

ated a “funnel effect,” which means, in Martínez’s words, that “those carrying a change of clothes and the hope to find work now have to walk the same paths as those smuggling guns and drugs.” Sometimes migrants, like Juan and Chauk in *La jaula de oro*, might be forced to haul drugs across the border for cartels. Others might have to wait a few extra days if a cartel is trying to move drugs or guns and doesn’t want to “heat up” the route. The routes change constantly, based on the cartels’ never-ending game of cat and mouse with the US Border Patrol, but most of them are in desolate stretches of the border—far from urban areas, and far from help. The funnel effect’s impact on migrants has been devastating: from 1999 to 2012, the number of migrants whose remains were recovered along the border spiked from 249 to 477.

Migrants who evade death and Border Patrol officers in the desert move on to the final circle of hell, life as an undocumented migrant in the United States. Most, like Juan, who gets a job discarding unusable cow parts in a meat-packing plant, will work long hours for scant pay at backbreaking, monotonous factory or service jobs—if they find employment at all. As undocumented migrants from Central America, they are easily exploited, unlikely to report abuses and unlikely to receive asylum. And yet, these are the people who made it: the ones who escaped violence and poverty in their home countries; survived the Beast, narcos and corrupt Mexican officials; and managed to cross into the United States, find a job and avoid deportation. These are the “lucky” ones, the people living the American dream. ■

thing similar to Obama in Jokowi’s unflappably pragmatic outlook and his preference for technical solutions to political battle.

Jokowi has already survived a political contest that many feared would be stolen from him. His opponent for the presidency, Prabowo Subianto, is a former commander of the Indonesian Special Forces, who only seemed to leave his villa and paddock of Lusitanos for mass Sukarno-style rallies. Prabowo called on Indonesians to support a reversion to the country’s less democratic Constitution of 1945 and denounced the very admixture of cronyism, corruption and foreign investment that made his campaign possible. By choosing Jokowi, Indonesians have avoided their own version of Putin or Berlusconi. Democrats across the country have been breathing easier in recent weeks.

But the larger significance of Jokowi is what he and Indonesia represent for the region—Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand—and the world, which pays scant attention to its third-largest democracy and fourth-most-populous country. In the United States, in particular, Indonesia is routinely cited as an example of a successful Muslim democracy. Some of this praise is deserved. In the period since the fall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesia has conducted four general elections in its archipelago of 250 million people; it boasts the most critical domestic press of any country in Southeast Asia (the magazine *Tempo*, the publishing house Gramedia, the daily *Jakarta Post*); it has gone from having one of the most centralized states in the world to a genuinely federal government, with citizens voting directly for their local representatives; it has allowed East Timor to secede through a referendum; it has established a much-praised peace accord with the rebels in Aceh; it has not only allowed its citizens of Chinese origin to speak their language again but also officially celebrates the Lunar New Year. None of this was anticipated by anyone observing the Indonesian scene in the 1990s.

## Jokowi’s Way

by THOMAS MEANEY AND SASKIA SCHÄFER

**T**he power of charismatic politics in the world today has lately taken two extreme forms in Asia. In India, Narendra Modi came into office in May with a mandate unprecedented in the country since Indira Gandhi; in Indonesia, the victory of Joko Widodo (universally known as “Jokowi”) in July has made him the most popular Indonesian leader in half a century. From a distance, the two politicians appear to have much in common. Neither sprang fully formed from a political establishment: Modi started his career running a tea stall; Jokowi, a furniture-export company. Both come from a heartland of their respective nations: Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat, the home state of Gandhi; Jokowi was the governor of Jakarta and before that the mayor of Solo, an ancient center of Javanese culture. Both style themselves tribunes of the people, combining highly personalized media campaigns with a pragmatic sense of how to reform their bureaucracies, uproot corruption and deliver their countries into a prosperity so long deferred. Both make a great show of conducting on-the-spot checks of state services to test their performance—a stunt familiar enough in offices around the world, but novel in the creaking dynastic regimes these two politicians have inherited.

But the similarities end there. *The Economist* could not bring itself to endorse the market-friendly Modi, owing to his divisive, caste-based politics and alleged complicity in an anti-Muslim pogrom in 2002. By contrast, the election of Jokowi has been met with international enthusiasm. He has golden credentials when it comes to inclusiveness: his running mate for the governorship of Jakarta was Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, an ethnic Chinese Christian who would not have been a candidate sixteen years ago, when the Chinese minority was attacked for its closeness to Suharto’s New Order. Modi has made clear that his administration will follow the growth-based model of his economic gurus, including Arvind Panagariya and Jagdish Bhagwati, but Jokowi’s economic principles remain vague enough for people of any political orientation to find in him whatever they seek. Unlike Modi, who thrives in the spotlight, Jokowi’s charisma is largely a product of the media’s embrace of a politician who wades through flooded streets and spends as much time outdoors with the people as in his air-conditioned office. His speeches and rallies have been remarkably subdued, but every Indonesian is familiar with his personal story. At home and abroad, Jokowi is likened to President Obama—with some justice. An astounding amount of hope has been thrust upon the man. In the lead-up to the election, Jakartans crowded the porch outside his office just to get a glimpse of the governor who dresses like a *becak* driver. There is also some-

**Y**et there are a series of slow-burning crises in the country that are difficult to piece together from the headlines. After decades of military rule and the exclusion of religion from politics, Indonesians embraced democracy and human rights. But the generation of anti-Suharto protesters failed to form a political alternative, and their democratic enthusiasm has now sputtered in the mire of corruption and political scandal. New authorities and ideas are jostling for influence, supported by foreign funding pouring in from Saudi Arabia and the United States. The most vis-

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ible point of ideological conflict is religion: Islam in Indonesia has for centuries been diverse and accommodating. It arrived in the region not by military conquest but through trade with Arabia, India, Persia and China. Starting in the eighteenth century, European Christians and Middle Eastern Muslims introduced new forms of faith into the country that demanded more rigor and uniformity.

Since the fall of Suharto, new versions of Islam have competed for dominance. Different groups have different ideas about the place that religion should have in the modern nation-state, where rigid educational and legal institutions have replaced more local practices. The construction of Saudi-funded schools and mosques in Indonesian cities, the mushrooming of supposedly sharia-compliant banking, and the ubiquitous labeling of products as *halal*—all of this attests to the growing power of newer strains of Sunni Islam in the country and the rise of middle-class consumers. Before the arrival of Arabs and Europeans, hardly any women in the Malay world covered their shoulders, let alone their heads; now they shop for Islamic accessories in vast, vertiginous malls. How these public displays of religious affiliation affect personal piety, and whether they support the stronger influence of Islam on the country's political institutions, is far from clear.

Most significant, Muslim modernists have energetically rehabilitated the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Islamic Scholars), formerly a sleepy governmental organization for Muslim affairs set up under Suharto. In the past decade, the MUI has become the chief authority on Islam in Indonesia, surpassing the two main civil-society organizations, Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama. Both of these groups—composed, respectively, of some 30 million and 40 million members—preceded the Indonesian nation-state and traditionally held religious authority. Now they send representatives to the MUI, whose leaders tend to take more rigid decisions. Independently funded through its monopoly over *halal* certification, the MUI exercises enormous sway over Indonesian life and defines the parameters of religious orthodoxy. To sharpen its public profile, it issues *fatwas* that proclaim specific groups or practices as non-Islamic and are often used to justify violence. The most notorious of these cases in recent years was the 2011 killings at Cikeusik in West Java, where three Ahmadis—members of the minority Islamic sect of Ahmadiyah—were murdered in a crowd that recorded their gruesome deaths for YouTube.

Indonesia would be a simpler case if it were just a question of the Islamization of some government institutions and the state's decreasing interest in preventing violent outbreaks. That would place it in line with many postcolonial nations (Algeria, Egypt, Israel) whose founders and original revolutionaries often failed to grasp the power of certain religious forms of life they expected their national liberation movements to sweep away—but which have, in recent decades, returned with renewed strength. But in Indonesia, another modernist ideology now vies for position with modernist Islam: human rights. Once the West lost interest in backing Suharto at the end of the Cold War, First World human-rights organizations flooded into the country. Now Indonesia boasts its own local human-rights community, which documents the atrocities of the Suharto years and protects minorities (Chinese, Ahmadis, Shiites, liberals, gays, atheists, etc.). Human-rights activists also have their own arm of the state: the National Commission on Human Rights. It has become a powerful enforcer of international human-rights norms across Indonesia, often working in tandem with foreign agencies to investigate abuses. In the case of the Cikeusik killings, Ahmadi Indonesians were provided with equipment to record abuses

and make videos proclaiming their status as global citizens and victims.

The form of Sunni Islam that international human-rights agencies castigate for being oppressive is often something much more complicated: the result of what happens when you join Islamic modernism with dire economic prospects in a political system in which government elites are all too happy to exacerbate identity-based violence if it means avoiding discussions about their failure to do more for the country. Their sense of opportunism runs deep. Many of the sharia-type laws on the books in Indonesia have been introduced and passed by the secularist heirs of the Suharto government, eager to curry favor with radical Muslims and get on with business. The minuet of modernist Islam and human rights in the archipelago in recent decades has thus contributed to the slow social fragmentation of Indonesia, whose original national cohesion was extraordinarily hard won.

**A**s postcolonial nationalizing projects in the twentieth century go, only the Indian experiment compares to Indonesia in its scale and ambition. But in at least two ways, Sukarno inherited a more vexing colonial legacy than Nehru: the Dutch had left little in the way of educational

## Headphones

The French Revolution vanishes  
into rain.

The cafe where Camille Desmoulins  
jumped atop the table and roared  
is closed.

So too the one grocery store  
in the Adirondack town.

Three years fade  
into centuries of raised voices.

When I think “of my childhood”  
what am I thinking?

Spiro Agnew's widow died.  
Everything a function  
of stochastic patterns  
this rain also obeys.

Can't you hear it  
the unpitched wave soaking  
the spruce?

Can't you hear them screaming?  
Morton Feldman said  
pointing below the Berlin pavement stones.

One deafens to live  
till you're deafened to all.

I'm canceling all the noise  
my earthened ears bring me.

or bureaucratic infrastructure compared with the British in India; and unlike India, Indonesia had been conquered by Japan and ruled for three and a half years during World War II. The genius of Sukarno was to channel the modernizing ideology of the Japanese into a popular movement and set it against the returning Dutch in 1945. Confronting both the Japanese and the Dutch, Sukarno appealed them in their moments of strength and applied pressure in their moments of weakness. It is a measure of the current state of Indonesian national self-consciousness that one of the major recent locally produced films was a biopic of Sukarno—*Soekarno: Indonesia Merdeka* (Freedom)—that provoked more reflection in the country than *The Act of Killing*. Besides dwelling on Sukarno's marital life and divorce, the debate centered on the film's forthright depiction of his collaboration with the Japanese empire.

In 1944, Sukarno and his second-in-command, Mohammad Hatta, worked out a mutually satisfying bargain with the Japanese, who formally granted the Indonesians independence before leaving the islands. The new constitutional charter was based on *pancasila*, five splendidly opaque propositions that have mostly served Indonesia well: belief in one supreme God (Hinduism in Bali was reinterpreted as a monotheistic religion), just humanity, national unity, democracy and social justice. Sukarno's peculiar blend of communism, nationalism and Islam proved to be an unstable compound, but it gave him enough cover to start incorporating the members of these factions, along with Christians and ethnic minorities, into the state. In addition, having the Constitution announced before the end of the war made it clear to the Dutch that reincorporation of the colony would not come easily. This required some more active resistance to accomplish, but the genuinely astonishing achievement came in the following decade, when Indonesians stitched together the most geographically disparate nation-state in the world and agreed to share political commitments and a lingua franca—all without infringing as much as one might have expected on local traditions, dialects and practices. It was Indonesia that inspired Benedict Anderson's concept of nations as "imagined communities," in which people who share a language and a bureaucracy begin to feel kinship with millions of others whom they will never meet.

Sukarno's undoing was the Cold War. In the early 1950s, he was a consummate Third Worldist, hosting the Asian-Afro Conference in Bandung in 1955 and adeptly consolidating Indonesia's fragile sovereignty. But before

long, things fell apart. Fellow leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, such as Nasser and Nkrumah, grew impatient with Sukarno's grandstanding and expressed support for Indonesia's new rival, Malaysia. In 1958, the Eisenhower administration, frustrated by Sukarno's accommodation of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), backed a military coup that dramatically failed to remove him. (It was everything that the successful 1953 coup in Tehran was not, and ended with a downed American B-26 pilot being tried in a Jakarta courtroom.) By the 1960s, with the American presence in nearby Vietnam beginning to crack, the Johnson administration once more looked for ways to replace Sukarno. General Suharto and his circle of officers proved congenial partners and took the initiative. The events of 1965–66 that brought Suharto to power are still shrouded in rumor, but US involvement was only a matter of degree. More than half a million alleged communists in the country were killed, some of whose names had been provided by the US embassy. For this, Suharto and his generals won the gratitude of Washington. Within a few years, Indonesia looked to be the ideal counterexample to Vietnam: the largest Communist Party outside the Soviet bloc had been eliminated with no direct US military action. The need to know more about communism in Indonesia had led to generous support for scholars in the 1950s and '60s—much of it centered around George Kahin's Modern Indonesia Project at Cornell University, funded by the Ford Foundation in consultation with the CIA. Many of the most prominent thinkers in the field, from Clifford Geertz to Benedict Anderson, got their start in this period. At the same time, Indonesia was opened for US investment. In a rash of pillaging of Conradian proportions, American oil and logging companies, along with the virtually Kurtzian Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, began extracting resources from the country.

A sampling of Indonesian literature of recent decades gives one the sense that the country's intellectual life has never recovered from the mass killings of the 1960s. This may be due to the fact that so many talented writers hailed politically from the left and were either killed or barred from print. Many of the best novelists who did survive—Mochtar Lubis, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Ahmad Tohari—remain little known in the country. It is perhaps a sign of trauma, or an appeal to outsider knowledge of the Indonesian tragedy, that even the novelists of the current generation circle back to the mid-1960s as their subject. It almost seems a limitation that novelists can't write serious fiction in Indonesia with-

out accounting for that decade. Indonesian literature continues to be produced in great quantity, but there appear to be few writers grappling with the intrigues of the Indonesian political elite. Nor has there been any Indonesian film that deals with the events of 1965–66 in the way, for instance, that the South Korean director Im Sang-Soo handled his country's 1979 coup in his 2005 film *The President's Last Bang*.

Islamic book fairs across the country reveal the place of the book in a nation undergoing extreme economic transformation. The titles on offer are almost all non-fiction. The philosophy of Nietzsche and the exploits of German U-boats are amply covered. Korans are sold with gold trim for display in the household. The influence of American self-help books is overwhelming. Across Southeast Asia, a code-of-conduct genre thrives, running the gamut of questions from how to be a good Muslim wife to how to combine inner spirituality with economic success. It is all very familiar.

Surveying Indonesian politics today, one might wonder where the military has gone. "Into business" is the answer. After Suharto fell at the height of the 1998 Asian economic crisis, there was a period of democratic outpouring unknown in Indonesia since Sukarno's initial push for independence. Hopes for *reformasi* were high. But the epigones of Suharto were shrewder than their liege: they established a multiparty parliamentary democracy that up until now has mostly been run by one or another of their former ranks, and they channeled the state's resources into privatized firms that came under their control. The outgoing president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, is a former Indonesian general with relatively clean hands; he spent some time at Fort Benning in Georgia and will principally be remembered for his invisibility.

Little wonder that Jokowi's main competitor, Prabowo, is popular not only for his connections and wealth, but also for being *tegas* (forceful). Although it would be difficult to find a purer product of Suharto's New Order, Prabowo styles himself as the savior of the *rakyat kecil*, the small people. Campaigning across Indonesia in his private jet, he wore a plain white shirt and *peci*, the traditional Sukarno outfit. During his speeches, Prabowo screamed with almost convincing passion about Indonesia's exploitation. Hacking the air into thin vertical bars and jamming his fist into the sky, he denounced Indonesia's leaders for depriving the people of the country's resources. It is

telling that nearly half of Indonesian voters were prepared to look past his alleged human-rights abuses and anti-democratic pronouncements. After sixteen years of corruption and chaos—what many Indonesians sneeringly call “demo-crazy”—the desire for a strong man well versed in shady dealings to rein in corruption now often overwhelms the wish to have a say, especially among the younger generation.

Jokowi himself came to power in Solo with a popular campaign that sought to correct the mismanagement of the city. But his reign as governor was more of a mixed performance than many commentators have been willing to admit. Widely praised for standing up for marginalized street vendors and simultaneously clearing the streets, his policy initiative also restricted street vending to locals. Stall owners who weren't registered in Solo were relocated outside the city, where nobody could hear their protests. Since then, his campaigns haven't focused on a political program but rather on his winning smile and his tireless hand-shaking with the *rakyat*. As governor of Jakarta, Jokowi was also known for his celebrations and civic entertainments. He now calls the capital “the city of festivals” and has doubled the number of cultural celebrations to ninety-seven a year.

There is no doubt that Jokowi brought substantial improvements to the city: his plans to reduce traffic and flooding were all welcome and appear to be proceeding apace. People—especially journalists—love him for his *blusukan* (surprise visits) to slums and hospitals. But it would be one thing if Jokowi were more of a populist of his own making. Instead, his success in the presidential race was dependent on a crucial anointing: his party's leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Sukarno, first welcomed him into its ranks, then agreed to let him run as the party's candidate instead of herself. One can only imagine the sort of back-room deal Jokowi had to consent

to in order to gain her support: he is now backed by some of the most well-known oligarchs in the land, whose political parties are more like obliging banks in which they can temporarily deposit their influence, rather than longstanding factions with competing visions for the state. But it would be a mistake to see Jokowi as simply a front man for the establishment. In fixing him as head of the Indonesian Democratic Party, Megawati seems to have acknowledged that it is in the PDI's interest to give Jokowi some space to maneuver. Already, the moment of his performative deference to Megawati is passing. Soon we will have a sense of whether he is capable of making constructive use of the full power of his office.

Lingering in the newspaper columns and the chatter of Jakarta's 7-Elevens is the sense that Jokowi remains the chosen son of the nation, the leader on whom the hopes of the people have come to rest. But are charisma and spectacles really what Indonesia needs? It would be presumptuous to give a firm answer. Yet it seems unlikely that any mortal could deliver on the hopes that Jokowi has been saddled with by his fellow citizens—and by the party he now serves. Unlike the United States, which placed just such a surfeit of expectations in Obama, Indonesia is still a young democracy with wilder hopes for the future. In the euphoria that followed the fall of Suharto, there was the palpable sense—still not completely extinguished—that Indonesian democracy would not mimic the rest of the world but blaze its own path forward. That euphoria has been revived as the result of a political contest that threatened to return the country to the darkness of Suharto's New Order. Whether Indonesians will now retreat back to their offices and shopping malls or maintain the will to reshape their society remains unclear. Either way, the world as a whole may still have something fresh and dramatic to learn from Indonesia about the future fortunes of democracy. ■

beach, chock-a-block with all generations and with a body culture seemingly so unfetishized that it made me feel svelte.

It was my first visit to all of these towns. I'm still making up for lost time, as in my undergraduate hitchhiking days Franco's Spain and junta-ruled Greece were on my index of forbidden places. I don't regret my youthful scrupulosity, but my standards have, over time, become more elastic: I've visited Putin's Russia, Deng's China, Mubarak's Egypt and Ceausescu's Romania. That the proprietorship of civilization's achievements so often falls to the tender mercies of fascists and other despots doesn't diminish them, even though many are the attainments of cruelty. A visit to the pyramids is not a vote for the pharaonic style of governance.

And yet the view from the bedroom window at home, where I am writing today, makes me wonder. I had been intending to riff on a building that I've been watching rise for the past year. I hate the thing because, within the next few weeks, it will have grown so tall that it will almost completely occupy the view. Where once I gazed on a patch of infinite sky, I will now be obliged to look at architecture. This building—an interesting piece of design by the architects Herzog and de Meuron—will join a phalanx of overscaled structures like the windowless phone company behemoth by John Carl Warnecke that collectively form the Great Wall of Tribeca, an ornamented extrusion that not only boosts property values (a penthouse in the new apartment house has already sold for \$47 million) but also subverts the idea of civility, the sense of collective responsibility in the shared environment. The new skyscraper usurps an uncodified but widely acknowledged right (for want of a better word) to the view.

Visitors to Singapore are greeted by draconian warnings of death should they be caught with the wrong forms of drug. But many are probably more intrigued by one of the truly eccentric strictures in Le Kuan Yew's fantasies of social harmony: the prohibition of chewing gum, first imagined in 1983 and imposed by a successor in 1992. This has been slightly relaxed in recent years—after legal push-back from Wrigley's and the signing of a free-trade agreement with the United States—and you can now buy a few sticks in a pharmacy for “therapeutic” use. But bringing more than two packs into the country is still considered smuggling and could earn you a year in the slammer or a caning. The reasons for the ban have nothing to do with mastication per se but with vandalism on the

## The View

by MICHAEL SORKIN

I spent ten days this summer in Basque country in Spain. The people were great, the food marvelous, the landscape gorgeous, and the towns and cities I visited—Santander, San Sebastián and Santillana del Mar—paragons of urbanity. There was a little detour to see a remarkable early house

by Antoni Gaudí, one of those geniuses whose example throws me into indecision about whether to get back to work or simply give up. These places were wonderful not simply for their architecture and urban ensemble but for their thick habits of civility, the promenading and snacking and the fabulous scene at the