

Indonesia

PERSONALITIES, PARTIES, AND VOTERS

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In elections to the 560-seat People's Representation Council on 8 April 2009, Indonesian voters gave the Democratic Party (PD) of incumbent president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono a remarkable victory with 21 percent of the vote, elevating it from a small party with only 55 seats to the legislature's leading party with 150 seats. Three months later, on July 8, Yudhoyono won reelection to the presidency with 61 percent of the vote in the first round, easily avoiding a runoff. Former president Megawati Sukarnoputri of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) finished second with 27 percent, and Golkar party candidate Muhammad Jusuf Kalla (Yudhoyono's vice-president during his first term) trailed with 12 percent.

The 2009 balloting marked the third legislative elections since the ousting of longtime strongman Suharto in 1998, but only the second presidential contest determined by popular vote. Prior to 2004, the president had been selected by the People's Consultative Assembly, a kind of super-parliament consisting, in the early post-Suharto years, of the members of parliament plus additional members appointed by the president. Now, however, the people vote directly for a presidential ticket that includes candidates for both president and vice-president, who typi-

INDONESIA'S POLITICAL PARTIES

(In Order by 2009 Vote)

PD (Democratic Party, 148 seats)—Secular nationalist, created in 2002 as personal electoral vehicle of presidential hopeful Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

GOLKAR (Functional Group Party, 106 seats)—Secular nationalist, was state party during Suharto's authoritarian New Order.

PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, 94 seats)—Secular nationalist, led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of founding President Sukarno, herself president, 2001–2004.

PKS (Prosperous Justice Party, 57 seats)—Islamist, inspired by Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, built on Islamist student movement in 1980s–90s, first competed in 1999 election as the Justice Party (PK).

PAN (National Mandate Party, 46 seats)—Secular nationalist, but base largely Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's leading modernist Muslim organization.

PPP (United Development Party, 38 seats)—Islamist, began in Suharto era as a forced fusion of existing Muslim parties.

PKB (National Awakening Party, 28 seats)—Secular nationalist, founded by Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim organization.

GERINDRA (Greater Indonesia Movement Party, 26 seats)—Secular nationalist, personal electoral vehicle in 2009 of Prabowo Subianto, retired army general and former son-in-law of Suharto.

HANURA (People's Conscience Party, 17 seats)—Secular nationalist, personal electoral vehicle in 2009 of Wiranto, Suharto's last armed-forces commander.

cally come from different parties.¹ In 2004, the retired army general and former cabinet minister Yudhoyono teamed with Kalla, a member of Golkar, as his vice-presidential running mate. Their joint ticket defeated incumbent president Megawati Sukarnoputri and running mate Hasyim Muzadi (the chairman of Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama) by a vote of 61 percent to 39 percent in the second round. In 2009, Yudhoyono chose Boediono, the head of the central bank, as his running mate in the presidential election.

Under Suharto's New Order, only three parties had been allowed to compete in parliamentary elections—Golkar (which had been the party of the Suharto government), the mildly leftist Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), and the mildly Islamic United Development Party (PPP). During the decade since Indonesia's transition to democracy, the landscape of political parties has expanded considerably: In 1999, five parties were significant players—a number that grew to seven in 2004 and nine in 2009. (For a list and descriptions of the major parties, see the Box above.) The growth in the number of parties represented in the legislature may be due to Indonesia's use of an election system based on proportional representation in mul-

timber districts and without an effective parliamentary threshold until the 2009 election.

The PDI-P was the largest party in 1999, but it has steadily lost voters since then, as have several other parties. Meanwhile, the PD, founded in 2002 by then-presidential hopeful Yudhoyono, has grown steadily, taking 7.6 percent of the parliamentary vote in the 2004 elections barely a year after its founding, and 21 percent in the 2009 contests. Despite Indonesia's being home to the world's largest Muslim population, Islamist parties (that is, those that favor the creation of an Islamic state) have never had sufficient voter support to challenge the secular state. In 2009, the combined vote of the two Islamist parties that passed the new 2.5 percent threshold for gaining entry into parliament was only 13 percent. For an overview of the election results in 1999, 2004, and 2009, see Tables 1a and 1b below.

Why have Indonesians voted as they have since 1999, and what are the implications of this behavior for the quality and stability of Indonesia's democracy? In a series of studies based on national political-opinion surveys carried out under the auspices of the Indonesian Survey Institute, we have tried to find comprehensive answers to these questions. In an earlier study based on findings from 1999 and 2004, we argued that leadership (that is, candidate appeal) and self-identification with a political party ("party ID" in the voting-behavior literature) were the two most important factors shaping electoral choices in those years.² We rejected an alternative interpretation that had been popular since Indonesia's first democratic elections in 1955: namely, that sociological or cultural factors—notably, religion, but also ethnicity, region, and social class—were the principal determinants of Indonesian voting behavior.³

The 2009 survey results reveal strong continuities, but also striking shifts, in the factors shaping voter choice. These new findings are based on two national opinion polls that we conducted just after the parliamentary and presidential elections in April and July, respectively. The appeal of a party leader or presidential candidate remains the most important factor, but media campaigns—especially on television—for both the parliamentary and presidential contests have become powerful forces in their own right. Meanwhile, the importance of party ID has weakened, although it remains influential for some parties' and candidates' supporters.

The most remarkable finding of our new research is the impact of voters' perceptions of the national economic condition—a factor that was not significant in 1999 or 2004. Likewise, voters' evaluations of the incumbent president's economic and other policies seemed to correlate for the first time with how they cast their ballots. As in 1999 and 2004, however, we found little evidence that voters were influenced by their religious, ethnic, regional, or social-class identities.

The implications of these findings for Indonesian democracy are both positive and negative. Indonesian voters have become increasingly rational—setting standards, identifying goals, and choosing leaders based

TABLE 1A—PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION RESULTS FOR 1999, 2004, AND 2009 (BY PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE)

1999		2004		2009	
Party	% of Vote	Party	% of Vote	Party	% of Vote
PDI-P	33.7	PDI-P	18.5	PDI-P	14.0
Golkar	22.4	Golkar	21.6	Golkar	14.5
PKB	12.6	PKB	10.6	PKB	4.9
PPP	10.7	PPP	8.2	PPP	5.3
PAN	7.1	PAN	6.4	PAN	6.0
		PD	7.5	PD	20.9
		PKS	7.3	PKS	7.9
				Gerindra	4.5
				Hanura	3.8
Other	13.5		19.9		18.2
Total	100.0		100.0		100.0

Sources: For 1999, International Foundation for Election Systems; for 2004 and 2009, Indonesian National Election Commission.

TABLE 1B—PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS FOR 2004 AND 2009 (BY PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE)

Party	Candidate	2004		2009	
		1 st Round	2 nd Round	Candidate	1 st Round
PDI-P	Megawati Sukarnoputri	26.6	39.4	Megawati	26.8
Golkar	Wiranto	22.2		Jusuf Kalla	12.4
PPP	Hamzah Haz	3.0			
PAN	Amien Rais	14.7			
PD	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	33.6	60.6	Yudhoyono	60.8
Total		100.1	100.0		100.0

Sources: Indonesian National Election Commission. The first-round total for 2004 exceeds 100 percent due to rounding.

on those standards and goals. Their preference for secular national parties reduces the likelihood of ethnic or religious conflict. The absence of class-based parties reduces socioeconomic tensions, but unfortunately also hinders the articulation of legitimate economic interests in the political arena. Although the media provide valuable information to voters, this information is distorted by the lack of both balance and transparency in the funding of advertising campaigns. Finally, the decline in party ID in our surveys reflects growing voter dissatisfaction with the parties and helps to explain the fragmentation and volatility of the party system. To a certain extent, this is the flip side of a much better-functioning presidency, but it also means that the party system is one of Indonesia's weakest democratic institutions.

According to the findings of our earlier surveys, sociological factors

were not important determinants of voting behavior in either 1999 or 2004. Most strikingly, neither adherence to a particular world religion nor belonging to a certain *aliran* (one of three Muslim “streams”—nominal, reformist, and pious, each of which was represented by a specific party and its affiliated organizations, particularly in the 1950s⁴) had a significant direct influence on voters. Moreover, regional differences, specifically the oft-mentioned gulf between the residents of Java and those of other islands, did not greatly influence voting behavior. These conclusions contradicted previous scholarly claims that *aliran* and locality largely determine how Indonesians cast their ballots.

Our 2009 election survey confirmed, indeed deepened, this finding. There was no consistent or solid evidence of voter polarization based on *aliran* or Muslim religiosity in either the legislative or presidential elections. The lack of significance of religious factors was particularly glaring in the presidential contest. The Golkar ticket consisted of Vice-President Kalla for president and former armed-forces commander Wiranto for vice-president. Wiranto’s campaign team tried to position the pair as more religiously orthodox than Yudhoyono and Boediono. As rumors spread that Boediono practiced Javanese mysticism and that his wife was Catholic, Wiranto made sure to point out in his campaign speeches that his wife and Kalla’s both wore the Islamic headscarf. Despite the prominence of this theme in the Kalla-Wiranto campaign, we found no evidence that it had any impact even on orthodox Muslim voters.

The impact of regional residence on voting behavior has also dissipated. In 1999 and 2004, there was a measurable regional effect when we compared PDI-P and PKB voters, on the one hand, with Golkar voters on the other: More of the former lived on Java, while the latter tended to be spread more widely outside Java and Bali. This effect weakened in 2009 due to massive regional shifts in the parliamentary vote. The number of Golkar votes in the outer islands dropped sharply, much more so than in Java. As a result, the regional profile of Golkar voters no longer differs much from that of other parties, particularly the PD.

Second, the PD’s spectacular increase in votes in 2009—almost tripling its share from the previous election—was spread remarkably evenly across the country. Many of the regions outside Java that Golkar had controlled in 2004, especially on Sumatra, are now dominated by the PD. In 2009, the PD matched Golkar’s votes in the electoral districts of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, and Papua, all of which had been dominated by Suharto’s old electoral machine in 2004. Yudhoyono’s party also grew significantly on Java, its base in 2004. Thus PD is now the most national of all the Indonesian parties.

The absence of a regional effect was also evident in the presidential election. The Kalla–Wiranto team tried hard to portray itself as being more representative of the outer islands than were Yudhoyono and Boediono (both ethnic Javanese), whom they labeled the “Mataram” or

“Majapahit” candidates—references to early Javanese kingdoms. Kalla and Wiranto, from Sulawesi and Java, respectively, were a more typical combination, with one candidate representing Java and the other, the outer islands. Voters were obviously unmoved by this tactic, however; the PD ticket came in first in every province except South Sulawesi, Kalla’s home, and Bali, one of Megawati’s strongholds.

Along with religion and regionalism, class is often thought to play a key role in shaping partisan choice. In 1955 in Indonesia’s only democratic election before 1999, the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), which found its support among urban and plantation workers as well as landless peasants, won 16 percent of the vote, making it the country’s fourth-largest party. In 1965, however, the PKI was blamed for the kidnapping and execution of six senior army generals. Its leaders were killed or arrested, and the party’s ranks were decimated. It has been banned ever since, and class politics have yet to make a comeback in the country. In fact, in today’s democracy, social class—at least as defined by level of education, income, and type of employment—is becoming less, not more, important to voter choice. In the 1999 and 2004 parliamentary elections, voters for PAN, PKS, and the PD tended to come from a more educated, higher-income, white-collar middle class. In the 2009 election, by contrast, there was no such neat class breakdown among the voters for any party. The PD in particular, but also PAN and PKS, now reach out to lower-class as well as middle- and upper-class voters.

Class likewise had little bearing on the presidential election, despite the efforts of certain candidates. Since its formation in the late 1990s, the PDI-P has positioned itself as the party of the “little man.” It appropriately claims a connection to the Indonesian National Party established in the 1920s by Indonesia’s founding president Sukarno, the father of PDI-P leader Megawati. In the 2009 campaign, Megawati and her running-mate Prabowo Subianto, head of the new Greater Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), defended the interests of small farmers, fishermen, and petty traders. Prabowo, in particular, attacked the Yudhoyono government’s alleged support for big business and foreign economic interests. This issue more than any other stoked the fears of Yudhoyono supporters and fueled the hopes of the opposition. In the polling booth, however, voters of all social classes overwhelmingly chose Yudhoyono over Megawati.

Candidates, Parties, and Campaigns

In our previous study, party leadership was the factor most strongly associated with electoral choice in the 1999 and 2004 parliamentary elections and also in the 2004 presidential election. In deciding how to cast their ballots, voters were strongly influenced by the likeability of

the party leader. In our study of the 1999 and 2004 contests, likeability was measured by asking respondents to choose the party leader whom they liked the most. In 2009, in order to get a more precise picture, respondents were asked to rate the leaders' likeability on a scale of 1 to 10. Among the listed leaders, the most liked was Yudhoyono, who placed well ahead of the second-place Megawati. These findings show that the PD's electoral success and Yudhoyono's reelection were clearly connected to voters' positive evaluations of the president as a leader.

Indonesian political parties no longer appear to have deep psychological roots in the electorate. As recently as August 2004, nearly 60 percent of Indonesian voters stated that they felt close to a certain party. This figure declined steadily until March 2006 and has since remained at a low level, averaging just 22 percent in our two 2009 surveys. In 2009, voters who identified with a party were additionally asked whether they felt "very close" (4), "close" (3), "somewhat close" (2), or "not close at all" (1) to that party. Their responses registered a mean score of between 1.8 for the People's Conscience Party (Hanura) and 2.3 for PD, suggesting that even the small portion of voters who identify today with a party do so only weakly. The low level of party ID in the surveys is mirrored in a large body of critical commentary on political parties in the Indonesian media.

Despite these findings and other factors—for example, a high incidence of swing voting (voters shifting their party choice) in 2004 and 2009—we nonetheless find that, statistically, party ID remains strongly associated with partisan choice. Party ID can, of course, explain why some old parties such as Golkar, the PPP, and PDI-P, which were all active during the Suharto era, are still in the game. It cannot, however, explain why between 2004 and 2009 one party (the PD) increased its vote sharply, two (PKS and PAN) remained relatively stable, and several (PDI-P, Golkar, PKB, and PPP) declined significantly.

In 2009, we asked voters a series of questions about their sources of political information, including direct contact with party representatives or their intermediaries and exposure to the mass media. We then connected these findings to voter choice. The results showed that very few voters had ever been contacted directly by parties, village officials, or religious leaders. Parties using traditional networks—local government bureaucracies, Islamic social organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (mass organizations informally connected to PKB and PAN, respectively), and other networks of Islamic scholars and teachers—are evidently struggling to reach voters. Against this background, it should come as no surprise that the vote of both Islamist parties and parties affiliated with Islamic organizations has been shrinking in recent elections.

By contrast, the mass media, and television in particular, reached nearly every single voter in 2009. A huge majority (88.8 percent) of

voters said that they had watched political or governmental news on television during the election campaign, while 34.9 percent had read election-related articles in a newspaper, and 30 percent had listened to reports on the radio. Internet use is still very limited, however.

Our survey asked respondents to name the parties and candidates whose campaign information and advertisements they had seen most often on television, read in the newspaper, or heard on the radio. The PD's televised advertisements were the most viewed (34 percent), followed by those of Gerindra (25 percent) and then Golkar (11 percent); no other party's ads were viewed by more than 6 percent of the voters. PD also headed the much smaller lists of voters who had read newspapers and listened to the radio. In the presidential race, voters paid far more attention to the Yudhoyono-Boediono ticket's ads than to those of any of their opponents. Not surprisingly, the frequency with which voters took notice of advertisements closely corresponded to the level of campaign spending of the various parties. Between January and late March 2009, the PD had spent more than any other party on television ads with US\$5.1 million, followed by Golkar with \$4.8 million, and Gerindra with \$4.4 million.⁵ These expenditures were not in vain: We found strong associations between voters' exposure to campaign ads and how those voters ultimately cast their ballots.

The impact of media campaigns and advertisements is affected not only by frequency and intensity of exposure but also by the content and substance of the communications. Beginning in August 2008, the PD's advertisements emphasized the achievements of the Yudhoyono government, particularly with regard to economic stability and the fight against corruption. Naturally, some opposition parties such as PDI-P and Gerindra attacked the PD's boasts. In their view, the government had in many respects failed politically and economically—for example, in its attempts to increase the prosperity of farmers and other lower-class groups. Golkar's position, by contrast, was ambivalent. It could not attack the government directly because the party's chair, Jusuf Kalla, was the incumbent vice-president. The party's ads nonetheless asserted that the country would be better off with Golkar in power.

The Incumbent's Performance

Government and opposition depictions of the state of the economy under Yudhoyono diverged dramatically. It was therefore clear during the campaign that voters' personal evaluations of their own and the nation's economic well-being would greatly influence the electoral outcomes. In the 1999 and 2004 elections, the direct effects of such voter evaluations were not visible because the differences between incumbents and challengers were obscure. In 1999, the party system was largely new, and even Golkar, the old state party, had repositioned itself as a demo-

cratic formation. In the 2004 election, the line separating opposition and incumbent forces was again blurred, as most parties, including Golkar, were in Megawati's government. In 2009, however, President Yudhoyono and, by extension, his party were the clear incumbents, while Megawati and her PDI-P were the clear challengers.

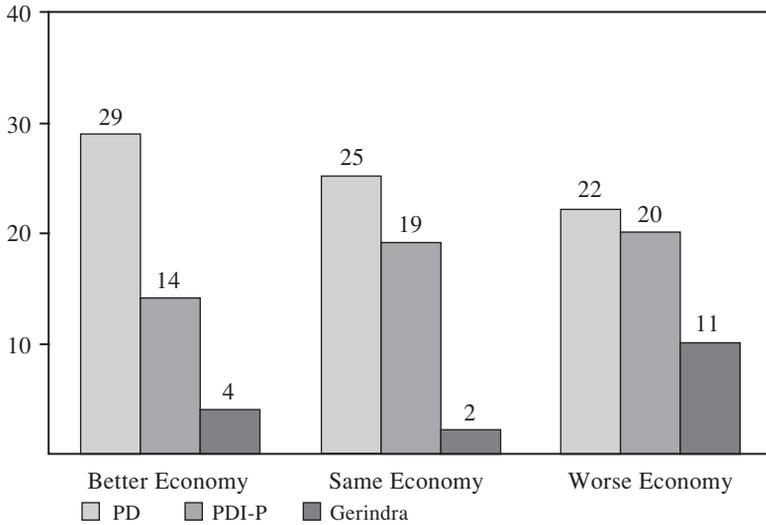
In our 2009 surveys, we asked respondents to evaluate the economic condition both of their own household and of the national economy in 2009 as compared to the previous year, assessing whether it had become "much better," "better," "worse," "much worse," or had remained "unchanged." Significantly, in both surveys more respondents had a favorable rather than an unfavorable view of their household's and the nation's economic condition. In April, 42 percent said that the national economy was getting better, while only 26 percent said that it was getting worse. In July, the numbers were even more favorable—57 percent saw improvement, while a meager 20 percent saw decline.

These relatively high levels of satisfaction with economic conditions seem paradoxical, given that 2009 was a year of global financial crisis that saw economic growth in Indonesia contract to about 4 percent from about 6 percent in 2008. There are two probable answers to this puzzle. First, Indonesia was affected by the crisis much less than its Southeast Asian neighbors, particularly Thailand and Malaysia. Second, the effects of the crisis were more than mitigated by the massive welfare programs that the government had implemented and promoted heavily during the previous few years. Budgetary spending on poverty-alleviation measures, for example, increased by 283 percent between 2005 and 2008.⁶ Voters knew about the welfare programs and evaluated them positively. Moreover, employment figures rose, and the percentage of Indonesians living below the poverty line fell. Inflation was also very low at the time of the elections, down after a sharp increase in the cost of living the previous year. Finally, fuel prices—always a political minefield—also dropped in 2009.

Evaluations of both household and national economic conditions—especially the latter—were closely correlated with partisan and presidential choice. This tallies with numerous political-economy studies that have found evaluations of national economic conditions to be more important in determining electoral behavior than evaluations of household economic conditions.⁷ The Figure on page 44 shows a significant divergence between perceptions of the state of the national economy entertained by PD, PDI-P, and Gerindra voters, respectively. The more favorable the evaluation, the more likely voters were to support PD; conversely, the less favorable the evaluation, the more likely voters were to vote for PDI-P or Gerindra. There are no comparable patterns for other parties.

This finding underscores another reality: In the eyes of voters, only PDI-P and Gerindra were opposition parties. All the large parties except

FIGURE—ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOTERS' EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITION AND VOTING FOR INCUMBENT (PD) AND OPPOSITION (PDI-P AND GERINDRA) PARTIES (%)



Source: LSI survey, April 2009

PDI-P had been Yudhoyono allies in parliament and government between 2004 and 2009. Among the remaining parties, only Gerindra appeared to be a force that could strengthen the PDI-P-led opposition. Again, this reflected the dynamics of Gerindra's campaign, which openly opposed government economic policies; hence, the correlation between a negative assessment of the economy and a vote for Gerindra—a pattern that continued through the presidential campaign. The more favorable the evaluation of the national economy, the stronger was the tendency to choose the incumbent over a challenger. At the same time, there was no significant distinction between the Yudhoyono-Boediono ticket and the Kalla-Wiranto ticket. As the sitting vice-president but not Yudhoyono's running mate, Kalla profited somewhat from positive evaluations of the economy, but not enough to make him electorally competitive. This was in part due to his ambiguous position as neither incumbent nor opposition candidate.

On the basis of multivariate analysis, leadership appeal, campaign advertising, and political economy emerge as the factors that best explain the 2009 *parliamentary* vote.⁸ President Yudhoyono's likeability is most strongly associated with a vote for his PD rather than PDI-P, PAN, PPP, and Hanura. These findings reflect recent developments in leadership competition and party politics. For nearly five years, Yudhoyono was under a bright spotlight. During most of this period, and especially after mid-2008, he enjoyed relatively high approval ratings. For the most part, the other parties did not use this time to cultivate new

leadership cadres; instead, most kept their old leaders, despite defeat in 2004 and poor performance in opinion polls before the 2009 ballot. In this context, Yudhoyono's likeability helped to move large numbers of voters from outside the PD base toward voting for the party.

Unlike leader appeal, the direct effect of media campaigns during the parliamentary elections loses statistical significance after political economy and leader likeability are included in the analysis. We interpret this finding to mean that the impact of media campaigns is closely connected with leader likeability and political economy. In fact, the PD's campaign themes were built around Yudhoyono's personality and the government's socioeconomic policies, both implemented and promised.

A different pattern emerges in the multivariate analysis of the effect of media campaigns on the *presidential* election. Here, the effect is significant regardless of leader likeability, party ID, or political economy. Presumably, this is because the presidential election campaign was marked by strong disputes over issues and programs, making the effect of the advertising itself still visible. In its strategy and communications during the presidential campaign, Yudhoyono's media team focused on welfare programs, not the president's personal qualities. By contrast, the media campaign for the legislative election a few months earlier had mainly identified the party with its leader. It proclaimed, for example, that "the Democratic Party is SBY's party," using the president's familiar initials to tie him to his institutionally underdeveloped party.

Interpreting the Data

What is the relevance of our findings for the quality of democracy in today's Indonesia? The survey data suggest five direct implications. On the positive side, perhaps most important is that Indonesian voters have become increasingly "rational." From previous surveys, we know that they have identified a set of priority goals: economic growth, general prosperity, national unity, education, and the rule of law. They turn to individual leaders rather than to political parties to achieve these goals, and they set standards for those leaders—personal integrity, social empathy, professional competence.⁹ In 2004, they elected Yudhoyono president because they thought that he was the most promising of the nominated candidates. Five years later, they gave him a second term because they perceived him to have performed well enough to merit reelection. In 2014, we expect most voters to engage in similar calculations, though of course the term-limited Yudhoyono will not be running.

A second and related positive finding is that most Indonesian voters do not give high priority to the demands of religious and ethnic groups, and are therefore not attracted to parties based on religious or ethnic identity. In multiethnic, multireligious Indonesia, this reduces the probability of conflict. If interethnic tensions arise, officials can legitimately

claim that most Indonesians want the issues resolved as quickly and peacefully as possible. During the first Yudhoyono government, Vice-President Kalla was able successfully to quell hostilities on several occasions, especially when managing the fragile peace in Aceh, brokered in Helsinki between January and May 2005.

The implications of the irrelevance of social class to partisan choice are less clear. In most modern democracies, divisions based on economic interest—if not class in a Marxian sense—provide the most important basis for partisan choice. In such societies, parties and their leaders take political power in order to implement economic policies and programs rooted in broader conceptions about the relative weight that should be allotted to market freedoms versus state intervention in the economy. Perhaps the reluctance of Indonesians to form parties of the Left or the Right is due in part to the horrific memories on both sides of the violent retaliation against the Communist Party in 1965–66. Alternatively, it may be that Indonesian voters in a high-information, TV-driven era are simply short-cutting the old ideological differences and making their own direct assessments of elected officials' policies and programs.

The independent impact of television campaigns, especially on the presidential vote, also has mixed implications for the quality of democracy. In Indonesia—as in most other countries—TV news, talk shows, and political commercials give citizens access to valuable information and commentary on politics and government. Indeed, modern democratic life in large, complex societies is inconceivable without the media, especially television. At the same time, the mass media often cannot be relied on for unbiased information. In Indonesia, the media's greatest failing may lie in the absence of balance and transparency in the funding of political commercials during campaigns. A few candidates and parties have huge budgets for TV ads, while most have none. Moreover, voters have no way of finding out who finances the ads.

Finally, the weakening of voters' identification with political parties is arguably the most important of the findings and has mainly negative implications. We recognize that this circumstance goes hand in hand with the country's emphasis on individual leaders, and thus is to some extent ineluctable. According to democratic theory, political parties should be based on long-lasting economic and social interests that provide relatively permanent links between government policy makers and voters. In Indonesia, however, many parties (including, of course, Yudhoyono's PD) are little more than extensions of the personality of a single leader. In the 2009 elections, only two new parties passed the 2.5 percent threshold for parliamentary seats. Not coincidentally, both are personal vehicles of wealthy, well-networked retired army officers—Prabowo Subianto in the case of Gerindra and Wiranto in the case of Hanura.

The party system's high volatility is a direct consequence of the

identification of parties with single leaders. PDI-P, for example, won an extraordinary 34 percent of parliamentary seats in 1999 because of its leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia's founding president and, throughout the 1990s, the standard-bearer of the opposition to Suharto's authoritarian New Order. When the people lost confidence in Megawati during her presidency, however, the party's support plummeted, and its vote share dropped by more than fifteen points in the 2004 elections. When Megawati leaves politics, the party will likely shrink further or even break apart. Similarly, the PD won an impressive 7.6 percent of parliamentary seats in 2004 (less than two years after its founding), mainly on the strength of the leadership image projected by SBY, a retired army general and onetime member of Megawati's cabinet. While Yudhoyono's perceived success as president explains the PD's 2009 jump to 21 percent of the vote, the party still lacks a strong nationwide organization and is jokingly referred to as "SBY's fan club." With the term-limited Yudhoyono no longer at the head of the ticket in 2014, the party may well see a decline in its votes.

Finally, Indonesian political parties have a reputation for excessive control from the top, meaning that local party branches and rank-and-file members have little influence on internal party policies or the selection of party leadership or electoral candidates. Even worse, there is no tradition or culture of party accountability to the electorate. Elected members of both local and national legislatures often regard voters and interest groups as supplicants rather than citizens with the right to demand responsiveness and accountability.¹⁰ The decline in party ID in our surveys may be reflective of growing voter dissatisfaction with these distant party leaders and organizations.

The Impact on the Quality of Democracy

We now return to the two questions asked at the beginning of this essay: Why have Indonesians voted as they have in the three rounds of national democratic elections since Suharto's downfall, and what are the implications of this behavior for the quality of Indonesian democracy? The answer to the first question is relatively straightforward. In 1999 and 2004, Indonesian voters were motivated primarily by their support for particular leaders and the strength of their identification with political parties. In 2009, voters were also influenced by the media campaigns of parties and presidential candidates, by their perceptions of the state of the national economy, and by their evaluations of governmental performance. Millions of Indonesians who rated the national economy positively cast their ballots for the PD in the parliamentary elections and for the incumbent, Yudhoyono, in the presidential election. Religion, regionalism, and social class, meanwhile, did not play a major role in shaping electoral behavior in 2009 or in the two earlier elections.

The answer to the second question is more complex. On the positive side, there appears to be a close alignment between voter preferences, election outcomes, and governmental policy performance, particularly with regard to presidential politics. Voters want to be governed by a

Fighting corruption may turn out to be a greater challenge or a less attractive goal when a large majority of the political parties represented in parliament are also in government.

president who can grow the economy, promote general prosperity, defend national unity, fight corruption, and improve the quality of education and health care. Most voters perceived that Yudhoyono had performed well enough in those areas to merit reelection. In addition to voters' increased attention to performance indicators, the low priority that most Indonesians placed on religious or ethnic factors is a positive sign of the electorate's growing rationality.

On the negative side, Indonesian voters have helped to perpetuate an ineffectual party system characterized by fragmentation (nine parties each won more than 3 percent of the vote in 2009), volatility (from the PDI-P as the largest party with 34 percent in 1999 to PD as the largest with 21 percent today), little internal party democracy, a high degree of personalistic leadership, and—perhaps most important—little responsiveness to the electorate. The presidency, meanwhile, functions much better. While this combination of a strong presidency and a frail party system is certainly not without problems, Indonesia's polity is likely to remain stable in the short term. The president has ample support from other parties in the parliament, much more than he had at the beginning of his first term. Furthermore, since Yudhoyono's inauguration in October 2009, Golkar has joined the cabinet as well.

Such a grand governing coalition will have both advantages and drawbacks. Arguably, Yudhoyono will have the political resources to govern more effectively than in his first term. There will, however, be an absence of the checks on the president's personal power that opposition parties provide in many democracies and that have been conspicuously lacking in democratic Indonesia since 1999.¹¹ Fighting corruption, for example, may turn out to be a greater challenge or a less attractive goal when a large majority of the political parties represented in parliament are also in government.

The worst disadvantages may not appear until 2014, however, at the end of Yudhoyono's second and final term. It will then become clear whether Indonesian democracy as a whole is too dependent on the vagaries of presidential recruitment because it lacks a solid base in a well-functioning party system. Voters were lucky to get a candidate as desirable as Yudhoyono in 2004, and lucky again in 2009 to have a president

who has been both responsive and responsible up for reelection. If they do not have similarly good fortune in 2014, however, they will be at the mercy of a party system with all the deficiencies that we have described.

NOTES

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1. In the Indonesian multiparty system, the incentive is strong for a presidential candidate to broaden his or her electoral base by choosing a running mate from another party.

2. R. William Liddle and Saiful Mujani, "Leadership, Party, and Religion: Explaining Voting Behavior in Indonesia," *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (July 2007): 832–57. The 2009 surveys were carried out by the Indonesian Survey Institute (Lembaga Survei Indonesia, or LSI), and included 1,800 respondents in April and 1,200 in July. Details of the research methodology are available from the authors.

3. The classic political-science study of the 1955 election is Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian Elections of 1955* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1957). Analyses of the 1999 and 2004 elections emphasizing the role of religion include Dwight King, *Half-hearted Reform: Electoral Institutions and the Struggle for Democracy in Indonesia* (New York: Praeger, 2003) and Anies Baswedan, "Indonesian Politics in 2007: The Presidency, Local Elections and the Future of Democracy," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 43 (December 2007): 323–40.

4. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York: Free Press, 1960).

5. "Media Panen Iklan Parpol" (Political party ads a media harvest), BBC Indonesia, 31 March 2009.

6. Mudrajad Kuncoro, Tri Widodo, and Ross H. McLeod, "Survey of Recent Developments," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 45 (August 2009): 166.

7. D. Roderick Kiewiet, *Macroeconomics and Micropolitics: The Electoral Effects of Economic Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

8. In our multivariate analysis, the dependent variable is a pair of parties (for example PD voters versus Golkar voters), and the independent variables are our hypothesized explanatory factors—from religious affiliation to perceived national economic condition.

9. Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, "Voter Preferences for Presidential/Vice-Presidential Candidates: Public Opinion Trends," LSI, Jakarta, 25–30 May 2009.

10. Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth, eds., *Elections in Indonesia: The New Order and Beyond* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).

11. Kuskridho Ambardi, "The Making of the Indonesian Multiparty System: A Cartelized Party System and Its Origin" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2008); Dan Slater, "Indonesia's Accountability Trap: Party Cartels and Presidential Power after Democratic Transition," *Indonesia* 78 (2004): 61–92.