

CONTESTING INDONESIA SEMINAR SERIES



Vedi R. Hadiz

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Chair: Toby Carroll
Research Fellow, Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Date: Thursday, 16 October 2008

Time: 12.15 p.m. - 1.30 p.m.

Venue: Seminar Room 3-1, Level 3
Manasseh Meyer
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
469C Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259772

This is a brown bag seminar and you are most welcome to bring your own packed lunch

Contesting Democracy and Decentralisation in Indonesia

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Vedi R. Hadiz is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He is the author of *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia* (Routledge, 1997), co-author of *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in Age of Markets* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), co-editor of *Social Science and Power in Indonesia* (ISEAS, 2005), editor of *Empire and Neoliberalism in Asia* (Routledge, 2006), and author of *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective* (forthcoming, Stanford University Press).

SYNOPSIS

No less than the World Bank has declared that decentralisation is a global phenomenon, and that most developing countries have experimented with it to varying degrees. Moreover, because of the inefficiencies associated with plodding, large, central states, decentralisation is presented by the Bank as facilitating the integration of local societies and economies into the world market. After the fall of Soeharto in 1998, Indonesia embarked on an ambitious decentralisation programme. Here, as in many other societies, decentralisation came to be commonly associated with notions of 'good governance', involving both raising public participation – therefore democratisation -- as well as the technocratisation of the processes of decision-making and mechanisms of public accountability. Using the Indonesian case, this seminar discusses the inevitable accompanying tensions and contradictions that ultimately define the terms under which decentralisation and democratisation actually take place. It advocates an analysis of the underlying social conflicts associated with the democratisation and decentralisation processes, which on the surface, may appear to be merely issues of technocratic design. Crucially, it offers an explanation as to why the outcomes of decentralisation and democratisation have diverged sharply from the expectations of both good governance advocates as well as populist supporters of the 'empowerment' of local communities.

This seminar is part of the Contesting Indonesia series organised by the Centre on Asia and Globalisation, at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. The series provides an opportunity for scholars and practitioners within the region to present their take on the world's third largest democracy. It runs from October 2 2008 into early 2009. For more information on the series please contact spymle@nus.edu.sg or visit <http://www.spp.nus.edu.sg/CAG/home.aspx>