

**Post-Election Analysis**  
*“Prospects for opposition and accountability”*

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On July 28, Dr. Dan Slater of the University of Chicago presented the findings of his recent trip to Jakarta on the heels of the July 8 Presidential Election. Dr. Slater’s research suggests that Indonesia’s decade of democracy has been characterized by collusion more than competition among its political leaders. Although elections have been commendably free and fair, Dr. Slater believes democratic accountability has been stifled between elections by the absence of any viable opposition party.

Dr. Slater began by discussing the power sharing negotiations that followed the elections. In the July election, SBY won in a landslide with roughly 62 percent of the vote, and consolidated his political position. Meanwhile, the share of votes going to Golkar, PPP, PKB, PAN, and PDI-P fell from 87 percent in 1999 to only 45 percent in 2009. The question now for Indonesia, according to Dr. Slater, is what SBY will do with his second term. Will he reconstruct a “party cartel” in which all significant parties share power rather than going into opposition? Or will he construct a more limited coalition?

Since the election, SBY has presented himself as very accommodating to the various political parties, even though his

landslide victory suggests he is strongly positioned to construct a more limited political coalition if he chose to do so. At the same time, it is important to remember that power-sharing arrangements are negotiated, not ordered. SBY’s willingness to keep sharing power rests on his expectation that he will start receiving steady, reliable support from the political parties in parliament. His current aim seems to be to require a quid-pro-quo of staunch support in exchange for cabinet posts and other high profile posts – trading executive access for acquiescence.

Yet the parties in parliament will be hesitant to tie their own hands, and party leaders probably lack the capacity to force their members to give the president consistent support. Dr. Slater believes that this points to the possibility of increased presidential-parliamentary conflict and the potential rise of a more “super-presidential” style of politics in the next five years.