



# Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs

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Hamid, Abdul (2014), Jokowi's Populism in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election, in: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 33, 1, 85–109.

URN: <http://nbn-resolving.org/urn/resolver.pl?urn:nbn:de:gbv:18-4-7385>

ISSN: 1868-4882 (online), ISSN: 1868-1034 (print)

The online version of this article can be found at:

[<www.CurrentSoutheastAsianAffairs.org>](http://www.CurrentSoutheastAsianAffairs.org)

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Published by

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies and Hamburg University Press.

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# Jokowi's Populism in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

Abdul Hamid

**Abstract:** Joko Widodo's victory in the 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election could be seen as a populist phenomenon. An outsider to Jakarta politics, Joko Widodo (Jokowi) beat the incumbent, Fauzi Bowo (Foke), who had received strong support from political parties. Using populism as an analytical tool, this paper argues that the following four factors enabled Jokowi to emerge as an alternative leader in Indonesia's capital: (1) social breakdown and declining capability of the government; (2) corrupt, draining political traditions and a negative image of political parties; (3) societal changes; and (4) the emergence of forms of political representation outside of traditional political institutions. Those situations led Jakarta voters to more easily accept Jokowi's offer – "New Jakarta" (*Jakarta Baru*) – as a new identity against the established regime. Populism can help explain Jokowi's victory in the election, but also the leadership of his administration after he was elected.

■ Manuscript received 5 March 2014; accepted 10 May 2014

**Keywords:** Indonesia, populism, democracy, leadership, media, representation

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## Introduction

I am stupid.

And I wonder why Solo people chose a stupid person like me to be the Mayor for two periods (Jokowi, quoted in Zainuddin 2012: 37).

Jakarta is Indonesia's centre for politics, economy and culture. As the country's capital, the elections in Jakarta have been the barometer for national politics in Indonesia. Therefore, in the post-Suharto *reformasi* era, Jakarta's electoral landscape has been fiercely contested and has been constantly shifting.<sup>1</sup> In the first national election after the fall of Suharto in 1999, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDIP) won in Jakarta. The Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS) won in the following election in 2004, before the Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat, PD) won the most recent election, in 2009.

Jakarta's gubernatorial election had a similarly fierce contest. In the 2007 election, the strong and influential position as vice-governor in the previous term did not make it any easier for Fauzi Bowo (Foke) to win the governor's seat. Foke (57.87 per cent) won over Adang Daradjatun (42.13 per cent) indeed. However, this result was far below expectation for a candidate who was supported by 20 political parties – compared with Adang who was supported solely by PKS party. This unpredictability continued in the 2012 gubernatorial election, when Joko Widodo (Jokowi) – a contender from outside of Jakarta's politics – beat the incumbent Foke.

This paper uses the perspective of populism to analyse Joko Widodo's victory over Fauzi Bowo in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election. In Indonesia, populism is relatively new and rarely utilised for analysing Indonesian politics, both at the national and local levels. Using populism in this case can make it easier to understand new trends in Indonesian politics, especially in the 2014 national election and since.

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1 Jakarta is a province that has special status as the national capital of Indonesia. Other provinces have autonomous regencies and cities below the provinces, but the Jakarta province has no autonomous regency and city under the special law on Jakarta, Law 29/2007. This law regulates that the local head election is only conducted at the provincial level to elect a governor, who then appoints the mayors and regents in Jakarta. In other regions, a combined governor/vice-governor ticket must secure the highest number of votes, with a threshold of 30 per cent. In Jakarta, the law also regulates that, to become a governor, a candidate must gain more than 50 per cent of the votes. If no candidate reaches this threshold, the two candidates with the most votes compete in a second round of elections.

## Populism and Democracy in Theories

Populism has long been used to analyse politics in Latin America and in East and Southeast Asia. For example, Estrada in the Philippines and Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand have been analysed as populists in Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> To date, however, not many works have used this theory to analyse Indonesian politics.

Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012: 3–7) stated that there are at least three approaches to populism. The first is populism as a particular type of political movement. From this perspective, Gino Germani (in Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012) explained that populism is a multiclass movement organised around a charismatic leader. The main ingredients are not only the presence of a strong leader, but also mainly the formation of a movement that appeals to very heterogenous social groups. This approach has mainly been used to explain Latin American populism and fascism in Europe in terms of the emergence of extremist mass movements.

The second approach is populism as political style that is characterised by the promotion of a particular kind of link between political leaders and electorate. This link is structured around a loose and opportunistic appeal to “the people” in order to win and/or exercise political power.

The third approach, which is used in this paper, views populism as a discourse. Taking this approach, Laclau explained that populism is characterised by the confrontations of the existing hegemony by means of a discursive construction that is capable of dividing the social into two categories: “the power bloc” versus “the people”.

Following this category, Panizza (2005: 3–4) defined populism as “an anti-status quo discourse that simplifies the political space by symbolically dividing society between ‘the people’ (as the underdogs) and its ‘other’”. Furthermore, Panizza argued that the identification of “the people” and “the other” are political constructs that have been symbolically established through the relation of antagonism, a mode of identification in which the relation between its form and its content is given by the process of naming; that is, of establishing who are the enemies of the people, and therefore the people itself.

Although Indonesia is a newly democratic country, most scholars agree that Indonesian democracy is being consolidated. Therefore, populism in this paper could refer to what Canovan explained about the populist movement within a mature, well-established democratic system. She argued that, in modern democratic societies, populism is best seen as an

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2 Mizuno and Phongpaichit (2009) used populism to analyse some Asian leaders, including Thaksin and Estrada.

appeal to the people against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society. Populists claim legitimacy on the grounds that they speak for the people and represent the democratic sovereign rather than a sectional interest of a specific economic class. The populist values also vary according to the context, depending upon the nature of the elite and the dominant political discourse (Canovan 1999: 3).

Canovan (1999: 4–5) also argued that unbalanced power relations meant that the elites and oligarchs have become the largest shareholders in government and political parties – two of the most important institutions in democracy – while the “ordinary people” have limited access to the policy-making process. In this kind of situation, populist leaders usually rise and claim that they speak for the silent majority of ordinary, decent people, whose interests and opinions (they claim) are regularly overridden by arrogant elites, corrupt politicians, and strident minorities.

Most populist leaders emerge from outside the established political system, capitalising on widespread political distrust of politicians’ evasiveness and bureaucratic jargon. Populist politics has the revivalist flavour of a movement, powered by the enthusiasm that draws normally apolitical people into the political arena. This emotion can turn politics into a campaign to “save” the country or bring about a great renewal (of governance) (Canovan 1999: 6).

The condition that leads to a populist rupture is one in which a plurality of demands coexists with the diminishing ability of the institutional system to absorb or accommodate them. In this process, a populist identity emerges from the dislocation of the specific identities of the holders of particularistic demands and their reconstitution in the imaginary unity of the people. The process that transforms these demands into an antagonistic relation with the established order becomes an aggregation of discontent that crystallises into a new popular identity.

There are certain circumstances in which a relation of representations becomes dislocated and makes populism more likely to become a dominant mode of identification. The first such circumstance is the breakdown of social order and the loss of confidence in the ability of the political system to restore it. The second is the exhaustion of political traditions and the discrediting of political parties. The third is when changes at the level of the economy, culture and society – through processes such as urbanisation, economic modernisation, and globalisation – shift the demographic balance between regional and ethnic groups. Social turmoil and social mobility alter established identities, loosen traditional relations of subordination and open up new forms of identifica-

tion. The final circumstance is emerging forms of political representation outside traditional political institutions (Panizza 2005: 9–13).

However, as Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012: 20–25) put it, populism is a double-edged sword for democracy that has both positive and negative impacts. In a democratic country like Indonesia, populism in the hands of the opposition is corrective for democracy. Populism provides opportunities to criticise problems that the new democracy faces such as corruption, inefficiency and exclusion, which means that populism could push democratic reform. Populism also opens the “new representation” of the silent majority that the elite had previously abandoned. In contrast, populism can also be a threat for democracy. It can undermine the check and balances among government institutions and threaten the strength or development of liberal democratic institution and protections. Large-scale support, directly from the people, can sometimes legitimise any actions by a populist leader, as occurred in Venezuela in 2009 when Hugo Chavez used a referendum to amend the constitution that limited a leader’s maximum term (Roberts 2012: 150).

## The Emergence of Jokowi

Before being elected governor of Jakarta, Jokowi was the mayor of Surakarta (Solo), a small town in Central Java with 500,000 residents (compared to the more than 10 million people in Jakarta). Nevertheless, he gained a reputation as a good governance icon in Indonesia because of his achievements in fighting the corruption that was rampant at all levels of government in Indonesia.

Jokowi won numerous awards for these achievements and established the following promotional tag line for Solo: “Solo, Shining without Corruption (*Solo Berseri Tanpa Korupsi*)”. This was substantially validated when Jokowi won the Bung Hatta Anti-Corruption Award in 2010. In the same year, he was also awarded as a figure of change (*tokoh perubahan*) by the *Republika* newspaper. Two years previously, *Tempo* magazine rewarded Jokowi as a “Star Figure” who had made significant changes in government practices. Before and during the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, Jokowi was also nominated for the Best Mayor award from the World Mayor Foundation (he won third place).

Jokowi became known as a potential Jakarta governor candidate in late 2011 when the Cyrus Network, a political consultancy body, and the Political Psychology Laboratory from the University of Indonesia con-

ducted an Elite Survey<sup>3</sup> entitled “Looking for the Best Jakarta Governor Candidate”. Instead of measuring the popularity of the gubernatorial candidates, this survey nominated the potential figures who were considered to have the high capabilities and qualities to be the best governor. Jokowi received the highest score in the survey (6.98), followed by Faisal Basri (6.7) and Fadel Muhammad (6.53). Foke, the incumbent, only scored 5.44, which put him in seventh position (Cyrus Network and Political Psychology Lab University of Indonesia 2011).

Jokowi received extensive national media exposure as a potential leader for his support for Esemka, a national car project produced and conducted by vocational high school (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*, SMK) students in Surakarta. Jokowi campaigned for Esemka and drove the car as his official car in January 2012, even though it had not yet passed the feasibility test. His actions received widespread support and coverage from the national media.

Jokowi received further popular coverage from the national mass media when he rejected the plan by the Central Java Governor, Bibit Waluyo, to build a shopping mall over the ex-Saripetojo Ice Factory, a cultural heritage site. Enraged, Bibit stated, “The mayor of Solo [Surakarta] is stupid, he is against Governor’s policy.” The people of Solo protested against this statement, to which Jokowi responded, “I am stupid, and I wonder why Solo people chose a stupid person like me to be the mayor for two periods” (Zainuddin 2012: 36–37).

Esemka’s exposés and Cyrus’ survey could be seen as efforts from Jokowi’s supporters to push him to run as Jakarta’s Governor. Cyrus later became Jokowi’s main consultant in the Jakarta election and played the main role in organising *Relawan Jakarta Baru* (New Jakarta’s Volunteers).

On 18 March 2012, Jokowi was nominated as a candidate by PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Struggle Party), decided directly by the PDIP Party Leader, Megawati Soekarnoputri. This nomination thwarted the plans of Taufiq Kiemas (Megawati’s husband) to pair Adang Ruchyatna, a PDIP cadre, as vice-governor with the incumbent, Foke. The nomination of Jokowi was also inseparable from the central role of Prabowo – the founder of the Gerindra Party (Greater Indonesia Movement Party), who persuaded Megawati and promised her he would fund all of Jokowi’s campaign costs. Prabowo then paired Jokowi with Ahok, a lawmaker from Golkar Party, as a candidate for vice-governor with

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3 The survey called “Elite survey” because the respondents were 100 experts who assessed several names recommended through focus group discussions.

Jokowi. Ahok resigned from the national parliament as well as the Golkar Party and joined the Gerindra Party (*Tempo* 2012d).

Fortunately for Jokowi, he emerged into Jakartan politics in the middle of Jakartans' frustration towards Governor Foke's stagnant, even declining management of the complex problems of Jakarta. To be elected as governor in 2007, Foke had used the slogan "Give Jakarta to the Expert [*Serahkan pada ahlinya*]", for which he flaunted his own "credentials" as an expert on Jakarta. He had been a part of Jakarta's bureaucracy for more than 20 years and his latest position had been as regional government secretary (Sekretaris Daerah, Sekda), the highest position in Jakarta's bureaucracy, before becoming vice-governor in 2002, and then governor in 2007. Foke completed masters and doctoral degrees in regional planning from a university in Germany. Foke used these two aspects, experiences and education, to claim his expertise and capability to solve Jakarta's problems.

In addition, Foke also exploited his religion and ethnicity as the indigenous "son of the region [*putra daerah*]", one of the more popular discourses in decentralisation era. In Jakarta, this idea had arisen during the *reformasi* era to give opportunities to the indigenous Betawi people to become leaders in Jakarta. Even though Foke was "only" half Betawi from his mother, as a leader of Betawi Consultative Body (Badan Musyawarah Betawi, Bamus Betawi) he had become an icon of Betawi's emergence. Foke also represented Islamic culture as a former leader of the Jakarta Regional Branch of Nadhlatul Ulama (NU).<sup>4</sup> This position and networks in Islamic communities became an important political capital for Foke, even if another influential Jakarta's NU Figure, Djan Faridz, did not support him in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial Election.

On 23 December 2011, the political situation in Jakarta heated up prior to the election when Jakarta's Vice Governor Prijanto announced his resignation from his position, primarily due to his poor relationship with the governor. Prijanto stated that he had not been delegated any tasks from the governor in 2011. Additionally, he questioned the lack of transparency in Jakarta's bureaucracy and the appointment of some high-rank positions in the Jakarta bureaucracy and Jakarta regional government-owned enterprise (Badan Usaha Milik Daerah, BUMD). He even wrote a book entitled, *Why I Resigned from the Jakarta Vice-Governorship* [*Kenapa Saya Mundur dari Wagub DKI Jakarta*], which he sent to the Cor-

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4 Nadhlatul Ulama (which in Arabic means "The Awakening of Islamic Scholar") is the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, with approximately 40 million members. NU was founded by Hasjim Asj'ari on 31 January 1926.



ruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, KPK) on 24 February 2012.

His resignation was accepted by Foke, but declined by the Jakarta provincial parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD) on 6 March 2012. Prijanto was reinstated as Foke’s vice-governor, but Prijanto’s actions prior to the election had significantly undermined Foke’s power and image.

## The 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

The following six candidates competed for the job of governor in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election: (1) Fauzi Bowo (incumbent), (2) Hendarji Soepandji (retired general), (3) Joko Widodo (mayor of Solo city), (4) Hidayat Nurwahid (member of parliament), (5) Faisal Basri (well-known economist and lecturer), and (6) Alex Noerdin (South Sumatera Governor).

Jokowi won the election in a battle that was rather fierce, particularly against Foke. Table 1 below shows the support for each candidate and the results of the first rounds of the election.

**Table 1: Strength and Voters of Each Candidate. First Round, 11 July 2012**

No	Candidates	Support party(-ies) (per cent of total seats in local parliament) / supporters	Voters (per cent of total voters)
1	Fauzi Bowo – Nachrowi Ramli	Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat, PD), National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN), People’s Conscience Party (Hati Nurani Rakyat, Hanura), National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB) (41 local parliament seats, 43.6 per cent)	1,476,648 (34.05 per cent)
2	Hendarji Soepandji – Ahmad Riza Patria	Independent (419,416 supporters)	85,990 (1.98 per cent)
3	Joko Widodo – Basuki Tjahaja Purnama	PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), Greater Indonesia Movement Party (Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Gerindra) (17 local parliament seats, 18.1 per cent)	1,847,157 (42.60 per cent)

No	Candidates	Support party(-ies) (per cent of total seats in local parliament) / supporters	Voters (per cent of total voters)
4	Hidayat Nurwahid – Didik J Rachbini	Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS) (18 local parliament seats, 19.1 per cent)	508,113 (11.72 per cent)
5	Faisal Basri – Biem T. Benjamin	Independent (487,150 supporters)	215,935 (4.98 per cent)
6	Alex Noerdin – Nono Sampono	Functional Group (Golongan Karya, Golkar), United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP), Prosperous Peace Party (Partai Damai Sejahtera, PDS), Non Seat Party (18 local parliament seats, 19.1 per cent)	202,643 (4.67 per cent)

Source: Jakarta General Elections Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*, KPU DKI Jakarta 2012b).

Jokowi's first-round victory defied almost all pre-election polls, which had predicted a victory for Foke. One such pollster, Indobarometer, announced its survey result in May of 2012, predicting that Foke would receive 49.8 per cent of the vote, Jokowi 16.4 per cent, Alex 5.7 per cent, Hidayat 4.5 per cent, Faisal 2.3 per cent, and Hendardji 0.2 per cent. A further 5.7 per cent of respondents refused to answer, 6.8 per cent had not decided yet, and 2.3 per cent answered "I don't know". A poll by Lingkaran Survei Indonesia (the Indonesian Survey Circle) in June 2012 before the first round of balloting indicated that Foke would receive 43.7 per cent of the vote, Jokowi 14.4 per cent, Hidayat 5.3 per cent, Alex 4.6 per cent, Faisal 1.8 per cent, and Hendardji 0.5 per cent. A further 29.7 per cent of respondents had stated "secret" or "not yet decided" (*Gatra* 2012).

The real result of the first round of balloting, as indicated in Table 1, showed that Jokowi won with 42.60 per cent of the vote, followed by Foke with 34.05 per cent. The surveys failed to anticipate where the sizeable number of floating voters – those who answered secret and/or had not decided yet in the surveys – would vote. Based on these results, the majority of floating voters seemed to select Jokowi. There was also a decrease in Foke's supporters that was not measured several days before Election Day.

As no candidate received more than half of total votes, the first and second winners went to the second round.<sup>5</sup> Table 2 below shows the result of the second round.

Table 2: Strength and Voters of Each Candidate. Second Round, 20 September 2012

No	Candidates	Support party(-ies) (per cent of total seats in local parliament)	Voters (per cent of total voters)
1	Fauzi Bowo – Nachrowi Ramli	PD, PAN, Hanura, PKB, PKS, Golkar, PDS (77 local parliament seats, 81.9 per cent)	2,120,815 (46.18 per cent)
3	Joko Widodo – Basuki Tjahaja Purnama	PDIP, Gerindra (17 local parliament seats, 18.1 per cent)	2,472,130 (53.82 per cent)

Source: Jakarta General Elections Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*, KPU DKI Jakarta 2012a).

## Jokowi’s Populism

Jokowi’s victory defied not only the prediction of professional surveys but also Indonesia’s long-established political logic of organised vote mobilisation at election time.<sup>6</sup> The key to Jokowi’s success clearly lies beyond the traditional paradigm, and it is in this context that we look at populism as an analytical tool for understanding the changing nature of Jakarta’s local electoral politics. We will argue that Jokowi’s victory is evidence that populism has been a political phenomenon in Jakarta.

Jokowi was not a total outsider to the political system, but he was very much the new kid on the block in Jakarta. Jokowi was not a part of the Jakarta elites and the associated problems, which meant he offered new hope as an alternative leader. Some felt that his experience as a mayor of a small city was not enough to manage Jakarta’s complex problems, but his popularity outstripped such feelings.

5 See note 2 on the special regulation on the Jakarta gubernatorial election.

6 The exit poll by Lingkaran Survei Indonesia for the 2007 Jakarta gubernatorial election showed that the followers of political parties remained loyal to the order of the elite. For example, 70.8 per cent of voters from the party coalition voted for Foke. The highest loyalty was demonstrated by PKB, when 83.3 per cent voted for Foke, mainly due to Foke’s position at the time as the chairman of Nadhlatul Ulama Jakarta. On the other hand, PKS also succeeded in mobilising its masses, with 82.8 per cent votes for Adang (Lingkaran Survei Indonesia 2007a: 12, 2007b).

Referring to Panizza (1999), I argue that there are four reasons for Jokowi's rise, or the rise of populism, in Jakarta. First, Jakartans were uneasy with the weakening of social order and the political system's feeble ability to achieve restoration. Jakarta is comprised of diverse ethnic groups and the relationships among these groups are not always harmonious. There are a large number of ethnicity-based and religion-based mass organisations in Jakarta, some of which are not hesitant to resort to the coercion. The organisations known for being ethnically based are the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (Forum Betawi Rempug, FBR), the Children of Betawi Communication Forum (Forum Anak Betawi, Forkabi), the Board of Trustees for the Potentials of Banten Family (Badan Pembina Potensi Keluarga Besar Banten, BPPKB), the Ambon Group, the Timor Group and the Flores Ende Group. The most notorious religion-based organisation is the Islamic Defender Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), which not only actively promotes Islam (*dakwah*) but also with its paramilitary group the Islamic Defender Paramilitary Group (Laskar Pembela Islam, LPI), does not hesitate to use violence against what it considers "immoral".

Bloody conflicts among these organisations are commonplace in Jakarta. In April of 2010, for example, thousands of public order police (Satpol PP), police officers and military officers clashed with thousands of people and the members of FPI who were protesting the demolition of the cemetery of Mbah Priok. Three public order police officers were killed and 149 people were injured in this riot (Wicaksono 2011). Another conflict was between an Ambon group and a Flores group on 29 September 2010 in the South Jakarta Courthouse. Three people were killed and 10 injured, including the head of the South Jakarta Police, who was shot in the foot (*Kompas* 2010). On a smaller scale, street fights (*tawuran*) often happen in Jakarta among groups defending their businesses and activities. In just one month, between January and February 2012, there were 11 recorded street fights among different groups (*Detik.com* 2012b).

Outside of social conflicts, everyday messiness and random illicit behaviours in the city (such as littering, river blockages, passengers "surfing" on the roofs of commuter trains, motorcyclists riding on sidewalks) also caused widespread frustration, in addition to the major chronic problems such as floods and traffic congestion. In short, Jakarta's government under Governor Foke – with his hollow claim to be an expert on Jakarta – had failed to provide viable answers to improve the Jakarta's life and environment, and had further undermined his reputation.

In a survey conducted by the Center of Political Studies, University of Indonesia (April 2012), only 0.13 per cent of the total respondents

were “very satisfied” with Governor Foke’s performance, 5.53 per cent were “satisfied”, 37.06 per cent “unsatisfied”, 3.37 per cent “very unsatisfied”, and 53.5 per cent considered his performance “mediocre”. Respondents indicated that the three main problems in Jakarta were floods, traffic jams and the environmental damage.

At the same time, Jokowi’s good image as a good leader, as widely reported by the national media – helped him emerge as an alternative for Jakarta. His success story in relocating 989 street vendors has become a popular story. He conducted a long series of negotiations (54 meetings) with vendors in the centre of Surakarta city, which resulted in them agreeing to move a newly built market without resorting to the standard top-down extortion. This humanist approach, which solved the problem without resorting to violence, won Jokowi the respect of Jakartans. In Surakarta, the public order police (Satpol PP) were led by a woman and kept their batons while doing their job, while in Jakarta, it was common for Satpol PP to resort to violence against citizens, such as in the case in Tanjung Priok area.

The second reason for Jokowi’s increase in popularity was the decreasing trust in political parties. In a *Kompas* newspaper survey in March 2011, 80.4 per cent of respondents stated that they had a negative perception of political parties. This figure showed an increase from the surveys in 2011 (80.1 per cent) and 2010 (61.13 per cent). Similarly, the percentage of the respondents who had positive opinions of political parties decreased to 14.7 per cent in 2012 from 15.3 per cent in 2011 and 30.4 per cent in 2010. Furthermore, 90.2 per cent of respondents were disappointed with the performance of political parties, an increase from 88.9 per cent in 2011 and 81.5 per cent in 2010 (*Kompas* 2011).

This survey applied to Indonesia overall. Considering that Jakartans were far more exposed to mass media and, especially the daily news on corruption among political parties and politicians than Indonesia overall,<sup>7</sup> Jakartans’ distrust of political parties and politicians was relatively high and most people in Jakarta considered political parties to be synonymous with corruption. Significant scandals involving political parties included Century,<sup>8</sup> Wisma Atlet Hambalang,<sup>9</sup> and Al-Qur’an<sup>10</sup> procure-

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7 The survey by the *Tempo* magazine and pollsters Lembaga Survei Indonesia (2012) found that 50 per cent of the Jakartan voters accessed social and political issues at local and national levels through television daily. The survey also found that 49 per cent of Jokowi voters had access to a daily newspaper.

8 Century Bailout Scandal involved corruption in short-term liquidity support amounting to 6.76 trillion IDR (573,600,000 USD) for the Century Bank,

ment. Jakartans became increasingly aware and critical of candidates paying fees to receive endorsements from political parties. Consequently, they tended to look for a clean figure, regardless of the supporting political parties. This is quite clear from the results of first and second round of elections showing in Tables 1 and 2. The percentages of votes by the pairs of candidates did not correspond to the percentages of votes of supporting parties in the 2009 election. The Jokowi–Ahok pair well understood that the people were attracted to individuals rather than parties. The pair built its own brand and trademark identities, such as the idea of *Jakarta Baru* and the use of checkered shirts, maintaining relative independence from the supporting parties of PDIP and Gerindra.

The third reason for Jokowi's surge in popularity was the profound changes at the level of the economy, culture and society through processes such as urbanisation, economic modernisation and globalisation. While these changes are not limited to Jakarta, that city has been most influenced by these changes as the national capital and also as an emerging global city. The most conspicuous articulation of these changes is the rise of the young and educated in Jakarta; 3.8 million voters (54.98 per cent of the total voters in Jakarta) are between 17 and 35 years old and 914,000 of these were first-time voters aged 17–21 years old. These young voters are increasingly educated (*Kompas* 2012).

In 2007, 32.3 per cent of Jakartan adults had graduated only from elementary school. The corresponding percentage dropped to 19.3 per cent in 2013. The percentage of Jakartans who had graduated from junior high school remained the same, 21.5 per cent, in 2007 and 2012. However, the percentage of Jakartans who graduated from senior high schools increased significantly from 36.2 per cent in 2007 to 41.9 per cent in 2012. Moreover, the percentage of the Jakartan population with

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which allegedly involved some political parties and politicians. The case is still under investigation in KPK.

- 9 The Hambalang Scandal involved corruption in the construction of a sporting complex in Hambalang, Bogor in 2009. The mark-up in the case amounted to approximately 463 billion IDR (39,300,000 USD), distributed to numerous politicians and government officials. Some high-ranking politicians from the ruling Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat, PD) became suspects in this case, such as the former chairman, the former treasurer, and also the former minister of sport and youth.
- 10 The Al Qur'an scandal is the corruption cases in the procurement of Al-Qur'an (the Islamic holy book) amounting to 130 billion IDR (11,000,000 USD) in 2011 and 2012. The money allegedly flowed to some politicians and high-ranking government officials in the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

bachelor's degrees also increased, from 10 per cent in 2007 to 17.3 per cent in 2012.<sup>11</sup>

Jokowi targeted these young, educated voters. During the first round campaign period, Jokowi visited 77 “middle-class” *kampungs* in Jakarta and gained the majority of votes at these *kampungs*. More importantly, these young and educated supporters popularised him through mass media and social media. With this positive image, Jokowi encroached on Foke's base and widened his target to poor members of society, especially in the second round.

Ethnic and religious ties are also weakening in metropolitan Jakarta, especially for the Jokowi supporters, who tend to be more autonomous voters and try to access information directly, especially through mass media. Only 0.5 per cent of Jokowi voters voted because of religion similarity, and 4.9 per cent voted for Jokowi because they had “similar ethnicity with the candidate”.<sup>12</sup>

Religion and ethnicity campaigns, which were predominantly directed against Jokowi and Ahok, especially in the second round, did not substantially undermine their votes, although these types of issues were frequently discussed during the campaign period. Jokowi became the direct target of some influential Islamic leaders such as the popular *dangdut* singer Rhoma Irama, who advised Muslims not to vote for Jokowi and Ahok. Rhoma claimed that he was not a member of Foke's campaign team, even though he was a star for the Foke's YouTube video and stage campaign.

Mobilisations based on ethnicity organisation were also not so effective. Some Chinese organisations, such as Lestari Kebudayaan Tionghoa Indonesia Foundation, Forum Masyarakat Tionghoa (Format) and Hakka Indonesia, had stated that their hundreds of thousand members would vote for Foke (*Republika* 2012), but this did not eventuate. Based on exit polls by Lembaga Survei Indonesia and *Tempo* magazine, in the first round of the election, 100 per cent of Chinese-Indonesians voted for Jokowi–Ahok. In the final round, the number was 81 per cent for

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11 The data is a comparison from the database of Lingkaran Survei Indonesia's Survey, *Kemungkinan Golput dalam Pemilihan Gubernur DKI Jakarta*, 14–16 July 2007 and the basis data for *Tempo* magazine and Lembaga Survei Indonesia's Survey, “*Pilkada DKI Jakarta, Protes Kelas Menengah*”, 2–7 September 2012.

12 *Golongan Penentu Kemenangan*, an exit poll by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (2012a) in *Tempo* magazine, 30 September. For Foke voters, the story is somewhat different, and religion- and ethnicity-based support was slightly higher. Just over one-quarter of Foke voters chose him because Foke represented their religion and 4.6 per cent for their ethnicity.

Jokowi–Ahok and 7 per cent for Foke–Nara. This means that, as a personal awareness, ethnicity was important, but suggestions from ethnic leaders had less influence.

Finally, forms of political representation outside of traditional political institutions were emerging. Populism is always marked by an emergence of mass media to represent people's aspirations, either naturally or designed by populist leaders. According to Panizza (2005: 15), the first wave of populist leaders in Latin America was associated with the emergence of the radio as a form of mass communication. For the 2001 elections in Thailand, Thaksin used radio and television to support his campaign as a saviour of Thailand, dramatising his rags-to-riches journey from a poor boy to a rich businessman. The media reported Thaksin's simple, catchy message and his intent to bring happiness to the majority of the country. Thaksin also spoke for an hour on a weekly radio show about his activities and thoughts on issues of the day. He dominated the daily television news, and also appeared in several special programmes, including an evening chat show in which he lamented his predecessors (Phongpaichit and Baker 2009: 68–73).

Thus, the mass media became a “representative institution”, effectively sending and communicating messages both from the populist leaders and from the people. It also illustrated the failure of parliaments and political parties, both at local and national levels, to perform their duties to represent their public.

Online media has become increasingly important, acting as a “representative institution”. Social media in particular has grown in popularity among Jakartans. Many people, mainly the young and the middle class, can access internet easily using cellular phones or at internet cafés (*warung internet, warnet*), using the internet as “netizens” of Facebook or Twitter. Based on a study by *SemioCast* in June 2012, Jakarta was the most active Twitter city in the world, followed by Tokyo and London. More than 2 per cent of all public tweets geo-localised at the city level were posted from Jakarta (*SemioCast* 2012).

Jokowi's team uploaded some videos, such as the Jokowi–Ahok profile, the New Jakarta platform, and Jokowi's Stand-Up Comedy, on YouTube. One campaign video clip – a parody of *What Makes You Beautiful*, a hit song by popular English boyband One Directions – became a hit on YouTube, watched by hundreds of thousands of people. Facebook and Twitter were also used systematically for campaigns<sup>13</sup> (see also Suaedy, this issue).

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13 Interview with Hasan Nasbi, Director of Cyrus Network, 28 August 2012.



Besides the official campaign team, one phenomenal pseudonym Twitter account, @triomacan2000, which has hundreds of thousands of followers, had attacked Foke systematically and supported Jokowi and Hidayat in the first round. This increased the level of support for Jokowi. In the second round, however, @triomacan2000 shifted its support to Foke. This sudden change triggered suspicion among the followers and failed to repeat its influence.<sup>14</sup>

Jokowi himself was something of a media darling. People's enthusiasm to view and hear news about Jokowi, in both conventional and social media, encouraged journalists to continue featuring him. Rather than speaking loudly like other politicians, Jokowi tended to listen to people's aspirations, limiting himself to speak mainly about only two topics during the campaign: Smart Jakarta Card (*Kartu Jakarta Pintar*, KJP) as a solution for educational problems and Healthy Jakarta Card (*Kartu Jakarta Sehat*, KJS) for health problems (*Koran Jakarta Baru* 2012).<sup>15</sup> Listening to the people and presenting simple solutions to the people were typical populist strategies and were quite effective at attracting wide media attention.

According to a survey by Saiful Mujani Research Consulting (2012b), in the second round of the election, Jokowi was ahead of Foke in all mass media news except for radio. In other words, the higher the access rate of voters to the mass media, the higher Jokowi's chance of winning the election. This is in line with the Indonesian Journalists Association's (Aliansi Jurnalis Independen, AJI) study, which showed 810 positive news stories and 172 negative news stories on Jokowi in Jakarta between

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- 14 @triomacan2000 is a ghost-written Twitter account that "tweets" actively about corruption and scandals among high-rank officers. Some issues that were tweeted by @triomacan2000 were corruption in the Budgetary Board of the National Parliament (Badan Anggaran DPR), oil mafia, and also the mark-up in air traffic control radar procurement at Soekarno Hatta Airport. Having started tweeting on 1 April 2011, @triomacan had 649,000 followers by 24 May 2012 (*Tempo Online* 2012b).
- 15 Healthy Jakarta Healthy Card (*Kartu Jakarta Sehat*, KJS) is a new health care concept for Jakarta people, adopted from its successful implementation in Surakarta. Citizens only need to show their Jakarta identity card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*, KTP) and family card (*Kartu Keluarga*, KK) to access Jakarta's health care and services. Before this, poor citizens in Jakarta had to obtain a relief letter (*Surat Keterangan Tidak Mampu*, SKTM) from the head of the sub-district (*kelurahan*) in order to receive free health services. Smart Jakarta Card (*Kartu Jakarta Pintar*, KJP) is a scholarship programme awarded to poor students in Jakarta to ensure they complete their 12 years of studies including senior high school. See also *Memotong Birokrasi dengan Sistem Kartu* (Cutting the Bureaucracy through a Card System).

1 June and 13 September 2012. On the other hand, there were 666 positive news and 260 negative news about Foke (*Tempo Online* 2012a).

Furthermore, PoliticWave – a site that claims to monitor millions of conversations in major social media like Twitter, Facebook, blog, online forums, online news, and YouTube – announced that until 12 September 2012, Jokowi–Ahok were the subject of 54.9 per cent of social media conversations, while Foke–Nara received 45.1 per cent. Jokowi–Ahok also performed better in terms of the net reputation index, achieving 18.51 per cent whereas Foke–Nara was down in the negative sentiment index with a net reputation index of -11.38 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

One of the worst pieces of news about Foke, which dramatically undermined his image, was his provocative, ill-natured statement towards the victims of fire in Karet Tengsin, where instead of offering helpful condolences, he made a rather intimidating offer: “Now, who will you choose? If [you] choose Jokowi, you’d better build [homes] in Solo” (*The Jakarta Post* 2012).

This statement was captured by the national television camera and broadcast widely in the news; the video was uploaded onto YouTube and shared many times among social media users. It sparked many indignant comments from viewers, and became one of hottest issues among Jakartans during the second-round campaign.

These four situations had made it easier for Jokowi to successfully capitalise on the disappointment of Jakartans, while offering hope for a new identity and possible solutions: the New Jakarta (*Jakarta Baru*). For many Jakartans, The New Jakarta seemed to be an answer to their disillusionment with Governor Foke and formal political institutions. Jokowi created an oppositional relationship between the “New Jakarta” as a symbol of his struggle in election, and the established “Old Jakarta” that was represented by Foke as the incumbent.

Moreover, Jokowi rarely rely on old, overused, direct symbols of candidates’ faces or logos of political parties; his and Ahok’s faces were used sparingly, as were the logos of Gerindra or PDIP. Instead, Jokowi created a new identity through new symbols that promoted pluralism and had never been used before in Indonesian politics, such as checkered shirts. The checkered shirt became a symbol of Jakarta’s pluralism in

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16 The PoliticWave (2012) survey uses certain concepts that require explanation: (1) Share of exposure: presentation of buzz/mention for each candidate in social media; (2) net reputation: measures candidates’ reputation based on netizens’ sentiments; (3) buzz: the number of social media conversations about a candidate; (4) unique users: the number of unique accounts that participate in the conversation. See PoliticWave 2012 and Twitter @politicawave.

which many ethnicities and religions lived together. In addition, the fact that checkered shirts are commonly worn by young people made them feel part of Jokowi's group.

This new idea in Indonesia's politics was also apparent when Jokowi appointed Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), a Christian Chinese, as his vice-governor running mate. Jokowi accepted Prabowo's offer of being paired with Ahok and rejected other candidates from PDIP who seemed more likely to gain votes from Jakartans, such as Deddy Mizwar, a popular senior actor, or Adang Ruchiatna, a senior PDIP politician. This was a sign that Jokowi supported pluralism, including ethnic Chinese, and needed a capable companion who had achieved government reform as a former regent and parliament member.

Neither Jokowi nor Ahok represented the Betawi ethnicity as the natives of Jakarta; this was in contrast with the incumbent, Foke, and his companion, Nachrowi, who both claimed to represent the Betawi. Nachrowi was the successor of Foke as the head of Bamus Betawi, and therefore had strong support from large, influential Betawi organisations such as the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (Forum Betawi Rempug, FBR), the United Betawi Front (Front Betawi Bersatu, FBB), and the Children of Betawi Communication Forum (Forum Komunikasi Anak Betawi, Forkabi).

This showed that Jokowi's presence was not only an appeal to people who opposed the established structure of power, but also to the dominant ideas and values of the society. Jokowi's background from an ordinary family, along with his humble, low-profile, "common people" appearance, which was notably different from most politicians, made voters feel more related to Jokowi as their representative. Jokowi also won the hearts of the urban middle class with his confession that he was a big fan of popular rock bands such as Metallica, Dream Theatre and Guns 'n Roses. In short, Jokowi built his image as a "different politician", representing the situation that Panizza described in which populist leaders place themselves symbolically outside the political realm by claiming that they are not politicians, or are at least are not like other politicians.

Moreover, Jokowi often said that what he gained as a successful leader and businessman came from his own experience and hard work; this helped him portray himself as an ordinary person with extraordinary attributes. He mentioned that his family was a victim of evictions when he was a child in Surakarta. Successes in business or other private pursuits are often used to legitimise a leader's political persona by showing that his or her qualities are both different from, and more valuable than, those of ordinary politicians. Jokowi brought new spirit that a person

with merits and achievements could rise to a high level of leadership. As an outsider who has achieved success, the leader's journey to political leadership is similar to the other ordinary people who, through their efforts and endeavours, reached high social levels (Panizza 2005: 21).

Jokowi's story became something of a legend, written about in many books before, during and after the Jakarta elections. At least 20 books on Jokowi are sold in Gramedia, the largest bookstore chain in Indonesia.<sup>17</sup>

## After the Election

Jokowi's populism did not end after he was elected as governor in September 2012. Referring to Panizza (2005: 11), populism is not only about a crisis of representation but also a beginning of representation, allowing those who have never been represented – for reasons such as their class, religion, ethnicity or geographical location – to be acknowledged as legitimate political actors.

The (mass) media became a new representative institution that connected Jokowi directly with Jakartans and the wider Indonesian population. Jokowi's first 100 in office received special attention from all mass media. His main daily activities as governor were consistent with his campaign style – *blusukan* or making *impromptu*, direct visits to *kampungs*. Even now, some media still report Jokowi's daily activities.

Jokowi also tried to build support from the Jakarta bureaucracy, as a lack of bureaucratic support would make it very difficult to fulfil his campaign promises. He adopted a carrot-and-stick policy toward the bureaucracy. Just a month after being appointed as a governor, he was friendly to the bureaucracy. In October 2012 he forgave some sub-district heads (*lurah*) and district heads (*camat*) who were late in reporting to their office when Jokowi conducted a sudden inspection. In a session widely covered by the mass media, Jokowi gave his mercy in a large meeting attended by anxious district heads and subdistrict heads in Jakarta. He gave a speech:

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17 For example, *Jokowi Spirit Bantaran Kali Anyar* (Elex Media 2012), *Jokowi: Memimpin Kota Menyentuh Jakarta* (PT Tiga Serangkai Pustaka Mandiri: Jakarta 2012), *Jokowi, From Zero to Hero* (Buku Pintar 2012), *Jokowi Si Tukang Kayu* (Ufuk Publishing 2012), *Jokowi Politik Tanpa Pencitraan* (Gramedia Pustaka Utama 2012), *Jokowi: Dari Jualan Kursi Hingga Dua Kali Mendapatkan Kursi*, (Ufuk 2012), *Spirit Semut Ireng Jokowi (Muka Metal Hati Keroncong)* (Penerbit Bangkit 2012), and *Falsafah Jawa Soebarto dan Jokowi* (Araska Publisher 2013).

I ask you to smile. Don't be tense. I see everybody is tense. I won't get angry today. District and sub-district heads are my partners. [You are] my co-workers at the forefront in dealing directly with the society. So I ask all of you later have same vision, work culture, and service culture. I don't want to talk much. I don't care about yesterday [Sidak-ed]. Never mind. But in the future, I want us to have the same vision. So [for the sub-district heads] whom I visited yesterday, don't be afraid. Sleep well [...] (*Harian Jogja* 2012).

After six months, Jokowi started to tighten the reins and reform the bureaucracy. He introduced a merit-based test called "Position's Procurement" (*Lelang Jabatan*) at the district head (*camat*) and sub-district head (*lurah*) level starting in April 2013. The main goal of this "procurement" was not just to put the right, qualified person in the right position, but can also be seen as an effort by Jokowi to consolidate his power in the bureaucracy.<sup>18</sup>

Jokowi and Ahok used the media to keep in touch with and build support from the people. Jokowi created a public meeting among stakeholders to discuss mass rapid transport (MRT) planning, which was broadcast live on national television. He opened a public space in which ordinary people could experience an unprecedented direct view and access to public policy-making.

Ahok's meeting with the Office of Public Works (Dinas Pekerjaan Umum) on 24 November 2012 became a hit on YouTube, showing Ahok sternly criticising and questioning the office's marked-up budget. The Jakarta Regional Government (Pemerintah Propinsi DKI) also set up a special channel on YouTube to publicise its activities, to gain direct support from that Jakartan people and to show its transparency.

Soon after Jokowi was inaugurated as the governor of Jakarta, he made the important decision to raise the regional minimum wage (*Upah Minimum Regional*, UMR) by 44 per cent from 1.56 million IDR (132.4 USD) to 2.2 million IDR (186.7 USD). His decision was warmly welcomed by workers, but deeply distressed the Indonesian Employers Association (Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia, Apindo), to the point that the vice president of Apindo, Yudhi Komaruddin, publicly stated, "We regret having voted for Jokowi-Ahok" (*Detik.com* 2012a). This bold move, however, showed that Jokowi does not shy away from protecting the

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18 *Lelang Jabatan* (Positions's Procurement) is the open recruitment for all civil servants who fill some of the requirements to be a *camat* (district head) and *lurah* (sub-district head). See the process and news related to *lelang jabatan* on Ahok's official website *Ahok.org* (2013).

lower-middle class, even if it might alienate some of his more affluent supporters.

However, populism is a double-edged sword for democracy. It has positive effect to enhance the quality of democracy, give “voice to people that do not feel represented by elite”. On the other hand, the emergence of a populist leader also creates the opportunity for a powerful leader to rise. Great support directly from the people would sometimes legitimise a leader's actions and threaten check and balances.

In Jakarta, the local parliament was losing the trust of the Jakartan people. This declining trust towards the parliament made people defend Jokowi when he was in disputes with the local parliament. It could be seen as an unbalanced power relationship between the executive and legislative bodies that could be a threat to democracy. For example, the implementation problem of Jakarta healthcare card (*Kartu Jakarta Sehat*, KJS) served as ammunition for some Jakarta's local parliament members to criticise Jokowi. In June 2013, they threatened to use their interpellation rights over the KJS scheme, which could lead to the impeachment of Jokowi. Enraged by this threatening political move, many people responded by issuing a petition to fire the Jakarta Parliament members who initiated the interpellation. Some groups also circulated the names and pictures of these parliament members, advising everyone not to vote for them in the 2014 legislative election.

Jokowi's victory in Jakarta has also influenced Indonesian politics. Some politicians became “Jokowi wannabes” by blatantly, if superficially, copying Jokowi's style. Some regional head candidates, for example, used checkered shirts in their campaigns in the hope that they could perpetuate their power or gain popularity by imitating Jokowi's style. Jokowi's random *blusukan* visit has also become a new trend among politicians, including the Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. By assigning Jokowi to accompany Megawati to deliver her speech during the campaign, PDIP also used Jokowi to as an attractive prop to gain votes in some gubernatorial elections, such as in Bali, North Sumatra and Central Java.

Jokowi's struggle from a poor kid to a rich merchant and then Surakarta mayor to Jakarta governor has also been filmed, featuring a number of famous actors in a movie titled “Jokowi”. The movie screened in cinemas across Indonesia in June–July 2013 and attracted particular attention in Solo, where hundreds of people formed long queues for the premiere, strategically hosted on the day before Jokowi's birthday (*Timlo.net* 2013).

Jokowi's popularity did not wane once he was elected governor. Jokowi still tops most polls as the most popular candidate for Indonesian president in the 2014 elections. For example, the latest survey from the Indonesian Institute of Science (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, LIPI) on 10–31 May 2013 showed that Jokowi's electability was 22.6 per cent, followed by Prabowo (14.2 per cent), Aburizal Bakrie (9.4 per cent) and Megawati (9.3 per cent) (*Tempo* 2013).

## Conclusion

Jokowi's victory in Jakarta could be seen as a populism phenomenon. As an outsider to Jakarta's politics, Jokowi became an alternative when Jakartaans grew disillusioned with their government. In this paper, I have argued that Jakarta faced four factors that prompted the emergence of Jokowi as an alternative leader: (1) social breakdown and declining capability of the government; (2) corrupt, draining political traditions and the bad image of political parties; (3) changes at the level of the economy, culture and society; and (4) the emergence of forms of political representation outside of traditional political institutions, especially social media.

These four situations had led to Jakarta voters accepting Jokowi's alternative offer, the "New Jakarta", as a new identity that offered hope against the established regime. Jokowi also challenged the established values in politics by choosing Ahok, a Christian Chinese, as his companion.

Populism is useful not only for explaining Jokowi's victory but also the leadership of his administration. During his earlier phase in the office, he had opened up an opportunity for people to be involved in decision-making processes directly or through the (mass) media. He also made policies to protect the lower-middle-class, such as raising the regional minimum wage.

Populism fills the gaps of substance within procedural democracy by allowing people to access and influence the government policy, which did not occur in previous eras. However, institutionalising these changes is important in order to ensure that the populist leader plays within the rules of the game and that these changes continue to be implemented even after the change of leader. These changes cannot be carried out simply to achieve popular support and less control from the local parliament. For the 2014 national election, Jokowi's populism is important for PDIP to increase its electability and has also given Jokowi the chance to be the most potential presidential candidate, thus carrying populism to the national level.

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