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Ian Wilson is a senior lecturer in Politics and Security Studies and is a Research Fellow at the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University. His research interests focus upon contemporary Indonesian politics and society, in particular political violence, vigilantism and the political economy of organised crime as well as urban social movements. He has published widely in both English and Indonesian in publications such as *Critical Asian Studies* and *New Mandala* and is the author of *The Politics of Protection Rackets in Post-New Order Indonesia*.

Indonesia's 2019 elections and the rise of political polarisation

Abstract

Indonesia's 2019 presidential elections were perceived by many in the country as marked by increasing polarisation around issues of identity. The parameters of polarisation varied in their socioreligious and geographic foundation, but generally coalesced around constructions of an Indonesian nationalist pluralism vs majoritarian Islamism.

The presidential contender, former general Prabowo Subianto, established an alliance with a range of hardline Islamist groups and militias who framed the election as a struggle for defending the integrity of the faith from a government hostile to Islam. The incumbent, President Joko Widodo, seeking to neutralise religiously framed attacks, deepened his ties with Indonesia's biggest Islamic organisation, Nahdatul Ulama. This included his choice of vice-presidential running mate, the conservative religious scholar Ma'aruf Amin.

Each sought to use identity as a mode of mobilising electoral support, producing deep antagonistic societal divisions with an overall result that politics has become more conservative and intolerant. The rapid post-election reconciliation between Prabowo and Jokowi and their respective party coalitions off-sided many supporters, revealing that while polarisation was acutely felt at the societal level, for elites it was simply a strategy in inter-oligarchic conflicts.

Outlining the elections and its immediate aftermath, this presentation will consider the social and political implications of identity-based populist electoral contestation in the world's largest Muslim majority democracy.

11 November 2019
(Monday)
4:00-5:30pm

G7603 (YEUNG)

Yeung Kin Man Academic Building

All are welcome

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