

SEBASTIAN, LEONARD C.

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*UNISCI Discussion Papers*, Núm. 6, octubre-sin mes, 2004, pp. 1-8

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

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*UNISCI Discussion Papers*

ISSN (Versión impresa): 1696-2206

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# UNISCI Discussion Papers

## INDONESIA'S HISTORIC FIRST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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September 20 marked the end of a momentous year for Indonesian politics concluding a third leg of a series of elections with an array of electoral formats which began in April ranging from an open list proportional system for the House of People's Representatives and the House of Regional People's Representatives; a single non-transferable vote system for new Regional Representatives Council and culminating with two round majoritarian system for the presidential election. Being the third largest democracy after the USA and India, Indonesia's election mechanism is complex and required significant voter education initiatives to socialize the new election format. The general elections held on 5 April was for a fully elected House of People's Representatives (DPR, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat), the House of Regional People's Representatives (DPRD, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah) or the regional assemblies at the provincial and district level and the new Regional Representatives Council (DPD, Dewan Perwakilan Daerah). Neither the military nor police or other functional organizations would have any direct representation in the various legislative bodies. At the national level, parties would be competing for 550 seats, a significant increase from 462 in 1999. The second stage held on 5 July would be the country's first direct presidential election where voters will choose from pairs of candidates put up by political parties that have won a threshold of seats or votes in the first stage, namely, either 3 percent of the seats in the DPR (16 seats) or 5 percent of the nationwide vote. If no pair of candidates received a majority of 50 percent plus 1 of the vote together with a minimum of 20 percent of the votes in half of Indonesia's 32 provinces, a second round of voting will be held on 20 September to decide between the top two pairs. The mood during the elections was peaceful and relaxed with no incidents of conflict marring this historic occasion. Independent international observers were present and representatives from The Carter Center and the European Union were evident monitoring the election process in the conflict areas of Aceh, Ambon and Papua.

On 5 July, for the first time in the country's 59 year history, the people of Indonesia exercised their right elect their own choice for President. Approximately 155 million

<sup>1</sup> Las opiniones expresadas en estos artículos son propias de sus autores. Estos artículos no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de UNISCI. The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors. These articles do not necessarily reflect the views of UNISCI.

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Indonesians went to the polls. According to the General Elections Commission (KPU, Komisi Pemilihan Umum) the total of 155 million people voted in 574,945 polling stations throughout Indonesia's 440 autonomous districts and towns. Each voting station was entitled to process a maximum of 300 voters. By 6 July, one day after the elections, early official results broadcast over the major television networks showed Partai Demokrat's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono leading with 33.56%, followed by incumbent Megawati Sukarnoputri at 26.48%, Wiranto at 22.61%, Amien Rais at 14.01% and Hamzah Haz trailing at 3.34%. These were results reported by polling stations covering around 15 million voters, or 10% of total registered. At the same time, the Quick Count method of accessing voter pattern broadcast by the major news networks based on preliminary results garnered from 1650 stations from among 2500 observed placed the voting trend at: Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono 33.15%, Megawati Sukarnoputri 26.02%, Wiranto 23.34%, Amien Rais 14.42% and Hamzah Haz 3.07%.

Such indicated the certainty that there would be a second round of elections, as not a single candidate would have been capable of achieving the required 50% plus one of votes necessary to win the election outright. Most analysts were surprised the relatively poor performance of Amien Rais, whose popularity had been rising prior to the presidential elections. Wiranto's low tally of votes was also surprising considering the combination of formidable election machinery behind him and heightened speculation that Suharto family money had bolstered his candidacy. He was after all supported by both the Golkar Party which had won the legislative elections and the PKB the party associated with the Nadlatul Ulama, Indonesia largest Muslim mass organization.

There was also a drop in the estimated percentage predicted to be received by Yudhoyono. Polling prior to the elections had predicted that he would gain something between 40%- 45% of popular votes. With his percentage of the vote hovering at 33.4%, this represented a drop of between 7% - 10%. Speculation was rife as to where all the votes gone to as there was no logical consistency in gains made by political parties in the April legislative elections as compared to results obtained by each of their presidential candidates in the recent presidential elections.

Much capital was made by losing presidential tickets over technicalities which marred an otherwise perfect election, creating some confusion. Apparently ballot papers had been folded outward in two, length-wise, with on one side showing pictures of the 5 teams - one of which had to be pierced to denote the team chosen - and the other merely mentioning the event - the Presidential Elections on 5 July 2004. The General Election Commission had stipulated that ballot papers found pierced on both sides of the paper as a result of the paper not being completely opened at voting would be considered invalid. However, realizing that a number of polling stations had locked their ballot boxes, the General Election Commission then changed its mind and declared such ballot papers valid. This act required a recount of formerly invalid votes. Though considered by experts to be a relatively small technical matter, the fact that the decision was made after witnesses of political parties had already left the effected polling locations gave the opportunity for losing presidential tickets to cry foul.

By 6 July, with over 48 million votes counted, the vote tallies remained stable, with Partai Demokrat's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono leading at 33.52%; followed by PDI-P's Megawati at 26.69%; Partai Golkar's Wiranto (22.14%); PAN's Amien Rais 14.43% and no. (5) PPP's Hamzah Haz with a mere 3.22%. These gains are very different from those achieved by political parties during the April legislative elections that had the Partai Demokrat at the number 5 position with 7.45%; PDIP at number 2 with 18.53%, Golkar at number 1 with 21.58%, PAN at number 7 with 6.44% and PPP at number. 4 at 8.15%. The demographic map



of voting patterns made for interesting reading. According to LP3ES, one of the leading polling institutions, their Exit Poll revealed that out of the 100% votes received by Yudhoyono, 27% came from his own Partai Demokrat. He was further supported by Golkar voters contributing 24% to his vote total. Approximately 8% came from PKB (Yudhoyono even won in traditional PKB hard-line pockets of Madura and Sidoarjo in East Java). And a further 5% came from PKS with 4% from Megawati's PDIP, 3% from PAN, and a further 6% from "other parties". From the perspective of how candidates' party members voted, only 55% of total Golkar votes went to their own candidate, Wiranto, while 31% went to Yudhoyono. From the PKB party, only 49% voted for their own party candidate Solahuddin Wahid, Wiranto's running mate, as opposed to 28% who voted for Yudhoyono as President on the Partai Demokrat ticket. Moreover, Yudhoyono was supported by 24% of PKS votes and 88% of his own Partai Demokrat.

Taking into account the ratio between Indonesia's population living in the countryside against those in cities is 55%:45%, approximately 59% Yudhoyono's votes came from rural areas, compared to 62% of those voting for Wiranto and 44% voting for Amien Rais. Such data indicated that Amien Rais received most of his votes from urban centers. Amien Rais appeared to attract voters from the tertiary educated groups, (at 20% of votes), compared to 8% of those voting for Yudhoyono and 7% of votes for Megawati. Only 26% of those voting for Amien Rais were from the sector of the population with elementary education as compared to 46% for Megawati and 33% for Yudhoyono.

Contrary to expectations, Megawati received highest percentage of the non-Muslim votes at 27%, highest among all candidates, while 97% those voting for Amien Rais were Muslims. Of the electorate representing Muslim mass-based organizations, 33% of Nahdatul Ulama (NU) votes went to Wiranto-Wahid (Solahuddin Wahid being a PKB/NU leader), 22% to Mega-Hasyim Muzadi (Muzadi was current NU chairman), 11% to Amien Rais and 32% to Yudhoyono. While Amien Rais won 54% of the votes from Indonesia's second largest Muslim mass based organization - Muhammadiyah, with 21% of that vote going to Yudhoyono, 13% to Wiranto and 11% to Megawati respectively. "Other Muslim organizations" gave 36% of their votes to Yudhoyono, 26% to Amien Rais, 20% to Wiranto and 13% to Megawati. While 36% of "non-affiliated" votes went to Yudhoyono, 23% to Wiranto and 20% each to Amien Rais and Megawati.

Among first-time voters, Yudhoyono's proportion was highest at 22%, compared to Amien Rais at 18% and Megawati at 14%. In the overall analysis such data confirmed what the Kompas newspaper polls have found out, namely that the people of Indonesia enjoyed the independence of voting in their choice of nominees making it evident that unlike the situation in the Suharto era party leadership or party affiliation had little influence on voters' individual choice. What determined were personalities of candidates and what each candidate stood for! Indications were strong that voter patterns in the in the second round in September would mirror the first round result.

So what was the magic ingredient behind Yudhoyono's success despite attempts by his opponents to discredit his campaign by describing him as a pawn of the United States?

Some point to the fact that the majority of voters are women, and Yudhoyono's charm and charisma attracted female voters. This, though, did not explain his popularity among men. Others contended that his popularity rose when he was seen as the "underdog" particularly after he was marginalized from the Cabinet by President Megawati and later denigrated by her husband Taufik Kiemas. Possibly closer to the truth was the fact that Yudhoyono was



considered “*santun*” by many Indonesians. Translated the word means: polite, correct, knows his manners, and is considerate of others. Indonesians are attracted by such qualities. Others were impressed by his and his running mate Jusuf Kalla’s handling of the conflicts in Maluku, Papua and Aceh seemed insurmountable tasks. A more significant reason actually came from Yudhoyono when he admitted that key was his efforts at public communication as compared to his competitors. Throughout public dialogues and the presidential debates Yudhoyono was at ease in the way he explained complicated issues to the public in simple comprehensible Bahasa Indonesia, evidenced in his explanations on the problems relating to Aceh and other conflict areas. He also had the knack of making complicated problems seem simple, and by that extension seemingly easier to resolve. On being perceived by the public as “*santun*”, Yudhoyono explained that the poverty experienced in his childhood made him understand the plight of the common people and the poor, and it was easy for him to relate to their problems. He understood that the electorate wanted simply to live in peace, earn sufficiently to send their children to school and live the simple life.

On 26 July, with a total 118,656,868 valid votes nationally (with another 2, 635,976 declared invalid) the final results of the presidential elections were announced with:

Yudhoyono – Yusuf Kalla received 39,838,184 or **33.574%** of total valid votes; Megawati – Hasyim Musyadi: 31,569,104 or **26.605%** of total valid votes;

Wiranto – Solahuddin Wahid: 26,286,788 or **22.254%** of total valid votes; Amien Rais – Siswono Yudhohusodo: 17,392,931 or **14.658%** of valid votes; and

Hamzah Haz – Agum Gumelar: 3,569,861 or **3.009%** of total valid votes.

Yudhoyono won in 13 provinces, being: Yogyakarta, Jambi, Riau Islands, Jakarta, East Java, South, Central and East Kalimantan, South and South East Sulawesi, Papua and West Irian Jaya. Wiranto came top in 7 provinces, namely: Riau, Bengkulu, West Nusatenggara, North Sulawesi, Gorontalo, Maluku and North Maluku. Megawati was top in 6 provinces, namely: North Sumatra, Bangka Belitung, Central Java, Bali, East Nusatenggara and West Kalimantan; while Amien Rais was top in Aceh Darussalam, and West Sumatra. The Megawati-Hasyim camp, however, remain undeterred with the survey results, considering it extremely biased. In the meantime, Megawati, in her capacity as President, is found extremely busy inaugurating large and small projects and meetings, thus remaining constantly in the media limelight. With a second round seemingly a head to head battle between Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla, and incumbent President Megawati and Hasyim Muzadi the media dubbed the race for the presidency as one between change or the status quo.

In her capacity as the incumbent, President, Megawati courted various political party leaders and received the support of the PPP party under leader Hamzah Haz and Golkar party Chairman, Akbar Tanjung declaring in the run-up to the second round of the election a “nationhood coalition” in the hope that the coalition made up of the largest party machineries would effectively tip the balance in her favour. Her strategy flew in the face of facts as it was evident as seen from the first round of the presidential elections that the electorate did not follow the instructions of party leaders to support a particular candidate. Megawati had hoped that the combination of party machinery and the loyalty of support base be enough for her to prevail. Unfortunately the short interval between the first and the second round of the presidential election in September was simply too short a period for her to achieve any significant change in public opinion that seeming was already formed.



The lessons from the first round of the presidential elections were noteworthy for a number of remarkable developments that should have had veteran Suharto era Indonesia watchers shaking their heads with disbelief. A first observation is that voters are now more loyal to candidates they like than to parties they traditionally support. This observation seemed to be evident in polls conducted in the run-up to the second round of the presidential elections. The 17<sup>th</sup> survey in a series of polls conducted by International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) had found that incumbent President Megawati was unlikely to benefit from the Nationhood Coalition her PDI-P had forged with the Golkar party in an attempt to increase support for her candidacy.

Indeed, the IFES survey had found that almost 80 per cent of people who said they voted for Golkar in the April parliamentary elections now intended to vote for Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The same poll suggested that figures for Amien Rais and Hamzah Haz supporters who moved their support to Yudhoyono were 41.7 per cent and 70.9 per cent respectively. The power of the Suharto era party machinery with its ability to intimidate and manipulate voter sentiment is on its way to being well and truly emasculated. A direct presidential election has effectively allowed a once oppressed electorate with freedom of choice. In reality it is now the personalities of the candidates and not agreements between party leaders that influence voter perceptions. More important was the role of the media particularly television in undermining the importance of the party activist. No longer was the rural voter dependent on party activists in the region or local leaders for direction. They could now make an assessment based on individual preferences. Megawati by contrast to Yudhoyono appeared aloof and uncommunicative in front of television cameras.

Second, party discipline and more importantly loyalty to the party leader so evident during the Suharto era is another norm slowly being cast to the dustbin of history. Witness for instance the mini-revolt within Golkar with the party's top brass having to resort to issuing official sanctions against senior members who disobeyed a directive to show support for President Megawati's reelection bid. Golkar grandees who recently spoke to the author confessed that they are in a conundrum as to how convince their grassroots cadres to observe leader Akbar Tandjung dictum to support Ms Megawati. Furthermore, it was impossible to believe that the antipathy that existed between Golkar and the PDI-P evident in the 1999 elections when supporters of both parties clashed violently on a number of occasions could be breached so easily by a mere instruction from the party elite.

Many within Golkar see Akbar's moves as a last ditch attempt at self preservation. In this sense, a win for Yudhoyono in the presidential election may embolden the pro-Yudhoyono lobby within Golkar to make their move to unseat Mr Akbar during the Golkar national congress to be held at the end of the year to elect a new leader. Mr Akbar for the time being seems intent on holding on to power. Concerns over such developments would undoubtedly prey on President Megawati's peace of mind as she knows that her candidacy is only viable if the Golkar party machinery – more effective and reliable than her PDI-P albatross – operates at full throttle.

Third, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's victories in the Nahdlatul Ulama strongholds of East Java and South Kalimantan in the first round of the presidential election has allowed the slaying of yet another sacred cow, namely the phenomenon of *politik aliran* which characterizes Indonesia's political system through the unique presence of political parties linked formally or informally through networks of social organizations. Since the 1955 elections, voters have habitually supported political parties that represented their particular cultural or political streams. Hence veteran Indonesia watchers would have expected that the



PKB backing of the Wiranto-Solahuddin Wahid team or Megawati's partnership with NU Chairman Hashim Muzadi would effectively bring victory for either presidential ticket in East Java for the first round of the presidential election.

Neither Wahid nor Muzadi despite their impeccable NU pedigree was able to influence voters who were swayed by Yudhoyono's popularity despite the fact that the Yudhoyono-Kalla team was viewed as *pinggiran NU* or peripheral NU. Likewise the outer province NU base of Hamzah Haz was no help to his presidential ambitions as he too was thrashed by Yudhoyono in his constituencies of Kalimantan. Similarly, despite the backing of Muhammadiyah leadership, Amien Rais' campaign too petered out in the end through a lack of support from the Muhammadiyah grassroots.

In the wake of such immense changes to Indonesia's political landscape could President Megawati attempt a Lazarus-like recovery? Since the spectacular decline in the popularity of her party in the April general elections, she had been less complacent and more willing to take the fight to Yudhoyono. There are advantages after all in being the incumbent as seen from her visit to West Nusa Tenggara where she dispensed government grants worth some Rp 17 billion for community development at the district level, an act replicated in other parts of the archipelago. The great imponderable was: despite a pledge of neutrality, would the Police and the Army leadership (reported to favour Megawati) through their use of informal networks sway voter sentiment? Could state officials who are also supposed to be neutral favour the incumbent? Such situations are not easily countered by Yudhoyono. However, it is rumoured that he may have benefited from a *Pam Swakarsa* (voluntary Islamic militia) operation may be mounted by Islamic forces previously loyal to Wiranto by utilising door to door visitations to encourage voters to support the Yudhoyono-Kalla ticket as well as an operation mounted by grassroots elements within military supportive of his candidacy thereby undermining moves made by Megawati strategists.

The Quick Count following the close of polls on 20 September confirmed that from data received from 1,362 sample polling stations out of the more than 500,000 stations in Indonesia's 32 provinces, encapsulating 283,442 votes of the more than 150 million registered voters, results indicated that Yudhoyono-Kalla team was ahead at 60.2% of total votes against Megawati-Hasyim Muzadi's 39.8%. The General Election Commission's electronic data analysis system also indicated that Yudhoyono was ahead in 30 of Indonesia's 32 provinces, with only in two provinces, Bali and East Nusatenggara claimed by Megawati. In Bali, which is PDIP's traditional base, Megawati won 64% over Yudhoyono's 36%, and 86% in East Nusatenggara against Yudhoyono's 14%. The capital, Jakarta, gave a landslide victory to SBY with 70% supporting him over Megawati's 30%. Following the Quick Count, South Sulawesi (home of Jusuf Kalla) gave 92% votes to Yudhoyono-Kalla team with only 8% to Megawati. In West Sumatra Yudhoyono won 85% over 15%, while the restive province Aceh produced 78% of votes for Yudhoyono and only 22% for Megawati. In the most populous province of East Java, Yudhoyono won 59% against Megawati's 41%, while Central Java, also another PDI-P stronghold, the Megawati lost to Yudhoyono garnering 49% of votes against Yudhoyono's 51%. In the new Riau Islands province, Yudhoyono won 58% against 42% for Megawati, and on mainland Riau Yudhoyono won 70% over 30% for Megawati. Even North Sumatra, another PDIP stronghold, 60% of votes went to Yudhoyono with 40% to Megawati.



Hj. Megawati Sukarnoputri      Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono/  
KH. Ahmad Hasyim Muzadi      Drs. H. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla

**Breakdown of votes**<sup>3</sup>

Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam	456.696	1.536.607
North Sumatra	2.215.861	2.561.543
West Sumatra	303.453	1.572.355
Riau	609.951	1.188.778
Jambi	400.632	915.594
South Sumatra	1.565.758	1.630.269
Bengkulu	274.498	442.423
Lampung	1.406.574	2.164.059
Kepulauan Bangka Belitung	219.416	231.034
Kepulauan Riau	194.829	366.509
DKI Jakarta	1.492.800	3.364.044
West Jawa	7.781.098	13.104.155
Central Jawa	8.409.372	8.993.963
DI Yogyakarta	776.497	1.149.059
East Jawa	8.206.244	12.137.197
Banten	1.728.202	2.913.642
Bali	1.247.009	755.350
West Nusa Tenggara	512.242	1.539.094
East Nusa Tenggara	1.115.507	438.648
West Kalimantan	942.654	950.884
Central Kalimantan	331.184	437.426
South Kalimantan	394.176	1.079.016
East Kalimantan	456.617	826.328
North Sulawesi	517.080	672.999
Central Sulawesi	243.104	855.889
South Sulawesi	551.296	3.797.672
Southeast Sulawesi	197.329	703.195
Gorontalo	199.086	274.395
Maluku	196.852	161.807
North Maluku	138.854	228.226
West Irian Jaya	44.425	60.940
Papua	70.686	143.794
Overseas voters	71.413	148.437
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.271.395/39.1183%</b>	<b>67.345.331/60.8817%</b>

Despite a reasonably good recovery by President Megawati, the commonly held view was that she had left things a little too late. There was a palpable sense among the electorate that Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono would be able to accomplish more for the Indonesian people as opposed to what the Megawati government has done over the past three years particularly in issues such as keeping prices down, improving security, creating jobs, reducing corruption, improving education and maintaining territorial integrity. With victory under his belt, the

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://tnp.kpu.go.id>.



abiding question now is whether the emerging consensual government can actually govern? The term of office of Members of Parliament concludes at the end of September, while the term of office of the incumbent President elapses on 20 October. On 20 October Indonesia's new President and Vice President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla will be officially installed with Yudhoyono promising to announce his new Cabinet, its structure and personalities immediately following his inauguration. One hopes that the remarkable political developments during an almost year long election campaign that have challenged long established political paradigms will be followed by government practices which will once again challenge conventional views on Indonesian politics allowing the country to break out of a now seven year cycle of low economic growth.