

Jokowi marked the beginning of his presidential campaign by publishing an article in Kompas newspaper entitled “the revolution of mentality”. For those who are acquainted with cultural history this motto might have given rise to some questions and even misgivings. This catchword sounds similar to, and can easily remind one of Cultural Revolution of Mao in China and *Kulturkampf* in Germany under Bismarck as two political programs that brought about disintegration in the two countries.

Surprisingly, however, the revolution of mentality propounded by Jokowi turned out to generate a far-flung enthusiasm among people while bringing about wide-ranging discussions in social media. *Kompas* newspaper seemed helpless in trying to give its space to hundreds of responses arguing for or against the idea. A new discourse was set in motion, in which it was intellectually contested whether or not a political change in present Indonesia could be best set off by a change of mentality, a radical reversal of outlook and attitude, which leads to a different way of looking at things and the world.

As a matter of fact there is an ongoing debate among social and human scientists as to where to start best social or political change; whether the expected change goes from material base of culture to social base and further to mental base of culture, or the other way around. I, for one, tend to believe that social change can start anywhere at any level of culture, be it in economy, social behavior or people’s mind-set, depending on the workings of many other variables. In that connection Jokowi has observed that Indonesian economy shows obvious growth, which unfortunately has strengthened only an oligarchy that has control over most of resources, leaving, however, most of people stranded in their unchanged poverty.

At the same time many political institutions have been founded and brought into force without showing significant impact on the change of social and political behavior. KPK or Anti-corruption Commission has worked very hard to capture people involved in graft, and yet there is no serious forbidding effect on the general intrepidity to take public fund for private use. In the case of Indonesian politics all the stimuli at the material base and social base of culture turned out ineffective. Jokowi comes to the fore and says: let us start all over again at mental base of culture. Let us launch a revolution of mentality.

Needless to say, Jokowi is by no means a great political thinker, and yet he is blessed with a good intuition to see which ideas are workable and has a great talent to implement his visions and to get things done. Revolution of mentality becomes a core program for his presidency.

However, one can see that a revolution of mentality has taken shape and has worked effectively during his presidential campaign. Political transactions and money politics were obviously discarded by his followers.

More than 180 groups of volunteers in Jakarta (not to speak of those in the regions) worked for Jokowi *pro bono* and spontaneously with their own financial and logistical means, oftentimes without a central coordination. They are united in spirit and motivation, not in organization or in an

institutional framework. Moreover, a spontaneous movement did its best to collect money to support Jokowi's campaign resulting in an amount of Rp 312 billion. The contributors comprise people from all levels of income, from those who gave tens of millions down to people who donate five or even one thousand Rupiah. All of them are now acknowledged by Jokowi in his 1008 page-report of revenue.

The same voluntarism is also discernible in the spontaneity of three young guys who use their IT expertise to create a software in two days to help monitor the incoming votes for respective presidential candidates at all levels of enumeration of votes, from village level, through sub-district, district and provincial level to National Election Commission or KPU in Jakarta. This great effort has been made out of personal engagement without any financial support or sponsor, and was motivated by the appeal of President SBY that every citizen should be actively involved in monitoring the enumeration of votes.

Taking all these activities into account, one can safely contend that the ingenious techno savvy of the young IT experts antedates Jokowi's vision to build an e-government in order to enhance both accelerated efficiency and transparency. If the three young guys can use two days to create an e-election-monitoring program, they certainly must be able to build an e-government program in one or two-month time. The thing is government officials should be willing and cooperative to make use of the best intelligence in the country without unnecessarily feeling intimidated by smarter young guys, who are motivated to improve public service. Jokowi seems to be a leader who can appreciate professional skill and dedication and makes it one of the main criteria in selecting people who will work with him.

Now that many good things have taken place there is a hope that Jokowi's visions of government can be carried out in the near future, this being done by capitalizing on what has materialized during his campaign in the spontaneous initiatives of his followers to support his

campaign without giving a damn to the old habit of calculating everything in money terms. To put it briefly, the revolution of mentality is now underway and the experiences during presidential campaign has engendered a new ethos, whereby people follow their elected leader faithfully once they believe that the personality of the leader is a living personification of his political visions.

Source: [The Jakarta Post](#)

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