

The Limits of Democracy:
Violent Conflicts and Reconciliation in Indonesia
Abstract

Yustinus Tri Subagya

This presentation is to examine the analytical discourse and to reflect the series of violent conflicts that happened in the past authoritarian New Order regime of Indonesia. Specifically, I am going to focus this discussion on the transitional process of democracy where the anatomy of the past power did not automatically dismantle when it was succeeded, but it attempts to resist and to renegotiate in the new landscape of state political power. By learning from the escalation of the violent conflicts in several areas, we could pick up the lesson that the ethical politics have to underlie the process of democratization. Otherwise, it will bring about marginalization of civil society which were lacks access to power in the decentralization. This is due to the dominant role of elite group and political brokers in determining the policy in the region.

My experience working in the conflict area of Poso reveal how life of people who became victims have been neglected. Their voices are not being heard by the government since the beginning of reconciliation efforts until reconstruction, when the violent was no longer intense. From the victims perspectives, the traumatic memory of the past atrocities and their emotional sufferings are still apparent. A lot of problems dealing with the conflicts are not seriously being addressed by the local government. Therefore, this presentation is also an attempt to highlight the remaining problems of the violent conflict with ethnic and religious nuances for developing democracy and eradicating poverty. To focus the discussion, I refer to the case study of the past violent conflict and its resolution in the Poso region of the Central Sulawesi province.