
REVIEW OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A Closer Look at the 2014 Presidential Election

DHARMA AGASTIA, MARIA MONICA LAYARDA,
MUHAMMAD KUKUH DEWANTARA,
AND RADITYO ARYO HUTOMO

AS JULY 9 IS fast approaching, Indonesia is preparing itself for a major test for its young democracy. Over 185 million voters¹ will exercise their democratic rights at almost 545,000 voting centres² spread across the archipelago to elect a new leader to lead the world's 10th largest economy. The new leader will replace the incumbent president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). Two presidential candidates, Prabowo Subianto and Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, will contest to obtain a majority vote of more than 50% nationwide and at least 20% of votes spread in over half of the total provinces in Indonesia to be elected as the new President as governed under Art. 159 in Law No. 42 of 2008.

1 Official data from the General Elections Commissions (KPU). See <http://data.kpu.go.id/dptnik.php>

2 Ibid.

*Dharma Agastia, Maria Monica Layarda, Muhammad Kukuh Dewantara,
and Radityo Aryo Hutomo are research interns at the Centre for Strategic
and International Studies (CSIS) in 2014.*

Looking at the second quarter of 2014, this review of political developments attempts to provide a quick overview of the election mechanism in Indonesia and map out the policy directions of the two power contenders, in order to portray the current political atmosphere towards the presidential election.

Post-Legislative Election and the Map of Coalition

The presidential election comes exactly three months after the parliamentary election on 9 April, which largely shapes the political map in this multi-party state. Only parties, or coalitions of parties, which meet the presidential threshold of 20% of DPR seats or 25% of popular votes in the parliamentary elections are eligible to nominate a candidate.

The result of the legislative election was seen as a surprise, as it had been largely predicted that the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) would score a big victory, which would have been enough to nominate its own candidate.³ Much of this optimism stemmed from the “Jokowi Effect”, a term commonly used to describe the common perception that the popularity of Jokowi, PDI-P’s presidential candidate, would attract enough voters to vote for PDI-P.⁴ However, it turned out that the “Jokowi Effect” did not live up to the expectation although the party still managed to secure 19% of the total vote, the highest among the other contenders.⁵

With apparent need to form a coalition to enable nominating a presidential candidates, two opposing coalitions were formed, making the 2014 presidential election a tight, two-horse race. The first is centred around the Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Gerindra) Party, which came third in the parliamentary election. They joined forces with the National Mandate Party (PAN), Golkar Party, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), and the United Development Party to nominate Gerindra’s chairman, Prabowo Subianto, for presidency and Hatta Rajasa of PAN for vice-presidency. The second is formed by PDI-P to nominate Jokowi as president and

3 Yenni Kwok, “The ‘Jokowi Effect’ Could Be the Most Important ‘Thing in Indonesia’s Elections,” *Time*, 9 April 2014.

4 Elvan Dani Sutrisno, “Charta Politika: Deklarasi Jokowi Sebelum Pileg, PDIP Bisa Tembus 30%,” *Detik*, 14 March 2014.

5 See Edward Aspinall, “Why was the Jokowi effect limited?” *New Mandala*, <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2014/04/10/why-was-the-jokowi-effect-limited>; and Wimar Witoelar, “The ‘Jokowi effect’: No breakthrough in party oligarchy.” *The Jakarta Post*, 11 April 2014.

Jusuf Kalla as vice president, which is supported by an equally strong coalition Nasional Demokrat (Nasdem) Party, National Awakening Party (PKB), People's Conscience Party (Hanura), and the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI) which failed the parliamentary threshold. SBY's party, the Democratic Party, has decided to stay neutral, despite its intense communication with Prabowo's side.⁶

Comparing the Candidates: The Policy Agendas

While Prabowo and Jokowi are often portrayed as starkly different public personas, such polarity is less reflected in their policies. Various written statements, interviews, and speeches by the two power contenders reveal significant overlaps in various key issue areas.

Vision and mission

In the official vision and mission statement submitted to the General Election Commission (KPU), Prabowo-Hatta reveals their vision "to develop an Indonesia that is united, sovereign, fair and prosperous, as well as dignified."⁷ In a similar tone, Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla envision "the creation of an Indonesia that is sovereign, independent and has an identity based on *gotong royong* (communality)" in their 42-page declaration.⁸ A quick glance of the two proposals reveals many overlapping themes.

Law and governance

In the first televised debate held on 9 June, both candidates reiterated similar commitments to safeguard Indonesian democracy, eliminate all kinds of discrimination, and strive to promote clean governance. One of the similar ways mentioned by both sides in tackling corruption in the country is through the strengthening of the Corruption Eradication Committee (KPK). Prabowo additionally proposed to raise civil servants' pay to reduce corruption while his running mate, Hatta, particularly emphasized the need for prevention and monitoring mechanism. Jokowi introduced a novel solution to the table and pushes for electronic

6 Margareth S. Aritonang and Ina Parlina. "Dems stay neutral, despite persuasion," *The Jakarta Post*, 2 June 2014.

7 "Visi, Misi dan Program Bakal Pasangan Calon Presiden dan Wakil Presiden: Prabowo-Hatta," available at the official website of KPU, http://www.kpu.go.id/koleksigambar/VISI_MISI_prabowo-Hatta.pdf

8 Visi, Misi dan Program Bakal Pasangan Calon Presiden dan Wakil Presiden: Jokowi-Kalla," available at the official website of KPU, http://kpu.go.id/koleksigambar/VISI_MISI_Jokowi-JK.pdf

government system, such as e-budgeting, e-audits, and online tax, to cut unnecessary administrative red-tape and eliminate bribery. He also made references to his experience as the Jakarta governor, during which he has attempted to implement a fit-and-proper test in selecting civil servants to create a more open and meritocracy-based system.⁹

Economy, education, and social welfare

Prabowo and Jokowi have largely projected themselves as populist leaders who would put the nation's wellbeing at the heart of their decision-making. Protectionist and nationalist tones dominated much of the presidential debates. Minimizing reliance on foreign capital, increasing state investment in infrastructures, building national industries, promoting autarky in agriculture, and curbing fuel subsidies are amongst the dominant themes in Prabowo's and Jokowi's economic platforms.¹⁰ Both have also displayed similar commitment to keep the recent ban on mineral ore exports.¹¹

As outlined in his grand plan for Indonesia, dubbed as the "Big Push Strategy,"¹² Prabowo endorses a state-led effort to boost the country's economy and tackle poverty, particularly focusing on a massive expansion in agriculture.¹³ This scheme generally seeks to significantly increase government's role in heavy industry, property, automotive and aviation, as well as banking sectors among others. Prabowo's economic plan is matched with Jokowi's nine agenda priorities, *Nawacita*, which summarizes his key economic, political, and social reforms.

The two policy proposals overlap in most of the key areas, including their ambition to create a more self-sufficient Indonesia. To increase domestic agricultural production, for instance, Prabowo aims to clear 16 million hectares of destroyed forests to create agricultural land for food production and biofuel over the next two decades while Jokowi focuses more on building a minimum of 70 new dams and providing more

9 Salvatore Simamarta Salvatore, "Presidential Debate: Talking to People," *The Jakarta Post*, 11 June 2014

10 See "Visi, Misi dan Program Bakal Pasangan Calon Presiden dan Wakil Presiden: Jokowi-Kalla"; and "Visi, Misi dan Program Bakal Pasangan Calon Presiden dan Wakil Presiden: Prabowo-Hatta."

11 Eveline Danubrata and Faith Hung, "In Indonesia, foreign investors wait to see who will be president," *Reuters*, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/06/11/indonesia-election-investment-idINKBN0EM2M720140611>

12 Prabowo Subianto, "Indonesia Facing the Future: Challenges for the Next 20 years," a lecture at the Indonesia Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 1 August 2012, http://www.rsis.edu.sg/indonesia_prog/facing%20the%20future%20-%20Prabowo%20Subianto.pdf

13 Ibid.

affordable fertilizer.¹⁴

In infrastructure development, Prabowo is committed to build 3,000 kilometers of highways and rail tracks, and a number of new seaports and airports. By comparison, Jokowi makes a similar promise to construct 10 deep sea ports, 2,000 km of roads nationwide, 10 airports, 10 ports and 10 industrial estates; although he puts more emphasis on increasing sea traffic.¹⁵

Furthermore, the two candidates equally recognize the need to reduce the costs of fuel subsidy, despite different in their elaboration. Prabowo pledges to keep the price as it is while introducing car registration measures that require car owners to declare their incomes to ensure that state subsidies are only accessible to the lower-income families.¹⁶ Jokowi, on the other hand, opts for a more direct solution by gradually cutting subsidies over a four to five year period while proposing to build more local oil and gas refineries to minimize fuel import and increase the production of domestic renewable energy sources.¹⁷

On health care and education policy, both Prabowo and Jokowi pledge to improve the national health care system, ensure 12 years of compulsory and free education for all citizens, as well as to reinvigorate the family planning program. Jokowi suggests that he will implement his “Indonesia Pintar” (Smart Indonesia) and “Indonesia Sehat” (Healthy Indonesia) programs that are already underway in Jakarta during his tenure as Jakarta governor. Jokowi also notably gives more emphasis on reforming the nation’s educational system to push for a “mental revolution” to build a more positive mindset, attitude and national character. He plans to do so by incorporating more character-building programs into the school systems.

While there are notable similarities in the economic goals and policies of the two candidates, what essentially denotes the two distinct horses in this race is their leadership style. Jokowi’s belief that human resource development through education and healthcare is key to growth reflects his overall philosophy that change starts from the ground. On the contrary,

14 Randi Fahi, “Factbox: Platforms of Indonesia's presidential candidates,” *Reuters*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/21/us-indonesia-election-policies-factbox-idUSBREA4K05I20140521>

15 Ibid.

16 Tito Siahaan, “Prabowo, If Elected, Would Pursue Plan to Cut Fuel Subsidy by Half in 3 Years,” *The Jakarta Globe*, 20 June 2014.

17 Bernadette Christina, “Jokowi Eliminates Mafia, Prabowo Cuts Fuel Subsidy,” *Tempo*, 22 June 2014, <http://en.tempo.co/read/news/2014/06/22/055587049/Jokowi-Eliminates-Mafia-Prabowo-Cuts-Fuel-Subsidy>

Prabowo, whose plan is reminiscent of Soeharto's, envisions reform from the top, which means that the state allocates money in the place it judges right.¹⁸

Defense and foreign policy

As the two presidential hopefuls discussed international affairs and security issues during the third round of the presidential debate on 22 June, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to always prioritize the people's interests, maintaining the populist undertone of their campaigns. Prabowo argued that the nation's international influence is determined by domestic prowess and thus prospering the country remains his priority.¹⁹

During the 22 June debate, Jokowi outlined four strategic points of foreign policy, including his support for Palestine's independence and full membership in the United Nations. Also on his priority list is the modernization of the Indonesian armed forces to safeguard national and maritime security, including the deployment of drones, and improving the nation's competitiveness.²⁰ In his attempt to protect migrant workers, Jokowi conveyed his pledge to provide training before placement, introduce a more strict selection process, and promote more active role of embassies overseas. On the other hand, Prabowo introduced his idea to purchase Leopard main battle tanks to increase national security while improving education to protect migrant workers.²¹

The two presidential hopefuls also shared their belief in promoting diplomacy and dialogues to solve disputes with neighboring states, although both asserted that they would take forceful measure if deemed necessary to protect sovereignty. The difference between their stances was more apparent in a number of issues, for example with regards to Indonesia's relation with Australia. Prabowo asserted that the problem lies within Australia, not Indonesia, and that Australia suffered from a phobia of Indonesia. He, however, highlighted the need for Indonesia to prove that it has no ill intentions towards its neighbors. Alternatively, Jokowi viewed the shaky relationship as a result of distrust. He also raised his concern that Australia tends to see belittle its neighbor. To promote trust,

18 Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, "Indonesia Presidential Election 2014: Candidates cultivating support of farmers," *The Strait Times*, 18 June 2014

19 Devianti Faridz, "Indonesian presidential candidates debate foreign policy, national defence issues," *Channel News Asia*, 23 June 2014, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/indonesian-presidential/1195068.html>

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

Jokowi aims to promote further cultural and educational exchanges on top of government diplomacy.²²

The Campaign Activities

Campaign Financing

Campaign financing has been regarded as an important factor in a democratic election. Political parties and candidates in Indonesia rely on private financing, as the government does not allocate its budget to subsidise political parties. Hence, Indonesia allows individuals, groups, and corporations to make contribution to a campaign; both for the legislative election or the presidential election. As the concern for transactional politics is rising, Indonesia has seen more regulations being rolled out by the government. The Law number 42/2008 regulates presidential election in Indonesia. As for the 2014 presidential election, the General Election Commission has published General Election Commission Regulation Number 17/2014 and its revision, General Election Commission Regulation Number 28/2014.

Under the Law number 42/2008, there are three types of sources for campaign funds: (1) the candidate(s) him/herself; (2) the political parties or coalitions that make the nomination; (3) other parties. Furthermore, the Law elaborates the limitation of the contribution that can be made by other parties. By limiting the amount of contribution that can be made, the law aims to curb down the potential for a candidate to owe their winning to a certain individual or group, particularly to avoid the risk that a big contribution could indicate the existence of a trade-off, such as government contracts or public office.²³ For sure, transactional politics will hinder the maintenance of effective governance.

Both Prabowo and Jokowi have their own way of raising campaign funds. Since the end of May 2014, Jokowi team had opened a bank account to allow individuals and groups to make contributions.²⁴ Prabowo finally opened a bank account in mid-June, after some criticism against the

22 Ibid.

23 Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, "The Funding of Political Parties in the Anglo-Saxon Orbit," in Reginald Austin and Maja Tjernström, *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2003), pp. 33-54.

24 Fabian Januarius Kuwando, "Ingin Sumbang Jokowi-JK? Ini Nomor Rekeningnya." *Kompas*, 27 May 2014.

solicitation for campaign fund `from one of its nominating parties, PKS.²⁵ To take the step further from what is being necessitated by the law, Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla hired a public accounting firm to audit its account.

Despite both candidates showing effort towards transparency in campaign funds, the public must keep a close look throughout the election process. Despite all efforts, the regulation on campaign financing still leaves room for fraud. Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW) made an extensive report regarding general election corruption in Indonesia and highlighted several gaps.²⁶ One of the examples is the lack of a clear definition of ‘foreign party’ in Article 103 regarding the prohibition of campaign fund sources. There is also the loop hole that, with the distinction between sources from the political parties, the candidates, and public, one party may switch the money around to circumvent the limitation. This creates the possibility for an individual or a group to donate more than what is allowed in exchange for political favors.

The role of the social media

One of the highlights of the 2014 presidential elections is the increased use of social media by the two presidential candidates. With 67 million first-time voters aged between 17-24, constituting almost 35 percent of the total eligible voters, and over 90 percent being vocal on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook²⁷, the fastest and surest way to secure their votes is by interacting on the same platform.

Both presidential candidates maintain several social media accounts used to interact with their voters. Jokowi has a Twitter account (@jokowi_do2) with 1.6 million followers and a personal Facebook page with around 2.8 million likes (as of June 2014), which helped him win the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2012. Prabowo Subianto also has a Twitter account (@Prabowo08) with over 900 000 followers and a Facebook page with 7 million likes (as of June 2014).

During the course of the elections, a large number of partisan social media accounts have been created to show support to one candidate and, more often, to discredit the opposing candidate. There are also nonpartisan

25 Insanudin, “Prabowo-Hatta Juga Buka Rekening untuk Sumbangan Masyarakat, Prabowo-Hatta Buka Rekening Sumbangan, Jadikah PKS Tarik Dukungan?” *Kompas*, 13 June 2014.

26 Ibrahim Fahmy Badoh and Abdullah Dahlan, *Korupsi Pemilu di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Indonesian Corruption Watch, 2010)

27 Nicolas Picard and Michelle Chang, “Will Indonesia’s Online Youth Shape 2014 Elections?” *The Asia Foundation In Asia*, <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/10/16/will-indonesias-online-youth-shape-2014-elections/>

websites, such as AyoVote.com, dedicated to encourage voters into making educated decisions by providing nonbiased information on the two candidates and election procedures.²⁸

Smear campaigns

As elections draw near, campaigning gets even dirtier. Most smear campaigns towards presidential candidates involve the questioning the candidate's race and religion – two potentially disruptive issues in Indonesia. For example, Jokowi has been accused of being an ethnic Chinese Christian and has been required to defend himself against such allegations. His contender, Prabowo, has been accused of being a Jordanian citizen and unfit for leadership considering his past human rights issues.²⁹

Circulation of smear campaigns is mostly conducted through social media and sometimes the printed media. On the Internet, smear campaigns are often linked to an army of dedicated cyber-supporters fabricating stories and images and spreading them on social media. In print form, smear campaigns take the form of tabloids filled with negative messages and then spread to the masses.

While smear campaigns are frowned upon in general, there is a tendency that smear campaigns have proven to be highly effective in influencing voter opinion. False allegations of Jokowi's religion and race in the defamatory tabloid "Obor Rakyat," for example, have been said to have caused Jokowi's electability to decrease significantly, to the point where Jokowi needed to openly defend himself against the false accusations.³⁰

The role of media moguls

Besides politicians, the 2014 presidential election has also attracted the attention of media moguls. Aburizal Bakrie, owner of Viva Media Group, and Hary Tanoesudibjo, owner of MNC Group, have failed in their bid for presidency and are now backing Prabowo Subianto. On the other hand, Surya Paloh, owner of Metro TV and Media Group, is assisting Joko Widodo's campaign efforts.

With television being the public's main source of information, the involvement of media moguls in the elections is worrisome for Indonesia's fledgling democracy. In a democracy, the media is expected to

28 Marcel Thee, "Indonesian presidential election heats up online," *Nikkei Asia Review*, 19 June 2014, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Policy-Politics/Indonesian-presidential-election-heats-up-online>

29 "Mud flung as Indonesia presidential race heats up," *Reuters*, 22 June 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/06/22/uk-indonesia-election-attacks-idINKBN01E:X07620140622>

30 Ibid.

remain neutral and free. When media owners become involved in politics, it becomes harder for the media to carry out its function as a provider of non-biased information to the public. The Broadcasting Commission of Indonesia sought stricter regulations on the supervision of political campaign advertisements and has reprimanded several television channels for showing one-sided coverage.³¹ Even so, as the elections draw near, it seems that the campaigns will only become even more aggressive and potentially dirtier.

Safeguarding the Election

The official state institutions related to the elections are the Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Monitoring Body (Bawaslu). KPU, as the body responsible for organizing the election processes, are met with decisions and anticipation of whether the election will go into a second round. Earlier, KPU was adamant that the election could have results in only one round.³² Learning from the experience of the 2009 elections, it is very likely that the 50 percent popular vote and 20 percent Electoral College vote threshold could be fulfilled, even more so with only two candidates running.³³ However, a recent development shows that a second round might not be too farfetched; a clause was added to the General Election Commission Regulation (PKPU), reaffirming that even with only two candidates running, if the threshold is not fulfilled, the election will continue into a second round.³⁴ The new clause was added as the previous law did not have any mention if only two candidates are running.

As for Bawaslu, they seem to have their hands full with the issues of smear campaigns, which have been noted to be on an unprecedented scale, especially on social media.³⁵ Bawaslu has repeatedly advised both candidates and their campaign teams to conduct peaceful campaigns. Bawaslu seem to have a more passive approach towards overseeing the campaign process, which is reflected in the larger scope of the campaign process

31 "Social media in Indonesia's elections: Chasing the first voter advantage," *The Economist*, 25 March 2014.

32 "Ketua KPU: Pilpres 2014 Bisa Satu Putaran," *Tempo.co*, <http://pemilu.tempo.co/read/news/2014/06/20/269586750/Ketua-KPU-Pilpres-2014-Bisa-Satu-Putaran>

33 Ibid.

34 "KPU Revisi Aturan, Pilpres 2014 Bisa Dua Putaran," *Kompas*, <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2014/06/24/0943057/KPU.Revisi.Aturan.Pilpres.2014.Bisa.Dua.Putaran>

35 "Bawaslu soroti kampanye hitam pilpres," *BBC Indonesia*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2014/06/140606_sosial_media_kampanye_pilpres.shtml

as they have mentioned that the key to overseeing the campaigns are the national campaign team from both candidates, especially in smaller areas where campaigns are usually pioneered by volunteers and sympathizers.³⁶ Such hands-off approach is likely because Bawaslu cannot handle every single complaint regarding the campaigns. But the approach seemed to be working according to Bawaslu's Commissioner, as both campaign teams are keeping each other in check, reporting violations.³⁷

Concluding Notes

Indonesia's 2014 presidential election will no doubt leave a remarkable legacy in the nation's long and turbulent democratic history. Compared to previous elections, the 2014 election has so far shown significant improvements in many aspects, including the electoral process, increased voter awareness, and better regulative control over elections. While many aspects still need further improvement, in particular surveillance on smear campaigns and violations, the 2014 elections will hopefully stand as proof of a maturing democratic process in Indonesia.

36 "Tak Kuat Tampung Aduan, Bawaslu Sebut Tim Kampanye sebagai Pengawas dalam Pilpres," *Kompas*, <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2014/06/19/2013160/Tak.Kuat.Tampung.Aduan.Bawaslu.Sebut.Tim.Kampanye.sebagai.Pengawas.dalam.Pilpres>

37 "Komisioner Bawaslu: Pengawasan Pilpres dari Peserta Telah Berjalan Baik," *Tribun News*, <http://www.tribunnews.com/pemilu-2014/2014/06/20/komisioner-bawaslu-pengawasan-pilpres-dari-peserta-telah-berjalan-baik>