Interviews

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Notes

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10 Indonesia’s democratisation

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In Europe, people often say that the twentieth century came to an end with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, in Asia it took another ten years. Here it was not state-socialism that was defeated but the West’s own authoritarian growth project that imploded. Now there is another historical chance. In Indonesia, the world’s third largest democracy is emerging. How shall we understand its problems and dynamics? How shall we go beyond the mainstream focus on Jakarta’s elitist political theatre? This is difficult. At the time of writing (early 2009), there continue to be more decisive steps in a weak than had previously emerged in a year. In addition, they are unusually hard to sort and interpret. Many of the common perspectives contained within are subject to substantial revision as they are less than helpful in reading the unfolding of the crisis (not to talk of predicting it).

The following is intended an attempt to analyse ongoing processes on the basis of ongoing research, focusing on research about popular politics of democratization through repeated case studies over a decade in three different contexts (Russia, the Philippines and Indonesia). The draft version of the Indonesian study was concluded just before the crackdown on the democracy movement that took place on 27 July 1998. This was when things began to change the way the research had indicated - but so fast that even though the study had to continue, it was only possible to publish brief ‘interim’ essays. 1-2/ Before turning to the more comprehensive and time-consuming book writing, the following is an attempt to use results from the analysis of popular politics of democratization to both discuss approaches to the study of the democratization and analyse Indonesia’s elections and their aftermath. 3 For representational reasons, however, we begin by addressing the approaches to the issues and conclude with the elections and the recent turbulent developments.

The new consensus on democracy is not good enough

Until 21 May 1998, mainstream analysis claimed that Indonesia’s basic problems were financial and economic. The focus was on weak market forces, a strong state and a weak civil society. The actions of the market and its supporters, however, proved politically disastrous, contributed to a socio-economic catastrophe, obstructed democratisation, and only accidentally helped do away with Subarto.
The economic crisis did not result from excessive state regulations and depolitisations (which had been there for decades), but from the combination of bad deregulation and demagoguery. Suharto's nepotism, oligarchy and the IMF-sponsored technocrats' neo-liberalism, and from (both parties') constraint of popular influence as a basis for checks and balances.

Too late, then, only as Suharto's own aides dumped him in face of a revolution – analysts argued instead that the problem was political. Nothing would improve without legitimation government, which called for some democracy. With this I agreed, of course, having instilled since the mid-1990s clamouring on first Magawi and then the democracy movement in general, that a major political crisis would develop as soon as there was a triggering factor (which then happened to be financial), because Indonesia's essential problems were its weak regulations and its inability to handle conflicts and reform itself.

Yet, I would argue, the new general consensus is not good enough. To ask for democratic governance is fine, but what of the problematic context of democratisation of Indonesia's second attempt (since colonialism) at authoritarian nation-state development? What of the socio-economic context of a crisis with some winners, many losers and surging unemployment? What of feeling trust, the rise of 'goon' politics and crime and violence? What of the instant general elections supported by the West, the elite horse trade election of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as new president, and the appointment of a conservative pact cabinet? What of the fact that while analysts suddenly realised the importance of certain aspects of democracy, there is little knowledge of what kind of democracy the various actors aim at, the problems of getting there, and what could possibly prevent failure? And what of the declining interest in the deepening of democracy to include ordinary people's capacity to make use of its institutions – now that sections of the elite have been legitimised through elections and have found a way of handling their conflicts through peaceful horse trading? So let us begin by discussing how to approach the dynamics of Indonesia's democratisation.

Blind definitions

In Indonesia, since mid-1998, most leading actors who claim that they are serious democrats tend to agree on the universal essence of democracy in terms of freedom of speech and organisation, constitutionalism and free and fair elections – including Golkar's ex-president and then second-best Muslim alternative Habibie, and the new president Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). This is not the main problem. Within the new democracy discourse we can almost forget about Mahathir's and Lee Kuan Yew's 'Asian values' and Huntington's 'clash of civilisations.' Of course those concepts may become politically fashionable again – especially if the Indonesian democratisation details – but the current problem is rather that internationally reputed scholars on democracy, and so-called friendly governments and organisations, limit the universality of more inclusive-used conceptions.

What are on offer are primarily ideological packages – complete with ideas about civil society and civic virtues, special constitutional arrangements and electoral laws, technocracy-oriented voters' education, unregulated market economies and enlightened compromises – on the basis of rather self-congratulatory readings of European and especially American experience. Indonesia, however – with its long-standing symbiosis between strong state-based patrons and bosses and private big business, in addition to weak middle and working classes, and even weaker secular popular organisation – is not Spain, Hungary, South Africa, Chile, the Philippines or any other cases that are often used to form generalisations. What had comes to worse, even bright Indonesian activist-scholars tend to forget about the situation: this is true of those who supported the compromises of Magawi, and especially of Amien Rais and Gus Dur. So the trouble is not the question of whether or not the essential principles of democracy are universal, but the ideological neglect of the fact that application and development of these principles are always contextual and vary both over time, and with the social forces involved. Actual democracy changes. There is no end of history.

Actors' views of democratisation

To begin with, therefore, we have to ask for the significant actors' more elaborate perspectives on democratisation. Even if they agree on many principles, they do disagree on how and what is to be done for. For instance, any reasonable understanding of Indonesia's future presupposes more knowledge of why certain forms of democracy and new political institutions suddenly make sense to many of Indonesia's old followers. Further, there are different views on what preconditions should be present with regard to citizens' actual capacity to make use of democratic institutions before one is prepared seriously to bet on democracy: for example in terms of guarantees for free and fair elections only, or also substantial knowledge of political alternatives and the presence of ideologically and socially rooted parties. Finally, we have the question of how far democracy should be extended, including the basic question of how long and to what extent the armed forces should retain political and economic privileges. In other words: the forms of democracy, their utility, their preconditions and their extension.

But let us not expand on this here, because there is a lack of space and it is probably even more important to know how and in what way the actors would like their democracy to become real, that is, how the process of democratisation should take place.

Elite manoeuvres

On the surface this is well understood. Distinctions like Samuel Huntington's between the three common pathways of changing the system – of transforming it, replacing it, or compromising and transmogrifying it – help us identify the triangular conflict that dominated until the recent presidential race. This preexisting discord among the elite was centred on, in the one corner the then president Habibie, armed forces chief Wiranto and their collaborators, who preferred 'guided democratisation'; from above; in the second corner the radical students, who argued that democratisation presupposed the replacement of the incumbents; and lastly, in the
third corner, the dominant moderate opposition, the Cagempur wave. This last group comprised pragmatic and often liberal-oriented Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (widely expected within the elite and with a strong mass base among rural Muslims in East and Central Java), nationalist party symbol Megawati Sukarnoputri (the daughter of the late President Sukarno), modernist and semi-traditional Muslim leader Amien Rais (with a mass following among urban Muslims), and the incitement of ‘the good Javanese ruler’, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, all of whom tried to domesticate and yet benefit from the radicals’ protest, while basically focusing on negotiating and winning reasonably fair elections, and then subsequently forming pragmatic coalitions and striking the best possible deal with sections of the establishment.

This synopsis, however, is very general and not unlike asking for the actors’ ideal scenario of how various competing parties should behave and what the general process of democratisation should look like. So how can we get below the surface to analyse the ways in which the actors themselves, first, fight for their ideal models when confronted with the harsh realities, and second, try to increase people’s ability to make use of democratic institutions when up against the recalcitrant elite? How shall we, in other words, analyse the actual politics of democratisation?

Of course, we may try the common political science method (pioneered by scholars like O’Donnell, Schmitter and Ramirez) of distinguishing in each camp between ‘hard-liners’ and ‘soft-liners’ and then analysing their intraelite Habilitation and Wannann, for example, often leaned towards the hawks and have now been outmanoeuvred. Adi Saujana (Muslim leader and Habibie’s Cooperator Minister who subsidised ‘indigenous’ Muslim business to promote a “people’s economy”) kept his options open and tried to be more successful than Malaysia’s Anwar Ibrahim but failed miserably. The interesting cases included Bambang Yudhoyono (army forces reformer and the new Minister of Mines and Energy), Marsudi Darusman (Golkar party deputy leader, until recently chairman of the Human Rights Commission and the new Attorney General), and at times even Abuh Tanjung (Golkar party leader). Further, among the moderate opposition leaders, Gus Dur (until the presidential race in an alliance with Megawati) paved the way for a conservative pact through reconciliation (and may now revive his links with the nationalizations), while Amien Rais was fishing for various partners until losing the elections and betting on Gus Dur to gain influence within the ensuing executive (but may now emerge as a main contender for power). The students, finally, kept discussing what kind of demands could keep them together, how to face the elections, and whether to remain a ‘pure student moral force’ or to call on urban poor and others to link up, until being marginalized within the adjusted institutional framework and then, from the outside, only being able to prevent the total derailment of the process.

Capacities and contesting forces

This way one may easily continue, mapping the actors and their followers, discussing their intrigues, and making the picture increasingly complicated.

The established recommendation of separating the radicals, marginalizing the hawks and negotiating a pact among the rest—in order to promote ‘limited but safe and steady’ democratisation—may also be considered. Of course, we know by now that this is exactly the entanglement that became dominant; and that it is won by the most skilful part-builders Gus Dur, Amien Rais and Abuh Tanjung (while Megawati only won the elections), whereafter Wiranto lost out. Megawati’s administrators have gained some influence, and Rais began to contemplate an oppositional Muslim bloc. But where does it take us? We are confined to central level politics and to the elite. We may analyze its ideals and its manoeuvres in much more detail; that would be the easy part. But what of the players’ room for manoeuvre? What of their capacities? International factors, then, are very important, but we will not understand much of the electoral process and essentially not even know much of the room and prospects for the new moderate pact among the establishment—if we do not look into the actors’ bases beyond the political theatre of Jakarta, at the local level, both in the Jakarta area and in the provinces, and perhaps even more importantly if we are interested in the possibilities for further development of democracy beyond liberal electoralism (on the basis of people’s treatment and actual capacity to make use of “normal” democratic institutions) it is indispensable to look at the potential of alternative social and political forces.

So before we return to the elections, the presidential race and the new ‘Pact Order’, we need to ask how the central level elite tried (and continue to try) to renew its position and win support among wider circles, as well as how contesting forces tried (and continue to try) to make an impact. The so-called political opportunity structure continues to change rapidly. Sobat’s attempt at a second and increasingly authoritarian Indonesian state-led development project in Indonesia. The central rulers, including the armed forces, are weakened. There was a power vacuum lasting one and a half years and the old institutions and rules of the game deteriorated. The new ‘Pact Order’ may now begin to change this picture, but alternative institutions are yet to be established. There are many new freedoms and opportunities, but the question is who can make use of them and how?

Little knowledge of the most important processes

The irony, however, is that we know embarrassingly little about much of this. For years, attention was directed at the centre and the elite. Most of Sobat’s ‘New Order’ was elected in the leader’s class circle with attached classes. Thereafter the bureaucracy and the ‘dynamizing’ armed forces shared the control of the mass apparatuses and its components so each and every level, down to the very classroom. Politics, in effect, was primarily about elite networks, with court politics surrounding it all. Dissenters prevented from organizing people were also eclectic, relying on personalities with some integrity, many contacts, and foreign funded non-membership-based NGOs. But much of this is history now. Of course, history is important. The structurally organized army, for instance, is weakened but still there. More than thirty years of denationalization, top-down...
control of almost any society-based grouping and movement, and little if any widespread knowledge among the poor masses of how democracy works can take long to compensate for. And politics, to a large extent, continues to be a matter of 'extension and circulation of elite networks'. But to extrapolate from what we know of Indonesia until the fall of Suharto is not enough.

The new primacy of local and mass politics

Rather, I would argue, there are two new major trends that call for special attention. First, while the politics of elite networks may remain, the centres have lost their grip, and more power (and the struggle for it) is now spreading to the provincial and local levels. This, therefore, will also be the time of local politics. Second, any new regime and elite network need popular legitimacy. Hence, within the framework of more localised politics, this will also be the time of mass politics and elections.

Local politics is not only about the actors who, in the process of democratisation, dispute the mainstream definition of what constitutes the demos, the Indonesian people, and instead give priority to the fighting against Jakarta's domination (thus suggesting various forms of de-indonesianisation, like those until recently seen in East Timor, and still in Aceh, and West Papua). Perhaps more decisively, the growing importance of elites-dominated but local and mass-related politics is a general trend. As in the Philippines, for instance, the fall of the authoritarian regime and attempts at reversing democracy are combined with the decentralisation of politics and administration, and participation and deregulation of business, all of which together, I would argue, pave the way for local bosses (in terms of local powerbrokers), to - within a formally democratic framework - enjoy a monopolistic position over coercive and economic resources within their bailiwicks.1

But in the Philippines, of course, is characterised by the long history of American colonialism, partially decolonised government, and more private control of resources than in Indonesia. Within this framework, however, Indonesian-like primitive accumulation through political and administrative means has also been important and sometimes even decisive.2 In contrast, the Philippine-like liberal electoralism, decentralisation, participatory and deregulation are now definitely entering into the Indonesian context as well. So while some local Indonesian bosses are likely to be comparatively 'petty' in terms of less private wealth and more dependency on public resources, and therefore may be wider space for patrons than in the Philippines - in terms of bosses with more benevolent and reciprocal relations to their subjects - there are basic similarities.

The Indonesian patrons and bosses, as well as their local associates, have both links to outside patrons and sometimes factions of the central elite - national political struggles are often localised - but also access to the zones and direct control of many resources, including much local administration and business, the territorially-organised Indonesian armed forces, and vigilante groups. This is likely to be an important local power base in Indonesia's political economy, especially now that Gus Dur's 'Past Order' will enable the establishment to adopt revised rules of the game, in the absence of broad interest-based popular organisations (like labour unions) and related parties (prohibited for decades), this is how electoral campaigns may be financed and votes mobilised over a long period of time. And this implies the range of both private and public good, and, in tandem with religious and ethnic communities, such networks become increasingly important in times of economic crisis, disintegration of state patronage, and free little respect for rights as for law and order. For example, as we know from India, and as is detailed in Worr's chapter in this volume, religious and ethnic communities have been a problem as such, and the increasing involvement of local political parties and organisations, as in the case of the Makassars among others-based Indonesian areas.

This is not to deplore the breakdown of authoritarian central rule in Indonesia, but instead the lack of strong democratic public institutions, with non-partisan ears and policies under its command to handle conflicts and prevent clashes. This framework has proved comparatively efficient in democratically solid Indian states with all kinds of ethnic and religious groups.3 But in Indonesia, however, there is still little change, no previously subordinated but now more important and discerned minority, communities and regional and local interests, to voice their demands within the formal political system (for example through federative arrangements and local parties) or by referring to special rights and regulations.4 Hence they turn to other means of protection. Therefore, conflicts between local patrons/bosses, their collaborators (internal and external), and their thugs - who can all draw on exceedingly vulnerable sections of the population - have probably been behind much of the so-called religious and ethnic violence that has been reported on almost daily basis. This, then, is the fertile ground on which increasingly the majority of the national political battles between various Muslim, business and military factors takes place.

Popular politics of democratisation

From the horizon of studies of conflicts and opposition, this is the complicated context within which struggles for democracy have to be fought out. But how shall we, within this framework, go about meeting the processes and understand the problem? Since the late 1960s, students of both the rise of capital and neo-liberalism in Indonesia, in emphasising commodity, have tended to regard studies of popular movements for political change as ideologically and a waste of time. In addition, the West we are concerned in supporting democratic forces that couldn't even offer a realistic alternative.5 However, during the first part of 1998 things began to change, and some months later, legitimate government - through democratisation - was put at the top of the political agenda. This terrortory is likely to diminish within business, media and diplomacy circles now that Gus Dur's relatively licenses and stable 'Past Order' is installed and Wiranto is reassured. But as already mentioned, given an analytical (and normative) interest in development of democracy, we still have to look into the potential of alternative social and political forces.

Ideally, we should be able to see an assessment on empirically and theoretically
well-grounded comparative studies of the actors’ politics of democratisation in local settings. In reality, however, much of the knowledge is lacking and time is short. Hence we begin by asking the three most vital questions: what are the actors’ views of the real political situation and opportunities? What ideas and interests do they try to bring up on the political agenda, and how do they go about it? How do they try to mobilise and organise people in support of these ideas and interests?20

Regarding the crucial period of 1995–9, such questions and their answers would require more space than is available in the current chapter.21 As a result, we shall limit ourselves here to a few summarising notes, before moving on to the main part of the chapter, to special analysis of the elections and their aftermath.

Background

The basic problem for the democracy movement in Indonesia has long been that most dissidents have been isolated from the people in general. This is because of the distinction of the broad popular movements in the mid-1990s and the authoritarian rule during Soeharto’s ‘New Order’. Until recently it was forbidden to form membership-based autonomous organisations, and even now, apart from religious organisations, there are few movements that exist are weak and difficult for many people to relate to. The same holds true in terms of critical ideologies and theoretical consciousness. Most of the dissident groups have had to work from above, and out of the main urban centres where a certain level of protection has been available from friends and temporary allies with influential positions. As a consequence, layers of fragmented divisions have developed over the years.

The expansion of capitalism may indirectly promote democratisation, but it is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the expansion is related both to authoritarian state intervention and to a division of labour that often breaks down old class alliances while giving rise to a multiplicity of interests and movements. On the other hand, even limited liberalisation has created some space in which it may allow certain people to try partially to improve their status of living by different local efforts, instead of having always to grasp political power first, and thereafter relying on state intervention. For many years, this local space and the need to overcome socio-economic fragmentation spurred on Indonesian pro-democracy work from below. Thus, despite everything, it has been possible for many development-oriented NGOs to relate to new social classes in society, and for a new generation of radical students to relate to peasants (hard hit by evictions) and new industrial workers. Hence the new movements were potentially significant many years before the students old enough to be active during the Suharto era. They were more than a product of the global wave of democracy and some assistance within Jakarta’s political theatre, they were (and are) also conditioned by the expansion of capital and the new classes that emerged.

Moreover, there has been a tendency since the early 1990s to link up alternative development and human rights work in civil society with politics. Major groupings tried their best to relate specific issues and special interests to more general perspectives. But in doing so they tended to get stuck either to their limited kind of politicisation – with some social foundation among the grassroots – or in their attempts at broader perspectives without much social basis. The result was that they were never able to generate a democratic opening. Instead, ‘external’ mobilising points gave rise to a more general movement for transition from authoritarian rule. And within such a broader movement many of the outright democrats related to legally accepted populist democracy, while others either had to in fragmented activities and development work or turned to ‘constant’ top-down party building.

Popular politics of democratisation, 1996–9

The development of this pattern was able to be discerned between 1988 and 1996.22 And as previously indicated, this is almost exactly what happened in mid-1996 when the government ousted moderate opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri. Many genuine democrats tried to relate to the recognised political system by mobilising as much as possible behind her before the 1997 elections. The regime displayed an incapacity to reform itself by cracking down on democratisation and the democracy movement in general with brutal force (thus ironically generating ethnic and religious riots instead). Yet, simultaneously, the basic weaknesses of the movement (and became equally obvious) its fragmentation and its separation between up-down activities who tried to ‘run offside’ and grassroots activists who have not yet been able to generate interest-based mass organisations from below. To understand this, we need also to take a closer look at how the movements themselves read the conditions and found it most reasonable to work and go about their activities; in other words, to discuss popular politics of democratisation. Since we are short of time (and impatient), let us begin with some of the more exciting conclusions and only thereafter discuss how we have arrived at them. Two processes and one policy conclusion seem to be especially vital for an understanding of the general/lack of substantial convergence (despite ‘our’ pro-democratic factors) between fragmented interests, ideas, groups and actions, and the very different outcomes of pro-democratic politics.

Single issue and special interest

No sphere of activity and way of mobilising people proved especially favourable with regard to democratisation. The students were very important but ‘only’ did away with Suharto. Rather, at both national and local levels, the common problem seemed to be the focus on bringing together issues and special interests, both within explicitly political activities and in the work of civil society. Furthermore, many vital questions and social forces could not be incorporated even when there were attempts at desegregating the political by picking a strategic single issue like corruption and then broadening it to other areas. Alternatively, when explicit attempts were made to bring together issues and special interests, they were nearly added, not integrated (and prioritised between) within an ideological and collective framework. Hence, as a result, there was no focus on an alternative, in terms of government, governance and development of the society as a whole at different levels, only on promising or resisting this or that.
Civil versus political society; central versus local levels

A fundamental problem in both contexts was the lack of coordination between actions in the civil and explicitly political society, as well as between the central and local levels. Even at times of intensified pro-democratic work (as when trying to form a broad front in early 1996 or going ahead from the fall of Suharto), it was possible to see how political and civil society activists work on various levels (usually imperfectly understandably) tended to follow different logic and agendas, not combining each other’s strengths and compensating for each other’s weaknesses.

This creates a major problem. While the democracy movement was (and is) unable to link work in both political and civil society; and between the central and increasingly important local level, this was (and is) instead, accomplished rather “inefficiently” by so-called moderates through populism and clientelism, and on the basis of, on the one hand, religious (plus some extent ethnic) communi-
ties, and on the other, political clout. The result, of course, is even more dra-
monstrous: dangerous conflicts between various communities, patronates, bosses, thugs and followers, and an even weaker democracy movement.

Indonesia, the typical way out has been for the activists to look for shortcuts (to the seemingly hopeless attempts at integrating people) by way of alternative (and if possible charismatic) patronage. As there is no closely organised and hierarchal party, it has mainly been a question of finding the ‘Leader’ (or powerful NGO) and the ‘Loyalist’ that can be used as a node and entry point.14

The elections and their aftermath

The parliamentary elections of June 1999, the crisis in East Timor, the appointment of Gus Dur as new president (with Megawati as vice), the rise of his ‘Fact Order’ and its conflicts are all turning points which call for special analyses. In many ways those events were dominated by the top-level action. But let us set aside the elite game as such and read instead the election and its aftermath from below, from the point of view of the basic dynamics of the democratic forces that have just been outlined.

The birth of the world’s third-largest democracy

The June 1999 elections were boring, for parochial journalists. Too little violence and chaos to report, and too little knowledge to explain why. Comparatively democratic rules of the game, and the inclusion of most parties involved, forced much of the elite temporarily to cooperate by mobilizing votes rather than manip-
ulating in closed circles and provoking religious and ethnic groups only. This was a victory of sort. In addition, much of the frequently reported delay in the count-
ing was less because of successful cheating, than time-consuming checks and balances to counter this, plus frustration, of course, among elite politicians who had lost their real or imagined old constituencies but remained within the new Election Commission. Except in East Timor, Aceh, West Papua and a few other places, some 106 million people finally felt that their vote did matter and patiently waited for the results. In any way we witnessed the birth of the second rather than the third-largest democracy in the world (as so many Americans don’t even bother to cast their vote).

But while the very elections were rather free and fair, the context was not so just and the substance was shallow. There was a lack of reasonably equal oppor-
tunities to make use of the political liberties, and many fundamental problems continued to be swept under the carpet. These factors will reappear, and this, therefore, is what we should focus on, if we are interested in the prospects for stability and substantial democratization.

First, the unjust electoral system. One single result was not delayed: that the armed forces would receive 7.9 per cent of the seats in the parliament (or four more seats than reformer leader Amien Rais’ party got in the open elections). Further, 34 per cent of the delegates who then elected the new president in October were not elected but appointed by the military and political elites in closed, smoky metropolitan and provincial rooms. Also, beforehand, ex-
communist as well as local parties were prohibited, and remarkably many seats were allotted to provinces where Habibie’s Golkar-party machinery remained intact.

Second, the unjust proceedings. While Golkar made good use of the state appara-
iss and control of foreign funded credits for cooperatives and social safety net programmes, especially on the outer islands, self-appointed Western democrats gave priority to stable government through instant elections of ‘legitimate’ rulers, rather than democracy in terms of people’s rule and stability through acceptable chances for everyone to influence politics and keep track of elected politicians. Foreign support for democratization was limited to electoral arrangements, tech-
nical information, and some promotion of civic virtues through NGOs. Meanwhile critical voters’ education about the actual political forces involved was scarce, and promotion of democratic organizations among labourers, farmers, civil servants and employees was almost absent – not to talk of potentially important parties on the basis of ideas about how societies work and may be changed. Such priorities may be in line with a shallow version of democracy where parties are just machines for the election of elite politicians, and people can only make some difference through a myriad of single issues and special interest groups. But they differ from a more informed understanding of the dynamics involved, as well as from European, Indian or South African experiences where broad popular organization and parties were essential for the birth and growth of democracy.

Predictably, on the one hand, the Indonesian outcome was top-down mobilis-
ation of votes on the basis of populism and clientelism through the established political machines of Golkar (22.4 per cent of the votes and 120 seats), PDI-P, Democratic Party of Struggle (20.7 per cent; 133 seats), PPP the Muslim Democratic Development Party (10.7 per cent; 58 seats), and the established socio-religious organisations of NU with its major party PKB, National Awakening Party (2.6 per cent; 51 seats), plus Muslim parties in support of ‘moderates-Muslim’ candidates. On the other hand, the exciting attempt to form a new liberal middle-class party, PAN, the National Mandate Party – with secular centre-left politicians, Muslim values and reformer leader Amien Rais as a
locomotive – proved much more difficult (7.1 per cent; 34 seats). Aside from the armed forces’ 38 seats, the remaining 46 seats (13.5 per cent of the vote) were shared by minor parties, which were primarily Muslim-based. The students, moreover – who feared the elites to do away with Sabahau, were in the forefront of the reform process, and put pressure on the traditional politicians – lost momentum and were marginalized. Veteran development, human rights and democracy activists often said that their attempts to help people themselves to organize were distorted by the neo-traditional political competition.

Third, the shallowness of the elections. This is not to agree with the many observers who talked of excited masses in support of a weak woman and a blind man with our real programmes. The largest and second-largest democracies in the world, India and the USA, have elected and survived equally qualified leaders. Moreover, aside from PAN’s educated middle-class programme, certain issues did play an important role in terms of people’s expectations and trust in Megawati of PDS-P and Goen Dar of PKB. They were symbolic both of dignified resistance against Sabahau and of peaceful improvements without religious and ethnic conflicts, according to the old ideals from the struggle for independence. No, the major problem is rather that it will be very difficult for the essentially traditional and conservative politicians who were elected to live up to the expectations of ordinary people, especially of the broad and essentially unorganized social movement around PDS-P and Megawati. While there might be a rather long honeymoon for the new leaders, the fact is that voters in the new instant democracy were mobilized through old perspectives, loyalties and machines which did not correspond, and may not be able to cope, with the new major conflicts and ideas in society.

Let us turn now to four areas that are all related: first, the economic and social problems; second, East Timor and the centrifugal tendencies; third, the role of the new middle class; and fourth, the established parties and the future of the anti-monopolistic struggle. I analyze these issues one by one in the sections that follow, before concluding with a discussion of Goen Dar’s ‘Pact Order’ and the political violence, neglected democratic preconditions, and (thereby) the democratic vacuum.

The major hidden crisis

The major issue for most Indonesians was a non-issue – how they should be able to cope with the most severe economic crisis since the birth of the nation. Corruption, of course, was at the top of the agenda. Nobody desires the importance of fighting it and of totally reforming the relevant legal and economic institutions. But what were the interests involved? What were the social and political forces that could enforce efficient checks and balances? Some honest top-level politicians are not enough. The IMF’s fundamental structural adjustment programme was kept outside the election campaign, and even the Asian Wall Street Journal (31 June 1998) questioned the fact that the Indonesian people were not allowed to take an independent stand on such a vital issue in the elections. But the depoliticization of the crisis was a good illustration of the structural
being provoked and thereby eliminated, which must have been difficult enough. Moreover, the UN also found itself rather helpless. Of course, immediate UN strengthening of its local representatives in order to maintain its presence would have been in full accordance with the May agreement (Article 7) — and disgracefully enough, this was not done. But while most people wished that the UN had intervened further, it is important to remember that this simply was not realistic.

So let us discuss instead the increasingly popular ‘truth of the day’ within the Western ‘international community’, that the UN ought to have been able, without hindrances, to sanction armed intervention when help broke loose, but that it faced opposition from China in particular and several other developing countries. This indeed can be said to be true. But it was the US which approved Indonesia’s occupation of East Timor in 1975; it was Australia which recognised its annexation; both countries sponsored Jakarta’s special military forces; Sweden and Norway (among others) gave top priority to business deals with Suharto’s Indonesia; and the entire West adopted the particularly rigid Asian version of the principle of non-intervention in the area even in the face of genocide (by backing the Khmer Rouge regime).

East Timor certainly shows that international emergency assistance must be a matter of course when people are being tortured and murdered, as surely as when they are starving and dying. Yet the basic question remains: will an intervention strengthen the forces of democracy that must be capable of assuming the leadership? Presuming, that is, that we do not propose making most countries in the world into Western protectorates with UN soldiers in every bush.

I myself persist in the view that an armed intervention without Jakarta’s consent would have made it possible for the Indonesian military and militias to ideologically transform their terror and murder into a war of ‘Indonesian national self-defence’, eliminate the independence movement, and reintroduce autocratic rule in Indonesia itself. Not even the brave students would have been able, in such a scenario, to stand in their way. Luckily, however, the West was not able to start a war, and the International Monetary Fund itself wanted to put the squeeze on Jakarta (for the Bali bank scandal). So the Indonesian democrats were able to stand up to the military and its allies and thus pave the way for international assistance to East Timor.

Thereafter, given that massive sid could soon reach all those needing it, that Xanana Gusmao would be able to undertake his policy of reconciliation, and that Indonesia’s occupation would not be followed by donors’ domination, the remaining problems in East Timor seemed to amount to the following three. First, the militia had an escape-hatch in Indonesia’s western part of the island. Second, even at the time of updating this text in early 2000, some 150,000 refugees were still stranded in areas there; and third, all atrocities (which were terrible enough even if some estimates must have been exaggerated) have to be investigated and their perpetrators judged.

Back to Indonesia — without which these problems could not (and cannot) be solved — the situation looked grim indeed, until 23–4 September 1999. The military was facing the flames of extreme nationalism, and it had pushed through
a law making possible a constitutional coup d'état, should it and the then presi-
dent Habibie take the view that people were protesting too much and thereby
threatening stability. In the long run, it would have been too late for the mili-
tary to preserve its power, either by entering into a conservative alliance with
Mugiasri (then the strongest presidential candidate), or by 'serving the nation' from
protests against Habibie (should he have been able to buy himself votes
even to become president in the end). So the standard line returned in diplo-
matic and business quarters (and among scholars nourished by them) was as
usual that now was not the time to push too hard, as everything might go to
rack and ruin. Rather, the best would be a stability pact between Mugiasri and
Warabro.
Fortunately, however, the moderates intervened instead. (Collectively they
deserve the Peace Prize?) Yet again it was they who, along with some few
reformist politicians, came to the succour of the waning Indonesian democracy.
And they did so by using the only method that really bore: resolve popular
actions. The military and its allies retired. This, in its way, was a unique case,
but a temporary one, of course. But this is practically inexcusable when real
political democracy is almost as dangerous for the establishment as if their property
rights had been at stake.
It would be a good thing if the 'international community' were finally to learn
this lesson, as this was not the first instance. As we know, even one of the world's
most devastating economic crises and worst external pressures were not enough
to persuade the elites to dump Sukarno. What was needed to act this was collec-
tive popular action. That was decisive. And in the absence of a strong democracy
movement, this took the form of riots and student demonstrations. Therewith
the democracy movement was ignored again and the moderates abandoned. No
transitional government was set up, only panic and shallow elections took place,
and the political vacuum was created, a catastrophe developed in East Timor, and the
military and its civilian associates hold on to their positions.

A politically frustrated new middle class?

In processes like these, much hope is usually vested in the capacity of the
educated new middle class. In face of the elections, however, the irony is that the
Western closure of middle-class advancement did not even manage to make life
easier for those who aimed at within the new liberal-oriented PAN-party. It is
ture that PAN's own performance, abandoned as it was by most Muslim railways
as well, was a clear indication of the increasing importance of urban and semi-
urban intelligentsia, professionals and educated businessmen. People on the other
hand, however, some of the democratization potential of the new middle class may
now get lost because of its problems making a difference within the neo-
traditional political framework. The already-naming 'alternative' opinion, the
East European-like privatization of public social and economic policies, as well as
the preference for extra-parliamentary lobbying and pressure group activities,
do not automatically promote democracy. It also remains to be seen how middle-
class groups now react to the fact that Anies Rais was very active in mobilizing
the conservative Muslims rather than the reform forces behind Gus Dur during

the horse-trade election of the new president, thus brokering a conservative pact
that gave sections of PAN and the other Muslims much more influence in the
government than during the elections.

By now, as Gus Dur and his liberal pragmatic allies are consolidating their pos-
tions in the central government, it is obviously interesting to rally what remains of
the Muslim 'anti forces' behind himself. Meanwhile PAN itself is deeply divided
and only survived its first congress in mid-February 2000 by postponing the
entire debate on whether it should turn explicitly Muslim or not, given the
rather poor results in the parliamentary elections.

Beyond adiano politics: de-colonization or elite reconfiguration?
The electoral achievements of the PDI-P, the PKB, the PPP (and to some extent
PAN) are likely to be interpreted as the return of adiano politics based on the old
cultural-religious pillars of the syncretic patrilineal combats (PDI-P),
and the traditional and moderate Muslim sectors (primarily PKB and PPP
respectively). A brief comparison between the results of the only previous free and
reasonably fair elections, 1995, shows some striking similarities. In 1995 the
combination of the nationalist party's 12.3 per cent, the Christian and Catholic
parties some 5 per cent and the reformist Communist Party's 16.4 per cent
came to almost 45 per cent. The latter party was destroyed in the mid-1980s but
in 1999, the PDI-P got 33.7 per cent, some splinter parties a few percent each,
and most of 'the others' may be part of Golliar's 22 per cent (Golliar did not exist
in 1995). Further, in 1995 the NU got 18.4 per cent while this time PKB got 12.6
per cent and 'the rest' probably voted for the minor NU-related parties and NU-
sections of Golliar and PPP. Finally, in 1995 the urban-oriented moderate
Muslim alliance of Maqumi (inc Muslim PKB and the West-oriented Socialism
Party) got some 25 per cent, while this time, the combination of PPP's 10.7 per
cent, PAN's 7.1 per cent, some minor Muslim parties (including Partai
Buday Indonesia and Partai Keadilan), and the ICMI-ruled Habibie parts of Golliar
came to roughly the same.

However, this seemingly stable pattern may be a hangover from the past in
the terms of the available political machines and mass organizations, while the
socio-economic fundamentals have changed. For instance, while the national-
ist party behind Maqumi's father, President Sukarno, had its major base among
the rules, administrators and educators of the state on each and every
level (and their capacity to command votes), this stronghold, which also
monopolized the military arm big business, was captured by Sukarno
and Golliar after 1965. So even if Maqumi's PDI-P may try to recapture some of
this, it is now more rooted in general anti-monopolistic sentiments, often led
or backed-up by small and medium business people (including many ethnic
Chinese) who did not benefit much from privileged political contacts under
Sukarno. This may also be partially true of Gus Dar's PKB. So even though their
own resources are scarce, some of these new local political and business lead-
ers are now likely to develop into more private-based parties and bases in
close contact with religious leaders, military commanders, and important
Indonesia's democratization

This kind of pact between sultans among the incumbents and moderates among the opposition is not just mainstream analysts' standard recipe for a smooth transition to democracy, but also the long-standing path nourished by Gus Dur and his associates. The first thing to note, however, is that although Gus Dur himself is more democratically oriented than Megawati, and a sharp liberal-oriented Muslim intellectual (rather than a cleric), whose statements like 'we make a perfect team - I can't see and she can't talk', have already charmed international media, he remains an elite manipulator whose deceptive statements and manoeuvres are too confusing to be predicted by potential assessors.

Furthermore, and more importantly, the forces and compromises that he is relying on are likely to turn his pact into a more preservative than reformative one. This is not because Gus Dur or people in his inner circle, like Marlise Shimentek, who came from a joint attempt in the early 1990s to form an Eastern European type Democratic Forum, necessarily would like that way, but because they lack a solid and reasonably popular mass movement. The basic logic, therefore, is that Megawati's popular mobilization of people, and the expectations of the mainly unorganized social movements of urban poor that has rallied behind her, would probably have given more space for anti-monopolistic efforts at de-Colonialism than Gus Dur's pact. Essentially Gus Dur's pact harbours and draws on established organizations and clericalist networks (including not just religious ones but also Golok: reasonably loyal businessmen and military officers) that may now shape rested rules of the game and adapt to them.

More fundamentally, moreover, any scholarly celebrated pact between moderate incumbents and reformers is up against serious problems in Indonesia. To begin with, and as already noted, substantial political democratization is especially difficult here. The establishment is less strictly based on private and thus non-constituent ownership of the essential resources than in many of the 'Third World' countries that have forced the basis for empirical generalizations. One indication is the current struggle related to the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA). After years of privatizing public assets and profits, the crisis has now given rise to a general need among democratic as well as international investors to socialize their losses. Hence, the case is back again as a major cornerstone in the economiconomy and administration. To roll them back is not just a matter of saying no or trying (as Gus Dur had) to form an elitist pact and assemble internal support. The military entered into business on a massive scale already with the nationalizations of Gramalit (Grimalt) Dutch companies in the late 1950s. To allow this is about as difficult as removing armed landlords through land reform. But the worst aspect of this is the violence committed by the military or supported by it. East Timor has taught the entire world how it works. Violence is made into established state policy in the manner of 1965-6. The military and the militias acted the same way then as now. Jelena's and months are consciously exci-

prasangka dan fungsional pembatasan.

Thus, the new pact includes the slightly reform and secular-oriented sections of Gus Dur and the military. Amien Rais' and Gus Dur's tactical Muslim alliance, plus Megawati and a free representatives of her party. Aside from objecting to any minister with a corrupt past, and insisting on a formally civilian minister of defence, Gus Dur's main forms seems to have been the inclusion of almost all medium-sized parties (except Gus Dur's Colours-ICMI camp) at the expense of a coherent and strong cabinet and a functioning opposition.
Indonesia’s democratisation

Neglected democratic preconditions

The kind of more substantial democratisation which is therefore needed is no far-fetched ideal type. It simply means that people in general, and not just competing sections of the elite, must have the chance and capacity to make use of the democratic institutions that go with liberal political democracy, so that they can develop and advance their own societal ideas and interests, and select and control their own representatives.

Most scholars would agree, then, that this calls for reasonably genuine political parties—and government and the people—and reasonably genuine mass organisations (behind and in addition to the parties) on the basis of people’s societal ideas and/or interests. But Indonesia is short of the first: (there is not even a coherent opposition) and lacking the second. Yet, as we know, this has not been given priority to, even by sel-concerned Western democracy supervisors (and now it is neglected again among liberals who like to alter the electoral reforms in the direction of American or Philippine politics). Yet, for example, even reasonably enlightened business managers do not seem to bother much about the fact that it must be better to negotiate with genuine unions than to have to repress people both inside and outside the factory gates.

Moreover, everyone would agree that democratisation calls for fundamental administrative reforms and a real rule of law—constitutionalism—also in addition to popular sovereignty. The only problem is that when constitutionalism does not precede popular sovereignty (as in the West), we either have to resort to the time being is not yet right for democracy, or discuss which socio-economic forces and which societal dynamics would simultaneously enforce constitutionalism and democracy. Most literature on the subject (including that produced by the World Bank) talks at length of what should be done, but avoids the problem of what should possibly comprise the institutional forces. So as long as there is no sign of a viable alternative, we have to return to the basic need of pressure from genuine organisations among the subordinated and abused sections of the population (workers, professionals and businessmen alike). And there are very few such organisations in Indonesia.

The problem is similar with regard to decentralisation, which is increasingly seen as another precondition for democratisation. Now and better laws are drafted. But there is absolutely no forceful policy in support of forces and organisations that might prevent the rise of local patron and boss rule, especially not below the district level, where people live but where not even modest democratic changes have taken place—aside from where people themselves have pressured against corrupt village leaders and Golkar hegemony.

Or we can turn to the absolutely vital educational sector which has to be totally reformed and de-Golkared after centuries of indoctrination and subordination of both teachers and students. Will one enforce that, if progressive students, teachers, and cultural workers are not encouraged and actively organized?

Let us finish with the need to remain the conflict between religious and ethnic communities. How shall this be possible, if no liberal and religious politicians are linking up with libertarian activities in closing down welfare state
A democratic vacuum – and a race to fill it

While the major problem between the fall of Suharto’s ‘New Order’ and the rise of Gus Dur’s ‘Part Order’ was the political vacuum, the new primary obstacle is, thus, the democratic vacuum. Neither the established elites nor most genuine pro-democratic actors have firm roots in parties and organisations on the basis of people’s societal ideas and interests.

This vacuum will now be filled – or at least compensated for – and the race is already on. As we know, the neo-traditional politicians have so far been comparatively successful in making up for their isolation by using popular and clientelistic top-down incorporation of ordinary people and drawing on old perspectives, logistics and machines. This is likely to be preserved and consolidated during Gus Dur’s Part Order. Indonesia may be turning from one-man bonom to petty bonom. While the Indonesian breakthrough is remarkable it is only the end of the beginning. To a large extent the outcome rests with the capacity of the genuine democracy movement to regain the initiative, exert pressure and offer a political alternative. This will be increasingly difficult if many domestic experts and most foreign supporters keep on promoting liberal American personality and middle-class lobby and pressure group politics, including attempts to further alter the electoral laws in this direction.

The prospects are not the best. Despite all advances there is still no unified democratic front. While some leaders prefer to work within the established parties or try to make use of their access to new leaders and influential administrators, others have been marginalised or have got new opportunities to expand their private projects in civil society. As we have seen in previous sections, the movement is fragmented, focuses on single issues or general propaganda, and often fails to link up with, coordinate, and guide grassroots activities in civil society. So who is interested in political democratisation? NGOs, for instance, might become membership-based and give priority to the support for popular mass organisations. But other NGOs prefer to stay away from involvement with the state and politics, so we do not know what will happen. Many rather autonomous popular initiatives at the grassroots level, including local unions and action groups, might now federate openly. But there are also top-down and foreign funded initiatives. Increasingly many people, and hopefully the students too, are getting engaged in investigating the history and truth about state-sponsored crimes against human rights, in order to fight militarisation and religious and ethnic conflicts among people. But anti-state and civil society romanticism are also part of the problem when there is a need for alternative politics to handle `uncivil societies’. Out of some of this, genuine parties might develop. But currently it is even difficult to turn electoral watchtogs into parliamnary watchdogs, and now there is mainly a process of fragmentation and depoliticisation, so again we do not know what will happen. The only thing we know for sure is that those are uphill tasks that have proved difficult enough under less harsh conditions, such as in the post-Marcos Philippines and those tasks call for support and close studies.21

By the end of 1998, moreover, interest and concern had shifted to the problem of disintegration, primarily in relation to Aceh. The nature of the problem is that both unitsaries who hail nationalism and federalists who call Indonesia a colonial construct seem to believe that the country will fall apart without harsh central control. Few recall how Indonesians emerged out of the anti-colonial struggle for freedom and democracy. Few pay attention to the fact that the democratic part of the project was purged from the late 1950s onwards. And few discuss whether the problems and demands on the local level can be handled in a more fruitful way by returning to the concept of democracy in the original national project, than to the despotic modernisation in Jakarta or the competing ethnic and religious communities in the provinces.

This is not just a question of groups and provinces that would like to break away from Indonesia. On a more general level the central structures of authoritarians are crumbling and the economy is in a shambles. As we know, politics will become more localised and the economy more privatised and internationalised (though hardly de-monopolised). So when leading democratic actors often say that local actions and processes, especially in local towns and villages, stand and fall with their own political advances at the centre, they might not be entirely correct. In fact, the political and economic processes of de-centralisation might well imply instead that a stronger democracy movement may and must also grow from below.

The very processes are complicated and there are no ready-made paths. In the Central Java village of Gebjuk, for instance, in Karanganyar district, right after the fall of Suharto, a few dissident asked democracy activists in Solo for help to sue their corrupt lurah (village head). The activist, however, was that nothing would change unless they themselves talked up with others and sought the support of the villagers in general. So this they did. A similar refrain was formed to fight the Anrah who had appropriated money for a fresh water project, overcharged people for land certificates and privatized public land in favour of his cronies. Demonstration, for instance, were held at the Anrah’s and Aspar’s (the head of the district) offices (the Anrah is still legally responsible to the Lupat rather than to the villagers). The Anrah’s office was occupied for two weeks, and an absolute majority of the villagers came forward to prevent the military and the police from intervening. When the Anrah was brought to trial and temporarily discharged, the committee continued its work with regular meetings and public gatherings, initiated a cooperative to support agriculture, added the discussion of local Golker leaders’ usage of the public social safety net for their own political purposes, and then discussed how to gear up by demanding total information of the local administration. This was not dependent on the ups and downs in the rate of foreign reported demonstrations in front of Hotel Indonesia in central Jakarta.

The committee members were hardly revolutionaries. The chairman was a dynamic local factory mechanic in his mid-twenties. Other members included a retired schoolteacher who used to hunt communists in the 1960s, but also a...
Olea Temparu

much younger, well-dressed, and educated radical businessman, and a farm-
eric-agricultural labourer. Their party affiliations varied; some supported PDI-P,
others the small NU-based PNI and one the conservative Muslim PBK. 'But that
doesn’t matter,' they told me, jokingly picking at each other. 'That’s just general
and traditional affiliations. The important thing is our list of what should be
done here.' (This was in June 1999.)

My fear was that they would be co-opted and divided by the established politi-
cians and administration on the district level. But their own responses at the time
was that they did not know what would happen. They just wanted to hold on to
their own programme and relate to similar committees in nearby villages, and if
possible on ‘higher’ levels too. I asked if they knew of any such committee ‘up
there’, but of course they did not, since hardly any existed.

Between hope and reality, my wonder at the time was, thus, if it was really
beyond the capacity of the politically more ‘advanced’ pro-democrats at the
more central levels to learn from Gehjek, to unite on more aggregate but yet
clear margin platforms (rather than acting as isolated pressure groups or
ideological speedboats only), and thus help to provide links and an organisa-
tional and ideological framework between committees on different levels
(before they too were infected by neo-traditional politics).16

Six months later, little of this had happened. On 27 November instead, just as
I revisited Gehjek, the committee failed miserably. The new better leader,
however, is equally important to learn. It had started well. Golkar lost massively
in the June elections and the committee was in legal case against the Saksi,
so an election of a new head of the village would also take place. But then a politi-
cal recreation took place among the elites on various levels. The now climate of ‘Pact Order’ took over and no common enemy was left to fight. Personal ambu-
dations gained ground in the committees which split. Two candidates were nom-
inated; one was brought in from outside the group by its anti-propaganda, the
dynamic skilled worker; another emerged from within, the educated radical busi-
nessman. While PDI-P won the June general elections but remained politically
and organisationally weak, and neither caused problem nor gave help to the
committee, Golkar lost the people’s sympathies but retained its organisation
and informally remained to control the local administration. Hence, the latter candidate (the radical businessman) skillfully prevented on legal grounds
from running (formally he was running just outside the village). The politically
less experienced committee was not able to provoke but was equally smart counse-
lor. Rather it stubbornly opted instead for boycott. Even worse, it actually tried
to prevent the election on that Saturday morning of 27 November when I
returned, and was stopped, of course, by the administration and the police,
which, thus, appeared as defenders of democracy and people’s right to vote. And
this people did, rather massively — and in favour of a Golkar candidate.

In short, it was possible virtually to see (and even if actually realistically how
even the initially best possible ‘local and popular’-oriented group turned out to be
totally insufficient without ideological and political structure and leadership.
Finally, on a more general level, the risk is that this kind of failure of the post-
Cold War idea about instant democracy through the injection of human rights

Indonesia’s democratisation

civil society groups and liberal elections, open up with the return of the other
extreme those that stability and safety can not yet be upheld by democratic
means, but that elite-led modern development is the only way to stable democ-

acy. In Gehjek an idealist local ‘bauer reformer’ loses out to Golkar and at the
centre a hopeless new civilian manner of defence, Jusuf Habibie, is even
making use of the argument about lack of sufficient modernisation and middle
class to threaten the entire nation with the return of the military if the generals
do not get a 62 per cent increase in the state budget and if, as he put it, the
politicians are not able to create a ‘healthy and strong’ political atmosphere.17

There must be an end to the vacillation between the two extremes. It is not
enough that the US finally, on 14 January 2000, reposted its attempts at coups in
Jakarta. The ideal thesis is not sufficient and the determinist path ends up in
dictatorship. The latter argument was used to legitimise Western support of
Suharto’s authoritarian modernisation, and not even its thirty years of develop-
ment helped. Democracy did not emerge as the project broke down. So if we
like to learn from history, we must realise that the present problem is not the lack
of state control of people, but he lack of democratic institutions and of people’s
chances and capacity to dream and make use of them. In other words, the
healthy and stable growth of the world’s third-largest democracy primarily
depends on the development of the popular democracy movement, beyond
instant elections and now conservative pact rules. So the historical compromise
between the two extremes would be to develop the insufficient civil rights
elections path to also promote the kind of popular capacities for further demo-
cratic development that the practice of top-down modernism has constantly
undermined.

Conclusion

To summarise briefly: the new consensus on the need for democratisation in
Indonesia is not good enough. What are on offer are primarily superficial
ideolegal packages and empirical generalisations from quite different cases.
There is a need to discuss instead Indonesia’s own problematic context and the
actors’ politics of democratisation. One of several conclusions is that the
democracy actors have failed to build links between civil-society-oriented
movement and organised political work with ideological perspectives, and focus
on collective interests. Another is that elite politicians and local patrons and
bosses seem to be more capable of adapting to a neo-traditional electoral
framework, in ways that are reminiscent of the Philippines. A third is that the
June 1999 elections were rather free but not so just and very shallow. A fourth is
that this in turn was a major factor behind the September 1999 carnage in
East Timor. A fifth is that there are no obvious to reasonably substantial
democratisation and stability in Indonesia, as the deeply embedded state-
political violence, the symbiosis between political and economic power, and
thirty years of ’floating mass’ politics are major hindrances. So while Indonesia
has now gone from Suharto’s ‘New Order’ to Gus Dur’s ‘Pact Order’, thus, as
I stated before, it is only the end of the beginning. The healthy growth and
stability of the world’s third-largest democracy depend instead on the further development of the popular democracy movement. If this is accepted, the focus in scholarly studies and international aid should shift from the rights and institutions of liberal democracy to the factors and processes that may empower people to really use them.

Notes

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1 I am very thankful to all friends and colleagues, political leaders and activists who in a spirit of mutual trust and interest in critical issues have spent a great deal of time in informative and exciting discussions with me. Also, to Indonesia, I am most thankful for Bosnia’s dynamic organisational assistance. This is currently financed by the USAID University and, after a long period, by SAARC. The department for research cooperation within the USAID makes the International Development Co-operation possible.

2 See Tiersma 1990a. A shorter and slightly updated summary was later published; for that see Tiersma 1997a.

3 From late 1996 my results were primarily based on news clippings and continuous visits and follow-up interviews with ‘key informants’ as well as an ongoing project on the democracy actors and their constituents (in Indonesia, jointly led with Ariel Rodman). These were reported on in a series of nearly ten articles. See Tiersma 1990a, 1991a, 1997a, 1998a, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d, 1999e, 1999f.

4 A major problem for this kind of summary is that, because of word limits, it has been impossible to include full references. Readers with specific queries are welcome to contact olivo@tiersma@unio.no.

5 See Tiersma 1990a.

6 This, for instance, was already obvious at the August 1998 International Jakarta conference, “Towards structural reforms for democratisation in Indonesia”, organised by the Ford Foundation and the Centre for Political and Regional Studies at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. I am still return later to observations in relation to the parliamentary elections.

7 For one interesting perspective, see Markoff 1996 and 1997.

8 See Bunting 1997. This, of course, fits well with the general trend in the transition projects led by (a) Gallopin G’Dorsett and Philippe Schmitter, (b) Larry Diamond, John Iken and S. M. Lipset, (c) John Iken and Alfred Stepan, and (d) Michael Hong and Nicolas van de Walle.

9 So titled because of the Islamic School run by Gus Dur where students managed to get the four leaders to meet on 12 November 1998.


11 For empirical comparative analyses, see, for instance, Trocki 1998. For the problems of popular democracies under such conditions, see, for example, Tiersma 1990b. The definition of worsen is adapted from Skidlow 1998a, 1998b, 1998c.

12 For India, here and in the previous paragraph, see, for example, Brunn 1990 and 1999; Cross and See 1990, and See and Karli 1995.

13 For outlines of the new electoral system, see National Democratic Institute 1999.

14 For arguments in favour of the question, see Tiersma 1999a, chapter 13.

15 See Tiersma 1990a.

16 For references see Tiersma 1990a, 1991a, 1997a, 1999a.

17 “Node” here refers to something similar to the computer-technical meaning of the word, that is, to indicate a kind of meeting point or intersection.