Civil-society Support — A Decisive Factor in the Indonesian Presidential Elections in 2014

Ririn Sefsani and Patrick Ziegenhain

Summary
This paper argues that the enormous support of civil-society organizations was a major reason for Joko Widodo's victory in the Indonesian presidential elections in 2014. Social-science theories generally assign civil-society organizations a leading role in strengthening a democratic political order and improving the quality of democracy in it. The authors' assessment of Joko Widodo’s election campaign reveals that the involvement of volunteer groups (relawan) with pro-democratic goals was an important component. The remarkable commitment of these civil-society organizations, which provided support in a variety of ways, can be interpreted as a positive sign that democracy is deepening in Indonesia.

Keywords: Indonesia, democracy, presidential elections, Joko Widodo, civil society

Ririn Sefsani is a consultant on governance and democratic reform issues and currently works for the Partnership of Government Reform (Kemitraan) in Jakarta, Indonesia. She is also a board member of the Mombine Women’s Political School in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.

Patrick Ziegenhain is currently an interim professor at the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. His research mainly focuses on political, economic, and social developments in Southeast Asia.