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The Contribution of the Police in the Age of Democratic Decline in Indonesia: Political Motivations and Internal Dynamics¹⁾

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This article aims to investigate the motivations of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) with regard to politics. It focuses on political concessions to the Polri, the wide-ranging roles of the Polri, and internal dynamics within the police institution. This article examines the beneficial relationship between incentives for promotion within the police ranks and political intervention. Additionally, it shows how President Joko Widodo uses a mutually beneficial relationship with the police to suppress political opponents. This article demonstrates that incentives for promotion offered to mid-ranking police officers also contribute to criminalization of activists, opposition sympathizers, and political opponents, which is heavily linked to the decline of democracy in Indonesia. Many eligible officers, including 500 chief commissioners (*Komisaris Besar* or *Kombes*), compete for promotions to one-star general or brigadier general (*Brigadir Jenderal*, or *Brigjen*); however, the available positions are limited. This article describes the strong connection between this promotion bottleneck and the police intervention in politics that has led to the decline of democracy in Indonesia. Overall, this article enhances the understanding about the democratic regression in Indonesia and adds to arguments presented in previous studies.

Keywords : *Police, Indonesia, Democracy, Criminalization, Security.*

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Introduction

Studies that have examined the security sectors in Indonesia have often emphasized the military's role and have mentioned little about the police. Furthermore, the scarce research about the Polri has tended to focus on investigating corruption and the police brutality (Marenin, 1996; Hills, 2007; Muradi, 2014). However, we argue that in addition to Polri's primary job of providing security, the role of the police in Indonesian politics and the economy has increased since 2014 when President Joko Widodo (hereinafter referred to as Jokowi) was sworn in as the new Indonesian president.

Lembaga Survei Indonesia released a survey in 2018 exploring the public perception of democracy, corruption, and intolerance. The Polri, as an institution, received the highest scores for corruption. After the presidential election in 2019, a survey conducted by Lingkaran Survei Indonesia indicated that the Polri experienced the most significant decline in public trust—15% in one year—compared to other state institutions. The survey cited widespread allegations of the Polri's involvement and intervention in the presidential election as the reason. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in its report in 2018 suggested that as a civilian police force, the Polri must earn the people's trust and maintain the nation's peace because building political stability is critical to enabling investment growth and economic development. Numerous studies about the Indonesian security sector have focused on the military reform, but little attention has been paid to reform of the Polri. Initially, changing the role of the Indonesian police was not a priority; however, two decades after the political reform in 1998, the need for further investigation has become urgent.

The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) reported that it received 2,757 complaints in 2019, of which 744 were related to the police. By October 2020, approximately 30 active and retired police officers had been selected to lead civil institutions in addition to their primary law enforcement duties. Several questions arise from the facts presented above. These include: What is the impact of the prominent roles played by the Polri under President Jokowi's leadership? How did the Polri become political muscle used by Jokowi to maintain power? How can the police-military rivalry during his administration be characterized?

The structure of this article is as follows: First is a discussion of the rivalry between the police and the military. The second part focuses on the police and politics, in particular on the Polri's excessive influence in Jokowi's administration and how that has affected the

development of political stability in Indonesia. This article discusses the expansion of roles, duties, and functions of the police and the consequences of those expanded roles, including the criminalisation of civilians and activists, land disputes, and the involvement of the police generals in politics and business. The final part of this article focuses on the internal dynamics within the police and how competition for promotions within the institution of Polri forces mid-rank police officers to participate in politics in support of President Jokowi's political agendas. This study uses qualitative research approaches, primarily interviews, data analysis, and reviews of previous literature. Due to movement restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were mainly conducted online.

I. Eternal Rivalry between the Police and the Army

When Indonesia underwent significant reform in 1998, the country prioritized particular agendas such as democratization, decentralization, regional autonomy, direct elections, the abolition of dual military functions, the establishment of a Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*, or KPK), establishment of a constitutional court, transparency and open governance, and bureaucratic effectiveness. The police reforms were overlooked during the democratic transition period because the Indonesian presidents prioritized the aforementioned agendas and decided that the police reforms could be discussed later, after the transition had taken place. The decision to delay the police reforms created a snowball effect after the Indonesian democracy was consolidated, especially after the administration of President Yudhoyono.

Indonesia existed under authoritarian rule for thirty-two years. During President Soeharto regime, the police and the military were part of the same institution, called the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, or ABRI). ABRI consisted of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Police. Since 1960, the military and the police officers had been appointed to national and regional legislatures. During this period, ABRI often involved and dealt with domestic security involving civilians:

Throughout the New Order era, the police had been integrated into the command structure of ABRI and often participated with the army in joint operations against demonstrations, riots, and strikes as well as regional rebellions (Crouch, 2010, p.134).

Democratization, which was introduced to Indonesian politics in 1998, mandated the separation of the military and the police. That process began on April 1, 1999. The military

was prohibited from being involved in internal security activities, which were under the police authority. This significant responsibility for domestic security greatly expanded the Polri's power. Previously, for more than three decades, the police had received back-up and support from the military for domestic security authority.

Before democratization, the Polri had been the country's least-favoured security institution, always in the shadow of the military forces. However, as a direct consequence of democratization, which eliminated the dual function of the military, the Polri became a new player on Indonesia's political stage. Unlike the military, which opposed the democratization process and regime change, the Polri played a critical role during the democratic consolidation period (Baker, 2015). The separation from the military granted Polri the more significant role of maintaining domestic security and excluding other branches from that roles. In the early years of separation, the Polri urged reduction of the military's role in the domestic security. Although the Polri was motivated to push this for their own benefit, it also played an essential role in making progress toward consolidated democracy in Indonesia. Having said that, with the responsibility of ensuring the citizens' safety, the role of the Polri has dramatically expanded. Given their recent separation from the military, the need for the Polri to improve national safety while providing democratic police services has become a significant issue in Indonesia (JICA, 2018).

After the separation, the first instance of rivalry between the police and the military came during the terrorist bombings in Bali in October 2002. Disputes over which institution should take the lead role increased, and cooperation between the army and the Polri has been problematic ever since. Crouch (2010) found that in 2000, there were 79 clashes between the military and the police, in which six participants were killed. These figures declined to 52 clashes and three deaths in 2001 and rose to an estimated 100 disputes in 2003. From the post-democratization period until the presidency of President Yudhoyono in 2004–14, discussion about the police focussed mainly on professionalism, accountability, and corruption (Muradi, 2014; Buttle, Davies, and Meliala, 2016). Thus, after two decades of democratization, there are still issues that have been overlooked and have not been discussed comprehensively. Two such issues are the transparency of promotion in the Polri and the motivations of the police with regard to politics.

In the first five years of Jokowi's presidency, the agenda focused on infrastructure projects and economic development, while discussions about Indonesian politics mainly targeted the political economy and avoided security issues such as the long-awaited police reform. President Widodo's administration was able to avoid deviating crucial discussions

such as the police reform from its course because of the full support of political parties and Polri generals. The police reform would reduce the advantages and powers of the police in Indonesian politics. Proposing the police reform would destroy the mutually beneficial relationship with the police and may hinder President Jokowi's agendas in domestic politics.

Supriatma (2019) explains that the rivalry between the police and the military had plagued Indonesia's security sector since the early days of political reform (or known as *reformasi*) in 1998, and with President Jokowi allying himself more with the police, the police elite had greater access to him than did the army elite. For this reason, some within the military, especially the Army, felt that they were being excluded from power during the first term of Jokowi's presidency.

In addition to the rivalry between the military and the police over responsibility for counter-terrorism operations, the two institutions also clashed over responsibility for dealing with security issues in Papua. Prior to democratization, the military often handled security issues in Papua because the Indonesian government labelled the opposition in Papua as a separatist movement. However, during the Jokowi administration, the security operation in Papua began to focus more on armed criminal groups. The shift in responsibilities also meant different officers had authority in the field. Previously, the military officers dominated security operations in Papua because the fight was about separatism, which dealt with national sovereignty. National sovereignty is a substantially the military domain. However, due to the change in emphasis, the police officers under the counter-terrorism unit took charge of operations (Densus 88).²⁾

Competition among retired generals in the army also increased tensions between the two institutions. The retired generals, especially those who support President Jokowi's political opponent, have claimed that they are being excluded from power. This jealousy recently led to conflict when the police accused two generals who support President's Jokowi's opponent of treason and planning to assassinate several members of President Jokowi's cabinet and some civilians.³⁾

The tension among the high-ranking officers in the police and the military and the retired generals is reflected among the lower-ranking officers as well. For example, in September 2020 when dozens of the military personnel attacked and burned down the police station in Ciracas, East Jakarta.⁴⁾ The incident in Ciracas was not the first: in 2019, the military personnel stormed a police station over a traffic dispute. Low-ranking police and the military officers were also involved in a street fight during mass protests in

Jakarta. As the fights between the two institutions intensified, President Jokowi did nothing. The issue was dealt with by President Jokowi's ministers and trusted generals within the military and the Polri institutions. In July 2021, President Jokowi clearly stated that there should be no more friction between the military soldiers and the Polri members in the future.⁵⁾

II. The Police and Politics in Indonesia

This section focuses on the police motivations with regard to Indonesian politics and elaborates on the driving forces behind the police's expanded role during the President Jokowi administration. Kurnia Ramadhana from Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) explained in a 2021 interview that since President Jokowi was elected as the President of Indonesia in 2014, he has feared becoming a pawn in Indonesian politics because he does not control a political party. Consequently, Jokowi seeks to create situations in which he cannot be controlled. The first opportunity to demonstrate his independence from former President Megawati arrived in 2015 when he needed to replace General Sutarman as chief of the Polri.⁶⁾

However, at that time, Jokowi could not escape the power, the importance, and the influence of Megawati and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*, or PDI-P),⁷⁾ so he chose to nominate Budi Gunawan. Budi Gunawan was Megawati's former aide and was closely associated with her and her party. Ironically, during the plenary session to approve Budi Gunawan's nomination, he was identified as a suspect by the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, or KPK). The resulting public pressure led Jokowi to drop Budi Gunawan's candidacy and choose General Badroedin Haiti, deputy chief of police, as General Sutarman's replacement. President Jokowi's decision to nominate Budi Gunawan worked against the popular desire to restore faith in democracy; instead, this was the first evidence of democratic regression in the Jokowi administration (Muhtadi, 2015).

The direct impact of Budi Gunawan as a suspect led to four other KPK leaders – Zulkarnain, Adnan Pandu Praja, Abraham Samad, and Bambang Widjojanto – being named as suspects from the Polri as a retaliation to the KPK leadership.⁸⁾ This threatened not only the KPK leadership but also the police officers who worked in KPK and civil society who actively and firmly opposed Budi Gunawan's nomination.⁹⁾ Tempo magazine and Tirto, an online news media, also reported that Antam Novambar, the deputy head of

the criminal investigation, forced a KPK officer Endang Sutarsa, to testify on behalf of Budi Gunawan. Antam denied the allegation and clarified that there was no threat or intimidation. Another example of corruption is the criminalisation of Indonesia's top graft investigator, Novel Baswedan, who faces threats each time he reveals a large corruption case or corruption related to the police. The police reopened the investigation of the shooting of a thief when Novel was a police officer.¹⁰⁾

The second opportunity for President Jokowi to change the public perception that he lacked power came when Badroedin Haiti was close to retiring as the Indonesian police chief (*Kepala Polisi Republik Indonesia, or Kapolri*). The competition to replace him was between Budi Waseso (Budi Gunawan's in-law) and Tito Karnavian. Budi Waseso was the head of the Criminal Investigation Department (*Bareskrim*), while Tito was the director of the National Counter-Terrorism Agency. It was rumoured that Jokowi initially selected Budi Waseso but changed his mind at the last minute and chose Tito instead.¹¹⁾

During the fit and proper test conducted by the Indonesia National Parliament (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, or DPR RI*) to assess the candidates for Kapolri, Tito promised to establish an independent task force to investigate internal corruption cases within the Polri. However, a few years later, the promise had not been fulfilled. It is understandable why there was no task force, because when Tito was the head of the Metro Jaya Regional Police (Kapolda), there was a 'red book' case alleging that in connection with a corruption case involving Constitutional Court judge, Patrialis Akbar. Tito benefited from the corruption and received additional benefits for performing his job.

Outstretched roles, duties, and function of the police

The Polri's responsibilities are regulated in Law Number 2 of 2002 and include maintaining public security and order and providing law enforcement, protection, and services to the community. Moreover, as a state institution, the police carry out their duties and receive budget support from the government. President Widodo has been seen to favor the police taking center stage in upholding security while pushing the military toward a more professional role (Supriatma, 2019). For example, since President Widodo's election in 2014, the Polri's budget has tripled; in 2021, it is the third-highest-funded department and accounts for approximately 13% of the national budget, equal to Rp 112 trillion. By comparison, Polri's budget also tripled under Yudhoyono, growing from Rp 16 trillion to Rp 47 trillion during his ten years as president.

Former military commander General Gatot Nurmantyo scolded President Jokowi by

comparing the Polri' s budget with that of the military.¹²⁾ Nurmantyo misleadingly claimed that TNI, which is tasked to manage 455,000 personnel, as well as hundreds of aircraft, tanks, and other heavy military equipment, receives much less funding than the police as a whole.

Table 1, Ministries and institutions with the largest budgets in 2021.

Ministries and institutions with the largest budgets in 2021		
Public Works and Housing	Rp 150 trillion	18%
Defence	Rp 137 trillion	16%
Police	Rp 112 trillion	13%
Social	Rp 93 trillion	11%
Health	Rp 84 trillion	10%
Education	Rp 82 trillion	10%
Religious	Rp 67 trillion	8%
Transportation	Rp 46 trillion	5%
Finance	Rp 43 trillion	5%
Agriculture	Rp 22 trillion	3%

Source: Authors' compilation from the Ministry of Finance.

Table 2, The police budget since 2014.

The police budget since 2014	
Year	Budget
2014	Rp 44 trillion
2015	Rp 57.1 trillion
2016	Rp 79.27 trillion
2017	Rp 84.01 trillion
2018	Rp 98.1 trillion
2019	Rp 94.3 trillion
2020	Rp 104.7 trillion
2021	Rp 112 trillion

Source: The information gathered by the author.

The significant budget increase is an essential element in the police reform and in increasing the professionalism of the police officers. By allocating a sizable sum to the police, Indonesia's leaders hoped to fund institutional reform. However, there are still criticisms of the Polri's performance in maintaining domestic security and order. One example is the handling of student protests on 24–30 September 2019 and in early 2020. The Advocacy Team for Democracy-consisting of Indonesian Legal Aid, Commission for Missing

Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Legal Aid Institute, and Jakarta Legal Aid—recorded at least 390 complaints regarding human rights violations in 2019 (Tirto, 2019). Early in 2020, massive demonstrations took place across Indonesia linked to the Job Creation Act, and numerous human rights civil societies accused the Polri of using excessive force against the protesters. The Jakarta Post (2020) reported that KontraS received and collected more than 1,900 photographs and videos taken at various locations, reportedly revealing the police brutality against students, activists, workers, journalists, and residents who happened to be at the protest sites. Nearly 1,500 people were arrested in the protests. KontraS reported that the police officers intimidated the demonstrators by repeatedly swearing at them, firing water cannons and tear gas, and hitting, kicking, and attacking them (Jakarta Post, 2020).

Within the same period, demonstrations also took place across Indonesia to protest changes in laws related to the KPK. During a demonstration in Kendari, two students were shot and killed by the police—even though, the police officers are prohibited from bringing weapons and using live rounds during peaceful demonstrations (Jakarta Post, 2019). The prominence of individual police officers has direct consequences for the Polri as an institution. Allegations of corruption, active involvement in local and national politics, association with land disputes, dual functions performed by officers, the police violence and brutality, and misconduct in investigations must be regarded as signs and symptoms of the Polri's problem, not the root causes. We argue that one of the starting points is the outsized role that Jokowi awarded to the Polri, including participation in political, economic, and security matters. This situation has led to the effects mentioned above.

The separation from the ABRI moved the Polri under the president's authority, and the Indonesian parliament was clear that this decision was only temporary. The plan was to give the Polri to a ministry such as Home Affairs, but the Polri has argued that placing the police under ministerial control would result in their 'politicization' and demean their attempts to professionalize institution (Baker, 2015). However, after recent developments, it seems that President Jokowi values the Polri as a tool for enforcing political decisions, maintaining order, regulating activities, and representing the regime. This accords with Hills' analysis (2007, p.407) of the police relationships with presidents of African states. The question remains: Did Jokowi use the police to further his political interests?

It is widely suspected that every president in the post-democratization period has politicized the police. Indonesian presidents often use law enforcement officers to facilitate their political agendas. For example, President Wahid removed the Police Chief General

Bimantoro when the general refused to defend the president from impeachment. During the presidential campaign of 2004, President Megawati was supported by the police chief, who ordered police families to vote for Megawati's party (Baker, 2015).

Since 2014, the Polri have begun to play an active role in politics by maintaining a robust connection with President Jokowi. Jokowi often takes advantage of this close relationship to perpetuate his power by eliminating political opponents and even criminalizing several of them. Supriatma (2019) argues that there are strong perceptions within the military that President Jokowi has allied himself with the police, and that the police have been helping the government to control the opposition—for example, by applying the Law on Electronic Information and Transaction; No. 11/2008 (known as ITE law).

Conversely, for the Polri, maintaining a strong relationship with the president has strengthened its political power over the military, and Jokowi has allowed the police generals to be installed in positions outside their traditional domain. It can be argued that Polri's engagement in Jokowi's political agenda has significant similarities with the TNI's engagement with Soeharto's domestic politics during the New Order period. These similarities relate mostly to the way in which the Polri is involved in stabilizing political situations when Jokowi is under fire or in supporting certain policies or laws that Jokowi has initiated. The police are always involved when President Jokowi is 'under attack', and the excessive use of hate speech laws is frightening. The main targets are not direct political opponents but opposition sympathizers and civilians.

In the years since independence, specifically after the *reformasi* in 1998, the Polri has not played an important role in Indonesian politics. But because President Jokowi lacks robust direct ties with the military, he has exploited the opportunity to embrace the police force as a political ally. Under his leadership, Jokowi's main access to the military elites is through his former military confidants (Supriatma, 2020). By forging a strong connection with the Polri, Jokowi has unintentionally welcomed the police as a new political player in Indonesia. At the same time, Jokowi has also benefitted from this connection; as long he maintains close ties with the police, he can remain in power without any meaningful challenge from his political opponents.

The recent involvement of the police in politics is similar in many ways to that of the TNI during the New Order era. The large number of the police officers occupying public positions recalls the dual function of the ABRI in the New Order era. The decisive role of the police in government is not a new story; since the establishment of the republic, the security forces have controlled almost all aspects of life. In the past, however, the police

were still one with the army.

The connection to Jokowi allows the Polri to act as a domestic security and political force within the government. It can be argued that this connection is also the main reason Indonesian democracy has been declining in recent years. Under President Jokowi's leadership, the Polri is 'actively building legal cases against government opponents, silencing critics, and persecuting those who threaten the president's power' (Supriatma, 2020). At the same time, the police protect President Jokowi's main supporters when they are reported by his political opponents by putting their cases on hold and in some cases declining to proceed. The injustice, unfair treatment, and discrimination in exercising the rule of law have led to the decline of democracy in Indonesia.

For example, it is widely suspected that the police helped President Jokowi harm Rizieq Shihab's public image. As the leader of the Islamic Defender Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, or FPI), Shihab is an openly vocal and frequent critic of Jokowi. In 2016, as he was being investigated regarding a treason case, the police confiscated the mobile phones of Rizieq and others involved. A few days later, records from Rizieq's phone were leaked to a website called *baladacintarizieq.com* (Rizieq's Tale of Love) that included 'steamy' and provocative conversations between Rizieq and a woman (Tempo, 2017). The website also revealed audio recordings, chat logs, and photographs that were sent to Rizieq. The creator of the website remains unknown; however, it is widely suspected that the Polri revealed these details to harm Rizieq's public image.¹³⁾

These stories indicate that the Polri are closely involved with Indonesian politics. As an institution, the police are often used as a weapon, aiming to silent the political opponents, civil society that criticize President Jokowi administration and to weaken the anti-corruption movement, among other priorities.

III. Internal Dynamics and Promotional Contest

We argue that the police involvement in politics has also been strongly influenced by the internal dynamics within the police. Many middle-ranking officers, including chief commissioners, currently compete for promotions, with approximately 500 hoping to become one-star generals or brigadier generals (Tempo, 2018). The police promotions are based on performance and achievement, but the challenge is enormous when 500 people are seeking two or three open positions per month.

The major bottleneck involves chief commissioners, but many commissioners and deputy

commissioners are also waiting to be promoted. This unequal situation between demand and supply of the police officers has a direct effect on the police professionalism and work performance. At the same time, most of these low- and middle-ranking officers are attempting to prove their worth by capturing many criminals as possible, including those suspected of only minor offenses.¹⁴⁾

Meanwhile, the number of high- and middle-ranking officers who did not receive promotions has also increased. The Indonesian Police Watch (IPW) states that currently, the quotas are nine officers with three stars, 60 officers with two stars, and approximately 220 officers with one star.¹⁵⁾ The placement of the police officers in agencies other than the Polri is used to solve the problem of unemployed officers. For example, all regional Anti-Narcotics Agency heads hold the rank of brigadier general. As a result, the number of opportunities for promotion to one-star general has increased.

We argue that one of the quickest ways to attract the attention of high-ranking officers and earn a promotion is by capturing the political opponents' sympathizers, including civilians. Moreover, many police officers seek the attention of high-ranking officers by fully supporting the political agendas of President Jokowi. For example, when demonstrations happened under the Jokowi administration, the police often responded brutally, prohibited demonstrations, and undermined the freedom of speech:

The police culture had been 'militarized', and it tended to adopt the military methods in dealing with political protests. Often the police were armed with the military weapons in controlling a demonstration (Crouch, 2010, p.134).

For an officer who supports President Jokowi's political agenda, the possibility of earning a promotion is quite high. In the 2020 direct elections, the police officers often intentionally intervened in local politics by supporting PDI-P or President Jokowi's political agenda in the region. Some regional police (Kapolda) heads helped in the 2020 elections. For example, Agus Andrianto was widely suspected of helping the nomination of Jokowi's son-in-law for Mayor in Medan, North Sumatera.¹⁶⁾

The police intervention also occurred during the 2018 regional elections, as admitted by the head of the North Maluku General Election Supervisory Agency (*Badan Pengawas Pemilu*, or Bawaslu) admitted the involvement of the police in 2018 elections.¹⁷⁾ The North Maluku police threatened him not to cancel the nomination of the candidate from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*, or PDI-P). The local people that we met, suspected that the police assisted the candidate from PDI-P to secure the 2019 presidential election in North Maluku. The interviewees

explained that if the candidate from PDI-P won the gubernatorial election, the governor could force the local civil servants to vote for the PDI-P candidate in the presidential election.

The Polri generals have also actively participated in local politics. For example, in the 2018 and 2020 elections, several retired police generals ran for office (CNN, 2020). Some ran for governorships and a few ran for positions as regents.

For the active officers, and to be able to accommodate those *Kombes*, the Polri imitated the territorial command strategies of the TNI. The Polri have also upgraded every provincial or regional police force (*Kepolisian Daerah*, or *Polda*) in Indonesia (Kompas, 2020). Previously, there were two types of regional police in Indonesia: type A and B. Before the update, a *Polda* type B was led by a one-star general and a *Polda* type A was led by a two-star general. However, with the recent update, each *Polda* is now led by two-star generals and the deputy is now a one-star general. This change has created many openings for one-star generals, which may reduce the *Kombes* waiting list.

The police leaders continue to find settlement approaches to overcome the excess in *Kombes*. Every middle-ranking officer wants to be a general, at least a one-star general (*Brigjen*), as there is a significant difference in finance, treatment, and power for those who wear a star on their shoulders.

However, the promotions of the Polri officers are not transparent and often not merit-based. Numerous mid-rank police officers believe that political support, rather than performance, might boost their chances for promotion. An example is the accelerated career of Komjen Listyo Sigit Prabowo, who was the chief of Solo police when President Jokowi was a mayor in Solo, Central Java. With Jokowi's support, Listyo Sigit was listed as the only candidate for the Chief of Indonesian Police, and he was sworn in to the office on 27 January 2021. Listyo Sigit was not the first officer in the police or the military to be singled out by Jokowi.

As can be seen in the table below, numerous the military and the police officers have received outstanding treatment from Jokowi because they once worked with him in Solo. It is not new that a politician promotes officers from the same birthplace or constituency; however, the promotions under the Jokowi administration have arguably been highly accelerated for some officers, including General Sigit. General Sigit became the Chief of Indonesian Police after less than ten years as a mid-ranking officer. Similarly, General Tjahjanto's career also accelerated under President Jokowi. General Tjahjanto became the Commander of the TNI when he met President Jokowi for the first time, after less than

seven years as a mid-rank officer in the military.

Table 3. Jokowi and former officers in Solo.

Officers	Positions	Information
Hadi Tjahjanto (Air Force 1986)	The Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces	Previously he was the commander of the Adisumarmo airbase when President Jokowi was the mayor in Solo
Widi Prasetyono (The Military Academy 1993)	Head of Staff Diponegoro Military Command	The commander of District Command in Solo
Bakti Agus Fadjar (The Military Academy 1987)	Head of Diponegoro Military Command	The commander of District Command in Solo
Lutfi Lubihanto (The Police Academy 1984)	Head of the Police Intelligence (2016-2019)	The Police Chief in Solo
Andogo Wiradi (The Military Academy 1981)	Expert staff of the commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces	The commander of District Command in Solo
Maruli Simanjuntak (The Military Academy 1992)	Head of Presidential Security Forces	The commander of District Command in Solo
Listyo Sigit Prabowo (The Police Academy 1991)	Chief of the Indonesian National Police	The Police Chief in Solo

Source: Author's compilation from online news sources.

Promotion contests are not limited to the 500 middle-ranking officers (*Perwira Menengah*, or Pamen) but can be found among high-ranking generals as well (*Perwira Tinggi*, or Pati). The former chief of the Polri, Idham Azis, stated in February 2020 that there are 418 high-ranking officers, consisting of one four-star general, 11 three-star generals, 118 two-star generals, and 298 one-star generals (Berita Satu, 2020). In a recent report on the Polri leadership, the ICW and Tempo magazine stated that three significant factions currently control the police: the Makassar faction, commanded by the previous chief of the police, Idham Azis; the Budi Gunawan faction, led by the head of the Indonesian Intelligence Agency (BIN); and the Solo faction.¹⁸⁾ For example, the two-star generals who are in the Makassar faction are

- Fadil Imran, the current head of Metropolitan Police,
- Ahmad Dofiri, head of the West Java Regional Police, and
- Ferdi Sambo, head of the Division of Profession and Internal Security (*Kadiv Propam*).

In an interview, ICW officer describe the internal politics within the Polri during the competition to become the head of the Polri.¹⁹⁾ The two strongest candidates in the Solo faction are Listyo Sigit, the current chief of the Polri, and Nana Sudjana, former head of

the Metropolitan Police. In the Budi Gunawan faction, Agus Andrianto currently leads the Security Management Agency (*Kabarhakam*), and Agung Setya is head of the Riau Regional Police. Luhut, a senior minister and Jokowi's right hand, is widely suspected to support Boy Rafli Amar, the current head of the Counter-Terrorism Agency.

As supporters of President Jokowi, the police generals (active and retired) are often appointed to strategic and important positions including in ministries, government agencies, and state enterprise, as well as a few other civilian positions which are not related to the main tasks of the police. Under the New Order era, a similar approach was used by President Soeharto. President Soeharto often gave political concessions to the military. Military generals were often appointed to be governors or to lead extensive national projects. For more than three decades under the authoritarian regime, the military always controlled important and strategic positions.

KontraS claimed that 55 retired and active police generals hold strategic positions in ministries, as ambassadors, and in state-owned companies. Since the close ties formed, it seems the police and President Jokowi helped each other. The police play dual functions as both a domestic security force and a political agent on the national and local levels. Where is this heading?

We argue that the increasing involvement of the police in politics started with the Jokowi factors, where the president often installed his closer allies in the police to hold numerous high-ranking positions. These high-ranking positions automatically elevated the status of the police. From there the issue moved to internal dynamics where, because the closer allies often bypassed elder generations, hence, the internal competition within the Polri arose.

Conclusion

One of the political reform mandates in 1998 was the abolition of dual military functions and separation of the military and the police. The separation significantly expanded Polri's responsibilities and power in domestic security. In the early years of democratization, the military often opposed the decision that limited the military's power in domestic security and political contexts. In turn, the police push to limit of the military's role in domestic security authority. The reduction of the military's role in the domestic security was motivated for the Polri own benefit, the separation from the military resulted in the role of the Polri has dramatically expanded in domestic security. The expanded role of the police

allows the Polri become political muscle used by Jokowi to maintain power.

However, in practice, even though the military's role in domestic security has been reduced significantly, there is not much difference in Indonesian security reform during the democratic regime. From a practical standpoint, the military has limited responsibilities and operations in domestic security, but violence against civilians and security officers' involvement in politics nonetheless remain high.

Against this backdrop, we have discussed the need to investigate the motivations of the Polri in politics. We have highlighted the rivalry between the Polri and the military and how President Jokowi chose to use the Polri as his political muscle. The tension between the Polri and the military can be characterized in the struggle over control of security matters in Indonesia, such as counter-terrorism operations in Indonesia, internal competition between the retired generals, and fights between the low-ranking officers within the two institutions. Another reason for their rivalry is that President Jokowi also tripled the budget of the Polri while the military budget did not change much. President Jokowi's decision to groom political muscle within the Polri substantially increased factionalism among retired generals in the military. Jokowi does not have full control over the military as he does with the police, so the disharmony among the retired military generals ultimately benefited President Jokowi's political agenda.

This article elaborates on the role of the police in Indonesian politics under the Jokowi administration. It shows how President Jokowi uses a mutually beneficial relationship with the police to suppress political opponents. The police involvement in politics bears a strong resemblance to that of the military in politics during the New Order era. A large number of police officers occupying public positions recalls the dual function of the military in the New Order era. The police are doing double duty, responsible for both domestic security and supporting the president's political agendas. This development shows us that Indonesia is currently facing democratic backsliding similar to what the country experienced during the authoritarian regime, this time because of the police participation in politics.

The connection with Jokowi allows the Polri to act as both domestic security and a political force within the government. It can be argued that this connection is also the main reason why Indonesian democracy has been declining for the past few years. The Polri is creating legal cases against government opponents, silencing critics, and persecuting those who threaten the president's power. The injustice, unfair treatment, and discrimination in exercising the rule of law have led to the decline of democracy in Indonesia.

The police involvement in politics is also strongly influenced by internal dynamics within the police force. The easiest way to earn a promotion is by capturing the political opponents' sympathizers, including civilians. Moreover, many police officers seek the attention of high-ranking officers by fully supporting the political agendas of President Jokowi. For example, when the demonstrations occurred under the Jokowi administration, the police often responded brutally, prohibited demonstrations, and undermined freedom of speech.

Since the close ties between the Polri and President Jokowi has formed, they often helped each other. The police play dual functions as both a domestic security force and a political agent on the national and local levels. The increasing involvement of the police in politics started with the Jokowi factors, where the president often installed his closer allies in the police to hold numerous high-ranking positions. These high-ranking positions automatically elevated the status of the police. From there the issue moved to internal dynamics where, because the closer allies often bypassed elder generations, hence, the internal competition within the Polri arose.

Finally, there are possible limitations to this study. The data for this study was collected through online interviews due to movement restrictions caused by Covid-19. Qualitative research typically relies on face-to-face interactions for data collection, such as interviews and fieldwork. The author's online interviews generated less information than expected because informants refused to share confidential information using the online platform. There are also many potential sources of bias in this study because we found it difficult to find active and retired police officers who wanted to discuss the internal dynamics within the Polri openly for fear that doing so might threaten their careers. We believe that if data collection for this study had been conducted using actual fieldwork and face-to-face interviews, we would have found active and retired police officers who wanted to talk about this matter anonymously.

Notes

- 1) This article was part of a project of "Human Security in Southeast Asia in the ASEAN Community Era" at the Asia-Japan Research Institute, Ritsumeikan University.
- 2) Counterterrorism Special Detachment 88, or Densus 88, is an Indonesian National Police counterterrorism squad. However, many generals in Jokowi's administration criticized this decision and asked Jokowi to propose the military intervention in terrorism and Papua security operations. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/05/13/jokowi-proposes-military-involvement-in-fight-against-terrorism-through-perpres.html>, http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=56934589&Country=Indonesia&topic=Politics_1, and <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/>

- indonesian-government-considering-further-military-involvement-in-papua/
- 3) Read Supriatma (2019) for details. Supriatma (2019) articulates the competition between retired generals comprehensively. When the Polri announced these accusations, the Polri invited the active generals from the army and claimed that the information came from the army intelligent agency. This public claim clearly showed the open war between the retired general's factions within the army. <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/police-arrest-alleged-funder-of-plot-to-assassinate-four-top-officials/>. However, these accusations openly criticized by many retired generals within Jokowi's administration.
 - 4) This is not the first time, in 2018, Ciracas police station also ransacked and burned down by the military personnel that provoked his comrades. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/03/serious-efforts-needed-to-end-bitter-tni-national-police-rivalry-observers.html>
 - 5) <https://voi.id/en/news/66583/president-jokowis-order-end-the-friction-between-tni-soldiers-and-police-members>
 - 6) Online interview with Ramadan-Indonesian Corruption Watch, 21 January 2021.
 - 7) Megawati is the chairman of PDIP and PDIP nominated Jokowi as its presidential candidate.
 - 8) Bambang was named as a suspect in allegedly ordering witnesses to give false information at the trial of the West Kotawaringin election dispute at the Constitutional Court. Adnan Pandu was allegedly robbing shares of the company PT Daisy Timber in Berau, East Kalimantan, in 2006. Zulkarnain was accused of corruption by accepting bribes of Rp. 5 billion to stop the investigation in the grant fund for the Socio-Economic Management Program, East Java, in 2008. Abraham Samad has also been named a suspect in the alleged forgery of documents.
 - 9) Online interview with Ramadan-Indonesian Corruption Watch, 21 January 2021.
 - 10) <https://en.tempo.co/read/722002/kpk-expects-the-police-not-to-detain-novel-baswedan>. In an interview with Ramadhana, ICW concerns about this case because every time Novel Baswedan investigating major corruption cases, the issue of bird nest thieves death always comes up. ICW also worries that the recent label of 'radicals' to Novel and few other people within KPK as an effort to delegitimize KPK efforts to eradicate corruption in Indonesia.
 - 11) Online interview with John Doe-Civil Society Officer, 20 January 2021. The participant requested that they will remain anonymous. This issue was also widely suspected and spread among the Presidential Palace staff and numerous civil society organizations. When President Jokowi chose Tito, few people in the presidential palace warned the civil society organizations not to protest/complaint about President's decision before it become official. The presidential staff worried that the President would change his mind again if he found out about the complaint from the civil society. Civil society was complained about Waseso nomination because Waseso is close with Budi Gunawan. Besides, they are also considered as a family because Waseso's son-in-law is Budi Gunawan's son.
 - 12) Supriatma (2019) explained that the claim from General Nurmantyo is actually not true and misleading. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4507975/di-acara-prabowo-gatot-buka-bukaan-soal-anggaran-tni-dan-pencopotan-anak-buah>
 - 13) After few years as a suspect, the police drop the pornography case against Rizieq. <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/police-drop-pornography-case-against-rizieq-shihab/>
 - 14) For example, the police arrest 3,823 people in cases of thugs and small amount of extortion. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210615193715-12-654756/polisi-tangkap-3823-orang-kasus-premanisme-dan-pungli> and <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3493783/overkapasitas-lapas-anggota-dpr-kasus-kecil-tak-perlu-dipenjara>
 - 15) In a long discussion with a lawmaker, the chairman of IPW, Neta Pane explained about this logjam. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POqXE5crSg8>
 - 16) Online interview with Ramadan-Indonesian Corruption Watch, 21 January 2021.
 - 17) Interview with Syahrani Somadayo, Ternate, 16 February 2018.
 - 18) Online interview with Ramadan-Indonesian Corruption Watch, 21 January 2021.

- 19) Online interview with Ramadana-Indonesian Corruption Watch, 21 January 2021.

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