INDONESIAN DEMOCRACY PROMOTION:
Between Normative and Strategic Commitments

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's reasons to launch democracy promotion through the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) in 2008, and its continuity, are guided by three commitments: strategic commitments, normative commitments, and mixed commitments. The contribution of this research is viewing democracy promotion as a foreign policy. It uses qualitative approach that enables us to address gaps in the literatures by uncovering specific reasons, motives, and rationality of a country like Indonesia in supporting democracy. The findings of the research that uncover existing debates on models, mechanisms, and effects of democracy promotion tend to ignore the salience of reasoning behind the initiatives of democracy promotion. Understanding the reasonings and motives of democracy promotion would bring relevance for the study of foreign policy or the practice of democracy promotion on a global scale.

Keywords: democracy promotion; strategic commitment; normative commitment; mixed commitment; Bali Democracy Forum; foreign policy.

ABSTRAK

Alasan Indonesia untuk meluncurkan promosi demokrasi melalui Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) pada tahun 2008, dan kelanjutannya, dipandu oleh tiga komitmen: komitmen strategis, komitmen normatif, dan komitmen campuran. Kontribusi dari penelitian ini adalah melihat promosi demokrasi sebagai sebuah kebijakan luar negeri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang memungkinkan kita untuk mengatasi kesenjangan dalam literatur dengan mengungkap alasan, motif, dan rasionalitas tertentu dari sebuah negara seperti Indonesia dalam mendukung demokrasi. Temuan-temuan penelitian yang mengungkap perdebatan yang ada tentang model, mekanisme, dan dampak dari promosi demokrasi cenderung mengabaikan pentingnya alasan di balik inisiatif promosi demokrasi. Memahami alasan dan motif dari promosi demokrasi akan membawa relevansi bagi studi kebijakan luar negeri atau praktik promosi demokrasi dalam skala global.

Kata kunci: promosi demokrasi; komitmen strategis; komitmen normatif; komitmen campuran; Forum Demokrasi Bali; kebijakan luar negeri.

BACKGROUND

When Indonesia launched Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) in December 2008, several questions regarding reasons for promoting democracy as a strategic agenda in Asia-Pacific were emerging. Why did Indonesia – a country with democracy that has not been consolidated yet – launch and create a forum to support democracy dialogue and promotion? Why was democracy promoted in this part of the Global South while many Western countries shifted priorities from democracy promotion? Could Indonesia be an alternative of non-Western democracy promotion? Why did Indonesia engage "non-democracy countries" in the forum and how they would interact with international democratic actors?

Indonesia's credibility, capacity, and significance in promoting democracy are both supported and challenged by numerous democracy promotion analysts for a variety of reasons (Carother and Young, 2011). While some of them welcomed the Indonesian commitment to share experiences, develop agendas, and support democracy in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, others challenged that initiative (Piccone, 2016).

After more than a decade since Indonesia launched the agenda to promote democracy, similar questions were raised again when political dynamics changed. When in 2008 Indonesia was considered as an example of rising democracy in Asia, in 2018 Indonesia was viewed as shifting from stagnating to declining democracy. The question becomes: is Indonesia a relevant example to any attempts to rejuvenate democracy promotion (Slater, 2023:95-109)?

To continue questioning the Indonesian efficacies to support and promote democracy is basically grounded in Indonesian's ambivalences. As shown by Ted Piccone, despite promoting democracy, Indonesia's record on human right resolution at the UN Human Right Council and General Assembly from 2005 to 2010 scored low (Piccone, 2016:206). For Piccone, when Indonesia showed no support for condemning its neighbors, Myanmar and Cambodia, it remains beholden to the noninterference doctrine (Piccone, 2016:207).

Low scores in democracy index given to Indonesia by various organizations assessing democracy globally did not affect significantly to Indonesia's role in democracy promotion both in ASEAN and globally. The low scores encouraged Indonesia to further its commitments to improve the conditions of democracy internally and internationally. Democracy is believed to be in a dynamic sense as a working project. Hence, Bali Democracy Forum was primarily aimed as a learning community and sharing practices of democracy.

Other assessments critically questioning Indonesian's commitments on democracy promotion. Some argue that democracy promotion is merely an effort to project power of top leader regionally (Sukma, 2011:110-23). Other views it as the new "positive" democratic identity post-political instabilities (Huijgh, 2016). Some also state that democracy promotion as a role played by Indonesia in responding to the existing regional and global dynamics (Karim, 2016: 385-404).

Those aforementioned reviewers provide important insights reflecting to the Indonesian democracy promotion in the early stage of the Bali Democracy Forum. However, those analysts let the essence of the dynamics and processes inside the initiatives of democracy promotion, particularly in the years of 2010-2016, untouched.

This article is primarily aimed to uncover dynamics, complexities, and processes of the making the democracy promotion as foreign policy. The research shows the motives of strategic commitment, normative commitment, and mixed commitment among variety actors. Unlike other writers, I argue that various actors – state actors, civil society and media actors, international organizations, and also partner countries/actors – tend to have different

motives in the processes of democracy promotion. State actors are likely to have strategic commitment, while non-state actors are disposed to own normative commitment. This article shows how interactions among groups of actors affecting their democracy promotion's motives. In practice, the motives of both strategic and normative commitments are being mixed.

I propose that the Indonesian democracy promotion should be positioned as foreign policy process. As argued by Tsveta Petrova, a political scientist from Columbia University, different constituencies shape different motives for democracy promotion (Petrova, 2011). State officials tend to promote democracy for strategic considerations and their commitments are strategic commitments. Meanwhile, civil society actors often promote democracy for normative reasons, namely values, norms, and solidarity. Thus, their democracy promotion's views are normative commitments. In the practice of democracy support, the blending and mixed-motives are often hard to disentangle.

As has been presented above, in the first part of the paper I will explore the importance of renewing ideas and reflecting the experiences of democracy promotion in the age of democracy decline and the rise of authoritarianism. In the second part I will assess the debates and literature of democracy promotion reflecting from the Indonesian experiences. Unlike most of the previous analysis which is grounded on external reviews, this paper will reflect democracy promotion from the insiders' views.

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION FROM INDONESIA

In the following part of the article, I will develop a theoretical framework responding to the aforementioned critics. The theoretical framework reviews the *raison d'etre* in terms of normative and strategic commitments of each actor. It also evaluates their dynamics after interacting and experiencing democracy engagements in various arenas. Three arenas reviewed in this article are grounded in the Indonesian experiences in creating state actors' forum of the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), engaging networks of civil society and media in Bali Civil Society and Media Forum, and supporting democracy in practice, such as in the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries, particularly Egypt and Tunisia.

As for the Indonesian democracy promotion, it would be understood as an effort to position democracy promotion in foreign policy process. The delicate balance of promoting the state and geopolitical interests while harnessing democracy values, institutions, and practices needs to be taken into account. Democracy becomes a new value and identity for Indonesian foreign policy and interests.

Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion can be defined as "purposeful actions meant to encourage a transition from dictatorship to democracy or to enhance the quality of democracy in regimes that have already moved towards democratic government" (Petrova, 2011). Democracy promotion is aimed to support activities for harnessing democratic norms, building political

institutions, and shaping democratic practices. Therefore, democracy promotion affects transition and transformation of political regimes. Indonesian democracy promotion emphasizes solidarity and democracy support, not shaping the transformation of a political regime.

Programs and activities of democracy promotion developed by Indonesia cover three categories of initiatives (Carothers, 2000: 181-199): first, political process: promoting regular, free, and fair elections as well as political party development; second, governing institutions: strengthening of the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary at the national and local levels as well as their checks and balances and the rule of law; and third, civil society: support for civic groups and non-state actor individuals who have important civic functions such as the media, educators, etc.

Meanwhile, state actors' participation in democracy promotion can take the forms of policy instruments, including "diplomacy (persuasion and pressure), foreign aid (technical and financial assistance), political conditionality (incentives and sanctions), and sometimes intervention (covert or overt coercion)" (Petrova, 2011). Those policy instruments as tools for democracy promotion are characterized as strategic commitments.

Strategic Commitments

Democracy promotion as a strategic commitment is basically an effort to create an environment of peace, security, and welfare through enacting democracy in the region. The strategic commitment indicates the tendency of the state actors to prioritize their strategic interests in promoting democracy. By enabling democracy as a precondition of interaction among countries, therefore, cooperation, trade, and security would be achieved. The main idea behind democracy as strategic commitments is grounded in the premise of "democratic peace" theory that "democracies are peaceful to each other (Doyle 1983: 205-35)."

Indonesia's struggles to response the challenges of nation, state, and democracy buildings internally were tremendous. The rise of various political and identity issues occurred during BDF or its activities/programs made the discussions, learnings, and sharing experiences grounded in complexities of real live. Participants often brought critical issues and shared them in the forum. With many limitations and challenges, BDF strives to make learning about democracy conducted in democratic ways.

The significance of creating a strategic environment through democracy in Asia-Pacific has been stated by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Dr. Hassan Wirajuda, one of the main proponents of Indonesia's democracy promotion (Wirajuda, 2011: 147-158). Advancing from the situation and complexities in building and sustaining political and economic cooperation of the ASEAN, Dr. Wirajuda believes in the needs of stable, rules-based regional institutions. This strategic commitment was the reason for Indonesia to launch an initiative in democratic promotion through the establishment of the BDF in 2008. This initiative provides foundations and arenas for regional and global order and democracy (Talbott, 1996). Strategic considerations for promoting democracy are often manifested from

geopolitical security such as preventing the aggression of major powers and creating peaceful interactions with partners in the neighborhood (Petrova, 2011).

Normative Commitments

Democracy promotion as a normative commitment is basically an effort to share and advance democratic values for humanity. The salience of democracy that potentially enriches the lives of citizens is stated succinctly by Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999: 3-17):

> "First, political freedom is a part of human freedom in general, and exercising civil and political rights is a crucial part of the good lives of individuals as social beings. Political and social participation has intrinsic value for human life and well-being. Second, democracy has important instrumental value in enhancing the hearing that people get in expressing and supporting their claim to political attention (including claims of economic needs). Third, the practice of democracy gives citizens an opportunity to learn from one another, and help society to form its values and priorities."

Promoting democracy as normative commitments is often grounded in local and national values. As the Indonesian civil society actors and academics bring about the significance of political rights as the foundation of Indonesian democracy, in democracy support activities they also discussed the strategies in defending the sustainability of the norms.

Democracy Promotion from Indonesia

Indonesian democracy promotion is primarily intended to prioritize democracy support in foreign policy process (Petrova, 2011). As a new value and identity, the delicate balance lies in promoting the strategic interests while at the same time harnessing democracy values. The *raisons d'etre* of democracy promotion in general includes strategics, normative, and mixed commitments.

Three arenas being reviewed below are grounded in the Indonesian experience in establishing the Bali Democracy Forum, Bali Civil Society and Media Forum, and supporting democracy in practice. The interactions and experiences of engaging various actors in numerous arenas recalibrate the motives and *raison d'etre* of democracy promotion of Indonesia as visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Logical Framework
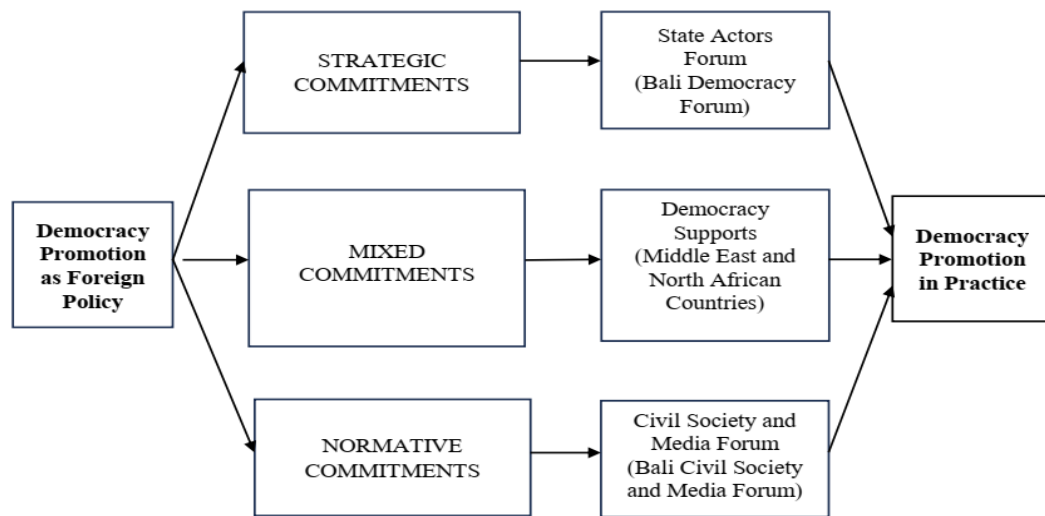
The substance of the BDF is learning democracy though sharing experiences based on certain themes selected each year. Since the BDF is a state actors' forum, delegations participating in the forum are profoundly shaped by their countries' strategic commitments. As a forum, lesson learning is translated into democracy supports in certain regions and the strategic commitments would be mixed with normative commitments. Later on, with the establishment of the additional pillar of democracy, Bali Civil Society and Media Forum or BCSMF, the normative commitments emerged and harnessed.

Following the logical framework provided above, there are three arenas will be discussed: the first arena is the effort to construct strategic commitments through examining the making of the BDF, the second one is grounding normative commitments through weaving civil society and media networks, and the third one is balancing the mixed commitments through supporting democracy in the Middle East and North Africa, particularly Egypt and Tunisia.

CONSTRUCTING A STRATEGIC COMMITMENT: The Making of Bali Democracy Forum

The geopolitical situation in the Asia-Pacific region also contributed to the initiative of the launching of Bali Democracy Forum in 2008. The geopolitical competition among major powers believed to affect the security and peace in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia. Having a role as the regional leader, Indonesia strived to maintain peace, security, and solidity of the region through diplomacy. Therefore, Bali Democracy Forum was designed to advance Indonesia's diplomatic interest and it could be achieved through taking initiatives in promoting democracy as a strategic commitment.

As a strategic commitment, democracy is basically an instrument to achieve strategic objectives such as peace, security, and development. Democracy promotion as a strategic commitment prioritizes the state's foreign policy objectives that are aimed to create

democratic environment in the region. That would be a precondition for cooperation, trade, and security in the region (Doyle, 1983: 205-35).

When Indonesia launched the BDF in December 2008, it selected theme on "Building and Consolidating Democracy as an Agenda for Asia." As a forum where state actors shared experiences in democracy, it discussed agendas and committed initiatives on issues as well as strategic and salient consideration for the state actors. As stated by the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Institute for Peace and Democracy, 2008:7), the Indonesian initiative in launching the BDF in 2008 is a strategic commitment for Indonesia and the Asian 21st Century.

Strategic Commitment 1 – Inclusive Forum

In the early development of the BDF, there was criticism of BDF as a merely "talk shop" or a tool to legitimize non-democratic states. The design of the forum as an inclusive learning community on democracy through practices is aimed to engage participants from both democratic and democratizing countries as well as 'aspiring to democracy' countries. The criticism was not made balance with the appreciation of its impacts. Beside as a learning community on democracy, BDF also contributes in facilitating cross-country dialogues on peace and democracy and supporting democracy in some regions.

The BDF was aimed to be an inclusive forum, with the sharing of experiences and the learning of democracy by engaging developed democracies, democratizing countries, and countries aspiring to be democratic. Following the launching of BDF, some questions arose. Should non-democratic countries be invited to the democracy forum? When will the forum become a learning community in democracy? When will it become an instrument of recognition and even authoritarian upgrading? Can the BDF ground its normative commitments, or only just part of foreign policy for strategic commitments?

As BDF is an inclusive forum, developed democracy, democratizing countries, as well as aspirant to democracy countries are invited to participate. President Yudhoyono elaborates the approach of the forum as follows ((Institute for Peace and Democracy, 2008:7).

> "Perhaps one reason for the great interest in this forum is the unique approach we have taken. We have all come here as equals. We are not trying to impose a particular model on any of us. We have come here not to preach, not to point fingers. Indeed, we have come here to share our respective experience, out thoughts and or ideas for cooperation to advance democracy."

The strategic and political nature of the BDF represents its inclusive characters. The strategic commitment of making the BDF as an inclusive forum and a forum of sharing and learning experiences about democracy becomes a unique approach of the BDF.

Strategic Commitment 2 – Strategic Themes

       Similar to the selection of the participants and speakers in the BDF that are based on strategic considerations, the selection of the themes of the BDF is deduced more from strategic commitments than merely normative considerations. Most of the themes selected are relevant to either the foreign policy agendas, geopolitical dynamics, or new strategic engagements.

       Table 1 shows how selected themes of the Bali Democracy Forum are selected and formulated to reflect the emphasis of the motives of advancing democracy promotion, whether as strategic agenda or normative agenda. Most of the themes, from the early establishment of BDF in 2008 up to 2020, except BDF 2011 and BDF 2019, are destined to advance strategic agenda. BDF 2011, 2019, 2021, and 2022 the themes shift to the motives of normative agenda. As shown in the table and elaborated in the following analysis, the shift is not clear cut.

       The first three forums of the BDF emphasize the significance of the strategic commitments, such as "Agenda for Asia" (BDF I), "Rule of Law and Development" (BDF II), "Peace and Stability" (BDF III). The mixed commitments can be seen in the themes of "Democratic Principles and Governance" (BDF V) and "Religion and Pluralism" (BDF IX). Other themes were selected alongside the strategic commitments, such as "Pluralistic Society" (BDF VI), "Socio Economic Progress" (BDF VII), "Public Governance" (BDF VIII), "Does Democracy Deliver?" (BDF X), "Democracy for Prosperity" (BDF XI), and "Democracy and Covid-19" (BDF XIII).

Table 1. BDF Themes with Strategic Commitments

Years	BDF Number	Themes	Notes
2008	I	Building and Consolidating Democracy as Agenda for Asia	Strategic Agenda (Strategic Commitment)
2009	II	In Search of Synergy: Democracy, Rule of Law, and Development".	Strategic Agenda (Strategic Commitment)
2010	III	Democracy and the Promotion of Peace and Stability	Peace and Security (Strategic Commitment)
2012	V	Advancing Democratic Principles at the Global Setting: How Democratic Global Governance Contributes to International Peace and Security, Economic Development, and Effective Enjoyment of Human Rights	Principles and Governance (Normative and Strategic Commitments)
2013	VI	Consolidating Democracy in Pluralistic Society	Consolidation (Strategic Commitment
2014	VII	Evolving Regional Democratic Architecture: The Challenges of Political Development, Public Participation, and Socio-Economic Progress in the 21st Century	Regional Architecture (Strategic Commitments)
2015	VIII	Democracy and Effective Public Governance: Challenges, Choices, and Prospects for Asia-Pacific	Governance (Strategic Commitments)
2016	IX	Religion, Democracy, and Pluralism	Identity and Pluralism

| 2017 | X | Does Democracy Deliver? | (Normative and Strategic Commitments) Delivering Development (Strategic Commitment) |
| 2018 | XI | Democracy for Prosperity | Delivering Development (Strategic Commitment) |
| 2020 | XIII | Democracy and COVID-19 | Geopolitics (Strategic Commitment) |

Rarely the themes of the BDF emphasize the normative commitments, such as democracy principles or values. However, Table 2 shows that four out of fifteen BDF themes specifically emphasize on principles, values, and norms of democracy. The themes that are based on explicit normative commitments are "Enhancing Democratic Participation in a Changing World: Responding to Democratic Voices" (BDF IV in 2011), "Democracy and Inclusivity" (BDF XII in 2019), "Democracy for Humanity: Advancing Economic and Social Justice during the Pandemic" (BDF XIV in 2021), and "Democracy in a Changing World: Leadership and Solidarity" (BDF XV in 2022).

Table 2. BDF Themes with Normative Commitments

2011	IV	Enhancing Democratic Participation in a Changing World: Responding to Democratic Voices	Participation and Voices (Normative Commitment)
2019	XII	Democracy and Inclusivity	Inclusivity (Normative Commitment)
2021	XIV	Democracy for Humanity: Advancing Economic and Social Justice during the Pandemic	Humanity (Normative Commitment)
2022	XV	Democracy in a Changing World: Leadership and Solidarity	Solidarity (Normative Commitment)

Table 1 and the discussion above elaborate how the strategic commitment of state actors translated into various themes of BDF. Meanwhile, the following Figure 2 illustrates how the strategic commitment shapes and inspires dialogues and discussions of other forum and activities supporting democracy in certain region.

Figure 2. Constructing Strategic Commitments
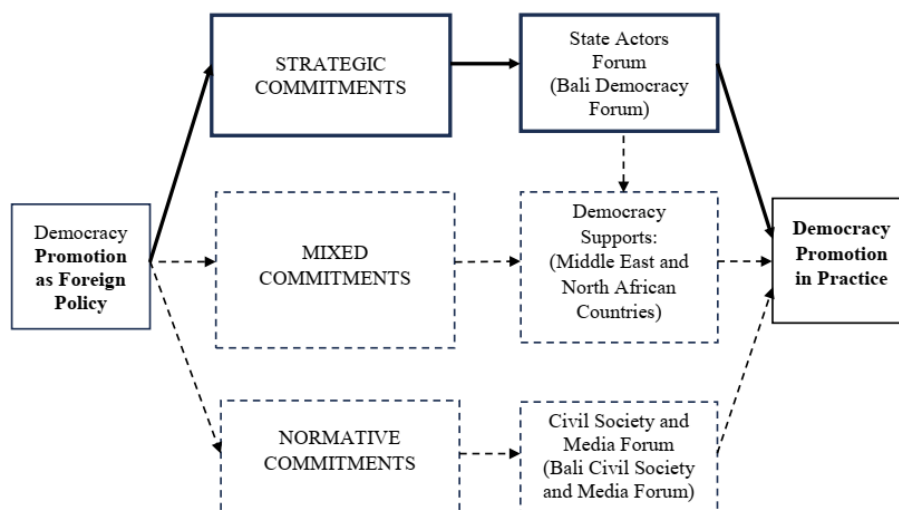
GROUNDING NORMATIVE COMMITMENTS: Weaving Media and Civil Society Networks

When the state actors focus more on democracy as instruments for strategic objectives (security, peace, and development), civil society, social activists, and media networks in Indonesia believe that democracy should be the direct and primary targets of the promotions or supports. Targeting democracy in terms of grounding democratic norms, building democratic institutions, and securing democratic practices are the leitmotif of democracy promotion. As normative commitment, those norms, institutions, and practices are containing the substantive goodness in itself. It is a normative commitment since democracy contains virtues of freedom, equality, and solidarity.

Few years after BDF was launched, networks of civil society, social activists, and media actors in cooperation with international and transnational networks inaugurated the establishment of civil society and media forum about democracy. At the beginning the Indonesian state actors view this initiative was inevitable, even some of them were relatively ambivalent. The questions among the state actors were whether civil society and media forum would be too critical and constrain the state actors' "style" of democracy dialogue which often indirect, 'euphemistic', and merely rhetorical. To ease the situation, state actors treated the Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) as a sideline of the BDF.

However, in its development BCSMF interacts with the state actors' forum. It is able to reshape elements of strategic commitments with more normative substances. Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) works closely with partner countries and international/transnational civil society networks to create initiatives to ground democracy norms, institutions, and practices. As the implementing agency of BDF the role of IPD is to bridge the strategic objectives with normative commitments.

To guarantee the cooperation of the state actors (particularly BDF), IPD nurtures supports and commitments from "institutional activists" from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Institutional activists are leaders and diplomats who have democratic commitments to make democracy as strategic agenda in Indonesian Foreign Policy. To garner supports and participation from media networks in Indonesia and abroad, IPD works in tandem with the Indonesian Press Council. The Indonesian Press Council leadership is actively engaged IPD with the networks of activists in Indonesia and in other countries. Among civil society organizations, the Indonesian Legal Aids Institute with its networks engages to shape the civil society and media forum to commit normative missions.

This situation is comparable with the roles of social activists in many parts of the world to guarantee the normative commitment. Social activists strive to shape democracy promotion as part of foreign policy is an effort to balance the state actors' strategic commitment with non-state actors' normative commitment. The emergence of international laws grounded in normative commitments make social activists' aspirations justified and should be defended by state actors' policy (Petrova, 2011).

In the next part of the article, I will discuss three manifestations of the normative commitments in promoting democracy: it upholds the freedom of expression; it harnesses political rights; and, it builds solidarity.

Normative Commitment 1 – Upholding Freedom of Expression and Political Rights

Among several themes that often discussed, trained, and shared in the Bali Civil Society and Media Forum are topics of freedom of expression. Freedom of expression indicates freedom to voice, articulate, and express individuals' and collective concerns, opinions, and demands. Freedom of expression manifests people ability to demand and organize changes.

The challenges of upholding freedom of expression are the main obstacles expressed by journalists in doing their jobs. In democratic country, journalists act to guarantee democratic opinion, shape democratic will (state policy and behavior), and ground the emergence of democratic procedures. In democratizing countries, journalists perform as democratic actors to expand democratic spaces and as catalysator for democracy consolidation. In non-democratic (less democratic) countries, journalists become proponents of possible changes and public advocates for political rights.

Viewing the role of journalists from democratic expectations, in many ways journalist activisms complicate their roles to share facts, develop news, and carry opinion. These complications were expressed vividly by journalists participating in the third Bali Media Forum (BMF) themed "Being Heard: The Role of Ethical Journalism and Media Support in Enhancing Democratic Participation in a Changing Information Environment" as well as in the first Bali Civil Society Forum (BCSF) in 2011. The journalists' view and critical stance toward injustice policies are often perceived as lack of nationalism and tend to be Western-biased opinion. In one particular Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (the forum that merged Bali Media Forum and Bali Civil Society Forum), delegate from Egypt asked the Indonesian journalists to share the Indonesian experience in upholding freedom of expression. Responding to the question, an Indonesian journalist reflected the Indonesian experiences in upholding freedom of expression as multi-front struggles and never-ending processes. He stated that the institutional building such as creating press-freedom law and press council are two most important institutional strategies in the beginning of democracy transition. He added on the need to fill the press council with activist-journalists and make the council defending the political rights of journalists.

In the forum participants strongly expressed the need for normative commitments to uphold freedom of expression. They committed to supporting the roles of journalists in guarding democracy through freedom of voice and expression. The journalists expressed their concern that they faced threats, violence, and other acts that were aimed to restrain their voices. Therefore, the need to equip the journalists with skills and capacities to understand the danger was imperative. The participants also shared the experiences of democratic and democratizing countries in creating laws of press freedom and in building institutions such as press councils, independent journalist associations, and women journalist associations.

The Indonesian experiences show that the threats from the state authority continue when journalists are perceived as to be too critical to the rulers. In the recent development, the enactment of the new Information and Electronic Law causes other limitations to the freedom of expression. Critics to the state wrong-doing could be easily viewed as insult and spreading hate speech/opinion which could be prosecuted by law. Democracy is indeed a working progress. Normative commitment should be continuously harnessed and defended.
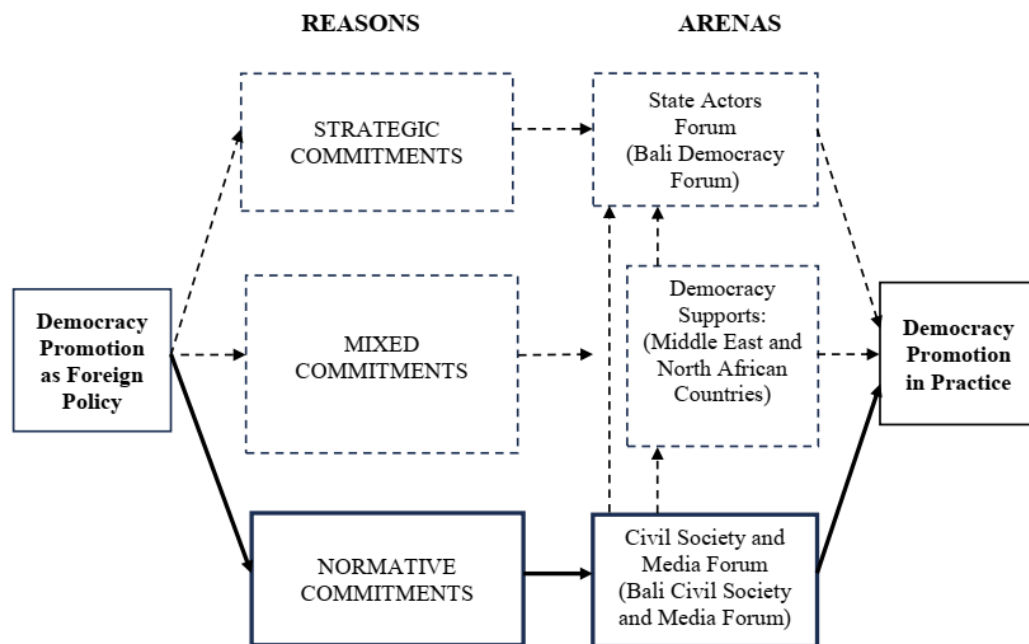
Normative Commitment 2 – Building Solidarity

The third form of the normative commitment is building solidarity (McAdam and Rucht, 1993: 36-59). Building democracy support grounded in solidarity by engaging civil society and media actors is possible through programs and activities, such as supporting democracy in MENA, the Pacific region, and Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV).

The Bali-based Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) held a workshop titled "Egypt-Indonesia Dialogue on Democratic Transition" on May 25-27, 2011. The invited participants of the workshop represented diverse and prominent group of the Egyptian political and social activists, journalists, and academics (Wirajuda, 2011: 147-158). The workshop manifested a strong sense of solidarity. It also reflected on the close affinities between Indonesia and Egypt.

One of the questions raised in the workshop in supporting the MENA democratic processes is on conditions and sustainability of solidarity. This question was raised by civic activists from Egypt since they saw strong connections and affinities among the Indonesian resource persons. The Egyptian delegate admitted that they know each other personally only after they participated in the first and second back-to-back meetings held by IPD in Jakarta. This made Indonesia realized the gravity of solidarity issues in Egypt. As for the Indonesian civic leaders, they have been known each other from their student years, mostly when they were students at universities. They suggested the civic leaders from Egypt to weave social fabrics at campuses, social media, and political space.

As in normative commitments in the form of upholding freedom of expression and political rights, several insights, ideas, and inspirations developed at the BCSMF on the issues of weaving solidarity are also shared at the BDF.

The manifestation of normative commitments is visualized in the Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Normative Commitments

DELICATE BALANCING STRATEGIC AND NORMATIVE COMMITMENTS
Supporting Democracy in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Countries

The Indonesian democracy support took various forms, such as dialogues, institutional buildings, election management and monitoring, state administrative reforms, public spheres, and media and civil society training in numerous countries starting in 2009. Working with local partners, engaging international experts, and with the support of international partners, IPD developed democracy support programs, activities, and initiatives in the MENA, the Pacific region, and CLMV (Wirajuda, 2011).

The initiatives in supporting democracy in MENA cover clusters of programs. Each cluster has its own dynamics in terms of translating ideas and programs into support activities, challenges in the fields, and responses that emerged. Since the programs and activities supporting the MENA were managed through second track diplomacy, civil society activists, media actors/networks, and academics played major roles. Diverse actors from Indonesia shared the Indonesian experiences in grounding political rights, press freedom, and social justice in the processes of state institutional reforms. The participants from MENA who were mostly civic leaders, Islamic leaders, academics, and media shared similar interests and concerns that were significant for the democratic values and principles of their countries. Indonesia and MENA both expressed their commitments to support each other in upholding values, norms, and principles of democracy. They also shared normative commitments as the main objectives of democracy promotion (Piccone, 2016).

If the non-state actors from Indonesia and MENA emphasized democracy promotion as normative commitments, the state actors focused on strategic commitments. For example, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaged in a dialogue with Egypt

on Islam and democracy. The dialogue that was aimed to harness stability in the region and solidify the cooperation between both countries was led by diplomats, legislators, and other relevant state actors. In this strategic view, democracy became rational instruments for achieving strategic objectives, such as regional peace and international cooperation.

Mixed Commitment 1 – Weaving Social Fabrics

In supporting the Arab Springs through democracy promotion, the Indonesian government worked in a delicate balance between normative commitments and strategic considerations. The normative commitments are objectives of the democracy that supports engaging Egypt, Tunisia, and other MENA countries. The engagements were deeply rooted in solidarity among stakeholders and participants who respected dignity, equality, and justice. Indonesia itself felt the struggle of the Arab Spring as both personalized commitments and historical mission (Wirajuda, 2011).

In addition, as discussed before, the state actors of Indonesia consider the strategic significance of the MENA countries. They carefully ensured that their support to the MENA countries did not cross anyone's sovereignty. International organizations and developed democracies were also invited to engage and support several programs and activities between Indonesia and the MENA countries. Most of those initiatives put further pressures on Indonesia to turn its strategic commitments to become more normative considerations. Details of balancing the delicate dynamics were spelled out in various activities of Indonesia – MENA countries.

Following the scoping missions in Egypt and Tunisia conducted by the Government of Indonesia and IPD, five dialogues and other programs on sharing experiences on democracy and peace building were executed in Indonesia, Egypt, and Tunisia. The initial dialogue had a humble objective: provide opportunities for civil society leaders, media actors, political parties, and public intellectuals to get to know each other, share aspirations, and reflect on their roles. The actors facilitated in weaving the elements of social fabrics in those Arab Spring countries. Some informal and "solidarity" engagements held in Jakarta and Bali were cherished as being contributive to the Arab Spring movements.

Even though the approach of the early engagements between Indonesia and MENA in 2011-2012 were informal and cordial, the meetings themselves were often delicate and political. In the first meeting held in Jakarta in which most invited participants came from Egypt and a couple from Tunisia, the dialogue was started with elaboration and comparison on the histories of Indonesia and Egypt. A participant asked about the relevance of the dialogue. Another participant questioned how the selection process of the invited participants were conducted to represent Egypt's contemporary political history. The dialogue turned into a heated conversation after a participant mentioned the impartiality of a speaker, his countryman who he deemed was too close to the previous regime. The accused speaker defended his position. This turned the dialogue into a tense but honest conversation.

Observing that situation, the committee of the dialogue invited all of the participants to enjoy a coffee break. Over the coffee break the conversation on the delicate subject of who

would speak for its nation was resolved. When they were invited back to the meeting room, the participants asked whether they could continue their dialogue on the most important subjects for the future of the MENA people – the position of Islam in the Constitution, the roles of women, the neutrality of the military, and human dignity –informally outside the meeting room. The Indonesian committee's response to that request was, "This is the 'sacred' purpose of inviting you brothers and sisters from Egypt and Tunisia, to discuss what matters for your people's lives and future. Please do continue."

This aforementioned situation indicates the normative commitments for supporting dialogue on the issues most pertinent from the eyes of the participants. Strategic commitments of sharing the Indonesian experiences and the needs of peace and stability in the region would be secondary. In the BDF, the normative commitments are expanded, embedded, and shaped to accommodate state actors' strategic interests. Norms and principles of democracy mixed with strategic interests for sustaining security, peace, and development.

Mixed Commitment 2 – Grounding Democratic Processes

During several engagements in the dialogues, training, and electoral visiting programs held in Bali and Jakarta, some participants from Egypt raised tough questions. They asked which one should be conducted first in democratization: election or constitutional amendment? Can Indonesia answer this based on the Indonesian experience?

The issue on the amendment was problematic for Egypt following the Arab Spring since each choice – conducting election before amending the Constitution or vice versa – would provide support for the contending groups and become a pretext for their legitimation. Conducting election before amending the Constitution has been argued to enable leaders and political forces to be popularly supported by the public. The election would give legitimacy to the elected representatives to amend the Constitution. However, the problem there would be on the legal bases of the election process, and the legitimacy of the election processes could be questioned.

For Egypt, the choice to conduct the election before amending the Constitution was supported by the Islamists since they had more advantages in mobilizing support compared to other competitors. This could make the Islamists dominate the election. This choice was rejected by the militarists and previous ruling elements. Instead, they demanded the second process which was amending the Constitution before conducting the election. This choice had been claimed as enabling legally-bound rules as the basis of election. The amendment process would represent people's will and opinions and it would become a legal basis to make a legitimate process and legally elected leaders. The choice of conducting a constitutional amendment before election was strongly rejected by the Islamists and some activists. They demanded to conduct elections first, since the election was the only instrument for creating legitimate leaders to amend the Constitution.

When the delegates from Egypt asked participants from Indonesia to give insights derived from the Indonesian democratic transition processes, the situation changed to become even more political. If the Indonesian delegate stated they selected one particular

choice it could be translated as a bias to support the position of certain groups. Instead, the Indonesian participants stated that the sharing of experiences was grounded in normative commitment of solidarity and norms of freedom and justice. The political situation in Indonesia after "reformasi" in 1998 forced Indonesia to conduct the election on 7 June 1999 then followed by amending the Constitution, first on 19 October 1999, then on 18 August 2000, then again on 19 November 2001, and finally on 10 August 2002. Certainly, in the process, some elements of previous actors, long established political parties, and existing networks got involved and inevitably maintained.

The dialogues among the non-state actors between Indonesia and MENA countries are mostly aimed to harness and support democracy norms, principles, and values. However, the debates on political processes, particularly in Egypt, has its strategic implications. Recommending which process to do first, whether election or constitutional amendment, can be seen as prioritizing certain political or strategic interests. In delicate mixed motives, the state actors of Indonesia attempted to navigate their interests. Bali Democracy Forum as a state actors' forum expanded to accommodate normative commitments. At the same time the non-state actors' engagements, which were dominated by normative commitments, in many occasions articulated strategic interests of the state actors and some non-state actors.

The manifestations of the mixed commitments are visualized in the Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Mixed Commitments
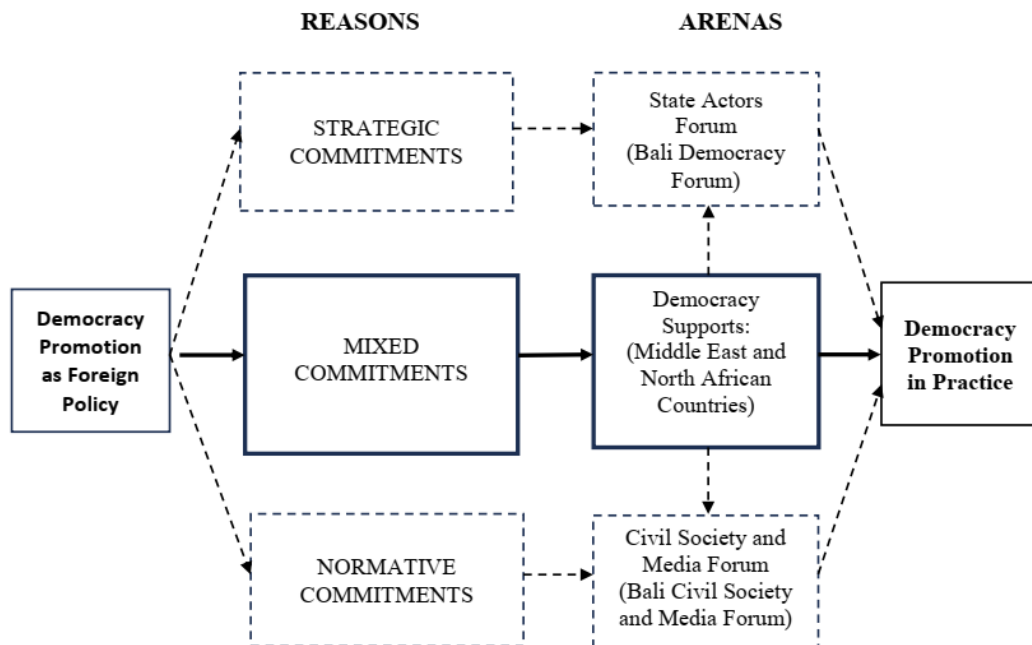
CONCLUSION

When Indonesia launched democracy promotion through the establishment of the Bali Democracy Forum in 2008, it guided by three commitments: strategic commitments, normative commitments, and mixed commitments. This particular research contributes in

viewing democracy promotion as a foreign policy. It uses qualitative approach that enables us to address gaps in the literatures by uncovering specific reasons, motives, and rationality of a country like Indonesia in supporting democracy.

Promoting democracy by Indonesia has been puzzling. Why did Indonesia – a country with unconsolidated democracy – launch and create an initiative to support democracy externally? What were the reasons for launching a democracy forum, engaging civil society and media, and supporting countries to democratize? In today's age of democracy decline, leadership and initiatives to promote democracy are very needed. The example from Indonesia could be valuable. As a community learning through democracy, Indonesia commits to sharing best practices and challenges on democracy, and to promoting. democracy through reflecting on its mistakes and struggles.

Indonesia's commitment to share experiences and lessons learned on democracy externally has internal implications as well. For the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is conceptualized as international-domestic (inter-mestic) affairs. By sharing experiences and lessons learned abroad, Indonesia will be responsible for having the credibility and efficacy of its own initiatives. Indonesia should improve its own democracy situation at home when it promotes democracy abroad. This is Indonesia's strategic reason for launching democracy promotion more than a decade ago: rejuvenating democracy at home while supporting democracy abroad.

Indonesia's reasons to launch democracy promotion through the Bali Democracy Forum in 2008 are guided by three commitments: strategic commitments, normative commitments, and mixed commitments. Viewing democracy promotion as a foreign policy enables us to advance our understanding of the motives, reason, and rationality of a country like Indonesia in supporting democracy. The existing debates on models, mechanisms, and effects of democracy promotion tend to ignore the salience of reasoning behind the initiatives of democracy promotion. Understanding the reasonings and motives of democracy promotion would help us to better understand why certain models and mechanisms are selected.

By promoting democracy as a strategic commitment, a nation could secure its own benefits (security, trade, investment), harness its collective interests (international peace and mutually benefiting cooperation), and serve partner or recipient country's interests. However, there are pitfalls of democracy as strategic commitments: rewards are not obtained immediately, the possibility of conflict-enhancing effects, and the effects are often marginal. To minimize the costs and harness the benefits, the Indonesian approach of democracy promotion as strategic commitment should be carefully focused in setting conditions such as inclusive forum, low-risks initiatives, and close international cooperation.

As elaborated above, the Indonesian democracy promotion as strategic commitments happened not in vacuum. The BDF, BCSMF, and other democracy support initiatives interacted with various state actors' interests and non-state actors' dynamics.

Theoretically, promoting democracy as normative commitment is mainly supported by non-state actors. In Indonesia, the engagements among civil society and media actors are

committed to uphold freedom of expression, political rights, and developing solidarities across regions. Often, these democratic values are culturally grounded to create peace and consensus.

Supporting normative commitments externally sometimes "clashes" with nation-states (*Westphalian* type) through conditions such as self-determination, policy restraint, and non-intervention. Indonesia approaches normative commitments by balancing the needs and interests of the partners with the norms, values, and principles of democracy. The challenges of the normative commitments are translating norms, values, and principles into institutions and political practices. Learning good practices is proven to be important, and sharing mistakes and challenges are highly valuable.

In promoting democracy, Indonesia cooperates with partner countries – both developed democracies and democratizing countries – as well as aspirant countries to democracy. This inclusiveness also characterized the design of the forum, engagements, and initiatives. Promoting democracy as strategic commitments, normative commitments, and mixed motives have elevated Indonesia as a "quiet player" in democratic promotion. Will Indonesia take its future role as a Global South democracy promoter? Will they respond to historical calling to promote democracy as strategic or normative commitments? The answer will be shaped by state actors, non-state actors and other democratic actors as well.

To reflect the aforementioned analysis on the Indonesian experiences in democracy promotion there are insights that could be proposed. First, successes and challenges in promoting democracy start and determine by political will and strong commitment of the leaders. Second, collaborations and supports from both democratic, democratizing, as well as participants countries are most needed since democracy promotion is a collective enterprise. And lastly, collaborations between state institutions, societal actors, as well as international civil society organizations and media are salient. Those are three recommendations for Indonesia's future role in democracy promotion.

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