2009 ELECTIONS, DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION, AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

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Introduction

- 2009 ‘ll be the third GEs in the Reform Era
- The last 2 GEs were democratic
- Problem: will the third GEs be democratic?
- Every five years, new electoral rules and regulations are applied
- Questions: will the third GEs be meaningful for Indonesia’s democratic consolidation and political representation?
Elections and Democratic Consolidation

- Democratic Consolidation → establishing a political system that could control political power so as to prevent it from becoming absolute, and thereby, is used to serve and facilitate public interests
- Significant indications → fair and just court, functional parliament, decentralization of government authority, institutionalization of political parties, empowerment of civil society, periodic general elections, and civic education outside the formal school
- Periodic elections → the only political way to constitute that political power can be controlled and should be transferable peacefully
**Progress in Electoral Politics**

- New Package of political laws → renewal of elections
- Government (Nat’l & Local) is directly elected by the people
- Strong political representation
- Almost every high rank public official is elected directly and/or indirectly
- Quantity of election → twice a week
Problems of Democratization

- More open participation, lesser participants
- More elected government / public officials, lesser work for the people
- Political parties being disgraced (enity-partysm), more number of new political parties
- Problematic parliament (misused of power), more figures intend to be members of parliament
- Democratic consolidation hampered → very slow progress or even set back
- Dualism of political interests implanted in major political actors → fulfilling reform interests vs surviving self interests
Political Facts

- 38 parties qualified as electoral participants → old-new, big-small, exclusive-inclusive, modern-traditional, clean-problematic
- Many figures competing for members of parliament (nat’l & local), and for presidency → old-new, senior-junior, pluralist-antipluralist, progresive-konservative, clean-problematic
- Legislative election → parties vs candidates, candidates vs candidates, competition in electoral district
- Presidential election → party vs party, coalition vs coalition, figure vs figure, figure vs party, figure vs coalition
- Will this variety of choices be meaningful or useless for democratic consolidation in general, and political representation in particular?
Representation Based on Major Parties

- Dilemma of political engineering → stability of presidential government vs problematic plurality of interests
- Party map → not too plural
- 3-10 seats per electoral district → lessening level of representative plurality
- 2.5% PT → majority of plural votes is not counted
- Un-intended representation
- Competition in electoral district will be tight, and beneficial for parties having wide political network
- Domination of political representation by big and major parties in parliament
- Require sensitivity and capacity of big parties to absorb plurality interest and aspiration of the society
**Quality of Collective Representation**

- Plurality votes for elected candidates → un-consolidated parliament → problems of party discipline
- Projection → MPs vs Parties’ Policies
- Elected candidates justified not to obey parties’ political directions
- Long electoral campaign which has not been effective
- Limited public access of information (*Formappi*)
Conclusion

- Although renewal is made, 2009 elections tends to result in more problematic political representation
- There will be complexity of representation especially reflected by conflicts between members of parliament and their respective political parties
- The objective of making political stability for the presidential government might not be achieved