

Oligarchy in the Jokowi government and its influence on the implementation of legislative function in Indonesia

Asian Journal of Comparative Politics
1–15

© The Author(s) 2021

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: [10.1177/20578911211995564](https://doi.org/10.1177/20578911211995564)

journals.sagepub.com/home/acp



Asrinaldi 

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Andalas, Indonesia

Mohammad Agus Yusoff

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia

dan Zamzami Abdul Karim

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia; Sekolah Tinggi Raja Haji Tanjung Pinang, Indonesia

Abstract

The weak implementation of the House of Representatives', or Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat's (DPR), function indicates stagnation in Indonesia's democracy. This fact is due to the party oligarchy's stronghold in the Jokowi government, which ignores the nature of public representation that should be carried out. The oligarchy controls the government and DPR's performance in establishing political compromises for every legislative policy with the government to facilitate the affairs of party oligarchs, who are also the members of the Jokowi government coalition. In addition, they engage in cartel politics to secure their respective power and material interests. This article examines the roles of party oligarchs in influencing the implementation of political functions in the DPR. Ironically, the coalition formed by the party oligarchy has helped the Jokowi government and the DPR to secure government policies and the economic and political interests of the oligarchic group.

Keywords

cartel politics, democratic decline, government coalition, legislative, oligarchy

Corresponding author:

Asrinaldi, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Andalas, 25163, Indonesia.

Email: asrinaldi@soc.unand.ac.id

Introduction

The weak implementation of the function of political representation in the House of Representatives, or Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR), signals the stagnation of Indonesia's democracy. This fact is due to the leadership of Joko Widodo (popularly called Jokowi), whereby party oligarchs became the ruling regime's main supporters. After the 2014 elections, opposition parties such as the Golkar Party, United Development Party (PPP), National Awakening Party (PKB), Nasdem Party, Gerindra Party and National Mandate Party (PAN) joined the Jokowi government to strengthen his position in governing the country. Slater (2018) observed that the party oligarchs who crossed into President Jokowi's coalition (previously under the stronghold of Prabowo Subianto) were rewarded with power in the cabinet and other government positions. The transfer of various political parties into the Jokowi government further strengthened the cartel politics that characterised it.

Consequently, no critical and quality debates have discussed the draft legislation in the DPR. The chairs of coalition political parties (many were also ministers under the Jokowi government and important elites from the coalition parties) could control their members in the DPR easily. For instance, the debate on the draft of the Omnibus Law on Cipta Kerja had raised several public controversies. The issues discussed included the ease of granting permission for foreign workers, wage rules that benefit companies and freedom for companies to lay off employees. However, the law-making process was procedurally flawed as it overlooked lengthy public discussions. Moreover, the draft ignored the rights, justice and democratic values of citizens.

Despite this fact, there was no serious rejection from the DPR except for a few parties outside the coalition government, including the Justice Party (PKS) and the Democratic Party. The joining of major political parties who won the 2019 elections into the Jokowi government coalition impacted the loss of their check-and-balance function in the DPR. Furthermore, the direction of the coalition party elite to support every policy of the Jokowi government exacerbated the situation. Coalition parties behind the government aimed to control the working committee (*Panitia Kerja*), which discusses this law to guard the government's interests towards the law. On top of that, PKS and Democratic Party members were unwilling to be part of the working committee and discuss this law in view of the COVID-19 pandemic (CNN Indonesia, 2020a).

The involvement of party oligarchs in controlling the political process of the DPR should be seriously considered since before the 2019 presidential election; they agreed on winning the presidential election by forming a coalition party and distributing power among themselves (Fukuoka and Djani, 2016; Mietzner, 2013). Inevitably, the oligarch coalition of government-supported parties led to the formation of a cartel party to secure their political positions in the government and strengthen their respective economic resources (Ford and Pepinsky, 2014; Katz and Mair, 2018). To cement their position further, they also threatened to dismiss party members in the DPR who went against the party's interests. The strong dominance of the party oligarchs was due to the absence of democracy in political parties and of accountability and transparency regarding the policies.

This article explains the influence of political oligarchy in implementing political functions in the DPR during Jokowi's presidency. Oligarchy controls the government and influences the DPR's performance in creating political compromises for legislative policies made with the government. Carrying out cartel politics is inevitable to facilitate the affairs of the party oligarchs involved in the Jokowi government coalition and to save their economic and political interests. Winters (2013), Ford and Pepinsky (2014) and Reuter (2015) have reviewed the practice of oligarchy. However,

the studies remain inadequate as regards executive institutions and their implications for Indonesia's democratic process. After the 2014 elections, the behaviour of party oligarchs who joined the coalition of parties supporting the government had directly controlled the members of the DPR. This article sheds light on this phenomenon since the DPR was considered a rubber stamp for the ruling regime. This tendency is unfortunate as the existence of this institution is similar to its role during the New Order era.

Oligarchy in political parties in Indonesia

Oligarchs in the Indonesian political system have received considerable attention from scholars. Winters (2013: 13) explained how these oligarchs secured Indonesia's political power. Apparently, they have financial resources that grant them the path to power. Winters also highlighted other factors that influence Indonesia's politics, such as formal political rights, official positions, coercive forces and mobilisation forces. These factors affect the political process, depending on their conditions. In addition, Winters stated that this material strength is a fundamental basis for building oligarchs as it could become another broad and systemic manifestation of power. This phenomenon is natural as the oligarchs' ultimate political goal is to retain their power and concentrate their wealth.

Reuter (2015) had a similar view, emphasising oligarchy in Indonesia in terms of ownership of economic material, and stating that oligarchy in Indonesia is an effort to combine economic power by individuals or a small group of elites involved in the political system. Notably, oligarchy has a dominant influence on the military, bureaucracy and civil society. Additionally, Reuter revealed that the oligarch group was also involved in controversies. For example, many oligarchs in these political parties participated in funding the party's operations in 34 provinces and 514 districts and cities. It could be observed that the party's financial limitations encouraged entrepreneurs to participate in financing political party campaigns and gave them security in controlling the party.

In Indonesia, the role of oligarchic groups as a political engine of presidential candidates is seen in its involvement in the 2014 and 2019 elections. In the 2014 elections, Fukuoka and Djani (2016) stated that although supported by a simple coalition from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan), Hanura Party, National Awakening Party (PKB) and Nasional Demokrat (NasDem), Jokowi with a 53.15% majority (70,997.85 votes) ended up beating his rival, Prabowo Subianto, who only garnered 46.85% (62,576,444 votes). The main reason for Jokowi's victory was support from a solid political machine of the oligarchic elites.

Similarly, Jokowi's victory in the 2019 elections was also supported by the oligarchic elites, who campaigned together for him to win. Interestingly, most of the coalition parties that joined Jokowi were Prabowo's previous supporters in the 2014 elections: the Golkar Party, the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the United Development Party (PPP). This change was due to Jokowi appointing them as ministers, including Airlangga Hartarto, the designated chair of the Golkar Party, while the others were offered positions in government agencies (Mietzner, 2017). President Jokowi's success in garnering political support from these major parties allowed him to win back the elections in 2019 easily.

In the previous decade, political oligarchs in Indonesia have increasingly taken shape. Tomsa (2017) emphasised that the oligarchy in the Jokowi government have used political institutions to protect their material interests. Unfortunately, these political institutions failed to create accountability and transparency when performing their functions. This situation became more complicated when the oligarchy involved entrepreneurs in the political processes, especially in financing the

activities of political parties. In general, this involvement pertains to economic interests, in line with Reuter's (2015) explanation that oligarchs in Indonesia's ruling political parties have a background as shareholders in the family or public companies. Through this involvement, the political oligarchy would protect the interests of the entrepreneurs as they become supporters of the oligarchic power in Jokowi's government. Eventually, influences of the oligarchs' behaviour were the power gained in the government and the performance of the DPR in overseeing Jokowi's government. Undeniably, the oligarchs' behaviour hijacked the democratic system, such as the regulating policies made in the DPR that must be in line with the government's policy agenda. As a result, this oligarchic action led to the formation of cartel politics.

Based on the above discussion, this study inferred that the coalition of political parties controlled by oligarchs is an essential part of the new regime's formation of power after the New Order. Basically, the oligarchs joined the political coalition to form a government that could protect their interests and make them leaders of political parties. As leaders, they could be responsible for sourcing the operational costs of the parties in the regions, especially ahead of the general elections, to ensure that their parties continue to win seats in the DPR. This pragmatic strategy is extremely beneficial, especially if major parties win the elections to profit their interests. Nevertheless, this discussion topic remained limited to the activities within the Jokowi government and whether the effect of the party oligarchy coalition weakens the DPR's function as a representative political institution.

Therefore, this study presents how oligarchy in the Jokowi administration impacts the political dynamics of the DPR by developing Tomsa's (2017) explanation of Jokowi's leadership style, which is more accommodating to oligarchic political groups in his government rather than fulfilling people's expectations of democracy. Using a regime approach that highlights interests and institutions surrounding the president's power, Tomsa summarised that Jokowi had failed to maintain and revive the democratic narrative mandated by reforms after the collapse of the New Order regime. This article also adds evidence to Slater's (2018) explanation of a growing political cartel in the Jokowi administration, which enjoyed Jokowi's power status quo, particularly during his second term. This article proved that the political elite's success in actualising this political cartel was also part of their success in controlling the DPR institution with a coercive approach, namely the Inter-Time Replacement (*hak recall*) mechanism, to its members. As a government partner institution, the DPR must approve the ministry's proposal of programmes and budgets to be included in the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN). Therefore, it is no wonder that several programmes from ministries with political party elites have enormous budgets that they can use to finance party activities.

Dysfunction of the DPR during the New Order era

During the New Order era, DPR members who are a part of the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, MPR) were basically a rubber stamp for the government's policies under President Soeharto. The regime in power performed a strict selection of potential candidates of DPR members through a rigid screening process using the military, stressing on those who were loyal to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. In the name of the ideology that guards Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, the regime controls the selection process for all DPR member candidates in all political parties participating in the general election. On top of that, President Soeharto had direct control over the DPR's power through Golkar, its prominent supporter (Tomsa, 2008). Soeharto deliberately formed the Golkar Party ahead of the 1971 elections in order to win.

His victory in this election also placed Golkar as a hegemonic force in the DPR. The best Golkar cadres occupied strategic positions, such as chair of DPR and the commission, facilitating Soeharto to control and communicate with the DPR. Golkar became the political machine of the Soeharto regime, controlling all political institutions, especially the DPR. Moreover, Soeharto's command in the party elite owed to his expertise in performing political patronage (Crouch, 2010: 5), forcing the political elite to depend on Soeharto's rule. Numerous bureaucratic and political elites during the New Order era benefited from this political patronage, forming a social base for their interests and mobilising support for the authorities' interests (Aspinall and Barendschot, 2019: 9). Furthermore, multiple political elites who were under Soeharto's patronage also joined Golkar to channel their political interests to support the DPR ruling regime (Tomsa, 2008).

This political patronage weakened the DPR's function, becoming a symbol of representative democracy in Indonesia due to the DPR's lack of criticality towards the Soeharto government in overseeing its policies. Rüländ and Manea (2013: 124) explained how the policy-making initiative came from the executive and improved the DPR, which lasted for a long period and caused the executive to dominate the DPR's political process. Changes gradually occurred several years before the New Order regime collapsed in May 1998. Nevertheless, changes in the DPR's critical attitude towards the policy-making process appeared from the competition between factions supporting the regime in military institutions, weakening the support for Soeharto's rule and allowing other political forces to gain support from Islamic groups (Ramage, 1995). Besides, Soeharto began to accept his power regarding his policies during social, economic and political crises.

The dependence of various military, bureaucratic and informal elites on the ruling regime cannot be separated from Soeharto's expertise on providing protection and material wealth. Political patronage describes the exchange of resources performed privately under unequal conditions. This political patronage also created a dependence on Soeharto who needed support and loyalty. During the 32 years of the New Order regime, Soeharto succeeded in making the military, bureaucratic and informal elites in the regions dependent and acting in the ruling regime's interests. Soeharto's success in using military power to conduct political screening of those running to be DPR members affected their fear of being critical of the regime. Although the initial objective of the political screening was to identify those supporting the communist ideology, it also revealed those who were disloyal and inconsistent with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, thus causing the authoritarianism of the New Order regime (Kingsbury, 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising that since this stage, the DPR has been powerless in the face of intense political domination of the New Order regime in controlling the DPR members in performing their functions.

DPR domination during the transitional democracy: Habibie, Gus dur and Megawati

The 1999 election resulted in a new composition of DPR membership that was stronger and more critical of the government. Forty-eight political parties participated in the first post-Soeharto elections. Of these, 20 managed to acquire seats in the DPR. Members of the DPR who originated from the anti-Soeharto political elite with diverse backgrounds still felt euphoria when they entered parliament. In the MPR Special Session on 14 October 1999, most of them rejected the accountability report of President Habibie, who was president during the democratic transition period. In fact, members of the DPR in the MPR Special Session considered that President Habibie's failure to implement MPR Decree Number VI/MPR/1978 had caused the East Timor Province to become independent and separate from Indonesia (Habibie, 2004: 327).

Apart from political parties during the New Order era, the entry of new political parties has changed the MPR and DPR dynamics, which were no longer merely stamps of the ruling government. For example, the competition for political parties in the DPR has also affected executive power under President Abdurrahman Wahid (also known as Gus Dur), who became the president after becoming the political outcome president of the Central Axis group. This group comprised several Islamic political parties, such as PKB, PAN, PPP, the Crescent Star (PBB) and the Justice Party, to prevent Megawati Soekarnoputri from becoming president. Besides this, several Middle Axis elites fabricated gender, religion and leadership issues to gather justification from MPR members to thwart Megawati as a presidential candidate. Furthermore, Amien Rais, who commanded the Central Axis, succeeded in making Gus Dur the president, replacing President BJ Habibie.

However, Gus Dur did not have good relations with the DPR members during the two years of his administration. The conflict started from the allegations of a scandal involving Gus Dur, namely Bulog Gate, which involved funds amounting to US\$4 million, and Brunei Gate involving US\$million (Barton, 2002: 304). Although it was difficult to prove the truth behind these scandals, members of the DPR/MPR had already shown their disapproval of Gus Dur's leadership style, which often contradicted the interests of political groups in the MPR (Honna, 2003: 188). Moreover, the Central Axis party that supports Gus Dur is a coalition of Islamic Parties. The critical attitude of MPR and DPR members in overseeing the government's administration under President Gus Dur ended with his dismissal at the MPR Special Session on 23 July 2001, and his replacement by Megawati, who previously served as his representative. In addition, Gus Dur's inability to control DPR members from various political parties after winning the 1999 general election in the DPR proved his failure in political communication to collaborate with the party's prominent elites.

Learning from Gus Dur's experience, Megawati attempted to establish good cooperation with the DPR which still oversees her government. At the beginning of Megawati's leadership, she used a humble approach in the annual session of the MPR while acknowledging weaknesses in the government's administration. This approach had impacted the MPR's political attitude in receiving reports regarding Megawati's administration progress, which brought long-term benefits to the executive and legislative relations after President Gus Dur's resignation. Soesastro (2003: 2) explained, 'As such, it was a pretty accurate reflection of Megawati's first hundred days in power, during which she has managed to face with poise all of the crises affecting the country without taking many proactive steps to improve things'. The position of mutual understanding between the two institutions provided benefits to Indonesia's democracy. Moreover, Megawati wanted to focus on the economic sector policies after the economic crisis Indonesia faced in 1997. This fact is in line with Crouch (2010: 35), who described how Megawati's political patronage relations with political parties in the DPR succeeded in uniting their respective interests even though they must sacrifice the people's interests.

The DPR's critical attitude during president Yudhoyono's presidency

Even after receiving the Indonesian people's support, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's victory in the 2004 general election did not ease him in facing the DPR. The strain in their relationship goes back to several weeks after his inauguration as president, starting from the DPR's objection to his policy of withdrawing the proposal to replace the Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI Commander) who had already entered the DPR at Megawati's suggestion before his term ended. Previously, Megawati had proposed General Ryamizard Ryacudu to replace General

Endriartono Sutarto who had resigned. However, Yudhoyono, who was elected in the 2004 elections, withdrew the proposal (Mandan, 2006). Yudhoyono constantly faced the DPR's critical attitude during his leadership between 2004 and 2009. Thus, Yudhoyono often felt offended at the behaviour of DPR members. Although his victory in the 2004 election was supported by political parties such as the Democratic Party, PBB, the Indonesian Justice and Unity Party (PKPI), PKS and the National Mandate Party (PAN), the number of votes from the coalition parties supporting Yudhoyono was slightly less than those of the DPR's opposition parties who closely supervised his government.

President Yudhoyono worried about the DPR's strong position when dealing with the government. Furthermore, the tensions between his ministers and the DPR members in discussing his government policies have disrupted the government's activities. Moreover, the DPR members did not hesitate to use their interpellation and inquiry rights whenever the government policies caused a public stir. Jusuf Kalla, who was also Yudhoyono's deputy in the government, became Chair of Golkar in December 2004, defeating Akbar Tandjung. This made it easy for the coalition of parties supporting Yudhoyono to join the DPR's dominant coalition. As a result, Yudhoyono received reliable support from most DPR members (Crouch, 2010: 36). It seemed that Yudhoyono's experience as Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security in the Megawati administration had taught him how to deal with DPR members who were critical of the government due to the interests of their political group.

The pattern of political patronage was part of President Yudhoyono's strategy to build cooperation with political party elites for his administration to run smoothly. Meanwhile, political parties in the DPR expected an opportunity to benefit from this political patronage. These parties needed financial resources, particularly in facing the 2009 general election. Thus, the pattern of political cartelisation during Yudhoyono's time began to strengthen (Ufen, 2006: 26). Yudhoyono tried to involve numerous political parties in his government by offering ministerial positions. Since the amendments to the 1945 Constitution, the DPR position had become more robust than in the previous period. The dominance of political party leaders who won the most votes in the DPR since the 2004 General Elections became apparent to its members and strengthened the DPR institution in dealing with the government.

The second term of Yudhoyono's administration seemed comfortable, with the acquisition of seats by the Democratic Party being highly significant in the 2009 election (20.85% controlling 148 seats in the DPR). The number of supported seats in the DPR had also increased from the coalition of several political parties, such as PAN, PKS and PBB, who agreed to bring Yudhoyono back in the 2009 election. Thus, the coalition of political parties supporting Yudhoyono in the DPR had acquired 316 out of 560 seats. President Yudhoyono's success in winning the presidential election by 60.8% did not automatically give him confidence in exercising government power. He felt the need to expand his political support by involving political parties outside his party coalition, such as Golkar, PDI Perjuangan and Gerindra (Sukma, 2009). His objective was to ensure that the government's administration ran smoothly without significant opposition from its rival political parties in the DPR. Unfortunately, this coalition was too large to create a new political cartel, and built a corruption network in Yudhoyono's administration (Schneier, 2009: 299). This corruption network eventually affected the Democratic Party when the prominent supporter of Yudhoyono's party dragged the Democrat Party elite into the Hambalang Athletic House's Corruption Case. On top of that, the corruption case greatly impacted the decline in the Democratic Party's vote acquisition in the 2014 election to 10.19% from the 20.85% votes in the previous election. This incident was a devastating blow to Yudhoyono's party, which ultimately faced difficulty in

Table 1. The position of the DPR when dealing with the government.

Government	Period	Position of the DPR	Number of political parties
Soeharto	1966–1997	Weak	3
BJ Habibie	1997–1999	Strong	48
Abdurahman Wahid	1999–2001	Very Strong	48
Megawati Soekarnoputri	2001–2004	Very Strong	48
Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	2004–2009	Moderate	24
Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	2009–2014	Moderate	38 national political parties + 6 local political parties
Joko Widodo	2014–2019	Weak	12 national political parties + 3 local political parties

Source: Data processed from various sources.

restoring their previous glory. In the 2019 election, the Democratic Party's vote acquisition decreased to 7.77%.

Table 1 illustrates the ebb and flow of the relationship between the government and the DPR over time. However, the relationship's pattern depends on the extent to which the president could control the political party elite by involving them in the government. Most of the presidents have used this strategy, the most obvious being Jokowi who involved nearly all political parties in his government, which impacted the DPR's performance.

President Jokowi: Strengthening oligarchy, declining DPR function

One of the impacts of implementing a multi-party system in Indonesia is allowing the political elites to form coalitions for the presidential election. Many scholars such as Mietzner (2016) and Tomsa (2017) have viewed this multi-party system as incompatible with strengthening presidential systems and as rendering the democratic system of representation unstable. The instability of the democratic system is illustrated by the competition between the executive and legislative institutions with separate powers. Merging is possible for these institutions if the meeting points between them regarding a policy do not reach a consensus. In a presidential system, the executive and legislative functions lie within the framework of implementing a check-and-balance mechanism instead of mutually excluding each other's existence.

One of the advantages of forming an oligarchy in Jokowi's administration is the reduced critical attitude of political parties in the DPR that support him. Despite the debates and critical attitudes among members of the House of Representatives regarding this policy, these would come from external parties to Jokowi's supporters. A small number of members would have little influence on the DPR's decision to support Jokowi's policy. For example, the latest debate was about the issuance of a government regulation in lieu of Perppu No. 1 of 2020 on state fiscal policy and financial system stability for handling COVID-19 to face threats that harm the national economy and financial system stability. In such a scenario, the DPR lost its overseeing function when the Perppu was implemented into the law (Farisa, 2020).

Another problem is that the revision process of this Act did not undergo public debate. In less than a week, the revision of the Act was passed. Moreover, it was ratified one week prior to the end of the DPR members' term of office for the 2014–2019 period. The discussion of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Law began with the Presidential Letter No. 42 of 2019, which was

sent to the DPR to discuss the revision of the Act (Asmara, 2019). The publication of Jokowi's letter raised doubts among the public about his commitment to eradicate corruption in Indonesia, which had become growingly unclear (Suparman, 2019). However, the revision of the KPK Law has proven the strength of the party's oligarchy in determining its main political agenda in the DPR. For example, President Jokowi convened with nine coalition party elites and faction leaders in the DPR to create an understanding concerning several laws to be discussed in the DPR. The meeting discussed the government's plan to issue an omnibus law or rules that could simultaneously revise several laws.

The influence of the oligarchy in the DPR has rarely been underlined by researchers highlighting Indonesia's political dynamics. The intervention of political party elites mobilised their cadres to support the Jokowi administration's plan, especially in the second term of Jokowi's leadership. In particular, the agreement between party factions that supported the government for the ratification of the Omnibus Law on Cipta Kerja into Law No. 11 of 2020 proves the control of party oligarchs who joined Jokowi's administration. Besides this, the absence of a critical debate in the DPR indicates that the institution was controlled by party oligarchs in Jokowi's administration. Fadli Zon, Gerindra Deputy Chair, revealed that:

The omnibus law has made the parliament less powerless . . . how can the parliament conduct a study and synchronise such articles in such a short time? Very difficult . . . So, what happens is that the parliament adjusts to the wishes of the government . . . The discussion of the Omnibus law paid less attention to the voice and participation of the community. (Saputro, 2020)

In line with this statement, the ratification performed for the public outside the DPR was sudden and violated the proper procedure. Even the Democratic Party Faction (not part of the coalition supporting the Jokowi administration) considered it to have a flaw in the design. This situation is not transparent and accountable as it did not involve multiple parties (CNN Indonesia, 2020b). Furthermore, the party factions supporting Jokowi's government agreed to continue ratifying the Cipta Kerja Omnibus Law at the DPR plenary session less than a week after the first level of a decision-making work meeting to decide on the issue of this bill. The community rejected the ratification as it was not their expectation, proving the DPR's failure in focusing on the people's aspirations as the basis for drafting this law.

The strength of the political oligarchy is directly proportional to the strength of the cartel party in Indonesia's political system. In addition, the existence of oligarchic groups in the government affects the DPR's actual functioning. The DPR members are also highly controlled by the oligarchy of their respective parties, ignoring the nature of public representation that should be carried out. This irony is glaring and interesting as the DPR during the reform era had a similar character as the DPR during the New Order. This legislative body had approved more executive policies, identical to serving as a rubber stamp during the New Order era. Consequently, the check-and-balance mechanisms became futile when these institutions did not perform their respective functions, specifically in drafting laws in legislative institutions (Dayley, 2020).

The coalition of political parties has restricted the appearance of alternative candidates, a relatively new scenario. Interestingly, during the 2019 election, the party oligarchs wanted the election between Jokowi and Prabowo Subianto to be conducted similar to the 2014 election. Luhut Pandjaitan (who was trusted by Jokowi) met with Prabowo Subianto on 6 April 2018, who persuaded him to run as presidential candidate for the 2019 elections (Agus, 2018). This scenario occurred as the requirements for nominating a presidential candidate followed the results of the

Table 2. Voting for coalition parties supporting President Jokowi and Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 elections.

2014 election result						
No.	Coalition supporting Jokowi			Coalition supporting Prabowo Subianto		
	Parties	Percentage of votes	Percentage of seats	Parties	Percentage of votes	Percentage of seats
1	PDI-P	18.96	19.46	Gerindra	11.81	13.04
2	Golkar	14.75	16.25	Demokrat	10.19	10.89
3	PKB	9.04	8.39	PAN	7.57	8.75
4	Nasdem	6.74	6.25	PKS	6.77	7.14
5	PPP	6.53	6.96			
6	Hanura	5.27	2.86			
Total		61.29	60.17	Total	36.34	39.82

Source: 2014 election results (<https://pemilu2014.kpu.go.id>).

2014 election. This rule is incorporated back into Law No. 7 of 2017 on elections, which had the full support of the coalition party that supported President Jokowi.

Thus, PDI Perjuangan gathered 19.46% of the seats and continued to act as bearers of the incumbent presidential candidate Jokowi to face the Gerindra who proposed Prabowo Subianto. The Gerindra held 13.04% of the number of seats, pushing the two parties to form a coalition for the 2019 elections by involving other political parties. Table 1 illustrates the strength of the coalition supporting the two presidential candidates based on vote acquisition and seats of political parties that passed the parliamentary threshold in the 2014 elections. It should be noted that acquiring these votes and seats is a requirement to be nominated in the 2019 elections. Meanwhile, the PBB and PKPI only obtained 1.46% and 0.91% of the total votes, respectively, thus not passing the parliamentary threshold of 2.5% of the total votes (cf. Mietzner, 2019). Ultimately, the two parties could only support the coalition under President Jokowi.

Table 2 shows that the coalition party had supported President-elect Jokowi who gained control over the legislature. This control embodied the policies agreed between the party elites and the Jokowi government. However, for party oligarchs, policies made in the DPR must not conflict with their business interests. Thus, party cadres who are DPR members unwittingly became the ‘tools’ of the coalition party political power and had their behaviour monitored by the oligarchs of political parties, rather than the constituents who elected them. This oligarchic tendency resembles bandits who want to perpetuate their political and economic interests (cf. Morgenstern, 2004).

Conversely, the DPR members were also inspired by the behaviour of party oligarchs. Various corruption cases in the ministry involved DPR members due to their involvement in projects with questionable values. For example, the case of the eKTP (Electronic ID) project involving the Golkar Party chair, Setya Novanto, with high-ranking officials from the Ministry of the Interior, caused state losses of 2.3 trillion Rupiah (Lindsey and Butt, 2018: 292). The investigation of the case began in 2013 during the leadership of President Yudhoyono and ended with a court decision on 24 April 2018 that declared Setya Novanto guilty (Hilmi, 2018). The KPK arrested 23 members of the DPR in the period of 2014–2019 for being involved in a corruption case involving 16 people

from Jokowi's government coalition party – seven people from the Golkar Party, two from the Hanura, two from PPP, three from the PDI Perjuangan, one from the Nasdem and one from the PPP. Meanwhile, corrupt DPR members from the coalition party supporting Prabowo consisted of seven people – three from PAN, three from the Democratic Party and one from PKS (CNN Indonesia, 2019).

The practice of rent-seeking by several DPR members had influenced their performance as the people's representatives. In line with this notion, the public also underlined the weak performance of the DPR legislation. This fact indicated that the targets set in the National Legislation Program during the 2014–2019 period were not achieved, where 189 bills were planned to be discussed with the government (DPR RI, 2015). Nonetheless, only 91 bills were passed into law (Sari, 2019). Despite this fact, the laws were successfully discussed and enacted as general laws related to the power of the DPR members.

To facilitate the discussion of the law in the DPR based on the interests of the ruling government, the coalition party obtained ministerial and coordinator positions to smooth the discussion of the law, which was considered questionable by the DPR. The minister of a political party is directly responsible for the material of the Act discussed while ensuring that the draft law is supported by the DPR through political lobbying by utilising party cadres in the DPR. This strategy is effective to weaken the critical power of the DPR, decreasing the ideal function of the DPR. Even with the inclusion of party oligarchs in the government, President Jokowi formulated policies based on his interests. After the 2019 election, the public hoped that Prabowo Subianto, Jokowi's rival, would become a balancing force in the DPR. Unfortunately, this did not happen, as Prabowo and his party were willing to become part of the oligarchy's power under Jokowi's leadership. Automatically, by leaving the PKS and Democratic Party, whose opposition to the government was unclear, the DPR solely became a rubber stamp of government policy, a similar function to that during the New Order regime.

President Jokowi realised that interference with his government's administration came from the DPR during the first term of his leadership. Thus, expanding his governing coalition by involving large political parties in opposition, such as the Golkar, Gerindra and PPP, made it easier for him to control the DPR. The next problem arose when the DPR failed to implement check-and-balance, namely criticism from the public who recognised the character of the Jokowi regime in strengthening the oligarchy in his government. Furthermore, Jokowi became undemocratic towards those who criticised and disrupted his development agenda (Slater, 2020: 57–58). History also noted that the disharmony between the executive and legislative branches could impeach the president in a country that uses a presidential system. Thompson (2017) compared this phenomenon with the Philippines, where competing claims of legitimacy between the president and the legislature contributed to Joseph Estrada's fall in 2001. There was a deadlock between the legislature and the chief executive, which contributed to the extra-constitutional removal of President Estrada. The existence of competition between the two-state institutions caused a protracted political crisis in the unstable presidential system. Thompson further noted that the presidential system is unstable in an identical way to the cases of several presidents who were in power in the Philippines. Hence, the Philippines incident is a lesson for countries that practice a multi-party presidential system such as Indonesia. Unfortunately, Jokowi's accommodative politics for political parties had weakened his position when dealing with the DPR, which had weakened the DPR in performing its functions.

President Jokowi realised the need to acquire strong support from the DPR's political forces, especially from the winning parties in the legislative elections that control the DPR. Even though he initially received less support from the coalition party supporters, he managed to increase his

power in the DPR government by applying a similar strategy as his predecessor president. Jokowi formed a large coalition by granting political party elites the choice to determine the portfolio of ministerial positions in his cabinet. This crucial strategy allowed him to control the DPR through the political party elite in his cabinet. The strategy also went beyond Presidents Megawati and Yudhoyono's abilities to control the DPR during the reform era. President Jokowi's influence on the political party elites in the government made him ignore the significance of a balancing force in the DPR to oversee a democratic government. It could be seen that Jokowi was trapped by following Suharto's leadership pattern of trying to secure his development programme from political interference.

Conclusion

The article has presented how political oligarchy in Indonesia under President Jokowi became a force that threatened the consolidation of democracy by controlling all state institutions. Given that the political party elites in Indonesia have continued to protect their economic interests and continuity of their political power, the oligarchy will consistently control the DPR function. A political party oligarchy could easily control its party members in the DPR as it could withdraw its cadres' membership in the DPR if it no longer serves the party's interests. The exercise of the right to 'recall' rendered the political party cadres in the DPR unable to be critical of the government, which is also a coalition partner. DPR members have indirectly carried out the interests of the oligarchs gathered under the Jokowi government coalition. Furthermore, the impact of the short-term coalition formed by the party elites supporting the Jokowi government had dominated the power in the legislature. On top of that, the party oligarch's coalition meets the requirement for the presidential nomination and controls the DPR to secure the Jokowi government's policies and the economic and political interests of the ruling elites. In addition, the behaviour of party elites is identical to the previous DPR party members, following their behaviour and becoming rent-seekers. Several corruption cases involving DPR members proved that they want to secure economic resources as capital for their political power continuity.

The behaviour of the political party oligarchy in the Jokowi government has threatened Indonesia's democracy. The oligarchs control the parliament members who are the cadres of political parties, causing them to lose focus in fighting for the community's interests. As a result, the critical attitude of DPR members in legislating the law no longer exists since the majority of DPR members are controlled by party oligarchs. Inevitably, the formation of an elite party oligarchy with the ruling government led to the practice of President Jokowi's administration, returning to the pattern of authoritarianism during the New Order. The only difference lies in the main source of support for the power of the ruling government. If the military provided the strengthening of authoritarianism during the New Order era, the oligarch could be fully supported during the Reformation Order. Meanwhile, during the reform period, political party oligarchs provided support. In the end, the coalition built by the party oligarch had strengthened cartel politics, forming the character of the current Jokowi government.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of the article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research project was funded by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia and Universitas Andalas through the basic research scheme code T/44/UN.16.17/PT.01.03/Humaniora/2019 and the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia under the code project SK-2020-005 and SK-2020-015.

ORCID iD

Asrinaldi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4809-6676>

References

- Agus F (2018) Bertemu empat mata, Luhut minta Prabowo maju Pilpres 2019. [Meeting face to face, Luhut asked Prabowo to run for the 2019 presidential election]. CNN Indonesia, 7 April. Available at: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180407215504-32-289128/bertemu-empat-mata-luhut-minta-prabowo-maju-pilpres-2019> (accessed 27 May 2020).
- Asmara CG (2019) Soal polemik revisi UU KPK, ini penjelasan lengkap Jokowi. [Regarding the polemic about the revision of the KPK Law, this is Jokowi's complete explanation]. *CNBC Indonesia*, 13 September. Available at: <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20190913113348-4-99190/soal-polemik-revisi-uu-kpk-ini-penjelasan-lengkap-jokowi> (accessed 25 May 2020).
- Aspinall E and Barends W (2019) *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Barton G (2002) *Abdurrahman Wahid: Muslim Democrat, Indonesia President*. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- CNN Indonesia (2019) Infografis: Daftar anggota DPR 2014–2019 terjerat korupsi. [Infographic: List of 2014–2019 DPR members caught in corruption]. 19 September. Available at: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20190919085039-35-431798/infografis-daftar-anggota-dpr-2014-2019-terjerat-korupsi> (accessed 27 May 2020).
- CNN Indonesia (2020a) Demokrat-PKS tolak bahas omnibus law di tengah wabah corona. [Democrat-PKS refuses to discuss the omnibus law amid the corona outbreak]. 3 April. Available at: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20200402155933-32-489672/demokrat-pks-tolak-bahas-omnibus-law-di-tengah-wabah-corona> (accessed 13 April 2020).
- CNN Indonesia (2020b) RUU Ciptaker ke paripurna, 7 fraksi setuju 2 menolak. [The Ciptaker Bill went to plenary session, 7 factions agreed and 2 rejected]. 3 October. Available at: <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20201003233852-32-554072/ruu-ciptaker-ke-paripurna-7-fraksi-setuju-2-menolak> (accessed 7 November 2020).
- Crouch H (2010) *Political Reform in Indonesia: After Soeharto*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Dayley R (2020) *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*. New York: Routledge.
- DPR RI (2015) Program legislasi nasional. [National legislative program]. Available at: <http://www.dpr.go.id/uu/prolegnas-long-list> (accessed 27 May 2020).
- Farisa FC (2020) Catatan PSHTN FHUI atas Perppu 1/2020 dari “absolute power” hingga hilangnya fungsi pengawasan. [PSHTN FHUI notes on Perppu 1/2020 from “absolute power” to loss of supervisory function]. *Kompas*, 12 May. Available at: <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/05/12/13304951/catatan-pshtn-fhui-atas-perppu-1-2020-dari-absolute-power-hingga-hilangnya> (accessed 23 May 2020).
- Ford M and Pepinsky TB (2014) Introduction: Beyond oligarchy? In: Ford M and Pepinsky TB (eds) *Beyond Oligarchy: Wealth, Power, and Contemporary Indonesian Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publication Cornell University Press, pp. 1–11.

- Fukuoka Y and Djani L (2016) Revisiting the rise of Jokowi: The triumph of reformasi or an oligarchic adaptation of post-clientelist initiatives? *South East Asia Research* 24(2): 204–221.
- Habibie BJ (2004) *Detik-Detik yang Menentukan: Jalan Panjang Indonesia Menuju Demokrasi*. [Decisive Seconds: Indonesia's Long Road to Democracy]. Jakarta: THC Mandiri.
- Hilmi A (2018) Kasus E-KTP, Setya Novanto divonis 15 tahun penjara. [In the E-KTP case, Setya Novanto was sentenced to 15 years in prison]. *Tempo*, 24 April. Available at: <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1082710/kasus-e-ktp-setya-novanto-divonis-15-tahun-penjara> (accessed 27 May 2020).
- Honna J (2003) *Military Politics and Democratization in Indonesia*. London: Routledge.
- Katz RS and Mair P (2018) *Democracy and the Cartelization of Political Parties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kingsbury D (2003) *Power Politics and the Indonesia Military*. London: Routledge Curzon.
- Lindsey T and Butt S (2018) *Indonesia Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mandan AM (2006) *Mendung di Atas Senayan*. [Overcast Over Senayan]. Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia Satu.
- Mietzner M (2013) Fighting the hellhounds: Pro-democracy activists and party politics in post-Suharto Indonesia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 43(1): 28–50.
- Mietzner M (2016) Coercing loyalty: Coalitional presidentialism and party politics in Jokowi's Indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 38(2): 209–232.
- Mietzner M (2017) Jokowi's presidency between elite consolidation and extra-parliamentary opposition. *Asian Survey* 57(1): 165–172.
- Mietzner M (2019) Authoritarian innovations in Indonesia: Electoral narrowing, identity politics and executive illiberalism. *Democratization* 27(6): 1021–1036.
- Morgenstern S (2004) *Patterns of Legislative Politics: Roll-Call Voting in Latin America and the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ramage DE (1995) *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance*. New York: Routledge.
- Reuter T (2015) Political parties and power of money in Indonesia and beyond. *Trans: Trans-Regional and-National Studies of Southeast Asia* 3(2): 267–288.
- Rüland J and Manea MG (2013) The legislature and military reform in Indonesia. In: Rüland J and Manea MG (eds) *The Politics of Military Reform: Experiences from Indonesia and Nigeria*. Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 123–147.
- Saputro I (2020) Prabowo: Gerindra paling keras bela buruh, 80% kepentingan buruh diakomodasi di UU Cipta Kerja. [Prabowo: Gerindra defends workers the hardest, 80% of workers' interests are accommodated in the Job Creation Law]. *Palu Tribun News*, 13 October. Available at: <https://palu.tribunnews.com/2020/10/13/prabowo-gerindra-paling-keras-bela-buruh-80-kepentingan-buruh-diakomodasi-di-uu-cipta-kerja?page=all> (accessed 8 November 2020).
- Sari HP (2019) DPR sahkan 91 undang-undang selama masa bakti 2014–2019. [The DPR passed 91 laws during the 2014–2019 term]. *Kompas*, 1 October. Available at: <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2019/10/01/05340051/dpr-sahkan-91-undang-undang-selama-masa-bakti-2014-2019?page=all> (accessed 27 May 2020).
- Schneier EV (2009) Reformasi and the Indonesian 'war on terror': State, military and legislative–executive relations in an emerging democracy. *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 15(2–3): 294–313.
- Slater D (2018) Party cartelization, Indonesian-style: Presidential power-sharing and the contingency of democratic opposition. *Journal of East Asian Studies* 18(1): 23–46.
- Slater D (2020) Indonesia's tenuous democratic success and survival. In: Power T and Warburton E (eds) *The Democracy in Indonesia: From Stagnation to Regression*. Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, pp. 45–62.

- Soesastro H (2003) Introduction: Indonesia under Megawati. In: Soesastro H, Smith AL and Ling HM (eds) *Governance in Indonesia: Challenges Facing the Megawati Presidency*. Singapore: ISEAS, pp. 1–12.
- Sukma R (2009) Indonesian politics in 2009: Defective elections, resilient democracy. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 45(3): 317–336.
- Suparman F (2019) Kirim Supres ke DPR, Jokowi dinilai ingkar janji terkait pemberantasan korupsi. [Sending Supres to the DPR, Jokowi is considered to have broken promises related to corruption eradication]. *Berita Satu*, 12 September. Available at: <https://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/574742-kirim-surpres-ke-dpr-jokowi-dinilai-ingkar-janji-terkait-pemberantasan-korupsi> (accessed 25 May 2020).
- Thompson MR (2017) The Philippine presidency in Southeast Asian perspective: Imperiled and imperious presidents but not perilous presidentialism. *Contemporary Politics* 24(3): 325–345.
- Tomsa D (2008) *Party Politics and Democratization in Indonesia: Golkar in the Post-Suharto Era*. London: Routledge.
- Tomsa D (2017) Regime resilience and presidential politics in Indonesia. *Contemporary Politics* 24(3): 266–285.
- Ufen A (2006) Political parties in post-Suharto Indonesia: Between *politik aliran* and “Philippinisation”. *Working Paper 37*. Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Area Studies.
- Winters JA (2013) Oligarchy and democracy in Indonesia. *Indonesia* 96: 11–33.