In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

PRAGMATISM AND INDONESIAN LEGISLATIVE ELECTION

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I. Introduction

1.1 Background

The election of members of parliament and the senate have become routine ever since Indonesia decided the democratic system in her political life since 1999. Inevitably costs are incurred. In the 2014 legislative election it has been reported the central government has provided a sum of Rp. 15.4 trillion and a number of political parties, including the major ones such Golkar Party, Indonesian Democratic Party For Struggle (PDIP) and the Democratic Party provide a sum of Rp. 1.461 trillion for their own election purposes. These are minimum amounts not taking into account the alternative and social costs involved.

It is reasonable to ask about the benefits the people may expect of their legislators and members of the senate which together number about 694 (560 legislators and 134 members of the senate). In a negative way one may say that the election is not meant to further increase the number people who lack food; nor is it intended to further enrich the few Indonesians who are already rich even by world standards. On the positive side one may say that the election is a rightful process which leads to a change of government in a peaceful manner. Still the central question remains what is the basic intent of the election?

1.2 The preamble of the 1945 constitution of the Republic of Indonesia

To my mind the basic intent of the election shall be the realization of the vision and mission for which the declaration of independence of Indonesia was made in August 17, 1945. The vision and mission of the Indonesian state are clearly set out in the preamble of the 1945 constitution. The vision is to realize “a state, free, united, sovereign, and just and prosperous.” This vision is to be achieved using five principles, which the first president of the Republic, Soekarno, called Pancasila. The principles are Belief in The One God, humanity with morality, Indonesian unity, democracy with enlightened deliberation through consultative representation and social justice for all Indonesians. The values contained in the vision and mission are the yardsticks by which to evaluate the collective performance of the legislators.

Three salient points may be noted. First of all the vision and mission have been framed in the preamble within one breath. The language used is a flowery one but the operational unity of the vision and mission as intended by the founding fathers of the Republic cannot fail to be observed by anyone who carefully reads the preamble. In fact such unity is emphasized by the second person in the duet Soekarno - Hatta, who proclaimed the independence. In at least two occasions Hatta pointed out that the principle of the Belief in The One God does not only mean tolerance and respect among people who adhere to different religious beliefs but also as the main operational principle by which to execute the Pancasila. The first occasion was a speech at the University of Indonesia at the onset of the new order government in 1966. The second occasion is in his book entitled “Pengertian...

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1 This article is the shortened version of the first in a series of papers in Indonesian on the benefits of the 2014 election for the people of Indonesia.

2 Hatta’s speech at the University of Indonesia in May 1966 at a “Simposium Kebangkitan Semangat ’66: Menjelajah Tracee Baru, Universitas Indonesia, 6 Mei—9 Mei 1966, Jakarta. (Symposium on the Reivival of the Spirit of 1966: To Explore New Paths, University of Indonesia, May 6—9, Jakarta.)
Pancasila in which Hatta pointed out that the Belief in The One God is the main source of moral values to execute the Pancasila ideology. In that way the Pancasila state will have a strong moral basis. The Pancasila state is not a theocratic state nor is it a secular state. This also means that the operational unity of the vision and mission will have to be maintained.

The second salient point is a message from the founding fathers to succeeding generation of leaders in Indonesia. One knows for a fact capitalism is atheism in practice, placing as it is an over-emphasis on material progress. Such overemphasis has resulted in many forms of injustice in the world including income inequality, destruction of the environment, cultural domination, weakening of the family, the exclusive material intent in the pursuit of knowledge and the perennial tendency of the strong to dominate the weak. Succeeding generation of leaders need to engage themselves in the eradication of such injustices. But efforts in such eradication have to begin at home.

The third salient point is an emphasis on justice, justice being a component in both the vision and mission.

1.3 The objectives of the study

This study is focused on the implementation of the vision and mission as stated in the preamble. Specifically the study wants to show:

a. That the development efforts have not been consistent with the values contained in the vision and mission
b. That such inconsistency came about because of the technical uncoupling of the vision and mission
c. That the uncoupling originated in the decision of parliament on the law about the system of development planning
d. That the system of decision making in Indonesian democracy has been based on pragmatism, which, if continued will endanger the existence of Indonesia as envisaged in the 1945 constitution.

II. Methodology

The discussion about the achievement of vision and mission will centre on the just and prosperous society component. This will have implication on the realization of the other components.

The necessity for the vision and mission to be considered as a technically unified entity is based on the basic conclusion of the law of consistency in socio-economic development that there has to be a complete match between the values and action contained in the operational policies with those contained in the objectives. Otherwise the objectives will not be realized.

The data to be used in the study will be secondary data and the time period covered will be the ten years of 2004-2014, the period of the last two general elections prior to the one in April 2014.

This study will employ the tawhidi epistemology which is more inclusive in terms of the sources of knowledge compared to the empirically based epistemology usually used in scientific investigation. In the tawhidi epistemology the sources of knowledge include the Qur’an, empirical reality, spirituality and history. The Qur’an is knowledge revealed through God’s pronouncements to Prophet Muhammad pbh. Empirical reality is knowledge acquired by the human senses. Spirituality is knowledge acquired by individual human being through communication with The All-Knowing and is transmitted in the form of inspiration. History will be past events properly verified to become useful knowledge. The use of the tawhidi epistemology is a necessity given the nation’s mission has as its first component the Belief in The One God. Philosophically the tawhidi epistemology allows one to make judgements on the empirical findings of the investigation.

III. Failure to realize the vision of the nation


3 Hatta, M., 1977, Pengertian Pancasila (The Meaning of Pancasila), C.V. Haii Mas Agung, Jakarta, p. 17
After two general elections the prosperity of the nation is far from being realized. Out of 112 million members of the labour force in 2012, 39 % were unemployed, either fully or disguised. This is one important reason why poverty is still widespread and income inequality prevails. According to World Bank criteria of US$ 2/ day per capita expenditure, 43.3 % of the Indonesia population are poor. On average the income of the richest 10 % of the Indonesian population is 12 times the average income of the poorest 10 %. In 2007, the income of the richest 10 % was 9.6 times the income of the poorest 10 %. Income inequality tends to increase. An international journal, Forbes, published the names of 19 richest persons in the world including “ the owner of Djarum and BCA, R. Rudi Hartono and Michael Hartono, also Chairul Tanjung, the owner of CT Corp.; also Edwin Soeryadjaya, Hary Tanoesoedibyo, Martua Sitorus, and others.” The statistical office of the government, BPS, documented that there has been an unequal distribution of suffering and development benefits inter-regionally. In Jakarta in the month of September 2013, the poverty rate has been 3.72 % of the total population while in Papua it was 40.72 %.

Poverty and inequality of income take various forms. It is reported that 36 % of Indonesian children under five years of age experience retarded growth due to malnutrition. Globally Indonesia is number five in the number of children under five experiencing retarded growth.

A fundamental aspect of prosperity and justice is to what degree the population are being provided with the wherewithal of biological capacity to survive, that is access to food, specifically to calorie intake. The following data have been assembled from the BPS Socio-economic Survey of Households in various years. The cut-off point for sufficiency of calorie intake is 2000 units per person per day. According to this criterion, between 2002 – 2013, only in three years the calorie intake has been sufficient, that is in 2005 (2007.65), 2007 (2014.9) and 2008 (2068.17). In the other nine years the calorie intake per person per day has been under 2000 units. This means that the population of Indonesia go hungry most of the time between 2002-2013.

An example where Indonesians whose calorie intakes are under 2000 get their calorie the following figures will shed some light. In the year 2010 average per capita calorie intake has been 1925.61 units. This amount has come from various sources of food. Grains contributed 927.05 units; oil and fat 233.39 units; prepared food 273.84 units. The following Table provides more detailed sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Calorie Intake</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>927.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots</td>
<td>37.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>45.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>41.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs and milk</td>
<td>56.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>38.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>40.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and fats</td>
<td>233.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared food</td>
<td>273.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>231.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1925.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Socio-economic Survey of Households, 2010

What has been reported above is actually an update of what has been written by the author about Indonesian development connected with seven subjects which are increasing unemployment, increasing socio-economic gap, increase in crimes, low total factor productivity, low relative position of Indonesian human resource status in the world, investment biased towards capital intensive sector relatively neglecting the agricultural sector, importing many agricultural commodities which

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7 [Keberpihakan.org/page/articles/1, accessed March 18 2014](http://www.keberpihakan.org/page/articles/1)
actually need not be imported like rice, sugar, salt and soy beans. ¹¹

In conclusion one may say that what has been reported here is consistent with regard to objective 1.3 a. of the study that the development efforts have not been consistent with the values contained in the vision and mission of the nation. Democracy which was adopted since 1999 has not produced the kind of development outcome which can bring Indonesia closer to her vision and mission as an independent nation.

IV. The vision has not been achieved because Pancasila has not been implemented

In connection with objectives 1.3 b. and c. it may be stated that the unity of vision and mission has been broken. The principle of the Belief in The One God has not been implemented. If the efforts to realize the vision by methods other than those consistent with Pancasila, the efforts will fail. And they have failed.

How has this failure come about? This is seen in the law about the system of development planning, Law of The Republic of Indonesia No.25, 2004 About The System of Development Planning. The law in its “Consideration” does make reference to God when it says “a. with the grace of God Almighty, Indonesian Proclamation of Freedom has ushered in Indonesia towards a national life which is free, united, sovereign, just, and prosperous.” This sentence in the law has recognized the role of God Almighty in granting freedom to Indonesia to achieve her vision. But how this vision is to be achieved is not by implementing Pancasila. The failure to implement Pancasila means the failure of parliament (and the government) not only by issuing the law in the first place in 2004 but also in repealing it in subsequent years and issuing a new one more suited for Pancasila implementation.

The first principle of Pancasila is the Belief in The One God. By not recognizing the role of Pancasila in achieving the vision of the nation, the law in effect is saying that The One God does not have a role to play in free Indonesia, whose freedom has been granted by Him in the first place. A question may asked as to why He is not needed in free Indonesia? The answer may be that the job of implementing the second principle of Pancasila, moral humanity, is strictly the role of the Indonesians as humans. If this is the answer, it defies logic because it means there is a different conception of God Almighty mentioned in the law and God The One in the first principle of Pancasila. However illogical the role of God has been articulated in the law, Pancasila as the mission of the Indonesian nation has been uncoupled from her vision. The nation has been veered away from her rightful, cherished vision, a vision that has been fought for with blood and tears of millions of Indonesians over a long period of time. In any case, if after the election, the parliament and the government do not repeal the law no. 25 of 2004 on the system of development planning and put in its place a law conducive to implementing the unified mission and vision, then the benefits of the election to the nation, nay to her very existence will be negative!

V. Pragmatism and democracy

With regard to objective 1.3 d., one may ask the question, if the vision of the Indonesian nation is not to be achieved by implementing Pancasila, how then is it to be achieved? It is to be achieved by the system of decision making in democracy called pragmatism. Pragmatism is a philosophy which says that whatever is considered good and beneficial in this life, do it. Whatever is good for the present life may be good or not good for the after-life if such after-life exists. But who decides the benefits associated with actions? In a system of democracy, it will be the legislators who make the laws of the land and the government, specifically the government bureaucracy who implement the laws. But on what basis will these legislators and bureaucrats determine the benefits of actions? Nothing specific or systematic may be put forward except the subjective evaluation of the legislators or the bureaucrats. In any case the idea that The One God participates in every aspect of decision making and that there are benefits to be derived or not derived in the after-life do not factor in the decision making system based on pragmatism. One definition of pragmatism is “action or policy dictated by consideration of practical consequences

rather than by theory or dogma.” 12 Pragmatism has been adopted in the Law No.25 of the year 2004 in Chapter II Principles and Objectives, Clause 2 “National development is to be conducted on the basis of democracy with the principles of truth, justice, sustainability, environmental consideration, and autonomy and balance between progress and national unity.” 13 It can be seen that the basic principle and objective of the system of national development planning does not make any reference at all to Pancasila.

One may ask of what importance is this Pancasila to Indonesia? Soekarno, who coined the term Pancasila, said in his 1956 address to the nation on the occasion of the 17 August 18th celebration, “The Indonesian nation has to have life-content and life-direction. We have to have levensinhoud dan levensrichting. A nation who does not have life-content and life-direction is a nation whose life is not deep, a nation who is shallow, a nation who is superficial, a nation who does not have levenstdiepte at all.”

“He (such a nation) is fond of artificial gold, and not spiritual gold. He adores the power of the baton and not moral power. He loves physical pomp, and not the light of truth and justice. He sometimes is strong but the strength is skin-deep, while in the inside he is empty.”

“A nation with character believes in his own values and has self-reliant values... A nation without such values cannot stand on his own. A nation without faith cannot stand.” (The angular printed English is from Soekarno. The other English is from the author, translation of the original). 14 What the first president of the Republic said on August 17, 1956 answer the question put forth at the beginning of this paragraph. Needless to say that given the previous data and other researches done by this author have confirmed the statement that Pancasila has been wiped out in the formal way through the law about the system of development planning and in the empirical world. A research on higher education concludes among others that the university graduates who have been hired as part of techno-management structure in the bureaucracy have had their incomes increased but failed to contribute to the nation’s socio-economic competitiveness. “The university graduates have been educated using the positivistic philosophy of science based solely on the empirical world. There has been a symbiotic relationship between the socio-economic system (of capitalism) and the system of higher education in Indonesia.” 15 In the field of regional development, another research piece concludes “The Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 32 Year 2004 about regional government is not consistent with Pancasila because it excludes chapter 29 clause 1 of the 1945 constitution which says that the President of the Republic of Indonesia holds government power.” 16

VI. Why has the methodology of pragmatism been utilized in national development of Indonesia?

This is connected with the choice of democracy in the political system in the era of reformation. The guided democracy promoted by the former President Soekarno in 1959-1965 was rejected because it was considered a failure to raise the living conditions of the population and also because it was characterized by severe limitation on political expression. There has also been a rejection of Pancasila democracy which was practiced in the new order era 1966-1998. This kind of democracy was practiced with a lot of limitation on political freedom including the...

12 Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, accessed 1 March 2014
13 The law on the system of national development planning has been decreed by the President of The Republic of Indonesia, Megawati Soekarnoputri on October 5, 2004 and made legally binding on the same day by the head of the state secretariat, Bambang Kesowo.
14 Republika Daily, September 24, 2014
15 Hasibuan, S., 2013, Pengembangan SDM Universitas bagi Peningkatan Daya Saing Bangsa (Human Resource Development to Develop Indonesia’s Competitiveness), Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia, Jakarta.
16 Hasibuan, S., 2013, Implementasi Otonomi Daerah Menurut Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia Year 1945, (Implementation of Regional Autonomy According to the 1945 Constitution), Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia, p.1
forming of political parties and political expression. So with the end of the new order in 1998 and the onset of the era of reformation in 1999, there was an articulation for a democracy without a suffix or prefix. In other words it was thought that what Indonesia needs is a full-fledged democracy. Such a democracy is a free market democracy either in the field of economics or politics. In economics Indonesia has to adopt what is known as “The Washington Consensus” which consists of ten guidelines to promote economic growth which is the paramount objective to be pursued in the economy. These ten guidelines include fiscal policy discipline, redirection of public spending from subsidies…, tax reform…, positive and market determined interest rates in real terms, competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization…, liberalization of inward foreign direct investment, privatization of state enterprises, deregulation….. and legal security for property rights.17 In the field of politics, in the context of implementing the so-called political freedom, regular elections are held to elect members of parliament nationally and regionally. The president of the Republic, regional governors and heads of districts as well as mayors are directly elected in the various elections.

VII. Why pragmatism is not suitable for Indonesia to realize her vision

This is because pragmatism as a method of decision making is based on an established paradigm in an established economic system foreign to Indonesia. The established paradigm consists of materialism, individualism, natural freedom, and positive philosophy of science, that is science based on empirical information alone. The established economic system is the capitalist system as it obtained in America. The philosophy of pragmatism was developed in the USA in 1870 by the American philosophers Charles SandersPeirce (1839-1914) and John Dewey (1859-1952).18 At this time capitalism was already established in America for about 200 years. American independence from England was proclaimed in 1776. It may be added that the USA, from the philosophical point of view, was a product of the time of the enlightenment, a period when it may said that the function of God in the affairs of public management has been excluded. There is complete separation between religion and management of the state. The existence of God, however, is recognized, as shown on the paper money of the US dollar. From the point of view of the philosophy contained in Pancasila, materialism is not consistent with such philosophy. The philosophy of materialism regards anything that exists being physical and The One God is not physical although the whole physical reality is His handiwork. The philosophy of individualism is also not consistent with the idea of balance between individual interest and the interest of the community of the Pancasila. The belief in The One God implies limitation on a person’s freedom to utilize resources at his or her disposal, the limitation being that one’s action should benefit not only oneself materially and increase one’s faith in Him but also benefit the wider public and the environment. The belief in The One God implies the tawhidi epistemology where the sources of knowledge are multiple including revealed knowledge, acquired knowledge including from the empirical world, spirituality and history. Briefly, pragmatism is based on a philosophy not consistent with the underlying philosophy of Pancasila. It is therefore not suitable to be used as a methodology to realize the vision of Indonesia.

Additionally, the ten guidelines of The Washington Consensus and the objective of economic growth to which the guidelines are directed cannot be consistent with the philosophy of Pancasila which requires a more balanced growth as between the material and the non-material including the spiritual, and a more inclusive growth including the proper development of family life. Some of these guidelines are anathema to the rightful expression of nationalism of emerging or developing economies, pitting as they are the strong against the weak in contradiction with the basic principle of moral humanity. One of them, market determined interest rate, is in contradiction with the dictates of the holy book, the Qur’an, which forbids the charging of interest in business transaction but condones syariah finance which is now burgeoning in the world.

18 Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Pragmatism, plato.edu/entries/pragmatism/, accessed 31/3/2014
It may be noted that the use of pragmatism in the framing of the law on the system of development planning means not only in the separation of the vision and mission of the nation but also replaces Pancasila as the methodology to be used in pursuing the vision of Indonesia. It is therefore not surprising the development effort in the last ten years has produced outcomes contrary to the vision. It may be claimed that the development effort has produced stability in the country. This may be so but the stability that exists is a shallow one in the sense that the more people realize that the outcome of the development is contrary to the vision they have been holding, especially with regard to social justice, the stability may change into instability.

One may ask how is it possible that in a country where the large majority of the population are Muslims, the practice of pragmatism can thrive? The short answer seems to be that the practice of the Islamic faith predominantly takes the form of private faith that is faith in the relation of the individual with The Almighty God and less of the public faith, that is faith connected with the relation of the individual person with other human beings and the environment. By “predominantly” I mean that the emphasis on the private side of the Islamic faith is also reflected in the curriculum of the so called Islamic universities which contains little of the concerns of public policy as opposed to private policy interest of “halal and haram.” Hence it is not unusual to observe a highly pious personality and yet so oblivious to the practice of the materialistic and individualistic economic growth. In other words the philosophy and practice of pragmatism find a very accommodating home in the largely Muslim nation called Indonesia. Such an observation is confirmed by other academic observers such as Hilmy in his book entitled “Islamism and Democracy – Piety and Pragmatism.”

IX. Conclusion

I may conclude this article by saying that the last two general elections of 2004 and 2009 may have given further experience and lessons to the present generation of Indonesian leaders and electorate about the practice of constitutional democracy. One thing seems clear that there is an urgent need for a proper balance between political and economic freedom on the one hand and the effective and efficient execution to realize vision and mission of the Republic in the interest of all Indonesians on the other. It is the job of the politicians to figure this out. The following however are a few recommendations.

IX. Recommendation

The basic recommendation will be to technically unify the vision and mission as intended by the preamble of the 1945 constitution. This however is easily said than done. What is wanted, in the words of the first president of the Republic, is to create a nation not “fond of artificial gold” but “spiritual gold”, adoring not “the power of the baton” but “moral power”; who loves not “physical pomp” but “the light of truth and justice.” Indonesia does not want itself to be a nation “sometimes is strong but the strength is skin-deep, while in the inside he is empty.” The President has put it very well of the basic qualities required of a nation to realize her vision and mission. Such requirements are of a high order but the following will be a start.

Create a common understanding and perception among the newly elected legislators and senators, the bureaucracy, political parties and others about the unity of the vision and mission based on the Belief in The One God. Based on this a wide array of programs of action may be initiated including changes in the wording of some of the stipulations of the 1945 constitution, repeal of many laws and creation of new ones such as the law on the system of development planning and the law on autonomy in regional development, and operational research on a wide array of topics. I would like to emphasize these are necessary actions but in no way sufficient and Allah knows best.

Acknowledgement

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19 Hilmy, M., 2010, Islamism and Democracy – Piety and Pragmatism, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore
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11. Kompas Daily, September 24, 2014