

BOOK REVIEW

REVIEW OF MAX LANE (ED.), *CONTINUITY AND CHANGE AFTER INDONESIA'S REFORMS: CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN ONGOING ASSESSMENT*. SINGAPORE: ISEAS PUBLISHING, 2019. 274PP. ISBN: 978-981-4843-22-5 (SOFTCOVER)

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Indonesia's re-elected president Joko Widodo, or better known as Jokowi, recently formed his new cabinet which included a few politicians from the self-serving old political forces who are not committed to reforms. The most shocking and disturbing is the appointment of Jokowi's rival, Ex-general Prabowo Subianto, as defence minister. Prabowo has been accused of committing many human rights violations in the past including masterminding the kidnapping of student and social activists as well as the anti-Chinese riots throughout the country in 1998, although he denied such accusations. Ironically, the cover of Max Lane's edited volume *Continuity and change after Indonesia's reforms: Contributions to an ongoing assessment* written before the 2019 presidential and legislative elections featuring a photo of Jokowi sitting side by side with Prabowo and having a friendly discussion with each other seems like a prediction of both politicians' close working relationship in the near future, as exemplified by Jokowi's recent cabinet formation.

This edited volume offers a collection of articles on Indonesian politics in the post-Soeharto era, with particular attention paid to the election of Jokowi in 2014 and the first term of his presidency (2014-2019), which have not been examined in detail in any other scholarly works. They are based on a workshop held at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore in March 2018. The volume consists of an introduction by the editor that is followed by 10 contributions.

In the introduction “Indonesia’s new politics: Transaction without contestation”, Max Lane gives an overview of Indonesia’s politics since the fall of Soeharto in May 1998. He points out that the opening up of a much more open and democratic political environment has led to the proliferation of political parties in the country. However, as he correctly notes, this is “not a reflection of different class representation, but rather of different fragments or factions of the best-resourced class” (p. 7), thanks to the “[u]norganized, dispersed geographically” (p. 7) working class and peasant farmers who are too weak to compete with the best-resourced class or domestic bourgeoisie in politics. This is a legacy of Soeharto’s era that excluded the working class and peasant farmers “from any meaningful political life” (p. 7). This resulted in the lack of significant ideological differences among the parties. In addition, despite being a reform-minded and relatively clean leader, Jokowi had to form his cabinet based on deals with other political parties that mostly “represent[ed] continuity with New Order politics and personalities” (p. 8). This became even worse after Jokowi was re-elected in this year’s presidential election as he included the notorious ex-general Prabowo in the cabinet, as mentioned earlier in this review.

Echoing Lane’s argument, Ulla Fionna in her chapter “Indonesian parties twenty years on: Personalism and professionalization amidst dealignment” attests that the political parties in post-Soeharto Indonesia lack significant progress and have institutionalised many negative influence and practices inherited from the New Order. These include “lack of clear or explicit ideology, money politics, and lethargic parliamentary work” (p. 38).

Mada Sukmajati’s chapter “Ideologies of Joko Widodo and Indonesian political parties” analyses the policies of Jokowi and his rival Prabowo in the 2014 presidential election. The chapter also examines the connection between Jokowi’s policies in 2014-2017 and the ideologies of the political parties backing him as well as those opposing him. Sukmajati points out that there was no significant difference between the missions offered by both candidates because their policies were based on populism, focusing on the improvement of infrastructure in the country. After Jokowi came to power, he had to conduct negotiations with both the parties backing him and his political opponents in implementing his policies. Jokowi offered space for compromise in some policies, “leading up to several planned policies not being implemented” (p. 67). But at the same time, he refused to compromise on other policies such as transportation infrastructure development that dealt directly with the populace. This was to secure his popular political legitimacy.

Rizky Alif Alvian in his chapter “Political Islam movements and democracy in Indonesia: A changing landscape?” deals with Indonesia’s political

Islam movements' shift of strategies in facing the democratic institutions and discourse that emerged after Soeharto. Such institutions and discourse generally excluded political Islam groups. In order to advance their interests, some political Islam groups adjusted their ideologies and political involvement to ensure their compatibility with Pancasila, the national ideology. The government disbanded those that were deemed incompatible with Pancasila.

Wawan Mas'udi's "Creating leadership legitimacy in post-reform Indonesia" echoes Lane's argument that due to the continued political dominance of the old elites, in order to develop his leadership legitimacy, Jokowi had to include not only reformist aspirants but also "parties' self-interests, and even New Order proponents" in his cabinet. This resulted in his ambiguous position on reform agendas, including human rights investigation and economic development that benefitted ordinary citizens (p. 123).

The politics of the middle class in post-Soeharto Indonesia is the central theme of Amalinda Savirani's chapter "The political middle class in post-Soeharto Indonesia". Savirani reveals that "different sections of the middle class have expanded their political roles into more and varied arenas than in the previous era" (p. 128). But they are not homogeneous ideologically. Those having careers in national and local politics tend to be inward-looking and pro-status quo because of their dependence on state resources. Conversely, those who are active in the civil society arena do not depend on state resources and hence are "generally outward looking [*sic*] and progressive" (p. 143). However, Savirani also points out that their form of mobilisation lacks systematic consolidation because it is generally "based on spontaneity and voluntary" (p. 143).

Cornelis Lay's chapter "The politics of central-local relations in contemporary Indonesia" explores the dynamic power relations between the central government in Jakarta and the regional governments, focusing on decentralisation between 1998 and 2014, and the simultaneous existence of decentralisation and recentralisation since 2014. The emergence of recentralisation is due to Jokowi's prioritisation of infrastructure development throughout the country that involves several nationally decided projects.

Leo Agustino chapter "The roots and actors of corruption in the political realm" reveals a very disturbing phenomenon in post-Soeharto Indonesia, i.e. the increase in corrupt practices especially among government officials and politicians. The main factors behind this phenomenon are the explosion of election campaigning costs after the opening up of democratic space and the weakening roles as well as duties of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK- *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*). Some forms of weakening the KPK include the arrest of its commissioners by the police when they are handling major

corruption cases and the attempted dissolution of the KPK through legislation by the House of Representatives. In other words, the political dominance of self-serving politicians is the major obstacle of corruption eradication in the country.

Ahmad Rizky Mardhatillah Umar, in his chapter on Indonesia's foreign policy reform after Soeharto points out that Indonesia only achieved limited reform in its foreign policy in the post-Soeharto era. Its foreign security and economic policies are still significantly shaped by the United States, just like during Soeharto's era. Umar argues that one of the reasons is the limited participation of the public, especially civil society organisations and pressure groups, in foreign policy decision-making, thanks to "the legacy of foreign policy as a technocratic or highly elitist matter" (p. 207).

Richard Chauvel's "Papua under the Joko Widodo presidency" examines the human rights issues in Papua after Jokowi came to power. Chauvel points out that despite Jokowi's relatively stronger interest in Papua compared to his predecessors and his frequent visit to the province, the conflict and human rights violations there still remained unsolved. As Chauvel notes, "there has not been any fundamental change in the central government's approach to Papua" (p. 231). This is because Jokowi only prioritised the development of infrastructure throughout the country but never paid attention to human rights issues.

The last chapter by Yatun Sastramidjaja examines youth activism in post-Soeharto Indonesia. According to Sastramidjaja, young people involved in youth activism generally identify themselves as leftist (like their predecessors during Soeharto's rule), and they have been very critical and actively opposing neoliberal policies in higher education as well as other sectors in society. But they have yet been able to pose any significant challenge to the entrenched politics of Indonesia due to the selective suppression of the government. As Sastramidjaja notes, this indicates "the lasting legacy of the New Order system of oppression" (p. 257).

Overall, the chapters in this volume present a disturbing picture of Indonesia after the fall of Soeharto and the election of Jokowi as president: democratic without substantial reforms. The anti-reforms old elites continue to dominate Indonesian politics due to the weak and fragmented civil society. The recent appointment of Prabowo as defence minister makes any hope for significant positive reforms under Jokowi's second term even gloomier.