**Comments on Cekli Setya Pratiwi PhD thesis draft**

**(Dr Amalinda Savirani, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 26 Feb 2023)**

Dear Cekli,

I want to congratulate with for having this full draft, an important step in completing your PhD. I read this draft with high interest, and I think this dissertation will contribute to the topic of democracy in Indonesia (argued to be “declining”, “backsliding”, “stagnating”) over the past years, by looking at specific issue on anti-blasphemy law.

I have some notes/comments/questions to improve the draft. You can discuss this with Aj Mike Hayes and don’t have to follow all of them. It is your thesis and you are the one who knows the topic. I have detail comments in the text I sent along with this summary. My comments are in green mark.

1. The strength of this thesis is its socio legal approach. While you have elaborate the notion of socio-legal in chapter one, and you describe it is a combination of “top-down”, and “bottom-up”, is not really clear for me what you mean by that and how you operates it in the chapters. Do you mean “top-down” is the formal law, and “bottom-up” is the social? You need to explicitly state. Also what aspect/scope of “social” do you mean here (see point 3 below). This needs to clarify in chapter 2.
2. I am not too clear either when you write socio-legal as an approach or as a theoretical framework as explored in page 22. You claim they are both (approach and framework). The reason I ask this is because when I read the chapter 3 and 4 and 5, you include many additional theories (not discussed/mentioned n chapter 1 or 2). For example, in chapter 3 you explore “Theory of rule of Law” (page 37-42), and in chapter 4 “theory on political manipulation”. I am not too sure how the structure of PhD thesis in Mahidol is, whether it is fine to have each chapter with theory. If it is the model, it is fine, but I think in chapter one you need to prepare the reader that you will mention various theory you going to use in the ensuing chapter, as part of socio-legal approach. Therefore, I think socio-legal is not a theoretical framework, rather you borrow social theory to explain the focus of your research. Another model to pool theory in chapter 1 or 2, and the rest of the chapters are empirical data. With this model, the theory should not a lot.
3. You mention about discourse analysis in chapter 2. But the data chapters, you did not mention which one using this analysis. If you don’t fully use it, I think better to drop it in chapter 2.
4. Relates to point 1, the “social” aspect of your case that I think needs to be explored is the changing of electoral system from indirect to direct. This pushes candidate to aim for majority voters, which means the Muslim, and you are right when label it as “the populist”. However, you have not analyzed this systematically, to answer: why populist emerge in Indonesia? I am pretty sure if the election of executive position (president, governor, district head) using the old system (voted by members of parliament), the rise of populism will not be this strong.
5. Each chapter needs to focus on one main question. In chapter 2 (50 pages), I think there are two things/aims there: a) to explore the historical development throughout Indonesian history; b) assessment that the IABL is flawed or not. I suggest to separate this two in different chapters. Reader (at least me) get overwhelmed and confuse with the two aims you want to achieve. The first one needs to be argued as a foundation of socio-political of IABL in Indonesia, and how things getting intensified in the last period of Reformasi. Here the question of “why” needs to be explored (see point 3 above). The assessment feels a distraction on the question (a). Also, I am not sure whether point (b) assessment IABL as flawed is needed or not, because if you do so, you kind of return to your emphasize on legality of this law (which is against your socio-legal approach), I think.
6. The study cases (Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, Meilina, and Gafatar), needs to be elaborate in detail somewhere. Readers (with non-Indonesian specialists) will not understand the story. I am not sure where this should be. Perhaps chapter 4 before analyzing the case?
7. I am still not sure what is your main argument in this thesis. I hope to read it in chapter 7, but it is not there. I think chapter 7 is where you answer all of your research questions, this is also where you state your main arguments of this thesis. What can the IABL law in Indonesia tell us the quality of human rights in Indonesia? And why? What socio-political dimension contribute to the rule of law? Is law a subject of politics or vice versa, or intermingled? And why? How has socio legal helpful in understanding this?

I hope my comment is useful. Good luck with revising it. Looking forward to reading the revision

Yogyakarta 26 Feb 2023

Dr Amalinda Savirani