

Today's Local Politics in Indonesia 1998-2004:

Who controls the political and economic interests in Kalimantan?

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I. Introduction

Indonesia started to implement political reforms in 1998, after President Soeharto was overthrown. These reforms, democratization and decentralization, transferred much authority to Parliament and district governments. This political change had a tremendous impact on local politics because local and national influential figures, some of whom emerged newly and some who were old figures, came to compete for regional political and economic interests. In order to gain influence over local politics, for example, those figures help their family members and “friends” to win elections through political maneuvers, vote-buying, social mobilization by utilizing local socio-cultural conditions, and so on. Some of these figures themselves became district heads, members of local or national parliaments, local chairmen of national political parties and/or leading members of local socio-cultural organizations.

This picture of today's local politics in Indonesia may have already been shared among political scientists of Indonesian studies, especially since Robison and Hadiz [2004: 245-247] expressed their fears about the emergence of local bosses. Apart from their generalizing work of today's local politics in Indonesia, there are also individual case studies of local politics focusing on a particular region, such as Dwipayana [2001, 2004] on Bali, Honna [2005] on West, Central and East Java, Okamoto [2001, 2005] on Banten and South Sulawesi, Hadiz [Aspinall and Fealy. eds. 2003: 119-131] on North Sumatera, McGibbon [Ibid.: 194-213] on Papua, and Widodo [Ibid.: 179-193] on Central Java. It, however, can be said that characteristics of today's local politics in each region are neither the same as Robison and Hadiz generalize nor infinitely diverse as each case study implies.

¹ Ph.D Candidate from Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies. This presentation is based on my field research in West, Central and East Kalimantan from November 2003 until January 2004. Many people helped me during fieldwork and I would like to say special thanks to Dr. Ikrar Nusabakti for being my counterpart in LIPI, Mr. M.M for helping me a lot to collect data and information on Central Kalimantan, Mr. A.R. Budi van Darol for assisting me in West and East Kalimantan, and interviewed people although I can not mention their names here.



In this presentation, I illustrate how features of local politics in Indonesia can be classified into several types. The key to classification is an analysis of the relationship between local government heads (Governor, Mayors, and district heads) and local influential figures. Local government heads and local influential figures are the most powerful actors in today's local politics. Local influential figures are those who have the ability of mass mobilization and/or finance for elections, and whose power bases are economic, social, and/or criminal activities. They are, for example, local businessmen, leaders of socio-cultural organizations, leaders of local gangsters (*preman*), and so on. Local politicians whose power bases are only their careers in a political party are not included.

I offer three questions for analyses: (1) who are today's local government heads? (2) How did local influential figures gain social, economic and political power? (3) How can the relationships between local government heads and local influential figures be characterized? I use personal profiles of local government heads, vice local government heads, and local influential figures, who receive a large share of local political and economic interests. I focus on their place of birth, ethnicity, religion, occupational careers, in addition to the political, economic and socio-cultural organizations to which they belong, and personal networks such as family, friends and business partners. I collected this data and information during fieldwork from November 2003 until January 2005.

In the next three chapters, I will compare the three points mentioned above among West, Central and East Kalimantan. These provinces show different political features although the social and cultural settings are similar. I will then analyze why political features are different among the three provinces. My suggestion is that there are two important factors: the conditions of local economic resources and the state control over the resources. I will discuss this in the fifth chapter.

I would like to note that I will analyze personal profiles of local government heads, vice local government heads, local parliament members, local influential figures, national political and business figures involving local politics in West, Central, and East Kalimantan, and national parliament members representing the three provinces much in detail in my dissertation. This presentation gives only an outline of case studies of West, Central and East Kalimantan and the tentative conclusion that local political features can be classified according to the conditions of local economic resources and state control over the resources.

From centralization to decentralization

I would like to mention political reforms briefly, which have influence over local politics. Only a political organization named *Golkar*, and two political parties named *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP)* and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI)*, were allowed to participate in



elections during the Soeharto era. Golkar always won elections with formal and informal electoral campaigns at national, provincial and district levels under the sponsorship of Soeharto and Indonesian National Army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia: TNI*). The President was elected once five years by the People's Consultative Council (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat: MPR*) consisting of the elected national parliament members and the appointed representatives from military, provinces, minority ethnic groups and various social organizations. It was nothing of a surprise that Soeharto was reelected six times. President Soeharto appointed Governors, and Governor appointed Mayors and district heads. Local parliament members could only nominate candidates and select three among them as the choices for appointment.

After the fall of Soeharto in 1998, relatively free establishment of political parties was allowed. More than 100 political parties were established, and 48 parties were allowed to participate in the general election in June 1999. People could elect the national and local parliament members freely in the election. The elected national and local parliament members became the main actors to elect President and local government heads respectively².

A new regulation of local autonomy (Law No.22/1999) was implemented starting in January 2001. The central government transferred authority to district governments. The provincial government no longer has authority over district governments, but rather became a coordinator of interests among districts. Moreover, a new regulation of financial distribution (Law No.25/1999) makes local government finances richer by allowing more local taxes, allocating dividends of forest and mining royalties, and so on.

Under those institutional changes, local contests over political and economic interests grew more intense in the era of post-Soeharto.

Kalimantan

The provinces of West, Central and East Kalimantan are three of four provinces in the Indonesian territory of Borneo Island. Populations of these provinces are relatively small but they are diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion. These provinces were originally covered with tropical forest, especially in the inland area and the peat land in the coastal area. Soils are poor for wet rice culture and people in Kalimantan have relied on slash-and-burn agriculture, hunting and gathering forest products for a living. Under these conditions, the local population is small except some industrial cities, to which plenty of people came from various places of Kalimantan and other parts of Indonesia to find jobs or better education. Moreover, there were massive inflows of immigrants into Kalimantan during the Soeharto era. They are mainly transmigrates who were recruited in Java by the central government.

² A direct election for President started in 2004 and for local government heads started in 2005.



Kalimantan is rich in natural resources such as forest, oil, natural gas, coal, gold, diamond and so on. Most of the resources, however, have been controlled by the central government, and were already exploited during the Soeharto era.

II. West Kalimantan

Demography, Economy, and Political History

West Kalimantan has an area of 146,807 km² and 62.7 percent of the land (92,024.75 km²) is categorized as national forest. The provincial population is 3,722,172 in 2000 and the population density is 25.3/km²³.

The main ethnic groups here are Dayak (20-30%) and Malay (19.4%)⁴. Dayak are indigenous people who have 200-300 sub-ethnic divisions. Most of them live in the inland area⁵. The Malay had built Islamic kingdoms in the coastal area since the 14th century. They have been in the majority of local bureaucrats in this province⁶. Chinese make up 9.5 percent of the provincial population. Their ancestors settled in West Kalimantan during the gold rush around the mid-18th century⁷. Javanese make up 9.1 percent of total population. Most of them came to Kalimantan as transmigrates during the Soeharto era⁸. In general, Dayak are Catholics or Protestants, Chinese are Catholics, Protestants or Buddhists, and Malay, Javanese and other immigrants are mostly Muslims.

The main economic resources in West Kalimantan are forest products such as rattan and logs, and plantation products such as oil palm, paper, orange, and rubber. Private and national corporations manage these businesses. Illegal logging is also practiced in the border area with Malaysian Sarawak⁹.

The province of West Kalimantan consists of two cities and eight districts¹⁰. During the Soekarno administration, political interests were shared by the first generation of Dayak politicians, the surviving Malay aristocrats, and military officers. The Dayak elite was, however, disgraced by Soeharto in 1967 because Oevaang Oeray, the first governor of West Kalimantan and one of the Dayak political leaders, was regarded as a sympathizer of Soekarno.

³ Pemerintah Daerah Tingkat I Kalimantan Barat and Kantor Statistik Propinsi Kalimantan Barat 1997: 15, Ibid. 1999: 189, and Ibid. 2001: 72.

⁴ Concerning ethnic statistics, see Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta [2003: 24].

⁵ There are many studies on Dayak cultures, societies, and histories such as Geddes [1957], Lindblad [1988], Maunati [2004], Miles [1976], and Riwut [1958].

⁶ A brief history of Malay in West Kalimantan is provided in Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Pusat Penelitian Sejarah dan Budaya, Proyek Penelitian dan Pencatatan Kebudayaan Daerah [1978/1979].

⁷ Concerning Chinese immigrant in West Kalimantan, see Heidhues [2003].

⁸ Concerning ethnic statistics, see Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta [2003: 24].

⁹ Centre for Political Studies, Soegeng Sarjadi Syndicated 2001: 629-630.

¹⁰ A city and two districts were established in 1999. Two new districts were established in 2003, as well, but this research does not deal with them.



Military officers and local Malay bureaucrats then gained important political positions during the Soeharto administration¹¹.

The second generation of Dayak political elite began to emerge mainly as local bureaucrats from 1970s, in which they came to enter Government Official Academy (*Akademi Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri: APDN*) in the provincial capital¹². Their positions in local governments were, however, relatively low when compared with Malay bureaucrats. The longer Dayak officials gained experiences as government officers the more they felt they were marginalized in the local bureaucracy. Under these conditions, Governor Aspar Aswin (1993-2003) started to put some Dayak officials forward as districts heads from 1994¹³. In addition, the violent conflict between local Dayak and Madura immigrants in 1997 led the Dayak elite to gain political influence over local politics¹⁴. Malay bureaucrats also keep their political influences owing to their large number in the local bureaucracy, national and local networks in the executive and the legislative, companionship with local businessmen of many years, and so on¹⁵. It, however, should be kept in mind that the Javanese military governor assumed control of local politics under the Soeharto's authoritarian regime.

Political Conditions in the Era of Decentralization (1998-2004)

There are five political characteristics in West Kalimantan in the era of post-Soeharto. Firstly, money politics, social mobilization, and violence are rampant especially at elections of local government heads. For example, the local parliament house in Mempawah, the district capital of Pontianak, was destroyed and burned by around a hundred rioters in February 1999. The rioters were supporters of one of the candidates for the Pontianak district head, who failed to win the nomination as the final three candidates by the central government in January 1999¹⁶.

Secondly, Governor has neither official nor informal authority over Mayors and district heads any more. Governor Usman Ja'far (2003-2008) intentionally stated in public that he could not admonish district heads for their procrastination in paying the central government the reforestation fund and forest product royalty¹⁷.

Thirdly, all local government heads were born in this province. Two mayors and five district heads were born in the district in which they now gain a position as a government head. The ethnicity of Governor, two mayors and three district heads is Malay, and the ethnicity of Vice

¹¹ Concerning local politics during 1950s-1960s, see Davidson [2003].

¹² Today's Vice Governor is the first Dayak alumnus from APDN. He was the only Dayak who graduated from APDN in 1968. Five Dayak students graduated in 1969 and at least 59 Dayak graduated during 1970s.

¹³ Aspar Aswin was born in East Kalimantan in 1940. He was a Javanese military officer. The first Dayak district head was elected in 1994 under the sponsorship of Aspar Aswin [*Tiras*, 1997: 45].

¹⁴ Concerning Ethnic conflicts in West Kalimantan, see Davidson [2002].

¹⁵ The conflict between local Malays and Madura immigrants in 1999 might also contribute to their political rally after Dayak gained political influences from the middle of 1990s. I will discuss more in my dissertation.

¹⁶ Kompas, 6 February 1999. The defeated candidate was afterwards elected as a district head in another district.

¹⁷ Kompas, 16 August 2004. Forestry entrepreneurs should pay the reforestation fund and forest product royalty to the district government and the district government should transfer them to the central government.



Governor and four district heads is Dayak¹⁸. Dayak and Malay are the first and second largest ethnic groups in West Kalimantan, respectively. This suggests that a “local man,” who was born in this province and belongs to main ethnic groups in the region, can gain social and financial support for elections more easily than a non-“local man”. This feature is quite different from the case of East Kalimantan, taken up in the fourth chapter.

Fourthly, at least six of the eleven local government heads have once served as sub-district heads and/or district government officials in the district where they now gain a top position of the government. It goes without saying that they already have formed “friendships” with local politicians, leaders of socio-political organizations and local influential figures such as local businessmen, leaders of *preman* and village leaders during their residence.

Fifthly, a temporary alliance of Malay and Dayak candidates is seen in elections, particularly in districts where Malay and Dayak populations are comparable¹⁹. Malay-Dayak alliances are seen in a pair of candidates for a local government head and a vice head. For example, if a candidate for a local government head is Dayak, a candidate for a vice head is Malay. This rule was formed by a tacit agreement after “ethnic” conflicts happened in 1997 and 1999. The purposes are probably to remove potential sources of further ethnic conflict and to gain more votes from both Malay and Dayak members in parliaments²⁰.

III. Central Kalimantan

Demography, Economy, and Political History

The area of Central Kalimantan is 153,564 km² and an area of national forest makes up 84.1 percent of the total area (129,173.55 km²). The provincial population is 1,823,715 in 2000 and population density is 11.9 / km²²¹.

Dayak people make up more than 40 percent of the total population in this province. The second largest ethnic group is Banjarese (24.2%), some of whom are royal descendants of the small Islamic Kingdoms, which were built in western parts of the province in the 17th century, and some who are merchants coming from the neighboring province of South Kalimantan. Javanese immigrants make up 18 percent of the population²². The Dayak follow many religions, including Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, and Hinduism. Muslim Dayak mostly belong to the ethnic sub-group of Dayak Bakumpai, who make up 7.5 percent of the total population.

¹⁸ A district head has mixed ethnicities of Chines and Dayak.

¹⁹ Basically, there have been social and political divisions among Malay and Dayak since the Soeharto era. The Malay-Dayak alliance is seen at six of the eleven pairs of a local government head and a vice head.

²⁰ Interview with a local NGO leader and secretaries of local parliaments.

²¹ Pemerintah Daerah Tingkat I Kalimantan Tengah and Kantor Statistik Propinsi Kalimantan Tengah 1999: 174 and Ibid. 2001: 45.

²² Concerning ethnic statistics, see Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta [2003: 24].



Hindu Dayak belong to Dayak Katingan who make up 3.3 percent of the total population. Banjarese, Javanese and other immigrants are mostly Muslims.

The main economic resources here are forest products such as logs, rattan and resin. These forest resources are processed into sawn timber, plywood, veneer, lumber core and so on. Illegal logging has been conducted by local businessmen in the wide national park, as well. They collude with local government officers and security forces such as military and police²³.

The province of Central Kalimantan consists of a city and thirteen districts. Five of them are old districts and other eight were established in 2002. Christian Dayak as well as military officers had strong influences over local politics from 1957²⁴ until the middle of 1980s. Muslim bureaucrats came to gain a share of political interests under the governorship of Javanese civil officers after Tjilik Riwut, the first Governor and one of the powerful local leaders of Christian Dayak, died in 1987²⁵. The political rise of Muslims became apparent in the elections of local district heads after the fall of Soeharto. Muslims gained the position of Governor and all five district heads seats by 2000²⁶. Dayak Christians, however, regained influence over local politics after the Dayak-led ethnic cleansing against Madura immigrants in 2001²⁷. They gained positions of Mayor and four district heads of new districts in 2003.

Political Conditions in the Era of Decentralization (1998-2004)

Three characteristics are seen in politics of Central Kalimantan in the era of post-Soeharto. Firstly, money, violence, and various methods²⁸ are used in political contests especially for election of local government heads. The difference with West Kalimantan is that there are three main local influential figures, who provide violent supporters and financial support for a particular candidate in elections at almost all districts. This is the second feature.

The three political fixers are a Dayak leader of a local social organization, a local Malay businessman, and a Dayak Bakumpai businessman whose commercial base is in Banjarmasin²⁹. The Dayak social leader earned a reputation among a part of the local people as a mediator of

²³ Centre for Political Studies 2001: 663-665.

²⁴ Province of Central Kalimantan was established in 1957. Central Kalimantan belonged to Province of South Kalimantan before 1957.

²⁵ For example, during 1978-83, a Christian Dayak civil officer and four military officers were appointed as Mayor and district heads under the governorship of W. A. Gara, a local Christian Dayak officer. During 1994-1999, two Christian Dayak officers, a military officer, and three Muslim officers were appointed as Mayor and district heads under the governorship of Warsito Rasman, a Javanese civil officer.

²⁶ Only Mayor of Palangka Raya (1998-2003) is a Christian Dayak. He was a military officer.

²⁷ Concerning ethnic conflicts in 2001, see International Crisis Group [2001].

²⁸ For example, VCD of "ethnic" conflicts in 2001 was made and circulated among local people so that people will remember who was the "hero" during the conflict.

²⁹ Banjarmasin is a capital city of the neighboring province of South Kalimantan. Central Kalimantan was a part of South Kalimantan until 1957 and Banjarmasin was a center of Central and South Kalimantan in terms of politics, economy and academy. This situation does not change so much until today.



“ethnic” conflict between local Dayak and Madura immigrants in 2001³⁰. His organization has branches at almost all districts in Central Kalimantan. Besides, four district heads and some local parliament members are in high positions of his organization. The two local businessmen both started to build up their business careers as subcontractors of timber public/private corporations in Jakarta, who have been operating in Central Kalimantan since the timber boom at the end of 1960s. The local businessmen have made use of their position as subcontractors and corporation’s logging licenses for running illegal logging. One has operated his business in the central and western parts of the province and the other controls over the northeastern area³¹.

In elections, those three figures put forward their ‘friends’ as local government heads. Twelve of fifteen local government heads in this province are former local government officials, whose positions provide ample chance to become ‘friends’ with the local businessmen³². Two district heads are local businessmen³³ and the other was a central government officer who was born in the district where he now became a government head. Incidentally, twelve local government heads were born in Central Kalimantan and the other three were born in Banjarmasin. In terms of ethnicity, there are eleven Dayak³⁴ and two Banjarese. The ethnicity of the others is unclear.

The third political feature is that a temporary alliance of Muslim and Christian candidates is seen in elections. For example, if a candidate for a local government head is Muslim, a candidate for a vice head is Christian. This alliance is seen at least in elections of Governor, Mayor and eight district heads. Like in West Kalimantan, this rule was formed by a tacit agreement after the “ethnic” conflicts in 2001 in order to remove a potential source of further ethnic conflict and to gain more votes from both Muslim and Christian local parliament members³⁵.

IV. East Kalimantan

Demography, Economy, and Political History

East Kalimantan has an area of 211,440 km² and forest covers an area of 177,161.22 km² (83.8 percent of the total area). The provincial population is 2,441,533 in 2000 and population density is 11.5 / km²³⁶.

³⁰ He and members of his organization were arrested as agitators against Madura immigrants [International Crisis Group 2001].

³¹ Concerning the local businessman who controls the central and western parts of this province, see EIA and Telapak Indonesia [2000].

³² Among the twelve local government heads, one was a district head, four were district secretariats, two were provincial/district heads of the Forestry Office (*Dinas Kehutanan*), one was a provincial head of the Public Works Office (*Dinas Perkerjaan Umum*), one was a district head of the Regional Development Planning Agency (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah: BAPPEDA*), and one was a provincial head of the Mining Office (*Dinas Pertambangan*).

³³ One clearly has business network with a political fixer.

³⁴ Among them, six are Muslims and five are Protestants.

³⁵ There are not any social divisions between Muslims and Christians but political contests. Interview with local government officers and one of candidates for a vice Governor.

³⁶ Bappeda Propinsi Kalimantan Timur 2002: 264.



Javanese immigrants and their descendants make up 29.5 percent of the provincial population. The second largest ethnic group is Bugis, who migrated from the neighboring island of Sulawesi. They make up 18.3 percent of total population. Banjarese make up 13.9 percent, who mainly came from South Kalimantan. Kutai, a sub-ethnic group of Malay, who constructed the Kingdom of Kutai in the 14th century, make up 9.2 percent. It is difficult to know the number of Dayak in East Kalimantan because the Dayak population was counted according to their sub-ethnic categories and many of them are classified as “others” in the census in 2000. It can, however, be estimated that around 10 percent of the provincial population is made up by Dayak, because Dayak in East Kalimantan are mostly Christians³⁷ and the Christian population in the province make up 13.8 percent of the total population³⁸. Javanese, Bugis, Banjarese and Kutai are mostly Muslims.

The main economic resources in East Kalimantan are mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, coal, and gold. Forest resources are also plentiful³⁹. Foreign enterprises, public corporations and big business groups in Jakarta have exploited those resources. For example, Pertamina, a public oil corporation, and a few foreign enterprises such as Shell Indonesia and Vico Indonesia have explored oil and natural gas. A problem of privatization of national enterprises came up since the fall of Soeharto. For example, the central, provincial, and district governments competed over acquisition of PT Kaltim Prima Coal, one of the big national enterprises of coal mining⁴⁰.

The province of East Kalimantan consists of 4 cities and 9 districts⁴¹. Javanese, Banjarese as well as military officers were strong political forces in the local bureaucracy and parliaments during Soekarno and Soeharto administrations. Some educated Dayak and Bugis immigrants, and Kutai aristocrats who survived politically also have been recruited in the local bureaucracy and parliaments in the context of political competitions among Javanese, Banjarese, and military officers⁴².

Political Conditions in the Era of Decentralization (1998-2004)

There are four political features in East Kalimantan. Firstly, money politics is the most important key to win elections. For example, it is said that one of the candidates for Governor used six billion rupia for buying provincial parliament members, who supported his rival

³⁷ There are also some Muslim Dayak, who mostly belong to an ethnic group of Tidung.

³⁸ Suryadinata, Arifin and Ananta 2003: 25, 116.

³⁹ Centre for Political Studies 2001: 690-692.

⁴⁰ Concerning the issue of PT Kaltim Prima Coal, see Prasetyawan [2005].

⁴¹ A city was established in 1999 and another city and four districts were established in 2001. A district was established in 2003.

⁴² In detail, see Magenda [1989].



candidate in the election of Governor in 2003⁴³. There is no violent mobilization in elections in this province.

Secondly, most of the local government heads are old acquaintances with each other. Among thirteen local government heads, two district heads were friends at the elementary school; at least two mayors and a district head were alumni at the Faculty of Economy in Mulawarman University in Samarinda; two mayors and a district head were close associates at the provincial branch of quasi-official youth organizations such as Indonesian National Youth Council (*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia: KNPI*) and Indonesian Reform Youth Force (*Angkatan Muda Pembaharuan Indonesia: AMPI*); Vice Governor and two district heads are executive members of the same social organization; and two mayors worked at the same hospital.

Thirdly, the place of birth and ethnicity of local government heads are various. Governor, two mayors and a district head are “immigrants,” who were born in other provinces in Indonesia. There is no ethnic majority among them. There are three Bugis, two Dayak, two Kutai, a Banjarese, a Sundanese, and a Bajau. The other three have mixed ethnicity.

Fourthly, six of thirteen local government heads have already gained high political positions at provincial level before they ran for elections. The Governor was the former Vice Governor; four Mayors worked respectively as a provincial head of Bappeda, the director of a main public hospital in Samarinda, a Golkar factional leader of provincial parliament during 1998-99, and a provincial head of AMPI; and a district head was a national parliament member representing East Kalimantan during 1987-1997 and worked as a provincial head of the Regional Environmental Impact Controlling Agency (*Badan Pengendalian Dampak Lingkungan Daerah: BAPEDALDA*). Besides, two district heads are provincial executive members of a big local social organization, which has established a ‘reciprocal’ relationship with today’s Governor since the Governor’s election in 1998⁴⁴.

V. Analysis

There are two similar political features among West, Central, and East Kalimantan, that is, unrestrained money politics and ethnic/religious politics. Money politics is actually seen everywhere in Indonesia today. Money politics was of course exercised during the Soeharto era but the frequency and the amount of money was much lower than today’s condition.

Ethnic/religious politics means political alliances among candidates from different ethnic/religious origins in elections for local government heads. If a candidate for Governor is Malay, for example, a candidate for Vice Governor is Dayak in West Kalimantan. If a candidate

⁴³ *Tempo*, 13 Juli 2003: 23-30.

⁴⁴ In detail, see Maunati [2004].



for Governor is Muslim, a candidate for Vice Governor is Christian in Central Kalimantan. There is ethnic and religious diversity among candidates in East Kalimantan. This feature probably results from tacit agreements after the “ethnic” conflicts in 1997, 1999, and 2001 in order to remove a potential source of further ethnic conflict and to gain more votes in elections in such multi-ethnic/religious societies.

There are two differences in the political features of the three provinces. One is the typology of current holders of political power. A type of major political power holder in West Kalimantan is a local government head who was born in this province and has served as a government official at the (sub-)district level. In Central Kalimantan, there are three strong political fixers behind the local government heads. Their power sources are economic and social activities and their influences spread over districts. In East Kalimantan, a type of major political power holder is a local government head, who is an old face in the provincial political circles.

The other difference is whether violent methods are used for gaining local political and economic interests. Violent mobilizations are used in West and Central Kalimantan but there is no violence in East Kalimantan.

Why do those differences arise among the three provinces? I suggest there are two factors. One is the condition of how many economic resources a province has. The economic resources concerned here do not include legally inaccessible resources such as forest in the National Park. The condition of economic resources can be measured by how many export sectors a province has and how much the value reaches. It is likely that this factor is especially related to two major types of local power holders, those who derive their power from local government offices, and those whose power source is routed in economic, social, and/or criminal activities. The latter group is composed of individuals engaging legal and illegal activities, which are likely influenced by the factor of economic resources, as well. Moreover, this factor is probably related to whether or not violent methods are used in local politics; violent contests over political and economic resources are more intense in regions where economic resources are scarce.

The other factor is the condition of to what degree the central government has concessions over the economic resources. The state regulations over economic resources are different according to the kind of resources. For example, the local government can issue forest concessions up to 100 ha, but mineral resources, especially oil and natural gas, are completely controlled by the central government. This factor is probably related to what is the key to gain local political and economic interests. It can be said that personal network with central government figures is important in regions where the central government controls the local economic resources, while



local networks are important in regions where local governments and private sector actors can handle the local economic resources.

The combination of the two factors mentioned above can be related to whether local power holders have influence at the district level or provincial level. For example, provincial government officials may become local power holders in regions where economic resources are plentiful but controlled by the central government, while district government officials may become local power holders in regions where local governments can manage the moderate amounts of economic resources.

West Kalimantan has moderate amounts of economic resources such as rubber plantations, oil palm plantations and forest resources (see table 1). Local governments and private sectors can handle those resources in a certain degree. Moreover, these resources easily lead illegal economic activities such as illegal logging. It is difficult for the state apparatus to police all operations of illegal logging because the area is too large and transportation is very limited. Under those conditions, a number of local influential figures grew at the (sub-)district level, such as local businessmen, foremen of plantations and forest industries, agencies of illegal logging, leaders of local *preman* (gangsters) and so on. They have reciprocal relations with local government officers. High officials at (sub-)district governments concerned in regional development projects and public works are especially close with such local influential figures and can easily obtain financial and social support from them. Their contests for the limited economic interests in West Kalimantan often rise to the surface with taking a shape of violent mobilizations in elections.

Table 1 Main Export Commodity of West Kalimantan Province 1995
(US\$ Thousands)

No	Sector	Value
1	Wood & Logs	472 501
2	Rubber	163 724
3	Others	14 290
4	Fishery	10 423
5	Forest Products	3 835
	Total	664 774

Source: Ministry of Industry & Trade, Regional Office, West Kalimantan Province
http://www.bkpm.go.id/bkpm/detailat.php?mode=baca&info_id=53

Central Kalimantan has only forest resources as a main economic resource (see table 2). Big business groups in Jakarta held almost all forest concessions during the Soeharto era. They have subcontracted local timber companies to do not only logging operations but also suppression of resistance of local people⁴⁵. Some of the subcontractors have also operated illegal logging at the national park with over 400,000 hectares. In those processes, a few successful local businessmen came to gain social, economic and political influence at the district and provincial levels. Their influences are much stronger than that of local government officials. The local

⁴⁵ Concerning timber business in Central Kalimantan, see Siregar [2004].



businessmen became patrons of local government heads and share the few economic interests in this province. Only an ambitious social leader succeeded in gaining a share of the interests with violent methods. Violence is the only means that he could use.

Table 2 Main Export Commodity of Central Kalimantan Province 1995 (US\$ Thousands)

No	Sector	Value
1	Veneer, Plywood	116 215
2	Wood & Wood For Rail Stock	32 441
3	Processed Woods Products	26 098
4	Crum b Rubber	15 853
	Others	2 570
	Total	193 177

Source: Ministry of Industry & Trade, Regional Office, Central Kalimantan Province
http://www.bkpm.go.id/bkpm/detailcat.php?mode=baca&info_id=54

East Kalimantan has plenty of mineral resources, such as oil, natural gas, coal, and gold (see table 3). Mining have been operated by public corporations and large private companies in Jakarta, who have a great capital and close connections with Soeharto because mining concessions are issued by the central government⁴⁶. Moreover, illegal mining can be policed easily. In such regions, the key to political and economic success is to have a personal network with national political and business figures. Provincial high officials and provincial leaders of Golkar and quasi-official organizations have the most advantages in having such network. Forest resources are also abundant in East Kalimantan and there are growing local timber businessmen like in West and Central Kalimantan. There is, however, no violent political competition in this province, probably because economic interests are so plentiful that those new political forces can also receive their share without hard efforts.

Table 3 Main Export Commodity of East Kalimantan Province 1995 (US\$ Thousands)

No	Sector	Value
1	Natural Gas & its Derivative products	2 103 710
	Wood & Logs	2 585 790
	Coal	
	Manufacturing Products	
	Fishery Products	
	Total	4 689 500

Source: Ministry of Industry & Trade, Regional Office, East Kalimantan Province
http://www.bkpm.go.id/bkpm/detailcat.php?mode=baca&info_id=56

VI. Tentative Conclusion

My analysis here is still a work in progress, so I will conclude tentatively that features of local politics in each region are neither the same nor infinitely diverse. Three types of local politics can be extracted through the analyses of political features in West, Central, and East

⁴⁶ Local governments can issue coal concessions from 2001. See Law No.55/2001 (PP RI No. 75 Tahun 2001 Tentang Perubahan Kedua Atas PP No. 32 Tahun 1967 Tentang Pelaksanaan UU No. 11 Tahun 1967 Tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Pertambangan).



Kalimantan: (1) there are many local influential figures at the district level and they are allied with (sub-)district government officers; (2) a few local influential figures have a strong influence over local society, economy and politics and became patrons of local government heads at both district and provincial levels; (3) old faces in provincial political circles gain the most advantageous position to access political and economic interests. It is feasible that the political conditions in other provinces can be classified into these three types as well.

Those different types of local politics can be explained by the condition of how much legally accessible economic resources a region has, and which institutions control the concessions over the resources. These factors are arguably related to how local government officials and local influential figures obtain access to economic resources.

This paper focuses on local government heads and local influential figures as important local political actors. Analyses of local parliament members and national political and business figures involved with local politics will be my next challenge. I suspect that national figures, especially businessmen, will be the most powerful actors if they are actively involved in local politics in the region where they have family linkages. Local parliament members are probably powerless as a political aggregation except in cities such as Jakarta and Yogyakarta, where the middle class has grown enough in size. I will explore these hypotheses in my dissertation.



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