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Dictators Never Die: Political Transition, Dynastic Regime Recovery and the 2021 Suharto Commemoration in Indonesia

Abstract

Political transition theory has clear indicators for successful democratisation such as the two turnover test in elections, rule of law, press freedom, and institutional reform. The distinction between system change and regime change however remains ambiguous. After rapid political transitions from authoritarian to democratic systems, old guard elites seek to recapture power and protect their wealth in countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines. The authors characterise this as a process of dynastic regime recovery, with elite networks seeking to control discursive spaces as part of a broader strategy to regain political power and legitimacy. Political distortions persist in rapid transitions to democracy, and this article examines the ways in which interlocking elites from the Suharto era strategically adapt to Indonesia's competitive multi-party system. The authors gathered data from 21 interviews with the Suharto family and their associates, as well as observations from an exclusive commemoration event celebrating the centenary of Suharto's birth in June 2021. The centenary is a network-led revanchist effort to promote a positive narrative about Suharto's presidency, as a constituent part of a complex regime recovery strategy. The 2022 election of Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr in the Philippines indicates that there are opportunities for the rehabilitation of formerly discredited political dynasties. The recovery of the Suharto family legacy, business networks and political party coalitions has yet to ensure institutional recapture or electoral victory, but it is too soon to write a definitive political obituary.

Keywords: political transition; regime recovery; commemoration; Indonesia; Suharto

Introduction

Political transition theory has clear indicators for successful democratisation such as the two turnover or alternation test in elections, the rule of law, press freedom, and institutional reform. Critics respond with evidence of an “alternation fallacy” where there is political turnover without transformation in countries such as Zambia.¹ The distinction between system change and regime change remains ambiguous. After rapid political transitions from authoritarian to democratic systems, old guard elites seek to recapture power and protect their wealth in new democracies such as Indonesia and the Philippines. The authors characterise this as a process of dynastic regime recovery, with elite networks seeking to control discursive spaces as part of a broader strategy to regain political power and legitimacy.

At the early stages of political transitions it is observed that a range of distortions will persist into democracy.² This article examines the ways in which interlocking elites from the Suharto era (1966 to 1998) strategically adapt to and distort Indonesia’s competitive multi-party system. The authors gathered rare data from 21 interviews with members of the Suharto family and their associates, as well as observations from an invitation-only commemoration event celebrating the Suharto centenary in June 2021. The centenary is a network-led revanchist effort to promote a positive narrative about Suharto’s presidency, as a constituent part of a complex regime recovery strategy. The 2022 election of Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr in the Philippines indicates that there are opportunities for the rehabilitation of formerly discredited political dynasties. The recovery of the Suharto family legacy, business networks and political party coalitions has yet to ensure institutional recapture or electoral victory, but it is too soon to write a definitive political obituary.

This article is structured as follows. Section 1 outlines the analytical framework and study design for the analysis of political transitions and commemoration. Section 2 justifies the selection of the Indonesian case study, with relevant background and context. Section 3

provides a thematic analysis of our empirical findings from fieldwork in Indonesia from 2020 to 2021. Section 4 concludes with a synthesis of our main findings and academic contributions.

Theories of Political Transition and Commemoration

It is widely reported that democracy has been in slow decline worldwide since the mid-2000s, with declinist sentiments linked to concerns about political legitimacy, prosperity and effective governance.³ Recent indicators from Freedom House show sixteen consecutive years of decline in global freedoms, and some countries are clearly struggling in the transitional space between authoritarianism and democracy.⁴ In crisis-driven political transitions such as post-communist Russia in 1991 or post-financial crash Indonesia in 1998, the “moving ruins” of former regimes persist into democracy.⁵ The moving ruins distort democracy as ideological and cultural relics carry over from former regimes, and as post-tenure impunity is brokered between deposed leaders and their successors. Technical studies of systemic transitions are therefore incomplete without an account of emerging configurations of power and processes of regime recovery.

Regime resilience is rooted in national cultural foundations, institutional structures and the mobilisation of broad political coalitions through wealth distribution and patronage.⁶ Our study advances this line of analysis by emphasising the strategic mobilisation of discourse via commemoration networks to advance the interests of political dynasties in their attempts to achieve regime recovery. Regime recovery occurs when there are unresolved political tensions in young democracies, as suggested by the illiberal Orbánisation of Hungary caused in part by the persistence of social hierarchy, prejudice and authority more than 30 years after political transition.⁷ Hungary has been characterised as a “diffusely defective democracy” after abruptly turning away from liberal democracy and EU norms.⁸ Similarly, the populist strongman leader Rodrigo Duterte was elected in the Philippines 30 years after the People Power movement that ousted the authoritarian Marcos regime, setting the scene for the restoration of the Marcos

dynasty. For comparison, more than two decades have passed since the fall of President Suharto in Indonesia, and latent processes of regime recovery are underway.

To the extent that Indonesia fits the prevailing model of “patronage democracy,” where material benefits are routinely exchanged for political support, it follows that regime recovery involves forms of contingent exchange.⁹ A second type of currency in this model of patronage democracy is the non-material exchange of ideas and visions for the future. Commemoration networks make instrumental use of public memory to control discursive spaces and influence perceptions about political priorities in young democracies such as Indonesia.

In a study of the political afterlife of Japanese prime ministers, researchers conclude that “political obituaries should never be written too early”.¹⁰ This is duly noted in the case of the Philippines. In 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte authorised the controversial reburial of former president Ferdinand Marcos in the national Heroes’ Cemetery in the capital Manila, 27 years after his death in exile in Hawaii. In 2022 Ferdinand Marcos Jr won the presidential election, with Sara Duterte as his Vice President, in a major reversal of fortunes for a family dynasty synonymous with kleptocratic, sultanistic and militaristic rule.¹¹ This electoral victory is explained by the persistence of support for the Marcos family in their “solid north” provincial stronghold of Ilocos Norte, the replication of dynastic patronage politics at subnational levels, and the strategic use of memory politics.¹² The close proximity between authoritarianism and democracy in transitional countries suggests that autocrats, living or dead, have the potential “to raise their heads” whenever democracy falters.¹³

Suharto’s six children and their close associates retain considerable wealth and power in “post-Suharto” Indonesia. They do not have a provincial stronghold like the Marcos family, but they are able to influence political movements and engage in memory politics. Suharto’s two eldest daughters organised commemoration events throughout 2021 with the support of an interweaving network of political, cultural and religious elites. The Suharto centenary was a

deeply significant historical event but not a popular commemoration or a public spectacle. The main story trending on Twitter in Indonesia on 8 June concerned the South Korean band EXO. All major Indonesian newspapers and television stations covered the centenary, but it was not headline news. Neither was 8 June an official state commemoration. President Joko Widodo took the unconventional decision to avoid formal press statements and public appearances. There is no mention of Suharto's centenary in the record of presidential speeches on the Cabinet Secretary website, and the attempted immurement of Suharto's legacy is combined with selective historical revisionism by the government.¹⁴ By contrast, in January 2008 former President Yudhoyono declared a week of national mourning after Suharto's death, and Yudhoyono attended the state funeral with members of the Suharto family, foreign leaders and diplomats. The ceremony included a military guard of honour, and most of the Indonesian news coverage focused on the positive aspects of Suharto's presidency.¹⁵

Suharto's centenary commemoration is an appropriation of the past and an active attempt to catalyse the political rehabilitation of a dynastic regime by a network of partisan actors with varying interests. Centenaries of historical figures are said to owe "less to national pride and government support than to local patriotism and commercial interest".¹⁶ Suharto's centenary is political, the product of "very contemporary preoccupations" championed by private political actors whose hopes for the future are partially inspired by their heroes from the past.¹⁷ Political centenaries sometimes involve the complicity of state actors. The Suharto family co-sponsored commemorative events in 2021 with local government departments and Javanese royals from Yogyakarta and Surakarta, using the centenary to promote political ideologies, charitable foundations and business ventures developed by the Suharto regime. Some members of this network are trying to exploit the remaining premiums associated with the Suharto franchise, in keeping with the pragmatic, transactional nature of Indonesia's patronage democracy.

Suharto's rural upbringing and limited education were unlikely antecedents for his rise as one of Asia's most brutal, durable, avaricious, and successful dictators.¹⁸ When Suharto died in 2008, one observer noted that he left behind a "wordless memory" because of his lack of speechmaking abilities and charisma.¹⁹ This may hold true today, but the network of memory curators recovering his legacy are filling the narrative gaps. Suharto's commemoration network is rebooting cultural and political memory through coded dialogue between the "hardware" of material sites, national monuments and artefacts, and the mnemonic "software" of media, novels, films, and public discourse.²⁰ The implication is that for all of the procedural progress made in Indonesia since democratisation in 1998, rival dynastic regimes continue to influence public life and compete to control discursive spaces. Since 1966 this rivalry has centred on the Suharto and Sukarno families, with local permutations throughout the archipelago.

Adam Schwarz argued in *A Nation in Waiting* that Suharto's lack of succession planning and outdated system of governance in the 1990s left fundamental questions about Indonesia's political identity unresolved.²¹ Indonesian leaders are still debating the nature and scope of democracy, electoral reforms, the granting of local autonomy across an archipelago with more than 17,000 islands, the role of Islam in society and government, the threat of communism, and the political status of the military. The 2021 Suharto commemoration addresses some of these contingencies and presents challenges to Indonesia's fledgling democratic project, particularly in the context of the 2024 elections.

The Ambiguities of the Suharto New Order Regime

Non-democratic leaders rarely "foresee good fate and careers after office", and this post-tenure anxiety influences their behaviour in office and explains their reluctance to leave.²² As a critical part of any dictator's endgame, the manner in which leaders leave office affects their country's future political trajectory.²³ Former leaders cast long shadows, establishing expectations by

which their successors are judged,²⁴ and there are often bargains between coalitions of elites and oligarchs to protect their interests during political transitions.²⁵ Deposed leaders can be an *éminence grise* as they remain politically influential. In Burma for instance, General Ne Win manipulated elite politics from behind the scenes following his resignation in 1988,²⁶ as did Mahathir in Malaysia and Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore. Suharto, by contrast, spent his post-tenure decade in relative isolation while facing indictments, defending his family's wealth, convalescing, and seeking solace in Islamic scripture and Javanese mysticism.

Major General Suharto rose from relative obscurity to absolute power in 1965-66, after seven army generals were killed by Indonesian plotters allegedly from the communist-linked 30 September Movement, triggering a six-month purge during which at least 500,000 people were killed. The attempted communist coup lasted for just two days in October 1965, but the effects were "epochal", enabling the incremental takeover of state power by Suharto under national emergency conditions.²⁷ With the backing of a US-led international consortium of donors and investors, Indonesia achieved economic growth and poverty reduction through a mixture of technocratic planning and fortuitous timing. New technologies and investment were available precisely when the country began implementing its economic modernisation strategy.²⁸

By the mid-1990s, Indonesia was a reasonably prosperous middle power, with Suharto's authoritarian developmental regime delivering material benefits, access to education, family planning policies, and economic growth.²⁹ This developmental model lifted many people out of poverty and expanded public sector employment, but it has been characterised as predatory and unsustainable, with an overreliance on oil, timber and resource extraction.³⁰ The regime constructed an extensive patronage network to buy political loyalty and control key economic sectors. Some of the estimated 95 Suharto family-linked foundations (*yayasan*) are run from

the Granadi building in central Jakarta, including educational and religious “charities” that had special access to finance from state banks and donors during the New Order era.³¹

When Suharto turned 70 in June 1991, he had no apparent successor and the country had no tested constitutional mechanism for succession, explained in part by the culturally Javanese personalisation of power that undermined institutionalised checks and balances.³² With no exit strategy, Suharto served his fifth and sixth terms in 1993 and 1997 at the head of the ruling Golkar Party appointed by the legislature. Most autocrats exit office when elite pacts break down and they are judged to be a liability. Political or military elites withhold support or orchestrate coups to achieve their endgame,³³ triggering regime defection cascades.³⁴ During Indonesia’s political transition in May 1998, there were large-scale public protests and riots. Military leaders and elites strategically distancing themselves from Suharto, seeking new roles in the country’s emerging democratic setup. On 15 May 1998, in the wake of the devastating Asian financial crisis that set the stage for elite mutiny, extra-constitutional challenges and mass civil unrest, Suharto announced his resignation.³⁵

Suharto populated the national political landscape with patronage distribution networks, bureaucratic clans and “financial generals” that undermined the performance legitimacy of his regime.³⁶ Suharto’s special relationships with Chinese-Indonesian tycoons such as Liem Sioe Liong led to the rise of colossal business conglomerates.³⁷ Suharto’s children and relatives expanded their business interests, controlling conglomerates and distributing patronage.³⁸ By the end of his tenure there were at least 250 firms linked to the Suharto family through direct ownership or boardroom membership, resulting in cronyism and anticompetitive practices.³⁹ Democratisation eroded the premium enjoyed by firms connected to Suharto, and some elites distanced themselves from the former president for pragmatic political reasons, shifting their allegiances by taking up positions in government and political parties in the reconfigured democratic landscape.⁴⁰

Three key aspects of Suharto's legacy influenced Indonesia's democratic transition: the "frozen boundaries of New Order corporatism" that failed to countenance political change, the fragility of state institutions and bureaucracy resulting from their lack of independence, and the ideological vacuity of New Order thinking.⁴¹ Suharto's reluctant departure after three decades in power, and the complex legacy he left behind, has implications for Indonesia's post-1998 political, cultural and institutional development. Legacy research addresses puzzles about political cleavage structures seemingly frozen in time, and the durability of certain features of political life in the aftermath of transitions and upheavals.⁴² There is always the risk of transitional democracies being undermined by political, ideological and cultural relics inherited from former regimes.⁴³

Over two terms from 2014 to 2024 President Jokowi's government has achieved a degree of political stability through a "new developmentalism" based on conservative state-centred nationalism deeply rooted in Indonesian history.⁴⁴ Reminders of Suharto-era tradecraft are everywhere in democratic Indonesia, as politicians consolidate power, expand their governing coalitions, accommodate vested interests and oligarchs, and engage in patronage distribution.⁴⁵ Jokowi's ever-swelling governing coalition has left a weak opposition, raising questions about the integrity of institutional checks and balances.⁴⁶ The president appears indifferent to the symbolism of having retired officers and ex-generals running the Ministry of Defence and the military playing a contentious role in domestic security and policing.⁴⁷ Jokowi is promoting the Bintara Pembina Desa (Babinsa) army supervisory village structure,⁴⁸ a Suharto-era election campaign asset used by the Golkar Party to mobilise local voters and impose control. The government is recentralising power while promoting a public security agenda based on law and order, policing of speech, and cyber surveillance.⁴⁹ One should not overstretch the comparison, but Suharto and Jokowi as Javanese leaders had similar developmental priorities, attention to technical detail, ruthless streaks, and both seem to be "indifferent to considerations

of propriety”.⁵⁰ The result is an authoritarian turn and democratic decline in Indonesia under Jokowi.⁵¹

While President Jokowi mimics Suharto era policies and governance approaches, his government is simultaneously attempting to undermine aspects of the Suharto legacy. In 2021, the government started investigating Suharto-linked foundations and businesses through the Bank Indonesia Liquidity Assistance (BLBI) asset recovery scheme to recoup 110.4 trillion rupiah in outstanding debts accrued since the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis.⁵² In November 2021, the BLBI Task Force seized 124 hectares of land worth some 600 billion rupiah from PT Timor Putra Nasional, a car manufacturing company owned by Hutomo Mandala Putra, better known as Tommy Suharto.⁵³ President Jokowi was silent during the Suharto centenary, but sent a loud signal in April 2021 by initiating the takeover of the Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park (Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, TMII) after five decades of management by the Suharto family.⁵⁴ In February 2022 the Jokowi government issued Presidential Decree 2/2022, which includes a retelling of history that erases Suharto’s name from the list of key figures involved in a major military attack against the Dutch on 1 March 1949, undermining the New Order regime’s historical narrative and promoting rival dynasties such as Sukarno, Hatta and Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX from Yogyakarta. These antagonisms are a challenge to dynastic regime recovery, and there is a long road ahead for the Suharto commemoration network if they wish to find themselves in power again, as in the case of the Marcos family in the Philippines.

The 2021 Suharto Centenary Commemoration

8 June 2021 marked the centenary of the birth of Suharto, Indonesia’s longest serving president, who ruled the world’s fourth most populous country for 32 years starting in 1966. The authors had the rare opportunity to attend the Suharto commemoration in the capital city Jakarta, a private invitation only ceremony with a limited capacity of 1000 guests because of COVID-19

regulations. Among the mainly middle-aged and elderly guests were members of the Suharto family inner circle, along with political and religious elites with their own private ambitions. The Suharto centenary revisits the past and offers some historical correctives, but for the most part it is a future facing, subversive political event. The authors observed commemoration activities in the capital city Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and in Central Java province in 2021, detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: List of Suharto Centenary Events in 2021.

DATE	EVENT
1 MARCH	Webinar co-hosted by the Suharto Memorial Museum in Kemusuk, and the Department of Culture, Yogyakarta, commemorating a major Indonesian military offensive on 1 March 1949 against Dutch colonial forces known as Serangan Umum 1 Maret 1949. The speakers were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aan Ratmanto, an academic from the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), Surakarta. 2. Gatot Nugroho, director of the Suharto Memorial Museum, Kemusuk, Bantul, Yogyakarta.
6 MARCH	Webinar co-hosted by the Yayasan Sekar Arum Sejati foundation in Yogyakarta, and Badan Musyawarah Museum (Barahmus), an NGO in Yogyakarta, concerning the history of the 1 March 1949 military offensive, which Suharto was a part of. The speakers were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Princess GKR Mangkubumi from the royal palace of Yogyakarta. 2. Prince Haryo Yudhadiningrat from the royal palace of Yogyakarta. 3. Ki R Bambang Widodo, director of the NGO Barahmus. 4. Lieutenant Colonel Daldiri Dwi Purnomo, from the Army History Department. 5. Gatot Nugroho, director of the Suharto Memorial Museum, Kemusuk, Bantul, Yogyakarta. 6. RM Donny Surya Megananda from the Department of Culture, Yogyakarta, and the Wayang Kekayon Museum, Yogyakarta.
1 JUNE	Research grant and writing competition about Suharto's leadership organized by the Universitas Trilogi in Jakarta and the Panitia Peringatan Seabad Suharto centenary committee. Competition prizes are research grants for postgraduate students valued at 20 million rupiah and undergraduate students valued at 15 million rupiah, and a full scholarship to study at Trilogi University for a senior high school student.
3 JUNE	An elderly street artist named Ki Joko Wasis, often seen in the popular alun-alun kidul square near the royal palace of Yogyakarta, raised publicity for the centenary by painting a portrait of Suharto while walking 20 miles from the city to the Suharto museum in Kemusuk.
8 JUNE	Main commemoration event held by the Panitia Peringatan Seabad Suharto centenary committee. Approximately 1000 guests physically present, and 170 mosques virtually, hosted by the Suharto family at the Masjid At-Tin, the central mosque at the Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park (TMII).
8 JUNE	Commemoration event held by the Suharto centenary committee at the Astana Giri Bangun mausoleum in Karanganyar district, Central Java. Approximately 500 guests involved in Tahlilan and Yasinan prayer services and charitable donations.
8 JUNE	Commemoration event held by the Suharto centenary committee at the royal Masjid Nurul Iman Dalem Kalitan Keraton Surakarta, in Central Java, supported by operations manager Zainal Abidin. Some 500 guests involved in Tahlilan and Yasinan prayer services and charitable donations.
8 JUNE	Commemoration event held by the Suharto centenary committee at the Suharto Museum in Kemusuk. A smaller event with approximately 50 guests involved in speeches and discussions about Suharto's presidency, followed by charitable donations.
9 JUNE	Street artist Ki Joko Wasis raised publicity for the centenary by walking 60 miles from Yogyakarta to the Astana Giri Bangun Suharto family mausoleum.
17 JUNE	Virtual memorial event organised by the Indonesian Presidential Museum Balai Kirti in Bogor, supported by the Bogor city Department for Tourism, Culture and Creative Economy, the Suharto centenary committee, the Purna Bhakti Museum at TMII, the Indonesian Museum Guide Association, and others.
22 JUNE	Suharto centenary commemoration webinar organised by the Presidential Museum in Bogor. Speakers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try Sutrisno, Vice President of Indonesia from 1993 to 1998. 2. Aris Setyanto Nugroho, Head of the Indonesia Development and Education Foundation (YPPPI). 3. Mahpudi, author of multiple books about Suharto, including <i>Incognito Pak Harto</i>.
22 JUNE – 23 JULY	Month long virtual exhibition called Suharto Incognito in cooperation with the Presidential Museum in Bogor, the Museum Purna Bhakti Pertiwi TMII, and the Komunitas Jelajah Budaya cultural community.
DECEMBER – JANUARY	National youth painting competition held by the Yayasan Seni Rupa Indonesia to celebrate the Suharto centenary. Advertised by Titiek Suharto on Instagram. First place prize is 7.5 million rupiah.
8-12 DECEMBER	A collection of some 300 books about Suharto on display at the Indonesia International Book Fair, Jakarta Convention Centre. On 11 December, author Mahpudi launched his new book <i>Legasi Pak Harto</i> published by Yayasan Harapan Kita, holding a Zoom event with Effendi Gazali and other discussants.

The commemoration network consists of the Suharto family and their inner circle of close relatives, as well as confidants from Suharto-linked foundations and businesses, some minor royals from the palaces of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, Golkar Party members, factions within the military, academics, journalists, and artists raising publicity for centenary events. Suharto's second daughter Siti Hediati, popularly known as Titiek, chairs the Panitia Peringatan Seabad Suharto Centenary Committee. Titiek works with Suharto's brother-in-law Suhardjo Subardi (Pak Hardjo), who is the chief advisor of centenary events. Pak Hardjo is a former Ministry of Finance customs chief who operated during the New Order, and the former director of the Yayasan Harapan Kita, a powerful Suharto era foundation. Pak Hardjo and his well-connected son Aris Setyanto Nugroho helped organise the main centenary event in Jakarta held at the Masjid At-Tin, the central mosque in the Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park (TMII). TMII is a 100-hectare open-air museum and exhibition site set up by the Yayasan Harapan Kita in 1975 at the request of Suharto's wife Siti Hartinah (Ibu Tien), and it remains an important part of Suharto's cultural policy and legacy.⁵⁵ Incidentally, Imelda Marcos was one of the guests of honour during the inauguration of TMII, planting a banyan tree in Ibu Tien's orchid garden to reinforce the Suharto family's royal aspirations.⁵⁶

On 8 June 2021 the authors observed prayers for Suharto, including *tahlilan* and *yasinan* recitations for the deceased commonly practiced by Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia with some 60 million members. A special prayer was given by controversial preacher Haikal Hassan, who referred to all guests as "ideological children of Suharto", followed by a religious *tausiah* speech by Nasaruddin Umar, Grand Imam of the Masjid Istiqlal in Jakarta, the sixth largest mosque in the world. Two thousand care packages were distributed to orphans and the poor. Suharto's second daughter Titiek presented copies of a book called *Profil 999 Masjid Pak Harto* to VIP guests. The author of this book is Suharto's well-connected grandson Panji Adhikumoro, the Chairman of the Yayasan Amalbakti Muslim

Pancasila (YAMP) Islamic foundation and the Vice President of Hyundai Group Indonesia. One of the closing events was a live Zoom dialogue with 170 mosques from the national YAMP network, led by YAMP board members from West Java and Aceh provinces.⁵⁷

The Suharto centenary is the work of a politically revanchist commemoration network deploying selective representations of Indonesian political history and ideology. This network is fragmentary, consisting of an inner core of Suharto loyalists orbited by a second tier of pragmatic opportunists with mixed loyalties and complex political entanglements. The core family network uses its vast resource endowments and residual powers to mobilise media, mosque and military personnel in a bid to control discursive spaces and restore Suharto's legacy. The result is a wide range of mosque network activities, online partisan media coverage in Cendana News, social media campaigns, book and magazine publications, documentary film production, and public events sponsored by Suharto-linked foundations such as Yayasan Supersemar and Yayasan Harapan Kita.⁵⁸ New generations of journalists and academics are working closely with the Suharto family to rebrand the New Order and to bolster Suharto's popular legitimacy and legacy, publishing hundreds of books and sponsoring youth essay writing and painting competitions.⁵⁹ The authors focus on three interrelated themes from the 2021 centenary, namely political coalitions, Islamic movements, and historical legacy. Each of these themes relate to dynastic regime recovery and democratic resilience in Indonesia.

Political Coalitions

High profile guests attended the centenary in Jakarta, a signal that the Suharto family network remains residually powerful and that the reconfiguration of political elites continues in Indonesia's evolving democratic structure. Gerindra Party Chairman and Minister of Defence Prabowo Subianto attended the centenary at Taman Mini (TMII). Prabowo is a contender for the 2024 presidential elections, even though his "nativist brand of authoritarian populism"

failed to bring electoral victory in 2014 and 2019.⁶⁰ He was married to Titiiek Suharto from 1983 to 1998, and once served as the commander of the Indonesian Special Forces. For Titiiek and Prabowo, the Suharto centenary at TMII was a significant reunion. In May 1983, thousands of Indonesian political elites, royals and dignitaries gathered at the Taman Mini Audience Hall to celebrate the wedding of Prabowo and Titiiek, a grand Javanese ritual exemplifying Suharto's "ruling cultural vision".⁶¹ The pair divorced in the midst of the political crisis in 1998, when the Suharto regime unravelled, but they are far from estranged.

In the 2019 presidential election, Prabowo gained strong political support from hard line Islamic groups including the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the anti-Ahok 212 Alumni.⁶² Many supporters were disappointed after the election, however, when Prabowo joined the coalition led by his rival Jokowi. In 2024, Prabowo is most likely to turn away from conservative "Islamist parties" and form a coalition with more liberal "Muslim democratic parties" such as the National Awakening Party (PKB), which has a traditional voter base from Nahdlatul Ulama, the country's largest Islamic civil society organisation.⁶³ Jokowi's defeat of Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election was due in part to the nomination of Vice President Maruf Amin, who carried an influential mass constituency base from Nahdlatul Ulama and Muslim religious leaders (*kyai*). It appears that Prabowo's party Gerindra is seeking an early opportunity to form a coalition with the National Awakening Party to gain support from the Nahdlatul Ulama base, which plays strategic a power broker role and has the potential for mass voter mobilisation. Prabowo's deep connection to the Suharto family will enable the recovery of Suharto's legacy and the targeted redistribution of patronage if Prabowo wins or influences the outcome of the 2024 presidential election, as witnessed in the Philippines when President Duterte helped re-legitimise and re-platform the Marcos family.

Anies Baswedan, the Governor of Jakarta, appears in the headlines of major newspapers covering the Suharto centenary from 8-9 June 2021. Anies, who is of Hadhrami Arabic descent,

leveraged his ethnic and religious identity as political capital during his 2017 campaign for governor of Jakarta, ultimately defeating Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (better known as Ahok), his Chinese Christian rival and Jokowi ally who was standing trial for blasphemy at the time.⁶⁴ At the end of the centenary at TMII, Anies told the press that he considers Suharto to be a leader who always puts the nation first, with his calm demeanour and instinct to protect the country, and his living legacy evidenced in the healthcare and education programmes that continue to benefit the Indonesian people.⁶⁵ Anies Baswedan was an anti-Suharto student activist in his youth, but his praise for Suharto in 2021 is a sign of political ambition and satisfies the Javanese custom of *mikul dhuwur mendhem jero*, literally to “raise high and bury deep”, praising the deceased while ignoring their faults. In June 2022 Anies was included in a shortlist of three candidates for the 2024 presidential nomination by the National Democratic Party (NasDem) and will likely be a frontrunner.

The presence of Golkar Party officials at the TMII centenary raises questions about the complex relationship between the Suharto family and Golkar, one of the most powerful parties in the country. During the New Order era, Golkar was Suharto’s electoral vehicle, operating in conjunction with Pancasila ideology and military doctrine to achieve hegemonic control for the Suharto regime.⁶⁶ Airlangga Hartarto is the chairman of the Golkar Party and the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, and he plans to run for president in 2024. He has connections with the Suharto family through his father Hartarto Sastrosoenarto, a close Suharto confidant, economic adviser and minister during the New Order era. Bambang Soesatyo attended the TMII centenary. He has served as Speaker of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) since 2019 and is a member of the Golkar Party executive. Under Soesatyo the MPR has reintroduced Suharto-era guidelines for state policy (*Garis Besar Haluan Negara*) and five-year development plans, while considering proposals for extending presidential term limits,⁶⁷ raising fears of a return to electoral authoritarianism. Bambang Soesatyo is also working with Tommy Suharto

on the development of motor racing facilities in Sentul city.⁶⁸ Akbar Tanjung, a prominent political figure who held various ministerial positions in the Suharto era, was also present at the centenary. In the transitional years after the fall of Suharto, Akbar Tanjung won a hard-fought contest for the chairmanship of Golkar, gaining support from prominent figures in the military, including future president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and religious groups such as the HMI Islamic Students Association.⁶⁹ The Suharto commemoration is a significant historical event and a reminder that many of the Indonesian elites who influence political party alignments, electoral campaigns and policy agendas have complex, nuanced relations with the Suharto family and their networks.

Indonesian political parties are now formulating strategies in anticipation of the 2024 presidential, legislative and regional elections. Members of outgoing president Jokowi's Indonesia Maju (Forward) government coalition are seeking to build a new pragmatic coalition that is not bound to any particular ideology or policy platform. Two clear coalitions have begun to emerge ahead of the 2024 elections. First is the Indonesia Bersatu (United) coalition that consists of Suharto's former political vehicle Golkar, the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the United Development Party (PPP). The second is the Kebangkitan Indonesia Raya (Great Awakening) coalition initiated by Prabowo's Gerindra Party and the National Awakening Party (PKB). The membership of these coalitions is still open, and key parties such as the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), Democratic Party (DP), the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), and the National Democratic Party (NasDem) have yet to declare their intentions. The role of minor parties such as the Suharto family-linked Berkarya, Perindo, the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI), the People's Conscience Party (Hanura), the Moon and Star Party (PBB), and the Justice and Unity Party (PKPI) remains to be seen ahead of the 2024 elections. Any significant involvement in the 2024 elections will depend on the ability of party leaders to lobby the major parties and join a winning coalition.

Tommy Suharto's alleged involvement in the 212 anti-Ahok Islamist movement and the presence of hard line religious figures at the TMII commemoration such as Din Syamsuddin and Haikal Hassan can be interpreted as a strategy from the Suharto family to co-opt Islamic groups to promote their interests in the 2024 elections. Tommy Suharto's Berkarya Party won 2.9 million votes, or 2.09% of the total votes, ranking 11 out of 16 parties competing in the 2019 elections. This means Berkarya outperformed some of the established parties such as the Hanura Party with 2.1 million votes and the Moon and Star Party with 1.1 million votes. The Suharto family still has the capacity to mobilize voters at a limited scale. The Berkarya Party voter breakdown shows pockets of support in traditional Golkar provincial bases such as Banten, Lampung, East Nusa Tenggara, and West Nusa Tenggara.

The results of the 2004, 2009 and 2019 democratic elections show that relying on the popularity of the Suharto brand is insufficient to attract significant numbers of voters. Suharto's eldest daughter Siti "Tutut" Hardiyanti Rukmana served as Minister of Social Affairs in her father's final 1997 cabinet packed with loyalists.⁷⁰ Following the transition to democracy, Tutut Suharto sought to contest the 2004 elections, but her presidential aspirations were at odds with Golkar's trajectory under the chairmanship of Akbar Tanjung, so she joined General Hartono's PPKB party.⁷¹ The Suharto family had no shortage of campaign funding, but there was little public support for a Suharto returning to the presidential palace so soon after democratisation. Suharto's second daughter Titiek became the Golkar Party deputy chairperson in 2014, when billionaire Aburizal Bakrie was party leader, and served as an elected Member of Parliament representing the Special Region of Yogyakarta from 2014 to 2019. Titiek resigned from Golkar in 2018 to support her brother Tommy's new Berkarya Party. In 2019 Tommy and Titiek Suharto ran as legislative candidates in Papua and Yogyakarta respectively, but failed to win their seats. The six Suharto children still lack the legitimacy and credibility to directly compete in elections, so they must strategically align with nominees who have chances of success.

The performance of the Suharto family in the 2024 elections depends in part on which coalition they join. There is an opportunity for gains if they can form a coalition with the Golkar Party, the source of Suharto's hegemonic rule for three decades. The Suharto connection with Golkar remains active, as seen from the presence Akbar Tanjung, Bambang Soesatyo and others at the TMII commemoration event, and annual visits made by Golkar elites to the Astana Giri Bangun Suharto mausoleum for *nyadran* rituals before the start of Ramadan. Tutut Suharto's daughter Danty Rukmana will likely join the Golkar Party and run in the national legislative election from the East Jakarta constituency in 2024. The 2024 election may be a tipping point for the Suharto family in their pursuit of dynastic regime recovery. If they join a winning coalition and place family members in positions of authority throughout the country, they can disrupt the Jokowi government's BLBI asset recovery scheme, delay investigations into Tommy Suharto's businesses and the family *yayasan* network, form deeper alliances with Islamic parties, and amplify their positive messaging about Suharto's legacy. The performances of Golkar and Berkarya in the 2024 elections will have a significant bearing on the prospects for dynastic regime recovery. In the Philippines, the Marcos family was able to rewrite history under the Duterte presidency (2016 to 2022), and accuse opponents such as Leni Robredo of communist affiliations during the 2022 campaign, and a similar scenario for the Suharto family is plausible under a Golkar or Prabowo-led coalition government.

Islamic Movements

Since Indonesian independence in 1945, there has been a coevolution of religion and state, with unresolved tensions regarding the primacy of Islam, the nature of "godly nationalism" and the role of religion in public life.⁷² At the start of his presidency, Suharto, who was raised in a community of syncretic Javanese Muslims known as *abangan*, held a deep scepticism toward political Islam, though in his later years he made strategic "overtures to the Islamic

community”.⁷³ Suharto often emulated the Dutch colonial practice of “emasculating political Islam while outwardly promoting its spiritual health”.⁷⁴ The Suharto centenary featured Islamic ceremonies and protocol, revealing pragmatic connections between the Suharto family and different types of religious leaders.

Din Syamsuddin, a prominent Islamic scholar, former head of the mass organisation Muhammadiyah (2010–2015), and former head of the advisory of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (2015–2020), attended the Suharto centenary. Din Syamsuddin has written favourably about Suharto’s New Order regime, and the dilemmas of succession, expecting that upon Suharto’s retirement in 1998 a new leader would emerge with the same leadership qualities, namely being ex-military, Javanese and Muslim.⁷⁵ After the centenary, Din stated that Suharto deserves credit for major developmental achievements, as well as being an advocate of the Islamic banking sector and undertaking charitable work, including the construction of 999 mosques in conjunction with the YAMP Islamic foundation established by Suharto in 1982.⁷⁶ Din has a complicated relationship with the Suharto family. He was for instance Prabowo’s chief advisor during the transitional period in 1998, at a time when Prabowo’s allegiance to Suharto was in doubt. Din was also a speechwriter for Harmoko, the former Minister of Information under Suharto who urged the president to carry on as leader in 1997 despite clear signs that Suharto was unfit, and who then called for Suharto’s resignation in May 1998 in his role as Speaker of the House and Golkar Party chair.⁷⁷

Fuad Bawazier, an Islamic activist of Arab descent, rose through the ranks of the Ministry of Finance hierarchy in the New Order era, serving in Suharto’s cabinet briefly in 1998 prior to the collapse of the regime. Fuad, who apparently granted tax favours to the Suharto family and maintains good relations with Suharto’s children,⁷⁸ was a VIP guest at the TMII centenary. As with many members of the Suharto commemoration network, however, there are indicators of divisions and personal rivalries, evidenced by Fuad’s role in the founding of the National

Mandate Party with Amien Rais, one of political elites who demanded Suharto's resignation. Nasaruddin Umar, Grand Imam of Masjid Istiqlal in Jakarta, one of the largest mosques in the world, was another VIP in attendance at the TMII centenary. During his prayers for Suharto, Umar remarked that he is one of the millions of students supported under Suharto's Yayasan Supersemar scholarship scheme running since the 1970s.⁷⁹ Umar praised the rate of mosque construction during Suharto's time. The imam from South Sulawesi is an accomplished scholar advocating interfaith dialogue and gender equality in Indonesia, working with the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs on various initiatives and setting up his own organisations.

If Nasaruddin Umar is a proponent of civil Islam, then Haikal Hassan comes from the opposite side of the spectrum. This controversial Islamic preacher and General Secretary of the Habib Rizieq Shihab Centre also led prayers for Suharto at the TMII centenary. Hassan is the founder of the National Coalition of Fatwa MUI that influenced the 2016 Ahok blasphemy case, a political trial against a close ally of President Jokowi.⁸⁰ Hassan was the spokesperson of a multi-party coalition supporting Prabowo and Sandiaga Uno in the 2019 presidential election, and the spokesperson of the Islamist alumni group who led the mass demonstrations against Ahok, known as Persaudaraan Alumni Aksi Bela Islam 212, with one million people marching "in defence" of Islam. The facts suggest a significant Suharto family connection to Haikal Hassan and Habib Rizieq Shihab, head of the controversial Islamic Defenders Front. For example, on 15 November 2020 Titiék Suharto attended the wedding of Habib Rizieq Shihab's daughter. There are implicit links between the anti-Ahok Islamic movement, members of Prabowo's Gerindra Party, and a Suharto-linked foundation Yayasan Solidaritas Teman Cendana chaired by Firza Husein.⁸¹ Political Islam has become more dynamic and competitive since Indonesia democratised in 1998, and the centenary shows that the Suharto family is mobilising and distributing patronage to a number of politically influential religious movements and organisations in pursuit of regime recovery.

Historical Legacy and Cultural Norms

To reconstruct a version of the past that is “worthy of commemoration in the present” is a contested endeavour involving the struggle for public memory between advocates of various political ideas and policies.⁸² The historical underpinnings of regime recovery are contingent and malleable. For example the autocratic Xi Jinping government in China carefully manages Mao Zedong’s legacy, with only “calculated evocations” of one of the most dominant political figures of the twentieth century,⁸³ while in Russia the Putin government no longer officially celebrates Vladimir Lenin’s legacy.⁸⁴ In Indonesia, the Jokowi government appears indifferent toward Suharto even though some of their policies are borrowed from the Suharto New Order era.

According to the Suharto family, their father spent a lifetime fighting to build a just and prosperous society (*adil dan makmur*), and while the young generations may not appreciate it, they benefit from the foundations established during Suharto’s presidency even if democratic Indonesia appears to be losing its moorings.⁸⁵ The Javanese slogan *Piye kabare? Penak zamanku to?* (“how are you? My [Suharto’s] time was better, no”?) appeared on vehicles in major Indonesian cities in the early 2000s. This is a general indicator of public support for Suharto, who remains popular in parts of Indonesia despite the negative coverage of his tenure in most academic and media circles. More broadly, however, this slogan is part of a running joke used by ordinary people to criticise political elites. According to Sumartono, this slogan appeals most to the urban poor and vulnerable classes suffering from inflation and instability in post-1998 democratic Indonesia.⁸⁶

The Suharto network promotes the narrative that a dangerous communist revival is underway, the by-product of an unruly transition to democracy in 1998. The threat of communism and the communist imaginary continues to distort Indonesia’s elections.⁸⁷ This

narrative ignores the comprehensive defeat of the Indonesian Communist Party and their affiliates in 1966. The latent threat of communism, so the story goes, results from leftists or communists being embedded in highly regarded national institutions such as the Corruption Eradication Commission, the Election Commission, the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.⁸⁸ Communists are supposedly active in the popular left-leaning PDIP party chaired by rival figurehead and former president Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of first president Sukarno. It follows that “communists” intervene in public life, for instance supporting one of President Joko Widodo’s campaign organisations named PROJO and lobbying to deny the awarding of Suharto’s posthumous honorific as a National Hero (Pahlawan Nasional).⁸⁹

The image of Suharto promoted by his supporters is one of a modest man unwaveringly committed to his role as president, diligent in his work and religious devotion, a keen listener with a sense of humour. David Jenkins, who has reported on Indonesia since the 1960s, notes Suharto’s adherence to Javanese customs and norms, including the ability to conceal one’s feelings at all times, and the discipline to hold one’s hand and not overcommit.⁹⁰ Suharto was fond of Javanese aphorisms and royal Court culture, though some regime insiders privately questioned the depth of his cultural understanding.⁹¹

Staff at the Royal Palace (Keraton) of Surakarta, a traditional centre of power and culture in the Javanese world, held formal centenary events on 8 June. After a major fire in 1985, restoration efforts gave Suharto the chance to reclaim the glory of the Palace while forging an “unprecedented congruence” of traditional Javanese and authoritarian New Order political dispensations.⁹² Suharto’s wife Ibu Tien was the daughter of a minor noble from the Mangkunegara royal family of Surakarta, and during his presidency, Suharto found ways to buy influence with aristocrats.⁹³ In the early 1970s, Suharto selected his family mausoleum site, known as Astana Giri Bangun, on a spur of the sacred Mount Lawu, in Karanganyar

district, Central Java. The tombs of the Mangkunegara royal family rest on this hillside, and the addition of Suharto's lavish family mausoleum appears to violate the custom of the kings.⁹⁴ This expensive, socially competitive site for the future dead was a heavily guarded tourist attraction during the New Order era.⁹⁵ After Suharto's exit from office and Indonesia's democratic transition in 1998, people generally stopped visiting the mausoleum, which was showing signs of physical decay after enduring decades of annual monsoons,⁹⁶ and perhaps a degree of moral decay as the Indonesian public embraced a new era of competitive multi-party democracy.

Mausoleums are well-known contested sites of memory invoking "the presence of an absence",⁹⁷ symbolic physical structures that are "weighed down by the past and captive to the interests of elites".⁹⁸ The Suharto family mausoleum in Central Java, managed by Pak Sukirno, a retired sergeant major (navy), is one of the public memory sites used by the Suharto commemoration network to selectively appropriate the past to meet the political needs of the present. From the perspective of the Suharto family, this is a necessary moral endeavour, a conservative religious challenge to the excesses of Indonesian democracy and any associated phenomenon deemed leftist, communist or anti-Islamic.⁹⁹

Symbolic commemoration events took place in many parts of Indonesia. According to Dahlan Iskan, founder of the Jawa Pos media group, there was a Suharto tribute event in Magetan District, East Java.¹⁰⁰ This was an all-night *wayang* theatre performance at the house of shadow play narrator and puppeteer Ki Putut Puji Agusseno organised by the Himpunan Masyarakat Soehartonesia association founded in 2016. During Suharto's tenure, cultural production was an important feature of authoritarian governance. The arts were developed in a way that was "distinctly New Order in character", allowing critical content but with the general goal of a nationalised culture and set of values that aligned with the ruling Golkar Party.¹⁰¹ The arts and media play a significant part in the control of discursive spaces and the rebranding of

the Suharto regime, in conjunction with the use of patronage to influence political coalitions and mobilise religious networks.

Conclusion

Commemoration shines a light on the continuous material and ideational competition amongst political elites that takes place behind the scenes in Indonesia's patronage democracy, and draws out politically significant and unresolved aspects of the past that affect the present and have implications for the future. The Suharto centenary was an effort by a commemoration network to rehabilitate a discredited figure whose tenure ended both too soon and too late. By the late 1990s, the Suharto regime had no succession plan, cronyism was out of control, and the regime was unable to steer Indonesia into the new millennium. With the financial crash in 1997-98, Suharto's developmental achievements were undermined; elite pacts were broken; defection cascades intensified; suppressed religious movements re-emerged; and political factions drummed up old public anxieties about ethnic minority (mainly Chinese-Indonesian) identity and a highly implausible communist revival for electoral gain. The actors driving regime recovery are seeking material advantage, discursive control and political opportunity within this uncertainty.

Indonesia has progressed from a transitional to a semi-consolidated democracy since Suharto's resignation, or abdication, broadcasted live on national television on 21 May 1998. After ruling the country for three decades, and spending his final post-tenure decade in relative isolation at his Cendana residence, Suharto died of multiple organ failure on 27 January 2008 at Pertamina Hospital in Jakarta. Benedict Anderson noted with measured satisfaction that every year, the number of young people who have forgotten Suharto's New Order grows apace.¹⁰² There is, however, a passage from William Faulkner's 1951 play *Requiem for a Nun* worth noting: "the past is never dead. It's not even past".¹⁰³ When young generations forget

the human rights violations and excesses of the New Order era, this benefits the Suharto family, just as the Marcos family benefits from the public amnesia that obscures the martial law period. The Marcos regime in the Philippines seized the opportunity during the Duterte presidency to revise history, using social media to appeal to younger generations and disillusioned voters. Suharto family members and affiliates are actively reconstructing their father's legacy for political and financial gain. Weak economic performance and ineffective governance by elected leaders causes democratic backsliding, which creates new spaces for former autocrats and their networks to regain influence.¹⁰⁴

President Joko Widodo was conspicuously silent during the Suharto centenary on 8 June 2021. The government did however authorise the takeover of the Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park (TMII) in April 2021, ending half a century of Suharto family control, and is investigating Suharto family and corporate assets through the Bank Indonesia Liquidity Assistance Task Force. At the same time, government policy and propaganda draws inspiration from the authoritarian developmentalism of the Suharto era. Take for example the attempted co-optation of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and the passing of a sweeping omnibus law in 2020 to boost economic growth; the fixation on vaguely defined leftist and secularist threats; and the reliance on military factions for protection and political support. Recalling Adam Schwarz, Indonesia is still in many respects a nation in waiting, with unresolved issues from the Suharto era distorting Indonesia's democratic system and political culture.

Ultimately, Suharto's centenary was not a popular or state commemoration, but rather an appropriation of the past, with strategic memory reboots and historical correctives to restore the former presidents' tarnished political legacy. Beyond the shorthand often used to describe Suharto since 1998 – tyrant, dictator, kleptocrat – lies a man of many contradictions and talents, as the biographies of Suharto by David Jenkins and Robert Elson reveal. The Suharto network's armamentarium continues to influence contemporary Indonesian politics, culture and memory

in pursuit of dynastic regime recovery, a prospect that now seems less fanciful given the return of the Marcos dynasty in the Philippines.

NOTES

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⁵² The Task Force was authorised through Presidential Decree 6/2021, signed on 6 April 2021.

⁵³ Muhammad Idris, “Mengenal Timor, Pabrik Mobil Tommy Soeharto Yang Asetnya Disita Pemerintah Karena BLBI”, *Kompas*, 6 November 2021, <https://money.kompas.com/read/2021/11/06/170334526/mengenal-timor-pabrik-mobil-tommy-soeharto-yang-asetnya-disita-pemerintah?page=all>

⁵⁴ Government Regulation 19/2021 signed in February 2021 establishes new rules for land procurement undertaken in the public interest. Officials from the State Secretariat made it clear that the Taman Mini Park needs better management (telephone interview, 9 June 2021), a point of view shared by some TMII staff, who accept that profitability is down and that management by foundations run by Suharto’s children is increasingly complicated (interview at At-Tin Mosque, TMII, 8 June 2021).

⁵⁵ John Pemberton, *On the Subject of ‘Java’* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 154.

⁵⁶ Pemberton, *On the Subject of ‘Java’*, p. 160.

⁵⁷ Pak Sumarsono, a senior figure from YAMP, works for Suharto’s son Sigit Harjojudanto, and the Suharto foundation Yayasan Dana Sejahtera Mandiri supports the YAMP mosque network.

⁵⁸ Cendana News is available at <https://www.cendananews.com/>.

⁵⁹ See for instance the work of Indonesian journalists and authors Mahpudi, Bakarudin and Dwitri Waluyo.

⁶⁰ David M. Bouchier, “Two Decades of Ideological Contestation in Indonesia: From Democratic Cosmopolitanism to Religious Nationalism”. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 49, no. 5 (2019): 713–33. [Quotation from p. 723].

⁶¹ Pemberton, *On the Subject of ‘Java’*, p. 176.

⁶² The “212” movement refers to the mass demonstrations against former governor Ahok that took place in Jakarta on 2 December 2016.

⁶³ Colm A. Fox and Jeremy Menchik, “Islamic Political Parties and Election Campaigns in Indonesia”. *Party Politics* (OnlineFirst, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688221091656>

⁶⁴ Adam Tyson, “Blasphemy and Judicial Legitimacy in Indonesia”. *Politics and Religion* 14, no. 1 (2021): 182–205.

⁶⁵ Rizki Sandi Saputra, “Soeharto di Mata Anies Baswedan: Pemimpin Yang Nuansanya Kebapakan dan Selalu Mengayomi”, *Tribun News*, 8 June 2021, <https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2021/06/08/soeharto-di-mata-anies-baswedan-pemimpin-yang-nuansanya-kebakapan-dan-selalu-mengayomi>

⁶⁶ Edward Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 22.

⁶⁷ Dewi Nurita, “Manuver MPR dan Kegelisahan Jokowi Akan Amandemen Konstitusi”, *Tempo*, 15 August 2021, <https://fokus.tempo.co/read/1494744/manuver-mpr-dan-kegelisahan-jokowi-akan-amandemen-konstitusi>

⁶⁸ Eka Alisa Putri, “Unggah Foto Bareng Tommy Soeharto, Kolom Komentar Ketua MPR Berubah Jadi ‘Arena’ Tagih Utang”, *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 October 2021, <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/nasional/pr-012771055/unggah-foto-bareng-tommy-soeharto-kolom-komentar-ketua-mpr-berubah-jadi-arena-tagih-utang>

⁶⁹ Leo Suryadinata, “The Decline of the Hegemonic Party System in Indonesia: Golkar after the Fall of Soeharto”. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 29, no. 2 (2007): 333–58. [Quotation from p. 338].

⁷⁰ Salim Said, *Menyaksikan 30 Tahun Pemerintah Otoriter Soeharto* (Jakarta: Penerbit Mizan, 2016), p. 18.

⁷¹ Interview with a Suharto family associate, Jakarta, 15 January 2020.

⁷² Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 10.

- ⁷³ Jenkins, *Young Soeharto*, p. xxxv.
- ⁷⁴ Vatikiotis, *Indonesian Politics under Suharto*, p. 120.
- ⁷⁵ M. Din Syamsuddin, “Political Stability and Leadership Succession in Indonesia”. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 15, no. 1 (1993): 12–23.
- ⁷⁶ Uji Sukma Medianti, “Doa dan Tasyakur di 100 Tahun Soeharto”, *Republika*, 8 June 2021, <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/que2ex384/doa-dan-tasyakur-di-100-tahun-soeharto>
- ⁷⁷ Interview with the Suharto family, Jakarta, 18 January 2020.
- ⁷⁸ Shiraishi Takashi, “Indonesian Technocracy in Transition: A Preliminary Analysis”. *Southeast Asian Studies* 3, no. 2 (2014): 255–81. [Quotation from p. 269].
- ⁷⁹ Erfan Maaruf, “Imam Besar Masjid Istiqlal: Soeharto Banyak Sekolahkan Anak dan Bangun Ribuan Masjid”, *Sindonews*, 8 June 2021, <https://nasional.sindonews.com/read/449934/15/imam-besar-masjid-istiqlal-soeharto-banyak-sekolahkan-anak-dan-bangun-ribuan-masjid-1623161201>
- ⁸⁰ Tyson, “Blasphemy and Judicial Legitimacy in Indonesia”.
- ⁸¹ Philips J. Vermonte et al., “Gerakan ‘Hibrida’ Aksi Bela Islam: Aktor, Struktur, Motivasi dan Pendanaan”. *Working Paper Series, WPSPOL - 1/2020* (Jakarta: CSIS, 2020), <https://www.csis.or.id/publications/gerakan-hibrida-aksi-bela-islam-aktor-struktur-motivasi-dan-pendanaan>
- ⁸² John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 13.
- ⁸³ Glen Tiffert, “30 Years After Tiananmen: Memory in the Era of Xi Jinping”. *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 2 (2019): 38–49. [Quotation from p. 39].
- ⁸⁴ Marlene Laruelle, “Commemorating 1917 in Russia: Ambivalent State History Policy and the Church’s Conquest of the History Market”. *Europe-Asia Studies* 71, no. 2 (2019): 249–67. [Quotation from p. 258].
- ⁸⁵ Interview with the Suharto family, Jakarta, 18 January 2020.
- ⁸⁶ Wirianto Sumartono, *Gimana Kabarmu, Nak? Masih Enak Zamanku, tho’? Kami Tidak Tahu Politik, Kami Hanya Ingin Makmur* (Yogyakarta: Laksana, 2018), pp. 86-89.
- ⁸⁷ Rendy Wadipalapa, “Countering the Communist Imaginary: The Role of Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia’s 2014 and 2019 Presidential Elections”. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 43, no. 3 (2021): 557–84.
- ⁸⁸ Interview with a Suharto family associate, Jakarta, 14 January 2020.
- ⁸⁹ Interview with the Suharto family, Jakarta, 18 January 2020.

- ⁹⁰ Lisa Murray, 'It Took Me Longer to Write Soeharto's Story Than for Him to Live It', *Australian Financial Review*, 27 August 2021, <https://www.afr.com/world/asia/it-took-me-longer-to-write-soeharto-s-story-than-for-him-to-live-it-20210825-p581pj>
- ⁹¹ Jenkins, *Young Soeharto*, p. 105.
- ⁹² Pemberton, *On the Subject of 'Java'*, p. 183.
- ⁹³ Jenkins, *Young Soeharto*, p. 25.
- ⁹⁴ Jenkins, *Young Soeharto*, p. 25.
- ⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson, "Exit Suharto: Obituary for a Mediocre Tyrant". *New Left Review* 50, no. March/April (2008): 27–59. [Quotation from p. 28].
- ⁹⁶ Anderson, "Exit Suharto", p. 28.
- ⁹⁷ Maria Todorova, "The Mausoleum of Georgi Dimitrov as Lieu de Mémoire". *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. June (2006): 377–411. [Quotation from p. 378].
- ⁹⁸ Andrea Witcomb, *Re-imagining the Museum: Beyond the Mausoleum* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- ⁹⁹ Interview with a Suharto family associate, Jakarta, 14 January 2020.
- ¹⁰⁰ Dahlan Iskan, "100 Tahun Gayung", *Fajar*, 9 June 2021, <https://fajar.co.id/2021/06/09/100-tahun-gayung/?page=all>
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- ¹⁰⁴ Benedicto, "The Place of the Dead, the Time of Dictatorship".