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Email: intdiscourse@iium.edu.my; intdiscourse@yahoo.com

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Book Reviews

Electoral Dynamics in Indonesia: Money Politics, Patronage and Clientelism at the Grassroots. Edited by Edward Aspinall and Mada Sukmajati. Singapore: NUS Press, 2016, pp. 472. ISBN 978-981-4722-04-9.

Reviewer: Abdul Rashid Moten, Centre for Islamisation of Knowledge, International Islamic University Malaysia. E-mail: rashidm@iium.edu.my.

The editors of the book under review, Edward Aspinall, a professor of politics at the Australian National University, and Mada Sukmajati, a lecturer at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, rightly point out that scholars of elections and politics in the Third World do often assert the primacy of patronage and clientelism in elections, and that they hardly analyse the mechanisms through which vote-buying takes place (p. 8). The book under review tries to fill in this gap in the literature through an analysis of the 2014 legislative election campaign in several electoral districts in Indonesia. The overwhelming objective of this book is to identify “the chief mechanisms that Indonesian legislative candidates used to appeal to voters” (p. ix) to win elections in Indonesia. The introductory chapter provides a brief overview of relevant works on patronage and clientelism in Indonesian politics, explains the research design and goals, and summarizes the main findings of the case studies.

The book contains an introduction, written by the editors, and twenty two chapters. All but two chapters were produced by Indonesian researchers. Four of the chapters were written in Bahasa Indonesia, published by Gadjah Mada University in 2014. These chapters were translated by Edward Aspinall. All the chapters are based on fieldwork carried out by 50 researchers across 20 Indonesian provinces a couple of months prior to the national legislative election held on 9 April 2014. In total, the researchers conducted interviews with 1,500 candidates and campaigners and observed hundreds of campaign events. They

documented the strategies and tactics Indonesian politicians used to win the election. Most of their studies are included in this volume and they provide an excellent overview of electoral competition taking place in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority state.

The book sets out to answer several questions relating to money politics, patronage and clientelism. In particular, it tries to find out the extent to which "candidates win voters' support by distributing cash, goods, and other benefits" and the extent to which "these strategies are supplemented (or replaced) by other appeals, whether they be programmatic, charismatic or identity-based" (p. 1). It studies the varieties of patronage politics, i.e. vote-buying, individual gifts, services and activities, club goods, pork barrel projects, as well as the "vote brokerage networks" (p. 30), which include success team structures, social network machines, and parties. The twenty-two empirical chapters of the book provide a series of sketches of how campaigning and the varied forms of patronage politics and clientelism worked in Indonesia.

The findings are interesting. One, patronage distribution is central to Indonesian politics. Every single case study reveals the dangerous penetration of money into electoral processes. The candidates competed publicly even with members of one's own party for votes and dished out money directly to voters. Two, candidates often rely on informal networks instead of party machines. Party structures are breached through cross-party alliances of candidates who rely on their own resources and networks. Interestingly, some contributors have explored the use of "formal contracts" between candidates and voters (Chapter 3), the effect of gender quotas (Chapter 9), the role of trade unions (Chapter 11), the meticulous de-mobilizing work of gambling bosses who bet against certain candidates (Chapter 15), the timing of electorally-motivated intergovernmental transfers (Chapter 19), and the intricacies of collective voting in Papua (Chapter 23).

One novel question explored in the book was about the feelings of the voters who received money for voting. Noor Rohman found that many voters in Pati, Central Java (Chapter 14), did not feel obliged to vote for the candidate who paid them money. Some voters interpreted the money they received as *rejeki* – a blessing or material benefit received from God. Some felt that they had to accept the money to be

polite, but did not consider it necessary to vote in return other than to offer an appreciative smile or a thank you. Some religiously inclined voters did accept the money but were not sure if the money is religiously sanctioned (*halal*) or forbidden (*haram*). Hence, they used the money to buy petrol or cooking fuel rather than food or drink that would enter their bodies. Finally, some voters accepted payments, particularly from incumbents, considering it to be their own money stolen by government officials (pp. 246-247).

These interesting findings are scattered throughout this very accessible volume and are well-worth reading. All the contributors focus on a set of common questions and follow the same methodological approach. They all noted the use of tactics and strategies by candidates that are common to an electoral system. Noticeably, there was a remarkable absence of electoral violence even in areas where people have long suffered from civil strife. They all reported the prevalence of money politics, patronage politics, and clientelism in the Indonesian electoral system. They lamented the prevalence of weak and frail structure of the political parties. The central finding of this edited volume is that the relationship between candidates and voters is defined by 'money politics'. Not simply that the candidates dish out money to win elections, voters also expect candidates to give them something tangible. It has been highlighted that the deployment of money does not guarantee electoral success. However, those who refrain from playing money politics end up losing the election. Money is distributed through various intermediaries, including leading figures from the local mosques or church. A summary of these findings in a concluding chapter would certainly have augmented the value of the book.

The Accidental Executive: Lessons on Business, Faith and Calling from the Life of Joseph. By Albert M. Erisman. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015, pp. 202. ISBN 978-1-61970-621-7.

Reviewer: The late Muhammad Arif Zakaullah, formerly of Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia.