

# Local Elections and Local Politics in Indonesia: Emerging Trends

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## Abstract

This article analyses local elections held in the post-Suharto era in Indonesia with a special reference to *pilkada* (*pemilihan kepala daerah langsung* [direct elections of local leaders]) between 2005 and 2008. Using the state-society perspective, it argues that local elections have seen the rise of new political dynamics and rapid growth of electoral activity in regions. *Pilkada* has brought about the emergence of coalitional politics, political ideologies or streams (*aliran*), the rise of 'little kings' (*raja kecil*), an increasing number of businesspeople entering local politics, the use of gangsters/goons (*preman*) in local elections, a boom in political consultancy, and the increase of the no-vote camp. There are grounds for optimism regarding the intensity of the interaction between the local state and society in the regions. The people in the regions have now had the opportunities to vote for their leaders directly, something which was impossible in the past. There is no doubt that the electoral competition for candidates is going to be very important because the availability of good potential local leaders varies between the regions. Political parties themselves have to improve their performance and build a proper recruitment process so that they can find good candidates who can attract voters.

## Key Words

Local elections, local politics, *pilkada*, Indonesia

## Introduction

This article examines local elections in post-Suharto Indonesia with a focus on the direct elections for local heads or *pilkada* (*pemilihan kepala daerah langsung* [direct elections of local leaders]) which have been held

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throughout Indonesia since 2005. Unlike the national elections, which since the fall of Suharto in 1998 have been held five times, in 1999 (parliamentary elections), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (parliamentary elections and direct presidential elections), little is known about *pilkada*. There is no doubt that by successfully holding national elections Indonesia has reached a milestone that confirms the country as a new emerging democracy in the region. In this article, I want to argue that the new political phenomenon *pilkada* deserves serious attention, as the post-Suharto Indonesia battles to remove the remnants of past authoritarianism while embracing a new democratic path. It suggests here that the intense local contest among political parties and local leaders to assert their control over power and economic resources in the regions occurred during the process of dismantling Indonesia's centralistic political structure. At the same time, it shows that *pilkada* has facilitated the rapid growth of electoral activity and also enabled local people to vote for their leaders directly which is important in a democracy. *Pilkada* has also brought new trends such as the emergence of coalitional politics which often goes beyond individual political parties' ideologies or streams (*aliran*), the rise of 'little kings' (*raja kecil*), an increased number of businesspeople entering local politics, the use of gangsters/goons (*preman*) in local elections, a boom in political consultancy and the increase of the no-vote camp (*golput*). Widespread money politics, vote-buying, and corruption are also among trends emerging from *pilkada* in the regions.

This article suggests that we need to critically examine *pilkada* throughout Indonesia with a view to learning and comparing it with a similar phenomenon in the Southeast Asian region. Through this examination, we can avoid making simple generalizations because the dynamics of local elections do not necessarily imitate those of the national level. Political parties and local leaders who compete in *pilkada* have their interests which are often shaped by the configuration of local power and by local issues affecting ordinary people. Similar trends in local politics including the emergence of corruption, political killings, and the rise of strong leaders in localities also occurred in the Philippines and Thailand in the 1990s (Pasuk and Sungsidh 1994; McVey 2000; and Arghiros 2001). The questions I pose in this article are what do we know about *pilkada* and what have the results of *pilkada* meant for Indonesia's new democracy? Do the results of *pilkada* in other regions give us some insights into the local elections in Java and Bali in 2008? What were the results of the local elections in those places that have had implications during the 2009 parliamentary and presidential elections?

## Contending Perspectives

There has lately been an increase in academic interest in decentralization and local politics in the post-Suharto era with scholars and observers offering a variety of perspectives to explain the nature and consequences of dismantling the New Order's centralistic political structure. Let me examine briefly each perspective.

### *Neo-Institutional Perspective*

This perspective argues that decentralization is an important step towards making the relationship between government and the people closer, which is achieved through the transfer of responsibilities from the national to local governments. Local elections are important because they allow locals to elect their leaders without the intervention of the central government. Through decentralization, local governments will have more power or leverage to deliver programs and services for the local people. Decentralization will make it easier for political and business actors to reach out to people in the regions. To achieve this, however, there should be capacity building of *institutions* in the local government. Capacity building means that the local government must improve its performance by adopting good governance principles such as accountability, transparency, legal frameworks, and participation (Turner and Podger 2003:6). Consequently, good and proper designs for decentralization policies are required, and the role of non-government organizations or civil society in participating in the local policy-making processes is needed. In the long run, decentralization will encourage the regions to find their resources through raising revenue and bringing investors to the regions. In other words, decentralization will enhance and eventually benefit local markets.

The idea of decentralization was discussed among policymakers and international consultants in the 1990s when the global trend of democratization reached out to many nations including Indonesia. As is widely known, there has been a great deal of exchange of ideas between the Indonesian bureaucrats attached to the Ministry of Home Affairs and those from international donor/aid agencies such as the GTZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*), the World Bank, the UNDP (United Nations of Development Programme), the ADB (Asian Development Bank) and USAID (Turner and Podger 2003:129-30). This nexus provided critical international support for Indonesia, especially as the central government had limited resources with which to implement decentralization policies. Decentralization was one of the key reform

agendas that emerged during the Habibie government. As the pressure for decentralization gained strength, the new parliament, which came in after the 1999 general election, enacted the law on local government (No. 22/1999) and the law on new financial arrangements between Jakarta and the regions (No. 25/1999), enabling the decentralization process to begin.

### *Neo-Marxist Perspective*

This perspective is a critique of the neo-institutionalist position. It argues that decentralization is about politics and power. It offers the view that decentralization does not always lead to an improvement in the regions because predatory forces at both central and local levels do not hesitate to derail or hijack the policies or programs aimed at improving the well-being of local people. These predatory forces comprise key players from the 'old' centralistic political system who have survived the change and managed to adjust their role in a new democratic political system. Many of them are linked to the old power holders and can forge a coalition with the new power holders in the regions. These predatory forces enter local elections to control political and economic resources in the regions. These see local elections as an arena through which they can achieve their goals to control political and economic resources available in the regions. They may support political parties or local leaders even if this requires the use of bribes or 'money politics' (the popular Indonesian term for corruption). Accordingly, establishing good governance principles at the local level will be difficult because these powerful predatory forces will do their part to ensure those principles do take root. These predatory forces also will organize uncivil society organizations to work against civil society in the regions in the contest for controlling regional political and economic resources. Examples of this perspective include Robison and Hadiz (2004), and Hadiz (2004 and 2007).

### *Political History Perspective*

Proponents of this perspective argue that the idea of a decentralized government is not new in Indonesia in that it has historical and constitutional foundations that can be traced back to the post-independence period. The spirit of decentralization is recognized in Article 18 of the 1945 Constitution, which states that the people of the regions can govern their affairs as long as they operate within the context of a unitary Indonesia. This constitutional foundation recognizes the diversity and complexity of the regions—an acknowledgment to the regions whose people were

anxious and suspicious of a central government governing a large country like Indonesia. Unfortunately, centralization quickly became the reality as the newly independent Indonesia faced regional rebellions and separatist movements in rich regions such as Aceh, Papua, South Sulawesi, West Sumatera, East Kalimantan, and West Java. Both Sukarno and Suharto governed Indonesia in a strongly centralist manner that maintained the unity of Indonesia at all costs including adopting authoritarian and militaristic governance styles to exploit the rich resources available in the regions.

The point here is that the aspiration of the regions to run their affairs has never disappeared and decentralization as an issue became a part of the *Reformasi* movement which spread throughout Indonesia in the lead up to the fall of Suharto in 1998. The push towards decentralization was a clear rejection of the centralistic nature of Suharto's New Order government which suppressed and denied the freedoms of the people in the regions to run their territories with a considerable amount of autonomy. For many Indonesians, anxiety and disappointment over the decision of the majority of the people of Timor Leste to leave Indonesia in the United Nations-sponsored referendum in 1999 created a sense of fear that other troubled regions would break away from Indonesia. It was against this backdrop that Suharto's successors (B. J. Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) pursued decentralization policies which allowed the regions greater freedom in running their affairs and the right to choose their leaders. This political history perspective can be found in the writings of Malley (2003), Schulte Nordholt and van Klinken (2007), and also Mietzner (2007).

### *State-Society Perspective*

Proponents of this perspective argue that the nature of decentralization in the regions depends on the dynamics of state-society relations at the local level. It suggests that decentralization paves the way for local state and society actors in the regions to interact and to negotiate with each other in the context of developing their regions. Each region has particular dynamics in its state-society relations. In the regions which have strong and capable local leaders and bureaucracies and better human resources and economic standards, the interactions between state and society actors tend to be better (though not always) compared to those in poorer regions.

Since decentralization was implemented in 2001, there has been a rise in local civil society actors (encompassing religious organizations, businesspeople, professional associations, journalists, academics, activists,

and students) who participate in negotiating issues affecting the regions. For example, in the district of Jepara in Central Java, the role of the local *Nahdlatul Ulama* branch and non-government organizations is very important, especially in monitoring and scrutinizing the conduct of local government and their leaders to undertake local development projects. The opposition of civil society to the proposed nuclear reactor in Jepara shows that local democracy has developed well in this part of Indonesia. In Bantul district, Yogyakarta, a critical role was played by local journalists, artists, and activists from non-government organizations in voicing the concerns of victims of the 2006 earthquake regarding the slowness of the local government in distributing relief assistance and compensation fund. The state-society perspective can be found in the writings of Schiller (2007) and Erawan (2007).

### **Pilkada (2005-2008)**

*Pilkada* became possible after the parliament enacted the law on local government (No. 32/2004) in the last days of the Megawati presidency. The exact numbers of *pilkada* are not available, but according to the Home Affairs Minister Mardiyanto, from 2005 to 2008 there have been 480 *pilkada* while the data from the People's Voter Education Network shows less than that number (Table 1). The busiest year was in 2005 when more than 200 *pilkada* were held across Indonesia. Kutai Kertanegara district was the first district to hold *pilkada*, with the election won convincingly by Syaukani HR and Samsuri Aspar supported by Golkar. In the following three years, *pilkada* was held in many districts and municipalities where the majority of incumbent district heads (*bupati*) and municipality heads (*walikota*) were reelected, but others were voted out. The controversial *pilkada* was the one in Depok municipality in the south of the capital city of Jakarta where the dispute over the results of the *pilkada* had to be resolved in the Supreme Court.

Overall, however, most *pilkada* were held without the sort of crisis that could derail *pilkada* as a mechanism for the direct election of local leaders. This is quite remarkable considering many regions and peoples who were involved in this local political contest, and the magnitude of organizational and logistical capabilities and local resources required to hold many *pilkada*.

There are important principles behind the establishment of *pilkada* in the regions throughout Indonesia. People in the regions can directly elect their leaders as opposed to the indirect election through the votes of local

parliament members (DPRD [*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*]), which was based on the previous law on local governments (No.4/1974 and No. 22/1999). With *pilkada*, the people in the regions can elect leaders who are known by them and who care about local issues. Also, the people in the regions can communicate directly with those who want to contest in elections and exercise their democratic rights through their participation in electing their leaders. As has been discussed widely, the indirect election mechanism was prone to 'money politics' as both candidates and members of local parliament were individually and collectively involved in bribing and betting to choose provincial governors or district heads. Now, by allowing the people to vote in *pilkada*, a greater level of public scrutiny is possible.

The emergence of independent candidates in the regions is positive in the sense that there is more choice in electing local leaders. The independent candidates are often those who failed to get the endorsement of political parties or those who believe they can mobilize political supports from their community. However, it is too early to know the effectiveness of independent candidates in contesting local elections since the obstacles are not small because they need not just supporters but also other resources. At the end of 2008, the success rate of independent candidates in Indonesia was low. Nonetheless, we can certainly expect that this trend will continue to gain attention in the years to come.

The political developments in Aceh during the 2009 election are also worth mentioning such as the emergence of local political parties (*partai lokal*). I see this will become an issue in the future simply because local people and their leaders may believe they can pursue their political aspirations better through local parties rather than through national political parties. One could argue that if local political parties are permitted in Aceh, then why not also in other places in Indonesia? Historically, local political parties contested local and national elections during the parliamentary democracy period in the 1950s.

The role of the regional election commission (KPUD [*Komisi Pemilihan Umum Daerah*]) was important for whether the *pilkada* turned into successes or failures. This all depended on the funding support which in the case of KPUD came from the local government. In several places, there were a lot of concerns about the lack of funding and human resources to enable KUPD to perform its task well. According to the regulation, the local government is responsible for ensuring that funding is available for the KUPD to administer local elections. Problems occurred when local

governments delayed the provision of funding and other resources needed by the KUPD to prepare for elections. Another concern that often generated legal disputes among political parties claimed that irregularities occurred during the counting of votes.

The reality, however, is somewhat different. We can see the use of money ('money politics') is still an issue that affects the selection process for candidates in *pilkada*. Candidates need to be endorsed by a political party or a coalition of political parties (holding a minimum of 15 percent seats in local parliament). In the selection process, price tags have been applied for candidates who want to contest the *pilkada* with amounts in the range of IDR 5-10 billion for district head and above IDR15 billion for the provincial governor. The rich or popular candidates and candidates who have strong financial backers are most successful at winning the endorsement of political parties. But, this does not necessarily mean that these candidates will win the elections.

*Pilkada* has also seen the rise of 'little kings' (*raja kecil*). The role of *bupati* and governors in the new decentralized Indonesia carries much weight in terms of regional power and influence. Those who have been elected as governors or district/municipality heads come from diverse backgrounds such as bureaucrats, businesspeople, artists, former military officers, academics, journalists, and activists. Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, who is the Governor of the Special Province of Yogyakarta, is one of them. He comes from the Yogyakarta royal family and, in a real sense, he is a *raja*. He has enormous political power and popular appeal which extend beyond his province. He was elected as governor in 1998 and still holds this position but recently he was also seen as a possible contender for the 2009 presidential election, alongside the incumbent President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Megawati Sukarnoputri. Another *raja kecil* is Fadel Muhammad who is currently the Governor of Gorontalo Province in North Sulawesi. Originating from Gorontalo, he became a successful business figure in Jakarta. He has developed his hometown rapidly over the past years transforming the Gorontalo region into an emerging region in the Eastern part of Indonesia. He is a leading political figure within Golkar and he may go into national politics. In Blitar, East Java, there is Djarot Saiful Hidayat, who was successful in developing Blitar with his populist policies favoring small traders and local entrepreneurs. Since he became mayor in 1999 he has gained respect and popularity, which positions him as an important local leader in the Blitar region (*Tempo*, 28 December 2008).

As suggested earlier, there have been new developments in local politics in Indonesia where the national and local political and economic

interests converge and coalesce. *Pilkada* has brought about the emergence of coalitional politics which often goes beyond political parties' ideologies or 'streams' (*aliran*). These political coalitions are fluid and pragmatic and reflect the local political constellation in the regions. The kinds of political coalitions that are established differ from region to region and there is no guarantee that a local political coalition among members endorsed by the big parties will automatically succeed in local elections. In fact, in several cases of *pilkada*, a political coalition of small political parties has been able to defeat those of big parties. Coalitions of nationalist parties usually comprise PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle), Golkar, PD (Democratic Party), and other small (nationalist) political parties. Nationalist-Islamist coalitions comprise PDIP, Golkar, PD, PAN (the National Mandate Party), PKB (the Nation Awakening Party), PBB (Crescent Star Party), and other small (Islamic) political parties. Islamist coalition comprises PPP (the United Development Party), PBB, and other small (Islamic) political parties. Nationalist-Islamist-Christian coalitions comprise PDIP, Golkar, PKB, PKS (the Prosperous Justice Party), PPP, PAN, PBB, PDS (the Prosperous and Peace Party), and other small political parties.

The appearance of local gangsters/goons (*preman*) in *pilkada* is regarded by some observers as a new phenomenon, but in fact *preman* have long been established in Indonesian society. They appeared in the post-independence period organizing themselves in various militia groupings. During Suharto's New Order, the ruling party Golkar used *preman* to mobilize voters and intimidate opponents. Now, almost every political party has its militia groups or task force (*Satgas* [*satuan tugas*]). These appear at many parties' mass gatherings. Among them are the *Satgas* PDIP and BMI (*Banteng Muda* Indonesia [Indonesian Young Bulls]) which belong to PDIP. Members are recruited from local youth. Meanwhile, Golkar has the AMPG (Angkatan Muda Partai Golkar) in areas with a strong Golkar's supporter. The PKB has the *Garda Bangsa* or *Pagar Bangsa*, the PPP has the AMK (*Angkatan Muda Ka'bah*) which has members coming from various Islamic youth organizations. The youth wing of PAN is known as BM PAN (*Barisan Muda* PAN) and the *Pemuda Demokrat* and *Satgas* PKS belong to PD and PKS respectively.

Another trend is the boom in political consultancy aimed at helping political parties and their candidates to win *pilkada*. This new business activity took off in the past years with a range of political consultancy organizations offering surveys and quick counts for national and local elections, which in many instances causing controversy especially when

their information is not accurate or differs from official accounts. I would argue that the introduction of surveys and quick counts has been very popular informing and educating voters and the general public about the contending candidates in *pilkada*. Some of the key political consultants are the LSI (*Lembaga Survei Indonesia*) which pioneered political consultancy in Indonesia. It was established in 2003 by Yayasan Pengembangan Demokrasi Indonesia by Denny January Aly and Saiful Mujani who obtained doctoral degrees from the Ohio State University in the US. Denny was in charge as its Executive Director while Saiful was one of the researchers. They obtained knowledge on political consultancy in the US and apply survey methodologies similar to those used by political consultancy firms there. In 2005, Denny January Aly established the LSI (*Lingkaran Survei Indonesia*) which offers similar services and he has become the Executive Director. The former is now headed by Saiful Mujani. This was followed by others such as FOX Indonesia led by Choel Mallarangeng, Strategic Political Intelligence (SPIN) led by Hamid Basyaib, the CIRUS Surveyors Group led by Andrinof A. Chaniago, and the Reform Institute led by Yudi Latif (*Tempo*, 18 January 2009).

Also, another trend is the increase of the no-vote camp (*golput* [*golongan putih*]) in *pilkada* across Indonesia. *Golput* refers to eligible (registered) voters who refuse to go to ballot booths or those who deliberately destroy the ballot papers as a symbol of protest. *Golput* is not a new political phenomenon. It emerged as a protest vote in Indonesia in the 1970s and has appeared in every election since then, reminding the public that there is a small number of voters who are not satisfied with the elections or who are disillusioned with how political parties and their leaders conduct their activities. In several *pilkadas*, there has been an increased percentage of *golput* votes around 25-30 percent in district or municipality levels and 35-40 percent at provincial level.

The local media and local advertising industry in the regions also benefited from *pilkada* especially when it comes to promoting and advertising the profile of candidates for local elections. The cost of political advertising varies between regions. The most expensive is in Jakarta (and Java/Bali). For example, it costs IDR5-10 million to run 1-2 minute radio commercials, IDR10-25 million for a section in a newspaper, and IDR100-200 million for a television advertisement for 1-2 minutes duration. Such costs will likely continue to rise in years to come.

## Provincial *Pilkada* in Indonesia

What insights do we get from the results of *pilkada* about local elections? Let me examine the results of *pilkada* for governors held throughout Indonesia from 2005 to 2008 (Table 2). From 2005 to 2008, the candidates for governorship supported by the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) on its own won in North Sulawesi, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, East Nusa Tenggara, Lampung, Central Java, and Bali. However, this success was not repeated in other places. Here the PDIP was forced to establish a coalition with other parties, including those with different ideologies or *aliran* such as PBB, PKS, and PPP. For Golkar, from 2005 to 2008, the results were poor especially for Golkar with their candidates winning in only two provinces in 2006: West Sulawesi and Gorontalo. Only Golkar has strong supporters in these provinces in Sulawesi especially in Gorontalo where the local people voted overwhelmingly for Fadel Muhammad.

As a result, Golkar decided to form a coalition with other political parties and the results were good in that Golkar and its coalition successfully won *pilkada* in six provinces: Jambi, Riau islands, Banten, Jakarta, South Sumatera, and Riau. The medium and small political parties such as PKS, PAN, PKB, PPP, PD, PDS and PBB also did very well especially by forming several different coalitions and successfully won in Bengkulu, South Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Bangka Belitung, North Maluku, Southeast Sulawesi, West Java, North Sumatera, East Kalimantan, and West Nusa Tenggara. Overall, the results tell us that coalitional politics was the best way for political parties to win provincial *pilkada* in Indonesia.

What can be said about the recent provincial *pilkada* held in Java and Bali? Four provinces (West Java, Central Java, Bali and East Java) held *pilkada* in 2008. The voters who live in Java and Bali account for almost two-thirds of total votes in Indonesia. It has to be mentioned here that the major political parties Golkar and PDIP won in Java and Bali in the 2004 general elections, while parties such as PKB, PKS, PAN, PPP, and PD also took the remaining votes. Therefore, winning provincial *pilkada* in Java and Bali was seen as crucial as political parties prepare for the 2009 general elections. In what follows, I examine the results of each of *pilkada* in Java and Bali.

### *West Java Province*

The results of *pilkada* in West Java province, which was held on 13 April 2008, were big news in Indonesia. The candidates supported by major

political parties such as Golkar and PDIP lost and suffered a humiliating defeat. A coalition of Golkar and PD supported the pair of the incumbent governor, Danny Setiawan, and Iwan Sulandjana, while the PDIP with the support from PPP, PKB, and other small political parties to endorse Agum Gumelar and Nu'man Abdul Hakim. The winners were Ahmad Heryawan and Dede Yusuf who were supported by a coalition of PKS and PAN. West Java is an important place for major political parties. In the 2004 general election, Golkar won 29.4 percent of the vote followed by PDI-P (16.7 percent) with the remaining votes shared equally by parties such as PKS, PD, PKB, and PAN.

The results of the West Java *pilkada* tell us that the supporters of Golkar and PDIP did not vote for their respective candidates. One theory for this defeat was that the party supporters did not work hard enough to help their candidates at the grassroots level. It is true that the public perception of the incumbent governor, Danny Setiawan, was not positive as he has been in the job for a long time and more importantly he was implicated in some corruption cases (funds for ambulance and housing project for local parliamentarians) (*Tempo*, 27 April 2008). Agum Gumelar also suffered image problems, being seen by the supporters of PDIP as someone who failed as an attractive candidate because he was seen as a part of the New Order period. Many voters believed he was not a good candidate as he had also failed in the selection process for *pilkada* in Jakarta in 2007 and before that he was also not successful in the 2004 presidential election. Meanwhile, Ahmad Heryawan and Dede Yusuf were regarded by many voters as new generation local leaders who were young and fresh. Dede Yusuf, who is a former movie star, was very popular among young voters and women in West Java. The two men were very creative in their support campaigns reaching out not just to the Islamic community but also PDIP and Golkar voters and non-Sundanese voters living in West Java province. Then, this victory was a result of the work of the supporters and party machinery of PKS and PAN during the campaign period. It is interesting to see whether the rise of PKS and PAN in West Java would continue in the 2009 general elections.

### *Central Java Province*

The results of *pilkada* in Central Java province, which was held on 22 June 2008, was very interesting as the candidates supported by big parties from PDIP and Golkar fought against the candidates endorsed by small parties from PKS, PD, PKB, PPP, and PAN. In many ways, it was a tight contest,

with the candidates supported by the PDIP (Bibit Waluyo and Rustiningsih) winning in this *pilkada*. They were popular and well known. Bibit Waluyo was a high-profile military general who had occupied several important military positions such as the chief of the regional military command in Central Java and also the chief of the Strategic Military Command in Jakarta. There is a long-standing tradition of governors in Central Java coming from military ranks. Rustiningsih is a successful leader from Kebumen district and is among the first women elected as district heads in the post-Suharto era. Her success in developing Kebumen district also brought about the speculation that she would be among potential candidates to reach the PDIP at the national level in years to come.

In this *pilkada*, Golkar, which supported Bambang Sadono and Muhammad Adnan, lacked votes from city and rural areas in Central Java, which were dominated by PDIP voters. Candidates who were supported by small Islamic parties gained much, sharing the rest of the votes available during the *pilkada*. For the PDIP, this *pilkada* was very important because it has proven its solid support in Central Java. The results tell that the PDIP's party supporters worked hard at the grassroots level throughout Central Java. This augurs well for 2009 when Megawati run again in the presidential elections.

### *Bali Province*

The result of *pilkada* in Bali province, which was held on 9 July 2008, was to be expected as the candidates supported by the PDIP won convincingly against the other candidates. The PDIP supported Mangku Pastika and A.A. Puspayoga because they are prominent both internationally and locally. Mangku Pastika was the chief of police in Bali province and was instrumental in dealing with the impacts of the Bali terrorist attack in 2002. A.A. Puspayoga was familiar to many Balinese people as he belongs to the royal family in Denpasar. The appointment of these candidates benefited PDIP enormously. It sent a strong message to voters that the political stability and security needed by Bali could be delivered by the leadership of Mangku Pastika and A.A. Puspayoga. Overall, the results demonstrate that support for the PDIP in Bali remains strong, which was a positive message for Megawati in 2009.

### *East Java Province*

*Pilkada* in East Java province was held in two rounds. In the first round

(22 July 2008), the results were very close for candidates. The candidates who were supported by PD and PAN (Soekarwo and Syaifullah Yusuf) and those who were supported by PPP and other small parties (Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Mudjiono) won together and went on to contest the second round (held on 4 November 2008). The results in the first round showed voters were divided along nationalist and Islamist lines. The voters from the nationalist camp went to Golkar, PDIP, and PD while voters from the Islamist camp went to PKB, PPP, and PAN. This was very interesting because in the end, no one was able to win a majority vote. The results in the second round were even more complicated and again divided equally. This occurred because PDIP decided to support Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Mudjiono while Golkar supported the Soekarwo and Syaifullah Yusuf camp.



Image 1

Pilkada campaign ad on *becak*

Photo by Sulistiyanto (2008)

All these results suggest that none of the candidates were as credible and well known as those in West Java, Central Java, and Bali. The voters in East Java province were also diverse and divided along the party lines. It will be also interesting to see whether the voters in East Java province would be divided again in the 2009 general elections. In the second round

held on 4 November 2008, the results were very closed which, according to the KPU, the winner went to the Soekarwo-Saifullah camp. This decision was protested by the Khofifah-Mudjiono camp because they argued that there were irregularities occurred in several places in Madura island and they brought the case to the Constitutional Court to solve it. Finally, on 2 February 2009, the Constitutional Court decided that the case brought by the Khofifah-Mudjiono was not strong and therefore concluded that the results of the second round of *pilkada* were valid and the Soekarwo-Saifullah camp was the winner.

## Conclusion

This article has examined local elections held in the post-Suharto era in Indonesia between 2005 and 2008. It has been argued that with *pilkada* we have seen the rise of new political dynamics in the regions. There has been the rapid growth of electoral activity and the possibility of local people directly electing their leaders. *Pilkada* has brought about the emergence of coalitional politics, straddling political ideologies or streams (*aliran*), the rise of ‘little kings’ (*raja kecil*), an increasing number of businesspeople entering local politics, the use of gangsters/goons (*preman*) in local elections, a boom in political consultancy, and the increase of the no-vote camp (*golput*).

In explaining all of this, I suggest that the state-society perspective is useful to examine the emergence of local politics in Indonesia. Through this perspective, we can see that the success and failures of decentralization depend on the dynamics of state-society relations at the local level. By allowing the regions to run their activities, the local state and society actors can interact and negotiate with each other to develop their regions. Each region indeed has different characteristics and political dynamics which sometimes produce different stories. From the above examination of the *pilkada* held throughout Indonesia from 2005 to 2008, it can be suggested here that there are grounds for optimism regarding the intensity of the interaction between the local state and society in the regions. The people in the regions have now had the opportunities to vote for their leaders directly, something which was impossible in the past. There is no doubt that the electoral competition for candidates is going to be very important because the availability of good potential local leaders varies between the regions. Political parties themselves have to improve their performance and to build a proper recruitment process so that they can find good candidates who can attract voters. The failure to do all of this would only confirm skepticism that money and power in Indonesia are two sides of the same coin.

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Table 1  
Pilkada in Indonesia (2005-2008)

Year	District/Municipality	Province
2005	207	7
2006	70	7
2007	35	6
2008	146	13
Total	458	32

Source: People's Voter Education Network (2008)

Table 2  
Provincial Pilkada in Indonesia (2005-2008)

Province	Winning Candidates	Political Party	Coalition	Votes and Percentage
North Sulawesi (2005)	Sinyo H. Sarundajang and Freddy Harry Sualang	PDIP		447,581 (39%)
Central Kalimantan (2005)	Agustin Teras Narang and Achmad Diran	PDIP		347,540 (44%)
Jambi (2005)	Zulkifli Nurdin and Antoni Zeidra Abidin		PAN, Golkar, PKS, PBB	995,792 (80%)

West Sumatera (2005)	Gamawan Fauzi and Marlis Rahman		PBB, PDIP	757,296 (42%)
Bengkulu (2005, two rounds)	Agusrin Maryono and Syamlan		PKS, PBR	170,149 (23%)
Riau Archipelago (2005)	Ismet Abdullah and Muh. Sani		Golkar, PKS, PPP	309,119 (61%)
South Kalimantan (2005)	Rudi Arifin and Nur Rosehan		PKB, PPP	444,637 (32%)
Central Sulawesi (2006)	H. Bandjela Paliuju and H. Ahmad Yahya		PBB, PAN, PKPB, PKB	411,113 (36.15%)
Papua (2006)	Barnabas Suebu and Alex Hasegem		PDIP, PIB, PBSB, P Pancasila	323,979 (30.75%)
West Irian Jaya (2006)	Abraham O Atururi and Rahimin Katjong		PDIP, PPKD, PD, PNIM, PPDI, PNBK, PBSB, P Pancasila, P Pelopor	183,279 (61.3%)
West Sulawesi (2006)	Anwar Adnan Saleh and Amri Sabusi	Golkar		220,076 (46.26%)
Banten (2006)	Ratu Atut Chosiyah and M. Masduki		Golkar, PDIP, PDS, PBB and PBR	1,445,457 (40%)

Gorontalo (2006)	Fadel Muhammad and Gusnar Ismail	Golkar		423.335 (81%)
Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (2006)	Irwandi Jusuf and M. Nazar	Independent		768.745 (38.20%)
Bangka Belitung (2007)	Eko Maulana Ali and Syamsudin Basari		PBB, PKS, PAN, PD	180,641 (35.3%)
Jakarta (2007)	Fauzi Bowo and Prijanto		Golkar, PDIP, PD, PPP, PAN, PKB, PBB, PBR, PBB and other small parties	2,109,511 (57.87%)
West Kalimantan (2007)	Cornelis and Christiandy Sanjaya	PDIP		930,679 (43.67%)
North Maluku (2007)	Thaib Armaiyn and Abdul Ghani Kasuba		PD, PKS, PBB and PKB	179,020 (37.35%)
South Sulawesi (2007)	Syahrul Yasin Limpo and Agus Arifin Nu'mang		PDIP, PAN, PDK and PDS	1,432,572 (39.53%)
Southeast Sulawesi (2007)	Nur Alam and Saleh Lasata		PAN and PBR	421,360 (42.78%)
West Java (2008)	Ahmad Heryawan and Dede Yusuf		PKS and PAN	7,287,647 (40.5%)

North Sumatera (2008)	Syamsul Arifin and Gatot Pujo Nugroho		PPP, PKS, PBB, PKPB, PKPI, PSI, PDK and other small parties	1,396,892 (28.69%)
East Kalimantan (2008)	Awang faroek Ishak and Farid Wadjdy		PD, PDS, PPP, PAN, PKB, PM and PBR	426,325 (28.9%)
East Nusa Tenggara (2008)	Frans Lebu Raya and Esthon Foenay	PDIP		772,632 (37.34%)
Central Java (2008)	Bibit Waluyo and Rustriningsih	PDIP		6,084.261 (43.43%)
Bali (2008)	Mangku Pastika and Anak Agung Puspa Yoga	PDIP		1,087,910 (55.04%)
West Nusa Tenggara (2008)	GH Zainul Majdi and Badrul Munir		PBB and PKS	847,976 (38.84%)
Maluku (2008)	Karel Albert Ralahalu and Said Assagaff		PDIP, PD, PBR, PDK, PKPI, PPNUI and PBB	452.711 (62.14%)
Lampung (2008)	Sjachroedin and Joko Umar	PDIP		1,513.666 (43.27%)
South Sumatera (2008)	Alex Noerdin and Eddy Yusuf		Golkar, PD, PBB, PAN, PBR and PNBK	1,866,390 (51.4%)

Riau (2008)	Rusli Zainal and Mambang Mit		Golkar, PKB, PPP and PBR	1,069,196 (57.48%)
East Java (2008, two rounds)	Soekarwo and Saifullah Yusuf		PD, PAN and other small parties	7.729.944 (50.60%)

Source: Centre for Electoral Reform (2008) and Berita Indonesia <http://beritaindonesia.co.id/politik/catatan-pilkada-jatim/print/> (accessed 18 December 2009).

## Notes

- 1 Among these scholars are Weatherbee (2001), Sulistiyo (2002), King (2003), Ananta, Arifin and Suryadinata (2004), Antlov and Cederroth (2004), and Schwarz (2004).
- 2 See Sulistiyanto (2004) and Baswedan (2007).
- 3 There are a number of studies on *pilkada* published in Indonesian language such as Amirudin and A. Zaini Bisri (2006), Joko J. Prihatmoko (2005), M. Mufti Mubarok (2005), and Pheni Chalid (2005). Meanwhile, for a study in English language, see Erb and Sulistiyanto (2009).
- 4 For example, see Sakai (2002); Aspinall and Fealy (2003); Kingsbury and Aveling (2003); Erb, Faucher and Sulistiyanto (2005); and Schulte Nordholt and van Klinken (2007).
- 5 Also the Asia Foundation and Ford Foundation, to name a few, supported decentralization programs in several places in Indonesia.
- 6 East Kalimantan is among the rich regions and has no traced of local rebellion.
- 7 Thanks to Jim Schiller for this point.
- 8 Only five *pilkada* (North Maluku, Taur Bengkulu, Southeast Aceh, West Sulawesi and Tuban) encountered legal disputes. Two more *pilkada* (East Java and East Kalimantan) will be held toward the end of 2008. See, [http://www.mediaindonesia.com/print.php?ar\\_id=38144](http://www.mediaindonesia.com/print.php?ar_id=38144), accessed 22 October 2008.
- 9 The local political parties were allowed to contest in the national elections in the 1950s and therefore the Aceh case is without precedent in Indonesia.
- 10 This data was provided by different sources in Indonesia (Personal communication, 7 November 2008).i

- 11 This data was provided by the Centre for Electoral Reform, a non-governmental organization based in Jakarta.
- 12 Both PKS and PAN did not done well in the 2009 parliamentary election in West Java and surprisingly the Yudhoyono's PD won many votes, capturing the voters from these two parties.
- 13 PDIP did relatively well in Central Java during the 2009 parliamentary elections but still did help much in giving votes needed for Megawati in the presidential election held in July 2009.
- 14 PDIP won the votes in Bali in the 2009 parliamentary election as well as in the presidential election. The PD ranked in the second followed by Golkar, PKB, PAN and other small parties.

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