

Revisiting the rise of Jokowi: The triumph of *reformasi* or an oligarchic adaptation of post-clientelist initiatives?

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Yuki Fukuoka

Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, Malaysia

Luky Djani

Faculty of Public Administration, University of Indonesia, Indonesia; Director Institute for Strategic Initiatives, Indonesia

Abstract

Just a few months into his first term, the new president of Indonesia, Jokowi, began to disappoint his supporters who had expected his presidency to enhance the quality of Indonesia's dysfunctional democracy.¹ Contrary to his campaign promise of establishing a 'clean' and 'professional' government without horse-trading, Jokowi granted strategic government positions to those with links to oligarchic interests, indicating that key decisions were largely dictated by his party patrons. Much of the literature, which has tended to portray the rise of Jokowi as a challenge to oligarchic interests, is not well placed to account for this 'U-turn'. Against this backdrop, this article explores another dimension of Jokowi's ascendance, arguing that it should also be understood in the broader context of oligarchic adaptation of 'post-clientelist' initiatives – measures to attract enlightened voters to compensate for increasingly ineffective clientelistic mobilisation. This is not to argue that Jokowi was simply made a 'puppet' of his patrons, but to suggest that more attention needs to be directed to the broader structural constraints placed on Jokowi in order to have a more nuanced understanding of the political context in which he must operate.

Keywords

Elections, Indonesia, Jokowi, oligarchy, post-clientelist initiatives

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1. The views expressed in this article are those of Yuki Fukuoka solely in his private capacity and do not in any way represent the views of the Government of Japan.

Corresponding author:

Yuki Fukuoka, Embassy of Japan in Malaysia, No. 11 Persiaran Stonor, Off Jalan Tun Razak, 50450 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Email: lukydd@yahoo.com

Introduction

In 2014, Indonesia set out to elect a successor to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (hereafter SBY) who had governed the country for the previous decade. The 2014 elections, in particular the presidential election, unfolded essentially as a contest between two popular candidates, Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto. Among the observers there was a tendency to view the presidential race as a contest between a ‘man of the people’ committed to further democratic reform and a Suharto-era general with authoritarian instincts. Thus, Jokowi’s eventual victory against Prabowo was widely portrayed as a triumph of Indonesia’s *reformasi* (Asia Pacific Editor, 2014; Aspinall and Mietzner, 2014c; Mietzner, 2014b; *Time*, 2014). However, just a few months into his first term, the new president began to disappoint many of his former supporters who had expected that Jokowi’s assumption of the country’s top office would enhance the quality of Indonesia’s dysfunctional democracy. Indeed, contrary to his campaign promise of establishing a ‘clean’ and ‘professional’ government without horse-trading with vested interests, Jokowi’s initial appointments of strategic positions within his governments, many of whom included those with dubious backgrounds that link to oligarchic interests, indicated that key decisions were largely dictated by his patrons, most notably Megawati Sukarnoputri of PDI-P.

Indeed, subsequent studies on the subject have tended to emphasise the disappointing performance of the Jokowi administration. Aspinall (2015: 899), for example, argues that Jokowi has ‘shown himself unwilling or unable to break with Indonesia’s post-Suharto traditions of collusive democracy . . . Indeed, by some measures democratic governance has gone significantly backwards in the months of his presidency’. Similarly, Muhtadi (2015: 350) argues that Jokowi ‘soon fell into the lowlands of old politics, and is now seen by many as a business-as-usual politician who engages in promiscuous power-sharing and backroom manoeuvres’. As scholars are increasingly shifting focus from Jokowi’s initial ascendancy to the assessment of his first year as the president, we are still left wondering why Jokowi, who was expected to present a new type of leadership, has failed to make a meaningful break from Indonesia’s political tradition. If Jokowi’s presidency does not pose a serious threat to oligarchic rule in the country, then how do we make sense of his political ascendancy? It is now appropriate to revisit the rise of Jokowi and rethink what it has meant to our understanding of Indonesian politics.

This article suggests that such a ‘disappointment’ has, at least partly, been conditioned by earlier analyses of Jokowi, which tend to portray his rise as a challenge to oligarchic interests which are said to dominate the country’s political economy. These studies have been somewhat preoccupied with highlighting how Jokowi’s down-to-earth leadership style or his supporters’ grassroots voluntarism – both of which were sharply contrasted with Prabowo’s ‘authoritarian instincts’ and ‘oligarchic machine politics’ – helped him win the presidency despite having been overwhelmed by the material power of oligarchic elites who opposed his ascendance (see Aspinall and Mietzner, 2014c; Mietzner, 2014b).² While these studies provide important insights, from which this study has benefited, their emphasis on Jokowi’s victory over oligarchic machine politics

2. This is, of course, not to suggest that these analyses were simply grounded in a naïve faith in Jokowi. Indeed, many of them, written by prominent Indonesianists, were political activism, driven by a well-grounded fear of what Prabowo would do if elected. Still, these analyses, many of which were pre-occupied with highlighting the danger of Prabowo and naturally provided more favourable coverage of Jokowi, perhaps inadvertently, raised expectations of the new president to an unsustainably high level.

is not adequately balanced by equally serious attention to Jokowi's own coalition which, by the time he was elected, had come to include a diverse range of oligarchic interests.

Against this backdrop, this article revisits earlier analyses of the rise of Jokowi and argues that his political ascendance should also be understood in the broader context of oligarchic adaptation to a new and increasingly uncertain environment. When Indonesia's democratisation began in 1998, the country's civil society forces were fragmented and disorganised. Consequently, the transition process was largely hijacked by oligarchic interests who had been nurtured under the old regime (Fukuoka, 2013b; Hadiz, 2010; Hadiz and Robison, 2013; Robison and Hadiz, 2004; Winters, 2011, 2013). Oligarchic elites have dominated the post-Suharto electoral process, drawing on clientelistic mobilisation of voters, mostly through money politics. Still, reflecting the country's greater political freedom, there has been a discernible expansion of civil society activities (Aspinall, 2014a; Crouch, 2010; Mietzner, 2012, 2013). While powerful and coherent civil society movements, which would present a counterweight to oligarchic networks, are yet to emerge, this development has made clientelistic mobilisation costlier and insufficient. Thus, oligarchic elites have begun to invest in 'post-clientelist' initiatives, adopting ostensibly 'reformist' measures or co-opting well-reputed leaders to supplement increasingly ineffective clientelistic mobilisation.

It should be recalled that the ascendance of Jokowi, at least initially, was largely arranged by oligarchic elites, most notably Prabowo Subianto, who attempted to exploit the former's popularity to improve his own prospect of winning the 2014 presidential election. To be sure, this strategy backfired as it inadvertently created the most formidable presidential contender who eventually defeated Prabowo himself. Yet, Jokowi still had to operate in Indonesia's deeply entrenched oligarchical democracy. As will be highlighted below, Jokowi's phenomenal popularity among ordinary Indonesian voters turned him into an ideal target of co-optation by oligarchic elites who had been in need of 'post-clientelist' initiatives to compensate for increasingly ineffective clientelistic mobilisation. As Indonesia entered the election year, a broad range of oligarchic interests began to bandwagon behind the then popular Jakarta governor out of the desire to preserve their grip on power in an increasingly uncertain environment. Indonesia's electoral process, still vulnerable to patrimonial manipulation, provided these elites with ample opportunities to selectively embrace Jokowi who, in turn, was forced to accommodate, though not entirely, the logic of oligarchical democracy. This in no small measure compromised prospects for substantial reform under his presidency.

This article revisits Jokowi's political ascendance with an emphasis on oligarchic adaptation of 'post-clientelist' initiatives. The first section presents an analytical perspective from which to understand Jokowi's rapid ascent to the national political scene. This section emphasises structural changes in Indonesian society that have made clientelistic mobilisation increasingly costly, which then encouraged oligarchic elites to make more use of 'post-clientelist' initiatives to supplement old styles of mobilisation. It is emphasised here that such 'post-clientelist' initiatives are introduced not instead of clientelism but in addition to it, as a measure to maintain the status quo in an increasingly uncertain environment. The second section then looks at the election campaigns, highlighting the way in which oligarchic elites attempted to exploit Jokowi's popularity in order to maintain power. This is followed by the third section which looks at political dynamics under Jokowi's presidency. Though Jokowi's government, inaugurated in October 2014, is still in its early stages, this article suggests that there are already signs that his presidency may not significantly enhance the overall quality of Indonesia's oligarchical democracy. The last section sums up the findings of this article.

The rise of Jokowi revisited

As Mietzner (2014a, 2014b, 2015) rightly argues, the political ascendance of Jokowi can only be explained in the context of the 'gradual calcification that befell Indonesian democracy' during SBY's presidency, especially in his second term.³ Although emerging from the 2009 elections with a strengthened popular mandate, SBY disappointed those who had hoped that he would use his final five years in office to launch a fresh wave of reforms. Much to the disappointment of many, the SBY government never pursued radical reforms that would have undermined the process of wealth accumulation by oligarchs (see Fukuoka, 2013a). SBY was also criticised for undermining the country's democratic institutions, most notably the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) (see Fealy, 2013; McRae, 2013; Mietzner, 2012; Tomsa, 2010). Meanwhile, his party, Partai Demokrat (PD), lapsed into unprecedented levels of corruption. Accordingly, SBY's approval rate plummeted from 75% in November 2009 to 30% in May 2013 (Mietzner, 2014a). In short, the 10 years of the SBY presidency left Indonesia with growing frustration regarding the performance of democratic institutions and widespread apathy among citizens.⁴

The rapid ascendance of Jokowi should also be understood in the broader context of changing structural conditions. When Indonesia's democratisation began in 1998, the country's civil society forces were fragmented and disorganised. Consequently the transition process was largely, though not entirely, hijacked by oligarchic interests that had been nurtured under the old regime (Fukuoka, 2013b; Hadiz, 2010; Hadiz and Robison, 2013; Robison and Hadiz, 2004; Winters, 2011, 2013). Against this backdrop, oligarchic elites have dominated the post-Suharto electoral process through clientelistic mobilisation of voters, such as money politics. Still, the fall of Suharto has created favourable conditions for the subordinate classes to organise. Reflecting the country's greater political freedom, there has been a discernible expansion of civil society activities (Aspinall, 2013; 2014a; Crouch, 2010; Mietzner, 2012, 2013). For example, there has been a rapid expansion of farmers' unions and labour unions. Equally impressive is the growing activism of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which have advocated reforms. These pressure groups' campaigns not only enhanced the public's political awareness but also made the political elite take more notice of non-elite interests.

Against this backdrop, ordinary voters, particularly those from the middle and lower classes, have come to demand improved public services, having been enlightened partly by the increasing activism of civil society organisations.⁵ This has made electoral contestations increasingly competitive, and clientelistic mobilisation alone can no longer guarantee the survival of oligarchic elites, thus

3. For a similar analysis, see Winters (2014b). For a review of SBY's presidency, see Aspinall et al. (2015).

4. In 2011, the Indonesian Survey Institute published a poll showing that the parliament enjoyed the second lowest level of trust among Indonesians, while political parties were at the bottom of the list. The same survey also revealed that only 20% of respondents regarded themselves as 'close' to a particular party, down from 86% in 1999 (LSI, 2011).

5. This is particularly so in urban areas. The most conspicuous is the rise of educated voters in Jakarta. In 2007, for example, 32.3% of Jakartan adults had graduated only from elementary school. The corresponding percentage dropped to 19.3% in 2013. The percentage of Jakartans who had graduated from senior high schools increased from 36.2% in 2007 to 41.9% in 2012. Moreover, the percentage of the Jakartan population with bachelor's degrees also increased from 10% in 2007 to 17.3% in 2012 (Hamid, 2014: 98).

promoting the intermingling of clientelist politics with programmatic politics.⁶ Accordingly, oligarchic elites, including senior politicians who have been ingrained with the politics of patronage, now recognise that to ensure their own political survival, sufficient resources need to reach enough people in ways to produce satisfactory development outcomes, thus moving beyond a heavy reliance on patronage distribution. This is not to say that money politics is no longer relevant in Indonesia's electoral politics, far from it. The point is that with the prevalence of money politics, combined with the growing public demand for better public services, candidates can no longer distinguish themselves from their opponents in the eyes of the electorate simply by dropping more cash; everyone is providing hand-outs. Thus, in recent years, one has heard more stories of frustrated politicians who had provided enormous hand-outs during election campaigns but still could not get elected.⁷

Instead of simply providing hand-outs during elections, an increasing number of politicians, particularly those in government, have begun to explore another venue of patronage politics, namely government programmes (see Djani et al., 2014). Distributing patronage through government programmes not only enables politicians to reach out to the electorate through 'legitimate' channels but also helps enhance their image as reformers. Indeed, a number of recent studies have identified the rise of populist leaders, particularly at the local level, who pursue ostensibly 'pro-poor' policies as well as traditional forms of clientelistic mobilisation (Aspinall, 2014a; Bunnell et al., 2013; Choi and Fukuoka, 2015; Rosser and Sulistiyanto, 2013; Rosser and Wilson, 2012).⁸ It is in this context that Indonesia has 'begun to see policy outcomes that do not fit with the narrative of a devastated Left and a democratic transition lacking organized representation of social interests' (Aspinall, 2013: 103).

According to Manor (2013: 243–6), such a development constitutes a broader trend where political elites in the Global South have begun to adopt 'post-clientelist initiatives' to 'complement the patronage with populism as the former becomes costly and insufficient to maintaining popularity and political support'. To make up for increasingly inefficient clientelistic mobilisation, they now adopt pro-poor, or populist, measures or co-opt well-reputed leaders to gain additional votes from enlightened voters (Manor, 2010, 2013; Pratikno and Lay, 2013). At the same time, the adaptation of such 'post-clientelist' initiatives does not necessarily lead to the curtailment of clientelism. As Manor (2013: 244) emphasises, 'post-clientelist' initiatives are:

almost always pursued not instead of clientelism but in addition to it, since it is politically risky to try to abandon clientelism. That would inevitably alienate too many powerful interests ... post-clientelist initiatives do not replace patronage distribution; they supplement it.

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6. If money politics still constitutes the primary factor determining election results, we would expect to see a high rate of re-election among incumbents who tend to have greater access to state resources than their opponents. The incumbent re-election rate in Indonesia, however, has not been particularly high. Indeed, in the 2014 legislative elections, only 40% of the incumbents could retain their seats in parliament. See, for example, Formappi (2014).
 7. Some of the politicians we spoke to admitted that money alone does not guarantee their survival. Thus they began to conduct extensive dialogues with the electorate to identify campaign agendas that would attract the public's attention (interview with Yoyok Rio Sudibyo (Bupati of Batang, 24 February 2013), Selle KS Dalle (South Sulawesi Province legislator, 20 May 2015) and Nyumarno (Bekasi District legislator, 3 August 2015)).
 8. Mietzner (2009), similarly, argues that the introduction of direct local elections reshaped local politics by providing a new, but still limited, mechanism of vertical accountability: the elections proved to be highly competitive, with an incumbency turnover rate of 40%. Although almost all candidates belonged to old-established elites, he argues, the electorate favoured relatively clean politicians.

In other words, the increasing prominence of post-clientelist initiatives may not necessarily represent the decline of patrimonial politics, as they could also be pursued as a 'preventive' measure adopted by traditional elites to maintain a grip on power in an increasingly uncertain environment.⁹

While not ignoring the increasing activism of civil society, or Jokowi's unique personality, we argue that the meteoric ascendance of Jokowi should also be understood in the context of an oligarchic adaptation of 'post-clientelist' initiatives. As clientelistic mobilisation becomes less efficient, oligarchic elites in Indonesia are beginning to selectively embrace populism in an attempt to maintain their grip on the country's power structure. In this context, populist leaders, particularly those who had emerged outside the New Order power structure, have come to present themselves as an ideal candidate for co-optation. Jokowi was at the forefront of such 'new' leaders. Jokowi, who is a carpenter's son and a former furniture salesman, established a strong reputation for clean and innovative governance as a mayor of Solo. His achievements in Solo included revitalising public spaces, easing traffic congestion, improving health care delivery, promoting investment and rebranding the city as a Javanese cultural centre (see Bunnell et al., 2013; Mas'udi, 2014). These successful reforms helped Jokowi significantly increase his popularity, enabling his re-election in 2010 with more than 90% of the vote, an almost unheard-of result in an Indonesian local election.

Jokowi's rising profile naturally caught the attention of Prabowo Subianto, former son-in-law of Suharto. Prabowo, who is also the former leader of the country's much-feared Kopassus Special Forces, had taken considerable steps to reinvent himself as a decisive populist leader as well as the antithesis to Indonesia's outgoing SBY, who had been criticised for indecisiveness. Prabowo harboured strong presidential ambitions and, with the support of his billionaire brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, money was not an issue.¹⁰ Presumably recognising the limits of clientelistic mobilisation, the policy platform of Prabowo's Gerindra party included ambitious pro-poor policies aimed at cultivating support, particularly among the lower social classes. Still, his image as a militarist relic of the New Order, more specifically the dark memory of 1998 where he allegedly kidnapped pro-democratic activists, was still preventing Prabowo from reaching higher in the popular polls. Prabowo and his Gerindra party were thus keen to repair this past image (Fealy, 2013; Mietzner, 2014a, 2014b). It is in this context that Prabowo approached Jokowi, asking the latter to run for Jakarta's governorship in 2012.

Jakarta's governorship election was considered to be of strategic importance in the run-up to the 2014 elections as it was considered to be a gauge for the voting behaviour of the whole Indonesian population, given the diversity of the capital representing the country's heterogeneity. Prabowo thought that Jokowi had the potential to arouse the interests of a disaffected Jakarta electorate and promoted his nomination with Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), an ethnic Chinese businessman and former mayor of Bangka Belitung, as his running mate.¹¹ Initially there was strong opposition to Jokowi's nomination from within PDI-P, particularly from Megawati's husband Taufik Kiemas. It was suggested that they viewed Jokowi, who had never been active in the party, as an 'outsider', though Megawati too saw the potential benefit of Jokowi's victory in Jakarta and eventually

9. Among those who were quick to adopt this strategy was Prabowo who, despite originating from a wealthy family of political aristocrats, deliberately recast himself as an outsider trying to save Indonesia. For a discussion of this, see Mietzner (2015).

10. On Hashim Djojohadikusumo, see Montlake (2010).

11. Fealy (2013) points out that Ahok's nomination was Prabowo's strategy to secure the support of Chinese voters, or at least neutralise their opposition to him, before the 2014 elections.

decided to endorse his nomination (Mietzner, 2014a). Thus, Jokowi's arrival in Jakarta was largely top-down in nature. As Winters (2013: 25) highlights:

The wildly popular Jokowi's victory over the sitting governor was due to a groundswell of support from scores of groups ranging from students to housewives' associations that helped propel him to victory. This important democratic part of the story was made possible, however, by a prior oligarchic move in which the power of wealth placed Jokowi before the voters in the first place. Even if he did come to enjoy grassroots support, he did not arrive at the gubernatorial contest as a consequence of grassroots initiatives or politics.¹²

This is not to suggest that Jokowi is simply a passive carrier of fixed interests derived from his position in the oligarchic power structure. The strategy of adopting 'post-clientelist' initiatives contains inherent tensions as it could potentially create political dynamics beyond the control of traditional elites. Indeed, Jokowi was a politician with his own ambitions. After the successful campaign in Jakarta's gubernatorial election, Jokowi began to harbour greater political ambitions. Mietzner (2014c), for example, argues that the triumph in the capital also 'convinced Jokowi himself that he possessed a special political talent and was therefore destined for higher office'. While Jokowi 'prudently concealed his growing ambition',¹³ his popularity reached a phenomenal level, and he became the most popular presidential contender in various surveys. Thus, the Jokowi phenomenon, initiated by oligarchic elites, began to move beyond the control of its own producers, particularly Prabowo. In other words, oligarchic strategy for the 2014 elections inadvertently created an extremely popular leader who now presented himself as a leading contender in the presidential race.

Jokowi's phenomenal popularity eventually led Megawati to name him as PDI-P's presidential candidate despite strong opposition within the party, particularly from the faction of Puan Maharani (Megawati's daughter), who had strong presidential ambitions herself.¹⁴ The entry of Jokowi into the presidential race captured the imagination of the public, who had grown

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12. Throughout the gubernatorial election, Hashim Djojohadikusumo funded the surveys, outdoor advertising and media ads. Not surprisingly, those ads always featured a closing statement from his older brother, Prabowo (*Tempo*, 2012). If Gerindra provided the Jokowi-Ahok pair with a significant sum of campaign money, it was PDI-P that helped grassroots mobilisation. The party went all out for the election. Megawati ordered all members of DPR to mobilise for the campaign, and it was reported that at least two members were sent to each electoral district (*Tempo*, 2012).
 13. A number of journalists told the author that, during his time as Jakarta governor, Jokowi often appeared puzzled, sometimes even unsatisfied, when journalists finished interviews without asking him about his presidential ambition.
 14. Jokowi's nomination was delayed due to Puan's strong objection to Jokowi's nomination (Mietzner, 2014a; *Tempo*, 2014a). To sort out the differences within the party, Megawati refrained from making a quick decision. Instead, she formed the 'the team of eleven' (*tim sebelas*), consisting of people close to her, to decide upon a qualified candidate for the presidency. Eventually, the team submitted its report on January 20 2014, concluding that Jokowi would be a feasible presidential candidate. The team also suggested that if Jokowi's nomination was announced sooner rather than later, support for Jokowi could translate into increasing votes cast for PDI-P. Though Puan eventually accepted Jokowi as the party's candidate, her team reportedly continued to object to an early announcement; apparently, if the nomination was announced before the legislative elections, a PDI-P victory would be attributed to the Jokowi effect instead of being credited to Puan's campaign team (*Tempo*, 2014a).

increasingly frustrated and disillusioned by the perceived inaction and indecisiveness of the SBY government (Aspinall and Mietzner, 2014c; Mietzner, 2014a, 2014b). Indeed, there were great expectations that Jokowi's assumption of the presidency, if realised, would entail significant improvement of Indonesia's dysfunctional democracy. However, it needs to be recalled that Jokowi's political ascendance was 'oligarchically' facilitated and not the result of a grassroots initiative (see Winters, 2013). It was, in fact, the recognition of the limits of patrimonial mobilisation on the part of the PDI-P leadership that led the party to embrace, though hesitantly, Jokowi. They had no intention of letting an 'outsider' take full control of the party; endorsing Jokowi was a post-clientelist initiative to maintain the status quo.

As emphasised earlier, 'post-clientelist initiatives' may not replace old patronage politics; instead they could supplement it. This article emphasises that even with presidential nomination, Jokowi still had to operate in Indonesia's deeply entrenched oligarchic power structure which provided him with limited space to develop a support base independently from traditional centres of power. To be sure, the meteoric ascendance of Jokowi inspired many ordinary Indonesian voters who mobilised behind him even without receiving financial inducements. However, the largely disorganised nature of civil society support for Jokowi meant that he still needed to depend on oligarchic interests in contesting for the presidency. Indeed, during the legislative and presidential elections, Jokowi was forced to accommodate the logic of Indonesia's patrimonial politics, which then compromised the prospect of significant reform. Though Jokowi eventually defeated Prabowo, by the time he won the presidency he had come to depend on a diverse range of oligarchic interests. To the discussion of this we now turn.

The 2014 elections: The 'Jokowi effect' contained

Almost 190 million Indonesian voters participated in the legislative elections in April 2014 and the presidential elections in July. Indonesia's parliament consists of two elected national legislative bodies which are the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) and the Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, DPD) at the national level. In joint sessions, the DPR and the DPD are known as the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR), though this is not to be construed as a balanced bicameral system where both bodies have the authority to legislate. The DPD largely acts as a consultative body on matters including centre-regional issues, such as regional autonomy and regional budgets. Furthermore, the 132-member chamber does not come near to balancing the 560-member DPR. The DPD members are elected through plurality votes in multi-member constituencies at the provincial level and must not belong to a party. The results of legislative elections in April were instrumental to the presidential elections held in July. Presidential pairs are nominated by parties that garner at least 25% of the popular vote, or 20% of the seats in the DPR. If no single party crosses the threshold in legislative elections, a coalition of parties must nominate single choices for president and vice president. The conditions are that the victorious pair must gain over 50% of the popular vote, of which 20% must come from at least half of the provinces.¹⁵

The entry of Jokowi in the 2014 presidential race dramatically changed the dynamic of the election campaign and enhanced public expectations. Firstly, it was expected that with Jokowi's nomination, the victory of his party, the PDI-P, in the legislative election would be guaranteed. Indeed, several polls identified the so-called 'Jokowi effect', suggesting that PDI-P's share of the

15. This paragraph heavily draws on Fukuoka and Na Thalang (2014).

vote in the legislative election in April would significantly increase with his nomination. The same polls also suggested that Jokowi would win an outright first-round majority in the presidential election in July (*detikNews*, 2014a; *Jakarta Post*, 2014). There were also growing expectations among the public that Jokowi's assumption of the presidency would significantly improve the quality of the country's dysfunctional democracy, by allowing for the greater representation of those who had previously been marginalised in the political process. Sukma (2014), for example, proclaimed that Jokowi's candidacy represented 'more than just an expectation of generational change in politics. His personality and style also correspond with the prevailing yearning among the public for a new type of leadership'.

However, as the previous section has highlighted, the ascendance of Jokowi took place partly because oligarchic elites let it and even encouraged it to happen. Yet their support for Jokowi was conditional. The PDI-P leadership supported Jokowi's candidacy only insofar as his popularity would help them regain access to state patronage without seriously curtailing traditional patrimonial politics. It was, thus, no surprise that Jokowi was never granted control over the party during the campaign. For example, PDI-P made it clear that all donations must go to the party treasury, which would then allocate the money to Jokowi as it saw fit. It was reported that PDI-P did not even provide enough funds for Jokowi to campaign, leaving him to use his personal savings (Witoelar, 2014). This led Jokowi's supporters to ask business tycoons not to donate to the party, but instead to give directly to Jokowi (see Winters, 2014a). The absence of enthusiastic support for Jokowi was also evident in the party's media strategy during the legislative election. Conspicuously missing from PDI-P's media campaign were TV ads promoting Jokowi (*Tempo*, 2014b). Instead, the majority of the party's TV ads featured Megawati and her daughter Puan Maharani, not Jokowi. They only released TV ads featuring Jokowi during the final two days of the campaign.

Throughout the legislative campaigns, oligarchic elites within PDI-P managed to maintain their grip on the party, but not without a cost. By not letting Jokowi fully engage with the electorate, PDI-P could not fully exploit the 'Jokowi effect'; voters failed to see the link between voting for PDI-P and Jokowi's presidency.¹⁶ The 'Jokowi effect' was further compromised by its inadequate access to the media. It is worth recalling that ownership of the TV stations in Indonesia is concentrated in a handful of oligarchs.¹⁷ Golkar candidate Aburizal Bakrie, for example, owns two TV stations, *TV One* and *ANTV*. Likewise, Hanura's vice-presidential candidate Hary Tanoesoedibjo owns the Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) Group. Also, Surya Paloh of the NasDem Party runs a news channel, *Metro TV*. Prabowo does not own TV stations, though he and his brother possessed enough capital to buy up TV air-time and conduct the most aggressive and focused campaign supported by massive political advertising. Not only providing oligarchic elites with favourable coverage, TV media was also used to discredit Jokowi. As Meitzner (2014a) argues that, 'after one and a half years of favourable press coverage, those party leaders who owned TV stations ordered

16. This is partly due to the 'open-list' proportional representation adopted in the last election. This system enables voters to choose a party as well as one of several candidates listed by the party on the ballot. The seats won by the parties go to the candidates that win the most individual votes. While this system enables voters to express preferences for the individuals who will represent them, candidates resort to extreme measures to outdo their rivals from within their own party (see Aspinall, 2014b).

17. The vast majority of Indonesian voters rely on TV, rather than print media or the internet, as their main source of news (International Republican Institute, 2013).

their editors to limit reporting on Jokowi's campaign events to a minimum and instead start digging up negative stories'.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, malfeasance affected the legislative election, which featured unprecedented levels of campaign spending and elaborate networks for vote buying. Also, evidence indicated that individual legislative candidates manipulated vote-counting in various ways (Aspinall, 2014b; *Jakarta Globe*, 2014a). Contrary to the earlier predictions that Jokowi's popularity would help his party enjoy a comfortable victory, the election produced an extremely fragmented parliament, with PDI-P gaining only 19% of the vote, below the presidential threshold. As a result, one commentator noted that 'there was no "Jokowi effect" . . . Or maybe there was one, but it was not strong enough to break the stranglehold that Indonesia's party oligarchies have on the electorate' (Witoelar, 2014). PDI-P's comfortable win in the legislative election would probably have enabled Jokowi to gain more bargaining power within PDI-P, providing him with greater political capital with which to launch his reform initiatives. Instead Jokowi was perceived to have been 'defeated' and the PDI-P leadership, ironically thanks to their poor electoral performance, managed to retain control not only of the party, but also of the presidential coalition that Jokowi now had to construct.

As well as enabling the party leadership to maintain the upper hand, PDI-P's poor performance in the legislative election also provided those outside the party with opportunities to exploit Jokowi's popularity to gain access to state patronage in the new government. PDI-P's failure to pass the presidential threshold meant that Jokowi was now forced to enter coalition politics. It was in this process that some of the New Order oligarchs, such as Jusuf Kalla and Surya Paloh of NasDem, jumped onto Jokowi's presidential ticket. Jokowi's choice of Kalla was motivated by a pragmatic consideration of the latter's ability not only to raise a substantial sum of campaign funds but also to garner votes in Eastern Indonesia, where PDI-P performed poorly in the legislative election.¹⁹ Jusuf Kalla received strong support from certain segments of business elites, most notably Sofyan Wanandi, head of the Indonesia Employer Association (Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia) (*Tribun News*, 2014). Meanwhile, Jokowi's alliance with Surya Paloh, another New Order oligarch who owns *Metro TV*, reflected the painful experience that the PDI-P's insufficient media presence played a role in its poor performance in April, as well as Paloh's close relationship with Megawati.²⁰ Thus Jokowi began to be co-opted by a broader array of oligarchic elites.

18. Through various channels, Jokowi's rivals denounced him for neglecting his mandate to serve a full five-year term as governor of Jakarta (*Kompas*, 2014a). At the same time, Jokowi began to be portrayed as 'Megawati's puppet'. Prabowo even promoted a narrative that the elections were a contest between puppets of foreign countries (i.e. the Jokowi camp) and an Indonesia that is sovereign. 'Do you all want an Indonesia that is sovereign, controlling its own wealth, and standing on its own feet – or an Indonesia led by a puppet of foreign power (*boneka-boneka kekuatan asing*)?', said Prabowo (*Kompas*, 2014b).

19. Similarly, Amran Sulaiman helped Jokowi improve his electoral performance in East Indonesia. Jokowi is said to have been beholden to the support of Sulaiman, who was subsequently appointed to Agriculture Minister and now constitutes one of the 'untouchables' in Jokowi's cabinet along with Rini Soemarno (the State-Owned Enterprises Minister) and Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan (the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security) (personal communications with local observers. See also *Republika* (2014)).

20. Jokowi also invited AM Hendropriyono, former head of the National Intelligence Agency (BIN), who allegedly has a record of human rights violations, to join his campaign team. After Jokowi's victory in the presidential election was officiated, Hendropriyono was appointed as an advisor to the transition team, which raised eyebrows among human rights activists.

In the subsequent presidential election, Jokowi faced a formidable rival, Prabowo, who picked Hatta Radjasa of PAN as his vice-presidential candidate and formed a ‘big tent coalition’ (*koalisi tenda besar*) comprising Golkar, PAN, PPP, PKS, PBB and eventually PD. As mentioned earlier, there was a tendency to view the presidential race in terms of a contest between a ‘man of the people’ committed to further democratic reform (i.e. Jokowi) and a Suharto-era general with authoritarian instincts (i.e. Prabowo). The brief analysis of coalition building above, however, suggests that this stylised portrayal is somewhat misleading as it obscures the fact that while Jokowi and Prabowo offered radically different styles of leadership, both had come to construct equally dubious coalitions of oligarchic interests in contesting for the presidency.²¹ Though Jokowi repeatedly claimed to build a ‘no-condition coalition’ formed without horse-trading, his statements were contradicted by coalition partners.²² Despite his public rhetoric, it appeared that there was an ‘implicit understanding’ that such rewards would be forthcoming should Jokowi win (Aspinall and Mietzner, 2014c). Indeed, as discussed later, Jokowi’s cabinet line-up announced in October 2014 clearly indicated that he had continued Indonesia’s old tradition of exchanging ministerial posts for political support.

Significantly, in constructing a broad coalition, Jokowi ‘did not indicate he would challenge anybody or anything directly’ (Klinken, 2014). Throughout the campaign, Jokowi remained vague about what his administration would entail in terms of political reform, presumably reflecting the reluctance of his coalition partners to support significant changes. This disappointed many voters who had expected Jokowi to launch ambitious initiatives, some of whom subsequently turned to Prabowo.²³ Meanwhile, Prabowo conducted a series of black campaigns to discredit Jokowi as a national leader. Still, Jokowi served his purpose by drawing a broader array of social forces than his coalition parties could have without him. Jokowi’s relative ‘outsider’ status combined with a range of populist policies such as free basic education and health care appealed particularly to lower class voters. One characteristic of Jokowi’s camp is the presence of voluntary (*relawan*) organisations, such as Projo (Pro Jokowi), Bara JP (Barisan Relawan Jokowi President) and Seknas Jokowi (Sekretariat Nasional Jokowi), organised mostly by grassroots initiatives. Their presence helped the Jokowi campaign team reach out to various social groups such as peasants, the urban poor, labour unions, women’s networks, environmental organisations and alumni from various universities.

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21. Some observers argue that the coalitions formed in this year’s presidential election are quite ideologically defined. Power (2014), for example, argues that ‘the weeks of political maneuvering have resulted in a plainly polarised pair of coalitions: an ostensibly pluralist alliance backing Jokowi-JK, and a Prabowo-Hatta coalition possessing a far more obvious “Islamic” character’. Such an argument, however, is based on the presumed significance of religious cleavage which, as many observers have noted, has become largely irrelevant in defining the way parties operate (see Ambardi, 2009; Hadiz, 2010; Fukuoka, 2013a; Robison and Hadiz, 2004; Slater, 2004; Slater and Simmons, 2013).
 22. PKB chairman Muhaimin Iskandar, for example, said that he could guarantee that the religious affairs minister would come from Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), PKB’s traditional base of support, if Jokowi was elected, which then generated the perception that Jokowi’s commitment was not shared by his partners (*Jakarta Globe*, 2014b).
 23. According to Mietzner, from the beginning Prabowo enjoyed the support of 17% to 23% of voters who backed his visions despite his dubious human rights record. But an additional 25% to 27% of voters were added to these original supporters after Jokowi failed to offer a clear concept for Indonesia’s future, further increasing the electability of Prabowo in the polls (Asia Pacific Editor, 2014).

The race became tight, as Prabowo achieved a significant catch-up, but eventually Jokowi emerged triumphant.²⁴ On 22 July, the KPU announced that Jokowi had won the election with 53.15% of the vote, while Prabowo had garnered 46.85%. Voter turnout was 70.2%. Prabowo subsequently appealed to the Constitutional Court to order a revote, though on 21 August the Constitutional Court delivered a verdict rejecting Prabowo's case. Jokowi's nomination as Indonesia's seventh president was finally official. The election result was widely regarded as a triumph of the people, who had been marginalised in the political process in the post-Suharto era, against oligarchic networks that dominated the country's political economy. Yet, as the above analysis has highlighted, such a portrayal obscures another important dimension of the elections: the 2014 elections displayed not so much the triumph of the people as the adaptation of Indonesian oligarchs to a new environment. Jokowi not only helped PDI-P to come back to power for the first time since 2004 but also enabled other oligarchic elites who had jumped onto his presidential ticket to benefit from their tactical association with a popular 'new' leader.

The Jokowi presidency: A break from the past or business as usual?

When Jokowi was inaugurated as the seventh president of Indonesia, much of the initial attention was paid to his potential challenges in dealing with the opposition, namely Prabowo's Red and White Coalition which held a majority in the DPR.²⁵ However, it did not take long until observers began to notice that more serious problems lay within Jokowi's own coalition, with some scholars expressing surprise at the resilience of networks of oligarchic interests that prevented any meaningful attempts to deviate from the historic path of patronage politics (see Aspinall, 2014c). Such surprise, presumably, derived from the underlying assumption that Jokowi's political ascendance represented a new political dynamic that could pose a challenge to the country's oligarchic elites. This article acknowledges that the rise of Jokowi, and the broader structural changes behind it, has certainly posed a new challenge to oligarchic interests. At the same time, however, it argues that the emergence of this 'new' type of leader should also be seen as an adjustment measure adopted by these oligarchic interests in an attempt to maintain their grip on state patronage in an increasingly uncertain political environment.

Jokowi's new government, announced on 26 November 2014, shows some important signs indicating that the 2014 elections did not present a significant shift in the distribution of power in favour of the 'reformist' president. Particularly instructive in this respect is the formation of Jokowi's cabinet. Jokowi had initially planned to announce the cabinet a day after his inauguration on 20 October. It was hoped that he would form a 'clean and professional' government, which was seen as his first test. However, the announcement was delayed as vested interests operating around the president continued to interfere with the appointment process (Aspinall, 2014c and 2015; Aspinall and Mietzner, 2014c; *Tempo*, 2014c). Not surprisingly, those who had helped Jokowi secure the presidency demanded what they considered to be a fair proportion of cabinet posts. This enabled certain figures with links to the authoritarian past to secure strategic posts.

It is not our intention to suggest that Jokowi's cabinet line-up entirely reflected the wishes of his patrons who exploited the former's popularity as a 'post-clientelist' initiative. Indeed, some of Jokowi's cabinet ministers, such as Finance Minister Bambang Brodjonegoro and Culture and

24. For analyses of the presidential elections, see Aspinall and Mietzner (2014a, 2014b, 2014c); Fukuoka and Na Thalang (2014); Mietzner (2014b).

25. This section pays particular attention to an earlier stage of Jokowi's presidency as dynamics reflects.

Primary & Secondary Education Minister Anies Baswedan, are respected in their respective fields. Also, Jokowi's strategy to involve the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the Financial Transactions Reporting and Analysis Center (PPATK) – two important organisations with the competence to examine ministerial candidates' track records – in the selection process, reportedly without prior consultation with his master patron, Megawati, was a commendable one (*detikNews*, 2014b; *Tempo*, 2014d). Still, it needs to be noted that such a measure did not result in a significant curtailment of clientelism. There were instances where Jokowi granted strategic posts to those with a dubious background, despite strong disagreements from civil society as well as KPK and PPATK, due to the candidates' close links to Megawati or Kalla. More importantly, throughout the selection process, Jokowi shuttled back and forth to Megawati's private residence which naturally had the effect of reinforcing the impression that Megawati's wishes were overriding the president's own preferences (*Tempo*, 2 November, 2014c).

One good example of this could be found soon after the election victory when Jokowi formed a transition team designed to help him manage a smooth transfer of power from outgoing SBY. The unveiling of the team line-up raised eyebrows. While the team contained some figures widely respected as reformists, most notably Anies Baswedan, Jokowi appointed Megawati's confidant Rini Soewandi as the chair of the team. Soewandi served as trade minister in Megawati's 2001–2004 presidencies and before that as chief executive of Astra, a big Chinese conglomerate of the New Order era, where she built her corporate career. During her time as trade minister, she was allegedly involved in the controversial purchase of Sukhoi fighter jets, with an exchange rate higher than the one in effect at the time, without the approval of DPR, the finance minister and the defence minister. After leaving the cabinet, she seldom appeared in public but remained closely associated with Megawati, taking care of all her needs 'from holidays to important political party matters' (*Tempo*, 2014e: 19). The transition team was also joined by those affiliated with Megawati and Paloh: Andi Widjajanto, a former lecturer at the University of Indonesia, and Hasto Kristiyanto, the deputy secretary general of PDI-P and Akbar Faisal, a NasDem party politician.

Expectations for a new type of leadership under Jokowi's presidency began to be undermined by growing speculation that his party patron, Megawati, was trying to influence key decisions (*Jakarta Globe*, 7 September, 2014c). Such a suspicion was reinforced when the cabinet was announced. While Jokowi called on the KPK and PPATK to screen candidates and weed out those suspected of corruption, it did not lead to an overall improvement of the quality of party appointees (Aspinall, 2014c). One of the most problematic appointments was the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises, Rini Soewandi. The KPK and PPATK, which had been asked to check the records of the candidates, gave a 'yellow' mark to Soewandi, indicating that there was a good chance that she was involved in corruption cases. It was reported that her appointment was due to Megawati's strong insistence that Soewandi be appointed to the cabinet (*Tempo*, 2014c). Another controversial appointment was the Coordinating Human Development and Culture Minister, Puan Maharani, Megawati's daughter, who had no experience of running a government agency. Puan told the media that her mother had nothing to do with the cabinet selection, but acknowledged that she, along with other PDI-P ministers, had been nominated by Megawati (*Jakarta Globe*, 2014c).

The president, who had initially insisted that the appointment of the cabinet was his prerogative, had to remove an army of his favourite candidates on Megawati's insistence and replace them with her own loyalists as well as his coalition partners, Hanura, PKB and NasDem functionaries (Aspinall and Mietzner, 2014c: 365). Naturally the formation of the less-than-satisfactory cabinet led observers to express disappointment. Aspinall (2014c), for example, lamented that, 'this is a cabinet that continues rather than breaks with Indonesia's emerging political traditions ... this

cabinet is far from being the fresh start that Jokowi promised'. Siti Zuhro, from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), similarly criticised the party-heavy makeup of the cabinet, stating that it was a reflection of the internal struggle between various factions for control of the administration: 'His efforts to form a streamlined coalition and streamlined cabinet haven't succeeded. There's an internal struggle going on, and Joko appears to be hostage to it, restrained in his ability to form his own cabinet' (*Jakarta Globe*, 2014c).

The formation of the not-so-reformist cabinet was followed by a series of equally dubious appointments. For example, in November 2014, Jokowi appointed HM Prasetyo of NasDem, who had no outstanding achievements when he served as junior attorney general, as new attorney general, despite public demands that the position should not be given to a party politician. While Prasetyo subsequently quit NasDem, after the president instructed him to do so, the public remained sceptical about the Jokowi government's commitment to law enforcement with the justice and human rights minister position also having been given to another party politician, Yasonna Laoly of PDI-P (*Jakarta Globe*, 2015a). In January 2015, Jokowi again attracted criticism when he nominated Budi Gunawan, then governor of the police academy, as chief of the National Police. Budi was previously identified as being among several police generals linked to 'fat bank accounts' through which transactions amounting to millions of dollars were regularly made. It was widely suggested that his nomination could largely be attributed to Budi's closeness to Megawati (*Tempo*, 2015). Though Budi's nomination was eventually withdrawn, this episode reinforced the perception that Megawati was exerting undue influence over the Jokowi government.

Jokowi, on the other hand, has made attempts to carve out his own strategic space, though such attempts have largely been defensive, rather than proactive, in nature and have existed alongside oligarchic elites' efforts to bolster patronage.²⁶ In this context, rather than enhancing the quality of Indonesia's democracy, which is said to have stagnated during the SBY era, some even say that Jokowi's initial performance is worse than his predecessor's (*Jakarta Globe*, 2015b). One survey revealed that 61.6% of the respondents were satisfied with Jokowi's performance in the first 100 days, which is below his predecessor SBY who enjoyed a higher initial approval rate of 66% (*Kompas*, 2015a). Equally importantly, civil society forces, which were credited for facilitating Jokowi's ascendance, have gradually been sidelined in the political process. It was instructive that when these forces rallied against Budi Gunawan's inauguration, one cabinet minister dismissed them as being 'unimportant' (*Kompas*, 2015b). Jokowi's popularity waned accordingly. These observations suggest that Jokowi's electoral victory did not reflect a discernable erosion of the oligarchic power structure. Instead it served more as a mechanism through which to redistribute patronage away from the old power centre to the new power centre formed around Megawati.

Conclusion

Even before he finished the first 100 days in office, Jokowi had already disappointed many of his supporters. Perhaps this was inevitable given the unsustainably high levels of public expectations that accompanied his presidential election victory in July 2014. At the same time, such expectations were, at least partly, based on a somewhat one-dimensional interpretation of the election results that Jokowi's victory represented a triumph of a new democratic leader against traditional oligarchic interests. This article has taken issue with such an interpretation and revisited the meteoric ascendance of Jokowi with a greater emphasis on the oligarchic adaptation of 'post-

26. For a concise assessment of Jokowi's first year in power, see Muhtadi (2015).

clientelist' initiatives. It has then suggested that the existing literature, which tends to emphasise Jokowi's unique leadership style, or the 'bottom-up' nature of his supporters, obscures important political dynamics that not only aided his ascendancy but also placed limits on what he could achieve as a new president. The article has emphasised that Jokowi's elevation to presidency needs to be understood as a measure taken by oligarchic elites in an attempt to compensate for traditional clientelistic mobilisation that has become increasingly ineffective in recent years. This article does not agree with the notion that Jokowi is simply a 'puppet' of his patrons, but suggests that more attention needs to be directed to the broader structural constraints placed on Jokowi to have a more nuanced understanding of the political context in which he must operate.

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