

THE RIVALRY OF AHOK VERSUS ANIES IN JAKARTA ELECTION 2017

Ali Mufrodi
UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya
ali.mfd52@gmail.com

Introduction

This article would like to discuss the rivalry between Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok the Governor incumbent, and Anies Baswedan, the Governor candidate, to challenge Ahok in Pilkada (District Election) DKI Jakarta 2017. How the campaign process held by them both to win the voters, the horizontal conflicts between the supporters of these two candidates. Jakarta Election 2017 not only bumping both groups. It also involving other groups such as nationalist groups which were incorporated in politic parties like Koalisi Merah Putih (KMP = Gerindra, Demokrat, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), the splinter group and the Muslim hard-line groups.

In another word, Jakarta Elections 2017 bear heavy burdens. It is burdened by many interests of various groups inside the country: and abroad like the Amnesty International and the United Nations. They also criticized the running of election campaign of Daerah Khusus Ibukota (DKI) Jakarta 2017. They are very concerned with issues such as the enforcement and development of social solidarity, religious tolerance, developing moderate Islam and narrowing the space of Islam hard-line.

An important part of this article is the discussion about the course of the campaign and why Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok suffered a crushing defeat and Anies Baswedan won a phenomenal victory.

It also can be said that the echoes of the Jakarta election is not only limited to Jakarta area, it surpasses the geographical boundaries of Jakarta and even surpasses Indonesia. The Jakarta election has received a very wide attention from the international world. This is evident from many foreign mediaes which broadcast the Jakarta election.

The Campaign Running

The election of Jakarta 2017 is the harsh election. Social clashes happen anywhere both online and offline. Each supporter of candidates threw negative issues to their opponent. Anies Baswedan rumored as Shiite, Ahok rumored as a China conglomerate henchman. As a result of sharp conflicts, the people of Jakarta become divided into torn social harmony and social cohesion fake. Ahok and Anies, both use primordial issues. Ahok rolls out the issue of diversity and Anies launching Islamic issues. Political experts considered these two are primordial equally, but because majority population of Jakarta are Muslims, then Anies campaign strategy that uses Islamic issues to encourage a lot of votes, reap big success and finally winning the election.

Although Anies Baswedan is widely known as a moderate Muslim figure and deeply understand the healthy democratic process, but he only remain silent when obtaining free support from hard-line Islamic groups that oblige Muslims to choose Muslim leaders without having thinking about superior programs. Furthermore, the application of religious politicization on the Anies side has consumed the victim of Ahok as incumbent governor who is charged with a blasphemy case. In this point, Ahok faces two court as well, the court of law and the people's court. Even though the level of Jakarta people's satisfaction on Ahok's performance as governor is at 60 % to 70 %, it has

no meaning in dealing with the politicization of religion. Ahok is powerless in face of external situation that does not benefit him as a double minority; as a Chinese who is a Protestant Christian.

All the elements that have been described above: the practice of black campaign in the form of insulting races and groups, spreading false news and cheap gossips, using primordial issues replacing superior programs. All this reflects the practice of low quality and unhealthy democracy. Borrowing Lahcen Haddad term, a Professor and Morocco Politician, the process of democracy by applying many negative elements such as this, will only result in negative coveriegnity (Hadad, 2017).

Initial Conflict: Ahok and Front Pembela Islam

The conflict between Ahok who at the time of this writing, just suffered a defeat in the second round of voting on April 19, 2017, with Muslims---in this case is---Islamic hard-lines groups such as the mass organization of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI = Front Pembela Islam) headed by Habib Rizieq Syihab (Moerti, 2014)

The conflict between the two sides was not only happening during the election process of Jakarta Regional Head Election which started in September 2016, but can be traces since Ahok replaced Jokowi as the governor of DKI Jakarta because he was the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

The fact that Ahok---a Chinese and a Christian or a double minority---becomes the Governor of DKI is difficult to be accepted by hard-line Muslims like FPI. In the eyes of FPI, Indonesian Muslims in general and in Jakarta in particular, it is *haram* to be led by non-Muslim rulers. This was further strengthened and endorsed by the Majlis Ulama Indonesia's fatwa in October 2016 (Mutiaara,

2016). This is very paradoxical in the eyes of FPI, how is it possible that majority Muslims are led by minority Christians and from ethnic Chinese minorities. Since then, FPI began to fight through preaching forums in mosques and in various *Majlis Taklim* in Jakarta until various demonstrations are done consistently and massively. Until the time when the people of Jakarta to elect a new Governor candidate in elections 2017. FPI and other elements of one strained ideology with FPI very benefited with the district election of DKI Jakarta. Why? Due to the heated political atmosphere that accompanied the campaign of the supporters of the candidate pair (*Pasangan Calon = Paslon*) and the conflict of interest that took place between them, made the lunge and FPI maneuvers become more free.

FPI feels to have new partners who have the same interests to overthrow Ahok from the seat of the Governor of DKI, namely *Paslon Agus-Sylvi*, and *Paslon Anies-Sandiaga Uno*. The existence of the same interests between these three parties then gave birth to various political interactions that resulted in ways to overthrow Ahok. The heated political temperatures become more intense with the existence of a case of blasphemy by an incumbent governor while speaking in the *Kepulauan Seribu* on September 17, 2016, through the phrase “do not be lied by (*Alquran Surah*) *al-Mâ'idah* 51” (*TEMPO*, 2016). Immediately, the governor Ahok was reported to the police by an anti-blasphemy coalition and by the *Pemuda Muhammadiyah*. This religious defamation case was used maximally by the FPI to gain wider support from the Indonesian Muslim. *Habib Rizieq Syihab*, the head of FPI, led FPI members to a demonstration on October 14, 2016. *Habib Rizieq Syihab* (*HRS*) was very disappointed because of no responses from the Indonesian Police Headquarters and from the *Jokowi*

Government toward Ahok's blasphemy case. So, HRS decided to mobilize a larger mass than October 14. Finally, HRS and his alliances the Muslim hard-line groups succeeded to held bigger demonstration on November 4 or known as the 411 Islamic defending (Topfield, 2016) which was attended by hundreds of thousands of Muslim Masses and some Nationalist groups such as supporters of the Gerindra Party and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS = the Prosperous Justice Party) carrying Paslon Anies-Sandiaga Uno and Democrat Party, Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN = National Mandate Party), Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB = Party of National Awakening), dan Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP = the United Development Party) which carries Paslon Agus Sylvi. It can be said that the action of Islam 411 is really phenomenal and so successful in forcing the state, in this case the police, to establish the status of the suspect to the incumbent governor.

Furthermore, based on determination to guard Ahok's legal case, Muslim hard-line leaders propose to make the largest demonstration than before and it was happen on Second December 2016 or known as Aksi Bela Islam 212 (Islamic Defending). And again Islamic hard-line groups gain more success to press POLRI and Jokowi Government to grant their demand for imprisoning Ahok despite resistance and defending actions from Jokowi's decision through Minister of Home Affairs Tjahyo Kumolo to reinaugurates Ahok as Governor of Jakarta after the campaign leave ends, triggering hard protest from many parties, "Ahok should be jailed for his status as a defendant in a blasphemy case instead of reinaugurating him as governor," they say.

Ahok's status as a suspect by the police force has made national politics more heated and triggered many reactions both domestically and abroad. In the country,

Ahok's supporters who are members of Ahok's Friend or Ahokers and other sympathetic parties to Ahok protest strongly and accuse the police of being under pressure in appointing suspects over Ahok. Overseas, it's popping up various reactions and protests loudly against the decision of the National Police to establish Ahok as a suspect case of blasphemy. Mainstream foreign media such as The Guardian, the New York Times, Time Magazine, the Sydney Morning Herald Tribune, and Reuters strongly criticized Ahok's determination as a suspect by the Indonesian Police. Not to mention two authoritative international institutions such as the UNB (University of New Brunswick) Human Rights Council and International Amnesty, voiced their concerns and further stated that the government of the Republic of Indonesia should revoke the law of blasphemy in Indonesia because there will be further casualties victims for the enactment of this law. They also deplore that Indonesia as a multi-ethnic and religious country and who has been famous for its religious harmony will be threatened by the imposition of this religious defamation law.

Ahok: Controversial Man

Many people judge the figure of Ahok as a very controversial man, who speak blunt and even tend to be rough that is considered not in accordance with the Indonesian culture (Qodari, 2017). Since becoming Governor DKI in 2014, he is not far from the pros and cons created by some of his policies against the current and is considered as the enemy of poor people such as his policy to displace Kampung Pulo and Bukit Duri, raiding the street vendors and even threaten to imprison them if they violate the Regional Regulation (Peraturan Daerah). Ahok is also known to be very temperamental that so easily triggered

his anger if he finds something undesirable. His anger exploded when a student of one University and a lawyer criticized him. He even once cursed a grandmother with harsh words. Many people are trying to remind him of bad habits of irritability and using harsh words, because as a governor, he is not worth doing that. As a high official, he became a public figure whose every behavior received widespread public attention. The result of all that has been described above is easy to understand that many people do not like him. Ahok so easily create of high-tensions conflict situations. He create, unnecessarily, political opponent that endanger his own political career. In other words, Ahok has made political blunder. The wider community of Jakarta had been angry at the behavior of this uncivilized Ahok until it reach its peak when he speaks in Kepulauan Seribu where he twisted the Alquran Chapter al-Maidah Verse 51 “Do not want to be lied to use the verse al-Maidah 51” This speech proven to be fatal for Ahok which throw him from the governor seat. He was reported to the police by some Islamic organizations who accused him of humiliating the religion of Islam and insulting the clerics and as already known to the wider public, Ahok is currently in jail. It is very high cost by Ahok for his harsh and uncivilized character. When many survey institutions stated that about 70% of Jakarta people expressed their satisfaction with the performance of Ahok as governor and his sectoral electability was in the range of 52%. But, this fact is not directly proportional to Ahok electability in the DKI election 2017 in which he and his vice, Djarot, must recognize Anies-Sandi as the winner with a considerable difference of 15%. This fact shocked many political observers.

Ahok has to pay very expensive price for his rude behavior. His brilliant political career as his name that

means the Light (Cahaya) of Moon (Purnams), suddenly faded to then extinguished. Now, he is in jail for the next two years based on the verdict of the Judge stating that he was proven to have denounce Islamic religion during his speech in Kepulauan Seribu. Ahok will no longer be able to take part in national politics and run for state officials at various levels, because now he bears the status of prisoner. This is obviously a severe blow to Ahok's supporters and anyone who sympathizes with him. But, despite his rough character, Ahok also has some advantages that are recognized by his friend and his political opponent. Ahok is a leader with a strong character: honest, brave, and clean as governor who implements all financial transactions in transparent way to prevent the practice of corruption and he dares to face the street thoughts who have been harvesting illegal profit from the payment of illegal levies and taxes from street vendors in many places in Jakarta by raiding them and replace them to proper places. He is the brave governor. He confeses to the public that some person threatens him for his death, but he responds casually and lightly, "I am not afraid to die. Every person would die, if not now, maybe tomorrow or any time God took my life." He is also a reformer in Indonesian politics. He strongly rejects the party oligarchy that has been dominating national politics. He refused to pay the political dowry to be carried by certain political parties to become candidates for governor (TEMPO, 2016). Straightly, he declared himself out of membership Gerindra Party, because he does not want to submit to higher authority command of the party.

The Phenomenal Victory of Anies

Finally, Anies Baswedan-Sandiaga Uno won the Jakarta Election 2017 held on 19 April ago. It is beyond the expectations of many political oservers (Reuters, 2017).

Why? Because, in the beginning of the campaign, Anies-Sandi are not taken into account by the national political observers. Majority of survey institutions such as Saiful Mujani Research Center (SMRC), Lembaga Survey Indonesia LSI, Indonmatrik are favoring the Ahok-Djarot to win the election in the range of 43 %, while Anies Sandi is at 18 %. But, gradually, the electability of Anies-Sandi increased to 23,8 % in the end of the first round campaign. In the first round voting, Anies-Sandi were in the second rank with 39, 95 % votes, while Ahok-Djarot were ranked first with 42, 99 % of the vote, and Agus Harimurti-Sylviana are surprisingly only grabbed 17, 02 % of the vote and failed to advance in the second round. In the second round voting, Anies-sandi made big surprise to win the election with 57, 95 % while Ahok-Jarot only got 42, 05 %.

It is very interesting to analyze the campaign journey of Anies-Sandi until finally able to surpass the couple Ahok-Djarot. The following passages will explain several factors that make paslon (pasangan calon) Anies-Sandi won the Pilkada DKI 2017:

First, Anies-sandi rarely hit by bad news or negative issue during campaign. This created a clean image among the voters about Anies-Sandi (GATRA, 2017). It is different with the other two which were hit by negative news such as Ahok who was afflicted by the blasphemy of religion and his insulting against the chairman of MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council) KH Ma'ruf Amin while Sylviana Murni stumbles corruption case of Jakarta city budget.

Second, Anies-Sandi received a windfall in the first round of elections in the form of votes from Agus-Sylvi. As it is widely known that several days before first round voting, came an unexpected event which was the explanation of former KPK chairman, Antasari Azhar, who was exposed by many national media about the engagement

former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in the murder of Nasrudin Zulkarnaen, the director of Putra Rajawali Banjarn, falsely accused Antasari as a murderer to get revenge for the imprisonment of Aulia Pohan which is his relative as parent in law. The explanation of Antasari make many voters of Agus-Sylvi, switch their votes to Anies-Sandi. The Electability of Anies-Sandi rises from 23, 8 % to 39, 95 % and were in the second rank while Ahok-Djarot ranked first with 42, 99 %.

Third, The Anies's triumph is also determined by the courtesy and cordiality of his appearances in the public space. On the other hand, the appearance of Petahana Ahok is rude and grumpy which creates a negative image among the voters of Jakarta people who lower their sympathy to elect Ahok.

Fourth, Anies-sandi are becoming the melting pot and the gathering of anti-Ahok segment. Some citizens of Jakarta choose Anies because they like Anies-Sandi, while others supported Anies-Sandi because of their anti-Ahok stand (Detik, 2017).

Fifth, Anies-Sandi were greatly benefited by the blasphemy case that afflicted Ahok. This blasphemy by Ahok who led to his imprisonment has undeniably triggering the anti-Ahok movement and made the Muslim voters aware of the importance of selecting Muslim rulers (TEMPO, 30 April 2017). Some of Islamic organizations such as the Muhammadiyah, Hizbut tahrir Indonesia (HTI), Forum Umat Islam (FUI), Front Pembela Islam (FPI) dan GNPF-MUI consistently advocating the voters to choose Anies which is a Muslim instead of choosing Ahok, a Christian. Even more that one of Anies's campaign strategy is campaigning to choose Muslim rulers through mosque networks throughout Jakarta. According to Dr. Eep Saefulloh Fatah who is the man behind the gun of this

strategy states that he was inspired by Ali Belhaj, an Algerian cleric who valiantly opposed the tyrannical regime of President Bouteflika who was arbitrary against Algerian Muslim. He traveled to many mosques in Algeria to encourage muslim people there to oppose the tyranny of the Algerian military regime that has always marginalized Muslims. Finally, Belhaj and Algerian Muslims through the FIS (Front Islamique du Salut = Front Penyelamat Islam) won a political victory in the 1990 election defeated the state party the National Liberation Front (NLF).

Finally, the Indonesian Muslims succeeded in achieving political victory even though at the local level, which greeted with very emotional. This victory is very historic and is considered to have important milestones for the political life of Muslims. Furthermore, for the first time in the history, Muslims in the election of Jakarta choose a Muslim leader with the consciousness that they have to refer to their own holy book Alquran Chapter al-Mâ'idah verse 51.

The Foreign Media Highlighted Jakarta

Many people judge the figure of Ahok as a very controversial man, who speak blunt and even tend to be rough that is considered not in accordance with the Indonesian culture. Many mainstream Foreign Media show their high care to Jakarta election 2017. such as the New York Times, Newsweek, TIME Magazine, Reuters, Guardian, Independent, Sydney Morning Herald and many others. The news broadcasting by these international media makes the election of Jakarta into the spotlight of the world and invite wide comments related to what is happening in the Jakarta election.

After reading the news content of all the above news heading, it can be concluded that in the Jakarta

election 2017, Indonesia is risking its reputation as a country that has a high tolerance in religious life that has been widely recognized by the international world. Is Indonesia managed to maintain and preserve the values of tolerance and solidarity in the interfaith life? Facts in the field prove the absence of tolerance and solidarity (Cohrane, 2017) among religious people because Indonesia imposed a religious blasphemy law which is considered as a form of tyranny of the Muslim majority against the minority, in this case, Chinese and Christian minority World (Watch Monitor, August 1, 2017). Muslims become accused for having imposed a case of blasphemy against Ahok based on the weak accuse. The police who arrested Ahok with a case of blasphemy over his oration related al-Maidah verse 51 and the judge who handles Ahok case of blasphemy, both considered subject to the pressure of Muslims who conduct Islamic Defending (Bela Islam) 411, 212, and 313. In turn, this will be a bad precedent that in the future, there will be another Ahok who will become defendant if they are considered to endanger the interests of Muslims. In other words, Muslims as majority will make the law of blasphemy as a tool to impede achievement and deprive minority rights to full expression. In the language of Professor Komaruddin Hidayat, Ahok's brilliant political career was shattered by a speech that last only a minute and a half (C. Paddock, May 6, 2017).

The imposition of a case of blasphemy against Ahok also proves another thing that is the emergence of hard-line Islamic groups on the national political stage (Yenni Kwok, April 20, 2017) that see Islam with horse spectacles and narrow interpretation of Alquran verses. Jokowi government is considered weak in the face of Islamist militant groups. The New York Times harshly states that the hard-line Islamic groups like FPI, FUI, Hizbut Tahrir

Indonesia dan GNPF-MUI have done what the so called Talibanisasi public sphere. Hard-line Islamic groups are considered contrary to the peaceful character of the spread of Indonesian Islam and always in the process of dialogue with local culture.

The foreign media above also regret the attitude of Anies Baswedan who is actually a moderate

Muslim, blinded by his ambition to win the election, he is willing to change his attitude from a moderate Muslim to a pragmatic Muslim. It is apparent when he visited the FPI headquarters in Petamburan, Tanah Abang.

Anies was really utilize valuable momentum in the form of free support when Muslims in large numbers coordinated by Habib Rizieq Syihab, Muhammad al-Khaththath and Bachtiar Nasir, held an action of Islamic Defending which the main demand was for the police to imprison Ahok who is considered to be a desecration of Alquran and for the Indonesian Muslims especially Muslims in Jakarta to select Muslim leader.

This pragmatic attitude of Anies Baswedan, in turn, according to the foreign media, giving birth to what the so-called the politicization of Islam. These foreign media are protesting the application of religious politicization by Anies who use religion as a tool for his political purpose reminded that the election of Jakarta is feast of democracy celebrated by Jakarta people that is assumed to have and use their political rights while the governor candidates enliven it by showing off their flagship programs, when not the flagship program offered but utilizing the majority religion to gain many voters, these are considered demeaning democracy.

References

Piter, Randan Bua, *The Ahok Way: Hidup adalah Kebenaran, Mati adalah Keuntungan*, Penerbit: Visi Anugerah Indonesia, Bandung, cet/ III, November 2014.

Markus Gunawan, *Ahok: Kobi* Jakarta Baru, Penerbit: Visi Media, Jakarta, Cetakan II, November 2013.

Muhammad Husnil, *Melunasi Janji Kemerdekaan: Biografi Anies Rasyid Baswedan*. Penerbit Zaman, Jakarta, cet. I 2014, www.penerbitzaman@gmail.com

TEMPO, *Agama dan Luka Pilkada*, 24-30 April, 2017

TEMPO, *Dua Wajah Ahok*, 13-19 Juni 2016.

TEMPO, 4 November 2016, 7-13 November 2016

TEMPO, *Kuda-Kuda Menjelang Laga*, 17-23 Oktober 2016

TEMPO, *Manuver Terakhir*, 13-19 Februari, 2017-08-19

TEMPO, *Lawan Bang!* 19-25 September 2016

GATRA, *Sang Jawara*, 20-26 April, 2017-08-19

<http://www.MUI.or.id>

<http://www.Juangnews.com>

<http://www.detiknews.com>.

<http://www.Amnesty.org>

<http://www.nytimes.com>

<http://www.time.com>

<http://www.reuter.com>

<http://www.guardian.com>

<http://www.cfr.org>

<http://www.worldwatchmonitor.com>

<http://www.affinitymagazine.us>

<http://www.predata.com>

<http://www.aljazeera.com>

www.merdeka.com

www.en.tempo.com

www.portal-islam.id

www.huffingtonpost.com