

Preface

About the SInGA Research Program on Governance and Sustainable Society

We wish to dedicate this volume to all those involved in research on governance and a sustainable future for Indonesia. Our particular gratitude goes to members of the research team on good governance at the University of Groningen, including the Indonesian partners and Ph.D. researchers involved. We hope that the current research on Indonesia and the collective efforts presented here will be of benefit for Indonesian society in the coming decades.

The editors of this volume have designed an integrated program for mid-level policy officials from Indonesia pursuing a Ph.D. degree at the University of Groningen participating in the World Bank's SPIRIT program (Scholarship Program for Strengthening the Reforming Institution) and other scholarship programs established by the Indonesian and Dutch governments. A key objective has been to offer advanced capacity building for the integration of theoretical and empirical perspectives on governance, especially suitable for civil servants moving into leadership positions within the national ministries of Indonesia, lecturers at Indonesian universities, and leaders from important civil society organizations. While the Ph.D. candidates have individual research projects spanning four years of research, there has been a high level of collaboration across the research team and interdisciplinary supervision by various departments within the university and key partnership universities in Indonesia. The results of this research are presented in Ph.D. dissertations, in scientific journals, and in this edited volume.

The program was established with the enthusiastic support of the Central Executive Board (CvB) of the University of Groningen and its President, Professor Sibrand Poppema. In addition, the faculties and research schools of the editors of this volume, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Spatial Sciences have also been very supportive and provided additional resources. The initial launch of the program and its ongoing success in

maintaining close contacts with stakeholders in Indonesia is due to the great diligence of Mr. Tim Zwaagstra, Program Manager for Southeast Asia of the Research and Valorisation office of the University of Groningen. The interdisciplinary, inter-faculty nature of the research program is fostered by its home in the Globalisation Studies Groningen (GSG) institute of the University, led by its Director Prof. Joost Herman. We would also like to thank the great efforts of Tienke Koning, Director of the Ubbo Emmius Fund, in support of the SInGA program.

Earlier versions of many of the papers in this volume were presented at the Spirit Indonesia Groningen (SInGA) conference on governance and sustainable society, held from April 9–10, 2014, in Groningen, The Netherlands. This conference was organized with the financial and logistical assistance of one of the university's focal research areas 'Sustainable Society.' We wish to thank Prof. Oscar Couwenberg, Academic Director, and Sharon Smit, Managing Director, of the Sustainable Society core research area for their support. The Ph.D. candidates presented articles related to their research and received comments from a distinguished range of invited guests. Key note presentations were delivered by Rudolf Treffers, (former) Executive Director of the World Bank, and Theo Thomas, World Bank official in Jakarta and Brussels. The conference was opened by the University President Sibrand Poppema and her Excellency Retno Marsudi, Indonesian Ambassador to the Kingdom of The Netherlands, currently the Foreign Minister of Indonesia.

Regular exchanges continue between the University of Groningen and Indonesia, and at partner universities to discuss governance and sustainable society research. For example, Ronald Holz hacker delivered a series of lectures related to this research program at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta and visited the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, during the summer of 2014. It is our intention to further disseminate this kind of research with a view to improving our understanding of well-being for present and future generations in Indonesia. It is also our intention to demonstrate the role of decentralized governance beyond Indonesia. Recruitment is ongoing for new Ph.D. candidates to join our governance and sustainable research program, recently expanded beyond Indonesia to include countries in Southeast Asia and ASEAN. The book launch for this edited volume is to take place at the fall conference 'Governance and Sustainable Society in Southeast Asia' November 18–20, 2015, at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

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Decentralization and Governance in Indonesia

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