

Interview by Jemma Purdey and David Lowe with Chusnul Mariyah, Jakarta, 23 April 2014

PhD, Political Science, University of Sydney, 1990s



[00:00:21]	Father was a schoolteacher and mother sold foods from home in Babad in Lamongan, East Java. Was the eldest of seven with three little sisters and three little brothers. Born in '61 and remembers the anti-communist violence in the neighbourhood. They used to catch fish to eat in the river, Bengawan Solo, but for two years after 1965 they couldn't because the fish would have body parts in them. Resulted in feminism and non-violent attitudes in the family. They sheltered a member of the Gerwani in their house and protected their Chinese neighbours.	Background; Family; Childhood
[00:05:46]	Went to madrasa rather than the public school. (Father taught in a public school.) Went to public school for SMP and then to teachers college. Then went to University of Indonesia (UI) and took political science inspired by parents' political activism. Father was an active Golkar party member because he was a senior public servant, and took Chusnul as a child, under duress, to a campaign for the party.	Early education; Undergraduate education; Political networks
[00:09:21]	At UI was active in the student movement and supervised the women's dormitory. Was also involved in women's groups, and helped found many women's peace and justice organisations. Got some funding with the help of George Soros.	Networks; Student activism, womens' activism; international network; leadership
[00:12:29]	Loved studying civics (father was a civics teacher). Also in 1977 many members of her extended family were arrested for being member of the United Development Party (PPP) and this raised many questions for her. Enrolled in politics	Political networks; Undergraduate education

	and English at Gajah Mada University (UGM) and encountered prejudice because she had gone to teachers college rather than finishing high school. This inspired her to prove them wrong and she was ranked sixth of 250 students. Took seven years to finish the undergraduate degree, with a BA after three years.	
[00:16:07]	In fifth semester became a tutor for Prof. Miriam Budiardjo and Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin. Diverse interests, active in women's, environmental and human rights movements. Not very involved in Muhammadiyah then but now is vice chair of the politics and public policy committee of the central board. Religion is important to her and feels her religious knowledge is an asset for arguing the feminist case. Was involved in the legislative change for shariah law in Aceh in 2000.	Early work experience; activism; networks; leadership
[00:23:00]	After finishing her undergraduate degree wanted to continue her NGO work. Thought about studying overseas after got tenure and worried about being able to study in English. Met Richard Chauvel and decided to study urban politics in Australia. Did a five-month English course in Jakarta.	Postgraduate study; Connection with Australia; Preparing to go to Australia
[00:27:38]	Arrived in Sydney, to go to University of Sydney, on a Friday with no money but managed to get the National Bank to advance some of her allowance. Stayed in International House for three days then found accommodation through the Indonesian network. Had three friendship groups: Australian students studying Indonesian, other international postgraduate political science students and people who she met through Barbara Leigh (Michael Leigh's wife) from the education faculty and people working in public policy.	Arriving in Australia; Living in Australia; Indonesian community in Sydney; student networks; Friendships
[00:33:08]	The third group was fun, they went out together to the opera, concerts and theatre, and cooked together. Chusnul lived with some of them for a year or so. Did a bridging course in English with other international students. Wanted to practise speaking English so went to a weekly politics class and listened to the radio and watched television (<i>Yes, Minister</i> and <i>Yes, Prime Minister</i>).	Friendships; networks; Learning English; Popular culture
[00:36:40]	Stayed with Michael and Barbara Leigh for five years, got to know Tim and Andrew. Andrew had young Labour meetings at the house, Chusnul learnt about Australian politics. At first it was difficult in class, trying to understand the	Living in Australia; Friendships; Australian political culture

	Australian political system and political culture. Was inspired by Antony Green and was able to emulate his work in Indonesia in 2004.	
[00:39:28]	Watched SBS and the cricket. Tim Leigh took her to a match and they saw a stalker. Learnt about cricket through Pakistani and Indian friends. Came to live with the Leighs because Barbara felt responsible when things didn't work out with Chusnul's Greek housemate. At first it was for a few months but they invited her to live there more permanently.	Popular culture; Friendships
[00:43:28]	Chusnul's thesis was inspired by seeing an article about community opposition to the then Minister for Planning, Robert Webster. She investigated multinational corporations, neighbourhood associations and the redevelopment of Balmain and Casino. Had a two-year AI scholarship to do a master's then an AIDAB scholarship to do a PhD. Stayed in Balmain for a few months. Met Balmain residents: film-maker, Curtis Levy; Leichhardt Mayor, Larry Hand, (a documentary film was made about his seeking re-election – <i>Rats in the Ranks</i>); Tom Uren.	Studying in Australia; Fieldwork in Australia; Scholarship opportunities; Networks
[00:47:48]	Went to public meetings and networked, met local politicians and went on pub-crawls with them to ask them questions for her research. People were very open. Went to fundraising dinners to meet people, it was very helpful for gathering material.	Networks; Fieldwork in Australia
[00:51:50]	Seeing Australian federalism inspired Chusnul to pursue federalism in Indonesia. Went to the US to investigate the American system. [Comments about decentralisation and federalism, and public debate about them in Indonesia.]	Living in Australia
[00:58:25]	Now teaches Australian politics, which is compulsory so there are a lot of students. Uses Australian examples, more than the US, to illustrate her teaching about policy, education etc. Chusnul feels more open towards and connected to Australia than the US.	Post-scholarship career; Ongoing connection with Australia
[01:05:30]	When the embassy library closed down Chusnul asked for all the books about Australian politics and moved them to UI. Would like to get more up-to-date resources but it's difficult. The internet is good. Has some contact with the embassy, the cultural attache's office.	Alumni network
[01:08:55]	Chusnul teaches comparative politics in the master's program and Australian politics to undergraduates. She took her students to the	Career and research interests; Ongoing connections with

	Australian embassy but felt the person they spoke to there knew less about Australian politics than she does. Went to embassy events during Alexander Downer's time.	Australia; Alumni network;
[01:12:30]	Has asked the embassy for teaching materials for her students but they haven't obliged. Follows Australian politics on the internet but would like a new textbook to use. When she's invited to embassy events she takes her students or colleagues.	Alumni network; Ongoing interest in Australia
[01:15:36]	Keeps in contact with people she meets at conferences and friends from Sydney. Likes keeping in touch through Facebook because she can set the frames of reference herself. Prefers Facebook to Twitter.	Ongoing connections with Australia; Professional networks; Social media
[01:19:30]	Still gets a lot of invitations from the media but doesn't like the short grabs, is more likely to accept if it's a proper interview.	Leadership
[01:20:12]	Chusnul is President Director of Centre for Election and Political Party (CEPP), which she helped set up at UI. The university didn't provide any funding and she didn't want to ask for foreign funding or fund it through consultancy so she contacted commissioners from the National Election Commission (NEC), who were mostly academics, and rallied them at 43 different universities. Chusnul persuaded Udayana University to host a CEPP conference in Bali in September 2012 and invited politicians. As a result centres were set up in 30 universities.	Leadership; Professional network
[01:26:24]	The government saw the value in political education for young people and so now the government provides some funding to the CEPP and there are centres in 43 universities, led by academics and staffed by student volunteers and interns. In August last year 200 tutors provided political education to 8500 university and senior high school students. 'Rock the boat' is the slogan.	Leadership; Professional network; Activism
[01:31:30]	Chusnul would have loved to go into politics but what she saw when on the NEC put her off and she decided she'd be more effective teaching the next generation. [Shows Jemma CEPP t-shirts paid for by crowd funding.] CEPP members include high school as well as university students (some of whom are politicians) and lecturers, they observed election ballots and wrote reports. They held an expo and invited politics students and lecturers as well as the political parties. It got	Activism; Leadership; Networks

	a lot of media coverage.	
[01:36:44]	Chusnul is organising a CEPP delegation to Canberra. CEPP had to raise the funds, Chusnul is paying for herself, staying with a friend to save money. They will meet with people organised by the Indonesian embassy and some of Chusnul's own contacts including Andrew Leigh and Ken Ward. She encourages her students to email Australian academics and politicians directly, and to study in Australia. Also welcomes Australians to her classes at UI. [Comments about sending clever students to Jim Fox rather than Richard Chauvel.]	Ongoing connections with Australia; International mobility; Networks
[01:42:39]	Chusnul's six younger siblings all went to university and studied (in descending order of age) mathematics, Arabic literature, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, international relations, electrical engineering. Two of them studied overseas, one in Japan and the other in Germany and the US.	Family background; international network
[01:45:01]	[Discussion about Chusnul's daughter and niece starting university and finding it difficult but still doing well.] Her daughter would like to do a master's in France.	Family background
[01:50:16]	[Reflections about university education and how her father didn't have material wealth to give his children but he sent them to university. He valued education but encouraged his children to balance study with rest, and Chusnul maintains this balance now.]	Family background
[01:55:39]	Wifi at UI is usually OK. Can listen to Australian parliament on youtube.	Ongoing connection with Australia
[01:58:24]	END	