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Why Democratization and Decentralization in Indonesia Have Mixed Results on the Ground: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia has been subject to democratization and decentralization since Suharto's resignation in 1998. Whilst these two institutional reforms have attracted the attention of many scholars, no one has provided an overview explaining their mixed results. To address this gap, we conduct a systematic review of democratization and decentralization literature in Indonesia, exploring how democratization and decentralization relate and identifying moderators (constraining or supporting contextual factors) of the effects of the two institutional reforms. Our first finding is that the actual processes of democratization and decentralization may undermine each other. Our second finding is that clientelistic informal state institutions together with capture by old predatory elites in the context of legal fragmentation negatively affect outcomes of democratization and decentralization processes, whereas citizen collective action and reform-oriented leadership positively affect them. Based on our findings, we present an advanced framework and three lessons for future studies on democratization and decentralization.

1 | Introduction

Since the fall of Suharto's centralized, authoritarian regime in 1998, Indonesia has been subject to democratization as well as decentralization. The underlying assumption was that these two institutional reforms together were needed to address governance and corruption problems of Suharto's presidency, and to promote more equitable and rule-based polities that would enhance societal outcomes (Setiyono 2015; World Bank 2003). Not surprisingly, the parallel transition towards a more democratic political regime and stronger local government in Indonesia has attracted the attention of many scholars (Alm, Aten and Bahl 2001; World Bank 2003). As a result, a huge body of literature has emerged, discussing and debating various properties and outcomes of these complex and bumpy processes.

Some scholars suggest that democratization and decentralization have led to several positive advancements (Aspinall 2014; Fossati 2017; Lewis 2022). Other scholars, by contrast, argue that democratization and decentralization have fallen short (Bunnell et al. 2013; Hadiz 2004a). Moreover, some studies contend that these processes have created more opportunities for corruption, and even worse: have made corruption more widespread and difficult to control (Setiyono 2015; Silitonga et al. 2016).

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Though key features of post-Suharto institutional reform are much analysed in the literature, there is no systematic literature review of democratization and decentralization in Indonesia. Two scholars did provide a literature review but these were not fully focussed on Indonesia or limited in scope. In the review of Sujarwoto (2017), Indonesia is one of the developing countries reviewed whereas Wardhana's (2019) review focuses on effects of democratization and decentralization on one specific policy domain: social protection. However, no literature review has taken all studies on democratization and decentralization in Indonesia together, systematically exploring what authors say about the relationship between democratization and decentralization and what moderators (i.e.: constraining or supporting contextual factors) explain different outcomes of these processes on the ground. In our view, the proof of the pudding of democratization and decentralization is on the ground but understanding this proof, or to be more precise: the mixed results of these two reform processes, requires a sophisticated but grounded analytical framework. Therefore, the aim of the present study is twofold: to synthesize all studies on democratization and decentralization in Indonesia in terms of outcomes and moderators, and to propose an analytical framework for studying democratization and decentralization on the ground.

The two main questions of our study are: (1) what is the nature of the relationship between democratization and decentralization in Indonesia? And (2) what are the moderators that shape outcomes of these processes? The term 'moderator' is used to capture a range of factors or conditions through which outcomes of democratization and decentralization are shaped. A moderator can explain why outcomes of democratization and decentralization are either in line with or deviate from desired expectations.

To address these questions, we first present the analytical framework that we have used to conduct our systematic literature review. Then we present the results of our review, consisting of four parts: outline of general features of the included studies, overview of governance and societal outcomes, synthesis of the nature of the relationship between democratization and decentralization, and identification of five moderators. Based on our findings, in the discussion, we upgrade our original analytical framework into a more advanced and grounded analytical framework for studying democratization and decentralization in Indonesia on the ground. We also reflect on the relevance of our framework for contextual studies of democratization and decentralization in other parts of the world.

2 | Analytical Framework

Our analytical framework consists of four main concepts: democratization, decentralization, outcomes, and moderators (see Figure 1). In the following, we will discuss each of these concepts and how they relate.

Boyer (1992) defines democratization as 'the process of moving from an authoritarian to a democratic political system' (p. 517). According to Sahin, Lewis, and Lewis (2012), democratization consists of four general phases: the collapse of autocracy, transition to democracy, consolidation, and maturing of democratic political system. From this perspective, transition to democracy is often characterized by the establishment of democratic institutions and procedures to enhance two critical aspects of democratization: competitiveness (political liberalization or pluralization) and political equality or inclusion (Sørensen 2008). The former is often conceived as a minimalist conception of democracy (Doorenspleet and Kopecký 2008) whereas the latter puts social justice, civil rights and rule of law more central (Zuern 2009).

This study adopts a broad approach to democratization, not only considering democratic institutions, but also (underlying) democratic norms (like for instance, greater accountability of governments to citizens). Some scholars consider democratic accountability through the introduction of direct election as a key feature of democratization (Lewis, Nguyen and Hendrawan 2020; Michels 2006). In this context, accountability is viewed as a democratic norm or ideal, with the establishment of democratic electoral institution serving as its institutional vehicle. Since direct election enforces constituency and voting agency, it is supposed to encourage greater accountability and government responsiveness to the interest of the general population. This way democratic election provides opportunities for citizens to shape societal outcomes and hold powerholders accountable.

For the second element of the framework, we draw on Crook and Manor's (1998) conceptualization of decentralization as the transfer of powers and resources from central to lower levels of governments. This transfer of powers can take form in the political, administrative, and financial realm (Manor 1999). Commonly assumed by its proponents is that decentralization would bring government closer to citizens (Crook 2003), being more open to inclusive forms of governance (Cheema and Rondinelli 2007) and, basically, more responsive and accountable to citizens (Agrawal and Ribot 1999; Hutchcroft 2001; Manor 1999). Moreover, increased decision-making powers and resource allocation at subnational level are assumed a prerequisite for policy innovations, local initiatives, and improved service provision and delivery (Ahmad et al. 2005; Grindle 2009).

In scholarly work, the relationship between democratization and decentralization is often portrayed as a means-end relationship. For instance, Crook (2003) and García-Guadilla (2002) view decentralization as a means to strengthen democracy. In a similar vein but the opposite way, Faguet (2014) argues that decentralization requires democracy to realize its desirable promises. However, other scholars have noted that these two reform processes do not necessarily work hand in hand, and may even frustrate each other (Kulipossa 2004; Pickvance 1997). In this study, we do not take an a priori position in this debate, but explore how authors on democratization and decentralization in Indonesia have qualified the relationship.

We distinguish two types of outcomes of democratization and decentralization in our study. The first type is governance outcomes, such as greater accountability, transparency, and effectuation of good governance reforms. The second type is about societal outcomes, such as access to healthcare, education, and so on.

The relationship between institutional reforms (democratization and decentralization) and outcomes is not a simple causal

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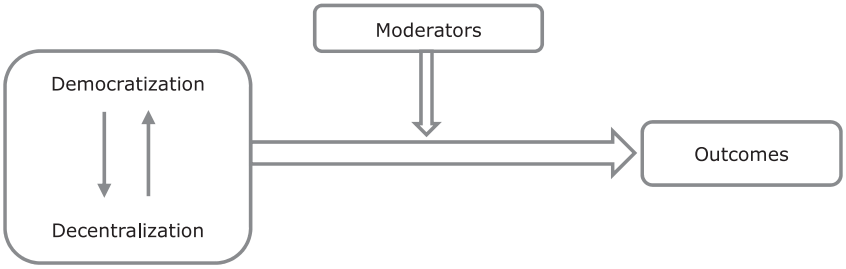


FIGURE 1 | Analytical framework.

relationship. To analyse this relationship, we are inspired by the work of Pawson and Tilley (1997). In their realist evaluation approach, they use the concepts of mechanisms, contexts, and outcomes to explain why programs work differently. Mechanisms refer to hidden dimensions of a programme (like the workings of a clock) that help to understand intended and unintended outcomes in particular contexts. For our analytical purposes, Pawson and Tilley's concept of mechanism is not fitting well enough as it is too much related to a programme (rather than institutional reform) and assumes a causal process. The concept of context fits better but is too broad and static.

Given the limitations of these two concepts, we use the term 'moderator' to refer to supporting or constraining contextual factors that can explain positive or disappointing outcomes of democratization and decentralization. Moderators can not only refer to a pre-existing feature of context, but also to current forces that influence outcomes of democratization and decentralization. Much more than the conventional understanding of context, perceived merely as a static set of variables (Holstein and Gubrium 2004), the concept of moderator can help to explore how context affects outcomes and, more specifically, to explain why democratization and decentralization can lead to either desired or poor societal and governance outcomes on the ground (Greenhalgh and Manzano 2021).

3 | Methodology

This study adopts a systematic literature review characterized by 'systematic and explicit, accountable methods' (Gough, Oliver and Thomas 2012, 5). Such a method allows to systematically collect as many relevant studies on democratization and decentralization in Indonesia as possible (Gough, Oliver, and Thomas 2012) as a comprehensive and relevant data set for analysis and drawing conclusions (Petticrew and Roberts 2008).

Figure 2 presents an overview of all steps of the systematic literature review, starting with a search query and ending with data analysis. In the next two paragraphs, we will detail steps taken in data collection and data analysis.

3.1 | Data Collection

Our first step was to develop a search query with a view to identify all relevant, peer-reviewed publications. We relied on two electronic databases for information retrieval, namely Scopus and Web of Science. We used the following terms for our search query in both databases: "democratization OR democratisation OR democracy OR democratic OR *reformasi*" AND "decentralization OR decentralisation OR decentralized OR "regional autonomy" OR "bureaucratic reform" AND "Indonesia OR Indonesian" in the title, abstract, and keywords for Scopus and in topic for Web of Science. These queries are based on our analytical framework, viewing the two processes of democratization and decentralization as interrelated (Klinken and Berenschot 2018; Kulipossa 2004; Nordholt 2005; Selee 2004). Therefore, we only selected articles that mention both processes.

The search query generated 421 hits from the two sources combined. After importing these results into the Endnote computer programme, 117 duplicates were identified and removed, leaving 304. Screening was then carried out by reading all titles and abstracts using different inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 1). We discovered that 52 papers that did not meet the criteria, leaving 252 papers after the first screening stage.

These 252 articles then were taken through a second screening stage, focussing on articles that analyse impacts or outcomes of democratization and decentralization. Using the Endnote computer programme, we classified these 252 articles into three categories, each describing and analysing democratization and decentralization in a different way. In the first category, these two institutional reforms are treated as independent variables. In the second categroy, democratization and decentralization are dependent variables. In the third category, the two reform processes form a background or setting. Of the 252 articles, 81 were classified as the first category whereas the majority of 164 articles fell into the third category, mentioning democratization and decentralization merely as background. Seven articles that discussed factors that led to democratization and decentralization in Indonesia, were grouped as dependent category.

As we were only interested in the first category, we took these 81 articles and evaluated them against our final inclusion criterion by reading the full text of each article. We eliminated all articles that did not explicitly or implicitly discuss moderators that shape outcomes of democratization and decentralization. This process resulted in a final body of 47 studies, comprising 43 articles and four book chapters.

3.2 | Data Analysis

We imported these 47 articles into ATLAS. ti 9 software for further analysis and coding. We carefully read through the full text of each paper, and coded segments of the texts that either

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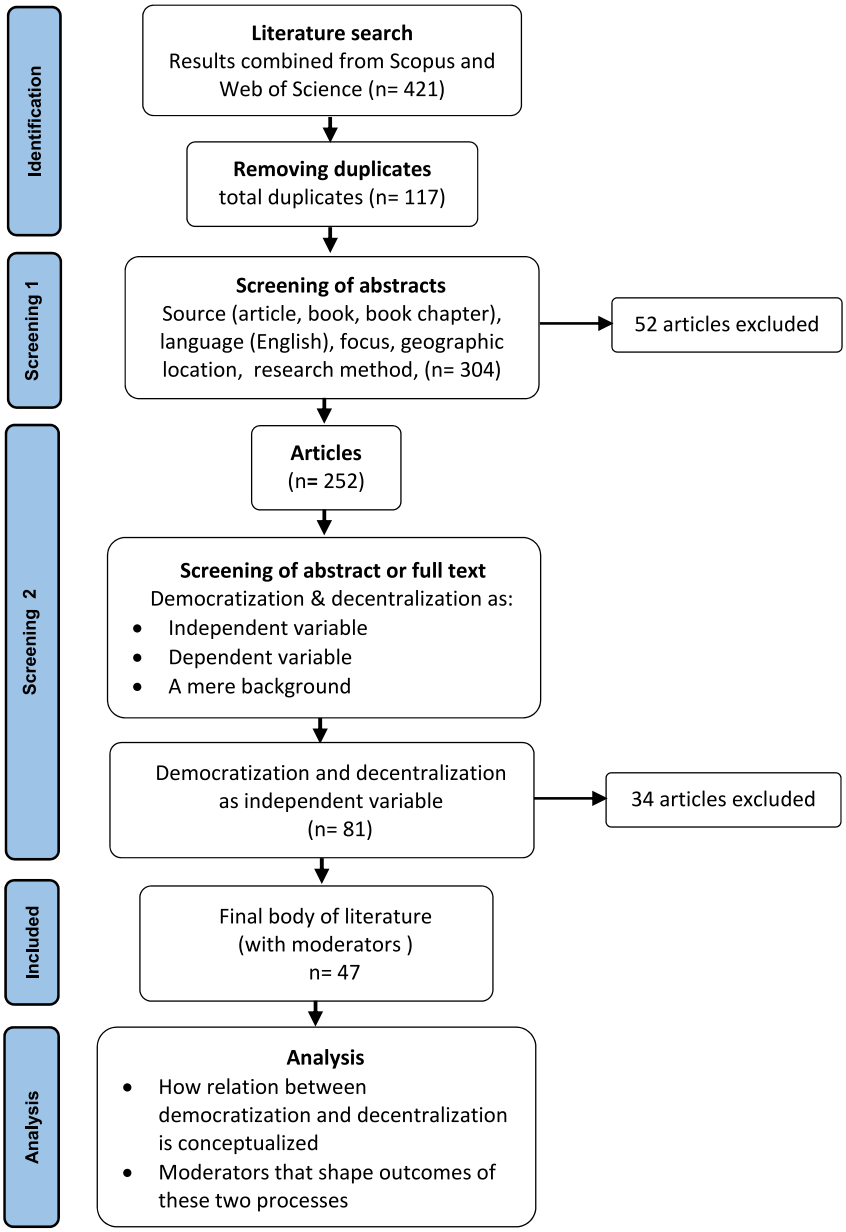


FIGURE 2 | Diagram flow of a systematic review process. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 1 | Inclusion-exclusion criteria.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Document type	Article, book chapter	Proceedings, editorial or opinion notes, book review
Language	English	Other than English
Geographic location	Indonesia; maximum three countries in comparative case studies	Other than Indonesia; more than three countries in comparative cases
Focus	Papers that contain explicit references on democratization and decentralization	Papers that do not contain explicit references on democratization and decentralization
Research methods	Theoretical and empirical paper; qualitative and quantitative	

explicitly or implicitly show how the authors looked at the relationship between democratization and decentralization. Based on our conceptual understanding of democratization-decentralization relationship, we used conceptual-driven codes and labelled the texts as tension or synergy. We employed this similar procedure to analyse outcomes. For identifying moderators, we applied open coding to inductively generate contextual factors that shape outcomes of democratization and decentralization

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(Elo and Kyngas 2008). To do so, we took different steps of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2022). After familiarization with the data, we began coding segments of texts which generated the initial descriptive codes. As we passed this stage of analysis, we then looked for patterns by collating codes based on their similarities. We created candidate themes, reviewing and redefining them, and eventually arrived at five categories (see Appendix 1 for coding processes).

4 | Results

This section presents the results of our systematic literature review. To start with, we present general features of the reviewed articles. Then we summarize what all articles report on governance and societal outcomes of democratization and decentralization processes in Indonesia. Subsequently, we present how all papers address the central issues of our paper: the relationship between democratization and decentralization in Indonesia that addresses research question one, and moderators that shape their outcomes that deal with research question two.

4.1 | General Features of the Literature

A few years after the start of democratization in 1998 and decentralization in 2001, the first articles on democratization and decentralization were published in peer-reviewed journals (see Figure 3). Since then the number of publications did not really boom but reached a quite stable number, averaging slightly more than 2 publications per year in the period 2003–2022. The year of 2012 showed a small peak, assumedly the time in which scholars found it relevant to look back at 10 years of democratization and decentralization.

Looking at the disciplinary profile of the lead author of every article, we can conclude that the topic in the first place has attracted scholars from political science or governance and public policy (see Figure 4). Whilst this does not come as a surprise, it is interesting to note that the topic has attracted the attention of scholars from many other disciplines, trained in education, sociology and economics but also in natural sciences, like marine and environmental studies.

In terms of topic or problem field, the following patterns are visible: the highest number of publications address impact of democratization and decentralization in the field of natural resource management. Other 'popular' topics are good governance, governance reform and health care (see Figure 5).

4.2 | Outcomes

In our reviewed literature, 28 articles report on governance outcomes and 19 articles on societal outcomes. The reported governance outcomes were predominantly negative. Examples are failure to reform governance and public policy (Berenschot 2018; Blunt, Turner and Lindroth 2012; Hadiz 2004a, 2004b; Nguitragool 2012; Nomura 2008; Simandjuntak 2012; Warman 2018), failure to enhance greater accountability (Buehler 2010; Diprose and Azca 2020; Duncan 2007; Hadiz 2012; Ito 2011), failure to develop governance systems in a rule-bound and impersonal manner (Setiyono 2015), and failure to reduce corruption (Buehler 2018; Heo 2018; Setiyono 2015; Silitonga et al. 2016). A few studies report on positive governance outcomes, such as improvement of democratic accountability (Fossati 2016b, 2018; Pribadi 2022) and local governance quality (von Luebke 2009).

Also in terms of societal outcomes, the overall picture is rather bleak. Negative outcomes refer to failure to improve quality of public service delivery (Berenschot and Mulder 2019; Hidayat 2017; Pierskalla and Sacks 2019; Raihani 2007), failure to provide benefits to society through equitable distribution of and access to natural resources (Diprose and Azca 2020; Sahin, Lewis, and Lewis 2012; Wever et al. 2012), failure to protect land rights of marginalized groups (Anggoro and Negara 2021; Duncan 2007), and failure to prevent environmental degradation (Bettinger 2015). Positive outcomes are also mentioned, including improved public service provisions (Wetterberg and Brinkerhoff 2015), particularly in health service delivery (Aspinall 2014; Fossati 2016a, 2017; Jung 2016; Rosser and Wilson 2012), education (Parker and Raihani 2011), and environmental sustainability (Satria and Matsuda 2004).

4.3 | The Nature of the Democratization-Decentralization Relationship

Although many theoretical discussions assume strong linkages between democratization and decentralization (Agrawal and Ribot 1999; Crook 2003; Faguet 2014; García-Guadilla 2002), our

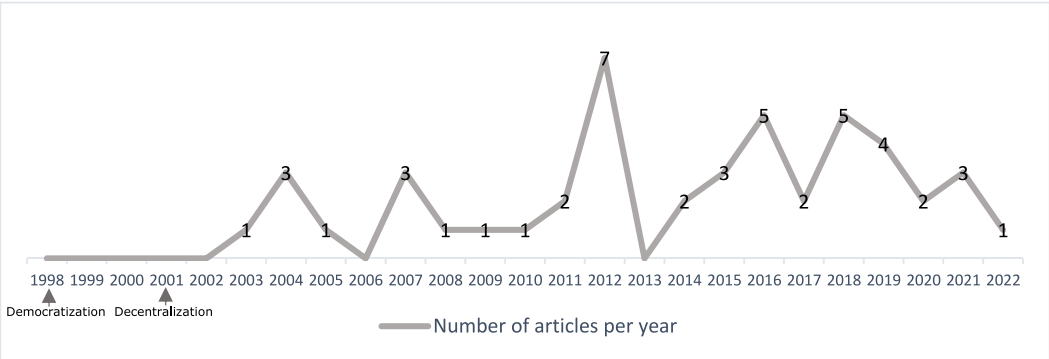


FIGURE 3 | Year of publication. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

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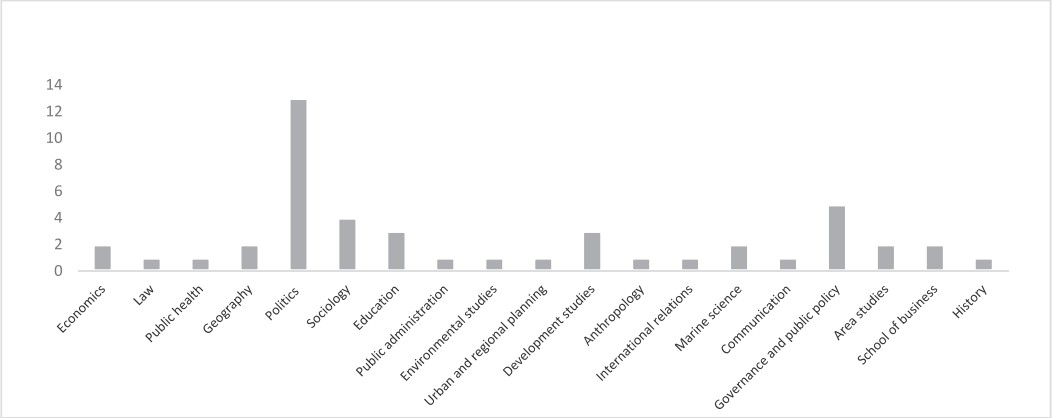


FIGURE 4 | Disciplinary background of lead author per publication.

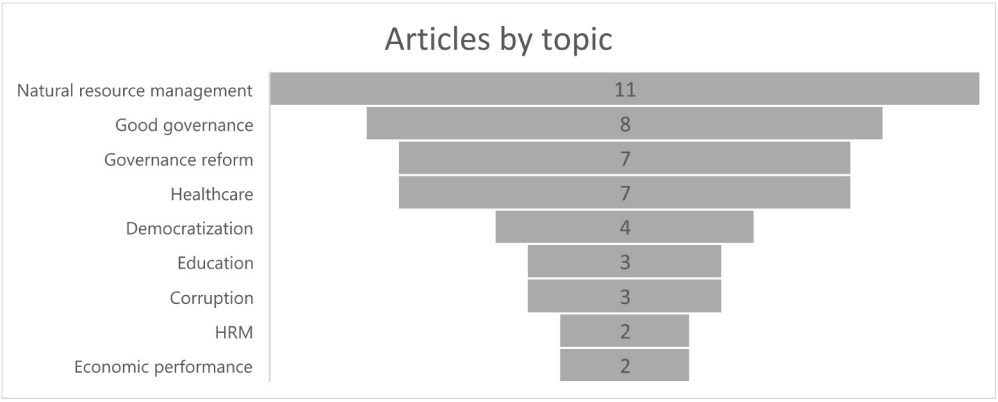


FIGURE 5 | The literature classified by topics or policy domains.

findings highlight that the largest part of the reviewed literature does not address this relationship at all. Most articles (31 out of 47) do not discuss any explicit or implicit notion on the relationship between these two processes. Of the 19 articles that do, 12 conclude that democratization and decentralization hamper or frustrate each other in one way or the other, while only seven articles indicate a mutually reinforcing relation. Since democratization and decentralization is complex phenomena, these authors point at various distinctive elements, considering both its intended goals and institutional manifestation. Democratization can refer to local direct election, but also its intended objectives (e.g. greater accountability and responsiveness to citizen). Similarly, decentralization not only pertains to devolution of power and resources, but also its intended aims (e.g. good governance, merit-based bureaucracy, public service and policy reforms). Below, we will detail how the 19 articles explain a negative or positive relationship.

The 12 articles that present a negative relationship between democratization and decentralization do so in two different ways. The first way is that democratization negatively affects decentralization. For instance, Berenschot (2018) and Berenschot and Mulder (2019) show that direct election for regional heads actually triggers a typical electoral competition that creates a clientelistic political arena. This condition in turn constrains the institutionalization of a merit-based bureaucracy that decentralization was aspired to bring. Similarly, Hadiz (2007) and Simandjuntak (2012) argue that electoral democracy have weakened the implementation of decentralization policy associated with good governance agendas. These studies together highlight how the introduction of local direct election actually works against the realization of the intended aims of decentralization.

The second way is that decentralization hampers democratic progress. Antlöv (2003) and Ito (2011) show that decentralization actually has adversely affected the genuine development of democracy at village level. When decentralization continuously benefits village elites and strengthens their power, it discourages democratic development, particularly in bringing downward accountability and empowering participation among the poor. At a district level, studying decentralization and its impact on indigenous ethnic minorities in Halmahera, Duncan (2007) argues that district leaders who have been empowered by decentralization, continuously ignored the interests of indigenous minorities and their land rights. Decentralization failed to strengthen democracy in relation to protecting the rights of indigenous community. Likewise, Hadiz' findings (2004a, 2004b) highlight that decentralization only benefited vested interests rather than being instrumental for democratization with enhanced accountability and transparency. In the field of corruption, the character of this relation is also apparent. Setiyono (2015) contends that instead of enforcing effective accountability mechanisms, the implementation of decentralization has become a fertile ground for the spread of corruption, which in turn erodes democracy and rule of law (Heo 2018).

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Decentralization might also not favour the development of democracy in terms of accountability and responsiveness to citizens. Wetterberg and Brinkerhoff (2015) illustrate how local bureaucratic officials give less attention to citizens accountability and responsiveness when they have more incentives to pursue their interests in the name of centrally mandated efficiency and effectiveness measures. Their findings highlight two competing objectives of decentralization and without careful mitigation, democratic aims might be easily overlooked and missed (Wetterberg and Brinkerhoff 2015).

On a positive note, several authors signal or at least suggest that decentralization has strengthened democratization. Aspinall (2014) and Fossati (2016b) show in their study of the healthcare programme expansion how the introduction of local direct election encourages local politicians to promote healthcare reform. In his study of electoral accountability in three different districts, Fossati (2018) highlights the emergence of retrospective voting behaviour where people voted for local leaders based on their performance. Along with these electoral incentives, decentralization policy has empowered democratically elected local governments to allocate resources to implement policy reforms. Similarly, von Luebke (2009) contends that decentralized political and budgeting powers have enabled district heads with managerial skills and political ambition to adopt and implement policy reforms that align with local citizens' interests. Parker and Raihani's (2011) study on decentralization of education system presents a similar observation, contending that decentralization has empowered leadership of school principals that may in turn deepen democracy.

4.4 | Moderators of Democratization and Decentralization

We identified five moderators that shape outcomes of democratization and/or decentralization on the ground. It is important to note that some articles refer to two or more moderators. Clientelistic informal state institutions were referred to in 20 studies, and capture by old predatory elites in 15 studies. Citizen collective action and reform-oriented leadership appeared in 13 and eight studies respectively. Finally, legal fragmentation appeared in five studies. We present each of these moderators in detail below.

4.5 | Clientelistic Informal State Institutions

In the literature clientelistic informal state institutions are mentioned most frequently, referring to informal relations that characterize state and non-state interaction. These include collusive ties, favouritism, patronage, and other forms of informal networks that shape how state institutions operate, curtailing its capacity to implement laws, regulations, or policies in a rule-bound, impersonal manner (Berenschot 2018; Setiyono 2015). Consequently, state institutions become informalized, more responsive to wealthy or well-connected individuals and less to ordinary citizens, the poor and marginalized groups. This dynamic aligns with Berenschot and van Klinken's (2018) concept of informalized state institutions, where the actual outcomes of bureaucratic processes frequently reflect the prevalence of personal, clientelistic relationships.

In resource-rich regions, collusive ties between politicians and business elites hinder policy reforms as the former often relies on campaign and other illicit funds in exchange for government favouritisms. Duncan's (2007) study on impacts of decentralization on indigenous communities in North Halmahera reveals such case: local governments are inclined to prioritize corporate interests in oil palm plantation over protecting land rights of local indigenous minorities. Similarly, Diprose and Azca (2020) point at the prevalence of political brokerage in Riau, channelling campaign and other illicit funds from extractive companies to politicians in return for favouritism. Bettinger (2015) and Nguitragool (2012) argue that the reliance on informal networks to access state resources, undermined good governance and environmental sustainability. These informal relations perpetuate the established relations of power that only benefit elites at the cost of local communities and environment.

Fierce electoral competition also contributes to the informalization of state institutions. Berenschot (2018) argues that bureaucratic reform measures were difficult to institutionalize as politicians face strong incentives not to use bureaucratic appointments in a meritocratic but clientelistic manner. These practices are more intensive in areas where the economy is predominantly state-dependent (Berenschot and Mulder 2019). Furthermore, fierce electoral competition characterized by intensifying money politics strengthens collusive and other informal ties. Hadiz (2007, 2012) contends that intensifying money politics has transformed political parties into auction houses where party nominations were sold to the highest bidder while electoral competition were confined only among coalitions of predatory forces (Hadiz 2004b). It is argued that this money-driven politics endures patron-client relationships, which further personalize state institutions and impede good governance (Simandjuntak 2012). Under such circumstances, politicians have more incentives to undermine rather than improve governance quality.

Several articles explain that decentralization has not curtailed but rather reinforced corruption. Setiyono (2015) stresses that the use of personal channels and informal rules to attain public services and influence politics prevents the governance system to perform and develop in a rule-bound, impartial manner. Likewise, Silitonga et al. (2016) posits that decentralization enables local leaders to organize extensive informal networks with various stakeholders to advance their personal interests and corrupt practices. Buehler (2018) further notes that decentralization has allowed district heads to exploit sharia legislation, accumulating money from charity (*zakat*) revenues and distributing it strategically to supporters and networks of electoral brokerage.

Patronage networks as a way of distributing state resources also constitute the informalized character of state institutions. Blunt, Turner, and Lindroth (2012) and Pierskalla and Sacks (2019) contend that human resource management in public organization was undermined as local elites exploit their discretionary control over staff recruitment and promotion to generate illicit income and secure electoral support. Gonschorek's (2021) study

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finds that the allocation of state resources is biased, favouring the birthplace of the incumbent governor's district with significantly larger shares of government grants as opposed to other districts. Ito (2011) and Pribadi (2022) report that decentralization has led to increased budget allocation to authorities at village level but not changed the patronage-based system of resource distribution. Increased budgets at local level due to decentralization policy have not necessarily led to improved public services delivery and made local authorities more responsive to the poor and marginalized (Blunt, Turner, and Lindroth 2012; Pierskalla and Sacks 2019; Rosser and Wilson 2012).

When confronted with state institutions that are informalized, unresponsive and unpredictable, citizens have strong incentives to develop informal ways and personal ties with government officials (Berenschot and Mulder 2019; Setiyono 2015). For instance, Pribadi (2022) contends that rural villagers in West Java employed a polite, informal way of articulating and demanding better access to public services. This approach enhances citizens' capacity to voice their rights and increases village authorities' responsiveness to local aspirations. Similarly, Rahayu, Woltjer, and Firman (2019) show that Cirebon city's local government-owned water supply enterprise (PDAM) opted for an informal approach to resolve longstanding water supply disputes with the upstream district of Kuningan. However, while such strategy constitutes an important form of political agency that allow citizens to deal with the state (Duncan 2007; Pribadi 2022; Setiyono 2015), it actually further contributes to the informalization of state institutions.

4.6 | Capture by Old Predatory Elites

This moderator refers to the persistence of old, predatory interests which have successfully adapted to and co-opted new democratic institutions, including political parties, parliament, and other institutions of democratic rule. Despite echoing with the established term “elite capture” (Dasgupta and Beard 2007), capture by old predatory elites emphasises historical and lingering influences of Suharto's New Order on Indonesia's democratization and decentralization. This coalition of forces and interests impedes the intended objectives of democratic reforms. By reconstituting themselves within the democratic framework, these predatory forces continue to exert significant influence, posing a major challenge to Indonesia's democratization and decentralization (Blunt, Turner, and Lindroth 2012; Hadiz 2004a, 2004b; Setiyono 2015).

For instance, Hadiz (2004a, 2004b, 2007) contends that a range of former New Order elites including (retired) military men, elite bureaucrats, business actors, and local enforcers of the regime have secured strategic positions in all major political parties, and have taken key positions in parliament and executive offices. This is also evident in the case of provincial elections between 2005 and 2008, contested mostly by figures associated with the New Order regime (Buehler 2010). Diprose and Azca (2020), and Rosser, Roesad, and Edwin (2005) show how such coalitions have narrowed access to and control over natural resources by successfully capturing the structure of power under the democratic system and exerting significant influence over policy-making processes. As a result, natural resource distribution has continuously benefited a few elites at the expense of society at large and particularly the poorer and marginalized sections (Sahin, Lewis, and Lewis 2012).

Various authors have noted that the successful reorganization of old, predatory power relations in Indonesia's democratic political system has undermined the quality of reform initiatives in various sectors (Armando 2014; Aspinall 2014; Nguitragool 2012; Warman 2018). According to Aspinall (2014), the quality of healthcare reform implementation in Indonesia suffered from the continued oligarchic domination and corrupt practices associated with it. Meanwhile, Armando's (2014) study on television industry shows how business elites, mostly Suharto's close circle, circumvented the need for a decentralized broadcasting system by intervening the legal drafting process in parliament. Consequently, television broadcasting remained highly centralized and failed to function as a medium of public sphere that empowers local citizens to exert public oversight of the local government. In environmental governance, Warman (2018) and Nguitragool (2012) contend that the failure of recent decentralized forestry reform has to do with the entrenched predatory interests developed under the previous centralized regime who utilized decentralization for rent-seeking opportunities.

The capture by old predatory elites has a profound meaning as it explains why good governance reforms are hardly put as priority and are continuously refused or frustrated, unless these reforms are harmless to the status quo. Several authors contend that this capture mechanism means that technocratic notions of good governance associated with decentralization miss the point (Blunt, Turner, and Lindroth 2012; Hadiz 2007, 2012). Decentralization provided opportunities for old predatory elites to newly consolidate their power and networks of patronage (Setiyono 2015). Capture by old predatory elites also undermines electoral democracy which was supposed to signal policy preferences to the elites and to function as the main site of political participation and contestation (Buehler 2010).

4.7 | Citizen Collective Action

Citizen collective action refers to citizens' ability to exercise democratic practices and demand greater accountability by collectively mobilizing and putting pressure on state authorities, or by voting bad politicians out of office. Strong citizen engagement tends to yield positive results of democratization and decentralization whereas weak participation leads to less favourable outcomes.

Aspinall (2014) and Jung (2016) demonstrate how collective activism led to the successful adoption of universal healthcare coverage in Indonesia, despite democratic institutions being severely affected by the logics of money politics. These studies underscore the significance of issue framing that can attract cross-sectoral alliances when building advocacy coalition (Aspinall 2014; Jung 2016). Satria and Matsuda (2004) illustrate how citizens in West Lombok revitalized a traditional

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institution (*awig-awig*) in response to the local state's failure in fisheries management. This revitalization effectively curbed destructive fishing practices and promoted marine resource sustainability, showcasing the power of collective action.

Citizen participation in electoral processes offers great potential to enhance democratic accountability. Fossati (2018) shows that retrospective voting, where votes are given based on performance evaluation of local government, emerges as a form of accountability in local direct election. Retrospective voting requires political knowledge, trust in electoral institutions, and clear responsibility attribution, and its occurrence suggests that Indonesian local politics is not exclusively transactional (Fossati 2018). Several authors contend that the changing electoral incentive from local direct election system has encouraged reform initiatives at local government (Aspinall 2014; Fossati 2016b, 2017). As the attainment of public offices has to rely on popular votes, politicians face greater incentives to implement reforms for securing popular votes. Additionally, Amri and Amri (2021) found a positive correlation between subnational competitiveness and democratic institutions (local elections and political rights). Taken together, these studies underline the importance of citizen collective action for improving local governance and policy outcomes.

Several studies problematize the limited outcomes of democratization and decentralization as a result of insufficient citizen participation. While Buehler (2010), Parker and Raihani (2011), and Raihani (2007) identify low citizen capacity as the primary issue, others point to poor participation mechanisms (Hidayat 2017), or absence of an effective participatory framework (Wever et al. 2012) as key barriers. Raihani (2007) suggests that a more structural problem, particularly poor economic conditions, prevents local populations from actively engaging in democratization and decentralization processes.

4.8 | Reform-Oriented Leadership

Several studies emphasise the importance of reform-oriented leadership, referring to the willingness and capacity of local leaders to implement reforms and improve public service delivery. In the health sector, Azizatunnisa et al. (2021) argue that district head appears to be the most critical factor explaining the sustainability of the immunization programme. Similarly, Fossati (2016a) contends that intergovernmental cooperation, initiated by local government leaders across different levels, improves health service delivery especially for disadvantaged groups despite limited financial and institutional capacity. Parker and Raihani's (2011) study on decentralization of education system shows a crucial role played by local leaders, particularly the school principals, in achieving excellent school performance. Despite not uniformly empowering, decentralization has enabled some schools to perform even better in the hands of visionary, participative and exemplary leadership (Parker and Raihani 2011). On water governance, Rahayu, Woltjer, and Firman (2019) argue that decentralization has empowered district governments to leverage local resources (e.g. water) for local revenue generation. However, such outcome depends on district head's mobilization and innovative capacity to utilize the opportunities provided by democratic decentralization. This capacity is further exemplified in von Luebke's (2009) study based on eight district cases. While societal demands theoretically influence government performance, the author contends that district head's willingness and capacity, particularly in initiating reforms and supervising bureaucratic performance, are the critical factors explaining variations in local governance quality. Likewise, Wetterberg and Brinkerhoff (2015) contend that government-led policy entrepreneurship is a key driver that drives the need for public sector reform.

Rosser and Wilson (2012) offer a deeper analysis of reform-oriented leaders, arguing that the nature of relationship between district heads and political party elites significantly shapes the adoption of pro-poor policies. District heads with strained party elite relationship tend to prioritize pro-poor policies over expensive construction projects that are typically used to cement patronage networks and elite party machinery (Rosser and Wilson 2012).

4.9 | Legal Fragmentation

Legal fragmentation refers to sectoral regulations, legal inconsistency, and distortion from lower-level regulations. It impedes and deflects the actual implementation of democratic norms that are supposed to strengthen citizenship rights. According to Anggoro and Negara (2021), the fragmented legal system on indigenous people's rights in Indonesia has hindered local communities' ability to secure customary land rights. The sectoral rights arrangements, which create complex bureaucratic procedures and the need to engage with various government agencies, are key barriers explaining that indigenous communities often lack resources to navigate (Anggoro and Negara 2021). Similarly, Nomura (2008) demonstrates how legal inconsistency thwarted a progressive local regulation on participatory forest management in Wonosobo. This ambiguity allowed the proponents of the conventional top-down forest management approach to maintain the status quo, preventing the rights-based participatory forestry model from replacing the previous system that only benefited the ruling class and their subordinates (Nomura 2008).

Another example is the study carried out by Wever et al. (2012), showing that coastal management in Indonesia suffers from legal fragmentation, with at least 22 laws and regulations creating legal inconsistencies and ambiguities. The argument is that these legal issues might facilitate hidden agendas that harm traditional fisheries economically and environmentally (Wever et al. 2012). Meanwhile, though the law No. 22/1999 on regional governments provided better checks and balances of the executive power of village head, Antlöv (2003) found that its implementing regulations actually distorted the law's intended democratic objectives for village governance. In the television industry, weak regulatory framework hampers television broadcasting's potential as local public sphere for civil society to create better oversight of the implementation of decentralization policy at local governments (Armando 2014).

Despite the diverse settings this legal fragmentation entails, there is one thing they have in common: the distortions

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generated by contradictory operational regulations, lack of regulatory framework, and legal inconsistencies create legal uncertainty, that do less harm to vested interests than to 'ordinary citizens'. Even worse, vested interests seem to benefit from this uncertainty. These results resonate with recent studies by Mudhoffir (2022) and Berenschot et al. (2023), showing that Indonesia's complex legal patchwork enables strategic manipulation of local regulations and facilitates predatory elites' capital accumulation.

5 | Discussion

Based on our results, we can now upgrade our initial analytical framework (Figure 1) and present a more sophisticated and grounded analytical framework (Figure 6). First, we fill in the black box of moderators by distinguishing five contextual factors of democratization and decentralization. Much more than Sujarwoto (2017) and Wardhana (2019) that focus notably on conditions for decentralization to have beneficial effects, highlighting the presence of effective formal institutions, citizen participation, and local leadership, these moderators explain why democratization and decentralization can have both negative and positive governance and societal outcomes. These outcomes again can have an effect on public policies geared towards democratization and decentralization. Disappointing societal benefits and failure of governance reform may have a feedback effect and trigger a call for revitalizing, intensifying or adjusting public policies geared towards democratization and decentralization.

Admittedly, the moderators that explain negative governance and societal outcomes, may also prevent or filter out feedback from the wider population through collective action or reformist leadership. We contend that both the prevalence of either negative or positive outcomes of democratization and decentralization in Indonesia, and the feedback of these outcomes to public policy, very much depend on the power and interplay of moderators that prompt negative outcomes and moderators that prompt positive ones.

Three moderators are not only explaining negative effects but are also interrelated: Clientelistic informal state institutions hamper democratization and decentralization processes by stimulating and perpetuating various forms of informal, clientelistic relations that informalize and prevent state institutions to operate in a rule-bound and impersonal manner. Although decentralization and democratization pertain to changes in formal institutions, old informal patterns and norms have always been very dominant and even more important as they shape the way formal state institutions operate. As state institutions get informalized, informal relations can make state institutions either more or less responsive, and eventually become unpredictable. Consequently, political and economic relations are defined and built not only on the basis of formal laws and procedures, but rather on personalized ties that are mostly clientelistic in nature. At the same time, capture by old predatory elites undermines democratization and decentralization through the appropriation of political parties, electoral institutions (legislative and executive positions), and other institutions of democratic rule and procedures. In this way, a range of predatory interests reflecting power constellations incubated under the previous autocratic regime have maintained its political domination. Despite democratic and decentralization reforms creating space for the rise of new actors, many often succumb to and eventually engage with the same predatory practices and alliances. As a result of legal fragmentation, more radical or egalitarian objectives of democratization and decentralization are deflected in two ways. First, legal fragmentation provides a fertile ground for strategic manipulation by predatory elites of local regulations and enable them to circumvent any obligations to fulfil intended aims of democratic reform. Second, legal ambiguity provides an excuse for state officials to delay implementation of critical processes, such as acknowledging citizen rights and equality.

The two other moderators, that is: the rise of citizen collective action and reform-oriented leadership, are associated with positive results. Democratization and decentralization processes will have positive outcomes with citizen collective action that is capable of exercising democratic rights to correct and punish politicians, forming advocacy coalition, and putting pressures on state authorities. When citizens have the capacity and conditions enabled them to organize, state authorities are likely to be held accountable. This also confirms studies on participatory development programs (KDP and Musrenbang) in Indonesia where similar effects of the importance of citizen participation can be seen (Gibson and Woolcock 2008; Grillos 2017; Guggenheim et al. 2004). Reform-oriented leadership is another key determinant for democratization and decentralization to deliver its promises. The willingness and capacity of local leaders to

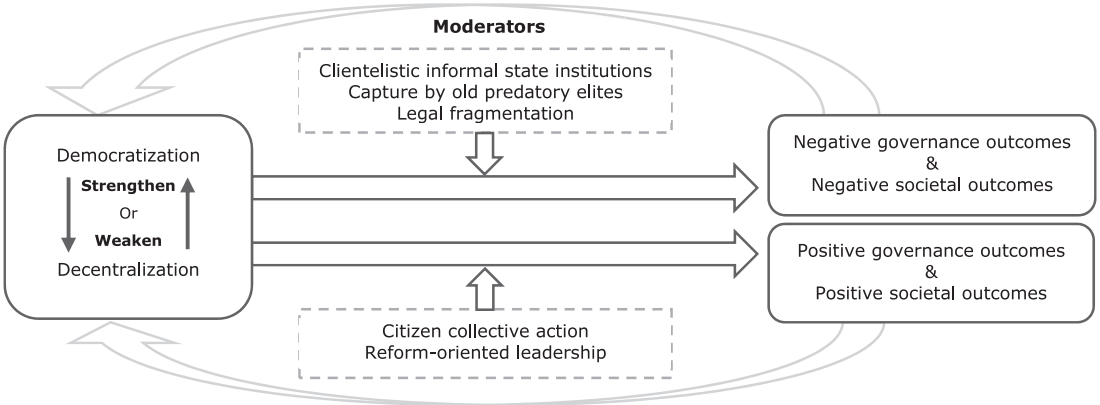


FIGURE 6 | Analytical framework for studying democratization and decentralization.

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implement reforms and promote accountability are two important elements. However, such quality of leaders is hardly cultivated, given predatory practices that often define power constellation within political parties from which these leaders have to be nominated to compete in elections. Under this circumstance, therefore the primacy on the quality of political leadership suggests the importance of incentive structures that stimulate these leaders to promote accountability or implement policy reforms. Given the challenging circumstances described with the earlier moderators, it is important to understand how these reformist and progressive figures can emerge and navigate entrenched political and economic forces.

While our analytical framework has been drawn from an extensive review of literature on democratization and decentralization in Indonesia, we argue that the framework, possibly with location-specific terms, can be used to study democratization and decentralization processes and its outcomes in many other parts of the world. Other countries undergoing democratization and decentralization also have to face tensions between vested interests and claims of reformist leaders, not only seeking ways on how to use (new) formal rights, programs and procedures but also coping with many other (more informal) institutions. Having said this, we would like to draw some broader lessons from our study of democratization and decentralization in Indonesia.

The first lesson is the importance of adopting a historical perspective in studies on democratization and decentralization. Although the demise of Suharto's regime marked the beginning of reform period underpinned by democratization and decentralization processes, institutions originating from the New Order rule still linger on. Power relations and interests representing an alliance of politico-bureaucratic apparatus and big businesses established under Suharto's New Order are still quite dominant. Such configuration of forces and interests may indicate a broader sociopolitical terrain under which democratization and decentralization are and have been organized. The collapse of Suharto's autocratic regime did not lead to the replacement of old predatory interests with reformist coalitions and interests (Hadiz 2012). Another significant New Order's legacy to the democratic era has to do with the state-society relation. As the state systematically disorganized civil society during that period, its implication for civil society activism, including the relative absence of cohesive, organized counterforces is still very clear until today (White, Graham and Savitri 2022).

The second lesson is the need to understand the nature of the state. This study shows at least three important features that characterize the nature of the state, but also mediate the effects of democratization and decentralization: capture by old predatory elites, informalization of state institutions, and legal fragmentation. The same moderators that hamper democratization and decentralization outcomes reveal much about the nature of the state in Indonesia. In many cases, old predatory elites and interests capture a set of institutions such as parliament, executive offices, and elections that disallow the state to operate effectively and responsibly. The latter is particularly prone to this capture as serious measures to break the link between money and politics are insufficient or just do not exist (Indrayana 2018). Seen it this way, state institutions that are highly informalized are not only the legacy of the New Order's rule, but a product of democratic elections dominated by this configuration of elites and interests. The informalized character is created through reciprocal relations among politicians and government officials with business interests, making the former more responsive to the latter. Conversely, ordinary citizens or not well-connected individuals experience state actions, including laws, policies, and rules as unresponsive, random and unpredictable. This situation is exacerbated by legal fragmentation, providing a fertile ground for such character to flourish and for elites who profit from it. We therefore argue that democratization and decentralization cannot be understood without a full understanding of the nature of the state.

The third lesson is that understanding what democratization and decentralization entails on the ground implies the need to investigate everyday state-citizen interaction. Citizens may hear about public policies aimed at democratization and decentralization, but in daily life they also have to cope with the informalized character of state institutions (Berenschot and van Klinken 2018). They see state resources continuously being captured by elites associated with the old power and interests, and legal fragmentation remaining a major hurdle for democratic progress in many sectors. In such contexts, taking the angle from communities' perspective is crucial to understand democratization and decentralization outcomes on the ground.

For future research on outcomes of democratization and decentralization on the ground, we would like to propose the following agenda: first of all, to conduct comparative studies of how communities in the Global South, particularly marginalized groups, try to cope with and overcome constraining contextual factors of democratization and decentralization, and to reinforce and benefit from positive moderators. Second, and given that local leadership can make a difference, we propose to conduct comparative in-depth studies of local governments and how and why these governments erode or strengthen democratization and decentralization on the ground. This two-fold agenda could generate research that can illuminate under what conditions and through what steps communities, civil society and local governments can positively influence democratization and decentralization on the ground.

6 | Conclusion

To understand both positive and negative outcomes of democratization and decentralization in Indonesia, analysis of moderators, as supporting or constraining contextual factors, is important. Our study shows that clientelistic informal state institutions and old predatory elites in a context of legal fragmentation negatively affects outcomes of democratization and decentralization. Citizen collective action and reform-oriented leadership positively affect these reform processes. A major question for future research is how these moderators as competing forces play out in different local contexts in Indonesia and in the Global South at large. Supporting a positive emancipatory agenda, we particularly propose to focus on how citizen collective action and reformist leadership can be

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strengthened to generate positive outcomes of democratization and decentralization in the Global South.

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Conflicts of Interest

I declare that the authors have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could be perceived to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The data that supports the findings of this study are available in the supplementary material of this article.

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