright spots in this otherwise gloomy picture. Most obviously, public support for democracy remains high. Although the 2019 student protests against the dismantling of the KPK and proposed Criminal Code revisions were effectively quashed by forces in government, they did reveal that hundreds of thousands of young Indonesians were willing to stand up for their democracy. Meanwhile, some distinguished Indonesian commentators—people like television host Najwa Shihab, documentary filmmaker Dandhy Laksono, lawyers Haris Azhar and Bhivitri Susanti, and Amnesty International's Usman Hamid, as well as the journalists working for publications like *Tempo* and *Tirto*—have used their platforms to discuss and critique many features of the present democratic regression. Ensuring such independent and critical voices escape suppression or co-option will be essential if Indonesian democracy is to arrest its present decline. Additionally, elections remain competitive, and while these institutions remain robust there is some hope that more committed democrats may one day come to power. That said, the barriers to nomination for truly reformist candidates look harder and harder to overcome.

The rest of this book is organised into five parts. Each is anchored in a specific aspect of democratic theory, and is designed to identify and assess core features of Indonesia's trajectory of decline. The volume begins with a look at Indonesia's democratic health through a historical and comparative lens. Part Two examines two interrelated threats to Indonesia's democratic stability—deepening political polarisation and the rise of populist mobilisation. Part Three turns to a critical dimension of democratic success—the depth and nature of public support for democratic institutions. Part Four sheds light on the state of core democratic institutions, and demonstrates how elected politicians and state officials have colluded to erode the sorts of checks, balances and liberal guardrails that are critical to a healthy democracy—like political parties, the media and human rights protections. Finally, Part Five reflects on issues relating to law, security and state power in contemporary Indonesia.

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