

Trade Union Politics and Elections in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Political reforms since 1998 changed the ways in which Indonesian trade unions are organised and operate, as well as the extent to which unions have developed their political strategies to compete in legislative elections. Trade unions were controlled and depoliticised for almost 32 years under Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime. They have since re-emerged in the post-1998 democratisation era, following an alteration in the political policies that were used to curb the political freedom and independence of the labour movement.

This thesis provides new insights into the political dynamics of trade union politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia, with consideration given to the changing roles and positions of trade unions toward electoral politics, and the ways in which union elites are vying for power and mobilising organisational resources. The thesis also questions the impact of the unions' new political roles in policy-making. Empirical data for this thesis is gathered from in-depth interviews involving trade unionists, union legislative candidates, politicians, union members and workers, as well as from direct observation of union political activities during field research in the districts of Bekasi and Serang and the city of Medan.

The core chapters of this thesis find that the process of union engagement in electoral politics is evolving. Unions have endeavoured to overcome their lack of financial resources by developing their organisational capacity and strategically channelling resources into election campaigns. Unions are learning from their failure of previous elections, giving rise to new political identities and interests, and using their roles in parliament to influence policy-making. In response to the complex structural and organisational constraints that exist, however, a more consolidated movement, a strong, programmatic and sustained political alliance with well-established parties, and enhancing worker understandings of their political identity and strategic role in elections are crucial to determine the success of union electoral engagement in post-authoritarian Indonesia. In developing these arguments, this thesis offers a way forward for a better understanding on the varied possibilities for, and limitations of, union electoral engagement and explicates the prospect of political unionism in the Indonesia's future democracy.

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Abbreviations

ASBS	Serang's Trade Unions Alliance
BTI	Indonesian Peasant's Front
DPD	Regional Leadership Council
DPP	Central Leadership Council
DPR	People Representative Council
DPRD	District People's Regional Representative Council
FKTU	Federation of Korea Trade Unions
FNPBI	National Front for Indonesian Worker's Struggle
FSBS	Serang's Labour Solidarity Forum
FSPMI	Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers' Union
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KAJS	Social Security Action Committee
KSPSI	Confederation of All Indonesian Workers' Unions
KSBSI	Indonesian Prosperous Workers' Unions
KPU	General Electoral Commission
KPPOD	Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy
KSPI	Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions
LIPI	Indonesian Institute of Sciences
LIPS	Sedane Institute for Labour Information
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NU	Nahdatul Ulama
PAN	National Mandatory Party
PBN	National Labour Party
PBSD	Social Democratic Labour Party
PDIP	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
PKB	National Awakening Party
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PKS	Prosperous Justice Party
PPI	Indonesian Workers Party.
PRD	People's Democratic Party
PSP	Workers Solidarity Party

PSPSI	All-Indonesian Workers' Solidarity Party
SBMI	Medan's Independent Trade Union
SBSI	Indonesian Prosperous Workers' Union
SOBSI	All-Indonesian Central Workers' Organisation
SPAI	Various Industry Workers' Union
SPN	National Trade Union
SPSI	All-Indonesian Workers' Union

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Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis compares and analyses the engagement of Indonesian trade union elites in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. By operationalising the concept of union electoral engagement, this thesis explores how unions develop their political movements, deploy their collective power during elections, establish their electoral strategies by means of mobilising organisational resources, and perform their political roles in local parliament. My argument is that since democratisation in 1998 Indonesian trade unions can be viewed as economic and political actors with the potential to develop their collective power to challenge elitism, expand political representation for workers, and put the interests of workers at the centre of legislative agendas. Electoral democracy in Indonesia today is primarily a contestation between different political identities and interests (Aspinall and Mietzner 2010) and old rivalries (Hadiz 2004), but also confronts the challenges created by the legacy of the past (Caraway 2015). In this context, the engagement of trade union elites in electoral contestation represents specific constituents (workers) that enable the unions to take an active role in policy-making for their specific political agenda and interests. Post-authoritarian Indonesia is an important timeframe because it has been the era when trade unions and workers have found their new roles and position to be contingent upon the process of economic and political development, including their interaction with political institutions and attempts to bring labour interests into the policy-making process.

The fall of longstanding president Suharto in May 1998 changed the ways in which Indonesian unions are organised and operate, as well as the extent to which unions engage in electoral politics. Over the last decade, the Indonesian labour movement has dramatically changed and improved conditions for organised labour (Ford 2009; Juliawan 2014; Lane 2018). With the freedom of association they have gained since 1998, trade unionists have adopted various political strategies, some of which are progressive, to develop their movement. Networking among trade unions is getting stronger, particularly when they have the same interests such as the determination of minimum wages and revisions to labour laws. Public protests led by trade unions have become a common sight

and are occurring with greater intensity and purpose (Juliawan 2011: 353).¹ Union elites have also engaged in electoral politics, either nominated by labour-related parties or by well-established mainstream parties.² The capacity of unions to improve their organisation and strategy has been one clear indicator of union activism that has strengthened their collective power, and these changes show how the democratisation process has provided a context for unionists and workers to mobilise and engage in political activism (Ford 2009; Juliawan 2011; Suryomenggolo 2014).

The labour movement's newfound collective power is based on the ability of trade unions to build networks and mobilise workers, as well as their ability to create influential movements against state and capital interests (Tjandra 2010; Suryomenggolo 2014). Their movements are not just limited to tactics such as strikes and street demonstrations; union leaders also use mass media to raise the profile of their struggles to gain public attention and lobby parliament (Juliawan 2011), and they now use legal means to address their grievances in the hope of obtaining justice (Tjandra 2010: 12). For instance, in 2004 the general manager of a Japanese company in Surabaya, East Java province was convicted of violating trade union rights under Trade Union Law Number 21/2000. The manager was jailed for one and a half years for unlawfully dismissing four trade union leaders in his company (Tjandra 2010: 11). Such a case is unprecedented since it is the first time an employer has been jailed under the act, which seems to be a significant step towards address the problem of inconsistent labour law enforcement in Indonesia. Since 2011, some major unions under the Social Security Action Committee have actively campaigned and organised demonstrations to push the government to reform the social security system. As a result, the government began to implement the Health Security Programs in January 2014 and Employment Security Programs in July 2015, as mandated by Law Number 40/2004 concerning the National Social Security System. In 2013, workers in the Freeport mining company in Timika district, Papua province won their demand to increase their wages after a lock-out protest running for three days. In the same year, workers in Bekasi and Serang districts successfully forced local governments to

¹ In 2005 the Ministry of Manpower recorded 96 labour strikes nationwide. The number increased significantly to 239 labour strikes in 2014 (Pusdatin 2015). In addition, the number of collective bargaining agreements at the company level increased steadily from approximately 10,959 in 2010 to 12,113 in 2013, and this pattern continues. In the same period, according to data from the ILO (2015), the likelihood of resolving industrial dispute cases has improved significantly, from approximately 38.1 per cent in 2010 (1,456 out of 3,821 industrial dispute cases) to 86.2 per cent in 2013 (2,468 out of 2,861 cases).

² In this thesis, the terms "union elites" and "union leaders" are used interchangeably. See Chapter Three regarding the definition of union elites used in this thesis.

increase the minimum wage to a level that was higher than what was initially proposed by the local wage council. These examples demonstrate that workers are now able to develop stronger bargaining positions through their collective power, although this thesis finds that the tendency of union leaders to get involved in electoral politics is proving divisive and may undermine this progress.

The role of non-government organisation (NGO) activists concerned with labour movements has also contributed to the re-emergence of organised labour in Indonesia (Nyman 2006; Ford 2009; Arifin 2012). NGOs such as the Trade Union Rights Centre, the Sedane Institute for Labour Information, and the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation have undertaken grassroots organisation, research and policy advocacy functions (Ford 2009: 80). At the grassroots level, labour NGOs are organising factory workers, providing legal aid, conducting organisational training, establishing community workers groups, and even offering logistical support and encouragement for strike action (Ford 2009: 86). Activists from research and policy advocacy NGOs are attempting to raise local, national and international awareness in relation to labour conditions in Indonesia. They are using mass media and public advocacy campaigns and are lobbying the government and international institutions to support the trade unions who are demanding their rights. NGOs are documenting the living and working conditions of factory labourers and are disseminating their findings in Indonesia and abroad (Ford 2009: 86-87). Moreover, the recent success of labour NGOs in supporting the trade unions is complemented by their links with international NGOs and labour groups in other countries in Asia, Europe, North America, and Australia (Ford 2009; Silaban 2009). Pro-labour NGOs are receiving direct funding from government aid organisations, union-sponsored organisations, private organisations, and even international human rights campaigns such as the anti-Nike campaign (Ford 2009: 88). In this regard, Munck (2002) and Atzeni (2015) are correct when they state that globalisation not only affects production systems and economies in developing countries, but also brings about new dynamic labour movements and strengthens the role of organised labour.

Some scholars suggest that the labour movement in post-authoritarian Indonesia should not be underestimated as it represents the emergence of a movement of society in Indonesia's political development (Nyman 2006; Beittinger-Lee 2010; Juliawan 2011). According to Meyer and Tarrow (1998: 128), a movement of society takes place when three conditions are fulfilled. First, social protests evolve from being sporadic to a perpetual element in modern life. Second, protest behaviour occurs with greater

frequency in more diverse constituencies and is used to represent a wider range of claims. Third, the trend of professionalisation and institutionalisation may change the major vehicle of contentious claims into an instrument within the realm of conventional politics. Some of these conditions have been met in Indonesia, although this thesis finds that trade unions are still struggling with internal organisation problems and the legacy of the Suharto years.

The implementation of decentralisation and new legislation regulating political parties and elections are enabling unions in Indonesia to seize new opportunities for political mobilisation, particularly in the electoral arena (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1299). Nevertheless, as political reform in Indonesia is still ongoing, some unions have begun to pursue electoral strategies that entail running union elites in legislative races at both national and subnational levels. The fact that several union leaders successfully gained local legislative seats in the 2009 and 2014 elections is an important indicator of their deeper political involvement, but more needs to be done to examine the nature and consequences of this shift to formal trade union activism. Political parties are the primary agent for trade unions to engage in electoral contestation, for instance by providing direct access to the policy-making process. Therefore, alliances with political parties have crucial importance for trade unions. When participating in partisan politics, however, unionists belong both to political parties and to their specific constituencies and union organisations (Murillo 2001: 14-15). They are therefore likely to be confronted with a dilemma, between accepting the policy status quo and pursuing policy change to guarantee the interests of their specific constituency (Lee 2011: 142).

Ever since the fall of Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998, many scholars have focused on Indonesia's political reforms. As one of the most populous democratic countries in the world (after India and the USA), with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia as a case study can offer rich insights into the relationships between Islam, democracy, and development. Moreover, Indonesia can contribute to comparative studies on decentralisation processes, which have been attracting the interest of international development agencies (Hidayat 2005; Nordholt and Klinken 2007; Tyson 2010). Some believe that Indonesia has done exceptionally well in consolidating its democracy (Prasetyo et al. 2003; Erb and Sulistiyanto 2009). On the other hand, there are a number of scholars who argue that despite significant institutional reform in the post-Suharto era, democratic change in Indonesia has been superficial, with the core power

structures remaining unchanged. It has been found that oligarchic elites have survived the 1998 regime change and continued to use the state to maintain their political power (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Choi 2014; Winters 2014).

As a crucial part of the story of Indonesia's democratic reforms, the dynamics of trade union engagement in formal politics and the tendency for union elites to contest parliamentary elections have received comparatively little attention. Caraway, Ford and Nugroho (2015) are among the few scholars to carry out systematic research in this area. The authors have analysed how historical legacies, institutional configurations and organisational settings have shaped the political activities of two trade union federations under the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (KSPI) that participated in the 2009 legislative elections. They found that the legacy of authoritarianism, electoral rules and union fragmentation are significant factors in explaining why none of the union candidates won legislative seats in 2009. Ford (2014) also conducted research in Batam, questioning the possibility of non-elite actors from trade unions engaging in a meaningful way in electoral politics. Ford (2014: 342) sought to challenge mainstream studies of local politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia, which often argued that the entrenched and dominant role of political elites has effectively excluded non-elite interests from the electoral arena. Ford (2014) chose Batam as a study case because organised labour in this city has established a purpose-specific structure to promote the political interests of its members in electoral contestations. She argued that "despite the ultimate failure of the union's electoral experiments between 2004 and 2009, the process of learning by doing embedded in trade unions presents a significant challenge to analyses that discount the possibility of substantive popular participation in electoral politics" (Ford 2014: 341).

This thesis builds on Ford's (2014) findings by examining the ways in which trade union elites perceive their socio-political position and use their collective power to develop their political movements in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Little is currently known about the political legitimacy of these newcomers who are engaging in electoral politics; for instance, why many of them seek political careers at lower levels of authority. Even less is known about the manner in which trade unions and their legislative candidates develop their strategies to contest legislative elections, and why only a few union candidates have successfully gained legislative positions. In relation to the work currently being done on Indonesia's local politics, this thesis aims to understand whether and how elected union legislative candidates in the 2009 and 2014 elections have played

their political roles in the parliament office and contributed to the improvement of the formulation and implementation of labour-related policies. By analysing politically active trade union elites, one can better understand emerging power relations within a democratic and highly decentralised Indonesia.

A Brief History of Indonesian Trade Unions

Historically, the first Indonesian labour organisations were established after 1910, in the late period of Dutch colonisation (1602–1942), initiated by Dutch primary and secondary school teachers, employees of the state railways, and Indonesian workers at sugarcane plantations (Tedjasukmana 1958: 4-8). Around this time, the labour organisations had played important roles in the early nationalist movement and were central to the development of political consciousness, creating opportunities for Indonesians to acquire organisational skills and providing a channel for many to join nationalist political parties (Ingelso 2001; Suryomenggolo 2013). One significant development was the establishment of the Socialist Party in 1914 by the railway trade union known as *Vereeniging van Spoor-en Tramweg Personeel in Nederlandsch-Indie* (VSTP). Then on 23 May 1920 some of the VSTP leaders established the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as a section of the International Communist Organization (Tedjasukmana 1958: 9). During the Dutch colonial era, communist trade unions were expanding because they were integrated with the international revolutionary movements, particularly since the establishment of the PKI which was the member of the *profintern* in Moscow and Canton (Tedjasukmana 1958: 14). As emphasised by Nyman (2006: 95-96), during the Dutch era trade unions were not only active in demanding welfare improvements, but also participated in radical political movements and the struggle for independence. Therefore, the Dutch East Indies authorities treated and framed “labour organisations as a dangerous political movement” (Silaban 2009: 117).

In the post-independence era (post-1945), some scholars used the concept of political unionism to explain the existence of trade unions which was more likely to be political than economic (Ingelso 2001; Ford 2005; Suryomenggolo 2013). During this era, unions had just been freed from colonial restrictions and “grew out of a highly politicised context where the nationalist struggle became a priority for society in general” (Nyman 2006: 96). Soon after Indonesia’s independence was proclaimed on 17 August 1945, a number of union representatives gathered in Jakarta to formulate a common platform and political strategy on how the labour movement could participate in politics

and strengthening the new republic. This meeting was successful in establishing the Indonesian Workers' Front (BBI) which later strengthened the unions' link to political parties.³

In 1946, the PKI took the initiative in the establishment of the All-Indonesian Central Workers' Organization (SOBSI) and further built up a huge union federation. In 1957, SOBSI was the largest trade union federation with 39 national and more than 800 local affiliated unions. Its membership constituted more than 60 per cent of the whole of organised labour or nearly 2.7 million members of workers from plantations, the sugar industry, dockworkers and seamen, railroad employees, oil workers, and metalworkers (Tedjasukmana 1959: 28-29). At that time, communist-affiliated radical labour unions obtained political support from prominent labour figures who had been exiled abroad and imprisoned in a detention camp in Boven Digul New Guinea by the Dutch colonial authorities (Tedjasukmana 1959: 19).⁴ As Tedjasukmana concludes (1959: 23), during this period (1945-1965), the government under Sukarno regarded trade unions as politically necessary. This recognition can be illustrated by the involvement of SOBSI that spearheaded the nationalism of foreign enterprises in 1957, an act that was supported by Sukarno (Hadiz 2006: 561). Presiden Sukarno also recruited several union leaders in his cabinet, such as SK Trimurti and Iwa Kusuma Sumatri, and directly elected 40 prominent union leaders as temporary parliament members under his 'Guided Democracy' system.

The militant radical unionism that prevailed since the early decades of political unionism ended abruptly after the PKI was banned in March 1966 for its alleged involvement in a failed coup on 30 September 1965, the so-called G30SPKI incident, that led to a national emergency. Six top army general and one junior officer were kidnapped from their homes in Jakarta and later tortured and murdered on the outskirts of the city at Lubang Buaya by a military operation that called itself the Thirtieth September

³ Besides the communist affiliation, trade unions were affiliated with other political parties with different ideologies such as nationalist, socialist, and proletarian (Ford 2009). The nationalists were associated with the Indonesian National Party led by Sukarno and was supported by the People's Labour Union. The All-Indonesia Workers Congress (KSBI) was linked to the Indonesian Socialist Party and the Central Organization of Indonesian Workers (SOBSI) had links to the Proletarian Party. These three unions, including SOBSI, were just some of the many trade unions from across the political spectrum that were established or re-established during the post-independence era (1945-1965).

⁴ One of the leaders was Iwa Kusuma Sumantri. He was a leftist who had studied in Eastern University Moscow and was sent to Boven Digul detention camp in New Guinea in 1929. During World War II he was released and was appointed as Minister of Social Affairs at the beginning of Indonesian independence era. During his leadership he set up the first labour congress and contributed to the appointment of several SOBSI leaders to parliament.

Movement (Hearman 2013: 9). It is widely held that the military operation was led by Lieutenant Colonel Untung, a member of the *Cakrabirawa* presidential guard and an agent acting on behalf of the PKI (Hearman 2013: 9).

In 1965, the PKI was the third largest communist party in the world with over 27 million members including their affiliated organisations such as SOBSI, the Indonesian Peasant's Front (BTI), the youth group Pemuda Rakyat (People's Youth), and the Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani).⁵ Prior to the G30SPKI incident, the PKI were also involved in violence conflicts between poor peasants who were usually backed by the BTI and Pemuda Rakyat against the land owners in several rural areas in Java and Sumatra, who were mostly religious and society leaders and aligned with the Muslim political parties, such as the Nahdatul Ulama and the Masyumi. One example was the Kanigoro incident in January 1965 in the Blitar regency of East Java in which members of the BTI and youth group Pemuda Rakyat attacked an Islamic service held in an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), killed the religious leader (*kiyai*) and defiled the Qur'an (McGregor 2009: 198).

Following the G30SPKI incident, the army led by Mayor General Suharto took control and ordered the destruction of the PKI including its labour wings, SOBSI. The army under Suharto labelled the G30SPKI as a coup d'état and accused the PKI and its organisational wings of masterminding the incident. After Suharto gained power in 1968, anti-communist propaganda was very strong. Communist ideology was forbidden, including the spreading of communist teachings and the use of communist symbols.⁶ To spread the anti-communist campaign, the army formed alliances with civil society groups such as student and religious groups which were opposed to the PKI (Hearman 2013: 10). Former communist party supporters were arrested, and thousands were killed, especially those considered to be involved in the 1965 coup and political violence in the early 1960s, while their family members faced various economic and political pressures and

⁵ For decades after the G30SPKI incident, the 'communist threat' was promoted in school textbooks and the G30SPKI was commemorated through a national public holiday and remembered as a 'black day' in Indonesia's history during which communists attempted to seize state power through violent means. Since 1981, on every 30 September, a state ceremony was held at the monument of Pancasila Sakti at Lubang Buaya (the site where the victims of G30SPKI were tortured and killed), which was always attended by president and vice president, ministers, leaders of political parties and government institutions, family members from the victims, and representatives of mass organisations, including youth and students. On the night of 30 September, a film entitled *The Betrayal of the G30SPKI* was also broadcasted through national TV networks, reinforcing the message of the dangers of communism.

⁶ See Tap MPRS (People Assembly Council's Decision) No. XXV/1966 on the destruction of the PKI and the prohibition of the communism/Marxism-Leninism teachings in Indonesia.

restrictions (Sulistyo 2000; Cribb 2002). Amnesty International estimated that between 600,000 and 750,000 people were imprisoned for varying lengths of time after the G30SPKI. In addition, about half a million PKI supporters were killed in the 1965-1966 massacres (Sulistyo 2000; Cribb 2002).

Under Suharto's repressive regime, the labour movement was depoliticised and strictly controlled. Trade unions were systematically suppressed with no opportunities to build independent organisations as well radical leftist movements (Tjandra 2010: 56). This policy was carried out by the New Order regime due to the perceived need to preempt the re-emergence of leftist political tendencies within organised unions (Hadiz 2006: 564). Labour activists who opposed Suharto and his regime were sometimes abducted and imprisoned. Harsh repression of workers' protests was routine, including military intervention when dealing with industrial disputes (Quinn 2003: 23). The high-profile case of Marsinah, an Indonesian worker who was kidnapped by the army and brutally murdered on 8 May 1993 because of her involvement in the strike action at her workplace, is one example of the repressive efforts used against the labour movement during the Suharto era.⁷

A range of anti-trade union policies were implemented, including the forcing of trade unions to amalgamate into a single union. The New Order's single union, the SPSI, was primarily an instrument of power rather than a representative body for unions and workers (Ford 2005: 200). The SPSI was enforced, just like any other functional groups in the state's corporatist structure, to maintain close institutional ties to the New Order electoral machine, the Golkar Party (Ford 2005; Mietzner 2013). Using the enforcement of the ideology of *Pancasila*, a Sanskrit word which translates as five principles, for encapsulating the idea of a kind of social partnership and deliberation to reach a consensus, the New Order government argued that "the trade unions must be renovated in order to avoid repeating the mistake of the past, when trade unions eschewed its social-economic responsibilities in favour of a divisive political unionism in which political parties' interest were prioritized over member's needs and the national interest" (Sukarno 1984, cited in Ford 2005: 3). Therefore, the legacy of the political anti-communist struggle of the 1960s would always identify militant radical trade unions as politically dangerous leftist organisations (Hadiz 1997; Nyman 2006). Consequently, unions and

⁷ The Marsinah case generated international attention about human rights violations in Indonesia and inspired many workers, NGOs and student activists to rally against the militaristic regime. This is widely acknowledged as one of the most politically influential events leading to the fall of Suharto in 1998.

workers lost their leftist antagonistic traditions as well as their political identity in elections and negotiations. In addition, the doctrine of socio-economic (depoliticised) trade unionism which was strictly imposed for almost 32 years seems to have survived and been adopted by the majority of unions in Indonesia today.

In the post-New Order era, democratisation has brought some positive effects on the emergence of organised unions as well as civil society movements. The industrial relations system has transitioned from exclusionary corporatism backed up by strong state intervention to collective bargaining that requires bipartite and tripartite dialogues as favoured by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This has resulted in a better representation of workers' interests in companies, and at regional and national levels within Indonesia's bipartite and tripartite structures (Ford 2005; Mizuno 2005). Further, the establishment of the Industrial Relations Court in 2004 has shifted the function of settling disputes from the Committee for Labour Disputes Settlement, an agency controlled by the government during the New Order era, to the Tribunal of Industrial Relations, an entity independent of the government. One of the designed features of the whole process is the move to the rule of law (Mizuno 2005: 199). In addition, the implementation of the decentralisation policy has contributed to the shift from centralised labour administration to district and provincial levels. Under Law Number 32/2004 on Regional Government, the implementation and inspection of employment regulations as well as dispute settlement functions are devolved to the local government.

The Return of Political Unionism

The engagement of trade unions in electoral politics in the post-authoritarian era is reminiscent of the long history of the political unionism before and after Indonesia's independence in 1945, during which labour organisations were often associated with political parties. As noted by Suryomenggolo (2013: 40), the early labour movement in Indonesia "constituted nothing more than a political arm of the new Indonesian state". Trade unions developed their political aspirations by getting involved directly in political parties and maintaining close relations with political parties. However, the legacies from the Suharto era continue to shape the context in which Indonesian unions mobilise today (Törnquist 2004; Hadiz 2010; Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015).

Union repression, de-politicisation and the association of unions as leftist organisations with communist affiliations during the New Order era have effectively amounted to the suppression of trade unions' abilities to re-engage with formal politics. The freedom of association guaranteed since 1998 did not immediately bring strong political consolidation among labour organisations. On the contrary, the labour movement experienced significant fragmentation. When conflicts between union elites occur, the result is usually the establishment of a new union organisation. This is not only because of inter-elite rivalry and clashes of interests, but also because the Trade Union Law Number 21/2000 is said to place too much emphasis on freedom of association and facilitates "extreme fragmentation" by setting loose requirements for establishing new trade unions (Juliawan 2011: 352).

Despite these challenges, Indonesia's democratic reform did create new opportunities for trade unions to transform their movements not just industrially, but also politically (Ford 2005). Moreover, their relative success on industrial recognition in the post-1998 era further increased trade union elites and labour activists' optimism as to their ability to compete in electoral politics (Ford 2005; Juliawan 2011). This condition has been evident since the first multi-party elections in 1999 and the first direct elections in 2004, during which some trade unions and labour activists established labour political parties with varying degrees of success. For instance, there were five labour parties out of 48 parties that took part in the 1999 general elections. Three labour parties came from sections of the All-Indonesia Workers' Union (SPSI) which was established during the authoritarian New Order era. In the 2004 elections, four labour parties passed the administrative verification procedures, although only the Social Democratic Labour Party (PBSD) passed the final stage of verification from the Electoral Commission. The PBSD failed in the national level elections; however, the party attracted 636,397 votes nationwide and gained 22 seats in various districts in 2004, doing particularly well in the North Sumatra province.

Several large and established political parties are now building political alliances with trade unions in attempts to secure votes from workers, particularly in several union-dense provinces in Java and Sumatra islands. In the 2009 legislative elections, for instance, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) ran nine labour candidates for national assembly in union-dense electoral districts in the Riau Archipelago, Central Java, West Java, and Banten (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1301). Meanwhile, 18 trade union

leaders affiliated with 12 established parties were registered in the Batam municipal assembly election (Ford 2014: 352).

Out of three acknowledged and registered national trade union confederations in the Ministry of Manpower, only the KSPI have begun to fully participate in legislative elections. The KSPI is the only trade union confederation among three biggest confederations that has no link with previous labour organisations during the Suharto era. The majority of KSPI members are union federations concentrated in industrial zones and come from large companies, making it easier for them to form organised unions. In developing labour movements, the KSPI is also building a network with labour NGOs, such as with the Trade Union Right Center and the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation. At the international level, the KSPI is affiliated with the International Trade Union Confederation and is a member of Industrial All (KSPI 2017). In addition, the other two biggest national confederations - the Confederation of All-Indonesia Workers' Unions (KSPSI) and the Confederation of Indonesian Prosperous Trade Unions (KSBSI) - are not fully united but they both tend to disagree with union involvement in electoral politics.

Indonesian trade unions have found several different ways to participate in electoral politics in the post-authoritarian era. The first, already mentioned, is by establishing labour-related political parties. The second is by nominating the trade union elites and labour organisation leaders as legislative candidates through organisational partnerships with political parties. The third is to form individual contracts with different political parties (even though they came from the same trade union or labour organisations). The fourth is by becoming members of political parties. Given that union electoral strategies are part of a dynamic process aimed at gaining membership support, as well as ensuring electoral victory, analysis of these modes of electoral participation among trade union elites is extremely significant not only for understanding how the union elites vie for voters, but also for a broader analysis of contemporary Indonesian politics. It is also important to consider the fact that labour constituencies are difficult to mobilise, and that political party elites tend to see unions as outsiders with nothing to contribute financially to parties (Ford 2014: 356).

Trade unions are positioned to serve a strategic role in the formal political arena to represent the interests and political aspirations of the working population. In particular, as the trade unions have quite a substantial membership base, with 120 federations representing around 2.7 million members, they have the potential to cause considerable

swings in votes, particularly in the union-dense areas. The political potential of trade unions is also supported by the gradual changes of the Indonesian economic structure in recent decades. Before the 1970s the Indonesian economy was heavily dependent on the agriculture sector, reflecting both its stage of economic development and government policies to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency. Furthermore, since the beginning of the 1980s, the government focused on diversifying export orientation from oil to manufactured products and it caused a gradual process of industrialisation and urbanisation. When trade barriers were reduced in the mid-1980s, the Indonesian economy became more globally integrated (Elias and Noone 2011: 1). After being hit hard by the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, the manufacturing sectors, as the main contributor to union membership, grew by about 6 per cent from 2007 to 2014, compared with -5 per cent growth in the 1997-2000 period. This growth particularly occurred in labour-intensive industries such as textiles, garments, footwear, food and beverages, electrical goods and electronics, and furniture. These sectors employ a third of the total manufacturing workforce. A larger and more stable workforce, manufacturing growth, urbanisation and investment in education are seen as positive developments for industry and union membership (Lane 2018: 12).

Trade union participation in electoral politics in post-Suharto era is influenced by the changes to Indonesia's electoral system. Before the 2004 general elections, the members of the national and local legislature were chosen by the political parties based on a closed proportional system. Consequently, this system gave too much power to the political parties, and members of the legislature put their party interests above those of their constituents (Suryadinata 2002: 76). Since 2004 the electoral system in Indonesia has changed, allowing voters to vote directly for legislative candidates as proposed by the participating political parties in legislative elections. This new rule also applies to the election of local government leaders such as mayor and regent. In the 2009 legislative elections, a new electoral law with an open proportional system was established showing that Indonesia's democracy is continuing to improve its electoral system. The reform of the electoral system in the 2009 elections resulted in the practice of real and more democratic political competition (Aspinall and Mietzner 2010: 34). Since 2009 each legislative candidate should compete to get their voters not only against the candidates from other parties, but also the candidates from the same party. In particular, this open proportional system of elections allows those who were not part of the political class

before to be more actively involved in the political development of their regions and to contest legislative positions which possess real policymaking powers.

Trade Union Politics

Several trade union elites have started to compete in electoral politics since the first multi-party general elections began in 1999. The responses coming from the labour unions, labour activists and the workers have been varied. Some unionists seem to reject this approach and actively campaign against the involvement in formal politics as well as the forming of alliances with political parties, while others respond differently in different contexts, which speaks to the complexity of the issue (Aspinall 2014; Ford 2014).

Törnquist (2004) and Ford (2005) noted that in the early reform period (known in Indonesia as *reformasi*), while union leaders and labour activists showed their intention to be more politically assertive, many of them remained suspicious toward the electoral participation of several labour parties as well as the forming of political alliances between political parties and union elites. Some trade union leaders and labour activists continue to question the motives of union elites and fear that the unions will only be used for the political interest of political parties. In a national seminar that I attended which was held by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (2013) about the Indonesian labour movement, there were questions from the participants about whether or not the labour union elites who have been elected to the legislature actually have the capacity and will to strive for the interests of labour.⁸ Some participants at the seminar questioned whether union leaders are only being used for political reasons, such as to gain more votes from their members, and whether it is the right time for the labour movement in Indonesia to get involved actively in electoral politics. These are some of the unresolved issues that this research will address.

A serious debate has also emerged among scholars of Indonesian labour concerning the engagement of trade union elites in formal politics. According to Hadiz (2010: 151), the contemporary labour movement remains “essentially constricted in its capability to influence the fundamental agenda of social and political reform in Indonesia”. Labour organisations have been marginalised politically, at national and local levels, because the “reform agenda has been largely shaped by economic and political

⁸ National Seminar at Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI) titled “The Political Direction of Unions after Reformation Era”, Jakarta 25 April 2013.

interests unconnected to the worker's interest, and even hostile to that of the labour movement” (Hadiz 2010: 151). Other scholars stress the internal problem of fragmented unions (Törnquist 2004; Silaban 2014; Caraway and Ford 2017). For example, fragmentation resulted in the failure of the Labour Party, led by Muchtar Pakpahan, which only attracted 0.56 per cent of the vote in the 2009 legislative elections. At that time, the KSBSI was facing internal conflict under two different leaderships, and most of its elites refused to support the involvement of the KSBSI with Pakpahan’s Labour Party. Another example is the metal workers leaders in Bekasi who chose not to mobilise resources to support union candidates in the 2009 legislative elections because “the union’s national leadership had failed to convince them of the soundness of its strategy” (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1302).

In line with Hadiz (2010), Törnquist (2004: 380) noted that labour union approaches to politics have been “flawed because of the insufficient political capacity among labour elites”. Fragmentation and factionalism have driven a wedge between various labour groups, who want to increase their independence and obtain their own political contacts and sources of patronage. This is one of the reasons for the failure of labour oriented political parties which contested the election in 1999 (Törnquist 2004). Indonesia’s democratic transition took place in the wake of a deep financial crisis, and while this created room for new labour movements and forces to emerge, it also “diminished the bargaining power of workers” (Törnquist 2004: 387). In addition to the fragmentation problem, unions also had to operate in a precarious situation where the acceleration of informal employment was taking place, including short contracts and labour outsourcing (Tjandraningsih 2012: 409). Moreover, Indonesia is still dominated by agricultural and informal sectors, and most workers in these sectors are not unionised.

Despite negative indicators such as union fragmentation, elite factionalism and ideological obstacles, dynamic change is taking place and there are new opportunities for the engagement of trade unions in electoral politics. Unions in Indonesia are fragmented but their membership is geographically concentrated, particularly in the industrial zones. Under Indonesia’s decentralisation systems, this condition can be advantageous for union elites to build political alliance with political parties and bring labour issues into local parliamentary politics. In this regard, union elites in industrial-dense areas have more opportunity to engage in electoral politics as well as to shape decisions concerning areas of policymaking affecting workers interests in local parliament. Though not overtly

leftist, labour leaders have secured parliamentary seats and unions are engaging in political activities despite facing significant constraints, indicating new opportunities and a growing pluralism in the Indonesian democratic system.

Since the freedom of association has been granted as a legal right in 1998, the political activism among trade unionists has increased significantly. Labour confederations such as the KSPI are increasingly participating in electoral politics and have been successful in securing legislative seats for members. In order to increase their political strength, trade unions have also been sharpening their political activism through training and education programs for their leaders and members.

As reported by Lane (2018: 14), between the period of the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections, thousands of members of the Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers' Union (FSPMI), the largest federation under the KSPI, were trained under the so-called "Ekopol" (political economy) training programmes. They were trained to understand important issues beyond their workplace and are increasingly equipped with skills to think critically and use political language to articulate their interests. Educators of these training are not only senior union leaders but also "activists who had been part of the radical wing of the opposition during New Order era" (Lane 2018: 14). Many Ekopol-trained unionists have become union leaders in the factory level, enabling them to transfer their knowledge and to build solidarity with workers in other companies. The role of the Ekopol training programmes has been "central in enabling the escalation" of labour mobilisation on the street demonstration as well as political campaign in 2014 legislative elections (Lane 2018: 14).

The likes of Törnquist (2004) and Hadiz (2010) accurately capture the re-emergence of the labour movement in the early years of the democratic transition, when the political involvement of labour unions was still weak, and the economic condition of Indonesia was still volatile due to the impact of the Asian Financial Crisis. The work of Caraway, Ford and Nugroho (2015) is more relevant now, as they focus on the trade union elites who participated in the 2009 legislative elections. They concluded that with democratisation, unions have greater opportunities to engage in the electoral arena. Despite the unfavourable legacy from Suharto's New Order and trade union failures during the 2009 elections, they might have a chance to secure their place in the subsequent legislative elections.

Some scholars contend that the emergence of organised labour and attempts to re-engage in electoral politics is an attempt to make the best use of their new freedoms in Indonesia's post-authoritarian regime. As part of the civil society movement, the engagement of trade union elites in formal politics is important not only on election day, but also in the daily struggle to provide a strong countervailing political power resource that is necessary to counter the dominance of oligarchic power in contemporary Indonesia. Further, from her study on civil society and democracy in Indonesia, Nyman (2006: 10) argued that democratisation has had noticeably positive effects on the organisational capacities of industrial workers in post-authoritarian Indonesia. As one of the chief beneficiaries of the post-Suharto political reforms, the labour movement can now organise more freely to form unions and to use collective bargaining power when dealing with workplace issues. These newfound abilities are part of the fundamental pre-conditions that can be used to support the labour movement to reach a higher level, that is, to be involved in the labour policy decision-making process that can only be reached by engaging in formal politics (Nyman 2009: 12).

Research Questions

I have established that Indonesia's democratic reforms provide wider political opportunities for trade union elites to participate in electoral politics. Indonesia has carried out four successful general elections since the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1998. Two major challenges often raised separately by scholars are: (1) the dominance of old elite alliances from the New Order era; (2) the lack of successful candidates from civil society groups managing to get seats at the legislative assembly (Suryadinata 2002; Robison and Hadiz 2004; Nyman 2006; Aspinall 2010; Liddle 2013; Choi 2014; Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015). While the participation of civil society groups in electoral politics has increased, they continue to exist in the margins of the new political landscape, and organised labour is no exception. In response to this situation, I argue that in contesting legislative elections, the trade unions not only have to compete with well-funded elites, but also have to deal with internal organisational obstacles, structural barriers and contextual challenges. To better understand the changing nature of the labour movement in Indonesia, I propose the following primary research question: how have trade union electoral strategies, organisation and political roles evolved during the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections? To support this primary research question, I pose five subsidiary research questions:

1. What patterns of change have occurred within the Indonesian labour movement since democratisation in 1998?
2. Why do trade union elites engage in electoral politics, and how do they seek to legitimise this engagement?
3. What type of electoral strategies are union elites using to mobilise union members and worker constituencies while contesting legislative elections?
4. To what extent do structural and organisational constraints affect the mobilisation capacity of union candidates during legislative elections?
5. In what ways are elected trade union elites using their parliamentary positions to advocate workers' interests and rights?

Operationalising the Concept of Trade Union Electoral Engagement

This study builds upon the theoretical understanding that trade unions are not merely economic actors, but are inevitably political (Bartolini 2007; Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010; Upchurch, Croucher and Flynn 2012; Lee 2015). Trade unions are organisations founded by working people as “a response to the inequalities of social, economic and political power of the emerging industrial society” (Marks 1989: 51). In many capitalist industrial states, trade unions are generally suppressed by the market, and “thus trade unions are primarily reactive and defensive in their political behaviour” (Taylor 1989: 16).

Trade unions are typically in a disadvantaged position when compared to employers, who enjoy far greater resources in the labour market. Trade unions have to negotiate with employers for the improvement of working conditions and influence the ways in which the state shapes the rules of the game in the labour market. Referring to Keynesian economic theory and policy, Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010: 315-317) argued that the labour market is “subject to government intervention” and therefore “regulating labour markets is a question of power resources” and involves political issues. The involvement of unions in formal politics reflects the growing importance of industrial workers as well as the emergence of class politics (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010: 319). In this concept, trade unions are not simply concerned with their economic interests and negotiations with employers, most notably through collective bargaining. Their interests extend to influencing labour-related policies through partisan politics (unions acting as interest groups). For these interests to be manifested in their movements, unions and workers need to engage politically by establishing strategic alliances with

other political actors or political institutions which are often conditioned by specific opportunities and constraints (Lee 2015: 5).

The purpose of studying trade unionism from a political perspective is to explain its emergence, the way trade unions respond to political opportunities, the decisions they make about the most appropriate site for political action, the strategies they pursue, and their adaptation to changing political situations (Marks 1989: 59-60). Trade unions are engaged in a political arena with strategic objectives to develop their collective power and membership interest, to endorse fairer labour market policy, and to build up their organisational capacity for a wider range of interventions, for example in labour-related policy-making and in the monitoring and implementation of industrial regulations (Boreham and Hall 1994: 76). Therefore, in order to be able to fully grasp the dynamics of trade union activism, research on trade union politics needs to combine the perspective that unions are primarily tied to their position in the socio-economic structure with an understanding of the conditions that shape union interactions with party politics and worker mobilisations (Lee 2015: 14).

Studies of trade unionism often benefit from an interdisciplinary approach (Marks 1989; Ford 2005; Benson and Zhu 2008). According to Marks (1989: 9), “the study of unions and industrial relations is an intellectually cosmopolitan discipline, and this is nowhere more apparent than in the field of union political activity”. For instance, in sociology, trade unionism is essentially about collective behaviour which in various ways has been given an institutional form. Other disciplines that are relevant are economics, politics and law. The analysis of wage determination, income distribution and the effect of trade unionism in production, falls within the economic strand. The analysis of pressure groups, lobbying, and political alliances falls within the political strand. The analysis of legal frameworks within which unions have to operate falls within the legal strand. No single discipline can claim a monopoly over the study of trade unionism as unions have been conceptualised from a variety of perspectives. Unions can be viewed as “close-knit communities that are working for their members, or as business-like organisations attempting to bargain with employers, or as part of a political movement seeking diverse political goals” (Benson and Zhu 2008: 36). Each of these perspectives may provide useful insights into the others and they are intimately linked to each other (Benson and Zhu 2008: 36).

Trade unions have emerged at different times in different countries. Each country has a different trade union structure and a variety of economic and political experiences which have largely determined attitudes and responses to union activism (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010: 316). For example, in the case of developed countries such as Britain, Germany and France, trade unions came into existence during the industrial revolution, especially from the 1870s onward. In countries like New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, by contrast, trade unions were popular before they reached the industrialisation phase. In these countries, the formation of labour parties is commonly used as part of trade unions' political strategies to extend their political influence. Meanwhile, in several developing countries, trade unions emerged following prolonged periods of colonial rule as part of nationalist movements to attain independence. In addition, they gained political momentum after regime changes as a result of democratic transition. Therefore, in relation to the study of trade union activism, the methods to be used are in accordance with the varied structural origins of trade unions, their histories, and the prevailing economic and political conditions in which they are situated (Lee 2015: 16).

Several studies on trade unions have concluded that their political strength constitutes the main variable in explaining the diverging pattern of economic performance and social security in many countries (Boreham and Hall 1994; Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010; Upchurch, Croucher and Flynn 2012). For instance, Boreham and Hall (1994) have demonstrated the correlation between union strategies and the level of industrial economic democracy. Utilizing data from three different surveys of union strategies and measures of industrial and economic democracy in seven capitalist countries since the mid-1970s, they found that union movements that have pursued a strategy of political unionism, such as those in Sweden and Germany, have been able to gain significant concessions in securing institutional rights to influence policy formation both at macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. On the other hand, in countries such as the US and Japan, where unions have traditionally pursued strategies locked in at the enterprise level, there is little prospect of improvement for their movements. In these countries, trade unions will remain isolated from key decision-making opportunities at the macro political level and will, therefore, be denied the chance to decisively influence the course of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform (Boreham and Hall 1994: 344).

Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick's (2010) study reinforces the findings of Boreham and Hall (1994) and sheds considerable light on the question of why trade unions must explicitly redefine their political identities. Focusing on trade unions' role in the political arena and their relationship with governments and political parties with reference to ten European countries, they found four key dimensions that have particular political influence. These are the union's ideology, opportunity structure, organisational capacity, and contextual challenges. A recent and similar study has been carried out by Fairbrother (2015), focusing on three key dimensions for union renewal in an increasingly globalised world. She notes that the need for trade union renewal comprises a dialectical relationship between union purpose, union organisation and union capacities. These three dimensions provide the basis of a union's collective authority and power (Fairbrother 2015: 572-573).

In most developed industrial countries in Europe as well as in some countries in Latin America, political unionism has grown since the early industrial era, concurrent with the formation of democratic institutions, the growing political identity of the working class, a demand for improvement working conditions and rights, the electoral success of labour-related parties, and the construction of the welfare state (Marks 1989; Murillo 2001). In the case of the UK, for instance, political unionism saw its highest growth in the period following the Second World War; when unions were recognised, membership was expanded, their leaders were increasingly involved in formal politics, and unions became an integral part of both the bargaining arena and of polity (Fairbrother and Gerard 2002: 56). Thus, in those countries, organised unions and workers were viewed as one of the influential elements of political development and to have successfully determined "the politics and policies of their own society" (Lee 2015: 141). In Indonesia however, and in other Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, operationalising union political engagement requires conceptual adjustment. In these countries, union density is low, democracy is still fragile, elite politicisation is strong, and no left-leaning parties have survived to play a major role in politics. In this thesis, therefore, trade union political engagement is understood as any union's relationship with political institutions, particularly political parties, in which union elites are fully engaged in electoral competition by mobilising their members and workers in general, to gain political representation and influence policy-making. The term "political unionism" is used in this thesis to operationalise the engagement of trade unionists in contemporary Indonesian formal politics.

To answer my research questions, I adopt the four key dimensions of political unionism identified by Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010) as well as similar criteria used by Fairbrother (2015). First, in response to the debate about the importance of the Indonesian labour movement in the post-authoritarian era - whether trade unions should engage or remain neutral in electoral politics - I gathered qualitative data concerning trade union elites' perceptions of political unionism. The analysis will focus on the dimension of unions' ideology, particularly their organisational identities and purposes. In particular, the analysis is also related to trade union elite's motivation to engage in electoral politics as a way of understanding the unions' purpose in engaging with formal politics. Referring again to Fairbrother (2015: 566), he notes that "the purpose of a union is to pursue objectives that reflect its identity". Trade unions articulate their organisational purpose in several ways: as a "business-like service organisation", as a "sword of justice" or as a "vested interest". These different types of purpose and identity have a strong impact on the ways in which trade unions determine and pursue their modes of struggle (Fairbrother 2015: 567).

The next dimension is the opportunity structure. Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010: 326) define opportunity structures as the "varying degrees and forms of economic and political transformation that enabled trade unions to utilise their power resources to seek ways of influencing public policies". Opportunity structures can cause strong trade unions to shift their priorities increasingly from issues in the industrial arena to decision-making policy in the political arena (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010: 327). In the Indonesian context, opportunity structures rely upon to the approval of ILO Convention Number 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, the establishment and complicated implementation of three new labour laws, the localisation of labour issues under decentralisation policy, and the ongoing changes in the electoral system that have created wider political opportunities for trade union elites to participate in elections.

To understand union organisational capacity, several different union electoral strategies are analysed in this thesis. According to Levasqu and Murray (2010: 341) union capacities can be defined as "the ability of unions to address and define union concerns toward labour-related issues that can be exercised, developed, transmitted, and learned". Furthermore, Fairbrother (2015: 563) argued that union capabilities without strong organisational resources are not enough to support effective trade unionism. In this study,

the dimension of unions' organisational capacity relies on their ability to use their collective resources, which is reflected in the processes of workers' mobilisation during electoral campaigns. Thus, in contrast to party cadres who have a wider range of constituents, the union candidates are highly dependent on workers' political support to gain votes. According to Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010: 318), political unionism requires relatively high membership density and financial resources to support it. If organisational resources are modest, coalitions with other groups, such as political parties, may make it easier to achieve their goals. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how and why the Indonesian trade unions have chosen different electoral strategies, in particular how they network and form strategic coalitions to influence elections.

The final dimension to consider is the contextual challenges. This is related to the contemporary economic and political issues which confront trade unions and shape the appropriateness of different strategies. In his study, Fairbrother (2015: 562) explains the types of contextual challenges that exist and questions the prospect of trade unionism in relation to the changing economic system, from mass-based industries to new industries, and the balance of power that has caused union membership levels to decline dramatically, narrowing the political interests and purposes of both of them and workers. Fairbrother (2015: 562) notes that those challenges occurred especially in advanced capitalist (or highly industrialised) countries. Meanwhile, Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010: 318) explores this dimension by giving examples of how trade unions in some advanced capitalist economies have sought alternative forms of action in response to drastic economic and political changes. One example is the decision of most German trade unions to adopt the demand for a minimum wage policy, after the opening up of the German labour market through European Union (EU) enlargement and an increase in low-wage workers.

In this thesis, I define contextual challenges as systemic political practices and electoral dynamics that are beyond the control of trade union elites and directly or indirectly affect the success or failure of union engagement in electoral contestation and policy-making. These aspects include corrupt practices and material inequalities, union-party alliances, fragmentation and elite factionalism, the decline in union membership, and changes in workers' political identity. Furthermore, noting the current dynamics of Indonesian local politics, in this study the dimension of contextual challenges is also related to the policy-making role played by elected union elites in parliament. As

generally acknowledged, the presence of unionists in electoral contestations represent the population of a specific constituency, namely the union members and workers. To a certain extent, they can act as a new class of politician and can build bridges by voicing worker interests at the policy-making table. In practice, however, unionists turned-politicians often face a representation dilemma: are they activists or party representatives? Given the pattern of elite politics and culture in Indonesia (Noor 2010: 14), unionists in parliament may be isolated by their new position or “belittled by career politicians as idealist or naïve beginners”, while those who have turned against their former associates to pursue their own interests or align themselves with the oligarchy and status quo will be viewed as “traitors” (Mietzner 2014: 45). Therefore, analysis of this issue will lead to a deeper understanding of the impact on democratisation, particularly concerning the question of how trade unions have exercised and developed meaningful engagement in formal politics.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method because explaining the engagement of trade union elites in electoral politics requires thick analysis and nuanced process-tracing through the triangulation of data, which are attainable through qualitative study. Qualitative research has been described as the most appropriate method to examine the thoughts, beliefs and ideas of individuals or groups, so as to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena (Silverman 2005: 34). According to Pierce (2008: 44), the strength of qualitative research “lies in its unique capacity, to learn and understand the underlying values of individuals and groups”. Qualitative research helps us to understand the behaviours and beliefs of individuals and groups and can help us to interpret how individuals and groups make sense of their setting through social structures and roles, and through the observation of symbols, motivations, feelings, emotions, and opinions (Berg 2001; Powner 2015). These are in line with Klenke’s (2008: 34) view that, in term of design, one of the characteristics of qualitative research is its “flexibility and reflexivity”.

Research concerning trade union politics should encompass two convictions that capture the qualitative character of union strength and political identity (Marks 1989; Benson and Zhu 2008; Upchurch, Croucher and Flynn 2012). The first is that union political activity should be analysed at multiple levels, encompassing the sources of union

orientation in their occupational communities, union bargaining power in the industrial or sectoral context, and at the level of formal politics. In the Indonesian context, local level political analysis is also necessary in order to understand the specific factors that shape union strengths (and weaknesses) and the propensity for organised labour to seek power in the era of decentralisation. It is because political reforms in Indonesia through decentralisation have transformed the nature of local politics and given local elites greater political influence (Hidayat 2005; Tyson 2010; Choi 2014). The implementation of the decentralisation policy has been one of the most critical and observable political changes in Indonesia since 1998. It marks the end of the uniformity of policies carried out by the central government in the districts and municipalities across the country. Its implementation has contributed to the shift from centralised labour administration to the district and provincial levels. Analysing this issue will lead to a deeper understanding of the impact on democratisation, for instance how trade unions exercise and develop different modes of political engagement.

The second conviction is that in seeking to understand union political activity one should consider the role of union elites, who exercise political power or influence and directly engage in struggles for political leadership. Compared to their members, union elites have greater control over shaping agendas and deploying resources and are therefore more directly engaged in the political process (Upchurch, Croucher and Flynn 2012: 23). Union elites play a significant role in every organisational decision and influence the extent to which unions maintain or abandon ideology, design union strategies, and agitate for change on behalf of a wide membership, raising questions of representation (Burnham et al. 2008; Benson and Zhu 2008).

Burnham et al. (2008: 231) explain that a key research technique for political scientists interested in decision-makers is semi-structured elite interviewing. According to Drever (2003: 1), during semi-structured interviews the “interviewer sets up a general structure by deciding in advance what ground is to be covered and what main questions are to be asked”. By their very nature, elite interviews provide the political scientist with an insight into the mindset of the elites who have played a role in shaping politics, policy or society. Richards (1996: 200) highlights a number of putative advantages in elite interviewing. The first is that the elite respondent can help in interpreting documents, particularly if the interviewee can gain access to the authors responsible for putting together a relevant document. The second is that the elite respondent can help in

interpreting the personalities involved in the relevant decisions and help explain the outcome of events. The third is that the elite respondent can provide information that is not recorded elsewhere, or that is not yet available to the public. The fourth is that the elite respondent can help to understand the context, set the tone, or establish the atmosphere of the area that is being researched. The fifth advantage is that elites can help the researcher to establish a network or provide access to other individuals, in line with the so-called snowball effect.

Interviews with elites require certain research skills and experience and pose a number of operational challenges (Richards 1996; Gubrium and Holstein 2002). Thus, researchers who use this technique should be aware of its pitfalls. One potential pitfall is the tendency of elites to dictate viewpoints by directing researchers to accept or accommodate what they have pointed out. This challenge often centres on power relations and is typically found in interviews with elites who hold strategic positions and want to control and dominate the interview process (Gubrium and Holstein 2002: 33). The next challenge is related to the issues, goals and purposes of the research. For instance, a research project coinciding with the highly politicised and polarised election environment tend to make elite respondents suspect that the interview is being used as a cover for their political opponents to acquire potentially damaging information. If so, gaining the trust of elite respondents is crucial to ensure the reliability of the data and findings (Keren and Edith 2015: 109). According to Richards (1996: 200) “elites may adjust their interpretation of an event in order to avoid being seen in a poor light, or in certain cases, they may have an axe to grind”. In extreme examples, the elites can give different opinions in different interviews or change what they have said in the course of a single interview (Keren and Edith 2015: 109). Researchers should therefore be constantly aware that the information elites supply can be of a highly subjective nature (Gubrium and Holstein 2002: 39).

Data Collection

The primary and secondary data analysed in this thesis are based on information collected through fieldwork carried out in Indonesia between August 2016 and January 2017. Mixed methods are used for data collection: (1) semi-structured, in-depth interviews with unionists, labour activists, union legislative candidates, party politicians, government bureaucrats, and labour scholars; (2) participatory observations in various activities that

range from labour demonstrations on the street, union and workers meetings, parliament meetings, and seminars; (3) documents published by trade unions, labour NGOs, and the Electoral Commission (KPU).

Prior to this research, I had carried out several studies involving trade unionists, labour activists as well as workers. After finishing my MA degree in Japan in 2010 I joined a research team formed under a recommendation of Commission IX DPR RI (National Parliament) and National Tripartite Institution to carry out a study on Law Number 13/2003 on Manpower. I was also involved as a facilitator working on trade union representation at local and national levels to formulate a position paper that was to be submitted to the parliament in support of the government plan to revise Manpower Law Number 13/2003. Nevertheless, this plan failed to gain consensus among union leaders; instead, they decided to use their political channels and opted to struggle in electoral politics and lobby parliament. These experiences encouraged me to conduct further research for my PhD program in relation to trade unions' involvement in politics and their attempts to engage in electoral contestation. In addition, as a researcher working in the government research institution, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), I have been conducting other research that includes my interests in minimum wages, the concept of decent working conditions, and labour movements, which date from the early 2000s. I have therefore had a relatively long association with trade unionists and workers.

I consider my interviews to be the core empirical evidence in this thesis. I interviewed 67 informants, mainly union elites, with the length of interviews ranging between 30 and 120 minutes. The total number of interviewees does not include several dozen workers and unionists that I spoke to during my participatory observation, because the interactions were closer to casual conversations than formal interviews. Detailed interviewee profiles, as well as participatory observations, appear in Appendix A and B. Most of the interviews were recorded, with the full consent of each interviewee, but if an interviewee refused to be recorded I took notes instead. There were also some interviewees who asked me to turn off the recording during their interviews and who requested to make off-the-record comments especially when we were discussing personal opinions or particular union elites.

In reflecting on my fieldwork experience, I noticed that trust and establishment of informal relations with trade unionists are often crucial elements in gaining richer data. As a PhD researcher from the University of Leeds, I am an outsider to all the informants;

however as a researcher working for a government research institution, I could be considered an insider for several participants. Therefore, it is necessary to consider that my dual roles as PhD student and government researcher should be balanced in order to effectively and objectively analyse the information that I gathered from my participants. In the overall interview process, I always maintained that all the data or information that I was gathering was part of my efforts to gain valid and credible study findings. Data collection followed ethical conventions and protocol related to consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and data protection. My project received ethical approval in May 2016 (reference number AREA 15-122).

I prepared for the interviews by collecting information and researching any issues related to my informants' organisational backgrounds, as well as their views on particular issues through social media, news and related publications. In an effort to deal with the potential bias of my dual identity, I positioned myself as an objective researcher and stressed to my respondents that any answers they provided would constitute very valuable information for my research. Such reassurances seemed to work to alleviate certain insecurities and anxieties felt by some respondents. In certain interviews, I found several informants appeared to try to judge their position and opinions, and even tried to question me, attempting to involve my position in their conflict of interests. To deal with such cases, I tried to put myself in a neutral position and reassured them that there were no wrong answers. In short, all empirical data from interviews are obviously not intended to offer statistical confirmation or disconfirmation of the claims I offer in this thesis, but rather to enable examination of how unionists and workers perceive, interpret, and assess their movements, allies and the political context that surrounds them. Their stories and experiences helped me answer my research questions, understand the complexities of trade union politics and their involvement in electoral politics, and formulate nuanced qualitative explanations in my thesis.

Case Selection

In order to gain in-depth knowledge and insights about trade unions politics and to investigate specific strategies and decisions concerning trade unions' involvement in formal politics, I selected case studies in three different research locations: Bekasi in West Java, Serang in Banten, and Medan in North Sumatra. These three research locations are industrial centres and were selected because of their specific features of trade unions' political involvement in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections.

A case study in Bekasi district was selected to represent the Labour Go Politics movement that was established by the FSMPI during its attempt to participate in the 2014 legislative elections. Under this movement, the FSPMI has successfully established a new type of political alliance with political parties and placed its two cadres in Bekasi's district parliament office. As one of the most union-dense and industrialised areas in Indonesia, the strength of the labour movement in Bekasi has become a barometer of organised unions conducting any collective action. In addition, its proximity to Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia puts Bekasi in an important position for understanding the political dynamic of trade union activism in this region.

In the case of Serang district, this research location has been selected to represent the origin of the Labour Vote Labour movement. This movement is an electoral strategy that was initially pursued by an inter-union alliance in Serang district to support nine trade union elites who ran for legislative seats via five different parties in the 2009 legislative elections. Serang has also been selected to represent a new form of union political strategy in the 2014 legislative elections via individual partnerships between particular union elites with certain political parties. Through this strategy, the union elites compete in elections by joining certain political parties, though they generally do not receive support from their home union organisation.

While Bekasi and Serang represent two large industrial centres and the birthplace of strong trade unionism in the post-Suharto era, the case of Medan was selected to represent the most important industrial centre outside of Java Island in terms of size and history. Medan is well known as a stronghold of worker mobilisation from the All Indonesian Labour Federation (FSBSI), and some independent labour organisations such as the SBMI and FNBI. Labour movements in Medan, and North Sumatra in general, have a long history and connection to the legacy of Dutch colonisation, where North Sumatra was designated as plantation area. Since the first democratic elections in 1999, Medan has become one of the most attractive locations for the labour constituency in North Sumatra, especially for labour-related political parties such as the Labour and Social Democratic Party (2004), and the Labour Party (2009). In the 2009 legislative elections, the Labour Party successfully placed one legislative member in Medan's local parliament. Thus, the centrality of the labour movement in these three industrial areas poses a great challenge to our understanding of how union elites vie for political power

and how their political engagement influences policy-making and the nature of industrial relations in these areas.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis proceeds in seven chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 provides a review of the development of Indonesian trade union politics since the end of Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998. It discusses how political reforms, democratisation, and economic liberalisation have developed, and explains the development of labour politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia. This chapter also highlights the significant influence of democratisation and globalisation on the development of labour movements in several countries. Chapter 3 addresses the second research question (hereafter RQ2), concerning the engagement of trade union elites in electoral politics. It focuses on trade union legitimacy related to political unionism and the different political motives behind the participation of trade union elites in electoral contest. Chapter 4 provides detailed empirical findings regarding trade union electoral strategies through a close examination of the case study of three different types of worker mobilisation conducted by trade unions and their elites in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. It answers RQ3 by considering the extent to which union political engagement has impacted the ability of trade union elites to represent their members in gaining political support.

Chapter 5 discusses the empirical findings related to the unions' structural and organisational constraints, which largely determine the success or the failure of the union candidates engaging in electoral politics (RQ4). There are four aspects discussed in this chapter: corrupt practices and material inequalities, the union-party alliance, union membership, and workers' political identity. Chapter 6 offers an analysis of the political role played by elected trade union elites in local parliaments in Bekasi, Serang and Medan (RQ5). The discussion of the empirical data on union elite political roles is structured according to their representation function as members of local parliaments, particularly in terms of legislative and monitoring functions. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by revisiting and synthesising its key arguments and findings. It also discusses the broader implications that this research has for an understanding of trade union politics in post-authoritarian countries. It ends by identifying the continued significance of studying trade union politics to our better understanding the impact of democratisation on the

engagement of trade union elites in contesting legislative elections and shaping policy-making processes.

Chapter Two

Trade Union Politics in Post-1998 Indonesia

Introduction

This chapter reviews the development of Indonesia's trade union politics since the end of Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998. It aims to understand the importance of democratisation in the making of trade union activism. In this thesis, trade union politics is understood as various modes of collective actions carried out by union actors and workers to seek political representation and to influence the policy-making process. As argued by Lee (2011: 5), trade union politics is "a matter of a democratic project where union actors and workers are fully immersed in contestation and negotiation for greater representation and influence by exploring the opportunities under the political institutions in flux". The capacity of trade unions in mobilising their collective power is largely determined by economic structure and the characteristics of trade unions. Both of these factors are "potentially materialised in the interaction of opportunities and constraints found in the upholding political context" (Lee 2011: 12). In this regard, trade unions are viewed as not only economic actors but inevitably political actors that constantly interact and negotiate with the political conditions in which they are situated and develop (Hyman and Gumbrell McCormick 2010; Lee 2011; Fairbrother 2015).

The development of trade union politics in post-1998 Indonesia is emphasised because there has been a surge of organised labour since the collapse of the New Order authoritarian regime in 1998. Along with the establishment of fundamental labour political rights in the first-round of Indonesia's political reforms, trade unions in post-1998 Indonesia have gained collective power and managed to organise and to strengthen their organisational capacities (Suryomenggolo 2014: 12). Furthermore, in response to electoral reforms, political institutions have also been reorganised to allow trade unions to participate freely in the political mobilisation and policy decision-making process. Thus, in contrast to the centralised and restrictive New Order era, post-1998 Indonesia has witnessed the emergence of a plurality of new civil society actors, each with their own particular interests that are being articulated and defended. For this reason, Mietzner and Aspinall (2010: 1) find that Indonesian democracy cannot be described in uniform and all-encompassing terms. In addition, the strength of international pressure placed upon the state to liberalise the economy, and the way unions are responding and

reorganising, also appears to influence different unions' mode of interests as well as their capacities for collective mobilisation in post-authoritarian Indonesia (Caraway 2015: 25). Analysing the political dynamics of trade unions and workers that have evolved provides the basis for understanding the development of trade union politics in Indonesia today as well as the prospect of union activism after the 2019 general elections.

This chapter begins with a discussion of post-authoritarian trade union politics by reviewing the development of trade unions in several countries. This first section provides comparative contexts to understand trade unions in different settings and the challenges of adjusting their movements during periods of democratic transition and economic liberalisation. The next sections provide the political and historical context that explains the development of post-1998 trade union politics in Indonesia. The analysis is presented based on three aspects that crucially contributed to the development of trade union politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia. These three aspects are the role of trade unions in the ousting of the Suharto New Order regime, the labour legal reforms, and the electoral reforms. The chapter concludes with some general observations about the development of trade union politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

The Context: Post-Authoritarian Trade Union Politics

The current literature on post-authoritarian trade union politics highlights the significant influence of democratisation and globalisation on the development of labour movements in different settings (Murillo 2001; Levitsky and Mainwaring 2006; Benson and Zhu 2008; Backman and Sachikonye 2010; Juliawan 2011; Lee 2011; Caraway 2015; Lane 2018). Democratisation and globalisation are seen as “twin epochal changes” that challenge the trade unions in developing their economic interests and collective mobilisation (Caraway, Crowley, and Cook 2015: 3). It emerged as part of the greater political and economic agendas of many countries to restore citizens' fundamental political rights and to introduce or expand the economy in the new supposedly democratic governments (Juliawan 2011; Caraway, Crowley and Cook 2015).

After years, even decades of political suppression under an authoritarian regime, democratisation in Eastern and Central Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia has created more political space for trade unions to advance their political and economic interests, both in the workplace and in the broader political arena. Along with the establishment of electoral reforms, the restoration or development of mutual ties between

political parties and unions have critically shaped the nature of most trade union politics in those regions (Levitsky and Mainwaring 2006; Benson and Zhu 2008; Caraway, Crowlye and Cook 2015). Specifically, democratisation has given trade unions broader opportunities to develop their collective power and to participate in popular politics. However, it is argued that “political opportunities given by democratisation are outweighed by the economic constraints imposed by market liberalisation”, which has forced organised unions onto the defensive or pushed them into different directions (Caraway, Crowlye and Cook 2015: 1).

Market liberalisation has not only restructured the economy of many countries but has also integrated the labour market globally by means of greater flexibility (Benson and Zhu 2008; Gillan and Pokrant 2009; Caraway, Crowlye and Cook 2015). In many countries, the fixed-term employment system has been replaced by contract and outsourcing based working systems which has further increased job insecurity and precariousness, while weakening the power base of trade unions (Tjandraningsih and Nugroho 2008; Anner and Caraway 2010; Amengual and Chirot 2016). Union membership has decreased as many workers in the manufacturing sectors lose their jobs due to flexibility in production and the intensification of competitive market pressure (Isaac and Sitalaksmi 2008; Anner and Caraway 2010). Consequently, trade unions are confronted by the dual challenge of advancing their interests and collective power and repositioning their strategies in dealing with the pressure of market reforms and economic liberalisation.

Many works on post-authoritarian trade union politics have also shown that trade unions varied significantly in how they navigated their collective actions to develop their political leverage as well as to deal with economic liberalisation. A major reason for this variation is that trade unions in many countries entered a post-authoritarian era with different starting points, historical legacies, membership and ideological bases, organisational and mobilisation capacities, in addition to relationships with political parties (Cadland and Sil 2001: 34). These variation of historical, capability and relations of union in particular countries “considerably shapes the trajectories that union follows once authoritarian ends” (Caraway, Crowlye and Cook 2015: 4).

In Central and Eastern European countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, the development of trade union politics is strongly affected by the legacy from the past, the economic crisis following the break in the economic system, and the

capability of unions to deal with the challenges from social and labour market reforms established by post-communist governments (Mainland and Due 2004; Krzywdzinski 2010; Ost 2015). The labour market reform was part of various elaborate conditions for former communist countries in this region related to accession into the European Union (EU) membership as well as demanded by the International Labour Organisation (Mainland and Due 2004: 2).⁹

As noted by Ost (2015: 101), after the collapse of the communist regime in the early 1990s, trade union leaders in Central and Eastern Europe had a difficult time adapting to new challenges of democratic transition and market liberalisation in which trade unions had little experience mobilising their members, no history of independence from the ruling party, and were used to having the monopoly on union representation. As a result, trade unions were weak in the political arena, had a lack of willingness and ability to negotiate their member's interests with employers, paid little attention to new membership recruitment and remained surprisingly passive (Krzywdzinski 2010: 277). The legacy from the long history of unionism which was sponsored by and subordinated to the state, made trade union leaders in this region unable to cope with the changes as well as unable to build new foundations and consolidate their movement (Guardianchich 2012; Grdesic 2015; Ost 2015). The legacy from the previous socialist state has meant "the enthusiasm connected with the transition to democracy translated seamlessly into enthusiasm for a market economy that left unions unprepared and uneager for the challenge" (Ost 2015: 101). As with what happened with the *Solidarnocs* in Poland, for instance, after the communist regime was toppled in 1989, its leaders stop playing to defend union rights against encroachment from the state. Instead, the *Solidarnocs* union leaders support the new government by means of working to prevent strikes, minimising labour activism, and providing succor for the new political leaders (Krzywdzinski 2010: 278).

In Latin America - for instance in Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Chile - a partisan coalition between labour-based parties and unions has strongly affected the development of post-authoritarian trade union politics in the region (Murillo 2001; Levitsky and Mainwaring 2006). The interaction between trade unions and their allied parties have been built in a long history, particularly since the post-war period, which

⁹ Social and market reforms in Eastern Central Europe covers several areas related to social dialogue, health and safety at work, general labour law, equal opportunities for men and women, social security for migrants and public health (Mainland and Due 2004: 1).

persisted during the authoritarian regime, and even remain important influences until today (Bensusan and Cook 2015: 7). Several countries, such as Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela, re-gained significant political momentum simultaneously with important populist labour-based parties coming to power in the late 1980s. In these countries, democratisation preceded market reforms, so unions were in a stronger position to adapt or resist liberalisation policies (Caraway 2004: 30). In Argentina, the Peronist unions, the leading national labour confederation who had strong-allies during Juan Peron's leadership (1946-1955), accepted the market-liberalisation reforms introduced by the Peronist loyalist president Carlos Menem in 1989. However, they had opposed the same efforts carried out by the previous non-Peronist president, Raul Alfonsin (1983-1989), as shown by 13 national strikes during his administration (Murillo 2001: 2). Despite the state's controlling role, the partisan loyalties between the trade unions and the Peronist Party have enabled trade unions in Argentina to negotiate the reforms of social security, labour legislation and privatisation policies (Murillo 2001: 45). The Peronist legacies subsequently helped Argentina's trade unions to sustain their influences even after the regime changed (Bensusan and Cook 2015: 8).

A similar history of union partnership with labour-based parties is also found in Mexico. The Confederation de Trabajadores de Mexico (CTM), the biggest trade union confederation in Mexico, forged an alliance with The Partido Revolucionario Institucional for almost 70 years with the ruling party. This partisanship gave the CTM important economic and political resources, including strategic positions in political parties and government agencies which gave unions the power to influence the decision-making in both institutions (Cook 2007: 153). In contrast to Argentina however, trade unions in Mexico failed to sustain their political influence when the regime changed in 2000 (Bensusan and Cook 2015: 161).

In Africa, historically, trade unions have been active in a broad popular movement for independence and liberalisation, often central in resistance of authoritarianism, and have been on the front-line to promote and enhance democratisation (Buhlungu 2006; Beckman, Buhlungu and Sachikonye 2010). The relationship between unions and party politics in this region is hotly contested either for the unions who supported the alliance with the political party or for those who stay out of politics to strengthen their political autonomy. In some countries, such as in the cases of Zimbabwe and Ghana, the unions themselves played vital roles as the supporter of political opposition by building their

own network and alliances against the ruling party. In these countries, most unions prefer to strengthen their political autonomy and develop their own street politics. The disengagement of unions from party politics has weakened the unions with organisational deficits that most union leaders in these countries were anxious to address (Beckman 2010: 10). In South Africa's case, such as the Cosatu (the leading South African confederation) the story shows a different direction from what happened in Zimbabwe and Ghana. The Cosatu in South Africa engaged in a triple alliance, showing that the unions have effectively utilised the political potential provided by these alliances. As noted by Pillay (2006: 187), the Cosatu in South Africa illustrates a type of political unionism that successfully builds alliances with the ruling party but is still sufficiently autonomous to pressure government via the social movement of unionism.

In East Asia, the political and economic development has strongly influenced the existence of trade union politics and its relationship to political parties. Most literature on the development of trade unionism in this region is distinguished into two groups of countries. The first group is North-East Asian democratic countries, consisting of South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong which are also termed as "New Industrialised Countries" (NICs). In this group, except for Hong Kong, the political shifts from labour-repressive authoritarian rule to democratic regimes started in the late 1980s. The second group is South-East Asian countries; comprising of developing countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia.

In South Korea, prior to democratisation in 1987, labour policy was subordinate to economic development and the military government adopted labour exclusive policy to support its policy on export-led industrialisation. Under this policy, trade unions were not considered as an important factor in industrial relations, and "disputes were dealt with not as labour issues but as national security issues" (Rowley and Yoo 2010: 53). Post-1987, the economic liberalisation that soon followed political democratisation strengthened South Korean's trade unions to develop new strategies for the representation of their members (Benson and Zhu 2008, Lee 2015). Under a newly created tripartite mechanism in 1998, trade unions in South Korea were involved in the various legal revisions of labour laws and industrial negotiations to protect labour rights and improve working conditions, in addition to the economic and social status of the workers (Rowley and Yoo 2010: 53). In democratised South Korea, the two labour organisations, the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) and the Korean Confederation of Trade

Unions (KCTU), were involved in a partisan coalition. The conservative FKTU continued to maintain its status by building a political alliance with the ruling party, whereas the KCTU chose a new political path to accommodate labour grievances by forming political alliances with other civil society organisations to an established labour-related party in 2000, namely the Democratic Labour Party (Lee and Lim 2006; Lee 2011). Although unions in South Korea had political channels in the elections, most of South Korean workers had no interest in political representation (Lee 2015: 73). They have remained as electoral outsiders in most electoral democracy in post authoritarian Korea. The reason is largely to the failure of party and representation politics to develop as an attractive and programmatic political agent as well as to mediate labour interests into institutional politics (Lee 2015: 84,143). As a consequence, militant street-level politics still dominate trade union politics in South Korea today.

In democratised Taiwan, in contrast to the South Korean experiences, the issue of trade unions has been highly politicised (Lee 2015: 88). Since the end of the authoritarian regime in 1986, the organised unions in Taiwan chose to stay on the old path by continuing to rely on established parties to enhance labour interests (Lee 2015: 94). The changing political landscape has exerted a profound impact on Taiwan's trade unionism in which the political confrontation between different unions has been the inevitable result of elite compromise and union cooptation by party politics (Zhu 2008: 60). Democratisation in Taiwan has led to the development of independent and autonomous unions as well as a change in Taiwan's industrial relation system, which was transformed from state corporatism into societal corporatism (Chen, Ko and Lawler 2003: 320). While labour organisations have gained political momentum under democratisation, the economic restructuring and market liberalisation have created new challenges for many unions in Taiwan (Chen, Ko and Lawler 2003: 322). These challenges include the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, economic shift from the manufacturing sector to service, growing employer utilisation of flexible employment arrangements, and the extensive use of foreign guest workers (Chen, Ko, and Lawler 2003: 322). Consequently, trade union in Taiwan have experienced the downsizing of and a reduction in membership (Lee 2015: 36). Meanwhile, market liberalisation has affected many Taiwanese companies (which are characterised by small and medium size enterprises) to move to Mainland China and other countries in South-East Asia for cheaper labour costs or more competitive locations (Zhu 2008: 63). In addition, uncertainty and change in both political and economic conditions faced by the trade unions in Taiwan have further divided the

trade unions and weakened their ability to influence policy at national level and bargaining at industry and company levels (Zhu 2008: 73-74).

In the South-East Asian countries of Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, the trajectory of post-authoritarian trade union politics is generally closer to that of the post-communist countries in Central Eastern Europe. These three countries had a long history of independent unions and strong ties with communist ideology, particularly during the pre-independence era. With the exception of Thailand, which had never experienced colonisation, the first development of labour organisation in these three countries were inseparable from the independent movement and the spread of communist ideology influenced by the Communist Party (Deyo 2000; Hutchison 2015). In Thailand, for instance, before the 1932 coup which gave birth to a constitutional monarchy system, the influence of the Communist Party was strong on the emergence of the first union organisation in this country. Following World War II, the Communist Party in Thailand succeeded in establishing national trade unions, the Central Labour Unions (Tejapira 2001: 52). Nevertheless, the communist link trade union was diminished after the anti-left authoritarian regime in Thailand took power in 1958. In the Philippines, the establishment of first militant labour organisations was led by a communist group which carried out various protests against the neglect of labour rights during American colonisation (Hadiz 2012). In the post-authoritarian era, trade unions in Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia are confronted by the challenges of democratisation and economic liberalisation that occurred simultaneously. Nevertheless, trade unions in these countries have distinctive experiences in dealing with the political opportunities presented by democratisation, while they face the same effect from economic liberalisation, such as the massive replacement of permanent with casual employment and a decline in union membership.

In Thailand, the modern trade union movement emerged during the period of 1972-1991 in conjunction with rapid economic growth, following the implementation of government export-orientated strategy and the introduction of the first Labour Relations Act in 1975 (Yukongdi 2008: 221). During this period, along with the students' movement and relatively stable political condition, trade unions were able to organise themselves as effective organisations (Yukongdi 2008: 221). However, a succession of military coups in 1991 followed by the removal of state-enterprise unions and the prohibition of the right to strike, subsequently limited the development of meaningful trade unions in Thailand (Yukongdi 2008: 231). In addition, the competing regimes in

Thailand have each, over the last four decades, also placed major obstacles in the way of Thailand's trade unions to build and use their organisational capacities (Brown 2016: 211).

In the Philippines, worker mobilisation was part of the "people power" movement that deposed the authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and organised labour was accommodated from the outset in the new Corazon Aquino administration (Boudreau 2009). Aquino's first labour minister was Augusto Sances, a former human rights lawyer, leftist sympathiser, and supporter of My First Movement (Kisulang Mayo Uno, KMU) - the labour centre that played an important role in the ousting of President Marcos in 1986. Augusto Sances was considered to be too pro-labour and was eased out within a year of his appointment (Hutchison 2015). Over time, however, trade unions in the Philippines seem to have been unable to adjust to the short-term shifting of the government and the return of oligarchs into the political system (Boudreau 2009: 243). Furthermore, the re-application of the authoritarian legacy of tripartism as a means of co-opting union leaders and the strong support of the government to promote greater flexibility regarding industrial relations, rapidly narrowed and weakened the labour movement in post-Marcos Philippines (Ofreneo 2009; Hutchison 2015). More importantly, as the unions had no established party connections, they were marginalised in formal politics and continued to be outside the electoral mainstream (Hutchison 2015: 67). In addition, the KMU appears to have failed to generate labour reformist pressures. This labour organisation was split into two separate organisations in 1998 that further weakened unions' consolidation. The combination of continued co-optation in industrial relations, the decline in union membership as an obvious effect of labour flexibility, and divisions among unions have contributed to labour weaknesses in the Philippines today (Hutchison 2015: 67).

The broader literature on trade union politics presented above shows how trade unions in many countries have experienced a distinctive pathway and outcome in the post-authoritarian era. It provides us with a perspective that is rich and comparative in understanding the dynamics of trade union politics from the post-authoritarian context, with possibilities as well as limitations introduced by democratisation and economic liberalisation. In contrast to working-class mobilisation in early twentieth century Europe, where "their interest in economic enhancement was closely tied to their political demand for universal enrichments" (Bartolini 2007: 29), the collective mobilisation of trade unions in the countries presented above differed depending on the workers' experiences during and after the end of the authoritarian regime. Thus, we cannot generalise about

trade union politics in the post-authoritarian era, seeing as they are conditioned by specific structural and political opportunities and constraints. In the context of Indonesia, although trade unions emerged during the onset of the third wave of democratisation, the development of Indonesian trade unions in the last two decades have seen extremely dynamic change, particularly related to the unions' responses to political reforms, as well as their relationship with political institutions and other political actors. The discussion in the subsequent sections provide a more detailed examination of those dynamics.

Trade Unions in the Ousting of Suharto

The Asian financial crisis in 1997 that caused a sudden economic collapse, mass demonstrations and domestic unrest is well covered in the literature explaining the main determinants that forced president Suharto to step-down in May 1998. As noted by Crouch (2010: 2), in 1997 nobody had anticipated that Suharto's authoritarian regime had entered its final year. At that time, the Indonesian economy was strong, the military was under control and Suharto and the Golkar Party had just won their seventh consecutive electoral victory. Most Indonesian and political observers predicted that the leadership of Suharto would be succeeded by his trusted cadre from the military who would lead the subsequent regime unchanged (Crouch 2010: 2). Yet, within a year Indonesia's economy was devastated by the economic crisis, and Suharto unexpectedly stepped down.

Having been praised as a high performing economy by the World Bank, Indonesia's economy suffered from the 1997 Asian financial crisis that caused a currency crisis, among other things (Dhanani, Islam and Chowdhury 2009: 9). From annual gross domestic product growth of nearly seven per cent between 1987 and 1997, Indonesia's economy contracted to 4.7 per cent in 1997 and subsequently declined by -14 per cent in 1998. The Indonesian currency against the US dollar underwent a dramatic devaluation from IDR 2,450 in June 1997 to IDR 17,000 in January 1998. As a consequence of these economic shocks, poverty and inflation rose substantially, many factories and businesses were closed and millions who lost their jobs in the formal sectors became unemployed or underemployed in the informal sectors (Dhanani, Islam and Chowdhury 2009). In September 1997, Indonesia's government agreed to implement a rescue package imposed by the IMF which later hit Suharto's patronage network and undermined the foundation of his regime (Crouch 2010: 23). Furthermore, the government's decision to increase the fuel price in early May 1998 as part of the IMF programme, triggered mass protests led by students in many urban areas across the country. Following the army shooting at a

student demonstration taking place at Trisakti University in Jakarta on 13 May 1998, massive riots ensued in the capital and other large cities, particularly in Java and Sumatra. For three days after these incidents, thousands of students along with civil organisations occupied the parliament building. In short, as described by Crouch (2010: 23), it was only when General Wiranto, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces at the time, conveyed his report to President Suharto concerning his inability to control the student protests, did the president decide to resign and hand over his power to vice president Habibie on 18 May 1998.

Scholars have mentioned that trade unions and workers had played a relatively minor part in the popular movement that brought down Suharto in May 1998 (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Heryanto and Hadiz 2005; Törnquist 2005). Although independent organising and labour protests had been on the rise for most of the 1990s (Ford 2005: 33), there were several conditions that caused the unions to play a minimal role in the ousting of Suharto in May 1998. One plausible explanation is that trade unions and workers were particularly “handicapped” given the large number of factory closures and work terminations in the formal sectors that had resulted from the financial crisis (Heryanto and Hadiz 2005: 265). Before 1997, unemployment rates were under four per cent, but they soon surged to around seven per cent at the end of 1998. In Indonesia, a one per cent rise in unemployment is equal to 400,000 people out of work (Dhanani, Islam and Chowdhury 2009). In addition, the manufacturing sector that employed the majority of formal workers declined by 10 per cent in 1998, which led to factory closures and work termination.

A further explanation for the marginal role played by trade unions relates to the organisation of independent unions which were experiencing stagnation at that time, especially after the riots in front of the Indonesian Struggle Party (PDI) headquarters on 27 July 1996, known as the *Kudatuli* incident.¹⁰ As noted by Botz (2001: 12), in the aftermath of the *Kudatuli* incident many pro-democracy activists and supporters,

¹⁰ *Kudatuli* is an acronym for the “27 July riots”, which is also known in Indonesia as “Gloomy Saturday”. It was a riot involving thousands of people burning buildings and vehicles on several main streets in Jakarta. The riot was triggered after the military occupied the PDIP headquarters lead by Megawati and forcibly dissolved the free speech forum (*mimbar bebas*) held by several pro-democracy activists and Megawati die-hard supporters. At that time, the government did not recognise the results of the PDI congress in Medan which had elected Megawati as a chairman but supported the PDI’s leadership under Suryadi (formed by the government). During the riots, five people died, 149 were injured, and 136 people detained (Botz 2001).

particularly from the People's Democratic Party (PRD), were arrested by the military.¹¹ The arrest of Mukhtar Pakpahan, Dita Indah Sari and several other national labour leaders and pro-democracy activists in the aftermath of the undermined the labour movement in 1998 (Botz 2001: 34).

Mukhtar Pakpahan at that time was known not only as a labour lawyer but also the leader of the All Indonesian Labour Unions (SBSI), an independent union founded in 1992. In 1993, he led a national strike which led to his detention and interrogation by the military (Pakpahan 2009: 12). In 1994, he also led a labour demonstration in the city of Medan, North Sumatra which led to riots and the arrest of 60 labour activists, himself included. He was imprisoned for ten months. Meanwhile, Dita Indah Sari was one of the founders of the PRD and leader of the PPBI, who were actively involved in advocating and organising factory workers. The PPBI and SBSI were the only two independent labour organisations that were actively involved in many labour strikes across Java in the mid-1990s (Botz 2001: 12). In early July 1996, Dita Indah Sari and two other PRD and PPBI activists - Mohammad Soleh and Coen Husein Pontoh - were detained by the military concerning allegations of their involvement in a labour protest involving around 20,000 workers in the city of Surabaya. In late July 1996, after the *Kudatuli* incident, Dita Indah Sari and other 14 PRD and PPBI activists were imprisoned on charges of subversion (Botz 2001: 279).

There were various types of popular movements that emerged in the final weeks before Suharto stepped down in May 1998. Unlike the student movement in Thailand, the Philippines, and South Korea, student groups in Indonesia in 1998 largely ruled out an alliance with unions and workers. As Aspinall (2004) and Crouch (2010) observed, there was a change in the purpose and pattern of the 1998 movement led by student activists. Demands for economic improvement, law enforcement, and the elimination of corruption, collusion and nepotism, gave way to spontaneous and unstructured

¹¹ At that time the PRD had not been recognised as a political party by the government. The PRD was originally an organisation called the Democratic People's Unity founded by student activists, leaders of NGOs and artists who were involved in several cases of legal assistance for marginalised people and wanted a more democratic government. Since the mid-1990s, the PRD's activists had been involved in various mass mobilisation against the New Order government, including worker protests such as those seen in Surabaya, Jakarta and Medan. The PRD was declared as a political party by Budiman Sujatmiko on 22 July 1996. In addition, the PRD was accused of trying to arouse communist ideology by the New Order government and was considered the mastermind of the 27 July riots which led to the murder of two leaders of this party. As well as this, four went missing, and the other 14 members were imprisoned. After the regime changed in 1998, the PRD was recognised by the government as a political party and became one of the contestants in the 1999 elections.

movements centred on a demand for Suharto's resignation. Thus, confronted by a combination of genuine constraints posed by the detention of labour activists, rampant termination of work due to severe economic crises, and the lack of support from student groups, trade unions and workers were in a politically weakened position during the ousting of Suharto in May 1998.

Labour Laws Reform and Organised Unions

The downfall of President Suharto in May 1998 was followed by a series of political transformations that restored political freedoms and began to reform Indonesia's legal system, including the labour laws. On 9 June 1998, within a month of his inauguration as the third Indonesian president, Habibie made his first international policy decision by ratifying ILO Convention Number 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise. This ratification complemented the ILO Convention Number 98 on the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively, which had been ratified during the Sukarno era on 15 July 1957 but had never been put into practice. A year later, on 7 June 1999, Habibie also ratified a further three fundamental ILO Conventions. These three conventions were ILO Convention Number 105 on Abolition of Force Labour, ILO Convention Number 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, and ILO Convention Number 135 on the Minimum Working Age. The ratification of these conventions meant that Indonesia was the first Asian country to ratify all eight fundamental ILO Conventions (ILO 1999).

Habibie's ratification of the ILO Conventions was "an expeditious way" to gain political support and legitimacy as well as to send a strong signal to the international community that the new government of Indonesia was seriously committed to the implementation of political reforms (Caraway 2004: 35). The decision was also inseparable from the denial of workers' rights and the repressive nature of Indonesian industrial relations during the New Order era, which had been consistently criticised by the ILO and the International Confederation for Free Trade Unions (Isaac and Sitalaksmi 2008: 44). In addition, Habibie also had no choice but to move in the direction of democratisation because he came to power as an "accidental" president who lacked strong political support "outside the discredited New Order regime" (Crouch 2010: 21). In his memoir, however, Habibie (2006: 57) confessed that personally he had been unhappy with the feudal culture of the New Order regime and favoured democratic government

with freedom of the press, independent unions, the lifting of restrictions on the formation of new political parties, and the release of political prisoners.

The ILO has played a significant role in the labour law reform process in Indonesia (Quinn 2003). Soon after Indonesia ratified the ILO Convention Number 87, the ILO's Committee on the Application of Labour Core International Standards issued a strongly worded report warning the government of Indonesia to immediately reform its labour regulations (Caraway 2004: 37). At this time, the Habibie government was still operating Manpower Law Number 25/1997, a law that was rejected by trade unions immediately following its approval in September 1997 (Wirataman 2014: 44), and was heavily criticised by the ILO due to its violation of international labour standards (ILO 1999).¹² From 24 to 28 August 1998, the Indonesian government welcomed the ILO's Direct Contacts Mission, which was composed of a group of experts to assist the government on the necessary measures to be taken on the legal and institutional reforms required to meet its obligations under ILO Convention Number 87 (ILO 1999: 8). After meetings with the ILO's Direct Contact Mission, the Indonesian government agreed to conduct several immediate actions, such as delaying the operation of Manpower Law Number 25/1997 and preparing for reforms of its labour regulations (ILO 1999). Two months later, on 23 December 1998, the government of Indonesia and the ILO agreed to work on the Labour Law Reform Programme which was marked by the signing of a Letter of Intent between Fahmi Idris (Indonesia's Minister of Manpower and Transmigration) and Iftikhar Ahmed (ILO Director for Indonesia) witnessed by president Habibie (ILO 1998). Under these programmes, the government of Indonesia, assisted by the ILO, drafted three new labour laws that later were promulgated by parliament.¹³ These three new labour laws are known as Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000, Manpower Law Number 13/2003 and Industrial Relations Disputes Settlements Law Number 2/2004.

Besides the ILO, it is important to note that labour reforms carried out by the Indonesian government were also part of the international design led by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Here, the Asian financial crisis that hit

¹² Manpower Law Number 25/1997 was enacted by President Suharto at the onset of the Asian Financial Crisis on 4 September 1997. This manpower law was criticised by trade unions due to its strict limitations on labour strikes, government control of union registration, and the introduction of contract labour system.

¹³ Although the final decisions were in the hands of the Indonesian government, under the guise of technical assistance the ILO was allowed to be involved in the drafting process of new labour laws, which included having a direct input during the drafting process, both through the provision of detailed comments and advice on standard matters and legislation (ILO 1998).

Indonesia in 1997 is an important factor that led the IMF and the World Bank to impose liberalisation measures on Indonesia's economy, which later characterised the economies of most countries in this region. The financial crisis had undermined coalitions that opposed economic liberalisation but at the same time consolidated groups that support liberalisation (Crouch 2010: 56). As the first letter of intent with the IMF was signed by the Indonesian government on 31 October 1997, Indonesia's economic recovery was tied by the IMF prescriptions.¹⁴ As part of the deal to receive financial loans, the government of Indonesia agreed to restructure its tax and monetary sectors, to pursue privatisation and trade liberalisation and to reform its legal system, including its labour laws.

The IMF and the World Bank required Indonesia's government to reform its labour laws as it was central to generating employment, improving the welfare and skills of workers, providing a stable environment for business, and to ensure that the new labour laws protect the rights of workers, including freedom of association and preserving a flexible labour market.¹⁵ In this regard, the reform of labour laws was designed to ensure that the establishment of three new labour laws created a balance between the application of labour market flexibility that supports economic liberalisation and the acceptance of core international labour standards required by ILO conventions (Quin 2003). In this sphere however, this combination is enforced differently as the IMF and the World Bank are well-known not for their support for the implementation of core labour standards but more for encouraging countries to implement flexible labour market policies (Caraway 2010: 161). In addition, "the enforcement capacity of the IMF and the World Bank are far greater than the ILO" given that the former can cut off the loan imbursement and restrict the country from receiving financial support from other donor institutions (Caraway 2010: 160).

Given that it was extensively practised by many countries in the mid-1980s, the policy to increase labour flexibility has "polarised industrial relations communities and created a rift between them" (Tjandraningsih and Nugroho 2008: 1). Those who support the policies that enhance labour market flexibility, particularly employers and economists, believe that it will create an effective work process by allowing employers more freedom in hiring, firing and managing the working day as well as attract more

¹⁴ See Letter Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP), Jakarta, Indonesia, 31 October 1997. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/103197.htm>.

¹⁵ See Indonesia and the IMF Letter of Intent, Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, and Technical Memorandum of Understanding, Jakarta, Indonesia, 18 March 2003. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/2003/idn/01/>.

investment and create new job opportunities. In contrast, trade unions and labour NGOs who strongly rejected this policy argued that the implementation of labour market flexibility will exacerbate workers' social economic conditions and undermine the collective strength of the unions (Tjandraningsih and Nugroho 2010: 5). In the context of Indonesia, regulations related to labour market flexibility are adjusted according to the Indonesian labour market situation which is dominated by low skilled workers and still involves the government in its capacity as a regulator and labour inspector. As a result, Indonesia's new labour laws are formulated in combination with neo-liberal labour policy, with provisions related to flexible labour markets (outsourcing and fixed-term contract systems) existing alongside protections such as minimum wage standards and the maintenance of tripartite cooperation between the government, employers and trade unions.

The establishment of three new labour laws demonstrate the government's commitment to carry out legal reforms, as required by the IMF and World Bank, although the existence of these new labour laws creates opportunities and challenges for both workers and employers (Amengual and Chirot 2016: 1065). The Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000 restricts government intervention in the formation of new trade unions, allows workers to use their rights to organise, and provides them with the basic democratic guarantee of collective power and collective bargaining.¹⁶ In the New Order era it was practically impossible to form independent unions, so the Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000 now allows any group of ten or more workers to form a new trade union.¹⁷ A minimum of five unions in five different workplaces might establish one federation, while three union federations in a region are eligible to form one confederation registered at national level.¹⁸ The law also protects union members against discrimination from employers and provides strong sanctions on employers who obstruct the establishment of a new union.¹⁹ In addition, the law designated the function of unions as the authorised bargaining agent in the formation of collective labour agreements at the shop floor level, the settlement of industrial disputes and the representation of workers in

¹⁶ Both the terms *Serikat Pekerja* and *Serikat Buruh* are used in the Trade Unions Act Number 21/2000 (literally written as *Serikat Pekerja/Serikat Buruh*), which reflects the differences between workers' organisations as to the appropriate terminology. The use of the term *Serikat Buruh* was effectively outlawed during the Suharto era for having radical and communist connotations. In the post-authoritarian era, many newly established unions prefer to use the term *Serikat Pekerja* to avoid radical imagery and negative connotations (Ford 2005).

¹⁷ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 21/2000 on Trade Unions, Article 5 [2].

¹⁸ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 21/2000 on Trade Unions, Article 6 [1-2] and Article 7[1-2].

¹⁹ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 21/2000 on Trade Unions, Article 28 [a-d].

councils and institutions related to worker issues.²⁰ In short, the law has given a legal basis for Indonesian trade unions to use their collective power to organise and to support their traditional objective of defending workers' rights and interests.

In present-day Indonesia, the number of trade unions has increased rapidly from only one federation in 1998 to 120 union federations and 14 union confederations in 2018 (Ministry of Manpower 2018). Instead of strengthening or consolidating their collective power, the existence of the new trade union act is perceived by most trade union elites as a freedom to establish new unions, which causes serious problems of union fragmentation (Silaban 2014: 49). When disputes among union leaders in one organisation emerge or when new leaders replace the old leaders, the disgruntled leaders establish a new union by taking some of their supporters with them. The trade union elites are fishing in the same pond while the number of union members is decreasing. In 2006, there were 1,237 trade unions on the shop floor level with 3,383,597 members registered in the Ministry of Manpower. By 2016, the number increased to 7,294 trade unions, but union membership decreased to a total 2,717,961 members.²¹ Although labour activists and union leaders generally recognised the need to unite their movement into one powerful and effective front, the acute problem of union fragmentation, in turn, contributed to the complexity of organising the labour movements in post-1998 Indonesia.²²

In contrast to the Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000, whereby both trade unions and employers voiced minimal complaints in relation to its implementation, the Manpower Law Number 13/2003 is "contentious" (Amengual and Chirot 2016: 1057) and has become the "cornerstone of Indonesia's labour legislation" (Manning 2010: 46). Of 193 articles stipulated in the Manpower Law Number 13/2003, 73 articles are highly debated and categorised as problematic clauses, particularly for both workers and employers (LIPI 2011: 9). These articles are concerned with minimum wage, severance payment and dismissal, strikes, fixed-term contracts and outsource working systems, and foreign workers. On the one hand, workers have generally benefited from the new formulation of minimum wages because the new manpower law uses decent living

²⁰ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 21/2000 on Trade Unions, Article 25 [a-e].

²¹ Data on union membership in Indonesia is still debatable. Updated data on union membership is highly rely on the activity of the labour agency to carry out data collection and annual reports delivered by the trade union in each region.

²² See Chapter Five for more comprehensive discussion about the problem of union fragmentation in post-1998 Indonesia.

standards rather than previous measurements which used the index of minimum physical needs.²³ Furthermore, dismissed workers are also relatively well protected because of the increase in the rates of severance and long-service payments. Conversely, the new manpower law also legalised the practice of fixed-term contracts and outsourcing that allow employers to recruit temporary workers based on company requirements.²⁴ The practice of labour flexibility regulated in the new Manpower Law, particularly the outsourcing system, has transferred the basic rights attached to workers from companies where outsourcing workers are working for companies that supply labour.²⁵ Here, the Manpower Law Number 13/2003 seems to be problematic in that the provision concerning hiring and firing tends to restrict employers from dismissing workers, although conversely it provides flexibility in terms of using fixed-term contracts and outsourcing workers. Apart from these problems, enforcement is weak, and employers routinely violate regulations regarding minimum wages, contracts and outsource working systems (Amengual and Chirot 2016: 1058). For instance, the minimum wage that should be a standard for minimum payment of salaries for less than one year working and single workers, in practice, has been implemented as the maximum wage, regardless of the length of work and status of the workers. Likewise, the implementation of outsourcing which should be limited only to non-core jobs, is practised in practically all types of work, including those jobs categorised as core jobs. In addition, to overcome the costs that must be incurred by the company as compensation for dismissal, contract workers are usually asked to resign and are then recruited again in the same position but with a working period of zero months (LIPI 2011: 45).²⁶

During President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's leadership (2004-2014), the government had attempted several times to revise the Law Number 13 /2003 on Manpower, specifically to increase its flexibility. On 27 February 2006, President Yudhoyono released Presidential Instruction (Inpres) Number 3/2006 concerning the

²³ In 2015, President Jokowi issued Government Regulation Number 78/2015 which regulates the new formulation for the measurement of minimum wages. Under Government Regulation Number 78/2015, minimum wages are calculated based on indicators of economic growth and inflation. The issuance of Government Regulation Number 78/2015 is controversial because it is contrary to higher law that regulate minimum wages (Manpower Law Number 13/2003), so that in its implementation it is constantly rejected by the majority of trade unions.

²⁴ In practice, the implementation of flexible labour policy leads to the creation of different groups of workers in a company.

²⁵ See Government of Indonesia, Law Number 13/2003 on Manpower, Article 65 [6].

²⁶ Employers may hire contract workers for up to three years (with a two-year contract and a one-year renewal). After the maximum contract period has ended, the employment status of contract workers will automatically transfer to that of permanent worker (Law Number 13/2003 on Manpower, Article 59 [4] and [7]).

Investment Recovery Policy Package which included a statement to revise the Law Number 13/2003 on Manpower. The revision aimed to remove restrictions on the recruitment of workers on contracts and outsourcing practices in core business, to simplify restrictions concerning termination of employment and severance payment, to reformulate minimum wages, and to provide more flexible work permits for foreign workers. Prior to the issuance of this Presidential Instruction, several institutions such as Bappenas and Doing Business published reports stating that the rigidity of the rules in the Manpower Law Number 13/2003 could deter the future investment climate in Indonesia. In 2005, the government, under the coordination of vice-president office also appointed five-universities consortium to conduct research about Manpower Law Number 13/2003.²⁷ However, after massive labour protests and demonstrations in Jakarta during May-April 2006 (especially in Parliament, State Palace and Ministry of Manpower offices), the government's attempt to undertake the amendment was cancelled (*Antara News*, 3 May 2006). In addition, at that time, the representatives of trade unions also boycotted their presence in the Tripartite Institution so that it was difficult for the government to negotiate its plan to revise (*The Jakarta Post*, 2 September 2006). In 2008, the Indonesian government again released a decision to revise the Manpower Law Number 13/2003 in response to the growing global economic crisis.²⁸ At that time, attempts to revise the Manpower Law Number 13/2003 were carried out via a series of dialogues involving government representatives, employers and trade unions in the National Tripartite. However, until the deadline ahead of the 2009 presidential election, the plan met with failure.

After being elected for his second term as president in 2009, Yudhoyono's administration proposed revising the Manpower Law Number 13/2003 for the third time. In 2010, the National Tripartite, Commission IX DPR RI and Ministry of Manpower agreed to appoint the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) to conduct an independent study related to the revision of the Manpower Law Number 13/2003, exclusively specific articles which were considered controversial, such as minimum wage, severance pay and dismissal, fixed-term contracts, outsourcing, strikes, and foreign worker permits. The study was carried out by conducting focus group discussions (FGD) with groups of entrepreneurs and trade unions at national and regional levels, including FGD with

²⁷ These five-universities include: University of Indonesia, University of Gadjah Mada, University of Padjajaran, University of Airlangga and University of Hasanuddin.

²⁸ See a joint regulation released by four ministries on 22 October 2008.

representation of unions of non-tripartite members and consultation with expertise from ILO and universities.²⁹ Ahead of the People's Representative Council (DPR) plenary session scheduled on 16 December 2011, trade unions in various cities in Indonesia protested and rejected the draft proposed by the government on the revision of the Manpower Law Number 13/2003.³⁰ The proposed draft was considered by trade unions to be pro-entrepreneur, neglectful of the rights of workers, and no different from the previous proposal submitted by the government to the DPR on August 2006 (*Sindo News*, 16 December 2011).³¹ On 16 December 2011, a draft of the revision of manpower law was rejected by the DPR in the plenary session with almost the same reasons that had been conveyed by trade unions and workers through street demonstrations (*Antara News*, 16 December 2011).

Problems related to the implementation of the labour laws have become increasingly complex, particularly since 2004, when the authority related to labour affairs was transferred to the district/local government under the decentralisation policy. Thus, much debate takes place at the district (local) level over labour issues. In the areas where organised unions and labour mobilisation are strong and well-consolidated, the minimum wage determination at the end of the year regularly emerges as a focal point for union-government-employer contestation and frequently results in a dramatic increase. The minimum wages that have been set by the Wage Council can even change when the government is pressured by unions by way of demonstrations and protests.

Workers mobilisation concerning minimum wages is not new in post-1998 Indonesia, but it is growing in intensity, allowing the unions to win some victories. For instances, after a series of massive strikes and demonstrations in 2013, Jakarta and neighbouring districts experienced a large nominal of year-on-year wage increase. In

²⁹ The author also involved in this study as part of the research team member from LIPI. The result of the study, including LIPI's recommendation for government's plan to revise the Manpower Law No.13/2003, had been disseminated by LIPI from June to September 2011 in several meetings with union representations and entrepreneur groups in Jakarta, Surabaya, Batam, Makasar, and Balikpapan.

³⁰ In a meeting with Tripartite National members facilitated by LIPI on 30 Oktober-1 November 2011 in Hotel Lorin Bogor West Java, majority of Tripartite National members from trade union's representations refused to involve in the formulation of position paper for the revision of Manpower Law Number 13/2003, instead they decided to take steps through political lobbies, including through engagement in electoral politics. This background later became one of the reasons and motivations for the author to carry out this research.

³¹ At the same time, LIPI received many inquiries from trade unionists in relation to its research findings and recommendations submitted to the government. At that time there was growing concern among unionists that the government (Ministry of Manpower) ignored the recommendations that had been submitted by LIPI including inputs given by the unions in the FGD.

Jakarta, minimum wages increased by 47 per cent to 2.2 million IDR (US\$227), in Bekasi by 40 per cent to 2.1 million IDR (US\$221), in Bogor by 57 per cent to 2 million IDR (US\$207), and in Subang by 57 per cent to 1.58 million IDR (US\$164). The problem relating to minimum wages became more compelling particularly in 2015, when the government released Government Regulation Number 78/2015 concerning the new formulation of minimum wages. Under this regulation, the government replaced the previous formulation of minimum wages using decent living standards and based it on economic growth and inflation rates. In addition, Government Regulation Number 78/2015 has also reduced the authority of the Wages Council and given full authority to the governor, regent and mayor to formulate the minimum wages annually. Consequently, issues related to minimum wages as well as the practice of flexible market are constantly a source of industrial conflict and have become the main obstacles in the implementation of labour regulations in contemporary Indonesia.

Electoral Reforms and Political Unionism

Electoral reform, broadly understood as the reformulation of electoral legislation to select government leaders and parliament members, has brought about a dramatic change in Indonesia's political landscape. Although democratisation in post-authoritarian Indonesia involves old actors that survived the regime change, it is also accompanied by major changes in the political system in addition to political institutions. Given that the political regime changed in 1998, Indonesia has successfully conducted four consecutive democratic elections (1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014) involving numerous new political parties. Trade unions in Indonesia, as significant collective actors, have managed to engage in electoral contestation either by establishing labour-related parties or building political alliances with mainstream political parties. In this regard, democratisation in post-authoritarian Indonesia has not only created organised unions at industrial levels but also political unionism that provides meaningful channels and allies for unions to represent their political interests in formal politics. The following section reviews briefly the relationship between the electoral reforms and trade union experiences in electoral politics since Indonesia held its first multiparty elections in 1999.

Indonesia's Electoral Reforms

Besides labour law reforms, a further remarkable political decision taken by Habibie during his early weeks in office was to hold an early general election on the basis of new

electoral legislation, lifting the restrictions on the establishment of new political parties and ratifying new regulations concerning the composition and function of the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR), the People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) and the Regional People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD). To follow up his decrees, Habibie agreed to hold an Extraordinary Assembly of the MPR in November 1999, in which the MPR agreed to hold democratic elections on 7 June 1999.³²

Habibie's decision to launch electoral reforms through a democratic election was crucial for Indonesia's new political order after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998. As noted by Crouch (2010: 43), democratisation "usually requires the drastic amendment of the old constitution or the drafting of a completely new one while existing electoral laws need to be overhauled". Unlike in South Korea where economic reform, the rise of collective action of civil society organisations, affluence and prosperity led to demands for electoral reforms and democratisation in 1987 (Lee and Lim 2006: 307), however, democratic transition in post-1998 Indonesia was launched in "crises-ridden" conditions in which political institutions were still dominated by members of the old political forces.³³ In these crisis-ridden conditions, "concern about national welfare, political stability and broad coalitions of political support tends to dominate" the decisions made by political elites, even if the reforms harmed the political interests of that political elite itself (Grindle and Thomas 1991, cited in Crouch 2010: 7).³⁴

These old elites had no option but to survive and to avoid the deepening of the political and economic crisis by adopting drastic reforms. Rather than disappear since the regime change, the politico-bureaucrats who occupied the state apparatus during the Suharto era have survived mainly due to the success of Suharto's systematic policy of disorganising independent civil society groups and any form of political oppositions (Hadiz 2004; Törnquist 2004; Edwin 2005). They "have been able to reinvent themselves through new alliances and vehicles, much like they have, for example, in parts of post-Communist Eastern Europe/Central Asia" (Hadiz 2004: 593). In addition, one particular

³² Habibie's three decrees were Law Number 2/1999 on Political Parties, Law Number 3/1999 on General Elections, and Law Number 4/1999 on the Composition and Function of the MPR, DPR and DPRD.

³³ During the democratic transition under President Habibie, the Golkar Party was still the largest party with 325 out of 500 seats in Parliament (DPR), while its military ally had 75 seats. The remaining two parties, the PPP and PDI, accounted for 89 and 11 seats respectively.

³⁴ Another category is "politics as usual reforms", where "changes are considered desirable but the consequences of not acting are not considered threatening to the decision makers or the regime" (Grindle and Thomas 1991, cited in Crouch 2010: 7).

section of the elites- the military leadership- has retained and continued much of its influence in political system, thereby further reinforcing the idea that the old elites successfully survived in terms of the range of actors who participated and influenced the political reforms during the transition period.

One of the major impacts of the electoral reforms carried out by Habibie at the beginning of his administration was the emergence of new political parties. Unlike the New Order which permitted only three parties to contest elections, the new electoral and political party laws enacted under Habibie's administration allowed any political party that met the broad criteria to contest the 1999 elections.³⁵ As a result, less than six months after he signed Law Number 2/1999 concerning Political Parties on 1 February 1999, there were around 180 political parties registered in the Ministry of Justice.³⁶ This situation was inevitable given the strong pressure to open the tap for wider political participation especially by civil society groups that were previously oppressed under Suharto's leadership. Nonetheless, the sudden increase of political parties raised concerns from various parties vis-à-vis the possibility of political instability, in the form of conflicts of interest and ideology, as transpired in the multi-party system during the Sukarno era between 1950-1959 (Subekti 2004: 249). At the end, of the 107 political parties registered during administrative qualification, 48 were qualified to participate in the 1999 election. Subekti (2004: 256) categorised these 48 political parties into three big groups: religious parties such as the Islamic Party, the Star Moon Party, the Ka'bah Party, the Catholic Democratic Party, and the National Christian Party; nationalist parties such as the Indonesia Democratic Struggle Party, the Functional Groups Party, the National Mandate Party, the National Awakening Party, and the Indonesian National Party; and pragmatically self-interested political parties such as the Indonesian Workers' Party, the Fisherman and Farmer Party, and the People's Economic Party. The emergence of Islamic parties and the old parties in the Sukarno era (such as the Murba Party, the Indonesian Nationalist Party and the Indonesian Islamic Party) in the 2009 elections, showed that they were still able to survive after 32 years of depoliticisation under the Suharto regime.

The 1999 elections provided a foundation for more democratic elections in Indonesia. This condition can be seen from the approval of the amendment of the 1945

³⁵ One of the conditions for political parties to participate in the 1999 elections was to have a board of party representatives in half of the total number of provinces and in half of the total number of districts/municipals registered in each province (Article 39 of Law Number 2/1999 on Political Party).

³⁶ Article 2 of Law Number 2/1999 on Political Party stated that the formation of political parties can be done by a minimum of 50 people aged at least 21 years old.

Basic Constitution and the implementation of the second package of electoral reforms by elected members of parliament from the 1999 elections. Prior to the 2004 elections, parliament agreed to the provision of a new political party (Law Number 31/2002), a new electoral law with direct presidential elections (Law Number 23/2003), and the amendment of the Basic Constitution concerning parliamentary authority and the limitation of the president and vice president to two five-year terms.³⁷ This attempt was “a landmark in the reform of Indonesia’s political institutions” (Crouch 2010: 35).

According to Aspinall (2005: 119), “the elections of 2004 brought to an end the transition period in Indonesia’s politics that began in 1998”. The 2004 elections not only produced a president and vice president based on people’s choices, but also a more democratic election through the establishment of the electoral commission (KPU) with independent members from outside of the government and political parties.³⁸ After the 2004 elections, efforts to reform the electoral system in Indonesia were also carried out via the introduction of direct elections for the governor (province) and mayor/regent (city/district) in 2005 along with the enactment of the second revised Law Number 32/2004 concerning Regional Autonomy.

In the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections, as have been practiced since the first-multiparty election in 1999, a new electoral system was established but with more far-reaching reforms. The electoral system changed from a closed-proportional to open-proportional system. This new system effectively invalidated the closed party list system whereby the legislative candidates were elected in the order in which they were ranked on a party’s list of legislative candidates regardless of the numbers of votes they themselves had received. Instead, in the open proportional system the seats were to be allocated on the basis of the number of votes for the individual nominee. Consequently, each candidate has an equal chance to be elected regardless of his placement in the ballot list. This modification further changed electoral strategies conducted by political parties in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections, particularly relating to political campaigns and

³⁷ For example, “the President has the authority to submit the laws with the agreement of the DPR” was changed to “the President has the right to submit bills to the DPR” (see Article 5 Amendment of Basic Constitution 1945).

³⁸ Based on the evaluation of Freedom House (2009), since the 2004 elections, the score of Indonesia’s political rights and civil liberties consistently improved from 3.4 in 2004 to 2.3 in 2006. Previously, the score was 7.5 in 1997 and had improved to 4.4 in 1998. Freedom House uses a score of one for most free and seven for least free on each scale to measure the level of democratisation in each country. Furthermore, Indonesia has been categorised as a free country since 2006. In 2008, Indonesia’s political rights and civil liberties scores were the same as (2.3) other emerging democratic countries, such as Mexico and India, and even better than Thailand (6.4) and the Philippines (4.3).

the recruitment of legislative candidates (Ramdansyah 2009; Subekti 2015). Mass rallies, traditionally a prominent feature of an election campaign, have been largely dropped and replaced by the adoption of voter-focused campaign activities (Ulla and Gwenael 2015: 145). Each legislative candidate has their own constituent to focus on as well as the success team, and further increased the rivalry between candidates nominated by the same party (Ramdansyah 2009: 58). At the same time, political parties started to recruit non-party cadres as legislative candidates to gain optimum votes from potential voters. These non-party cadres generally have strong political resources, either financial such as from businesses, or mass support such as from religious and community leaders or members of civil organisations such as trade unions (Detmann and Pepinsky 2017: 124).³⁹

Union Electoral Engagement

Despite its minimum role in the popular movement that brought down the Suharto New Order regime in May 1998, trade union elites soon managed to engage in the first multi-party election in 1999. They advanced in electoral politics using four different labour-linked parties that formed in the initial years after the fall of Suharto. Muchtar Pakpahan, Imam Sudarwo, Saleh Said Harahap, Dedy Hamid, and Rasyidi were among those union elites who had embraced new opportunities for political engagement in the first multi-party election in 1999 (Ford 2008: 68). With the exception of Mochtar Pakpahan, these elites came from different sections of the national leadership of the All-Indonesian Trade Unions (SPSI). They formed three separate labour parties: the Workers Solidarity Party (Partai Solidaritas Pekerja, PSP), the Indonesian Workers Party (Partai Pekerja Indonesia, PPI), and the All-Indonesian Workers Solidarity Party (Partai Solidaritas Seluruh Pekerja Indonesia, PPSPI).

The participation of SPSI's senior figures in the 1999 elections evoked suspicion of their true political motives, whilst their participation was opposed by many other union leaders and labour activists at that time (Törnquist 2004; Caraway 2008; Ford 2014). This negative reaction was widespread, including from within the SPSI itself.⁴⁰ Among these

³⁹ As noted by Mietzner (2007: 239) in the 2004 elections, 39.8 per cent of all national elected parliament members had a background in business; while Detmann and Pepinsky (2017: 124) found that in 2014, 56 per cent had a background in business. In addition, Detmann and Pepinsky (2017) also found that from 6606 legislative candidates running in 2014 legislative election, the fifth highest proportion came from private backgrounds (56.3 per cent), followed by academics (21.5 per cent), bureaucrats (15.9 per cent), parliament members/incumbent (14.4 per cent), and civil society actors (10.2 per cent).

⁴⁰ Interview with Syaiful DP, chairman of FSP KEP KSPI and one of the founders of KSPI Reformasi, Jakarta 23 September 2016.

dissidents were a group of unionists who formed the Federation of Indonesian Labour Unions (FSBI) in the late 1970s but then joined the SPSI in the 1980s and formed FSPSI Reformasi after the new trade unions law was enacted in 2000.

As pointed out by Törnquist (2004: 388), in the immediate years after the fall of Suharto, various groups of progressive labour activists wanted to become as independent as possible from the state-controlled union (SPSI), old union bosses and their various external patrons. They remained opposed to forming alliances with political parties, including four labour-political parties that participated in the first multiparty election in 1999 (Törnquist 2004: 389). “They did not see any relationship between struggles in the workplace and those over politics” (Törnquist 2004: 392). Moreover, the fact that there were Golkar Party loyalists among the parliament candidates claiming to represent labour aroused suspicions among labour activists that unions were being used as a political vehicle to keep the old guard of Suharto-era elites in power. For instance, the head advisor of the PPSI was Ibnu Hartomo, the younger brother in-law of Suharto’s wife, Fatimah Tien Hartinah.

In the 1999 election, suspicion and rejection from union leaders and workers were not only addressed to the SPSI figures who were known to be exceedingly close to the authorities during the New Order era - but also to reformist figures, such as Pakpahan, who opposed the New Order regime. While Pakpahan announced the establishment of a workers-based party which he named the National Labour Party (Partai Buruh Nasional, PBN), this announcement sparked protests and widespread rejection from labour activists and unionists, some of whom were from the SBSI itself. They questioned Pakpahan’s motives and even accused him of using workers and the labour movement for personal political reasons (Ford 2005: 202). Pakpahan acknowledged that his decision to establish a political party could be interpreted differently amidst unpredictable political conditions.⁴¹

According to Pakpahan, the suspicion and rejection were based on the following facts. First, he was chosen to lead the SBSI, not to establish a new political party. The SBSI was initially established to focus its struggles on high profile issues such as union recognition and worker rights, to organise a strike when necessary and reject a direct political role for unions. It was also to fill four basic union principles that did not exist in the New Order era SPSI union. These four basic principles are democracy, non-

⁴¹ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

discrimination, solidarity, and independence. According to Pakpahan, the principle of independence was misunderstood by many trade unionists as well as workers.⁴² In the interview he suggested that:

Independence does not mean that trade unions should not engage in formal politics. Alliances with other societal and political forces, including political parties, is necessary. However, in every alliance of this type, the question must be, which one is the independent party. The crucial issue is whether trade unions determine what programmes are to be implemented, or they risk being subservient to party politics.⁴³

Second, many labour activists and unionists in Indonesia were strongly influenced by the socio-economic definitions of trade unionism that were established and institutionalised throughout Suharto's 32 years in power, when anti-political unionism rhetoric was rife. Simultaneously, however, particular labour activists worried about the emergence of pro-Golkar elites in the labour movement who were seeking political advantages amid the turmoil of the transition in 1998. Third, the main target of activists and protestors during the large-scale demonstrations in May 1998 was Suharto. When he was overthrown, divisions emerged among activists, particularly in relation to their political position in the transitional government under President B.J. Habibie. Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, Pakpahan's initial political reason for forming the labour-related party was to prevent the re-grouping of New Order elites after the fall of Suharto, principally from the Golkar Party and its alliances.⁴⁴ In his own words, "the PBN was initially founded as a result of the political demands at that time, and the argument that evolved was that labour participation in politics was indispensable to *Reformasi*".⁴⁵

In the 2004 legislative elections, the Social Democrat Labour Party (PBSD) was the only labour party among 24 political parties that passed the verification stage and was able to contest the election. This party is not a new labour party; it is the reconstruction of the Pakpahan's PBN which failed to reach the two per cent electoral threshold in the 1999 general elections. In contrast to the 1999 elections, where union cadres and labour activists dominated the parliamentary candidate nominations of the PBN, in the 2004 election, the newly formed PBSD recruited candidates from different socio-economic

⁴² Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

⁴³ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

⁴⁴ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017

⁴⁵ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

backgrounds, for instance academics, religious figures, community leaders, and even candidates from the private sector. Although the PBSD attracted more votes than the PBN in the 1999 elections, it still failed to win seats in the national parliament. Nevertheless, in the local elections, the PBSD managed to gain 22 seats in various districts mostly in the North Sumatra where many of the founding members of PBSD came from.

Table 2.1: Labour-related Parties' Vote Gains in the 1999, 2004, and 2009 Legislative Elections

1999		2004		2009	
Political Party	Votes	Political Party	Votes	Political Party	Votes
PBN	111,629	PBSD	636,397	PB	266,203
PSP	49,807			PPPI	745,625
PSPI	61,105				
PPI	63,934				
Total	286,475		636,397		1,011,828
% of Nat. Votes	0,31		0,56		0,97

Source: Electoral Commission (KPU).

Why did the PBSD in the 2004 elections and the Labour Party in the 2009 elections failed to get significant votes, even to pass the parliamentary threshold? The reasons are complex. There were negative reactions from unions and workers that opposed the involvement of union elites in electoral politics, as well as intense and ongoing debates about the role of unions in electoral politics.⁴⁶ However much of the problem lies with the parties themselves. They were perceived to represent the narrow interests of elites or their respective organisations rather than being a united party representing various trade unions (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1310). Moreover, the PBN (1999), PBSD (2004) and Labour Party (2009) have been considered to have poor political communication with union leaders, both from inside and outside of SBSI, and tends to be controlled by its founder, Muchtar Pakpahan.⁴⁷

Pakpahan, has his own views about the failure the Labour Party in the 2009 elections. Given that the Indonesian working class were still inherently curious about supporting union activists in the elections and had little understanding of the union elite regarding the importance of the union-party alliance, anti-leftist sentiment was still prevalent in the 2009 elections. Pakpahan claims to regret that there were various efforts

⁴⁶ For a more comprehensive discussion on ongoing debates about the role of unions in the legislative elections see Chapter Three.

⁴⁷ Interview with several union leaders during fieldwork (names withheld), August 2016 – January 2017.

to hamper the participation of the Labour Party in the 2009 elections, such as “*anti-kafir*” (non-Muslim) and “anti- leftist” campaigns which were directed against legislative candidates, political threats to voters who would join or attend the Labour Party campaigns, restrictions on air transportation access for Pakpahan to campaign (particularly in Papua), and fraud during votes recapitulation for the Labour Party.

In the 2009 general election, trade union engagement in electoral politics reached another significant milestone in the post-authoritarian era. Union elites did not only use labour political parties as a strategy to engage in electoral politics, they also started building political alliances with non-labour political parties.⁴⁸ The implementation of an open proportional electoral system required popular candidates as vote-winners. Thus, several major political parties, such as the Golkar, PDIP, PAN, PKS, and Gerindra began approaching the central executive of major unions to establish political contracts under which union candidates were nominated in exchange for member’s votes (Ford 2014: 344). For example, Said Iqbal, the president of FSPMI, was among unionists that began to participate in the 2009 legislative elections under non-labour parties. He ran for a national parliamentary seat under the PKS in the Riau Island electoral district.

⁴⁸ Two labour-linked parties that participated in the 2009 elections were the Labour Party (PB) and the Indonesian Entrepreneur and Workers Party (Partai Pengusaha dan Pekerja Indonesia, PPMI). The Labour Party replaced the older two parties founded by Muchtar Pakpahan, the PBSB and the PBN, as these two parties failed to meet electoral thresholds in the 1999 and 2004 elections.

Table 2.2: Union Legislative Candidates in National and Provincial Levels in the 2014 Legislative Elections

Name	Trade Union	Position	Political Party	Electorate Level
Irwan Abdullah	FSPMI	Vice-president of FSMPI	PKS	National
Purwanto	FSPMI	Head of FSPMI East Java	PKS	National
Bambang Wirahyoso	SPN	Former chairman of SPN	PKS	National
Djoko Suryanto	SPN	Vice-chairman of SPN	PBB	National
Baso Rukman	SPN	Head of SPN Central Java	PKS	National
Tgk Syaiful Mar	Aspek	Head of Aspek DI Aceh	PBB	National
Anggawira	PB PGRI	Head of PB PGRI West Java	Gerindra	National
Rustan	FSPMI	Vice-president of FSPMI	PDIP	Provincial - West Java
Toriyani	FSPMI	Member of FSPMI East Java	PDIP	Provincial - East Java
Darmo Juwono	FSPMI	Head of FSPMI Riau Islands	Hanura	Provincial - Kepri
Lilis Mahmudah	SPN	Vice-chairman of SPN	PKS	Provincial - Banten
Soeparno	SPN	SPN Central Java	PDIP	Provincial - Central Java
Siti Kahiroh	SPN	Head of SPN Jogjakarta	PKB	Provincial - Jogjakarta
Fery Nurzali	KEP KSPI	Vice-chairman of KEP KSPI	Gerindra	National
Idin Rosidin	KSBSI	Former leader at KSBSI	Gerindra	National
Rekson Silaban	KSBSI	Former Chairman of KSBSI	DPD	National

Source: Data from KSPSI, KSPI and KSBSI and Electoral Commission (KPU).

In addition to union leaders, several well-known anti-Suharto activists with student, peasant and labour credentials during the Suharto era also came close to non-labour parties to participate in the 2009 legislative elections, notably Dita Indah Sari and Budiman Sujatmiko. Dita Indah Sari is a law student from University of Indonesia who took the lead in organising several student demonstrations and labour protests in the last decade of the Suharto era (Botz 2001: 239). She was among 14 PRD activists who were detained by the military regime under Suharto after the *Kudatuli incident* in 1996 on charges of subversion (Botz 2001: 279). In 2003, she established a leftist-populist party, the People's United Opposition Party (POPOR), supported by several former PRD activists as well as student, peasant and independent labour groups. However, the party was disqualified by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights and so failed to participate in the 2004 elections. In the 2009 elections, Dita was nominated as a national legislative candidate from the Star Reform Party (PBR) but she failed to gain significant votes. Prior

to her nomination in the 2009 elections, she had actually tried to establish another new political party called the National Liberation Party of Unity (PAPERNAS). However, this party was constantly so opposed and harassed by religious groups and youth organisations that it eventually decided to disband.⁴⁹ While Budiman Sujatmiko, having abandoned his party (PRD) that had raised his popularity, moved to the PDIP in 2008 and he was nominated as a national legislative candidate in the 2009 elections. The decision of these former leftist activists to join mainstream parties in the 2009 elections emphasizes the shift of mindset of labour activists in post-Suharto Indonesia toward electoral politics which tends to be pragmatic amidst the lasting anti-leftist sentiment and new political opportunities offered by electoral democracy.

The strategy of some union elites to build political alliances with parties continued in the 2014 legislative elections. Several high-profile union leaders were nominated for national, provincial and local levels. Hence, when all 12 political parties started to approach union leaders to represent them as parliamentary nominees, many of the unionists were more open to the idea than they had been in the previous three general elections. At the confederation level, for example, the SPSI officially remained neutral in electoral politics, though did not prevent members from declaring their candidacy in the 2014 legislative elections.⁵⁰ Similarly, the KSBSI, despite disassociating itself from the Labour Party in the 2009 election, allowed its cadres to participate in the 2014 elections.⁵¹

Of the 73 union candidates who run for legislative election in the 2014 elections, 53 participated in local elections. This is a sharp increase compared to the 39 union candidates competing locally in the 2009 elections. The 53 union legislative candidates were spread across five districts and municipals in four provinces, with the majority being based in Java. The Bekasi and Serang districts dominated the number of nominations, with eight and six candidates respectively. These two districts are the main base of two progressive union federations under the KSPI, the FSPMI and SPN. A large number of union candidates competing at district levels is part of the union strategy to gradually place their best cadres in parliament, starting from the lowest level in the hope that

⁴⁹ As reported in *Detiknews* (29 March 2007), about 500 people from the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Betawi United Forum (FBR) gathered in front of *Tugu Proklamasi* in Central Jakarta to block and dissolve the declaration of Papernas that would be held on that day at 3pm. In this action, the protesters unfurled various banners which opposed the establishment of a new party by former PRD supporters, such as ‘Papernas = New Style of Communists, Disband and Destroy’; ‘Say No to New Style of Communism’; and ‘Get Rid of Communism’.

⁵⁰ Interview with Abdullah, chairman of FSP KEP SPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016.

⁵¹ Interview with Mudofir, president of KSBSI, Jakarta 16 September 2016.

someday they will be successful at provincial and national levels.⁵² This strategy has also been implemented by unions as part of a political learning by doing process to build political education among union members and workers in general.⁵³ In this regard, leaders of Indonesia's trade unions took a relatively different path compared to general unions in many countries which usually build political partisans based on common ideology or particular political interests (Lee 2011; Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010; Fairbrother 2015). This fact certainly raises questions regarding their political motives and the purpose of establishing a union-party alliance involving many political parties. This issue will be discussed further in the subsequent chapters including unions' electoral strategies, the determinant factors that affect the success and the failure of unions' participation in legislative elections, as well as the role of elected union elites in policy-decision making.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the development of trade union politics in post-1998 Indonesia. Particular attention is given to the impact of political reforms launched by new democratic governments since the collapse of the Suharto authoritarian regime in May 1998. This chapter has demonstrated that economic crises and demands to reform its legal system (particularly related to labour rights and democratic elections) during the first wave of democratic transition played a significant role in the development of Indonesia's trade union politics. International pressure from the ILO, IMF and World Bank played a key role in the design of three new labour laws that further contributed to the complexity of trade union development in post-1998 Indonesia. Indonesia's trade unions face the same challenges as general unions in many countries whose labour markets are globally integrated, and unions are weakened due to the decreasing number of members. However, major changes in the new Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000 have created a new industrial environment in which workers can use their basic rights to organise, defend their interests through collective bargaining, optimise their collective mobilisation by way of massive labour demonstration and protests, and even put pressure on governments to halt policy that hinders workers' interests. In some actual cases, such as in the

⁵² Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 23 September 2016.

⁵³ Interviews with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016; Interview with Maxi Ellia, former vice-president of FSPMI (2011-2016), Jakarta 6 October 2016.

determination of minimum wages, organised unions have managed to balance power relations between employer groups and the government.

This chapter has also highlighted the crucial influence of the electoral reforms on the emergence of political unionism in post-1998 Indonesia. Democratic elections have given trade union leaders broader political opportunities to optimise their collective power and compete in electoral contestation. Several modes of electoral participation have been developed by Indonesia's trade union elites, although structural and organisational challenges hindered their electoral performance. In spite of their defeat, trade union elites in Indonesia understandably still need to learn how to build effective electoral strategies and to gain trust and the votes of their main electoral constituents: the workers. As will be shown in the subsequent chapters, the success of several union leaders elected as legislative members in the 2009 and 2014 local legislative elections provide valuable lessons for the future of trade union's political and electoral engagement in democratic Indonesia.

Chapter Three

Trade Union Electoral Legitimacy

Introduction

This chapter explores the debate that has emerged among trade unionists and labour activists concerning the engagement of trade union elites in electoral politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia. It aims to address the following research question: why do trade union elites engage in electoral politics, and how do they seek to legitimise this engagement? There are three important reasons why attention to trade union electoral legitimacy is important for understanding trade union politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia. First, the dynamic of non-elite participation in electoral politics is still understudied, particularly concerning trade union elites (Nyman 2006; Beittinger-Lee 2010; Choi 2011). Much of the attention paid to Indonesia's electoral reform has been focused on the roles of the state, political parties and political elites (Dagg 2007; Ufen and Bunte 2009).

Second, an analysis of how the trade unions interpret their role and function in electoral democracy is instrumental in understanding the impact of democratic reform on the Indonesian labour movement. Trade unions are popular organisations which represent the interests of a segment of society in its daily economic and political struggles. They have potential mass support, with members, sympathisers and organisational networks going beyond the limitations of ethnicity, religion and even national borders (Nyman 2006: 67). As stated by mainstream political literature, democratisation cannot result in democracy itself without a balance of power between civil society element and the state, and among the classes within the society (Alagappa 2004; Beittinger-Lee 2010; Mietzner 2014). With specific regard to the current political conditions in Indonesia, where acute imbalances are present in the power relations, civil society organisation such as organised labour are expected to play an important role in the effort to reign in the balance of power, to challenge elitism, to expand political representation and to mobilise urban workers traditionally associated with political activism (Ford 2009; Juliawan 2014; Mietzner 2014).

The third reason for studying electoral legitimacy is historical. During Suharto's thirty-two years in power, trade unions did not engage in genuine collective bargaining and were depoliticised. Under the single union policy, the All Indonesian Trade Union (SPSI) was introduced, just like any other functional group in the state's corporatist structure, in order to maintain close institutional ties with the New Order electoral machine, the Golkar Party (Ford 2005; Hadiz 2010). Some scholars have noted this historical reason as one of the significant determinants that discouraged trade union elites in Indonesia from taking advantage of the political opportunities offered after the 1998 reforms (Törnquist 2004; Hadiz 2010), maintaining the dominance of old union elites in organisational union structures, as well as the widespread emergence of business-based unions from legacy unions (Caraway 2008; Tjandra 2016). This condition was mirrored in the influence of the employers' attitudes towards industrial relations, as they had tended to enjoy government protection and privilege during the New Order era. Although the new labour law guaranteed the rights of workers to establish independent unions, in practice, anti-union sentiment was still apparent in employers and later resulted in low numbers of workers taking up union membership (Ratna 2009; Caraway 2011; Juliawan 2015). Despite these challenges, recent developments indicate that trade unions are not only orientated towards what would be expected of them in other democracies, such as collective bargaining, but are also trying to redefine their political role. Such a trend can be seen in the increasing involvement of trade union elites in the last two legislative elections.

Contextualising the engagement of trade unions in post-New Order electoral politics has led to academic debates regarding the nature of civil society movements in Indonesia and the extent to which contemporary politics is dominated by oligarchic interests (Robison and Hadiz 2013; Juliawan 2014; Winters 2013; Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015). Some scholars such as Robison and Hadiz (2013) and Winters (2014) argue that political power is still in the hands of the same group of powerful actors who held it during the Suharto era. Democratisation will always be obstructed or even prevented as long as the structure of oligarchy remains in place (Winters 2014: 94). Thus, democratic reforms demanded by individuals or groups such as trade unions "can only be piecemeal" (Robison and Hadiz 2013: 54). On the other hand, some suggest that Indonesian politics is progressing because democratic institutions have been consolidated and the involvement of a wider range of actors is producing diverse political outcomes and new contestations (Aspinall and Mietzner 2010; Ford and Pepinsky 2013). The ability

of the labour movement in Indonesia to engage in electoral politics is proof that the working class is an important political force that can have an impact on the Indonesian political landscape.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first provides the characteristics and typology of post-1998 Indonesian trade unions. It aims to provide background information related to the challenges faced by Indonesian trade unions in the new democracy, as well as the extent to which the development of union organisations and political conditions are influencing the political orientation of union elites. Two subsequent sections analyse the organisational and individual levels of union elites and how they are justified, and the political motives behind the candidacy of union elites in electoral politics. As my research examines local level elections in detail, it is necessary to assess these dynamics, establishing for instance, why the majority of union elites seek political careers, particularly at sub-national levels far from the country's centre of power.

Post-1998 Indonesian Trade Unions: Characteristics and Political Orientation

The fall of Suharto in May 1998 signified not only regime change in Indonesia but also the birth of various civil organisations, including trade unions. Together with students, NGO activists, religious and community leaders, and other civil society groups, trade unions in Indonesia have not only fought for worker interests but also have managed to be part of the pro-democracy movement, fighting for political reforms and the improvements of Indonesia's economic, social and political development (Nyman 2006; Mietzner 2013). The Indonesian labour movement post-1998 has taken many forms, from strengthening collective power in low level workplaces, to doing the same in local, provincial and national tripartite institutions; from lock-outs or strikes to street demonstrations; and from lawsuits to political lobbying and engagement in policy making-processes in parliamentary departments.

Despite all the potential offered by the post-1998 political reforms, at least in the short to medium term, Indonesian trade unions are confronted by several challenges. The first is strengthening their collective bargaining power; the second is developing a consolidated movement; and the third is ensuring their interests are represented in policy-making. These challenges, as will be discussed, raise concerns regarding the future development of trade unions in Indonesia as well as their role in society.

Union's Organisational Characteristics

Discussion of labour organisation in post-1998 Indonesia is often characterised by the following three main features. First, most trade unions are vulnerable to fragmentation and elite factionalism, which has intensified in response to the recognition of the right to form independent unions (Törnquist 2007; Tjandraningsih 2007; Caraway 2015; Tjandra 2016). Since the approval of ILO Convention Number 87 in 1998, and following the establishment of Trade Union Law Number 21/2000, dozens of new trade union federations have been registered in the Ministry of Manpower and hundreds of local unions have been created at plant level.⁵⁴ The establishment of the new labour law in 2000 provided Indonesian workers with the right to establish two kinds of workers' organisations: trade unions both within and outside enterprises. It also provides workers with the right to establish three different levels of union organisation: confederations of unions, federations of unions, and shop floor-level trade unions. In addition, it does not forbid the establishment of new federations not affiliated with union confederations at the national level, nor the establishment of shop floor-level unions with no union federation.

Second, trade unions have also taken many different forms, structures and orientations. Unions are established across political spectrum which is co-exist side by side. They have distinctive organisational orientations from “conservatives” who seeks to maintain good relationships with both the government and employers, to “moderates” who seek only membership and representation in workplaces, and “radicals” who want real economic, social and political change (Botz, 2001: 166). A combination of the four different types commonly used to categorise unions also can be found in the post-1998 Indonesian labour movement. They comprise: general unions, enterprise unions, craft unions, and industrial unions (Mizuno, Tjandraningsih and Herawati 2007: 17).

Third, the rights which unions aim to defend are exclusive, mostly revolving around workers' welfare issues, such as the establishment of a minimum wage; the removal of the practices of outsourcing and unilateral termination of employment; the implementation of social security programs; and improvements in working conditions. Alliances with other civil organisations and other marginal groups, such as farming and fishing associations, are still underdeveloped. Even if there are efforts to build alliances with these interest groups, they are usually unsustainable and inherent in the labour

⁵⁴ See Chapter Five for a more comprehensive discussion of union fragmentation and elite factionalism issues.

movement (Tjandraningsih 2007: 6). However, recent observation of organised unions indicates a positive trend in their concern regarding public interests. Unions and workers have been actively involved in several national demonstrations against government policies, such as increases in fuel prices, reductions in electricity subsidies, the tax amnesty scheme, corruption, and coastal reclamation.⁵⁵ Since the last decade, trade unions in several regions have also established regional links by building inter-union alliances. As noted by Tjandra (2016: 134), there were at least fifteen regional union alliances established across four provinces on the island of Java in 2012. Most of these were established in union-dense industrial areas. They were established as part of the unions' new strategy to strengthen their bargaining position collectively at the local level, particularly when dealing with local government authorities, when they may be making demands regarding the same issue. This new trend of inter-union alliances and wider networks has been developed due to the closeness of their core labour issues and the strength of communication and trust between union elites, which is often inherited at the local level. It is also related to the failure of national union leadership to work with unions at the local level due to the ineffectiveness of peak organisations in performing their umbrella duties (Tjandra 2016: 129).

Union's Political Orientation

Despite the increasing trend of union elite candidacies in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections, including the appearance of several union alliances to support candidacies in both presidential (2014) and local elections (2017), it is difficult to determine precisely the current situation of trade unions' political orientation. Currently, there is no updated precise analysis of trade union in Indonesia related to this issue. Mizuno, Tjandraningsih and Herawati (Akatiga) published a directory of Indonesian trade unions in 2007. This publication provides information about the profile of 90 trade unions, such as their historical backgrounds, structures, programs, recruitment systems, funding, relationships with NGOs and international institutions, and views on key labour issues (such as the freedom to organise, wages, working systems, strikes, industrial courts, political interest, and labour laws).

⁵⁵ See for example, Reuters, 29 September 2016, "Thousands of workers against tax amnesty"; Koran Perjuangan, 31 May 2017, "Apa yang Salah jika KSPI Memperjuangkan Isu Guru, Korupsi, Penggusuran, dan Reklamasi"? (What's wrong if KSPSI is protesting against issues related to teachers, corruption and coastal reclamation"?)

Below is a brief description of trade union political orientation based on interviews with several trade unionists in confederations and federations and at plant level during my fieldwork from August 2016 to January 2017, as well as information from the few related studies available. It aims not only to provide analysis related to union legitimisation regarding engagement in electoral politics but also to provide background information related to the analysis in the sub-sections that follow.

Based on political orientation, post-1998 Indonesian trade can be divided into five different categories. The first is the legacy unions. Caraway (2008: 1372) defines legacy unions as “state backed unions inherited from the previous non-democratic regime”. Their existence in post-authoritarian government mostly depends on “retaining state support” and “holding on to existing members”, not developing new organising” (Caraway 2008; 1373-75). In post-authoritarian Indonesia, legacy unions are associated with the Confederation of All-Indonesian Workers’ Unions (KSPSI).

The KSPSI was registered as a confederation in 2002 and supported by 17 sectoral sections of the union federations. The KSPSI is a continuation of the SPSI, which restructured in 1998 following internal conflict between two groups within the FSPSI body. The FSPSI was established in 1973 and was the only single union recognised under an exclusionary model of corporation adapted during Suharto regime (1968-1998). Its establishment was part of Suharto’s political strategy to disband the powerful Communist-linked unions and to force the remaining non-Communist ones into a single union (Hadiz 1997; Ford 2009). At the beginning of its establishment, the KSPSI claimed to have 4.8 million members spread across 31 provinces, 432 districts and municipalities, and 13,655 companies/factories (Pusdatin 2017).

Like the legacy unions in Mexico and Russia, the KSPSI survived after the regime change in 1998 and has continued to hold on to power due to its privileges and inherited institutional and legal advantages over other new unions (Caraway 2008: 1378). Among KSPSI’s inherited advantages are: its high level of membership, which is due to its monopoly during the Suharto era; office facilities provided by the government; and its position in the union’s tripartite bodies at national, provincial and district levels.

Another factor that helps KSPSI to maintain its privileged position is the “feebleness of competitors”, which are fragmented into many competing union federations (Caraway 2008: 1379). At its establishment, the nature of the KSPSI could

not be separated from its political character, which means it maintains organisational proximity to political parties, and has the support of the government. Since 1998, the KSPSI has successfully developed its political links with several well-established political parties, such as Golkar and the PDIP. Two former leaders of the KSPSI were appointed as ministers in the Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001) and Megawati Sukarno Putri (2001-2004) administrations respectively: Bomer Pasaribu and Jacob Nuwawea as Minister of Manpower and Transmigration. This achievement contributed to the survival of the KSPSI and led to the continuation of its dominance after the transition period (Caraway 2008: 1380-83).⁵⁶

Since 2012, the KSPSI has been split between two leaders: Yoris Raweyai and Andi Gani both claimed legal leadership. Andi Gani was a former leader of the Union Federation of Workers of Finance and Banking (Fokuba), a union federation under the KSPSI, and has a close relationship with the PDIP. His position in the KSPSI and relationship with the PDIP are inseparable from the influence of his father, Jacob Nuwawea. Since being active in the union in the 2000s, he has been regenerated by Nuwawea as a potential leader of the KSPSI.⁵⁷ Yoris Raweyai is an old Golkar cadre who was deliberately placed in office to bring the direction of the KSPSI closer to the Golkar Party.⁵⁸ This fact further reinforces the general view that the KSPSI is still a ‘yellow union’, although institutionally it has taken a neutral stance in electoral politics.⁵⁹

The second type is unions established by ex-SPSI members. The SPSI’s dominance in post-1998 Indonesia has been challenged many times, not only over a case involving its double stewardship, but also in the defection of its cadres to establish new trade unions. Supported by the American Center for International Labour Solidarity (ACIL), on 6 October 1998 – following the resignation of Suharto in May of that year – 11 out of 13 sectoral unions under the SPSI declared a new union called ‘SPSI Reformasi’. The founders of the SPSI Reformasi were SPSI dissidents who wanted to

⁵⁶ For instance, during his service as Minister of Manpower and Transmigration under the Megawati administration, Nowaweya did not resign or step down from his position as the president of the KSPSI. With his power in the government and union, he protected the KSPSI by claiming the properties provided the previous government as organisational assets of KSPSI and by delaying the union membership reverification process that mean the KSPSI could claim to be the biggest union confederation, giving the KSPSI stronger representation in tripartite bodies and wage councils (Caraway 2008: 1382).

⁵⁷ Interview with union leaders (names withheld), Jakarta 20 September 2016.

⁵⁸ Interview with union leaders (names withheld), Jakarta 20 September 2016.

⁵⁹ Interview with Abdullah, chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta September 2016. The term of yellow union is a reference to the symbolic colour of the Golkar Party, Suharto’s political machine during the New Order era.

reform the organisation, mainly to distance it from the shadow of the Golkar party and the influence of some of its elites who had founded new political parties to participate in the 1999 elections.⁶⁰

In its development, the SPSI Reformasi became the forerunner to the establishment of the KSPI in 2002. In 2007, the KSPI changed its name from “Congress” to “Confederation”, after achieving membership of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). At present, the KSPI represents 239,000 workers from 12 union federations. This figure places the KSPI as the second largest union confederation in post-1998 Indonesia, after the legacy union- the KSPSI (Pusdatin 2017). Following its second congress in February 2008, the KSPI declared it would develop its political strategy by establishing political party alliances and nominating its elites in the legislative elections. In the 2014 elections, the KSPI was recorded as the most active union confederation in political movements, especially in the nomination of its elites in legislative elections. The KSPI was also involved in the 2014 presidential election, supporting the nomination of Prabowo Subianto and in several regional leader elections (*Pilkada*) in 2017, such as in the DKI Jakarta (Anis-Sandi) and Bekasi districts (Obon-Bambang).

The third type of post-1998 Indonesian trade union is the revived union, linked to the Indonesian Confederation of Prosperous Worker Trade Unions (KSBSI). The KSBSI is an independent union, established in 1992, that was suppressed and banned during the New Order authoritarian regime, but which survived after 1998. Although positioned as a dissident union opposed to the New Order regime, the KSBSI was not left-wing, more aligned with moderate social democratic unionism.⁶¹ The existence of the KSBSI in post-1998 Indonesia is inseparable from its founding figure, Muchtar Pakpahan, who in the 1999, 2004 and 2009 elections developed it to engage in electoral politics through the establishment of labour-related parties. The National Labour Party (PBN) for instance, established by Pakpahan in 1999, was designed to work with mainstream opposition parties such as the PDIP and the National Awakening Party (PKB). By proposing such an alliance, Pakpahan intended to place the PBN as part of the mainstream opposition against the Golkar Party and Habibie government.⁶² However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the PBN failed to gain any legislative seats at the national level.

⁶⁰ Interview with Syaiful DP, chairman of FSP KEP KSPI and one of the founders of KSPI Reformasi, Jakarta 23 September 2016.

⁶¹ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

⁶² Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

As it developed, the nature of the political unionism of the KSBSI - the third largest confederation in Indonesia - also changed its political position in 2015.⁶³ Under the leadership of Mudofir Hamid (2015-present), the KSBSI officially declared that it would take a neutral position in electoral politics, although in practice, this did not prevent its leaders and members from engaging in legislative candidacy.⁶⁴ In an interview, Mudofir explained that the involvement of the KSBSI in electoral politics had weakened the organisation as it had caused divisions among union leaders in the federations and among members at the grassroots level. In addition, the decision to actively engage in electoral politics was part of top-down pressure from the national leadership, which he argued was no longer appropriate in the spirit of democracy. Mudofir's decision to take the KSBSI away from its original political path caused Pakpahan to withdraw his support of it and to later decide to establish a rival union using its old name: the SBSI. Moreover, other cadres who were not included in either in the KSBSI led by Mudofir, or the Pakpahan's SBSI, chose to establish another new independent union called SBSI 1992, which was led by Sri Sunarti, the former general secretary of the KSBSI during Pakpahan's leadership (1999-2010).

The fourth type is NGO-supported unions. As noted by Edwin (2003) and Ford (2008), labour NGOs played vital roles in the establishment and organisation of the labour movement late in the New Order era and during Indonesia's democratic transition (1998-2004). Their presence was inseparable from the role of international donors in supporting democratisation in Indonesia through financial aid and the development of civil society organisations (Ford 2008). Unions in this category mostly focused only on organising workers at the grassroots level, especially in factories, and refused to build political links with parties or to engage in electoral politics. This trait is closely related to the basic character of the ideology inherent in the work of NGOs, which generally take a neutral position or are independent with regard to political interests. Many union leaders in this category decided to establish new unions, as they were demanding more authority from their supported labour NGOs. There were also some unions which ceased functioning, as their supporting NGOs stopped operating or changed their main priority to other sectors of the community.

⁶³ Based on data from Ministry of Manpower 2017, the KSBSI has 250.000 members from 9 union federations.

⁶⁴ Interview with Mudofir Hamid, president of KSBSI, Jakarta 12 October 2016.

The Congress of Indonesia Unions Alliance (KASBI) is one example of a union confederation which was established by unions and labour NGOs in 2003 and has continued to operate.⁶⁵ However, since the KASBI decided to work with political parties in the 2004 legislative elections, several unions which were initially involved in its establishment have left, for instance: the Indonesian Trade Unions Alliance (GSBI) and the Malang Democratic Union (SBDM). However, unlike most unions, the KASBI refused to work with mainstream political parties and preferred to build alternative political parties supported by unions, workers and other civil society organisations (Santoso and Parto 2016: 120).⁶⁶

The fifth type is unions established by political parties. Although the strategy of engaging in electoral politics is still a matter for debate among union leaders, this stance does not preclude the establishment of trade unions initiated and established by political parties. One example of a trade union in this category is the Justice Trade Union (SPK). The SPK was established in 1999 by mosque activists in factories in the Jakarta and Bogor areas and by lecturers who were also sympathisers and administrators of the Justice Party in 1999, which later became the Welfare and Justice Party (PKS) in the 2004 legislative elections. The SPK founders, Marty Agung and Edy Zanur, were also known for their involvement in the establishment of the PKS during the 2004 elections. These two figures also played an important role in establishing a political link between the PKS and other trade unions such as the FSPMI and SPN, including the nomination of union leaders in the 2004, 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. At present, Marty Agung - who is a national parliament member representing the PKS - is still listed as a general advisor to the SPK.

Another example of a union supported by a political party is the Confederation of Indonesian Muslim Trade Unions (the Sarbumusi). The Sarbumusi is a trade union with a long history of post-independence union political movements (1955-1968) and was founded by labour activists and Nahdatul Ulama (NU) administrators to support the NU Party in the 1995 elections. In addition to fighting for the interests of NU workers and citizens, the Sarbumusi was established as part of the NU strategy to combat the spread of communist ideology by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which at that time was

⁶⁵ KASBI was established on 14-17 March 2003, following an inter-union meeting at the end of 2002 which was attended by 16 independent unions that made up the Inter-city Workers' Alliance (Jaringan Buruh Antar Kota, JBAK).

⁶⁶ For comprehensive description about the history, ideology and politics of KASBI see "Buku Panduan Serikat Buruh Gerakan Buruh Indonesia dan Internasional: Sejarah, Politik dan Ideologi" published by Central Board of KASBI (2016).

supported by the largest union, the Central Organisation of Indonesian Labourers (SOBSI). After 1998, the Sarbumusi declared itself to be a union confederation and positioned itself as part an autonomous organisation under the NU - the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia. Organisationally, although both the NU and Sarbumusi stated that they were not affiliated with any particular political parties, the political strategies of these two organisations could not distinguished from those of the PKB, considering most of its members and leaders were founders, administrators, and supporters of the PKB.

The sixth category is non-affiliated unions, consisting of independent unions that have no affiliation with particular confederations or federations. As mentioned previously, Labour Law Number 21/2000 allows the establishment of trade unions under both confederation and federation structures and of non-affiliated unions that have no links to higher level union groups. Included in this category are plant-level unions and occupational-based unions that are not affiliated with union federations. The latest available data at the time of writing this thesis, published by the Ministry of Manpower (2012), shows that there were 2,465 non-affiliated unions located at the enterprise level, which constituted the second largest after the legacy unions - the KSPSI (6,779 unions). Most of the non-affiliated unions have no political links and take a neutral position in electoral politics.

The discussion above reveals that the organisational character and political orientation of post-1998 Indonesian trade unions vary and have evolved dynamically. Their development has not only been determined by political reforms and ongoing socio-economic changes but has also been influenced by the existence of labour NGOs activists, politicians, the role of overseas labour organisations, and the interests of unions leaders, which can split unions apart, as in the case of the KSBSI discussed above. Scholars have used these characteristics and dynamics to partly explain unions' weaknesses, as well as the complex picture of the post-1998 Indonesian labour movement (Ford 2003; Mizuno, Tjandraningsih and Herawati 2007; Silaban 2009). In this regard, some scholars have pointed out that the dominance of legacy unions and the problems of union fragmentation have undoubtedly contributed to the labour movement's ongoing weakness (Caraway 2008; Hadiz 2010). Others stressed the challenges faced by Indonesian trade unions in relation to their attempt to build political links with parties, despites all the conditions that have benefited trade unions and the opportunities offered by democratisation. On this basis, Isaac and Sitalaksmi (2008: 253) argued that "[the labour movement] may not grow much in its present infant stage for some time to come". In this context, it is important to

understand the current union elite's perspective on their engagement in electoral contests and the reasons that legitimise their decision. This will be analysed below.

Union Justification to Engage in Electoral Politics

One of the fiercest debates related to union participation in Indonesia's electoral politics is that among trade union elites regarding the proper function of trade unions themselves. A large proportion of trade unions reject the idea of supporting political parties as well as union nomination in electoral politics and prefer instead to focus on traditional trade union activities. What might be considered more progressive union groups take the opposite position, considering electoral politics to be part of an effective mechanism through which trade unions can increase their ability to influence in particular, policy-making in general and industrial relations in specific sectors. These two contradictory positions are affecting the electoral performances of unions, as evidenced by the electoral records of union candidates since their first electoral engagement in the 1999 elections.

According to Ford (2005, 2014), the rejection of political unionism by some trade unionists has been strongly influenced by the legacy of the New Order era, where the authoritarian regime has successfully controlled the attitude of workers and trade unionists toward political unionism. The New Order's single union, the SPSI, was primarily an instrument of power rather than a representative body for unions and workers (Ford 2005:200). The SPSI was enforced, just like any other functional groups in the state's corporatist structure, to maintain close institutional ties to the New Order electoral machine, the Golkar Party (Ford 2005, Mietzner 2013). Using the enforcement of the ideology of *Pancasila*, a Sanskrit word which translates as five principles, for encapsulating the idea of a kind of social partnership and deliberation to reach a consensus, the New Order regime argued that "trade unions must be renovated to support achievement of national development goals and to prevent repeating the politicization of union's interests by political parties such as what happened in the post-Independence period" (Ford 2005: 198). The doctrine of socio-economic definitions of trade unionism which were strictly imposed for almost 32 years seemed to have survived and been adopted by the unions. Consequently, workers lost their political identity as well as their understanding about the role and function of unions in electoral politics.

Experiences from elsewhere suggest that the debate over whether trade union need to enter politics or not does not occur only in young democratic countries, such as Indonesia, but is also found in many countries which have a long history of its labour movements. In Europe and the United States, this phenomenon happened in the opening stages of the development of trade unions in these countries, as part of the labour movements of the early nineteenth century. For instance, in Britain, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) initiated the establishment of the Labour Party. In its development, the Labour Party in Britain has “grown out of the bowels of the TUC” and has been instrumental in shaping policies related to working class interests in the country they soon came to dominate it (Marks 1989: 3). In the United States, most trade unions, such as the American Federation of Labour, kept their distance from national politics. However, since the late nineteenth century several progressive unions such as the United Mine Workers and the Print Workers’ Unions were actively involved in politics at the state and local levels (Marks 1989: 3). In Germany, the union-party alliance was the other way around. In the 1860s, most unions were created by political parties for expressly political purposes, and their orientation also followed party interests. However, from the 1890s onwards, when the relaxation of state repression gave broader opportunities to trade unions to choose their movement, they established their own national organisation and emphasised their political independence from the Social Democratic party, rapidly increasing their membership (Marks 1989: 3). By 1906, when the Free Unions had grown in size and strength, they became more confident in their ability to form their own political party, and this then brought them to the centre of the political stage (Marks 1989: 4).

The trade unionists interviewed for this study openly acknowledged a range of shortcomings which have hampered the effectiveness of union engagement in electoral politics. They attributed these shortcomings both to the problems that characterise the current labour movement and to the challenges that it is facing. The issues most often mentioned were elites and organisational egoism and rivalry; labour political identity; the New Order legacy; fragmentation; organisational capacity; suspicion and co-optation; and the problems related to financial politics and the dominance of oligarchies. However, trade union interpretations of political activism and their role seem to be mostly influenced by their background, convictions, organisational orientation and strategies, as well as their understanding of the importance of union involvement in formal politics offered by the new Indonesia’s democracy. The following section provides an

explanatory overview of two different positions of union elites regarding the needs for trade unions to engage in electoral politics.

Views of the Proponent Elites

In the opinion of most union elites who support union engagement in electoral politics, entry into the arena of electoral politics is part of the unions' new strategy to secure a place at decision-making tables in order to fight for worker interests and political agendas. The presence of unionists in the parliament could limit the domination of legislative bodies and government agencies by capitalist elites and business-politicians. It is also part of unions' short-term strategy to solve the stagnation faced by political parties in providing legislative candidates who understand labour issues and have high levels of integrity and commitment to fighting for workers' interests. In the long run, this is intended to improve the quality of the labour movement; to educate and enhance workers political consciousness; and to develop the embryo of an alternative labour party supported by trade unions and their members.

Words and phrases that are often used by proponent elites to describe the importance of trade union engagement in electoral politics have included "important", "necessary", "inseparable" and "demands". In the view of Iwan Kusmawan, a member of the executive board of the KSPI and the chairman of the SPN, trade union engagement in electoral politics is not merely intended to place union cadres in legislative institutions, but is also a necessary strategy to strengthen collective union power.⁶⁷ He stressed that the struggle through negotiation in the factory and demonstration on the street is highly necessary in every labour movement, particularly to optimise their function as pressure groups. However, to increase the bargaining position of trade union, that strategy is assumed to be ineffective when there is no effort to get involved in the formal politics directly.⁶⁸

In another argument, Maxia Ellia, former vice-president of the FSPMI stated that the defeat of the Labour Party and the lack of support from workers for the majority of union candidates in the previous elections should not be viewed as failures.⁶⁹ However, part of the process of developing workers' political consciousness and political experimentation is for union leaders to engage in electoral democracy. In his opinion, it

⁶⁷ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

⁶⁸ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

⁶⁹ Interview with Maxi Ellia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 6 October 2016.

is not surprising that some trade union elites had little sense of how to mobilise their members or that the workers proved so difficult to mobilise in electoral politics, as they had been told for so long by an authoritarian regime that the political sphere does not concern them.⁷⁰

When asked how they deal with the fact that the democratic system is being exclusively dominated by oligarchic, political and bureaucratic elites, most of the proponent elites interviewed in this study argued that trade unions are different from political parties, but both are needed in a democratic system. According to Nicolas, trade union elites turned-politicians belong to both arenas, falling between the union and the party.⁷¹ However, they are different from career politicians as they are members of specific popular groups, not free individuals. They have been selected to be members of parliament because they have been nominated by trade unions and have an identity as representative of a labour group. Therefore, the possibility for elected candidates from trade unions to be controlled by their constituents is higher than that of career politicians from political parties.

Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI and founder of the Labour Party, argued that the relationship between trade unions and formal politics is inseparable, as regulating industrial relations involves political issues.⁷² In the view of Pakpahan, “if a trade union desires a significant achievement in their struggle, they must adopt political programs into their movement”.⁷³ In other words, there must be a forum which can be used to represent the labour movement in formal politics, either through the establishment of a labour-related party or the attendance of members of parliament from trade unions. In the interview, Pakpahan was convinced that:

The fall of Suharto in 1998 brought a fundamental change in the workers struggle to improve their welfare, the recognition of human rights, anti-discrimination law enforcement, social justice and democracy. Unfortunately, the importance of union independence is often misunderstood by many trade unionists as well as workers. Independence doesn't mean that trade unions should not engage in formal politics. On the contrary, alliances with other societal and political forces, including political parties, is necessary. Trade unions cannot be separated from politics, including political parties. However, in every alliance of this kind,

⁷⁰ Interview with Maxi Ellia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 6 October 2016.

⁷¹ Interview with Nicholas, chairman of SBSI North Sumatra, Medan 26 November 2016.

⁷² Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

⁷³ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

the question must be, which one is the independent party. The crucial issue is whether trade unions will determine what programs are to be implemented, or whether they will be subservient to party politics.⁷⁴

At the local level, the need for unions and workers to become involved in local electoral politics can be interpreted as part of a political experiment and a form of democracy in the spirit of the implementation of local autonomy policy. A union's political engagement is established based on similarities in the issues being fought for, similar locations as the basis for movement, and the intensity of communication among union elites in similar sectors and occupations. As Obon Tabroni explained:

In the decentralisation era, the desire of unions to be involved actively in electoral politics is increasing, considering that the opportunity to take part in policy making and to influence labour policies at the local level is also widely open. I never stop encouraging them (union leaders and workers) to work together as we have a great potential to enter parliament and influence policy-making.⁷⁵

Other views were driven by the fact that labour issues are often politicised by political elites during electoral campaigns but are often ignored by the government and elected parliament members when negotiating their interests after elections have ended. As stated by one union candidate interviewed:

Before, I viewed politics to be dirty. Politics was an issue for the politicians in parliament, while the union only handled the factory. After getting a political education, I realised that we also need to engage in politics, so it is not always used as a political commodity of political elites.⁷⁶

There has been a question mark among trade unionists over whether union elites who turn to politics will be able to bring about significant changes in the interest of their supporting group, since they could easily be co-opted by oligarchic, political and bureaucratic elites. Like other civil society activists who join formal politics, Nyumarno understood that assumption. However, when he became politician, he gained much better grasp of political lobbies and the complexity of the political process. In his interview, he talked about how he would lobby parliamentarians one by one, to approve the submission of draft local regulations on manpower.⁷⁷ For Nyumarno, therefore, fighting in formal

⁷⁴ Interview with Muchtar Pakpahan, president of SBSI, Jakarta 16 January 2017.

⁷⁵ Interview with Obon Tabroni, former head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 22 January 2017.

⁷⁶ Interview with Aji, legislative candidate and FSPMI union leader in Bekasi, Jakarta 22 September 2016.

⁷⁷ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member in Bekasi district and former union leader, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

politics means playing two roles at once: as politician and representative of workers in parliament.

The labour NGOs, such as the TURC and Omah Tani, have played significant roles in building political awareness among trade unionists and workers (Tjandra 2016; Mahsun 2018). They not only provide unions with economic and political education (Ekopol) but also support union engagement in electoral politics. Their support includes: political training for union administrators; compiling the political programs of labour movements in the region; designing political campaigns during the 2014 legislative elections. In an interview, Handoko Wibowo, the founder of Omah Tani, explained that in his “Ecopol school” union leaders and workers not only learn about organisational management and current issues related to workers’ interests, but also about their important role in building alternative political movements.⁷⁸ “During their 3 to 5 days here, they (union leaders and workers) not only learn from people who have experience in mobilising mass movements, but also from activists and former political prisoners during the Suharto era (including former dissidents and leftist supporters who were sent to Buru island), so that they will have strong idealism and understand the consequences of struggling in the political arena”.⁷⁹

The Opponent Elites

The relationship between trade unions and political parties always causes contradiction and debate. A union elite’s decision to engage in electoral politics is not only affected by structural factors but is also determined by the extent to which they have adopted the most

⁷⁸ Interview with Handoko Wibowo, founder of Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2017. Omah Tani was founded in 1998 by Handoko and other human rights activists mostly university graduates from the city of Jogjakarta. Initially, Omah Tani was an organisation known as the Struggle Forum of Batang Farmers (FPBB) and consisted of 34 farmer organisations in the Batang district. Over time, the FPBB expanded its affiliation to fishermen’s groups and changed its name to the Forum of Associations of Farmers and Fishers in Batang and Pekalongan (FPBB). The FPBB’s activities mainly focused on providing legal advocacy for farmers and fishers groups in Batang and Pekalongan who were experiencing land conflict with the state and private sectors. In 2009, under the leadership of Handoko Wibowo, the organisation changed its name to Omah Tani and launched Farmer Go Politics movement which then successfully placed nine members out of ten village head elections in three sub-districts in the Batang regency. In the 2011 local elections, as part of the same movement and supported by its 34 local affiliates, Omah Tani played a crucial role in the candidacy of Yoyok Riyo Sudibyo in the local election (Pilkada); was later elected as Bupati Batang (2012-2017). Beside being a lawyer, Handoko Wibowo also known as a Chinese descendant who had been involved in human rights activist since the Suharto era, has strong civil society network links with human rights and anti-corruption NGOs, such as the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (*Kontras*), the Indonesian Law Aid Foundation, the Transparency for International Indonesia movement, the Indonesian Corruption Watch, and the Demos. In 2015, Handoko won the Yat Thiam Hiem award – a prestigious human rights award in Indonesia given by the Yat Thiam Hiem Foundation and Center for Human Rights to people who contribute to human rights issues.

⁷⁹ Interview with Handoko, founder and head of Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2017.

appropriate attitude and action in organising their movement. In this context, the freedom of association and protection to organise in a new Indonesia's democracy tends to be interpreted differently by union elites, according to whether they support or refuse the union's engagement in electoral politics. Despite the fact that some unions still refuse to become involved in politics, it does not mean that they do not have political orientations when fighting in the interest of workers. In the words of one union federation leader interviewed for this thesis: "The spirit to fight in formal politics already exists, but the response depends on the growing situation".⁸⁰ Other union elites argue that unions' neutrality in politics is part of their opposition strategy to maintain union autonomy. In the view of one union elite member: "If we agreed to collaborate with political parties which currently existed, it would mean that we were betraying our cause to work with parties that we have criticised".⁸¹

There are three main reasons given by several trade union elites to legitimise remaining independent of political parties. The first is to preserve the unity of their members. This view is based on the reality that there are workers who have various political choices which are greatly affected by their different religious, ethnic, and historical identities. As explained by a union leader:

Our members have various social and political origins, from NU, Muhammadiyah, Christian, Islam, Batak, Javanese, etc. If we force them to follow our decision or ask them to choose union candidates from political parties which are different from what they want, will they still vote them? If we force them, we worry that it will ruin our organisational solidarity.⁸²

The second reason is related to political awareness among workers. According to union elites in this group, to make workers aware of politics, the first aspect to build is their political awareness through political education. A respondent stressed that "some of the union elites want to carry out 'chilli sauce politics' which means once people have eaten it, they want to immediately feel the taste".⁸³ Another elite member disagreed over whether labour has significant potential votes for union candidacy. In the interview he argued that:

⁸⁰ Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 25 September 2016.

⁸¹ Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 28 September 2016.

⁸² Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 27 September 2016.

⁸³ Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 28 September 2016.

During street demonstrations, tens of thousands of workers are willing to join and they are easily mobilised by union leaders, since the issue they are fighting for is easily understood and familiar in their daily life. However, when talking about politics, it takes more effort for them to understand what politics is? And unfortunately the labourers in Indonesia are not as good at doing this as those in Western countries, whose political education is well established.⁸⁴

The third reason is related to union priority. Most union elites in this group recognise that the key issue for the union at this stage must be to strengthen its collective bargaining for genuine labour union agreement with companies in order to be able to begin to raise wages and improve the condition of workers. They argue that during Suharto's 32 years reign, the state's official union federation, the SPSI - which was the only legally recognised trade union- did not engage in genuine collective bargaining and contract negotiation. Therefore, with the freedom of association and the right to organise that have been granted, trade unions oriented toward collective bargaining have emerged as a dominant form of such organisations. According to a union leader in this group, "the current priority of union movement should be to increase their membership and strengthen their bargaining position in the factory, so that the union can make maximum contributions to negotiating beneficial work agreements for its members".⁸⁵

The fourth is related to the existence of political decisions at the national level (confederations) which often run contrary to the wishes of union officials at the federation, local and factory levels. This condition then arouses suspicion among opposing union leaders that their leaders have utilised trade union for the benefit of their political interests. For example, the KSPI's decision to build political cooperation with the Gerindra party in the 2014 elections conflicted greatly with leaders at the federation level as it did under the leadership of Yoris Raweyai, who provides support for the Golkar party.

Based on the discussion above, it can be said that the labour union elites have different understandings related to their need to engage in electoral politics. It seems that the relationship between unions and political parties always contains contradictions and areas of debate. On the one hand, trade unions are different to political parties. Their main goal is to fight for member and organisational interests, while the main goal of

⁸⁴ Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 28 September 2016.

⁸⁵ Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 28 September 2016.

political parties is to gain legitimacy and power from votes in a general election. Both have different orientations, but both are needed to build a democratic government. On the other hand, attempts to protect and improve working conditions and workers' economic situation are strongly influenced by the presence of regulations imposed by legislative institutions. Therefore, a duality of purposes is common in union movements, because unions must balance their members' interests and the requirements of national development.

Union Candidates and the Question of Motives

Winning a seat in a legislative election not only offers a great deal of political power but also enhanced social status in recognition of a winner's success and prestige, as well as various material rewards and financial benefits. Party officials are now recruiting popular figures from trade unions and high-profile members of NGO-sponsored unions to compete as parliamentary candidates in several worker-dense districts in Java and Sumatra, to act as political fixers or vote mobilisers (Ford 2014: 344). New potential candidates and canvassers are also being approached, including popular figures such as local community leaders, religious leaders, artists, academics, and even ordinary citizens who do not have any significant economic power and political experience. This trend has been emerging since the 2009 legislative elections, when the first open proportional representation electoral system was adopted, and a significant number of popular figures from civil society organisations and ordinary candidates competed in local elections (Heryanto 2010; Aspinall and Mietzner 2014).⁸⁶

The emergence of newcomers in local elections has created a large pool of candidates that are more locally rooted and more broadly based, represent a plurality of political interests, and are less militarised than during the Suharto era (Törnquist 2008; Choi 2014). This trend has challenged the characterisation of political elites as predatory figures nurtured by the New Order regime (Buehler and Tan 2007; Winters 2014; Poczter and Pepinsky 2016). Furthermore, this trend has caused competition to intensify among parliamentary candidates, particularly in local electoral contests. Despite this seemingly

⁸⁶ For example, Heryanto (2010) observed the nomination of ordinary citizens in the 2009 legislative elections. They included *becak* (rickshaw) driver Abdul Wahid from the United Development Party (PPP) in Tegal, street vendor Erni Wahyuni from the Star Reformation Party (PBR) in Samarinda, vehicle washer Joko Prihatin from the National Mandate Party (PAN) in Kudus, public parking assistance Sukardji from Renewal Democracy Party (PPD) in Ponorogo, *ojek* driver (motorcycle taxi) Soleman from PAN in Kupang District, and *angkot* driver (local van) Benedictus for DPD in Jakarta.

positive development, some studies find that the patrimonial and oligarchic tendencies in Indonesia's post-Suharto polity remain strong. It can be seen from the practice of money politics, which has become more flagrant and widespread in elections (Choi 2011; Aspinall and Mietzner 2014; Aspinall and Sukmajati 2015). Outright vote-buying is increasingly vulgarly blatant, with candidates organising success teams to distribute cash to voters in the days before an election, as it is known in Indonesian as *serangan fajar*, the dawn attack (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014: 355).

The negative aspects of elections in Indonesia have, to some extent, perpetuated public cynicism and suspicions regarding the candidates' political motives, purposes and goals (Heryanto 2010; Choi 2015). As pointed out by Heryanto (2010: 184), the emergence of a large pool of political newcomers has had two opposing effects on society. On one side, it seems to "contradict widespread reports about the widespread apathy among the general population". On the other, it has "confirmed people's cynical suspicion that something other than genuine motives in a political or moral cause must have been driving so many newcomer candidates to join local electoral contest" (Heryanto 2010: 186-87).

Relatively few studies have examined what motivates newcomer candidates to participate in local elections in post-Suharto Indonesia. Choi's (2015) study of political newcomers in Pontianak, West Kalimantan Province, argues that electoral reforms have given a broader political opportunity for newcomers in local politics, but this development does not necessarily indicate a level of democratic maturity. She draws her conclusion based on the finding that "the new local elites are by no means immune to the institutional features of old-style politics as they treat electoral politics as a means to build a political career and to nurture and exploit patronage networks" (Choi 2015: 367).

Another example is a study conducted by Mietzner (2013) on the involvement of newcomers who are civil society activists, in post-1998 formal politics. Looking at the activists' backgrounds and political motivation, he found three different types of civil society activists who joined formal politics. The first is career-oriented elites who view "civil society activism as an early but necessary stage of their path to entering formal politics". The second is politically interested individual activists from the New Order era who moved into formal politics as soon as they found political opportunities, following the regime change. The third is reformist activists who joined formal politics as they are greatly concerned that democratisation is in danger due to strong influence of the

oligarchic elites who dominate the economic and political system (Mietzner 2013: 42-43).

From his study, Mietzner (2013: 46) concluded that the presence of civil society activists in formal politics has “provided a counterweight to the influence of oligarchic interests in Indonesia’s new democracy” as they “have avoided the dilemmatic trap between regime co-optation and fundamental opposition”. These civil society activists are benefitting from regime change and turn to politics because they view democracy as “deficient but overall worth defending” (Mietzner 2013: 47). However, Mietzner (2013) does not deny that despite some of the success stories of activists who have joined formal politics in Indonesia’s post-1998 democracy, there are some former activists who not only failed to have used their new political role to fight for their causes, but were co-opted by the pragmatism and corruption of Indonesian mainstream politics. These activists turned politicians have exploited their position in parties, parliament, and government to “collect funds to seek higher political office and pay for extravagant lifestyles” (Mietzner 2013: 42).

It is generally understood that the involvement of civil society activists, including trade unions, in electoral politics has improved the quality of democracy and the process of democratic consolidation and decentralisation in post-New Order Indonesia (Diamond 1999; Nyman 2006; Beittinger-Lee 2010). This situation could stimulate political participation by other civil society groups and help to strengthen the legitimacy of democratic government (Beittinger-Lee 2010: 33). Nevertheless, most civil society leaders tend to remain outside the formal political institutions and instead exercise an informal influence on the political process (Choi 2014: 386). However, those who have begun to make their presence felt in the Indonesian political arena often face criticisms based on the suspicion that they are just pursuing power for their own interests, and in some cases may have turned against their former colleagues and causes (Mietzner 2012: 30). Trade union elites certainly face this dilemma. Since their first engagement in electoral politics in 1999, they have faced criticism from the trade unions themselves, as well as labour activists and workers (Törnquist 2008; Hadiz 2010; Juliawan 2011; Ford 2014). In addition, the fact that the nomination of unionists in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections was scattered across various parties also seems to add to people’s suspicions about the nomination of trade union elites in electoral contests. Unlike trade unionists in South Korea, Taiwan and Brazil, who have specific partisan politics, with social democratic, socialist, and leftist-related parties (Chen, Ko, and Lawler 2006; Lee

2015), the majority of union elites in Indonesia follow the general trends of populist leaders, with personal latitude to establish direct relationships with various distinctive political parties and heterogeneous masses, by addressing their specific identity as unionists.

To analyse the political dilemma facing union leaders, I will focus on what advanced political opportunities can mean among trade union candidates, and I will attempt to better understand the union candidates' backgrounds, motives and reasons for running parliamentary seats in electoral contest. As stated by some scholars, the study of elites provides a useful analysis for addressing a range of political concerns. These include: leadership and authority; legitimacy and hierarchy; political identity and power relations; social structures and social change; ideology and consciousness (Shore and Nugent 2002; Bottomore 2006; Fairbrother 2015).

Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010) and Fairbrother (2015) in their studies on trade union configuration between politics and political parties highlighted that the purpose of a trade union is to pursue objectives that reflect its identity and ideology. The different types of purposes or motives have a strong impact on the way in which trade unions determine and pursue their mode of political struggles (Fairbrother 2015: 567). Hence, "trade union elites" is the term used to refer to those who occupy influential positions and roles in the important spheres of labour organisation and worker interests. They are the group whose "political capital" positions place them above their fellow ordinary workers (Marks 1989: 45). They are what Glee (1993: 4) called "the means of orientation whose decisions crucially shape what happens to workers". In line with Marks (1989) and Glee (1993), Shore and Nugent (2002: 4) stated that "the concept of elites suggests qualities of agency, exclusivity, and power". According to Shore and Nugent (2002: 4), elites are the "makers and shakers" whose roles "positions them above their fellow citizens" and their "decisions crucially shape what happens in the wider societies". Trade union elites thus can be defined as a "functional group" who for various reasons, have high status in a labour organisation (Bottomore 1993: 7) and "represent a way of conceiving power" (Marcus 1987: 10) by dominating the development of ideas and interests of their fellow workers and organisational orientation.

My interview data based on 16 union legislative candidates in Bekasi, Serang and Medan reveals a strong relation between the motives of union candidates to engage in electoral politics and how they were nominated as parliamentary candidates. For instance,

the union candidates who were nominated by their home organisation under a union-party alliance seem to have strong motives for competing in electoral politics to realise a political cause or organisational agenda.⁸⁷ In this case, union officials choose their best union cadres, who will have been considered to have a strong commitment to workers' organisations and be widely known by workers. They will have been selected by trade unions and entrusted to fight along sides some political parties in parliament, on behalf of the party and trade union. Meanwhile, those who run independently tend to have a broad range of motives, but also seem to have a common interest. That is, they regard competing in the election as an instrument for gaining social mobility, social recognition, material rewards and a political career. Here, what I refer to as independent candidates means those union elites who run individually as legislative candidates on a platform based on their desires and efforts, without any support from unions, either because they were proposed personally by their party, or besides being union leaders, they have also been active in local branches of political parties. The electoral performance of 16 union candidates interviewed for this thesis can be seen in Table 3.1 below.

⁸⁷ See Chapter Four for a more comprehensive discussion on union electoral strategy.

Table 3.1: Trade Union's Legislative Candidates

Name	Position in Trade Union	Political Party	Electorate	Year of electoral	Votes	Result
Nyumarno	Head of advocacy PUK SPMK FSPMI PT Kimco- Lipo Motor Indonesia. Head of advocacy SPAI FSPMI Member of LBH FSPMI West Java	PDIP	Bekasi	2014	6,092	Elected
Nurdin Muhidin	Head of PUK FSPMI PT Hitachi Power Head of Eijip, Delta and Hyundai' workers' forum. Member of wage council, Bekasi	PAN	Bekasi	2014	10,981	Elected
Aji	Head of PUK FSPMI PT.NSK Bearing Member of wage council, Bekasi Member of LBH FSPMI West Java	PAN	Bekasi	2014	2,293	Failed
Rustan	Head of PUK SPL FSPMI	PDIP	Provincial	2014	34,688	Failed
Sahat B.Butar	Vice-chairman of FSP KEP KSPI	Gerindra	Bekasi	2014	412	Failed
Ferry Nuzzarli	Vice-chairman of FSP KEP SPSI	Gerindra	National	2014	11,031	Failed
Argo Priyo Sujatmiko	Secretary FSP KEP Serang Coordinator for Politics and HAM FSBS	PMB	Serang	2009	467	Failed
Rahmat Suryadi	Secretary DPC SPN Serang	PPP	Serang	2009	356	Failed
Intan Dewi	Secretary DPD SPN Banten	PAN	Serang	2014	400	Failed
Mingu Saragih	Head of FSPMI North Sumatra Province	PDIP	Provincial	2014	5,736	Failed
Zainal Abidin	Head of SPN DPD Banten Province	Hanura	Serang	2014	2,115	Elected
Adhadi Romli	Head of DPW FSPMI Banten Province	PDIP	Serang	2014	1,345	Failed
Napitupulu	Head of SBSI 1992 Medan	Gerindra	Provincial	2014	689	Failed
Juliaman Damanik	Secretary of Labour Party in Medan, Head of SPSI in Medan	Labour Party	Medan	2009	1,050	Failed
Muchtar Pakpahan	Member of SBSI Medan	Labour Party	National	2009	12,476	Failed
Fernando Tobing	Head of Labour Party in Medan, member of SBSI Medan	Labour Party	Medan	2009	251	Failed

Source: Raw data taken from trade union organisations and unpublished document from General Electoral Commission, 2016.

Most trade union candidates interviewed for this thesis generally claim that their motive to compete in electoral politics is to represent the voice of the workers and to defend their interests. They also share the view that their participation is part of a new strategy which makes it more likely for them to engage directly in formal negotiations and policymaking mechanisms. However, different answers were given when the fundamental question: “What was your primary motive to be a parliament candidate”? was modified by narrowing it down with follow-up questions such as: “Why did you become interested in running as a legislative candidate”? “What made you convince that you would get votes from workers in the election”? and “What made you feel confident that you could fight for the benefits of workers through formal politics”? Based on the interviews, I was able to distinguish between three groups of parliamentary candidates with union credentials that participated in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. I refer to these three groups as political challengers, political careerists, and political opportunists.

The Political Challengers

McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001: 24) defined political challengers as “politically disadvantaged groups engaged in sustained collective action to secure their claims”. In a democratic election, they typically mobilise participants to publicise their cause and to gain support and influence, more than by mobilising financial resources. In this study, I refer to certain union elite candidates as political challengers because they have chosen a different way to most other legislative candidates in order to compete in legislative elections. There are three main reasons for this. First, they will have committed to refusing the practice of vote-buying or money politics during political campaigns⁸⁸. This political commitment will be part of the trade union’s efforts to promote a clean political campaign and to build political awareness, especially among union members⁸⁹. Such conditions, obviously, run contrary to the common knowledge that money politics is inevitable and still plays a dominant role in every electoral contestation in post-1998 Indonesia (Aspinall and Sukmajati 2015: 2).

Second, most trade union candidates in this category are relying solely on obtaining votes from workers, yet there is no guarantee that workers will vote for them. Third, their engagement in electoral politics is part of a new strategy and a new experiment. Some of the candidates may have decided to vie for political power through electoral contests as they have been driven by frustration regarding major political actors, including party politics. They appear to be motivated to get involved in electoral politics because they recognised the strategic importance of electoral politics for their roles, particularly in evolving from their traditional forms of negotiation and, street mobilisation to being legally suited to following a more formal channel with direct involvement in the policy-making process. Fourth, many of the union’s candidates are not locally born or raised (*putra asli daerah*), but in many cases, ethnic and religious identities have always been the most effective way of seeking voter support in electoral competition in Indonesia.

Among members of this group of political challengers is Nyumarno, a unionist from FSPMI who ran for a parliamentary seat in Bekasi District in the 2014 legislative elections. His decision to engage in local politics was driven by the frustration of his

⁸⁸ In the interviews, most candidates expressed their difficulty in dealing with voters' demands for money politics. See Chapter Five for a more comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁸⁹ Interview with Kahar.S. Cahyono, former secretary of *Aliansi Serikat Pekerja Serikat Buruh Serang* (2009-2010), vice-president of DPP FPMI and member of KSPI executive board, Jakarta 22 December 2016.

repeated experiences in negotiating particular labour issues with government officials and parliament members in his district, where he perceived he was having minimal impact. In the interview, Nyumarno pointed out that the issue of labour is often politicised by the candidates in every election, but subsequently the fate of workers tends to be forgotten.⁹⁰ He also stated that Bekasi, as one of the biggest industrial centres in Indonesia, should have parliament members who rise organically from the labour force. His main reason for standing in the election was also driven by the fact that entrepreneurs and former bureaucrats have long dominated parliament. In the interview, he stated that “if a union chooses to be outside parliament, it is hard to expect the presence of pro-labour government policy”.⁹¹

According to Nyumarno, labour support was essential during his candidacy. His dedication and experience so far in the unions is clear evidence and shows his serious commitment to continuing to represent workers. For example, when nominated as a parliamentary candidate he was serving as a head of advocacy for the Various Industry Workers’ Union (SPAI) of FSPMI. He was also active in several civil society organisations such as the Ampera Foundation, Organisation of Bekasi’ Society Movement towards Prosperity, and was a member of the legal aid agency of FSPMI West Java. In 2010, Nyumarno was one of the figures in the plant level union who successfully won a lawsuit in the bankruptcy court in a layoff case on which he worked.⁹² The judges concurred with the union claims and obliged the company in question to pay salaries and social security benefits which had not been paid for two years. After obtaining his bachelor’s degree in Law and intensive interaction with a senior politician from the PDIP, he ultimately decided to run for a seat in the local parliament in Bekasi district. He is one example of a unionist who was successfully elected in 2014. He explains that political representation enabled him to bring the agenda of workers into the formal political arena⁹³.

Another example of political challenger is Aji Prijo Sujatmiko who participated in the 2009 legislative elections in Serang district, Banten province. Before his nomination he was a political and human rights coordinator for the Serang Unions Forum (FSBS), an independent union in Serang focused on conducting research and advocacy for local

⁹⁰ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member in Bekasi district, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

⁹¹ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member in Bekasi district, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

⁹² Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

⁹³ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member in Bekasi district, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

unions. Sujatmiko's decision to run as a parliamentary candidate was based on his consistent frustration over poor labour policies issued by the local government.⁹⁴ It was at this time that the local government issued Local Regulation Number 7/2009 on employment, which was considered to be merely a product of copying and pasting of Law Number 13/2003 on Manpower. He felt that the production of poor policy was inseparable from the incompetence of parliamentarians on the main issues faced by workers, and he claimed that support from workers and unions was his main political capital to compete in electoral politics. His commitment to prioritising the interests of workers was manifested in a political contract between himself and the unions, which supported his nomination. Despite failing to be elected, he maintains his stance that trade unions should be actively engaged in politics.

The case of Nurdin Muhidin is another example of a union candidate who pursued political power out of personal interest. He is a unionist candidate who was successfully elected in Bekasi in the 2014 elections. Before he was elected as a member of parliament, he was one of the most popular union leaders of FSPMI and was head of the Workers-Communication Forum in three industrial zones in Bekasi district (Hyundai, Delta and Ejip). He was also a member of the regional wages council in Bekasi district. He is a powerful operator, is known among the workers of Bekasi as the "king of the microphone" and is often called "*Nurdin Toa*" because of his frequent participation in the street labour demonstrations.⁹⁵ For instance, on 25 November 2015 he was arrested and detained for eight hours, along with five union leaders, on illegal demonstration charges. In the interview, he insisted that his main motives to run for parliament have never changed, even after he was elected as a member of parliament. He made clear his commitment to keep fighting for the interests of workers and contributing more significantly to the policy-making process. When asked for evidence, he mentioned his strategic role as a chairman of the special committee of labour regulation in Commission IV DPRD Bekasi district, providing direct supervision in factories that have committed industrial violations, and the provision of complaints hotlines for workers to report violations of labour regulations.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Interview with Sujatmiko, union's legislative candidate from FSP KEP in the 2009 elections, Serang 16 December 2016.

⁹⁵ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

⁹⁶ See Chapter Six for a more comprehensive discussion on the role of elected union elites in local parliaments.

The Political Carriers

In contrast to the group I refer to as political challengers, there is a second group that might be called political careerists, consisting of union candidates who view union activism as a necessary stage of their socialisation as politicians and are motivated to seek their fortune in electoral politics to launch their political careers. Included in this category are the candidates who have benefited from their position in unions, society, and the private sector and have used their close relationship with a political party as a springboard to a career in politics. Most union candidates from this group tend to form their own success team to mobilise voters and use their own money to campaign. They are not only active as trade union officials but also registered as administrators of a political party at the local level or engaged in a party's auxiliary organisations. When campaigning in workers' residences, they use their position as union administrators, and beyond that they use the attributes of personality, kinship relations, and ethnic and religious identities to seek voter support. Some of them experienced defeat in electoral contestation, some were elected in the 2009 legislative elections, and most persisted in their attempts to be elected in the 2014 legislative elections as well as now campaigning for the next 2019 elections.

Among members of this group, is Zainal Abidin, a senior trade union leader from the DPW SPN Banten Province. He is one of the very few unionists who have been involved in three elections since 2004 and has been elected twice as a legislative member at the same level in the 2004 and 2014 elections. Besides having a position as vice chairman of a regional branch (DPD) of SPN Banten province, he is also vice-chairman of the local branch (DPC) of the Hanura Party in Serang district. His involvement with political activities began when his colleague at PSP SPN PT Nikomas and a chairman of the United Local Party (Partai Persatuan Daerah, PPD) - a new political party established in 2003 - invited him to run as a legislative candidate in the 2004 elections. His first attempt was successful, and he was elected as the only legislative member from the PPD Party in parliament office at Serang district for 2004-2009.

Motivated to pursue a higher political position, in the 2009 election Abidin ran for a provincial parliamentary seat but failed to gain significant votes. This failure did not, however, dampen his ambition to have a career in formal politics. With his experiences in the 2004 and 2009 legislative elections, Abidin ran for third time as a legislative candidate at the district level in the 2014 legislative elections, this time under different bearer party, the Hanura Party - a new political party lead by a former army commander

from the Suharto era, General Wiranto. In the interview, he stated that he was motivated to pursue a career as a politician as he felt he had spent long enough working in a factory and representing workers at the union.⁹⁷ He also admitted that he was motivated to run for a legislative seat as he had more advantages as a native with an adequate formal education background and supportive political situation, as the Banten province had just formed in 2002. He argued that his current position as member of parliament means that he is not only representing workers but also society as a whole. However, he maintains his close relationship with unionists and workers in Serang district to sustain his access to political power and other connections.

Another example of a politically ambitious unionist keen to advance his political career is Adhadi Romli, a former national FSPMI leader and member of the local parliament in Serang district (2009-2014). Prior to being a legislative candidate in the 2009 elections, Romli was the head of DPW FSPMI Banten Province. As a union leader, he was often involved in workers' advocacy activities, dealing with industrial disputes, as well as organising labour across Banten province. He confirmed that his position as union leader at the provincial level had given him valuable experience and contributed greatly to his confidence in competing in an electoral contest. Supported by his labour networks and success team, Romli was successfully elected as a legislative member in the Serang 2009 legislative elections. In the interview, he stated that he was first motivated to take part in the electoral contest as he was convinced that he had significant potential resources to do so. In his view, starting a political career at the local level is the most strategic way, considering that political learning is a gradual process and cannot be instantaneous. During his time as a legislative member in Serang district (2009-2014), Romli succeeded in occupying various strategic positions in the parliamentary structure, including being elected as chairman of Commission I in charge of local budgeting. In the 2014 legislative elections, he re-ran as a legislative candidate, but failed to gain sufficient votes to be elected. Since 2017, he has been serving as head of the PDIP DPC Serang branch and is preparing to nominate himself as a legislative candidate in the 2019 legislative elections. Besides being active in party management at the local level, Romli also runs a law firm that deals with cases related to industrial disputes experienced by workers in Banten provinces.

⁹⁷ Interview with Zainal Abidin, vice-chairman of DPD SPN in Banten province and legislative member from the Hanura Party at Serang district, Serang 2 December 2016.

The Political Opportunists

The third category is political opportunists, referring to the union legislative candidates who follow the rules of the democratic game, but were motivated to seek their fortunes in the 2014 legislative nominations for their own personal advantage. Their candidacy can be said to be ‘instant politics’ and they tend to rely on personalities with populist characteristics in order to mobilise and gain sufficient vote support. Included in this category are union elite candidates who were motivated by the idea of gaining social recognition; being a legislative candidate can increase one's social status in the community. Furthermore, union legislative candidates that fall into this category tend to run their candidacies individually or without organisational support from their home union organisations, instead using their organisational position to attract workers. As most are short of financial resources, union candidates in this category often rely on individual and kinship networks to attract potential voters during political campaigns. Additionally, they are mostly nominated for local level elections, either by new political parties or middle-level political parties that have no solid structure, as well as by sympathisers at grassroots level. In other words, they are recruited as legislative candidates not only as a vote-getter for political parties, but also to fulfil administrative requirements for political parties to participate in local elections.

In an interview, a legislative candidate in this category admitted that from the beginning he felt unconfident about competing in the 2014 legislative elections. A few days prior to the deadline of legislative candidacy registration in August 2013, he was offered a place on his party's legislative candidate list by local branch's party leader, who believed him to have the potential to gain significant support, particularly from union members and workers in general. Moreover, the electoral area offered was a labour-intensive residential area and as a union activist he was quite a well-known figure in his residential area. He also stressed that the administrative requirements to register as a legislative candidate were also simple - only involving filling out several forms - so there was no reason for him to reject the offer. In practice, however, he realised that the union could not provide sufficient organisational support and material resources, and that his party was new and lacked consolidation, which made him less enthusiastic to continue his political campaign. In the interview, he did not object to the term “instant candidate” but disagreed that he had pursued nomination to raise his social prestige. He admitted that he was not a pure party cadre, merely a sympathiser with no experience in mass

mobilisation for political campaigns. His total votes were very minimal, far below even the average votes cast for other legislative candidates in his electorate. Based on his experiences in the 2014 legislative elections, he suggested that it would be difficult for union elites to make successful gains in an electoral contestation without organisational support from the unions and members, sufficient financial resources, and solid support from a success team and the party machine at the grassroots level.⁹⁸

From the examples discussed above, it can be seen that trade union elites are engaging in electoral politics with a variety of political motives, which in these particular cases go beyond tradition unions' goals in order to succeed in the electoral competition. While there are union elites who continue to present challenges to electoral democracy and are motivated to strengthen their commitment and leadership to promote political changes, other are attempting to engage in electoral contests in order to gain material benefit for their personal agendas and tend to be influenced by elites in the process. This implies that although political reforms in post-1998 Indonesia have provided wider political opportunities for trade union elites to engage in electoral politics, this development does not always guarantee that it will be followed by increased political maturity among those elites. The union legislative candidates are by no means immune to the institutional features of pragmatic and populist-oriented politicians who dominate contemporary Indonesia's political life and who tend to treat electoral contests as a means to build their political careers and to nurture and exploit people's interests.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the legitimacy of trade union elites' engagement in electoral politics. It seems that the freedom of association and protection to organise in the new Indonesian democracy tends to be interpreted differently by trade union elites: those who support and those who are against union's engagement in electoral politics. Moreover, union elites' decisions to engage in electoral politics are not only affected by the opportunities given by structural factors but are also determined by the extent to which they have adopted the most appropriate attitudes and actions in organising their movement.

⁹⁸ Interview with a union leader (name withheld), Jakarta 12 October 2016.

Some trade union leaders have expressed optimism and confidence about the future of the involvement of trade unions in formal politics. These union elites seem to have successfully avoided the problem of being co-opted by the oligarchic regime and the continuing inter-union rivalry and union fragmentation. In their view, union engagement in electoral politics is not only part of the exercising of their new political strategy but is also an important process in which they can use the opportunities offered by the democratic system to develop their movements and to fight for their interests in a more formal way. The other union elites who refused to engage in electoral politics are continuing to bide their time. They consider that in order to function as an interest group or pressure group acting in the interests of their members, remaining independent of political parties is essential, particularly as the Indonesian oligarchy remains strong.

The cases presented in this chapter reflect how the socio-political changes that have taken place in Indonesia since 1998 have effectively provided wider political opportunities to union elites to engage in electoral democracy. It also paints a picture of how union candidates in local electoral settings have benefited from post-Suharto democratic reforms. Given the fact that the labour movement is still in its infancy, the success of some union leaders in the 2014 legislative elections in gaining seats in legislative office is an important achievement. It also provides a broader analysis and review the role of non-elites in contemporary Indonesian politics where some scholars remain pessimistic, as the democratic system has been exclusively run by oligarchic, political and bureaucratic elites. Finally, the findings presented in this chapter could provide an important corrective to the dominant streams in political science writing on the involvement of non-elites in formal politics.

Chapter Four

Trade Union Electoral Strategy

Introduction

This chapter examines the types of electoral strategies used by unions to mobilise their base and core constituencies. Learning from the defeat of labour-linked parties in the 1999 and 2004 elections and driven by the fact that direct approaches to politics such as street demonstrations are not always feasible, several progressive union leaders began to modify their strategy by engaging in electoral politics. Despite the existing complex organisational and political constraints on trade unions engaging in electoral politics, democratic reforms in Indonesia since 1998 have increasingly given broader political opportunities for union elites to engage in electoral democracy. In the 2009 legislative elections, for instance, eight trade union leaders from the Federation of Metal Workers Unions (FSPMI) in the industrial city of Batam attempted to participate in the local election under the union-parties alliance. Meanwhile in Serang district, two labour organisations formed an inter-union alliance to support the nomination of nine union leaders in local, provincial and national legislative elections.

The involvement of trade union elites in electoral politics continued in the 2014 legislative elections. Several trade unions, particularly in the industrial centres of Java and Sumatra, had learned from previous experiences and attempted to apply different strategies that entailed running union groups in legislative election races at local, provincial and national level. Some trade unions established campaign teams (usually called “success teams” or *tim sukses*) with members who were completely outside of the party structure. The other union candidates adopted a meet-the-voters style campaign rather than holding large open-air party campaigns. A few of the strategies were successful, with union candidates being elected as members of parliament in specific union-dense districts, such as in Bekasi and Serang. At this point, when several well-established political parties started to approach union leaders to represent them as parliamentary nominees, trade unionists seemed much more open to the idea of trade union engagement with electoral politics compared to the early 2000s (Mietzner 2013: 208). By the time of the 2014 legislative elections, the question was no longer whether unions should try to influence politics, but how they should do so; for instance, by

establishing labour-related parties or by running union candidates for legislative tickets by forming alliances with different political parties.

As observed by Heryanto (2010), Aspinall (2014) and Choi (2016), the presence of newcomers competing for parliamentary seats in the 2009 and 2014 elections was striking compared to the previous two elections in 1999 and 2004. Decentralisation and the open proportional system have brought far greater opportunities for political participation not only by society leaders and social organisation actors, including union leaders, but also by ordinary citizens with little or no meaningful material resources and political experience (Heryanto 2010; Choi 2016). Through the open-list system, voters in a district or municipal area can vote either for the party or an individual candidate. The number of seats that each party wins in each electoral area in a local election is in proportion to the combined votes for the party and all its individual candidates in that electoral area. The candidate with the highest individual votes on the party list can subsequently claim the party's seat at the local level.

In post-authoritarian Indonesia, the proliferation of political parties means that up to 550 candidates are competing for 50 seats (at most) in each local election (district or municipal level). Even the well-established parties usually win no more than two or three seats in each local electoral area. In addition, there are usually five or six local electoral areas in each district or municipality. This new system creates strong incentives for individual candidates to devote their resources and strategies to campaigning individually, rather than for their party. As a consequence of this new electoral system, the competition to gain votes has become stronger, not only between candidates from different political parties, but also between fellow candidates from the same party.

Electoral strategy is not only concerned with numbers and targets, it is also about the process and the objectives that need to be achieved (Subekti 2015: 45). Thus, the process and the outcomes of trade union engagement in electoral politics presents a significant challenge, especially given the entrenched and dominant role that political elites have so far played in Indonesia's electoral democracy, effectively excluding non-elite actors from participation (Ford 2009: 341). As democratic consolidation requires the participation of various groups in society, the engagement of trade union elites in electoral politics is significant not only with regard to our understanding of the development of trade union politics, but also for broader analyses of contemporary Indonesian politics. As stated by Beittinger-Lee (2010: 32), an indicator of a successful democratic

consolidation is whether democracy is extended to groups that were formerly excluded or marginalised during an authoritarian regime.

Ford (2014), Juliawan (2014), and Caraway, Ford and Nugroho (2015) have conducted initial research regarding trade union engagement in Indonesia's electoral politics. Specifically, they studied the establishment of political alliances between trade union elites and political parties in the 2009 legislative elections. For instance, Ford (2014) conducted research in the industrial city of Batam, where the local branch of the FSPMI set up a purpose-specific structure to promote the political interests of its members in successive local executive and legislative elections. Ford (2014: 356) argued that despite the ultimate failure of the union's electoral experiment in Batam, the FSPMI and party alliances, as well as union willingness to engage in electoral politics has challenged accounts that seek to brush aside potential to encourage greater grassroots participation in Indonesia's electoral politics.

Juliawan (2014) conducted research on the political partnership between the National Trade Union (SPN) and the Justice and Welfare Party (PKS) in Semarang and Demak districts, Central Java province in the 2009 legislative elections. Juliawan (2014: 46) argued that the failure of union leaders to mobilise members to follow union direction, and the absence of political partners in the form of genuinely labour-oriented political parties, were the main factors related to the defeat of union candidates in the 2009 legislative elections. Furthermore, he concluded that the union and labour activists may have been relatively effective in organising street demonstrations, but unions attempting to mobilise their members into electoral politics still face an "uphill battle" in the near future of democratic Indonesia (Juliawan 2014: 39).

This chapter analyses new types of union electoral strategies that have been overlooked in previous works related to union electoral engagement in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. I examine the evolution of trade union electoral strategy through a close examination of three case studies that reveal different types of worker mobilisation conducted by trade union elites in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections, including union candidates who won seats in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. I argue that union involvement in electoral politics is part of the experiential process to: develop their activism; maximise their role in defending worker interests; strengthen their collective bargaining power; adjust to the opportunities and challenges that come with democratisation. To achieve these objectives, trust from union members and support from

trade unions for the mobilisation of workers are important aspects; nevertheless, factors such as the track record and personal ability of union candidates in using and maximising their own political resources are also crucial in determining their success in any election, particularly in a local election.

The first strategy I examine is the effort to mobilise union members to support their candidates regardless of the political party supporting them. This strategy can be seen in the FSPMI's 'Labour Go Politics' movement in Bekasi in the 2014 legislative elections. The second strategy is the inter-union alliance of two labour organisations under the Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang in the 2009 legislative elections. Through this strategy, the two largest labour organisations in Serang endeavoured to mobilise union members, regardless of the origin of their organisations, to support the nomination of union candidates in the elections. The third strategy is the nomination of union officers as legislative candidates through partnership with political parties or individuals joining political parties in the 2009 and 2014 elections. These union elites did not represent their home union organisation as they competed in the electoral contest without organisational support (as their union organisation took a neutral position regarding electoral politics), but undoubtedly, they wanted to gain vote support from the union membership. Regarding this strategy, I use a study case of the SPN, who encouraged their cadres to engage in the 2014 elections, although officially the union kept its distance from political parties.

The Labour Go Politics Movement in Bekasi

The Labour Go Politics (*buruh go politik*) movement was initiated by the FSPMI to promote their cadres running for legislative office in the 2014 legislative elections. It is part of the FSPMI's new strategy to engage actively in electoral politics and to achieve its mission to build a democratic, free, representative, and independent union, to bring about social welfare and justice for workers and society in general.⁹⁹ Unlike in previous elections, the FSPMI's role as an organisation was dominant, particularly in designing winning plans and building alliances with political parties. Through the Labour Go Politics movement, the FSPMI used its organisational structure to: select and nominate candidates; organise and finance political campaigns; mobilise volunteers and union

⁹⁹ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016. The vision and mission of FSPMI are available on its website: <http://fspmi.or.id/visi-misi>.

members; conduct political negotiations with political parties.¹⁰⁰ In the 2009 legislative elections, by contrast, the role of individual elites was very strong, and they tended to work alone, lacking support from organisational structures and networks.¹⁰¹ It seems that the FSPMI had learned from the previous strategy and their failure in 2009 legislative elections, where none of their candidates won legislative seats.

At the second national annual meeting of the All Indonesian Union Confederation (KSPI) in 2014, the second largest union confederation - of which the FSPMI a member - the Labour Go Politics campaign was promoted not only as supporting legislative candidates from the FSPMI, but also 70 other candidates from eight union federations under the KSPI.¹⁰² The majority of these candidates competed in district and municipal elections concentrated in the principal industrial centres in Indonesia, such as Bekasi, Bogor, Tangerang, Serang, Semarang, Gresik, Medan, and Batam. In its development, the Labour Go Politics campaign was not only aiming to promote FSPMI and KSPI cadres but was used as a strategy to build political awareness and political education for workers and union leaders.¹⁰³

The involvement of trade union elites in local elections was not a new phenomenon and is not the exception in Bekasi. In the 2009 legislative elections, the names of several union elites and labour activists had been listed as legislative candidates in some electorate areas in Bekasi, either nominated by two labour-linked parties or by means of the individuals joining political parties.¹⁰⁴ These individual candidates did not represent their trade unions but had undoubtedly wished to gain votes from workers and union members. Nevertheless, none of the candidates successfully won any legislative seats.

At that time, most union leaders were less enthusiastic about participating in electoral politics as well as supporting their colleagues running for parliamentary seats (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1299). The majority of union leaders believed that union engagement in electoral politics was still premature as the union needed more time to prepare and to educate members about its importance (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Sobar Gunandar, secretary of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Maxie Elia, labour activist and former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 23 August 2016.

¹⁰² Data collected from KSPI Press Release on 3 April 2014 and unpublished report from the SPN.

¹⁰³ Interview with Supriyatno, head of PC FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁰⁴ For instance, there were three FSPMI cadres who ran for legislative office in Bekasi district in the 2009 elections: Jefri Herlian under the Democratic Nationhood Party, Miranti under the Indonesian Justice and United Party, and Supriadi under the Archipelagic Republic Party.

2015: 1292). Other unionists recognised the need for unions to participate in formal politics but feared that it could: distract unionists from their main union's duties; cause internal conflict and endanger solidarity among members; tear the union apart through varying political affiliations (Caraway, Ford, Nugroho 2015: 1304).

Similar views regarding the involvement of trade unions in the 2014 legislative elections were identified in my fieldwork in Bekasi, particularly in those who had so far refused the idea of union engagement in electoral politics, such as those discussed earlier in Chapter Three. Nevertheless, what was new in Bekasi's 2014 legislative elections was the nomination of trade union cadres as legislative candidates from the FSPMI - under the Labour Go Politics movement - through several different parties. Moreover, unions and workers who had previously abstained from electoral politics were fully immersed in the process as campaign teams, volunteers and supporters of their union candidates.

Bekasi has its own privileges compared to other electoral areas in Indonesia. Since industrial expansion began in the 1990s, Bekasi has not only developed the largest industrial estate in Southeast Asia, but it is also well-known as a barometer of the labour movement in Indonesia (Mufakir 2014; Tjandra 2017). It is home to more than 1.3 million workers and is the principal base of the two biggest union federations in Indonesia, the FSP KEP SPSI and FSPMI. These two union federations have taken the lead among unions in the labour movement (Mufakir 2014). In 2011, the FSPMI and SPSI and various local unions formed an alliance, specifically the Bekasi Workers on the Move Alliance (Aliansi Buruh Bekasi Bergerak), which subsequently organised several huge demonstrations and successfully lobbied for minimum wage increases in Bekasi.¹⁰⁵ The unions in Bekasi have also been effective in curbing the widespread practice of outsourcing or employing workers on illegal third-party contracts via a labour movement termed "factory raid" or "*gerebek pabrik*" (Mufakhir 2014: 102). Both models instigated by this movement were then followed by other unions in several industrial centres in Indonesia, who also carried out labour demonstrations related to wage increases and the abolition of outsourcing practices. It was reported that in 2012 roughly 24,000 workers from around 60 companies that had formerly outsourced workers had been re-employed

¹⁰⁵ From 2001 to 2010, the minimum wage in Bekasi increased by an average of 9 per cent annually despite an average of approximately 8 per cent annual inflation. From 2011-2014, the minimum wage in Bekasi increased by an average of 23 per cent per year with an average inflation rate of almost 6 per cent (BPS Kabupaten Bekasi 2015).

on permanent contracts due to union actions through factory raid in Bekasi (Mufakhir 2014: 106).

As part of their effort to build an alternative political movement, the success of unions in consolidating their collective actions, such as strikes and labour demonstrations, then gave union leaders in Bekasi the confidence to take part in the 2014 legislative elections.¹⁰⁶ In this context, organisational support given by labour NGOs such as the Trade Union Rights Centre (TURC) and the Omah Tani are also important to note, because they had a strategic role in building the confidence of union elites to engage in the 2014 legislative elections. These two NGOs contributed mainly by providing organisational advocacy and political education to union elites and their members, particularly in Bekasi.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the number of union elites who ran for legislative office in Bekasi was the highest compared to other electoral areas in Indonesia. Of the 80 trade unionists who participated in the 2014 legislative elections across Indonesia, 15 competed in Bekasi electoral areas.¹⁰⁸

The FSPMI was founded in 1999 after it broke away from the FSPSI (an official union federation from the Suharto period), and at the time of its formation enjoyed the support of important international actors, including the ILO and many Global Union Federation members (Broadbent and Ford 2008: 2). In 2014, the FSPMI had 213,456 members, and roughly half worked in Bekasi.¹⁰⁹ As a union federation, the FSPMI incorporates six trade unions spread over 1,153 factories in 12 provinces and 50 districts and cities across Indonesia.¹¹⁰ It operates primarily in the automotive, electronics and electrical industries, along with a smaller division in shipbuilding and maritime services, transportation, and various other industries that include metals, pharmaceuticals and chemicals. Compared to other union federations, which commonly rely on branch-dependent structures, the FSPMI adopts a centralised structure to develop financial independence.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Sobar Gunandar, secretary of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Maxie Ellia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 23 August 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Based on data compilation from the KSPI, KSBSI and KSPSI.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi, 30 September 2016.

¹¹⁰ As reported in the third FSPMI annual leaders meeting in Jakarta 12-13 February 2014.

¹¹¹ Interview with Maxie Elia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 23 August 2016.

The FSPMI is not the largest union federation; nonetheless, it is arguably the most well-organised, influential, and fastest growing union federation in Indonesia today (Ford 2008; Tjandra 2017; Lane 2018). Over the last decade, the FSPMI has also taken the lead among trade unions in the labour movement, either as the initiator or leader of several movements. For instance, the formation of the Action Committee for Social Security (KAJS) in 2010, and the national labour demonstration in 2012, where the initial formation and action was led by the FSPMI's leaders.¹¹²

The FSPMI has four organisational tools to support its programs: the Garda Metal, Koran Perdjoengan, legal aid, and a centre for training and education. The Garda Metal (Metal Battalion), is well-known for its militancy and is the spearhead of every FSPMI's demonstration. Wearing a black-and-red para-military style uniform, hundreds of the Garda Metal are always positioned on the front line of street demonstrations carried out by the KSPI/FSPMI.¹¹³ Between 2010 and 2014 members of the Garda Metal were among thousands of FSPMI members who obtained Ekopol programs, including courses facilitated by Omah Tani.¹¹⁴ Several members of the Garda Metal were also union leaders at factory level, leading more militant action and strengthening solidarity, including during the political campaign in the 2014 legislative elections, by offering voluntary support.¹¹⁵ This meant that the FSPMI had a well-trained and educated spearhead formation, able to provide leadership at national, regional and the factory level, as well as voluntary supporters for worker mobilisation.

In addition, while most of the union federations are still renting houses or shop houses for secretarial operations, the FSPMI has an impressive three-story building as its head office in addition to branches in several areas such as Bekasi and Batam. The existence of decent buildings and a secretariat have supported the FSPMI in its various activities, including education and training for union administrators and inter-union consolidation across sectors and factories. In contrast, other unions are burdened with the

¹¹² The KAJS is a civil organisation formed by dozens of national trade unionists and labour NGOs, and student and professional groups, after a meeting of unions in Jakarta on 8 March 2010 facilitated by the FSPMI. It was established to push for the implementation of social security reforms by merging all supporting groups into one action committee. The committee was led by the presidium, consisting of nine leaders of union federations and labour NGOs; On 3 October 2012, the FSPMI led a national labour demonstration that was conducted simultaneously in 22 provinces and involved around two million workers (*Tempo*, 3 October 2012).

¹¹³ Personal observation on labour demonstrations organised by the KSPI/FSPMI in Jakarta 26 November 2016.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Handoko Wibowo, leader of Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2017.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Handoko Wibowo, leader of Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2017.

cost of renting and limit their activities, with their funds mainly collected from membership fees.¹¹⁶ These advantages have empowered the FSMPI, enabling it to take a proactive role both with their affiliated unions and their members and on the national stage with other union federations (Broadbent and Ford 2008: 26).

Of the 15 union candidates who competed in Bekasi's 2014 election, nine candidates were FSPMI cadres. Initially, the selection process of union candidates from the FSPMI in Bekasi was planned to be by means of *pemilihan raya* or an internal election involving all FSPMI members in Bekasi. However, the plan was not implemented due to limited time and to avoid disunity among members, as the internal election had raised organisational concerns about further negative impacts on union leaders and members at factory level.¹¹⁷ As explained by Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, the internal election plan could actually break the concentration and consolidation efforts of union leaders and workers at the factory level, because the Labour Go Politics movement supports union candidates based on electoral area, rather than who represents each sector in the FSPMI.¹¹⁸

The nine legislative candidates in Bekasi belonging to the FSPMI were chosen based on several criteria that had been agreed upon internally by the organisation. They had served as members of executive boards at the branch level, or had been, or were, leading the union at the factory level. Furthermore, they had been members of wage councils at the local level, so they understood issues related to wages and labour issues. The nine FSPMI candidates were assumed to be popular candidates who could attract potential voters from outside FSMPI members and to be committed, honest and capable leaders, so they could gain workers' trust. In addition, the nine FSPMI candidates agreed not to engage in money politics. The "No Money Politics" principle was part of the FSPMI's efforts to improve political education for workers and communities, and end campaign by rotten politicians, and was carried out by several election monitoring networks in the 2014 elections.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Based on my personal observation at union office at FSPMI Bekasi, KEP KSPSI, KEP KSPI, SPN, SP LEM KSPSI, SBSI Medan and informal communication with the administrators during my fieldwork in Bekasi, Serang, Medan and Jakarta, August 2016-January 2017.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Sobar Gunandar, secretary of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

In the 2014 legislative elections, nine cadres of the FSPMI in Bekasi ran for legislative office, with five different parties rather than one party. This decision was part of the FSPMI's strategy to overcome internal resistance to the notion of political partnership by maintaining distance from any single political party.¹²⁰ Political parties are a means for the FSPMI to facilitate its entry into parliament without undermining its organisational independence. A further reason was that by placing their cadres with more than one political party, the FSPMI would have a greater opportunity to deploy their candidates in several different electoral areas in Bekasi.¹²¹ The participation of the FSPMI in the 2014 election can also be regarded as a new experimental strategy in electoral politics and as a step toward building its own political party in the future.¹²² The financial, structural and legal barriers to establishing and sustaining a political party in Indonesia are high, so the union had little choice in the 2014 legislative elections but to place union leaders as candidates in existing parties (Hoban 2014; Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 7).¹²³

Negotiations with political parties at the district level were conducted by the branch leaders of FSPMI Bekasi by offering a benefit which a party cadre or a new candidate would not possess, that is the strength of voting blocs represented by the size of union membership. As stated by Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010: 324), trade unions and political parties are mutually dependent organisations. However, in terms of representation and membership both are different. According to Marks (1989: 5) political parties attempt to participate in elections by aggregating the political interests of their supporters, which encourages them to create broad-based organisations. Party membership is floating because it is determined largely by the political system in which it operates. By contrast, trade unions have a different membership profile; for example, one which is sectorial and composed of numerous organisations encompassing workers in specific industries or occupations.

¹²⁰ Interview with Maxie Elia, former vice-president of FSPMI 2012-2016, 23 August 2016.

¹²¹ Interview with Supriyatno, head of PC FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹²² Interview with Maxie Elia, former vice-president of FSPMI 2012-2016, Jakarta 23 August 2016. At the time of my field research, several leaders of union confederations and federations (including the FSPMI) were drawing up programmes for the formation of new political parties that planned to participate in the 2019 legislative elections. One strategy being considered was to merge with the Pakpahan's Labour Party, which had failed to contest the 2014 election. Interview with Ferry Nurzali, KSPSI, Jakarta, 8 September 2016 and Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN and member of the formator team of the establishment alternative Labour Party, Jakarta, 1 October 2016.

¹²³ See Chapter Five for a more comprehensive discussion about these issues.

In relation to the twelve political parties that participated in legislative elections in 2014, only five accepted the FSPMI offer. These five parties were PAN, PKS, PDIP, the United Development Party (PPP), and The Justice and Unity Party (PKP). According to the head of the FSPMI Bekasi, several political parties rejected the partnership they offered due to their concerns over competition for votes between party cadres and union candidates.¹²⁴ Meanwhile, the refusal of certain political parties to nominate union cadres was greatly determined by the party's decision to prioritise candidates from internal cadres and their disagreement with the FSPMI strategy to nominate their cadres for different parties.¹²⁵ This indicates that political parties recognise the strength of the bloc voting that the union claimed, and that to accept or reject the strategy being built by the FSPMI, particularly in Bekasi, is now an important consideration for them.

For its political campaigns, the FSPMI in Bekasi formed success teams to target potential voters, both in factories and worker residences. The success team's members were FSPMI officers at branch, sector and factory levels, who were unpaid voluntary recruits. The structure of success teams is such that more members are recruited at the lower levels. The upper level consisted of a success team working at district and municipal levels, acting as a campaign coordinator for nine candidates from the FSPMI who competed in the 2014 legislative elections in Bekasi. The second (or middle) layer is a success team formed on the basis of electoral areas divided into four groups: the core team, the sub-district coordinator (*korcam*), the village coordinator (*kordes*), and the field coordinator (*korlap*). The third (or low) level is a success team formed at the factory level specifically to promote a certain union candidate based on their electoral area. They campaigned in the factory canteen during meal times, used union meetings to assist with campaigning, visited commuter pickup points where workers usually congregate to wait for their transport home, and utilised union offices in the factory as campaign centres to attract workers and introduce union candidates.¹²⁶

For district level elections, the FSPMI placed five union cadres in five out of six electorate areas (*dapil*) in the district of Bekasi. While at the municipal electoral level, the FSPMI only placed two of its cadres in two of the five electoral areas in the city of Bekasi. This strategy was implemented to avoid competition between union candidates

¹²⁴ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹²⁵ Interviews with Jalika, parliament member in Bekasi district, Bekasi 25 September 2016; interview with Abay, parliament member in Bekasi district, Bekasi 25 September 2016.

¹²⁶ Interview with union officials in Bekasi (names withheld), Bekasi 22 September 2016.

so that they could achieve maximum votes from workers in each electoral area they represented. Thus, it is apparent that the FSPMI learned from their electoral experience in 2009, particularly in the Batam and Serang districts, where running multiple candidates in the same electoral area would have divided the concentration of votes from their members. They also seem to have understood the potential distribution of votes in the eleven electoral areas in Bekasi. Out of twelve electoral areas in Bekasi (six at district level and six at municipal level), the FSPMI only nominated their candidates for seven electoral areas, which they calculated those most likely to allow them to gain potential votes.

The open campaigns were conducted centrally, at district and municipal levels, centrally, at PT Kepsonic, a factory belonging to a Korean investor that had been abandoned due to a bankruptcy case. At this factory during the campaign days, no political parties' flags were flying, just those of the FSPMI and the KSPI.¹²⁷ The nine FSPMI candidates in Bekasi were displayed on the same posters and banners with the logo and name of the six parties that had nominated the union candidates. The same templates of posters and banners were also used by the FSPMI to promote its legislative candidates on social media, such as Facebook and YouTube. One message was presented in the form of a short video on the FSPMI website urging workers to vote only on the basis of the names of union legislative candidates in the ballot, not according to the symbols of the political parties attached to them, although under Law Number 8/2012 on Legislative Elections voters are allowed to vote for either. This sort of campaign led to protests from several local political party officials, as they argued that the FSPMI had misconducted the campaign process.¹²⁸

In an interview, one local party official questioned the political motives of the unions in relation to their campaign strategy, as well as the purpose of building a political alliance that it ignored the role of political party in the campaign.¹²⁹ In addition, the FSPMI is deemed to exclude or equalise the existence of the platforms of each political party and to undermine the atmosphere of the campaign, as is usually run by candidates from most political parties.¹³⁰ Consequently, the campaign process ran separately, with

¹²⁷ Personal observation of FSPMI political campaign at PT Kepsonic, Bekasi 22 March 2014.

¹²⁸ Separated interviews with PDIP, PAN and PKS party officers, Bekasi 23-25 September 2016.

¹²⁹ Interview with Iwan, member of success team of PDIP Bekasi branch, Bekasi 25 September 2016.

¹³⁰ Interview with Fatima, member of success team of PKS Bekasi branch, Bekasi 24 September 2016.

different success teams representing the unions, and local political party officials deciding to campaign on behalf of candidates other than those put forward by the union.

In the case of PT Kepsonic, political campaign activities included introducing profiles and the serial number of union candidates on the ballot, as well as explanations on how to vote and fold the ballot paper, all to a soundtrack of popular *dangdut* music and thematic worker's songs. The political promises and speeches of the union campaigners that were generally related to labour issues that also often raised during labour demonstrations, such as minimum wage formulation, the abolition of outsourcing practices, health insurance and pensions, hospitals for workers, labour regulations, unilateral layoffs, and the importance of workers as a political class. At the core of this strategy, in the spirit of the Go Politics campaign, the unions sought to persuade as many of their members and families as possible to vote for their own officials. This situation was evident in their campaign taglines written on posters, banners and shirts, such as: "Workers Go Politics, from Factory to Public", "Remember 9 April 2014, it is the Time for Labour to Vote Labour", "Labour Go Politics Will Fight for Workers' Prosperity".¹³¹

Campaigns in each electoral area (sub-districts) were conducted by mobilising the FSPMI members to support the Labour Go Politics campaign. The mobilisation of workers was enabled through mass rallies (*pawai*), using motorcycle parades and open-topped vehicles equipped with loud speakers and supported by the establishment of volunteer posts in several houses belonging to FSPMI members.¹³² Certain FSPMI's candidates preferred to adopt a meet-the-people or *blusukan*-style campaign to meet their constituents and seek support in their specific electoral areas.¹³³ They did not rely solely on FSPMI officials as a success team but also recruited volunteers from local organisations, for instance youth groups (*karang taruna*), farmer groups, religious and community leaders such as *ustadz*, and the leaders of household and neighbourhood groups (RT and RW). The *blusukan*-style campaign was popularised by Joko Widodo, the current Indonesian President during his campaign for the governorship of Jakarta in 2012. In the *blusukan*-style campaign, a candidate meets directly with their constituents to introduce themselves and to explain their programmes, predominantly by undertaking door-to-door visits to people's homes, and visiting traditional markets, villages and small-

¹³¹ Personal observation of FSPMI political campaign at PT Kepsonic, Bekasi 22 March 2014.

¹³² Direct observation at a campaign day in Bekasi district on 23 March 2014.

¹³³ The word "*blusukan*" originated from a Javanese word which means walk into every corner of a new place in a small village, town or backstreet for a certain purpose, such as meeting people or just looking around.

scale streets to meet potential voters. The candidates also attended community events, such as religious prayers (*pengajian*), *arisan*, community service (*kerja bakti*), and others. In Western democracies, this method of campaigning is sometimes referred to as “retail politics” (Arifianto et al. 2015: 56).

In an interview with Nyumarno, the FSPMI’s legislative candidate at *dapil* six in Bekasi, who was nominated by the PDIP, he admitted that his *blusukan* strategy was not only inspired by Jokowi's campaign style but he regarded it as the most effective method for legislative candidates like him - who had extremely limited financial ability - to reach out to voters and gain support on election day. Moreover, he stated that he needed to meet potential voters as much as possible, because he does not originate from Bekasi and his constituents were relatively diverse, consisting not only of workers in the manufacturing sectors but also informal workers such as farmers, traders and workers in the service industry.¹³⁴ The same opinion was also conveyed by Aji, the FSPMI’s legislative candidate in *dapil* three in Bekasi district, representing the PKPI, who stated that the open proportional electoral system had not only caused disagreements among candidates - who become increasingly competitive - but voters have also become smarter and are more likely to support candidates they know.

It is not easy for electoral newcomers such as union cadres to obtain significant support amid vote-buying practices, money politics and the strong political influence of the oligarchy or so-called “old players” in Indonesian politics (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014: 32). In the interviews, I asked several FSPMI officials and legislative candidates to give their own assessment of the Labour Go Politics campaign. Most concluded that apart from union fragmentation problems, a lack of political education for workers and technical obstacles, one other major obstacle was the challenge of changing voter habits when they were up against vote-buying and money politics. At the grassroots level, money politics and vote-buying is commonly known by various terms, such as: *cendol* money, cigarette money, *pulsa* money, and envelope money. This is the practice of candidates giving money, gifts of various sorts, and donations which would benefit communities, to their constituents. In addition to the old elites and the dominance of business-politicians it can be seen in the existence of many former legislators in Bekasi District who were re-elected in the 2014 legislative election.

¹³⁴ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member and former union leader in Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

Concerning the fifty candidates elected in the 2014 legislative elections in Bekasi District, fifteen were members of parliament who were re-elected for the second time, while five were elected for the third time.¹³⁵ This demonstrates the strong presence of old players in the context of local politics in Bekasi, which is also well-known as one of the strongest base areas of the Golkar Party, the ruling party during Suharto's era. In the 2004 and 2009 legislative elections, the votes and seats gained by the Golkar Party in the Bekasi district parliament came second after the PKS (2004) and the Democratic Party (2009). While in the 2014 elections, the Golkar Party succeeded in becoming the winning party, with the total number of votes they received reaching 23 per cent (ten seats in the Bekasi district parliament office).

Regarding the Labour Go Politics campaign, in the end, two of the nine candidates from FSPMI Bekasi managed to gain district parliamentary seats (DPRD II). These were Nurdin Muhidin, who ran with the PAN, and Nyumarno who ran with the PDIP. Both were elected after receiving surplus votes, as they managed to collect the largest proportion of votes among other legislative candidates from their respective parties. As newcomers, the votes they won were impressive. Nurdin's votes were the highest among the 57 legislative candidates from the PAN in the district of Bekasi. In comparison with nine elected candidates from the same electoral area, he ranked number three, below the votes of Iip Bustomi (16,143 votes) from the Democrat Party and Jejen Sayuti (11,004 votes) from the PDIP. These two names are not only well-known business-politician figures in Bekasi but are also recorded as having been re-elected three times as members of parliament in the district of Bekasi since the 2004 legislative elections.

As for Nyumarno, he managed to collect the second highest number of votes among eight candidates from the PDIP who competed together in the *dapil* six district of Bekasi. The greatest number of votes for PDIP candidate in this electoral area were obtained by Yudhi Darmansyah, who is the son of a senior politician from the PDIP and was elected as the youngest candidate among the 50 elected legislative members in the 2014 legislative elections in Bekasi. Among the elected candidates in the *dapil* six District of Bekasi, the votes cast for Nyumarno placed him in fifth position out of eight elected candidates. He managed to outperform two popular politicians and former members of the district of Bekasi parliament in 2009-2014, specifically H. Abay Subarna (5,841

¹³⁵ The five politicians in Bekasi district who were elected for a third time in the 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections are: Aep Sjaiful Rohman (PDIP), Zaenuddin (PKS), Syamsul (PKS), Jejen Sayuti (PDIP) and Iip Bustomi (Democrat Party).

votes) from the Democrat Party and Yayah Ratnasari (5,092 votes) from the PDIP. See Table 4.1 below for a full breakdown of the electoral results for nine FSPMI candidates in Bekasi.

Table 4.1: The 2014 Election Results for Nine FSPMI Candidates under the Labour Go Politics Movement in Bekasi, West Java Province

Name of Candidates	Political Party	Electorate	Ticket position	Candidates Votes	Total party votes in the electorate	Ranking in the electorate among the same party candidates
Iswan Abdullah	PKS	National	9/9	27,426	234,477	4/9
Rustan	PDIP	Provincial	2/6	34,688	252,432	4/6
Nurdin Muhidin*	PAN	District/1	8/9	10,981	22,905	1/9
Suparno	PKPI	District/2	2/6	3,961	4,980	1/6
Aji	PAN	District/3	8/8	2,293	20,513	3/8
Susanto	PKP	District/5	1/5	2,217	3,001	1/5
Nyumarno*	PDIP	District/6	6/8	6,092	41,704	2/8
Hendi Suhendi	PPP	Municipal/4	10/10	1,013	8,780	5/10
Masrul Jambak	PKPI	Municipal/5	3/9	603	2,992	3/9

Source: Raw data drawn from unpublished document issued by the Electoral Commission (KPU).

*Elected as legislative members in Bekasi district for the period of 2014-2019.

Examining the track records and personal capacity of Nurdin and Nyumarno, we can recognise that they deserved to be elected in Bekasi's 2014 election. Nurdin is known as a great orator not only at every labour demonstration in Bekasi but also at the national level (Jakarta). Compared to other candidates, he is well-known by workers in Bekasi.¹³⁶ He has been a union leader not only at factory level but also at a branch level, and furthermore, he has even been a labour representative in the Bekasi wage council, the body which determines minimum wages for workers in the industrial zones of Bekasi district. At the time of becoming a member of the wage council in Bekasi district, he managed to fight for minimum wage increases of up to 23 per cent.¹³⁷ During the Labour Go Politics campaign, he not only relied on campaigning in front of factories and

¹³⁶ Interview with Maxie Elia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta, 23 August 2016.

¹³⁷ This increase was recorded as the highest in Bekasi since the new minimum wage policy was established in 2003.

mobilising workers in mass campaigns, he also campaigned creatively, utilising social media, such as YouTube and Facebook.¹³⁸

As for Nyumarno, he has more political experience than other FSPMI candidates in Bekasi. Besides being FSPMI's official and labour advocate, he worked in the parliament office as an expert member of staff' (*staff ahli*) for Rieke Diah Pitaloka, a well-known national legislator from the PDIP. He was also Pitaloka's campaign coordinator for the Bekasi area during her run for Governor of West Java Province in February 2013. This experience and the political networks he has built were invaluable political resources, contributing to his success in the 2014 legislative elections in Bekasi (Hoban 2014; Tjandra 2017). In the interview, he claimed that he was allocated as the legislative candidate in the most challenging electoral area, seeing as most of the voters were non-union members such as farmers, traders and workers in informal sectors. This fact has forced him to look for strategies other than those outlined by the FSPMI success team, for instance the recruitment of non-labour volunteers and the *blusukan*-style campaign.¹³⁹

Family background was also believed to play a significant role in the success of the two FSPMI cadres in Bekasi.¹⁴⁰ In relation to the nine FSPMI candidates, Nurdin is the only native (ethnic Sundanese) of Bekasi, whereas Nyumarno benefited from the position of his father-in-law, who is a prominent public figure in his electoral area.¹⁴¹ Both elected candidates had significant support not only from workers but also other societies who were not union members.¹⁴² This situation seems to be different compared with other union candidates who are highly dependent on support from workers, especially FSPMI members. Nevertheless, Nurdin and Nyumarno were successful in their political experimentation under the Labour Go Politics campaign, by entering the local parliament office in Bekasi district. Their achievement could inspire for countless other unionists and labour activists elsewhere in the country to get involved in electoral politics. They educated the local union leaders concerning the potential benefits of strategic and

¹³⁸ One of his campaigns on YouTube has been seen by more than 1700 viewers since its release on 20 March 2014. See this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4u1INZRd8c> (Accessed 12 August 2017).

¹³⁹ Interview with Nyumarno, member of local parliament and former union leader in Bekasi, 28 September 2016.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Handoko, founder and leader of Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2016.

¹⁴¹ Votes for Nyumarno were predominantly cast by voters from the Wanareja and Sidomukti villages, two places where his father in law and his wife's family are living. Interview with Saman, member of success team for Nyumarno in Wanareja village, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

¹⁴² Interview with Handoko Wibowo, founder and leader of Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2016.

active participation in formal politics, not just on wage-setting and other areas of industrial relations policy, but on broader issues that affect workers, like health and education policies. This optimism was at least visible at the time of their inauguration with the presence of thousands of workers and a “command car” parade, complete with loudspeakers that were used to lead the workers during the demonstration and attracting plenty of attention from the public and coverage by the mass media during their inauguration.¹⁴³

Having examined the way in which the FSPMI’s leaders built their electoral strategy in the 2014 legislative elections, it can be said that the FSPMI have successfully learned from their experience and failure in the 2009 legislative elections. Lacking political experimentations in mobilising members for electoral contestation, the FSPMI has strengthened its political movement through the strategy called the Labour Go politics movement. This strategy provides a counter-argument to the notion that Indonesian unions are politically insignificant. The way FSPMI leaders have established the movement and mobilised its collective resources has been a crucial determinant in the success of FSPMI gaining seats for its two officials to seat in the local parliament of Bekasi; however, they alone are not a sufficient explanation of the FSMPI’s increased political capacity in contesting legislative elections. The other main factors that can be derived are the organisational capacity to revitalise its movement, political support from labour organisations outside the unions, and Bekasi being the most union-dense area in Indonesia.

The FSPMI has successfully developed its capacity as a union federation through revitalisation of its economic and political functions, including a willingness to adopt new electoral strategies. This attempt is impossible to achieve without the support of union leadership, human resources, finances, and solidarity of union leaders from national to factory levels, including militant and voluntary success teams at the grassroots level. In contrast to the nomination of union leaders from other unions, which has tended to lean towards individuals, the FSPMI as a union organisation has been directly involved in designing and developing union-party alliances, especially in local elections.

¹⁴³ Personal observation during the inauguration of elected parliament member in Bekasi district on 8 August 2014.

In addition to serving as the main base for FSPMI membership, as in the case of Bekasi, the socio-political characteristics of the labour movement in this region are also central to explaining the success of Labour Go Politics movement in the 2014 legislative elections. Since large scale construction of industrial estates in Bekasi began in the early 2000s, this region has been become the main barometer of the Indonesian labour movement. Trade union membership have been building in this region since the establishment of new trade union law in 2000 and has been followed by a significant increase in industrial conflicts and the escalation of labour mobilisations, such as labour strikes and street demonstrations. Because of its proximity to Jakarta - the capital city of Indonesia - almost all of the ideas for national labour demonstrations came from unions and workers in Bekasi. Thus, a feature of politics in Bekasi, including trade union politics, is often the large extent to which it reflects the national situation. This situation has not only contributed to the formation of fairly solid loyalty among workers in this area - one of the important conditions for successful in electoral contestation - but has also facilitated union leaders to mobilise their members in elections.

The Labour Vote Labour Movement in Serang

The Labour Vote Labour movement was a strategy pursued by the inter-union alliance in Serang district, Banten province to support nine trade union elites who ran for legislative seats via five different parties in the 2009 legislative elections. The movement was initiated by several leaders from two labour organisations, specifically Serang's Labour Solidarity Forum (FSBS) and Serang's Trade Unions Alliance (ASPSB). The movement was declared in Cikande on 15 December 2008 at the FSBS annual meeting. During this period, unlike the central offices of most unions, which had difficulties in uniting the leaders and primarily took a firm stance against involvement in electoral politics, most union leaders in Serang were relatively enthusiastic about supporting their candidates in the election.¹⁴⁴

According to Saukani, the head of the DPD SPN Banten province, the situation is strongly influenced by the rapidly growing labour movement in Serang District, which is indicated by the absence of generational gaps between union officials and the balance of strength between each union that emerged in the late 1990s.¹⁴⁵ As stated by Tornquist

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Kahar Cahyono, former FSBS officials and one of initiators of the Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang, Jakarta 19 December 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Ahmad Saukani, head of the DPD SPN Banten province, Serang 3 December 2016.

(2004: 388), elite factionalism regularly emerges in a union which is dominated by an “old boss” who tends to strive to maintain their position and influence in the union. Further, Rokhani (2009: 224), argued that competition for union membership and union elites’ lack of willingness to accept innovative ideas could be reasons why it is difficult to unite the labour movement in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

According to Kahar, former coordinator of the FSBS, the decision to form the Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang was motivated by at least two considerations. The first was to address the decision of some union elites, previously proposed by some political parties, to be nominated as legislative candidates. The FSBS and ASPBS, as the largest inter-union organisation in Serang, felt a need to form a more organised movement so that the possibility of union candidates being elected would be greater than fighting alone. In addition, several union candidates who were supported by the Labour Vote Labour movement were FSBS and ASPBS officials.

The second was related to the increasing frustration of trade unionists, owing to a lack of supervision and legal action against various labour violations regulated by Law Number 13/2003 concerning Manpower. Their disappointment intensified when at the end of their term, Serang districts parliament members approved a local government proposal on the enactment of Local Regulation Number 7/2009 related to employment, which the union believed to be highly problematic. Local Regulation Number 7/2009 was believed by the FSBS and ASPBS to result from a lack of concern by parliament members regarding labour issues at the local level, as it merely copied most articles regulated by Labour Law Number 13/2013. This subsequently led each of the union elites in the FSBS and ASPBS in Serang to collectively encourage and support candidates from unions in the 2009 elections.¹⁴⁶

The Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang was not the only union movement to engage in electoral politics during this period. Similar movements also emerged in several other industrial areas in Indonesia, such as in Tangerang, Batam, Medan, Semarang and Demak. However, what distinguishes the movement in Serang District from other areas was the existence of several trade unions which formed an inter-union alliance to support union candidates in legislative elections. Furthermore, in other regions, each union worked by forming a partnership with certain political parties. For instance,

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Kahar C. Cahyono, former FSBS officials and one of initiators of the Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang, Jakarta 19 December 2016.

the SPN Tangerang branch formed a partnership with the PKS to support the nomination of its cadre, Siti Istikhroh. In Batam, the FSPMI nominated its ten cadres through five different parties, while in Medan, the Indonesian Free Labour Union (Serikat Buruh Merdeka Indonesia, SBMI) supported its five officials, who competed in the Deli Serdang and the Medan municipal parliament via the Labour Party.

The FSBS and the ASPSB are two labour organisations designed to function as a medium for the channelling of union aspirations and building solidarity among workers. Both originate from one organisation as most of the FSBS officials are ASPSB members and vice versa. The FSBS was founded on 11 September 2002 by several labour NGO activists and union leaders in Serang district.

The existence of labour NGO activists in the establishment of the FSBS in Serang confirms the importance of the contribution of NGOs to the establishment of a non-union labour organisation in Indonesia, particularly at the end of the New Order and the first wave of the reformation era. Initially, the FSBS was formed as a communication forum among union leaders in Serang District. Its main activity was to conduct union meetings to share experiences and discuss solutions concerning several labour issues, such as violence against labour activists committed by hired thugs, unpaid salaries and unilateral dismissal. During its development, FSBS activities expanded, including providing mediation between unions, employers and the government; educating union cadres; and mobilising unions and workers in labour demonstrations.

In order to avoid resembling unions, and to maintain neutrality and prevent inter-union conflicts, in 2004 some leaders of the FSBS formed a new organisation, the ASPSB. Thus, the activities of the two organisations were divided and each had distinct functions and objectives. The FSBS functioned as an organisation engaged in empowerment, education and training for union cadres, and conducted research related to labour issues. The ASPSB in Serang functioned as a pressure organisation which had the purpose of mobilising unions and their members in labour demonstrations, and mediating workers' interests with policy makers.

In the Labour Vote Labour movement, the FSBS and the ASPSB Serang acted with an ad hoc structure designed to coordinate campaigns promoting union candidates and channel the political aspirations of their members in the context of the legislative election. To obtain optimal support from workers and to ensure their candidates were

elected, activists within these two organisations established success teams and volunteers to identify potential voters domiciled in Serang, to form a communication network among union leaders in factories, and to campaign among their members for support. They even planned different agendas and work programmes for selected candidates (somewhat optimistically) at both district and municipal levels in the event of them taking seats in parliament.¹⁴⁷

Choices of political party and electoral area were negotiated by each candidate prior to the Labour Vote Labour movement being declared; i.e. four months before election day. Consequently, some candidates supported by this movement inevitably competed in the same electoral area. For instance, Aryo Sujatmiko and Ngatri registered in Serang district 2 and Rahmat Suryadi and Halimi registered in Serang municipality 4 (see Table 4.2). Despite the need to ensure that trade unionists who wished to run under the Labour Vote Labour movement would get support from the inter-union alliance, it also implied that the FSBS and the ASBS as campaign coordinators did not have the power to prevent unaligned union elites from running. Additionally, of the nine union candidates supported in the Labour Vote Labour movement, there were also a few former union elites who competed at the district and municipal levels. They ran individually, either under certain mainstream parties or two related labour parties (the Labour Party and the Indonesian Entrepreneur and Workers Party), and included Sanusi and Purbo Asmoro, who were former members of SPN Serang and ran with PAN, and Adhadi Romli, who was the former head of the DPW FSPMI, Banten province and nominated by the PDIP.

As in other industrial centres such as Batam, Tangerang, Medan, Semarang and Demak, none of the union candidates supported by the Labour Vote Labour movement in the Serang election won a ticket to the parliament office in the 2009 legislative elections. The results were disappointing, even if they were not completely below the union's expectation.¹⁴⁸ For example, Argo Priyo Sujatmiko attracted only a third of the votes gained by the elected candidate in his electoral area. Halimi and Ripi Uripno Aji, who were union branch leaders at a district level, also failed to command a considerable number of votes. Not even the national and regional union officials who ran for national

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Kahar Cahyono, former FSBS officials and one of initiator of the Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang, Jakarta 19 December 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Kahar Cahyono, former FSBS officials and initiator of the Labour Vote Labour movement in Serang, Jakarta 19 December 2016.

and provincial level positions could secure enough votes to get elected. The combined votes cast for the three union candidates who ran at the district level was not even half of the number required for a candidate to be elected.

Table 4.2: The 2009 Election Results for Nine Union Candidates under the Labour Vote
Labour movement in Serang, Banten Province

Name of Candidate	Political Party	Electorate	Ticket position	Candidate Votes	Total Party votes in the electorate	Ranking in the electorate among the same party candidates
Syamsudin Idris	PAN	National/1	7 out of 7	1,932	10,379	4 out of 7
Hafuri Yahya	PAN	Provincial/1	9 out of 11	2000	44,456	5 out of 11
Puji Santoso	PMB	Provincial/1		1,004	2,811	1 out of 4
Argo Priyo Sujatmiko	PAN	District/2	6 out of 7	348	4,422	4 out of 7
Ngatri	PMB	District/2	1 out of 1	43	113	1 out of 1
Isbandi Anggono	PAN	District/3	7 out of 8	313	7,328	6 out of 8
Rahmat Suryadi	PPP	Municipal/4	2 out of 6	400	3,715	3 out of 6
Halimi	PKP	Municipal/4	1 out of 1	24	50	1 out of 1
Ripi Uripno Aji	PKS	Municipal/4	2 out of 5	118	2,138	5 out of 5

Source: Raw data drawn from unpublished document issued by the Electoral Commission (KPU).

Several questions emerged about the overall performance of trade union candidates and their defeat in the election. One labour NGO activist interviewed for this thesis blamed the strategy conducted by unions, which was too focused on gaining votes from workers, particularly union members.¹⁴⁹ Further, as he observed, the political campaign work undertaken by the FSBS and ASPSB was more focused at the level of union leaders and had minimal impact at the grassroots level, such as in local neighbourhoods and the narrow alleys where workers usually live. Another labour NGO argued that the idea of engaging in electoral politics was only understood by the union elite, because they were only interested in gaining political power. At the grassroots level, most of the workers still failed to understand the relationship between the elections and the role of the unions in politics.¹⁵⁰ As one informant argued:

¹⁴⁹ Interview with a staff from labour NGO in Serang (name withheld), 20 December 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with a staff from labour NGO in Serang (name withheld), 20 December 2016.

Many workers came during the union campaign, but not all the workers who attended the campaign intended to hear a political speech from union candidates. Many came just to follow their friends or to be entertained because they were already bored with their routine and repetitive work in the factory. These facts can also be observed when workers participated in labour demonstrations. Moreover, not all the workers who lived in Serang had a Serang ID card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk*, KTP). Even if they had a KTP of Serang, it did not guarantee that they would choose union cadres. This was because for most workers, the election means just “*nyoblos*” [to brush off the election]. Also, they frequently did not know what effect it would have on them. So, judging from the experience of the 2009 elections [and 2014 elections], the union’s participation in the elections still only appears in the ideas and the interests of the union elite at the senior level, while at the grassroots not much has changed.¹⁵¹

In an interview with Kahar, who was part of the success team for the FSBS candidates, gave his own assessment of the defeat. It supposedly boiled down to the lack of financial resources to support the campaign, the immaturity of workers associated with the political class, and the strength of the influence of money politics from wealthy candidates. He also argued that party affiliation was a significant factor in determining whether union candidates gained a significant number of votes. Concerning the five political parties that became the political vehicles of unions in the 2009 legislative elections in Serang, the total votes collected were not more than 4 per cent. This is a far cry from the total votes of other political parties, such as the PDIP and Golkar, which achieved 6.7 per cent and 17.1 per cent respectively. The PMB and PKP, which are the new parties and political vehicle for three out of nine union candidates, attracted only 0.4 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively at the district level.

The strategy of multiple union candidates with different parties running in the same constituency divided workers’ votes and obviously confused the constituents, especially the union members.¹⁵² If the union elites had been able to agree to campaign together but delegate responsibility for each electoral area to a single union candidate, they could have maximised trade union candidates’ chances of being elected. Additionally, they could also have run multi-party trade union tickets at the district election level by nominating single union candidates with various affiliated parties in each

¹⁵¹ Interview with a staff from labour NGO in Serang (name withheld), 20 December 2016.

¹⁵² Informal talks with several workers in Serang district, 2-7 December 2016.

electoral area. Therefore, the union could have had the opportunity to allocate its members in several areas, as well as to maintain its political neutrality.

The failure of the Labour Vote Labour movement in the 2009 legislative elections made union elites in Serang use individual partnerships with political parties to contest the 2014 legislative elections. This strategy was chosen because in reality the union elites who were successfully elected in the 2009 election were precisely those who were not supported by the Labour Vote Labour movement. In this regard, the attempt to build a united-front involving different unions in Serang seems only sensible as an idea among elites, but difficult to implement in the context of creating a more consolidated strategy. This constraint is particularly related to attempts to gain political support from workers of different unions, and the lack of organisational capacity such as the KPSBS and ASPSB to build partisan politics directly with well-established political parties. Moreover, the majority of union elites in Serang who competed in the 2014 elections were not only union officials but also party's cadres or party administrators who had their own political motivations and strategies to gain labour support and other potential voters in their electoral areas.

Individual Partnerships with Political Parties

Another form of trade union political strategy in the nomination of unionists as legislative candidates is via individual partnerships between union elites and certain political parties. Through this strategy, the union elites compete in elections by joining certain political parties, though they generally do not receive support from their home union organisation. However, as unionists, they wish to gain votes from the union membership as well as the public. According to my findings, most of these candidates viewed their engagement in electoral politics as a necessary stage to launch their political careers. These candidates have benefited from their positions in unions and society and used their close relationships with party officials to succeed in electoral politics.

Heryanto (2010: 190) referred to this category of legislative candidates as “lone campaigners” who believed that anyone could run in the election, regardless of their financial and political resources, and moreover, that campaigning could be undertaken on an individual basis, sometimes without the presence of organised supporters. Heryanto (2010: 190) has argued that the increasing trend of newcomers and individual campaigners since the 2009 elections cannot be attributed solely to the establishment of

the new electoral system. The establishment of the new electoral system for the 2009 elections led many people to “the illusion that all citizens are politically equal in elections” and they believed that they had a chance to be elected regardless of their political and financial resources (Heryanto 2010: 191). However, the expansion of new media and popular culture must have played a significant role in stimulating people to contest elections. He argued that new digital media and technology is both “socialising and alienating” which means it has increased people’s knowledge in some areas but disempowered them in others (Heryanto 2010: 191).

Apart from the absence of a labour-related party, this strategy was conducted by most of the union elites that participated in the 2014 legislative elections. Hence, it can be ascertained that 43 out of 80 trade union officials who competed in the 2014 election ran for legislative tickets using this strategy. The FSP KEP KSPSI, the SBSI 1992 and the FSP KEP KSPI are three examples of trade unions at the federation level that have officially remained neutral in electoral politics, even though some of their union officials were nominated by political parties in the 2014 legislative elections.¹⁵³ For example, Fery Nurzali, the vice-chairman of the FSP KEP SPSI and member of the executive board of the KSPSI, ran as a national legislative candidate with the Gerindra Party. Sahat Butarbutar, member of the executive board of the FSP KEP KSPI, ran for local parliament office candidate under the Gerindra Party. The chairman of the SBSI 1992 in the Medan branch, Julian Napitupulu, was nominated for the Medan Municipal Parliament by the Gerindra Party. Apart from their positions as union officials, a few were also active in politics, having become party officials at the branch level (DPD) or had even been involved in campaign teams with certain political parties in the gubernatorial, mayoral or regency elections. This background, coupled with the proximity of a political party, has provided union elites with greater opportunities to use their personal abilities to lobby party leaders for parliamentary tickets in the election.

In comparison to other unions, unionists from the SPN comprised the greatest number of individuals who ran for parliament in the 2014 election. Of the 43 unionists who ran individually in the 2014 legislative elections, 15 were the SPN officials. They were nominated by several political parties, in national, provincial and local elections (see Table 4.3). The involvement of SPN elites in electoral politics is not a new phenomenon,

¹⁵³ Interview with R. Abdullah, chairman of the FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016; Sjaiful DJ, chairman of the FSP KEP KSPI, 23 September 2016; and Napitupulu, head of the SBSI 1992 Medan branch, 30 November 2016.

because since the 2004 legislative elections several of its elites have been involved in contesting parliamentary seats. For instance, Bambang Wirahyoso, the national chairman of SPN, challenged as a legislative candidate for the PKS in West Java province, and Sunaryo, the chairman of SPN's Tangerang branch office, was nominated by the PAN for Banten provincial parliament.

The SPN is one of the few trade union federations that from its establishment in 2003 perceived electoral politics as a strategic way for unions to become involved in policy-making.¹⁵⁴ The decision to engage in electoral politics was officially declared at their second national congress in 2005. In the 2009 legislative elections, the SPN established a political partnership with one of the Islamic parties, the PKS. At that time, several SPN leaders at the national level already had close relationships with PKS leaders. In addition, the PKS was the only political party that offered the SPN a real chance to nominate its cadres. However, the SPN's political affiliation with PKS is not permanent, to avoid co-optation of the union by the political party and appreciating that it would draw criticism from its organisational circles.¹⁵⁵ According to Iwan Kusmawan, the chairman of the SPN, it is necessary to work with political parties if the union wants to engage in "practical politics", and one possible way to achieve this would be to run union candidates in the elections through established political parties.¹⁵⁶ Fundamentally, political parties provide the only means for unionists to engage in electoral contestation, and therefore, increasing the number of union candidates meant convincing political parties to place union cadres on their electoral lists.

In the 2014 legislative elections, the SPN attempted a new engagement strategy: giving free options to their cadres to run as individual candidates. Through this strategy, all decisions, from negotiations with political parties to the determination of electoral areas, to campaign activities and the establishment of success teams, are handed over to union candidates. The SPN through its national, provincial and local management boards still has a responsibility to mobilise and facilitate its candidates by organising events during the campaign period. This was drawn up by the SPN as its principal political target, to place as many union cadres in legislative office as possible, regardless of the political

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of the SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of the SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

¹⁵⁶ Since 2016, Iwan Kusmawan has been involved in a union alliance incorporated into the Indonesian Labour Movement (GBI) to develop a strategy for forming a new political party, which will be participating in the 2019 election. However, by final registration date for participating, the GBI had failed to establish their planned new party.

party which nominates them. In addition, as a political vehicle, the existing political parties have no distinctive programmes that distinguish them from each other. The experience and failure of the 2009 legislative elections has also provided a lesson for the SPN, especially since none of its cadres won any parliamentary seats. Furthermore, limiting the partnership to only one political party is also considered an ineffective strategy, because the number of nominated cadres is dependent on the decisions of political parties, including the determination of the electoral area and ticket position in the ballot. For instance, in the 2009 legislative elections, the SPN Branch in Tangerang proposed six SPN cadres for nomination as legislative candidates with its affiliated party, the PKS; however, the party only accepted one ticket.¹⁵⁷

As newcomers and outsiders, it is difficult for union candidates to gain full support during political campaigns by relying on a party. In an election where multiple candidates from the same party compete to attract voters from the same electorate, the candidates who hold power in the local party (typically the executive board of the party) usually dominate the party machinery and use it to support their candidacy (Aspinall 2015: 102). Hence, “the party machine itself is a site of contestation” between outsiders and party cadres (Aspinall 2015: 102). Frequently, this situation has turned into a personal campaign for party elites and forced other non-party candidates to develop their own means of support. However, this fact had been anticipated by some union candidates interviewed in this study, so that they were surprised if they lacked support from the party during their campaigns.¹⁵⁸ Despite limited financial ability, this situation caused the union candidates to be creative in organising their campaign strategy, including the formation of a campaign team.

To attract significant potential votes, union candidates who ran individually used their personal networks and preferred to conduct individual meetings. Other union candidates targeted members by attending various union activities and lobbying their leaders to support their candidacy. Some union candidates who have strong traditional family structures (such as *marga*) formed family teams to support their legislative candidacy. They believed that the open-list system has changed the way that voters view

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Saukani, head of DPD SPN Banten, Serang 3 December 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Fery Nurzali (FSP KEP SPSI) Jakarta 8 September 2016, Sahat Butarbutar (FSP KEP KSPI) 23 September 2016; Napitupulu (SBSI 1992) Medan 30 September 2016, Iwan Kusmawan (SPN) Jakarta 1 October 2016; Intan Dewi (SPN) Serang, 3 December October 2016; and Zaenal Abidin (SPN) Serang 2 December 2016; These union elites competed in the 2014 election under individual partnerships with political parties.

their political representatives. However, this new system has also changed the way voters respond to their legislative candidates. Voters are more pragmatic, challenging candidates by asking for more concrete benefits (cash or goods) in exchange for their votes, as other legislative candidates and their success teams also approach them.¹⁵⁹ Thus, it can be understood that most union candidates who ran individually preferred a meet-the-people style of campaigning to holding large open-air party campaigns. In addition to large costs, open-air campaigning is considered ineffective, because the open-list system competition between candidates is increasingly stringent and voters tend to vote for candidates that they already know or those with a popular touch (Simandjuntak 2012; Aspinall 2014; Choi 2016). Therefore, relying on such a strategy is challenging for union candidates, especially in large electoral constituencies where a union candidate with limited financial support could not possibly visit every community in a sub-district, or at least not regularly enough to build the personal rapport that voters value so much.

Some union elites with modest financial ability have established success teams staffed by between 5 to 20 people. As in many other places, the success teams have a pyramidal structure depending on union candidates' financial capacity and the size of the constituency (sub-district, village, polling booth, and neighbourhood communities). A union candidate interviewed in this research stated that he was supported by a 20 person team, consisting of 5 unionist fellows from his home organisation and 15 people from his networks of community-level groups such as religious groups, an ethnic-based group and women's groups.¹⁶⁰ His campaign teams are charged with recruiting as many supporters as possible, mostly people within their networks; for instance their organisation members, relatives, neighbours, and friends. However, with regard to his success team, he stressed that 20 people was still far from enough to cover all six sub-districts, with 16 villages in his electorate area. He admitted that he has spent just over 300 million rupiah (US\$20,000) from his own pocket for his candidacy and all the money has been spent on campaign promotional material (such as t-shirts, posters, banners and gifts), fees, fuel, food and drink, arranging meetings, and other sundry costs. Therefore, it can be said that union candidates who were involved in the 2014 elections by joining individual political parties are no different from party cadres or other newcomers, especially if the strategies they applied are no different to those of other candidates.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Zainal Abidin, the SPN candidates in Serang district, Serang 2 December 2016.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with a union candidate who competed in Serang district in the 2014 election (name withheld), Serang 3 December 2016.

Table 4.3: The 2014 Election Results for SPN's Legislative Candidates

Name of Candidate	Political Party	Electorate Area	Ticket Position	Candidate Votes	Total Party Votes in the Candidate's Constituency	Ranking in the Electorate among Candidates from the Same Party
Akhmad Zaini	PKB	Bogor district	1/9	1,616	20,657	2/9
Iwan Kusmawan	PKS	Bogor district/3	6/8	3,566	24,337	4/8
Lucky Hendarsyah	Hanura	Bogor municipal	2/8	134	3,766	5/8
Zulkifli Pohan	Nasdem	Bogor municipal	4/8	259	3,210	5/8
Suradi	Nasdem	Bekasi district	5/7	321	6,573	6/7
Intan Dewi	PAN	Serang district	7/9	336	15,421	6/9
Saeful Nufus	Hanura	Serang district	4/8	61	4,679	6/8
Zaenal Abidin	Hanura	Serang district	1/10	2,115	10,760	1/10
Hera Iskandar	Nasdem	Sukabumi district	3/9	3,003	11,303	1/9
Ali Sholeh	Hanura	Pekalongan district	7/9	493	4,041	2/9
Maryana	Hanura	Sidoarjo district	6/8	2,201	12,421	7,8
Kusmen	PDIP	Tuban district	9/11	1,650	14,321	7/11
Dede Kamaludin	Nasdem	Sumedang district	6/8	528	9,765	7/8
Budi Sumardi	PAN	Sukabumi district	6/7	678	7,654	5/7

Source: the SPN and raw data drawn from an unpublished document issued by the Electoral Commission (KPU).

Most of the union candidates who ran individually in the 2014 elections were nominated by mid- to low-level parties and new parties such as the PKS, Hanura, Nasdem, PBB and PKPI. As Table 4.3 illustrates, of the 14 SPN cadres who ran individually in the 2014 legislative elections, only three were nominated by well-established parties, for example the PDIP and PAN. In terms of ticket position, the SPN cadres were generally assigned mid- to low- ranking positions for a party ticket on the ballot. Even national leaders who were long-term union cadres, such as Iwan Kusmawan, were positioned well down the list. Although obtaining a party ticket is no longer a deciding factor in winning a seat through the open proportional system, it indicates that they did not have a serious chance of being elected. Moreover, data from Table 4.3 also reveals that most union candidates who ran individually in the 2014 legislative elections gained less than one-third of the total votes of political parties in each union's electoral area. At this point, it can be said that union candidates who ran individually for legislative tickets in the 2014 legislative elections served as nothing more than votes-getters for political parties.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ For a more comprehensive discussion on union-party alliance issues see Chapter Five.

Implications for Trade Union Politics

The three case studies in this chapter show that democratic reforms in post-authoritarian Indonesia have provided trade unionists with greater opportunities to present an alternative form of political power via their engagement in electoral politics. Amid the dominance of business-politicians and old elites, such as those found in Bekasi, who often use electoral democracy to maintain their existence and political power for their own ends (Hadiz 2010; Aspinnall and Mietzner 2014; Choi 2016), the increased involvement of trade unionists in elections has given an initial impression of success in relation to the political empowerment of civil society organisations in Indonesia. As democracy in Indonesia is still progressing, this development is certainly a positive indicator of the potential future progress of its democracy. As stated by Diamond (1999) and Beittinger-Lee (2010), the active participation of civil society groups in electoral democracy is a necessary step for the development of democracy itself and is needed to reshape and fulfil the demands and challenges for the next phase; the consolidation of democracy. Furthermore, Diamond (1999: 127) also stated that among the numerous functions of civil society in promoting democracy, preventing authoritarianism and stimulating people's political participation is fundamental. Pluralist and vibrant civil society organisations can help to launch crucial reforms and stimulate people to participate in politics, and above all, elections. Therefore, the engagement of unionists in electoral politics should be considered a necessary step for increasing the quality of democratisation, because "no functioning, participatory democracy with an accountable government is conceivable without a vibrant civil society" (Beittinger-Lee 2010: 31).

The trade unions in Indonesia have considerable potential as an alternative new political force outside the mainstream political party elites that have been instrumental in Indonesia's political system. As part of a growing civil society organisation, Indonesia's trade unions have material power that can be used politically due to the potential number of members across industrial sectors, as well as their networks and organisational structures at all levels, from national, provincial, and local, right down to the shop floor (Isaac and Sitalaksmi 2008; Silaban 2009; Wulandari 2009). Compared to political parties, which are characterised by open memberships, trade unions have a more binding membership, given that members and union officials have the same interests and needs, including organisational responsibilities that must be carried out between themselves (Edwin 2003: 23). The various labour issues that the unions have been fighting for, such

as a minimum wage, social security, and labour regulations, are an integral part of political policy and so it possible for them to promote such issues in formal politics (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010). In relation to local autonomy and highly competitive elections, winning local elections potentially has more to offer in union-dense localities, as Indonesia's union membership is geographically concentrated, particularly in the industrial centres in the Java and Sumatra.

The three case studies discussed in this chapter reveal several important implications for future trade union politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia. The first is that: union membership, organisational structure and networks are instrumental in building more organised trade unions, but they may not be enough when it comes to electoral politics. In the context of establishing an effective labour movement through strengthening the functions of trade unions as pressure groups - such as strikes and street demonstrations - this still only occurs within relatively controlled conditions, particularly with regard to the function and the role of union elites. Due to sharing similar issues and interests, such as the need for wage increases and the implementation of social security programs, workers can be mobilised by their union elites to take to the streets to demonstrate their demands. In contrast, in the context of electoral contestation, the ability of trade unions to influence workers' decisions to follow the union line is limited and influenced by many factors that cannot be entirely controlled by the union elites. As a political process therefore, electoral engagement clearly requires unions to build effective political mobilisation and appropriate participation and interconnection of union elites and their members, especially regarding what to fight for through their involvement in electoral politics.

Second, the wider political spaces offered by Indonesia's electoral democracy for newcomers to engage in electoral contestation is not in line with the way in which workers and other constituents respond to union legislative candidates. This is clear from the low votes obtained by most union candidates, including trade union elites who were nominated by labour-related parties in the 2009 legislative elections. It seems that the benefits of struggling to enter the realm of policy-making by competing in electoral politics are obvious to the union elites, but most workers appear to either lack trust in union candidates or have failed to understand their political identify and role.¹⁶² Even union candidates that are widely known and have good reputations among workers, for

¹⁶² See Chapter Five for some evidences from workers related to these issues.

instance Muchtar Pakpahan, Said Iqbal, Iwan Kusmawan, and Joko Heryanto, are not very successful in electoral contests. This indicates that relying on popular figure is not enough for unionists to gain optimum vote support from union members as well as other section of society.

Third, strengthening members' loyalty and gaining trust from workers are crucial for unionists in electoral contest. As stated by Isaac and Sitalaksmi (2008: 232), trade unions in most countries, including Indonesia, have three important roles in fighting for the interests of their organisations and their members. First, to propose pro-union and pro-labour legislation that will maintain their existence. Second, to push through collective bargaining via bilateral action with employers to establish and administer a set of common roles for workers and employers. Third, to fight for collective voice in political matters, directly or indirectly. In Indonesia, the implementation of these three union roles will be interlinked with several contemporary principal labour issues, such as: the demand for minimum wage increases; elimination of outsourcing; control of foreign workers; rejection of Government Regulation Number 78/2015 on the formulation of minimum wage; unilateral layoffs; union busting; the revision of Labour Law Number 13/2003. In the context of electoral politics, the extent to which trade unions will have the capacity to carry out what is considered their core roles will clearly influence members' loyalty and whether they follow union direction in the election. As argued by Suwignyo (2008) and Juliawan (2014), the loyalty of union members to their elites is not only determined by voluntary and contractual relationships, but also derives from the elites' ability to convince workers to fight for and solve their labour problems. The fact that the problems faced by workers have not been resolved by the unions could explain why they tend to respond negatively to union-affiliated legislative candidates.¹⁶³

The experience of several reformist activists who were successfully elected in the 2014 legislative elections serve as a good lesson learned for future union engagement in legislative elections. Among of these activists is Budiman Sujatmiko, a national legislative member of the PDIP in 2014-2019. When he ran as a national legislative candidate in the 2014 legislative elections, he offered three programmes to his constituencies, which he stressed were created to form political consensus between

¹⁶³ Isaac and Sitalaksmi (2008: 244) have categorised the collective bargaining activities of unions at national and industrial levels, as well as the extent of their joint consultation activities, as low. The only high-level union activities are collective union bargaining at enterprise level.

himself and potential voters on the problems in society and the solutions required.¹⁶⁴ These three programmes were to establish an aspirational house, to settle land conflict cases, and to propose the establishment of Village Law (RUU Desa). The first and second programmes were part of the political concessions between himself and potential voters regarding crucial issues necessary for most of society in his electoral areas. Meanwhile, the proposed creation of the Village Law was part of his big idea, as well as his political promise regarding the key role of parliament in producing legislation that would provide a broad range of benefits, especially for rural communities. They comprise 70 per cent of the Indonesian population but have received little attention in the development process. When asked about the increasing trend for reformist activists to be nominated as legislative candidates, he suggested that such candidates were different from most politicians, as they were mostly [assumed] to have strong ideals, organisational networks and experience with community advocacy programmes at grassroots level. But without alternative ideas and concrete programmes to offer to their constituencies, it will be difficult for them to gain trust and support from heterogeneous voters within the current electoral system, which is highly competitive and, in many cases, tends to be elitist and populist.

The fourth is related to the type of partisan strategy unionists adopt in order to be nominated as legislative candidates. Regarding this choice, Indonesian unions face dilemmatic and challenging conditions. They are confronted with a political terrain in which no party espouses pro-labour principles (Caraway et al. 2015). Indonesia's political parties differ little on policy matters and differentiate themselves primarily by whether they are religious or nationalist (Ufen 2008; Tomsa 2010; Aspinall 2014). The term "opposition party" is rarely used, as most parties in the post-Suharto era are involved in "oversized rainbow coalitions" (Aspinall 2015: 100). In addition, the typical left and right parties that could lead fierce debate and competition in elections is largely absent. As a result, political alliances built between legislative candidates and political parties are mostly no longer based on programmatic and ideological commonalities, but instead on short-term interests and the proximity of legislative candidates to party officials. In this regard, the choice of the majority of union elites to advance in the 2014 legislative elections through individual partnership with certain political parties - particularly without organisational support from home unions - has further weakened their position in

¹⁶⁴ Informal discussion with Budiman Sujatmiko during a conference at Warwick University, 28 July 2017.

electoral contestations. The same is true of the unions' choice to support their cadres' nomination through different political parties, as in the case of Bekasi and Serang where union candidates from the same organisation have been nominated by different parties in the same electoral areas at national, provincial and district levels. These strategies not only have eroded workers' trust, they have made them question the true political motives of union elites candidacies in electoral politics and confirmed that the candidates are no different from those outside the unions who approach workers to gain their potential votes for personal and elitist interests. In response to this challenge, as well as to the subsequent political developments and electoral system, it is crucial for Indonesian unions to develop their partisan politics using a more strategic and programmatic strategy, and particularly to consider the option of building a partisan coalition with one of the major well-established political parties.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined union experiences in electoral politics by examining three case studies of trade unions' engagement strategies for local electoral contestation. It reflects the diversification of strategies among some trade unions in their attempts to engage in electoral politics. Regarding the first strategy, the trade unions established partnerships with five different parties as a political vehicle to nominate their cadres in a local election. The trade unions promoted their candidates by establishing success teams and volunteers, and by mobilising their members under the movement termed Labour Go Politics. Through this strategy, the unions tried to consolidate the strength of their membership in supporting their cadres' nomination, regardless of which political party was supporting them.

In the second strategy, the trade unions established an inter-union alliance to support the nomination of their leaders through different political parties under the movement called Labour Vote Labour. Unlike the first strategy, which involved the FSPMI working alone to promote their cadre candidates, through the Labour Vote Labour movement several trade unions and labour organisation sought to consolidate their wider collective strengths to support candidates from various unions in one inter-union alliance. By contrast, the third strategy involved trade union elites competing in local elections by joining political parties without support from their union organisations. However, as unionists they wished to gain votes from the workers as well as the public.

It appears that union engagement in electoral politics is about the strategic use of new opportunities offered by democratic reforms to present unions and civil society actors as an alternative base of political power. Although most of the union candidates failed to gain significant votes, their experiences may have started to undermine the legacy of economic unionism which was firmly institutionalised by the New Order regime. A lesson learned from the unionists who successfully won legislative seats in the 2014 legislative elections was that the personal qualities of union candidates as well as their track records are necessary to convince workers to support union cadres' nominations. However, also crucial in determining their success in local electoral contestations is the ability of union candidates to recruit success team members; map membership and potential voters; communicate their plans and programs to workers; strengthen their networks; maximise their own political resources.

The three case studies discussed in this chapter also reflect how union candidates in local electoral settings still face various structural and political challenges in transforming their collective power into electoral contestation. On the one hand, the enthusiasm of the union elites for engaging in electoral politics is apparent, especially after the establishment of the open-list system following the 2009 legislative elections, where the number of union candidates nominated by political parties increased. On the other hand, most workers still seem to lack an understanding of their strategic position and identity as well as being reluctant to trust their union candidates. Therefore, strengthening union organisation and building political consciousness is a necessary priority for the union elites and also for workers in general.

Indonesian elections are becoming more competitive, but money politics is still the main tool for winning votes. There is a lack of political parties standing specifically to represent the interests of workers, thus the ideas and strategy for building an alternative political party that can be supported by the majority of trade unions and other civil society groups is crucial. At the same time, the success of placing some union candidates within some local parliaments gives them a political stake in the future of union engagement in electoral politics. This is heavily dependent upon the extent to which they can contribute to better policies, matched with the interests of workers and the general public.

Chapter Five

Structural and Organisational Constraints

Introduction

This chapter addresses the following research question: to what extent do structural and organisational constraints affect the mobilisation capacity of union candidates in contesting legislative elections? In this chapter, structural constraints are defined as electoral dynamics and systemic political practices that are beyond the control of union candidates and affect the success or failure of a union's engagement with electoral politics. Meanwhile, organisational constraints can be defined as a variety of problems arising from internal union organisation and that directly or indirectly affect the ability of union candidates to mobilise their collective power in a legislative election.

Changes since 1998 have transformed Indonesia's political life, both at national and local levels. Some scholars note that democratic changes have been few and slow, pointing to the return of powerful elements that were nurtured under the New Order and have continued the corruption, collusion, money politics and other practices strongly associated with the previous regime. Others argue that the democratic process has challenged traditional authorities and that we should be optimistic about Indonesia's political future. Hadiz and Robison (2013: 35) contended that "the fall of Suharto's New Order regime and the dismantling of his highly centralised authoritarian regime did not mean a shift in the power structure toward liberal modes of government". The state officials and politico-business families nurtured during the New Order regime have not only survived and quickly adapted to political changes but also successfully seized the country's economy and political development through their wealth in the new democratic Indonesia (Hadiz and Robison 2014; Winters 2014). Using the material power accrued during the New Order era, combined with increasingly competitive elections and the high dependence of political parties on financial support from outside sources, established elites now fund and often control major political parties as well as organisations linked to them. In short, the actual power configuration in the post-Suharto era has not changed a great deal. Instead, it is limited to the establishment of new identities by previous wealthy elites and the reorganisation of the old power relations within a new system of parties and elections, and new kinds of alliances with business and social interests as

well as with the military, police and other law enforcement authorities (Hadiz and Robison 2013: 37-38).

By contrast, those who see a more optimistic future for Indonesia's politics argue that material power is necessary but only one of the many resources mobilised in electoral politics. Other positive trends such as the development of civil society, the rule of law, the organisation of oppositional or reformist forces, and popular mobilisation are all important aspects in understanding the significance of political changes in Indonesia today (Aspinall 2013; Liddle 2013; Ford and Pepinski 2013). The analysis in this chapter places the power configuration and the ability of unions to mobilise their resources as necessary aspects in understanding trade union politics in post-1998 Indonesia. In this regard, the power configuration is understood as a process of political involvement among the various parties with roles to play and influence in the development of electoral democracy in Indonesia. These include: political parties, local and national government, civil organisations (including trade unions), and the public.

The chapter starts by focusing on how corrupt practices and material inequalities have affected the mobilisation capacity of union candidates in contesting legislative elections. Here, corrupt practices are defined as strategies used by most wealthy legislative candidates to secure votes and consolidate their power by distributing money, gifts and other material benefits during campaigns. As argued by many scholars of Indonesian politics, the country's elections have long been dominated by money politics in which political parties and political candidates rely on the distribution of cash, gifts and other material resources through campaign structures and intermediaries (vote brokers, society leaders) to influence voters (Fukuoka 2013; Choi 2014; Aspinall and Mas'udi 2017). Voters tend to show little interest in party manifestos and become increasingly "pragmatic" or "transactional" by taking advantage of the opportunity presented by money politics as a common practice in exchange for their votes (Aspinall and Mas'udi 2017: 420). With the open-list electoral system, legislative candidates, either from the same or different parties, are not only expected to compete with each other to obtain votes, but also have to finance their own campaigns. In such a context, it is obviously not easy for union legislative candidates with their limited material resources to compete for political power. I therefore present evidence of a new approach from union legislative candidates to surmount the practice of money politics and their lack of material resources, which are now crucial in determining the success or failure of union elites to

compete in legislative elections. It aims not simply to reiterate what has already been identified by various studies about the practice of money politics in Indonesia, but to contribute new insights into how unionists as newcomers compete in local legislative elections, and in particular how they deal with issues related to vote-buying. Aspinall and Mas'udi (2017: 417-426) call this a new inventiveness by candidates to tackle the practice of money politics when running for office. This “inventiveness” refers to the ability of individual candidates to compete with locally powerful and wealthy candidates by combining: a wide variety of political networks; supporting organisations: sources of finance, social and political capital; and new campaign strategies (Aspinall and Mas'udi 2017: 418).

The second important form of structural constraint found in this research is the problem of union-party alliances. In the 2014 legislative elections, no single political party could be said to represent the union vote. None of the labour-related parties that participated in the three previous elections (1999, 2004 and 2009) had successfully qualified or passed the selection process conducted by the General Electoral Commission (KPU).¹⁶⁵ Under a revised legislative election law, the parliamentary threshold increased from 2.5 per cent (Law on Legislative Election Number 10/2008, Article 202) to 3.5 per cent (Law on Legislative Election Number 12/2012, Article 218).¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the number of party branch offices has also increased from 75 per cent to 100 per cent in each province, and at least 75 per cent and 50 percent of party's branch office in districts and in sub-districts respectively. Further, at least 30 per cent of a party's legislative candidates have to be female. As a consequence, unions had to build partnerships with mainstream parties to participate in the 2014 legislative elections.

¹⁶⁵ From a total of 46 parties registered in the KPU, only 12 parties passed the requirement to contest in the 2014 legislative elections. The Labour Party was among 46 parties that registered to participate in the 2014 but failed to meet new requirements stipulated under the Law Number 8/2012 on Legislative Elections.

¹⁶⁶ Initially, under the Law on Legislative Elections Number No.8/2012, a threshold requirement of 3.5 per cent of parliamentary votes was applied in all three level of legislative elections (national, provincial and district or municipal levels). However, two months near to legislative election's day on 17 April 2014, this regulation was contested by several parties in the Constitutional Court and was agreed only to be implemented at the national level. Since the first multi-party elections in 1999, discourse surrounding the need to increase the parliamentary threshold level has often been one of hot issues in Indonesian electoral politics. One argument is that the number of political parties should be decreased in order to improve the quality of democracy and effectiveness of the presidential government system. However, efforts to increase the parliamentary threshold level in every legislative election in Indonesia have been considered to benefit only large, well-established parties as well as being part of a political strategy to maintain old political forces that have survived since the regime change in 1998.

As non-party cadres, however, union legislative candidates as newcomers with limited financial capability face the dilemma of being secondary to the interests of the political parties. In a context where legislative elections have become more competitive – from closed to open proportional electoral representation – parties’ political machines and strategies to compete with candidates from within and outside are becoming crucial to every union legislative candidate. In addition, the candidacy of union elites in party lists is an effort to reach worker constituencies in industrial areas.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, union legislative candidates are expected to optimize their collective power and organisational support, as well as to obtain majority votes compared to other candidates in the same party and electoral areas.

The following sections of this chapter discuss two important organisational constraints found in this research that affect the success or failure of union engagement in electoral politics. The first factor is union fragmentation and elite factionalism. The second factor is a decline in union membership and workers’ understanding of their political position and identity in the elections. While the Indonesian labour movement has made several gains since the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1998, especially in the area of freedom to organise, the problem of union fragmentation has also emerged, which complicates attempts to engage in electoral politics. Further, in the absence of a strong and unifying party for unions to cooperate with, they have no obvious partisan home. This condition further increases the difficulties unions face building cooperation across organisational lines, which is vital for unions’ ability to strengthen their electoral position. In addition, the nature of union membership and the political identities of workers determine patterns of support for trade union candidates in competing for legislative positions.

Corrupt Practices and Material Inequalities

The implementation of the 2014 legislative elections has been criticised not only for procedural, administrative and operational logistical problems but also the increasing of corrupt practices during political campaigns. Compared to previous elections, the practice

¹⁶⁷ Based on Indonesia’s open proportional electoral system, a legislative candidate with the highest number of votes will gain the accumulated votes from other candidates in the same party and electoral areas in the final vote’s recapitulation. If the total votes meet the minimum threshold for legislative seats than it will be counted as a share of 1 seat for party representation. In the legislative elections, a voter has at least two choices either to vote for one legislative candidate based on the list offered by a party or to choose a party via a symbol printed on the ballot. Votes for the party symbol will be given to candidates with the most votes in the final vote’s recapitulation.

of vote-buying and individual gifts became “more flagrant” in 2014, increasingly vulgar, and moreover, widespread across the country (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014: 121). Based on a large research project on the practice of money politics in the 2014 elections, which involved 50 researchers and interviews with about 1500 legislative candidates and campaigns workers in 20 provinces, Aspinall and Sukmadjati (2015: 10) concluded that the practice of money politics in the 2014 elections was a central aspect of the campaign strategy for most legislative candidates and the practice of vote buying was more intense in 2014 than 2009 and earlier elections. This greater intensity and the more widespread nature of vote-buying and money politics practiced during 2014 elections can be seen in three aspects: the proportion of candidates who were involved in the practices, the candidates’ total expenditures, and the sum distributed to individual voters and communities (Aspinall and Sukmadjati 2015: 29-32).

Aspinall and Sukmadjati (2015: 39) also highlighted the role of vote broker as a popular strategy used by most candidates to connect them with the voters individually and secure votes in the 2014 legislative elections. The brokers are recruited to provide information about candidates to voters, to mobilise the voters to support and vote for the candidates, and to ensure that the voters actually vote for the candidates on the polling day. In order to seal the deal, the brokers generally delivered cash and goods to voters (Aspinall and Sukmadjati 2015: 34). These findings further confirmed that the practice of vote-buying and individual gifts has become an undeniable feature of Indonesia’ electoral democracy.

The relationship between Indonesian elections and the use of money and other material resources could be described as “two sides of the same coin”, especially in a society where patron-client relationships are significant (Simandjuntak 2012: 102). It often found in a society where strong patron-client relationships have traditionally co-existed side by side with religious and cultural value. As note by Simandjuntak (2012: 108) in most traditional societies in Indonesia where there is an enduring patrimonial system, such as in regions of North Sumatra, potential voters tend to prefer candidates who are wealthy because it is “manifestation of power and prosperity” and a form of guarantee to “supply security and protect” their followers if they are successfully elected. Benefiting from their material power, the wealthy candidates often use their material advantages to secure votes and consolidate their power by distributing cash, gifts and other material benefits to voters. The voters, in turn, behave like clients, as they seek tangible benefits from wealthy candidates in exchange for votes and political loyalty

rather than opting to give their votes to candidates who offer specific programs or broad policy changes (Mas'udi and Kurniawan 2017: 450). Personalistic relations and voters' preference wealthy candidates are often found in many young democratic countries as "the traditional understanding of elite in which wealth constitutes the most important of elite capitals" (Simandjuntak 2012: 108)

The use of money, gifts and other material transactions is itself in line with the increasingly pragmatic condition of Indonesia's electoral democracy which lacks policy debates and prioritises materialistic aspects in elections (Fukuoka 2013; Jati 2014; Aspinall and Sukmadjati 2015). Due to this, several observers of Indonesian elections have questioned the quality of electoral democracy in Indonesia. According to Fukuoka (2013: 61), electoral democracy in Indonesia has created a "business bias" where money plays a crucial role and has effectively marginalised non-elite actors who may have the potential to become effective politicians if elected. According to Jati (2014: 13), an election is no more than a political-economic arena where each of the actors - candidates and the voters - mutually reinforce their political bargaining for the sake of fulfilling their respective interests.

The widespread practice of vote-buying and individual gift practices in the 2014 legislative elections had a strong connection with the implementation of the open proportional representation electoral system adopted in Indonesia after the 2009 legislative elections (Aspinall 2014: 101). Under the proportional electoral system, voters may choose to vote for either the candidate or the party symbol on the ballot paper. The number of seats for the political party in each electorate area is then determined by combining the total votes all relevant candidates and the votes for the party symbol. The candidate who has the largest number of votes will then have the first opportunity to gain a parliamentary seat in an electoral area. This condition, in turn, causes competition between candidates to be very tough, not only regarding those from different political parties, but also those from the same party. To obtain optimal votes, the candidates rely not only on campaigns coordinated by political parties, but also on individual campaigns, and they form success teams that extend through layers of brokers to connect them with potential voters.

Although the practice of vote-buying has been increasingly open since the 2009 elections, the number of cases reported to the Constitutional Court were relatively insignificant compared to other types of campaign violation in the 2014 legislative

elections. One of the reasons is that the majority of political parties and legislative candidates competing in legislative elections in 2014 are suspected of violating campaigns with money politics (Rumah Pemilu 2014). Based on an evaluation report published by the Rumah Pemilu (2014), the Constitutional Court received 903 lawsuits against legislative election violations from political parties. Of these, the allegations of balloting and vote-busting during vote recapitulation were most significant, reaching approximately 59 per cent, followed by bureaucratic neutrality (21 per cent), voter list manipulation (9 per cent), vote-buying (4 per cent), and other cases (7 per cent).

Most union candidates interviewed for this thesis confirmed that the use of cash and gifts of various sorts to constituents in exchange for votes was an undeniable political reality that they faced during their candidacy in the 2014 legislative elections. As one union candidate in Bekasi explained: “voters have become more open and vulgar about money politics. They shamelessly embarrassed me by asking for *cendol* money during the campaign”.¹⁶⁸ Another candidate in Serang claimed that “voters often even compared what other candidates had given when I tried to approach them to support my candidacy”.¹⁶⁹ It is the opinion of Sahat, a union candidate from the Gerindra Party in the 2014 legislative election in Bekasi, that “money politics is obviously real and often difficult to avoid because our society generally regards it as something acceptable in the election. Even with friends and neighbours, asking for votes can be a business”.¹⁷⁰ Similar views were also confirmed in interviews with other union candidates who regularly expressed that they were left speechless with regard to money politics during their candidacy in the 2014 legislative elections. In this regard, several admitted defeat, others felt regret and refused to re-engage in electoral politics, while others accepted it as valuable experience and part of a useful learning process. As one informant commented:

I was not surprised when many voters I met during campaigns often asked me: is there no *cendol* money, *mas*? Where's the envelope, *mas*? What can you do for us, *mas*? That's the reality in our society. However, in essence, I do not regret the defeat of my candidacy, and surely the previous election has become a good learning process for myself and also for FSPMI with its Labour Go Politics. For the next election, I think it is essential to educate and empower

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Ferry Nurzali, union candidate from the Gerindra Party in Bekasi. Jakarta 8 September 2016. *Cendol* money is a phrase used by voters in Bekasi to ask for money in exchange for their votes. The word *cendol* refers to a popular Javanese traditional sweet drink made from rice jelly, coconut milk, palm sugar syrup and ice. Other popular phrases openly used by Indonesians during the election as a form of vote-buying are: “envelope money”, “cigarette money”, “pulse money” and “salt money”.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Intan Dewi, union candidate from PAN in Serang, Serang, 3 December 2016

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Sahat Butarbutar, union candidate from the Gerindra Party in Bekasi, Jakarta 28 September 2016.

the workers and other voters about the importance of clean elections. Surely this is not an easy task considering our society is very complicated. Regarding the workers, most do not yet understand, why is it important for workers as well as unions to have their political representation in parliament. Of course, to develop political capacity, Indonesian trade unions and workers still have to go through a long process.¹⁷¹

In contrast to other candidates such as party cadres, public figures and business-politicians, there are at least three challenges that union candidates frequently face regarding the practice of money politics in legislative elections. The first challenge is that most union candidates are poor candidates due to their lack of financial capacity. For instance, one union candidate in Bekasi, admitted that he spent about 10 million (US\$666) for his operational expenses.¹⁷² Another stated that he only had about Rp 20 million (US\$1,333) in his bank account when he decided to run for the legislative position in the 2014 election.¹⁷³ A union candidate from Gerindra in Medan explained that he spent roughly Rp 25 million (US\$1,666) on campaign attributes, although he said this was nowhere near sufficient.¹⁷⁴ In an interview, a political consultant that had experience forming success teams in the 2014 elections explained that a legislative candidate needs to allocate at least 500 million (US\$35,000) to fund campaign operations in a legislative election at district/municipal level.¹⁷⁵ This funding is required for various expenses, mostly for regular meetings, campaign logistics (t-shirts, flags, banners, pamphlets), transport and success teams allowances, and is regarded as the bare minimum.¹⁷⁶ It does not include cash and gifts, where the amount required can be much larger depending on how much cash needs to be inserted in an every envelope.¹⁷⁷ Where money gift are concerned, is no way union candidates with limited financial capability can match their more wealthy rivals, and they may also not be able to fund alternative campaign strategies that can attract voters to vote for them.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Aji, union candidate from PKPI in Bekasi, Jakarta 3 October 2016

¹⁷² Interview with a union legislative candidate in Bekasi (name withheld), Jakarta 3 October 2016.

¹⁷³ Interview with a union legislative candidate in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 28 September 2016.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with a union candidate in Medan (name withheld), Medan 5 December 2016

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Sarifuddin, political consultant at Survey Monitoring Independent Network, Bekasi 23 September 2016.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Sarifuddin, political consultant at Survey Monitoring Independent Network, Bekasi 23 September 2016.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Sarifuddin, political consultant at Survey Monitoring Independent Network, Bekasi 23 September 2016.

The second challenge is that most Indonesian workers have relatively low-incomes, especially those who work in labour-intensive industries - so-called blue-collar workers.¹⁷⁸ A study conducted by the Electoral Research Institute and the KPU (2014) concluded that the economic situation in a region is strongly affected by voters' political reasoning in elections. At the grassroots level, a household's economic conditions significantly influence the level of maturity and rationality its members of voting age possess when making political choices in elections. This conclusion is in line with the results of a national survey on voter behaviour in the 2014 legislative elections conducted by LIPI (2014), which established that 67 per cent of voters from households with income levels categorised as good tend to have high levels of resistance to money politics practices. Regarding these findings, with their low income, blue collar workers could possibly be the main target of money politics practices.

The third challenge is the distinctiveness of a union's political identity with regards to other candidates, such as party cadres. In terms of supporters, the party cadres have a broad-base - a sort of floating mass - while union candidates have specific electorates encompassing workers in specific industries or occupations. Moreover, union political identity is based on organisational membership or even class struggle as a result of specific conditions, such as the abuse of worker's rights, economic inequality and political repression (Edwin 2003; Nang and Ngai 2009). On the one hand, this condition benefits the union candidates because they have voters who can be recognised and moreover, who are clearly approachable. In contrast, the situation can be more challenging for union candidates, because the issues related to workers' social and economic conditions, such as minimum wages, the abolition of contract-working systems, health and education services, housing, and transportation costs regularly become political themes in campaigns and are used by every candidate in the elections.

According to Aspinall and Sukmadjati (2015: 22), the influence of money politics on voters' decisions on whether to follow the instructions of candidates is repeatedly problematic and complex. The relationship between patrons and clients (the voters who

¹⁷⁸ A survey conducted by AKATIGA-FES (2012), found that the average monthly salary among 600 workers working in the metal industry across 7 districts in West and East Java provinces reached IDR 1,264,351 (US\$84). This amount is marginally below the average of the provincial minimum wage in West and East Java Provinces which reached IDR 1,345,678 (US\$91) in 2012. Additionally, outsourced and non-permanent workers tend to have lower monthly salaries than permanent workers. According to LIPI (2013: 56), the minimum wage is often implemented as the maximum wage by most employers, particularly in labour intensive industries.

receive money or goods) is only transactional, and certainly not obligatory or binding. Under free, open and competitive elections, those who attempt to buy votes are unsure whether the electorate will automatically give their votes to them on polling day (Aspinall and Sukmadjati 2015: 22). Owing to the intense competition among candidates, voters frequently receive money or goods from different candidates.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, there is no guarantee that voters will follow the instructions given by a success team and in many cases the money was used by vote-brokers for their personal benefit.¹⁸⁰ To overcome the uncertainty associated with money politics and to obtain more sympathy from potential voters, the well-funded candidates generally use specific strategies during campaigns, such as making charitable donations, arranging free health treatment (*pengobatan gratis*), sponsoring sports events, or attending religious activities to deliver items used for praying (Aspinall and Sukmadjati 2015: 45).

Union candidates interviewed for this thesis acknowledged that the use of money politics not only affected voter's behaviours in the 2014 election, but that it might also have limited their campaign activities. Some union legislative candidates tried to approach potential voters who were non-union members by conducting door-to-door campaigns with their success teams in the workers' residential areas. Others tried to use more traditional ways, approaching family and social networks as well as union leaders, though they were unsure if these were effective. Those who were nominated as legislative candidates through their individual connections with parties and who ran without support from their home union organisation, not only accepted their limitation but even stopped campaigning before the election day. For instance, a union legislative candidate in Serang district explained that she only used social media, in addition to family and kinship lines to seek votes when running as legislative candidate during the 2014 legislative elections.¹⁸¹ She acknowledged that besides having little or no financial ability to fund the operational costs of campaigning and forming a success team, her electorate were controlled by the success teams of several better-funded candidates. They not only used banners, pamphlets, flags and other promotional materials to gain the attention of potential voters but also recruited local figures as success team members and vote-brokers to support their candidacy. Another union legislative candidate explained that he chose to

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Saman, success team coordinator of Nyumarno in Jatireja village, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Sarifuddin, political consultant at Survey Monitoring Independent Network, Bekasi 23 September 2016.

¹⁸¹ Interview with a union legislative candidate (name withheld), Serang 3 December 2016.

apply a strategy of small meetings and endeavoured to meet voters as much as possible to compete with the well-funded candidates.¹⁸² He also placed at least several members of his support team in densely populated areas where many blue-collar workers were based, in an attempt to seek votes. However, he admitted that those strategies were not effective and were costly because of the diverse nature of the voters and the vastness of his electoral area.¹⁸³ Other union candidates also admitted experiencing difficulties when forming a voluntary success team to support their candidacy.¹⁸⁴ In one interview, a union legislative candidate explained that a few union colleagues who were initially willing to support his candidacy even switched to another more wealthy candidate's success team because of the attraction of the material rewards provided by them.¹⁸⁵

Nevertheless, not all union candidates simply accepted their limitations when dealing with widespread corrupt practices and their material limitations in the 2014 legislative elections. A variety of situations can be seen in the experiences of union candidates who competed in the 2014 legislative election under the Labour Go Politics movement in Bekasi. Through this movement, resistance to money politics was achieved by optimising the union's collective power, especially at the grassroots level. The FSPMI in Bekasi, for instance, turned their lack of financial resources into a strength by co-opting their militant members from Garda Metal to run an anti-money politics campaign and to work voluntarily to convey an organisational message to support union legislative candidacies. In this respect, the cohesiveness of the union officials, success teams, volunteers and union members in campaigning against anti-money politics was essential, including gaining publicity and sympathy from non-members and non-labour voters.¹⁸⁶ As one of the union candidates commented:

We cannot work on our own [referring to most union candidates who competed in an election without union support] to fight money politics. They [the well-funded and incumbent candidates] are not only supported by many members of success teams, but their logistical support is also impossible to compete with". Our strength rests on organisation membership, so we should make sure that our members cannot be influenced by the lure of money politics and rotten-politicians for the sake of their short-term and personal interests. Therefore, political education for workers is very important, it must be carried out continuously not just during political campaigns in elections, so that workers cannot be fooled

¹⁸² Interview with a union legislative candidate (name withheld), Serang 2 December 2016.

¹⁸³ Interview with a union legislative candidate (name withheld), Serang 2 December 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with a union legislative candidate (name withheld), Medan 5 December 2016.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with a union legislative candidate (name withheld), Medan 5 December 2016.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

again by political candidates who think that the end justified the means, including the handout of cash and goods.¹⁸⁷

According to Supriyatno, the use of money politics in Bekasi had been anticipated before the FSPMI launched their political campaign under the Labour Go Politics movement.¹⁸⁸ For instance, when recruiting the FSPMI's legislative candidates, one of the requirements was that the candidate agreed and committed to resisting various forms of money politics practices during campaigns. Furthermore, during campaigns and the mobilisation of workers, all members of the campaign teams, ranging from national, local, and factory to grass-roots levels worked voluntarily.¹⁸⁹ In addition, all operational expenses during the campaign that involved union-backed candidates were borne by the union (FSPMI) or without any contribution from political parties.¹⁹⁰ As described by Supriyatno in the interview:

If we talk about money politics in Bekasi, it is not a secret anymore. It has become a common issue in every election. Just look at names like (names withheld). They are not only known as party officials and well-funded politicians, but also successful local businessmen and have also been repeatedly elected as members of the legislature. Through Labour Go Politics, we want to show that even though we don't have money we can work and win elections. We are committed to saying no to or going against money politics. We want to educate workers and the public about the true value of electoral democracy. We are already accustomed to mobilise our members and voluntary workers, just like when we were organising demonstrations or protests on the street. So, we just need to work with our existing networks. At the grassroots level, our cadres from Garda Metal certainly cannot be doubted for their loyalty and voluntary to organisation.¹⁹¹

At the grassroots level, the FSPMI's union candidates applied several methods to confront the prevalence of vote buying practices. For instance, in electorates (*dapil*) 4 and 6 in Bekasi district, the union candidate with their campaign team and voluntary supporters applied a strategy which they named a "dawn guerrilla attack" or "*gerilya serangan fajar*" in the days before the poll.¹⁹² They mobilised FSPMI members in each

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Nyumarno, legislative member and former union leader in Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

¹⁹² Interview with Nyumarno, legislative member and former union leader, Bekasi 28 September 2016. Interview with Aji, legislative candidate from PKPI in Bekasi, Jakarta 3 October 2016. Interview with Saman, member of success team of Nyumarno in Jatireja village, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

local community to approach their family members and neighbours and appeal to them to resist vote-buying in the final week before the election, as well as to secure their support for the union candidates. As explained by one of the unions' success team members in *dapil* 6, the use of a personal approach involving union members is an effective way to promote the union candidacy to non-workers voter (family members and neighbours), as most Indonesians tend to trust people they know.¹⁹³ As stated by a success team member:

The most difficult thing is to convince the parents, especially the elderly. They certainly are not familiar with the union candidates and are easily affected by money politics. But if the child (union member) delivered the message, it could be more effective, especially if the child served as a breadwinner in the family. Then surely what is recommended is more easily accepted.¹⁹⁴

In several specific areas where the use of money politics during the campaign was prevalent, the union success team encouraged voters to accept money or goods but ignore the candidates. This strategy was part of their campaign to punish corrupt candidates and to support anti-money politics and *anti-politisi busuk* or the anti-rotten politician's movement.¹⁹⁵

Based on the several cases discussed above, it can be argued that the practice of vote-buying and individual gifts as forms of corrupt practices used by wealthy candidates and material inequalities faced by most of union candidates in the 2014 legislative elections had a genuine effect on the capacity of the latter to compete in elections. On the one hand, it has limited most union candidates to expanding their mobilisation strategy to obtain votes from non-worker electorates in particular, due to the characteristics that distinguish them from other candidates, such as party cadres, community leaders and businessman. On the other, it reveals that union candidates were lacking the ability, or more precisely were unprepared, to compete with well-funded candidates in a new electoral system which is more open and competitive.

The wider implication seems to be that union candidates failed to create what Aspinall and Mas'udi (2017: 417) called "inventiveness" from their specific characteristics and to optimise opportunities presented by the new electoral democracy.

¹⁹³ Interview with Saman, member of success team of Nyumarno in Jatireja village, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Saman, member of success team of Nyumarno in Jatireja village, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi branch, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

Their nominations were driven by a mix of instant political choice and popular political identity, but they failed to convince their main supporters. As such, while it is true that both challenge the union engagement in electoral contestations, candidates also encountered a lack of organisational support and ability to reach not only union members but also broader constituencies among different social groups. However, as they have such different characteristics from other candidates, there is actually an advantage or opportunity that can be optimised by union candidates in contesting in democratic elections.

The success of two union candidates in parliamentary seats in Bekasi under the Labour Go Politics movement can be a good lesson learned in this regard. Under the Labour Go Politics movement, the FSPMI has successfully mobilised its collective power at the grassroots level and is capable of competing with the power of money politics as well as well-funded candidates. They have successfully transformed their lack of financial resources into a strength, for example, by optimising their membership and organisational networks and campaigning for anti-money politics to gain recognition of their political stance and strong message against the handout of cash and gifts during political campaigns. In this regard, a more democratic election can be a political opportunity for unions to engage in formal politics, as long as in the process of the contestation, the union candidates are supported by cohesive union organisational lines from central, local, sectorial and shop floor level, to grassroots members.

The Union-Party Alliance

In contrast to the previous three elections in post-authoritarian Indonesia, the 2014 legislative elections were marked by a significant reduction in the number of participating parties. Of the 38 political parties that participated in the 2009 legislative elections, only 12 managed to participate in 2014. This number included a new party, the National Democrat Party, which successfully passed the administrative selection procedure conducted by the KPU under the new legislative election law. Both labour-related political parties that participated in the 2009 legislative elections, the Labour Party and the Indonesian Entrepreneur and Workers Party, failed to obtain enough votes to pass the parliamentary threshold. Similarly, an attempt to re-register by the Labour Party in the KPU also failed to meet the administrative requirements. The implementation of the new electoral system and more rigorous registration requirements impeded the formation and

participation of the labour-based parties in the 2014 legislative elections.¹⁹⁶ Consequently, attempts to engage in electoral politics by building political partnerships with non-labour-based parties played a key role in unions' strategy in the 2014 legislative elections.

The unions' attempt to build political partnership with non-labour-based parties in the 2014 elections was not an entirely new phenomenon. Since the first multi-party election was conducted in 1999, in addition to being allied with labour-related parties, several unionists have pioneered developing personal relationships with nationalist and religious-based parties to participate in legislative elections. A noticeable example was Jacob Nowaweya, the SPSI's leader, who successfully won a seat at the national parliament assembly from the PDIP during the 1999 elections. He was subsequently appointed as the PDIP's spokesman on labour issues and promoted to a strategic position as a Minister for Manpower and Transmigration under President Megawati's administration in 2001-2004. A further example was Bambang Wirahyoso, the chairman of the SPN who was nominated by an Islamic-based party, the PKS, to run in the national 2004 legislative elections. Despite failing to be elected as a member of the national parliament, Bambang then played a significant role in the formation of the SPN's partnership with PKS in the 2009 legislative elections (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1301). Furthermore, in the 2009 legislative elections, a number of union elites from SPN, FSPMI and SPSI were nominated by several political parties, such as the PKS, PAN, PPP, PBB and PMB. They were nominated either on the basis of organisational partnership or individually by lobbying party boards. For instance, the SPN and FSPMI formed a political partnership with the PKS in the 2009 legislative elections. This alliance was formed in the lead-up to the 2009 election, where both unions and the party agreed to mobilise their members to support PKS candidates; in return the PKS committed to nominate SPN and FSPMI cadres on the party's legislative list (Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015: 1304).

¹⁹⁶ In the 2014 legislative elections, the requirements of a political party participating in the legislative election were increasingly tightened to support the effectiveness of the presidential government system (Subekti, 2015: 159). For instance, the parliamentary threshold increased from 2.5 per cent in the 2009 election (Law on Legislative Election Number 10/2008, Article 202) to 3.5 per cent in the 2014 legislative election (Law on Legislative Election Number 8/2012, Article 208). Similarly, party stewardship requirements have further complicated the conditions placed upon small parties, from a minimum of 75 per cent at the provincial level in the 2009 legislative election (Law on Legislative Election No. 10, year 2008, Article 8: b, c), increasing to 100 per cent at the provincial level, 75 per cent at the district level and 50 per cent at the district level (Law on Legislative Election Number 10/2012, Article 8: b, c, d).

As argued by Crouch (2010: 89), since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, ideas concerning political liberation, the recognition of civil rights and the role of civil government were accepted as an ideological foundation for Indonesia's new political order. The foundation of civil government has become stronger, especially after a series of military reforms took place by withdrawing the military's position from practical politics and following the implementation of regional autonomy, which changed the relationship between central and local government. The political system moved toward the establishment of a more democratic government or a political system that was not devoted to legitimising the exclusive powers of certain groups. These developments are seen by several civil society activists, including trade unionists, as an opportunity that did not exist in the past and have compelled them to become involved in formal politics (Noor 2010: 34).

According to Aspinall (2004: 87), the engagement of several civil society activists in formal politics in the early stage of post-authoritarian Indonesia is in some ways reminiscent of the pre-New Order situation. In the late 1960s, several student activists who opposed Sukarno's leadership sought to support the formation of a new government and later became part of the New Order regime. They were not only involved in creating economic developments under Suharto's administration but also played a key role in the establishment of Golkar, the ruling party of the New Order regime (Aspinall 2004: 89). Nevertheless, the engagement of civil society activists in formal politics in the post-Suharto era is no longer seen as part of the effort to sustain or legitimise a regime, but rather to represent the interests of society, although not all of society's interests have been represented (Noor 2010: 41).

Trade unions are confronted by at least two political dilemmas in relation to building partnerships with political parties in the 2014 legislative elections. First, Indonesia's political parties comprise poor policy platforms and could be differentiated as either religious or nationalist parties (Aspinall 2014: 102). Linkages between voters and parties are emotional and mostly influenced by their perception of party leadership and economic conditions (Sukma 2009; Mujani and Liddle 2010). If voters' perception is positive, they tend to choose the incumbent governing party; if negative, the voters tend to choose the opposition party (Mujani and Liddle 2010: 131). In addition, party stewardship has displayed a similar structure, and most have had a bureau for workers to formally institutionalise their interest in employment issues (Aspinall 2014: 103).

Consequently, the party identity has regularly become less relevant for union candidates promoting issues relevant to workers' interests in their political campaigns.

Second, unions are facing an absence of typical leftist or socio-democratic parties that usually espouse pro-labour principles. Attempts to build such a political party have been made several times, although none have succeeded in the electoral competition. For instance, a leftist party, the Democratic People's Party (PRD), participated in the 1999 election, but gained only 0.07 per cent of the votes. In July 2003, several former PRD boards and over 50 mass organisations sought to establish another new leftist-populist party called the People's United Opposition Party to participate. However, this party failed to pass the electoral requirement and was thus unable to participate in the 2004 election.

In contrast to the 2009 legislative elections, where the union-party alliance was formed involving only one specific political party, in the 2014 legislative elections the nomination of union candidates was spread widely across the party spectrum. The SPN and FSPMI, for instance, were no longer relying on one political party to engage in the 2014 election, as they did with the PKS in the 2009 legislative elections but preferred to nominate cadres by involving numerous political parties. This strategy was also carried out by several union officials from other federations under the KSPSI, KSPI and KSBI, who were first involved in electoral politics in the 2014 legislative elections. They were nominated by political parties based primarily on individual candidacy, seeing as their union organisation had declared itself as having neutral position or was refusing to support the candidacy of its cadres with any parties in the 2014 legislative elections.¹⁹⁷ However, as unionists competing in an electoral competition, they wished to gain support from union membership and workers in general.¹⁹⁸ In addition, the nomination of unionists in the 2014 legislative elections was not only dominated by small and medium size parties such as the PKS, PAN, PKPI and PBB, it also attracted large and established parties, for instance the PDIP, Golkar, Democrat and Gerindra. This situation not only reveals the fact that unionists are increasingly open to engaging in electoral politics, but

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Abdullah, chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016; Interview with Saiful DP, chairman of FSP KEP KSPI, Jakarta 28 September 2016; Interview with Mudofir, chairman of KSBSI, Jakarta 16 September 2016.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Fery Nurzali, union candidate from FSP KEP KSPSI nominated by the Gerindra Party at West Java electoral area VII, Jakarta 8 September 2016; Interview with Sahat Butarbutar, union candidate from FSP KEP KSPI nominated by the Gerindra Party at Bekasi municipal electoral area 1, Jakarta 2 September 2016; Interview with Napitupulu union candidate from KSBSI 1992 nominated by the Gerindra Party at Medan electoral area 3, Medan 26 November 2016.

also shows that union preferences regarding political parties in elections have changed. In contrast, it can be inferred that the trade unions increasingly have a significant role in delivering votes for political parties.

Apart from the failure of most of the union candidates in the previous elections, unionists acknowledged that they had learned a great deal from their previous electoral engagement, particularly in building partnerships with political parties. In the interviews, union leaders realised that forming partnerships with only one political party limited the nomination of union candidates in legislative elections.¹⁹⁹ The political parties not only control the access of trade unionists to the electoral areas but also the number of allocated seats, in addition to the selection of electoral location for union candidates. In Tangerang district for example, in the lead-up to the 2009 elections, the local SPN board had proposed six of its cadres via the PKS; however, only one ticket was allocated.²⁰⁰ In Bekasi, the FSPMI's proposal to nominate its two officials through the PKS in the 2009 legislative elections was unfulfilled as the party cadre rejected the request.²⁰¹ Furthermore, instruction from unions' national leaders to support a particular party may not necessarily have corresponded to aspirations at a local level and could have hampered the nomination of prospective cadres who had personal networks with different political parties.²⁰² In addition, unionists realised that signing a partnership with only one political party might give the appearance of the union being beholden to a certain political party, something that most unionists interviewed in this study wanted to avoid.

Regarding the party affiliation of the SPN's candidates in the 2014 legislative elections, its national leaders adopted a new strategy by freeing all their potential cadres to engage in electoral politics through any participating political parties. Furthermore, SPN leaders also encouraged cadres to compete in local elections (district level) rather than at provincial and national levels. In highly competitive elections, SPN leaders believed that nominating union candidates in union-dense localities could deliver a possible victory in contrast to the provincial and national races.²⁰³ Negotiation and partnership with party leaders were handed over to each SPN cadre, while organisationally, the SPN took an independent position, not wishing to be tied to any

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016; Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Ahamad Saukani, head of DPD SPN Banten, Serang 3 December 2016.

²⁰¹ Interview with Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

²⁰² Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

²⁰³ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

political parties. Prior to deciding to run in legislative elections, several SPN cadres had their own personal networks with specific political parties.²⁰⁴ The SPN and its cadres were bound in a political contract so that none of the SPN's legislative candidates engaged in the 2014 legislative elections were nominated by political parties without the approval of the organisation. The SPN agreed to provide its organisational support, especially by mobilising its boards at a local level. In turn, if successfully selected, the candidates agreed to prioritise the interests of SPN members and assist the development of the SPN in each of the areas they represented.²⁰⁵

In the case of the FSPMI, its local and national leaders not only endeavoured to form partnerships with different political parties but also pursued a more optimistic strategy by nominating potential cadres to engage in national, provincial and local elections. Furthermore, the relative success of the FSPMI in mobilising its membership in several national labour demonstrations increased their confidence with regard to engaging in three different levels of electoral contestations in the 2014 legislative elections.²⁰⁶ Negotiations with several potential political parties were conducted either by FSPMI leaders or individual cadres who had personal connections with particular political parties. In any negotiations with political parties, the FSPMI refused to pay '*mahar*' (contribution money) for its cadres' candidacies; nevertheless, the organisation agreed to offer its full support to each of its cadres, including the formation of the success teams, campaign financing and mobilisation of its officials and members at factory, sectoral and national levels.²⁰⁷ At a national level, only the PKS was willing to place two FSPMI cadres in the 2014 legislative elections. The personal relationship between the national leaders of both organisations is recognised as playing a key role in this partnership.²⁰⁸ In the 2009 legislative election, the FSPMI president, Said Iqbal was nominated by the PKS as their national legislative candidate in Riau Island province.²⁰⁹ Although he failed to gain significant votes, the organisational relationship that had formed following the 2009 legislative elections was believed to have paved the way for

²⁰⁴ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

²⁰⁵ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Maxie Ellia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 23 August 2016.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Supriyatno, head of FSPMI Branch in Bekasi, Bekasi 30 September 2016.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Maxie Elia, labour activist and vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 23 August 2016.

²⁰⁹ The city of Batam is located in the Riau Island province and one of the strongholds of FSPMI memberships outside Java. In the 2009 election, Said Iqbal was competed with Edward Hutabarat (KSBSI) who was nominated by the Labour Party at the same electorate. Neither was successfully elected.

closer links between both the FSPMI and the PKS to form partnerships in the 2014 legislative elections.²¹⁰

Besides the PKS, other parties such as the PDIP and Hanura Party also ran several FSPMI cadres in numerous provinces in the Sumatra and Java islands. The nomination of FSPMI cadres from these parties was mostly individual, especially as the candidates had a close relationship with the parties, as sympathisers or as local branch officials. Moreover, in union-dense electoral districts, local branch leaders of the FSPMI attempted to approach several large established parties; however, only small and medium-sized parties did not ask for money in exchange for the candidacies of FSPMI cadres. In Bekasi district, for example, FSPMI local leaders only managed to form political partnerships with the PAN and PKPI to place their four cadres in six different electoral areas. Nevertheless, ahead of the registration deadline for legislative candidacy on 28 February 2014, one FSPMI cadre was accepted by the PDIP in Bekasi district. He was nominated by the PDIP Bekasi branch via a recommendation from the PDIP national committee.²¹¹ It should be mentioned that in addition to being selected by the local party leaders, a legislative candidate in a local election may also be nominated by the consensus of national party leaders.²¹²

In practice, as non-party cadres make minimum material contributions to political parties, a union-party alliance tends to disadvantage union candidates. Many union candidates were frequently placed lowest on the ballot paper by political parties in the 2014 legislative elections. For instance, Minggu Saragih, the head of DPW FSPMI North Sumatra, was placed at the bottom of the list (number 10) for his legislative candidacy in North Sumatra province by the PDIP. Similarly, Irwan Abdullah, the vice-president of FSPMI and member of National Tripartite was placed number 9 out of 10 candidates nominated by the PKS in Wes Java VII electorate its national legislative seat. The same

²¹⁰ Besides Said Iqbal, several FSPMI leaders in Batam and Serang were also nominated as legislative candidates by the PKS in the 2009 election. In an interview with a union leader (name withheld), it was not surprising to hear that the FSPMI and the SPN leaders have a close relationship with the PKS. In 2006, Said Iqbal (president of the FSPMI) and Bambang Wirahyoso (president of the SPN) were among several union leaders who were sponsored by the PKS to go to Saudi Arabia for doing *Umrah*- the second pilgrimage after the *Hajj* for Muslim. In 2007, Said Iqbal and Bambang Wirahyoso were also involved in the establishment of Labour Work for Jakarta's Coalition to support the candidacy of Adang Dorojatun and Dani Anwar by the PKS in the Jakarta gubernatorial election.

²¹¹ Interview with Iwan, head of PDIP winning team in Bekasi district, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

²¹² Interview with Nursuhud, parliament member from PDIP, Jakarta 3 January 2017.

pattern was evident where SPN and KSPSI leaders were concerned in the provincial and local elections in Bekasi and Serang; they were mostly nominated in the lower list.

As argued by Mietzner (2007) and Ufen (2010) the decline of state subsidies for political parties has contributed to the increase of parties' attempts to exploit external financing. Mostly due to an inability to fund the campaigns of their cadres in the elections, party have resorted to nominating popular or wealthy non-party cadres who could contribute external financial resources in exchange for their nominations (Mietzner 2010: 251). The greater the ability of a candidate to contribute financially to the party, the more likely he or she is to be placed top on the ballot paper. While candidates with limited financial capabilities may be popular, they are usually placed middle and lower, with no guarantee of being elected. In this regard, non-party cadres who make no significant material contribution are usually listed as legislative candidates with a "shoe number" on the ballot paper. These candidates are regularly considered as a merely complementary in relation to electoral contests and only have a small chance of gaining more significant votes than those at the top of a list (Noor 2010: 49).

Seat allocation may be considered an aspect that is no longer influential in the open-list proportional electoral system. The implementation of this new electoral system since the 2009 election gives voters the opportunity to vote for individual candidates rather than having to vote for a party, as in the previous closed-list system. In practice, however, being placed low on the ballot paper list more often than not produces losses rather than advantages for a legislative candidate in an election. Likewise, voters in Indonesia often find it difficult to choose their candidates, as they have to vote from long list of names from many participating parties and lack information regarding candidates' backgrounds. Nonetheless, this condition is beneficial for popular figures, especially those who often appear on television, such as community leaders, businessmen, government officials, politicians and celebrities.

Data from the Centre for Political Studies at the University of Indonesia reveals that instead of voting for legislative candidates' names, 30 per cent of voters voted for party symbols on the ballot paper in the 2014 election (Puskapol UI 2014). This figure is almost the same as that found in the 2009 election. The study also found that among 97 elected female legislative candidates at the national level, the majority of them were listed at the top of the ballot paper. They were party leaders' official relatives such wives and daughters (36 per cent), party officials (32 per cent), businesswomen (18 per cent), former

members of the legislature (9 per cent), and NGO activists (8 per cent) and celebrities (6 per cent). In this regard, the fact that many union candidates were placed lowest on the list in the 2014 legislative elections suggests that the parties wanted to use union candidates as vote-gatherers but did not want to give union candidates a real chance to win the seats.

In term of party's political resources, although union members may be nominated as party representatives, it does not mean that most of them have the same opportunity to utilise the party machine during political campaigns. The fact that party cadres and non-party cadres from the same party are contesting the same constituency and electoral area, means the party resources themselves typically become "a site of contestation" (Aspinall 2014: 102). Candidates who are party officials and have influential positions in the party hierarchy will regularly dominate the party resources to support their own candidacies. They have wider access than other legislative candidates to party facilities and organisational networks, especially at the grassroots level such as in the district and sub-branch offices.²¹³ As newcomers and outsiders, party resources therefore become irrelevant to union candidates and this compels them to manage their own financial support for campaigns. Furthermore, on the day of voting, new-comers from non-party cadres have also to provide their own team (vote witnesses) to monitor the vote recapitulation at every level of their electoral areas.²¹⁴ The possibility of votes from non-party cadres being transferred to candidates who are from party officials is likely to occur.²¹⁵ Likewise, during the recapitulation of votes at sub-district and district levels, the votes cast between party cadres and non-party cadres could be manipulated by party officials, especially if they are split between two candidates from party and non-party cadres, to obtain a relatively balanced vote.²¹⁶ Therefore, union legislative candidates are required not only to have the ability to place a vote witness in every polling station but also to gain majority from other candidates in the same party to secure their votes in the

²¹³ Interview with PAN and PDIP success team members (names withheld), Jakarta 22 September 2016.

²¹⁴ Conflict during vote recapitulation in legislative elections usually involves claims between political parties. Lawsuits involving pitting one legislative candidate against another candidate in the same party are rare because generally problems involving candidates in one party are resolved internally (Interview with PAN and PDIP officials).

²¹⁵ In the interviews, several union legislative candidates admitted that not all votes result at polling stations could be recorded by their success teams. Thus, in the polling station, where no representation of vote witnesses were recruited by union candidates, it is highly possible that they lost some of the votes they gained. In urban areas, one polling station usually represents about 400 voters maximum from one or two household groups (*Rukun Tetangga*, RT). For instance, there are 150 polling stations spread across five sub-districts in the Bekasi electorate area 5.

²¹⁶ Interview with Safrudin, Commissioner of KPU Medan, Medan November 2016; Ahmad, commissioner of KPU Serang district, Serang 3 December 2016.

recapitulation process.²¹⁷ In this regard, the role of a union organisation in forming union success teams and mobilising the membership to support union candidacies is arguably the most important aspect for union candidates in gaining optimum votes and monitoring the process of vote recapitulation.

Union Fragmentation and Elites Factionalism

In contrast to the single union policy under the New Order regime, the post-1998 Indonesian labour movement is confronted by an over-abundance of trade unions, which has caused “divisive expansion” (Tornquist 2004: 377), created collective bargaining difficulties (Isaac and Sitalaksmi 2008: 243), increased “personal rivalries” (Tjandra 2016: 45) and contributed significantly to the “political insignificance” of union involvement in electoral politics (Silaban 2014: 45). Since the approval of ILO Convention Number 87 in 1998, followed by the establishment of the Trade Union Law in 2000, hundreds of new union federations at a national level and thousands of new unions at plant level, rapidly emerged throughout Indonesia. The growth of trade unions in post-1998 Indonesia was impressive, especially in relation to national confederation and federation levels. In 2006, for instance, there were six national confederations and 90 union federations registered at the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration Indonesia (Pusdatin Ministry of Manpower 2017). Ten years later, in 2016, the number of union confederations had more than doubled to 14 national confederations, while the union federations had reached 120. In addition, the freedom of association guaranteed after the regime changed in 1998 tends to be interpreted as proliferation rather than consolidation by trade unions in post-1998 Indonesia (Hadiz 2010: 158).

Freedom of association clearly facilitated the division of trade unions in post-1998 Indonesia. According to Caraway (2006: 221), the existing Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000 places far too much emphasis on freedom of association. Moreover, Caraway argued that the establishment of the Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000 has produced

²¹⁷ In Bekasi district, the case of Nurdin Muhidin and Nyumarno can be a clear example of how union candidates benefited from the open proportional system. Nurdin Muhidin received a majority of votes (10,345 votes) compared to seven other candidates from the PAN in Bekasi district electorate area 1, while Nyumarno was in second place among the other six PDIP candidates in Bekasi district electorate area 6. In the final vote recapitulation, they benefited from votes transferred from other candidates of the same party which meant their total exceeded the threshold (Bilangan Pembagi Pemilih, BPP) to secure seats in the Bekasi district’s parliament.

two contradictory effects. On the one hand, it has abolished obstacles to independent unionism, on the other, it has “facilitated extreme union fragmentation” (Caraway 2006: 222). As the law also allows independent unions, new trade unions have mushroomed into various structures with thousands of unaffiliated shop-floor level unions. In addition, there has not yet been a case whereby the government has rejected the registration of a new union. Registration of a new union at the Ministry of Manpower office simply acts as notification and only involves submitting a simple document with a list of founding members, union officers, number of members, and the address of the union secretariat.²¹⁸

Union divisions and elite factionalism in the Indonesian trade unions are regularly caused by personal rivalry rather than principles or programmatic reason (Silaban 2011: 90). The formation of new trade unions is also frequently driven by economic interests, as a union is seen as a source of income for many union leaders (Silaban 2011: 91). In this regard, losing a position in the union means a unionist is closing access to his livelihood. Furthermore, a new union often emerges after elections for new union leaders. Instead of giving their support to the new leadership, the losing elites typically choose to form a new counter-union and claim the same members as new elected leaders. This is an issue that is frequently mentioned during interviews with union leaders in this research. For instance, the SPN was separated into two distinct organisations after Iwan Kusmawan was elected as the chairman of the union federation in 2014. The former SPN chairman, Bambang Kusworo and his supporters established a new union confederation called the KSPN. Another reason is the absence of regeneration in relation to union leadership. Division in the unions has often also occurred due to long-standing old union leaders in the union structure, and a progressive group of workers in this situation may opt to exit and form a new union rather than work with old union bosses (Tornquist 2004: 388). For this reason, the divisions in the KSPSI and SPN bodies are genuine examples. At factory level, divisions among union elites are generally preceded by distrust and inter-union rivalry within union elites that has various causes.²¹⁹ Several main reasons are: the alleged

²¹⁸ In a separate interview with an official at the Ministry of Manpower, a revision to Law Number 21/2000 concerning Trade Unions was said to be urgently needed, especially to review the requirements of unions at national and local levels. However, the proposal to revise this law was considered very sensitive, considering it was related to the basic right of freedom to organise. According to this officer, the proposal to revise the law on unions should come from the unionists.

²¹⁹ During my visit at the head office of a union in Jakarta, September 2018, I had the opportunity to witness a meeting attended by 10 representatives of unions at plant-level who wanted to change their federation affiliation to the new one. The previous federation was acknowledged by those union representatives to have been failed to build regeneration in union management because it was controlled by old union elites.

misappropriation of members' dues; neglect of members' demands to employers by union officials; and allegedly colluding with employers to negotiate workers' demands (Rokhani 2009: 12). Although labour activists and union leaders have generally recognised the need to unite their movement into one powerful and effective front, the acute problems linked to union fragmentation and elite factionalism, in turn, have contributed to the complexity of organising the labour movement in post-1998 Indonesia.

Confronted with the problem of organisational divisions, Indonesian trade unions are in the challenging position of having to maximise their attempts to engage in electoral competition. In the absence of a unifying and sustained labour-based party, the nomination of union candidates in electoral contests requires unions to establish a strategy for working with each other to mobilise membership and pool their support for union candidacies. Likewise, given the fact that Indonesian trade union membership is geographically concentrated, particularly around industrial areas, limiting unions to putting forward only one candidate in each labour-based electoral district could provide larger margins of victory. It would facilitate the unions pooling their collective power, prevent the division of labour votes and maximise the number of union candidates elected. In the provincial and national elections, where the number of districts is much larger and requires bigger vote accumulation, the role of union confederations, federations and regional branch union leaders in facilitating a front to support union candidates is a crucial one. In practice, however, rivalries between the union elites, short-term interests and cynicism regarding politics, frequently become a major constraint for Indonesian trade unions in creating powerful and effective fronts during electoral contests (Tornquist 2004).

The union leaders and union candidates interviewed for this research acknowledged that attempts to build political collaboration with union leaders from various federations are complex and challenging. Contestation in electoral politics is commonly regarded as an extension of the interests of political parties rather than as a strategic means for unions to engage directly in the policy-making process.²²⁰ Furthermore, when a union declares itself to be neutral in an electoral contestation, it implies that the organisation closes the door on collaboration with other unions to support

²²⁰ Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016; Interview with Maxie Elia, former vice-president of FSPMI, Jakarta 23 August 2016; Interview with Fery Nurzali, vice-chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016.

the nomination of the union candidates.²²¹ In addition, amid intense competition for unions to maintain their membership, allowing other unions to enter its base, for example by conducting political campaign, is a rare possibility.²²² For many union leaders, ensuring their membership to follows their leadership and organisation's direction is more important than opening their door to other union leaders.²²³ The increasingly tight competition among trade union candidates to gain votes from workers' constituencies are becoming grounds for competition among trade union elites which have used different parties and campaign strategies. Consequently, most union candidates have preferred to use their own strategy and rely fully on their own union organisation and personal network to support their legislative candidacies.

In the 2014 legislative elections, for instance, three unionists from three union federations competed against each other in the same electoral area: West Java VII. They were: Nurzali, vice chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI from the Gerindra Party, Abdullah, vice chairman of FSPMI KSPSI from PKS, and Ahmad Fuad Anwar, chairman of the PPMI nominated by PKB. The West Java VII electoral area encompasses three districts, specifically: Bekasi, Karawang and Purwakarta, which also represent the most densely populated union localities in Indonesia.²²⁴ Apart from the union elites, the West Java VII electoral area was also enlivened by well-known national politicians, former mayors and regents, and celebrities. In this electoral area, there were 119 legislative candidates competing for the ten allocated national legislative positions. To be successfully elected, each candidate would have to gain a minimum of 235,851 votes. This included the condition that the party would pass the parliamentary threshold of 3.5 percent. There was a total of 2,189,677 registered voters spread across 11,108 polling stations in the 70 sub-districts (KPU 2015). Thus, competition among legislative candidates in this electorate area, including for support from workers as the dominant constituency, was very tight.

²²¹ Interview with Sahat Butarbutar, union candidates nominated by the Gerindra Party in Bekasi, Jakarta 13 September 2016. Interview with Zainal Abidin, union candidate nominated by the Hanura Party in Serang, Serang 2 December 2016.

²²² Interview with Iwan Kusmawan, chairman SPN, Jakarta 1 October 2016; Interview with Sahat Butarbutar, union candidates from the Gerindra Party in Bekasi, Jakarta 13 September 2016.

²²³ Interview with union leaders in Bekasi and Serang (names withheld), Bekasi 20-25 January 2017 and Serang December 2016.

²²⁴ In addition to five union candidates supported by the Labour Go Political movement, there were also three union candidates from three federations who competed against each other using different parties in this local electorate area. For instance, in the Bekasi district electorate 1, they were Butarbutar from the FSP KEP KSPI (the Gerindra Party), Suradi from the SPN (Nasdem) and Hendi Suhendi from the FSPMI (PPP).

Despite West Java VII being known as the most densely populated labour constituency in Indonesia, as was predicted, none of union legislative candidates mentioned above won national or local legislative seats. Even the votes cast for them in several sub-districts known as union base-voter areas were disappointing. Hence, competition between union leaders in the same electoral area not only weakened the collective power of unions and workers, but also made many workers become less enthusiastic to support their union leader's candidacy. Several union leaders and workers even put forward union legislative candidates with no difference from other political candidates, including those who had advanced from an organisation using different political parties for national, provincial and local legislative elections. With unions still developing their strength and political identity, nomination of union leaders in legislative elections through different political parties is ineffective and tends to make workers apathetic and further influence them to use other political identities when voting.²²⁵

Although Indonesian unions are being confronted by a fragmentation problem, several efforts were made to create electoral cooperation among them to support union candidacy in the election. For instant, several union leaders in Serang formed a joint front to support nine candidates from five different unions nominated by several different parties in the 2009 legislative elections. Initiated by two influential local labour organisations, the Serang's Labour Solidarity Forum (FSBS) and Serang's Trade Unions Alliance (ASPSB), union elites sought to form a joint campaign as part of a movement called Labour Vote Labour. A further example was related to a similar movement carried out by a number of national union leaders who established the Indonesian Worker's Axis (Poros Pekerja Buruh Indonesia, PBPI) to support union candidacy in the 2014 legislative elections.²²⁶ These efforts tend to flourish at the elite level but are less consolidated at the grassroots level.

One successful example of electoral cooperation among unions and workers across the federation was not in a legislative election, but during the Anis-Sandi nomination in the DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election (*Pilkada*) in early to mid-2017. Despite the different political contexts, the cooperation of a number of union federations to support the nomination of the Anis-Sandi candidacy in 2017 *Pilkada* Jakarta provides

²²⁵ During my fieldwork in Bekasi I talked to several workers and asked their opinions on their leaders who competed in the 2014 legislative elections. These opinions were expressed by most of workers whom I talked with.

²²⁶ Personal observation on the declaration of PBPI in TIM Jakarta, 16 February 2014.

a valuable lesson that could help overcome union constraints to form electoral cooperation. Anies-Sandi won the DKI Jakarta gubernatorial seat after they successfully defeated other candidates in two rounds of the election. Anies-Sandi formally gained political support from the unions after they agreed to sign a political contract with 13 union federations under a joint front; specifically, the Jakarta Worker's Coalition (*Koran Perdjoeangan*, 12 November 2017).

The political contract contained 10 points concerning popular issues which have always been common concerns for unions and workers, such as an increase in minimum wages, the removal of outsourcing working systems, the provision of affordable housing for workers, and improvements in social security services for workers. In exchange, union leaders agreed to form a union and workers' support network and mobilise its membership for the Anis-Sandi campaign using a popular tagline “*Maju Kotanya Sejahtera Pkerjanya*” or “Develop the City, Prosper the Workers” (*Koran Perdjoeangan*, 12 November 2017). The union and workers' support for the Anies-Sandi victory was visible in several sub-districts in East and North Jakarta where union support was strong. This successful experience pertaining to the electoral cooperation of the unions in 2017 *Pilkada* Jakarta suggests that Indonesia's unions, even with their fragmentation problem, still had the ability to surmount barriers and achieve electoral cooperation. The Anies-Sandi candidacy was a one-time event and had successfully unified the divided Indonesian unions that used to compete against each other in legislative elections. Nevertheless, to what extent this successful experience can be transformed into other unions' engagement in electoral contestation, will most likely be proven in subsequent legislative elections.²²⁷

²²⁷ Less than a month after Anis and Sandi being inaugurated as the Governor and Vice-Governor of DKI Jakarta on 16 October 2017, unions and workers staged a protest against their new policy on 2018's provincial minimum wage (UMP). Unions and workers were disappointed as the newly elected Governor of Anis Baswedan has set 2018's minimum wage (IDR Rp 3.6 million/ US\$265) at a level lower than that demanded by unions and workers (IDR Rp 3.9 million/US\$ 285). Anis has also broken his political contract with the unions as he had promised not to set the UMP based on Government Regulation No.78/2015, and instead to formulate the UMP based on Law No.13/2003 on Manpower (*The Jakarta Post*, 2 November 2017). Several union elites who previously had joined the unions' coalition to support the Anis-Sandi candidacy then withdrew their political support for their leadership in DKI Jakarta (2017-2022). In this regard, many believed that Anis-Sandi had used their political contract with the unions merely as a political strategy to gain votes from labour constituents during 2017's DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election (*Berita Satu*, 10 November 2017).

Union Membership and Workers' Political Identity

Union membership and workers' understanding of their important political role and identity play a crucial role in determining vote accumulation for union legislative candidates in elections. In contrast to other legislative candidates, such as party cadres, community leaders and business-politicians, who have broad-based supporters, union legislative candidates depend on specific electorates encompassing workers in specific industries or occupations (Marks 1989: 5). In the Indonesian context, those who are often referred to as blue collar workers are the main constituent of most union legislative candidates in election. They are categorised as factory workers in the manufacturing industries and dominate Indonesian trade union memberships. Nevertheless, the majority of workers, such as those in the agriculture sector who have little awareness of their legal rights as workers, are still not members of a trade union.

Trade unions, workers and union legislative candidates bond through political identity and organisational ideology, which is based on a collective consciousness or even class struggle (Edwin 2003, Santoso and Parto 2016). Moreover, their intensive communication in defending workers' socio-economic interests has made union legislative candidates easier for workers to recognise than other legislative candidates. This condition benefits the union legislative candidates because they have voters who can be mobilised in elections.

In addition to organisational constraints such as union fragmentation and elite factionalism - which have caused schisms among workers with regard to voting - attempts by union candidates to compete in legislative elections are also facing the problem of a decline in union membership. Data from the Ministry of Manpower indicates that in the last decade there has been a downward trend in the number of workers who join trade unions in Indonesia. In 2007, the number of union members reached about 3.7 million workers. The number then decreased by about 1 by 2017, to around 2.7 million members (Pusdatin 2017). Conversely, as discussed earlier, the number of trade unions at the confederation and federation levels has increased since the single union policy was lifted in 2000. This situation confirms that the increase in the number of trade unions was not followed by an increase in the number of union memberships. Instead, union elites are fishing in the same pond, trying to grab the same memberships, although the numbers are diminishing.

Scholars of Indonesian labour politics argue that the decline in union membership has been caused by the recruitment system applied in Indonesia, which in the past several years has tended to apply a contract and outsource-based work system (Tjandraningsih and Nugroho 2008; Juliawan 2010; Rajagukguk 2011). According to Juliawan (2010: 45), the contract and outsource-based work system not only eliminates the opportunity for workers to gain secure work and a decent living but also hinders their political right to organise by alienating workers from unions. Based on his research on the role of employment agencies in Tangerang, Juliawan (2010: 45) noted that employers and contracting agents have hampered the consolidation of workers' political power not by implementing anti-labour or anti-union movements, but by modifying worker status, from permanent to non-permanent workers. The contract and outsource-based system are considered to have a non-permanent working relationship, which appears to prevent workers from becoming members of trade unions. "Even if they have the courage and a chance to join a union, contract workers are concerned that union membership might be seen as an act of dissent and would jeopardise their already fragile employment" (Juliawan 2010: 45).

The practice of a contract and outsource-based system in Indonesia is part of the flexible labour market policy implemented in Indonesia since 2003. It was part of the financial aid requirements set out by the World Bank and the IMF who came in to save the Indonesian economy following the severe economic crisis that also hit many Asian countries in 1997-1998. The policy was meant to ensure that the establishment of three new labour laws during democratic transition (1999-2004) was supported by a stable environment for business and economic growth as well as improvements in the investment climate. The implementation of the flexible labour market policy is covered by Manpower Law Number 13/2003, particularly Articles 64-66 which regulate the terms of the contract and outsource-based work system. Despite the lack of law enforcement, the implementation of the flexible labour market policy has been violated on a vast scale by employers and employment agencies, particularly with regard to the restriction on business types and fulfilment of workers' basic rights, such as salaries, contract lengths, and freedom to organise (LIPI 2011: 45). As a result, rejection of these contracts and outsourcing, and demands for their abolition, have been part of the main agenda in every union demonstration. Similarly, the unions have also rejected the government's proposal to revise Manpower Law Number 13/2003, which they believe will further liberalise the Indonesian labour market (Nawawi 2013: 23).

Interview data suggests that the pressure on trade union membership due to the widespread nature of the contract and outsource-based work system has become a main concern among most union leaders at national and local levels. Their concerns often relate to the rights of contract and outsource workers, which are often violated, particularly the right to organise through trade unions. In the unionists' view, "a trade union is not only a place to represent workers in the company but also to fight in defending and advancing wider popular socio-economic interests in the society".²²⁸ Trade unions play a crucial role as a school for their members to understand who they are and how to protect their interests and to advance their causes.²²⁹ Another unionist expressed the idea that "during the Suharto era, unions and workers were not only depoliticised, they were also weak in term of bargaining position and set in following what the management had decided".²³⁰ In short, unionists claimed that the existence of trade unions plays a crucial role in building workers' collective consciousness, which can develop a degree of class solidarity and awareness of their political identity and role in the context of legislative election. As one unionist commented:

It is not easy to mobilise workers to vote for union candidates in elections. It is not only for contract workers and outsourcers but also for those who are permanent workers and members of trade unions. We need a process and various methods and more time to build workers' collective consciousness (awareness about their political identity and role), about the idea of movement, about the importance of electoral politics, who they are, and so on. Building workers' collective consciousness cannot be instant. It takes a process; even two, three times participating in strikes or demonstrations will not necessarily guarantee that they are conscious of their political identity as workers. It needs a continuous approach. We now have the freedom to organise. However, the union had long been asleep under Suharto. Indeed, it is not just asking them to join the union. Our workers are mostly just *nerimo* (accepting) because our culture often teaches us to be like that. Most workers, especially those who work under the contract and outsource system, they feel that they are grateful to be able to get a job. Because, surely, they are afraid to lose their jobs if they join the union. There are still many anti-union parties out there. In fact, they try to influence workers to avoid the union, or direct workers to choose union 'a' rather than 'b' because 'b' only do demonstrations. Hence, the presence of unions is crucial to support those workers. If they understood the importance of unions, about why they need to organise, then their understanding about their identity as workers would also certainly change. But it is important to note, who the leaders of their unions are. If it is those

²²⁸ Interview with Ahmad Saukani, head of DPD SPN Banten, Serang 6 December 2016.

²²⁹ Interview with Abdul Gani, member of DPP FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016.

²³⁰ Interview with Fayakun, member of DPP FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 9 September 2016.

who always say *yes sir yes sir* to HRD [company management], the story will be different.²³¹

The effect of unions' political consciousness-raising efforts for their members was apparent in my interviews involving a different group of workers.²³² Workers who supported union candidacies in the 2014 legislative elections strongly differentiated between themselves and other workers, who they considered unconscious still in term of their political identity as workers. In the interviews, one worker who supported the Labour Go Politics movement said, "Why are we afraid to be involved in electoral politics? Do we want only to fight in the factory and on the street? Until when?"²³³ A second worker stated, "I often participate in the strikes, so what would the world say if I did not vote for him [referring to one union candidate]"²³⁴ A third worker reflected that "Those who are still unconscious often say that politics is not part of the unions. So, isn't the wage policy a political product?"²³⁵ Likewise, a fourth worker explained, "Yes, I voted for him [referring to one union candidate], although I am not a supporter of his party. If not us, who else should support union candidates in the election?"²³⁶ Similar views can also be noticed on social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter whose use among workers and union leaders has become increasingly prevalent since the 2014 elections. Most statements show workers' hope for success in placing their representatives in the parliament, as well as improvement of labour welfare. Other expressed their hopes for the establishment of a new labour party supported by unions and workers.²³⁷

The above views were expressed by workers who consciously understood their political role and identity. It is certain that the role of their union as "a political school" in providing political education has succeeded in building its members' collective consciousness, which is one of the essential methods used to mobilise workers in elections. Hence, political education can be understood as a learning process for workers in their capacity as members of trade unions, both through training on labour issues and worker experiences involving action taken to defend their rights and socio-economic interests (Tambunan 2014: 116). As an outcome of the learning process, workers change

²³¹ Interview with Nicolas, coordinator of SBSI North Sumatra province, Medan 2 December 2016.

²³² In the interviews, most unionists often used alternately the term of "collective consciousness" and "political awareness". These terms referred to a form of class struggle with a condition where workers are aware about their specific identity, position and role among different group of people in the society.

²³³ Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 26 September 2016

²³⁴ Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 26 September 2016

²³⁵ Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 26 September 2016.

²³⁶ Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 26 September 2016.

²³⁷ Interviews with workers in Bekasi (names withheld), Bekasi 26 September 2016.

their perception of electoral politics and make attempts to participate in legislative elections by supporting union candidates. In this regard, political education for workers can be seen as an important tool for building workers' political consciousness.

It is important to note that the above workers' views remain the minority. Most Indonesian workers do not perceive their political role and position in the election as part of their political identity. Instead, what emerges is often related to other identities such as religious, ethnic, geographical, and historically related choices. With reference to historical accounts, workers' political identity as being part of a class struggle grew strongly in the pre- and post-independence eras (1945-1966) and then disappeared as a result of the deconstruction of the unions' ideology and the depoliticisation of workers during the New Order era (Hadiz 2010:89). The authoritarian New Order regime was successful in cutting the strong links between unions and political parties through the implementation of the single union policy and the prohibition of communist ideology which had a strong link with the unions. These conditions contribute to an understanding of the form and values of the labour movement in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Consequently, in post-authoritarian Indonesia, trade unions and workers are constrained or have no alternative but to reinforce their identity and rebuild their political strategy, including how to understand the links between workers' interests and community needs, and those between unions with the interests of political parties, and how they can be achieved. Unfortunately, as the process of democratisation continues to evolve, the debate over the ideology of the labour movement, as well as the importance of political unionism, is being abandoned, and conflict between union elites, marked by the formation of new trade unions, is increasing (Suwigno 2008: 145). In certain cases, there are various unions that have strong ideological bases, such as the SBSI and the KASBI. However, problems arise when the base at grassroots level is so small that when it comes to mobilising membership, it remains extremely limited. Conversely, unions with an exceptionally large membership base, such as those under the KSPSI and KSBSI, are still in a strong enough organisational position to refuse to engage in electoral politics.²³⁸

There are many factors that can influence workers' behaviour in voting. However, understanding voting behaviour is particularly complex since it relates to many factors, such as political, psychological, economical, sociological, and cultural issues – most

²³⁸ Interview with Abdullah, chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016; Interview with Mudofir, president of KSBSI, Jakarta 16 September 2016.

notably religious affinities, region, ethnicity, social class, and voters' perceptions about national economic conditions (Baswedan 2007; Mujani and Liddle 2010). According to Norris (2004: 21), voting in an election is not only about the decision-making process, but also how voters reconfirm their political identity. This process is alive and exists in any individual as a result of the continuous internalisation, social interaction, and political education that may emerge as a dominant factor affecting voters' decisions in elections (Norris 2004: 23). Likewise, Pratt (2003: 10) noted that the process of voters confirming their political identity is typically influenced by their political consciousness, which is constructed from how they realise "who we are" and how they identify their collective interests through identifying similarities and their political purpose. In the case of workers, their collective interests and political consciousness grow as a result of specific conditions, such as the abuse of workers' rights, economic inequality, social injustice and political repression (Nanggai 2009; Santosto 2016).

In terms of workers' political identity, my interviews involving a different group of workers confirmed two essential factors that influenced them in understanding their political role and position in elections. The first aspect is related to the difference between workers' point of view and their political identity as workers. When asked about their views related to the Labour Go Politics and Labour Vote for Labour campaigns in the 2014 legislative elections, workers who stated that they did not support these campaigns tended to see themselves as "workers" (*pekerja*) or "employees" (*karyawan*) rather than as "labourers" (*buruh*). They directly refused to be called as *buruh*, instead preferring to be categorised as *pekerja* or *karyawan*.

The identity dichotomy between the so-called *buruh* and *pekerja* or *karyawan* is still strong in workers in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Workers who work in retail companies, financial sectors, and services prefer to be referred to as *karyawan* and refuse to be categorised as *buruh*.²³⁹ Likewise, workers in the state-owned enterprises (BUMN), who have permanent working status preferred to be called *karyawan* rather than *buruh*. In the interviews, some workers commented that the Labour Go Politics and Labour Vote for Labour campaigns in the 2014 legislative elections were held only for those labourers working in factories or those who often took to the streets to demonstrate.²⁴⁰ Moreover, in the view of workers in permanent positions, employee status is different for labourers

²³⁹ Interview with workers in Bekasi (names withheld), Bekasi 24 September 2016. Interview with workers in Serang (names withheld), Serang 7 December 2016.

²⁴⁰ Interview with workers in Bekasi (names withheld), Bekasi 24 September 2016

as the former have a standardised salary and benefits, and they cannot be made redundant without notice as it should involve along and complex process.²⁴¹

Worker's indignation at being called labourers confirms the legacy of the New Order regime which is still strongly influencing Indonesian workers, particularly in understanding their political identity as workers. It also underscores the success of the authoritarian regime in Indonesia (1968-1998), of their political strategy to discourage left-wing political activism based on collective labour power, organisational solidarity and class consciousness. As argued by Rudnyckyj (2018: 156) dichotomy of labour identity was a key part of the political strategy of Suharto's authoritarian regime; he sought to foreclose labour's political activism, including suppressing communism, as the term *buruh* had been widely used by unions during Sukarno era (1945-1968). Moreover, a distinctive labour strategy was sought to make Indonesia an attractive country for direct foreign investment, in accordance with its industrialisation and export-led growth policies established in the late 1980s (Rudnyckyj 2018: 158). Meanwhile, a distinctive policy on workers' employment status as a group of permanent, salaried workers, and another group of non-permanent workers such as contract and outsource-based labourers, seems also have contributed to undermine workers' understanding about their political identity in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

In the era of president Sukarno (1945-1967), the use of the word *buruh* for workers was more common than *pekerja*. This condition can be seen, for example, in the use of term *Menteri Perburuhan*, which refers to the Ministry of Manpower and the use of trade unions words such as *Serikat Buruh*, which tends to have a strong association with being working class. In addition, unions were also given political privilege as they were allocated eight seats in the national parliament to represent labour interests (Tedjasukmana 1959: 35). During Suharto's presidency (1967-1998), the word *buruh* was replaced words such as *pekerja* and *karyawan*. Under the Pancasila industrial system, use of the word *buruh* was perceived to strengthen the stigma of the class dichotomy between employers and workers and to preclude the establishment of harmonious industrial relations (Ford 2009: 68). However, since the *reformasi* in 1998, the word *buruh* has been used again to accommodate freedom of expression (Semeru 2002; Ford 2009). Trade

²⁴¹ Interview with a worker in Medan (name withheld), Medan 23 January 2017; interview with a worker in Jakarta (name withheld), Jakarta 5 December 2017; Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 28 September 2016; interview with a worker in Bekasi, Bekasi 29 September 2016. Similar opinions also expressed during my informal conversation with many workers during my field work in Medan, Serang and Bekasi.

union words such as *serikat pekerja/serikat buruh* are also used simultaneously in any regulations related to unions.²⁴²

The second aspect is related to workers' perceptions about the function of trade unions. Most Indonesian workers still consider the function of trade unions to be economic rather than political. This is evident from a survey conducted by LIPI (2014) about workers' perceptions and their participation in the 2014 legislative elections. The survey indicated that 64 percent of workers tended to choose their union in the workplace to focus on economic functionality rather than politics. Similar findings were also made by a survey conducted by the All-Indonesian Workers Organisation (OPSI) in 2009, which concluded that the levels of knowledge, awareness, and political participation of workers are relatively low. This view is more visible when traced on the basis of unions' organisation where workers from unions who chose neutral positions in elections tended to have a different orientation (outside of their identity as workers) in legislative elections. This means that the influence of union organisations in shaping their members' understanding of unions' functions and role in electoral politics is crucial.

In interviews with numbers of young female workers who shared rooms in small rented house (*rumah petak*) in Bekasi, most of them showed no interest talking about politics (elections). As one respondent commented: "There is no benefit involved in politics. It is better to think about how we can work to collect money to live and then get married".²⁴³ When asked about the Labour Go Politics campaign, most of them knew about the campaign and were able to name the union that had initiated the campaign, but they said they did not support it. One worker responded that "Labour Go Politics was good, but it would not impact us much. When they reached the top (in the parliament), they would have forgotten us".²⁴⁴ These young female workers are members of one union that has split into four different factions and they seemed confused when I asked who the union leader was. Furthermore, a group of workers who I met during a lunch break at a small food stall in front of a textile factory in Serang, expressed similar views. They had no interest in joint political campaigns organised by union, which they said deviated from the unions' true function. One worker stated that he had been approached by members of

²⁴² See Trade Unions Law Number 21/2000 and Ministerial Decision Number 78/2001 on amendments of Ministerial Decision Number 150/2001 where references to *pekerja* was amended to read *pekerja/buruh* and references to *serikat pekerja* to *serikat pekerja/serikat buruh*.

²⁴³ Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 24 September 2016.

²⁴⁴ Interview with a worker in Bekasi (name withheld), Bekasi 24 September 2016.

a union success team to support one union candidate, but he did not vote for him as he had never met the candidate and questioned his motives and capacity.²⁴⁵

The cases discussed above highlight the complexity of how Indonesian workers expressed their political identity and positioned themselves strategically in elections. Workers' preference to identify as a *karyawan* rather than as *buruh* clearly underscored a strong influence of the 32-year legacy of labour's depoliticization in the New Order era. Likewise, workers' understanding of the function and role of a union which leans more towards them having an economic function than being agents for political representation. In addition, the current policy on workers' employment status as fitting into several categories, can also be said to have influenced workers' understanding about their political identity in post-authoritarian Indonesia. Nevertheless, in an era where the state no longer takes an active role in manipulating the political identity of citizens, including industrial workers, the above situation directly shows the weakness of the strategy that has been used by union leaders in post-authoritarian Indonesia. In this regard, the weaknesses are not only related to efforts to build a 'political consciousness' for union members but also how serious the union elites are about consolidating their movement in a more organised way and on a broader front. Without these two efforts, it is difficult for Indonesian trade unions to optimize and mobilise their collective power and be politically represented through taking part in electoral contestations.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified and examined the structural and organisational constraints regarding union electoral engagement in the 2014 legislative elections. Particular attention has been given to key aspects of the unions' structural and organisational constraints: corrupt practices and resource inequalities; the relationship between unions and political parties; union fragmentation and elite factionalism; the decline in union membership; workers' political identity. Overall, these aspects have a genuine effect on unions' mobilisation in legislative elections and limit most union candidates capacity to approach union members and non-worker electorates during political campaigns.

Most union candidates appeared unprepared when confronted with Indonesia's electoral politics, which are dominated by corrupt practices such as vote-buying, in which

²⁴⁵ Interview with a worker in Serang (name withheld), Serang 7 December 2016.

political parties and candidates rely on the discretionary and transactional distribution of material benefits to attract potential voters. Furthermore, corrupt practices have limited the campaign activities of most union candidates and some of them are even accepting of their limitations. This condition is evident with regard to union candidates who run individually for legislative seats with a lack of financial support and limited preparation. Despite vote-buying being so prevalent in the 2014 election, a handful of candidates in several labour-rich districts won, with the full support of their organisation. In this regard, a well-planned strategy and solid organisation among union leaders, candidates, success teams and voluntary supporters proved able to surmount the practice of vote-buying and money politics in the 2014 legislative elections.

In terms of union-party alliances, the union strategy of forming alliances with many political parties or freeing its officials to form connections with any parties increased the number of union candidates in the 2014 legislative elections. However, this is only the first step and is not an indicator of a more stable process for the trade unions' transformation to organisations able to compete effectively in political contestation. The relationships built with political parties are not based on a grand design agreed and supported by many unions, but rather on the short-term strategy of individual unionists or particular unions ahead of the election. Furthermore, as newcomers and outsiders with minimum financial resources, union candidates tend to be placed unfavourably position on ballot forms, especially since party machines are not part of a system that can bring them closer to the electorate to gain maximum support. In this regard, the party machine therefore becomes irrelevant for union candidates and thereby compels them to finance and manage their own political resources for campaigns.

The findings also revealed that union fragmentation and elite factionalism have placed union candidates in a difficult position to form inter-union electoral cooperation. The relative success of Indonesia's trade unions in transforming their collective power into street politics has not yet been replicated in union engagement in legislative elections. One reason is that short-term interests still dominate most of the union elites so that engagement in legislative elections is still regarded as a separate interest between union candidates and political parties. Consequently, political support for union candidates is more individualised and limited to the capabilities of each union organisation in terms of forming their own success team.

Regardless of the various obstacles and challenges faced by Indonesia's unions, the efforts that have been made by union candidates to optimise their role in competing for legislative positions has not failed completely. Most union candidates have attempted to introduce constructive electoral strategies, which in turn helps the development of democracy in Indonesia by promoting pluralism and diversity. Union efforts are especially significant in terms of their commitment to reject the transactional politics which has tarnished the quality of electoral democracy in Indonesia. Union engagement in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections has provided valuable lessons about the future of the Indonesian labour movement. For instance, their political movements must be conducted in a more organised way and built based on a grand design that is supported by many unions, especially with regard to objectives, strategies and role-sharing. In addition, efforts to empower workers and strengthen their political identity through political education are also crucial. If this can be achieved, it is possible that the political agenda of the Indonesian labour movement to disrupt electoral politics and win legislative seats could be realised.

Chapter Six

Unions' Political Role in Local Parliaments

Introduction

On 5 August 2014, 50 newly elected legislative members were inaugurated in the parliament office of Bekasi district for their 2014-2019 term of office. In contrast to similar official events held in previous periods, the inauguration ceremony was attended by hundreds of workers and unionists, mostly from the FSPMI, who appeared enthusiastic while waiting outside the parliament building. In the afternoon after the inauguration ceremony had ended, hundreds of workers on motorcycles travelled from Bekasi's parliament office to *Omah Buruh* in the Bekasi EJIP Industrial area.²⁴⁶ The parade was held as a form of celebration for the official inauguration of two newly elected MPs from the FSPMI in the Bekasi District People's Representative Council. That day was acknowledged by unions and workers in Bekasi as a symbol of their success with regards to the Labour Go Politics campaign in the 2014 legislative elections and marked the beginning of a new struggle in relation to policy decision-making in formal politics. Obon Tabroni, the head of FSPMI of Bekasi at that time, stated in his speech at *Omah Buruh*, that it was “a victory day for Labour” and a “new era for the labour movement in Bekasi”.²⁴⁷

The Bekasi parade reveals the magnitude of the unions' and workers' expectations of their newly elected representatives in the local parliament. This achievement at the same time answered many parties' doubts about the ability of trade unions to mobilise members in electoral political contestations. Following the inauguration of union elites as members of parliament, the next research question that it is crucial to answer is the extent to which union elites are capable of representing the voice of the workers and defending their causes via formal negotiations and policy-making mechanisms in local parliaments. Analysing this question will shed light on the new political role played by union elites in parliament, the magnitude of the challenge they face regarding the

²⁴⁶ *Omah Buruh* is a term for a non-permanent place or building built on a bridge located in the EJIP area of Bekasi. The site was built in 2002 and later became the secretariat of all workers' activities in three industrial estates in Bekasi (EJIP, Silicon and Hyundai). The word “Omah” comes from a Javanese word meaning “house”. On 9 September 2017, *Omah Buruh* was evicted after the authorities decided to continue the construction of the bridge that had been abandoned for about 15 years.

²⁴⁷ Personal observation during inauguration day of 50 members of parliament at Bekasi's parliament house and celebration of two MPs from FSPMI at *Omah Buruh*, Bekasi 5 August 2014.

dominance of elite actors in party politics, and the complexity of bureaucratic procedures in modern-day Indonesia.

Literature on Indonesian civil society shows that scholars remain deeply divided in their understanding of the potential role that can be played by reformist activists and civil society actors in formal post-authoritarian politics in Indonesia. Optimists believe that the presence of civil society activists in parliament will have a positive impact on the performance of Indonesia's legislative institution, which has been acknowledged to be too slow in managing various demands for political changes (Ziegenhain 2008: 73). In contrast to other newcomers, such as celebrities and business figures who have little experience in handling public issues, civil society activists in parliament are expected to improve the critical attitude of the legislature (LIPI 2011: 2). They can act as a new class of politicians who can build bridges between society and the state and provide a counterbalance in the policy-making process (Mietzner 2013: 29). In the context of local autonomy, their experience in advocating and empowering society at the grassroots level is expected to strengthen the mainstreaming of local issues as well as to provide alternative ideas to advance reforms at the local level (LIPI 2011: 22). However, one may question the ability of civil society actors to influence policy-making once they have moved into formal politics. As noted by Beitinger-Lee (2013) and Mietzner (2013), they must not only be able to cope with strong resistance from powerful elites who dominate the distribution of political and economic resources, but also deal with the strength of the party's structure and the existence of patronage relationships that are deeply rooted in Indonesian mainstream politics.

This chapter analyses the political role played by elected trade union elites in local parliaments and its implication for union engagement in electoral politics. As pointed out by Mietzner (2013: 44), the influx of reformist activists and civil society actors into formal politics is something of a dilemma. Once the unionists have moved into formal politics, they become part of the state institutions they previously criticised or opposed. Their position in parliament is inseparable from their bearer party's interests, particularly in the political decision-making process, which often involves backroom lobbies, collective consensus and the assignment of certain political roles (Ziegenhain 2008; Sherlock 2010). At the same time, their inherent identity as union activists with specific constituents (mainly workers) continues to be attributed to something that sets them apart from career politicians. In carrying out their political role, union activists in parliament are wary of the need to maintain the trust of workers and union members, who often reject

the word compromise. Therefore, as newcomers in the political domain, the ability of elected union elites to maintain the trust of their members while negotiating their political position within the party's structure and interests will be put to the test. The outcome will determine their success in parliament as well as the likelihood of re-election.

Focusing on the dynamics of Indonesia's local politics, this chapter analyses the legislative role played by elected union elites in Bekasi, Serang and Medan. The discussion of the empirical data on the political role of union elites is structured according to their representative function as members of local parliaments, particularly regarding legislative (law-making) and monitoring functions. An understanding of the political role played by union elites in local parliaments is important at least in two ways. First, many union elites have been engaging with electoral politics since the first multi-party election conducted in 1999, but few of them have won legislative seats. For instance, of the 36 union candidates who ran for legislative positions under the Labour Go Politics campaign in the 2014 legislative elections, only two unionists succeeded in gaining parliamentary seats. Second, very little is known regarding the political role played by activists or civil society actors who successfully entered parliament at national and local levels. Many scholars have produced studies on the importance of civil society in Indonesia's democratisation (Hadiwinata 2003; Beittinger-Lee 2010); however, only a few deal with the observation and assessment of case studies of the presence of civil society actors in parliament. Therefore, analysing the involvement of union elites in parliament is crucial, not only to complement the few related studies on this specific subject, but also as part of an important effort to understand the future engagement of union elites in electoral politics as well as civil society actors as a whole.

Struggle in the Formation of Local Labour Regulation

The implementation of the decentralisation policy has been one of the most important and observable political changes in Indonesia since 1998. It marks the end of the uniform policies carried out by central government across all districts and municipalities. As stated in the fourth revision of Law Number 23/2014 on Regional Government, the establishment of local regulation is the authority of both the Head of District (regent or mayor) and the District People's Representative Council (DPRD II).²⁴⁸ Furthermore, under the principle of equal partnership, the process of drafting, deliberating and the

²⁴⁸ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 23/2014 on Regional Government, Article 240.

promulgation of a regulation must be involved and jointly approved of by both the head of the district and the DPRD II.²⁴⁹ In addition, Law Number 23/2014 concerning Regional Government also grants the right of the community to provide oral or written input into the drafting process.²⁵⁰ Therefore, the implementation of decentralisation in Indonesia is not only a form of delegation of political and administrative authorities from central to local government, but also a strategy to support local diversity and the distinctive challenges faced by each local government, taking into account the unique characteristics of each region across Indonesia's archipelago (Hidayat 2008; Tyson 2010; Choi 2011).

A study conducted by the Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy or KPPOD (2016) on 185 local regulations established from 2010 to 2015, reported that the regulation on local labour is one of those most applied by local governments in Indonesia.²⁵¹ Other local regulations include local tax (retribution), licensing services, investment in regional enterprises, Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), spatial and environmental regulations, and regulations related to basic needs such as education and health services (KPPOD 2016: 3). However, in some major industrial areas in Indonesia, such as Subang, Batam, Karimun and Medan, labour regulation has not yet been implemented. This situation can be related to the fact that the establishment of local labour regulation in industrial areas is complex, lengthy, and regularly involves different interests from trade unions, employers and local government. Moreover, in specific locations designated as industrial areas, there is usually a national strategic industrial zone so that the assignment of local regulations must consider national interests, which are under the authority of the central government. In addition, local labour regulation covers various aspects and involves multiple sectors or local government agencies in its implementation. This includes: licensing and employment services; the provision of facilities and infrastructures that support workers' welfare; provision of workers' rights (such as membership of the social security programme); licensing of foreign workers; education and training; priority recruitment for local workers; the protection of vulnerable workers.

²⁴⁹ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 23/2014 on Regional Government, Article 241.

²⁵⁰ Government of Indonesia, Law Number 23/2014 on Regional Government, Article 237.

²⁵¹ These local regulations do not include the management of regional government organisations which are adjusted annually and annual mandatory local regulations which are stipulated in Law Number 32/2014 on Regional Government.

Following the inauguration of two union officials as parliament members in Bekasi district, one of the main targets of their political agenda in law-making is to establish local labour regulation. In my interviews, the two elected union representatives in the Bekasi parliamentary office stated that the existence of local labour regulation is “an urgent requirement” considering the strategic position of Bekasi as the largest industrial and most union-dense area in Indonesia.²⁵² There are at least three principal reasons related to the demands for the establishment of local labour regulation in Bekasi district. First, Bekasi is one of the main destinations for job-seekers who come from across Indonesia to find job opportunities in the industrial sectors. However, the unemployment rate in Bekasi is higher than the national figure. Based on data from BPS in 2013, the unemployment figure in Bekasi reached 97,922 workers or 7 per cent of the total workforce (1,345,909 people). By 2015, the number had increased to 149,859 workers or 10.03 per cent of the total labour force of 1,494,680 workers (BPS 2017). Most of these unemployed workers are local residents around industrial zones, are generally less skilled and educated than migrant workers and are therefore less able to compete in the employment market.²⁵³

In the context of local autonomy, the implementation of local labour regulation is expected to protect marginalised workers, strengthen the quality of local labour and avoid horizontal conflict between local workers and migrants.²⁵⁴ Since its introduction in August 2003, violations of the implementation of Manpower Law Number 13/2003 have occurred in many areas, including Bekasi district. One of the reasons is the inherent problem of certain rules stipulated in Manpower Law Number 13/2003, such as those on the limitation of contract and outsource-working systems, severance payment and dismissal cases, which can be interpreted by trade unions, employers and local governments in several ways. The establishment of local labour regulation is expected to remove the disadvantages in Manpower Law Number 13/2003, so that workers, employers and local governments can obtain protection and legal certainty.²⁵⁵ A proposal for the formulation of local labour regulations, which was initiated by the head of Bekasi

²⁵² Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016; Interview with Muhidin, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 26 September 2016.

²⁵³ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

²⁵⁴ According to the final draft of *Naskah Akademik*. Document obtained from *Sekretariat DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi*, 28 October 2016.

²⁵⁵ According to the final draft *Naskah Akademik*. Document obtained from *Sekretariat DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi*, 28 October 2016. See two research reports published by five universities (2006) and LIPI (2010) for comprehensive study on Labour Law Number 13/2003.

district, had been registered in the Regional Legislation Programme (Program Legislasi Daerah, Prolegda) in 2013 and 2014. However, until the end of the 2014 parliamentary term, the proposal had never been followed up by the People's Representative Council in Bekasi district. Despite the alleged lack of commitment by members of parliament to follow up the proposal, the political situation at that time is also believed to have influenced parliament's decision-making, given that 2013 was the political year ahead of the April 2014 legislative election.²⁵⁶

At the beginning of 2015, the head of Bekasi district and the local parliament had targeted 26 local regulations in Bekasi's 2015 legislative programme. Of the 26 targeted regulations, 12 local regulations were initiated by the head of the district, while another 14, including the local labour regulation, came from initiatives established by the district representative council (Secretariat DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi 2016). The target of 26 local regulations in one year appears over-optimistic, considering that in the previous period (2009-2014), the local parliament was only able to disseminate around 14-16 regulations per year.²⁵⁷ Except for annual mandatory regulations such as annual budgeting affairs, a local regulation typically needs at least six months to be established, from preparation of the academic document, legal drafting and deliberating, to promulgation in an official regulation document (lembar peraturan daerah).²⁵⁸ In cases where the formulation of a regulation requires input from the public, the process of drafting, deliberating and promulgation tends to be complex and lengthy. For instance, the formulation of Bekasi District Local Regulation Number 12/2011 (concerning tourism) took approximately a year and half to be completed.

One of criticisms that regularly arises in the public debate regarding decentralisation in Indonesia is that the implementation of regional government may have created new spaces for democratisation, but it has also caused local governments to compete with respect to issuing local regulations. In many cases, local regulations are formulated without comprehensive reviews, let alone consideration of the quality of the regulations produced. In order to be able to produce a number of targeted local regulations, the legal drafting and deliberation of regulations are frequently conducted hurriedly and with a lack of serious debate (PSHI 2016: 45). Consequently, since the implementation of decentralisation in 1999, many local governments have produced

²⁵⁷ Interview with Darmansyah, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 25 September 2016.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Darmansyah, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 25 September 2016.

problematic regulations that contradict public interest or higher laws and regulations, violate human rights and are poorly implemented.²⁵⁹

A study conducted by KPPOD (2005) on the implementation of local labour regulations established during the political transition period (1999-2004) in 38 districts across Indonesia found that those reviewed had faced many problems, in terms of judicial proceedings, substance, or the fundamental principles of local regulation. Of the 38 districts reviewed, fourteen local labour regulations were contradictory to higher laws, ten local labour regulations had substantial problems, eight regulations violated the principle of local regulation, whilst the remaining six regulations were ascertained to be problematic regarding justice, principles and substance (KPPOD 2005). Furthermore, in 2016, the Ministry of Home Affairs released a list of 3,143 local regulations categorised as problematic and recommended that they should be annulled by way of an official Presidential Decree. One example is Local Regulation Number 1/2011 of Karawang district on labour regulations, which was established four months before the end of the regent's term of office. Due to the hurried process of legal drafting and the political interest behind the establishment of this regulation, it was deemed to be problematic. It violated higher laws, such as regulating the minimum wage that had been regulated in Manpower Law Number 13/2013 and was too excessive, stating that local workers must be recruited first to fill jobs (KPPOD 2016).

At the end of 2015, only 18 out of 26 targeted local regulations were promulgated by the Bekasi district parliament. Among the eight remaining regulations that failed to be established was the local labour regulation (DPRD Bekasi District Secretariat 2016). According to Nurdin, the discourse to follow-up the draft relating to local labour regulations was discussed once, at an inter-faction meeting in August 2015. However, the majority of the factions preferred to prioritise the establishment of two regulations on education services and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).²⁶⁰ By necessity, local labour regulation has been registered in the *Prolegda* since 2013. However, from an economic and political perspective, local regulations on education services and CSR have undoubtedly attracted more attention from most members and faction leaders in the Bekasi district parliamentary office.²⁶¹ According to Nurdin, although a proposal on local

²⁵⁹ See list of 3,143 local regulations categorised as problematic local regulations published by Ministry of Home Affairs in 2016.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Nurdin, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 26 September 2016.

²⁶¹ Interview with Nurdin, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 26 September 2016.

regulation has been given priority in the *Prolegda*, it does not mean that the proposal will be directly approved in parliament. The establishment of a local regulation is part of a political process which requires not only collective approval from most of the factions but also determines how strongly political interests are embedded in the proposed regulation.²⁶²

With regard to the order of procedure (*tata tertib*) pertaining to Indonesia's legislature, the decision to follow-up the proposed legislation in the *Prolegda* through legal drafting should be based on the approval of all factions.²⁶³ In this regard, the decision to discuss draft regulation also very much depends on this approval. In practice, it is a rare occurrence in Indonesia's legislature that a member of parliament rejects or goes against the decisions of his/her political party. A member of parliament who expresses an opinion or position beyond the party line will be labelled disobedient and often doomed to the risk of being recalled from parliament by the party's executive board (Ziegenhein 2010). This rule on the recall of MPs by political parties is often regarded as a 'barrier' used to restrict MPs from being critical or contrary to the decisions of their political parties (Huda 2015: 1). Although Law Number 17/2014 on the People's Representative Council guarantees immunity for each member of parliament raising questions or giving their opinion outside and inside parliament, the law also gives a political party the authority to discharge members of the parliament through recall or interim change mechanisms (Pergantian Antarwaktu, PAW).²⁶⁴

Having been neglected for one year, in the first inter-faction meeting conducted on 20 January in 2016, the Bekasi District People's Representative Council eventually agreed to follow-up recommendations from the legislative committee (Badan Legislasi, Baleg DPRD) for making legal drafting of local labour regulations their main priority.²⁶⁵ The meeting also appointed Nurdin as the Chairman of Special Committee XIV, with the primary task of finalising the legal drafting of proposed local labour regulations.

²⁶² Interview with Nurdin, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 26 September 2016.

²⁶³ Prolegda is a planning instrument for the establishment of local regulations arranged in a planned, integrated and systematic way (Ministry of Home affairs Decree Number 12/2014). *Prolegda* consists of the composition or listing of local regulations derived from proposals by the head of the district and DPRD that stipulate their completion within one financial year.

²⁶⁴ The rule on recall of MPs by a political party was removed in Law Number 4/1999 on the Formation and Position of the MPR, DPR and DPRD during the *Reformasi* era (1999-2003). It was then re-activated in 2003, as stipulated under the second revision of Law Number 22/2003 Article 6.

²⁶⁵ Baleg DPRD is part of the organisational structure of the District People's Representative Council, whose main function is to coordinate the formulation of the regional legislation programme and preparation of legislative material requirements for the legal drafting process relating to local regulation initiated either by the head of the district or the district's People's Representative Council.

Regardless of Nurdin's role as the chairman of the *Baleg* DPRD, his appointment as the chairman of Special Committee XIV was politically beneficial, especially in relation to guiding the drafting process and ensuring that the discussion about the draft would not be delayed, as had happened three years earlier.

Prior to completion of the draft, which involved several meetings with related government departments in Bekasi district and working visits to DKI Jakarta, Cimahi and Pasuruan for comparative studies, the special committee also conducted two separated public hearings involving representatives of trade unions and employers (Apindo and Kadin). Ideally speaking, a public hearing aims to gather the opinions of the public, especially those who have a direct interest in the establishment of a local regulation. This mechanism is considered a recognition of a citizens' rights to participate in public policy-making and moreover, is central to democratisation (Lay 2017: 21). In practice, with an over-optimistic number of targeted regulations, the process of a public hearing in local parliament is frequently acknowledged to be a mere formality, considering that the process is only part of the procedure that should be conducted by the special committee. In the interview, one union activist who attended the public hearing argued that the process was unsatisfactory, as there was no clarification on whether or not input from unions would be accommodated in the draft.²⁶⁶ The same opinion was also expressed by one member of Apindo Bekasi, who established that there had been no substantive changes between the draft discussed in the public hearing and the final regulation.²⁶⁷ Apart from these views, the performance of the Bekasi district parliamentary institution has often been criticized by the public, especially with regard to its quality and the accountability of parliament members involved in the policy-making process. For instance, at the end of 2015, the parliament of Bekasi district was criticised by the Centre for Indonesian Law Studies (LKHI) which acknowledged a lack of transparency and often ignored standard procedures followed in the formulating of regulations.

On 10 August 2016, before it was officially approved, the draft regulation on local labour regulation in Bekasi district was discussed in a plenary session, which was attended by 34 out of 50 parliament members in the Bekasi District People's Representative Council. Unlike most plenary sessions, which tend to be a formality

²⁶⁶ Interview with Nasrudin, union leader at PT DJabesmen, Bekasi 5 October 2016

²⁶⁷ Interview with Adreas, member of Apindo, Bekasi 8 October 2016

(Ziegenhein 2010), this one comprised a serious debate.²⁶⁸ As will be described below, the debate was triggered by statements delivered by Nyumarno, who criticised the limitations of two articles in the draft and proposed one additional article in order to make the implementation of the draft proceed effectively.²⁶⁹ However, the proposal from Nyumarno was opposed by other politicians, which indirectly reveals the political interest among different parties concerning the establishment of local labour regulation in Bekasi district.

In an attempt to play his part in law-making, during the plenary session Nyumarno criticised the substance of Article 7 (6) and Article 28 (1) in the draft prepared by the Special Committee, which stipulated the obligations for employers and the management of the industrial areas in Bekasi district but did not comprise any sanctions with respect to violations.²⁷⁰ Article 7 (6) in the draft, stipulated that in relation to the training programme for workers, the management of industrial areas and employers must provide support facilities at workers' training centres (BLK). Furthermore, in Article 28 (1), relating to the recruitment of local workers and residents around industrial areas, the draft stipulated that every company would be obliged to cooperate with local education institutions to accommodate local workers and residents under the coordination of a designated official local organisation (Organisasi Perangkat Daerah, OPD).²⁷¹ According to Nyumarno's argument, the use of the word 'obligation' in both articles should be complemented by requirement of sanctions regarding violations. To support his argument, Nyumarno mentioned similar local labour regulations in other areas, for instance Serang and Karawang districts, which he claimed were being implemented inadequately because there was no section on violations. To ensure legal certainty in the implementation, and prior to the dissemination of the draft as a definitive regulation, in his final statement, Nyumarno recommended that an additional article on administrative sanctions for violation of both articles mentioned above should be added.

While Nyumarno's proposal was supported by one solitary member of parliament, who also shared his views during the plenary session, two members of parliament sought to oppose by giving different recommendations. The first opponent was Taih Minarno, a

²⁶⁸ Based on personal observation during Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016

²⁶⁹ Personal observation, Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016

²⁷⁰ Personal observation, Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016

²⁷¹ It is important to note that the rules in this article do not mention the explicit recruitment obligations of local workers with certain quota limits.

politician from the Democrat Party, who argued that the addition of the article in the draft, which had been prepared by the Special Committee, should not only consider other parties' interests but should also suspend the enactment of local labour regulation.²⁷² Furthermore, Taih Minarno argued that the proposal recommended by Nyumarno could be alternatively accommodated through the establishment of a Head of District decree. As stated in Law Number 23/2014, in addition to proposing local regulation, which is the authority of both the head of the district and the People's Representative Council, local government via the regent or mayor has the authority to issue a regent's regulation (Peraturan Kepala Daerah, Perkada). This supports the implementation of local regulations and gives the authority to issue a regent's decree to undertake local government duties.

Another opponent of Nyumarno's proposal was Suganda, a senior PAN politician in Bekasi district who was also a member of the Special Committee XIV, and who also expressed a similar opinion to Taih Minarno in the plenary session. In his statement, Suganda argued that the recommendation from Nyumarno concerning Article 28 had been accommodated in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the head of the district and Apindo Bekasi. As reported by one local media source in Bekasi, on 26 April 2016, the representative of employers in Bekasi made an agreement with the head of the district, in line with the MOU, to have a recruitment quota of 30 per cent for local workers (*Dakta*, 14 April 2016).²⁷³ In his final statement, Suganda stated: "Please do not change the things that have been discussed in the special committee in this plenary, so we are consistent".²⁷⁴

In an effort to respond to the statement made by the politicians, which opposed his recommendation, Nyumarno filed a second interruption and argued that both just wanted to divert attention away from the substantial weaknesses evident in the prepared draft.²⁷⁵ To counter their argument, Nyumarno argued that in addition to parliament initiating the draft, issuance of a regent's regulation to accommodate the absence of the article, such as a sanction in local regulation, is not only contradictory to the authority of

²⁷² Personal observation, Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016.

²⁷³ In practice, this policy of 30 per cent quotas for hiring local workers is not only ineffective in its implementation but also contradicts the fundamental principle of labour law. In addition, as reported by the KPPOD (2016) such rules can be related to the reasons why labour regulation in some districts, such as can be found in Karawang and Cimahi, are considered problematic and have been annulled by the Ministry of Home Affairs

²⁷⁴ Based on notes taken from personal observation at plenary session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016.

²⁷⁵ Personal observation, Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016.

the regent but would undoubtedly cause the implementation of local labour regulation to be ineffective.²⁷⁶ Moreover, he also criticised the statements from Suganda which he considered to show that his adversary did not understand the purpose of the plenary session and had disregarded the rights of each MP to express his/her opinion in the plenary session.²⁷⁷ At the end of his statement, Nyumarno concluded that “a plenary session is a place for final decision-making in the legislature, so before this draft is approved for local regulation, do not say that we cannot add or propose something for the draft”.²⁷⁸ To conclude, Nyumarno’s recommendation was eventually approved in the final deliberation by all factions involved. At the end of the plenary session, the head of Bekasi District People’s Representative Council, who chaired the final plenary session, officially approved the addition of Article 87 on administrative sanctions for the violation of Articles 7 (6) and 28 (1).

The above description shows how the presence of two union representatives in Bekasi district parliament office has effectively contributed to labour-related law-making at the local level. According to Ziegenhain (2010: 42), law making is the most fundamental function of parliament, as the creation of general and compulsory rules for all members of a certain social entity are “determined, granted and limited by laws”. Although any laws or regulations produced by parliament are a form of collective decision-making, each member of parliament still has influence to determine the direction and the form of the law and regulation they produce (Ziegenhain 2008: 43). As the case of Nyumarno in the plenary session has shown, his success in struggling for additional articles on penalties for non-compliance is not only important to minimise violation but also to ensure legal certainty in the implementation of local labour regulation. In addition, it is a demonstration of his role in channelling the reality of the implementation of regulations related to employment, which are often difficult to enforce due to the absence of sanctions against violations. In the interview, he admitted that he was not surprised that he encountered resistance from elite actors when proposing additional articles. However, under democratisation he still has space to influence effectively in law-making and to defence his reformist causes. In this regard, the union in Bekasi has gained a

²⁷⁶ Local Regulation Number 2/2009 on the Formulation of Bekasi District Local Regulation stated that the establishment of regent regulation and regents’ decrees must not be contradictory to public interest, local regulations and higher laws.

²⁷⁷ Personal observation, Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016.

²⁷⁸ Based on notes taken from personal observation at Plenary Session in Bekasi district parliament office, 10 August 2016.

political advantage through their direct involvement in policy-making, which has been provided by democratisation in the post-Suharto era.

Representing the Interests of Workers

Union activists in parliament represent the population of a specific constituency; that is, the union members or workers. Substantively, union elites in parliament should be a voice for their members as well as the aspirations of the working population in general (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2010: 319). This function is aligned with the basic idea of parliament as representing the people; as parliament members, they are expected to be responsive, meaning that they must care about the interests and demands of the voters they represent so that mutual trust can be guaranteed. According to Ziegenhain (2008: 34), the degree of closeness to constituents and the commitment of members of parliament in defending the interests of their constituency are two of the most crucial factors determining a politician's legitimacy. In addition, those factors are also crucial in determining the success of each parliament member in being re-elected, especially when an open, fair and competitive electoral system is adopted (Ziegenhain 2008: 35).

In the case of Bekasi district, the two elected union representatives have recognised that their newly acquired political role as parliament members not only means they can achieve their personal objectives; it also means vital legitimisation for the future of the Labour Go Politics movement and union engagement in electoral politics. Although Nyumarno and Nurdin have moved into parliamentary office, both have claimed that they continue to maintain their relationships with their main constituents, particularly trade unions and workers.²⁷⁹ This aspect of the relationship is not only crucial in channelling demands at grassroots level and political dynamics inside parliament, but also can be placed as a clear indicator in understanding the impact of the presence of activists in parliament. Furthermore, given their background as union activists and their position in Commission IV of DPRD Bekasi district, which deals with employment, health and education issues, Nyumarno and Nurdin have been given greater confidence and privileged access to focus on representing the interests of workers and their causes in local parliament.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

²⁸⁰ The three other commissions in DPRD II Bekasi district are Commission I which deals with Finance and Budgeting, Commission II on government services and Commission III dealing with infrastructure and development. The commissions are part of the main organisational structure in parliament and have a duty to support the implementation of the three main representative functions of the legislature: law-

In the interview, Nyumarno explained that “my background as a union activist has strongly influenced my current position in parliament and of course I am aware that all eyes are now on both of us (together with Nurdin) as it is unprecedented for unionists in Bekasi to be able to enter local parliament”. Of the 64 union candidates who ran for legislative positions under the Labour Go Politics campaign in the 2014 election, it was only Bekasi district where unions succeeded in placing two representatives in the local parliament. The position of Bekasi district is also privileged, both as the largest industrial area and as the main barometer of the labour movement in post-authoritarian Indonesia (Mufakir 2014; Tjandra 2017). Thus, it can be recognised that the presence of two union activists in Bekasi’s local parliament is a test case for their ability to work in policy-making, besides building workers’ political trust in relation to the unions’ attempt to engage in formal politics.

As noted by Duncan (2015: 48), the presence of two union representatives in Bekasi district’s parliamentary office has played a key role in the implementation of policies affecting workers in the district, such as doubling the number of labour inspectors and overseeing the distribution of social security benefits to an additional 8000 residents.²⁸¹ In the interviews, beside the establishment of local labour regulations, Nyumarno and Nurdin mentioned several political breakthroughs, which they claimed have never been carried out by previous politicians in Bekasi district. For instance, following their first role as parliament members, both initiated the establishment of a service facility in Commission IV of DPRD Bekasi district which they called a “complaint post”, enabling residents to directly report any problems related to government services and those that occur in society. Although not all reported cases have been followed up directly, in fact, this facility has provided a better channel of communication between their constituents and the monitoring function of parliament, which they claimed was ineffective in the previous parliament’s term of office.²⁸² Together with other members of Commission IV, Nyumarno and Nurdin regularly spearhead surprise investigations in factories, particularly to follow-up reports from unions and local labour NGOs in relation

making, budgeting and monitoring. The membership structure of a commission in Indonesia’s parliament consists of representative factions with specialist duties in certain areas of development.

²⁸¹ In his study concerning union revitalisation in Indonesia, using a case study of the FSPMI, Duncan (2015), included the case of Labour Go Politics and the participation of the FSPMI in the 2014 legislative elections as one of the three examples of the success of the FSPMI in repositioning its political strategy. The other two cases are the FSPMI’s political contract with Prabowo Subianto in the 2014 presidential election and the establishment of the Social Security Action Committee in 2010. However, his explanation of the political role played by the two union representatives in Bekasi district local parliament was limited to the initial months after their inauguration as members of parliament.

²⁸² Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

to violations of labour regulations. For instance, in November and December 2014, they were involved in a series of surprise investigations looking into cases of unilateral dismissals, such as in PT DMC, PT Sunstar, PT Hanken, PT Osung and PT Nippon. On 28 July 2017, Nyumarno and two other members of Commission IV they also carried one out in the case of five workers detained in a factory for the alleged theft of company property. Through negotiation, the five workers were allowed to return home after being held for three days inside the factory. In addition, Nyumarno then gave the five workers legal assistance to file a lawsuit because the company was considered to have violated criminal law by detaining the workers in the factory (*Berita Cikarang*, 27 July 2017).

On 22 February 2015, Nyumarno released a circular which gave the names and addresses of around 480,000 registered participants of the local health benefit programme (*Jamkesda*). As explained by Nyumarno in his circular, these data, which were difficult to access by union activists are believed to have been advantageous in helping residents who wanted to confirm their *Jamkesda* membership as well as for labour activists to monitor the implementation of the *Jamkesda* programme. In certain cases, Nyumarno and Nurdin are also frequently involved in the settlement of patient rejection cases by the hospitals. For instance, in mid-July 2015, Nyumarno was involved as a negotiator in the case of a patient from his electoral area who was refused treatment by a hospital as he was not registered on the government's social security programme. Through his direct negotiation with the head of the hospital, the patient was eventually treated in the hospital.²⁸³

In the eyes of certain union leaders in Bekasi, their fellow unionists in the local parliament are role models for their potential future political involvement. This view is not only reflected in their support of union engagement in electoral politics but in their approach to lobbying their representatives in parliament. Zarkasi, a union leader at PT DMC commented, "at least we are now more confident of showing our bargaining position when dealing with entrepreneurs and executives because there is stronger political support from our representatives in parliament".²⁸⁴ A similar opinion was also stated by Ika, a union leader at PT ONG Bekasi, who negotiated a unilateral dismissal case in the company where he worked. "If it was not for the negotiation that was

²⁸³ Interview with Arman, community leader in Jatireja Village, Bekasi 29 September 2016.

²⁸⁴ Interview with Zarkasi, union leader at PT DMC, Bekasi 6 October 2016.

facilitated by our representatives in parliament, it would have been unlikely that our demands were heard let alone be followed up by the company's management".²⁸⁵

Apart from what they have undertaken as members of parliament, both Nyumarno and Nurdin admitted that working in parliament has given them a much better understanding of the political process and the complexities of political deals that involve the different interests of actors and many layers of decision-making. In the interviews, Nyumarno mentioned how he had to approach and lobby each parliamentarian in order to encourage them to attend the plenary session and approve the submission of the draft on local labour regulation.²⁸⁶ In certain cases, they were even forced to place themselves in opposition to the unions' and worker's demands. In the case of the implementation of the apprenticeship programme, both preferred to focus on controlling the violation rather than supporting union demands and workers who opposed the apprenticeship programme. At the time of the fieldwork, both Nyumarno and Nurdin were initiating a proposal for local regulation on industrial zones and campaigning for the establishment of an industrial relations court. However, both understood that these initiatives would not be easy to achieve, considering decisions in parliament are part of a political process which regularly necessitates compromise. Nevertheless, both argued that working in parliament has given them opportunities to make crucial changes and that it is different to merely fighting outside. As Nyumarno confessed:

In parliament, we work at the same table as other politicians with different interests and political agendas. We need to be smart and read the situation carefully, otherwise we will lose. Of course, it is impossible for me to solve every labour problem, but at least I can contribute to certain meaningful aspects of labour issues. When we were fighting on the streets, we could only deliver our protest outside the office (the regent and parliament) and wouldn't receive a serious response. But now, I can directly meet or phone them (government officials) to ask them to fulfil their responsibility or settle things directly. Indeed, what I fight for has not reached its peak yet, but I now feel that what I do makes a difference.²⁸⁷

While only a few union activists have been successfully elected as parliament members, there are numerous elected unionists who have not only failed to have a significant impact on the policy fields they were previously concerned with, but moreover, were co-opted by party and elite structures for pragmatic reasons. Several have

²⁸⁵ Interview with Ika, union leader at PT OHS, Bekasi 1 October 2016.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

²⁸⁷ Interview with Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Bekasi, Bekasi 28 September 2016.

not only left their union roots but also adjusted to political realities and aligned themselves with the elitist group that they had previously fought against. This situation shows that the unionists who turned to parliamentary politics are not always immune to the temptations associated with party and elite bureaucratic politics.

The case of Juliaman Damanik, a former local leader of the SPSI and a politician from the Labour Party in Medan, can be seen as an illustration of the above case. After gaining a parliamentary seat in Medan's parliament office in 2011, he transformed himself into a politician who not only turned against his previous colleagues but has made compromises where pragmatic politics are concerned. His legitimacy as a member of parliament was questioned by several local unionists, as he actually failed to win a seat in the 2009 legislative elections.²⁸⁸ He obtained 1,050 votes, while his competitor from the same party and the same electoral area, Remon Simatupang, won a seat after gaining 1,297 votes. In May 2010, after being appointed as general secretary of the Labour Party in the Medan branch, he used his new position in the party structure to enter parliament by displacing Remon Simatupang through the interim change mechanism (*Pergantian Antarwaktu*, PAW).²⁸⁹ In response to questions about his political ambition and his connection with the PAW case, Damanik insisted that "politics is about how we utilise power and opportunity".²⁹⁰

In April 2012, instead of meeting with Damanik, as the only representative of the unions and workers in Medan's parliamentary office, a group of unionists decided to meet other legislators to seek support in resolving their labour related issues.²⁹¹ Similarly, in September 2013, a group of trade unions in Medan filed a motion of non-confidence against Damanik's role and his position in parliament; they considered him to have no regard for the interests of workers.²⁹² Referring to union opposition to his position and sharp criticism of how insignificant a role he played in supporting unions and workers in parliament, Damanik commented "I really know who they are, because I once worked

²⁸⁸ Based on interviews with several union elites in Medan (names withheld), November - December 2016.

²⁸⁹ Under Indonesia's constitution, a political party has the right to replace elected parliamentarians according to the PAW mechanism set in Article 7 Law Number 7/2014 on the Formation of the MPR, DPR, DPD and DPRD. However, in several cases this PAW mechanism is frequently misused by political parties to legally replace elected members of parliament whose voices, ideas or vision contradict the political party they belong to or are regularly utilised by the party to put forward their cadres instead of non-party cadres.

²⁹⁰ Interview with Damanik, parliament member of DPRD II Medan (2011-2014), Medan 29 November 2016.

²⁹¹ Interview with Fachruddin, former union leader of SBMI, Medan 23 November 2016.

²⁹² Interview with Nicolas, head of SBSI North Sumatra Province, Medan 26 November 2016.

with and was part of them. They always refuse if I ask them to cooperate with the government, let alone with the entrepreneurs, but that they always want their demands to be accepted on behalf of the workers”.²⁹³

According to Damanik, formal politics is different to labour activism. The latter is always putting forward ideas and demands based on what the members’ interests are, whereas in parliament there are many political interests and compromises to be reached. In the interview, Damanik stated that, “when you are an idealistic politician it means you put yourself out of the system”.²⁹⁴ In addition, by the end of October 2014, approximately two months after the end of his term as a member of parliament in DPRD Medan, his name was on the list of 13 former members of parliament who had not returned their official car. His position in parliament office had ended in mid-September 2014 (*Tribune News*, 17 September 2014). This unfortunately did nothing for the image of unionists in formal politics.

In the case of Serang District, the case of two unionists in local parliament, Adhadi Romli from PDIP (2009-2014) and Zaenal Abidin from the Hanura Party (2014-2019), is a different story. Unlike the case of Bekasi District, their role in representing the interests of unions and workers in the local parliament was considered minimal.²⁹⁵ One major cause was that their commission’s membership in parliament had no direct relationship with the policy fields they had previously been concerned with as union activists. To carry out their parliamentary functions and authorities, each member of parliament must be a member of a commission which determines his/her respective field areas and the affiliated government agencies they may supervise. The membership of each of the commissions is decided at the beginning of the five year-term of parliament by each faction and is determined in proportion to the size of the faction in the commission.

As noted by Sherlock (2010: 67), a commission in parliament is the principal site for parliamentarians to exercise both their formal authority and practical power ahead of executive government and affiliated government agencies. In practical terms, Sherlock (2012: 560) explains, “members of parliament know what their own commission is doing but often have little or no knowledge about the work of other commissions, unless they

²⁹³ Interview with Damanik, parliament member of DPRD II Medan (2011-2014), Medan 29 November 2016.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Damanik, parliament member of DPRD II Medan (2011-2014), Medan 29 November 2016.

²⁹⁵ Based on my interviews with several union elites and labour NGOs in Serang district (names withheld), December 2016-January 2017.

are particularly controversial ones”. In Serang District People’s Representative Council, the structure of the commission’s membership is divided into five areas. Employment affairs is included in Commission V. In the case of Adhadi Romli, he was a member of Commission IV, which is officially in charge of infrastructure development, for instance: spatial planning, public works and housing, transportation, communication and environmental management. Zaenal Abidin meanwhile worked for Commission I, which is responsible for governance services, such as: public administration, regional autonomy, licensing, personnel/apparatus, foreign and domestic cooperation, general elections and the parliamentary secretariat. Consequently, both had no direct authority over decision-making related to the interests of workers and unions in local parliament.

A further cause is related to the way union elites used to engage in electoral politics. As discussed in chapter three, the case of Adhadi Romli and Zaenal Abidin is an example of union elites who successfully moved into parliamentary office via individual partnerships or as people joining political parties. In contrast to those nominated by trade unions, such as in the Labour Go Politics movement in Bekasi, unionists who competed through individual partnerships with certain political parties formed their own success teams to mobilise voters and used their own money to campaign. They benefited from their close relationships and having their names recognised by the unions and used their position in the party structure as political capital to advance their careers in parliamentary office. Instead of being known as unionist-politicians, they prefer to be recognised as career politicians who view their political role in parliament as representing their respective political parties and constituents in general.²⁹⁶ As they are no different to other politicians from party-cadres, it is understandable if they make compromises in the face of political realities and the pragmatic nature of elite politics and adjust their role accordingly, including to gain personal benefits and to seek higher political positions in the party’s structure and parliament. In this regard, it can be said that electoral reforms have given union elites broader political opportunity to engage in formal politics, although this development does not necessarily guarantee that unionists who successfully participate in formal politics will have the interests of the workers at heart.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Adhadi Romli, former member parliament of DPRD II Serang (2009-2014), Serang 6 December 2016; Interview with Zaenal Abidin, parliament member of DPRD II Serang (2014-2019), Serang 2 December 2016.

Implications for Trade Union Politics

The three cases discussed in this chapter have several implications regarding unionist involvement in local parliamentary politics. As part of the union's learning process by participating in parliamentary politics, the experiences of elected unionists in Bekasi, Medan and Serang can be perceived as valuable political education for other unionists in their attempts to influence policy-making in parliament.

Given its privileged position as the most union-dense area in Indonesia, Bekasi district can be perceived as the new role model for further trade union engagement in electoral politics. Through the Labour Go Politics movement, the unions and workers in Bekasi have not only succeeded in placing two union representatives in local parliament but have also effectively formed a union-party alliance that has provided unions and workers with a stronger bargaining position to voice their interests in policy-making. The strong and sustained relationships between elected union leaders in parliament and their home organisations, including workers, is also crucial in determining the success of union elites in parliament. In this case, communication and cooperation between unions, workers and elected union leaders in parliament are key to maximising the political roles that elected union leaders can play in parliament, especially in resolving issues faced by unions and workers.

The case of Bekasi district also indicates that the political roles played by elected union elites in parliament become vital when they are appointed to a commission that directly supervises labour-related interests. As noted by Ziegenhain (2010), commissions in the Indonesian parliamentary structure play a crucial role in brewing every policy decision in specific areas. Parliamentary members appointed to particular commissions do not have authority in every decision taken by those commissions, especially regarding parliament's function of supervising the implementation of policies proposed by existing commissions. Only in plenary meetings can every member of parliament have the right to influence any policies that have been decided previously in the work committee on a commission. However, with there being so many targeted regulations, the outcomes of most plenary meetings are usually set from the beginning, through political lobbying, and they are carried out as a formal procedure to validate the decisions that have been made at each commission session. Therefore, besides being able to increase the confidence of union elites in the parliament, the existence of union elites in the commission that handles labour issues can also offset bias in political interests, especially from business-politicians who have been active in "practical politics". Unions' constituents are also benefited

because they have a direct political channel in the parliament that can be used as a political mouthpiece related to labour violations as part of the implementation of the monitoring function carried out by parliament members. Cases of inspection and enforcement of labour regulations carried out by members of Commission C in Bekasi district mostly came from workers' constituents through the complaint post facility, whose formation was initiated by two elected legislative members from the union in the 2014 legislative elections. In this regard, the political roles played by elected union elites in Bekasi district's local parliament are not only important for the development of the labour movement and local politics in this area - considering the strategic position of Bekasi as the most union-dense and industrial areas in Indonesia - but also for other regions in Indonesia which have been involved in electoral contestation.

However, it would be an overstatement to suggest that the presence of unionists in parliament is a powerful political force that has fully overcome the challenges of the dominant elite forces in the local political sphere. By way of contrast, the case studies in Medan and Serang district have revealed that Indonesian union activists are by no means immune to the temptations of party and elite politicisation. They have not only failed to have an impact in the policy field that they were previously fighting for, but also were co-opted by the party structure and elitist interests for pragmatic reasons. In relation to this issue, Mietzner (2013: 29) is correct, as he argued that the contemporary Indonesia's electoral democracy is best described as a new arena of contestation between entrenched elites, who keep attempting to use any means to sustain their political power, and activists-cum-politicians, who try pushing for further political reforms to fight for their specific political agendas.

Union activists who keep their distance from their previous union organisations and roots after being elected as parliament members tend to abandon issues and policies that were previously part of their concern in the union's struggles. This condition can be found in the cases of union elites who have advanced through electoral contestations via individual channels, built successful teams with their own capital and gained minimum financial support from union organisations. How union elites are nominated and compete to represent the interests of workers in electoral contestation is crucial in determining how and to what extent they will use their political roles for the interest of unions and workers when they are elected. The cases of Bekasi, Serang and Medan certainly provide valuable lessons for unions and workers in Indonesia in terms of formulating electoral strategy as

well as giving their political support to union elites' nomination in subsequent legislative elections.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the political role played by elected union elites in local parliaments by means of three cases study in Bekasi, Serang and Medan. It gives a mixed picture with regard to the roles played by trade union elites in relation to their attempt to engage in local parliamentary policy-making. The case in Bekasi demonstrates that union activists have used their new positions as parliamentary members to fight for their specific agenda and to defend their reformist causes. However, others in Medan and Serang have failed to avoid the dilemmatic trap between elite co-optation and their new activist-politician identity.

This chapter suggests that the presence of union elites in parliamentary politics can be advantageous for worker and union interests when elected unionists maintain their relationships with former colleagues and their causes. This condition is not only important to maintain political trust between labour constituents and elected unionists, but also to provide political spaces among them in communicating demands at the grassroots level and political dynamics inside parliament. Maintaining cooperative relations and mutual control between unions and their elected leaders in the parliament creates mutually beneficial relations between the union and its representatives in parliament. This condition can be realised if unions and their legislative candidates could work together, especially in determining: the political platform on which they will fight in parliament; alliances with political parties; the formation of a success team; mobilization of union members in campaign activities.

Given the significant position of commissions in the parliament, the placement of union activists in a commission should be in accordance with the field of policy with which they were previously concerned, so that they can perform their representative function as members of parliament as effectively as possible. Since legislative functions are generally fulfilled by parliamentary commissions, the appointment of elected legislative candidates by political parties to various commissions has created clear boundaries related to specific fields and tasks that must be handled by each member of parliament. As a consequence of this system, the ability of elected legislative candidates from unions to negotiate their political positions within a party's structure and interests

will determine their success in parliament, as well as the likelihood of further electoral victories by the unions.

As the case of Bekasi district has shown, the political role played by both union representatives in Bekasi District People's Representatives Council has had a positive impact on how they have contributed to labour-related decision-making and how union and worker's interests were represented in local politics. Supported by their experiences as union activists and a placement in the commission corresponding to their field of interest, the union's mission by way of the Labour Go Politics movement in Bekasi district can be considered a success - albeit a modest one - compared to the traditional approaches that unionists and workers used to pursue, such as mass strikes and street demonstrations. This success can be seen in their significant contribution to the establishment of local labour regulation and in the implementation of parliamentary monitoring functions which directly affect workers, such as direct investigations over unilateral dismissal cases and overseeing of the distribution of social security benefits.

Engaging in electoral politics is a strategic and legitimate way for union elites to secure a direct position at the policy-making table and can be beneficial for the unions in their struggle to voice workers' interests in the political sphere. However, in the absence of unifying and sustained labour-related parties that typically espouse pro-labour principles, union elites have no choice except to build partnerships with mainstream political parties in order to be able to engage in legislative elections. In this regard, the unionists' ability to maintain workers' trust and negotiate their political position within a party's structure and interests will determine their success in parliament, as well as the likelihood of further electoral victories by the unions. It is likely that unions will establish themselves as one of the key interest groups, and their involvement in formal politics can be placed as a necessary condition for successful labour movements in post-authoritarian Indonesia. In this context, what has been claimed by Hadiz and Robison (2010) through their Oligarch Thesis (in which political systems and Indonesia's economic resources are seen to have been occupied by predatory elites) has failed to capture the political dynamic and reality that has developed in the lower levels. The role of union elites in parliamentary politics is significant; in some specific areas of interests and in some regions, they have had successes. In this regard, although union activists do not have a dominant presence in parliaments, under democratisation there is still sufficient room for them to defend their causes and to fight for their specific areas of interest.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Since the collapse of Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime in 1998, Indonesia has engaged in the dual processes of economic liberalisation and political reform. The state has restructured its economy by integrating into the global marketplace through greater flexibility. With the support of the World Bank, the IMF and the ILO, the state has been implementing flexible labour market policies, a necessary option according to these international financial institutions. Simultaneously, the state has initiated a political reform process that includes recognition of political rights and the implementation of democratic elections and decentralisation, which provides broader opportunities for trade unions and all elements of civil society to participate in formal politics. These changes have not only created a new landscape for Indonesian institutional politics but also generated an essential redefinition of the relationship between the state, trade unions and employers.

As revealed in Chapter 2, trade unions in Indonesia face the same challenges as general unions in many countries whose labour markets are globally integrated. Indonesian trade unions are in a rather weak position due to the impact of flexible labour market policies; however, political reforms after 1998 led to the establishment of three new labour laws that have benefited them. In contrast to their counterparts in Thailand and Malaysia, where the unions are completely confined to roles designated by the state, trade unions in Indonesia have been quick to strengthen their organisation and can sustain their movement and pursue interests so as negotiate with the state and employers. Democratisation is allowing trade unions and workers to: use their fundamental rights to organise and develop; defend their interests via collective bargaining; engage in collective mobilisation by way of massive labour demonstrations and protests; and even put pressure on governments to halt particular policies that hinder workers' interests. In the context of political participation, reforms to political parties and elections have increased confidence among Indonesia's trade unionists to engage in electoral contestation. The implementation of decentralisation and the establishment of an open proportional electoral system since the 2009 legislative elections have created greater opportunities for non-elite actors such as trade unionists to be involved in legislative elections, particularly at subnational levels.

Despite opportunities offered by political reforms, Indonesia's trade unions still face several challenges. They are vulnerable to the fragmentation and elite factionalism that have intensified in response to recognition of the right to form independent unions. Labour organisations consisting of many different types, structures and political orientations have emerged, further hindering attempts by union elites to create a powerful and consolidated front during elections. At the grassroots level, workers generally do not perceive their political position and role in elections as part of their political identity. These conditions are increasingly exacerbated by the lasting legacy from the New Order regime regarding the stigma and dichotomy between workers (*pekerja*) and labourers (*buruh*), including workers' and union leaders' understanding of the traditional role and function of trade unions. These challenges have contributed to the complexity of union attempts to engage in electoral politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

Through operationalising the framework of political unionism developed by Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2010) and similar criteria used by Fairbrother (2015), this thesis has examined the electoral engagement of Indonesian trade unions in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. It has also explained how Indonesian unions legitimise their organisational position regarding electoral contestation. When democratisation took hold in 1998 in Indonesia, many trade union leaders still believed that trade unionism and party politics were two separate spheres. However, the labour movement found formal ways to engage in electoral politics, either by establishing labour-based parties or building political alliances with non-labour-linked parties. To account for different patterns of union electoral strategies, union mobilisation capacity and constraints were assessed, and the thesis questioned why only a few union legislative candidates were successfully elected. The ways in which elected union elites used their parliamentary positions to advocate worker's rights and interests were then analysed.

By examining union experiences in electoral contestations, this thesis has explicated the varied possibilities for, and limitations of, union electoral engagement in democratic Indonesia. New insights have been gained into the strengths and weaknesses of the politically active unions and their relationships with established political powerholders in Indonesia today. In line with my epistemological goals, through this thesis I have argued that Indonesian trade unions cannot be viewed just as economic actors. Despite their historical legacy and uneasy associations with communism and socialism in Indonesia, trade unions are highly political and have developed their collective power in an effort to challenge elitism and to expand political representation

for workers. This has been apparent since in 2012, when several major union federations refused to work collaboratively with employers and the government (which was prepared to revise Manpower Law Number 13/2003), deciding instead to use emerging political channels and networks to take part in electoral politics and lobby parliament.

Unions' Electoral Legitimacy: A Question of Motives

Trade unions have engaged in electoral politics since the first multi-party elections in Indonesia in 1999, though unionists remain divided with regard to building alliances with political parties and supporting the candidacy of union elites in legislative elections. The transition to democracy in 1998 has clearly affected the growth and structure of trade unions in Indonesia. However, the role, function and orientation of trade unions remains somewhat mixed and the association between trade unions and political parties is still perceived as unusual both by union elites and workers. This situation not only shows that the unions are still strongly influenced by the legacy of the authoritarian regime of the past, but also reflects the different needs and interests of union leaders in organising their movements. It makes it difficult for unionists to break into the electoral arena, while creating a complex political terrain for unions to mobilise and gain votes from labour constituents.

Chapter 3 considered why trade union elites engage in electoral politics and how they seek to legitimise this engagement (RQ2). Electoral engagement is determined to an extent by a union's background and its leaders' relationships with the past, elite interests, organisational priorities and strategies, and opportunities for union involvement in electoral politics. Moderate unions, particularly legacy unions characterised by their lack of leadership renewal, tend to focus on traditional trade union activities to maintain their economic function and represent their members in collective bargaining or negotiate workers' interests with employers. Some may agree with the idea of union engagement in elections, although union organisations tend to position themselves as independent of electoral politics. More progressive union elites may take the opposing stance, considering partisan politics to be part of a necessary strategy and an effective mechanism through which trade unions can shape policy-making. They are primarily motivated by the opportunities offered by decentralisation and the implementation of the open proportional electoral system, either for their specific organisational agendas or personal interests, such as gaining a political career, social recognition and material rewards.

The principal reason that union elites reject engagement in electoral politics is the desire to preserve the unity of their organisation and maintain organisational autonomy. Given the fact that workers have different religious and ethnic identities, and that their political choices are often affected by their political origins, histories and affiliations, forcing members to support particular candidates and a particular political party can cause internal strife and undermine organisational unity. One could argue that it is unions' priority to strengthen their collective bargaining in factories for the benefit of members. This is crucial because the SPSI, the only legalised union during Suharto's 32-year reign, did not engage in genuine collective bargaining or worker representation. On this basis, unionists who reject union engagement in electoral politics take the traditional position that unions and parties are distinct entities and should remain so. According to unionists in this group, the main goal of a trade union is to represent their members in negotiations with employers, while the aim of a political party is to gain legitimacy and power in political institutions via elections. In addition, with a political structure rife with elitism and an imbalance of power relations between unions and political parties, there are fears that the involvement of unions in political contests only benefits certain union elites and leads to the politicisation of labour issues in line with party interests. Suspicion among unionists relating to the political motivation behind the involvement of union elites in electoral contestation persists, although the main reason is different relative to the initial involvement of unionists in the 1999 election, which was an attempt to return to the New Order regime through the politicisation of trade unions.

For most unionists who support union engagement in electoral politics, entry into the arena of electoral politics is not only part of implementing their new strategy but also an important opportunity offered to present themselves as an alternative base for political power, following the democratic reforms. After decentralisation in 1999, unions in industrial-dense areas possibly had more opportunity to shape decisions concerning areas of policy-making affecting worker interests. As part of the complex political learning process, engagement in electoral politics was designed to: raise the profile of labour related-issues in elections; educate and enhance political consciousness; develop an alternative labour party supported by the trade unions, workers and other civil society groups. The dramatic change in unionist attitudes toward electoral engagement is inseparable from the way in which union elites have opened themselves up to building relationships with political parties on top of gaining access to political education, predominantly supported by labour NGOs. As democracy is still progressing in

Indonesia, this indicates a significant step forward for organised unions to take their collective potential in electoral politics seriously, besides the initial successful political empowerment of trade unions in post-authoritarian Indonesia.

Union Electoral Strategies and Constraints

The number of unionists nominated as legislative candidates has increased significantly since the 2009 elections; however, various electoral strategies pursued by unionists gained only limited success with respect to placing union candidates in parliament offices. The three case studies on union electoral strategies and constraints examined in Chapters 4 and 5 revealed several shortcomings concerning union success in legislative elections. The empirical findings focused on the types of electoral strategies union elites use to mobilise union members and worker constituencies, and the extent to which structural and organisational constraints affect the mobilisation capacity of union candidates during legislative elections.

Trade union structure, organisational capacity, networking and strategy are instrumental in their becoming more organised. However, those factors may not be enough to succeed when it comes to electoral contestation. Over the past decade, trade unions in Indonesia have improved their campaigns through various strategies such as labour strikes and demonstrations, lobbying parliament, and the use of lawsuits. They have achieved a significant outcome, shown by the increased number of collective bargaining agreements at the company level and likelihood of resolving industrial disputes. In the context of the labour movement, however, those strategies take place within more controlled settings and the results can be seen immediately when employers agree to accommodate union demands or through cancellation or delay of protests. Similarly, street politics and strikes have been fully understood by union leaders and workers to be part of their fundamental rights and have become the essence of unions' daily struggles in the post-Suharto era. Workers are therefore easily convinced by elites and can be mobilised to take to the streets to voice their demands. In contrast, in the context of elections the ability of union elites to influence workers' decisions to follow the union line is limited. Workers tend to position themselves one way in terms of their struggles in factories and in another when voting in elections. The desire to fight for workers' interests via electoral politics, and stressing the potential benefits of doing so, is now pronounced among union candidates. Nonetheless, most workers either reject this motive or fail to understand it.

In Indonesia's highly competitive legislative elections, where vote-buying and money politics are so prevalent and multiple candidates from the same party compete against each other to attract votes in the same electorate, parties themselves have become sites of contestation. The candidates who hold power in a party tend to dominate its machinery and use it to support their candidacy. However, non-party cadre candidates such as unionists are regularly forced to manage and finance their campaigns, including forming a success team. As well as this, most union-party alliances in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections were based on the non-programmatic and short-term strategies of particular unions or individual unionists ahead of the election. Consequently, the party machine has become irrelevant for most union candidates. Compared to those who were nominated and supported by their home union organisations, union candidates who ran individually for legislative seats – which dominated the union's legislative nominations in the 2009 and 2014 elections – found this situation unfavourable. Owing to factors such as their limited financial ability and lack of confidence, the majority of individual union legislative candidates failed to gain significant votes.

In Serang, the majority of union legislative candidates from the SPN gained votes cast with no more than one third of the total political parties in each electoral area. The same result was also observed in the case of unionists from the SPSI: even fewer votes were cast. A slightly different situation was found in Bekasi, where two out of nine union legislative candidates from the FSPMI under the Labour Go Politics movement won local parliament seats. Without relying on party machines, the FSPMI Bekasi branch succeeded in forming a successful team, recruiting volunteers, rallying members, and designing and financing their own political campaigns. Their well-planned strategy and solid organisation surmounted the practice of money politics and fierce competition in the 2014 legislative elections.

Confronted by the absence of a unifying and sustained labour-based party in the 2014 legislative elections, and a continuation of extreme organisational fragmentation, Indonesian trade unions are in the challenging position of having to maximise their attempts to engage in electoral contestation. It requires a political consensus among unionists to work with each other to pool their collective power, particularly strategy and role-sharing among union elites at confederation, federation and plant levels. In the 2014 legislative elections, however, most union candidates competed against each other with different parties in the same electorates (inter-union and intra-union competition). As shown in Bekasi, Serang and Medan, political campaigns conducted by union candidates

were more individualised and limited by the ability of the candidates and their respective union organisations to form their own success teams. Trade unions with no candidates in an electoral area did little to support union candidates or even closed the door on collaboration to support the nomination of union candidates from different unions. These conditions not only limited opportunities for union candidates to gain significant votes, but also indicated that trade unions in Indonesia remain focused on short-term interests and elite rivalries where electoral politics are concerned.

Worker preferences and profiles are significant. Their political identity, the relationship between unions and political parties, and their trust of union candidates are among the crucial factors that determine their behaviour and voting decisions. The identity dichotomy between labourers (*buruh*), workers (*pekerja*) and employees (*karyawan*) strongly influenced how Indonesian workers positioned themselves in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. The term “working class” generally refers to labourers working in factories or those who frequently demonstrate on the streets. Workers may also be affected by their different identities when voting, such as religious affinities, ethnicities and regions. Many people on the factory floor, or in the mill, continue to regard elections as an extension of political party interests, rather than as a strategic method for trade unions to improve their lot or resolve economic issues.

Regarding workers’ trust in union candidates, the loyalty of union members and their willingness to follow the union direction in legislative elections is not only determined by organisational and contractual relationships, but also derives from the ability of union elites to convince workers by using alternative methods and solutions that could foster progressive policies for workers. Institutional and popularity capital are not strong enough to guarantee union legislative candidates will gain significant votes from union members and workers in general. The fact that most union candidates failed to convince their main constituents to vote for them in 2009 and 2014 indicates that workers tend to respond negatively to union-affiliated legislative candidates. Most union candidates are still trapped in a “politics as usual” mode driven by pragmatism and populism and have a lack of policy-based collective solutions, which in turn erodes member trust in their willingness and ability to fight for workers’ interests if elected as parliament members.

Unions' Political Roles in Policy-making

Although the presence of union activists in parliaments is not a dominant one, under democratisation there is still sufficient room for organised unions to defend their cause and to fight for workers' interests. Regarding RQ5 the relationship between union organisations and commission membership in parliament plays a crucial role in determining the success of a unionist working as a parliamentarian. Elected unionists nominated and supported by their organisation's members tend to have a better chance of channelling union and worker interests toward parliaments than those who run as legislative candidates by joining an individual party. While the former tend to keep balancing their new position as both unionists and politicians, the latter very likely leave their union roots and align themselves with pragmatic elite politics.

The case of two elected unionists from the FSPMI in Bekasi district can be used as a new model for understanding the nature of meaningful political engagement of unions in local politics in post-authoritarian Indonesia. The FSMI has learned from their failure in the previous elections by developing a new electoral strategy through the Labour Go Politics movement which provides a counter-argument to the notion that Indonesian unions are politically insignificant or unable to have an impact in a political landscape with such a strong aversion to leftist politics. This Labour Go Politics strategy allows the FSPMI in Bekasi district to overcome their lack of financial resources and to counter the practice of money politics by developing their organisational capacity, mobilising their organisational and membership potentials into election campaigns, and giving rise to new identities and interests of workers in electoral politics.

The presence of two unionists in the local parliament of Bekasi district has had a positive impact on how they contribute to labour-related decision-making and how worker interests are represented in local politics. Union elites have made a significant contribution to the establishment of a local labour regulation and in the implementation of parliamentarian monitoring functions that directly affect worker interests, such as direct investigations into unilateral dismissal cases and overseeing the distribution of social security benefits. By way of contrast, cases in Serang and Medan reveal that elected unionists are by no means immune from the temptation of party and elite politicisation. They have not only failed to have a significant impact on the policy fields that they were previously fighting for but have also been co-opted by the party structure and elite interests for pragmatic reasons. Thus, the commitment and ability of elected unionists in

parliament to maintain workers' trust and to negotiate their political position within the party's structure and interests will determine their success in parliament and the likelihood of their being re-elected.

Implications for Trade Union Politics and the Future of Union Electoral Engagement

Given the structural limitations and organisational complexities of Indonesia's unions that restrict them from successfully engaging in electoral politics – the absence of a unified and sustained labour party, union fragmentation, inter-union and intra-union electoral competition – there are some positives to take from union experiences in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections. As part of the political process, it provides valuable lessons for future union electoral engagement. For instance, the union leaders' commitment to engaging in electoral politics must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen union electoral strategy as part of a more consolidated movement.

As a political process, electoral engagement clearly requires effective mobilisation, coordination and a long-term perspective for trade unions wishing to optimise their collective advantages. Solid leadership among union elites is crucial, especially to building consensus and redefining a union's political position by means of establishing broader intra-union partnership and electoral collaboration with other similar interest groups belonging to civil society organisations. It also requires an appropriate participation structure and interconnection between members at the grassroots level, union leaders in factories and national level. In this regard, the engagement of trade unions and other civil society groups in the electoral arena, as part of a more consolidated movement, potentially allows unionist and civil society organisation activists with the same concerns and interests to develop constructive dialogue and strengthen their consensus with political parties, enabling the latter to be more open. In addition, it may also help to generate broader collective action and an electoral block that could, in turn, enable the establishment of an alternative and a unifying labour-related political party. For Indonesia's trade unions, it is increasingly necessary to be insiders engaging in formal politics, rather than outsiders. It would be even more strategic for trade unions to represent as wide a popular base of the working population as possible. This is challenging work because any organisational consolidation involves the complexity of different interests. Yet, any narrowly political strategy will only limit trade union capacity and outcomes.

The union-party alliance should be developed to be more strategic and programmatic, particularly by building partisan coalitions with one of the major well-established political parties. It would not only reassure labour constituents but also guarantee consensus with a political party. The experience from the 2014 election in Bekasi shows that votes cast for union legislative candidates at the district level were not necessarily parallel with those nominated at the provincial and national levels. The strategy of nominating union candidates through one package, with different parties scattered at the national, provincial and district levels had a varied reception by workers at the grassroots level. A similar experience was found in Serang, where the nomination of union candidates connected with different parties in the same electoral area eroded worker trust as well as leading them to question the true political motives of the union elite candidacies. Inter-union elite competition further explains the disunity among elites in developing their electoral strategy and confirms that their position is no different from other candidates outside the unions who approach workers to gain their potential votes for personal and elitist interests. In the absence of a unified labour party supported by many unions, and insufficient levels of worker understanding regarding their role and position in electoral politics, the nomination of union leaders through many different political parties is ineffective and has in fact weakened the collective power of union candidates contesting legislative elections.

A more fundamental issue is enhancing workers' political understanding, particularly via education, to strengthen their political identity and collective awareness. Political education for union members must be a prioritised and integrated part of trade union activities. This includes the need to establish a political department within each union's structural management which is engaged in: strengthening the political literacy of each member (*melek politik*); the revival of prospective union leaders who have the quality and capacity to advance in legislative elections, and more serious attempts to build coalitions with well-established political parties.

The experiences of trade unions in Taiwan and South Korea hold valuable lessons as examples of trade union engagement in electoral politics. During the authoritarian era, trade unions and workers in Taiwan and South Korea had similar experiences of being undermined and depoliticised by their respective governments (Buchanan and Kate 2003; Lee 2011). They entered the democratic transition with non-partisan ties and non-programmatic parties and emerged with several different factions (Lee 2011: 45). However, unlike unionists in Indonesia, those in Taiwan and South Korea have been able

to reconcile and consolidate their movement after years of democratic transition. Taiwan is representative of how unions get involved in partisan politics by building political ties with two major established parties. In South Korea, by contrast, trade unions and other civil society groups established a labour-related party to engage in electoral politics. Through these strategies, both unions in Taiwan and South Korea have been able to place their representatives in national parliament and to secure policy concessions in national labour reforms (Lee 2011: 47). These experiences suggest that if this can be achieved, it is possible that Indonesia's unions may have a chance of establishing a successful labour party or a programmatic union-party coalition that benefits both unions and labour constituencies.

Original Scholarly Contribution

This thesis makes several important contributions to the knowledge of and understanding of trade unionism in contemporary Indonesia. It offers new insights into how union electoral engagement in Indonesia can paint a different picture for comparative studies on political unionism in post-authoritarian contexts. Having closely examined how union elites positioned and developed their electoral strategies in the 2009 and 2014 legislative elections, the process of union electoral engagement can mainly be seen to be about complex political learning. Unlike trade unions in Europe and Latin America in their early stages of development – which were supported by large union memberships, strong left-leaning parties, and the existence of modern democratic institutions – Indonesian unions are still developing into visible political actors. Unions' political activism in post-1998 democratic Indonesia is fundamentally intertwined with the development of collective action, such as strikes and street demonstrations, and these are still at the heart of the labour movement's strategy.

Unlike Poland, Brazil and Argentina, Indonesia had no typically leftist or socio democratic parties that espouse pro-labour policies. Attempts to build such parties had been made by several labour activists in the first decade of democratisation but failed due to strong resistance against leftist ideology and the legacy of the fear of communism in the country. In Indonesia today, the topic of communism seems to be less restricted compared to the New Order era, but this does not guarantee that the public are ready to tolerate or support leftist parties or movements. Stigmatisation and illustrations of the danger of communism have repeated for years and are deeply rooted in society. This

lasting legacy from the Suharto era limits the political space available for unions to even discuss, let alone mobilise around, leftist politics in a newly democratic Indonesia. As a consequence, the unions must build political partnerships with mainstream parties or non-labour related parties in order to participate in legislative elections. In this regard, leaders of Indonesian unions have taken a relatively different path to general trade unions in many countries, which usually build partisan politics based on programmatic and ideological communalities (Murillo 2001; Lee 2011).

Another scholarly contribution concerns a reassessment of the work currently being undertaken on Indonesia's local politics, particularly studies related to the participation of non-political actors and newcomers such as trade unionists in local policy-making, which has been under-explored. Countering existing literature, which emphasises that Indonesia's trade unions and workers are politically insignificant and continue to be politically marginalised (Törnquist 2004; Hadiz 2010), this thesis demonstrates that organised unions in post-authoritarian Indonesia have consistently developed their collective potential to engage in electoral politics. Voting reforms in the last two elections have clearly affected them, and they are more embroiled in political activism and seem more politically confident, although these gains are over-shadowed by the problem of union fragmentation. Organised unions have divergent experiences in mobilising members, building union-party alliances and using their access to parliament to influence the policy-making process. They have built union-party links across mainstream parties to provide workers with alternative political choices and several unionists have been successfully elected as parliamentarians.

This thesis confirms that although Indonesia's political system has been held hostage by predatory elites, as Hadiz and Robison and (2014) and Winters (2014) have claimed, organised unions have established their own significant way of engaging in electoral politics, influencing labour-related policies and advancing reforms through their involvement in parliamentary politics. The case of the Labour Go Politics movement in Bekasi is an instructive example of how union leaders have learned from their failure in previous elections and developed their collective potential with a more consolidated strategy in the 2014 legislative elections. Unions sought to turn their lack of material resources into a strength; for example, by nominating cadres across parties, running an anti-money politics campaign, and mobilising voluntary networks to support the nomination of their leaders in the legislative elections. Two union leaders successfully won local parliamentary seats for the first time in Bekasi district and were even able to

defeat several business-politicians and wealthy “old guard” politicians who ran for second and third terms. The presence of unionists-turned-politicians in local parliament has provided political channels for workers to demand better enforcement of labour law violations at the factory level and significantly influenced the formulation of local labour regulation.

This thesis also contributes by filling gaps in the small number of studies pertaining to Indonesia’s trade union politics (Juliawan 2014; Caraway, Ford and Nugroho 2015), and also provides analysis of the unions’ electoral legitimacy. The substantive chapters provide an interpretation of the unions’ positions and political motives regarding their electoral engagement and strategies. In addition to the strong influence of the authoritarian legacy, such as union de-politicisation and fragmentation, as Caraway, Ford and Nugroho (2015) have argued, this thesis also finds that union leadership, the ability of the unions to design a more consolidated political movement, and workers’ trust, are influential in the electoral success of the unionists. The fact that unions have learned from their previous mistakes and had members successfully elected as legislators shows that unions in Indonesia have significantly increased their capability to organise their engagement in electoral contestation. Moreover, it gives the impression of increased confidence among union leaders to become more involved in electoral politics. The question is no longer *whether* it is the right time for unions to engage actively in formal politics, but *to what extent* union elites will be able to redesign their political role and function in contesting electoral politics. Therefore, it can be assumed that attempts to improve industrial conditions for workers will be further integrated in subsequent elections, especially by unions such as the FSPMI, which has opted for a new political orientation and is building political alliances with opposition coalition parties. In this regard, the result of the 2019 presidential and legislative election could certainly have a variety of consequences for the direction of the Indonesian trade union movement in the near future.

The empirical findings in this thesis add an additional analytical layer to the comparative literature on the political role of union actors in democracies, particularly in Southeast Asia. In recent years, most scholarly works on this subject have been divided into two major strands. The first relates to the risk of union actors being co-opted by the state and its various political actors in Southeast Asia’s elitist political systems. The second relates to the potential roles of trade unions in the political sphere, including direct roles in policy-making and the need for meaningful relationships between other civil

society actors, in order to have further success in consolidating democracy through electoral engagement.

Elinoff (2014), for instance, has analysed the political role of the “people’s sector” in Thailand since 1992 and discovered that civil society actors in Thailand have revealed themselves to be deeply ambivalent and rooted in self-interest politics. Through examining the cases of the 2006 and 2014 military coups, Elinoff (2014) concludes that instead of consolidating a better democratic government, union actors and NGOs in Thailand are involved in weakening its democracy by mobilising their members and civil society forces to oust democratically-elected governments and even support military intervention. In a different case study, Lilian and Croucher (2014) examined trade union and civil society organisation coalitions in the 2008 democratic election in Malaysia and ascertained that they contributed significantly to the political mobilisation and strong performance of opposition parties. Lilian and Croucher (2014) found that the main goal of union and civil society organisation activists who made the move into the electoral arena in Malaysia was not only to influence policies but also to trigger regime change from within. However, as the coalition between trade unions and civil society organisations was built without a meaningful tie, trade unions and civil society actors were trapped in a conflict of interest. During the political campaigns, workers’ issues were mostly being raised by civil society organisations without union cooperation. Unionists accused activists from civil society organisations of using workers’ issues to advance their political agenda (Lilian and Croucher 2014: 425). In the case of Indonesia, trade union elites have experienced several different ways of organising their movement into formal politics, and in some cases have had a significant impact on the trajectory of the democratisation process. While some co-optation of unionist-turned-politicians by elites has taken place, some union elites have successfully advanced pro-union reforms and policies.

Wider Relevance and Contributions beyond Indonesia

This thesis has wider political significance: the empirical findings can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of trade union politics in contemporary Indonesia and beyond. The future research agenda includes further investigation of what basics are required to establish an institutionalised complementary channel for Indonesian trade unions to build a democratic bloc as a means of creating resistance, advocacy, and electoral success. When exploring structural and organisational constraints, this thesis

found a new issue in relation to the need for institutional arrangements that can facilitate unions in strengthening their collective mobilisation and position in relation to electoral contestation. The fact that labour movements are divided in many countries, also demonstrates the structural and organisational constraints which unions in the Indonesian context must work to overcome to be able to work collaboratively, and further scholarly scrutiny of them is crucial.

In the broader context, a study on contemporary trade union politics in emerging democratic countries in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, may also be required and will enable a comparative understanding of this thesis. Recent political changes in Malaysia (where there is a new government made up of previous opposition groups), the return of a military government as a result of political instability in Thailand, and the presence of a leftist-socialist elected president in the Philippines have undoubtedly had a serious impact on the development of trade union politics in each of these countries. Comparative research related to trade unions' political issues in this region could contribute greatly to a more comprehensive understanding of the latest developments in that area and in political unionism in Southeast Asia. It would also help to tease out the importance of trade union activism with regards to democratisation, global politics and the existence of labour movements in this region. Therefore, this thesis offers a new avenue for comparative research on trade union politics in Southeast Asia.

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Appendix

A. Composition of in-depth Interviewees

Interviewee	Number
Trade Unionist	21
Trade Union Legislative Candidate	16
Politician/MP	7
Workers	10
Labour NGOs activist	4
Employer association	2
Bureaucrat	3
Success team member	4
Total	67

Note: I also spoke to many workers and unionists during my fieldwork, but I do not count them in this thesis because the interactions were closer to informal communication than formal interviews.

B. Direct Observations

1. Plenary session in Bekasi district parliament office, Bekasi 10 August 2016.
2. Nasional Seminar organized by Indonesian Institute of Sciences, 20 November 2016.
3. Labour demonstration (KSPSI), Jakarta 26 November 2016.
4. Labour demonstration (FSPMI, FSP KEP KSPSI), Bekasi 29 October 2016.
5. Trade union meeting at FSP KEP KSPSI, Jakarta 8 September 2016.
6. Industrial court, Jakarta 18 October 2016.
7. Omah Buruh, Bekasi 24 September 2016.
8. Omah Tani, Pekalongan 20 January 2017.

C. List of Interviewees

1. Abdullah, general chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI.
2. Abay, parliament member at DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi from Democrat Party.
3. Abdul Gani, union leader FSP KEP KSPSI.
4. Abdul Hasan, union leader at PT Plast Indonesia-Bekasi.
5. Adhadi Romli, former member of DPRD Kabupaten Serang 2009-2014, former head of DPW FSPMI Banten, head of DPC PDIP Serang.
6. Agus Condro, politician from PDIP.
7. Adnan Dirham, worker at PT Nicomas Gimilang, Serang.

8. Ali, worker at PT MDN, Bekasi.
9. Ahmad Husein, worker at PT DJabesmen, Bekasi.
10. Aji, legislative candidates (FSPMI) from PKPI, Bekasi district.
11. A.J. Napitupulu, legislative candidate (SBSI 92) from Gerindra Party, Medan.
12. A.P Sujatmiko, legislative candidate (FSP KEP KSPI) from PMB, Serang district.
13. Edward Susanto, worker at PT LPA, Bekasi.
14. Eryawan, politician from DPP PAN.
15. Fachruddin, former union leader of SBMI Medan.
16. Fayakun, union leader from FSP KEP KSPSI.
17. Fatima, parliament member DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi from PKS.
18. Fernando L. Tobing, head of Labour Party Medan Branch.
19. Fery Nurzali, legislative candidate (FSP KEP KSPSI) from Gerindra Party, vice-chairman of FSP KEP KSPSI.
20. Handoko Wibowo, founder and head of Omah Tani Batang Central Java, Pekalongan
21. Heru Mualim, worker at PT KYK Indonesia, Bekasi.
22. IL, labour activist in Serang district.
23. Ika, union leader at PT SNG, Bekasi.
24. Idin Rosidin, politician from DPP Gerindra Party and former union leader at KSBSI.
25. Iwan, coordinator success team PDIP Bekasi branch office.
26. Iwan Kusmawan, chairman of SPN and member of KSPI executive board
27. Jalika, parliament member DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi from Gerindra Party
28. Joko Hadi, union leader at PT STK, Bekasi district.
29. Joko, Omah Buruh JIEP Bekasi district.
30. Juliaman Damanik, parliament member DPRD II Medan (2011-2014), from the Labour Party.
31. Kahar.S. Cahyono, former secretary of *Aliansi Serikat Pekerja Serikat Buruh Serang* (2009-2010), vice-president of FSPMI and member of KSPI executive board.
32. MA, labour activist in Serang district.
33. Maxi Ellia, labour activist and former vice-president of FSPMI.
34. MS, member of success team union legislative candidate in Serang district.
35. Minggu Saragih, union legislative candidate (PDIP) for North Sumatra Provinces
36. Muchtar Pakpahan, chairman of SBSI and former general chairman of the Labour Social Democrat Party (2004) and the Labour Party (2009).
37. Mudofir Hamid, president of KSBSI.
38. MI, union leader in Bekasi district
39. Mahmud Sabar, worker at PT OAS, Serang.
40. Nasrulloh, commissioner of KPU Serang district.
41. Nicholas, chairman of SBSI North Sumatra.
42. Noval Bahrudin, union leader in Bekasi district
43. Nasrudin, union leader at PT DJabesmen, Bekasi.
44. Nurdianto, union leader at PT NKS, Serang.
45. Nursuhud, politician from PDIP.
46. Nurdin Muhidin, parliament member of DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi from PAN

47. Nyumarno, parliament member of DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi from PDIP
48. Obon Tabroni, vice-president of FSPMI and former head of FSPMI Bekasi.
49. Picky Tarigan, union leader at SBSI Medan.
50. Sobar Gunandar, secretary of FSPMI Bekasi.
51. Saukani, head of DPW SPN Banten Province.
52. Rustan, legislative candidate (FSPMI) from PDIP at DPRD I West Java Province.
53. Rustam, union leader at Fokuba (Bank BCA).
54. Sahat Butarbutar, legislative candidate (FSP KEP KSPI) from Gerindra Party in Bekasi; vice-chairman of FSP KEP KSPI.
55. Romi, success team member from PDIP.
56. Sarifuddin, political consultant at Survey Monitoring Independent Network (JSMI).
57. Saman, member of success team of Nyumarno at Jatireja village, Bekasi district.
58. Saiful DP, general chairman of FSP KEP KSPI and founder of SPSI Reformasi.
59. STA, worker at PT PPCI, Bekasi.
60. SA, staff of the Bureau of Manpower services, Bekasi.
61. Suhana, commissioner of KPU Bekasi District, Bekasi.
62. Syahrial, worker at PT LMK, Bekasi.
63. SB, informant of Apindo Bekasi Serang.
64. Intan Dewi, legislative candidate (SPN) from PAN and board member of DPD SPN Banten province.
65. Yudhi Darmansyah, politician from PDIP and member of Baleg at DPRD II Kabupaten Bekasi.
66. ZKH, worker at PT LMK, Bekasi.
67. Zainal Abidin, parliament member at DPRD II Kabupaten Serang, vice-chairman of Hanura Party Serang Branch, vice-chairman of DPD SPN Banten Province.