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Localizing Democracy: “Paguyuban” Movement in Opposing “Liberal Democracy” in Yogyakarta Special Regions, Indonesia

Panel: Leadership Issues

A liberalization of political system in Indonesia had created so many serious problems within the society due to the ‘unintended’ result of democratization. For instance, democratization in Sukarno’s Era by installing new parliamentary system led to the ‘guided democracy’ which is dictatorship. It is in some degree was believed as an ‘Asian Value’—authoritarian can be accepted by the people. Democratization in the New Order era led to the authoritarian’s Suharto for 32 years. Moreover, the reform era under the banner of decentralization and the third wave of democratization in Indonesia by installing ‘liberal democracy’ created a bad situation within society: localizing corruption and the emergence of ‘old’ elites. It is as the consequence if democracy is only understood as ‘procedural democracy’ (Dahl, 1971, pp.6-7). It is named by people as a liberal democracy. Besides, localizing national problem into the local, spreading corruptions as direct impacts of free competition in the election then threaten a local wisdom, communities, and voluntary organization by no mean they are the most important component of democracy.

This paper as a part of my field research for about six months in Yogyakarta Special Regions tries to discuss: (1) how is democracy understood differently by both cultural entity within regions and political entity in the central government or formal politic institution? It, then, leads to problematic relation between local politics and national government in the context of unitary state and decentralization era; (2) what is the genealogy of informal association and under what reason they get involved in local politics in opposing central government’s proposal for dismantling the local privilege of “Indigenous” people in Yogyakarta? The role of voluntary organization (‘paguyuban’) in response to the political issues both local and national must be taken into account today especially, in this paper, related to the reaction to “democratization project” which is understood as the effort of central government to dismiss the special status of Yogyakarta Regions (Governor for Life); (3) relationship between informal and formal politics and also to give a credit to the every politics of ordinary people, (4) the ideal relationship between national and local government in the democracy era that maintains both cultural value and the existence of unitary state of Indonesia.

In addition, the mobilizations of cultural and local identity are so obvious by hundreds of voluntary organizations in Yogyakarta in order to oppose the liberal democracy proposed by Jakarta. Forming a new common enemy, then, created mass solidarity under the banner of ‘Kawulo Mataram’ to keep their own tradition—*pis holopis kuntul baris*. They were protesting democracy as one man one vote mechanism, and with self-determination, showing that “Westerned democracy” is not the only way in bringing society into the better prosperity. It is caused in the liberal society, like Greg Palast (2004) said that “The best Democracy Money Can Buy”. Meanwhile, the poor natural resources also contribute to the ‘radicalization’ of “Paguyuban” movement because the central government underestimated the superiority of local identity, the role of sultanate, and historical background of Yogyakarta in the revolution periods. The resistance to change movement as collective identity movement today is still going on and there are

various ways to express. We can see a lot of banner in the street as the symbol of opposition, for example: "We are proud of being Indonesian but We are more proud of being Yogyakartaans"; "We love peace, but we do love a Governor for Life"; "Special Status Go ahead, Appointed is the only option"; "People of Yogyakarta Resist to Change"; "Yogyakartaans are ready to Referendum"; " In Death, In Life, we follow Sultan"; " Freedom or Special Status", and so on.