

Why democrats abandon democracy: Evidence from four survey experiments

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Abstract

In several world regions, democracy is in retreat. This retreat is taking place amid growing polarization in many countries, and analysts are increasingly concerned with the role that deepening political divisions play in processes of democratic decline. This article investigates the relationship between partisan polarization and deteriorating public support for democratic institutions. It leverages the case of Indonesia, a major third-wave democracy now in the midst of a democratic regression. Indonesia's political landscape has become more ideologically polarized in recent years, despite the strength of clientelist networks and low levels of party identification. Using four survey experiments, we find that Indonesians embrace illiberal interventions and abandon democratic institutions when exposed to party and leadership cues. These results suggest that political polarization may prompt citizens to abandon democratic norms even in democracies without strong partisan identities.

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Eve Warburton is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. Eve studies comparative politics, with a geographic focus on Southeast Asia and Indonesia in particular. Her research is broadly concerned with identity, representation, and the political economy of policymaking in developing democracies. Eve's research has been published in a range of journals, including *Democratization*, *Party Politics*, *Electoral Studies*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, and the *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*. She is also currently finalising her first book manuscript on the political economy of resource nationalism in Indonesia.



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4:00-5:30pm**

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