

PERSPECTIVE

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Singapore | 5 September 2019

Jokowi's Defeat in Sumatra and the Future of Religiously Charged Binary Politics

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In the 2019 presidential election, Jokowi lost in six out of ten provinces in Sumatra, namely Aceh, West Sumatra, Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra and Bengkulu. He won in Riau Islands, North Sumatra, Bangka-Belitung and Lampung.
- Jokowi's opponent Prabowo's winning margins were generally larger than his. This indicates that the provinces where Prabowo won were more consolidated in their preference.
- Elsewhere in the archipelago, voting preference was influenced by the Islamist-pluralist binary. In Sumatra, however, in addition to such a binary, other factors also determined voter preferences in the presidential election.
- While the historical animosity against the PDIP was significant in West Sumatra, the voting pattern in North Sumatra was congruent to the 'geopolitical boundary' between Muslim districts in the east coast and Christian districts in the west coast. This pattern is likely to be repeated at the local elections that are to be held in 2020 and 2021.

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INTRODUCTION

In May 2019, President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo secured his re-election against former general Prabowo Subianto in the aftermath of the country’s most polarized presidential election. His victory margin of 11%, was marred by losses in more regions than in 2014. Most notably, he lost in six of the ten provinces of Sumatra, which, with its 37.8 million voters, is the island with the second largest number of voters after Java. Elsewhere in the archipelago, the current polarization, namely the binary politics between Islamism and the ‘Pluralism’, has largely informed electoral campaigns and voter preferences.¹ But what caused Jokowi’s poor showing in Sumatra?

The religiously charged binarism at the national level, the long-standing enmity towards the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in West Sumatra and the religious geopolitical divide in North Sumatra, influenced voting results in these provinces.

THE POLITICAL BINARY IN THE 2019 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Binary oppositions, or polarization, refers to the divergence of political attitudes into two ideological extremes.² In binary politics, ‘third’ alternatives are less accommodated. US politics, for example, often only allows two parties to participate substantially in governance, leading to binary stances of “Conservative vs Liberal” or “Left vs Right” or disputative issues such as “pro-Life vs pro-Choice”.

Indonesia’s recent presidential election exemplified the growing polarisation between the Islamists and the pluralists—the latter referring mainly to moderate Islamic and non-Islamic voters.³ Triggered by the anti-Ahok movement in 2016-2017 which culminated in the imprisonment of the Chinese Christian governor for blasphemy,⁴ Indonesia’s politics has been polarized between supporters of religious conservatism and those who opt for tolerance and religious harmony. In the 2019 presidential election, such a binarism was evident in the different campaign strategies used by both camps. Due to his nationalist-Islamist party coalition, Prabowo’s campaign relied more on the mobilization of Islamic sentiments, creating the image that he was accommodative to Islamic interests. In contrast, Jokowi was considered as more pluralist, although he also tried to shield himself from Islamist attacks—as well as attract conservative votes—by appointing a conservative cleric as running-mate.⁵

This religiously-charged binarism informed voters’ preference. An exit poll showed that 51% of Muslim voters voted for Prabowo, while 97% of non-Muslim voters voted for Jokowi.⁶ Jokowi lost in West Java, a province deemed the most religiously intolerant in 2017⁷ and which has the largest number of voters (33 million). Despite having a conservative running-mate, it seemed that for many voters Jokowi was not Muslim enough when compared to Prabowo. This was aggravated by social media rumours such as those claiming that the President would ban the calls to prayers, erase Islamic education from the school curriculum, and was sympathetic to the long-disbanded communist party.⁸ This was not the first time that issues questioning the President’s religiosity had been used to discredit him. In 2014, the rumours that he was not a devout Muslim and that he was in actual fact a Chinese contributed to a temporary decline in his popularity.⁹

As retaliation to the anti-Ahok and Islamist groups, Jokowi in 2017 issued a law prohibiting organizations that were deemed to be against the country's ideology, *Pancasila*. While this policy garnered praises from the President's supporters, it still harks back to the Soeharto regime's repressive policies and has thus elicited protests from groups advocating liberal democracy.¹⁰

Meanwhile, although Prabowo's camp also accommodated other groups such as some ex-military elites,¹¹ the Islamists were generally seen to define and to front the camp. Interestingly, the Islamists did not have their own leadership figure who could be Jokowi's match, and so despite Prabowo's lack of Islamic credentials to which he himself had confessed¹², they still found an ally in him. This led to a political bond that was consolidated by his pledge to prioritize Islamic interests if he became president.¹³

JOKOWI'S LOSSES IN SUMATRA

Sumatra is ethnically heterogeneous with Javanese (30.2%), Batak (14.4%), Malay (13.2%) and Minang (11.4%) forming the main ethnicities. Smaller groups include the Chinese (1.5%).¹⁴ It is however religiously predominantly Muslim (87%). Christians make up 10.7% of the population, and are most concentrated in North Sumatra where it makes up 31% of the population, while Buddhists (1.4%), Hindus (0.4%) and Confucians (0.1%) are present in smaller numbers.¹⁵

Table I shows the election results and the ethno-religious demography of Sumatra. Jokowi won in the first four provinces, whereas Prabowo in the last six.

Table I
The 2019 election distribution of votes and ethno-religious demography of Sumatra¹⁶

No.	Province	Number of voters	Jokowi %	Prabowo %	Margin %	Main Religions %	Main Ethnicities %	Main Parties
1	Bangka-Belitung	783,964	63.23	36.77	26.46	Islam 89.3 Buddhist 4.3 Confucian 3.3 Christian 3	Sumatra groups* 69 Javanese 8.3 Chinese 8.2	PDIP Golkar Nasdem Gerinda
2	Lampung	4,809,274	59.34	40.66	18.68	Islam 95.7 Christian 2.4 Hindu 1.5	Javanese 64.1 Lampung* 13.6 Sundanese 9.6	PDIP Golkar Demokr at Gerindra
3	Riau Islands	1,016,203	54.19	45.81	8.38	Islam 79.6 Christian 13.5 Buddhist 6.7	Malay 30 Javanese 25 Batak 12.5 Minang 9.7	Golkar PDIP Nasdem PAN
4	North Sumatra	7,524,301	52.32	47.68	4.64	Islam 66.4 Christian 31.1 Buddhist 2.4	Batak 44.8 Javanese 33.4 Nias 7.1 Malay 6	PDIP Gerindra Golkar PKS
5	Bengkulu	1,169,487	49.89	50.11	0.22	Islam 97.6 Christian 2.1	Sumatra groups* 55.1 Javanese 22.6 Palembang* 8.4	PDIP Golkar Gerindra PAN
6	Jambi	2,062,858	41.68	58.32	16.64	Islam 95.9	Jambi* 43.6	Golkar

						Christian 3.1	Javanese 29.1 Malay 5.4 Minang 5.3	PDIP Gerindra PAN
7	South Sumatra	4,820,768	40.30	59.70	19.40	Islam 97.1 Christian 1.5	Palembang 55.4 Javanese 27.4 Malay 8.1	Golkar Gerindra Nasdem PDIP
8	Riau	3,224,000	38.73	61.27	22.54	Islam 88.2 Christian 9.6 Buddhist 2.1	Malay 33.2 Javanese 29.2 Batak 12.6 Minang 12.3	PDIP PKS Gerindra Golkar
9	Aceh	2,804,934	14.41	85.59	71.18	Islam 98.7 Christian 1.2	Aceh* 85.4 Javanese 8.9 Batak 3.3	Demokr at Gerindra Golkar PAN
10	West Sumatra	2,896,494	14.08	85.92	71.84	Islam 97.7 Christian 2.3	Minang 87.3 Batak 4.6 Javanese 4.5	Gerindra PAN Demokr at PKS

*This is an amalgamation of smaller ethnic groups.

Jokowi was supported by 13,283,491 (42.7%) of the population while 17,828,810 (57.3%) of the total of 31.1 million voted for Prabowo. The table also shows that Jokowi won by generally low margins, the highest being in Bangka-Belitung (26.4%). Prabowo, on the other hand, won by significant margins, for example, 71.2% in Aceh and 71.8% in West Sumatra. This means that the provinces where Prabowo won were generally more consolidated in their political preference compared to those where Jokowi won.

Although all these provinces are predominantly Muslim, the percentage of Muslims in the provinces where Prabowo won are decidedly higher (with 90% average) than in those where Jokowi won. This shows that religion played a role in voter preference, with the provinces with more Muslim inhabitants inclining towards Prabowo. Lampung was an exception, however. Muslims make up almost 96% of the population, but they voted overwhelmingly for Jokowi. This was likely due to the predominance of Javanese (64%), which is Jokowi's ethnic group. Here we discern how ethnic voting may curb religious voting and restrict the Islamist-pluralist binarism. Ethnic voting was less influential in Riau, South Sumatra and Jambi where Jokowi lost. In these areas, Javanese make up at least 25% of their population.

Figure 1
Winning Margins of Jokowi and Prabowo in Sumatra (see Table I)

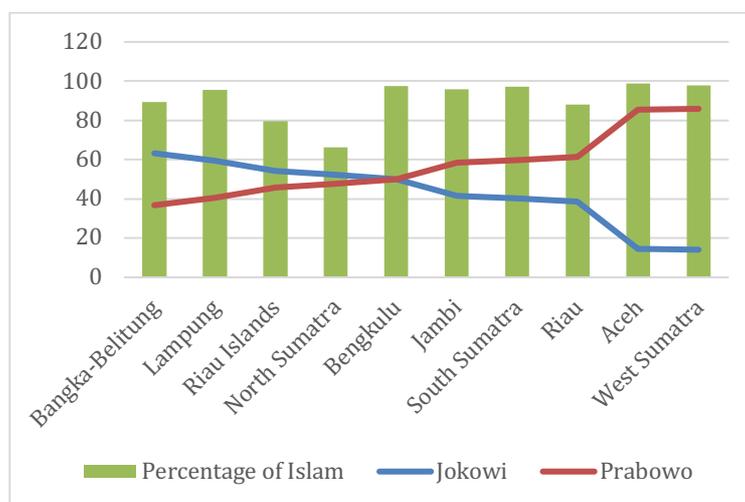


Table I also shows that Jokowi’s two main parties, namely PDIP and Golkar, are among the four largest parties in the four provinces where Jokowi won, and interestingly such is also the case in Bengkulu, Jambi, South Sumatra, Riau and Aceh (only Golkar there), where Jokowi lost. This means that a person who voted for a particular presidential candidate could still vote for a party that was not in this candidate’s coalition. This also means that religious binarism was more prevalent in the presidential election.

NORTH SUMATRA: BINARISM AND THE GEOPOLITICAL RELIGIOUS BOUNDARY

The province’s overall voting pattern is consistent with its districts’ religious demography. Muslim districts overwhelmingly voted for Prabowo (supported by PKS-Gerindra) while Christian districts voted for Jokowi (supported by PDIP). The similarity to the 2018 gubernatorial election is striking. Back then, Muslim districts voted for the all-Muslim ticket supported by PKS-Gerindra, while Christian districts voted for the mixed religion ticket supported by PDIP. In Table II, the first seven rows show the areas where the PKS-Gerindra governor candidate won in 2018, and where Prabowo also won in 2019. The next four show where the PDIP governor candidate had won in 2018, and where Jokowi also won in 2019.

Table II
North Sumatra’s 2018 gubernatorial and 2019 presidential elections compared¹⁷

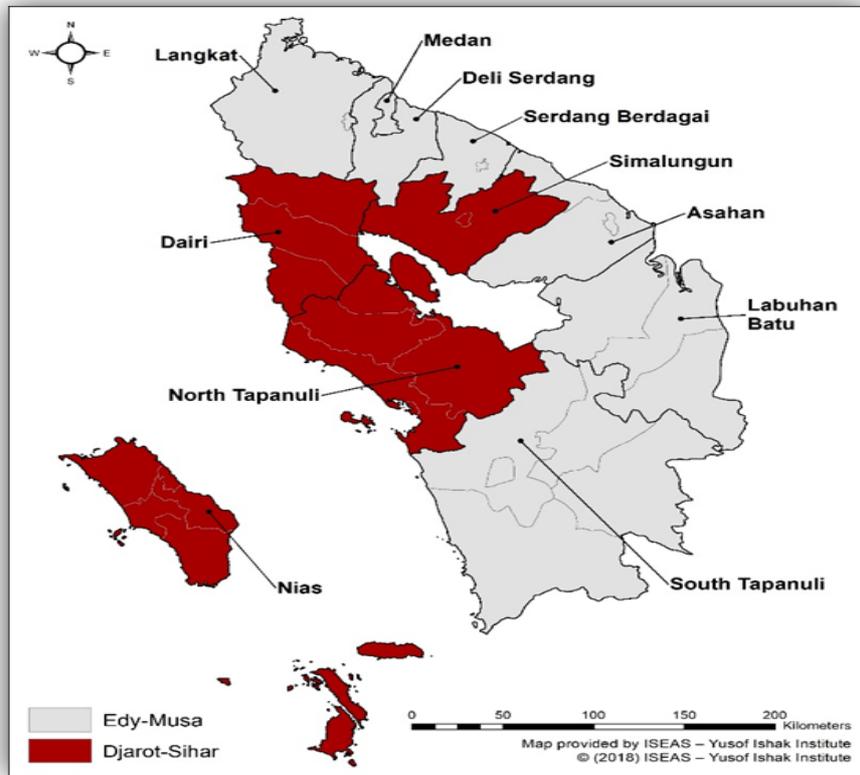
No	Areas/Electoral Districts	Edy-Musa %	Djarot-Sihar %	Prabowo %	Jokowi %	Religions %	Ethnicities %
1	Medan North	61.28	38.72	54.4	45.6	Islam 59.68 Christian 28.26 Buddha 9.9	Batak 35.2 Javanese 33 Chinese 9.7 Malay 6.9
	Medan South	51.88	48.12				
2	Deli Serdang.	61.15	38.85	54.33	45.67	Islam 78.24 Christian 19.5	Javanese 51.9 Batak 30.64 Malay 6.39 Chinese 2.32

3	Serdang Bedagai, Tebing Tinggi city.	65.64	34.36	53.8	46.2	Islam 89 Christian 18.64	Javanese 48 Batak 30 Malay 6.73 Chinese 4.7
4	Asahan, Tanjung Balai, Batu Bara	81.40	18.60	63.2	36.8	Islam 87.2 Christian 37.3	Javanese 38.6 Batak 33.2 Malay 21.13 Chinese 2.7
5	Labuhan Batu, South Labuhan Batu, North Labuhan Batu.	81.77	18.23	60.7	39.3	Islam 82 Christian 17.6	Batak 46.5 Javanese 45.5 Malay 4.3 Chinese 1
6	South Tapanuli, Mandailing Natal, Padang Lawas, Padang Sidempuan city.	86.21	13.79	74.6	25.4	Islam 89.1 Christian 10.7	Batak 82.8 Javanese 9.4 Malay 0.62
7	Langkat, Binjai city.	70.41	29.59	61.1	38.9	Islam 86.55 Christian 10	Javanese 54.35 Batak 21 Malay 10.1 Chinese 3.55
8	Nias, South Nias, North Nias, West Nias, Gunungsitoli.	29.18	70.82	8	92	Christian 96 Islam 4	Nias 99
9	North Tapanuli, Central Tapanuli, Tobasa, Humbahas, Sibolga city.	13.8	86.82	13.7	86.3	Christian 75 Islam 23	Batak 85.65 Javanese 3.2 Malay 1 Chinese 0.87
10	Simalungun, Siantar city.	40.40	59.60	29	71	Islam 49.6 Christian 48.3	Batak 58 Javanese 35.38 Chinese 2.5
11	Dairi, West Pakpak, Karo.	13.55	86.45	16.6	83.4	Christian 74.23 Islam 25.4	Batak 93.23 Javanese 4.32

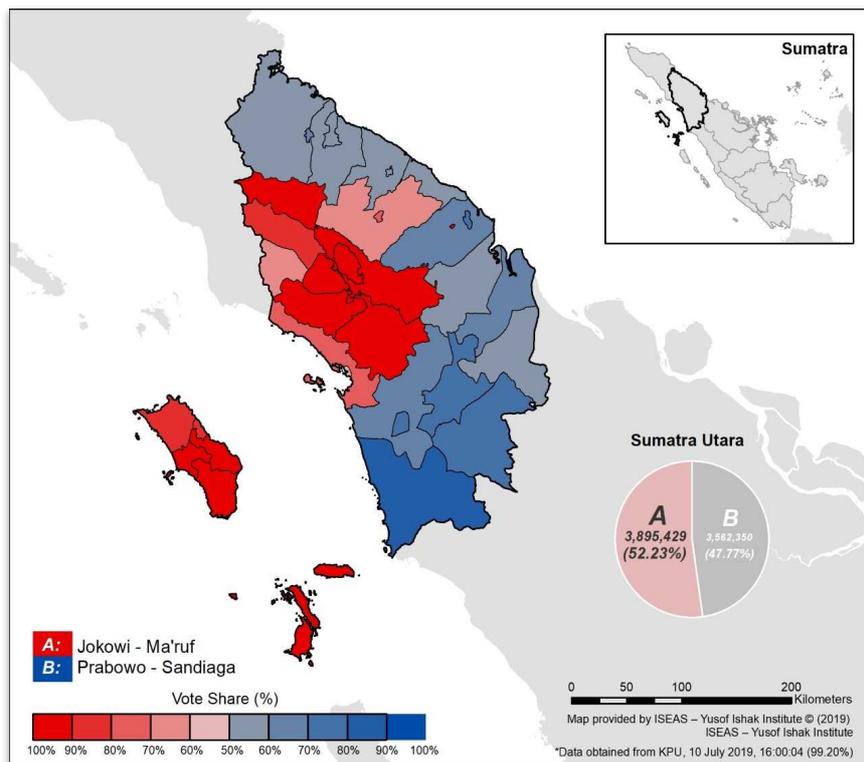
In 2019, North Sumatra's 33 administrative districts were divided into three large electoral districts. However, for the purpose of comparison, Table II groups these administrative districts into eleven smaller clusters according to the electoral districts in the 2018 gubernatorial election.

Table II and the maps show that the east coast Muslim districts which had voted for the all-Muslim ticket (Edy-Musa) in 2018, voted for Prabowo in 2019. Similarly, the west coast Christian districts which had voted for the mixed ticket (Djarot-Sihar) in 2018, voted for Jokowi in 2019. Table II also shows the failure of ethnicity to curb religious voting both in 2018 and 2019. Batak-Muslim districts, for example, voted for the all-Muslim pair, rather than the mixed pair with a Christian-Batak vice-governor candidate. Religious voting thus highlights the geographical divide between the Muslim east coast and the Christian west coast.¹⁸

Map I
Distribution of votes in North Sumatra's 2018 gubernatorial election¹⁹



Map II
Distribution of votes in North Sumatra's 2019 presidential election



In some Christian districts, Jokowi won by generally larger margins compared to Djarot-Sihar in 2018. Some Christian voters revealed that they felt anxious about the trend toward conservatism exemplified by the triumph of PKS-Gerindra in 2018.²⁰ Still, local politicians and academics reveal that religious voting is not uncommon in North Sumatra,²¹ where PKS governor candidates have won in three consecutive elections.

WEST SUMATRA: BINARISM AND HISTORICAL ANIMOSITY

West Sumatra has a predominance of Muslims (98%) and ethnic-Minang (87%). Jokowi suffered the worst results there, garnering only 14% of the total vote, down from the 23% he received in 2014. Some voters said they preferred leaders who prioritize Islamic interests and *berwibawa* (have a “commanding” attitude), which according to them were exemplified by Prabowo.²² The centrality of Islam in their daily life is embodied by the slogan *Adat basandi Syarak, Syarak basandi Kitabullah* (“Tradition is reinforced by the Sharia and the Sharia is reinforced by the Holy Book”).²³ On the surface, it seems that the nation-wide Islamist-pluralist binarism was the main factor influencing West Sumatra’s voting pattern. The province’s political history, however, reveals specific episodes which could explain Jokowi’s persistent lack of popularity.

First is PDIP’s connection with the Nationalist Party of Indonesia (PNI). PNI was PDIP’s progenitor and was led by Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno, the father of PDIP’s chairwoman Megawati Soekarnoputri. In Indonesia’s first election in 1955, PNI only gained 1% of the province’s vote, while the Islamic parties Masyumi and Perti gained 49% and 28% respectively. Even the Indonesian Communist Party gained 7%. In the 1971 election and five subsequent elections in the Soeharto era, PNI and PDI (into which PNI was fused) lost to the government party Golkar and the Islamic party PPP. In the post-reform era’s first election in 1999, despite PDIP’s sweeping triumph at the national level, it still lost to Golkar and other Islamic parties in West Sumatra.

The presidential elections also showed a similar disapproval of PDIP. In 2004, Megawati-Hasyim Muzadi (then chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia’s largest moderate Islamic organization) received only 16% of the votes, while Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono SBY (chairman of Demokrat party)-Jusuf Kalla won 85%. In 2009, Megawati-Prabowo garnered only 5.9%, while SBY-Boediono received 80% and Jusuf Kalla-Wiranto 14.2%. In 2014, Prabowo-Hatta gained 77% of the votes and Jokowi-Kalla only 23% despite Kalla’s wife, who is ethnic-Minang, having campaigned for her husband. Interestingly, Prabowo was unpopular back in 2009 when he was paired with Megawati. This indicates that West Sumatra’s votes for Prabowo in 2019 was likely less about supporting Prabowo than about not supporting Megawati and a PDIP presidential candidate.

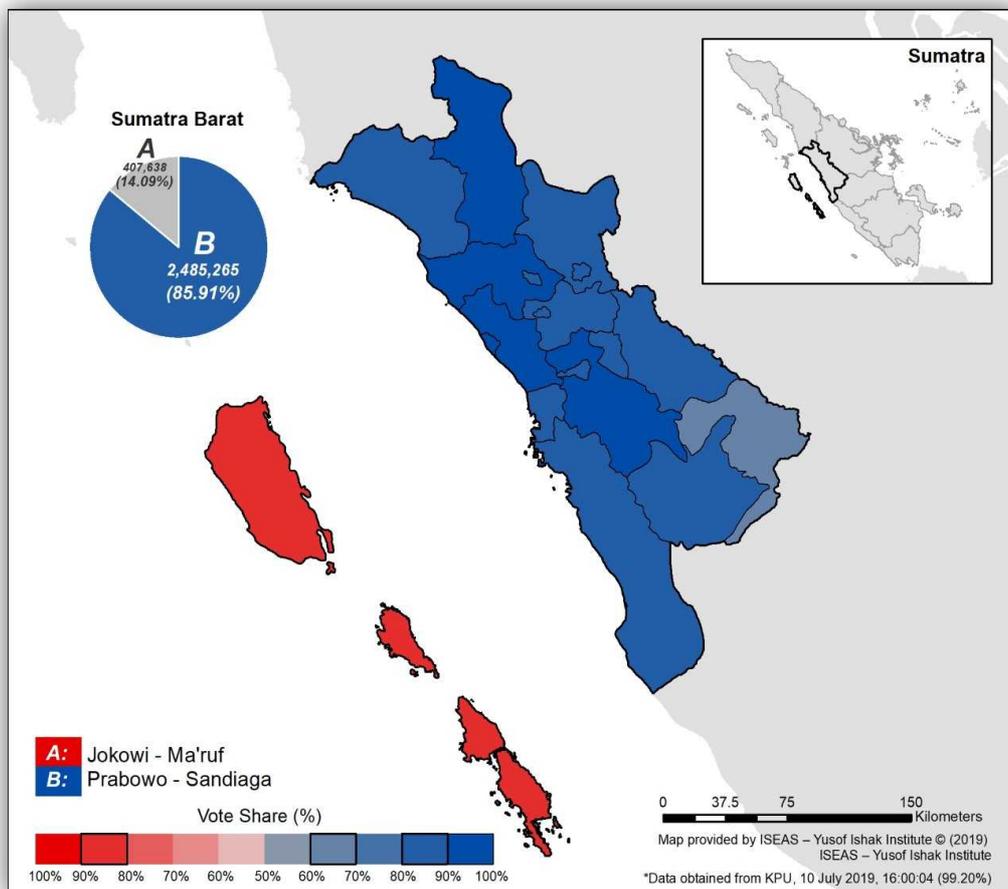
Second is West Sumatra’s historical feud with the central government. Lev and Feith wrote that the dispute began in “the turbulent period of mid-1956 to mid-1958, a period of transition from an open and pluralistic political system to a far more authoritarian one.”²⁴ In 1956, two groups sought to claim leadership: the first were the ‘regionalists’, consisting of military elites in several non-Java regions and members of the Muslim party Masyumi who were disenchanted with the over-centralized government in Jakarta which had neglected outer regions. The second was the Soekarno government, which did not see the

discrepancy between the regions and the centre as more problematic than “the prevailing dissatisfaction on ‘liberalism’ and [...] Indonesia’s choice of an imported brand of democracy rather than the democracy which existed in its own traditions.²⁵”

In 1958, the birth of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) was proclaimed in Padang, West Sumatra, with Syafruddin Prawiranegara as the Prime Minister. Soemitro Djojohadikusumo, former minister under Soekarno and Prabowo Subianto’s father, became an avid supporter of the movement. Although the central government subdued the movement in 1958, this episode triggered West Sumatra’s uneasy relations with the central government. For some observers, the fact that Prabowo’s father was involved in PRRI has made the 2019 contestation between Prabowo and Jokowi mirror the old competition between the regionalist and the Soekarno groups.

Ethnoreligious factors also played a role. Map III shows that the Mentawai islands, where Christians (79%) and ethnic-Mentawaians (86%) are predominant, overwhelmingly voted for Jokowi. In addition, although Prabowo won decisively (82-92%) in almost every district, Jokowi did gain 30% in Dharmasraya – coloured grey on the map. This was likely due to the district’s high percentage of Javanese (32%), a consequence of the ‘transmigration’ project.²⁶ Ethnic voting was thus likely, especially because the percentage of Jokowi’s win (31%) is consistent with the percentage of the district’s Javanese population. Here again, we discern how ethnic-voting had curbed the religiously-charged binarism, although not resulting in Jokowi’s victory as did happen in Lampung. Why ethnic (Javanese) voting could be influential in Lampung and Dharmasraya, yet not so much in other Sumatran regions, pertains to the different backgrounds and experiences of Javanese migrant groups, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Map III
Distribution of votes in West Sumatra's 2019 presidential election



There were efforts to increase Jokowi's popularity in West Sumatra. Before the election, to attract voters, twelve district-heads and mayors pledged their allegiance to Jokowi, stating that the President's infrastructure projects have improved their regions' economy.²⁷ In 2015-2018, Jokowi visited West Sumatra five times and was in 8 out of the 19 districts. He was in Padang to celebrate the 2016 Idul Fitri and became the first President who did the Eid prayer with residents of Padang. Yet these efforts failed to boost his popularity in the province.

CONCLUSION: BINARISM AND LOCAL SPECIFICITIES

In addition to being influenced by the binarism which affected national politics, the 2019 election in Sumatra was also affected by factors unique to individual provinces. Jokowi's worst showing in West Sumatra, where he gained only 14% of the votes may have been caused by a long-established animosity against PDIP (considered descendant of PNI), in addition to religious conservatism. In North Sumatra, where Jokowi only won by a negligible margin, the voting pattern emulated the 2018 gubernatorial election, with each district's religious demography influencing voter preference. North Sumatra's voting pattern in the presidential election thus reinforced the "geopolitical divide" between the east

coast Muslim districts which supported Prabowo and the west coast Christian districts which supported Jokowi.

At the national level, a national reconciliation is greatly needed yet very hard to achieve. Considering how religious conservatism has been successfully used, it is likely that religiously-charged binarism will continue to influence politics in the near future, especially the local elections in 2020 and 2021.

¹ Deasy Simandjuntak, "Jokowi's triumph in the 2019 presidential election and the future of binary politics", in *Heinrich Boell Stiftung Southeast Asia*, 6 June 2019, <https://th.boell.org/en/2019/06/06/jokowis-triumph-2019-presidential-election-and-future-binary-politics> (accessed 26/6/2019).

² Paul DiMaggio, John Evans, and Bethany Bryson. "Have American's social attitudes become more polarized?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102.3 (1996): 690-755; Delia Baldassarri, and Andrew Gelman. "Partisans without constraint: Political polarization and trends in American public opinion." *American Journal of Sociology* 114.2 (2008): 408-446.

³ I used the term 'pluralist' here very loosely. Jokowi's move to appoint Ma'ruf Amin as his running-mate shows that he also tried to avoid being too associated with non-Muslims. However, the fact that the President was supported by 97% non-Muslims as well as traditional (moderate) Muslims show that his support base was more "plural" than Prabowo's, which was fronted by conservative and literalist Muslims.

⁴ Deasy Simandjuntak, "Faced with a troubling blasphemy verdict, Ahok at least left Jakarta a legacy of reform", *Channel News Asia* commentary, 11 May 2017, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/commentary-ahok-left-jakarta-legacy-of-reform-8836708> (accessed 3/9/2018).

⁵ Deasy Simandjuntak, "Identity-politics looms over Indonesia's presidential election" East Asia Forum, 10 November 2019, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/11/10/identity-politics-looms-over-indonesias-presidential-election/>

⁶ "Siapa saja yang memilih Jokowi dan Prabowo berdasarkan exit poll dan quick count?" ("Who voted for Jokowi and Prabowo according to exit poll and quick count?" in *BBC Indonesia*, 24 April 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-48019930> (accessed 4/6/2019).

⁷ "West Java fails to improve tolerance", in *The Jakarta Post*, 11 January 2017, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2017/01/11/w-java-fails-to-improve-tolerance.html> (accessed 4/6/2019).

⁸ "Anti-communist rally in Jakarta: a washout" in *The Straits Times*, 30 September 2017, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/anti-communist-rally-in-jakarta-a-washout> (accessed 3/6/2019).

⁹ "Jokowi digempur kampanye fitnah" (Jokowi hit by a slander campaign) in *Deutsche Welle*, 4 July 2014, <https://www.dw.com/id/jokowi-digempur-kampanye-fitnah/a-17758807> (accessed 3/9/2018).

¹⁰ Deasy Simandjuntak, "Jokowi's ban on radical groups and Pancasila's uncomfortable past" in *Channel News Asia* commentary, 22 July 2017, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/commentary-jokowi-s-ban-on-radical-groups-and-pancasila-s-9047670> (accessed 1/5/2019).

¹¹ "Daftar purnawirawan jenderal TNI di kubu Prabowo-Sandiaga" ("The list of former military generals in Prabowo-Sandiaga's camp" in *Tempo*, 19 October 2018, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1138033/daftar-purnawirawan-jenderal-tni-di-kubu-prabowo-sandiaga/full&view=ok> (accessed 28/07/2019).

¹² “Prabowo: Ilmu Islam saya kurang, tapi...” (“Prabowo: My Islamic knowledge is lacking, however...”) in *Detik*, 27 July 2018, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4137520/prabowo-ilmu-islam-saya-kurang-tapi> (accessed 7/6/2019).

¹³ “Prabowo-Sandiaga signs pact with GNPF, promises to uphold religious values”, in *The Jakarta Post*, 17 September 2018, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/09/16/prabowo-sandiaga-signs-pact-with-gnpf-promises-to-uphold-religious-values.html> (accessed 6/4/2019).

¹⁴ Author’s calculation from data presented in Aris Ananta, et al. *Demography of Indonesia's ethnicity*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015.

¹⁵ Author’s calculation from data presented in Aris Ananta, et al., 2015.

¹⁶ The presidential elections result data are taken from the Electoral Commission website. The ethnoreligious demography data are based on the 2010 population census, and are taken from Aris Ananta, et al. *Demography of Indonesia's ethnicity*. ISEAS Publishing, 2015

¹⁷ The 2018 North Sumatra gubernatorial election data derives from Deasy Simandjuntak “North Sumatra’s 2018 election: Identity-politics ruled the day”, *ISEAS Perspective* No. 60, 1 October 2018. https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2018_60@50.pdf

¹⁸ North Sumatra has recently experienced an increased influence of Islamic conservatism in its local politics, not only illustrated by the victory of the PKS-Gerindra governor, but also by incidents such as the attacks on Buddhist and Confucian temples in Tanjung Balai in 2016. These were triggered by resentment against a Chinese-Buddhist woman complaining about the volume of a mosque’s speaker. The woman was eventually sentenced to imprisonment for blasphemy in 2018. See Hui Yew Foong and Deasy Simandjuntak, “Indonesia’s sectarian violence assumes religious guise” in *Today*, 21 August 2016, <https://www.todayonline.com/commentary/indonesias-sectarian-violence-assumes-religious-guise>; Leo Suryadinata, “Identity-politics in Indonesia: the Meiliana case”, *ISEAS Perspective* No. 4, 23 January 2019.

https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2019_4.pdf (accessed on 26/07/2019).

¹⁹ Map taken from Deasy Simandjuntak, “North Sumatra’s 2018 election: Identity-politics ruled the day”, *ISEAS Perspective* No. 60, 1 October 2018.

https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2018_60@50.pdf

²⁰ Conversations with potential voters and politicians in Medan and Deli Serdang, April 2019.

²¹ Interview with Dr Muryanto Amin, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Political Science, North Sumatra University; Raden Syafii, member of DPR (national parliament) from Gerindra Party; Fuad Ginting, head of North Sumatra’s branch of Indonesia Solidarity Party (PSI); Aswan Jaya, PDIP candidate in North Sumatra, April 2019.

²² “Pemilu 2019: kenapa dukungan untuk Prabowo begitu kuat di Sumatera Barat?” (2019 election: why was West Sumatra’s support for Prabowo very strong?) in *BBC Indonesia*, 18 April 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-47974094> (accessed 24 July 2019).

²³ Franz von Benda-Beckmann and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann. "Changing one is changing all: Dynamics in the Adat-Islam-State Triangle." *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law* 38.53-54 (2006): 239-270.

²⁴ Herbert Feith and Daniel S. Lev. "The end of the Indonesian rebellion." *Pacific Affairs* 36.1 (1963): 32-46.

²⁵ Feith and Lev, p.33.

²⁶ Since 1953, to reduce poverty and overpopulation in Java as well as to provide a workforce to utilize natural resources in the outer islands, Javanese were relocated from the highly populated Java island to less populated regions outside Java.

²⁷ These were district heads of Dharmasraya, Pasaman, Tanah Datar, Sijunjung, Mentawai, Limapuluh Kota, Padang Panjang, Bukittinggi, Solok city and Pariaman. See “12 kepala daerah di Sumbar deklarasi dukung Jokowi-Maruf” (“12 district heads in West Sumatra declared support for Jokowi-Maruf”) <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2019/04/09/17192381/12-kepala-daerah-di-sumbar-deklarasi-dukung-jokowi-maruf> (accessed 24/07/2019).

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