

## THE INCOMPLETE PROCESS OF INDONESIA'S DEMOCRATIZATION

Edward Aspinall & Marcus Mietzner (eds.), *Problems of Democratisation in Indonesia, Election, Institutions, and Society*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010. 359 + xx pages.

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The two editors of the book, Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner have been actively researching Indonesian politics since their adolescence. Aspinall lived previously for several years in Malang and Mietzner conducted his initial research on Indonesia in Ambon. The two editors, now scholars at the Australian National University in Canberra, belong to the new generation of Indonesian experts.

The two Australia based scholars represent a shift from the dominance of the American based experts from the earlier generation such as George McTurnan Kahin (Cornell University), Benedict Anderson (Cornell University), and Daniel S. Lev (Washington University), who researched Indonesia during the Cold War period. At that time Indonesia was considered as a country threatened by the “domino effects” of communism that already swept China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, leading to increased funds for Indonesian studies in the US, and therefore contributing to in depth political analysis produced among others by the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP). However, the importance of Indonesia in particular and Asian studies in general (Ellings & Hathaway 2010: 2) abated in the post Cold War period as attention is drawn further to more severe conflict areas. Therefore, with this book the two editors aim at bringing Indonesia back to the international political discourse. They argue that most of the comparativists, for instance like the Washington DC based Freedom house, have treated Indonesia only as one country among many others

in their quantitative analyses. A number of important work on Indonesia have also been published by junior scholars, unfortunately they lack influence for triggering a larger international debate on Indonesia.

This book is aiming to address that particular deficit in the current political science literature (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 3). Furthermore, the editors also explain that Indonesia deserves more attention because it is currently the world's third largest democracy, after the United States and India, and because it is one of the few examples where Islam and democracy can go hand in hand together (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 4).

The book reveals an interesting fact about the state of Indonesian democracy, namely the different perceptions between comparativists and Indonesianists. Larry Diamond's piece "Indonesia's Place in Global Democracy" represents the international perception of the state of democracy in Indonesia. Diamond asserts that "democracy has moved forward under the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono" (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 31). He also looks at the role of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in eliminating corruption by investigating and bringing important political figures to court, and the World Bank's positive measures on Indonesia's significant improvements in its quality of governance (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 34). Diamond further elucidates that the remaining deficiencies of Indonesian democracy lie the in opaque position of Islamic parties towards a democratic constitutional order and the ability of elites such as Wiranto and Prabowo having the power to reverse the course of democracy in the country (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 47). This positive view is in line with other international views on Indonesia. The Economist for instance praises Indonesia's "strong record in fighting terrorism" (*Economist*: August 12, 2010) bolstering the country's achievements in recent years.

The perception of Indonesian democracy in general and about President Yudhoyono in particular is quite different from the perspectives of Indonesian civil society and the media. They portray the President as a master image creator, utilizing the public space to project himself

as a liberal, democratic, firm, and yet fatherly figure. Delivering speeches that move people's heart and composing songs, the President was reluctant to take concrete measures on highly sensitive political issues such as the Lapindo, or the Century Bank Case. In the former he decided to continuously occupy Aburizal Bakrie owner of the Bakrie Group, the majority owner of the company causing the Lapindo disaster, as Coordinating Minister of People's Welfare in his first term. In the later, President Yudhoyono let Vice President Boediono and his former Coordinating Finance Minister Sri Mulyani face the DPR's investigation without taking partially the responsibility (*Tempo Interaktif* 20 May 2010). After the bombing of the JW Marriott and the Ritz Carlton Hotel in 2009, the President also used a photograph of him becoming a target for terrorist practices in his speech. However, according to ICG's Sydney Jones, it was an old picture from 2004 (*Tempo Interaktif* 2009). This phenomenon shows that the President could be misinformed about the photograph, or that he was capitalizing on the moment to gain popular sympathy.

Therefore, one of the important contributions of this book is bridge this gap between the domestic and the international perceptions of Indonesian democracy. Contributors of the chapters in the book consist of a mix of Indonesian and foreign scholars and practitioners on Indonesian politics. They offer a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses, and so are able to provide a snapshot on the details and the mechanics that have contributed to Indonesian democracy, capturing the successes while at the same time identifying the deficiencies in our democratic progress. It presents facts after facts supporting the analysis of the authors, and it is therefore recommended for the expert scholar as well as for the novice reader on Indonesian politics. Moreover, the book explains the most recent political developments such as the 2009 elections.

The various chapters of the book cover different topics, but are grouped into three main topics: managing democracy, society and democratic contestation, and local democracy. Therefore, in this review I will follow the existing structure, and compare the book's approach and findings with those of other international scholars.

The first part on managing democracy emphasized heavily on the formal aspects of democracy such as the electoral system, voters, the 2009 elections, the party system and the parliament. The chapter elucidates also about the role of political consultants and polling organizations, a new feature in Indonesian politics today. The late Joseph Schumpeter, a former professor of economics at Harvard University argues that election is the heart of democracy. In his own words “democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them. But since they might decide this also in entirely undemocratic ways, we have had to narrow our definition by adding a further criterion identifying the undemocratic method, viz., the competition among would be leaders for the vote of the electorate” (Schumpeter 1942: 284 - 285). Schumpeter’s position is thus very similar to this section that elaborates deeply about the election processes. I will explain the main arguments of the authors of the chapter and will add my own critique.

Rizal Sukma brings in an interesting observation about the Indonesian election of 2009. He argues that the quality of the election in 2009 has somewhat decreased compared to 2004 (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 55). It started already from the exclusion of experienced members of the General Elections Commission (KPU) from the selection process. The DPR also excluded Hadar Gumay, chair of the Center for Electoral Reform (CETRO) from being one of the candidates. The inexperience of KPU members resulted into administrative deficiencies of the election such as incorrectly printed ballots, uncertain campaign schedules, the absence of millions of eligible voters from the voter list, as well as the inclusion of military personnel not having the right to vote, and deceased persons.

There is a clear set back regarding the credibility of the KPU. Adam Schmidt strikes a similar tone, explaining that in 2004, KPU members consisted of well known and credible individuals even though a number of them were found to be involved in corruption cases later on. The quality of the administration of the election in 2009 fell short in standards compared to the 2004, and even the 1999 election when KPU members mostly consisted of members from political parties (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 103). An interesting and important perspective that

Schmidt brings in is that the unsatisfactory performance of the KPU is basically the negative outcome of its predecessor. Scandals in procurement practices by the 2004 KPU resulted into the jailing of a number of its leadership, and thus hindered institution building and transfer of knowledge to the current KPU. In addition, illicit cases by the 2004 KPU also had political implications. Moreover, Law no. 22 / 2007 on the Organization of General Elections restricted control on the KPU's procurement processes, and thus hampered the commission's ability to meet the tight deadlines.

Sukma also points to the declining support for Muslim - based parties (with the exception of the PKS). Internal conflicts within the National Mandate Party (PAN), the United Development Party (PPP) and the People's Awakening Party (PKB) reduced their support significantly. Muhammadiyah and NU leaders also encouraged their voters to support Jusuf Kalla in the presidential election. However, exit polls show that their mass bases are voting for SBY instead, showing the weakened influence of these organizations, and a shift in voting behaviour from traditional to swing voters.

Saiful Mujani & Bill Liddle explain that this phenomenon shows that candidate appeal, leadership and party identification were the most dominant factor in the 2009 election. Another determinant factor was voters' perception of the national economic condition. This they argue, is not in line to what scholars have believed since 1955, namely that Indonesian elections are mainly influenced by social and cultural factors such as religion, ethnicity and social class (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 75 - 76). There were efforts by vice presidential candidate Wiranto to picture himself and presidential candidate Jusuf Kalla as more religious than others by pointing to the headscarves worn by their wives. During the presidential campaign words also spread that Boediono was a practitioner of *kejawen* and that his wife was a Catholic. However, these strategies did not work out.

The media, Mujani and Liddle elucidate, has a more prominent role today. Partai Demokrat had the largest expenditure concerning media advertisements. The party spent US\$5.1 million on television advertisements followed by Golkar (US\$4.8 million) and Gerindra (US\$4.4 million). The media also had an important role in socializing welfare programs by the 2004 - 2009 SBY administration. In addition,

despite the fact that 2009 was a year of global economic crisis, the incumbent government benefitted from the fact that Indonesia was not as integrated to the global economy as its Asian neighbors were, and thus could thrive, suffering a decline in economic growth of 2 percent while still improving employment figures. Therefore, Mujani and Liddle argue that Indonesian voters' today have become more rational.

The rationality of Indonesian voters could be affecting their criticisms towards established parties. Sukma asserts that long established nationalist parties, and the two biggest in the 2004 election, Golkar and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI -P) also lost their votes significantly. Golkar's votes declined from 21.6 percent to 14.5 percent, and PDI - P's declined from 18.5 percent to 14.0 percent. All these, led to the Partai Demokrat (PD) to increase its votes from 7.5 percent to 20.9 percent, benefitting from the image of Yudhoyono. At the same time, according to Mujani and Liddle it has become harder for new parties to succeed in Indonesia today. Only 2 new parties, the Gerindra and the Hanura managed to get over the 2.5 percent parliamentary threshold. Overall, the parties represented in the parliament have been decreased from 16 in 2004 to 9 in 2009, showing that it becomes harder for smaller parties to make their voices heard.

The situation of political parties is complicated by their internal development. Dirk Tomsa makes an interesting observation regarding the party system in Indonesia. Building on the arguments of Marcus Mietzner he explains that on one hand the party system in Indonesia has stabilized because of the absence of strong ideologies within the parties. On the other hand, established parties which have participated in elections since 1999, continue to lose votes. He argues that those parties have failed to take advantage of the fall of Suharto and consolidate themselves. Instead, they were plagued by factionalism and lack of leadership. In addition, the tendency to include all parties in cabinets since 1999 contributed also to the erosion of party identity (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 147) and programmatic approaches. Political parties as an institution are further weakened by the personalization of parties where personal views of leaders can dominate decision making processes.

Tomsa further explains that the PKS is the only exception. The party relies on its programs and organizational cohesiveness to mobilize

votes. Nevertheless, what Tomsa does not explain is that the PKS, despite its participation in democratic processes, is a party that from time to time promotes less democratic policies such as restrictions on women's freedom. In other words, participating in a democratic process does not necessarily make PKS an advocate for democratic policies.

Despite PD's stellar performance, SBY still decided to have a grand coalition in his cabinet. All parties except for the PDI - P, the Gerindra and the Gerindra are currently presented in his United Indonesia Cabinet II, causing ineffective check and balances between the legislative towards the executive (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 68). Still, as the Century case shows, a grand coalition does not necessarily mean support in the legislative. Legislators acted rather independently than following the party line, and some coalition members even voted against the decision of the government. In Rizal Sukma's words "forces in the DPR often pursue their own logic and interests when it comes to their stance *vis - a - vis* government policies" (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 68).

Stephen Sherlock, a former parliamentary advisor for UNDP explains that the legislative role of the DPR has become more important in the reform era. Originally the 1945 Constitution stipulates that the task of drafting legislations lies with the President. The parliament is only responsible for giving its consent, or putting a rubber stamp on bills by the government. This has changed since the Article 20A (1) was amended. The DPR has become much more powerful these days. It has also the authority to scrutinize the activities of the executives, appoint members of the State Audit Agency (BPK), to select members of the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court and the Judicial Commission. Moreover, the DPR is also responsible for approving Indonesian ambassadors and is able to veto the acceptance of ambassadors from other countries, it also approves the Commander of the Armed Forces, and members of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Sherlock elucidates that if in the past Indonesia was very executive heavy, today the balance has shifted the other way around, making the DPR very strong but at the same time prone to corrupt practices (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 163).

Another important contribution Sherlock makes is his analysis of the decision making procedures in the parliament. The parliament, he elucidates, relies on a system called deliberation for consensus (*musyawarah untuk mufakat*). In this system, as long as a member is

expressing his or her dissent, then a decision cannot be reached. During deadlocks, members usually turn to behind the door lobbying. The system, Sherlock argues, gives every member a *de facto* veto power. Members of parliament often use this position to negotiate for extortion from other government departments.

The first chapter provides a coherent analysis about political parties and the legislative branch of the government. A minor critique would be the neglecting of the role of the state, or in other words, the role of the executive branch of government. This topic has not been one of the focuses of the book, and the editors and contributors could easily argue that I am looking for a burger in a pizza store. However, I think speaking about the role of the state in a country like Indonesia where elections are free, power is decentralized yet law enforcement is still very weak, is indispensable. Has the state become too weak? Would a stronger state mean a return to New Order? Or where exactly can the state be strengthened without becoming authoritarian again?

Francis Fukuyama differentiates between the strength and the scope of states. Strength includes the ability to enact laws, administrate efficiently and with a minimum of bureaucracy, controlling graft, to maintain a high level of transparency and accountability in government institutions, and to enforce laws. Scope deals with the provision public goods, defense, law and order, property rights, public health, education, environmental protection, fostering markets (Fukuyama 2004, 8 – 9). Looking at this, Indonesia has become more democratic in terms of the much lesser degree of authoritarianism in the country today. However, the state strength as positively defined by Fukuyama is still insufficient.

Looking at the scope of the state, one can argue that the state in Indonesia is quite active in a number of areas but with weak institutional capacities. As a comparison, the United States has limited scope but has strong institutional effectiveness. European countries are combining a broader scope and strong institutions (Fukuyama 2004: 11). There are simply areas or fields of work that have to be handled by the state. Germany's former Minister for International Development Cooperation, Erhard Eppler argues that the market cannot be expected to be in charge for sustainable development. The state for instance needs to establish a framework for the market to operate and prevent environmental degradation (Eppler 2010: 30). Therefore, in many developing countries the state has to be strengthened in order to be able to deliver its function.

Another element that reduces the strength of the Indonesian state is the attitude of its political actors who govern not in the spirit of public service, but to pursue personal interests. The work of Gayus Tambunan, parties involved in the Century case, and the bribing for the election of former Bank of Indonesia Governor Miranda Goeltom are a few examples of the misuse of public office. Instead of focusing its energy in competing with China or Malaysia for instance, Indonesian decision makers are constantly occupied with internal quarrels. Sociologist Ignas Kleden argues that one of the reasons for the weak Indonesian state is the fact that our founding fathers put more emphasis on nation building than on state building. Soekarno, for instance, studied the work of Ernest Renan and Karl Bauer, but not so much the work of J.J Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, or John Locke with the same intensity (Kleden 2004: xv).

To conclude, democratization in Indonesia has opened up opportunities for better governance of the state. But this opportunity needs to be utilized in strengthening the state in conducting its functions and responsibilities without reverting to authoritarian practices of the New Order. Otherwise, the political openness enjoyed after the fall of New Order will create a more democratic space which is not filled by democratic policies. Managing a democracy therefore must go beyond the purposes of organizing a free election. It requires a shift in direction in regards to the role of the state from its current form.

## SOCIETY: TURF BATTLE FOR POLITICAL INTEREST

Without a society, a state is meaningless. The society gives legitimacy to the state to use its coercive and administrative power. A state has therefore to continuously justify its existence to society. This second chapter is titled “Society and Democratic Contestation”, and explains about three elements of society namely the media, gangsters and women.

Ariel Heryanto, the first contributor of the chapter, argues that the fragmentation of politics is caused by the increased political competition among parties, causing the society to be less interested in politics, or in his terminology, politics has become domesticated. He stresses that this is what the New Order precisely wanted to achieve. Therefore,

authoritarianism does not necessarily lead to political apathy, and liberalism does not necessarily lead to more active political engagement (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 182).

The election campaigns during the New Order era were the only possibilities for the masses to express their political support. Despite the fact that the outcomes of elections were certain at that time, the regime made the efforts to create the impression that a certain degree of political competition existed. In the 2009 election the rallies were still held, but to a much lesser degree. Its campaign role was taken up by the media leading to increased spending for advertisements by political parties. Another phenomenon that emerged was the career shift of actors and actresses. Rano Karno, Dede Jusuf, Rieke Diah Pitaloka, and Nurul Arifin are among those who succeeded in achieving high ranking offices at the executive and the legislative branches of the government.

I do not fully agree with Heryanto's argument that political freedom has made politics less interesting, because political freedom has also empowered Indonesians in playing a more active role in shaping politics, although, this does not necessarily mean supporting a particular party. For example, social movements today are taking advantage of the various social networks that are used to a wide extent by Indonesians to demand justice. The "Coin for Prita" movement in 2009 helped put pressure on the Omni Hospital which initially charged Prita Rp20 billion for defamation. Yet in 2010, the Supreme Court rejected the civil lawsuit against her (*The Jakarta Post* 10 September 2010). Furthermore, Twitter is another social network that is now commonly used by politicians to raise issues, to campaign, or simply to test the water in Indonesian politics. Dino Patti Djalal, Denny Indrayana, Anas Urbaningrum, and Tifatul Sembiring are among those who utilize the network (*The Jakarta Post* 3 February 2011). New technologies allow politicians to engage in debates with their Twitter followers, forcing them to at least find justification for any policies or political maneuver they choose to conduct. Therefore, it is not true that Indonesians have become domesticated in politics. Instead, political interaction has become part of every day's life.

The second article elucidates about the involvement of political gangsters in politics. Ian Wilson makes an interesting point by arguing that *premans* in the long run are not interested to be utilized as only

foot soldiers. They look for larger revenue streams, and look even for political representation. The involvement of strongmen and gangsters in politics dates back to the 1950s. Initially they were utilized by the PKI and the PNI in securing their campaigns. The military soon followed. General Nasution utilized the gangsters to put pressures on Soekarno to suspend parliamentary democracy (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 201). The New Order continued to use the *preman*, but put a hard line towards them. As long as they contribute to the stability of the regime, they were allowed to continue existing. However, once the regime considered them as a threat, they face immediate execution. The mysterious shootings, known popularly as *petrus* was an attempt by the regime to hamper Ali Moertopo's efforts who aimed at the presidency by utilizing the *premans*.

Political parties today continue to make use of *premans*, though formalizing *premans*' appearances. *Premans* are nowadays work as task forces, often mobilized during campaigns, and act as the security force of the parties. In a number of cases, they are also used by the party to gain influence at various neighborhoods.

Should *preman* groups form their own political parties to represent their own interests? According to Wilson this depends highly on the ambitions of leaders and their political calculations. Feeling left behind and not rewarded properly by the Golkar party, Yapto Suryosoemarno, former chairman of the Pemuda Pancasila, Golkar's security task force, established the Partai Patriot Pancasila. Furthermore, The Front Pembela Islam (FPI) through their leader Habib Rizieq announces that they will establish their own political party in 2014. Rizieq feels betrayed by other Islamic parties which are failing to represent their interest and according to his interpretation, deviate from the true teachings of Islam. This shows that even *preman* groups need a vehicle to achieve their political goals, and secure economic interests. Nevertheless, Wilson argues, a group like FPI should carefully consider forming a political party for their own good. Failing to secure significant votes will reduce their political influence. In addition, the young people joining FPI are mainly interested because of the group's lenience towards action instead of talks, and becoming party might erode this attraction (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 208 - 210).

What has not become Wilson's focus, but nevertheless a driving factor for radical groups is their economic disadvantage. One explanation why

radical groups are radical is because they are poorly integrated into the current economic architecture. They view their underdevelopment as humiliation. Unluckily, many of them resist change, and prefer to rely continuously on their own methods (Friedman 2006: 488). These groups have broken the law several times, but the police are still unable to restrict their movements. Unlike members of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) who were hiding in the mountains prior to the peace agreements, these groups can be easily located, and are also not in possession of large number of guns. The FPI has even gone one step further recently, and has threatened to topple President Yudhoyono if he does not dissolve Ahmadiyah, a Moslem organization with the belief that Mohammad is not the last prophet (*Tempo* 21 – 27 February edition 2011: 28 – 29).

The last two chapters on society stress on the challenges faced by women in improving their political participation at the national and at the local level. Women belong to those who need to struggle for influence in the political realm. Sharon Bessel who elucidates about women's participation in the DPR argues that Indonesia significantly increased the proportion of women legislators to 17.8 percent in 2009 from 11.3 percent in 2004. Indonesia is slightly below the global average of 18.8 percent. Bessel makes an important contribution by analyzing the policy and legislative framework, the electoral system, and the use of quotas in other countries to improve women's representation. The Nordic countries for instance have a 42 percent women's representation in their parliaments. This was made possible by the welfare state which ensures that women have the opportunity to receive proper education (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 219 – 220).

Bassel further argues that a proportional system is more beneficial for women than the majoritarian system. In a majoritarian system as is applied in the US or the UK, the largest party forms the government. The flaw with this system is the fact that also the larger party tends to win a larger number of seats than the votes they gain in the election. A proportional system ensures a more equal relationship, a party that gains 25 percent of the votes will also get 25 percent of the seats (Heywood 2002: 232). A proportional system usually allows several members to be elected. On the other hand, a majoritarian system forces parties to choose between male and female candidates, usually resulting into the selection of the male candidate.

Bassel concludes that there are some progresses achieved in improving women's political participation. The Law No. 2 / 2008 on Political Parties stipulates that the membership of political parties must include at least 30 percent females. Moreover, 30 percent of the party's executive positions at the regional as well as the central leadership shall also be allocated to women members (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 232). However, despite these progresses, the biggest obstacle is the lack of sanctions if the above regulations are neglected. Furthermore, parties are also trying to find loopholes in existing laws. For example, the law stipulates that there must be a woman among three candidates on the ballot paper. Instead of putting male and female candidates in a zipper system, most parties put women in the number three position, showing the parties' preferences for male candidates.

At the local level, the state of women's political participation is even poorer. Hanna A. Satrio records that in 2009 only 9 women became heads of the regional government. Seven as district heads (*bupati*), one as mayor (*walikota*), and one as governor (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 243). There are only 8 percent of women in the upper echelons (3 and 4) in the bureaucracy at the local level. She further asserts that local elections, also known as *pilkada* are the least developed institutions in terms of gender equality. At the local level there are no regulations for political parties to promote women candidates.

Women have often become victims due to their minor involvement in decision making processes. Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan in one of their publications explains that women refugees in Ambon were not able to find sanitary napkins because the aid they received consisted mainly of food and cigarettes (*Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan* 2006: 4 – 5). This is one small example of the disadvantages women have suffered because of the lack of understanding about their situation.

The empowerment of women is crucial because it relates to many other aspects beyond elections. Empowering women has clear advantages for a country. Businesses have already recognized that women have huge potential to be involved in selling products and services. However, if uneducated, they will not be able to conduct this role effectively (Verveer 2011). Moreover, if women are successful, they can become a significant market for different products. The Boston Consulting Group predicts that women can drive an incremental USD5 trillion in global

spending in the coming years (Silverstein & Sayre 2009: 1). Therefore, improving their wellbeing is clearly beneficial for Indonesia.

Finally, the chapter on society provides a great collection of articles. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find a common thread connecting the different parts. The editors have put together gangsters together with women and the media in one section without having any explanation in the overview about the importance of picking these diverse elements.

#### LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLITICS: JUST THE SAME

The final chapter on local democracy begins by explaining about the relationship between the central government and the provinces. Later on, the chapter develops by elucidating the political dynamics in Aceh, Papua and Maluku. The important contribution that the chapter makes is that it stresses a number of similarities between politics conducted at the national and the local levels.

Michael Buehler argues that despite a number of changes in laws that have provided provinces with more power than before, in practice politics at the local level remain similar to politics at the national level, namely elitist in nature. The requirement for an individual candidate to run is to collect signatures from 3 – 6.5 percent of the population as proof of their support. This effort alone is already a costly logistical challenge. For an independent candidate, running for the executive office brings another challenge. Law 12 / 2008 also stipulates that an independent governor or mayor candidate will have to pay a fine of IDR20 billion if the person is withdrawing his or her candidacy after it approved by the local election commission (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 274), this consequence does not exist for candidates from political parties. Lastly, the campaign costs associated with the candidacy are often far too high. According to a research in 2005, the campaign expenses of a successful candidate at district and municipal levels averaged USD1.6 million, reflecting the fact that it is hard for ordinary citizens to step forward as successful candidates.

In the context of Aceh, Blair Palmer examines the elements behind the victory of Partai Aceh (PA). He also argues that the victory of the party is beneficial for the development of the peace in Aceh. Partai Aceh itself

managed to gain 33 of 69 seats at the provincial level, and 237 of 645 seats at the district level. There are several elements that contributed to PA's victory. First, the party was able to prevent intra – party division. Despite the fact that voters could choose between specific candidates in the party, or only the party in the ballot paper, most voters opted for PA instead of individual candidates. Therefore, PA was able to avoid competition among their candidates. Second, PA had a clear program, namely to strive for the implementation of the Helsinki MoU. Other parties, on the other hand, based their campaigns on lofty promises. Third, the majority of Acehnese felt that former GAM fighters should be given the chance to shift towards political struggle after fighting for the interest of Aceh for so long through armed resistance. Finally, Acehnese are also afraid that the failure of former GAM members to become legislators might lead to renewed violence (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010:293 – 295).

Palmer further asserts that the future of PA candidates depend strongly on their attitude after being elected. If they carry on the same old patterns as the nationalist parties, then sooner or later they will be exposed to the same criticisms. Partai Aceh is currently facing a serious internal dispute because it continued to support Zaini Abdullah and Muzakkir Manaf as governor and vice governor candidates despite the opposition from 20 out of 23 districts (Kompasiana 8 February 2011). International organizations such as FES, IRI, NDI, have provided numerous democracy trainings for members of parliament or political party members in Aceh (Marthaler, Hermawan & von Hoffman 2010: 189). Therefore, it is unlikely that members of PA are not aware of the democratic rules of the game. The Acehnese society is aware of this development of PA, and if there are no significant changes in the party's attitude, it is very likely that its support will diminish.

Compared to Aceh, the situation in Papua can be seen as stagnant. Until today there is no significant progress in regards to peace despite the special autonomy status the province enjoys. Richard Chauvel observes that a number of factors that contributed to Papuan nationalism such as mass migration, economic marginalization, and human rights violations by the security forces remained the same. The situation has only been complicated by conflicts among Papuan bureaucrats and politicians driven by the proliferation of districts (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 314 – 316).

A particular feature that is part of the voting behavior in Papua and Maluku which can also be found almost everywhere at the national level is the importance of ethnic, religious, social, and regional affiliations. Aceh escaped this complicacy perhaps because of the prominent role of the GAM in conflict resolution which was able to ensure support of the whole Acehnese society. However, the absence of a dominant party in Papua and Maluku opens the possibility for the above mentioned issues. Chauvel, for example, explains about the competition among coastal and highlanders in Papua. In the case of Maluku, Sidney Jones emphasized on the conflict between Moslems and Christians where each group tends to support their own candidates (Aspinall & Mietzner 2010: 334). Moreover, the research of Jones also found out that rationale considerations trumps voters' sympathy for a certain candidate. A number of Jones' respondents are supportive of Megawati because of her attention towards their plight. Also she had visited Maluku several times. However, as it turned out, many decided to vote in favor of Yudhoyono because they believed that Megawati's time was over.

Are the current developments in the three provinces an indication that Indonesia is prone to conflict? The Oxford economist Paul Collier looked at the statistics and concluded that the countries that have the biggest tendencies for conflicts are those where a dominant ethnic group exists, but where other groups are still significant as in the case of the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi, or the Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds in Iraq (Collier 2007: 25). Indonesia is more ethnically diverse and therefore compared to these countries is therefore less prone towards conflicts. In Indonesia unequal economic distribution between the central government and resource rich provinces such as Aceh and Papua often became the culprit for rebellions. In Aceh, the special autonomy status has reduced this problem, while in Papua where the special autonomy is less successful, the problem continues.

The chapter could have provided more success stories that could be replicated elsewhere. There are circumstances where national politics could learn from the local developments. A successful case at the local level is the Aceh health insurance, known as *Jaminan Kesehatan Aceh* (JKA) which requires Acehnese only to show their identity card to receive cost free treatments in hospitals in Aceh or elsewhere (*Kompas* 2 June 2010). These kinds of developments will hopefully force Jakarta to be more innovative in the future in meeting the needs of the citizens.

## CONCLUSION

The editors and the contributors have delivered one of the most important books on Indonesia's contemporary politics. Each of the articles, though covering different topics reflects a similar structure. In the beginning the writers always lay out their arguments, allowing the readers to understand their ideas before getting into the details, they also combined sound qualitative analysis with quantitative data. Moreover, the editors' aim in making Indonesia more relevant in the international context is a very laudable effort these days, especially in securing foreign aid for Indonesia. If donor countries consider that the democratization process in Indonesia is completed, they can easily shift resources to other countries facing democratic transitions such as Egypt, Tunisia, or Libya. Since Indonesia's democracy is not yet matured, if donor countries are shifting their priorities, a backsliding of the reform process could occur in Indonesia, as the poorly administered 2009 election which was managed with less foreign assistance demonstrates.

If any, there are two minor flaws of the book. The first is the chapter on society which mixes together various elements, making it difficult for the reader to capture the chapter's main message. Second, the book lacks an analysis on the capacity of the Indonesian state which is becoming more democratic, but still has to improve on delivering public goods and law enforcement.

The book is not alone in arguing that the democratization in Indonesia is facing a number of hindrances. In 2010, The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) published its democracy index, titled "Democracy in Retreat". The report puts Indonesia at number 60 (EIU 2010: 4), and from all the scoring criteria (electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, civil liberties) Indonesia received the lowest score in political culture. The report further explains that political culture is about the participation in politics beyond voting, and also the low level of public confidence in institutions (EIU 2010: 23). Reforming public institutions is unquestionably one of the most important homework of the government. Hopefully they are as concerned with the development of this country as the two foreign editors are.

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