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Authoritarian elections, state capacity, and performance legitimacy: Phases of regime consolidation and decline in Suharto's Indonesia

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Abstract
Political scientists have recently debated the extent to which strong state capacity helps authoritarian regimes to win elections and extend their rule. This article proposes that it is not only important to disaggregate the various forms of state capacity mobilized for that purpose, but also to analyze the sequence with which autocracies deploy them. Using Suharto's New Order regime in Indonesia as a case study, I argue that regimes mobilize different forms of state capacity in distinct phases of their development, and that the sequencing of this deployment can have implications for the regime's endurance. Suharto, for example, gradually reduced the importance of coercion as he increasingly focused on the state's ability to facilitate elite co-optation and economic patronage. This helped to extend the regime's endurance as long as the economy flourished, but also made it vulnerable to the fluctuations in the world economy that caused its demise in 1998.

Keywords
Authoritarianism, elections, state, military, Indonesia

Introduction

Elections in authoritarian regimes have received increasing attention in the literature on the endurance of non-democratic political systems. While the majority of authors have focused on the electoral strategies of autocrats (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Lueders and Croissant, 2014; Schedler, 2006, 2013), a newer stream in the discussion has highlighted structural and institutional factors that help authoritarian leaders to win at the ballot box. In particular, authors have begun to highlight the

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importance of state capacity as a key resource for authoritarian regimes. High levels of state capacity, it is argued, give autocrats a better chance to win elections, while weaker state infrastructures make an electoral defeat or post-election mobilization of the opposition more likely (Seeberg, 2014). In identifying the areas of state capacity that are essential for authoritarian consolidation, Slater and Fenner (2011) pointed to four ‘infrastructural mechanisms’ of power: first, the coercion of rivals; second, the extraction of revenues; third; the registration of citizens; and fourth, the cultivation of dependence. If regimes manage to develop strong capacities in these four areas, they can expect a longer life expectancy. Indeed, as Slater and Fenner (2011: 15) insisted, ‘state power is the most powerful weapon in the authoritarian arsenal’.

But why do authoritarian regimes operating in strong states still fall, even after decades of successfully drawing from the state’s capacities? Is this simply due to an ‘operator error’ (Slater and Fenner, 2011: 16), that is, bad decisions by autocrats in an otherwise supportive context? Or does this indicate that while some aspects of state power may help authoritarian regimes to establish themselves, these same elements can be unhelpful in the transition to long-term autocratic rule? And most importantly, does the fall of long-enduring regimes suggest that careful sequencing in the use of different state resources can extend the rule of autocracies, but is no guarantee for their indefinite survival? Should the answer to these questions be affirmative, this would suggest that rather than viewing Slater and Fenner’s dimensions of state power as the sum of segmental capacities, we could – alternatively – understand their significance as being limited to certain phases of regime development.

This article assesses the interplay between state capacity, the effectiveness of authoritarian elections, and the endurance of autocratic rule by analyzing the case of Suharto’s New Order regime in Indonesia (1966–1998). There are three main reasons why authoritarian Indonesia is a very suitable case study to illustrate how regime endurance is influenced by the level of state capacity – and the sequence with which its various elements are applied. First, Suharto’s Indonesia was generally viewed as possessing a strong state (Crouch, 1998); second, the New Order regime endured over more than three decades but eventually fell abruptly; and third, Indonesia, as the country with the world’s fourth-largest population, was one of the most important countries to be affected by the third wave of democratization. Thus, Suharto’s Indonesia can be considered an influential case (Herron and Quinn, 2016: 458; Seawright and Gerring, 2008: 294). Evidence for the arguments made in this article is drawn from official statistics produced by the Indonesian government and international economic agencies, secondary literature, and original interviews with regime officials. While a strict process-tracing is impractical for the long period studied and the limited space available in this article, the observable behavior of the researched actors and the outcomes reflected in the collected data provide an effective mechanism to explore the ways through which the Suharto regime accessed distinct segments of state capacity to extend its rule.

It is important to note a number of caveats. First, this article does not challenge already existing accounts on Suharto’s fall (Aspinall, 2005; Mietzner, 2009; Pepinsky, 2009; Slater, 2010). Rather, it focuses on the role state capacity played in the build-up and consolidation of the regime, but also shows that the sequenced mobilization of that capacity was ultimately insufficient to ensure continued authoritarian survival. Second, the presented argument makes no claim that certain levels of state capacity, and the sequencing in the deployment of its various aspects, *must* or *should* lead to certain outcomes in all cases. Indeed, the discussion below serves as a reminder that while state capacity and the sequencing of its segments can play a role in establishing and prolonging a regime’s durability, that very regime can still fall if: (a) the regime fails to provide for an institutionalized regeneration process; and (b) an unexpected economic shock renders the state apparatus ineffective and leads to uncertainty over the regime’s future. The article shows how these dynamics played out in Suharto’s Indonesia as an influential case, enriching – and cautioning – the

theoretical debate on the way state capacity influences the ability of authoritarian states to cling to power through engineered electoral dominance.

The following discussion, then, explores the extent to which strong state capacity helped Suharto win six consecutive elections, but also explains why the last of these victories accelerated the regime's demise. The discussion views each of the key areas of state power (coercion, revenue extraction and distribution, and cultivation of dependence respectively[1]) as being the dominant feature of one of the three main stages of the regime's development. Coercion was the most important instrument of establishing the regime from the late 1960s to the late 1970s; revenue extraction and elite patronage led the regime's consolidation in the 1980s; and the citizen's dependence on the state's provision of economic welfare kept the regime alive until its end in 1998. But with Suharto's regime in the 1990s reliant on the ongoing provision of economic benefits, their sudden end mortally wounded his government, especially since the development of new coercive capacities had been neglected. After first giving an overview of the expansion and militarization of state power in the early years of the regime, the article reviews the three main phases of regime development. Subsequently, it analyzes the most crucial reasons for Suharto's fall, emphasizing the limited significance of state capacity in times of major economic shocks. The final section draws some conclusions for the general interrelationship between state capacity and authoritarian durability.

Suharto's take-over: Expanding and militarizing the state

While the role of strong state capacity in securing the durability of authoritarian regimes remains a matter of debate, it is clear that weak state capacity makes regimes – whether democratic or non-democratic – vulnerable to decline and violent overthrow. In Indonesia, Sukarno's authoritarian Guided Democracy regime, established in 1959, suffered from a gradual but ultimately rapid decline in state capacity. The core civil service had shrunk in size from 855,000 in 1953 to 608,000 in 1963 (Bresnan, 1993: 105); the economy was in tatters, with inflation above 500 percent and debt standing at 524 percent of exports (Hill, 1994: 57); and high levels of internal political and ideological fragmentation made the state apparatus dysfunctional. The military, by contrast, was strengthening. Between the early 1950s and the mid-1960s, the military and police grew from around 300,000 to 505,000, partly due to the West Papua and Malaysia campaigns (Bresnan, 1993: 104; Crouch, 1978: 198; Sundhaussen, 1978: 65). The military budget also increased dramatically, from a third of the total budget in 1960 to half in 1961 (Pauker, 1962: 616). Thus, the collapse of civilian state capacity was accompanied by a parallel consolidation of the military, making Sukarno's toppling by Suharto, a leading general, in 1966 not only easier, but almost inevitable.

The Indonesian case provides strong evidence of the need for a sequential understanding of the areas of state capacity that support authoritarian consolidation. Not surprisingly, coercion was a key factor in the first phase of the regime's creation. Suharto's rule was launched by the violent destruction of the political left (Roosa, 2006), with more than half a million people killed in the anti-communist purges of 1965 and 1966 (Cribb, 1990). Without these political massacres, Suharto's 'New Order' government would not have been born, and without their shock effects, the regime's institutionalization would not have proceeded so smoothly. Suharto understood the importance of coercion for the consolidation of his rule, leading him to merge the military and civilian state apparatuses into one. To some extent, Suharto's takeover constituted the military's acquisition of the state as a whole. The number of military officers in the positions of mayor, district head, or governor rose from 20 percent in 1965 to 54 percent in 1969, before reaching around 80 percent in the early 1970s (Bresnan, 1993: 110; Sundhaussen, 1978: 52).

Suharto moved quickly to expand the bureaucracy of his newly militarized state. The ranks of the civil service swelled substantially, from 608,000 in 1963 to 1.6 million in 1974 and 2.7 million

in 1984 (Bresnan, 1993: 105). Viewing education as the most effective means to entrench the regime in the long term, Suharto particularly boosted the civil service in the education department. The number of employees in the Department of Education rose fortyfold between 1953 and 1986, reaching 1.7 million in that year. At the same time, he made sure that the civil service became an integral part of the state–military complex: in the early 1970s, all civil servants were effectively required to join Golkar, the regime's electoral machine. In the 1982 elections, 62 percent of Golkar candidates were government bureaucrats (Bresnan, 1993: 106). Similarly, workers' unions, students' groups, peasants' associations, and other societal organizations came under the control of Golkar as well. Thus, by the mid-1970s, Indonesia's state was not only strong, it had absorbed or fused with a wide range of political, security and societal actors, leaving only few non-governmental groups outside of its reach.

However, expanded state capacity can prove ineffective for autocrats if the swelling state infrastructure is not fed with the fuel that keeps its machinery running: money and other forms of patronage resources. Suharto was aware of this, and he therefore focused his attention on improving the economy and increasing the role of the state in it. Hasnan Habib, a senior military officer at the time, recalled that 'already in the late 1960s, Suharto told us that if we want to develop the state and keep in control of it, we needed cash; and money could only come if we opened up the economy'.[2] With the country opened for foreign investment, gross domestic product (GDP) growth reached more than 10 percent in 1968, and stayed between 5 and 10 percent throughout the 1970s (Hill, 1994: 62). Industrial output, which had shrunk in 1966, shot up by 29 percent in 1967, expanding by a further 20.6 percent in 1968 (Hill, 1994: 62). At the same time, Suharto strengthened the role of the state in the economy. In 1966, the share of government expenditure vis-à-vis total GDP had been below 10 percent; by 1975, it had exceeded 20 percent, and it stood at 25 percent in 1980. In order to maintain strict control over the growing economy, military officers took over the leadership of many state-owned enterprises (Iswandi, 1998: 146–151).

But while the economy grew, it did so from a very low base. The funds generated by this growth were, in the early phase of Suharto's regime, neither enough to develop the state as an effective machine of resource extraction, nor to make the citizenry dependent on state benefits. Hence, Suharto continued to rely on state coercion to consolidate his rule. Between 1967 and 1973, he forged a political system that emasculated the remaining parties and established Golkar as the regime's main political arm (Reeve, 1990). At the heart of this system were the military, which occupied key positions throughout the state's infrastructure (Honna, 2003; Lowry, 1996; McFarling, 1996); and the civil service, which was pressured to mobilize support for Golkar. With these two instruments of state coercion behind him, Suharto felt confident enough to call for elections in 1971. Initially, these elections had been scheduled for 1968, but the regime's power was not yet sufficiently sound to guarantee a compelling electoral victory at that time. Three years later, however, Suharto had all preparations in place to stage elections that, in his view, legitimized the 1966 takeover and laid the foundations for the institutionalization of his rule.

Coercion: The 1971 and 1977 elections

Merete B Seeberg (2014: 1265) has pointed out that 'autocrats presiding over a highly capable state may abuse the bureaucracy to subtly manipulate voters and the electoral framework'. And indeed, prior to the 1971 elections, the government banned all civil servants from joining political parties – whereas Golkar was not categorized as a party (Suryadinata, 1989: 44). This move was not only designed to mobilize the civil service for Golkar, but also to undermine support for Sukarno's Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia, PNI), which had drawn its strength in the 1955 elections from the bureaucracy. Concurrently, Minister of Home Affairs Amir Mahmud, a

general, organized his ministry's employees in a corps that openly advanced Golkar's agenda. While the political abuse of the bureaucracy neutralized PNI as Golkar's main challenger, Suharto also ensured that no major Islamic party emerged that could threaten its hegemony. In the 1955 polls, the Muslim-based party Masyumi had finished second, but Sukarno banned it in 1960. Suharto did not allow Masyumi to be re-established after 1965, leaving only a much-weakened Masyumi substitute, Parmusi (Partai Muslimin Indonesia, Indonesian Muslims' Party) and the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) as semi-credible electoral actors in the 1971 ballot.

Open intimidation by the army also played a key role in getting out the vote for Golkar. According to Ken Ward (1974: 158), 'particularly in areas where [army] units had been involved in the [anti-communist carnage] of 1965, warnings were made that "it will be like 1965 again if you don't vote for Golkar"'. And even 'without playing on communist and anti-communist fears, [army] troops could enlist Golkar members simply by playing upon fear of punishment' (Ward, 1974: 159). On voting day, then, a strange calm befell Indonesian voters, which Ward described as a 'remarkable demonstration of control over the country by Suharto's government and its military-bureaucratic apparatus' (Ward, 1974: 159). The result of the elections was a compelling, but not ridiculously inflated, victory for Golkar: it gained 62.80 percent of the votes, giving it the kind of 'supermajority [that is] essential in signaling regime invincibility' (Seeberg, 2014: 1270), but leaving enough space for the 'opposition' not to despair entirely (see Table 1).

Increased state capacity – facilitated by the militarization of the government and the rapid expansion and domestication of the civil service – had helped Suharto win his first electoral victory, but the autocrat only viewed this as an initial step towards an even more comprehensive reorganization of the political system. In 1973, he forced the remaining parties to merge into two: one Muslim party, the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP), and one nationalist–secular party, the Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, PDI). Suharto's heavy-ended intervention into the party system completed the design of his increasingly personalized, autocratic polity. Elections were stage-managed by the armed forces and the civil service; the parties had lost their teeth; Golkar was entrenched as the regime's electoral juggernaut, with Suharto at the helm; and presidential elections were entrusted to the 920-strong People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR), of which only 360 members were elected parliamentarians. The rest were military appointees and functional and regional representatives, all endorsed by Suharto. It was this body that 're-elected' Suharto in 1973, and would do so again another five times between 1978 and 1998.

Table 1. The 1971 Indonesian elections.

Parties	Vote share, %	Seats
Golkar	62.80	236
Nahdatul Ulama (NU)	18.67	58
Indonesian National Party (PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia)	6.94	20
Indonesian Muslims' Party (Parmusi, Partai Muslimin Indonesia)	5.36	24
Indonesian Islamic Union Party (PSII, Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia)	2.39	10
Indonesian Christian Party (Parkindo, Partai Kristen Indonesia)	1.34	7
Catholic Party (Partai Katolik)	1.10	3
Islamic Educators Association (Perti, Persatuan Tarbiah Islamiah)	0.69	2
League of Upholders of Indonesian Independence (IPKI, Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia)	0.62	0
Murba Party (Partai Murba, Musyawarah Rakyat Banyak)	0.09	0

But while the architecture of the New Order was largely in place by 1973, Suharto still needed the state's grown capacity of coercion to perpetuate it. In 1974, student demonstrations against increasing foreign investment – especially from Japan – posed the first major political challenge to the regime (Cahyono, 1998). In fact, these demonstrations ended the alliance between Suharto and anti-Sukarno student leaders, many of whom had continued to live under the illusion that the New Order would facilitate the return to democracy once the communist threat had been contained. Many of the activists who had supported Sukarno's removal by Suharto now ended up in prison themselves. Suharto's main tool of repression was the military's Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban, Kopkamtib). Created in 1965, Kopkamtib focused on the regime's main opponents: initially the communists, but since the early 1970s also Islamists and, increasingly, pro-democracy activists. With military officers running the vast majority of local governments, Kopkambtib had access to the full range of the state's coercive – and administrative – capabilities when pursuing its adversaries.

Thus, the 1977 elections – the first to be held within the framework of Suharto's 'reformed' party system – were still marked by extensive use of coercive state resources. In the lead-up to the polls, Suharto had been concerned that PPP could profit from rising levels of religiosity in society to threaten Golkar's dominance (Haris, 1991). Kopkamtib used a two-thronged strategy to confront this challenge: first, it revealed the existence of a fundamentalist Islamic group named 'Komando Jihad', with 700 of its sympathizers arrested in early 1977. The announcement of these arrests was designed to underscore the regime's message that despite the waning threat of communism, society needed to remain vigilant vis-à-vis other ideological threats – in this case, Islamism. The second strategy driven by Kopkamtib resembled that applied during the 1971 election: intimidation of Muslim clerics and voters. According to Suryadinata (1989: 88), 'a number of Muslim religious preachers were arrested […] and some military officers were said to have threatened the people that they would get into trouble if they didn't vote for Golkar'.

The result of the 1977 elections saw Golkar's result almost unchanged, at 62.11 percent (see Table 2). For Suharto, this outcome offered confirmation that despite the changes in his regime, his grip on power had consolidated. But it also signaled to him that the phase of securing the regime's power by coercion alone needed to come to an end. Benny Moerdani, one of Suharto's closest military confidants, was told by the president in late 1977 'that while of course we need to remain strong and vigilant, we have to erase the impression of an "emergency" government; it is time to "normalize" the state and how it operates'.[3] Repression had been essential in establishing the New Order regime in the infrastructure of the state. In order to keep it there, however, new strategies were needed. As Slater and Fenner (2011) explained, coercion is only one of the key areas of state capacity, with other 'infrastructural mechanisms' being equally important. As the regime slowly morphed from a military dictatorship into a civilianized autocracy, the state's role in extracting and distributing resources became just as vital for the regime as its coercive authority.

Table 2. New Order elections, 1977–1997, vote share.

Year	Golkar	United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan)	Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia)
1977	62.11	29.29	8.60
1982	64.34	27.78	7.88
1987	73.16	15.97	10.87
1992	68.10	17.00	14.89
1997	74.51	22.43	3.07

Resource extraction and patronage: Coopting the elite, 1982–1992

There were many reasons why Suharto had to shift the primary focus of his regime maintenance strategy from coercion to patronage in the late 1970s. First, as Alagappa (2001) demonstrated, military regimes face the inherent problem of outliving the reasons they cited for grabbing power. In the Indonesian case, Suharto had justified the 1965 takeover with a communist coup, the collapse of the economy, and the general ideological turmoil. In the decade after 1965, the communist party had been violently destroyed, the economy stabilized, and society de-ideologized. Thus, the regime had lost its *raison d'être*, and urgently had to find a substitute. Second, Suharto had grown out of the military, both in age and by stature. Suharto retired from the military in 1978, witnessing new generals emerge with whom he had no personal relationships. This made him suspicious of potential challengers from within the armed forces. And third, he knew that a regime based on a broad civilian alliance had a much better chance of long-term survival than one based on military rule. All of this led him to stall the development of further coercive resources (especially in the army, which he actually reduced in size) and to instead focus on other strategies to consolidate his rule. Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, a senior military leader in the 1970s who entered the civilian bureaucracy in the 1980s, recalled that Suharto told 'us generals frequently at the time that if the New Order wanted to survive the challenges of modernity, it had to promote civilians to key positions and shift resources into non-military areas.'[4]

To be sure, resource extraction and patronage distribution were not new concepts in Suharto's New Order regime. Indeed, it had been the glue that held the military regime of the late 1960s and early 1970s together (Crouch, 1979). But the circulation of capital and patronage had been predominantly an intra-military affair, with few civilian elites benefitting from it. The only exception was the military's cronies, who were mostly ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs. The necessary shifts in the New Order's character from a military-dominated to a civilian polity, on the other hand, would require a much more sophisticated system of elite cooptation. It also required a lot more capital – which was available by the early 1980s. Oil exports, which had been worth $641 million in 1973 rose to $6.9 billion in 1979 and $10.6 billion in 1980 (Hill, 1994: 99). Hence, the state's capacity to extract resources and distribute them to political allies, both existing and desired, had grown exponentially, and when Suharto needed to revamp the composition of his regime, he had the means to do so. Although oil revenues declined after 1980, Suharto's further opening of the country for foreign investments quickly led to new capital inflow (Hill, 1994).

While Suharto viewed the state as an effective tool to accumulate capital and dispense patronage, he also sought personal control of large amounts of funds. By the late 1970s, he had built up a vast network of foundations, using their resources to reward associates and 'persuade' others to support his regime. Beginning in 1978, state-owned banks had to give 2.5 percent of their profits to Suharto's Dharmais and Supersemar foundations (Vatikiotis, 1994: 51–52). While these foundations officially funded scholarships and other social services, their main purpose was to give Suharto access to a private source of patronage. Suharto made extensive use of this facility: he signed each cheque above $50,000 personally, reminding the recipients that they owed allegiance not only to the regime, but to him directly.

Suharto used the resources provided to him by the state to integrate a wide range of civilian actors into his regime. The Islamic NU, which up until 1984 had tense relations with the government, was lured into adopting a more sympathetic stance by promises of development funds for its thousands of boarding schools. One NU leader, presumably Abdurrahman Wahid, told John Bresnan (1993: 240) in an interview in 1986 that if the government 'feels threatened, it can cut off everything. [Thus] I reached an agreement with the government. They agreed [that] they would give preference to NU people in making new appointments to the civil service [and that] NU would receive licenses

for economic activities'. In return, Wahid withdrew NU support from PPP and supported Golkar in the 1987 elections, increasing the latter's vote share from 64.34 to 73.16 percent – its best result thus far. The deployment of the 'infrastructural mechanism' of revenue extraction and re-distribution, it seemed, produced better results than the coercive approaches of 1971 and 1977.

Suharto also mobilized the state's patronage resources to invite more civilians into the Golkar leadership, and to groom more indigenous, Muslim entrepreneurs as economic pillars of the regime. Under the Golkar chairman elected in 1983, Sudharmono, young civilians occupied half of the positions in the party's central board (Suryadinata, 1989: 127). At the same time, Muslim businessmen were offered increased patronage opportunities, responding to their long-term complaints that the regime only favored ethnic Chinese cronies (Winters, 1996). Accordingly, major natural resource contracts were handed to entrepreneurs such as Aburizal Bakrie or Arifin Panigoro, who repaid these favors by supporting Golkar.

The increased focus on the state's patronage resources made coercion less essential, especially in elections (Suryadinata, 1989: 132). Consequently, Kopkamtib was disbanded in 1988. The reduced significance of coercion also showed in the composition of local governments. Whereas in the early 1970s around 80 percent of all local executive posts had been occupied by military personnel, that number shrunk to less than half by the late 1980s. However, this does *not* mean that coercion was suddenly irrelevant. The military remained the backbone of the New Order government, and the regime occasionally demonstrated its unchanged brutality (Columbijn and Lindblad, 2002). Nevertheless, coercion was no longer the primary electoral tool of the government, as had been the case in 1971 and 1977. Elections were now a routine affair, marked as much by pay-offs and patronage as they were by fear of possible regime retribution.

State dependence and performance legitimacy: Dispensing welfare, 1992–1998

Ideally, authoritarian regimes have to rely on neither excessive state coercion nor overbearing patronage and elite cooptation to consolidate their rule. Indeed, if these two 'infrastructural mechanisms' dominate a regime's strategy for survival over extended periods of time, this points to significant weaknesses in the systemic functionality of the polity. Most durable authoritarian regimes have based their legitimacy on their socio-economic performance – or, in Slater and Fenner's (2011) terms, the infrastructural mechanism of 'cultivation of dependence' (Hiep, 2012). In the first two decades of Suharto's rule, it was difficult for the regime to justify its existence solely by pointing to its economic performance. The income flows generated by the economic revival of the 1970s had first been used to satisfy the demands of the military officers who had established the regime, and then to co-opt the civilian elites who could potentially challenge it. At the same time, however, Indonesia remained a poor country. In 1984, 62.8 percent of the population still lived in extreme poverty (currently defined as living on less than $1.25 a day at 2005 international prices), and 88.4 percent were poor or near-poor, that is, they lived below a slightly higher poverty line of $2 dollars a day (World Bank, 2015).

It was only from the late 1980s onwards that the expansion of the state's economic capacity helped to significantly reduce poverty. Extreme poverty declined to 54.3 percent by 1993, while GDP per capita almost doubled between 1984 and 1996, from $550 to $1041 (at 2015 prices). As a result, the middle class ballooned as well: by 1997, it had grown to about 17 million people out of a population of 190 million (*New York Times*, 1997). But unlike in other countries – such as South Korea – where the middle class spearheaded democratization, Indonesia's middle-income earners relied heavily on the authoritarian regime for its economic patronage (Shan-Loong, 2001). Hence, after the regime had violently annexed the state in the first phase of its consolidation and

co-opted the elite in the second, it made the poor and the middle class dependent on its cause in the third.

But as important as strong state capacities in cultivating economic dependence were for Suharto, developments throughout the 1990s also showed their limitations. While many Indonesians were satisfied with the economic performance of the regime, they had doubts over the prospects of the government's long-term endurance (Uhlin, 1997). Unlike Malaysia or Singapore, the other two authoritarian states boasting impressive economic development records, the New Order regime had no institutionalized mechanism for leadership regeneration. It was not surprising, then, that Suharto was still nervous about the 1992 and 1997 elections. His anxiety had a lot to do with the political rise of Megawati Sukarnoputri (Sukarno's daughter), who took over the chairpersonship of the PDI in 1993. Deeply worried over her growing popularity, Suharto engineered Megawati's replacement by a PDI regime loyalist in 1996. However, Megawati refused to accept her removal, and indirectly called on her supporters not to vote for the government-sanctioned PDI in the 1997 elections. As a result, PDI's vote share collapsed to 3 percent, while Golkar achieved its best result ever, 74.51 percent. On paper, it appeared as if the regime was still firmly in control.

Far from highlighting the solidity of the regime, however, the 1997 elections revealed indications of its decline. Most importantly, they showed that winning elections, even when accomplished by the deployment of the state's full capacities, can be of little significance for authoritarian regimes plagued by succession problems. This is particularly the case if such regimes depend on continued economic performance, rather than on electoral legitimacy or sheer coercion, for their survival. More so than previous elections, the 1997 polls reflected the regime's calcification – Golkar recorded a three-fourth majority at a time when uneasy speculation about the succession of the then 76-year old Suharto was at its height. Politically, the regime survived by providing the economic stability that Indonesians had become accustomed to. The downside of this, naturally, was that any serious interruption of the ongoing economic growth could spell the end of the regime.

Suharto's fall: The limitations of building a strong state

When Suharto fell in 1998 amidst a popular uprising (Mietzner, 2009; Pepinsky, 2009; Slater, 2010), he was still presiding over a structurally strong state. The civil service had grown to almost four million (Tjiptoherijanto, 2007: 33); the coercive force of the state was still high; and the political architecture of the New Order was solid. But the strength of the state was of little help to Suharto in 1998, mainly because of two key decisions. First, he gradually changed the narrative of the regime from one that ruled by force to crush the nation's internal enemies to one that delivered economic prosperity. When the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) hit in 1997, Suharto became the victim of his own paradigm shift. Unlike Burma's military rulers, whose rule neglected socio-economic welfare and instead continuously expanded existing coercive resources, Suharto had kept the military at pre-coup levels, and instead focused on the continuation of the economic boom. In 1997, the military and police forces still had the same strength as in 1965: 505,000 troops (White Paper, 1997: 50-51). The population size had doubled since 1965, however, meaning that the troops-to-population ratio had declined from around 1:198 to 1:396 (Mietzner and Farrelly, 2013: 346). This does not mean that Suharto's coercive apparatus was weak at the end of his presidency – but it suggests that rapidly switching back to a predominantly repressive mode was no longer an option.

Second, Suharto opened the economy comprehensively for foreign investors after the collapse of oil prices in the mid-1980s (Pepinsky, 2009). While this helped to initiate a new phase of growth, it also handed foreign stock traders influence over the Indonesian economy. In 1995, 67.03 percent of all transactions at the Jakarta Stock Exchange involved foreign traders, who could withdraw

their investment at any time if they deemed Indonesia's long-term prospects to be unsatisfactory (Irwan, 1998: 5). At the same time, Suharto borrowed heavily from international donors. By 1992, Indonesia's foreign debt was already 67 percent of GDP (Hill, 1996: 72). During the 1997–1998 crisis, this ratio shot up to 147 percent of GDP, and almost all of this debt was to international donors. Thus, Suharto's strong state now drew heavily from external capital, rendering him vulnerable to the swiftly changing attitudes of international actors.

Arguably, however, the New Order could have survived the 1997–1998 crisis had Suharto offered a persuasive succession plan in the years prior to the AFC. The extraordinary extent of capital outflow in Indonesia in that period was only explicable by Suharto's failure to present a long-haul political and economic blueprint. Instead, having suffered a mild stroke in December 1997, Suharto represented an image of personal and regime mortality.

Analytically, Suharto's experience also puts the spotlight on the relationship between strong state capacity and the short-term fuel that sustains it. Suharto had overseen 30 years of continuous economic growth, turning a basket case into 'Southeast Asia's emerging giant' (Hill, 1996). This economy was the foundation of Suharto's strong state, allowing him to expand the civil service, fund coercive measures, dispense patronage, and offer improved public services. But as soon as this economic engine began to stutter, in mid-1997, the seemingly sound state proved helpless. This indicates that even strong state capacities can be rendered irrelevant for the durability of authoritarian regimes if a sudden economic shock shuts down the machine that fed those capacities. As we have seen, this is especially the case in autocracies that morphed from purely repressive entities into polities based on performance legitimacy. Deprived of the capital to appease the population and to co-opt elites, the state can, in situations of crisis, only turn to its coercive capacities. While this may offer some short-term reprieve, as it did for Suharto between February and May 1998, it is unlikely to save such regimes over a longer period of time – especially if, like in Suharto's case, the coercive apparatus was stagnating in size. By contrast, authoritarian regimes with no economic growth record – such as Zimbabwe's – are less vulnerable to sudden economic downturns, and coercion is less likely to trigger a societal backlash as it had been routinized as the primary mode of the regime's maintenance.

Finally, the Indonesian case calls into question the significance of elections for the sustenance of closed authoritarian regimes. It is vital to note that Suharto's New Order was neither a hegemonic authoritarian nor a competitive authoritarian regime, despite its formal adoption of multiparty elections and the fact that Golkar's vote share was mostly below 75 percent (Lueders and Croissant, 2014: 19). Throughout Suharto's rule, elections were a public spectacle to legitimize the regime rather than a real contest for political power – and even the elections' legitimizing function became increasingly marginal. Legitimation by election was still important in the 1971 and 1977 polls, as the regime settled into its long-term political structures, and it may also have served as an endorsement of Suharto's civilianization of the regime in the 1980s. But at the time of the 1992 and 1997 elections, Suharto no longer drew his legitimacy from engineered elections – he sourced it from continued economic growth. The 1997 elections demonstrated the ease with which Suharto's strong state was able to produce a desired electoral outcome, but they also showed how little this mattered for the regime's durability. The question, then, is not so much whether strong state capacity helps autocrats to win elections – it almost always does (Seeberg, 2014); the question is whether such victories, particularly in late stages of its rule, are a factor in securing a regime's endurance.

Conclusion: State capacity, authoritarian elections, and regime durability in Suharto's Indonesia

Focusing on Suharto's New Order government, this article has assessed the significance of state capacity for securing the electoral victories of authoritarian regimes, as well as the relevance of such

victories for the durability of autocratic rule. The Indonesian case provides four main insights for the comparative debate. First, weak – or weakening – state capacity offers fertile ground for ambitious political actors to topple struggling regimes. Such takeovers are particularly probable if the challenging actor possesses resources that exceed those of the weakened state. Indonesia, as demonstrated above, had experienced declining state capacity in the lead-up to the coup of 1965. Within this weakened state, the military had developed a parallel state infrastructure, which not only helped the armed forces to overthrow Sukarno, but also superseded the old state structures after 1966.

Second, it is not only necessary to analytically disaggregate state capacity into a number of key dimensions – as many scholars have done – but these dimensions also need to be aligned with the phases of regime consolidation in which they are most important. The majority of authoritarian regimes undergo significant change during their lifetime, and they deploy different forms of state capacity during these phases of their development. Coercion, for example, is often crucial in establishing the regime. In Indonesia, Suharto's entrenchment in power would have been unthinkable without the expansion and mobilization of the state's coercive resources. But only few authoritarian regimes want to rely solely on coercion throughout their existence – North Korea being an obvious exception. Indeed, as Lueders and Croissant (2014: 1) have shown, repression is the least promising strategy for autocrats who want to stay in power through elections. Thus, most regimes try to complement coercion with other strategies – the application of which requires the deployment of alternative forms of state capacity. In Suharto's Indonesia, the regime first co-opted the elite in the 1980s, using the proceeds of the oil boom, and then moved towards economic performance legitimacy in the 1990s, profiting from the state's increased capacity for cultivating economic dependence.

In considering this three-phase model of authoritarian regime consolidation in Suharto's Indonesia, several qualifications are in order. To begin with, all three main 'infrastructural mechanisms' (coercion, resource distribution, and economic dependence) were present in all three phases of Suharto's regime. Coercion remained a significant factor throughout Suharto's rule (despite his unwillingness to expand the size of the security forces), elite cooptation was visible even in the early phase of the regime; and the government's economic performance was already an important cause of the stability of military rule in the 1970s. But it is possible to identify the factor that was most *dominant* in each phase. Clearly, coercion was less influential in the 1992 and 1997 elections than it was in the 1971 and 1977 ones. Civilian elite cooptation and the supply of economic benefits were most prominent in the 1980s and 1990s respectively, and while some authors have viewed the graft that accompanies such cooptation and economic booms as an element of state weakness, not as proof of its capacity (Becker and Stigler, 1974), in the case of New Order Indonesia (McLeod, 2010) it stabilized rather than destabilized authoritarian rule.

The third main insight from the Indonesian case relates to the implications of the sequencing of regime development and its corresponding deployment of different forms of state capacities for a regime's durability prospects. Under the New Order, the sequence of coercion, cooptation, and performance legitimacy allowed Suharto to re-invent his regime at crucial junctures of its evolution. He was able to dissociate himself from the armed forces once his own military career had ended in the late 1970s, and he could point to significant increases in public prosperity after the patronage-soaked cooption policies of the 1980s began to attract criticism. But achieving the citizenry's economic dependence in the 1990s also meant that Suharto needed to secure the continuation of economic growth. Similar to the rulers of the Arab oil states of the Persian Gulf, as well as those of Singapore and Malaysia, Suharto's fate was now inseparably linked to his regime's ability to satisfy the material demands of its citizens. When the economy collapsed, he no longer could feed the machine that kept his regime alive. Thus, reliance on the state's economic capacity might prolong a regime's life expectancy, but may also cut it short if the state is hit by an economic shock – especially if that shock hits a regime with uncertain succession

arrangements. The severity of rapid economic decline can be further aggravated if, as in Suharto's case, long-term autocrats prevent the growth of additional coercive resources, both because they believe they are no longer necessary and because they are seen as a potential threat to the regime itself.

Fourth, and finally, while different 'infrastructural mechanisms' helped Suharto win elections in different phases of the New Order regime, winning these elections became less and less important for the endurance of the regime. Of course, this constellation is different in competitive or even hegemonic authoritarian regimes, which try to boost their legitimacy by holding reasonably open elections. In Suharto's closed authoritarianism, by contrast, winning elections had degenerated into a political ritual by the late 1980s, and developments outside of the electoral arena grew more significant. These non-electoral factors also highlight the limitations of state capacity in securing the maintenance of authoritarian regimes. By the early 1990s, with a strong state still in place, a number of issues undermined Suharto's chances of staying in power: his age and the lack of a succession plan; changes in the post-Cold War international environment, in which Suharto's value as a non-communist ally of the West was greatly diminished; the transformation of both Indonesia's and the global economy, with the regime now affected by the uncertainties of international stock markets; and the general impression in society that the regime had outlived itself. Facing these pressures, Suharto ultimately had to accept that even the strong state he had built between 1966 and 1997 proved incapable of saving him. Thus, while state power may be 'the most powerful weapon in the authoritarian arsenal' (Slater and Fenner, 2011: 15), autocrats can still go down if it is the only gun they rely on.

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Notes

1. In this article I have adopted three of the four arenas of state power mentioned by Slater and Fenner, excluding the area of citizen registration. Suharto's New Order had strong capacities in registering and controlling its citizens. However, this was arguably not an indispensable element of its success. Further, in the area of resource extraction, I put more emphasis on the redistribution of extracted revenues than Slater and Fenner do. While they mention 'well-timed distribution of patronage' (Slater and Fenner, 2011: 21) as a benefit of extracting revenues, their main focus is on an effective tax agency, which Indonesia never had.
2. Interview with Hasnan Habib, Jakarta, 18 October 2003.
3. Interview with Benny Moerdani, Jakarta, 23 March 1999.
4. Interview with Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo, Jakarta, 15 December 1998.

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