

POLITICAL REFORM IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA: WHY HAS “GOTONG ROYONG” DEMOCRACY IN THE INDONESIA’S STATE IDEOLOGY OF PANCASILA FAILED TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND IMPLEMENTED

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Abstract- With deep reflection of the drafting the fourth sila of Pancasila by Indonesia’s founding fathers, “Gotong Royong” Democracy was mandated to us. But it seems that neither the conception nor its institutionalization has been successful. Neither the so-called Sukarno’s Demokrasi Terpimpin nor Suharto’s Demokrasi Pancasila had developed our understanding of “Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan /Perwakilan”. In contemporary political reform now days, the swing from authoritarian to political liberalization has brought with it some sort of anomaly of democracy; such swing is but a logical consequence of the nation’s ambiguity in grasping the idea of “Gotong Royong” Democracy of Pancasila that should mean consensual, deliberative nature of populists democracy. While so many observers make a study of our “Gotong Royong” democracy, they lack theoretical perspectives of democracy. The core of our failure seems to be the political scientists’ slow of tuning into the state of the arts of democratic theories, especially the deliberative theory of democracy.

Index Terms- conception and institutionalization, deliberative theory of democracy, the fourth Sila of Pancasila, Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

Judging the facts of bad practices of democracy for a long time of Soekarno’s presidency (1959-1965) and Suharto’s presidency (1967-1998)¹, two prominent political scientists of Indonesia came to the misleading conceptions of democracy: Gaffar’s coining the idea of what he termed “uncommon democracy” that would become a working democracy for Indonesia, and Sanit’s ad hoc thesis denying democratic ideal of Musyawarah mufakat (deliberation that comes to an agreement by all) on account of its incompatibility with modern culture². These two conceptions could be among the negative impacts the “death toll” of social sciences in the country, especially democratic theories.

With the current progress in constitutional reform with among others amending the 1945 Constitution four times during this Era of Reform, the path to the democratic politics is expected to go on the right track. Would such expectation be fulfilled? This paper shall explore the theoretical concepts of Pancasila’s

“Gotong Royong” Democracy in the light of most current state of the arts in democratic theory, i.e. theory of deliberative democracy. It is our proposition that during the three stages of Indonesia’s democracy, there were misconception and institutionalization of the 4th Sila that had led to the failure of democratic politics in the country.

II. DEMOCRATIC THEORIES IN PERSPECTIVE

Two democratic theories seem very relevant to this account of “Gotong Royong” democracy in Pancasila—first is Earth Democracy (ED) and second Deliberative Theory of Democracy (DTD). Conception of earth democracy developed by well-known environmentalist activist Mother Vandana Shiva conveys the idea of co-existence of diverse democracies. “In contrast to non-existence of theoretical basis for diversity of ethnicity and culture in current idea of multiculturalism, Shiva’s principle concepts do have its basis of acceptance of diversity cultures and respect their virtues”³ to Shiva, living democracy is a given culture has the right to live and

¹ Aidul Fitriadi Azhary. 2007. “Konstitusi dan Demokratisasi: Studi tentang Model Penafsiran Konstitusi bagi Pengujian Konstitusional yang Demokratis di Indonesia”. *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, Vol 10 (2), pp. 142-171.

² Mudhoffir writes, “...jadi dalam perspektif Arbi Sanit, mekanisme musyawarah mufakat dalam proses komunikasi politik dianggap sebagai using dan harus ditinggalkan” (Therefore, in Arbi Sanit’s view, deliberative mechanism in political communication is considered obsolete or fossilized and has to be no longer in use). AM Mudhoffir. 2006. “Partai Politik & Pemilihan: Antara Komunikasi Politik Vs. Komoditas Politik”, *Jurnal Konstitusi*, Vol 3 (4), pp. 123

³ Hari Zamharir. 2015. “Vandana Shiva’s Earth Democracy and Its Contribution to ‘Green Politics’ Diplomacy Geared to Improve Current Politics of Sustainable Development”. *Proceeding Parahyangan International Conference*, Bandung: Sentris, pp. 113-135

let live. Seen from this perspective, we find in Taiwan context-culture of Dharma’s Democracy.⁴

The second theory is DTD. To make it simple, let us define deliberative democracy (DD) as a way of political processes whereby larger segments of participants from society are honestly exchanging ideas and proposing solutions to the problems formulated in less conflictual way. Such processes take place with the State’s being responsive to “objective opinions” oriented more to public interests.⁵ The following is some elaboration on the idea of Deliberative Theory of Democracy (DTD). Melo and Baiocchi (2006), referring to the works of theorists like Joshua Cohen and Amy Gutman, writes: “...deliberative democracy provides a more satisfactory solution to the inevitable intractable difficulties in modern politics, such as deep moral disagreements, between reasonable persons and choices about allocation of limited collective resources, than (solution made by) ‘majority-rule’ or ‘representative democracy’”.⁶ To DTD, representativeness calls on larger segments to be involved; its mechanism would be beyond formal institution of representation: Habermas, in the words of Urbinati and Warren (2008) contends that. “Habermas is optimistic of empowering representation system by the need to extend the system to larger ‘extra-parliamentary forms of representation, particularly through new social movements....”⁷

While theory of DD is mostly developed in western democracy context, there emerges in Chinese culture, democratic practice that constitutes the very type of deliberative democracy. Weller (in Huang, 2000) observes that what has evolved in Taiwan’s transformation into democratic politics is typical culture of Taiwan—the emergence of civility and/or associations across the society. These factors have contributed to the increasing level of democratization. In addition to the social factor, in Taiwan, the role of State is also significant.⁸ In the study by Lim and Chen (2003) the deliberative type of democratic practice in Taiwan has had these features: its political culture that can be called consensus

⁴ Richard Madsen. . *Democracy’s Dharma: religious renaissance and political development in Taiwan*, 2007

⁵ Hari Zamharir, TB Massa Djafar. 2014. “Participation Deficit in Democratic Governance: Study on Public Involvement in Public Policy Making in Selected Regions”, Paper, unpublished.

⁶ Marcuse Andre Malo and Gian Paolo Baiocchi. 2006. *Deliberative Democracy and Local Governance: Towards A New Agenda*. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol 30.3. Sept 2006, pp. 587-600

⁷ Nadia Urbinati & Mark C. Warren. 2008. “The Concepts of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory. *Annual Rev of Pol of Science*, pp. 387-412

⁸ Huang’s proposition will be an important input for this research project to diagnose musrenbang practice in selected regions to see how well participatory development planning is run.

conference—capability in rational argumentation, respecting “others”, public spiritedness, and the attitude oriented to consensus. All the above features will later in this paper be dealt with when discussing “Gotong Royong” Democracy.

III. THE PRACTICES OF DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

Beginning in its early pre-independence times, the consensual, deliberative type of (populist) democracy in Indonesia’s state ideology of Pancasila was once practiced with great success during sessions by BPU-PKI to design the Constitution. However, as the country was exercising political freedom, especially under the “Constitutional (Parliamentary) Democracy” of 1955-1959, harsh conflicts of political groups took place and deliberation faced the dragging pace, making several governments ineffective. Thaha as referred by Firmansyah (2013) informs us that the 1950 Constitution adopted “liberal democracy” within the parliamentary system of government. This eventually had made the prominent leaders—Soekarno and Bung Hatta outraged.⁹ With the emergency situation, the Head of State declared the abolition of the parliament and the 1950 Constitution and that the Republic the return to the UUD 1945 Constitution—a procedure that was accepted but legally the decree should have been made by the prime minister,

After the failure of democratic practice during parliament-based politics during 1955 -1959, Indonesia holds a firm stance to adopting presidentialism of government. Demokrasi Terpimpin or Guided Democracy is associated with Sukarno’s vision of Indonesia revolution. To Soekarno, revolution needs single effective leader and so is in democracy. Indriyanto quotes Sukarno’s statement (in Djoehartono, 1965) “Tiada revolusi jikalau ia tidak berupa satu disiplin di bawah satu pimpinan” (“There would be no revolution unless there exists strong sense of discipline under single leadership”).¹⁰ The wrong path to democracy under Soekarno’s Guided Democracy is—in Azhary’s account—an inherent consequence of “originalism approach” to interpreting the 1945 Constitution,¹¹ and—along with Suharto’s Demokrasi Pancasila—the democracy is but a quasi-democracy¹².

During Suharto’s presidency, some sort of substantive democracy was also difficult to be adopted. This was

⁹ Noorhadi Hasan, 2008 . “Reformasi, Religious Diversity, and Islamic Radicalist After Suharto.” in *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities*, Vol (no number), pp. 23-51

¹⁰ Indriyanto, 2009. “Muncul dan Jatuhnya Bung Karno”, in epriants_undip.ac.id.

¹¹ Azhary, *ibid*, p. 159

¹² Azyumardi Azra. 2004. “Indonesian Islam, Election Politics and Beyond”, *NIASnytt: South East Asian Islam: Plurality, Tolerance and Change*, No 4, pp. 12-14.

especially true given the fact that in Suharto’s early years in power, he had had temptation to make sure that he would win the election. Therefore, consolidation was made and on July 5, 1971 general election, he won the election Suharto’s firm grip in power continued in the subsequent decades of 1980 and 1990—but without power sharing. Had Suharto been wise enough to negotiate his ideals and political interests of other stronger political forces, Suharto’s legacy may have been meaningful to democratizing the nation. To a great extent, I would argue the same way as Morfit does when he contends that Suharto may have put Pancasila as “more an ideology of containment, rather than an ideology to mobilize socio-political and cultural factors as promised”¹³.

During the era of democratic reform (1998-onward), efforts to improve the democratic governance has been going on, either in its domain of constitution and rule-making as for the constitution. For example, amendments were made, among others the institutionalization of representativeness, especially those of utusan daerah (delegates coming from regions) and utusan golongan (delegates coming from across the socio-cultural and/or ethnic or religion groups. But in general, deliberative mode of democracy has been difficult to implement. Sana and Hara find that while contemporary Malaysia adopts the type of elitists deliberation, Indonesia still face problems: “In Indonesia case, the freedom and wide opportunity to participate in politics was a great shock for people which have been long time under a controlled and hierarchical system....However, these people sometimes have limited educational and cannot play their function well representing the people as members of parliament”.¹⁴

IV. ANALYSES

On the basis of the main features of Deliberative Theory of Democracy (DTD), the following Chart gives detailed analyses of the practices of democracy in Indonesia.

Feature 1: Talking-centric. This feature or modality of deliberation was obvious during BPU-PKI sessions to draft the first Constitution; this feature then eroded in “Constitutional Democracy” of 1955-1969 and its subsequent decline took place for the long time of Guided Democracy and Pancasila Demokrasi. In our current era of reform, talking-centric mode of democracy has also been deteriorating. Feature 2: Public spiritedness. Democratic processes in DTD rate

high the spirit of public interests. This spirit was very high during the sessions by BPU-PKI and then become less and less afterwards—political interests of factionalism politics are getting more dominants. Feature 3: State Responsiveness. State actors (prominent national leaders) were very responsive to ideas for betterment of the nations; state had been dominating the society after the decline of Constitutional Democracy. In current reform, democratization, while giving larger room for public involvement, brings state in weakened position—thus little achievement is made in being responsive to sociological drives. Feature 4: (4) Larger segments involvement. Members of BPU-PKI were best represented by larger political segments of the society. Then came the long time of limited involvement coming from larger groups of the society until the reform turn in 1998. Currently, larger segments have been formally and informally involved in politics but under the representative mode democracy, their involvement has not been significant. Feature 5: levels/capacity to deliberate. Except in the days of BPUPKI sessions, most democratic practices that was done afterwards shows great sign of low level or low capacity to deliberate, even in the current era of reform, deliberation has been distorted by aggregative system of democracy that blocks the ample room for sufficient deliberation. Feature 6: Capability of negotiating interests. While this capability was very high in BPU-PKI times, this has been deteriorating especially in Soekarno’s Guided Democracy and Suharto’s Demokrasi Pancasila; in our current era of reform, this capability has not been improved among others as a logical consequences of adopting full presidential system of government.

In short, level of deliberation or musyawarah in the framework consensual mode of settling differences had been very high during the sessions in the pre-independence times in the “people’s assembly” or BPU-PKI whose mechanism, membership and institution of BPU-PKI did reflect the modality and criteria recommended by Deliberative Theory of Democracy (DTD). Such a high level of deliberation as mandated by the then fourth Sila of Pancasila eventually goes down to the level of medium level in the period of “constitutional democracy”, beginning in 1959, Subsequent decline took place in its consecutive years of Demokrasi Terpimpin (1959 – 1965), and Demokrasi Pancasila (1967 – 1998) when these two regimes implement its quasi-democratic governance. In our current era of reform, deliberation has not been satisfactory.

Acknowledgement: the writers express our great gratitude especially to the government of the Republic of Indonesia (Directorate General of Higher Education, the Ministry of Research & Technology, and Higher Education) for granting the research fund,

¹³ Michael Morfit. 1981. “Pancasila: The Indonesian State Ideology According to The New Order Government”. *Asian Survey*, Vol 21 (8), August. p. 846

¹⁴ Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani & Abu Bakar Eby Hara. 2007. “Deliberative Democracy in Malaysia and Indonesia: A Comparison”, <http://jati.um.edu.my/iconsea2007/download/paper/azizuddinb.pdf>. pp. 16-17

Hibah Bersaing 2015. The original topic of the proposed research is “Substansi Demokrasi dalam Sila Keempat Pancasila: Kajian atas Produk-Produk MPR RI dalam Tinjauan Teoretis dan Sosiologis”.

CONCLUSION

Democratic ideal as it is set forth in Indonesia’s political doctrine seems to have been misunderstood, and with its logical consequences in its institutionalization. This is the problem of advances in social sciences—many political scientists do not seem to be well-informed of state of the arts in democratic theories, especially theory of deliberative democracy. As far as power politics is concerned, Indonesia’s democratic reform these years has achieved promising results. Nevertheless, seen from theoretical perspectives, the fourth Sila of Pancasila as the democratic ideal mandated by the state ideology is much in line with theory of deliberative democracy. Except with the good practice of deliberation at the sessions in pre-independence ad hoc committee, BPU-PKI, this democratic ideal has been in decline until these days of era of reform in Indonesia. The sociological factors contributing to the decline of deliberative democracy in Indonesia seem to have been : (1) the death toll of advance in social science especially in democratic theory in Indonesia whereby political scientists have not contributed significantly to betterment of democratization as mandated by the fourth Sila of Pancasila; and (2) factors of social mobility especially through education of the segments of the Indonesian society whereby many of political leaders and political actors have been badly informed in political education, especially in the area of the substance of idea of “kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat dan kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan / perwakilan”.

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