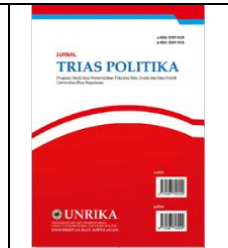


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Journal Homepage : <https://www.journal.unrika.ac.id/index.php/jurnaltriaspolitika>**CHALLENGES OF INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY POST-2024 ELECTION****Ahmad Rifki Nurfebriansyah^{1*}, Mudiwati Rahmatunnisa², Glenn Kevin Immanuel³, Karima Mahesa Suramahardini⁴, Muhammad Luthfi Thahir Yamani⁵**^{1, 2, 3} Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Padjadjaran University, Indonesia⁴ Research Analyst at PT Layanan Pengadaan Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia⁵ Department of Law, Faculty of Law, Indonesian University, Indonesia

Abstract: : Indonesia has experienced a decline in democracy over the past 5 years. The peak was in the 2024 Election, when political actors used their power to gain advantage in the Election. This article aims to analyze and predict how the situation of democracy in Indonesia will be in the future, especially in the next 5 years. This study uses a qualitative approach and data collection techniques with a literature review. Data analysis was carried out by observing the political symptoms that occurred and taking examples from other countries. The results of this study can be seen that the 2024 Election provides a major contraction to Indonesia's political tension. By looking at various indicators of democratization, Indonesia will experience a further decline in democracy in the future. Theoretically, this study not only enriches academic discourse on democracy and elections, but also emphasizes policy makers in formulating and maintaining Indonesian democracy in the future.

Keywords : democracy; challenges; prediction; democratic regression; electoral integrity.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia has experienced a continuous decline in its democracy index since 2020. According to the Freedom House report, Indonesia's democracy index recorded a score of 61 in 2020, 59 in 2021, 59 in 2022, 58 in 2023, and 57 in 2024. Data from V-Dem also shows that Indonesia's Deliberative Democracy index has been slowly declining since 2019, with details of 0.52 in 2019, 0.5 in 2020, 0.47 in 2021, 0.46 in 2022, and finally 0.45 in 2023.

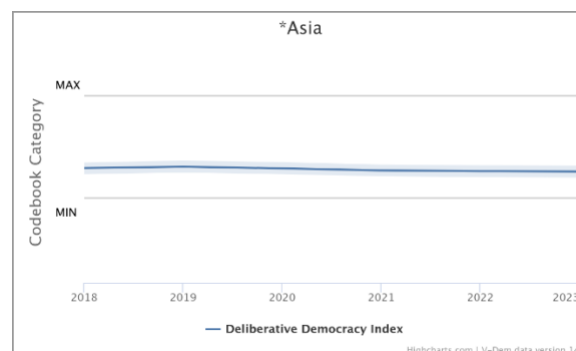


Figure 1. Indonesian Democracy Index 2018-2023 (V-Dem, 2023)

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It will peak in 2024 when the Indonesian election is full of controversy. One of the controversies that emerged on the media surface was the decision of the Constitutional Court (MK) which allowed vice presidential candidates who were under 40 years old, so that this decision was seen as a step to smooth Gibran's path as Prabowo's vice presidential candidate. (Hasanah et al., 2024). The 2024 election in Indonesia was marked by fraud, related to abuse of power, violation of the constitution, and structured, systematic, and massive fraud. One of the in-depth investigations that explains the fraud is a film published named *Dirty Vote* featuring renowned experts in the fields of politics and constitutional law, namely Zainal Mochtar Arifin, Bivitri Susanti, and Feri Amsari.

This incident increased public sentiment towards the government. The results of calculations by Gaizka et al. (2024) using the Naïve Bayes method show that the public tends to give negative sentiments to Gibran after he was inaugurated, due to increasing dislike. Many universities have shown vocal criticism of President Jokowi's government in the context of democracy taking place in 2024. There are several theoretical definitions of the concept of democracy. While sentiment analysis provides insights into public opinion, it often fails to explore the root causes of dissatisfaction, such as economic inequality, lack of transparency, or perceived authoritarian tendencies. Additionally, there is limited research on how these sentiments translate into political action or influence electoral behaviour. Ericson & Dahl (1972) calls it Polyarchy, a system when the center of power is more than one. Ericson & Dahl (1972) research often focuses on macro-level institutional design but overlooks micro-level dynamics, such as the role of local governments, civil society, and grassroots movements in resisting democratic erosion. Sen (1999) defines this term as public reasoning, not just a mechanical election system. Meanwhile, Acemoglu & Robinson (2012) defines it as when political institutions are inclusive. Previous research on elections has examined various challenges, including electoral manipulation, political dynasties, and declining public trust. Studies such as those by Creswell (2018) emphasize how democratic erosion can occur through legally sanctioned mechanisms, such as the concentration of executive power and the weakening of independent institutions. In the Indonesian context, Mietzner (2020) analyzed how electoral practices have been shaped by elite interests, raising concerns about fairness and transparency. Despite these studies, there remains a gap in understanding how public sentiment towards electoral outcomes directly impacts democratic resilience. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the challenges posed by the 2024 election and its implications for Indonesia's democratic future.

Several leading experts have pointed out the indicators of democracy. According to Ericson & Dahl (1972), democracy consists of several indicators, namely (1) freedom to compete in free and fair general elections, (2) the right to vote for adults, (3) access to free and diverse information, (4) freedom to form political organizations and opposition groups, (5) basic civil liberties, and (6) government accountability through parliamentary institutions. Sen (1999) explains several indicators of democracy, there are (1) political rights (fair elections and the right to vote), (2) civil liberties (freedom of opinion, press and association), (3) economic and social conditions and enabling political participation (education, health and economic resilience), (4) transparency and accountability in government, (5) public deliberation and thought, and (6) inclusiveness and protection of minorities. Acemoglu & Robinson (2012) also compiled indicators of democracy, namely (1) inclusive political institutions (expanded political participation, checks and balances, fair elections), (2) inclusive economic institutions (equal access to economic opportunities, protection of property rights, rule of law), (3) distribution of power (decentralization of power, political pluralism), (4) accountability and

responsiveness, and (5) avoidance of extractive institutions that concentrate power over resources.

While previous research has provided comprehensive frameworks for assessing democracy, there are still gaps in understanding how these indicators manifest in contemporary political dynamics, particularly in hybrid or declining democracies. Existing studies primarily focus on structural and institutional aspects but often overlook the role of public sentiment and perception in shaping democratic resilience. The impact of digital disinformation, social media polarization, and the strategic use of legal frameworks to undermine democratic norms are aspects that remain underexplored. Moreover, while Dahl (1972), Sen (1999), and Acemoglu & Robinson (2012) emphasize the importance of inclusive institutions and political rights, their frameworks do not fully address how democratic indicators interact with emerging challenges, such as executive aggrandizement, elite consolidation, and the erosion of electoral integrity through non-traditional means. This study seeks to fill these gaps by analyzing the state of democracy in Indonesia post-2024 election, focusing on how shifts in governance, public trust, and political maneuvering affect democratic sustainability. By integrating both traditional democratic indicators and modern political challenges, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of democratic regression and resilience in contemporary political settings.

Research on predicting future political dynamics has been conducted by various researchers. Kragh (2020) predicts that in 2045 there will be three different scenarios, namely (1) the Russian authoritarian regime will be further strengthened, (2) the constitutional order will be restored, and (3) the regime will experience disruption. Ding & Panda (2020) book also discusses the potential scenario of Xi Jinping's growing authoritarianism in China and the potential reforms that would follow. A study by Duggal et al. (2024) predicts that India will experience a breakthrough in geopolitical, economic, and social rights by 2030.

Based on the explanation that has been described in the previous section, the researcher is interested in writing an article entitled "Challenges of Indonesian Democracy Post-2024 Election". The researcher sees that there is a gap in the research on the political scenario that has been described previously, namely that there has been no research on the political scenario in Indonesia during the Prabowo administration and these studies do not use indicators of democracy. Therefore, this study aims to see the condition of Indonesian democracy that will occur during the Prabowo administration based on several simplified indicators.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research that emphasizes the search for meaning and the use of data in the form of descriptions and narratives (Sugiyono, 2016). The data collection technique in this study is a literature review. This involves gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing existing data and information from various written sources. The literature review is conducted systematically to ensure that data collected is relevant, credible, and comprehensive. The data sources for this study come from online news portals and articles that have been written by previous researchers. Cases collected from online news portals are specified to be the past 5 years. The data analysis stage begins by dividing the theory of democracy into several indicators of democracy. Each indicator of democracy will be explained with an explanation of the indicators of democracy, conditions that occur in Indonesia, synthesis with theories on indicators of democracy, cases of other countries, and predictions for Indonesia in the future. by breaking down democracy into specific indicators, analyzing current conditions, comparing with other countries, and making future projections.

Through this structured approach, the study aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of democratic trends in Indonesia while identifying potential challenges in the years to come.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will analyze 5 main indicators of democracy based on the opinions of Dahl, Sen, and Acemoglu namely (1) fair election, (2) rule of law, (3) government transparency, (4) checks and balances, and (5) freedom of expression. We only choose 5 indicators because these five indicators are important and easily seen in the current political dynamics in Indonesia.

Fair Election

Both Dahl, Sen, and Acemoglu point out that the implementation of fair elections is an indicator of democracy. Fair elections are a constitutional mandate that must be based on the principle of justice (Fahmi, 2016). Fair and free elections are defined through political events leading up to the election until the election day (Bishop & Hoeffler, 2016). Fair elections are key to political stability (Bishop & Hoeffler, 2016). Free and fair elections are crucial foundation of liberal democracy, ensuring that citizens can choose their leaders freely and fairly (Keman, 2025).

Several articles and political expert analysis discuss the 2024 Election which was marred by fraud. The conclusion of Hidayat's (2024) research shows that issues regarding fraud in elections involving vote manipulation and money politics can arise due to public suspicion of the government and state institutions. Fernando et al. (2024) research shows that the abuse of power that occurred can be demonstrated through the open support of ministers, governors, and mayors who are listed as being on the successful teams of candidate pairs. Three political and constitutional law experts in the film. Dirty Vote also stated that in the 2024 Election there was structured, systematic, and massive fraud. Dirty Vote explains that some of the fraud that occurred were (1) changes to the age limit rules for vice presidential candidates by the Constitutional Court, (2) the appointment of temporary regional heads by the President while waiting for the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections, (3) the use of state facilities by distributing social assistance to regions that were considered to have potential vote bank. One political observer, Jimly Asshiddiqie, explained that this fraud cannot be prosecuted legally because the perpetrator of the fraud uses legal instruments in carrying out his actions (Achmad & Pratama, 2024).

Yoweri Museveni, the president of Uganda, has won every election marred by allegations of fraud. He has won six elections, namely in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and the most recent in 2021. In 1996, Museveni won the election by monetizing elections, when money could influence election results (William, 1997). In 2001, the fraud that occurred was carried out by the supporting political parties by manipulating the election process (Sparks, 2008). In the 2006 elections, Museveni involved an elite network to win the election, which had an impact on the Supreme Court, which remained silent when it saw the election fraud by Museveni's group (Murison, 2013). In the 2011 election, the methods used were more brutal, suppressing protesters and using public funds for campaigns (Izama & Wilkerson, 2011). In the 2016 elections, the fraud committed by Museveni's party was the use of crime prevention, creating programs that caused uncertainty, and dividing the opposition (Khisa, 2016). In the most recent election, 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic was used as a pretext to limit political opponents' campaigning and limit the opposition's access to media resources (Sempijja & Brito, 2022).

Given that the previous election was rigged in a legal way, it is predicted that rigging in the election will still occur in the next election. Reflecting on the case of President Museveni in the Ugandan Election fraud that has been carried out 6 times, the 2029 Indonesian Election is predicted to still experience fraud by the ruling party. This is because the ruler who wins the election by cheating will tend to repeat the fraud in the next election. If the 2024 Election fraud uses state facilities, then the 2029 Election fraud is predicted to be even worse.

Rule of Law

One aspect that needs to be underlined from the democracy index is Acemoglu & Robinson's rule of law indicator. The rule of law can promote equality before the law, accountability for those in power, and limit arbitrary action by authorities (Borah, 2020). The rule of law can limit both the government and society, and emphasize that neither is above the law (Sirota, 2020). The rule of law is important in regulating society, reducing poverty, suppressing corruption, and protecting society from injustice (Wakelin, 2020). The rule of law can be more accurately called "law power" because every law has binding power for its implementers. Law rules can be changed by political power or anyone who holds a certain position. This is because the legal rules themselves are made and created through political power (Luthan, 2007). The rule of law ensures that democratic decisions are made in structured, predictable, and fair manner, which is necessary for the legitimacy of democratic governance (Webber, 2024).

Unfortunately, the rules regarding elections are often changed by officials in Indonesia. There have been many events of changes in political rules easily before the 2024 elections. Jokowi volunteers propose extending Jokowi's term to 3 terms in 2019 along with the issue of amending the 1945 Constitution (Adyatama, 2019). Jokowi himself initially rejected the idea because he thought it would lead him into trouble (Damarjati, 2019). Unfortunately, Jokowi issued a different statement by supporting the 3-term discourse when the discourse re-emerged (Mantalean & Novita, 2022). In the end, the discourse was not implemented due to rejection from Megawati. In late 2023, the Constitutional Court decided to change the rules by lowering the age limit for vice presidential candidates (Khaerunnisa, 2023). Revisions to the law like this can be seen as a limitation of the power and authority of the judiciary by the legislature, as well as interfering with the independence of the Constitutional Court judges (Wardah, 2024).

Frequent changes in political rules can weaken the power of law by enabling sophisticated legal governance and undermining the main attributes of the rule of law (Kliemt, 2024). The Election Law has experienced a weakening of its power as a result of the frequent changes that have occurred. Changing political rules can strengthen the rule changer and weaken political opponents (Levinson & Sachs, 2015). The discourse on a 3-term president could extend the president's power while limiting the participation of the president's political opponents. Frequent changes in political rules also create situations of uncertainty and reduce the ability of each political actor to cooperate and commit (Lopez-Calva, 2017). Frequent changes in election rules (e.g., changing age limits) make political actors seem to only need those rules at a certain time. If those rules do not suit their wishes in the future, they can easily change them.

In other countries, one example of when the rule of law was engineered for political interests was Vladimir Putin's political career in Russia. Putin uses law and legal institutions to achieve political goals, communicate with the public, and organize authoritarian coalitions that can help the president (Popova, 2017). Putin carried out two constitutional reforms, namely in 2008 and 2020. Constitutional reforms in 2008 allowed the presidential term to be increased from four years to six years (Medushevsky, 2019). Putin briefly stepped down as president and

served as prime minister in 2008, after his term had expired. However, he returned and was elected president in the 2012 election. The 2020 constitutional reform resulted in the rule that the president could serve two terms being extended to four terms (Kudryashova & Mirzaev, 2020). This allows Putin to run again in the 2024 and 2030 elections.

Therefore, it is not surprising that in the future of Indonesian politics, every political actor can change the rules as they please. All institutions, both executive, legislative, and judiciary can be vulnerable to political intervention by other political actors. Prabowo's group is not much different from Jokowi's group which carries out operations to change election rules, so these changes to the rules will continue to be carried out to smooth the political steps of one political actor and hinder the political steps of other actors. The discourse of 3 terms that failed during Jokowi's time has the opportunity to reappear in Prabowo's government and can even be successful. The constitution of the Basic Law also has the opportunity to be changed according to the needs of the political elite.

Government Transparency

Sen (1999) explained that one of the indicators of democracy is transparency in government institutions. Transparency in government with easily accessible and easy-to-use information is important for citizens to participate in politics (Vilela et al., 2017). Transparent government allows citizens to see the inner workings of government and keeps it accountable (Veal et al., 2015). Transparency can build public trust and enable free access to information by the public (Trisakti et al., 2022). Transparency can also encourage governments to reduce corruption (Grimmelikhuisen et al., 2017). Government transparency is a key element of a healthy and sustainable democracy and demonstrates that efforts to increase transparency should be a priority in democratic reforms (Hong et al., 2024).

Unfortunately, the symptoms shown in the previous situation indicate that the government has a problem with transparency. In 2020, the DPR passed the Job Creation Bill in the middle of the night. The ratification shocked the public because the ratification was done suddenly and as if hidden from the public (Putri, 2024). This made activists alert and on guard in case the Pilkada Bill would be passed at midnight, considering that the DPR decided to postpone the ratification of the Pilkada Bill the previous day (CNN Indonesia, 2024). The turmoil regarding the Regional Election Law is because the DPR Legislative Body will reject the Constitutional Court's decision to reject changes to the rules regarding the age limit for gubernatorial candidates in the Regional Elections to be held (Anisah, 2024). In the end, the DPR stopped the discussion and decided to respect the Constitutional Court's decision (BBC, 2024).

A non-transparent government can trigger massive corruption (Jiménez & Albalade, 2018). Corruption is not only in the form of material, but can also be in the form of power. If the policy of changing election rules is carried out without the consent of the community, then the parties who benefit can easily commit corruption. Lack of government transparency can leave people in a state of uncertainty (Galvão, 2018). Revisions to the Pilkada Law that do not involve the public can leave people uncertain about a future led by people they do not want.

Given the symptoms that occur and based on another country, it can be predicted that the DPR will still ratify controversial regulations at times when the public is off guard. A number of activists have indeed been aware and encouraged every member of society to ensure that the DPR does not ratify controversial regulations in the middle of the night. They have even implemented a strategy by staying overnight in the DPR building (Akmal, 2019). Therefore, the DPR may seek another strategy by moving the location of the ratification of the regulations.

Checks and Balances

Acemoglu & Robinson (2012) underlined another indicator of democracy is checks and balances. Previously, Ericson & Dahl (1972) stated that the term tended towards "forming an opposition group". Opposition groups are groups that are involved in various activities that are against the government, for example supporting political actors who oppose the government, protest movements, even armed resistance (Waty, 2021). The opposition (both party and non-party) plays a check and balances role. Checks and balances in government are needed to prevent the government from abusing its power (Holcombe, 2018).

Unfortunately, recent events tend to show that political parties in Indonesia tend to avoid the role of opposition. Currently, there is a coalition of political parties with large groups participating in the government, namely the *Koalisi Indonesia Maju* (KIM). Political party coalitions can be seen as a combination of groups of individuals who interact and are deliberately formed independently of formal organizational structures, have an issue and problem orientation, have a perception of mutual benefit, and require action from members (Lijphart, 1994). The problem that occurs is that parties that were not in a coalition and were initially very opposed to the current KIM parties when the 2024 Election took place, tended to approach and join the KIM group. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) stated that it would join KIM and support the Prabowo-Gibran government after KIM offered the deputy governor's seat (Octavia & Maullana, 2024). In fact, PKS has been acting as the opposition and has supported the presidential candidate who is KIM's opponent, namely Anies Baswedan, in the 2024 Election (Taufani, 2024). Recently, PDI-P, a party that was once the people's hope to become the opposition, gave a signal to join Prabowo's government (Ibrahim, 2024). Initially, PDI-P also supported a presidential candidate who was Prabowo's opponent, namely their own cadre Ganjar Pranowo (Gabriella, 2024).

The government can act more autocratic and domineering which can transform into a dictatorship if there is no opposition party (Khan et al., 2021). Prabowo could transform himself into a dictator if there is no opposition party in parliament. The absence of an opposition party could lead to a reduction in checks and balances. The missing checks and balances will allow government policies to run smoothly. One important example of how a country has a single coalition of large political parties is the Grand Coalition in the 2008 Kenyan elections. At that time, all parties, both the ruling party (Party of National Unity, PNU, led by Kibaki) and the opposition (Orange Democratic Movement, ODM, led by Odinga) joined together to form a coalition (Toroitich, 2010). This coalition did not survive the 2013 election, triggered by the rivalry between the two big parties, PNU and ODM, which brought ethnic conflict and competition in the 2013 election (Khadiagala, 2022).

Several of these events point to the possibility that Prabowo's government will not have an opposition party. This is related to the issue regarding Prabowo who will form 44 ministries (CNBC Indonesia, 2024). This is supported by the revision of the Ministerial Law which does not limit the number of ministries (Susanto, 2024). This is also because all parties will likely get ministerial quotas as a result of the expansion of the number of ministries. If all political parties in parliament during Prabowo's administration join the governing coalition, then the check and balances function in parliament is predicted to be minimal or even non-existent. The absence of a check and balances function means that every law proposed by the executive can be discussed quickly and immediately approved by parliament. Although this grand coalition was formed at the beginning of Prabowo's administration, it is predicted that the coalition will split ahead of the 2024 Election, based of Kenya cases. This is because each party has its own interests.

Even though all parties have joined the coalition, there are still non-party groups that can act as the opposition, taking over the role of checks and balances. One example is the Navalny Movement in Russia which took over the function of checks and balances and opposed Putin's power (Savenkov, 2019). Another example is the Petition of 100 which attracted public attention because of its movement to impeach Jokowi because it was considered arbitrary (Nurfebriansyah, 2024).

Freedom of Expression

Dahl, Sen, and Acemoglu give different names to this concept, but they have the same meaning, namely that they all discuss freedom. Freedom of speech is a principle that protects the right to various forms of communication, including offensive and shocking communication (Zoller, 2009). Freedom of expression is a fundamental right in a democratic society, essential to individual happiness and social well-being (Masferrer, 2023).

One of the important instruments in the freedom of speech of Indonesian citizens is the Electronic Transaction Information Law (UU ITE). This law began with Law Number 11 of 2008 which regulates all electronic transactions. This law has undergone two amendments, and the most recent is Law Number 1 of 2024. Several articles that were amended from this law intersect with democracy and freedom of speech. In the 2024 amendment, Article 43 letter (i) states that Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) can "order Electronic System Organizers to temporarily terminate access to social media accounts, bank accounts, electronic money, and/or digital assets." Research by Pratama & Faudina (2024) summarizes various sources which state the problems with the revision of the law, namely (1) it limits freedom and the right to express opinions, (2) it leads to arbitrariness because law enforcement officers can decide that violators of the ITE Law are guilty and must be punished without determining the specific provisions of which articles have been violated, (3) there are certain groups who take revenge and even use it to trap political opponents, and (4) the guarantee of legal certainty is reduced. This condition certainly makes freedom of expression increasingly limited by the presence of these regulations and articles. In the demonstration against the planned amendment to the Pilkada Law, there were several incidents monitored by the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI). The incidents were beatings and tear gas shootings by police that left 18 people injured in Semarang, and 31 people experienced violence during a demonstration in Bandung (Thea, 2024).

A decline in freedom of expression could result in social vulnerability and democratic backsliding (Masferrer, 2023). The implementation of the ITE Law, which has articles that tend to be restrictive, and the increasing violence by officers in several demonstrations could cause the level of democracy to decline. Maintaining the right to free speech is often a challenge, which can lead to dangerous incidents (Scanlon, 2003). What happened with the violence by the authorities in Semarang and Bandung shows that physical violence is the price paid for freedom of expression. Not far from Indonesia, Myanmar is currently experiencing a period of violence by the authorities against demonstrators. At the beginning of the coup by the military junta in February 2021, the military only carried out mass arrests of activists (Tong, 2021). This action escalated to the use of live ammunition against peaceful demonstrators (IFJ, 2022). Furthermore, the military took more brutal action by killing demonstrators.

Considering that the violence of the authorities is increasing, the ITE Law which is increasingly restricting freedom of expression, and the example of Myanmar which is gradually carrying out repressive actions, it is not excessive if Indonesia will also experience a situation of increasingly harsh repression by the authorities. The threat of kidnapping and killing of

activists can await the next government, because the level of repression shows an increasing trend until now.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that Indonesia's democratic system exhibits significant weaknesses in several key indicators: fair elections, rule of law, government transparency, checks and balances, and freedom of expression. The fraudulent practices identified in the 2024 election suggest a persistent pattern that could continue in 2029, mirroring the electoral manipulation observed in Uganda under Museveni. The erosion of the rule of law, evidenced by frequent changes in political rules for electoral benefits, reflects a concerning trend similar to Putin's legal manipulations in Russia. The lack of government transparency, particularly in policy-making and legislative processes, undermines public trust and creates opportunities for corruption. The diminishing role of opposition parties threatens the effectiveness of checks and balances, potentially leading to an authoritarian governance model, as seen in Kenya's grand coalition. Finally, the constraints on freedom of expression, including the misuse of the Electronic Transaction Information Law (ITE Law), point to an increasing suppression of dissent, posing a serious threat to democratic principles. These findings confirm that Indonesia's democratic framework is at risk of backsliding, as anticipated by previous theoretical models of democratic erosion.

The findings of this study align with previous research indicating that electoral fraud and political manipulations are characteristic of declining democracies (Hidayat, 2024; Fernando et al., 2024). The patterns observed in Indonesia are consistent with Acemoglu and Robinson's theory of extractive institutions, where ruling elites manipulate legal and political frameworks to sustain their power. Similarly, the cases of Uganda and Russia highlight how legal engineering is used to maintain long-term political dominance, a phenomenon that Indonesia appears to be mirroring. The reduction in checks and balances due to an expanding ruling coalition resonates with studies on Kenya's 2008 grand coalition, which ultimately led to governance inefficiencies and political fragmentation (Khadiagala, 2022). Additionally, the limitation on freedom of expression through restrictive laws aligns with research on authoritarian tendencies in electoral democracies (Masferrer, 2023). However, some differences arise, particularly in the Indonesian context, where political interventions in legal institutions remain relatively subtle compared to overt authoritarian regimes. Unlike Uganda and Russia, where election rigging involved outright suppression and violence, Indonesia's manipulations are largely embedded within legal frameworks, making them harder to challenge.

Theoretically, the study extends existing frameworks on democratic backsliding by demonstrating how legal instruments can be systematically altered to benefit ruling elites while maintaining a facade of democracy. This finding contributes to the broader discourse on hybrid regimes, where democratic institutions exist but function in ways that consolidate elite power rather than ensure fair governance. The Indonesian case provides empirical support for the argument that legal and political institutions can be co-opted to undermine democracy without necessarily dismantling formal democratic structures.

Practically, the findings highlight the urgent need for electoral and legal reforms to safeguard Indonesia's democratic integrity. Policies should be enacted to prevent legal manipulations that favor incumbent leaders, such as stricter regulations on electoral rule changes and independent judicial oversight. Civil society and media play a crucial role in maintaining transparency and accountability, and efforts must be strengthened to protect journalists and activists from legal repercussions. The international community and democratic watchdog organizations should closely monitor Indonesia's political developments, particularly in the lead-up to the 2029 elections, to ensure fair electoral practices. Additionally,

political parties should be encouraged to maintain opposition roles rather than coalescing entirely into ruling coalitions, as a functioning opposition is essential for maintaining checks and balances in a democracy.

CONCLUSION

This study provides predictive scenarios regarding the future trajectory of democracy in Indonesia under the Prabowo administration over the next five years. The findings indicate several critical challenges: (1) electoral integrity remains at risk due to persistent election fraud; (2) the rule of law may weaken as election regulations are likely to be altered for political advantage; (3) government transparency could decline as strategies to obscure decision-making processes are implemented; (4) the checks and balances system in parliament is predicted to diminish or even become non-existent; and (5) freedom of speech is expected to face increased restrictions, limiting public expression and discourse. The primary contribution of this study lies in its systematic analysis of potential democratic decline and the identification of key vulnerabilities within Indonesia's political landscape. By outlining these risks, this research provides a foundation for further scholarly exploration and policy discussion on democratic resilience in transitional political environments. From a practical perspective, these findings highlight the urgent need for proactive public engagement to safeguard democratic values. Civil society, media, and political institutions must collaborate to ensure electoral integrity, uphold the rule of law, demand transparency, reinforce checks and balances, and protect freedom of speech. Increased civic participation, vigilant monitoring of election processes, and active support for legal accountability are crucial to preventing democratic regression.

Despite these challenges, there remain opportunities for democratic improvements. Public awareness and active participation are key to ensuring accountability in governance. Citizens must critically engage with political developments, support legal enforcement against electoral fraud, advocate for transparency in government decisions, and reinforce opposition groups that provide checks on executive power. Furthermore, strategic use of legal frameworks, such as the ITE Law, can help safeguard free speech within existing legal boundaries. This study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The predictive nature of the analysis is based on current political trends and may be influenced by unforeseen sociopolitical developments. Additionally, the study does not incorporate quantitative data to empirically measure the projected democratic decline, which could be an area for further research. Future research should explore empirical methods to quantify the impact of democratic regression in Indonesia, such as public perception surveys or comparative analyses with other nations undergoing similar transitions. Moreover, further studies could investigate potential policy interventions that could mitigate the risks outlined in this research. By addressing these gaps, future scholarship can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Indonesia's democratic trajectory and inform strategies to strengthen its democratic institutions.

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Ahmad Rifki Nurfebriansyah, Mudiwati Rahmatunnisa, Glenn Kevin Immanuel, Karima Mahesa Suramahardini, Muhammad Luthfi Thahir Yamani

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