

What's Behind Democratic Backsliding? A Comparative Study of Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey

AHMAD SAHIDE	Department of International Relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia
E-MAIL	ahmadsahideumy@gmail.com
ORCID	https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2226-3085
YENIS CONTESA	Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia
E-MAIL	yeniscontesa@umsu.ac.id
ORCID	https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0846-0593

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, Tunisia, Indonesia, and Turkey have experienced democratic dynamics that indicate a downward trend despite previously being viewed as models of successful democratic transitions in their respective regions. This study examined the factors contributing to the democratic backsliding in these three countries through a qualitative analysis of the relevant literature. The research employed democratic backsliding as a framework for analysis. The results indicated that strategic election manipulation, the strengthening of executive power (executive aggrandisement), and restrictions on civil liberties are common patterns that emerge in the three countries. In Indonesia, the weakening of democratic institutions such as the Corruption Eradication Commission and the Constitutional Court, and regulations that restrict freedom of expression, demonstrate the characteristics of a flawed democracy. In Tunisia, a constitutional coup led by President Kais Saïed resulted in a consolidation of power and a transition to a hybrid form of government. Meanwhile, in Turkey, the changes to the political system made by Erdoğan accelerated the shift toward electoral authoritarianism. This article contributes to a deeper understanding of democratic backsliding in developing countries. It highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between power and civil liberties in fostering a healthy democracy.

KEYWORDS	Indonesia, Tunisia, Turkey, democratic backsliding, executive aggrandisement
DOI	https://doi.org/10.32422/cjir.1883
PUBLISHED ONLINE	14 April, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The global democratic phenomenon exhibits increasingly complex dynamics (BERCH, 2023). The year 2024 marked a significant milestone in the history of modern democracy, with more than half the world's population participating in elections across 76 countries (EIU, 2024). While elections are a fundamental element of democracy, their quality and integrity remain crucial issues (DUDANKAR & K, 2024; NOVILIA ET AL., 2024). The 2024 Democracy Index report noted that only 43 of the 76 countries held free and fair elections, and this figure included the 27 members of the European Union. Even in populous countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States, freedom of expression and the independence of electoral institutions remain under pressure (EIU, 2024).

The quality of global democracy is also reflected in the Democracy Index 2023, where out of 167 countries, only 24 are categorised as “full democracies,” and 50 as “flawed democracies,” while the rest fall into the categories of “hybrid regimes” and “authoritarian regimes” (EIU, 2023). The level of substantive democracy remains far from ideal (SPAISER ET AL., 2014). Even in established democracies like the United States and the United Kingdom, democratic erosion is occurring due to political polarisation, declining public trust in elections, and the increasing influence of oligarchs (HAGGARD & KAUFMAN, 2021; LEVITSKY & ZIBLATT, 2018). Religion-state relations are a crucial factor distinguishing the dynamics of democracy across regions. Hinnebusch (2006) emphasised that the democratisation process cannot be separated from historical factors, colonial legacies, and religious interpretations in politics. Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia, exemplify these challenges (DEMIR, 2024; KIMURA & ANUGRAH, 2024; LEININGER, 2022; SOMER, 2024; SYAHBA & FAHADAYNA, 2024).

In Indonesia, democracy is built on Pancasila as the state ideology, which recognises religious diversity. Still, post-reformation, there was an increase in identity politics that impacted civil liberties and deepened social polarisation in the country (HANAN, 2020). Turkey has pursued a strict secularist path since the era of Kemal Atatürk. However, under Erdoğan's leadership, there has been a re-Islamisation of the public sphere, accompanied by the centralisation of power and the transformation of the parliamentary system into a presidential one (YAVUZ, 2024; YILMAZ, 2025). Freedom

House (2023A) even classified Turkey as a “not free” country. Meanwhile, Tunisia was initially hailed as “the only success story of the Arab Spring.” However, since 2021, President Kais Saïed has implemented measures to consolidate power that limit the role of parliament, accompanied by increasing debate about the role of political Islam in the public sphere (MARZOUKI, 2022; SAHIDE ET AL., 2022).

The democratic decline in Muslim-majority countries cannot be explained solely by the absence of fully developed or formal democratic institutions in them. It also reflects social, cultural, and political factors that shape how democracy is practiced and experienced in these contexts. These dynamics emerge from complex interactions among state institutions, political parties, religious groups, and civil society. Recent studies indicate that weaknesses in the rule of law, corruption, and low levels of public participation further contribute to the erosion of democratic quality (ASHFAQ ET AL., 2023; KURU, 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this trend even further, as many governments have employed emergency measures to restrict civil liberties in reaction to it (MODEBADZE, 2022; NĚMCOVÁ, 2024). Globally, the rise of authoritarian states such as China and Russia has further weakened democratic norms by supporting non-democratic regimes and spreading disinformation (IBID.). Technology and social media also play a dual role – as a means of participation as well as an instrument for polarising and manipulating public opinion (IBID.; SATO & WIEBRECHT, 2024).

Democratic decline has become a major focus of contemporary academic research. Numerous studies have identified various internal factors driving democratic decline, including conflicts between legislative and executive institutions (LEVITSKY & WAY, 2020), institutional tensions (HUBER & PISCIOTTA, 2023), and challenges from domestic interest groups that contribute to instability (ÖZCAN, 2018). Furthermore, numerous studies have explored the historical roots and structural causes of democratic decline (BERMEO, 2016; WALDNER & LUST, 2018), highlighting the role of populism, political polarisation (KOEHLER, 2023), dynastic politics (WADIPALAPA & TYSON, 2025), election manipulation (URMAN & MAKHORTYKH, 2025), low public participation, and the role of social media in political communication (HARGONO ET AL., 2024). Democratic decline impacts not only domestic governance but also global political stability (LÜHRMANN & LINDBERG, 2019). State institutions and civil society organisations are seen as having an ambivalent role in this respect,

either strengthening or accelerating the erosion of democracy, depending on their capacity and independence (DIAMOND, 2020; MECHKOVA ET AL., 2017; SVOLIK, 2019; WOLKENSTEIN, 2023). On the other hand, authoritarian regimes often utilise strategies such as constitutional amendments, media control, and restrictions on political freedoms to weaken democratic institutions (SARSAR, 2022). International actors, including supranational organisations, major powers such as the United States and the European Union, and religious institutions such as the Vatican, play a dual role in both maintaining and hindering democracy (DALY, 2019; LEVITSKY & ZIBLATT, 2018; WALDNER & LUST, 2018). However, the effectiveness and consistency of their interventions remain a matter of debate. At the domestic level, political parties (WOLKENSTEIN, 2022; ZAMĘCKI & SZYMAŃSKI, 2023), independent media (BENNETT & KNEUER, 2024), and social movements (DELLA PORTA & ROSSI, 2013) influence democratic dynamics through their interactions with state institutions and civil society. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analysing the dynamics of democratic decline in three Muslim-majority countries – Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia – with a focus on how each country is moving toward a flawed democracy or hybrid regime. The main question asked was: What factors contributed to the decline of democracy in Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey?

LITERATURE REVIEW

AN OVERVIEW OF CREATED CONTENT RELATED TO DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

Several researchers have studied the phenomenon of democratic decline in various countries using diverse approaches. Previous studies have attempted to answer whether the strategies and actions undertaken by political actors had contributed to the weakening of democratic institutions or strengthened them. These questions pose a challenge to many academics and policymakers in terms of understanding global trends related to democratic erosion. In previous literature, studies on democratic decline have employed various concepts and models to identify the key variables that influence this process. Various approaches have been employed to analyse how countries experience democratic decline, whether through coups, the erosion of democratic institutions, or electoral manipulation. Table 1 presents the classification and definition of democratic decline as outlined in several studies conducted to date.

TABLE 1: A TAXONOMY OF RELEVANT RESEARCH TEXTS

Author(s)	Purpose and Focus	Methodology	Definition of Democratic Backsliding
Málaga & Ramos Silveira (2024)	To examine democratic decline as a phenomenon through an analysis of the 2023 coup attempt in Brazil.	Qualitative	Democratic decline refers to the erosion of political pluralism within the framework of democratic rule of law.
Bauer & Becker (2016)	To analyse contemporary forms of democratic decline.	Qualitative	Democratic decline refers to the weakening or erosion of democratic institutions by the state. Contemporary forms of it include increased executive power and promissory note coups, often legitimised through democratic processes.
Keck (2022)	To highlight three key perspectives for understanding democratic decline: democratic erosion, democratic backsliding, and abusive constitutionalism.	Mixed Methods	Democratic decline is the process by which political institutions that support and sustain democracy are weakened or eliminated by the state itself.
Ejaz & Thornton (2024)	To develop a public model as a tool for democratic oversight and evaluate its effectiveness through two empirical strategies: experiments.	Mixed Methods	Extreme political polarisation can lead to a decline in democracy by eroding support for democratic institutions and increasing tolerance for authoritarian practices.
Sadowski (2024)	To analyse the democratic decline and support for democracy in Poland.	Qualitative	Democratic decline is the process by which democratic institutions, norms, and practices are gradually weakened or eliminated, often by state actors.
Castaldo & Memoli (2024)	To examine the decline of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe.	Qualitative	Democratic decline refers to a decline in the quality of democracy that is characterised by the erosion of political rights and civil liberties within a country.
Holgado & Urribarri (2024)	To examine how elected leaders in Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela exploit legalistic strategies to undermine democracy.	Comparative	Democratic decline involves the gradual dismantling of elements of liberal democracy, where executive power undermines the democratic system through seemingly legitimate legal means.
Prozorova (2024)	To explore how post-Soviet Russian autocracies manipulate democratic structures and create “electoral autocracies”.	Exploratory	Democratic decline is characterised by the transformation of a democratic political system into one that is formally still called a democracy, but in practice weakens political freedoms, human rights, and mechanisms of government accountability.
Rivera & Lecaros (2025)	To analyse the impact of conservative religious authoritarianism on democracy in Peru, focusing on the convergence of Catholic and Evangelical actors.	Qualitative	Erosion of fundamental elements of classical democracy, turning political opponents into illegitimate “enemies.”
Tretter (2025)	To explore the ambivalent relationship between religion and democracy, particularly the influence of spiritual tech on democratic processes.	Perspective analysis, proposing a review process for spiritual tech.	Not explicitly defined, but the text implies that unregulated spiritual tech could threaten democracy.
Filetti (2014)	To test hypotheses on the influence of religiosity on political attitudes in Georgia and Azerbaijan.	Comparative	Not explicitly defined, but the text suggests that diverse roles of religion in different contexts could affect democratic values.
Cesari & Fox (2016)	To examine the concept of hegemonic religion and its relationship with democracy.	Empirical analysis using RAS2, Polity, and CIRI datasets.	Not explicitly defined, but the text suggests a strong association between religious hegemony and lack of democracy.

Hashemi (2016)	To explore the relationship between religion and political legitimacy in the Muslim Middle East.	Critical exploration with a historical and cultural focus.	Not explicitly defined, but the text implies that political legitimacy derived from religion challenges democracy.
Brathwaite & Bramsen (2011)	To reexamines the relationship between democracy and the separation of religion and state.	Principal component analysis of 125 countries.	Not explicitly defined, but increased separation of religion and state correlates with higher levels of democracy.
Forster (2023)	To investigate the intersection of political and theological beliefs during the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on democracy.	Qualitative literature review.	Erosion of democracy and human rights through populist political theologies.

Source: Authors (2025).

Table 1 shows that democratic decline can be understood as a gradual process of weakening or eliminating democratic institutions, norms, and practices that is often carried out by state actors themselves. This phenomenon can occur through various mechanisms, such as a reduction of political pluralism (MÁLAGA & SILVEIRA, 2024), an increase in executive power and democratically legitimised coups (BAUER & BECKER, 2016), and the erosion of political institutions that underpin democracy (KECK, 2022). Furthermore, extreme political polarisation also contributes to democratic decline by eroding support for democratic institutions and increasing tolerance for authoritarian practices (EJAZ & THORNTON, 2024). In some countries, democratic decline is reflected in a weakening of civil liberties, a decrease in judicial independence, and election manipulation, as has occurred in Poland (SADOWSKI, 2024) and Central and Eastern Europe (CASTALDO & MEMOLI, 2024).

Democratic decline can also occur through seemingly legitimate, legalistic strategies, such as elected leaders exploiting legal channels to undermine the democratic system (HOLGADO & URRIBARRI, 2024). In post-Soviet Russia, democratic decline is characterised by the manipulation of a political system that formally remains democratic but in practice limits political freedoms, human rights, and government accountability mechanisms (PROZOROVA, 2024). Thus, democratic decline is not only about drastic structural changes but can also occur gradually through various policies and actions that slowly erode democratic values.

Studies on the relationship between religion and democracy show that democratic decline can be influenced not only by institutional and structural factors but also by the mobilisation of religious authority and cultural norms. Rivera & Lecaros (2025) analyse the impact of conservative religious authoritarianism on democracy in Peru, focusing on the

convergence of Catholic and Evangelical actors there. They argue that democratic decline occurs through the erosion of fundamental elements of classical democracy, as political opponents are delegitimised and treated as “enemies.” Religion in this context acts as a mobilising factor, shaping political cleavages and influencing state policies in ways that constrain democratic pluralism. Similarly, Tretter (2025) explores the ambivalent relationship between religion and democracy, highlighting how technological spiritual movements (spiritual tech) can pose indirect threats to democratic processes when unregulated.

Filetti (2014) shows that religiosity affects political attitudes in different contexts, such as those of Georgia and Azerbaijan, indicating that the role of religion in democracy can vary depending on social and cultural settings. Cesari & Fox (2016) examine hegemonic religions and their relationship with democracy, finding a strong association between religious dominance and the weakening of democratic norms. Hashemi (2016) highlights challenges to democracy in the Muslim Middle East, where political legitimacy derived from religion can constrain democratic freedoms. Brathwaite & Bramsen (2011) demonstrate that an increased separation between religion and state correlates with higher levels of democracy, emphasising the institutional dimension of secularism as a stabilising factor.

Foster (2023) finds that the intersection of political and theological beliefs during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic can accelerate democratic erosion, as populist political theologies undermine human rights and civil liberties. Collectively, these studies illustrate that democratic decline in religious contexts is multidimensional: it involves institutional weakening, delegitimation of political opponents, manipulation of cultural and religious norms, and varying degrees of secular or religious authority in shaping state policies. This body of research suggests that any analysis of democratic backsliding must account for both formal political structures and the sociocultural mechanisms through which religion interacts with state power.

METHODS

DATA COLLECTION

This study employed a comparative, most-different systems with similar outcomes (MDSO) design, selecting three countries as units of analysis: Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey. These three countries were chosen purposively because despite the significant differences in their historical, institutional, and ideological contexts – Indonesia is the largest democracy in Southeast Asia with a secular tradition based on Pancasila, Tunisia is a post-Arab Spring transitional country that experienced a self-coup in 2021, and Turkey is a country with a legacy of secularism undergoing a process of re-Islamisation and centralisation of power – all three exhibit similar developments, namely democratic backsliding. This comparative approach aims to identify more general causal mechanisms behind the pattern of democratic backsliding, such as executive aggrandisement and electoral manipulation. To achieve this goal, this study used process-tracing methods in regard to each case to explore the sequence of events and causal mechanisms in depth, as well as structured cross-case comparisons to identify relevant similarities and differences. With this design, the research attempted to isolate the main causal factors, such as the weakness of the party system, the formation of oligarchic coalitions, and the practice of authoritarian legalism, and to place context variables – especially the relationship between religion and state and the institutional heritage – as moderating factors that influence the configuration of the mechanisms of democratic decline in each country.

This research used a qualitative comparative case study design. Qualitative research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (CRESWELL, 2018). This approach does not include the analysis of an objectively determined scope, frequency, or cause-and-effect relationships. In general, qualitative research relies on narrative or textual data rather than numerical data (SYAHBA & FAHADAYNA, 2024). According to Thomas (2005), this approach is employed to explain phenomena as they occur in real-world contexts, utilising written data from various sources, including interviews, scientific journals, books, theses, and official government reports. This study analysed three countries from different regions: Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey. The selection of these three countries was based on

their unique democratic dynamics and differing regimes, yet they exhibit similar trends of decline. The three countries were chosen because of their different political histories, legal systems, and regional contexts, yet also their similar trends of democratic decline (decline in terms of EIU/Freedom House scores). For each country, process tracing was applied to identify causal mechanisms linking structural factors to executive tactics. The results of the process tracing were then compared in a structured manner to identify similarities in mechanisms across the cases.

First, Indonesia was chosen because it is the largest democracy in Southeast Asia and is often cited as an example of a successful transition from an authoritarian regime to democracy, as it experienced such a transition following the Suharto era. Even Hillary Clinton once praised Indonesia's success in juxtaposing Islam and democracy (SAHIDE & SATRIS, 2021). Indonesia is known as a semi-secular, Muslim-majority country where Islamic values often intersect with political practices, though it simultaneously maintains a state structure that is not based on a particular religion. Over time, Indonesia has faced significant challenges, including the rise of identity politics, the erosion of democratic institutions, and the prevalence of oligarchy in the political process (FATIMATUZZAHRA & DEWI, 2021; NOVILIA ET AL., 2024; WADIPALAPA & TYSON, 2025). Second, Tunisia is often classified as a semi-Islamic country in comparative studies; however, this designation requires careful contextualisation. While Islam is recognised there as the religion of the state, the Tunisian Constitution ultimately establishes the country as a civil state which can be interpreted as secular. This outcome reflects the compromise during the 2011 constitution-drafting process, in which religious identity was balanced with secular governance. Moreover, Tunisia's legal framework is strongly influenced by the Code of Personal Status introduced by Bourguiba, which remains one of the most secular legal codes in the Maghreb region. This code, particularly regarding women's inheritance and personal status laws, was not reformed under the Ennahda government in a conservative or liberal sense, which highlights the limited role of Sharia as a primary source of law. Indeed, during the period 2011–2021, Sharia was not among the main sources of legislation, and the Tunisian legal system continued to operate largely under the secular provisions of the Bourguiban code (KOEHLER, 2023; MEHREZ ET AL., 2025; SYAHBA & FAHADAYNA, 2024). Therefore, describing Tunisia simply as “semi-Islamic” oversimplifies its complex legal and political structure, which integrates

secularist principles within a predominantly Muslim society. Third, Turkey was once considered a model country that successfully combined democracy with moderate political Islam, which made it an example of a semi-Islamic state in governance practices. However, over the past decade, Turkey has experienced a significant decline in its democratic standards. The government under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has demonstrated authoritarian tendencies through its consolidation of power, repression of the opposition, and restrictions on media freedom and judicial institutions (REUTERS, 2023). The following table classifies the countries by regime type:

TABLE 2: THE COUNTRIES AND THEIR REGIME TYPES

Country	Region	Regime	Description
Indonesia	Southeast Asia	Semi-secular	Indonesia is categorised as semi-secular. Its constitution does not explicitly define the state as secular or Islamic, but it accommodates religious elements in political and social life. This allows religion to influence society and politics while democratic institutions and civil liberties are maintained.
Tunisia	Middle East and North Africa.	Semi-Islamic	Tunisia is often labeled as semi-Islamic, but this requires contextual clarification. While Islam is recognised as the official religion, the Tunisian Constitution establishes the country as a civil state which can be interpreted as secular. The legal system relies largely on the Bourguiba Code of Personal Status, one of the most secular frameworks in the Maghreb, which remained mostly unchanged under the Ennahda government. Sharia is not a primary source of legislation, and secular legal provisions govern civil, family, and personal status matters
Turkey	West Europe	Secular	Turkey is classified as secular. Its constitution explicitly enshrines the principle of secularism, ensuring the separation of religion and state. Religious institutions do not directly influence the government or legislation, and freedom of religion is guaranteed. Historically, Turkey combined democracy with moderate political Islam, but recent years have shown a decline in its democratic standards due to authoritarian trends connected with government policies.

Table 2 is based on indicators used by international institutions such as the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and Freedom House, which measure the quality of democracy in various countries.

TABLE 3: CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES

Country Type	Score	Characteristics
Full Democracy	> 8	Civil and political liberties are guaranteed, the political culture is stable, the government is transparent, the judiciary is independent, the media is free, and checks and balances are functioning effectively.
Flawed Democracy	6 – 8	Elections are generally free and fair, but challenges persist, including pressure on the media, a weak political opposition, and low voter participation. Civil liberties are respected, but weaknesses remain in the governance system and political culture.
Hybrid Regime	4 – 6	Elections are frequently manipulated, the opposition is repressed, media freedom is limited, corruption is widespread, the rule of law is weak, and judicial independence is limited.
Authoritarian Regime	< 4	Political control is tight, elections are neither free nor fair, civil liberties are severely limited, the media is state-controlled, the opposition is repressed, and the legal system is subservient to the interests of the ruling regime.

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (2024)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research used the conceptual framework of democratic backsliding as developed by Nancy Bermeo. According to Bermeo (2016), democratic backsliding is a form of gradual autocratisation, usually led by executive actors, rather than the result of a military coup or a rapid transition to an authoritarian regime. This phenomenon is characterised by the weakening of democratic institutions through often legal and formal means, which makes it difficult to identify it as a violation of democracy immediately. Furthermore, Munck (2016) emphasised that democratic backsliding can be recognised through a decline in the quality of the democratic system, particularly in the way state institutions implement democratic principles. Democratic degradation is typically characterised by the weakening of three primary pillars of democracy: freedom of choice, protection from tyranny, and equality in civil liberties. The loss of any one of these pillars is a strong indication of democratic regression (SYAHBA & FAHADAYNA, 2024). In the post-authoritarian context, the role of civil society becomes crucial in the consolidation of democracy. Civil society refers to social groups that actively participate in political life and act as a counterweight to state power. Their activities encompass various forms of political engagement, including policy advocacy, public campaigns, and oversight of state institutions (CHANDHOKE, 2007).

The analytical perspective used in the present study is an agency-based approach emphasising the role of state actors – particularly the executive – in initiating the weakening of democratic institutions. Therefore, this study does not equate backsliding with all forms of auto-cratism, but rather specifically focuses on the gradual regression that occurs and is carried out through the instruments of executive power. Although the concept of democratic decline used here is based on Bermeo’s thinking regarding changes in democratic institutions, the indicators used in this study are adapted from the Economist Intelligence Unit, which provides a more concrete measure of the dynamics of democratic transition and regression. The following table presents the main principles of democracy, indicators of transition to democracy (progress), and indicators of democratic decline (regression), which serve as the basis for the analysis in this study.

TABLE 4: PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION, AND DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

Principles of Democracy	Democratic Transition (Democracy Indicators Improve)	Democratic Decline (Declining Democracy Indicators)
Citizen Participation	Political participation rates increase, demonstrating an active involvement of citizens in elections and public policy.	Political participation declines, indicating apathy or restrictions on political rights.
Constitution	Constitutional reforms strengthen democratic rights and the rule of law.	Constitutional changes limit freedoms or strengthen executive power.
Separation of Powers	The balance between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches strengthens.	Concentration of power in the hands of the executive, which reduces the roles of the legislative and judicial branches.
Rule of Law	The government is more accountable, transparent, and subject to the law.	Weakening of the rule of law and increasing impunity for state officials.
Political Pluralisation	The number of political parties and the freedom of opposition increase.	The decline of political parties due to government restrictions or pressure.
Election Law	Election reforms become more transparent and inclusive, ensuring fair elections.	Election manipulation, restrictions on the opposition, or the removal of voting rights for certain groups.
Civil Society	Freedom of expression increases, and civil society organisations become more active in promoting it.	Restrictions on NGOs, activists, and freedom of assembly.
Gender Equality	The role of women in politics and society increases substantially.	Women’s rights are restricted or merely promoted symbolically without any real impact.
Media and Journalism	The media becomes freer and more independent, and monitors government policies without pressure.	Media censorship increases, and journalists are intimidated or criminalised.

Source: Processed by the Authors, who referred to the Economist Intelligence Unit in doing so (2024).

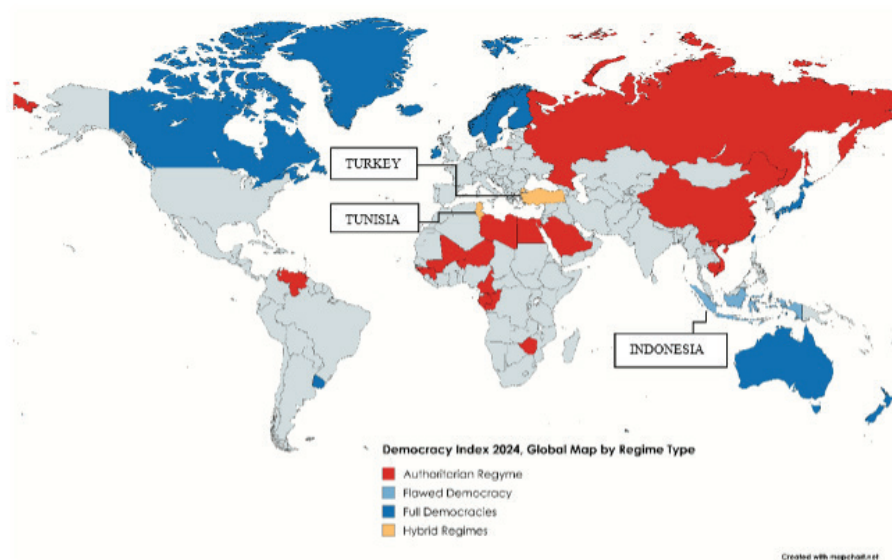
Table 4 illustrates the key principles that underpin democracy, as well as how these indicators change in the context of democratic transition (progression) and democratic decline (regression). The principles presented in the table encompass essential elements of democracy, including citizen participation, constitutional supremacy, separation of powers, the rule of law, political pluralism, electoral law, the role of civil society, gender equality, and freedom of the media and journalism.

Each principle is outlined in terms of two directions of change in the table: the first column contains transition indicators that demonstrate improvements in the quality of democracy, such as increased political participation, strengthened constitutional institutions, and freedom of association; the second includes regression indicators that reflect a decline or weakening of democracy, such as decreased citizen participation, the concentration of power in the executive, and restrictions on the media, journalists, and civil society groups. This table provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding a country's political dynamics, identifying whether it is moving toward democratic consolidation or experiencing regression. By referencing indicators from the Economist Intelligence Unit, which were processed and adapted by the authors, this table serves as a primary tool for identifying patterns of democratic change in the analysed case studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The state of global democracy in 2024, as seen on the Democracy Index map, indicates democratic regression in several countries, including Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey. The three predominantly Muslim countries analysed in this study come from different regions but face relatively similar challenges in maintaining their democratic systems. Based on the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) classification, Turkey and Tunisia are now categorised as hybrid regimes, while Indonesia is classified as a flawed democracy (EIU, 2024). This change in the classification reflects a decline in the quality of democracy in terms of political participation, the rule of law, and civil liberties. In other words, the democratic decline in these three countries is not only procedural but also substantive, as will be further discussed in the analysis of democratic indicators for each case.

FIGURE 1: WORLD MAP OF DEMOCRACY INDEX ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRATIC



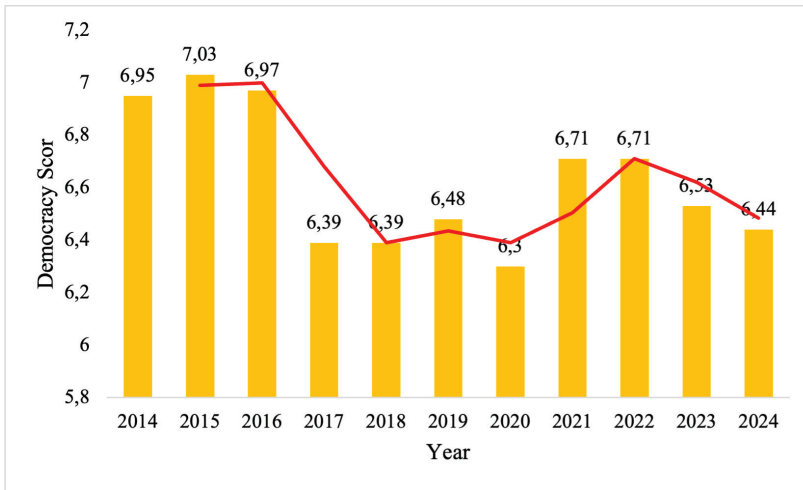
Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2024).

DECLINE BASED ON DEMOCRACY INDICATORS: INDONESIA

Since transitioning from an authoritarian regime in 1998, Indonesia has demonstrated significant democratic progress marked by increased political pluralism, media freedom, and the peaceful transfer of power through repeated elections (KALEMBANG, 2024). Post-reform Indonesia has held six presidential and vice-presidential elections in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, and most recently in 2024. However, during President Joko Widodo's tenure, various global democracy indices have actually recorded a decline in the quality of democracy in Indonesia. During his administration, Indonesia's status was never outside the category of a flawed democracy (TEMPO, 2024). President Widodo himself comes from a civilian background and was elected through a democratic mechanism. Although initially seen as a symbol of democratisation and the antithesis of the old political elite, the Jokowi administration actually showed various symptoms of weakening democracy, including increasing corruption, discrimination, and violence against minority groups; the unresolved conflict in Papua, and the misuse of legal instruments such as defamation and blasphemy laws for political gain (FEBRIANDY & WAHID, 2024). According to a report

by the EIU (2024), the trend of democracy in Indonesia in the 2014–2024 period showed a fluctuating pattern but generally pointed towards decline.

FIGURE 2: DEMOCRACY INDEX INDONESIA 2014–2024



Source: EIU Democracy Index (2024).

On February 14, 2024, Indonesia held simultaneous general elections encompassing the elections to the presidency, the House of Representatives (DPR), and the Regional Representative Council (DPD), and legislative elections at the provincial, district, and city levels (KUIPERS ET AL., 2024). The Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka ticket, nominated by the Gerindra Party and supported by a large coalition, won with 58.6 percent of the vote and won in 36 of 38 provinces (DWI RAHAYU ET AL., 2024; NOVILIA ET AL., 2024). However, the election process was marred by allegations of violations, including intimidation of polling officers and misuse of social assistance by President Widodo for campaign purposes (FATIMATUZZAHRA & DEWI, 2021; NOVILIA ET AL., 2024). Although the Constitutional Court found no significant legal violations, the controversy heightened concerns about the integrity of the election and the neutrality of state institutions, the main foundations of electoral democracy.

Furthermore, political pluralism is also under pressure from regulations that limit the participation of new political parties. Although

the constitution guarantees the right to form parties, the factual verification requirements in the 2017 Election Law make it difficult for small parties to compete on equal terms (NUGROHO, 2024). Provisions such as the requirement to have leadership positions in all provinces reinforce the dominance of established large parties and hinder the emergence of political alternatives. Consequently, the space for diverse representation in Indonesian democracy is increasingly narrowing, indicating a regression in political inclusivity and party pluralism (ASPINALL & MIETZNER, 2019). The decline of democracy is also evident in the constitutional realm. The changes to the minimum age requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates resulting from a Constitutional Court ruling in October 2023, were highly controversial and not entirely free from conflicts of interest. The Constitutional Court's decision paved the way for individuals under 40 to run as presidential or vice-presidential candidates, whereas previous regulations had required candidates for these positions to be 40 or older (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2024A; YUDHISTIRA & NURDIN, 2024). The Constitutional Court's ruling was actually made to clear the way for Gibran Rakabuming Raka (President Widodo's son) to run as Prabowo Subianto's vice presidential candidate. Coincidentally, the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court at the time was Anwar Usman, Joko Widodo's brother-in-law. Therefore, this dynamic reinforced the public perception that the constitution was being manipulated for the political interests of the ruling family (USMAN & SETIADI, 2023). Kaesang Pangarep, Jokowi's youngest son, was even appointed Chairman of the PSI just two days after officially joining the party. The involvement of the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, who is also President Jokowi's brother-in-law, in the ruling on the age limit issue without him resigning created a legitimacy crisis regarding the independence of the nation's highest legal institution (MURADI & SILAS, 2024).

The separation of powers, a key pillar of the democratic system, is also facing erosion. The dominance of the executive branch over the legislative and judicial branches weakens the principle of checks and balances. The involvement of actors with family ties to the president in key decision-making at the Constitutional Court demonstrates that the judiciary is not entirely free from political interference (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2024A). The trias politica is not functioning as intended, which further reinforces the impression of a consolidation of power that leads to an oligarchic system of government and reduces the deliberative space in public

decision-making. High levels of corruption in various state institutions further exacerbate this situation. Transparency International (2024) ranked Indonesia 99th out of 180 countries in its global corruption rankings with a score of 37, which reflects a weak accountability and oversight system. The country's reforms aimed at eradicating corruption have stagnated, particularly following the institutional weakening of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the political interference in the legal process. Bribery, embezzlement, and abuse of power persist, eroding public trust in democratic institutions (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2024A).

Citizen participation in Indonesian democracy presents a unique irony. While election turnout is high, substantive citizen participation remains low due to the dominance of political elites and structural discrimination. In several regions, religious minorities face administrative obstacles in the processing of important documents, which directly impacts their voting rights and access to public services (IBID.). These discriminatory practices highlight the state's inability to ensure equal political rights for all its citizens. In the same context, civil society, as a pillar of democracy, faces increasing pressure. While actively advocating for human rights and governance issues, it faces various forms of silencing, ranging from criminalisation and digital harassment to physical violence. The government frequently uses the Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) Law as a legal tool to silence criticism, narrow the space for public discussion, and weaken the role of civil society in maintaining democratic accountability (BURCHANUDDIN & SORE, 2024).

Gender equality is also a crucial indicator of a democracy's quality. Although the electoral system mandates a 30 percent quota for women's representation on legislative candidate lists, actual results have not fully reflected this provision. In the 2024 elections, women's representation in the House of Representatives (DPR) reached 22 percent, the highest percentage of this variable in Indonesian history. However, women still face cultural and structural barriers such as vote buying, gender-based violence, and discrimination in political recruitment (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2024A).

Meanwhile, the rule of law in Indonesia has not been able to guarantee equal justice for all citizens. The arbitrary arrests of activists and the use of the Anti-Terrorism Law to crack down on separatism in Papua

demonstrate the state's tendency to use the law as a tool of repression rather than protection of rights (ZAHIDI & BIN OTHMAN, 2024). Unequal access to justice and the weak integrity of legal institutions exacerbate the legitimacy crisis in the judicial system. Ultimately, the media and journalism, which should be the fourth pillar of democracy, are under alarming pressure. Criticism of the government is considered defamation. However, the essence of democracy is popular control over its leaders, and criticism is part of social control. Although Indonesia's media landscape is active and diverse, press freedom has declined due to regulations that ensnare journalists through articles open to multiple interpretations in the ITE Law (FEBRIANDY & WAHID, 2024). Cases of criminalisation of journalists, violence during reporting, and pressure on independent media further hamper the media's function as a check on power. Without free and critical media, the democratic space becomes closed to transparency and accountability.

Since the second term of Joko Widodo's administration, Indonesia's democracy has shown a pattern of regression. The passage of the 2020 Omnibus Law on Job Creation demonstrated the consolidation of economic and political power within oligarchic coalitions, which reduced public participation in policy formulation. The 2022 revision of the Criminal Code also expanded restrictive articles that potentially restrict freedom of expression, such as those prohibiting insults to the president and demonstrations (PETLACH & ŘÍČANOVÁ, 2025).

Thus, the dynamics of democratic decline in the Joko Widodo era can be categorised into two main patterns of contemporary democratic erosion according to Bermeo (2016): strategic manipulation of elections and executive aggrandisement. Strategic election manipulation is evident in various interventions of power in the election process, such as the misuse of social assistance for electoral purposes, intimidation of election organisers, and sudden changes in regulations that favour certain candidates, as seen in the alteration of the age limit for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. On the other hand, executive aggrandisement is reflected in the increasing dominance of executive power over legislative and judicial institutions, as well as the involvement of actors with family ties to the president in state decision-making. Both of these patterns occur formally through legal and regulatory mechanisms, but substantially undermine

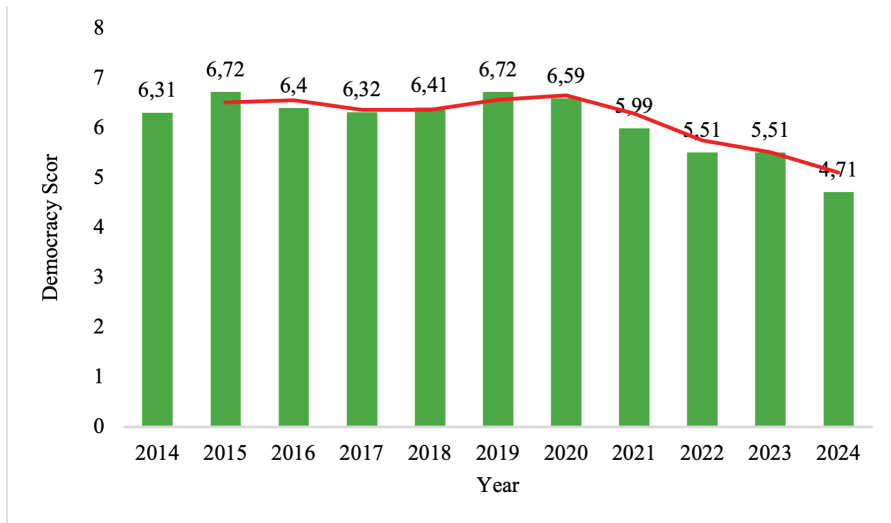
the basic principles of democracy, such as accountability, the rule of law, and a balanced distribution of power.

ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE BASED ON DEMOCRACY INDICATORS: TUNISIA

The Arab Spring, which sparked the growth of democratisation in the Middle East, began in Tunisia in late 2010. This event ended the authoritarian regime of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Tunisia was also the only country to consolidate its democracy successfully after the 2010 Arab Spring successfully. Shortly after Ben Ali's fall, presidential elections were held in Tunisia, and the then new elected president was Moncef Marzouki of the Republican Party. In 2014, presidential elections were held in Tunisia for the second time since the Arab Spring, and the winner was Beji Caid Essebsi. In October 2019, presidential elections were held again, and this time the voters elected Kais Saïed. The three presidential elections following the Arab Spring have categorised Tunisia as a mature democracy (based on Jack Snyder's theory of democracy). Tunisia has successfully consolidated its democracy (SAHIDE ET AL., 2022).

Tunisia, considered a pioneer of the post-Arab Spring democratic revolution, made significant progress in its democratisation process during the Essebsi administration (GANDOLFO, 2015). It was reflected in the increase in the country's Democracy Index score, which was due to its policies that supported a democratic system of government. However, since the election of Saïed as President in 2019, the quality of democracy in Tunisia has declined sharply. Saïed is a Tunisian politician, jurist, and former lecturer who ran as an independent candidate with an anti-corruption campaign and populist rhetoric. Although initially gaining widespread support as an alternative to political parties, his government has subsequently exhibited authoritarian tendencies. In 2021, he dissolved the parliament, unilaterally assumed executive power, and promulgated a new constitution that strengthened presidential powers. According to the EIU (2024), the trend in Tunisian democracy from 2014 to 2024 was a downward trend in various key indicators, including the electoral process, government functions, and political participation.

FIGURE 3: DEMOCRACY INDEX TUNISIA 2014–2024



Source: EIU Democracy Index (2024).

Tunisia’s presidential election on October 6, 2024 was won by Kais Saïed with over 90 percent of the vote, taking place under conditions that were neither free nor fair. The electoral process demonstrated a departure from democratic principles, primarily due to an executive intervention that significantly limited political participation (KOEHLER, 2023). In the second round of the legislative elections held in January 2024, turnout reached only 11 percent, reflecting the low public trust in the political process. The election process was also marred by fundraising restrictions, discriminatory candidacy, and a boycott by the main opposition parties, which reinforced public perceptions of the electoral democracy in Tunisia as delegitimised (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2024B).

This situation reflects a decline in the spirit of political pluralism that had flourished after the Arab Spring. Tunisia was previously known as a country with a dynamic multiparty system open to differing political views. However, since 2021, the unilateral measures taken by President Saïed, including the dissolution of the parliament and government by decree, have narrowed the space for political competition (HUBER & PISCIOTTA, 2023). The government’s anti-party approach, combined with its populist rhetoric, has further entrenched the exclusion of opposition groups. Strict

restrictions on candidacy in elections have further eroded the meaning of pluralism, leaving only candidates deemed loyal to the establishment.

These measures also had a direct impact on the country's constitutional structure. The constitutional reforms enacted through Presidential Decree 2021-117 systematically eliminated several fundamental democratic principles, such as the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances (TAMBURINI, 2023). The unilateral dissolution of the parliament and the elimination of independent institutions signalled Tunisia's radical shift from a post-revolutionary constitutional democracy to a concentration of power in the executive branch. It left the president as the sole source of political authority without any effective countervailing mechanism in places.

This consolidation of power has coincided with weak anti-corruption efforts. Transparency International (2024) ranked Tunisia 92nd out of 180 countries in its global corruption rankings, with a score of only 39. This score reflects a lack of public sector integrity, which has exacerbated the crisis of trust in state institutions. The country's democratisation, which was originally expected to bring governance reform, has instead stagnated due to the state's inability to take firm action against corruption, thus further reinforcing public perceptions of the state's efforts to ensure justice and accountability as a failure. The decline in democracy is also reflected in the declining level of citizen political participation (MEHREZ ET AL., 2025). Of the 9.7 million registered voters in Tunisia, only 29 percent cast ballots, while youth participation reached only 6 percent. This high level of political apathy is inextricably linked to the government's exclusionary policies, including the General Elections Commission's decision to approve only three candidates and its disregard for administrative court decisions. These decisions further narrow the space for citizen participation, creating a gap between the state and society (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2024B).

In this increasingly repressive context, civil society has also become a target of state pressure. Activists, non-governmental organisations, and opposition groups face various forms of legal harassment and restrictions on their freedom of movement. The state selectively uses legal instruments to silence criticism and restrict activities deemed inconsistent with the ruling party's agenda. This repression reflects a weakening of freedom of association and freedom of assembly, two essential elements of a participatory

democracy. The democratic backsliding has also had a significant impact on women's position in politics and the public sphere. While a progressive 2017 election law mandated equal gender representation, a 2022 legal reform overturned this provision. In the December 2022 legislative elections, only 11 percent of the candidates were women, and they won only 25 of the 161 parliamentary seats. Meanwhile, gender-based violence continues to escalate without an adequate policy response. President Saïed's appointment of a female prime minister was deemed merely symbolic, as the position of prime minister lacks any substantive decision-making authority (*IBID.*).

Furthermore, the law in Tunisia has been reduced to an instrument of political repression. Arrests of opposition figures, activists, and journalists have increased drastically, while political candidates have been criminalised, and access to fair legal oversight has been increasingly restricted. The Election Commission has even revoked its administrative oversight jurisdiction, thus eliminating transparent legal mechanisms. This repression is reinforced by disinformation and hate speech targeting opposition groups on social media, which construct a single narrative that supports the authorities (*PETKANAS, 2023*). Press freedom has also suffered as a result of the growing trend towards authoritarianism. Under Saïed's rule, several media outlets, such as Al-Araby and Al-Zaytouna, were closed, and journalists covering protests faced intimidation, detention, and even military trials (*KHAMIS, 2024*). This situation has created a climate of fear among journalists and independent media outlets, which are increasingly reluctant to criticise the government. President Saïed's rhetoric, which openly threatens the media, marks a decline in freedom of expression and weakens the public's control over the exercise of power. Tunisia has subsequently experienced a democratic backsliding with a shift toward a leader who was not democratically elected.

The various dynamics of democratic decline during the reign of President Kais Saïed in Tunisia can be categorised into two main patterns of contemporary democratic erosion: executive aggrandisement and self-coup. Executive aggrandisement is evident in the gradual but systematic takeover of legislative and judicial powers by the executive, starting with the suspension of the parliament in July 2021, the dissolution of the Constitutional Court, and the ratification of a new constitution that unilaterally expanded presidential authority. Meanwhile, self-coup is reflected

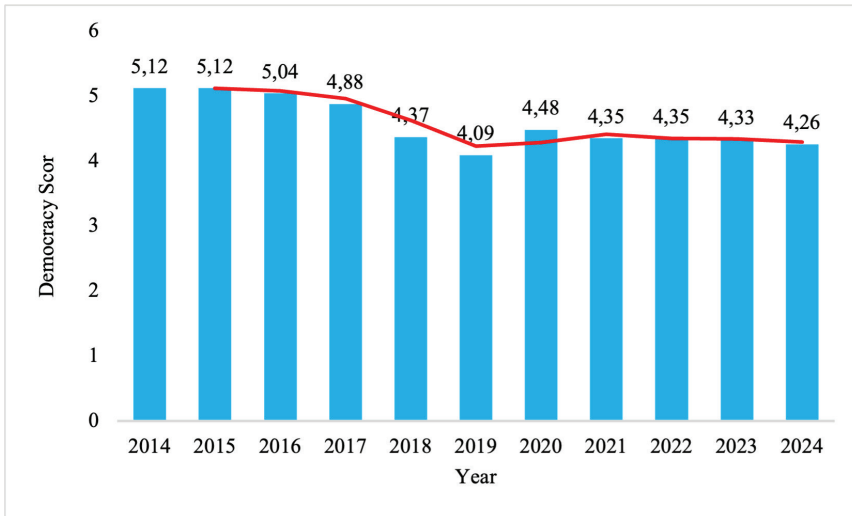
in the president's actions, which utilise his electoral legitimacy to turn off democratic institutions and enable him to govern through decrees without a transparent deliberative process. Both patterns occur within a formal legal framework, namely the declaration of a constitutional emergency and a tightly controlled referendum. However, they substantially undermine fundamental democratic principles, including limitations on executive power, the independence of state institutions, and public participation in the political process.

ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE BASED ON DEMOCRACY INDICATORS: TURKEY

Since the end of the military rule and the consolidation of civilian power in the early 2000s, Turkey has been viewed as a model of progressive Islamic democracy in the Middle East (SOMER, 2024). During the early years of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, various democratic reforms were successfully implemented, including the limitation of military power and an increase in civil liberties. Erdoğan himself comes from an Islamic political background and served as Mayor of Istanbul before becoming Prime Minister (2003–2014) and President (since 2014) (CHRISTOFIS, 2023).

However, over the past two decades, Turkey's democratisation trajectory has shown significant regression. The increasing concentration of power in the hands of the president, restrictions on press freedom and political opposition, and the misuse of anti-terrorism laws to silence criticism have raised serious concerns about the country's future democracy. Since the 2017 constitutional amendments that shifted the system of government from a parliamentary to a presidential one, Erdoğan has gained significantly greater control over the legislature, judiciary, and media. The EIU (2024) noted that from 2020 to 2024, Turkey experienced a downward trend in civil liberties and political pluralism. Turkey is now classified as a hybrid regime, which marks a transition from procedural democracy to electoral authoritarianism.

FIGURE 4: DEMOCRACY INDEX TURKEY 2014–2024



Source: EIU Democracy Index (2024).

A key turning point in Turkey’s democratic decline was the amendment to the Election Law passed in March 2022. While it was initially considered an inclusive measure, its lowering of the parliamentary threshold from 10 percent to 7 percent actually strengthened the dominance of the ruling coalition, particularly the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) and its allies (MURAT, 2023; TANCA, 2024). Furthermore, revisions to the mechanism for selecting judges for overseeing the elections opened significant opportunities for political interference in the electoral process. Judges with strong ties to the AKP now hold strategic positions, which undermines the independence and integrity of the electoral institutions. Procedural irregularities in the vote count in the first round of the May 2023 elections further raised public doubts about the fairness and transparency of the elections (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2023B).

The state of political pluralism in Turkey is also worsening. Although the country formally adheres to a multiparty system, its political practices exhibit repressive tendencies toward the opposition. The government employs legal instruments and institutional pressure to weaken opposition parties, including the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), the İP (İYİ Parti), and the HDP (Halkların Demokratik Partisi). Opposition figures experience legal intimidation, attacks on party offices, and threats of violence,

often without adequate protection from security forces. Cases such as the verdicts against Ekrem İmamoğlu and Canan Kaftancıoğlu, as well as the Constitutional Court's attempt to disband the HDP, demonstrate a systematic pattern of restrictions on political movement that is detrimental to pluralism (BILGIN & ÖZTÜRK, 2024).

Along with Erdoğan's consolidation of power since the transition to a presidential system in 2018, Turkey's political constitution has undergone a drastic shift toward centralisation of power. The president retains near-absolute control over executive functions and the policymaking process and wields significant influence over the legislature through his dominance of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The bureaucratic restructuring since 2016 has further weakened the independence of state institutions, with many strategic positions filled by political loyalists (SOMER, 2024). This situation undermines the principle of separation of powers and reduces the autonomy of state institutions, which should be guaranteed in a presidential system (TANCA, 2024).

Amid the shrinking democratic space, corruption has become a chronic problem that worsens governance. A Transparency International (2024) report ranked Turkey 107th out of 180 countries in terms of corruption ratings, with a score of just 34 out of 100. Corruption is widespread across various sectors, including public procurement and the judiciary, due to weak accountability mechanisms and inconsistent law enforcement. The country's anti-corruption institutions are considered ineffective and tend to be subordinated to political interests, creating a culture of impunity among government elites.

Citizen participation in Turkey is also hindered by various restrictions on civil liberties and the shrinking of the civil society space. The government employs various legal instruments to suppress non-governmental organisations and activists who criticise state policies. Public demonstrations are frequently forcibly dispersed, and many civil society organisations are compelled to suspend their activities due to concerns over national security or public stability. A strict surveillance regime for civil society associations further restricts the space for citizen participation in the democratic process (FREEDOM HOUSE, 2023B). Turkey also shows limited progress in terms of gender equality and minority group representation.

Women's representation in parliament has reached only 20 percent, despite a slight increase compared to the previous period. Meanwhile, the LGBT+ community faces serious political marginalisation, particularly when the political climate is increasingly conservative, and homophobic rhetoric from right-wing politicians. LGBT+ candidates running in the 2023 elections faced various forms of discrimination, while advocacy for LGBT+ rights is limited by regulations that rely on public morality (IBID.).

The rule of law in Turkey is increasingly being questioned. Procedural injustice, the politicisation of the judiciary, and the use of the law to silence political opponents are increasingly evident. An Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) report on the 2023 elections highlighted unequal media access, the government's rhetoric rife with accusations of terrorism against the opposition, and restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression as indicators of serious irregularities in the implementation of electoral democracy in Turkey. The political interference in the judicial process reinforces the public perception that the law is used as a tool of power rather than a means of justice. Press freedom has also suffered a drastic decline in recent years. Mainstream media are dominated by conglomerates closely affiliated with President Erdoğan, which results in biased reporting that favours the government's narrative. Independent media outlets face various forms of pressure, ranging from censorship and fines to forced closures and even criminalisation. In 2022, Turkey was the country with the fourth-highest number of imprisoned journalists, and this trend continued in 2023. Coverage of sensitive issues such as corruption and natural disasters is often cited as a reason for the detention of journalists. Broadcast watchdogs like RTÜK (Radio ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu) selectively sanction opposition media outlets, and "false information" laws further intensify the repression of online expression. Social media is also heavily monitored, with companies like X forced to remove content deemed detrimental to the government in the run-up to elections (IBID.). Erdoğan has undoubtedly engaged in executive aggrandisement.

This situation demonstrates that while Turkey maintains the institutional facade of democracy, including elections and a parliament, its daily state practices reveal a serious decline in pluralism, civil liberties, the rule of law, and government accountability. The superficial democratic process

is often overshadowed by the intensifying authoritarian control, which raises fundamental questions about the sustainability of democracy in Turkey in the contemporary political landscape. Therefore, many observers refer to what is happening in Turkey as a form of competitive authoritarianism (UGUR-CINAR, 2023). The decline of democracy during the Erdoğan era can be classified into two main forms of democratic weakening as identified in academic literature: strategic manipulation of elections and executive aggrandisement (BERMEO, 2016). Strategic election manipulation is reflected in seemingly legal changes to the rules of the political game, such as the revision of the 2022 Election Law that strengthens the position of the ruling coalition, the politicisation of election supervisory bodies, and the restrictions on media access and repression of the opposition in the lead-ups to elections. Meanwhile, executive aggrandisement is evident in the concentration of power in Erdoğan's hands through the 2017 constitutional amendments and the restructuring of state institutions that weakened the system of checks and balances. Both mechanisms were implemented gradually and legally, but they had a significant impact on the degradation of democracy by making the political competition less fair and weakening the independence of democratic institutions.

THE DYNAMIC POLITICAL COMPARISON: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING TRAJECTORIES

To understand the trends of democratic decline in the examined countries, the following comparison shows the Democracy Indexes of Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey from 2014 to 2024. This data, taken from the EIA (2024), shows how the three countries experienced the declines in their democracy scores with varying patterns

FIGURE 5: COMPARATIVE DEMOCRACY INDEX 2014–2024

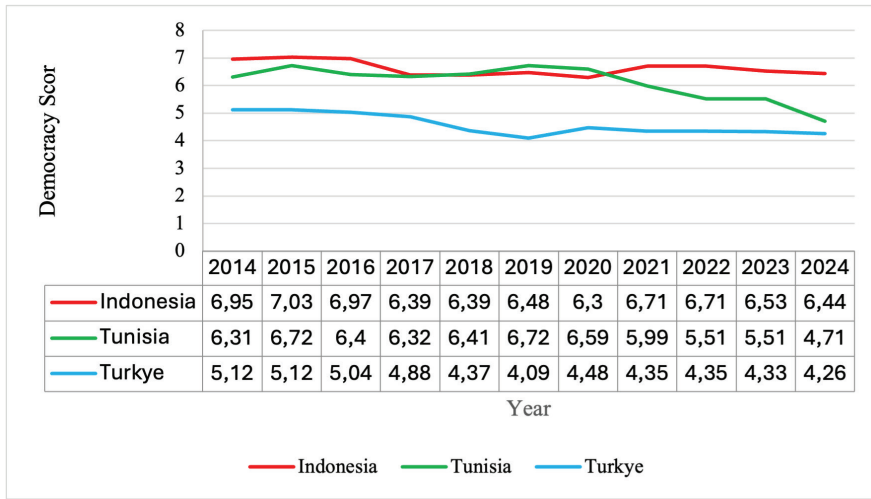


Figure 5 shows a comparison of the Democracy Index trends of Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey from 2014 to 2024. In general, all three countries experienced a decline in their democracy scores over the past decade, although with different patterns. Indonesia began this period with the relatively high score of 6.95 in 2014. This score rose to 7.03 in 2015 but then exhibited a consistent downward trend, dropping to 6.39 in both 2017 and 2018. After slightly improving in 2019 (6.48) and 2021 (6.71), the score experienced another decline as it fell to 6.30 in 2023 and then slightly rose to 6.44 in 2024. Although it remains above the positions of Tunisia and Turkey, Indonesia’s position still falls under the “flawed democracy” category.

Tunisia started with a score of 6.31 in 2014, slightly below that of Indonesia, and it rose to the peak position of 6.72 in 2015 and 2019. However, Tunisia has since experienced a sharp decline in this respect, particularly after 2021, with its score dropping to 5.51 in 2022 and 2023 and then dropping sharply to 4.71 in 2024. This decline represents a significant setback in Tunisia’s democratic consolidation, as it indicates a shift toward a more authoritarian form of government. Meanwhile, Turkey has shown a steadier but consistent downward trend. With a starting score of 5.12 in 2014, Turkey’s score has continued to decline almost every year,

reaching its lowest point in 2024 with a value of 4.26. During this period, Turkey performed worse than Indonesia and Tunisia, which reflects a deeper and more systematic democratic regression. Therefore, Turkey's political developments during this decade can place it in the category of a hybrid regime, a system that combines elements of procedural democracy with authoritarian practices, thereby weakening substantive democratic principles.

Table 5 presents a comprehensive comparison of the main causes of democratic decline in these three countries based on five key indicators: Electoral Process and Pluralism, Government Function, Political Participation, Political Culture, and Civil Liberties. Each indicator is broken down into specific elements, such as electoral law, political pluralism, separation of powers, corruption, citizen participation, and gender equality, which represent substantive dimensions of democracy. Through this approach, it is made clear that the democratic declines in Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey are not merely procedural but also affect substantive aspects of power management, public participation, and the protection of democratic values.

Meanwhile, Table 6 presents a classification of the political regimes in Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey based on their ideological types (semi-secular, semi-Islamic, and secular) and how each regime's characteristics influence its democratic weakening. This table also adopts the classification scores from Freedom House (2024A, B), which assesses the degree of democracy of each state through the dimensions of electoral manipulation, concentration of executive power, and the tendency toward constitutional coups. Each country is analysed based on its leadership background and regime ideology, and the concrete forms of democratic weakening that have occurred in it. In this regard, Indonesia is classified as a "flawed democracy." At the same time, Tunisia and Turkey fall into the category of "hybrid regimes," which indicates that while formal elements of democracy remain in them, their political practices have experienced significant erosion. In this categorical approach, the weakening of democracy depends not only on the regime's ideological form but also on the systematic strategies it uses to manipulate democratic institutions and eliminate the opposition. Thus, this table strengthens the argument that the democratic regression across

the countries is not homogeneous, but is rather influenced by the ideological context, leadership, and authoritarian strategies of each country.

TABLE 5: THE COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

Democracy Indicators	Elements	Indonesia	Tunisia	Turkey
Electoral Process and Pluralism, Government Functions	Election Law	The 2024 elections were not entirely free and fair; the dominance of grand coalitions, legal loopholes created through Constitutional Court rulings, and political dynasty controversies weakened the political competition, giving rise to accusations of power abuse.	The 2024 elections were neither free nor fair, and involved executive interference, restrictions on candidacy, and opposition boycotts.	The 2022 revision of the Election Law strengthens the AKP's dominance by lowering the parliamentary threshold and allowing for political interference in the work of election judges.
	Political Pluralism	Although political parties were free to form, the factual verification requirements in the 2017 Election Law hampered equal political participation and reinforced the dominance of the established political elite.	Kais Saïed's dominance and the dissolution of the parliament demonstrated anti-pluralism and populist tendencies.	The dominance of the AKP and Erdoğan, the criminalisation of opposition figures, and attempts to disband the HDP hinder pluralism.
Political Participation, Electoral Process and Pluralism	Constitution	Although political parties were free to form, the factual verification requirements in the 2017 Election Law hampered equal political participation and reinforced the dominance of the established political elite.	The 2021 constitutional reforms abolished the separation of powers and centralised presidential power.	Since 2018, the presidential system has concentrated power in Erdoğan's hands, with presidential decrees dominating policy.
	Separation of Powers	The Constitutional Court's controversial ruling on the age limit for presidential candidates reinforces perceptions of democratic inequality and the consolidation of power by family elites. The power structure is becoming increasingly oligarchic, favouring certain groups over others.	Power was concentrated in the president, and the legislative and judicial branches were weakened.	The executive branch dominates legislation and bureaucracy; independent institutions are weakened through the appointment of loyalists.
	Corruption	The country's 2024 CPI score is 37 (it ranked 99th), indicating high levels of corruption in state institutions and a weak effectiveness of the Corruption Eradication Commission.	The country's 2024 CPI score was 39 (it ranked 92nd), indicating endemic corruption and weak public governance.	The country's 2024 CPI score was 34 (it ranked 107th) due to weak public accountability, abuse of power, and a culture of impunity.

Government Functions, Political Participation	Citizen participation	Political participation increased quantitatively in 2024, particularly with the simultaneous elections.	Voter turnout was very low (29% total, 6% of the youth), indicating distrust in the political system.	The 2023 elections were held amidst unequal media access and intimidation of the opposition. Formal participation persisted, but procedural democracy was weak.
	Civil society	Inequality in access to political participation continues to be felt by marginalised and minority groups and is made worse by non-inclusive regulations.	The civic space was shrinking; participation was restricted, and civil society organisations faced legal pressure.	Freedom of assembly, association, and expression was restricted, and legal pressure was imposed on the opposition and activists.
Political Culture	Gender Equality	A 30% quota for women's representation in the DPR has been implemented; their representation in the DPR was expected to increase to 22% by 2024, but women remain underrepresented in the executive branch.	Legal reforms eliminated gender-affirmative action policies, the number of women in parliament dropped drastically, and gender-based violence increased.	Women's representation in parliament is only 20%; the LGBT+ community experiences marginalisation and political attacks.
Civil Freedom	Legal Regulations	Law enforcement is not entirely fair; arbitrary arrests, criminalisation of activists, and religious-based legal discrimination persist. The Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) Law and the Anti-Terrorism Law are used to restrict civil liberties.	The law is being used repressively against the opposition and activists; judicial oversight is limited.	Anti-terrorism laws are often used to silence criticism, and judicial independence is frequently questioned, particularly during election periods.
	Media and Journalism	The criminalisation of journalists, censorship, and the restriction of articles under the ITE Law pose a threat to press freedom. Media outlets are active, but they are often silenced or suppressed both legally and digitally.	Press freedom is declining; journalists are being detained and media outlets are being restricted, including through the closure of news outlets.	The government controls the media; independent journalists are imprisoned; and "false information" laws and censorship undermine press freedom.

Source: Processed writing referring to Freedom House (2024a, b).

TABLE 6: REGIME TYPES AND THE DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY IN SEMI SECULAR, SEMI-ISLAMIC, AND SECULAR COUNTRIES

Country	Region	President	Background	Regime Ideology	Democracy Weakening Categories	Regime Type	Reason for the Classification
Indonesia	Southeast Asia	Joko Widodo	Civilian	Semi-secular	Strategic Manipulation of Elections and Executive	Flawed Democracy	Despite regular elections and the persistence of multiparty competition, Indonesia has witnessed a weakening of its democratic institutions, including the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), the Constitutional Court (MK), and press freedom. Regulations such as the ITE Law restrict civil liberties, and political oligarchies dominate the decision-making process. The EIU's democracy index ranks Indonesia as a "flawed democracy."
Tunisia	Middle East and North Africa	Kais Saeed	Civilian	Semi-Islamic	Executive Aggrandisement and Self Coup	Hybrid Regime	Since the constitutional coup by President Kais Saied in 2021, Tunisia has witnessed a consolidation of power in the executive branch. The parliament has been suspended, the constitution has been revised to strengthen the presidency, and the opposition has been silenced. Elections are still held but are non-competitive, and the civic space has shrunk. Tunisia has been labelled a "hybrid regime" by various global indices.

Turkey	Western Asia / Europa Timur	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	Civilian	Secular	Strategic Manipulation of Elections and Executive Aggrandisement	Hybrid Regime	Turkey continues to hold regular elections, but there is structural manipulation and repression of the opposition. Erdoğan transformed the system into a presidential one, gained control of the judiciary, suppressed press freedom, and purged his political opponents. Despite the existence of formal democracy, the government's practices tend to be authoritarian. The EIU and Freedom House categorise Turkey as a "hybrid regime."
--------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------	----------	---------	--	------------------	---

Source: Processed writing referring to Freedom House (2024a, b).

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that Indonesia, Tunisia, and Turkey, despite their distinct regional and political contexts, have experienced similar patterns of democratic decline characterised by the weakening of democratic institutions, the consolidation of executive power, and the restriction of civil liberties. This weakening of democratic institutions has been carried out by leaders from among the civilian population who were elected through democratic mechanisms. In Indonesia, the democratic decline is reflected in the strategic manipulation of elections, the weakening of institutions such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the Constitutional Court, and regulations that restrict freedom of expression. Tunisia experienced a more drastic decline following the constitutional coup by President Kais Saïed, which dissolved the parliament and strengthened executive power, thus triggering Tunisia's transition from democracy to a hybrid regime. Meanwhile, Turkey, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has shown a shift toward electoral authoritarianism through changes to the government system, repression of the opposition, and strict control of the media. The commonality of and primary factor driving the democratic decline in these three countries is the consolidation of executive power (executive aggrandisement), which is reinforced by a weakening of the rule of law, rampant corruption, and a narrowing of civil and political liberties. While procedurally maintaining the implementation of elections, substantively, all three countries have experienced a decline in the quality of their democracy.

This research emphasises the importance of maintaining a balance of power, strengthening the rule of law, and protecting civil liberties as the primary foundations for maintaining a healthy democracy, especially in developing countries vulnerable to new patterns of authoritarianism. The events in Indonesia, Turkey, and Tunisia confirm Levitsky and Ziblatt's thesis in their book *How Democracies Die*, namely that democracy can be undermined by leaders elected through democratic mechanisms. Therefore, even if the democratic consolidation in a country has entered a mature phase, there is no guarantee that its democracy will not erode. Therefore, the task of all of us living in countries that adhere to a democratic system is to ensure that our elected leaders do not engage in executive aggrandisement.

REFERENCES

- A
- Ashfaq, H., Ashfaq, K., & Shahid, M. (2023). An analysis of democracy in Pakistan: Challenges and way forward. *Global Regional Review*, 8(1), 26–32. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2023\(VIII-I\).04](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2023(VIII-I).04)
- Aspinall, E., & Mietzner, M. (2019). Southeast Asia's troubling elections: Nondemocratic pluralism in Indonesia. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(4), 104–118. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0055>
- B
- Bauer, M. W., & Becker, S. (2016). Democratic backsliding, populism, and public administration. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, 3(1), 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvz026>
- Bennett, W. L., & Kneuer, M. (2024). Communication and democratic erosion: The rise of illiberal public spheres. *European Journal of Communication*, 39(2), 177–196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231217378>
- Berch, V. V. (2023). Democracy as a dynamic political and legal phenomenon: fundamental principles. *Uzhhorod National University Herald. Series: Law*, 1(79), 119–122. <https://doi.org/10.24144/2307-3322.2023.79.1.19>
- Bermeo, N. (2016). On democratic backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 27(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2016.0012>
- Bilgin, A., & Öztürk, A. (2024). Democracy and opposition in Turkey: An introduction to the special issue. *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*, 17(4), 323–327. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-023-00590-8>
- Brathwaite, R., & Bramsen, A. (2011). Reconceptualizing church and state: A theoretical and empirical analysis of the impact of separation of religion and state on democracy. *Politics and Religion*, 4(2), 229–263. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048311000137>
- Burchanuddin, A., & Sore, U. B. (2024). Social inclusion in enhancing political participation of marginalized communities in Indonesia. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 2(3), 831–849. <https://doi.org/10.59585/ijhs.v2i3.418>
- C
- Castaldo, A., & Memoli, V. (2024). Political support and democratic backsliding trends. The strange case of Central and Eastern European countries. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 32(1), 138–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2023.2206115>
- Cesari, J., & Fox, J. (2016). Institutional relations rather than clashes of civilizations: When and how is religion compatible with democracy? *International Political Sociology*, 10(3), 241–257. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olw011>
- Chandhoke, N. (2007). Civil society. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), 607–614. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469658>
- Christofis, N. (2023). Kemalism vs Erdoğanism: Continuities and discontinuities in Turkey's hegemonic state ideology. *Middle East Critique*, 34(1), 141–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2023.2251329>
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). Mixed methods procedures. In J. W. Creswell, *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- D
- Daly, T. G. (2019). Democratic decay: Conceptualising an emerging research field. *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, 11(1), 9–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40803-019-00086-2>
- della Porta, D., & Rossi, F. M. (2013). Democratization and democratic transition. In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (pp. 1–7). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm066.pub2>
- Demir, V. (2024). Public diplomacy and democratic backsliding in Turkey: A retrospective look at government investment in soft power. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 11(2), 42–57. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2017>
- Diamond, L. (2020). Breaking out of the democratic slump. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 36–50. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0003>
- Dudankar, N., & K, M. (2024). Election in Indian democracy-media overview. *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(5). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i5.2024.3693>

- Dwi Rahayu, D., Fatchan, M., & Ligouri, A. (2024). Analisis Sentimen Twitter Terpilihnya Prabowo – Gibran Menggunakan Metode Neural Network. *TEMATIK*, 11(1), 85–91. <https://doi.org/10.38204/tematik.v11i1.1943>
- E
- EIU. (2023). *Democracy index 2023: Age of conflict*. EIU.
- EIU. (2024). *Democracy index 2024*. EIU.
- Ejaz, H., & Thornton, J. R. (2024). Have attitudes toward democracy polarized in the U.S.? *Electoral Studies*, 92, 102854. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2024.102854>
- Fatimatuzzahra, N., & Dewi, D. S. K. (2021). The pattern of Joko Widodo's political dynamics practices. *Journal of Local Government Issues*, 4(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.22219/logos.v4i1.15407>
- Febriandy, R. K., & Wahid, U. (2024). Kemunduran Demokrasi Di Indonesia: Analisis Laporan Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute 2024. *Kaganga: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Riset Sosial Humaniora*, 7(2), 1041–1050. <https://doi.org/10.31539/KAGANGA.V7I2.12392>
- Filetti, A. (2014). Religiosity in the South Caucasus: Searching for an underlying logic of religion's impact on political attitudes. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 14(2), 219–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2014.904543>
- Forster, D. (2023). Covid-19, racism and the 'state of exception'? A theological ethical engagement with identity and human rights in an age of 'Corona' and beyond. *Acta Theologica*, 43(1), 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.38140/at.v43i1.7084>
- Freedom House. (2023a). Freedom in the world 2023. *Freedom House*. <https://freedom-house.org/country/indonesia/freedom-world/2023>
- Freedom House. (2023b). Freedom in the world 2024-Turkey. *Freedom House*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2024>
- Freedom House. (2024a). Freedom in the world 2025-Indonesia. *Freedom House*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/indonesia/freedom-world/2025>
- Freedom House. (2024b). Freedom in the world 2025-Tunisia. *Freedom House*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/tunisia/freedom-world/2024>
- G
- Gandolfo, L. (2015). From authoritarian to free state: Balancing faith and politics in Tunisia. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 26(4), 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-3425156>
- H
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. (2021). The anatomy of democratic backsliding. *Journal of Democracy*, 32(4), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2021.0050>
- Hanan, D. (2020). Identity politics in the 2019 Indonesian general elections: Its significance and limitation. *JWP (Jurnal Wacana Politik)*, 5(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jwp.v5i1.27710>
- Hargono, H., Rustan, A., Jambak, F., Alba, L. O., & Rahman, R. A. (2024). Dynamics and challenges of democracy in local elections in Indonesia and the Netherlands. *SASI*, 30(1), 111. <https://doi.org/10.47268/sasi.v30i1.2017>
- Hashemi, N. (2016). Rethinking religion and political legitimacy across the Islam–West divide. In S. Benhabib, & V. Kaul (Eds.), *Toward new democratic imaginaries – Istanbul seminars on Islam, culture and politics. Philosophy and politics – critical explorations, vol 2* (pp. 161–169). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41821-6_15
- Hinnebusch, R. (2006). Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique. *Democratization*, 13(3), 373–395. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340600579243>
- Holgado, B. G., & Urribarri, R. S. (2024). The dark side of legalism: Abuse of the law and democratic erosion in Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 68(12), 1578–1596. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642241268332>
- Huber, D., & Pisciotta, B. (2023). From democracy to hybrid regime. Democratic backsliding and populism in Hungary and Tunisia. *Contemporary Politics*, 29(3), 357–378. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2022.2162210>

- K
- Kalembang, J. V. (2024). Potential for the 2024 election and consolidation of Indonesian democracy. *Journal of Asian Multicultural Research for Social Sciences Study*, 5(1), 17–23. <https://doi.org/10.47616/jamrsss.v5i1.409>
- Keck, T. M. (2022). Erosion, backsliding, or abuse: Three metaphors for democratic decline. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 48(1), 314–339. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4133796>
- Khamis, S. (2024, November). Tunisia's fading spring: Media repression amid democratic detours (Issue Brief). Middle East Council on Global Affairs, *Issue Brief*. https://mecouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Tunisia-Media-Repression_En_Final.pdf
- Kimura, E., & Anugrah, I. (2024). Indonesia in 2023 between democracy and dynasty. *Asian Survey*, 64(2), 267–277. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2024.64.2.267>
- Koehler, K. (2023). Breakdown by disengagement: Tunisia's transition from representative democracy. *Political Research Exchange*, 5(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2474736X.2023.2279778>
- Kuipers, N., Toha, R., & Sumaktoyo, N. G. (2024). Third time's the charm: The youth vote and Prabowo's victory in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. *Pacific Affairs*, 97(3), 563–585. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2024973-art6>
- Kuru, A. T. (2014). Authoritarianism and democracy in Muslim countries: Rentier states and regional diffusion. *Political Science Quarterly*, 129(3), 399–427. <https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12215>
- L
- Leininger, J. (2022). *International democracy promotion in times of autocratization: From supporting to protecting democracy* (IDOS Discussion Paper 21/2022). German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). https://www.idos-research.de/uploads/media/DP__21.2022_01.pdf
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. (2020). The new competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 51–65. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2020.0004>
- Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How democracies die*. Penguin Random House LLC.
- Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2019). A third wave of autocratization is here: What is new about it? *Democratization*, 26(7), 1095–1113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2019.1582029>
- M
- Málaga, D. M., & Ramos Silveira, S. de F. (2024). A wounded democracy: Analysis of the determinant factors of democratic backsliding in Brazil. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 16(3), 13–26. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ccs.v16.i3.9071>
- Marzouki, M. (2022). Is democracy lost? *Journal of Democracy*, 33(1), 5–11. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2022.0000>
- Mechkova, V., Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2017). How much democratic backsliding? *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4), 162–169. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0075>
- Mehrez, A., Littvay, L., Meddeb, Y., Todosijevec, B., & Schneider, C. (2025). Introducing the comparative study of electoral systems in Tunisia: Populist attitudes, political preferences, and voting behavior. *Mediterranean Politics*, 30(1), 218–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2023.2252155>
- Modebadze, V. (2022). How the Coronavirus pandemic contributed to the rise of authoritarianism throughout the world. *National Security and the Future*, 23(1), 79–88. <https://doi.org/10.37458/nstf.23.1.4>
- Munck, G. L. (2016). What is democracy? A reconceptualization of the quality of democracy. *Democratization*, 23(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2014.918104>
- Muradi, M., & Silas, J. (2024). Post populism: An end-of-service Jokowi's politics for family. *CosmoGov*, 10(1), 150–167. <https://doi.org/10.24198/cosmogov.v10i1.50951>
- Murat, A. T. (2023). Democracy to dictatorship: Lessons from Turkey 2023 presidential election. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 12(6), 45–62. <https://doi.org/10.21275/SR23529121448>
- N
- Němcová, P. (2024). *Backsliding case study of Tunisia*. Prague University of Economics and Business.

- Novilia, K., Purnama, A., Wardhani, A. C., & Trenggono, N. (2024). Jokowi's political dynasties: Impact and its comparison to Nehru-Gandhi dynasties. *Journal of Islamic World and Politics*, 7(2), 235–244. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jiwp.v7i2.76>
- Nugroho, D. W. (2024). Analisis Dampak Sistem Presidential Threshold dalam Pemilihan Presiden dan Wakil Presiden di Indonesia Terhadap Inklusivitas Politik dan Representasi Demokratis. *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities*, 17, 211–218. <https://doi.org/10.30595/pssh.v17i.1131>
- O
Özcan, S. A. (2018). The role of political Islam in Tunisia's democratization process: Towards a new pattern of secularization? *Insight Turkey*, 20(1), 209–225. <https://doi.org/10.25253/99.2018201.12>
- P
Petkanas, Z. (2023). Kais Saied and the demise of democracy. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 28(4), 733–740. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2023.2211838>
- Petlach, M., & Říčanová, V. (2025). From people's champion to power consolidator: Examining Jokowi's role in Indonesia's democratic backsliding. *Policy Studies*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2025.2562359>
- Prozorova, Y. (2024). Democracy revised: Democratic imaginary and emerging autocracy in post-Soviet Russia. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 68(13), 1683–1702. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642241267937>
- R
Reuters. (2023, November 8). European Commission says Turkey backsliding on democracy, rule of law. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/european-commission-says-turkey-backsliding-democracy-rule-law-2023-11-08/>
- Rivera, P. B., & Lecaros, V. (2025). In the same spirit. Looking for political legitimacy: Conservative Christian alliances in contemporary Peru. *International Journal of Latin American Religions*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41603-025-00322-8>
- S
Sadowski, I. (2024). Democratic backsliding against a rising wave of support for democracy? Explaining trends in attitudes toward democracy in Poland (1995–2021). *International Sociology*, 39(6), 698–720. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809241284284>
- Sahide, A., & Satris, R. (2021). Indonesian democracy as a model for Egypt after the Arab Spring. *Sospol*, 7(2), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.22219/sospol.v7i2.16222>
- Sahide, A., Yoyo, Y., & Muhammad, A. (2022). Tunisia's success in consolidating its democracy one decade post-the Arab Spring. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 26(1), 49. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jsp.65912>
- Sarsar, S. (2022). Arab authoritarianism, Arab uprisings, and the future. *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(4), 121–136. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsa.2022.0017>
- Sato, Y., & Wiebrecht, F. (2024). Disinformation and regime survival. *Political Research Quarterly*, 77(3), 1010–1025. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241252811>
- Somer, M. (2024). A long battle: Turkey's backsliding and resistance through trench warfare. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 712(1), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162251318839>
- Spaiser, V., Ranganathan, S., Mann, R. P., & Sumpter, D. J. T. (2014). The dynamics of democracy, development and cultural values. *PLoS ONE*, 9(6), e97856. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0097856>
- Svolik, M. W. (2019). Polarization versus democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 30(3), 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2019.0039>
- Syahba, A. N. H., & Fahadayna, A. C. (2024). Tunisian fragile democratization: Case of democratic backsliding during Kais Saied's presidency. *Journal of Law, Politic and Humanities*, 5(1), 62–74. <https://doi.org/10.38035/jlph.v5i1.849>
- T
Tamburini, F. (2023). 'How I learned to stop worrying and love autocracy': Kais Saied's "constitutional self-coup" in Tunisia. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 58(6), 904–921. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096221079322>
- Tanca, D. E. (2024). Party system fragmentation and fractionalization in Turkey under the AKP's competitive authoritarian rule. *Turkish Studies*, 26(2), 199–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2024.2434534>

- Tempo. (2024). Demokrasi Indonesia di Bawah 10 Tahun Pemerintahan Jokowi. *Tempo*. <https://www.tempo.co/data/data/demokrasi-indonesia-di-bawah-10-tahun-pemerintahan-jokowi-246153>
- Thomas, G. (2005). The qualitative foundations of political science methodology. *Perspectives on Politics*, 3(4), 855–866. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592705050486>
- Transparency International. (2024). Corruption perceptions index 2024. *Transparency International*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024/index/tur>
- Tretter, M. (2025). Spiritual tech and democracy: initial ethical reflections. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2025.1494894>
- U
Ugur-Cinar, M. (2023). Elections and democracy in Turkey: Reconsidering competitive authoritarianism in the age of democratic backsliding. *The Political Quarterly*, 94(3), 445–451. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.13309>
- Urman, A., & Makhortykh, M. (2025). Trolls, bots and everyone else: The analysis of multilingual social media manipulation campaigns on Twitter during 2019 elections in Ukraine. *East European Politics*, 41(1), 97–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2024.2415640>
- Usman, & Setiadi, W. (2023). Politik Hukum Batas Usia Pasangan Calon Presiden Dan Wakil Presiden Berdasarkan Putusan Mk Nomor 90/PUU-XXI/2023. *Jurnal Keadilan Pemilu*, 4(1), 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.55108/jkp.v4i1.417>
- W
Wadipalapa, R., & Tyson, A. (2025). Cross-party presidential dynasticism in Indonesia: Evidence from the 2024 presidential elections. *Pacific Affairs*, 98(1), 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2025981-art4>
- Waldner, D., & Lust, E. (2018). Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21(1), 93–113. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050517-114628>
- Wolkenstein, F. (2022). European political parties' complicity in democratic backsliding. *Global Constitutionalism*, 11(1), 55–82. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045381720000386>
- Wolkenstein, F. (2023). What is democratic backsliding? *Constellations*, 30(3), 261–275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12627>
- Y
Yavuz, M. H. (2024). Erdoğan and the demise of the secular republic. *Middle East Policy*, 31(4), 151–156. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12790>
- Yılmaz, I. (2025). *Erdoganism: The established hegemony in Turkey's political arena*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5063947>
- Yudhistira, D., & Nurdin, B. (2024). Dynamics of legal politics after Constitutional Court Decision Number 60/PUU-XXII/2024 Regarding the Party Wholesale System in the 2024 Regional Head Elections. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Science*, 4(3), 129–136. <https://doi.org/10.55324/ijoms.v4i3.1039>
- Z
Zahidi, M. S., & Bin Othman, M. F. (2024). Human rights issue in Papua: A systematic literature review. *UNISCI Journal*, 22(65), 107–126. <https://doi.org/10.31439/UNISCI-203>
- Zamecki, Ł., & Szymański, A. (2023). Unintentional democratic backsliders. "Evil always wins through the strength of its splendid dupes." *Polish Political Science Review*, 11(1), 24–45. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ppsr-2023-0003>

NOTE

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) for their support and encouragement throughout the research process. Special thanks are extended to the colleagues and reviewers who provided valuable feedback and constructive suggestions to improve the quality of this study.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Ahmad Sahide is a lecturer in the Department of International Relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His research interests include Middle Eastern studies, democracy, and international politics. He has written and published a number of academic works focusing on political dynamics, democratiation, and socio-political developments in the Middle East. Through his teaching and research activities, he contributes to scholarly discussions on international relations, regional politics, and democratic governance.

Yenis Contesa is a lecturer at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. Her research focuses on political science and comparative politics, conflict resolution, and contemporary political dynamics in developing countries. Her research frequently examines issues related to media, discourse analysis, and democracy. Through her research activities and academic engagement, she contributes to the development of democracy studies, the strengthening of political institutions, and a critical understanding of democratic dynamics in Indonesia and the Global South.