

From Autocracy to Oligarchy: Elite Adjustment and Authoritarian Legacies in the Jokowi's Administration

Daripada Autokrasi ke Oligarki: Penyesuaian Elit dan Legasi Autoritarian di bawah Pentadbiran Jokowi

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ABSTRACT

Democratic breakthrough in Indonesia in the late 1990s was made possible through the dynamic interactions between the civil society organisations (CSOs) and its ruling elites. Although some of the former ruling elites were affected by the political transformation, others have evolved and survived as 'authoritarian diasporas,' In fact, the former ruling party, Golkar, also survived the change and is considered one of the 'authoritarian successors parties.' Based on these two conceptions developed by James Loxton and elite adjustment by Panji Anugrah Permana, this article explores the resilience of authoritarian legacies in post-Reformasi Indonesia, particularly among the authoritarian diaspora and its influences on Indonesia's democratisation, particularly during the Jokowi years. By examining the three main sectors among the former authoritarian elites in politics, businesses, and the military, this article makes a case for democratic backsliding in Indonesia under the Jokowi administration due to the resurgence and the roles played by the former authoritarian elites in re-capturing politics and political change from the CSOs. The analysis in this article is based on a field study and library research.

Keywords: Authoritarian Diaspora, Authoritarian Successor Parties, Democratisation, Elite Adjustment, Jokowi, Indonesia.

ABSTRAK

Kemunculan demokrasi pada lewat 1990an di Indonesia dimungkinkan dengan interaksi dinamik di antara organisasi masyarakat sivil dan elit pemerintahnya. Meskipun sesetengah elit pemerintah lama terkesan daripada transformasi politik itu, sesetengah yang lain berevolusi dan terselamat sebagai 'diaspora authoritarian'. Malah parti pemerintah lama, Golkar juga dapat bertahan dan dianggap sebagai salah satu pewaris parti authoritarian di negara itu. Berdasarkan dua konsep yang dibangunkan oleh James Loxton dan teori penyesuaian elit oleh Panji Anugrah Permana, artikel ini meneroka ketahanan legasi authoritarian dalam pasca-Reformasi khususnya dalam kalangan diaspora authoritarian dan pengaruh serta peranan mereka terhadap pendemokrasian Indonesia, khususnya pada era pentadbiran Jokowi. Dengan memeriksa tiga sektor utama elit lama, iaitu ahli politik, perniagaan dan di dalam ketenteraan, artikel ini menghujahkan kegelinciran demokrasi di Indonesia di bawah Jokowi disebabkan oleh kebangkitan semula bekas elit authoritarian dan peranan yang dimainkan oleh mereka dalam merampas semula politik dan reformasi daripada masyarakat sivil. Analisis artikel ini adalah berdasarkan kajian lapangan dan kajian perpustakaan.

Kata Kunci: Diaspora Authoritarian, Jokowi, Indonesia., Parti Pewaris Authoritarian, Pendemokrasian, Penyesuaian Elite.

INTRODUCTION

During Indonesia's New Order (1966-1998), party politics was allowed though elections were essential superficial in legitimising Suharto civil-military rule through *Partai Golongan Karya* (Golkar). It fits the characterisation of electoral authoritarianism by Schedler (2006), in which the government held multiparty elections but systematically and profoundly violated general liberal-democratic

standards. The hegemonic government heavily influences electoral authoritarianism. The hegemonic government heavily influences electoral authoritarianism, while elections do not affect the result. In other words, competitive elections are there, but they are unfair and unfree (Schedler, 2002). Suharto effectively utilised Golkar's party structure from the central government to the sub-district level to monitor and ensure that all government programs and Suharto's interests ran well (Reeve, 2013).

Suharto's regime – referring to the leading political elites and their governing characters – was framed by Tomsa (2008) as an authoritarian, bureaucratic regime and strongly supported by the military. After the fall of the Suharto regime, Indonesia reformed the armed forces, then known as the *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI), which merged the military forces and the police force by separating them into *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI) and *Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia* (POLRI). During Suharto's rule, the military provided hegemonic justification that they must play an active role in the country's development (Sebastian, 2006). However, the pressures of the Reformasi era forced the military to accept demands for democracy and initiate the military reform process.

Loxton and Power (2021) state that the remnants of authoritarian regimes include authoritarian diasporas, namely the spread of former ruling actors in the previous authoritarian regime to various electoral facilities before – or after – the transition to competitive elections. The authoritarian successor parties can operate after the political system has shifted towards a democratic transition and participate in electoral competitions. They still exist even though they sometimes change names, thus becoming authoritarian successor parties (Loxton 2018). The political elite in Indonesia has adjusted to the political change and democratisation process. At the beginning of *Reformasi*, there was a fundamental change in the political system, but some former authoritarian actors survived by making strategic adjustments. The political elites who possess exceptional bureaucratic skills and abilities tend to be more successful in adapting to the changing situations and conditions in Indonesia and have a greater chance of maintaining their political positions (Defbry 2019, p. 53). They are not genuinely committed to democracy but continuously changing their character according to the rapidly shifting political structures (Panji Anugrah Permana 2017). Accordingly, they act as democrats when the situation needs them to be to earn validity to the people, albeit somewhat cosmetically and with less commitment to liberal democracy. In democratic electoral politics, an electoral coalition has the potential to produce divergent results. Party leaders, thus, may compromise their policy commitments to get into power. Therefore, it cannot be denied that there will be political Bargaining and compensation to those in power in enacting (new) policy (Gandhi

& Ong 2019: 3). Bargaining for power in the mixed-government situation forced the democrats to rethink their commitment to democratic values substantially in fulfilling their political goals.

Elite adjustment, or adaptation, is needed due to the changing dynamics between structural changes, actors' actions, and the people's aspirations (Panji 2017). In this context, the oligarchic political practices were not completely eradicated after Suharto's New Order. Instead, there was an adjustment among the elite groups who had been around Suharto to continue to carry out domination or control in determining the political configuration based on their sectoral interests, where they try to adapt (*adaptive*) and be responsive to most changes in the political system (*responsive*) (Defbry 2019). It means that, among others, the change in the political structures from the New Order regime to the *Reformasi* era encouraged the old political elites to create and design political parties as instruments to participate in the general election contestation. In this case, the old political elites refer those ruling elites that existed before the democratisation era. They survived in the new political system despite changing parties. In fact, according to Loxton (2018), there are still parties that previously existed in authoritarian regimes that still exist in the democratic era. It impacts the existence of authoritarian successor parties, even though they have changed party names. For example, the presence of political parties in New Order only Development Union Party (PPP), Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), and Functional Group or Golkar became 48 political parties after *Reformasi*. However, many of them did not play a significant role in *Reformasi*.

The article examines how the mainstream elites in past authoritarian regimes survived in the *Reformasi* era and influenced Indonesia's democratisation. The analysis of elites is essential in identifying how they adjust in the democratic period, and their continual presence in the democratic system tends to make it difficult for the democratic system in Indonesia to reach an established level. This article is further divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the adjustment patterns of political, business, and military elites. The second analyses Jokowi as a focal point for the interests of the elite who have adapted to the *Reformasi* era. A conclusion follows this analysis at the end, reflecting the elite's adjustment, which has consolidated substantially during the Jokowi's years.

METHOD AND STUDY AREA

This study uses a qualitative method by examining how the adjustment phenomenon among the old political, business, and military elites in Indonesia enabled some of them to survive during the Reformasi era – with a focus on the Jokowi years (2014-2024). Primary data is used to obtain clarification of information from ten informants, consisting of party leaders, activists, and academic members. Several informants were purposely disguised to protect their privacy, especially concerning sharing sensitive information. In addition, secondary resources taken from previous research were used to compare with the primary data and support the arguments made. The elite adjustment conception by Panji Anugrah Permana (2017), Authoritarian Successor Parties, and Authoritarian Diasporas theories by James Loxton (2016 and 2021) are utilised in explaining the phenomenon of old elite adaptation in the *Reformasi* years. Furthermore, this research will describe the pattern of privileged relations that eventually made Jokowi a meeting point for elite bargaining in converging their sectoral interests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ELITE ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE OLD AUTHORITARIAN ELITES

After Suharto's New Order, political reform in Indonesia gradually changed the prevailing political system into an open democratic system with various freedoms. The political system's transformation forced political actors: the politicians, oligarchs, and the military who comprised the ruling elites in the New Order to adjust gradually in maintaining relevancy and political positions during the *Reformasi* years.

1. The Political Elite

Politicians with skills and experience in government in the New Order attempt to survive, particularly in occupying essential positions in the political system. The standard way for them is to create a new political party following a democratic political system. However, some of their parties have failed, especially parties with specific voter segments, such as parties based on profession, ethnicity, workers, women, and religious minorities - for example, National Labour Party and Indonesian National

Christian Party (Krisna). Whereas, if the parties would like to succeed in elections in Indonesia, they need much more robust and broader bases. First, there is infrastructure and connections that were built during the New Order, such as the existence of the Golkar, PPP, and PDIP parties; second, indirect support from religious organizations such as National Awakening Party (PKB), National Mandate Party (PAN), and Star Moon Party (PBB); third, there is a grassroots network created long ago such as the Justice Party (PK) (Ufen 2006 p. 10). In this context, it is evident that these parties still have their mass base and survive almost every election. The old political elites also formed political parties and continued to participate in government during the *Reformasi* era. For example, the Golkar party used to strengthen Suharto's power. After the reformasi, Golkar cadres founded political parties such as the Democratic National Party (Nasdem) by Surya Paloh, the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra) by Prabowo, the People's Conscience Party (Hanura) by Wiranto, and Democratic Party by Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). Also, the existence of old parties continues in Indonesian politics, such as Golkar, PPP, and PDI – after dualism, Megawati founded the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP). However, in the first elections in the *Reformasi* in 1999, the winner was PDIP, while in 2004, the winner was Golkar. It shows the strength of the Golkar network, although it eventually split into several political parties (Informant 1, 2022). The political elites have reached the strengthening stage in adjusting to SBY's administration, in which the lackeys of the old authoritarianism have entered the vertices of democracy. They manoeuvre by occupying several power lines.

The authoritarian diasporas strengthen their base primarily by propagating that they are democrats, even though they have a shallow commitment to democracy and eventually become conditional democrats. During the Jokowi administration, these diasporas were opportunist-pragmatic; for example, during the early days of Jokowi's administration, Golkar played the role of being in the opposition, overseeing all policies of Jokowi's government. However, the government placed Golkar (Informant 1 2022) on a check by taking advantage of internal dualism and suing Setya Novanto (Setnov) in the electronic identity card (e-KTP) corruption case (Power 2018 p. 331). On the one hand, several figures and Golkar circles supported Jokowi's government, including Jusuf Kalla, vice president

at the time (@batakasli 2014). On the other hand, Setnov's camp did not support the government and chose to become the opposition. It shows that the government under Jokowi's leadership has been involved in the party's internal affairs by eliminating the opposition. Also, a number of the old elite within Golkar have skilfully maneuvered to stay in power. Nevertheless, the adjustment of the old political elite in the *Reformasi* era is limited to the mainstream elite – civilians within Golkar and the military elite. This is because Golkar is a functional group consisting of ABRI, civil servants (PNS), and types of non-ABRI and non-PNS workers (Reeve 2013, p. 376). It means that the military elite began to adjust to the democratic system, too. Thus, the political elites of Golkar from the military tried to stay afloat to continue to have the support of the ruling government. The military adjustment is different from that of the political elites from the civilian community because, in a democratic system, the pattern of civil-military relations has certain limits, especially concerning military institutions having to obey the rules of the government or leaders from civilian circles.

2. The Military Elite

After military reform, the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI), which had carried out military reform by changing its name and constitutional structure to TNI, no longer had the veto power to overturn decisions made by the civilian government (Mietzner 2006). However, it impacts power struggles within military institutions, where there are factions that have different approaches to demonstrating power (Honna 2003, p. 3). According to Bradford (2004), the military elite began withdrawing from policy-making and practical politics but was not apolitical. Similarly, Liddle (2003) states that reforms in military institutions have only been ceremonial, and nothing has changed fundamentally. Along with its development, during the SBY presidency, the military was controlled and in harmony with civilians. The military's institutional prerogative rights and vested interests are well preserved, especially under the civil-military balance of power (Honna 2019). This step is precisely the military elite's adjustment to maintaining their political legitimacy, especially after Law No. 34/2004, which requires the military to focus on tasks in the defence sector. Thus, active soldiers may no longer play a role, be involved in politics, and could not occupy any executive positions reserved for

civilians. It aligns with the spirit of ending military involvement in socio-political affairs in the New Order. In this context, SBY succeeds in managing national security to create a stable civil-military relationship (Williams 2015) by consolidating and accommodating military interests, especially concerning promotion, and keeping the military in the corridor of the democratic system. SBY tried not to interfere in military reform by providing various facilities and promotions for officers with good track records, including officers who had served as SBY's subordinates and adjutants (Williams 2015). Even though the military elites adjusted themselves to the prevailing political system in Indonesia, they also experienced divisions. They had camps, including those that leaned towards certain political party elites, such as the PDIP (Informant 2, 2022). Under President Jokowi, those military elites' manoeuvre to strengthen their respective interests following the new political environment (Evan 2015). As a figure not from the mainstream, Jokowi lacked significant backing to balance oppositional influences, and trapped him in a difficult position, prompting him to find strength in the military (Weiss 2015). Accordingly, the part of the military in Indonesia's politics increasingly improved during the Jokowi administration,

In 2016, Jokowi greatly intensified the pressure for broader authority in domestic security affairs, such as instructions to hunt down the spreaders of lies and hoaxes that could cause national divisions (M. Darwin, 2018). At the same time, the credibility of the TNI has also increased in the public and belief that only the military can overcome the country's dangers. Then, the military recognises that there is no imminent conventional external threat (traditional security) but a proxy war, where foreigners seek to weaken Indonesia through non-military measures, such as drug use and advocacy for sexuality rights (Muhamad, Adhi & Keoni 2021, pp. 103–109; IPAC 2016 p. 1). The appointment of Luhut Panjaitan, who also came from the military, into the cabinet during the cabinet reshuffle in August 2015 was seen as Jokowi's move to help him consolidate power in various elements, including becoming Jokowi's political supporter in carrying out the program. Luhut's involvement is essential to strengthen Jokowi's political base. Based on the report of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (2016), Luhut is more impressed with socially progressive views. However, Luhut is considered to have confidence that the military can solve a

problem when the bureaucracy cannot solve it, so he supports the TNI playing a role in non-military tasks. Luhut, as Minister in Jokowi's cabinet, has a significant influence on Jokowi's political power base and has weakened PDIP's control over Jokowi (Informant 3, 2022). Jokowi must also remain loyal to the PDIP because Jokowi still needs its support for his regime consolidation. PDIP and Jokowi have a pattern of reciprocal relations and mutual care for one another (Firman, 2022). Jokowi is also seen to have a gentlemen's bargain with the TNI in exchange for loyalty and support for Jokowi's political agenda.

During the Jokowi administration, the military seems to have aspire to restore its past glory and

privileges. Jokowi issued presidential regulation (Perpres) No. 37/2019 concerning the Functional Positions of the TNI. Consequently, TNI officers can occupy various positions in ministries and government agencies or positions outside those regulated in Law No. 34/2004 (Ikhsan 2019). It has become a debate and polemic in society, even though the background of the presidential regulation was aimed at overcoming hundreds of TNI officers who did not have positions. It means that each government regime in Indonesia has a different relationship pattern, depending on the regime's interest in the "utilisation of the military". (See Table 1).

TABLE 1. The Roles of Indonesia's Military across Different Regimes

| | Legal Basis | Civil-Military Relationship | Roles |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Suharto | Law No. 20/1982 | Military dual function; and ABRI as <i>veto player</i> | Instrument to perpetuate Suharto's rule |
| Habibie, Gus Dur, Megawati | Decree People's Representative Council No. VI/2000 Tap MPR No. VIII/2000 | Abolition of military dual function ABRI and ABRI's reform transition | One of the state instruments in maintaining democracy |
| SBY | Law No. 34/2004 | Accommodative-Consolidative | Instrument of government executive |
| Jokowi | Law No. 37/2019 | Accommodative-Reciprocal | An instrument for partisan purposes and as an apolitical shield for Jokowi's regime |

Source: Designed and developed by the authors (2023)

Power (2018) had previously predicted that Jokowi would use the military as a tool for partisan goals and in the context of the 2019 campaign, where since the fall of the New Order regime, the military and politics have not been mobilised systematically to provide political advantages to the incumbent. It starkly contrasts SBY, who continued to maintain the military as an executive tool of the government rather than being used as an instrument of autonomous political power and his rights (Mietzner 2009). In this context, implementing Presidential Regulation No. 37/2019 issued by Jokowi ultimately tends to set back Indonesia's spirit of *Reformasi*, democracy and lead to autocratisation. It shows that Jokowi has significant interests when approaching the military, so the relationship between Jokowi and the military tends to be reciprocally accommodative. Jokowi accommodates military interests, and both parties have benefited: the military is guarding Jokowi, and Jokowi has given access to the military to return to civilian positions. In this context, Jokowi has been pragmatically playing the big tent strategy. Without a solid political machine and network, he could balance the coalition by relying on a small group of close people and advisers, including retired military

generals. The number of military and police retirees increased at the end of his first term. Overall, developing civil and military relations under Jokowi has increasingly provided opportunities for the TNI to expand its involvement in the political and bureaucratic space (Evan 2019a). In addition, Evan (2019b) stated that there was intra-military organisational pressure to promote active officer positions because many of them still needed to have a position, or their promotion was suspended. In this case, the military elite's manoeuvres have succeeded by taking advantage of their strategic alliance with Jokowi, who pragmatically accommodates military interests.

3. Business Elite

In the New Order, Suharto built a business elite patron-client system directly controlled with an oligarchic-sultanistic relation (Winters 2011). After the *Reformasi* movement, many of the business elite, who were also oligarchs, began to adjust to the democratic political system and new economic order, which are complex and lack in transparency. Ford and Pepinsky (2014) illustrated that changes

in post-reformasi Indonesian politics have yet to have much transformed in the context of political power because there is still the same strong group of business actors and oligarchs as during the Suharto regime. Nevertheless, business elites in Indonesia have progressed because non-oligarchic actors have also developed pluralistic and diverse ways (Pepinsky 2013). The trends and roles of the oligarchs are starting to change as they become one of the determining factors in Indonesian politics (Winters 2013 p. 33). Their grip is observable on the structure and operations of political parties. In fact, the oligarchs still carry out political reforms (Vedi & Robison, 2013; Winters, 2013, p. 33). Buehler (2014) stated that local politics in Indonesia were not produced by oligarchs but by state elites who adapted to the changing nature of Indonesian society after the New Order. So, what happens is the efforts of state elites to provide the resources local elites need to win elections selectively. In this context, the more accessible economy has made business elites and oligarchs no longer under the control of a centralised regime but started playing locally by taking advantage of regional autonomy. They seek to provide capital and financing campaigns for regional political completions in return for favourable economic exchanges and transactions.

Meanwhile, at the national level, the business elites and oligarchs have tried to stay adaptable by being directly involved in government, thus turning themselves into ruling electoral oligarchies (Winters 2013 p. 15). Accordingly, the oligarch becomes the central player in elections and substantially influences the selection of political leaders, including the president. As a result, the electorate is presented with options screened by a strong oligarch in the first place. Even if a new party emerges, the oligarchs would have eventually control or co-opt it (Vedi & Robison 2013 p. 36). The adjustment of the business elite in the *Reformasi* era has succeeded in determining options by looking at the antithesis against SBY leadership. In this context, Jokowi's emergence in the Solo election is a rare phenomenon with a strong base of public support. Meanwhile, the oligarchs felt the need to choose and present a new option used as an extension of their hand in the 2014 presidential election (Informant 4, 2022). First, Jokowi's power was based on the people's interests, so he became a populist. Second, Jokowi's popularity has been deliberately raised by the "paid" media and the oligarchs (Informant 4, 2022). The elite adjustment throughout various eras, from Suharto to Jokowi, is highlighted in Table 2.

TABLE 2. The Business Elite and Oligarchic Adjustment

| | Condition | Status | Characteristic/Role |
|--|--|--|--|
| Suharto | The oligarchy is centrally controlled | Pure business | Oligarchy-sultanistic |
| B. J. Habibie, Gus Dur and Megawati Sukarnoputri | The oligarchy adapts to the reform system | Business Negotiations | Oligarchic Manoeuvre |
| Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) | The oligarchs come in various lines but are controlled under SBY | Business Negotiations | Oligarchic Manoeuvre |
| Joko Widodo (Jokowi) | The oligarchs take advantage of popularity, helping to raise it through paid media | Participate in determining the direction of policy following the interests of the oligarchs. | Shaping the selection of transactional leaders for the oligarchic interests. |

Source: Developed and modified from Jeffery Winters' Sultanistic Oligarchy (2011).

Table 2 shows that the post-New Order oligarchs are trying to negotiate their business interests with the political authorities to maintain their wealth. The business elite and oligarchs carry out political manoeuvres by financing the candidates in intra and interparty competitions apart from financing their preferred parties in political campaigns (Mietzner 2013 p. 239). These transactions enabled the business elites to gain access to power and pursuing their interests, such as enacting heavily pro-business regulations, such as the Omnibus Law, the Minerals

and Coal Law, and the Corruption Eradication Commission Law (Informant 5, 2022).

During the SBY administration, the oligarchs made several manoeuvres by proposing projects and businesses aligned with the government's ideas. Moreover, SBY is a retired general with an influence and a power network within the military, apart from being the Chairperson of the Democratic party. As the oligarch, the patron and client relationship with SBY became much more expensive, so Jokowi was preferred and considered an alternative to SBY.

It is in line with the Indonesia electorate, which prefers a presidential candidate with a good track record in government. The oligarch, thus, shaped

the emergence of new political actors based on the conditions structured by, and sentiments among, the society.

TABLE 3. Business and Political Nexus in Leadership Selection

| No | The Role of the Oligarchy | Function |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Sponsoring Media Survey | Increase Electability |
| 2. | Patronise Mainstream Media | Promoting success stories and highlighting candidate's performance |
| 3. | Hired social media influencers | Making simple news go viral, countering issues, spreading true and misinformation (fake news) |

Source: Designed by the authors (2022)

Table 3 highlights the political economy nexus between Indonesia's business elite and the prominent political leaders. After Jokowi won the 2010 Solo Election with up to 90% of the vote, its domestic mainstream media, which is owned by the media oligarchy (Winters 2013 p. 25), started to provide more coverage of Jokowi, including his activities (Informant 6, 2022). The media darling phenomenon towards Jokowi has dominated Indonesian political news from mid-2012 until early 2014. This phenomenon is due to changes in new forms of political campaigns through non-traditional platforms or new media (Tapsell 2015 p. 35). Interest groups and opportunists from various circles began approaching Jokowi (Informant 7, 2022). Eventually, Jokowi became a meeting point for these groups, paving the way for Jokowi's gradual accession to power by making him a media celebrity.

In the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections, the mainstream media failed to promote public debate in a democratic manner, whereby the media oligarchs gave too much coverage to the political elites. This situation continued to develop until the rise of populism in Indonesia in the mid-2010s (Mietzner 2015). Observably, the mainstream media in Indonesia have played a role in determining public opinion since the second term of the SBY presidency to the current Jokowi leadership through its political economics dynamics whereby the news agencies are controlled by politicians such as Abu Rizal Bakrie and Surya Paloh (Aspinall 2013; Mietzner 2015). As a result, the media is used to extend some interests through media framings. Apart from that, the oligarch also sponsored content for propagating Jokowi's successes and performance as mayor of Solo. Thus, making Jokowi appear as a credible actor for the presidential contest was a significant design by the latter (Informant 8, 2022). Furthermore, the oligarch utilises civil society and social media by hiring influencers and paying buzzers (Informant 2,

2022; Informant 4, 2022) to make simple news go viral, countering negative issues against Jokowi, and spreading facts *vis-a-vis* misinformation in wooing supporters.

JOKOWI AS THE ELITE MEETING POINT

The adjustment among the former authoritarian leaders may eventually harm the democratic system as they inherit "valuable" resources from the old regime, such as ex-communist parties in Poland and Hungary, whereby they have the necessary administrative skills and experience to thrive in the chaotic conditions of democratic politics (Loxton 2016 p. 10). According to Loxton (2016), authoritarian inheritance refers to the inheritance of resources from authoritarian successor parties that once existed in the old regime but, paradoxically, could help them survive and even succeed in a democracy. Even so, it is rather difficult to justify that Jokowi's regime is a legacy of the New Order's authoritarianism because PDIP is not part of Suharto's authoritarian regime. Also, Jokowi is not coming from the mainstream of the New Order politics. However, reflecting on Jokowi's pragmatic behaviours, which accommodate various and diverging interests, there is observable democratic backsliding and the challenges of authoritarian inheritance during his era. Part of the elite group that used to be in the New Order has made a comeback – they were active throughout the *Reformasi* era, and a number of them were successful during the Jokowi years, by appointing retired senior generals to important positions in his government, including General Wiranto, General Luhut Pandjaitan, General Moeldoko, and General Agum Gumelar.

There are portable resources, Loxton (2016) argues, that can be used to withstand authoritarianism, such as party brands, territorial organizations, clientelist networks, party financial sources, and party supports. During the reign of SBY, the power

of influence of former authoritarian leaders in influencing the government was limited, with SBY cautious leadership against authoritarian legacies in his administration (Informant 9, 2022), though democratisation was instead stagnated during his terms (Aspinall et al., 2015; Mietzner, 2012; Tomsa, 2010). However, Jokowi's pragmatic attitude has

made him a meeting point for negotiating and converging elite interests (see Figure 1), stabilising Jokowi's regime, and advancing business and military interests. The strategy of accommodating most political parties is a way to eliminate and minimize major threats from political opponents.

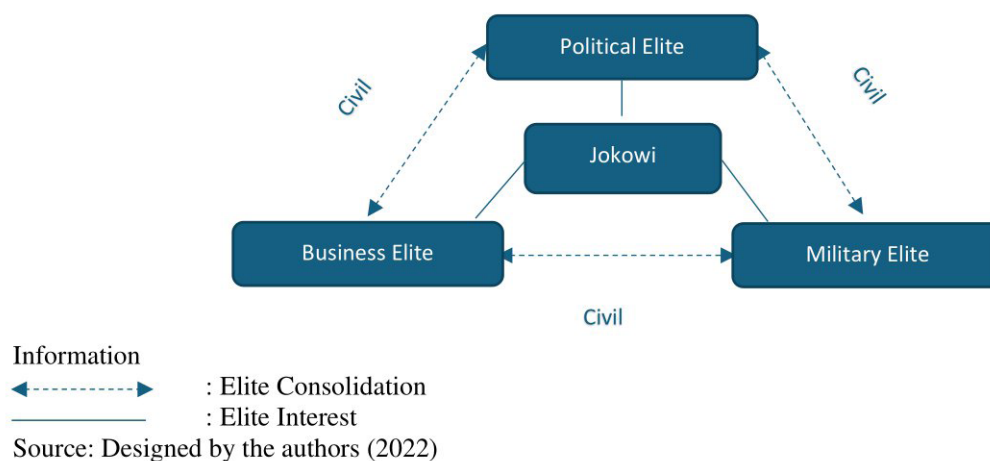


FIGURE 1. Jokowi as Elite Meeting Point

The elites are aware of the situation, so they quickly switch to carry out pragmatic political maneuvers to converge their interests. On the one hand, Jokowi is supported by civil society alliances, and his presence is portrayed as the people's victory against oligarchic domination (Informant 5, 2022). On the other hand, the power elite do not like the situation "when they can be controlled by the general masses" (Firman, 2022). The impact is political inequality, and those elites see the necessity to maintain the platform in protecting their interests. In addition, pragmatic and opportunist political elites from various parties seized the opportunity to ride on akin to the New Order behaviour, such as patronage, clientelism, money politics, political cartels, and the return of active officers and retired senior military generals to the civilian positions (Aspinall & Berenschot 2019; Burhanuddin 2018; Evan 2019b; Slater 2018; Yazid & Aknolt 2020). Meanwhile, the military elite in Jokowi's leadership was becoming less neutral and strongly supporting the regime. The military elites, however, are divided into factions as they support the regime "politically" while attempting to protect their neutrality. In this context, Jokowi promoted several senior generals to executive positions at various levels.

Likewise, the aspirant business elites are structured to form or join political parties, as it is easier for them to fight for their interests rather

than depending on their lobbying with the national leaders. Their business network is used to build their power network (Winters 2013); for example, business elites use their money to establish parties, such as what Hasyim and Prabowo did with Gerindra and Surya Paloh with Nasdem (Winters 2013 p. 27). According to Tapsell (2015), the involvement of business elites in every election, especially in Jokowi's victory, is for-profit-driven and helps control election coverage. In the Jokowi administration, the pattern of patron-client relations between Jokowi and businesspeople is vital, whereby business entrepreneurs must communicate with the political parties and elites that back Jokowi (Informant 1, 2022). The political-business network in the parliament and executive proved it. The study found that 318 of the 575 politicians in the parliament legislature had businessman backgrounds during 2019-2024 (Fachri Aidulsyah et al. 2020). The business elites interacted with the ruling power, the Jokowi administration, through affiliation in business, personal relations, or kinship to strengthen their clientelist or patronage. It allows a conflict of interest to occur; for example, Erwin Aksa is the President Commissioner of PT Bosoowa, which is affiliated with business associations, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce/KADIN and Indonesian Entrepreneurs Association/APINDO, and the Golkar party, as a politician (Jaringan Advokasi Tambang

2022). Accordingly, the clientelist interaction of elite businesses and politicians represents a political investment to access power more affordably and use it for wealth defence or increasing material capacity. The oligarchy needs to define clientelist relationships that depend not only on Jokowi but also on the elite to ensure the security and stability of this clientelist relationship. This relation aims to reduce the political costs incurred by the business elite that are becoming increasingly expensive. Thus, the business elite cannot only rely on Jokowi alone but is forced to be part of the power elite and provide policy input for the government. For example, the media oligarchy Hary Tanoë established the Perindo

Party, resulting in promiscuous power-sharing in public positions and offices (Informant 1, 2022), such as placing his daughter Angela Tanoesoedibjo as Deputy Minister of Tourism. One of the natural consequences of this pattern of patron-client relations is the concentration of political power. Funding is crucial for the campaign process and essential in Indonesian politics (Mietzner 2013 p. 95). Thus, the business elite and oligarchs, as the main contributors, remain essential in Indonesian politics (Buehler 2010 pp. 273–275; Winters 2011 p. 190). As a result, many authoritarian diasporas persisted in post-*Reformasi* Indonesia and prospered, particularly during the Jokowi years.

TABLE 4. The Elite Adjustment After *Reformasi*

| | Political Elite | Military Elite | Business Elite |
|--|---|---|---|
| Involvement in politics | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing new parties. 2. Join government coalition(s). | Joining ruling parties (after retirement) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sponsoring parties 2. Establishing new parties |
| Involvement in public office | Become part of the executive. | Become public officials. | Become a public official. |
| Support for the regime | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the government's political programs and agenda. 2. Strengthening the government's narrative. | Support the government's political agenda, including those which are outside the security domain. | Influencing the government's political programs and agenda. |
| Withstanding the opposition's challenges | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Countering against opposition's criticisms. 2. Provide justifications for the government's narrative. | Pressing the pressure groups. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mobilise mass organizations to suppress criticism against the government. 2. Sponsor mainstream media and social media influencers. |

Source: Designed by the authors (2022)

Table 4 shows that the adjustment made by the former authoritarian elites in New Order's Indonesia politics remained relevant throughout the *Reformasi* era. The easiest way for them to join the ruling regime's circle is by supporting its programs and agenda. The convergence of interests becomes possible when they enter the circle of the regime, particularly in assisting the ruling administration in re-designing the state policies.

Meanwhile, the military elite continues to support most government programs, though they are unrelated to defence. It can be demonstrated by looking at the support for national development programs. In this context, the involvement of the military unrelated to defence, such as in dealing with Covid-19 (Evan & Rage 2020), or in the case of removing several billboards for the FPI leader, Habib Rizieq, who was on the side of the road in Jakarta (Rahmatul & Siti, 2020). It was a polemic because the institution managing public order was not the military business but the Civil Service Police

Unit (Satpol PP) (Wahyu 2020). Despite the incident, Dudung was officially appointed TNI Army Chief of Staff (KSAD) in November 2021 by President Jokowi (Mabruroh & Dessy 2021). Thus, it is indicative that the military elite also play an active role in supporting the government, though in some cases, it is outside the security domain. Unlike in established democracies, the military during the Jokowi years played a role in the state's internal security in conjunction with the police (Tim Kontras 2005 p. 21). It is in stark contrast to Huntington (1957), who argued that objective civilian control would be only optimal if the military is separated from social and political structures in society, assigned to the defense sector, and adheres to traditional military values without being much influenced by values and ideologies developed in the community.

Janowitz (1971 p. 418) states that social changes that occur in society will force various parties and organizations, including the military, to be pragmatic by adapting and compromising with the existing

conditions. In this case, according to Denny Indra Sukmawan and Rodon Pedrasin (2022), the Jokowi government has exercised pragmatic civilian control as indicative in;

1. The involvement of retired TNI/police officers in partisan politics and political campaigns;
2. Holding public offices;
3. The development of civil society militarism blurs the boundaries between the military and civil society, such as the use of organised violence.

The military played a significant role in suppressing civilian groups against the government, such as in the case of military pressure on the Islamic Defender Front (FPI) movement. The FPI, led by Habib Rizieq, was a mass movement critical against Jokowi's administration. The FPI was gradually seen as an intolerant organisation, contrary to Pancasila, allowing checks from the government forces against the movement. At the same time, the old business elite mobilises the community organizations to suppress criticisms against the regime and the old popular autocrats. Sometimes, dirty tactics are utilised, such as mobilising thuggery-style organisations like the case of Wadas. The residents of Wadas village were not against the construction of the Bener Dam, but they were worried about its environmental impacts (*amdal*) and disaster risk (Muhammad 2022; Silvy 2022).

CONCLUSION

Since its *Reformasi* in the late 1990s, Indonesia has experienced gradual economic growth. It is beginning to reposition itself as a middle power in Southeast Asia, mainly through its institutional reforms, which bring more transparency and accountability to its political system. It started to gain much respect from its neighbours and the international community, whether politically, diplomatically, economically, or militarily.

Nevertheless, as discussed throughout this article, there are challenges to authoritarian legacies in Indonesia even after the *Reformasi*, particularly among the former authoritarian elites during the Suharto years in politics, businesses, and the military. In politics, the authoritarian diaspora spread

into various parties and associational organisations, apart from the Golkar surviving as an authoritarian successor party. Many old business elites are also surviving and gradually regaining their influence in the economy regionally and nationally. The role of the military elite has also been revisited, whereby several retired generals venture into politics and are appointed to public office.

Most of the above decline occurred during Jokowi's presidency, which parallels the rise of populism in Indonesia. In strengthening his political base and maintaining his presidency, Jokowi, over the years, has seemed to be more pragmatic by accommodating various interests, including from the authoritarian diasporas and survivors. A number of the old authoritarian measures, *vis-à-vis* democratic responses, are also utilised as his regime maintenance toolkit (Mietzner 2018).

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