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# Literature on Indonesia's Democratisation: Plenty of Empirical Details, Lack of Theories

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## ABSTRACT

*This essay focuses on the literature on the circumstances surrounding the fall of Indonesian president Suharto in 1998. It is argued here that the analysis on the chain of events were generally fact based, while comprehensive analysis on how and why the country will survive such turbulent situations is lacking. This focus on event is clearly reflected in how the authors elaborate on the day-to-day event around the period of Suharto's resignation. Nonetheless, although analytical works are lacking, the trend suggest that there will be much more emphasis on the subsequent developments.*

**Key words:** *Indonesia, Indonesian politics, democratisation, reformasi*

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In this report I review 24 of the available literature on democratization in Indonesia. Prior to this report I have done similar task on literature of theories of democratisation, and in this essay I wish to find out whether any of the theories of democratisation has been applied in any of the works I look at. The theories of democratisation are mainly derived from the experiences of Western countries, but they are accepted as universal – which means that they should be applicable to non-Western countries, including Indonesia. The questions that I want to answer with this essay are: which theories of democratisation are used in the literature, to what extent do they refer to the theories, and are the publications generally optimistic or pessimistic about the prospect of democratisation in Indonesia.

The literature observed in this essay includes books, journals, and dissertation theses written about Indonesia's transition to democracy. Only two of the works that I examine here were written before the fall of Suharto in 1998, the rest had been written around and after Suharto resigned. Indonesia attracts more attention for scholarly work after the fall of Suharto's authoritarian regime, because of two main reasons. First, there is much less censorship for publications, and thus there is more freedom in writing.<sup>2</sup> Second, the degree of uncertainty in Indonesian politics post-Suharto is such that there is a strong 'temptation' to predict what the next development would be.

I categorise the literature into two major groups – *general* and *specific*. The *general* group focuses on the

overall development of the democratisation process; while the *specific* group examines one particular area that is changing. Typically the areas of interest of the specific group are, among others, Islam, political parties, and women – issues that are influential for the progress of Indonesia's democratisation. I divided the general group into two sub-groups, the *empiric* and *analytic*. The empiric works emphasise details – facts and figures on the works; while the analytic stress on assessing the situation.

The conclusion of this essay is that there is very limited theoretical reference in the scholarly works on democratisation in Indonesia. Much emphasis has been placed on providing details and extensive data or on providing specific points to support arguments. Another conclusion is that the general overview of the literature observed in this essay paint a pessimistic view in terms of prediction for Indonesia's democratisation. The obstacles to build a more democratic Indonesia are seriously massive, that even seven years (and three presidents) after the fall of Suharto, the sign of progress is still not strong enough to convince the authors to predict differently.

## General Empiric

In this section I look at four books written about Indonesian politics around the fall of Suharto. Generally the books focus on providing the stories behind Suharto's resignation and look at the intrigues

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<sup>2</sup> During the New Order era, there could be no publications that can be negative publications for government.

surrounding the change of government in the country. The four books provide extensive data and details in the series of events that led to the fall of Suharto's regime in Indonesia. There are no theories used in any of the books. The sources used in the books are from general Indonesian publications (newspapers and magazines), as well as interviews with public figures, politicians, and observers of Indonesian politics.

The first book is by Kevin O'Rourke<sup>3</sup> *Reformasi: The struggle for power in post-Soeharto Indonesia*; published in 2002. Divided into 3 parts which is divided further into 23 chapters, the 499-page book provides extensive details on Indonesian politics during the New Order with a special focus on important events around Suharto's resignation. O'Rourke also pays a lot of attention to KKN (*Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme* or Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism) in Indonesia.

Although generally the book follows chronological order, O'Rourke tends to jump from one story to another rather abruptly.<sup>4</sup> The subtitle of 'struggle for power' does somewhat describe the content which covered Habibie and Gus Dur's presidencies. However, about half of the book described the 'flaws' of the New Order government, and only chapter 18 discussed the very influential back-dealing by the parties, which is more relevant to the subtitle. There is no theory referred in this book. O'Rourke also fails to present a prediction of Indonesia's prospect for democracy although he hinted that there are massive problems that the country is facing.

Adam Schwarz<sup>5</sup> wrote an updated edition of *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability* in 1999.<sup>6</sup> This update version contains 12 chapters in 533 pages. There is a historical approach in this book, with the overview of Indonesia politics during Sukarno in the first chapter. The next eight chapters discussed the 'features' of the New Order government, with special attention to KKN (in chapters 4–6). The last chapter highlights the issues that Indonesia has to handle urgently, such as communal violence and political stability.

Schwarz' book falls into the category of empirical works because there is extensive data in his book. He

also presented cases study to describe a particular phenomenon (Schwarz 1999: 109–115, 144–145). He referred to a huge body of literature, newspapers and magazines, as well as interviews with various public figures and politicians. Schwarz' book has no theoretical reference. In the last section, he summed up pessimistically by saying: "Indonesia's path to democratic reform is almost certain to be long and strewn with obstacles", which is further emphasised with "... all that one can confidently say of Indonesia's short-term prospects is that they are uncertain" (Schwarz 1999: 433, 435).

Kees van Dijk<sup>7</sup> wrote *A country in despair: Indonesia between 1997 and 2000*, published in 2001. The 621-page book in twenty chapters started by discussing the 1997 election, which followed by the description of economic crisis. Chronologically, the book then focused on the increasing pressure and the resignation of Suharto. Similar to the first two books in this section, van Dijk also highlighted Indonesia's problems such as KKN and communal violence. In chapters 17 and 18, there were extensive collection of cases and events that took place in 1998–1999, which showed the weaknesses of Indonesian government to tackle pressing issues such as law reform and communal violence. Thus, although there was no personal analysis from van Dijk about Indonesia's situation, he hinted that judging by the events that took place from 1997–2000, Indonesia has serious problems to deal with before moving forward to become more democratic.

Jeremy Allan<sup>8</sup> gave his insights of what happened in Jakarta in 1998 in his *Jakarta Jive*, published in 2001. His 225-page book in twenty chapters reads like a novel of true story about what he experienced in Jakarta around the chaotic period in 1998. There were details about the riot and student shooting in May 1998 at the start of the book. Because of the fact that the book is based on personal encounters, there is no mention about what happened in the government – unlike the first three books in this section. Allan's book is about what happened to the people affected by the policies of policy-makers, and stories about his daily life and family in Jakarta; which happened to coincide with the dramatic events in 1998.

<sup>3</sup> O'Rourke is a former *Van Zorge Report* journalist, a bi-weekly journal on Indonesian politics and economics.

<sup>4</sup> In then first three pages, O'Rourke moved from one short story to describing Suharto and Sukarno (O'Rourke 2002: 3–5).

<sup>5</sup> Schwarz is a business consultant specialising in Southeast Asia and an adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University; and also correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

<sup>6</sup> The first edition was published in 1994, minus the two last chapters in the second edition.

<sup>7</sup> Van Dijk is chair professor in the history of Islam in Indonesia at Leiden University, the Netherlands.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Allan is a copywriter who lived in Indonesia for two decades.

The four books discussed so far have no theoretical references and limited analysis in them. Only Schwarz' book provided the author's opinion, while the rest are more of compilation of data from resources, in Allan's book's case, his life in Jakarta. Consequently, the book carries different functions as well. Allan book provides a light reading material, while O'Rourke's and van Dijk's are particularly useful to refer to when looking for details about the events behind and around the fall of Suharto in 1998. Although Schwarz' book also has no theoretical reference, his analysis of what Indonesia needs to handle (in the last chapter) – which he wrote in 1998–1999, remained accurate until present.

## Analytic

This section focuses on nine items of scholarly work on Indonesia's democratisation. All but two of the items were finished being written after the fall of Suharto, and thus tend to focus on the obstacles for Indonesia to democratise. The other two items attempted to assess the prospect of democratisation in Indonesia when Suharto was still around. As for the post-Suharto books, three are results of conferences, and three are compilation of articles. The items do not emphasise empirical descriptions of events, and concentrate on personal analysis and arguments of authors.

Anders Uhlin wrote *Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratisation": The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World*, which was published in 1997. Uhlin assesses the democracy movements in Indonesia as being influenced by Huntington's Third Wave of Democratisation. He gave elaborate explanations of theories from which he drew his research and specified his research questions which are related to the domestic pro-democracy movements in Indonesia and the diffusion of ideas on democracy from outside the country (Uhlin 1997: 3–4, 13). The theories that he discussed, among others, were theories on normative and empirical democracy (by Sartori and Dahl) and democratisation and democratic transition (by O'Donnell and Schmitter) (Uhlin 1997: 8–16).

He divided his book into two parts (in eleven chapters and 293 pages) – one part looks at the domestic factors of democratisation and the other on international influence for democratisation. He clearly identified and examined the aspects (e.g.: state structure and Islam), and actors (e.g.: NGOs and individuals); that could influence and were playing important roles in the progress of Indonesia's democratisation (Uhlin 1997: 63–127). However, Uhlin stopped short of predicting the prospect of democracy's progress in Indonesia. In the end of his book, he focused more on the international aspect of democratisation in Indonesia and concluded that influence from overseas are often adjusted by Indonesian pro-democracy actors to suit Indonesian culture and norms.

Leo Suryadinata<sup>9</sup> wrote "Democratisation and Political Succession in Suharto's Indonesia", published in *Asian Survey* in 1997. He started the 11-page article by noting that Suharto's authoritarian regime was softening at that time, proven by the weakening of Indonesian army's (ABRI or *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*) role in politics, the increasing popularity of ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* or Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals), and the higher frequency of student and trade unionist street demonstrations (Suryadinata 1997: 269). However, he quickly argued that Suharto limited his 'allowance' of such movements only to the point where his popularity could rise, and that he would not allow liberal democratisation to take place in Indonesia (Suryadinata 1997: 277).

David Bouchier<sup>10</sup> and Vedi Hadiz<sup>11</sup> edited *Indonesian Politics and Society: A reader*, published in 2003. The book is a compilation of speeches, pamphlets, manifestos, and poems – most of which translated from Indonesian. The items were especially chosen to represent a specific position in the political debate or because they spoke about historical turning points (Bouchier & Hadiz 2003: 1). The editors provided background information on Indonesian politics at the start of the book, as well as 'set-up' for each time period they featured in the book. There are four parts in the book based on time

<sup>9</sup> Leo Suryadinata is a Professor in the Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore.

<sup>10</sup> David Bouchier is Chair of Asian Studies at the University of Western Australia. Vedi R. Hadiz teaches at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore; and Fellow of the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, Australia.

<sup>11</sup> Vedi R. Hadiz teaches at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore; and Fellow of the Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University, Australia.

periods: 1965–1973, the start and later part of New Order, and the reform era. Each part is divided into chapters, each chapter has five to eleven items – arranged in 326 pages.

This book presented short writings to describe a particular point in Indonesian history. The issues dealt with in this book ranges from the more major issues such as political debate, to the more ‘minor’ issues such as gender and environment. There is a balance between pro- and anti- government items on the part of New Order government. The book dedicated a special part to emphasise the process of democratisation in Indonesia by highlighting documents to portray government’s stand and various suggestions from public figures and a prominent Indonesian think-tank (Bourchier & Hadiz 2003: 188–211, 216–232, 258–272). The last part focusing on Indonesia post-Suharto, includes convictions that reform in Indonesia is imperative (Bourchier & Hadiz 2003: 280–308). However, there is no prediction on how that reform is going to progress in the country.

*Post-Suharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?* edited by Geoff Forrester was published in 1999. The 255-page book is the result of the annual Indonesian Update conference at ANU (Australian National University) in September 1998. The experts speaking at the conference had to assess Indonesia’s situation four and a half months after Suharto resigned a task that is especially difficult as Indonesia has just arrived at the transition period, and the direction where the country is headed was still very uncertain. In the area of politics, the dramatic changes that were taking place in Indonesia forced the presenters to be pessimistic about the progress of democracy (Forrester 1999: 1–2). In economics, the scale of economic problems has formed a rather bleak outlook from the experts.<sup>12</sup> In the field of society, the problems of national integration shaped a prediction that was similarly grim (Forrester 1999: 1–5–6, 10–11). Theoretical reference was missing from the book, but the analyses from the experts provide insightful account of the prospect of Indonesia’s democratisation. Although objectivity

of opinion might not be fully guaranteed,<sup>13</sup> the experts demonstrated that they have bases for their arguments.

Another book that is resulted from an academic gathering is *Indonesia in Transition: Rethinking ‘Civil Society’, ‘Region’, and ‘Crisis’*, edited by Hanneman Samuel<sup>14</sup> and Henk Schulte Nordholt,<sup>15</sup> published in 2004. The book is a product of a workshop held at Universitas Indonesia in 2003, aimed to assess the changes in Indonesia from different perspectives. At the heart of this 252-page book are articles looking at latest developments in different regions in Indonesia. Most contributors to this book focused on issues such as local politics and regional identity in various cities and ethnic groups (Samuel & Nordholt 2004: 107–128, 147–174, 197–222).

As with other works discussed in this essay, there is very limited reference to theories in this book.<sup>16</sup> In the introduction part, the two editors referred to earlier prominent works on Indonesia, and experiences of other countries, but no specific reference to theories of democratisation (Samuel & Nordholt 2004: 2–13). There are up-to-date data on the particular area presented by the articles focusing on a particular area. The last chapter is somewhat misleading – its title suggested that it will discuss the overview of Indonesia post-Suharto; but it actually focused on how Suharto’s government ‘shaped’ the way Indonesian children think and live.<sup>17</sup> Overall, this book is useful to get a picture of latest development in some areas in Indonesia.

Donald Emmerson<sup>18</sup> edited *Indonesia Beyond Suharto*, published in 1999. The book is a compilation of articles written by Western academics, divided into four parts: polity, economy, society, and transition. There are 11 chapters in this 395-page book. The aspects dealt with in this book ranges from political and economic developments, to religion and freedom of expression in Indonesia. The last chapters of the book focus on the crisis in 1997–1998, and the East Timor referendum in 1999. In the foreword, Emmerson claims that this book provides “both a survey of Indonesia’s post-

<sup>12</sup> Evans and Djiwandono had used the term *krisis* or *krisis total* (total crisis) to describe the economic situation in Indonesia at that time (Forrester 1999: 4).

<sup>13</sup> Dewi Fortuna Anwar made a positive assessment of Habibie’s government, but she works for Habibie Center, a think-tank that is founded by Habibie himself.

<sup>14</sup> Hanneman Samuel is Chief Sociologist for Social Development at the LabSocio of Universitas Indonesia.

<sup>15</sup> Henk Schulte Nordholt teaches Asian History at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam (The Netherlands).

<sup>16</sup> One of the references is in the article on globalisation (Samuel & Nordholt 2004: 18).

<sup>17</sup> Patricia Spyer, “*Belum stabil*: Some Signs of the Times in Post-Soeharto Indonesia” (Samuel & Nordholt 2004: 235–250).

<sup>18</sup> Donald K. Emmerson is a senior fellow at Stanford University’s Asia/Pacific Research Center and a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

independence development and a multidisciplinary assessment” of the issues that are urgently needed to be tackled (Emmerson 1999: vii). He also claims that the book does not attempt to predict the future of democratisation in Indonesia, but aims to assess political, economic, and social factors “that have shaped Indonesia’s developmental successes and its latest crisis” (Emmerson 1999: vii).

The book started with a short history of Indonesia by Robert Cribb and then the features of New Order regime is highlighted by William Liddle.<sup>19</sup> The achievements of New Order are also discussed but then weaknesses that come as the cost of rapid economic development were quickly revealed.<sup>20</sup> The other chapters focus on the flaws of Suharto’s government, such as KKN, women issues, and censorship. Although there is no theoretical reference, special attention is paid to make sure that the articles are coherent by asking contributors refer to one another’s articles. There are no predictions on how Indonesia’s progress would be, but the general sentiment of the book seems to picture a rather pessimistic view.

Council on Foreign Relations<sup>21</sup> Study Group in Indonesia’s meetings resulted in *The Politics of Post-Suharto Indonesia*, edited by Adam Schwarz and Jonathan Paris<sup>22</sup> – published in 1999. The study group wanted to fill up the missing attention from the United States government towards the world’s fourth most populous country, and when Indonesia’s problems become more severe the group meetings became livelier. There are five chapters in the 120-page book, written by prominent experts on Indonesia. The issues discussed in the book ranges from politics, military, economic crisis, and Islam – these are discussions that drew most attention from the study group.

The reference to theories in this book is limited to Hefner’s article that referred to theories on political Islam (Schwarz & Paris 1999: 68). The other articles use data from newspapers and other publications, with no consultation to theoretical works. Since the study group was established as somewhat a critique against the policies of the US government towards

Indonesia, the last section in the last chapter of the book that focuses on suggestions on what the US government should do in the future – basically the suggestion is that the US should establish a more coherent policy that is aimed to provide aid for Indonesia (Schwarz & Paris 1999: 105–111). Overall conclusion from this book is that the road to build a more democratic Indonesia is not a smooth one. Without theoretical reference, the study group agrees that there are serious obstacles that challenge Indonesia’s leaders.

Another book that resulted from ANU’s annual Indonesian Update is *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, edited by Grayson Lloyd<sup>23</sup> and Shannon Smith<sup>24</sup> and published in 2001. The 359-page book is organised into five parts (25 chapters): recent developments, political history, economic history, social history, and looking forward. Contributors to this book took historical approach when looking at aspects such as: political parties and parliament, ideology, political leadership, women’s status, poverty, economic development, and decentralisation. The articles attempted to find a particular aspect in history ‘which impact on perceptions of the present and expectations for the future’. Message from this book is that there is a need to look at Indonesian history to find explanations of what has been going on in the country.

The book concluded that – similar to the other books in this essay – Indonesia’s future is uncertain and the path to a ‘better’ Indonesia lies in the hands of Indonesian leaders, political parties, and the army (Lloyd & Smith 2001: 316). Perhaps because of the historical nature of this book, theoretical reference is missing – and there are plenty of data in the articles on various historical accounts. The book argues that there is clear relationship between the events that are currently developing and how history has shaped the society (Lloyd & Smith 2001: 313).

Charles U. Zenzie wrote “Indonesia’s New Political Spectrum” in *Asian Survey*, which looked at the various competing political leaders. In the 21-page article, he focused on the dynamics of interaction between the major parties – especially the

<sup>19</sup> See chapters 1 and 2 of Emmerson’s book (Emmerson 1999).

<sup>20</sup> See chapters 4 and 5 of Emmerson’s book (Emmerson 1999).

<sup>21</sup> The Council on Foreign Relations, Inc. is a nonprofit, nonpartisan national membership organisation aimed to promoting understanding of international affairs.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Paris is a Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations specialising in the Middle East and Indonesia.

<sup>23</sup> At the time of publication, Grayson J. Lloyd was a PhD candidate at Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.

<sup>24</sup> Shannon L. Smith is an observer at Indonesian Political and Economic Affairs, Canberra.

leaders. In terms of time range, the article is limited to the predictions for the 1999 election, especially on which parties will form alliances and which scenarios are the most possible (Zenzie 1999: 263–264). Although theoretical reference is missing, there are extensive details on the major parties in Indonesia – as Zenzie provided short histories on the parties and explained the latest development on each of them.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, after presenting possible scenarios of coalitions among parties, there is also no analysis on whether any of the scenarios mentioned would be particularly beneficial for the progress of Indonesia's democratisation.

All the items in this sub-section are useful in understanding the general dynamic of Indonesian politics post-Suharto. Although short of prediction and theories, analyses from the experts help contribute to obtain different perspectives about the progress of democracy in Indonesia. Furthermore, the fact that there are routine meetings and conferences that focus on Indonesia is very encouraging for everyone who studies Indonesia or have interests in the country.

## Specific

In this section I look at eleven scholarly works that examines one particular area in the development of democracy in Indonesia. There are six books, four journal articles and one dissertation; which represent a list of growing<sup>26</sup> literature on the subject. Aspects that attract particular attention, among others, are political parties, decentralisation, disintegration, Islam and the military.

On the topic of political parties, Koirudin has contributed his book, *Partai Politik dan Agenda Transisi Demokrasi* (Political Parties and Democratic Transition Agenda). The book has six chapters in 214 pages. The focus of this book is the development of post-Suharto political parties and how they live up to the expectation of being one of the pillars of Indonesian democratisation. The book started with historical approach of the emergence of parties in general and in Indonesia, then focus on the development of Indonesian parties post-Suharto. At the end of the book there are suggestions on how parties should perform according to theories.

Effectiveness of the parties was judged through how they perform their functions, such as recruitment, political communication, and interest accommodation. Although very detail and theoretical in elaboration, Koirudin applied the theories on the aggregate of parties – instead on individual ones (Koirudin 2004: 86–104). What resulted from that was an overview of the condition which seems too general. There might well be deviation from the broad description of the situation and Koirudin failed to acknowledge that. Although there is no specific prediction on the progress of democracy, suggestions on how the parties should improve themselves are indications of how Koirudin felt about the progress of Indonesian party life.

A second book that focused on parties is *Menggugat Partai Politik*, edited by Mahrus Irsyam and Lili Romli. The 6-chapter 226-page book was inspired by the discussions in one of Indonesia's leading universities, Universitas Indonesia. Published in 2003, the book is a critique of the performance of Indonesian parties thus far. Each contributor in this book – mostly well-known Indonesian political observers, focused on one aspect, such as recruitment, effectiveness of parties as medium to express political aspirations, and party leadership. Political theories from Western scholars are widely used in this book (Irsyam & Romli 2003: 3, 24, 71, 112). Although Indonesian parties are premature to compare with their Western counterparts, suggestion for the parties to shift their focuses on the electorate instead of themselves is still worth applying (Irsyam & Romli 2003: 144).

Dan Slater wrote “Indonesia's Accountability Trap: Party Cartels and Presidential Power after Democratic Transition” in the journal *Indonesia*, October 2004. Slater sees the dynamics of presidential election in Indonesia as a result of negotiation and interaction between the major parties. He based his argument on Katz and Mair's cartel party theory, which basically argues that there is an increasingly close relationship between party and the state, where “parties become agents of the state and employ the resources of the state to ensure their own collective survival” (Slater 2004: 65). He argues that there is very low democratic accountability for Indonesian president because the parties have more power to

<sup>25</sup> Zenzie focused on PDI-P, PKB, Partai Golkar, PAN, PPP, and PBB (Zenzie 1999: 247–262).

<sup>26</sup> The censorship on publication in Indonesia has been lifted, and the uncertainty of Indonesia condition has attracted even more attention in writing about the country.

fail him/her, while the voters have no influence to change the parties' decision (Slater 2004: 64). Thus, an effective voter choice to elect a leader is seriously undermined under this scheme. Slater argues further that this informal networks would most likely still play important part in the success of Indonesian leaders, and so the democracy in Indonesia is somewhat tainted by this (Slater 2004: 89–90).

Paige Johnson Tan wrote "Anti-Party Reaction in Indonesia: Causes and Implications", in *Contemporary Southeast Asia* in 2002. She explores how the Indonesian parties have been somewhat curtailed by actions such as the creation of Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (Senate) – which is a party-less institution to create an independent constitutional commission; election laws were revised to limit the power of parties, and the public reaction in anti-party backlash (Tan 2002: 484). Tan worries that the reactions might contain the seeds of delegitimation of the political parties in the near future (Tan 2002: 506). She believes that political parties – together with the functioning legal and civil society are important keys to Indonesian democracy; thus the uncontrolled anti-party reaction could cripple parties and democracy (Tan 2002: 506).

Disintegration is the focus of Harold Crouch's article "Democratisation and the Threat of Disintegration", published in *Southeast Asian Affairs* in the year 2000. Crouch highlighted the effects of East Timor independence and look at possible fall-out of whether other regions would follow suit (Crouch 2000: 123). One of Crouch's suggestions is the reduction of military role in politics, as one of the keys to formulating policies that can keep the problematic areas content (Crouch 2000: 128). In the conclusion, Crouch argues that Indonesia's multifaceted problems are tremendous challenge to handle (Crouch 2000: 132).

Donald Porter wrote *Managing Politics and Islam in Indonesia*, published in 2003. The book is organised into 11 chapters in 264 pages. The focus of the book is the efforts of Indonesian government to exclude Islamic organisations, to control and limit their activities and influence (Porter 2003: 237). Porter explores the concept of Indonesia's state corporatism – the policies to manipulate Islamic organisation, Islamic parties, and even Islamic

education to regulate the dynamics of Islamic life in Indonesia. At the same time, Indonesian government created state organisations to achieve similar goals – manage Islamic activities. Porter believes that with the instalment of Habibie as Suharto's replacement, "the days of corporatist exclusion was over", but the people in power still relied on "the politics of exclusion".<sup>27</sup>

Aspinall and Fealy edited *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Decentralisation and Democratisation*, published in 2003. The 303-page book contains an update of the implementation of decentralisation in Indonesia since 1999, the topic of ANU's annual Indonesian Update.<sup>28</sup> Contributors of this book presented case studies from different regions in Indonesia to describe the practice of decentralisation in the areas. The 17-chapter-book argues that although the changes that were brought by decentralisation process were major, reality seems to point to the fact that the impacts have been trivial (Aspinall & Fealy 2003: 259). There is minimal co-ordination from the central government, and corruption is still rampant (Aspinall & Fealy 2003: 259). The book thinks that there needs to be an overhaul of central government administration to synchronise the whole decentralisation process – which is nowhere to be seen, yet (Aspinall & Fealy 2003: 273). Theoretical reference in this book is replaced by comparison with studies from other countries, such as Philippines and Brazil (Aspinall & Fealy 2003: 275–290).

The problems of decentralisation has also been the focus of Nankyung Choi's dissertation, entitled *Democratisation, Decentralisation, and Local Party Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia*, completed in September 2003. She focused on the area of Yogyakarta, and found that there is a wide gap between "formal democracy (i.e.: institutional aspect of the political system) and substantive democratisation (i.e.: institutionalisation of democratic practices in the day-to-day political behaviour of political actors" (Choi 2003: 194). She pointed to the fact that money politics and corruption is still rampant, and general public is become apathetic of politics (Choi 2003: 195–197). She uses extensive theoretical reference from democracy and democratisation theories (Choi 2003: 1–25), and concluded that there is a danger of

<sup>27</sup> Porter gave examples of this politics: denying representation in the MPR to opposition parties, intimidation, and repression (Porter 2003: 232).

<sup>28</sup> The process of decentralization in Indonesia was based on Laws 22 and 25 of 1999 (Aspinall & Fealy 2003: 3).

Indonesia becoming an ‘unconsolidated democracy’, if the state remains weak in handling the situation (Choi 2003: 198–200).

Edward Aspinall has published his thesis in 2005, entitled *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia*. At the core of this 328-page book, Aspinall presented a typology of opposition that was derived from Juan Linz<sup>29</sup> typology of organised opposition; which are: alegal opposition (dissident groups), proto-opposition (non-governmental organisation), mobilisational opposition (student dissent), and semiopposition (PDI – Partai Demokrasi Indonesia or Indonesian Democratic Party) (Aspinall 2005: 85). In the ten chapters, he argues that although Suharto has heavily controlled opposition in Indonesia, the combination of coercion and cooptation has eventually moulded an opposition that is effective in deteriorating the legitimacy of an authoritarian rule; although it is ineffective in creating an alternative to the state ideology or leadership (Aspinall 2005: 2).

A prominent Indonesian military observer, Jun Honna, observed the developments of Indonesian military after Suharto’s resignation in *Military Politics and Democratization in Indonesia*, published in 2003. In this 8-chapter 300-page book Honna examines how the Indonesian military has changed from Suharto era to an era without him as a patron. He argues that Suharto’s fall brought the military to a weaker state, caused by the missing control that Suharto used to pose on it for his personal interests (Honna 2003: 197). Indonesian military has now less influence and personnel in governmental posts, and yet Suharto’s legacy still enables it to linger around Indonesian politics. Thus, although Suharto’s demise has promoted democratisation in the military, it remains to be seen how the military leaders would shape military role in the country (Honna 2003: 209).

The journal Indonesia in October 2000 presented an analysis entitled “Changes in Civil-Military Relations since the Fall of Suharto”. The changes of military personnel has been influential since the New Order, but they have become focus of even more attention of Suharto’s demise, since there has been much more uncertainty surrounding the process. This article presented detailed tables of the changes and analysis of structural changes in the military (The Editors 2000: 125–137). The article argues that Indonesian army has serious challenges in order to

have a more acceptable more in the future Indonesia (The Editors 2000: 137). However, what is also not acceptable by the military is a civilian controlled military, something that the article thinks, has to happen in Indonesia.

## Concluding

The growth of literature on democratisation in Indonesia will continue at least for now. The variety of issues to deal with in them is immense, and so is the challenge to contribute in predicting the future of Indonesia’s young democracy. The scope and aspects of the problems in Indonesia is massive making it difficult to forecast. Although the literature has so far acknowledged that there are progress being made, the works analysed in this essay has also agreed that Indonesia still has a long way to go before finalising its transitional period to democracy.

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<sup>29</sup> Juan J. Linz is a prominent democracy and democratisation theorist.

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