Everyday Politics of Global Civil Society:

A Study of the Relationships between International and Local NGOs in Indonesia

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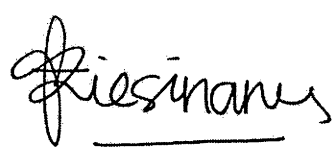
I certify that this thesis is my own original work. It contains no material which has been accepted for the award of a degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia within the context of theories of global civil society and hegemony. It seeks to understand whether global civil society is primarily an arena of cooperation as suggested by its proponents, or whether local NGOs are dominated by international NGOs as some literature suggests. My study looks at the everyday interactions of these two types of NGOs, including by studying the processes and procedures they engage in, as well as the tensions in their relationships. By seeking out the testimonies of local and international NGO workers I reveal patterns of domination and resistance which have not been explored in sufficient depth in the contemporary literature on NGOs.

I argue that even though international NGOs help local NGOs, they also dominate them. They assert their influence through controlling the supply of funds for local NGOs, through enforcing conditions of compliance on grant recipients, and through strongly shaping the discourse on development, in ways that contradict the egalitarian rhetoric of the development sector. Local NGOs also play an enabling role by engaging in practices which assist the domination of international NGOs. In this regard, my research finds the development sector in Indonesia bears strong resemblances to the classic model of hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci, in which unequal power relations occur in the context of the non-coerced consent of the ruled. However, in contrast to the classical theory of hegemony, I find Indonesian NGOs are highly critical of international NGOs and exercise targeted non-compliance towards them. International NGOs thus ultimately only exercise incomplete hegemony.

In making this analysis, I borrow from theories of the everyday politics of domination and resistance advanced by James Scott and Benedict Kerkvliet on the basis of their careful studies of peasants in different parts of Southeast Asia. These works on rural class relations provide a useful framework that allows me to show the "private transcript" of local NGOs' resistance to the demands and directions of international NGOs. I conclude that Gramsci's theory of hegemony is inadequate for explaining power relations between superordinate and subordinate groups, not only in rural villages, as demonstrated by the studies of Scott and Kerkvliet, but also in the context of global civil society.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKABRI	*Akademi Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia,* Indonesian Military Academy
AKY	*Akademi Kebudayaan Yogyakarta,* Yogyakarta Cultural Academy
APPC	Asia Pacific Philantrophy Consortium
AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BAIS	*Badan Intelijen Strategis*, Military Strategic Intelligence Agency and Police Intelligence
BAKIN	*Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara,* State Intelligence Coordinating Agency
BAPEDA	*Badan Perencanaan Daerah,* Regional Planning Agency
BIN	*Badan Intelijen Negara*, State Intelligence Agency
BINGO	Big NGOs
BPR	*Bank Perkreditan Rakyat*, People's Credit Bank
BRIMOB	*Brigade Mobil,* Mobile Brigade
BTI	*Barisan Tani Indonesia,* Indonesian Peasants Group
CEFIL	Civic Education for Future Indonesian Leaders
CEFRUL	Civic Education for Rural Leaders
CELOP	Civic Education for Local Politicians
CETRO	Centre for Electoral Reform
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIM	Centre for International Migration and Development
CPSM	Circle for Participatory Social Management
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CWS	Church World Service
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance
DAI	Develoment Alternatives Inc.
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEPLU	*Departemen Luar Negeri,* Department of Foreign Affairs
DEPSOS	*Departemen Sosial*, Welfare Department
DFID	British Government's Department for International Development
DPR	*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat,* People's Representative Council

FES	*Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FNS	*Friedrich Nauman Stiftung,* Friedrich Nauman Foundation
FUUI	*Forum Ulama Ummat Indonesia,* Forum for Muslim Leaders and Community Ulama
GERWANI	*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia,* Indonesian Women Movement
HIVOS	*Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation
HOT	History of Thoughts
IAIN	*Institut Agama Islam Negeri,* Islamic State Institute
ICIP	International Centre for Islam and Pluralism
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
ICW	Indonesian Corruption Watch
IDe	*Institut Indonesia untuk Pendidikan Demokrasi*, Indonesian Institute for Democracy Education
IGJ	Institute for Global Justice
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IKIP	*Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan,* Teacher Training and Education Science Institute
IMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
InDHRRA	Indonesian Secretariat for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia
INFID	International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
INSIST	Indonesian Society for Social Transformation
INTRAC	International NGO Training and Research Centre
INVOLVEMENT	Indonesian Volunteers for Social Movement
IPP	*Ikatan Petani Pancasila, Pancasila*-based Farmers Association
IRCOS	Institute for Research and Community Development Studies
ISAI	*Institut Studi Arus Informasi,* Institute for the Study of the Free Flow of Information
IVCO	International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations
JIL	*Jaringan Islam Liberal*, Liberal Islam Network
JPPR	*Jaringan Pendidikan Pemilih untuk Rakyat*, Voter Education Network
KAS	*Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*, Konrad Adenauer Foundation
KEPA	*Kehitysyhteistyön Palvelukeskus,* Service Centre for Development Cooperation
KIPP	*Komite Independen Pemantau Pemilu*, Independent Committee for Election Monitoring in Indonesia

KNPI	*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia,* Indonesian National Youth Committee
Komnas	*Komisi Nasional*, National Committee
KPMM	*Konsorsium Pengembangan Masyarakat Madani*, Civil Society Development Consortium
LAKPESDAM NU	*Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Masyarakat Nahdlatul Ulama,* Institute for Human Resources Studies and Development Nahdlatul Ulama
LBH Apik	*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan*, Legal Aid Institute of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice
LINGO	Little NGOs
LIPI	*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*, Indonesian Institute for Science
LKiS	*Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial,* Institute for Islamic and Social Studies
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LP3ES	*Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial,* Institute for Economic and Social Research, Education and Information
LPEM	*Lembaga Penelitian Ekonomi dan Masyarakat,* Institute of Economic and Social Research
LPSM	*Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat,* Self-Reliant Development Organisation
LS-ADI	*Lingkar Studi-Aksi untuk Demokrasi*, Research-Action Circle for Democracy
LSM	*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat,* Self-Reliant Organisation
LSPP	*Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan*, Institute for Press and Development Studies
LSPPA	*Lembaga Studi dan Pengembangan Perempuan dan Anak,* Institute for Women and Children's Studies
LSPPA	*Lembaga Studi dan Pengembangan Perempuan dan Anak*, Women and Children's Development Study Institute
MONEV	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPBI	*Masyarakat Penanggulangan Bencana Indonesia,* Indonesian Society for the Prevention of Disasters
MUI	*Majelis Ulama Indonesia,* Council of Indonesian Ulama
NATO	No Action Talk Only
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organisation

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NKRI	*Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia,* Unitary State of Indonesia
NOVIB	*Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Internationale Bijstand*, Dutch Organisation for International Aid
NU	*Nahdlatul Ulama,* Awakening of Ulema
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance
OMS	*Organisasi Masyarakat Sipil*, Civil Society Organisation.
ORMAS	*Organisasi Kemasyarakatan,* Societal Organisation
ORNOP	*Organisasi Non-Pemerintah,* Non-Governmental Organisation
P3M	*Perkumpulan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat,* Indonesian Society for Islamic Schools and Community Development
PACIVIS	*Pusat Kajian Global Civil Society,* Centre for Global Civil Society Studies at the University of Indonesia.
PAR	Participatory Action Research Methodology
PCI	Project Concern International
PERCIK	Lembaga Persemaian Cinta Kemanusiaan, *the Institute for Social Research Democracy and Social Justice.*
PERMENDAGRI	*Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri,* Minister of Home Affairs Regulation
PILKADAL	*Pemilihan Kepala Daerah Langsung,* Regional Heads Direct Election
PIRAC	Public Interest Research and Advocacy Center
PKBI	*Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia,* Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association
PKI	*Partai Komunis Indonesia,* Indonesian Communist Party
POKKER	*Kelompok Kerja*, Working Group
PP	*Peraturan Pemerintah,* Government Regulation
PROLEGNAS	*Program Legislatif Nasional,* National Legislative Program
PSAP	*Pusat Study Agama dan Peradaban*, Muhammadiyah Center for Religion and Civilisation
PUDI	*Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia,* Indonesian Uni Democracy Party
PUSHAM UII	*Pusat Studi Hak Asasi Manusia Universitas Islam Indonesia,* Centre for Human Rights Studies Islamic University of Indonesia
REMDEC	Resource Management and Development Consultant
RFA	Request for Application
SC-UK	Save the Children – the United Kingdom

SEAPCP	Southeast Asian Popular Communication Program
SKEPHI	*Sekretariat Kerjasama Pelestarian Hutan Indonesia,* Indonesian NGO Networks for Forest Conservation
SMERU	Social Monitoring and Early Response Unit
SPSI	*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia,* All-Indonesia Workers' Union
STS	*Sekolah Transformasi Sosial,* Social Transformation Schools
UB	*Usaha Bersama,* Small-scale Cooperatives
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-NGLS	United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	U.S Agency for International Development
USC CANADA	Unitarian Service Committee of Canada
USC-SATUNAMA	*Yayasan Kesatuan Pelayanan Kerjasama,* Unity Service Cooperation Foundation
UU	*Undang-Undang,* Law
WALHI	*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia,* Friends of the Earth Indonesia,
WVI	World Vision Indonesia
YAKKUM	*Yayasan Kristen Untuk Kesehatan Umum,* Christian Foundation for Public Health
YAPPIKA	*Aliansi Masyarakat Sipil Indonesia untuk Demokrasi,* Civil Society Alliance for Democracy
YASANTI	*Yayasan Annisa Swasti*, Independent Women's Foundation
YIS	*Yayasan Indonesia Sejahtera*, Prosperous Indonesian Foundation
YLBHI	*Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia,* Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation

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Chapter One

Everyday Politics of NGO Relationships in Indonesia: Theoretical Considerations

Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become a major facet of social and political life in Indonesia over the last two decades. A boom in the number of NGOs in Indonesia occurred with the beginning of democracy in 1998. Almost all of these NGOs rely on larger international NGOs for funding and cooperate with them in varied ways. No extensive research has yet been conducted on these relationships, yet they are crucial to the development of Indonesian civil society.

The main concern of this research is the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia. I ask what is the nature of the relationships between these two types of NGOs? How much autonomy do local NGOs have in the relationships? How much do international NGOs dominate local NGOs? My study places the relationship between local and international NGOs in the context of theories on global civil society and hegemony. The existing literature often analyses NGOs in the context of global civil society theory, but less commonly in terms of hegemony. In particular, my research aims to understand the power relations between international and local NGOs by studying the "everyday life" of these elements of global civil society in Indonesia. By this I mean the everyday interactions of these two types of NGOs, which include the processes and procedures they engage in as well as tensions in their relationships. In other words, adopting Kerkvliet's working definition of everyday politics, this study involves analysing "the debates, conflicts, decisions, and cooperation among individuals, groups, and organisations regarding the control, allocation, and use of resources and the values and ideas underlying their activities."[1]

My thesis shows that international NGOs tend to dominate these relationships; they assert their dominance by providing funding for local NGO activities and enforcing the

[1] Kerkvliet, 2002: 11. See also Hilhorst, 2003: 4 and Leftwich, 1984: 64-65.

bureaucratic procedures that are supposed to guide their work. The ability of the international NGOs to dominate local NGOs through such arrangements is exacerbated by weak internal organisational management within local NGOs. However, my study reveals that although the domination of international NGOs is plainly apparent, local NGOs deeply resent their subordination to international NGOs and have the ability to 'exploit' the international funding system for their own benefit. The way in which local NGOs express their resentment is through targeted non-compliance towards certain international NGO requirements. Albeit weak, this resistance shows that we cannot assume international NGOs possess the normative consent of local NGOs in their domination of local NGOs. As consent is one of the main ingredients of hegemony, we must declare that the domination of the international NGOs in the relationships with local NGOs is not absolute.

It should be noted that this thesis is not necessarily meant to be an extended criticism of either international or local NGOs. However, it is rather an analysis of the consequences, both intended and unintended, of the unequal power relations between them.

As my research explores relationships between local and international NGOs in Indonesia within the context of theories about global civil society, the discussion in this chapter starts by reviewing the concepts of civil society, global civil society and hegemony. It then turns to survey the scholarly debates about the relationships between local and international NGOs in relation to hegemony. Following that, this chapter introduces an alternative framework for examining the debates about hegemony. This alternative is the concept of everyday politics which provides an entry point to look at domination and resistance in the relationship between international and local NGOs. Instead of arguing for or against the existence of hegemony in the relationships between international and local NGOs, as other scholars of global civil society tend to do, I will argue that by examining everyday forms of domination and resistance, we can see that the theory of hegemony is inadequate in explaining power relations between superordinate and subordinate groups. Domination and resistance can coexist.

Civil Society, Global Civil Society and Hegemony

The discussion in this section consists of three parts. The first part looks at what I call a "mainstream" view of civil society and the second part provides an overview of the idea of *global* civil society. Finally, the section then discusses Antonio Gramsci's concepts of civil society and hegemony. Though few scholars have considered relations between

NGOs in terms of hegemony (despite the fact that some have used the concept for describing NGOs' supposedly anti-hegemonic struggle against the state), I find the concept useful as it provides a means to think about relationships of inequality between NGOs.

An Overview of the Theory of Civil Society

The working definition of civil society in this study is that civil society is a broad sphere of organisations between the family, the state and the market. I adopt this broad concept from the working definition that is presented by the Centre of Civil Society. Its definition of "civil society refers to the set of institutions, organisations and behaviours situated between the state, the business world, and the family."[2]

The literature on civil society is abundant. Despite its richness, debate still surrounds key definitional concepts. The meaning of civil society has shifted over time. In tracing the origin of the concept of civil society, scholars usually referred to the ancient Greek world, when Aristotle introduced the term *politike koinonia* ['political society or community'].[3] The term political society, noted Cohen and Arato, is "defined as a public ethical-political community of free and equal citizens under a legally defined system of rule."[4] In other words, political society, Anheier et al. say:

> was a law-governed society in which the law was seen as the expression of public virtue, the Aristotelian 'good life.' Civilisation was thus linked to a particular form of political power in which rulers put the public good before private interest. This also very clearly implied that, both in time and in place, there were people excluded, non-citizens, barbarians, who did not have a civil society.[5]

This means that, as Khilnani puts it, there was no distinction between 'state' and 'society', rather the concept simply meant "a community within a legitimate political order."[6] Later, civil society was defined as a sphere outside state institutions, a concept introduced by Hegel and Tocqueville, and afterwards by Gramsci, who labels civil society as a "realm between the state and the market."[7]

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[2] Glasius, 2001: 4. For similar other sources, see White, 1994: 379; McNicoll, 1995: 3. As will be seen later, this working definition was influenced by the concept of civil society of Antonio Gramsci who argued that civil society is a realm between the state and the market.
[3] For example, see Cohen and Arato, 1992: 84; Anheier et al., 2001: 12.
[4] Cohen and Arato, 1992: 84.
[5] Anheier et al., 2001: 12.
[6] Khilnani, 2001: 7.
[7] Anheier et al., 2001: 12-15. For the debates on civil society discussion see also Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001; Guan, 2004; Walzer, 1995; Hedman, 2006.

Different theorists today have different interpretations of civil society. As Waltzer notes, one can look at a range of definitions provided by those who favour neoclassical, socialist, capitalist, and nationalist interpretations of civil society.[8] In illustrating the civil society debates, for example, Chandhoke writes:

> No theorist who subscribed to say de Tocqueville's formulations on civil society as the realm of social associations had remotely anything in common with a Gramscian, who saw civil society as the region where the capitalist state establishes hegemony over society. A Hegelian would worry that civil society is neither wholly good nor entirely bad, for it is the site of the battle between particularity and universality. An orthodox Marxist who had not taken Gramsci seriously would dismiss civil society as the sphere where the sale and purchase of labour power takes place. And an economist hijacking Adam Smith's complex formulations in the *Wealth of Nations* [without reading his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*] would employ the concept of civil society as an alibi for the domination of the capitalist economy over the state.[9]

Despite the lack of consensus on an exact definition, the Western social sciences literature tends to view civil society as a "normatively charged concept."[10] Mainstream discussion about civil society tends to associate civil society with democracy, civility, plurality, and voluntarily associations.[11] For instance, McNicoll defines civil society as:

> ... the totality of self-initiating and self-regulating organizations, peacefully pursuing a common interest, advocating a common cause, or expressing a common passion; respecting the right of others to do the same; and maintaining their relative autonomy vis-à-vis the state, the family, the temple, and the market.[12]

While for Kaldor: "civil society is a process of management of society that is 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down' and that involves the struggle for emancipatory goals."[13]

In summary, most mainstream 'civil society' arguments have a positive take on civil society.[14] The concept is perceived as a "good thing."[15] Fisher is an example of writers with a positive take on civil society:

> In a world increasingly beset by famines, wars, genocide, AIDS, environmental deterioration and continuing population momentum in the poor

[8] Waltzer, 1995: 9-21.
[9] Chandhoke, 2003: 6.
[10] Alagappa, 2004: 26. See also Hedman, 2006: 2.
[11] Observation on literatures about civil society in Bahasa Indonesia supports this notion, as the links between civil society and democracy emerge as the dominant theme (the majority even have these words in the titles). For example, see Hikam, 1999b; Azra, 1999; Widjajanto et al., 2007; Fakih, 1996a; Suharko, 2005; Triwibowo, 2006.
[12] McNicoll, 1995: 3.
[13] Kaldor, 2003: 142.
[14] For example of a critical reading on civil society, see Chandhoke, 2003; Kaviraj and Khilnani, 2001; Aspinall, 2004.
[15] See for example, Cohen and Arato, 1992; Anheier et.al 2001: 15; Van Rooy, 1998: 30.

> countries, the failed state has become the Achilles heel of the emerging international community. For every failed state there are many more "weakly institutionalised" governments, which can, curiously, also be described as semi-authoritarian. International governance, if it is not to become Olympian at best and tyrannical at worst, can only be built on what happens at the national level. To be accountable and strong, the national level must intersect, at least indirectly, with the efforts ordinary people make in their own communities. So, in a way, the local and the global are intimately connected, not just because people plant trees or recycle, but because all politics, to paraphrase Tip O'Neill, is ultimately local. The *good news* is that in much of the developing world, failed states co-exist with civil societies, which have expanded dramatically since the 1970s. [16]

In addition, Falk argues that "in civil society, ideas about truth, decency, and destiny have always held sway."[17]

Meanwhile Edwards reviews various celebratory tones on civil society as follows:

> Adam Seligman, tongue firmly in cheek, calls civil society the "new analytic key that will unlock the mysteries of the social order", Jeremy Rifkin calls it "our last, best hope", the UN and the World Bank see it as the key to 'good governance' and poverty-reducing growth, and even the real reason for war against Iraq – to kick-start civil society in the Middle East, according to Administration officials in Washington DC. As a new report from the Washington-based Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis puts it, "the US should emphasise civil society development in order to ensure regional stability in central Asia" – forgetting, of course, that citizens groups have been a prime cause of destabilisation in every society since the Pharaohs.[18]

In the end, for Biekart, "civil society became an idealised counter-image to counterpoise social virtue and political vice, the realm of freedom versus the realm of coercion, making the term serviceable to political struggle but thereby losing its analytical value."[19]

Scholars, such as Hedman, suggest that this normative reading of civil society can be traced back to the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville on democracy in America in the early nineteenth century.[20] Observing the democracy practiced in America, Tocqueville, "was greatly impressed by the extent of associations in civil life and put forward the argument that active associations were a condition for freedom and equality."[21] In particular, scholars point to Tocqueville's interpretation of the important role these dynamic civic associations play in checking state power.[22] "Tocqueville," argues Hedman, "provided an early formulation for the argument that a pluralist and self-organising civil

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[16] Fisher, 2003: 19.
[17] Falk, 1995: 41.
[18] Edwards, 2005: 1.
[19] Biekart, 1999: 31.
[20] Hedman, 2006: 2.
[21] Anheier et al., 2001: 12.
[22] Hedman, 2006: 2; Anheier et.al, 2001: 13.

society independent of the state is an indispensable condition of democracy."[23] Tocqueville writes:

> As soon as several inhabitants of the United States have taken up an opinion or a feeling they wish to promote in the world, they look for mutual assistance; and as soon as they have found one another out, they combine. From that moment they are no longer isolated men, but a power seen from afar, whose actions serve for example and whose language is listened to . . . Among the laws that rule human societies, there is one which seems to be more precise and clear than all the others. If men are to remain civilised or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio as the equality of conditions is increased.[24]

Contemporary civil society scholars reaffirm the importance of civic life to generate what they call social capital. Social capital consists of trust, reciprocity and networks, and scholars of this view consider such elements as being preconditions of a healthy democracy.[25] For example, Guan notes that as the existence of a "healthy" democracy "depends in large part on the development of a democratic civic culture that refers to the behaviours, practices, and norms that enable individuals to govern themselves," therefore "the presence of civic values such as trust, tolerance, civic-mindedness, reciprocity, and trust in government" has encouraged the existence of liberal democracy.[26]

Linking these definitions back to my topic, we can see that the idealist views of civil society as being an essential ingredient of democracy have underpinned programs supporting civil society implemented by international aid organisations over the past decade.[27] We can look at, for instance, the World Bank's definition of civil society, as "the arena in which people come together to pursue the interests they hold in common – not for profit or the exercise of political power, but because they care enough about something to take collective action."[28] This definition is a typical example of the currently dominant idealistic vision of civil society that operates among international donors. According to Ottaway and Carothers:

> The view that has most influenced donors, especially in the U.S. government, is one according to which civil society consists only of voluntary associations that directly foster democracy and promote democratic consolidation. These are associations that specifically seek interaction with the state, whether to advocate interests of the citizens, to oppose non-democratic behaviour of the state, or to hold states accountable to citizens for their actions. Donors favour groups that interact with the state through

[23] Hedman, 2006: 2.
[24] Quoted in Anheier et.al, 2001: 13; Kaldor, 2003: 20.
[25] For example, see Putnam, 1993; 2000; Fukuyama, 1995.
[26] Guan, 2004: 6.
[27] See for example, Malena, 2004; Bendell, 2006; The United Nations website: http://www.un-ngls.org/cso/cso.htm [accessed on 23 November 2008] and http://www.un-ngls.org/UNreform.htm [accessed on 26 November 2008].
[28] The World Bank, 2000: 5.

> Donors favour groups that interact with the state through advocacy work and those that do not explicitly compete for political office. In its purest form, this normative conception also insists that not only must a group actively promote democracy to be part of civil society but must also follow internal democratic procedures.[29]

This quotation indicates that in addition to having an overwhelmingly positive take on civil society, international donor agencies' interpretation of the concept tends to discuss the concept in comparison with the state. This view is also reflected in mainstream literature on civil society. Abundant literature on democratic transitions in Eastern Europe and Latin America, for example, emphasise the important role civil society played in challenging and transforming authoritarian political regimes.[30] Prominent writers see "the resurrection of civil society" as a key turning point in a democratic transition,[31] or describe civil society as "the political celebrity of the *abertura*."[32]

In explaining the role of civil society in democratic transitions, most scholars underline the effectiveness of civil society organisations' mobilisation in generating pressure for political change.[33] Diamond, for instance, notes, "extensive mobilisation of civil society was a crucial source of pressure for a democratic change."[34] He explains that the way citizens put forward their demands and confront autocracy are not only done through their individual acts but also through collective acts channelled through various civil society organisations.[35] Diamond's analysis here thus reiterates the theme of the preceeding discussion about mainstream civil society theory, which links civil society with democracy.

Furthermore, the mainstream view of civil society as the above examples have demonstrated, perceives civil society as a domain that consists of homogenous elements: groups that more or less have the same interest in the common good. It therefore implies there are no tensions and no unequal power relations in civil society. According to Hedman, this "Tocquevillean approach" to civil society "tends to reify civil society as a unified and coherent entity, to depict it in celebratory, universalist, and voluntarist terms, and to ascribe a single intrinsic meaning and automatic historical trajectory to its

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[29] Ottaway and Carothers, 2000: 11.
[30] See for example, O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Diamond, 1999.
[31] O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986: 48-56, quoted in Aspinall, 2000: 11.
[32] Stepan, 1988: 5, quoted in Aspinall, 2000: 11 and Anheier et.al, 2001: 14.
[33] For a review of the links between civil society and democratisation according to the dominant liberal view, see Mercer, 2002: 7-10.
[34] This quotation is a broad conclusion Diamond draws from a number of comparative case studies. Diamond, 1994: 5.
[35] Ibid.

role in democratisation."[36] Consequently, she argues, "contestation and class conflict within the realm of civil society and crucial questions about the conditions and processes of mobilisation *in the name of* civil society remain essentially unanswered."[37] In other words, the power relations *between* elements of civil society receive little attention.

In reality, elements of civil society are not homogenous and inequality does exist among elements of civil society. For instance, Biekart suggests that:

> Typologies of associational life and the pluralist approach of the 'third sector' only refer to the organisational dimension of civil society and tend to hide potential conflictual interests that are related to the material and ideological dimensions of civil society. Civil society is not only strong because it is 'dense', but also because it is relatively 'equitable' and 'inclusive'; 'density' and 'vibrancy' of civil society do not automatically imply 'consensus'. As some organisations in civil society generally are more powerful than others, they have the potential to impose decisions favourable to their interests on others.[38]

Meanwhile, Amoore and Langley argue that within civil society, "inequalities and conflicts abound" because "civil society is constituted as much by the highly differentiated politics of power as it is by the politics of empowerment and protest."[39] Similarly Hadiz writes that, "neo-liberal assumptions about the existence of a homogenous, common set of fundamental interests in civil society have little empirical basis, and neither does the notion of a civil society bound together by the nurturance of social capital."[40] More particularly, Edwards notes the inequalities between international and local NGOs, in which international NGOs "talk constantly about partnership, but rarely practice it in their relationships with NGOs in other parts of the world."[41]

This study will provide more empirical data on the heterogeneity and inequality that exist within civil society, by examining the relationships between international and local NGOs. As previous discussion of civil society has indicated, although civil society consists of a broad range of organisations such as professional and sport associations as well as trade unions, NGOs are the archetypal civil society organisations. I will discuss the definitional and distinctive aspects of NGOs in chapter two. My study of the interactions between NGOs in Indonesia shows that organisations with a stronger position – be it in terms of greater funds or influence in the community or knowledge about or net-

[36] Hedman, 2006: 5.
[37] Ibid. (Emphasis in original).
[38] Biekart, 1999: 40.
[39] Amoore and Langley, 2004: 99.
[40] Hadiz, 2003: 4.
[41] Edwards, 1999a: 25.

works with donors – clearly have greater power over, or in competition with, 'weaker' organisations. The power relations between elements of civil society will become clearer in the discussion about global civil society and hegemony below.

An Overview of the Theory of Global Civil Society

Just as there is no fixed definition of civil society, there is also no agreement on the definition of *global* civil society and little agreement on its significance. Scholars provide different definitions and views on the concept of global civil society. The definitions range from fairly simple to the complex and sophisticated. Some scholars, like Scholte, give a specific meaning to the term. He labels global civil society as "a political space where voluntary-action associations deliberately seek to shape the rules that govern one or the other aspect of social life" which "encompass cultural diversity and national context."[42] This definition is fairly neutral. A comprehensive, ideal-type of explanation about global civil society is given by Kaldor:

> Global civil society is a platform inhabited by activists (or post-Marxists), NGOs and neoliberals, as well as national and religious groups, where they argue about, campaign for (or against), negotiate about, or lobby for the arrangements that shape global developments. There is not one global civil society but many, affecting a range of issues—human rights, environment and so on. It is not democratic; there are no processes of election, nor could there be at a global level, since that would require a world state. And such a state, even if democratically elected, would be totalitarian. It is also uneven and Northern-dominated. Nevertheless, the emergence of this phenomenon does offer a potential for individuals—a potential for emancipation.[43]

Similar to the above positive view of global civil society, Keane argues that:

> Global civil society is a vast, interconnected, and multi-layered social space that comprises many hundreds of thousands of self-directing or nongovernmental institutions and ways of life. It can be likened—to draw for a moment upon ecological similes—to a dynamic biosphere. This complex biosphere looks and feels expansive and polyarchic, full of horizontal push and pull, vertical conflict, and compromise, precisely because it comprises a bewildering variety of interacting habitats and species: organisations, civic and business initiatives, coalitions, social movements, linguistic communities, and cultural identities. All of them have at least one thing in common: across vast geographic distances and despite barriers of time, they deliberately organise themselves and conduct their cross-border social activities, business, and politics outside the boundaries of governmental structures, with a minimum of violence and a maximum of respect for the principle of civilised power-sharing among different ways of life.[44]

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[42] Scholte, 2002: 3-5.
[43] Kaldor, 2003: 590-591.
[44] Keane, 2003: 23-24.

Keane's definition is an 'idealistic' vision of civil society which implies that civil society produces only a narrow range of positive attributes. Like other writers on global civil society, Keane also does not seem to anticipate the possibility of serious inequality within global civil society. As Chandler says:

> All the [global civil society] theorists locate global civic actors as the source of moral action and their break from conventional state-based politics as the strategic basis for radical political change.... For global civil society theorists, it is non-state actors which are held to have overcome the empirical and ethical divide between the domestic political realm and the international.[45]

In defining global civil society for this study, I extend my working definition of civil society beyond national boundaries. I adopt the definition of Anheier et.al, by giving a "purely descriptive" definition of global civil society: "the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organisations, networks, and individuals located *between* the family, the state, and the market and operating *beyond* the confines of national societies, polities, and economies."[46]

The term global civil society has become widely used in the past decade, along with the rise of globalisation as an increasingly important set of economic, political and social processes shaping societies and interactions between them across the globe.[47] Many scholars view global civil society as an emerging alternative force that can contest the dominance of states and state-based politics, and much of the academic discussion about it has been as uniformly positive as much of the early literature on civil society and democracy one or two decades ago. Jaeger argues:

> "Global civil society" has been one of the most important tropes in the post-Cold War discourses of globalization and global governance. In activist, official, and academic circles alike, an emerging transnational or global civil society has been seen as a counterweight to states, markets, and international organizations. As a nongovernmental and non-commercial space of association and communication, global civil society is said to inject publicity and accountability into political and economic systems. New communications technologies seem to have enabled it to generate public opinion in a global public sphere. To some, especially theorists of cosmopolitan democracy, global civil society even promises a democratization of world politics.[48]

Thus, for Falk, global civil society [movements] "carry the possibility of an extension of the movement for democratisation beyond state/society relations to all arenas of

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[45] Chandler, 2004: 3.
[46] Anheier et al., 2001: 17 (emphasis in original).
[47] Examples of studies on global civil society include Florini, 2004; Lipschutz, 1992; Scholte, 2002; Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor (eds.), 2002; Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 2003.
[48] Jaeger, 2007: 257.

power and authority."[49] For Edwards, "this form of governance [i.e. global civil society] is messy and unpredictable, but ultimately it will be more effective – by giving ordinary citizens a bigger say in the questions that dominate world politics..."[50] For Korten, Perlas and Shiva, "Global civil society manifests a previously unknown human capacity to self-organise on a planetary-scale with an unprecedented inclusiveness, respect for diversity, shared leadership, individual initiative, and a deep sense of responsibility for the whole."[51] Likewise, Kaldor notes that:

> Global civil society does provide a way to supplement traditional democracy. It is a medium through which individuals can, in principle, participate in global public debates; it offers the possibility for the voices of the victims of globalisation to be heard if not the votes. And it creates new fora for deliberation on the complex issues of the contemporary world, in which the various parties to the discussion do not only represent state interest.[52]

This positive impact of global civil society towards democracy is also put forward by Edwards who suggests that, "For citizens of non-democratic regimes, transnational civil society may provide the only meaningful avenue for voice and participation in decision making."[53] In line with Edwards' views, Keane writes:

> Global civil society refers to a dynamic non-governmental system of interconnected socio-economic institutions that straddle the whole earth, and that have complex effects that are felt in its four corners. Global civil society is neither a static object nor a fait accompli. It is an unfinished project that consists of sometimes thick, sometimes thinly stretched networks, pyramids and hub-and-spoke clusters of socio-economic institutions and actors who organize themselves across borders, with the deliberate aim of drawing the world together in new ways. These non-governmental institutions and actors tend to pluralise power and to problematise violence; consequently, their peaceful or 'civil' effects are felt everywhere, here and there, far and wide, to and from local areas, through wider regions, to the planetary level itself.[54]

Yet despite all the interest in the topic a mature discussion about the concept only started in the mid-1990s; so far, there have been few case studies of how global civil society might actually operate in practice.[55] Consequently, solid data and measurement of global civil society's interactions cannot be obtained easily.[56] Hence, my own study

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[49] Falk, 1995: 35.
[50] Edwards, 2001: 4.
[51] Korten, Perlas, Shiva, 2002: 18.
[52] Kaldor, 2003: 148.
[53] Edwards, 2001: 4.
[54] Keane, 2003: 8.
[55] For example, both Keck and Sikkink, and Chandler acknowledge the scarcity of studies on global civil society (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 33; Chandler, 2004: 2). Meanwhile, Taylor argues that "current research into global civil society suffers from weak description and inadequate theorization." (Taylor, 2002: 339) For recent efforts to map and measure global civil society, see Munck, 2006: 327; Katz, 2006; Nugroho and Tampubolon, 2007.
[56] Keane, 2001: 26; Anheier et al., 2001: 18.

aims to contribute to this still sparse literature, by presenting a case study of interaction between elements of global civil society in Indonesia.

Global Civil Society and Gramsci's Theory of Civil Society and Hegemony

The above discussion has shown that much mainstream literature on global civil society, just as on civil society more generally, tends to ignore the issue of power inequality within the system. There is also a tendency to gloss over the potentially negative aspects of global civil society, while over-emphasising the capacity for normative action.[57] There are tendencies to ignore the issue of power inequality within the system. My research will look precisely at tensions and unequal power relations between elements of global civil society, which in this case are represented by international and local NGOs in Indonesia. In doing so, I find Antonio Gramsci's analysis of civil society as an arena of contestation and inequality to be useful.

Besides describing civil society as the realm between the state and the market (and in this sense, not being far different from most contemporary mainstream usages), Gramsci sees civil society as "the arena wherein the ruling class extends and reinforces its power by non-violent means."[58] For Gramsci, civil society is the sphere of the hegemony of the ruling class. The system depends on consent, or in Kerkvliet's words, "acceptance or conformity arising from conscious attachment to or agreement with central elements of the prevailing order."[59]

What Gramsci means by *hegemony* is:

> the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.[60]

In other words, as Scott notes, hegemony is the term for the process of ideological domination.[61] Femia suggests that hegemony is "the predominance obtained by consent rather than force of one class or group over other classes."[62] According to Gill, hegemony "generally refers to a relation between social classes, in which one class faction or class grouping takes a leading role by the active consent of other classes and

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[57] For critical reading of global civil society, see for example: Chandhoke, 2001; Pasha and Blaney, 1998; Anderson and Rieff, 2005.
[58] Buttigieg, 1995: 26.
[59] Kerkvliet, 2002: 260.
[60] Quoted in Okolie, 2003: 439.
[61] Scott, 1985: 315.
[62] Femia, 1975: 31.

groups."[63] He then suggests that, "hegemony, therefore, is not a relation of coercive force as such (as it is viewed in political realist theory), but rather of consent gained through "intellectual and moral leadership."[64] In reading Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Scott argues:

> The central idea behind it [hegemony] is the claim that the ruling class dominates not only the means of physical production but the means of symbolic production as well. Its control over the material forces of production is replicated, at the level of ideas, in its control over the ideological "sectors" of society – culture, religion, education, and the media – in a manner that allows it to disseminate those values that reinforce its position. What Gramsci did, in brief, was to explain the institutional basis of false-consciousness.[65]

Hattori claims that "the central characteristic of capitalist society for neo-Gramscian scholars is the pervasiveness of *consent* to an otherwise burdensome order of things."[66] According to Scott:

> The critical implication of hegemony is that class rule is effected not so much by sanctions and coercion as by the consent and passive compliance of subordinate classes. Hegemony, of course may be used to refer to the entire complex of social domination. The term is used here, however, in its symbolic or idealist sense, since that is precisely where Gramsci's major contribution to Marxist thought lies. It is in fact the pervasiveness of ideological hegemony that normally suffices, to ensure social peace and to relegate the coercive apparatus of the state to the background.[67]

Furthermore, in interpreting Gramsci's hegemony, Kerkvliet suggests that "maintaining hegemony requires, in addition to coercion, that dominant groups make concessions to subordinate groups to an extent, resulting in lower-class people identifying their interests with the perpetuation of the system."[68]

Beside emphasising the importance of consent in Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the preceding discussion about the concept points out how discourse plays an essential role in theories of hegemony. As Davidson argues, the theory of hegemony "incorporates ideas about language and popular wisdom (*buon senso*)"and that hegemony must always "involve 'educating' the people to accept the economic, social and political order from which is built consensus."[69]

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[63] Gill, 1990: 42.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Scott, 1985: 315.
[66] Hattori, 2003: 153. For more examples about this strand of thinking, see also Wade, 2002; Hopgood, 2000; Gale, 1998.
[67] Scott, 1985: 315-316.
[68] Kerkvliet, 2002: 260.
[69] Davidson, 2008: 63.

Crucially, in Gramsci's view civil society was the chief sphere in which hegemony was manufactured and consent attained. Gramsci also stressed the crucial role of the cultural and ideological support provided by civil society and linked it with the hegemony of capitalism.[70] In explaining how hegemony is accomplished, Femia argues that hegemony "is attained through the myriad ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic social reality."[71]

Gramsci also considered civil society as a domain that encouraged an "exploitative and unjust status quo which also contains the seeds of revolution."[72] In this sense, civil society was seen as capable not only of promoting ruling ideas (or hegemony) but also of challenging and undermining them.[73] As suggested by Munck, "thus from Gramsci we can take our understanding of civil society (and global civil society) that is simultaneously the arena in which capitalist hegemony is secured but also where the subaltern classes forge social alliances and articulate alternative hegemonic projects."[74] This means that global civil society contains both the ingredients which perpetuate the capitalist system but also the elements which agitate against it.

As this research explores relationships of local and international NGOs, Gramsci's concept of civil society and his theory of hegemony are also helpful for scrutinising the dynamics of interactions between local and international NGOs in Indonesia, as elements of global civil society. In particular it enables me to understand unequal power relations *within* civil society and it allows me to look at tensions inherent to civil society, not just the positive outcomes civil society generates. If, for Gramsci, civil society is the arena where dominant social forces obtain the consent of subaltern groups, does it not make sense to ask whether a similar process of consent creation occur in global civil society? Can the daily interactions we see in global civil society be creating hegemony of one powerful actor in the international system? The concept also inspires us to consider whether what we would otherwise consider to be the weak and apparently dominated actors in global civil society have the ability to mount ideological resistance against the stronger, non-coercive hegemonic force they interact with there.

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[70] Ehrenberg, 1999, quoted in Alagappa, 2004: 29.
[71] Femia, 1975: 31.
[72] Whitelum, 2003: 69.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Munck, 2006: 330.

These then are the questions that consideration of Gramsci's concept of hegemony invites us to ask about global civil society, in particular NGOs, in Indonesia: is hegemony being achieved? Through what mechanisms? To what extent and how is hegemony being resisted? My research on the relationships between Indonesian and international NGOs seeks to answer these questions.

Interactions between Local and International NGOs: a Domain for Hegemony?

As has been noted at the beginning of this chapter, there are different views on the relationship between international and local NGOs.[75] One strand, promoted especially by international aid agencies, perceives the relationship as essentially mutually beneficial and as promoting ideal values like democracy.[76] Another view characterises the relationship as one of asymmetrical power relations, with the international NGOs dominant over the local NGOs.[77] These two views are clearly in contradiction and expose the fundamental debate this thesis seeks to explore. The first stand point, as has been demonstrated in the preceding literature review, is that global civil society is a domain for inculcating essentially ideal values aiming at the betterment of the human condition. The proponents of this view, as Munck argues, base their arguments on an assumption that there are "universal moral norms and values" and the global civil society "eschews all that smacks of self-interest and, of course, the merest hint that force might play a role in progressive social change and democratisation."[78]

On the other hand, there is also a body of literature which connects global civil society with Gramsci's concept of civil society and hegemony. For example, Munck argues that global civil society functions as an "empty signifier currently hegemonised by western liberal notions of civility and citizenship."[79] In addition, Pasha and Blaney suggest:

> Though transnational associational life may be a site of possible challenges to the oligarchical organization of contemporary global political economy, it also appears as a basis for sustaining the dominance of a narrow band of humanity; to the extent that global civil society represents an alternative vision, this might be seen, then, as equally hegemonic, enacting the 'global' values

[75] For examples of the debate, see contributions by Smith and Hanlon in Stiles, 2000.
[76] For examples of discussion about foreign aid assistance and democracy see Ottaway and Carothers, 2000; Carothers, 1999; Finkel et al., 2007; Diamond, 1999; Gershman and Allen, 2006.
[77] For critical discussion of the relationship, see also Edwards and Hulme,1996; Biekart, 1999; Mendelson and Glenn, 2002; Sundstorm, 2005.
[78] Munck, 2006: 327.
[79] Ibid.: 358.

> of north American and European activists, in lieu of a genuinely global deliberative process.[80]

In this view, global civil society is mainly a domain of hegemony of the United States, other advanced industrial countries, and global capitalism, with international organisations as its main instruments. For example, Cox argues that hegemony at the international level is not just an order among states, but, "it is an order within a world economy with a dominant mode of production which penetrates into all countries and links into other subordinate modes of production."[81] Cox then describes world hegemony as:

> A social structure, an economic structure, and a political structure; and it cannot be simply one of these things but must be all three. World hegemony, furthermore, is expressed in universal norms, institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behaviour for states and for those forces of civil society that act across national boundaries - rules which support the dominant mode of production.[82]

Furthermore he argues that international organisations serve as a mechanism for the universal norms of world hegemony.[83] According to Cox, there are five features of an international organisation which express its hegemonic role.[84] These features are non coercive in nature:

> (1) they embody the rules which facilitate the expansion of hegemonic world orders; (2) they are themselves the product of the hegemonic world order; (3) they ideologically legitimate the norms of the world order; (4) they co-opt the elites from peripheral countries and (5) they absorb counter-hegemonic ideas.[85]

Discussion about hegemony in the relationships between international aid organisations and local NGOs can also be found in the development sector literature, particularly that written by anthropologists, some of whom have debated whether "development discourse" is hegemonic. For some scholars, like Grillo, the development discourse promoted by international agencies and experts is hegemonic in nature because it "identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of practicing development as well as speaking and thinking about it."[86] However, others have argued against the existence of a hegemonic development discourse.[87] Hilhorst, for example, suggests two reasons to dismiss the notion of a hegemonic development discourse, namely the existence of "(a) multiplicity of

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[80] Pasha and Blaney, 1998: 419.
[81] Cox, 1983: 171.
[82] Ibid.: 172.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Grillo, 1997: 12, quoted in Hilhorst, 200: 402.
[87] See for example, Grillo, 1997; Hilhorst 2001, 2003.

voices within development, even if some are more powerful than others,"[88] and dynamic relations between dominant and counter-discourses, which lead to "renegotiations at the interfaces of discourse encounters."[89] She proposes to look at "the duality of discourse" by looking at "how actors shape discourse through their agency," and "the processes by which discourses become powerful."[90] Furthermore, Hilhorst translates this idea into practice by presenting an insightful study of the everyday practices of a local NGO in the Philippines, based on what she labels "actor-orientation."[91] At this point I only wish to hold up these contending perspectives on international development discourse, rather than arbitrating between them. Both views adequately illustrate that hegemony is a relevant question for analysis in the development sector.

The terms of the debate on development discourse does lead us to isolate one characteristic of the wider discussion that I want to emphasise: it tends to look at hegemony as a top-down phenomenon. When neo-Gramscian critical theorists such as Cox or Wade discuss the hegemonic nature of global civil society – as with the debate on global civil society in general – they tend to do so at the theoretical level. Consequently they produce a macro-level analysis without representing the 'voice' from below. Writers who argue there is a hegemonic development discourse likewise tend to focus on the development practices of international donors and do not pay close attention to local NGOs practices.[92] On the other hand, when scholars such as Hilhorst take up the alternative micro-level analysis and scrutinise local NGOs' everyday activities, they rarely frame their analysis in terms of how hegemony works.[93]

This study intends to look at the relationship between international and local NGOs by analysing the perspectives of both international and Indonesian NGOs themselves. This study therefore tries to pursue a more balanced approach which accommodates both international and local NGOs' points of view. Such a balanced approach enables this study to obtain a comprehensive picture of the relationship, which in turn it is hoped creates a more nuanced analysis.

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[88] Grillo, 1997: 22, quoted in Hilhorst, 2001: 402.
[89] Hilhorst, 2001: 402.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Hilhorst, 2001: 402. See also Hilhorst, 2003. Her study is interesting because it takes into account the voice of subordinate people, which in this context, the local organisations, in studying development discourse.
[92] See for example, Ferguson, 1990; Escobar, 1995.
[93] See Hilhorst, 2001; 2003. It should be noted that she provides one chapter in analysing the interaction between funding agencies and a local NGO in her book (2003) in which she illustrates the domination of the funding agency, which led to the discontinuation of the NGO's program.

The Study of Domination and Resistance in Everyday Life

In searching for a further conceptual framework to examine the relationship between international and local NGOs and link it with the question of hegemony, I came across a very useful body of literature that studies the everyday politics of domination and resistance in everyday life. The prominent proponents of the everyday resistance school, James C. Scott and Benedict J. Kerkvliet, propose a different way of looking at class relationships and hegemony. Drawing their conclusion from careful studies of peasants' everyday life in different parts of Southeast Asia, they suggest that Gramsci's concept of hegemony is inadequate for explaining ideological domination in the relationship between subordinate and superordinate people.[94]

As will be shown in this study, although Kerkvliet and Scott's research derives from studies of peasants, it turns out that the key elements of their arguments are very helpful in understanding power relations between international and local NGOs in Indonesia. In studying the everyday life of peasants, both Scott and Kerkvliet reveal that a close examination of the relations of peasants with village elites shows that peasants do not morally accept the rule of local elites. Although they are denied space to openly resist, peasants passively resist local elites.

According to Scott and Kerkvliet, the fact that peasants deny consent to the ideological system which supports their local social hierarchy, militates against hegemony. Scott labels the tactics peasants use to resist hegemony the "weapons of the weak."[95] He nominates certain behaviours such as "footdragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, [and] sabotage."[96] This study finds similar non-compliance in the everyday practices of Indonesian NGOs towards their international counterparts, such as the savings practices of local NGOs.[97] Thus Scott and Kerkvliet's approach for analysing everyday practices of superordinate and subordinate classes, is a useful tool for this study.

Scott's main critique of hegemony is that it fails to account for the capacity of the subordinated to resist. In his words, "[hegemony] fails to make sense of class relations," and it "also is just as likely to mislead us seriously in understanding class conflict in

[94] Scott, 1985, 1990; Kerkvliet, 2002, 2005.
[95] Scott, 1985.
[96] Ibid.: 29.
[97] Holloway labels this practice as corruption with good motives (Holloway, 2001: 14). See chapter four for more detailed discussion of this.

most situations."[98] He suggests "the concept of hegemony ignores the extent to which most subordinate classes are able, on the basis of their daily material experience, to penetrate and demystify the prevailing ideology."[99] Scott criticises Gramsci for exaggerating the power of superordinate classes which underestimate the capabilities of the subordinate to resist the main ideology in their everyday behaviour. He also adds that:

> ... theories of hegemony frequently confound what is inevitable with what is just, an error that subordinate classes rarely, if ever, make. This conclusion stems from a surface examination of public action in power-laden situations that overlooks both the "hidden transcript" and the necessity of routine and pragmatic submission to the "compulsion of economic relations" as well as the realities of coercion.[100]

Scott thus suggests that subordinate people might give the public impression that they view their subordination as natural and just, but when these subordinate people are out of sight, they behave differently. In other words, subordinate groups might appear to accept domination in the public transcript but completely reject it in the hidden one.

Scott therefore points to the importance of looking at everyday practices of subordinate people to get a better understanding of how domination and resistance works. He proposes the concept of the *hidden transcript* as a means to understand the resistance of subordinate people. This study will adopt Scott's concept to analyse the ways local NGOs think about their relationship with international NGOs. I find this very useful to think in this way as my observation of local NGOs reveals that they behave differently when they are not interacting directly with international NGOs.

Scott suggests that the *public transcript* is "a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate." In this public sphere hegemony might seem to be complete.[101] As Scott suggests:

> In ideological terms the public transcript will typically, by its accommodationist tone, provide convincing evidence for the hegemony of dominant values, for the hegemony of dominant discourse. It is precisely this public domain where the effects of power relations are most manifest, and any analysis based exclusively on the public transcript is likely to conclude that subordinate groups endorse the terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic, partners in that subordination.[102]

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[98] Scott, 1985: 317.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.: 317.
[101] Ibid.: 2.
[102] Ibid.: 4.

However, he adds "where it is not positively misleading, is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations."[103] This is above all because "the public transcript is an indifferent guide to the opinion of subordinates."[104] Scott explains "at the very least, an assessment of power relations read directly off the public transcript between the powerful and the weak may portray a deference and consent that are possibly only a tactic."[105] He concludes that "the questionable meaning of the public transcript suggests the key roles played by disguise and surveillance in power relations."[106]

On the other hand, Scott defines the *hidden transcript* as the "discourse that takes place "offstage," beyond direct observation by powerholders."[107] He argues that "the hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript."[108] Scott suggests that the *hidden* transcript has three characteristics: it is "specific to a given social site and to a particular set of actors"; it "does not contain only speech acts [verbal resistance] but a whole range of practices" and that "the frontier between the *public* and the *hidden* transcript is a zone of constant struggle between dominant and subordinate – not a solid wall."[109] Scott elaborates on several prominent actions in the *hidden transcript* which include what he labelled as "elementary forms of disguise" – which are "anonymity" (include gossip and rumours), "euphemisms and grumbling" – and "elaborate forms of disguise" which include oral culture, folktales.[110] He argues that:

> For the study of power relations, this perspective [of the *public* and the *hidden transcript*] alert us to the fact that virtually all ordinarily observed relations between dominant and subordinate represent the encounter of the *public* transcript of the dominant with the *public* transcript of the subordinate. .. Social science is, in general then, focused resolutely on official or formal relations between the powerful and weak. This is the case even for much of the study of conflict, as we shall see, when that conflict has become highly institutionalised. I do not mean to imply that the study of this domain of power relations is necessarily false or trivial, only that it hardly exhausts what we might wish to know about power.[111]

[103] Ibid.: 2.
[104] Ibid.: 3.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Scott, 1990: 4.
[108] Ibid.: 4-5.
[109] Ibid.: 14.
[110] Ibid.: 136-172.
[111] Ibid.: 13.

As I suggest earlier, these concepts are helpful as they enable me to explain contradictions between everyday practices of local and international NGOs, separately, and their behaviour when interacting with each other.

Kerkvliet's analysis of class and status relations in a Philippines village of San Ricardo has similarities with Scott's arguments. Kerkvliet states that:

> while Gramsci's argument recognizes that subordinate people can within limits manipulate conditions to gain some material advantages and that superordinate groups grant marginal allowances, it does not allow much room for continuous struggle between subordinate and dominant people over ideas and values.[112]

He furthermore elaborates his understanding that Gramsci's concept of hegemony appears to suggest that subordinate people:

> are confined within the boundaries of the dominant world-view, a divergent, loosely adjusted patchwork of ideas and outlooks, which despite its heterogeneity, unambiguously serves the interests of the powerful, by mystifying power relations, by justifying various forms of sacrifice and deprivation, by inducing fatalism and passivity, and by narrowing mental horizons.113

Yet Kerkvliet finds poor peasants and workers in his study were "neither passive nor mystified. Nor have they bought the dominant ideology's rationalization of their deprivation."[114] He offers further explanation by suggesting that:

> There is in San Ricardo considerably more ideological struggle between the subordinate and dominant classes that Gramsci's argument conveys. People of lower class and status have alternative ideas and beliefs that pose significant challenges to the rich capitalists' views about how property and other resources should be used and by whom. They have ideas about rights and justice that also contradict the beliefs of more powerful people. Their beliefs are not only implicit in actions but are verbalized. People articulate both specific and general reasons underlying their boycotts, walkouts, land takeovers, and other direct actions. Those ideas may not be expressed in language familiar to intellectuals, but they are expressed nevertheless. Villagers are not as confused or unconscious about what they are doing as Gramsci would suggest.[115]

It may seem strange that works on rural class relations can be a good guide for studying my topic on the relationships between international and local NGOs. Yet, because the perspectives of international and Indonesian NGOs themselves can be at odds, Kerkvliet's and Scott's analysis of ideological struggle between classes, as discussed above, fit well as a framework for analysing relations between international and Indonesian NGOs. Moreover, because one set of actors in these relations – the international

[112] Kerkvliet, 2002: 261.
[113] Ibid.: 262.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

NGOs – are more powerful, in the sense of having greater financial and agenda setting capacity, it is not altogether inappropriate to compare these relations to relations between rural classes in unequal societies.

Borrowing from their approach that looks at everyday practices of domination and resistance, I agree with Scott and Kerkvliet that Gramsci's theory of hegemony is inadequate in explaining power relations between superordinate and subordinate groups in both rural villages and in the context of global civil society, and presumably in many other settings too. The case of the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia in this study reveals that although the domination of international NGOs is apparent, local NGOs' deep resentment of that domination, and their ability to make use of opportunities arises within the relationship for their own benefit, demonstrates that Indonesian NGOs are non-compliant towards the domination of international NGOs. This non-compliance thus shows the absence of local NGOs' consent – one of the main ingredients of hegemony – towards the domination of international NGOs.

Research Questions and Central Findings

As has been indicated in the discussion throughout this chapter, my research focuses on the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia and places the relationship between local and international NGOs within the broader context of theories on global civil society and hegemony. NGOs are often understood as the main element of global civil society yet they are less commonly understood in terms of hegemony. I particularly aim to understand the power-play between these elements of global civil society by studying the "everyday life" of international and local NGOs in Indonesia. As I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, what I mean by everyday life is the everyday interactions of these two types of NGOs, the processes and procedures involved in their relationships, as well as the tensions that arise in their relationships.

It would not be possible, of course, to study NGOs' relationships in Indonesia without exploring their relationships with Indonesian society. As we will see later, with the country's rich associational life, one of the distinguishing characteristics of local NGOs is their close connections with the general society. Most local NGOs in this research, for example, either come from mass-based organisations or have deep roots in religious organisations, or are formed by various associations and community-based groups in pursuing common interests. Therefore, although this research looks at NGOs' relationships

in the context of global civil society, this study also considers the importance of the links these NGOs have with Indonesian society.

There are two sets of questions that guide this study. The first set of questions deals with the nature of the relationship between international and local NGOs from the perspective of the NGOs themselves. It looks at the everyday politics of the relationship between international and local NGOs in their own terms. With this first set, I focus on problems relating to divergent cultures, goals, and methods of work. I examine this issue by finding answers to questions such as: How do international NGOs see their relationships with the local NGOs? What are the perceptions of local NGOs about the relationship? Are these perceptions the same? What are the sources of tension each side faces? How do local and international NGOs think they should address these challenges? The key here is uncovering how the actors themselves view the problems they confront.

My second set of questions involves a higher level of conceptualisation and relates to the nature of global civil society and the question of hegemony. These questions involve placing the relationship between local and international NGOs in Indonesia within the context of theories of global civil society and hegemony. I do this by asking questions such as: What does the relationship tell us about the nature of global civil society? Does global civil society really (or even mainly) serve as a domain purely for the inculcation of ideal values such as civility as claimed by its proponents? Or is it also a vehicle of hegemony – in other words, a means by which powerful forces in international society (notably, in the rich countries), dominate the less powerful, and try to remake poorer countries in their own image? If the latter is the case, through what kind of mechanism is hegemony and consent acquired within global civil society? How is hegemony being resisted and is hegemony being resisted effectively?

To anticipate my findings, in scrutinising the way the Indonesian NGOs actually talk about and perceive their relationship with international donors and partners and how those international actors view their Indonesian counterparts – my first set of questions – I find that local and international actors have different perceptions about their cooperation, achievements and aims. For international NGOs, the main challenges of working with local NGOs relate to organizational capacity (or, more accurately, lack of capacity) of local NGOs, especially their human resources, accountability and inefficiency, and often of problems pertaining to corruption. Meanwhile, the common complaints from Indonesian NGOs towards international NGOs revolve around the high expectations

and rigidity of the international NGOs. Local NGOs resent the obligations they face to abide by the international NGOs' organisational framework. They criticise what they see as the excessive bureaucracy of the international NGOs, such as in the proposal formats and other administrative forms they impose, and the language (English) they insist upon. In other words, local NGOs complain that the relationship is driven by their donors rather than being established on an equal partnership. Studying the everyday life of Indonesian NGOs thus reveals a hidden transcript of widespread criticism of international NGOs.

This research also reveals some of the challenges that these NGOs face within their own organisations. It should be noted that, as we will see later, both local and international NGOs share similar weaknesses, but these weaknesses have more serious consequences for local NGOs because they are in a weaker position. Internal problems are common for many local NGOs. In addition, Indonesian NGOs struggle with other issues such as a lack of clear agenda and objectives. This condition affects their programs, leadership changes and non-egalitarian culture. In contrast with the idealised picture of NGOs that is sometimes presented in the mainstream literature on global civil society, a closer look at NGOs in Indonesia reveals practices such as elitism and favouritism, undemocratic decision making processes and rivalry among local NGOs.[116] These are behaviours that dominate the daily work practices, project implementation and strategic planning of NGOs and consequently affect local NGOs' relationship with international actors. I find that these characteristics are both results and facilitators of the domination of international NGOs in their relationships with Indonesian NGOs. In addition, the existence of these practices contradicts both the rhetoric of the NGOs themselves and the highly normatively charged parts of the civil society literature that argue NGOs are the promoters and defenders of ideal social values.

In discussing my second set of questions in which I place the relationship between local and international NGOs in Indonesia within the context of theories of global civil society and hegemony, my research finds that the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia is asymmetrical, with international NGOs the dominant party. My study discovers that, although funding is the dominant variable that creates the asymmetrical shape of the relationship between the two NGOs, it is not the sole factor. There are other factors which contribute to the domination of international NGOs.

[116] By favouritism I mean the tendency for international donors to work with certain prominent individuals that they know instead of with others they do not know.

These factors are, first, internal weakness among Indonesian NGOs, such as, their inability to determine a clear agenda and objectives, secondly managerial weaknesses and faults in leadership and finally jealousies and strife between local NGOs. Another cause for asymmetrical power relationships is the vague and flexible nature of the decision making within the local and international NGOs' relationship itself. This factor is an endemic feature of the managerial style that exists within the development sector.

Nevertheless, the evidence of the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia in this study reveals that although the domination of international NGOs is apparent, the deep resentment among local NGOs of international NGOs domination also demonstrates their non-compliance with the domination of international NGOs. This finding shows that hegemony within global civil society is not complete. Instead, local NGOs use many of the "weapons of the weak" that we expect to find whenever an unequal power relationship exists.

Chapter Plan

Although I am aware of the presence of NGOs from the Middle East or other Asian countries in Indonesia, when talking about international NGOs in my study, I limit my focus to Western NGOs.[117] The first two chapters (including this one) provide theoretical and historical background on the relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs. Although I have benefited from previous studies on Indonesian NGOs which predominantly look at either the Indonesian NGO sector as a stand alone case study or at its relationships with the state, I will not provide a detailed historical background on Indonesian NGOs in the way most scholars on Indonesian NGOs do.[118] Precisely because such historical overviews are available elsewhere, I instead prefer to write a historical overview of the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia. The remaining chapters then discuss various aspects of the relationships between international and Indonesian NGOs, including the issue of funding, the nature of the relationship among local NGOs, and the perspectives held by international and local NGO workers on their relationships, to shed light on the everyday politics of domination and resistance among them.

[117] I propose three practical reasons for this: firstly, Western NGOs historically and currently make up a large proportion of international NGOs in Indonesia. Secondly, a large body of available literature on international NGOs refers to Western NGOs. Thirdly, they provide the most plentiful data.
[118] For example, see Riker 1998; Fakih, 1995; Sinaga, 1994; Hadiwinata, 2003.

In addition to secondary sources, I obtain data from 120 formal in-depth interviews, and many observations of NGO offices, NGO meetings, NGO-run workshops and other NGO gatherings, during fifteen months of fieldwork, conducted mainly in Jakarta and Yogyakarta between 2005 and 2008.[119] Some interviews were held during short visits to Bandung, Salatiga and Makassar. I interviewed people from around twenty international NGOs and thirty local NGOs, as well as government officials, donor agency staff and academics. Some of my informants have links with several NGOs at a time, some have moved around, changing jobs from one NGO to another, be it inside local NGO circles, or in international NGOs, or from local to international NGOs.

Observation during several years of interviewing NGO workers revealed different patterns of attitude.[120] Some NGO workers have been open and very frank in answering my questions since our first meeting. Yet there are also those who only spoke up gradually over the years as they came to know me better and became more comfortable talking to me (and by doing so contradicting some of their earlier statements). The most cautious were usually the accountants and the administrative staff of local NGOs.

Another dimension of my observations was the enthusiasm and seriousness NGO people have for their work. A large proportion of most interviews I had with NGO workers would inevitably consist of lengthy talks about the details of their work. Most of them know their field very well, they take their job very seriously and implied that working in the development sector or in advocacy NGOs is not an 'easy' job (particularly for those who live far away in the field). However, I also found some of them were often too 'caught up' in the details of program implementation issues and technicalities. Some, particularly the international donors' policy makers, are the opposite as they tend to focus on the big picture but have problems implementing it.

As we shall see in later chapters, my study does not adopt the approach of focusing solely on a single area of advocacy or community development, nor is it exclusively focused on a single NGO. Instead, as mentioned earlier, it focuses on issues that were named as being important during my interviews with NGO workers themselves.[121] I

[119] It should be noted that my fieldwork was affected by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake that hit Yogyakarta in May 2006 where two main local NGOs for this study located.

[120] In this thesis I use the terms NGO "workers", "activists" and "staff-members" as interchangeable words without the usual nuances found in the sector.

[121] In assimilating and analysing my informants' perspectives, I am following the approach of other scholars, such as Hilhorst, who observed the everyday practices of an NGO in the Philippines using what she called as "an actor-orientation to the organisation of NGOs," and Ford, who conducted an "ethnographic exploration" when studying the relationships between Indonesian labour NGOs with workers,

find this tactic allowed me to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the relationship. Hence, it might not be immediately obvious why I include a discussion on local NGOs' internal problems in a thesis on relations between local and international NGOs: the answer is that my informants repeatedly insisted that this was a crucial factor in the relationships. I do not want to present a study which is merely critical of international NGOs, but I want to show how local NGOs' weaknesses allow them to be dominated by international NGOs because this was a repeated theme in my research conversations. Some local NGO workers suggest that all the problems are because of international NGOs. My research shows that local NGOs weaknesses also contribute to the international NGOs' domination.

Chapter two provides historical background on the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia since Indonesia's independence in 1945. This chapter also scrutinises relevant government regulations which affect the relationships between international and local NGOs. In addition, it surveys previous studies on the relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs. The discussion in this chapter concludes that international NGOs have always played and are still playing an important role as the main source of funding for Indonesian NGOs. I thus argue that having the control over the supply of funds for Indonesian NGOs is one way in which international NGOs assert their domination over local NGOs.

Chapter three provides an in-depth case study which introduces all of the main themes of this thesis: funding, the characteristics of Indonesian NGOs, and the perspectives of international and Indonesian NGOs on the sources of tension in their relationships. The in-depth case study is of the relationships that take place between a local NGO - Insist (the Indonesian Society for Social Transformation), a Yogyakarta-based Indonesian NGO - and two international organisations. The international NGOs are KEPA (Service Centre for Development Cooperation), a Finnish NGO, and IMD (the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy), a Dutch NGO. KEPA has been Insist's main partner since the late 1990s, while IMD and Insist had a disagreement which led to the discontinuation of their relationship in 2004. I provide this case study early in the thesis to provide a detailed, grounded and accessible discussion of the key themes of the thesis.

Chapter four examines the politics of international NGO funding. This chapter identifies the *public transcript* and the *hidden transcript* in the relationship between the two types

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unions and the state. See Hilhorst, 2003: 4-8; Ford, 2003: 23. To moderate bias from my interviews and observations during research, I consulted NGO documents and literature when I could.

of NGOs. I use these metaphors to explain power relations between international and local NGOs in dealing with matters related to funding. I argue that the public transcript on funding reveals the domination of international NGOs, in which they are able to wield their ability to dispense funding to impose conditions on the domestic NGO sector. Yet there is also a "hidden transcript" of resistance in which local NGOs save funds against the spirit and sometimes letter of their agreements with the international NGOs. This has become a form of non-compliance that is near universal in the Indonesian NGO sector.

Chapter five discusses the internal dynamics of Indonesian NGOs and how these dynamics affect the relationships between international and local NGOs. In this chapter I talk about the issues of personalisation, hierarchy, internal management conflict and rivalry among local NGOs and relate them with the hidden transcript of what local NGOs say about their donors privately. In other words, this chapter will assess the characteristics of subordinate groups in global civil society and the relations they have with *one another*. The discussion will reveal how local NGOs, because of their lack of unified purpose and their own internal problems have enabled international NGO domination to become stronger than it otherwise would be. The discussion will also demonstrate how international NGOs domination exacerbates these characteristics.

Chapter six looks at the perspectives of international NGOs and Indonesian NGOs on their relationships. In particular, it focuses on the sources of tension that these organisations encounter while working together. It will again discuss the public transcript and the hidden transcript in the relationship between the two types of NGOs and use these concepts to explain power relations between them. The discussion sheds light on how international NGOs assert dominance over Indonesian NGOs. Yet at the same time the chapter also reveals widespread resistance among local NGOs towards their international counterparts.

Chapter seven ends my dissertation by drawing out the key points from the discussion in preceeding chapters into a conclusion. This study concludes that the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia are dominated by international NGOs. There is therefore a form of hegemony. Western NGOs create this system not only because of their capital, but also through the internal weaknesses of local NGOs. However, as the subsequent chapters will demonstrate, there is passive resistance on the part of local NGOs towards international NGOs, which shows that the weak can indeed deny

the superior agent total domination. In other words, international NGOs exercise only incomplete hegemony.

Chapter Two

Relationships between International and Local NGOs in Indonesia: Literature Review and Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter provides a context for the discussion in my thesis. I first review previous studies of NGOs in Indonesia, looking for discussion of the relationships between international and local NGOs. Then I present a historical overview of the relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs. The latter section concludes with a review of relevant government regulations affecting the interactions between international and local NGOs.

The discussion in this chapter shows that most studies on NGOs in Indonesia discuss NGOs in the context of their relations with the state and with democracy. This pattern occurs because NGOs and civil society have widely been seen as playing an important role in challenging authoritarian rule in Indonesia. Meanwhile, a historical survey of the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia reveals that international NGOs have long been crucial to Indonesian NGOs. International NGOs have been – and remain – the main source of funding for almost all local NGOs in Indonesia. Most of the literature also views NGOs and civil society in an ideal-normative way, and tends to try to construct typologies. In addition, the literature review demonstrates that although several studies acknowledge there are unequal power-relations in the relationships between international and Indonesian NGOs, the topic area has been under-researched. No other scholar has provided deep empirical research on the everyday interactions between local and international NGOs. This dissertation aims to fill this gap in the literature.

Previous Studies on the Relationships between Local and International NGOs in Indonesia

In starting the discussion in this chapter, it is essential to define what this study means by the term NGO. Just like the concepts of civil society and global civil society, the term NGO itself has no universal meaning.[1] For the purpose of this study, an NGO will be defined as a private organisation existing in the realm between the state and the market, in the form of a task-oriented, not-for-profit organisation which does not seek political power.[2] An NGO is the prototypical civil society organisation. Following previous studies on NGOs in Indonesia, and with the purpose of setting boundaries for my study, this study also excludes other forms of civil society associations such as mass-membership 'functional groups', which include trade unions, sports clubs and cooperatives, and 'cultural and religious groups.'[3]

Literature on NGOs in Indonesia mainly focused on two themes: first, the influence of NGOs on democratisation, and, second, their relationship with the state. For example, Hadiwinata discusses the struggle of Indonesian NGOs working under the authoritarian Suharto regime and how they transformed themselves in the post-*reformasi* period.[4] Based on a very rich empirical study of three NGOs in Yogyakarta, Hadiwinata argues that "in a situation where authoritarian government imposed pervasive control on the political activities of society such as the New Order Indonesia, NGOs had cautiously confined their activities to community development."[5] However, "when the political setting had been dramatically transformed from authoritarianism to democracy, NGOs played their role in the strengthening of civil society by forming grassroots coalitions and networks."[6] Several other studies, written at different stages of late authoritarianism or the democratic transition, likewise focus on NGOs' interaction with the state and their role in promoting democracy.[7]

Most authors consider the topic of the international links of Indonesian NGOs only in passing. When the topic is treated in any depth, with a few exceptions, most dis-

[1] Ford, 2003: 27. See also Korten, 1987; Hadiwinata, 2003; Eldridge, 1995.
[2] This rough working definition draws heavily from Aspinall, 2000: 126; Hadiwinata, 2003: 4-6; Riker, 1998: 23-25.
[3] Riker 1998: 23-25; Aspinall, 2000: 126-127; Hadiwinata, 2003: 4-6. For an overview on definitions of NGOs, see Ford, 2003: 27-29.
[4] See Hadiwinata, 2003.
[5] Ibid.: 241.
[6] Ibid.
[7] For example, see Eldridge, 1995; Hikam 1995; Fakih, 1996a; Riker, 1998; Aspinall, 2000; Hadiwinata 2003; Ford, 2003; Suharko, 2005; Indeco de Unie, 1993; Ganie-Rochman, 2002.

cussion usually concerns funding and the funding dependency of the local NGOs on international NGOs.[8] For example, both Eldridge (who mostly looks at Indonesian NGOs in the period of the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s) and Hadiwinata (who studies Indonesian NGOs in the late 1990s and the early 2000s) argue that the linkages between international and local NGOs in Indonesia are important. They say that such linkages are useful for Indonesian NGOs, primarily as a source of funding. In 1995 Eldridge predicted, accurately as it turned out, that foreign donors would likely be the most reliable funding source for Indonesian NGOs, as it was still difficult for them to develop alternative funding sources.[9] However, beyond showing the link between funding and the existence of a relationship between international NGOs and local NGOs, their studies do not expand on the issue.[10]

In addition to their brief discussion of the relationships between international and local NGOs, a further point that arises from the work of both Eldridge and Hadiwinata is that they did not differentiate between different types of international donors. In their view, which appears to be common among scholars of Indonesian civil society in general, all international NGOs, state agencies, and development banks fall into one category: international agencies.[11] International agencies are generally treated as having a single, undifferentiated role: as funding agencies. Consequently, discussion of local-international linkages only occur when these scholars discuss funding or financial assistance to local NGOs.[12]

One study which discusses links between international and Indonesian NGOs in more detail is Sinaga's dissertation on the role of NGOs in the development process in Indonesia in the early 1990s.[13] When discussing the external environment confronting Indonesian NGOs, he provides a section which looked at the role of foreign aid from international foundations that operate in Indonesia, including the rules and procedures to administer foreign-funded development assistance.[14] In particular, he discusses in brief the activities of German political foundations in Indonesia. Despite

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[8] For example, see Fakih, 1996a: 229-230; Eldridge, 1995: 51-55; Sinaga, 1993: 137-156. Exceptions include Uhlin, 1997, and Ford, 2003, both of which provided detailed discussions of the discursive and philosophical influences of international NGOs towards local NGOs in Indonesia.
[9] Eldridge, 1995: 56.
[10] Ibid.: 51-55, Hadiwinata, 2003: 98-100.
[11] It should be noted that Ford briefly highlights the complexity of local NGOs' funding networks by citing Fowler's schema of NGO funding networks. See Ford, 2003: 30; Fowler, 1992b: 11.
[12] For discussion of Indonesian NGOs' funding sources, see Sinaga, 1993; Ginting, 2004; Atmaja, 2004.
[13] Sinaga, 1994.
[14] Ibid.: 220-241.

laying out the fact that these foundations played a significant role in "promoting social and political space" for local NGOs to "play their part effectively" as well as providing helpful background materials, Sinaga did not say much about the relationships between international and local NGOs.[15]

Another theme in the literature is that there are unequal power relations between international and Indonesian NGOs, as a consequence of Indonesian NGOs' dependence on their international funding agencies. For instance, Hikam suggests that local NGOs' dependence on international funding "has limited local NGOs' activities" and "created the danger of cooptation by funding agencies."[16] Sinaga argues that there is "widespread criticism that many NGOs were established solely for the purpose of acquiring funds from foreign donor agencies."[17] Eldridge notes two problems, namely the tendency of international NGOs to be interested in funding certain programs which have less of a priority for the local community, and the problem of reporting and accounting requirements from donors which tend to create a burden for local NGOs. This, he suggests, will eventually drive local NGO staff away from the community.[18]

A focus on the unequal relationship between Indonesian NGOs and their international counterparts also appears in the Indonesian language literature. The tone of this literature is even more critical than that of the English material, and it tends to attack the hegemonic nature of "developmentalism" promoted by international aid agencies.[19] These authors are critical intellectuals, themselves often connected to the NGO world, and many are NGO workers. Sangkoyo, for instance, argues that in the context of what he labels as '*pengerahan sosial*' [social mobilisation] in the non-governmental sector, Indonesia has become one of the "giant bazaars - the frontline for the expansion of the circuit on capital especially for countries that are the alumni of World War II" [*bazaar raksasa, garis depan bagi perluasan sirkuit modal,*

[15] Ibid.: 231-241.
[16] Hikam, 1999a: 4.
[17] Sinaga, 1993: 145.
[18] Eldridge 1995: 55.
[19] For example, see Irawan et al., 2004; Kuswardono, 2004: 143-164; Wirasapoetra, 2004: 165-172; Sangkoyo, 2004: 11-18; Fakih, 1996a: 69-110,170-171; Herdi SRS, 1999: 16; Billah, 1995: 191-195; Indeco de Unie, 1993: 2-24. It should be noted that Gramsci's concept of hegemony, particularly his reading on the counter-hegemonic force of civil society was influential among Indonesian NGO activists, particularly in the 1990s (see for example Indeco de Unie, 1993: 2-24). Fakih and Billah use the concept as a framework for their study. See chapter three for more disscussion.

khususnya bagi negara-negara alumni Perang Dunia II].[20] Kuswardono compares this "North-South social mobilisation" with "the zoo management" [*pengelolaan kebun binatang*] where:

> people in the South always have their behaviour and health assessed; they are fed, given vitamins, and trained, but remain powerless inside their cage. No matter how opportunistic and smart these NGOs in the South are at obtaining funds from the North for the purpose of social change, they are still unable to change the position of the people in the South. Change could always happen, but it could only be seen in the exhibition room which also serves as the experimental laboratory for planners and donors, and does not significantly change the fate of people of the third world countries.[21]

In addition, Fakih states, "we need to scrutinise funding agencies as they are fully contained with the dominant hegemony [developmentalism] and do not question social structure."[22] While Billah et.al note that "the relationship between (Indonesian) NGOs and funding agencies in general tend to be vertical, thus often it is very easy for hegemony and domination of foreign agencies over NGOs to occur."[23] Billah further suggests that having the money is not the sole reason for why funding agencies constantly succeed in negotiating with local NGOs. Instead, he argues that having the ability to better express their ideas rationally with strong arguments has provided international NGOs with leverage when dealing with local NGOs, which usually results in local NGOs "just tag[ging] along behind [*mengekor*] funding."[24]

The third theme that we can identify in the existing literature's discussion about international and local NGO links in Indonesia is the political sensitivity that surrounds the presence of international donors in the country. In the context of his analysis of Indonesian NGOs' relationship with the Government of Indonesia, Hadiwinata provides an extreme example of how in 1992 the Indonesian government cancelled all official governmental assistance from the Netherlands following what was called the "Brussels incident."[25] In this incident, which happened in 1989 during the fifth annual conference of an NGO network called INGI (International NGO Group on Indonesia) in Brussels, INGI sternly criticised the government's handling of large

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[20] Sangkoyo, 2004: 13. Sangkoyo claims that the dominant agenda of international funding agencies is to search for and control natural resources and markets. In this context, Indonesia, as a former colonized country which gained its independence after World War II, neatly serves their purpose. Ibid.
[21] Kuswardono, 2004: 163.
[22] Fakih, 1993: 23.
[23] Billah, 1993: 9.
[24] Ibid.: 23-24.
[25] Hadiwinata, 2003: 100. See "Insiden Brussels" in *Tempo*, 19 August 1989.

World Bank-funded development projects.[26] Other authors highlight how Indonesian NGOs' dependence on foreign aid offends Indonesian nationalism and religious sensitivity. These offences have given rise to the charge among some government officials and others that local NGOs are "*agen barat*," ["Agents of the West"] or "*antek asing*" ["Foreign Lackey"]. This is an especially common theme in Indonesian news coverage on NGOs.[27]

In summary, existing scholarly literature and public discussion of Indonesian NGOs raises several themes: funding dependence, asymmetrical power relationships and domestic 'sensitivity' towards the relationship between international and local NGOs. In other words, the existing literature mainly presents the problematic face of the relationship.[28] The literature suggests that the relationship between local and international NGOs is a source of tension both within the NGO community and more widely in Indonesia. However, although these existing studies about NGOs have provided essential background information for this study, most of them do not explore the link between international and local NGOs thoroughly. Claims about the relationship between international and local NGOs are made without providing detailed examples or case studies. This research will fill this gap in the literature by providing a study of the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia with an empirical depth that has been missing so far. This research will also integrate original data from both sides of the national/international divide, something that no other studies have done systematically.

As has been suggested in the previous chapter, the concerns of this study are explored by examining two related empirical issues. The first issue is the day-to-day habits and processes through which the power relations between international and

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[26] See also Eldridge 1995: 195-201; Herdi SRS 1999: 3. I will discuss this case further in my historical overview later in this chapter.

[27] For example, see; "Dituding Antek Asing, YLBHI Tak Pusing" in *Jawa Pos,* 20 June 2006; "Antek Asing Pengganggu Kedaulatan NKRI Selalu Berubah Bentuk" in *Berita Sore,* 15 August 2007; "Intervensi Asing Pemerintah Diminta Audit Dana LSM," in *Kompas,* 28 June 2006; "LSM, Suara Donor Atau Suara Rakyat?" in *Suara Pembaruan,* 22 June 2004; "Dikader Funding" in *NU Online*, 24 August 2005.
[http://www.nu.or.id/page.php?lang=id&menu=news_view&news_id=7331 accessed on 6 October 2007]. Newspaper coverage also include oftentimes critical opinion of government official towards NGOs, mostly during the New Order period, but also as recent as late 2008. See for example, "Menengok Peran LSM di Mata Pemerintah" in *Bernas*, 5 February 1992; "Ada LSM Yang Jadi Tangan Belanda" in *Jawa Pos* 31 March 1992; "LSM Diminta Tetap Junjung Harkat dan Martabat Bangsa" in *Bernas,* 12 May 1992; "Menko Polkam Tentang LSM" in *Jawa Pos* 16 January 1992; "Menhankam LB Moerdani: Kegiatan dan Pendanaan LSM Perlu Diteliti" in *Suara Merdeka,* 15 February 1992; "Menhan: Jangan Jadi Preman Moral" in *Kompas,* 23 December 2008.

[28] It should be noted also that there exists literature which presents more positive interpretations of the international link in fostering democratic governance in Indonesia. For example, see Riker, 2002.

local NGOs are mediated. In other words, the study looks at the everyday practices of local and international NGOs. The second focus is the perspectives held by international and local NGOs themselves about the problems or sources of tension in their relationships. This study will demonstrate that although domination of international NGOs in their relationships with Indonesian NGOs is apparent, the concept of hegemony is inadequate in explaining the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia. Instead, this study argues that at the ideological level, the domination of international NGOs is met with resistance and non-compliance by local NGOs.

Historical Overview of the Relationships between Local and International NGOs in Indonesia

The number of both international and local NGOs working in Indonesia has increased significantly over the last decade. According to records held by the Department of Foreign Affairs in 2006, there were 106 international NGOs working in Indonesia. The department's data only includes those NGOs which have established an in-country office and a formal structure in Indonesia. There are of course many international NGOs that do not set up an office in Indonesia, yet operate in Indonesia and provide funding to local organisations from abroad. However, this number can increase sharply in response to an emergency. For example, after the earthquake in Yogyakarta in 2006, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) registered 140 international NGOs working in the province. Despite occasional peaks in NGO activity it is true nevertheless that the overall number of NGOs (foreign and domestic) in Indonesia has been growing for some time. Based on data from the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics, it is believed that the number of Indonesian NGOs in Indonesia has grown from around 10,000 in 1996 to around 70,000 in 2000.[29]

Relationships between international and local NGOs fall into at least four categories. First, there is provision of funds or grants by international NGOs to local NGOs. This form is by far the most common form of interaction. An example of this is the relationship between Insist and its international counterparts examined in chapter two. Second, several international NGOs also provide technical assistance, which is usually in the form of training and workshops, for local NGOs. An example of this kind of relationship is an NGO Management Certificate training program for mid-

[29] Hadiwinata, 2003: 1.

level Indonesian NGO managers, conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in cooperation with the Centre for Global Civil Society Studies (PACIVIS) at the University of Indonesia.[30] This form of cooperation is very common among development NGOs. Thirdly, there are relationships which are a combination of the first and second models. This form usually takes place in a long-term program. As an illustration of the third hybrid type the Asia Foundation, apart from providing grants, has a professional team of auditors, accountants and grantee trainers to provide technical assistance on financial and grants management to its grantees.[31] The fourth classification comes when local and international NGOs join a network. These networks are usually single issue groupings, such as *The World Rainforest Movement*, or the *Jubilee South Asia/Pacific Movement on Debt and Development*. Another example is INFID (International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development), which is a prominent forum for international and Indonesian NGOs concerned with Indonesia's development.[32] These networks advocate an increase in public awareness and the influence of government policy. The act of local NGOs to "bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside" is what Keck and Sikkink call the "the boomerang pattern."[33]

The involvement of international NGOs in Indonesia after the country declared its independence in 1945 can be traced as far back as the first decade of Indonesian independence. The Ford Foundation, for example, started its work in Indonesia in 1953 and since then has been an influential grant provider in the country. During its first two decades in Indonesia the Ford Foundation focused on educational activities (most notably teacher training and scholarship programs and English-language education). Thus, the foundation mainly worked with the Indonesian government's agencies and universities.[34] Another prominent international NGO which established itself in Indonesia early in the country's history is the Asia Foundation, a different American NGO which started its work in Indonesia in 1955. The first two decades of the Asia Foundation's activities in Indonesia also revolved around education which included the provision of books through its "Books for Asia Program." From 1955 to

[30] Http://www.ndi.org/indonesia?page=0,1#NGOManagementCertificateProgramTraining [accessed on 23 February 2009].
[31] See "Finance and Grants Management: Services to Donors and Grantees," The Asia Foundation Brochure.
[32] INFID is previously known as INGI – the network mentioned on p.32.
[33] Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 12-13.
[34] See Bresnan, 2006; Ford Foundation, 2003; Ford Foundation, 1970.

2006, the Asia Foundation provided over two million books to various educational institutions, public libraries, government agencies and civil society organisations.[35]

The Sukarno Era: 1945-1966

The scarce information available on international NGO activities in Indonesia during the Sukarno era indicates that these organisations mainly focused on working with the Indonesian government and universities at that time.[36] As an illustration, one estimate is that ninety percent of the Ford Foundation's assistance to Indonesia up to 1970 was allocated for education and the "the development of Teachers Training Institutions, English Language and Technical Education, Faculties of Economics, economic and social research, assistance to national planning, and management."[37]

Another example of an international program in the early years of independence is the Australian Volunteer Graduate Scheme for Indonesia. The scheme, which was the embryo of the Australian Volunteers Abroad program, was established in the early 1950s with the central notion that "Australians possessing specific skills and qualifications should be employed by Indonesian government or voluntary agencies at local rates of pay and conditions."[38] Almost all of the forty-one participants of the scheme worked for government ministries, hospitals, research institutes and universities.[39]

The first two decades after Indonesia's independence was an era of turbulent nation-building characterised by increasing hostility towards foreigners, combined with the Cold War atmosphere, that culminated in President Sukarno's famous anti-American "go to hell with your aid" speech in 1964. This environment was not conducive to international NGOs activities. The Ford Foundation closed its office in Indonesia for eighteen months from mid-1965 to early 1967.[40] In his 2006 memoirs of the Ford

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[35] Http://www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Indobookstest.pdf [accessed on 18 February 2009].
[36] Both Ford Foundation and The Asia Foundation published a glossy coffee-table book about their work in Indonesia to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of their operations in the country.
[37] Ford Foundation, 1970: 29. Other program areas between the 1963-1970 period were agriculture, population and humanities. With regards to scholarship provision, this report stated that, up to 1970, the Foundation had given approximately 508 individual awards for long-term studies and short-term study and observations (Ford Foundation, 1970: 36).
[38] Eldridge, 1979: 131. Anther international volunteer scheme during the early 1960s in Indonesia was the U.S Peace Corps. The organisation started in 1963, and sent a total of 36 volunteers to Indonesia before communist harassment caused Peace Corps to leave Indonesia in April 1965. See Bresnan, 2006: 49-50; Ricklefs, 1993: 278.
http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.wherepc.asia&noflash=y#Indonesia [accessed on 5 February 2009].
[39] For the participants list, see Southall, 1964: 255.
[40] See Bresnan, 2006: 53-64.

Foundation's first twenty years in Indonesia, the former Ford Foundation Jakarta representative reflected on the unfriendliness towards foreigners in Jakarta during the first half of 1960s. According to this source, because of the weakness of public institutions at the time, the scarcity of English language material as well as the increasing political tension:

> One did not need to be able to read Indonesian to know what it meant to see Uncle Sam being battered by a young man wearing a *peci,* that distinct black cap that many Indonesians wear.[41]

In spite of the chaotic situation in Indonesia during the Sukarno period, the case of the Ford Foundation shows there was a close relationship between the Foundation's staff and high Indonesian Government official. At one time this even included President Sukarno himself.[42] For example, Adam Malik, the Indonesian Minister of Commerce in the early 1960s, personally endorsed the use of blocked funds which enabled the Foundation to receive a better exchange rate than the rate normally available at the bank.[43] Another instance of high-level support was a request of the foundation's representative in 1964 to Sukarno for thirteen Indonesian lecturers undertaking the Foundation scholarship to be able to continue studying in the U.S regardless of Indonesia's decision to ban Indonesians studying abroad (this was a policy decision that came after a U.S-Indonesia dispute over Indonesia's opposition to the federation of Malaysia and Sukarno's pro-Moscow foreign policy).[44] Such examples of close personal relations are highly unlikely to take place today at such senior levels in the engagement between international organisations and the Indonesian government (with the possible exception of organisations like the World Bank). This closeness was due to the much narrower nature of the Indonesian political elite at

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[41] Ibid.: 54. John Bresnan worked for the Ford Foundation in Indonesia during 1961-1965 (as Assistant Representative) and 1969-1973 (as Representative). He started his professional career at the U.S Foreign Service, and the Ford Foundation's headquarter in New York before going to Indonesia. After leaving Indonesia, he worked as the Ford Foundation Head of the Office for Asia and the Pacific in New York (1973-1982) and afterwards, as Senior Research Scholar at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University (Ford Foundation, 2003: 120; Bresnan, 2006). In 2003, President Megawati awarded Bresnan with *Bintang Jasa Pratama*, Indonesia's highest award for non-Indonesians. The third American to receive such award (the other two were George Kahin and Clifford Geertz), Bresnan was nominated by a substantial number of academics who received Ford's scholarship during Bresnan's tenure (Ford Foundation, 2003: 120).

[42] Ford Foundation, 2003: 120.

[43] Bresnan, 2006: 82.

[44] Ford Foundation, 2003: 120; Bresnan, 2006: 48-49. Frank Miller, the Foundation Representative at that time, was said to be well known in the Presidential Palace and he often had breakfast with Sukarno. In his memoir, Bresnan notes the Sukarno had once told Miller that if he (Miller) "would let Sukarno pick out a wife for him, he (Sukarno) would dance at the wedding." (Bresnan, 2006: 28).

that time, which allowed senior international agencies to gain closer access to senior political figures than is the case today.

The way in which the Ford Foundation first began its engagement with Indonesia provides a good explanation of the Foundation's close relationship to government: initially it was Indonesian officials, both in Washington and Jakarta, who first approached U.S organisations for assistance with English-language and economics training.[45] The Foundation responded by sending a team to Indonesia in 1952 to conduct a needs assessment. Sukarno's acquiescence resulted in the immediate approval of "$ 150,000 to bring teachers of English to Indonesia for the 1953 to 1954 school year."[46]

However there was relatively little interaction between local and international NGOs during the Sukarno era for one simple reason: before the late 1960s and early 1970s very few Indonesian NGOs existed.[47] Literature on Indonesian NGOs identify the Indonesian Planned Parenthood Association, *Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia* (PKBI), which was established in 1957, as among the first (if not the first) Indonesian NGOs established after independence.[48] One of the earliest records of a

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[45] Bresnan, 2006: 31-33.
[46] Ibid.: 32.
[47] For example, see Hadiwinata, 2003: 91; Suharko, 2005: 99; Fakih, 1995: 113; Hikam, 1999b. It should be noted that, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, one character of the definition of NGOs used for this study is that they are non-membership-based organisations. Therefore this definition excludes voluntary, self-reliant, and religious-affiliated groups and activities that have been deeply rooted in Indonesia since the colonial era. Previous rural studies suggest grass-roots level voluntary activities done in the spirit of traditional *gotong royong* [mutual-help] groups, particularly among the rural villages had existed for a long time (see Hadiwinata, 2003: 90). In addition, the colonial era saw the establishment of religious and educational organisations such as *Budi Utomo, Taman Siswa, Sarekat Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah* (Fakih, 1995: 113; Suharko, 2005: 99; Whitelum, 2003: 148-153; Sinaga, 1994: 81, quoted in Hadiwinata, 2003: 90). *Budi Utomo* and *Sarekat Islam* are considered the embryos of Indonesia's nationalist movement (see for example Suharko, 2005; Riker, 1998). Furthermore, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the flourishing of associational life with most groups affiliated with the major political parties' ideological *aliran* [streams] (Bunnell, 1996: 181 quoted in Whitelum, 2003: 152, Aspinall, 2004: 62). Therefore, the character of civil society in the 1950s and 1960s, as Aspinall argues, was "deeply polarized as was political life more generally" and "influenced by or affiliated to political parties that aimed to hold or seize political power, and that had conflicting ideological vision of Indonesian society." (Aspinall, 2004: 62) Examples of such organisations are left-wing grass-roots groups affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) such as the BTI (Indonesian Peasants Group) and GERWANI (Indonesian Women Movement) (Hadiwinata, 2003: 90), and the *Pancasila*-based Farmers Association (IPP) established in 1958, which evolved later into a large NGO, Bina Swadaya (interview with Bambang Ismawan, 27 October 2005; Bina Swadaya Profile, 2005). However the early New Order era saw these grassroots-mass-based organisations dissolve (see Hadiwinata, 2003: 90-91; Aspinall, 2000: 44) and be replaced by state-sponsored organisations such as KNPI (Indonesian National Youth Committee) and SPSI (All Indonesia Workers' Union) (Hadiwinata, 2003: 91).
[48] See for example, Eldridge 1995 and Riker 1998 quoted in Sakai 2002:162; Suharko 2005: 99. Other NGOs established in the 1950s are The Christian Foundation for Public Health (YAKKUM), as noted by Eldridge (1979: 128), and The Institute of Economic and Social Research (LPEM) (Ford Foundation, 2003: 47).

relationship between an international and a local NGO in Indonesia was the Ford Foundation's assistance to PKBI. The relationship started in the early 1960s in the form of "modest assistance" which included the services of a Ford Foundation consultant who was a family planning specialist.[49]

As the Sukarno administration became increasingly left-leaning in its political orientation in the 1960s, it began severing links with the Western world – first from the United Nations in January 1965, then the International Monetary Fund, Interpol and World Bank in August 1965. In this environment it became increasingly difficult for international NGOs to work in Indonesia.[50] The Ford Foundation, one of the few remaining international agencies in Jakarta, closed its office in June 1965 and did not return to Indonesia until eighteen months later, after Suharto assumed control of the country.[51]

The New Order Era: 1966-1998

The Suharto period ushered in a massive social, political and economic overhaul in Indonesia. One of the top priorities of the Suharto regime was economic development, and this remained a priority throughout the entire New Order. The urgent need for economic aid saw Indonesia actively restore its formal links with western nations in the attempt to attract material aid as well as technical assistance.[52] As an illustration, Indonesia rejoined the United Nations in April 1966, and in May 1966 the Indonesian Foreign Ministry announced that it would rejoin the International Monetary Fund.[53]

Given the rightwing character of the government, ties with the communist world were instantly downgraded. Diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were formally 'frozen' on 31 October 1967.[54] This ideological reversal led to a boon for western NGOs, whose value for the government's development program

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[49] Ford Foundation, 2003: 108. Sukarno opposed the family planning movement. The early days of PKBI in the Old Order consisted of "a guerilla coalition of doctors, gynecologists, nurses, and women volunteers" who were involved in smuggling contraceptives into Indonesia through the diplomatic pouch and receiving, distributing and explaining the use of contraceptives to women in the communities (Ford Foundation, 2003: 108). It was under the Suharto government that family planning became a state policy and the Ford Foundation started providing substantial funding to it (See Ford Foundation 1970: 34-35). For Ford Foundation Consultant's early account of the national family planning program, see Ryder and Suwardjono, 1971: 128-132.

[50] Ricklefs, 1993: 280.

[51] For a detailed account on the closing of the Ford Foundation's office, see Bresnan, 2006: 53-64.

[52] See Ricklefs, 1993: 290; Hadiwinata, 2003: 92-93.

[53] Ricklefs, 1993: 290

[54] Ibid.

was dramatically enhanced. Meanwhile, the U.S Embassy in Jakarta reported in late 1965 that it had been approached by Indonesian generals asking for support to obtain various supplies from military hardware to basic staples.[55] Initially sceptical, foreign nations soon started to provide assistance to Indonesia after Suharto took power.[56]

The growth of a development aid sector in Indonesia consequently encouraged the growth of both local and international NGOs in the country. Already in 1967, an international NGO directory listed fifty international NGOs with activities in Indonesia, with almost sixty percent of these groups focused on educational and training, followed by health and sanitation.[57] This figure is a modest estimate, as the directory did not survey American and Australian NGOs.[58]

In regards to local NGOs, the first decade of the New Order era was defined by the growth of NGOs that were mostly engaged in community development. Some scholars have dubbed these early New Order NGOs as the first generation of local NGOs in Indonesia.[59] Included in this era were organisations such as *Bina Swadaya, Dian Desa,* and *YIS* which later became mainstream NGOs.[60] These organisations "were formed and dedicated entirely to community development" and "the promotion of self-management activities at [the] village level."[61]

Scholars have suggested that the politics of the early Suharto era played a significant role in boosting the growth of community development oriented NGOs.[62] When the New Order came to power, it banned grass-roots political activities particularly the left-wing organisations associated with Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and

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[55] Simpson, 2003: 337.
[56] See for example, Eldridge, 1993: 7-9; Simpson, 2003: 335-343.
[57] See OECD-ICVA Directory, 1967: 1038-1045.
[58] At the time of the publication, Australia was not yet a member of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development who published the directory, while the directory for the US NGOs working abroad already existed (See for example, Technical Assistance Information Clearing House, 1964). For discussion of Australian NGOs working in Indonesia in the first decade of the New Order, see Eldridge, 1979: 121-155.
[59] For example, Suharko, 2005: 99; Hadiwinata, 2003: 91.
[60] The *Bina Swadaya* foundation was founded in 1967 in Jakarta and focused on farmers, including by providing microcredit through small-scale cooperatives [*usaha bersama - UB*]. The *Dian Desa* foundation was established in 1972 in Yogyakarta and focused on poor communities through the promotion of "appropriate technology" [*tehnologi tepat guna*]. The *Yayasan Indonesia Sejahtera* [YIS] was formed in 1974 in Solo and works in community development activities. (See Eldridge, 1995: 58-72). Eldridge argues that these three large, well-established NGOs "fit broadly" within the first type of his classification of Indonesian NGOs, namely "High-level Cooperation Grass-roots Development" which "accommodate the Indonesian government" and "mobilize popular self management." (Ibid.) Other similar characteristics of these three NGOs, as noted by Eldridge, were their informal links with churches (Eldridge, 1995: 57). For discussion of the influence of religion in the NGO sector and its by-products, see Eldridge, 1995: 170-183.
[61] Hadad, 1983: 3, quoted in Hadiwinata, 2003: 91.
[62] See for example, Aspinall, 2000: 44-46; Hadiwinata, 2003: 91-92; Riker, 1998: 136-140.

weakened mass-based organisations.[63] The government created a repressive political environment which, as Aspinall has argued, did not allow independent space for non-state discourse in the formal political sphere.[64] NGOs thus became an alternative means of forming non-state aligned movements as substitutes for the politically aligned groups which had defined Indonesian society during the Sukarno era.[65] According to Aspinall:

> NGOs were tolerated because of the middle class and New Order origins of their leaders and because of their particularistic, partial goals. Their leaders became expert in the arts of political survival, consciously striving to avoid confrontation with the state. Even where their leaders harboured far-reaching social and political aims, NGOs did not claim to organise a struggle for political power, nor to mobilise a mass base.[66]

In line with Aspinall's observation, Hadiwinata argues that because these early NGOs confined themselves to the field of community development, they were able to prove to the New Order regime that they were not interested in political activities.[67] For the same reason, Indonesian NGO leaders adopted the title *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* [Self-reliant organisation] or LSM in the late 1970s. The original term *Organisasi Non-Pemerintah* (ORNOP), the Indonesian translation of NGO, was perceived by Indonesian NGO leaders as having anti-government connotations.[68]

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[63] Hadiwinata, 2003: 90-91.
[64] Aspinall, 2000: 44.
[65] Ibid.: 44-45.
[66] Ibid.: 131. Aspinall notes that many influential NGOs were founded by former supporters of the military in 1965. He suggested that "some NGOs, even the most liberal like the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), initially received political and financial sponsorship form leading officials." Aspinall, 2000: 131.
[67] Hadiwinata, 2003: 91.
[68] See for example, Aspinall, 2000: 46; Billah, Busyairi and Aly, 1993: 3-5; Setiawan, 1996: 36-37 quoted in Sakai, 2002: 162. In addition, some NGO leaders considered the term ORNOP as "too general" [*terlalu luas*] thus the term LSM was created to label those organisations which "serve in development" (Interview with Bambang Ismawan, 27 October 2005). Bambang Ismawan, who admitted that his organisation played a role in creating the term LSM, also explained that another reason why they proposed LSM was because the term promoted social self-reliance [*kemandirian rakyat*] – a concept which development NGOs at the time tried to encourage. Bina Swadaya labelled itself as a *Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat* [LPSM - Self-Reliant Development Organisation]. This type of NGO is one category above an LSM under Eldridge's system of categorisation. Yappika, an organisation formed to channel funding from Canada, is another example of an LPSM. The *reformasi* era saw the term ORNOP being used more frequently than in the Suharto era, along with the more common term for NGO since the early 1980s' LSM (Setiawan, 2000, quoted in Sakai, 2002: 162). Bambang Ismawan is one of the leading figures in Indonesia's NGO sector. He led *Bina Swadaya*, one of Indonesia's well established NGOs, for four decades before retiring in 2008. He is also one of the founders of *Sekretariat Bina Desa,* a well known NGO focusing on rural issues that was established in 1975. We will learn more about the *Bina Swadaya* Foundation in later chapters. For Bambang Ismawan and *Bina Swadaya*'s profile, see "Bambang Ismawan: BSF a 'virus' to empower the poor" in *the Jakarta Post*, 3 January 2007; "Bambang Ismawan Menginspirasi Indonesia" *in Kompas*, 7 June 2007; Sekretariat Bina Desa, 2005: 13; http://www.binaswadaya.org.

However, the major reason behind the decision of local NGOs to be non-confrontational towards the state and to actively engage the New Order administration was mostly because the NGO founders considered their organisations "means to promote participation in the New Order modernisation project" and not because of "disappointment with the government."[69] As an example, after 1965 the founder of the early NGO *Ikatan Petani Pancasila* changed the name of his NGO to *Bina Swadaya* and began referring to his organisation as a "social economic development agency."[70] During the early years of the New Order the founder steered his NGO into a strategy he described as a "development approach" marked by the "promotion of self-help" for rural communities and "having a dialogue with the government."[71]

Fakih argues that the conformist approach of Indonesian NGOs in the 1970s was typical of the "reformist" attitude that dominated at the time.[72] The main concerns of these NGOs, "based on the rationale of underdevelopment," was to "to change traditional beliefs, attitudes, values and institutions [to help] people to become modern through creating participatory action programs among rural small business groups," without "questioning the existing structure and the dominant hegemony." Thus Fakih argues local NGOs in the early New Order era fell in line with the "the developmentalist ideology being promoted by the modernising elites of the military government."[73]

A different interpretation of the decision of NGOs to engage with the Indonesian government was that they wanted to obtain government support for their programs.[74] Aspinall suggests that many NGOs in Indonesia were founded with government officials as their patrons.[75] Examples included the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) with the Jakarta Governor Ali Sadikin as its sponsor, and the Institute for Economic and Social Research, Education and Information (LP3ES) which was sponsored by several technocrat ministers such as Soemitro Djojohadikusumo, Ali Wardhana and Emil

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[69] Aspinall, 2000: 45.
[70] Interview with Bambang Ismawan, 27 October 2005. During this interview, he explained that *Bina Swadaya*'s journey has three phases. Prior to the New Order, he suggested that *Bina Swadaya* (which was then *Ikatan Petani Pancasila*) was in its "social movement period" characterised by a mass-organisation approach, with activities aimed "to mainstream the fight for social economic empowerment of poor people." He labeled after-the-New-Order period as a "social entrepreneur" period where the organisation focused on advocacy through cooperation with other organisations.
[71] Ibid. *Bina Swadaya* was renowned for its cooperative engagement with the Indonesian government during the New Order era. Bambang Ismawan admitted that his organisation could develop well because of this approach.
[72] Fakih, 1995: 117-118.
[73] Ibid.: 114. See chapter one for discussion of Indonesian NGO typologies and "developmentalism."
[74] Aspinall, 2000: 45.
[75] Ibid.

Salim.[76] Consequently, as Aspinall argued, numerous Indonesian NGO leaders supported a "strictly complementary" role to the New Order government.[77]

However, the 1970s was also a period in which the role of international NGOs as foundations become steadily more important in funding local NGOs. For example, Sinaga notes that from the year 1971 to 1992, 62% of funds provided by the German Foundation, *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* [KAS] was channeled to NGOs.[78] While another German Foundation, *Friedrich Nieumann Stiftung* [FNS] channeled all of its funds to NGOs in various sectors. The relationship between international and local NGOs in the first decade of the New Order period was above all thus characterised by international NGOs providing funding in the field of community development, which was in line with the Indonesian government's policy. As noted by Aspinall and Mietzner:

> In the 1970s, most support for Indonesian NGOs was framed in terms of promoting alternative development and was directed at supporting micro credit, health and similar programs. In American development circles, these aid projects were jokingly referred to as "silkworm" programs, alluding to a particular grant that had focused on income-generation for Indonesian silkworm farmers.[79]

The nature of the relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs during this period was also less bureaucratic than it became later. According to a veteran NGO activist, Roem Topatimasang, in the 1970s-1980s, local and international NGOs could sit together and develop a program. In this era international NGOs did not act as what he labeled "brokers" for the programs of other international donors. According to Roem, this situation changed the 1990s.[80] Moreover, funding to local NGOs had been less project-based and instead, international NGOs would sometimes provide long-term institutional support. For example, from 1971 to 1978,

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[76] Eldridge, 1995: 86; Aspinall, 2000: 46.

[77] Aspinall, 2000: 46. As an example, Aspinall suggested the articles in *Prisma: The Indonesian Indicator,* No. 28, 1983 (particularly articles by Hadad, Hendrata, Hainsworth, Salim and Witular). Starting in the mid-1980s, however, as NGOs became more critical of the government, the government responded by increasing restrictions in its regulations and supervision of NGOs. Tension with the government started to develop and reached its peak in the 1990s. For discussion of NGOs as an oppositional movement, see the study of Aspinall (2000: 129-159). For comprehensive history of Indonesian NGOs, which include rules and relations which govern NGOs in Indonesia, see Hadiwinata, 2003: 90-119; Eldridge, 1995: 45-51; Sinaga, 1994: 206-211. As mentioned in chapter one, Hadiwinata continued Eldridge's insightful study which ended in the early 1990s.

[78] Sinaga, 1994: 237.

[79] Aspinall and Mietzner, 2008: 19.

[80] The notion of international NGOs as "brokers" is popular with a majority of my informants, local NGO workers in particular hold this view. Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007. Roem Topatimasang has almost three decades of experience in the NGO sector. More information about Roem is in chapter three on Insist.

LP3ES was completely funded by its major donor, the German Foundation, FNS, and the funding enabled them to purchase an office in West Jakarta.[81]

The early 1980s marked a widening of activities involved in the relationships between international and Indonesian NGOs, with international NGOs starting to provide more support to Indonesian advocacy NGOs, such as the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) and labour organisations.[82] As commentators on the Indonesian NGO sector have pointed out, the behaviour of Indonesian NGOs in the early Suharto period provides an interesting contrast with the behaviour of NGOs in the late Suharto period especially the 1990s; this era saw the growth of NGOs that were critical of the government as well as the emergence of advocacy oriented NGOs raising issues like the environment and human rights.[83]

An important development marking this shift was the formation of INGI, a network of Indonesian NGOs in cooperation with a number of international NGOs. INGI was originally formed in 1985 to advise and inform the IGGI (Inter-Governmental Group for Indonesia) – a Dutch Government-led international aid consortium for Indonesia – on IGGI-funded development projects in Indonesia. But INGI eventually evolved to include efforts to influence the Indonesian government's development policies.[84] As a coalition of local NGOs and their international partners and donors, INGI represented a dramatic new model of local-international partnership in the NGO sector, with at least an understanding that this was a body in which there would be formal equality between Indonesian and international NGOs, and where their collaborative efforts would be able to bring about policy changes that organisations working in isolation would not be able to achieve. It was an idealistic vision.

As previously noted, one of INGI's controversial acts occurred during its annual meeting with donors, known as the "Brussels Incident" in 1989, where INGI launched harsh criticism on donor-funded large projects, particularly on the Kedung Ombo dam project in Central Java where INGI accused the Indonesian government of employing political intimidation and failing to adequately compensate evicted vil-

[81] See "Yang Pelat Merah dan Yang Swasta," in *Tempo* 10/XXI 4 May 1991. For discussion about FNS and other German Foundations activities in Indonesia, see Sinaga, 1994: 231-241.
[82] Aspinall and Mietzner, 2008: 19.
[83] For discussion of the growth of critical NGOs, see Hadiwinata, 2003: 72-75. For a general discussion of Indonesian NGOs during the period, see for example, Hadiwinata, 2003: 93-101; Fakih, 1995: 103-123; Aspinall, 2000: 135-142.
[84] Hadiwinata, 2003: 98; Eldridge, 1995: 195.

lagers.[85] Scholars note that this act was one of the catalysts behind a change in Dutch policy toward Indonesia after 1989, which became more sharply critical of the Suharto government's human rights record. The Dutch attempted to attach human rights protection as a condition of development assistance. As noted earlier, the New Order responded by refusing to receive further Dutch government aid and disbanded IGGI in 1992.[86]

This response by the Indonesian government towards NGO attacks, apart from displaying the New Order's strong bargaining power towards the international world at that time, also shows the propensity of the New Order government to try to limit the influence of Indonesian NGOs. The Suharto government continued to tighten regulations towards NGOs, not only those from Indonesia but also their international donors.[87] As a result, a former country director of a prominent international NGO in Indonesia in the early 1990s, Paul McCarthy, recalls the difficulties that international NGOs had in building relationships with local NGOs during the New Order era:

> Certainly during the New Order era [it was] very difficult to have a good relationship due to high level of government interference. Certainly [it was hard] to support Indonesian organisations that were working in advocacy or with political element at all. Historically, it was difficult to maintain [a good relationship with local NGOs] except in the field of development or complimentary to the government. It was not impossible, but certainly it was difficult.[88]

Yet it should be noted that government regulations concerning international donors' assistance towards local NGOs were limited to international NGOs with offices in Indonesia. As Aspinall and Mietzner note, foreign NGOs with members who visited Indonesia periodically were not as bound by government restrictions as other foreign NGOs in Indonesia and that it was these organisations that supplied most funds for politically sensitive issues.[89] In this regard, they also suggest the particular significance of "European groups (many of which had Christian backgrounds and were in-

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[85] Hadiwinata, 2003: 99; Sinaga, 1994: 172; Eldridge, 1995: 198.

[86] For discussion of INGI and details of this particular incident, see Eldridge, 1995: 195-201; Aspinall and Mietzner, 2008: 16-18.

[87] See for example, Riker, 1998: 364-365.

[88] Interview with Paul McCarthy, 22 September 2005. After working for CARE, Paul McCarthy then turned to work as civil society specialist for the World Bank. He followed what is widely considered a typical professional career path in the international development sector, in which most international NGO staff usually end up working as a consultant for multilateral or bilateral funding agencies. For an insightful discussion on this subject, see Dichter, 2003.

[89] Aspinall and Mietzner, 2008: 19. NOVIB (Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Internationale Bijstand – Dutch Organisation for International Aid) is an example of such an organisation without an office in Indonesia. It was the primary source of funding for the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), the leading human rights NGO in Indonesia.

fluenced by the growth of social justice ideas in both Protestant and Catholic international development agencies through the 1980s)."[90] This factor of unregulated funding from non-resident international NGOs suggests a loop hole which NGOs took advantage of, and points to the partial effectiveness of government control of international and local NGO activities in Indonesia.[91]

Generally speaking, local NGO activists look back even to the late Suharto period as one in which local NGOs' relations with their international and partners were relatively open, equal and non-bureaucratic. Long-time NGO workers usually suggest the relationships became more bureaucratic and more dependent on bilateral and multilateral donor agencies only from the late 1990s, after *reformasi*. One NGO scholar and former international NGO Director in the late 1990s, Kastorius Sinaga, recalls: "prior to *reformasi*, [international and local NGOs] created a program together. Now the relationship has become industrial: [the internationals] subcontract, [their conditions demand] less staff, no joint program."[92] Don K. Marut adds, "In the past," he says, "local NGOs could decide the direction of their programs, such as what happened with the cooperation of LBH [The Legal Aid Institute] and NOVIB [the Dutch Oxfam]. Nowadays of course this is no longer feasible." [93] He points to the fact that international NGOs became more and more dependent on funding from Northern governments, which consequently resulted in their policy changes to follow donors, the governments of states: "Now international NGO policies have to be inline with the general development policy of their countries." In the end, he observes this changed the nature of the relationships between international and local NGOs.[94]

Although my research confirms the view among veteran local NGO workers that relationships became more bureaucratic, I have not been able to determine the specific origins of this trend in the case of Indonesia. Speculatively I assume that the reason why international NGOs began to impose heavier accounting standards on Indonesian NGOs was not because international NGOs became more dependent on the aid budgets of Northern governments. International NGOs have always been dependent on government aid. Rather what probably changed was the *volume* of funds, which

[90] Ibid.
[91] The Indonesian government attempted to rectify this matter by issuing several laws and regulations which required Indonesian NGOs to report *any* funding they received from international NGOs.
[92] Interview with Kastorius Sinaga, 5 August 2007.
[93] Interview with Don K. Marut, 25 October 2005.
[94] Ibid.

became ever greater after the late eighties. In making this claim I refer to the research of Elliot who claims that the increase in the Northern development budgets partly contributed to the increase "Gladstonian concepts of accountancy: that is on the rendering of receipted accounts rather than on any form of program or output budgeting."[95]

Having discussed the nature of the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia in the Suharto era, I will now briefly review the impact of these relationships on the Suharto government, especially at the time Suharto fell. Although the NGO sector did not play a direct role in putting an end to the Suharto regime, as Apinall argues, Indonesian NGOs substantially contributed to the ideological climate that undermined it.[96] They did so by "promoting sensitive issues to do with human rights, labour, legal reform and democratization."[97] In this regard, international donors were influential because, in the words of Aspinall and Mietzner, "growing political assertiveness by a wing of Indonesian NGOs coincided with, and was partly enabled by, willingness of international donors to fund them."[98] Since Indonesian NGOs heavily rely on international funding, we can thus conclude that the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia, particularly during the second half of the New Order period played a role in paving the way for greater efforts to de-legitimise the Suharto government, and thus played a role – even if only an indirect and minor one – in bringing that government to an end.

The Post-Reformasi Era

The fall of Suharto was seen as a victory for civil society. It led to an improvement in cooperation between NGOs and the government. As Paul McCarthy observes, there was a boom in the local NGO sector:

> After the New Order, [with regard to the atmosphere for NGOs] the balance really went from one side of the scale to the other side of scale. It became possible to do just about anything in Indonesia. Many… thousands [of NGOs], I would argue nobody knows how many of them, whether you call them ORNOP, NGO or LSM, … From an era of a very tight control [of the government] to almost no control.[99]

[95] Elliott, 1987: 60.
[96] Aspinall, 2000: 158-159.
[97] Aspinall and Mietzner, 2008: 18.
[98] Ibid.: 19.
[99] Interview with Paul McCarthy, 22 September 2005.

With the end of the Suharto government's repression of its perceived enemies, the hostility between the NGO sector and the central government thawed.[100] "Since 1998, very quickly (Indonesian) NGOs stopped seeing the government as the enemy, and started being engaged [and] supportive of the government," commented Douglas Ramage, the Country Representative of the Asia Foundation in 2007.[101]

As indicated above, the termination of the authoritarian regime and the transition to democracy created space for the massive growth of NGOs as well international aid to Indonesia.[102] As an illustration, in 2001, Indonesia topped the list of 167 country-recipients of the OECD's official development assistance, in that year receiving over US$1.3 billion.[103] The beginning of the post-*reformasi* period saw increased support from donors for local NGOs, and greater international NGO activities. Bilateral agencies not only channelled their funding through existing international organisations in Indonesia, but they also created new organisations to manage funding for local NGOs. An example was CSSP (Indonesia Civil Society and Strengthening Program). CSSP was a consortium of several international development consulting companies and international NGOs to manage USAID funding to support Indonesian civil society organisations. Between October 1999 to September 2004 CSSP gave over US$ 7.1 million to local NGOs in Indonesia.[104] As an example of the rapid growth of NGOs during this time, in the four years from 1996 to 2000, as noted earlier, there was a 600% increase in the numbers of local NGOs: from 10,000 in 1996 to around 70,000 in 2000.[105] Many of these NGOs, Hadiwinata notes, exist to chan-

[100] For example, the Partnership for Government Reform, a prominent organisation was set up in 2000 as a fruit of collaboration of international donors (led by the UNDP) and the government (National Development Planning Agency), supported by civil society groups and private sector, to advance government reform in Indonesia. See http://www.kemitraan.or.id [accessed on 10 February 2009]. For a detailed discussion about the Partnership for Government Reform's agenda and its international donors' influence, see Crawford and Hermawan, 2002. Other examples, as noted by a scholar on NGOs turned advisor to the Head of Police, Kastorius Sinaga, include those in the field of education and illegal logging (Interview with Kastorius Sinaga, 5 August 2007).

[101] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007. He also noted that this is the difference between NGOs in Indonesia and in the Philippines, "Many Filipino NGOs took a more oppositional position towards their government and many of them kept it that way. In Indonesia, many NGO people go in and out of the government." Yet observations during my fieldwork suggested a wide spectrum in Indonesian NGOs' attitudes towards working with the government. Many NGOs in Indonesia are still cautious about engaging with government.

[102] McCarthy, 2002: 1-2.

[103] See http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA_RECIPIENT [accessed on 4 May 2009].

[104] See CARE International et.al, 2004: 117.

[105] Hadiwinata, 2003: 1.

nel funds from international development organisations in responding to the 1997 Asian economic crisis.[106]

There was also a boom in the number of advocacy NGOs, with many new organisations established – and funded – to promote "good governance" themes such as anti-corruption, accountability and voter education programs. However, McCarthy notes, "just how many organisations are actually operational as opposed to existing 'on paper only' is an entirely different question."[107] He provides his findings as part of the World Bank public expenditure review team in 2001. Despite the local government of East Lombok listing 89 registered NGOs in the district, he could only find eight out of these NGOs existing in reality, that is having an office, staff and project activities.[108] McCarthy thus argues, "although such statistics cannot necessarily be extrapolated to all parts of Indonesia, it is broadly indicative of the fact that a significant percentage of NGOs either never existed or are no longer operational."[109] Along a similar line, Hadiwinata notes the existence of what he called "overnight operators," which are NGOs "established just to tap development funds for their own benefits."[110] These examples indicate the unhealthy growth of Indonesian NGOs in the early *reformasi* era.

Consequently, although the liberalism of the post-New Order era brought about a renaissance in the NGO sector far exceeding that of the early Suharto era, there soon began to appear growing concern among NGO observers and the wider public about the behaviour of local NGOs, particularly about corruption and the misuse of funds.[111] For example, a 2001 international poll result revealed that "Indonesia was one of only two countries out of twenty surveyed – Nigeria was the other – where NGOs were not the most highly trusted institution."[112] Another survey conducted in 2002 on public perceptions of Indonesian NGOs also showed a lack of public trust in the sector.[113]

Concerns over the problem of local NGOs' unhealthy behaviours have generated various responses from the Indonesian government, international donors as well as

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[106] Ibid.: 113-114.
[107] McCarthy, 2002: 1.
[108] Ibid.: 2.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Hadiwinata, 2003: 114.
[111] For example, see Collins, 2007: 124-125; McCarthy, 2002: 7-8; "A Small Matter of Trust" in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 2001.
[112] McCarthy, 2002: 8. Chapter six will discuss this topic of NGOs' accountability further.
[113] AC Nielsen/NDI Survey in 2002, quoted in Labsosio FISIP UI, 2002:25.

Indonesian NGOs. The Indonesian government responded by, again, tightening its restrictions towards Indonesian NGOs. We can see the issuance of the Law No. 16 on foundations in 2001 as an example.[114] Similarly, the fact that international donors' have moved to implement more bureaucratic oversight procedures toward local NGOs can be seen as the donors response to local NGO's misuse of funding.[115] On the other hand, mainstream local NGOs start initiatives such as creating NGOs' code of ethics and capacity building training which can be seen as their response towards criticisms against them.[116]

To summarise, we can see that different themes emerged in each of the three main historical periods. The Sukarno era saw limited cooperation between international and local NGOs. Cooperation focused mainly on education, training and voluntary and social welfare activities. Relationships in the Suharto era were mostly directed at economic or community development activities. The 1980s and 1990s, however, saw the rise of advocacy themes, including the environment, human rights and democracy. We could reasonably hypothesise that globalization was part of the explanation for this trend. These issues put the NGO sector at odds with government. The post-New Order era continued the wide range of advocacy activities that began in the 1990s, although many NGOs were now more inclined to engage with the government rather than to criticise it.

Nevertheless, one common thread that binds the three main historical periods is the significant role of international NGOs as the main source of funding for local NGOs. Consequently, international NGOs have been able to influence trends in Indonesian NGO activities over the long term. As noted earlier, the ability of advocacy NGOs to be critical towards the Suharto government, for example, would not have been possible without the readiness of international NGOs to fund their activities. We can thus conclude that international NGOs, through their provision of funding, have been among the most influential elements in shaping the activities of Indonesian NGOs.[117]

Indonesian Government Regulations and Procedures

The historical overview of both international and local NGOs and their relationship in Indonesia presented so far has suggested the Indonesian government has had at

[114] See the next section for a discussion of this law.
[115] See chapter four for discussion of international funding mechanisms.
[116] See chapter six for discussion of local NGOs' initiatives to improve their accountability.
[117] Chapter four will elaborate on this issue further.

least a degree of impact on these two types of NGOs. It is important to point out, however, that this influence has fallen far short of government expectations. The next section will review this issue and the range of government regulations concerning the relationships between international and local NGOs. The discussion will demonstrate the Indonesian government has tried hard to control NGOs, but this has had only limited success.

Prior to 1985, interactions between Indonesian and international NGOs in Indonesia were supervised by the Committee of Foreign Technical Assistance established through a special decree No. 81/1967.[118] This Committee, whose members were appointed by Suharto, had the authority to "monitor and administer all organisations receiving foreign assistance."[119] In addition, in 1973, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued guidelines on Overseas Technical Cooperation and Assistance which had the purpose of regulating foreign agencies in Indonesia.[120] Under its edicts, the Ministry required foreign organisations, prior to commencing cooperation with local NGOs, to draw up agreements with appropriate government departments in Indonesia.[121]

In 1985 the government overhauled the sector again when it issued *Instruksi Presiden* [Presidential Instruction] No. 32/1985 which established *Biro Kerjasama Teknik Luar Negeri* [Overseas Technical Cooperation Bureau], under the Minister of the Cabinet Secretariat, to oversee all the activities of foreign funded organisations.[122] This bureau took charge of issuing permits to international NGOs. Lubis and Sinaga stated that in order to receive a permit, an international NGO had to receive clearance from BAKIN (State Intelligence Coordinating Board) and have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the relevant government departments.[123] However, in order to receive the clearance and sign an MoU, an international NGO should first undergo a registration process which would take approximately three to four months.[124] This gives some idea of the extent to which the Suharto government deployed bureaucratic control mechanisms over international NGOs.

However, as previously noted, the Suharto government's attempts to control the activities of international and local NGOs in Indonesia were not as effective as it had

[118] Sinaga, 1994: 220, quoted in Hadiwinata, 2003: 91.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Eldridge, 1989: 6.
[121] Ibid.: 6.
[122] Sinaga,1994: 222-223; Lubis, 1993: 225, quoted in Hadiwinata, 2003: 94.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Confidential interview, 16 August 2007. See also Guidelines for International NGO Registration in Indonesia – Excluding Aceh, 2007.

hoped for. The regulations were not applicable to International NGOs without offices in Indonesia. Such organisations were thus able to provide funding for politically sensitive issues like human rights and environmental problems.[125]

In terms of international NGOs' process to set up an office in Indonesia, the procedure remains the same in the post-New Order era. The process is not only long but also daunting in its complexity. The first point of contact for an international NGO to obtain a permit to work in Indonesia is the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU). The registration procedure starts with the international NGO submitting nine required documents, from information about the international NGO and its proposed program in Indonesia to a recommendation from the Indonesian embassy of the respective country where the NGO's headquarter is located.[126]

The next step for the international NGO is to conduct a presentation before an inter-departmental meeting consisting of representatives from the State Secretariat, Directorate General of Taxation, Immigration, Home Affairs, BIN [State Intelligence Agency], BAIS [the Military Strategic Intelligence Agency and Police Intelligence].[127] The inter-departmental meeting will make the recommendation to accept or reject the international NGO's application to work in Indonesia and decides which department is suitable for the NGO MoU should the application be successful.[128] In addition, the international NGO must come from a country which has a diplomatic relationship with Indonesia.[129]

The existence of these sets of regulations and bureaucratic procedures reflects the government's attempt to ensure that activities conducted by international and local NGOs in Indonesia are in line with government policy.[130] Nevertheless, some scholars note that in the New Order era these regulations were more elastic as "government officials often offered their personal guarantee to allow NGOs to have a certain

[125] See Aspinall and Mietzner, 2008: 19-20.
[126] Guidelines for International NGO Registration in Indonesia – Excluding Aceh, 2007.
[127] Confidential Interview, 16 August 2007.
[128] Guidelines for International NGO Registration in Indonesia – Excluding Aceh, 2007. The experience of CWS, an American NGO which had an MoU with the Ministry of Social Services is that the MoU initially covered the period of one year before being renewed. The second MoU lasted for three years, and afterwards, it was for five years. Prior to signing each renewal, the organisation had to make a presentation before the inter-deptartmental meeting to explain its activity plan (Interview with Irma Sopamena, 5 September 2008).
[129] Confidential Interview, 16 August 2007.
[130] As an illustration, one of the rules of thumb in reviewing international NGOs' applications is to reject organisations working on three areas: politics, business and religion (Confidential Interview, 16 August 2007). See also Article 14 of the Government Regulations No. 23/2008 on the involvement of international organisations and international NGOs in disaster management.

degree of freedom of operation."[131] Hadiwinata argued that the New Order government's more generous attitude towards international NGOs was, at least in the first part of the Suharto government, driven by its need for development assistance particularly in reaching out to the urban and rural poor.[132] But the latter part of the Suharto regime saw a definitive tightening of conditions over the sector.

On the other hand the government has issued regulations which give concessions to the NGO sector.[133] Tax concessions for international NGOs, for example, have existed since 1955 through *Peraturan Pemerintah* [Government Regulation]: PP No. 19/1955 issued by President Sukarno. This regulation, which was the reference point for other regulations concerning international NGOs, exempts international organisations from *bea-masuk* and *bea-keluar* [import and export duties] on their goods.[134]

Another government regulation, PP. No. 8/1957, provided international NGOs with further tax exemptions for goods relating to their staff's daily operations. The regulation also exempts building materials for the NGO's offices and houses.[135] Finance Minister Regulations also preclude international organisations from being subject to income tax [*subjek pajak penghasilan*]. The latest protocol, in February 2009 is Finance Ministry Regulation No. 215/PMK.03/2008.[136]

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[131] Hadiwinata, 2003: 92-93.

[132] Ibid.: 92-93. See also Eldridge, 1995: 30.

[133] As existing literature on NGOs in Indonesia largely focus on the relationship between the state and the Indonesian NGO, scholars tend to focus on regulations which control and restrict NGOs.

[134] See Peraturan Pemerintah No. 19 Tahun 1955 (PP 19/1955) and its explanation. Article 1 of this regulation mentioned the United Nations and its organs, diplomatic missions and other international organisations. The regulation assigned the Minister of Finance the duty of writing further *peraturan pelaksana* [executive decrees] included drawing up a list of organisations.

[135] See Peraturan Pemerintah No. 8 Tahun 1957. As an interesting aside, the Indonesian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of the Cabinet provides international organisations with a special code for the number plates of their vehicles. Their plate numbers end with the letters of AX, BX, DX. The same regulations also saw a special suffix being assigned to the diplomatic corps' vehicles i.e. CD or CC, with the plate numbers assigned by the Department of Foreign Affairs. See http://www.indonesia-policewatch.com/adil/tips.php [accessed on 9 February 2009]. A former staff member of CARE International – one of the first international development NGOs working in Indonesia's New Order – recounted how in the early 1980s due to the local traffic police's confusion with the regulations concerning import tax-free vehicles, three of CARE's office cars in its Makassar field-office ended up having a red-license plate – the color plate for the government-owned vehicles (Interview with Jopie Sinanu, 9 September 2008). Indonesian vehicles' license plate consists of three color-coded categories: black color-plate for privately-owned vehicles, yellow plates for commercial services' vehicles and red plate for government vehicles. The term *NGO Plat Merah* ['Red License Plate NGO'] is usually the label for Indonesian NGOs with close connection to the government, i.e. NGOs created by government officials mostly to tap the government funding. See Holloway, 2001.

[136] [*Peraturan Menteri Keuangan No. 215/PMK.03/2008 Tentang Penetapan Organisasi-Organisasi Internasional Dan Pejabat-Pejabat Perwakilan Organisasi Internasional Yang Tidak Termasuk Subjek Pajak Penghasilan*]. This regulation lists a total of 124 international organisations comprising thirty organisations under United Nations agencies, twenty eight organisations under Bilateral Technical Cooperation Agencies (such as USAID, Australia-Indonesia Partnership), four cultural coopera-

Although the Indonesian government has granted such concessions to international NGOs, nevertheless the clear historical trend has been for the Indonesian government to attempt to control international NGOs and their relations with local actors in Indonesia. In particular the central government exercises the final say over the validity of international NGOs activities and has attempted to direct international NGO activities into directions that accord with the overall political program of the government. Although one can argue that this style of governance is one born of the Suharto era, recent developments suggest the desire for control is no historical aberration.

Thus, in 2008 the government also issued Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 38/2008. Extrapolating on Law No. 8/1985 on Societal Organisations [*Undang-Undang Organisasi Kemasyarakatan*], this regulation aims to regulate the flow of assistance between Indonesian societal organisations and foreign parties [*Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri Tentang Penerimaan Dan Pemberian Bantuan Organisasi Kemasyarakatan Dari Dan Kepada Pihak Asing*].[137] Its articles contain very detailed requirements and procedures for receiving and giving foreign assistance, including a demand that every organisation involved in an exchange of foreign assistance register with government agencies prior to receiving and giving assistance, provides a detailed report to the regional authority (governor or mayor or head of district) on the international NGO's funding activities in order to receive permission to proceed. Local NGOs are required under the same law to publicly announce in the media when they receive foreign assistance.[138]

Although the government insists that the new regulation aims to create a systematised mechanism for directing foreign funding and improving transparency and accountability, the regulation has sparked outrage among some civil society organisations who perceive it as an attempt by the government to control and restrain their activities.[139] Yet the general mood of NGO activists is reported to be unconcerned,

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tion organisations and sixty-two other international organisations which are mostly international NGOs.

[137] See Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri No. 38 Tahun 2008.

[138] For example, see Article 7, 11,13, 15, 19-21, 28-33 of the Regulation.

[139] See "NGOs Attack 'Draconian' Funding Rule," in *Financial Times*, 10 December 2008; "Permendagri No. 38/2008 Wujud Otoritarian Absurd," in *Kompas,* 23 December 2008. It should be noted that while the buzz on the *Revisi UU Ormas* [the Law on Societal Organisation revision] has been around in the past couple of years, the regulation passed last year is a ministerial-level regulation. See also "Revisi Anti-Otoriter," in *Gatra* 31, 15 June 2006; "Revisi Ormas Untuk Cegah Terorisme Dan Pencucian Uang," in *Antara News*, 21 July 2008. The *UU Ormas* Revision draft, prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs, has been on the list of the DPR's National Legislative Program [*Prolegnas*] since at least 2008 but has not been able to reach the *Prolegnas*' priority list (Nugroho 2008: 1). As of

as most consider the regulation to be something of a "toothless tiger" as there is no stipulated sanction for organisations which do not abide by the regulation.[140] In this respect, we can say that the government is again not really successful in exercising control over activities involving international and local NGOs in Indonesia.

Conclusion

In providing background information for my study, this chapter has looked at previous studies, and it has provided a historical overview on the relationships between international and Indonesian NGOs. The literature review of relationships between international and Indonesian NGOs has identified several themes: funding dependence, asymmetrical power relationships and domestic 'sensitivity' towards the relationship between international and local NGOs. The literature thus suggests that the relationship between local and international NGOs is a source of tension both within the NGO community and more widely in Indonesia.

However, the literature has largely emphasised studying Indonesian NGOs and their links with the state, while there has been relatively little of study on the relationships between *non-state* actors such as local NGOs and international NGOs in Indonesia. This study is therefore the first in-depth empirical research on the everyday relationships between local and international NGOs in Indonesia.

The discussion in this chapter also suggests that international NGOs play an integral role in the Indonesian NGO sector because they have been the main funding source of local NGOs. This role is especially important. By providing funds, international NGOs have enabled a section of local NGOs to voice critical views of the government, which significantly decreased the legitimacy of the New Order administration. This support for critical advocacy has continued into the present era.

February 2009, the *Prolegnas* 2006-2009 list has 229 Bill Drafts (See http://legalitas.org/database/lain/nasional/Prolegnas2006-2009.htm [accessed on 21 February 2009])

[140] "Permendagri No. 38/2008 Wujud Otoritarian Absurd," in *Kompas,* 23 December 2008. Even if the regulation contains sanctions it does not imply that enforcement would automatically take place.

Chapter Three

A Case Study: Insist and Its Relations with International Partners

Introduction

As noted in chapter two, in discussing the relationships of NGOs, previous studies of NGOs in Indonesia mostly focus on the relationship between NGOs and the state. When discussions about Indonesian NGOs' international links do emerge, funding becomes a prominent issue.

This chapter aims to introduce the everyday politics of NGO relationships by presenting an in-depth study of an NGO called Insist (the Indonesian Society for Social Transformation), a Yogyakarta-based Indonesian NGO. Insist is an intriguing case study. In the story of Insist there emerges a number of themes which become the main focus of my later chapters. In the case of Insist we see how divisive international funding requirements can be for local NGOs and how local NGOs oppose the donor driven funding agenda. We also observe how the relationships between local and international NGO relationships can fail and succeed and some of the factors behind each of these different scenarios. In addition, we get into the day-to-day detail of how international and local NGOs deal with each other on a routine basis. We see how much influence individual leaders have on the sustainability of domestic NGOs. In short, this chapter provides us with a living entry point into all the messiness and complexity that occurs in the relationships within global civil society.

The discussion in this chapter starts with an overview of Insist itself, including the organisation's goals, background and structure, and the backgrounds of the individuals involved in it. This chapter then looks at Insist's own *reformasi* process, a discussion which sheds light on internal management struggles in this local NGO. Following that I present two case studies of Insist's relationships with international NGOs, one of which was a successful relationship, and one of which ended in failure. These experiences illustrate in microcosm many of the key dynamics in the relationships

between local and international NGOs which are discussed in thematic context in later chapters.

An Overview of Insist

Insist was established in Yogyakarta in 1997 by several NGO activists, including the late Mansour Fakih and Roem Topattimasang.[1] Insist's founders, board of trustees, supervisors and executive consisted of veteran Indonesian NGO activists and some people with academic backgrounds. Mansour Fakih, who was the main founder of the organisation, for example, prior to establishing Insist wrote his dissertation in the field of education at the University of Massachusetts in 1995 on the role of NGOs in transforming Indonesian society.[2] Prior to pursuing his advanced degree, Mansour had a decade of experience working for several Indonesian NGOs, which included serving as the Director for Training and Community Development of P3M, a well-established Islamic NGO in Indonesia.[3] After completing his study, he returned to Indonesia to continue his work in the NGO sector. This included working as the Country Representative of Oxfam in Indonesia, before establishing Insist with his friends. Beside founding and directing Insist, he was also actively involved as training facilitator, research director at REaD, a productive writer and editor for Insist Press and Pustaka Pelajar [Student Library – a well-establish publishing house], and as a senior consultant for REMDEC, a development consultancy firm (which is also a member of Insist) in Jakarta.[4] These various overlapping jobs and connections with other organisations are typical for an NGO activist in Indonesia. In some ways the establishment of Insist was a follow-up to Fakih's studies.

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[1] At the time it was established, Insist stood for "Institute for Social Transformation." However, in 2004 Insist leadership decided to transform itself, including by changing its name to Indonesian Society for Social Transformation.

[2] Fakih, 1995. Mansour Fakih also received his masters degree from the same university, focusing on adult education and development, while he received his Bachelor Degree in Philosophy and Theology from an Islamic State University in Jakarta (IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta). See chapter five for further discussion about the nature of Indonesian NGOs and their activities. Despite his many links, Mansour was first and foremost associated with Insist. It is fair to say that he was the face of Insist. Many in Indonesian NGO circles consider that Mansour Fakih's passing in 2004 marked the beginning of Insist's demise.

[3] It should be noted that in identifying quotations from interviews with my informants, I will only write down their full names when they first appear in each chapter. Afterwards, I adopt the Indonesian convention of referring to people by their first names instead of their surnames. Most Indonesians are known by their first names – some even only have a first name. However, when I discuss their writings, I will use the general convention of mentioning their last name. In this respect I will identify Mansour Fakih as Fakih when discussing his writing, but Mansour when discussing him otherwise.

[4] See Fakih, 1995: 138; Fakih, 2002: 364.

Prior to founding Insist, one of the co-founders of the organisation, Roem Topatimasang, had over fifteen years of experience in community organising as well as being a facilitator of critical popular education (*pendidikan kerakyatan kritis*) in various NGOs and community-based organisations across Southeast Asia. He has also been active in publishing. He has written many NGO training manuals, translated and edited the Indonesian version of books such as *Pendidikan Kaum Tertindas* which is a translation of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1986), and produced documentary and visual essays for popular education and policy advocacy. As of 2007, his best-selling book, *Sekolah itu Candu* ("School is a Drug (addictive)") has been reprinted eight times since it was first published in 1998. Roem studied at the Teacher Training and Education Science Institute (IKIP) Bandung before being expelled as a student in 1980 due to his political activities (he spend 1978-1979 in military detention because of his involvement in various critical discussion groups and student demonstrations).[5]

Insist's other initiators, board members and friends consist of people with a combination of advanced degrees and long-time experience with NGO activism, including Dr. Russ Diltz, Dr. P.M Laksono, Fauzy Abdullah, Rizal Malik, Dr. Ivan Hadar, Zumrotin K. Susilo, Willarsa Budiharga, Dr. Sri Kusyuniati, Saleh Abdullah and Toto Rahardjo. Each of them bring with them extensive experience and networks which enrich Insist's own network. However, because Insist has a fluid structure according to what Insist's activists call a volunteer-based idealism project ["*proyek idealisme*"], most of these people do not work full-time for Insist or even reside in Yogyakarta.[6]

Mansour Fakih believed that discourses and practices of development in Indonesia were a domain of capitalist hegemony. He argued in his dissertation that, "development is basically a "new brand" of capitalism which is the most powerful hegemony in the modern history of the Third World."[7] He also utilised Gramsci's theory of hegemony and civil society in his thesis. Using what he labelled a participatory approach, Mansour's research critically examined the role of NGOs, as part of social

[5] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007. See also Rahardjo et al., 2005: 248; Topatimasang, 2007: 178; La Botz, 2001: 2-7.

[6] I use the term 'fluid structure' as a device for describing a lack of clear management within the organisation. This issue will become clearer as my analysis of Insist develops. Fluid structure does not always imply a lack of hierarchy, as will be seen in chapter five, many of the most sustainable local NGOs have powerful leaders that have almost rusted onto their organisations. Rather, a fluidity of structure implies a characteristic which is often seen among local NGOs.

[7] Fakih, 1995: 83.

movement organisations in Indonesia in relation to "the discourse of development, as to whether they should be considered as part of the development hegemony or counter to it." He attempted to "construct a theory of social movement organizations as a counter-hegemonic movement," an approach which carried over into his establishment of Insist.[8] Mansour also believed in the importance of the educational role of NGOs as what he called, "the appropriate vehicle for a counter-discourse and a counter-hegemonic movement," in transforming society at the grassroots level.[9] He heavily emphasised the counter-hegemonic goal in Gramsci's theory and his study constituted a normative endorsement of Gramsci and an idealistic declaration that the NGO sector could play a role in spearheading social change and countering state and capitalist hegemony.

Insist was formed out of this belief. The organisation was intended to serve as a vehicle for "social transformation" in Indonesia. The first three paragraphs of Insist's founding declaration formulated in 2004 below explain what its members meant by "social transformation."

> We believe that injustice is at the core or root of all of the social problems that have occurred at any time and place throughout the history of human civilization, particularly those experienced by the groups that have been at the lowest, most ignored economic, political, and social-cultural levels;
>
> We also believe that the social structures that have developed thus far are unjust, and result in economic, political, and social-cultural inequalities. As a result, some people have become increasingly prosperous, have a high level of access to resources, have broad opportunities to express themselves, and can determine the decision making process that impacts the broader community. On the other hand, the majority of the people are increasingly disempowered, ignored, and turned into objects or victims;

[8] Fakih, 1995: 51. Fakih adopted a participatory research concept adapted from the historical materialist methodology proposed by Kasam who defines the concept of participatory research as "research structured by the democratic interaction of the researcher and the oppressed classes of people and takes the form of a dialectical unification of theory and practice reciprocally between the researcher and the oppressed classes." (Kasam, 1982: 4, quoted in Fakih, 1995: 125). This means that Fakih's research objects, i.e. Indonesian NGOs activists, were heavily involved in his research process (three out of eight core team members of his study also joined him at Insist). Thus Fakih argues that his research "also created the possibility for NGO communities to be involved and to control the research process as well as the production of knowledge, by placing them as the subject and therefore the centre of the transformation" (Fakih, 1995: 125).

[9] Ibid.: 52. Fakih's study resulted in the identification of three typologies of Indonesian NGOs which he labeled as conformist, reformist, and transformist. This classification is an alternative to previous classification made by Korten (1987) and Eldridge (1989). Fakih criticised Korten and Eldridge for only looking at NGOs' program strategies and methodologies and not looking at these NGOs' paradigms and basic assumptions. (See Fakih, 1995: 161-167, 171-187). He argued that most Indonesian NGO activists were in the reformist paradigm, i.e. they accepted modernisation ideology and developmentalism, which is translated in Indonesia into the government's five-year development plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun*), but rejected the 'top down' and non-participatory development approach of the government (Fakih, 1995: 174). Although he was able to identify and classify NGOs activists' position towards developmentalism, Fakih was not able to propose an alternative theory of social movement organisations as a counter-hegemonic movement (See Fakih, 1995: 241).

> For these reasons, goals and efforts to eliminate all types and forms of injustice must be based on the empowerment of groups that have, to this point, been placed in weak, marginalised positions. They must be empowered to become active, critical actors in all processes of social transformation, moving towards the realisation of more just economic, political, and cultural systems, so that they can make a greater contribution to the advancement of civilization and humanity overall.[10]

In short, Insist aims to bring change to society by working with and empowering local community groups, particularly the marginalized at the grass-roots level.

It is also important to note at this point that Insist's orientation inclines its members to be mostly critical toward international NGOs and their agencies, not surprising if we recall Mansour's own views about developmentalism and hegemony. Most Insist workers I interviewed reconfirm this general belief in the activists underpinning of NGOs. They are very enthusiastic when talking about "making a change" at the grass-roots level, or local empowerment.

They also generally objected to too much 'foreign intervention' by international donor organisations in the Indonesian NGO sector. There appears to be a widespread understanding among Insist activists that, based on their experiences and observations, working with international organisations generally equals adopting international organisations' perspectives, issues and concerns.[11] As suggested by Roem:

> History has proven that for over twenty, thirty years, NGO works have not had a significant result when [they] are only part of international agenda. There has never been a fundamental structural change which has truly shaken [*mengguncangkan*] and changed society. Insist thus believes that if [we] want to have a social movement for social transformation in Indonesia, however small it is [*sekecil apapun*], it has to start from them [local, grass-root communities]."[12]

Insist's goals and ideological approach fit well with the transformist category of NGOs in Fakih's classification. As mentioned above, Fakih conducted participatory research in studying Indonesian NGOs activists' perspectives on developmentalism, in particular on "the problems of the people" and "their implications for their [NGO] action programs."[13] He suggested that the "transformism" paradigm of NGOs see "unequal structures, exploitation and capitalist hegemony" as causes of problems in the society. Thus, he argued that the transformist NGOs should aim to build a new

[10] See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=about_insist [accessed on 5 December 2008].
[11] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Donatus K. Marut, 25 October 2005; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006. For example, they fervently shared several experiences when they refuse to work with international donors whom they perceived only wanted to implement their own agenda and framework thus ignoring the local context.
[12] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.
[13] Fakih, 1995: 166.

economic and political structure, to challenge exploitation and to create a counter discourse. Fakih identified what he called "conscientisation" or creating critical consciousness through education, an alternative economic development, trade unions and co-operatives as program activities to achieve these grand-sounding transformative goals.[14]

Among such activities, Insist seems to focus on the "conscientisation" approach, i.e. creating critical consciousness through education. This was especially the case during the organisation's first seven years (1997-2004), when Insist established units to run education programs, training programs, publications, and human resource development.[15]

Insist's trademarks were critical publications, training and popular education, particularly for NGO activists and community organisers. For example, the publication unit, Insist Press, became renowned for its publications about social movements, political opposition and community organising.[16] It published a quarterly journal of "transformative social science" called *Wacana* (Discourse) which contained "critical and alternative views with the aim to strengthen community participation."[17] The journal has a thematic issue in every edition, with rather controversial and challenging titles, such as the cover of their 21st edition in 2005 (*Pilkadal* [*Pemilihan Kepala Daerah Langsung*] a play on words in which elections for the heads of regional direct elections highlighted the word *Kadal*, (meaning lizard, which has a derogatory connotation in Indonesian).[18]

Insist also initiated a *Sekolah Aktivis* (School for Activists) in 1999 which had a unique and utterly democratic style of teaching. *Sekolah Aktivis* invited NGO and student activists to join a one-year program. This program, which was run annually, was called Involvement (Indonesian Volunteers for Social Movement) with each

[14] Ibid.: 167.
[15] Interview with Fitri Andyaswuri, 10 November 2006. Fitri worked for the gender and justice training unit. Other skill training that Insist specialised in include community organising skills, participatory research and advocacy, training facilitation skills, human rights education, development analysis, social analysis, policy analysis, participatory budgeting and organisational/institutional development. Interview with M. Miftahuddin 22 January 2007. For more information about Insist's training specialty, see also http://www.infid.org/newinfid/print.php?pci=3286 [accessed on 16 December 2008].
[16] Insist Press' slogan of *Setiap tempat: Sekolah! Setiap orang: guru! Setiap buku: ilmu!* (Every place is a school, every one is a teacher, every book contains knowledge) reflects Insist's critical view on education. For Insist Press publication list, see http://bukuinsistpress.blogspot.com and http://press.insist.or.id [accessed on 7 December 2008].
[17] This statement appears on the bottom of every *Wacana*'s content page.
[18] See *Wacana* No. 21, Tahun VI, 2005.

batch having 21-33 participants.[19] The School used a participatory approach, which means that the participants themselves decided on the training process including its curriculum and schedule. The Involvement program consisted of extensive discussion and training, followed by a period of living-in or 'posting' in one of the members of Insist's national network of local NGOs or at the NGO that sponsored the activist.[20]

The adoption of the participatory approach in the Involvement program has reflected Insist's experimental and rather unconventional view towards education and society. An alumnus of the first Involvement program recalled, "I was shocked when I first joined this school. We (the participants) were divided into groups, and with each group assisted by a facilitator, we were asked to decide our own curriculum!" He shared his experience as a student activist, prior to attending Involvement where it was he and his fellow student activist friends who prepared training materials when they conducted *pendidikan politik* (political education) for student activist cadres. "All we had to do when training was just to *buka kepala* (opening their minds) and fill them with materials that we have prepared for them," he said, "(and) that's it."[21] This informant was clearly shocked by the participatory model of Insist's teaching.

Insist's alternative school program was also the realisation of Insist's vision of "creating critical consciousness through education." As an illustration, a former student in the Involvement Program revealed how hurt he and his student activist friends felt during their first week in class, when after studying theories of developmentalism and capitalism they came to the conclusion that what they fought for and thought had succeeded [i.e. the resignation of President Suharto], was not really "their victory." Instead, he says:

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[19] Interviews with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah, 12 and 16 October 2006. See also Avonius, 2002. Involvement, which is in a way is an experiment, inspired the creation of numerous *Sekolah Transformasi Sosial* [Social Transformation Schools] or *Sekolah Rakyat* [the People's Schools] by members of Insist's local networks in various parts of Indonesia. These are local community-based information and education centres aiming to provide an alternative non-formal education for local people at the grass-roots level. For example, *Sekolah Mitra Rakyat* [School of Friends of the People] in Jambi, *Sekolah Banjar* [School of the Village Councils] in the rural areas of Central and East Bali. See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&id=48 [accessed on 8 December 2008].

[20] Interviews with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah, 12 and 16 October 2006. See also Anvonius, 2002.

[21] Interviews with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006. He was the head of *Biro Sektor Rakyat* (Community/People Sector Bureau) of *Dewan Mahasiswa Universitas Gajah Mada* (the University of Gajah Mada's Student Council) in the late-1990s. After 'graduating' from Involvement, he continued to volunteer for Insist and in 2001 he was the *Kepala Sekolah* ("School Principal"/Program Manager) of the Involvement program. Dony is a lawyer by training and he represented Insist during the Insist Press management problem in 2004. (Interview with Bonar Saragih, 2 September 2008). We will look at Insist's internal problem in the next section.

> [we learned that] what we did was just helping other parties like the World Bank and the U.S to get what they want and benefit from the resignation of Suharto. And that conclusion was drawn in class by our "teachers" [facilitators in class] who only "sewed" our own words [*menjahit kata-kata kami semua*] after exploring the theories together.[22]

The informant continued sharing his experience by recalling Mansour Fakih's obsession of making Insist's school the *"Akabri"* [the Indonesian acronym of the elite Indonesian Military Academy] of NGOs and social movements in Indonesia. Subjects taught were theories of social change, community organising, popular education, advocacy, research action, organisational management, and strategic planning.[23]

Apart from its educational program for activists, Insist has also been renowned as a service provider in the field of advocacy training and community development. Insist has a long list of organisations it has developed and facilitated training programs for over the decade since its establishment.[24] The organisations ranged from the International Labour Organisation, for its labour rights advocacy training activities, organisations linked to the Catholic Church Diocese of Papua, with peace and justice capacity building training, UNICEF in training the Indonesian police for children's rights protection, to members of various government bodies such as the Department of Health and the Ministry of Female Empowerment for health legislation and reproductive rights advocacy.[25] Insist has also worked with numerous international organisations in running training programs. For example, it has worked with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) from the United Kingdom since 1999 in conducting peasant organisation programs in Java and in developing Participatory Action Research Methodology (PAR).[26]

But Insist's democratic style and teaching focus were not its primary strength. Rather, Mansour Fakih's personal reputation, his educational background and his experience as a facilitator in community development, as well as the strong back-

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[22] Interview with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006. He recalled the program had four quite large libraries available for free for Involvement participants. (Well-maintained public libraries with a wide range of updated collections were rare in Indonesia in the late 1990s). Those libraries were Insist's, and the private libraries of Insist's scholar-activists: Mansour Fakih, P.M. Laksono and Francis Wahono.

[23] Interview with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006. He remembered that Mansour Fakih considered Cahyono's class as the *angkatan uji coba* (pilot project/try-out class). He also suggested that those subjects did not have a proper name and they only started to label it for reporting requirements.

[24] For example, see http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=partner [accessed on 16 December 2008].

[25] Interviews with Fitri Andyaswuri, 10 November 2006; Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah 19 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007. For more details on Insist's works, see also http://www.infid.org/newinfid/print.php?pci=3286 [accessed on 16 December 2008].

[26] See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=partner [accessed 9 December 2008].

grounds and vast experience of his colleagues at Insist, appear to have played the main role in establishing Insist's reputation. As a former Insist managing director, recalled:

> Mansour [Fakih] was a well-known individual with good connections. It was him as an individual who people approached first. Afterwards, then he introduced his organisation, Insist, to these people or organisations to work with, because in the end, they need to work with an organisation. Individual relationships are very determining [in the NGO sector].[27]

This remark about the influential role of an individual in the NGO sector is a widely accepted view in the Indonesian NGO scene. Most NGOs need to have a "brand name" individual to be able to gain a reputation and be accepted in the NGO circle. I will discuss this issue of personalism further in chapter five.

The organisational culture of Insist reflected the ideology of its founder and his emphasis on transformative, as well as the extensive experience and local NGO networks of its activists. The organisation has vast and tight-knit networks with local NGOs in various parts of Indonesia, some of which even established by the founders of Insist.[28] As Miftahudin recalls:

> Insist started as a *Kawah Candradimuka* [a training ground]. If somebody comes to Insist with an idea, Insist would find a way to support that person, including finding people to support that person. However, when that person thinks they have had enough and would like to leave, they are free to go.[29]

As a further illustration of Insist's internal culture, a large meeting table in the backyard is a dominant feature of the Insist office. There are several smaller discussion tables at the office, including a round table at the library.[30] Observation during numerous visits to the Insist office showed that the office always had various visitors: from an NGO activist from an indigenous community organisation in Southeast Maluku, a young alternative media producer, to the founder of an alternative school for

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[27] Interview with Muhammad Miftahudin, 22 January 2007. He briefly joined Insist in 1997, then left to pursue his masters degree in Australia. After completing his study, he returned and worked as Insist managing director from 2000-2002. He then moved to Jakarta and worked as an education specialist for an international NGO, Save the Children UK. During the interview he mentioned two examples where it was because of Mansour Fakih that an international NGO ended up collaborating with Insist.

[28] For example, Roem Topatimasang and Donatus K. Marut were heavily involved in the establishment of Baileo, a grass-roots organisation in Maluku, in 1993, including its development consultant company, Micros, in 2003. They continue their involvement with Baileo. Most of Insist senior activists also founded and worked for Remdec, a renowned development consultant company in Jakarta. See http://www.baileo.or.id and http://www.remdec.or.id [accessed on 5 December 2008].

[29] The term is taken from Javanese *wayang* stories, to describe a crater which mythical heroes like Gatot Kaca jump into for training to increase their *kesaktian* [power and supernatural abilities].

[30] Between 2005 and 2008 Insist moved office three times. This is the description of its office that I visited during fieldwork in 2006. The former office I visited in 2005 also had a large meeting table at the centre of the office.

indigenous communities. Insist also shares its office with other organisations founded by Insist's activists.[31] The Insist office even used to be a home for "[our activists] friends who do not have a place to stay" with lots of activists or visitors sleeping there.[32] All of this stands as testimony to the fact that Insist over the years has managed to attract people from different elements of society: students, NGO workers, writers, artists and media workers.

Flexibility and informality, characteristics which tend to be associated with NGOs, are central to Insist. For example, the organisation's working hours suggest that evenings seem to be more productive working times instead of mornings for many Insist activists. My first interview with Insist activists in 2005 at their office started at 9pm and lasted until 1am, over a plate of *pisang goreng* [banana fritter], several cups of sweet Javanese tea and the activists' many cups of strong black coffee and chain-kretek-cigarette smoking. During the interview, there were still people working and coming in and out of the office. As a female Insist staff member said:

> If [we] want to survive at Insist, [we] have to be very masculine indeed. An easy example is our working hours. [We] tend to have meetings in the evening. A woman has to make a very large compromise with her family to be able to do that.[33]

Another example of the organisation's flexibility is its members' tendency to ignore formal structures and to be flexible with implementation of programs. As illustrated by a former managing director of Insist, Miftahudin, "When I was there we were very flexible in creating our divisions."[34] "What I mean is," he continued, "as an implementer, people could put different labels on the same role. Sometimes in writing a letter they introduced themselves as a general manager, and other time, as an operational manager." He reflected on his Insist-experience:

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[31] For example, the Yogyakarta Cultural Academy [*Akademi Kebudayaan Yogyakarta or AKY*]. *AKY* runs young writers training programs to "produce well-researched literature close to Pramoedya Ananta Toer's works". See http://www2.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0109/22/jateng/dibu26.htm [accessed on 8 December 2008].

[32] Interview with Muhammad Miftahudin, 22 January 2007.

[33] Interview with Fitri Andyaswuri, 10 November 2006. Fitri is a member of the younger generation of Insist and one of the minorities of Insist staff who is female. She specialises in gender and justice training. Prior to working with Insist in early 2000, she worked for five years for PKBI (the Indonesian Family Planning Association) and two years for LSPPA, an ADB-funded advocacy group for female-street-children. Gender issues are one of Insist's concerns and the organisation itself claims to be strongly opposed to discrimination against women. (See, for example, Fakih, et.al 1996 and Fakih, 1996b, which discuss gender and social transformation, and Islamic perspectives on gender discourse.) However, according to Fitri, in general women who choose to be involved in activism in Indonesia are immensely outnumbered by men.

[34] Interview with M. Miftahuddin, 22 January 2007.

> In essence nothing is standardised. It's up to me [*suka-suka saja*] what I want to have as a label. Every unit was fully independent so that even Mansour [Fakih], let alone myself, do not have the authority to instruct, for example, the *Involvement* organising committee. Each unit is independent in terms of running its program, funding, and staff. [Thus] I only have the control to ensure that the program run as scheduled. It is the person in charge of that division who decides the program content, how it is developed and how to manage it.[35]

Dony, an alumni-turned-program-manager of the Involvement program provided a further account which confirms the flexible nature of Insist's organisational structure in its early years. He made a remark about what he called the "distinctive" character of Insist: "Everybody can be a director (in Insist)."[36] For example, he said, "You are free to claim to the outside world that you are a program director of a certain program at Insist, although in fact you work alone for that program and you don't have anybody else to direct." This person from the younger generation of Insist continued, "For instance, [you can say that you work] as a research director, when formally at that time Insist did not have a research wing."[37]

Insist's flexibility is also apparent in its decision-making processes, which draw heavily on the participatory approach. Dony explained that, "it was an initiative of the Involvement alumni to suggest that Involvement graduates would sit in the next Involvement organising committee. Insist people agreed with our ideas and that's it." He said, "We had an alumni meeting in Yogya and established an Involvement committee. Involvement since then is fully run by former participants." He continued, "I think it's a very beautiful process in the context of democracy. Yet it also creates a sense of arrogance in us [the alumni]." He quoted the positive and encouraging response Involvement alumni received from Insist management when they proposed their idea: "of course you can. You can even be the Insist director if you want to."[38] For Dony, by opening up the management of the Involvement program to all former participants – rather than running the program in a top-down, professionalised or closed manner – Insist demonstrated its commitment to a participatory approach.

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Interview with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006.
[37] Ibid. In the interview, Dony suggested, "In reality, different people continue to conduct research and produce results, which then later were pooled together and became Insist Policy Studies." The organisation conducted policy research in the issues of "health, education, gender-based violence and environmental issues for district governments in several districts in Indonesia." http://www.infid.org/newinfid/print.php?pci=3286 [accessed on 16 December 2008].
[38] Interview with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006.

The above nature of Insist is confirmed in an assessment report of one staff member from Insist's oldest international partner organisation. "Insist has a democratic structure," Anu Lounela observed, "whereby any of the staff is able to implement a project – as long as it follows the principles of Insist – and to become a head of the team for the project, whereby s/he is responsible for its budget and the process."[39] According to her, this nature of Insist's structure has both positive and negative sides. "The staff of Insist," she said, "is very creative and able to produce much in a very short time without drowning in bureaucratic problems." She noted that Insist "has a striking capacity to support NGOs and student groups because of its ability to respond quickly." However, she suggested that "at some point it seemed that there was no cooperation between different staff members since they all had their own projects."[40] As will be seen, the problem she indicated in the previous sentence turned out to be one of the reasons behind Insist's decision to restructure its organisational format.

The picture of flexibility and informal organisational structure that I have painted in the case of Insist is typical of most Indonesian NGOs. Although many of them have a rudimentary organisational structure, in program implementations they tend to run without clear organisation and procedures. In addition, as we shall see in chapter five, most NGOs are centred on their leaders. The story of Insist explored here thus serves as an example or entry point into a wider class of cases. This situation presents an unexpected vulnerability when it comes to the hegemonic power relations of international and local NGOs. The lack of coherence frustrates the capacity of local NGOs to posit alternative ideas or challenge the agenda of international NGOs. Chapter five will provide more discussion on this topic. For now, the case of Insist serves as an interesting case study which sets the scene for the themes of later chapters.

Insist's *Restrukturisasi* Process and Its Constraints

As the organisation has grown, Insist's experimental and flexible nature, along with its association with more people, links and activities, began to start creating problems. Insist activists admitted that, by the early 2000s, Insist's messy internal struc-

[39] Lounela, 1999: 10. Lounela, the author of the report, was the first staff member of KEPA who was stationed at Insist office in Yogyakarta. KEPA is an umbrella organisation of Finland NGOs which has cooperated with Insist since 1998. KEPA and Insist have a unique partnership whereby KEPA sends its staff to work at Insist.

[40] Ibid.: 10. She also stated that Insist acknowledge this problem and during her stay the organisation has started to deal with the issue by attempting to "integrate the activities of different staff members into a more coherent whole." (Ibid.: 10).

ture began to create concerns.[41] As part of the post-*reformasi* NGO boom discussed in chapter two, Insist attracted a large amount of funds. For example, the managing director at that time said that roughly, around 1999-2001, Insist managed close to Rp. 3 billion in funds per year. He furthermore remembered how Mansour Fakih once refused an offer of around US$15 million in funds from a bilateral funding agency as they did not want to become a "broker" [the money was intended as 5-years grants program for local NGOs].[42] As a result of this inflow of money Insist outgrew its internal management capacity, particularly on the administrative side. For example, as admitted by Fitri, "we tended to be late in submitting reports as there were not enough resources available to conduct these tasks. Insist activists' energy were also burnt out from dealing with the high volume of training requests."[43]

Furthermore, there were several cases where Insist members found out that a certain amount of the organisation's funds had become, to use another Insist activist's word, "mysterious." In other words, the money was unaccounted for.[44] Dony added, in a situation "when everybody can be a director, it could become a boomerang [i.e. it could backfire], especially in terms of internal administration, as there was no control towards the management."[45] Mismanagement of funds then became an issue. This situation also reflects the wider concerns for NGOs during the period, in which, as explained in chapter two, many NGOs misused donor funding.

There was also concern that, as the organisation grew and attracted funding, Insist had attracted people who ended up looking at Insist as a place to work instead of the place to develop volunteerism and activism, part of its original design.[46] According to one of its founders, Insist's NGO-style management ["*manajemen NGO*"], which

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[41] See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=profil&id=6 [accessed on 4 December 2007].
[42] Interview with Miftahuddin, 22 January.
[43] Interview with Fitri Andyaswuri, 10 November 2006. She said in a month Insist in Yogya could handle three to four training seminars.
[44] Interview with Saleh Abdullah, 19 October 2006. He mentioned the sum of Rp. 500 million was once reported missing by an internal auditor from Remdec, Insist's consultancy arm. This issue was brought into attention during an Insist meeting. Yet no legal action was taken. Roem Topatimasang also indicated funding problems in his article on Insist webpage: "Roem Topatimasang: Dari Warung Kopi Kembali ke Warung Kopi" in http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=profil&id=6 [accessed on 4 December 2007]. See chapter six for discussion NGOs' accountability. Saleh Abdullah is an Insist senior activist. Prior to joining Insist in 1997, he was actively involved with Skephi (The Indonesian NGO Networks for Forest Conservation), a radical NGO established in the early 1980s (On Skephi, see Uhlin, 1997: 112-13). He was briefly jailed towards the end of the Suharto regime for his role in *Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia (PUDI)* [the Indonesian Uni Democracy Party], a dissident party led by Sri Bintang Pamungkas. On Pamungkas and PUDI, see Pamungkas, et al. 1998; Wijadi et.al, 1997.
[45] Interview with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 7 November 2006.
[46] Interviews with Muhammad Miftahudin, 22 January 2007; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah 12 October 2006.

lacked clear rules and responsibility had undermined Insist's initial objectives, and was thus no longer suitable for the organisation.[47]

Another reason for reform proposed by Insist activists was that instead of providing assistance and serving as a support system for social transformation done by organisations at the grass-roots level, as was initially intended, Insist in Yogyakarta had grown into an organisation which implemented activities of its own, particularly training programs. As a result, there grew a strong sense among Insist activists that there was too much centralisation at Insist. According to Insist's co-founder, Roem Topatimasang:

> We visualised Insist as a meeting place of those who want to work in transforming society, more like a *Warung Kopi* (café) than a formal organisation. So anybody could and may come to share their ideas and to compose their concepts. Yet Insist grew so fast it was like an overweight baby [*bayi bongsor*] ... and it was trapped in implementation work.[48]

Therefore, as it had become clear to Insist activists that the organisation was veering away from its goals, they started to think seriously about ways to change Insist in 2002.[49]

Noting the fluid and flexible nature of Insist, it is understandable how the organisation could be swept to follow whatever "current" or influence swayed it. Nonetheless, how and why Insist members themselves became focused on implementing program activities if they knew that this was not what they intended to do in the first place, was never really clear. Although accounts from different Insist activists as illustrated in the preceding pages, shed light on what happened, none were able to provide a concise explanation. In various degrees, Insist leaders also appear to be hesitant in talking about what had happened exactly to cause them to change, other than that they wanted to return to their original form.[50]

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[47] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.

[48] See "Roem Topatimasang: Dari Warung Kopi Kembali ke Warung Kopi" in Insist Website, http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=profil&id=6 [accessed on 4 December 2007]. Roem did not elaborate on what he meant by implementation work, however it is most likely that what he meant by that is project implementation. However from my interviews with Insist activists, the closest interpretation of what he meant was that Insist was unable to run activities as it relied only on several individuals. Therefore the organisation decided to implement its own "decentralization" by delegating jobs to members of its regional network.

[49] Ibid., and see also Insist profile on http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=about_insist [accessed on 11 December 2008].

[50] For example, most of them avoid being specific in admitting administrative problems, particularly about corruption cases.

One explanation about what happened concerns the participatory-approach exercised in Insist. Since this approach emphasises for "process" rather than "procedure," it resulted in the organisation being unable to control the outcome of the process. Yet, officially, Insist did not formally acknowledge the organisational problem it had internally as the main reason why it needed to transform itself. Instead, Insist has suggested:

> the process of change is constantly happening: the globalization of free market ideology, regional economic crises, the rocky reform of the national political system, and more, tend not to benefit the people at the margins. We at INSIST are aware that we ourselves have to change if we don't want to be swallowed up by these changes.[51]

Arguably, this statement exhibits Insist's possession of sophisticated skills in presenting big ideas using *bahasa aktifis* [the language of activists], yet without providing a clear, unambiguous explanation of what is actually meant. More importantly, it implies that Insist saw its need to change as a result of external pressure deriving from what was happening globally and nationally in Indonesia and *not* because of what had happened internally. This contradicted Insist activists' own statements during interviews and observations.

Other explanations involve international donors as part of the story of Insist's organisational change. As explained above, lack of clear structure and responsibility resulted in incidents in which Insist could not fulfil its reporting obligations and could not be accountable for its funding agencies. Insist's reputation was thus tainted and it was not as attractive as it had been previously in the eyes of international donors. This hypothesis also contradicts Insist's rhetoric as an independent organisation which is critical towards mainstream international funding agencies. But more importantly, it shows the significance of international donors in shaping the organisational nature of a local NGO, even for an organisation like Insist which is critical towards international funding agencies.

After a long process of contemplation and discussion, in 2004 the organisation decided to "transform" itself with the signing of a *Deklarasi Perubahan Insist* [Insist Declaration of Change] in Jakarta on 20 May 2004. That day was significant as it also marked the 100th day of Mansour Fakih's death.[52] The transformation involved changing the name "Institute for Social Transformation" into "Indonesian Society for

[51] See Insist profile on http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=about_insist [accessed on 11 December 2008].
[52] http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=about_insist [accessed on 11 December 2008].

Social Transformation." This was viewed as significant because by becoming a society, the Insist office in Yogyakarta returned to its founders' original idea, which was not to be an institution but a support system for the work of its network of grass-root organisations.[53]

In the form of a society or confederation, the new Insist appears to be clearly defined and structured.[54] It no longer has its own units focusing on education programs (Involvement and Fellowship), gender and justice training, human resources and Insist Press as it used to.[55] Instead, it consists of member organisations who share similar visions and ideals and a secretariat office in Yogyakarta. Insist member organisations are now the ones who carry out the type of work that Insist's units in Yogya used to carry out. For example, the "Involvement" program is no longer conducted in Yogyakarta, instead, it became the *Sekolah Transformasi Sosial* [Social Transformation School] program and is implemented by several Insist member organisations in their own areas. The restructuring process also saw Insist Press become an independent company and join Insist as a member.

Insist's members now are mostly grass-roots organisations and development consulting companies which Insist activists have been, historically and functionally, closely linked with, such as Baileo and Remdec. However, Insist is now also in the process of admitting new member organisations. As of December 2008, it had fifteen member organisations with two prospective member organisations.[56] Organisations are located in six regions: Maluku, Jakarta, Nusa Tenggara and Bali, Papua, Central and South Kalimantan and Sumatra.[57]

The role of the Insist office in Yogyakarta is now only to offer support in conducting studies, research and education to strengthen member organisations.[58] The Insist secretariat now serves as a facilitator for member organisations, such that when it

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[53] According to Roem Topatimasang, by becoming a society, Insist no longer has a legal form as an institution. See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=profil&id=6 [accessed on 4 December 2007]. However, the fact that Insist still signs agreements with international donors on behalf of its members which lack management capacity contradicts his two statements.

[54] See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=about_insist [accessed on 11 December 2008].

[55] Fellowship is Insist's initiative to invite activists to turn their experiences into a book. It is a yearly program which started in 2001. Interview with Fitri Andyaswuri, 10 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006.

[56] Ibid.

[57] See http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=profil&id=6 [accessed on 4 December 2007].

[58] Ibid. This again shows that Insist is in essence the same as its former self, except that the organisation is more clearly defined and structured, and focus to its members. Thus this supports my argument earlier that the real reason why they change is to avoid internal management problems.

receives a request to conduct training or to implement projects, the secretariat would now pass the request to the appropriate member organisation which will then carry out the activity. In this way, its founders envisage that it is the member organisations, and not the activists associated with Yogyakarta Insist office, that will be involved in activities thus enabling them to develop their capacities themselves.[59]

Yet the transition period did not go easily for Insist. It took four years to complete the process. The first two years mostly consisted of reshaping Insist's organisational structure and what members call strengthening the capacity of member organisations, which included capacity building training. The transition process also involved the establishment of an executive board. During this process the Insist secretariat was run by an interim caretaker team, which consisted of six members of what they called a 'task-force' team.[60] The secretariat had a few regular activities, particularly in 2005-2006. All in all, this was a period of significant crisis for the organisation.

Several factors contributed to the difficulties. First, in the view of several Insist activists, there was a technical problem.[61] Since the organisation is based on volunteerism, Insist decision-makers do not exclusively work for Insist. Like many prominent NGO figures in the post-Suharto period, they have high mobility and over-stretched schedules.[62] Moreover not all of them reside in Yogya.[63] As a result, even getting a signature to authorise the release of funds in response to member organisations' re-

[59] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 19 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.
[60] Interviews with Fitri Andyaswuri 10 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah 19 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang 27 January 2007.
[61] Interviews with Fitri Andyaswuri 10 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah 19 October 2006.
[62] For example, an Insist activist's normal schedule in any given month consists of at least two weeks of traveling. The traveling activities range from visiting member organisations, becoming a training facilitator or conducting needs assessment and evaluation programs in different places scattered from Papua to Aceh. Interview with Saleh Abdullah 16 October 2006.
[63] As an illustration, in 2006 a member of the Insist task-force team in charge of Insist's external relations, Donatus K. Marut, was appointed the Executive Secretary of INFID, the International NGO Forum for Indonesian Development, a prominent NGO forum. He is based in Jakarta where INFID's office is located. Don was the Executive Director of Insist from 2003-2004. Prior to that, he briefly worked as the Regional Coordinator of SEAPCP (Southeast Asian Popular Communication Program) based in Jakarta and as the Regional Coordinator of SEACA (Southeast Asian Committee for Advocacy) based in Bangkok, Thailand from 2000-2003. He has also been actively involved with Baileo and Remdec, both are member organisations of Insist. In addition, he has experience working for Oxfam UK/International in Yogyakarta. Don holds two Masters degrees (M.Sc in Natural Resources and Environmental Economics from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and M.Phil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge, U.K) as well as a BA in International Relations from Gadjah Mada University.

quest could be difficult.[64] Consequently the effort of drawing them together for meetings was a challenging task.

The second problem related to the nature of Insist with its participatory approach. Beside the problem of "having bosses in different cities," Fitri, who in 2004-2006 was the secretary of the task-force team, mentioned that the difficulties derived from the fact that "all of them [task-force team members] have equal power to govern and sometimes it could be difficult to manage as different people give different orders."[65] In other words, she was caught up in a situation where, as the common saying puts it, there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians. According to her, it could take time for the task-force members to synchronise their views on a particular problem.[66]

An additional problem mentioned by several Insist staff is that, admittedly not by design, Insist had been too 'centralised' for too long and therefore the gap between people at the Insist office and its member organisations at times was significant. What they mean by this is that prior to its reform, it was Insist activists from the Yogyakarta office who had been actively involved in training programs and other project implementation. Thus when it came time for the Insist member organisations to implement a project, many among them did not have the capacity to do so.[67] For example, Saleh Abdullah points to weaknesses in "English language skills, proposal and report making, [and the] finance system."[68]

At the same time, Insist activists also complained that other organisations still preferred to work with the individuals whom they had already knew, either by reputa-

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[64] Interviews with Fitri Andyaswuri 10 November 2006. Between 2004-2006, she was the secretary for the task-force team, or in her own words, *"pembantunya para dewa"* ["the servant of the gods"]. She is also the Program Manager of Insist's program in Aceh.

[65] Interviews with Fitri Andyaswuri 10 November 2006.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 19 October 2006; Henri Myrtinen, 16 October 2006.

[68] Interview with Saleh Abdullah, 19 October 2006. However, he also acknowledged the need to be careful in looking at member organisation's lack of capacity. According to Saleh, since Insist started to think about making organisational changes in 2002, there were those in Insist who rejected the idea. They then used this lack of capacity and the issue of the unreadiness of member organisations as the reason for not changing Insist. This statement, which implies that Insist conforms with the international development organisation standards of practice in a sense contradicts Insist's strong belief in striving for alternatives approach, as a transformative NGO, against the developmentalism of donors. Saleh admitted that the disagreements contributed to the reasons it took two years for Insist to formally have its transformation. Saleh also suggested the reason why there was resistance was partly because the new format would eliminate individual projects. On the other hand, Roem saw the resistance among member organisations as due to their misunderstanding of the new concept and because they had gotten used to the "old patterns" of Insist (Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007).

tion or past cooperation.[69] This resulted in outside partners choosing to work with experienced people at the Insist office in Yogyakarta – in other words, the old Insist – rather than with its member organisations or the lesser known Insist activists. A younger Insist activist recalled his 'training-days' experience as a facilitator of Insist where he was asked to leave ['*diusir*'] four times by training organisers as they preferred to have a more senior facilitator from Insist.[70] This, again, illustrates the importance of trust and individual reputation in the Indonesian NGO sector.

As a result of Insist's top-heavy organisational practices and the important role of individuals discussed in the previous page this resulted in the inability of Insist to promote its member organisations and conduct decentralisation as smoothly as it was intended. Insist addressed this issue by persistently explaining to donors about their new organisational format and strengthening its member organisations in various ways, including by giving them more opportunities to interact directly with donor organisations, for example by having them act as co-facilitators in donor training-activities. This means that in facilitating a training seminar or workshop, Insist would send two persons: a senior activist and an activist from one of Insist's member organisations.[71]

At the same time, two major disasters that hit Indonesia in December 2004 (the Aceh Tsunami) and May 2006 (the Yogyakarta earthquake) naturally distracted Insist from its organisational reform. For Aceh, the Insist Secretariat collaborated with its network of local organisations and member organisations in conducting emergency relief efforts, followed by reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.[72] In response to the 6.3-magnitude earthquake in Yogyakarta, the home of the Insist secretariat, Insist pooled its resources to mobilise the local community in providing assistance to the quake victims (unlike some local NGOs which had their buildings damaged by the quake, Insist was fortunate that its office was located in a safer area). During the

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[69] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 16 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang 27 January 2007; Dony Hendro Cahyono 10 November 2006.

[70] Interview with Dony Hendro Cahyono, 10 November 2006. According to Miftahudin, the former Insist Managing Director, when he was working at Insist, Insist already faced this issue and they dealt with it by charging extraordinarily high fees for individuals like Mansour and Roem to 'force' people to turn to Insist as an organisation and agree to work with whoever represented Insist (Interview with M. Miftahudin, 22 January 2007).

[71] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 16 October 2006; Dony Hendro Cahyono, 10 November 2006.

[72] For more information on Insist's work in Aceh, see "What Needs to be Done in Aceh: Basic Framework" on http://insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&artid=9 [accessed on 16 December 2008], "What Needs to be Done in Aceh: Emergency Relief" on http://insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&id=11 [accessed on 16 December 2008], "What Needs to be Done in Aceh: preparation to the next stage: reconstruction and rehabilitation" on http://insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&id=12 [accessed on 16 December 2008].

Yogyakarta reconstruction and rehabilitation process, the organisation was critical of the Indonesian national government's willingness to consider taking on new foreign debt from international donors to manage the disaster.[73] Instead, Insist promoted local resource mobilisation when necessary, combined with grants from international donors.[74] This preference for local resource mobilisation instead of international donors and lenders is typical of Insist's rejection of developmentalism and its preference for alternative methods and people's self-reliance.

With Insist being in a virtual state of "vacuum" particularly between 2004-2007, many people in Indonesian NGO circles came to believe that its 'golden era' had passed.[75] They saw Mansour Fakih's death as the turning point for Insist. For example, a former Insist Press director observed, "Without Mansour Fakih, Insist has lost a great leader which in turn affected its openness to alternative ideas from young people as well as the democratic atmosphere it used to have."[76] Such statements, including observations about Mansour Fakih's immense personal influence, were common in my interviews. This indicates again the significant role an individual can have in an NGO like Insist. In the opinion of another former Insist staff member, "it could be said that if Insist is a human being, Mansour is its vital organs, its body, and its arm – its everything. When Mansour passed away, well, [they were] gone too."[77]

People involved in Insist were aware of the external doubts caused by the death of Fakih, yet they disagreed with their critics.[78] According to Roem:

> Almost every day we receive comments asking why we are now *diam-diam saja* [just quiet], unlike the way we used to be in the past, when almost every week we held a press conference. We do not know how to explain it. Well, we are indeed changing. We no longer want Insist to be

[73] See "From CGI Meeting in Jakarta: IDR 17 Trillion Needed for Recovery of Yogyakarta and Central Java?" http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&artid=23 [accessed on 15 December 2008].
[74] For Insist's stand, see "Moral Call on Disaster Management In Yogyakarta and Central Java" in http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&artid=20 [accessed on 16 December 2008]. For examples of local mobilisation efforts and promotion, see "Teladan Hidup Kepedulian Sosial" in http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=id&page=profil&id=7 [accessed on 16 December2008]; "Four Weeks after the Earthquake, People's Solidarity continues: Contributions of More than US$1,000,000 per week" in http://www.insist.or.id/index.php?lang=en&page=article&artid=27 [accessed on 16 December 2008].
[75] Interviews with many NGO workers. Most of the time, the topic of Insist came out inadvertently when my interviewees asked about my case studies. The general response I received was that they were wondering what had happened to Insist as they had not heard much about the organisation after Mansour Fakih passed away in 2004.
[76] Interview with Eko Prasetyo, 11 November 2006.
[77] Interview with M. Miftahudin, 22 January 2006.
[78] Interviews with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; Don Marut, 25 January 2007.

> big. We want our members to grow vast and become strong. Whether or not Insist is well-known does not concern us [*tidak jadi soal*]."[79]

Insist's senior members are also critical of the nature of mainstream Indonesian NGOs, which they perceive as 'NATO' or 'No Action Talk Only' (a commonly used epithet for Indonesian NGOs), particularly when it comes to criticising the Indonesian government yet the NGOs themselves are unable to provide alternative solutions.[80] Therefore the organisation rarely joins local NGO meetings. As a result, Roem said, "Insist is considered (by other NGOs) as stubborn and *binatang aneh sendiri* [weird animal by itself]."[81] Insist seniors also admit that because of their new post-2004 style, they feel isolated [*dikucilkan*] by mainstream Indonesian NGOs.[82] This perspective of Insist leaders sheds light on factionalism among Indonesian NGOs, which I will discuss further in chapter five.

Insist activists also admit the organisation's transformation process is going slower than expected, but they remain committed to the internal reform process. At least, they say, they are trying to transform themselves to adapt to the new social and political environment and to overcome their problems. This sort of introspection is arguably very uncommon for Indonesian NGOs.[83]

Having discussed Insist's reform process and its constraints, I will now turn to Insist's internal organisational struggles, which as we shall see, affects its relationships with its international counterparts.

One thing worth noting in the story of Insist is its internal organisational dynamics. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the organisation was established by several Indonesian NGO activists who shared a strong commitment to the transformative model of NGO activism. However, the rhetoric of transformism turned out to be occasionally at odds with reality. As has been shown above, the participatory approach, which was characterised by heavy and lengthy discussions, lack of organisational structure, and an emphasis on process rather than results, turned out to be an obstacle as the organisation grew.

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[79] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.
[80] For example, Saleh Abdullah said of most Insist seniors believe that being "super critical" of the government, the way activists used to be before reformasi, without providing alternative solutions is unacceptable in the 2000s. He admits that after reformasi, many radical activists have toned down their anti-developmentalism approach and begun to work with the Indonesian government. (Interview with Saleh Abdullah 19 October 2006).
[81] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.
[82] Interviews with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; Don Marut, 25 January 2007.
[83] Ibid.

Several people at Insist revealed that over the years, certain individuals within the organisation became too dominant and this created a gap between Insist's "prominent names" like Roem Topatimasang and Don Marut and those who came into the organisation later and who were younger.[84] Some of the younger generation felt that the knowledge gap between themselves and the older leadership generation made it difficult for them to understand their seniors. As one younger member suggested, the gap between the prominent names at Insist and their juniors was so wide that "No matter how hard we tried, it was impossible for us to keep up with these 'Insist gods' [*dewa-dewa Insist*]."[85] The difficulty this person referred to in particular was that the seniors tended to speak using "big ideas and concepts" and assumed that everybody automatically would know what to do about them, in other words, how to translate into real action without further detailed explanation. Moreover, because Insist's seniors had been working with each other for decades, they "were able to read each other's minds."[86] The seniors at Insist, however, deny the allegation that there is a knowledge gap between generations. They claimed that they were always open for discussion and provided assistance and materials to anybody who asked for it.[87]

Nonetheless, generational differences at Insist added to the problems of the organisation. There were several cases when the younger generation felt under-appreciated and marginalised. The most notable example of this was an internal conflict that happened in 2003 which resulted in the firing of Eko Prasetyo, the then-director of Insist Press, and his colleagues at the Press. He left Insist together with the entire Insist Press staff which consisted of fourteen young people. This incident happened after Eko and his collegues rejected the restructuring of the Press proposed by Insist management. During an interview, Eko said the term 'fired' was rather "unique" as he was never formally hired by Insist. "Anybody can come and go at Insist," he said. Yet according to Roem, Eko's statement reflects the internal problem Insist had at that time. Fluid and flexible NGO-style management did not work well, and thus they decided to make changes which included auditing Insist Press and making it an

[84] Insist's younger generation are usually the alumni of one of Insist's education programs, such as Involvement. Prior to 2004, Insist Press had young people as its staff. Its director, Eko Prasetyo, was an alumnus of the first Involvement program. Other younger staff of Insist, included Doni Hendro Cahyono and Fitri Andyaswuri, who both joined Insist after participating in training conducted by Insist. A typical Insist's 'recruitment' pitch, started with Insist Director or seniors introducing Insist and asking participants to come to Insist to meet with Insist people and get involved. Interviews with Fitri Andyaswuri, 10 November 2006; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; Eko Prasetyo, 11 November 2006; M. Miftahudin, 22 January 2007.

[85] Confidential communication, November 2006.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Interviews with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006.

independent, private unit. Roem claimed that the conflict started when Insist Press people under Eko's leadership refused to be audited and as a result, they all were fired. However, according to Eko, he and his colleagues at Insist Press were deeply insulted and could not accept Insist management's sudden change of heart and its top-down interference which did not give any room for discussion.[88]

Their bitter separation from the organisation was big news in NGO circles. According to Eko, the prolonged conflict between Insist Press and Insist management was also due to the busy travel schedule of Insist leaders involved "many incidents, back-and-forth letters-writing, propaganda and deadlock" and that both parties had appointed lawyers and were ready to go to court.[89] Insist even called the police to guard the publishing property.[90] However, in the end both parties decided to resolve the conflict by having a meeting to settle the assets-division process, before going separate ways.[91]

After the split, together with former Insist Press staff, Eko established an independent publishing unit called "Resist," which continued to provide alternative, left-leaning materials in a provocative but easy to read format.[92] Their publications continue to be well received particularly by university students. Eko, a lawyer-by-training, was also heavily involved in a Community Policing program in Yogyakarta.[93]

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[88] Interviews with Eko Prasetyo, 11 November 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.

[89] Interview with Eko Prasetyo, 11 November 2006.

[90] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Bonar Saragih, 2 September 2008.

[91] Interviews with Eko Prasetyo, 11 November 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007. When I interviewed them, they admitted that they had not spoken to each other since their last meeting in 2003.

[92] Resist's publication series themes resemble Insist's themes, which included of social movements, anti-globalisation and critical education. However, unlike Insist, Resist packages its books in an easy-to-read format aiming at mainstream young people. See http://www.resistbook.or.id [accessed on 2 January 2009]. For example, Resist published popular books under the series of *Orang Miskin Dilarang* ["It is Forbidden for the Poor to be.."] which included titles like *Orang Miskin Dilarang Sakit* ["It is Forbidden for the Poor to be Sick"],*Orang Miskin Dilarang Sekolah* ["It is Forbidden for the Poor to Go To School"], and *Demokrasi Tidak Untuk Rakyat* ["Democracy is Not for the People"]. Other book titles are *Awas: Penguasa Tipu Rakyat* ["Beware: Leaders Deceive the People"]. Eko Prasetyo authored all these books. Noting this, many people in the NGO sector regret the Eko vs Insist's incident as Eko was seen as the backbone of Insist Press. (For example, interviews with Stanley Prasetyo, 14 October 2005; M. Miftahuddin, 22 January 2007; Farid Wajidi, 26 August 2008). However, Insist people said that Insist Press is doing fine without Eko. After Eko left, Insist Press completed its transformation as a private publishing house, and continued its work. Insist leaders admitted their books might not be as frequently published and as provocative as Resist, because they are not interested in making money but were more interested in producing quality works. (Interviews with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah, 19 October 2006; Bonar Saragih, 2 September 2008).

[93] This pilot program, involving collaboration with the Indonesian police, the Centre for Human Rights Studies Islamic University of Indonesia [*Pusham UII*] and the Asia Foundation, is regarded by

Eko was not the only person, who after leaving Insist, went on to do well elsewhere in the NGO sector. The list also includes a former Insist managing director who, as of 2007, was working as a Technical Advisor for a prominent international NGO focussing on children in Jakarta. When I interviewed him, he admitted that when he met his local NGO friends he sometimes felt unease as they half-jokingly said that he had become a 'traitor' working for a foreign organisation.[94] In addition, another former managing director who as of 2008 worked as the executive director of a major NGO Forum in Jakarta. These people, including Eko, agreed Insist had been influential in shaping and equipping them and they think highly of the old generation of Insist and the basic ideas of the organisation.

The generational conflict in Insist raises the issue of Insist's leadership succession, a very common problem in Indonesian NGOs, especially those which depend on the charisma and star-qualities of individual leaders. For a decade after, the decision makers and leaders of Insist remained the same. This situation has led to criticism among NGO workers, particularly from those who were formerly associated with Insist.[95] They suggest the organisation has struggled with succession because it did not develop a solid 'second-layer' of leaders with the skills and confidence to take over the leadership.

Insist seniors acknowledged they had problems dealing with leadership succession. They suggested that the difficulty of finding a good second layer of "cadre" lay largely in the different nature of activism during the era of Insist's seniors' (the late 1970s-1980s) and the next era (the generation of the 1990s). Roem claims:

> Young people who started in the 1990s grew in the era when money flooded in from donors [*banjir donor*] thus they did not have the same experience in building their own organisations by using their own money as those who started in the 1970s-1980s. My generation have these kinds of experience. As a result, the 1990s generation mostly is not capable of holding major responsibilities."[96]

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the police and the Asia Foundation as being a success. Beside founding and working for Resist, Eko also works as the program director for *Pusham UII*. This again demostrates the complex links Indonesian NGO workers have.

[94] Interview with M. Miftahudin, 22 January 2007.

[95] This appears to be the general characteristic of Indonesian NGOs. Most well known NGOs are led by the same persons (who usually found the NGO) over decades. See chapter five for further discussion on this issue.

[96] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.

In addition, Roem said that he believed that not many from the younger generation were ready to live as unpaid volunteer workers like the old leadership of Insist.[97] On the one hand, this statement could be seen as a pretext for Roem's inability (or unwillingness) to hand over the organisation's leadership. My observation of the younger people on the other hand suggests that there are those who agree with Roem (that they are not ready thus they keep learning) but there are also those who disagree and in the end leave the organisation. The discussion has introduced the importance of a leader for an NGO, and one of the by-products of a dominant leader is the problem of organisational succession. I will discuss this issue of "personalism" among local NGOs further in chapter five.

What to Make of Insist's Internal Problems?

Thus far this discussion has looked at the journey of Insist. The story has been very detailed, focusing on various internal matters. But this detail has served a purpose. It has served as an introduction to the everyday world of an NGO in Indonesia. It is my contention that it is only by developing such a finely-grained picture of local NGOs that we can begin to appreciate the broader dynamics of how they interact with other organisations, including international NGOs. To that end, in this chapter we have looked at the founding ideals of Insist, the strong influence of individuals within it and their backgrounds, and the interactions and even conflict between Insist's internal groupings. Using the account of the NGO activists themselves, the discussion shed light on the complexity and dynamics of the NGO's internal affairs. We have seen how the idealist visions of Insist's founder struggled to survive when the strong personality which led the organisation passed away. We have seen how the inability to plan generational succession divided the organisation. We have even seen how Insist had to reform itself as, to a certain extent because of international donors, due to some inability on its part to be accountable to donors.

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[97] Ibid. He said that Insist's executive committee runs solely on the basis of volunteerism. However, as Insist's program coordinator and task force team member in 2007, Saleh Abdullah stated that he receives Rp. 3.1 million a month from Insist. According to Saleh, this amount is much lower than the average for directors of large Indonesian NGOs in Jakarta (Email communication with Saleh Abdullah, 8 August 2007). At the same time, as a comparison, discussion with a number of international NGO workers revealed that Rp.15 million is the bottom range salary of a senior management position for an Indonesian at an international NGO in Indonesia. While the International NGO's expatriate staff's salary usually starts from US$2000 a month with housing and bills paid (which included maintenance, water and electricity bills and security guard at their house), schooling expenses for their children (up to three children per family) and a return airfare to visit their country every two years. A typical expatriate international NGO director's salary could be up to $25,000 per month. International NGOs staff also have health insurance coverage on top of their salary while health insurance for local NGO staff is usually deducted out of their salary.

In unearthing these issues I have attempted to look beyond NGO rhetoric and to present the reality of an NGO's life. Insist's journey as an organisation has provided a clear example of the gap between the rhetoric and reality of an NGO. Insist was one of the more overtly "idealistic" of Indonesian NGOs, proposing an exact "counter-hegemonic" model of participatory education. Yet in reality it became involved in the sort of program implementation and project management that dominates the Indonesian NGO world.

In the case of Insist, the contradiction between rhetoric and reality came to a head when the activists that succeeded Mansour Fakih realised the difficulty of translating Insist's grand ideals into more realistic actions or achievable goals.[98] When it became apparent that the egalitarian philosophy of its founder ran into practical problems in implementation – such as the fact that the many individuals in Insist held differing points of view and that creating consensus among them actually impeded decision-making – the organisation decided to reform and, in a way, distance itself from its original ideology. As a result when Insist came to embrace reform it appeared to become, unintentionally, trapped in its own rhetoric; it become what it precisely set out to resist.

While NGOs tend to be perceived in ideal terms, such as having democratic values, being egalitarian and existing to promote the social good, the preceding discussion exposes the fact that in practice NGOs have internal problems which, if not directly contradicting these values, can impede their realisation, and push NGOs in the direction of professionalisation. Weak management which frustrates program implementation, hierarchy and seniority cliques which undermine egalitarianism, internal organisational conflicts which challenge consensus-based decision making; all these things can be found in the Insist example, and are at odds with the idealistic rhetoric of the NGO sector.[99] The preceding discussion has also introduced the important role played by individuals in the NGO sector.

These characteristics above have taken a part in shaping and influencing the relationship between international and local NGOs, which is the core topic of this research. An individual can, in many instances, make or break a local NGO and hence make or break the relationship between a local NGO and an international NGO. The preced-

[98] As an extreme example: the difficulties of achieving gender balance with the male dominated realm of the Indonesian NGO sector (including at Insist).
[99] This finding, which is familiar among Indonesian NGOs encountered in this study, will be further discussed in chapter five.

ing discussion in this chapter thus has introduced the importance of internal organisational culture in local NGOs in the relationships between international and local NGOs, and vice versa, the importance of international NGOs in shaping the internal nature of local NGOs. In other words, it suggests that understanding the internal organisational dynamic of an NGO provides a key to understanding the nature of its relationships with international NGOs. I will discuss this issue in greater detail in chapter five.

The preceding discussion has shown Insist's internal organisational struggles. The following section discusses Insist's relationship with international NGOs. First, I look at a relationship both parties consider to be successful, then I discuss a relationship that broke down. Most of the evidence for this chapter will come from the perspectives of the NGO activists themselves – both from Insist and its international counterparts.

The Relationship of Insist and Kepa: An Ideal Case?

As previously noted, Insist has worked with many international NGOs. Based on interviews with various Insist activists, a rough estimation of the number of international agencies that Insist has worked and has been working with (which include multilateral agencies, such as the UNDP, and bilateral government aid agencies such as CIDA) point towards more than 40 organisations. Out of the many international NGOs Insist has cooperated with, there is one organisation that has been Insist' longest 'partner.' That is Kepa (The Service Centre for Development Cooperation), a Finnish NGO which has been working with Insist since 1998.

In starting the discussion on Insist and Kepa's relationship, it should be noted that I am interested in looking at Insist's relationship with Kepa as Insist is the *only* group from any Indonesian NGO interviewed in this study (out of 30 in total) that stated they had an equal relationship with an international NGO. In terms of developing programs, the two sides claimed they develop their programs together. According to Insist activists, Kepa provides them with complete freedom to decide what it wants to do. This is an arrangement which, according to Insist leaders, is rarely found in relationships between international and local NGOs.[100] Studying the Insist-Kepa re-

[100] Interviews with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; Don Marut, 25 October 2005. It should be noted that in mentioning Insist leaders' opinion here, I am merely conveying the reason why Insist perceived their relationship with Kepa to be equal: because

lationship not only enables us to assess Insist's claim about the equality it supposedly has with Kepa, but more importantly, it helps to provide an answer to the question of what makes an NGO relationship work. Looking at the perspective of the NGOs themselves also enables us to uncover things about the nature of domination and resistance in the relationship between international and local NGOs.

This section will first introduce Kepa, and then look at the relationship. The latter part of the section will discuss the challenges these NGOs encountered and factors that have shaped the success of their relationship. I will look at how the NGO activists themselves describe their relationship, in addition to their official materials such as reports, to obtain a more comprehensive analysis. It should be noted that, as mentioned earlier, my research looks at the relationship of international and local NGOs from the perspectives of the NGO staff members themselves. Consequently, I adopt the views of these NGO workers in setting the indicators of a successful relationship, which in this case includes continuous support from international NGOs to local NGOs.

Introducing Kepa

Kepa was established in 1985 by 56 Finnish NGOs. As its name suggests, the organisation is a service centre for Finnish NGOs interested in development work and global issues, with the aim to "encourage, support and organise Finnish civil society to enable participation in actions that promote global responsibility."[101] During the last decade it has focused its work on broader global issues as well as developed as a trustee and umbrella organisation for over 270 member organisations across a large spectrum of Finnish civil society.[102] Kepa's membership spans "from development aid organisations, cultural societies, educational institutions, missionary organisations to political groups, trade unions, and human rights and environmental organisa-

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they had the freedom to decide on their program. It is not my intention to claim that the provision of block grants was uncommon in the 1990s.

[101] Kepa, 2006: 3. See also http://www.Kepa.fi/international/english/index_html [accessed on 6 January 2009] for Kepa's profile overview. Kepa's major issues of interests are international and fair trade, globalization, environmental issues, human rights and development. (See Kepa, 2006: 5-7).

[102] Http://www.Kepa.fi/international/english/index_html [accessed on 6 January 2009].

tions."[103] Yet the organisation asserts that it operates independently without any ideology, political or religious affiliation.[104]

Kepa's activities can be grouped into two main functions which they call quality services and policy work.[105] Kepa's quality services program involves providing support to "strengthen the capacity of Finnish and Southern NGOs," while its policy work entails achieving policy changes by "drawing on cooperation with Finnish civil society groups, Kepa's Southern partners and international Networks" to "transform the structures that cause and sustain inequality in the world."[106]

Kepa employs a range of activities in carrying out these two main functions, including the provision of training and advice on development issues, logistical assistance to Finnish NGOs working in places where Kepa staff are located, the publication of magazines, bulletins and reports, to the maintenance of a website and library, as well as the implementation of policy analysis, networking, campaigning, advocacy, lobbying and the provision of financial support and technical assistance to its Southern partners.[107]

Kepa's presence and activities in developing countries are carried out through three means. First (and most importantly), they are carried out through the presence of its country offices, which as of 2008 are in Mozambique, Tanzania and Nicaragua.[108] Second, Kepa also exchanges activists and shares liaison officers in development cooperation projects, and lastly, Kepa sends individual employees or "information

[103] Ibid. See also Avonius, 2002: 10. In her evaluation report of Kepa, Avonius noted that, "While this wide variety of organisations offers Kepa immense possibilities and know-how it also makes the organisation occasionally rather bureaucratic and slow" (Avonius, 2002: 10). We will get back to this issue later in this chapter when discussing the challenges faced in the relationship between Insist and Kepa.

[104] Avonius, 2002: 10; Kepa profile in http://www.Kepa.fi/international/english/index_html [accessed on 6 January 2009].

[105] Interview with Henry Myrttinenen, 16 October 2006; Salminen 2006: 5.

[106] Salminen, 2006: 5; http://www.kepa.fi/international/english [accessed on 7 January 2009]. This aim of Kepa's development policy work is similar to Insist's broader goal as described earlier.

[107] Salminen, 2006: 5; http://www.kepa.fi/international/english [accessed on 7 January 2009]. As of January 2009, Kepa states that individual Finnish organisations (of which many are associated with Kepa) have projects in 60 countries. See http://www.kepa.fi/international/english/kepa_in_south [accessed on 7 January 2009]. Kepa's involvement in developing countries started in the mid-1980s with a volunteer program in which Finnish volunteers were posted at NGOs in these countries and eventually in the mid-1990s grew into a more long-lasting and effective development cooperation among Finnish and Southern NGOs (Avonius, 2002: 10).

[108] Up to 2007, there were four field offices which were located in Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Zambia (See Salminen, 2006: 5). However, the latest reform in Kepa saw the closing of its Zambia office by the end of 2007 and the posting of a new officer in Thailand in 2008. The interests of Kepa's member organisations' and the amount of Finnish aid in the global South are the two major factors that determine the location of Kepa's field offices. See http://www.kepa.fi/international/english [accessed on 7 January 2009].

officers" to work in their counterpart organisations in the developing countries.[109] As shall be seen later, Kepa and Insist adopted the third model.

Similar to Insist, since the late 1990s, Kepa has been reforming itself, or undergoing its own "*Reformasi* period," as they like to call it.[110] Kepa's organisational reform included the transformation of the Finnish headquarters into eleven task-oriented teams in 2003, the creation of two networks (the Policy and the Quality Networks) in 2004, and another assessment and planning process for its future in 2006.[111] Much similar to Insist's prolonged restructuring process, Kepa's slow organisational reform and unclear organisational structure at times caused frustration for both Kepa's own staff members and its member organisations.[112] This fact becomes important when we discuss challenges in Kepa and Insist's relationship later on.

Initially Kepa's member organisations became interested in cooperation with Insist in the late 1990s because they desired to find a local partner, who would help them monitor the activities of Finnish forestry companies in Riau (Eastern Sumatra) and West Kalimantan.[113] Before that time, Kepa was not involved in Indonesia. Insist's name first appeared as a possible partner organisation when Kepa held a meeting with an international NGO, Oxfam, in Yogyakarta during Kepa's first fact finding mission to Indonesia in 1997.[114] Insist's senior leaders had a close association with

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[109] Salminen, 2006: 5. Salminen noted that other terms such as "program officer", "liaison officer" and "program advisor" have been used interchangeably with "information officer" in some documents as they all have the same meaning in Finnish ("yhteystiedottaja"). Ibid.

[110] Avonius, 2002: 11; Interviews with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006; Saleh Abdullah, October 2006.

[111] See Avonius, 2002: 12; Salminen, 2006: 5. By 2006 Kepa has four field offices in Mozambique, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Zambia. These countries are the partner countries of Finland's development aid. Other partner countries are Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Nepal, Peru and Vietnam (Kehity-syhteistyo as quoted in Avonius 2002: 15).

[112] Interview with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006; See also Avonius, 2002: 12. Avonius noted in 2002 that "According to many, continuous change has had negative effect on working processes and perhaps also on working atmosphere" (Avonius, 2002: 12). She gave examples of the less than clear procedures for handling proposals from member organisations or the field offices, and the fact that teams are not always aware of each others' activities. Furthermore, she stated that "this ambiguity has apparently affected Kepa's Indonesia program as well" (Ibid). During an interview in 2006, Kepa's staff member acknowledged the frustration felt towards Kepa headquarters, but he said that things were getting much better (Interview with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006).

[113] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; M. Miftahudin, 22 January 2007; See also Avonius, 2002: 15-17. Avonius noted that Finnish environmental NGOs are one of the three types of Finnish organisations with major interests in Indonesia and Southeast Asia more generally. The other two are missionary organisations and human rights organisations. Furthermore she stated that the information provided by Kepa's information station at Insist has helped Kepa's environmental campaign to be one of the main factors behind the withdrawal of a Finnish pulp and paper company from Riau (Avonius, 2002: 15-18).

[114] Avonius, 2002: 16. During this first fact finding mission Kepa also had meetings with local environmental NGOs (Skephi, Walhi – the Friends of the Earth Indonesia, Konphalindo) and local women's NGOs (Solidaritas Perempuan and Kalyanamitra). Afterwards, Kepa also conducted a short

Oxfam and Skephi (one of the environmental organisations that Kepa also had a meeting with in 1997). When Kepa conducted its follow-up mission to Indonesia in early 1998, Kepa and the newly established Insist came to know each other in a meeting. This meeting led them to begin cooperation.[115]

Insist officially started working with Kepa in May 1998. In their relationship, Kepa provided financial support for Insist's publication and training activities, such as the *Wacana* ["Discourse"] Journal and the Involvement program, and for a Kepa-Insist staff exchange program.[116] Kepa also supported Insist's publication and advocacy work by placing a Finnish information officer in Insist, an officer who was fully funded by Kepa. In return, Insist implemented the activities previously mentioned in accordance with an agreed work plan, which involved fulfilling administrative and financial reporting requirements.[117] In addition, Insist also acted as a host organisation for the Kepa information officer, which entails providing the officer with working facilities, as well as providing input for Kepa's publication and advocacy work.[118] In terms of the amount of funds involved in their relationship, data indicates that annually Kepa provided around €30,000 to €40,000 for Insist's activities, and around the same amount to fund its information officer in Indonesia.[119]

The first information officer was Anu Lounela, who was officially stationed at Insist in 2000-2002 (however during 1997-1999 she also spent considerable time at Insist conducting assessment and preparatory work). She ended up marrying one of Insist's leaders. The second officer was Henry Myrtinnen. He started his posting at Insist in 2003 for a two-year contract, which was extended until the end of 2006.[120]

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visit to the Netherlands and to Great Britain to interview Dutch (Novib, Hivos) and British (Oxfam) organisations with activities in Indonesia. See Avonius, 2002: 16-17.

[115] Ibid.: 15-16. Avonius stated that during this second visit, Kepa also conducted meetings with Oxfam and Walhi, two NGOs that Kepa was also considering to be possible host organisations for Kepa's information officer in Indonesia. She noted that the fact finders reported that Oxfam was uninterested in becoming a host for Kepa and recommended Kepa to find a local organisation instead, while Walhi was seen as "possibly a risky partner" due to its blunt criticism of the Indonesian government at that time (Avonius, 2002: 16-17). On Walhi's history and outspoken activism, see for example Aditjondro, 2003: 124-146; Parlan & Adi, 2005; Sinanu, 2006.

[116] What they mean by staff exchange is during the first several years of their relationship, the two organisations' representatives conducted short visits to each other's offices to learn more about each other's work. For example, there were four visits between Kepa and Insist between 2000-2002 (Avonius, 2002: 20). The visits usually included meetings with other local NGOs as well as collaborating and participating in seminars. For more details about these visits, see Ibid.: 20-21.

[117] See chapter three for NGOs' reporting procedures.

[118] Avonius, 2002: 19; Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006; Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006.

[119] Avonius, 2002: 22; Kepa-Insist Partnership Agreement 2006.

[120] Interview with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006. See also Salminen, 2006; Avonius, 2002.

The job of Kepa's Information Officer in Indonesia basically has two components: to work for both Kepa and for Insist. "Theoretically," said the Kepa Information Officer in 2006, "I am supposed to work fifty percent of the time for Kepa and fifty percent for Insist. But in practice that just depends on what is happening at the moment."[121]

The type of tasks the officer does for Insist are varied. For example, Henry Myrttinen said, this involved "working on *Wacana* [Insist's journal called *Discourse*] and policy studies, occasionally helping out with training projects and coordinating international research projects. But it changes along with changes in Insist."[122] The liaison officer's Kepa-related job components are to contribute to Kepa's policy and quality work, such as trade and development policy issues, to provide information for Kepa and its members, and to integrate Kepa's policy work with Insist's policy work.[123]

Comparing Kepa's and Insist's Perspectives on Challenges in Their Relationship

The Insist-Kepa model of cooperation, with the stationing of an international NGO staff member at the local NGO counterpart's office, is very rare in the development sector.[124] For many Indonesian NGO workers, this model of relationship is an ideal one. Having an international NGO staff member embedded in a local NGO helps to create a sense of equality between the two. It also helps the NGOs to maintain a good flow of communication. However, although both Insist and Kepa's staff members state that they support this model of a relationship, they admit that challenges still occur.

For Kepa's information officer, the challenges he encountered working with Insist were mostly related to Insist's very flexible style of work and its organisational restructuring process. "With Insist's restructuring", Myrttinen said, "it is hard to know who is being responsible for what, and people tend to move around to different organisations. It is very confusing."[125] He also felt that there had been "a lot of wasted effort", for example, he was coordinating an international research project of Asian

[121] Interview with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006.
[122] Ibid. This admission suggests flexibility of the job descriptions in the Kepa-Insist relationship, and how internal changes in Insist affect its external partners.
[123] Ibid.; Salminen, 2006: 14.
[124] Beside Indonesia, Kepa also has had an information officer stationed in an environmental NGO in Thailand since 1998.
[125] Interview with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006.

Social Movements but when he tried to continue to the second stage, suddenly, he said, "Insist did not want to do it – after one year of preparation."[126]

On the other hand, the information officer also revealed that he experienced a similar situation within Kepa, his own organisation, due to Kepa's organisational restructuring process. Myrttinen admitted that he sometimes felt that he was being abandoned as there was very little feedback and an unclear structure and few specific objectives from Kepa in Helsinki. For example, he said, "When I started (working in 2003) I was coordinating all Kepa's field offices and partner (organisations) to the World Social Forum in Mumbai which took up about four months of my work." He continued, "But when I finished that, there was supposed to be follow up from Helsinki but [then] nothing happened."[127]

This lack of feedback and clarity appears to have been a chronic problem in Kepa. The previous Kepa information officer at Insist also made similar complaints, and other Kepa evaluation reports over the years have identified these officers' frustration.[128] On top of that, high turn-over of staff in Kepa headquarters added to the officers' problems: "They changed so fast and they don't keep the papers," he said.[129] However, Myrttinen observed that with the progression of the restructuring process at Kepa, things had started to improve.[130] Thus while much will be made in this dissertation of the disorganisation among local NGOs, this trend is one that is common among the sector as a whole.

Another challenge that the Kepa officer encountered related to reporting. It takes a lot of time to get reports from Insist. He suggested they are too "action oriented" with busy schedules and heavy workloads, and that writing reports was not seen as a priority for them. In contrast, international NGOs prioritise this type of administration. According to Myrttinen, "It is important to put something on paper to make sure something is happening."[131]

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[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] See Salminen, 2006: 16; For examples of the evaluation reports, see Salminen 2006; Avonius 2002.
[129] Interview with Henry Myrttinen, 16 October 2006. Over his three years working in Indonesia, the information officer stated that he had to deal with 13 different Kepa Indonesia-desk officers at the headquarters back in Finland. He mentioned Finnish law which guarantees people's job while they are away to take sabbatical leave, and maternity and paternity leave, as one of the reasons behind the existence of temporary staff.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.

Insist staff also mentioned this reporting issue as a challenge in working with Kepa.[132] They see reporting more as a burden and have actually logged official complaints with Kepa about it. They consider writing four reports in a year as being too much. However, Kepa insists that this reporting is vital and that the quantity they ask for is not excessive. Interestingly, Insist staff mentioned the issue of reporting as the *only* challenge they face in working with Kepa.[133] Otherwise they were generally satisfied with the relationship.

Lessons From the Relationship between Insist and Kepa

From the preceding discussion, we can identify several factors which have contributed to the reasons why the relationship between Insist and Kepa went well. Part of the reason why the relationship works is because Kepa and Insist had similar ideals and similar broad objectives. In other words, they were very close in their ideological orientation thus there was no element of local NGOs' resistance that tends to exist in other relationships between international and Indonesian NGOs.

An additional reason why the relationship went well is because Kepa's slow organisational change, unclear organisational structure and high staff turn-over at its headquarters meant that it virtually ignored its relationship with Insist. In fact, these organisational problems also probably – perhaps ironically – helped the relationship. In other words, the relationship works well because Kepa put little energy into it and did not try to control Insist. This condition can be seen as one of the factors that contributed to Insist being able to gain such freedom and equality in its relationship with Kepa.

Although Insist and Kepa had similar ideals, and similar broad objectives, the relationship between the two organisations worked because the international NGO unusually went out of its way to treat the local NGO as an equal partner. Secondly the international NGO itself was going through a period of internal restructuring that led to a lack of focus and disorganisation in its relationship with its Indonesian counterpart. These factors emerge as reasons why the relationship between Insist and Kepa was a success (using their own indicators of success mentioned earlier namely the

[132] Reporting consists of a narrative report (program activities report) and a financial report. Other obligations include Insist must "hire an independent auditor to audit the accounts and do book keeping," and "to keep the vouchers [receipts] for six years after the actual years of activities" (Partnership Agreement Between KEPA and Insist, 2006),

[133] Other concerns on the part of Insist, related to the uncertainty of their cooperation as Kepa is completing its organizational change, but this complaint is one devolving from an extraordinary set of circumstances.

existence of a continuous relationship or support), and thus have shed light on influential factors for a successful relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs.

Several points emerge from this discussion which are worthy of note and which will be examined further in later chapters. First, the flexible and informal nature of NGO relationships needs to be highlighted for attention. This informality can be seen in the absence of clear or focused job descriptions for Kepa's information officer stationed at Insist and Insist activists, and in the way these two organisations evolved and restructured themselves. Although most NGOs and their proponents consider their flexibility to be a positive feature (because it is linked to and promotes values such as informality, anti-bureaucracy, anti-establishment, egalitarianism), it turned out that this flexibility caused frustration and problems, both internally in the two organisations, and in the relationship between them.

A second theme that arises from the section on the Kepa-Insist relationship concerns how international and local NGOs form their relationships. Discussion about how Insist and Kepa came to know each other illustrates the strength of the professional networks of the Insist leadership. Kepa got to know and approach Insist from its network of organisations in Indonesia. Of equal importance was the leadership's own experience in the development sector and their visions, which brought them into cooperation with Kepa. This situation reveals that strong links between international and local NGOs are to a large extent dependent on relations among domestic NGOs in Indonesia. Obviously, networks and the "brand name" of individual NGO leaders, along with the endorsement of other NGOs in the sector are critical for local NGOs which want to become known by, and establish relations with, international NGOs. This condition implies that for local NGOs without an influential figure, a long reputation or a big network of allies, the chances of being successful in making relations with international organisations are rather bleak. This discussion raises broader issues of who gets the foreign funding and why, along with questions about rivalry among NGOs. Subsequent chapters will address this issue, chapter four will discuss international development funding mechanisms while chapter five will discuss the micropolitics of local NGOs and the relations among domestic NGOs.

How Insist and Kepa established their cooperation also reveals that it was Kepa who initiated the meeting and searched for the local partner organisation. A potential contradiction arises here. What does this circumstance say about the nature of the

relationship between local and international NGOs: who actually needs who in the relationship? Here, it appears that it was the international NGO which needed a local partner. This prompts us to rethink the widespread notion in the development sector that it is generally only the local NGOs that seek international backing. It also makes us question the common perception about the asymmetrical nature of relations between international and local NGOs. Through discussion in chapter five, this thesis will attempt to investigate these issues by looking at the perspectives of the NGO activists themselves on their relationships, particularly on challenges they encounter in working with each other, a topic that also arises in the next section.

When a Relationship Breaks Down: Insist and IMD

Having scrutinised a relationship between a local and international NGO in which both organisations considered the relationship to be successful, now I will look at a relationship which broke down: that between Insist and The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (IMD). I will provide a brief overview of IMD, followed by a discussion of its relationship with Insist. This discussion focuses once again on the two parties' perceptions of their relationship and challenges they encountered.

An Overview of IMD

IMD was established in 2000 by seven Dutch mainstream political parties with a mandate to encourage the process of democratisation in young democracies by working with political parties.[134] In this respect, IMD was one part of a much larger growth of "democracy" aid provided by advanced democracies to countries undergoing democratic transition in the 1990s and 2000s. Specifically, the organisation declares that it supports activities in three broad categories which, as of early 2009, are stated as "1. Joint initiatives by parties to improve the democratic system in their country; 2. The institutional development of political parties; 3. Efforts to improve relations between political parties, civil society and the media."[135] IMD's background, being the product of political parties, with a specific aim makes it a very different organisation to that of Kepa. IMD is a much more mainstream and conservative organisation.

IMD started working in Indonesia in 2003 with a program the organisation called *Sekolah Demokrasi* [Democracy Schools]. This program has two aims, as stated in

[134] http://www.nimd.org/page/about_nimd [accessed on 19 January 2009].
[135] Ibid.

its program profile, namely: "to train young regional politicians and activists in democratic values and create a new generation of politicians who can build bridges between the civil society and political institutions."[136] The decision to create the *Sekolah Demokrasi* program, as stated in IMD's 2005 Annual Report, came after "widespread consultations during the identification phase" which "led to the conclusion" that IMD's aims could "best be reached by supporting democracy education at the regional level, building bridges between political and civil society in Indonesia."[137] IMD envisioned *Sekolah Demokrasi* as a political education training program for local politicians at the district level.[138]

IMD's decision to be involved in a long-term program in Indonesia was influenced by "the complex political culture in Indonesia and the new democratic space that has emerged since the reforms that commenced in 1998."[139] According to the IMD consultant in Indonesia, initially the organisation wanted to work with Indonesian political parties but because of the condition of these parties, and the fact that IMD could not find suitable political parties who wanted to work with IMD at that time, IMD decided to work with civil society groups instead.[140] IMD then approached Mansour Fakih, who we have already seen was well-known for his experience in providing political training, recommended by an IMD acquaintance.[141] This suggests that it was IMD who first sought out Insist and it came to know Insist through the reputation of Insist's leader and an informal link. This again, suggests the important role an individual's profile can play as the public face of an NGO in Indonesia, and that international NGOs need local NGOs too.

The Breakdown

IMD and Insist's relationship started in 2003 with several initial meetings, followed by Insist carrying out a needs assessment to gauge the feasibility of setting up the

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[136] http://81.23.231.81/programme/indonesia [accessed on 19 January 2009]. The second aim is a modification as up to 2007, IMD stated the program's two aims are "to train young regional politicians, women and activists on democratic values and practices, and, to help educate the next generation of democratic politicians in Indonesia." (See for example, IMD, 2006: 41).

[137] IMD, 2006: 41. As will be seen later, Insist was also involved in this consultation and identification phase.

[138] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007.

[139] IMD, 2006: 41.

[140] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007.

[141] Ibid. Prior to making the approach, IMD had already hired an Indonesian, Benny Subianto, to become its consultant in Indonesia. According to Benny Subianto, it was he who collected information about Mansour Fakih and suggested Mansour to IMD in the Netherlands.

school in five regions across Indonesia.[142] However, Insist and IMD got into a serious disagreement which resulted in Insist pulling out of the program. This case made waves in NGO circles in Indonesia for some time in 2004. It was unusual for a local NGO to pull out of a program. Usually, it is the international NGO which cuts off a relationship. IMD and Insist have different perceptions on the breakdown and on the causes of their disagreement.

IMD perceived Insist as being too "idealistic" and too "rigid." According to Benny Subianto, the IMD consultant in Indonesia, IMD and Insist started their relationship with IMD hiring Insist to conduct a needs assessment for the *Sekolah Demokrasi* program in October 2003. But the needs assessment report, which IMD wanted to use to create the blue print of *Sekolah Demokrasi*, turned out to be "not convincing" with "a lot of political jargon" for IMD.[143] "We knew that Insist is always against neoliberalism, capitalism blah blah blah, and were fighting for the people," the IMD Consultant said. But IMD still hoped that Insist could revise the document and discuss how to improve it.[144] Benny elaborated:

> The blueprint should not refer (*mengacu)* to one rigid ideology. We (the IMD) are not against neoliberalism - it is okay, but it (Insist) should realise that as an organisation, IMD consists of rightwing groups as well as leftwing groups. Therefore, [they] should not stiffly refer to one particular ideology only. But with Insist, it's their ideology first. There are many principles of anti-neoliberalism that are good. It is not that I am not supporting anti-neoliberalism, but also when this anti-neoliberalism becomes just a jargon, a mantra, that is dangerous too.[145]

There was thus a fundamental difference of political vision between IMD and Insist (suggesting that, going back to the discussion in the previous section, one reason that Kepa and Insist could work together was that they were ideologically like-minded).

Furthermore, IMD was interested in Insist because of what it saw as Insist's association with the basic principles of democracy, which IMD viewed in mainstream liberal-democratic terms. But it turned out Insist had a more populist version. To illustrate this, Benny Subianto shared his account of what he claimed was a "very tense meeting" between IMD and Insist in Bogor in 2004. He explained, "when being asked about what Insist's concept of democracy was, Insist answered: well, pro-people [*ya berpihak ke rakyat*] blah blah blah, (and) that they would consult the peo-

[142] Interviews with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007; Saleh Abdullah, 12 October 2006.
[143] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

ple."[146] Even in a situation when what the people wanted was something very undemocratic (such as undemocratic local practices), according to the IMD Consultant, Insist still insisted that it would attend to locals' concerns and customs.[147]

Insist's pro-people ideology raised two concerns for IMD: ideological and technical. At the ideological level, IMD favoured a universal concept of democracy. The organisation did not want to use the term local democracy, as, according to Benny Subianto, this term has a meaning that "could be twisted [*dipelintir*]."[148] He explained further, "We want universal democracy with a local context, yet this does not mean localising universal democracy as it is dangerous: Suharto adopted this approach. He localised everything during the New Order era."[149] Benny continued:

> Insist disagreed with us. [Insist believes] democratic principles that you would like to develop in an area should depend on the people there. [Yet] we have to admit that in principle, many places [in Indonesia] are anti-democracy. That is why they [Insist] claimed that we promoted "pre-designed democracy" as if IMD already has a certain design of democracy which would be enforced on the program participants in Indonesia.[150]

On the technical level, Insist's "let the people decide" approach invited IMD to accuse Insist of not having the ability to translate its ideas into concrete action. According to Benny, "the most difficult thing about Insist's proposal is [that] they could not translate their ideas into something operational."[151] He added, "we are not talking about an academic paper [here] where you can do anything. But this is for *kabupaten* [district]-level local politicians. We need something concrete."[152] This accusation is ironic as operationally speaking, Insist activists have decades of work experience in the field. But it also points to a gap between Insist's grandiose rhetoric and the reality of program implementation, as perceived by the donors.

In addition, IMD was concerned because Insist rejected the idea of administering the program through a national steering committee consisting of respected academics and or Indonesian democrats, to which Insist would be accountable. The idea behind having this committee was that IMD envisaged the program being "owned" by Indonesians.[153] IMD interpreted Insist's rejection of this model as unwillingness to be

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[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid. See also IMD, 2006

transparent and accountable. The IMD consultant stated "they wanted their friends to be appointed as committee members, and rejected certain names [of committee members] that Insist thought would not be fair to them. This is a matter of accountability."[154] He went even further by saying that Insist refused to be audited.

Underlying IMD's account of its disagreement with Insist was IMD's deep disappointment with Insist's unwillingness to compromise, which led to a failure to reach consensus, particularly after the death of Mansour Fakih.[155] Benny Subianto said that Insist's needs assessment presentation was held in a seminar format attended by around fifty people who were representatives of IMD, politicians and, academics there by invitation. This Insist seminar was heavily criticised. In the aftermath, IMD suggested that Insist revise its concept draft. However, he expressed that Insist staff were "quite confident with what they had already produced" and repeatedly refused suggestions for revisions conveyed in several meetings and through IMD's long comments sent to them afterwards.[156]

Insist, on the other hand, accused IMD (including Indonesians who were involved in the program) of trying to "import" and impose their own ideology on Indonesia, thus totally neglecting the local context.[157] While Insist believed that if the program was to be successful, it had to be about the local people. "For us," Saleh Abdullah explained, "democracy must take sides to solve the problem of injustice; therefore, the *Sekolah Demokrasi* we envisioned does not start with theories but begins with real problems (of the people) and how to solve them. That is what democracy is."[158] As an illustration, Saleh shared his experience in conducting an assessment in East Nusa Tenggara, where he interviewed a woman at a traditional market in a place called Sikka. He questioned her on the meaning of democracy. The woman answered saying that she did not see the importance of it. He cited the woman's strong response: "What good does it do me? What matters for me is whether or not democracy could address economic injustice and poverty. I do not care what people say about democracy." Saleh continued, "This kind of democracy is exactly what we [Insist] desire."[159] Instead, Insist offered a bottom-up and decentralised model of democratic

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[154] Ibid.
[155] Mansour Fakih passed away shortly after the seminar where Insist presented its need assessments reports.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 13 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Don K. Marut, 16 August 2007.
[158] Interview with Saleh Abdullah, 13 October 2006.
[159] Ibid.

education, in which local participants would design the curriculum (which is explained more below).

When Insist presented this assessment result in a seminar, Saleh said they were heavily criticised by other participants. According to him, a prominent Indonesian political analyst labelled their research result as "categorically *kacau* [incoherent]." Saleh quoted the analyst's comment on Insist's concept: "Democracy has universal principles. If it clashes with the people in the market in Sikka, you should not attend to those people."[160] To his critic Saleh recalls replying, "if so, according to the democratic principles that I understand, a state should be secular and there should be no religous-based state," and he continued, "let us together then make an appeal to the (Indonesian) president to liquidate the religious affairs department as its existence is against democratic principles."[161] When his critics disagreed with this proposal, Saleh responded that his showed, "there is no such thing as universal democracy."[162] "In the end," Saleh self-reflectingly suggested, "the project [Insist-IMD] failed because of ideological problems and a deadlock of discussion."[163]

Another principal source of disagreement, according to Insist people, was the centralistic approach that IMD introduced, including by creating a national blueprint for the *Sekolah Demokrasi* and appointing "Jakarta people" as steering committee members.[164] As Roem put it, "I do not believe that all the social transformation that you think of can only be done by the elites from Jakarta," said Roem. He concluded, "We [i.e. Insist and IMD] have a different starting point, we depart from different beliefs. Though we perhaps share the same terminology, we have very different basic assumptions." He also said that since he considered it as a matter of principle he refused to compromise on this issue: "If the compromise is on a technical issue, that is alright, but for this one, no way."[165]

Insist people also objected to the lecture style of training that IMD favoured, because Insist believed that the top-down approach does not work effectively at the grassroots level. As Don explained IMD's idea:

> They bring the Jakarta intellectuals to give lectures here and there; people who most likely don't have the ability to travel to remote areas and

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 13 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Don K. Marut, 16 August 2007.
[165] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.

> do not posses the ability to conduct popular education the way Insist does. No way would democratic education, conducted by inviting people to the city and training them in a hotel, be effective.[166]

Roem further explained that, "our philosophy is to work with what exists in the community instead of [providing] something unfamiliar" therefore, "even if the existing situation [local practices in the community] contradicts our ideals, fine for me. That condition is indeed the challenge of transformation."[167] As an illustration, Roem shared his experience of working with the indigenous community of Kei Island in Southeast Maluku in the 1990s:

> It took me six years working in that community and convincing the indigenous council [*majelis adat*] to implement a more democratic voting-style and to include women in their general assembly. I was even able to do so not by design but slowly just as the opportunity arose. In a strong patriarchal and feudalistic society like that, I would straight away be butchered [*diparangi*] if I, newly arrived, just came and lectured them about gender equality and democracy. We can't just come and expect people to change their hundreds of years of tradition in one night. Even after these people adopted gender equality and democratic values, they would not recognise the term *jender* [gender] or *demokrasi* [democracy] as I never discuss those terminologies with them. In six years (I was there) never once have I mentioned these words as what is important is their understanding and willingness to implement the concepts, not the definitions.[168]

In concluding his story, Roem thus reasserted his conviction, "I believe that many existing local systems in Indonesia could develop their democratic format themselves. I believe so because I have lived among these people for a long time." He continued, "But if we use the western standard of measurement, well, they are not compatible."[169]

Insist's principle of empowering local communities, according to Insist people, caused them to refuse to work with an IMD-appointed board from Jakarta. Insist claimed that doing so was not what Insist signed on for. "We felt bound hand and foot half-way into the process," explained Saleh, "these people from the Netherlands came with an agenda and they already determined people they wanted to employ and crossed out the names we recommended."[170]

According to Insist, the initial agreed-upon plan was that it was Insist, together with its NGO network across Indonesia, who would implement the program. This would

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[166] Interview with Don K. Marut, 16 August 2007.
[167] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 August 2007.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Interview with Saleh Abdullah, 13 October 2006.

mean that the local people in the communities they worked with would be the highest decision makers, not "outsiders." In Insist's plan, each local *Sekolah Demokrasi* would have its own board, which in Insist's terms would be called *Dewan Guru* [Board of Teachers], consisting of a group of locals from various backgrounds such as academics from local universities, community and religious leaders and local politicians. Insist envisioned these people would decide on curriculum and program design appropriate for their community's school, and act as facilitators themselves.[171]

Consequently, in Insist's plan, having local boards would leave the people at the national level in Jakarta with only the minimal role of coordinating. Insist staff alleged that this is the real reason why IMD did not agree with Insist: IMD has promised several prominent Indonesian academics positions in a national board that they would create, which would enable them to decide on the curriculum. "No way," said Roem, "We could not see eye to eye if this was the case."[172]

Insist was seriously insulted by the establishment of this board and conveyed their opinion to IMD. However, according to the IMD consultant, Insist misunderstood the plan. He explained, "Perhaps our mistake was that in the beginning we did not properly explain to Insist that they, as implementing agency, should be accountable too. But this is all purely logical."[173] According to him, IMD's arrangement was to work with Insist and others in creating a blueprint for their *Sekolah Demokrasi* [Democracy School] program. Then they would have NGOs in the five regions to implement this program through an open bidding process.[174] IMD offered Insist to work in one region, without going through the bidding process, in an attempt to "compromise." But Insist rejected the offer and heavily criticised the bidding system which they perceived as evidence of IMD's neo-liberal approach and as unsuitable in the Indonesian context.[175]

The conflict became rather bitter with accusations flying between both sides. The IMD consultant said Insist's real motivation in rejecting IMD's plan to have a national steering committee and bidding process was because Insist wanted the entire

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[171] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 August 2007.
[172] Ibid. The people on the board included Dr. Ignas Kleden, Dr. Daniel Sparinga, Dr. Thamrin Tomagola and Ratih Hardjono.
[173] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007.
[174] Open bidding is a typical method of international funding agencies to implement development programs. NGOs and development contractors would then compete to get the funds. This is again part of neo liberal philosophy, which is in contrast with Insist and Kepa's style of cooperation. Chapter 3 will discuss the issue of international mechanism funding further.
[175] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 August 2007.

program funds for themselves.[176] On the other hand, Insist accused the IMD consultant and the people on the national steering committee as only being interested in profiting themselves.[177]

In the midst of these complaints, Insist took an extraordinary step. It released a document which it called a White Paper which explained its account of the story to other NGOs - internationally and locally – as well as the wider community. Insist explained that their target was the Dutch political parties who funded IMD. However, the IMD consultant argued that circulating the document was Insist's attempt to sabotage IMD's bidding process. He said:

> I think they expect that none of the [local] NGOs would be willing to participate in the open bidding [after reading the White Paper]. But so many NGOs applied. We received around ninety bidders from five regions.[178]

According to Insist, it was able to draw attention to the practices of IMD in Indonesia and the program was suspended for a while. Insist claimed that up to 2007 there has been no *Sekolah Demokrasi* in Indonesia. However, according to the IMD consultant, the program was running.[179] He admits that progress was slow as without Insist they basically needed to build everything from scratch.[180]

What to Make Out of the Conflict Between Insist and IMD

We can identify several matters of interest from analysing the collapse of the relationship between Insist and IMD. First, when we compare this breakdown to the relationship of Insist with Kepa, above all we can see that it was the lack of ideological similarity between Insist and IMD that proved fatal to their partnership. Both Insist and IMD agreed on the importance of democracy, yet the two organisations differ on what the concept actually means. IMD believes in "universal", standardised liberal

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[176] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007.

[177] Interviews with Saleh Abdullah, 13 October 2006; Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007; Don K. Marut, 16 August 2007. When being asked for clarification, both parties denied these accusations.

[178] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007. However, he admitted that the first bidding process was only able to select NGOs in three out of five regions. Benny said that IMD experienced difficulties in finding suitably qualified NGOs.

[179] The schools started in 2006, adopted some of Insist's ideas of incorporating local wisdom, but with a standardised curriculum and modules. For more information about *Sekolah Demokrasi*, see its profile on http://www.komunitasdemokrasi.or.id/sd.php [accessed on 5 January 2009]; http://www.nimd.org/page/indonesia [accessed on 5 January 2009].

[180] The program is run by an organisation which was set up by the people who were initially asked by IMD to be the members of the supervisory board for Insist. Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007. For information about this organisation, *Komunitas Indonesia Untuk Demokrasi* [Indonesian Community for Democracy], see its webpage: http://www.komunitasdemokrasi.or.id [accessed on 5 January 2009].

democracy, while Insist believes in popular democracy. This irreconcilable difference underlay the break down of the relationship between Insist and IMD.

Second, the discussion has provided an introduction on how international NGOs operate: they have certain sets of fixed standards and procedures. These are central to the way most international NGOs operate. Local NGOs usually have a weak bargaining position in dealing with those standards. If a local NGO tries to oppose international NGOs on such matters, they will almost certainly lose their funding support and they will most likely end up being marginalised within the NGO sector.

The above case is to some extent unusual. Insist chose to prioritise its values over international funding. It took a path not of hidden, subversion and non-compliance, but of frontal – even anti-hegemonic – opposition. But not many domestic NGOs choose to make such a trade off. The fact that IMD's program attracted the interests of ninety other local NGOs is a reflection of this.[181] Insist could take this stance and survive partly because it did not rely on just one international funding agency. It already has a steady relationship with Kepa, among other international donors that Insist had been working with. Insist was able to do so because it already had a good reputation in the NGO sector. Another reason was that Insist's flexible and voluntary-based nature meant that most of its leaders did not rely on Insist as their income source and thus has greater personal leeway to stand up for their beliefs.

Third, another source of disagreement between the two NGOs was accountability. International NGOs often consider local NGOs resist accountability. This implies that when coming to work in a country, international NGOs tend to have preconceived ideas about how programs should run, including how accountability is achieved.[182] Usually there is not much space for negotiation. The local context as well tends to get shunted aside.

However, the discussion of accountability in the Insist-IMD example begs questions about accountability itself: to whom are NGOs accountable? Is it to their donors or to the people they work with and represent at the grass roots? Why do local NGOs, as Insist has demonstrated in this chapter, appear to be uncomfortable with the issue of accountability? What are the underlying issues behind it? I will explore this issue of accountability more in chapter six and there I suggest that part of the answer is that because international NGOs exploit this issue as a way to assert their standards and

[181] See chapter four for scrutiny of the issue of international funding mechanism.
[182] For example, see Eliott, 1987: 60-64.

control in the relationship with local partners. Local NGOs, with their flexibility and unclear internal procedures, are prone to being labelled as unaccountable. In other words, the international organisation's standard of accountability is not always compatible with and adoptable in the local NGOs' context.

Conclusion

My purpose in this chapter has been to ground the discussion about relations between international and local NGOs in subsequent chapters in a close case study that reveals all the complexity and the contention that infuses NGO life in Indonesia. This chapter has thus introduced two detailed case studies of relationships between international and local NGOs through presenting the organisational journey of Insist, and its successful and unsuccessful relationships with Kepa and IMD.

As I have suggested earlier, I use the account of the NGO themselves as a starting point for my analysis in an attempt to look beyond NGO rhetoric and to present the reality of an NGO's daily life and its relationship with international NGOs. More importantly, this methodology helps us to understand the dynamics of power relations between the international and local NGOs. In subsequent chapters I will look more closely at many of the key issues raises in this study of Insist.

The first part of the chapter's discussion about the formative ideology of Insist, its powerful leaders and their backgrounds, and Insist's interactions with international organisations has provided an insight into the everyday world of an NGO in Indonesia. The complex case of Insist reveals the organisation's struggle to ensure the rhetoric of its founders corresponded with the reality of program implementation and sustainability.

The Insist case study also has introduced several issues which I argue are important in shaping and influencing the relationship between international and local NGOs. First, internally, many NGOs are characterised by weak management, hierarchy and non-egalitarian generational conflict, all of which are at odds with the idealist rhetoric associated with the NGO sector. Second, individuals play a disproportionately strong role in the NGO sector in Indonesia. I elaborate more on these issues in chapter five.

The second part of this chapter examined the relationship between Insist and two international NGOs. The discussion has shed light on different spectrums of international NGOs' variety, as IMD and Kepa have exhibited. The Insist-Kepa relationship

survived arguably because Kepa had a fluid structure (due to its own internal reforms) and because it went out of its way to develop a partnership of equals with Insist. The discussion demonstrated that the flexible elements of the two organisations were one of the determinant factors. If Insist and Kepa had clear and focused job descriptions, their relationship would be much harder to sustain. In part, it is arguable that the relationship prospered precisely because Kepa was not focused on its work with Insist, and thus made few demands of it. This indicates how influential an international NGO is in the relationship, even for an organisation with strong counter-hegemonic idealism like Insist. This model of relationship is rare in Indonesia. Most relationships between international NGOs and local NGOs occur on a short-term and project-oriented basis.

The discussion of Insist and IMD has drawn our attention to factors which can trigger the discontinuation of a relationship between international and local NGOs. Ideological similarity appears to be a decisive factor. The discussion of the failure of Insist's relationship with IMD has also introduced the potential dissonances which can be caused by funding accountability.

Both types of cases presented here are not common in Indonesia. The relationship with Kepa was unusual because there was even relatively no "off-stage" or hidden resistance from Insist. The breakdown of the relationship with IMD was unusual because Insist did not use "weapons of the weak" but engaged in frontal conflict. Most relationships between local and international NGOs in Indonesia tend to be neither so ideal nor so problematic. This reflects the nature of Indonesian NGOs as being heavily influenced by or even dependant on international NGOs. Because of asymmetrical power relations between local and international NGOs, resistance tends to be both common and muted. What the Insist-Kepa and Insist-IMD relationships have served to do is to introduce some of the biggest themes in the relationships between international and local NGOs in colourful detail. I will expand on these themes in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Four

The Politics of NGO Funding in Indonesia

Introduction

One of the issues that emerged from the discussion in the previous chapters is the significance of funding. Chapter three introduced the notion of how international NGOs try to enforce an agenda of accountability. In addition, as has been pointed out in chapter two, previous authors writing on the topic of the relations between international and local NGOs in Indonesia have isolated funding as both the core and the most sensitive aspect of the relationship. For instance, although Eldridge and Hadiwinata do not discuss the issue of the relationship between international and local NGOs at length, both of these writers argue that international funding is the lifeblood of Indonesian NGOs.[1] Meanwhile Fakih has shown the unequal nature of many relationships between the two classes of NGOs, and argued that the dominance of international donor agencies is one of the problems confronting Indonesian NGOs.[2] But all of these accounts have not provided much detailed explanation of the mechanics of funding. They have not explained how international NGOs use funding to impress their agenda on Indonesian NGOs.

This chapter thus analyses the issue of funding in the everyday politics of the relationship between international and local NGOs. It aims to explain the international NGOs' funding mechanisms, and links them with the concepts of hegemony, *public transcript* and *hidden transcript* of resistance introduced in chapter one. In this chapter, therefore, I show how international NGOs use the financial dependence of the domestic Indonesian NGOs to impose conditions and standards of behaviour that are determined purely by the international NGOs. This circumstance leads us to an inescapable reality: the international NGOs are able to enforce a hegemonic agenda. Crucially, however, I find that this domination is not complete. Local NGOs do have special tactics by which they attempt to defend their own autonomy and challenge

[1] See Eldridge, 1985, 1995; Hadiwinata, 2003.
[2] See Fakih, 1995.

the will of the international agencies. An example of this is their efforts to achieve financial independence. Therefore, this chapter argues that although we find that there are hegemonic power relations between them, the hegemony of the international NGOs is resisted by local players.

NGO Funding

At the heart of the relationship between international and local NGOs is the issue of funding.[3] Although 'self-sustainability' has been popular NGO jargon for many years, in reality most NGOs in developing countries continue to depend on foreign organisations as their main source of funds. Many people criticise the asymmetrical power relationships between international and local NGOs, as the result of the latter's dependence on foreign funding. As an international consultant puts it:

> Once funding enters the equation, the relationship can change fundamentally from one of partnership to donor-client. Indigenous civil society organisations often resent the inequality that tends to pervade relationships based too much on the availability and provision of funds.[4]

Clark argues that "Partnership implies a basic equality"; however, "this is not possible when the relationship is characterised by money flowing in one direction and accountability in the other."[5] As a result, according to Smilie, some major international NGOs have become for local NGOs "what government was too often to them: a bureaucratic, project-oriented, paternalistic source of money."[6]

In terms of NGO funding sources, as chart 4.1 below demonstrates, international NGOs receive funds from government and citizens in the Northern countries. International NGOs then make use of the funds by forming relationships with local NGOs. Some international NGOs raise large proportions of their funds privately. However, Northern governments' development funds constitute the majority of international NGOs' funding sources. In this sense, international NGOs are similar to local NGOs: both depend on external funding sources. We can thus see that, in this regard, many international NGOs operate basically as intermediary agencies between Northern governments and local NGOS in Indonesia.

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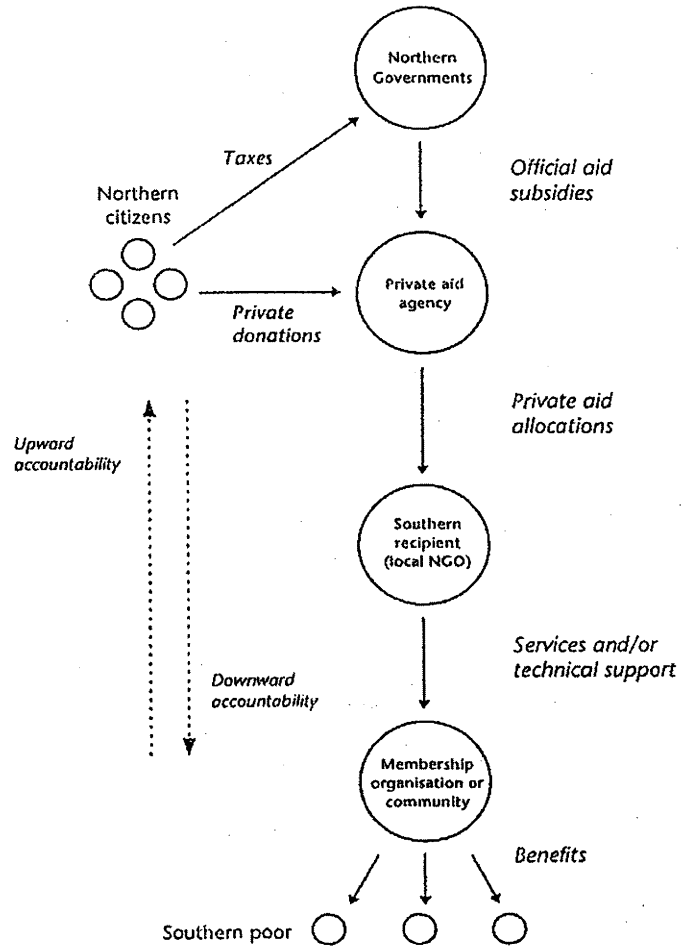
[3] Links with local NGOs mainly provide international NGOs with access to the domestic sphere in Indonesia, and the same links enable Indonesian NGOs to access a range of benefits like networks, material resources, ideas exchange, leverage and, most importantly, funding.
[4] McCarthy, 2000: 20.
[5] Clark, 2001: 27.
[6] Smillie, 1993: 35.



Biekart's simplified private aid chain.[7]

Basic Figures on NGO Funding in Indonesia

It is rather difficult to provide a chart explaining the exact amount of overall funding provided by international NGOs to Indonesian NGOs. The range of organisations and activities involved is very diverse and the task of sorting out the many activities and funding sources of NGOs is very difficult. The amount of funding can be from as little as US$ 10,000 to run a one-week workshop or training event, to US$ 1,000,000 for a two-year program.[8] Making this task even more difficult is the fact that most international NGOs tend to be discreet when disclosing detailed information about their funding. During my fieldwork, some NGOs readily shared informa-

[7] Biekart, 1999: 79.

[8] For example, Ford Foundation's grant database for its Indonesia program lists 193 grantees during the period 2004-2008. The large majority of the grantees are NGOs. On that list, the largest grant for an NGO is US$ 1.3 million for a two-year HIV/AIDS program. For the foundation's database, see http://www.fordfound.org/grants/database/searchresults?all&all&resultsPerPage=10&yearFrom=all&yearTo=all&amountFrom=ANY&amountTo=ANY&fields=all&regions=in&programs=all [accessed on 19 February 2009].

tion about their budgets. Others were willing to do so under certain conditions of confidentiality. Some publicly announced their budget.[9] But many do not, with the result that there is overall relatively little transparency in the world of international funding for Indonesian NGOs.

One method of getting an approximate figure of international NGO funding in Indonesia is by looking at the budgets in the annual reports of international NGOs.[10] As an illustration, CARE International Indonesia allocated US$ 35,062,000 for its projects in 2007.[11] Meanwhile, Save the Children UK assigned GBP 8,606,171 for its programs during 2006-2007.[12] The budget of World Vision International in Indonesia 2007 was US$ 41,946,458.[13] Furthermore, in 2007 the Asia Foundation announced that it was managing US$ 60 million in programs in Indonesia.[14] The combined 2007 annual budget of these four large international NGOs alone was thus more than US$ 150 million. As mentioned in chapter two, there are more than 100 registered international NGOs in Indonesia. Not all international NGOs have budgets as large as these four, and not all of their allocations are channelled exclusively to local NGOs. Therefore these figures are just to give a rough picture of how much money international NGOs operating in Indonesia have.[15]

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[9] For example, CETRO (Centre for Electoral Reform) is arguably the first NGO to publish its audit results in the newspaper (Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007). CETRO posted its audited balance sheet and expenses for the year 2000 on its webpage: http://www.cetro.or.id [accessed on 19 February 2009]. Another organisation which has been publicly announcing its annual audit result since 2006 is ICW (the Indonesian Corruption Watch). See http://www.antikorupsi.org [accessed on 20 February 2009]. In addition, in 2000, twenty-five BINGO ('Big NGOs' – a label for large, prominent NGOs in Indonesia) were surveyed for a civil society directory, and the survey included their funding sources (see Ibrahim, 2000). It should be noted that Law No. 16/2001 on Indonesian foundations and its revision, Law No. 28/2004, require a foundation to be audited yearly and display the audit result on a notice board of the foundation's office if the foundation receives external funding below the amount of Rp. 500 million or has assets of more than Rp. 20 billion. If the foundation receives funds above Rp. 500 million or has assets above Rp. 20 billion the foundation must publish its audit results in a local newspaper (see article 52 of both Law No. 16/2001 and Law No. 28/2004). However, many foundations ignore these requirements and continue to treat their funding as confidential.

[10] Most international NGOs do not publish a country-specific annual report but instead incorporate the country program into their international annual report. This obviously adds to the challenge of obtaining specific information about their funding operations in Indonesia.

[11] CARE International Indonesia 2008 Portfolio brochure.

[12] Of which 65% of the fund was for an emergency program in Aceh-Nias and another 17% % for an emergency program in Yogyakarta and Klaten. See Save The Children UK Annual Report 2007: 4-5.

[13] Again, a large part of the funding (US$ 18,059,659) was for the Aceh Program. See World Vision Indonesia, 2007: 23.

[14] Indonesia program overview brochure obtained from http://www.asiafoundation.org. The Asia Foundation also uploaded its tax return form for its tax exemption in its Headquarters on this webpage. The form revealed that during the period of October 2006-September 2007, the organisation provided US$ 7.1 million grants to close to 100 Indonesian NGOs.

[15] Another example of information on international NGO funding for local NGOs is when such an international NGO releases an open invitation announcement for local NGOs, such as the one made by Hivos to ask for proposals for € 435,000 block-grant funding for its gender, sexual rights and re-

A different way to come at an estimate of funding flows from international to local NGOs in Indonesia is by looking at the issue from other way around – that is to assess the amount of funding received by Indonesian NGOs from their international counterparts. For example, in 2005 Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW) received a total of over Rp. 4.7 billion (approximately US$ 470,000) from eight international NGOs.[16] Several prominent Indonesian NGOs' financial reports indicate that on average they receive around Rp. 1.5 Billion (approximately US$ 150,000) yearly from their international counterparts.[17]

Again, we cannot generalise because Indonesian NGOs, as with their international counterparts, have different sizes, capacities and activities, but the above figures do shed some light on the amount of money available at the receiving end.[18] We could estimate that an established, professional, mainstream Indonesian NGO could be obtaining around US$ 150,000 a year or more, but the number of local NGOs earning in the high hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars annually is likely to be very small.

Before further discussing funding, it should be noted that the above discussion is limited to international NGOs and local NGOs. Funding provided to Indonesia by multilateral and bilateral agencies, for example the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance (OECD) official development assistance (ODA), is measured in the billions of dollars.[19]

There are various ways in which multilateral and bilateral agencies channel their funding in Indonesia. It could be through working with the government (for example through technical cooperation), setting up an office or organisation for a specific project, and issuing an invitation to submit a proposal submission (in which case usually

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productive rights, and the rights of minority groups in Indonesia programs for the 2008-2010 period. Http://elektra.hivos.nl/index.php/content/download/8846/46625/file/Hivos%20%20Proposals%20Info%20Sheet%20English.pdf [accessed on 19 February 2009].

[16] The ICW 2004/2005 Audit Report in http://www.antikorupsi.org [accessed on 19 February 2009].

[17] Confidential reports; "Ulil Abshar: 1.4 Milyar Itu kecil" in *Hidayatullah*, 6 December2004, http://www.hidayatullah.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1499:ulil-abshar-q14-milyar-itu-kecilq&catid=71:wawancara&Itemid=73 [accessed on 20 February 2009].

[18] For example, the chance of receiving funding for NGOs working in the themes of democracy, good governance, pluralism and gender is evidently greater than those who are not focussing on the donor-favoured issues.

[19] For example, the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID) provided £34.4 million (approximately US$ 51 million) to Indonesia in 2007/2008 (see http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/indonesia-factsheet.pdf [accessed on 21 February 2009]), while the total grants disbursements of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donor countries to Indonesia in the year 2007 reached the amount of close to US$ 1.3 billion (see http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=ODA_RECIPIENT [accessed on 21 February 2009]).

parties like international NGOs and international development consulting companies compete to get funding – this is the more common practice). In addition, some agencies also work directly with a small number of local NGOs, which are usually well-established ones. A survey of twenty five prominent NGOs in Indonesia in 2000 revealed that 34% of their foreign funding comes from ODA.[20] While this chapter will not touch on the dynamics of government-local NGO funding relations, it should be borne in mind that ODA sources are also important for local NGOs.

Local NGO Dependence on International Funding

It is commonly understood that most Indonesian NGOs are highly dependent on international funding. So much so there is a popular joke among Indonesian NGO workers "*Marilah kita berdoa sesuai funding masing-masing*" ["Let us pray according to our own funding (source)"].[21] The joke derives from the fact that it is common for government officials at ceremonies in Indonesia to have prayers, which usually begin with the announcement of "*Marilah kita berdoa sesuai agama dan kepercayaan masing-masing*" ["Let us pray according to our own religion and belief"]. An international NGO director once shared an observation about the use of the term 'funding' within the Indonesian NGO community.[22] The American director, a long-time resident of Indonesia, recalled that one of his colleagues was addressed as "funding" by some local Indonesian NGO staff. The fact that local NGO staff would say, "*funding datang!*" ["here comes funding"] when they saw the international NGO officer visit the local NGO's office, according to this director, implied two things: "funding" has become a noun in the Indonesian language, but more importantly it also reflects the perception of local NGOs that the international NGO is a wellspring, not of water but rather of money.[23]

Available figures support the common perception that local NGOs are dependent on foreign funding. As an illustration, Sinaga notes that for his three case studies of Indonesian NGOs a very high percentage – between 85 to 100% – of their funding came from foreign donor agencies.[24] In addition, of twenty-two other organisations

[20] See Ibrahim, 2000: 11.
[21] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007.
[22] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007.
[23] Ibid.
[24] The percentage of funds and NGOs are as follows: 85% (CUCO-I), 97% (YLBHI) and 100% (Yasanti). See Sinaga, 1993: 142-145.

surveyed in Sinaga's 1993 study 52% were started with foreign capital.[25] An assessment by Ibrahim of twenty-five prominent Indonesian NGOs in 2000 revealed that international funding made up 65% of these organisations' revenue, with 64% percent of the international funding coming from international NGOs and seven out of these twenty-five groups dependent completely or nearly 100% on international donors for their financing.[26] While a more recent study of NGOs still revealed that, although they have made more efforts to raise funding domestically, the majority of NGOs in Indonesia are still reliant on foreign funding as their major source of income.[27]

The case of the YLBHI (Indonesian Legal Aid Institute Foundation), a prominent Indonesian NGO and a long time critic of the New Order government, provides a classic example of of the importance of international funding. The NGO has suffered significantly after the fall of the Suharto government as its foreign donors discontinued their funding.[28] The story of YLBHI was mentioned frequently during interviews with local NGO workers. YLBHI's first major blow was in the mid 1990s, when the government rejected foreign assistance from the Dutch government, which channelled through Dutch NGOs, including YLBHI's main donor, NOVIB. This was the result of the Brussels Incident discussed in chapter two.[29] After *reformasi*, YLBHI continued to suffer as its major donors stopped their funding due to, in the words of Antlov et al., "management quality and internal governance issues, particularly the conflicts between the board of trustees and the executive office."[30] In July 2003, the lack of operational finance saw the number of YLBHI staff in fourteen branch offices plunge from 410 to 172, and it only had Rp. 5 million (approximately US$ 500) left in its account.[31]

The high dependence of Indonesian NGOs on international financial support has made the sector vulnerable to the accusation that it serves the interests of foreign donors over the interests of beneficiaries (a topic I return to in greater depth in chapters

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[25] Ibid.: 142-145. The survey also found that 68% of these twenty-two organisations consider a foreign donor agency as their first priority for sources of funds (Ibid: 144).
[26] Ibrahim, 2000: 10. International donors in this survey include international NGOs and official development assistance from multinational and bilateral funding agencies.
[27] Tetanel, 2004: 115-116. Tetanel surveyed NGOs in Yogyakarta, which indicated that six out of the eight NGOs studied relied on international donors for their main source of income.
[28] See Bunnell, 1996: 184, quoted in Hadiwinata, 2003: 100.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Antlov et al., 2006: 156.
[31] See "Balada Lokomotif yang Terseok," in *Tempo* 36/XXII, 3 November 2003. See also "Mobil Kijang Pun Melayang," in *Tempo* 09/XXII, 28 April 2003, "Lokomotif Kehabisan Solar," in *Tempo* 09/XXII, 28 April 2003, "Melego Meja, Mengharap Maitua," in *Tempo* 36/XXXII, 3 November 2003.

four and six). There is an extensive debate over this issue, which has a long history in Indonesia.[32] In the New Order era some people accused the local Indonesian NGO community of selling themselves to suspect foreign interests that could undermine the sovereignty – but reading between the lines one could interpret them to mean the dignity – of the state. This nationalistic criticism still remains strong. As mentioned in chapter two, even in the post-*reformasi* period, when the relationship between NGOs and the Indonesian government vastly improved compared to the New Order era, leading government figures still remain suspicious of local NGOs and their connection with international NGOs.[33]

Another broad cluster of criticisms of local and international NGO funding relationships comes from the anti-developmentalist and anti-free market critics who perceive foreign-funded NGOs as instruments of neo-liberal agencies and interests.[34] Recently, however, the discourse has changed. Today some Indonesian critics attack funding relationships on the basis of religion. These critics, who are generally from Islamist groups, criticise Islamic NGOs that receive funding from Western NGOs as part of what religious hardliners see as the West's (and especially the United State) attempt to spread the principles of liberalism which "attack" Islam from within.[35] Thus, from the local NGO community itself and Indonesian society more broadly, there is a dominant sense that local NGOs are subordinate to the international NGOs because the former needs the funding of the latter. This reality is the cause of considerable angst.

I wish to make it clear that this power imbalance is one of the underlying realities of the NGO sector in Indonesia. The idealised rhetoric of civil society theorists (and the sector itself) falls flat when faced with the evidence that the international NGOs who distribute the money have more power than the local NGOs who depend on it. We

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[32] For example, see Hadiwinata 2003: 98-100; Lounela 2002; For discussions on Islamic organisations see Sabili (http://www.sabili.co.id); Hidayatullah (http://www.hidayatullah.com); Swaramuslim (http://swaramuslim.net)

[33] One could also refer to the government's allegedly draconian new laws on NGOs passed in 2008. Although the government claims such legislation is aimed at promoting transparency and accountability, many NGO workers see it as an attempt to reassert government control over the NGO sector.

[34] For discussion about anti-developmentalism see chapter one.

[35] For example, see Jaiz, 2002, 2004; Handrianto & Husaini, 2007; "Paham Liberal: Menjual Islam Demi Dolar" in http://swaramuslim.net/more.php?id=A1256_0_1_0_M [accessed on 25 February 2009], "Membongkar Kedok AKKBB" in http://sabili.co.id/index.php/20081111173/Indonesia-Kita/Membongkar-Kedok-AKKBB.htm [accessed on 25 February 2009]; "Di Sini ada CIA" in *Sabili*, No. 10/XII/3 Desember 2004; "Dari Pluralisme Sampai Gender" in *Sabili*, No. 10/XII/3 Desember 2004; "CIA dan Ford Foundation" in *Sabili*, No. 10/XII/3 Desember 2004.

will see in detail in the next section precisely how international NGOs enforce their agenda.

However, I also wish to remind the reader at this point that this situation is not the only reality. As we will explore later on, local NGOs do have the ability to passively resist the will of their international NGO donors by using the "weapons of the weak."

Towards a More Demanding Relationship

When discussing relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia, as mentioned in chapter two, long-time NGO workers usually point out how the relationship became more bureaucratic and more dependent on bilateral and multilateral donor agencies in the late 1990s, after *reformasi*. Roem Topatimasang suggests:

> Today ... they [international NGOs] now come in and just announce to local NGOs: we have this [certain] amount of funding to do this [particular] program and we want to cooperate with you [on that specific activity only]. [In the past] International and local NGOs developed their program together starting from scratch. It was even the international NGO who sometimes ended up drafting a proposal with ideas from local NGOs, and trying to get funding for the proposal.[36]

Also, since the late 1990s Don Marut says that international NGOs have developed an attitude that was "too managerial", which in turn has forced local NGOs to adopt such an approach. According to Don, NGOs nowadays are more concerned with "managerial and administrative standards" instead of their "program capacity." He continued, "dirty, hand-written proposals used to be more appreciated as it was the result that was important. But nowadays, it is the sophisticated proposal [*"proposal canggih"*] that gets approved."[37] These comments reflect a broad trend that is not only happening in Indonesia. Observing international NGOs practices in the late 1980s, Elliot notes:

> As their budgets rise – and given the current enthusiasm for the voluntary sector in official aid circles, both bilateral and multilateral, that now seems unstoppable – so they demand more and more projects on which to spend their money: most northern NGOs dislike a carryover of funds as much as any government department. This puts huge pressures on the local NGOs. They need to generate more projects, process more paper, [and] render more accounts.[38]

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[36] Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007.
[37] Interview with Don K. Marut, 25 October 2005.
[38] Elliott, 1987: 60.

On the other hand, there is one reason to assume the trend towards tighter control by international NGOs may not necessarily be as uniform as the informants suggest. There are different types of international NGOs with different managerial styles, which we could reasonably expect would result in different types of relationships with the local Indonesian NGOs. For example, international NGOs which do not rely on external funding for grants provision, such as the Ford Foundation, should accordingly have more freedom than other international NGOs which lack internal funding sources.[39] We should also expect that block grants extended over longer periods of time from some funding agencies, instead of project-based or program-based grants, should give greater freedom to international NGOs. Counter-intuitively therefore, when international NGOs still retain their autonomy, we can reasonably expect them to be less bureaucratic or managerial in their approach towards the local NGOs.

Yet the overwhelming opinion of veteran NGO workers is that the shift towards project-based relationships, such as that described by Don Marut, has been the dominant trend in the sector. This general shift has happened because, as discussed in chapter one, most donor agencies have taken up common themes, notably "strengthening civil society" and "promoting good governance". The entry of these terms into the Indonesian NGO vocabulary in recent years suggests that funding agencies, which are mostly bilateral and multilateral funding organisations, have had increasing influence on international NGOs from where the terms have in turn been transmitted to local NGOs.[40]

The International NGO Agenda Setting Process: What to Fund?

Several factors contribute to the process of determining an international NGO agenda when working in a specific country, such as Indonesia. These factors can basically be divided into two categories. The first group consists of factors which exist at the global or international level, and the second category comprises nationally-derived factors.

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[39] Ford has its own endowment fund thus it does not seek external funding for its activities. See <http://www.fordfound.org>.

[40] See chapter six for more discussion of this trend. Another example of the influence of foreign governments on the activities of international NGOs is the understanding, common among NGO workers, that even an international NGO's geographic work location can be influenced by the interests of the government of the NGO's country of origin. Anecdotal examples mentioned included the presence of PT. INCO, a Canadian nickel mining company, in South Sulawesi as supposedly behind the existence of CARE Canada's operations on the island since the early 1980s; and the preference of Australian NGOs to work in Eastern Indonesia is a result of the Australian government giving development priority to the area.

Factors included at the global level are the international NGO's broader agenda which mostly derives from, or is in line with, the mission statement established by the headquarters of the international NGO. The international agenda typically comes in the form of a relatively general agenda statement. For example, CARE USA's mission statement is "to serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world."[41] Following that sentence, this International NGO adds "Drawing strength from our global diversity, resources and experience, we promote innovative solutions and are advocates for global responsibility," before continuing the explanation about what the organisation does as follows:

> We facilitate lasting change by strengthening capacity for self-help, providing economic opportunity, delivering relief in emergencies, influencing policy decisions at all levels and addressing discrimination in all its forms. Guided by the aspirations of local communities, we pursue our mission with both excellence and compassion because the people whom we serve deserve nothing less.[42]

Although the second sentence of CARE's mission statement above ("Guided by the aspirations of local communities ....") provides more information, it is still rather general.

Another example is the Asia Foundation. The Asia Foundation homepage states that the organisation is:

> A non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women's empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations.[43]

Again, just like the CARE example of the previous paragraph, the Asia Foundation's statement is very general. There is no further explanation about, for example, how they set out to achieve their goals or why they are doing what they do. These kinds of statements, which explain the international NGO's mission without going into too many details, are typical. Admittedly these mission statements are for public consumption, thus one may argue that there could be more detailed and real global priorities in their internal documents. However, as will be seen later, I argue that such general statements nevertheless provide international NGOs with room for interpretation and thus enable them to be highly flexible in tailoring their programs.

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[41] <http://www.care.org/about/index.asp>.
[42] Ibid.
[43] <http://www.asiafoundation.org/About/overview.html>.

Locally-derived factors also affect international agenda setting. In the country where the international NGO works, the regional international NGO branch office usually creates the details of policy for the local level. At the national level, the broader agenda established internationally by the international NGO's headquarters serves as a guideline, however subsequently the broader agenda is usually adjusted into the context of the country concerned – be it in terms of the political and social context or its specific development needs.

However, even the publicly announced country-specific agenda is mostly still general. For example, the Asia Foundation's Indonesia-office information page states that "in partnership with government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector, the Foundation continues its support of Indonesian initiatives to further consolidate its democracy, improve government services, and reduce poverty."[44]

An additional example of a general mission statement for a specific country comes from Church World Service (CWS), an international development NGO working in Indonesia, which declares "CWS Indonesia strives for a just and sustainable development in Indonesia by improving the quality of life of poor Indonesians through strengthening people's institutions and improvement of livelihood using empowerment strategies."[45]

It is only through various program implementations of the international NGO that such general country-specific agendas are transformed into specific goals. Different international NGOs have different methods of determining the focus of their program activities in Indonesia. The Asia Foundation, for instance, claims that it is a matter of matching the international NGO's mandate and expertise with the needs of the community. As expressed by the Asia Foundation Country Representative for Indonesia, Douglas Ramage:

> In part it is driven by our mandate or major thematic areas. So, we don't work with street children, environmental reform, HIV/AIDS, cultural affairs. In part, we have developed some institutional expertise over the years and we've made them available to local organisations. Our staff are made up of Indonesian experts in their fields. So we rely on our staff for strategic planning programs, etc and problems, and see whether or not we can contribute to that with our background and expertise.[46]

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[44] <http://www.asiafoundation.org/Locations/indonesia.html> [accessed on 23 February 2008].
[45] <http://www.cwsindonesia.or.id/en/organization.php?cws_langu=#1ms> [accessed on 23 February 2008].
[46] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007.

Meanwhile, other organisations tailor their programs based on a specific need as it arises in the country. By way of illustration, according to CWS Program Development Advisor, Michael Koeniger, when drought brought food insecurity to West Timor in the early 2000s, it was local counterparts of CWS Indonesia, along with the regional government that informed CWS of the situation and CWS senior representatives in turn approached USAID to fund their program to address the drought crisis in West Timor.[47]

An international NGO could also create a program to match the availability of donor funding. USAID, for example, sometimes issues a document called "request for application" (RFA) explaining that it has a certain amount of money and is interested in supporting specific programs in a country. In the words of Koeniger:

> So you realise that there is money available and then you think whether this is part of programs that we do and whether we would be able to get some of the funds – are we eligible and can we put together a concept paper and send it to the donor to get the money?[48]

Another method by which international NGOs create a program is to combine a local community's needs with the international NGO's expertise, capacity and priority, as well as the donor's funding availability. As explained by CWS Indonesia Director, Maurice Bloem, a long-time resident of Indonesia:

> (CWS) Indonesia's strategic plan is the combination of needs identified within the country, the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation itself, and also what CWS does worldwide, and also the donor factor – whether you are able to find money to do what you want to do. Those are the important factors.[49]

The discussion above has looked at different processes that international NGOs go through in setting up their programs in Indonesia. Factors such as the international NGO's international mandate, capacity and expertise, the needs of the local community – as understood by the international NGOs – and the availability of funding from donor agencies have been identified as determining aspects of the international NGO program agenda-setting process in Indonesia. In addition to these factors, as mentioned earlier, the political and social context of the country is also important. In the case of Indonesia during the New Order era, for instance, a program such as prison reform, although badly needed, was considered as "out of the question" for

[47] Interview with Michael Koeniger, 22 April 2005
[48] Ibid.
[49] Interview with Maurice A. Bloem, 23 April 2005.

NGOs as there was no political support for it.[50] It was only during recent years that several NGOs were established and funded to work on the issue of prison reform.[51]

Apart from showing that there are many elements involved in the international NGO agenda-setting and program-making processes above, as I have indicated earlier, the discussion so far has revealed that some aspects of the processes are unclear. Although international NGO country-specific public statements are more specific than the worldwide agenda established by their headquarters, such statements are relatively broad and thus are flexible.

One of the implications that arise from this condition is that international NGOs are able to tailor their programs to fit their donors' interests, which suggests the top-down nature of this sector. This condition is also reinforced by the fact that, as the discussion suggests, local NGOs have a minimal role to play in setting international NGO country priorities and in the decision making processes of international NGOs.

Translating Agenda into Action: Who to Fund?

The discussion in the previous section has scrutinised how international NGOs set their own agendas. This section takes a further step by discussing what happens after the creation of an agenda or a program. In other words, this section discusses the process of how an agenda is translated into action, a situation which demands building relations with local NGOs. The discussion suggests that international NGOs, as "the ones with the money," have more power in setting the agendas for the relationships.

As chapter two has identified, the provision of funds from international NGOs to local NGOs is the most common form of interaction between them. How does a relationship between an international and a local NGO typically begin? From the discussion in chapter three on the relationships between Insist and its international partners, we can identify one method of forming a relationship, namely that the international NGO seeks a local partner to cooperate with. In this respect, international NGOs look for local NGOs that match their requirements. When a local NGO, such as in the case of Insist and IMD, does not fit their criteria, the relationship breaks down. This method suggests that even though it appears international NGOs initiate

[50] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007.
[51] Ibid.

relationships and thus need the local NGOs, they in fact dominate the relationships in the end by determining the lifespan of their relationships.

Another method by which international and local NGOs start their relationships is when a local NGO submits a program proposal to an international NGO. Often, the local NGO will submit a proposal in response to a public call for proposals by the international in a particular program area; less commonly the local NGO will have simply identified for itself the international NGO's funding priorities and tailored its proposal accordingly. In either case the local NGO is responding to the agenda set by the international "partner". If the international NGO selects the proposal, after having carried out a selection process usually involving a field visit and intensive program discussions to ensure that all will accord to its guidelines, the two NGOs, international and local, would embark on a relationship.[52] Again it is the international NGO that has the last say.

Some international NGOs can be specific in setting the agenda of the relationship between them and their local counterparts. In such cases, local NGOs act as program implementers and thus resemble sub-contractors. Other international NGOs are more flexible in the sense that they provide a block grant and a set of general themes, and let the local NGOs come up with their own ideas on program implementation. In such cases, local NGOs have more room to manoeuvre, nevertheless the opportunities to do so still exist within the parameters set by the international NGOs.

Themes that are considered important – using a term common among local NGOs – "sexy" – by international NGO inevitably become influential and popular among local NGOs. People often talk about the sudden prominence of "good governance" in response to changing donor tastes from the late 1990s; or, a little earlier, about the fashion for gender programming. For example, we can see the popularity of issues such as good governance, including anti-corruption programs, and gender in the NGO sector (which I will further discuss in chapter six). In the end, regardless of the method by which a relationship is formed, one key characteristic of the process is the dominance of international NGOs in the decision making process involved in their relationships.

[52] The selection process usually takes place within three to four months. For an example of steps involved in an international NGO's local partner organisations selection process, see: <http://www.cwsindonesia.or.id/en/programs.php?cws_langu=1#pilar> [accessed 1 February 2008].

International Funding Mechanisms: the "Public Transcript"

In this section I shall show in detail how international NGOs use funding to impose their agendas on Indonesian NGOs. Most international NGOs usually have developed various standards of procedure concerning the provision of funding to local NGOs. This is especially true when it comes to local NGOs' reporting system towards international NGOs.

As an illustration of the procedures, I shall look at the Asia Foundation's detailed protocols for its grantee organisations. The Asia Foundation's detailed procedure enables us to understand what is involved in the reporting requirements. Prior to signing a Letter of Agreement (LoA) that formally initiates a relationship, the Asia Foundation requires its prospective local grantees to fill in a "Survey Questionnaire" and "Questionnaire on Internal Controls, Policies and Procedures." These questionnaires are basically surveys on "the management and finance" competencies of the local NGO.[53] The two-page Survey Questionnaire asks general questions about the local NGO's organisation and structure, including its government registration number, its accountant's qualifications and the accounting software it uses, its financial policy and procedures manual available to the organisation, bank account details (to be used solely for the Asia Foundation funds) and external audit information.[54] Meanwhile the Questionnaire on Internal Controls, Policies and Procedures contains twenty-one detailed questions concerning financial procedures of the Indonesian NGO, which includes questions related to payment vouchers, petty cash, and the security of financial documents and data.[55]

The next step after the completion, return and approval of the Asia Foundation surveys is for the Indonesian NGO to sign an LoA with the Asia Foundation. According to Dwiyanti Wiratmi (Yanti), an accountant at one of the Asia Foundation's long-time local partner organisations, the Asia Foundation would send copies of LoAs

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[53] Interview with Dwiyanti Wiratmi, accountant at Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKiS), 28 August 2008. LKiS and the Asia Foundation's relationship started in the late 1990s. For LKiS' profile, see http://www.lkis.or.id>.

[54] Survey Questionnaire form - The Asia Foundation – for LKiS. The Asia Foundation put a special note on the questionnaire: "Please note that the provision of information in response to this questionnaire will not automatically entitle your organisation to any funds from the Foundation. Funds may usually be committed by way of a properly drawn and signed "sub-grant agreement" between the partner organisation and the Foundation." On the bottom of the form there is a section for the Asia Foundation's examination and recommendation. Included in the checkmark for The Asia Foundation's consideration is the question of whether the Asia Foundation officer has visited the organisation or not.

[55] Questionnaire on Internal Controls, Policies and Procedures – The Asia Foundation – for LKiS.

signed by its Country Representative to be counter-signed by the local NGO Director.[56]

Following Indonesian government regulations, the Asia Foundation also requires the local NGO to arrange for the LoA to be approved in writing by a representative of the Indonesian government, which should be at least an echelon II official.[57] The local NGO keeps one signed LoA copy and send the other copy back to the Asia Foundation.

Following that, the Asia Foundation transfers the funds to the account of the local NGO which usually happens between five days to two months after the counter-signing date of an LoA.[58] According to Yanti, The Asia Foundation usually divides funds transfers for long-term programs into two batches: the first batch is sent after the LoA is approved, while the second payment is made after the submission of the second or third report as prescribed in the LoA.[59]

The Asia Foundation sends other documents and guidelines too. A complete LoA package from the Asia Foundation consists of a letter from its program officer or program assistant, three copies of an LoA, *Panduan Pengisian the Asia Foundation 209* [Guideline to fill in the Asia Foundation 209 Form/Grantee Financial Report and Certification], *Panduan Singkat Pengisian Formulir Kontribusi Dana Pendamping* [Short Guideline for Counterparts Contributions], *Keterangan Jasa Sukarelawan* [Volunteer Service Information Form], *Keterangan Penggunaan Peralatan* [Utilities Usage Information Form], *Keterangan Penggunaan Tempat* [Office Building Certification Information Form], *Keterangan Kontribusi Donor* [Donor Contributions In-

[56] Interview with Dwiyanti Wiratmi, Accountant at Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKiS), 28 August 2008.
[57] Interview with Dwiyanti Wiratmi, 28 August 2008; Interview with Anick H.T., 15 August 2007. Different international NGOs apply this rule differently. Some organisations do not require government officials to sign the LoA with local NGOs. Some, like the Ford Foundation, apply a stricter rule which requires the involvement of the Secretariat Cabinet (Interview with Roem Topatimasang, 27 January 2007).
[58] Ibid.; LKiS financial documents.
[59] Ibid. For reporting requirement see next page.

formation Form], and Grantee Financial Report and Certification.[60] All documents are in Bahasa Indonesia, except the LoA.[61]

In regard to the reporting requirements for the Asia Foundation's grantees (which consist of narrative program reports and financial reports), Yanti explained that this reporting usually follows the Asia Foundation's requirements as expressed in the LoA – the Asia Foundation's requirements by-and-large follow the requirements of its donors.[62] For example, the reporting period for its program under its U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) grant is every five months, therefore the Asia Foundation demands reports from its grantees every five months. The Asia Foundation's program under the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) requires the local NGO to provide a timesheet to measure the contribution of staff time to the program.[63]

In cases where it does not have specific requirements from its own donors, the Asia Foundation's standard reporting system for grantees usually consists of two reporting periods: a mid-term report (completed obviously mid-way through the program) and a final report, to be submitted no later than a month after the program ends.[64] To assist its grantees with their report writing, in 2003 the Asia Foundation issued a narrative reporting guideline which requires the report to have four parts: general information, a maximum of fifteen pages of executive summary which includes qualitative

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[60] LKiS financial documents. With regard to counterpart contribution (cost-sharing), the Asia Foundation requires its grantees to contribute to the relationship at a nominal rate of five to ten percent of the program's value. This contribution can be in-kind, such as volunteer works or office space. According to Yanti, LKiS usually contributes seven percent in form of in-kind contributions. She also added that different donors have different policies regarding cost-sharing. For example, Hivos, a Dutch NGO, does not require cost-sharing (ibid.).

[61] There is an anecdotal story about a staff member in one of the Asia Foundation's recipient organisations who signed the LoA without understanding the content because he only looked at the amount of money involved. Later the local NGO staff member was surprised to learn from fellow The Asia Foundation grantees about a particular item in the agreement, "*loh, ada toh isinya seperti ini?*" ["I didn't know that the content (of the LoA) said something like that"]. The Asia Foundation officers in turn were willing to translate the LoA and encouraged grantees to ask them for clarification should they be unclear about their LoA. However, the LoA itself continues to be written only in English (ibid.). Different international organisations naturally have different policies concerning their MoU/LoA. Although English appears to be the predominant language of the MoUs/LoAs, some international NGOs made their MoU/LoA bilingual – Bahasa Indonesia and English (Observations of various MoU documents at LKiS). Since its inception in 1998, LKiS has worked with various international funding agencies included USAID – The U.S Agency for International Development, AusAID – The Australian Agency for International Development), Hivos – the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation – a Dutch NGO, the Ford Foundation and the Toyota foundation).

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid. The Asia Foundation Country Representative stated that the organisation is also a grantee in the relationship with its donors, so knows how it feels to be a grantee organisation (Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007).

[64] Observation of other international NGOs and local NGOs during fieldwork confirms that this is the standard reporting procedure.

and quantitative impact analysis [*analisa dampak kualitatif dan kuantitatif*], a unit activities report [*laporan satuan kegiatan*], and finally, attachments (which consists of the documentation of program activities, such as clippings of news coverage of the activity, conference or seminar papers produced, and photographs).[65]

The Asia Foundation also provides its grantees with a booklet of Standard Procedures, which contains obligatory standard procedures [*Ketentuan Standar Wajib*] concerning funding.[66] The eleven-page-document covers regulations under twelve headings as follows: "Allowable Expenses", "Financial Report", "Audits and Receipts", "Payment, Advance Payments and Funds Return" [*pengembalian dana*], "Revision of Grants Budget", "Grants Termination and Postponement", "Disputes", "Non-liability", "Amendment", "International Air Travel" (which includes a clause under the U.S government Fly America Act that requires all grantees receiving American money to use only American airlines where available), "Materials and Services Procurement" [*pengadaan barang dan jasa*], "Counterpart Contributions" [*kontribusi dana pendamping*] and "Notification" (which requires all communication to be done in writing).[67]

To summarise what we can conclude from the example of the Asia Foundation, it is apparent that when an Indonesian NGO signs an agreement with an international NGO, the local NGO accepts that it must act on its donor's terms. Yanti, the accountant at LKiS, for example, said she does not have a problem with donor requirements as she perceives this as a legitimate consequence of being in a relationship with them, and also because the instructions are clear.[68] Commenting on the

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[65] LKiS Documents. This program guideline was developed by a program officer of the Asia Foundation. He was formerly an LKiS activist and one of its founders. For financial reporting, the foundation uses a specific form and a 'Quickbook' in which the accountants of grantees receive training in how to write the Asia Foundation standard financial reports.

[66] These are for non-USAID funded programs, USAID has its own standard procedures. This document, according to Yanti, has only been used in the past few years as the Asia Foundation administration became tightened (Interview with Dwiyanti Wiratmi, 28 August 2008). Requirements for USAID grants (through the Asia Foundation) are stricter and are usually included in the LoA. For example, for the purchasing of equipment valued at a minimum of $50,000, such as computers, USAID requires the local NGO to purchase American-made products unless, as stated in the LoA, "American products are not available or are more than 50% more expensive than comparable products from other free-world countries, or if there are pressing concerns such as compatibility with existing equipment/availability of maintenance services." Furthermore, the LoA stated that "the purchase of any non-American made products must have the prior approval of The Asia Foundation." The local NGO also needs to "obtain and submit to the Asia Foundation at least three written competitive bids for comparable products prior to purchasing the computer" using the grant.

[67] Booklet – "Ketentuan Standar Bagi Penerima Dana Asia Foundation (Untuk Non USAID grants)." The obligation to apply the Fly America Act demonstrates the Asia Foundation's close relationship with the U.S Government.

[68] Interview with Dwiyanti Wiratmi, 28 August 2008.

LKiS- the Asia Foundation relationship, Yanti suggested that she generally collaborates well with the Asia Foundation finance officers and grants trainers, although the high turnover of finance staff at the Asia Foundation sometimes makes cooperation difficult [*"bikin pusing"*].[69]

The above discussion on funding and procedures has provided an example of an international NGO approach, but different organisations have different procedures concerning their local grantees.[70] The Asia Foundation appears to be an organisation with especially detailed regulations and procedures.[71] The development of meticulous processes concerning financial matters signals an effort by international NGOs to codify their relationships with grantees: international NGOs enforce procedure in exchange for funding. This takes place under the pretence of avoiding the problems of funding misuse and corruption, but as we shall see in my review of the opinions of the local NGO workers, the dynamic of 'ensuring accountability' does not capture the entire scope of the international NGO agenda.

The finance-related procedures illustrated above also shed light on how the administrative and bureaucratic terms in the relationship between international and local NGOs are largely defined by the international NGO. In other words, on paper, by signing an agreement with an international NGO, a local NGO agrees to abide by the terms set up by the international NGOs in exchange for receiving funding.

In addition, the fact that most Indonesian NGOs rely heavily on international funding could naturally lead to the conclusion that they are dominated by international NGOs. All of this, I believe, constitutes the *public transcript* of the relationship, in which local NGOs are the subordinates and international NGOs are those who dominate. Scott has said:

> it is precisely this public domain where the effects of power relations [between NGOs] are most manifest, and any analysis based exclusively on the public transcript is likely to conclude that subordinate groups endorse the terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic, partners in that subordination.[72]

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[69] Yanti mentioned seven names of the Asia Foundation's 'come-and-go finance staff' that she had been working with over the past six years. For every new staff member, Yanti has to explain and retell matters related to the Asia Foundation and LKiS cooperation (ibid, 28 August 2008).

[70] For example, USAID is notorious among Indonesian NGO workers for its onerous requirements. USAID distributes a thick book of regulations for its grantees (see also Holloway, 2001). Other organisations have simpler procedures, for example DANIDA only has a one-page financial report template (Interview with Dwiyanti Wiratmi, 28 August 2008), while some are even still developing their reporting formats. As with the Asia Foundation the so-called best-practice standard is evolving.

[71] The regulation also includes a provision for local NGOs to return the interest from their grants.

[72] Scott, 1990: 4.

I argue that the reporting system and procedures discussed earlier constitute the *public transcript* of the relationships between international and local NGOs, because these terms are set by international NGOs and it is implied that local NGOs comply with these rules. Nevertheless, without scrutinising local NGO perspectives on their funding situation, ("the hidden transcript") or the "the discourse that takes place off-stage, beyond direct observation by powerholders" it might be premature to draw conclusions.[73] By focusing on the agenda of the dominant party we may unwittingly accept at face value the (mistaken) premise that the 'subordinate' are content to be subordinate. I argue this is an error. Thus, the following section will discuss funding-related issues from the perspective of local NGOs. First it will briefly look at the difficulties of being financially independent of international donors, and secondly, at how local NGOs quietly attempt to assert their own autonomy.

Overview of Local NGO Fundraising Efforts and Constraints

As mentioned earlier, most existing literature on Indonesian NGOs as well as popular assumptions in NGO circles indicates that NGOs are heavily reliant on foreign funding.[74] On the other hand, international funding agencies tend to fund only a particular set of programs or project activities with very specific budget items agreed in their MoU or LoA. Holloway notes that international NGOs in Indonesia often refuse to pay the overhead costs of local NGOs.[75] Indeed, it is a common practice of international NGOs to ask local NGOs to contribute to the international NGO's program, as mentioned in the example of the Asia Foundation discussed earlier. In other words, international donors, as Holloway puts it, are not "user-friendly to [the] NGOs who are the user of the funding."[76] Sinaga argued that "the stability of NGOs' finance is closely related to the proportion of the net balance (between revenue and expenditure) to the revenue in the previous year."[77] This means that in order for an NGO to survive, it has to be able to save its income from the previous year. Sinaga has suggested NGOs should keep around ten percent of their previous year's income as reserve funds to cover minimal overhead costs in case they do not obtain projects

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Using data compiled by LP3ES in 1999, Sakai states that there are more NGOs who rely on membership dues (240) in comparison to assistance from abroad (160) and income from activities (160) as their funding source (Sakai, 2002: 166). However Sakai noted that "there is still a heavy dependence on outside funds" which indicates that although the number of organisations receiving assistance from abroad and income are much fewer than those who receive membership dues, the quantity of outside funding is more significant than membership dues (ibid.).
[75] Holloway, 2001: 11.
[76] For more examples, see ibid.
[77] Sinaga, 1993: 145.

or income.[78] Holloway has composed a list of the financial necessities of an NGO in Indonesia that would suggest Sinaga's figures are probably conservative:

> the actual program activities, the overheads of the organisation which need to be paid to keep the organisation alive (part of management time, rent, utilities etc), staff capacity building, staff benefits (e.g. housing, pensions, health insurance), savings for program development.[79]

The temporary nature of international NGO funding has led many local NGOs in Indonesia to struggle against their reliance on external funding; one of the creative ways in which local NGOs have struggled against this system is through trying to develop their own income streams, albeit often with difficulty. A number of NGOs in Indonesia have experimented with public fundraising. For example, WALHI and YLBHI have set up bank accounts for public donations.[80] WALHI is among the first organisations to approach public fundraising seriously. It has a special public fundraising division and has set up an ambitious goal to have at least 50,000 domestic individual donors by 2013 in order to be independent from international donors.[81]

While western civil society organisations have been in the business of direct fundraising for over a century, the idea of tapping the domestic market for funds is relatively new to the developing environment of Indonesia. Some Indonesian NGOs (like Insist at one time) developed their own business units, publishing houses and consultancy operations. Yet despite these creative attempts to develop their own income streams, it is not easy to find an NGO in Indonesia that has managed this task with enough success to liberate itself from dependence on foreign funding.

Among the few local NGOs operating on a large scale with financial independence is Bina Swadaya. This forty-year veteran NGO claims a total turnover of US$9.8 million in 2004, of which 95% of its budget came from its own activities and only five percent from foreign funding.[82] How does it manage this considerable achievement? Bina Swadaya has eight subsidiaries which consist of everything from a publishing house to a travel agency. Another part of Bina Swadaya owns four rural banks, including BPR [*Bank Perkreditan Rakyat*] which operates across Java and has a relatively well established brand name for its microfinance services, as well as two train-

[78] Ibid. However he did not explain the rationale behind the ten percent figure.
[79] Holloway, 2001: 11.
[80] See http://www.walhi.or.id and http://www.ylbhi.or.id [accessed on 5 February 2009].
[81] Ginting, 2004: 202.
[82] See Bina Swadaya Brochure 2005; <http://www.binaswadaya.org>.

ing and study centres and a consulting service. This NGO has an astonishing total of 900 staff.[83]

As Bina Swadaya entrenched and developed its fundraising activities, other NGOs began to perceive Bina Swadaya critically as more of a profit-making organisation than an NGO. However, Bina Swadaya's long-time director, Bambang Ismawan, insisted on continuing the organisation's philosophy of financial independence. Bambang has said the "foreign funding era will pass away one day and therefore we need to be self-reliant." He also stated that Bina Swadaya's profit-making activities are not inconsistent with its social activities. Indeed Bina Swadaya argues that its business operations even have positive social impacts. For example, the microfinance section of *Bank Perkreditan Rakyat* serves poor people.[84] While the example of Bina Swadaya does show how local NGOs can make themselves financially independent, Bina Swadaya is a rarity in the Indonesian NGO community.

The most common and easiest method for local NGOs to be financially sustainable is by having what is widely known in NGO circles as "savings." The term is a more benign name for what one NGO observer has labelled "hoodwinking donors".[85] Other terms I have heard included "reserve funds" [*Dana Cadangan*] and "perpetual funds" [*Dana Abadi*].[86] This practice is an important illustration of domination and subversive resistance to it. I will argue that, through the practice of savings, local NGOs are at least partially able to get around the issue of financial sustainability and make use of, borrowing Hilhorst's term, "room for maneuver" in their relationship with international NGOs for their own benefit.[87] Closer scrutiny of funding relationships that appear to be dominated by an international NGO actually reveals the act of conscious non-compliance and thus resistance by local NGOs towards the hegemony of the international partner. Importantly, what international NGOs perceive as corruption, is considered by local NGOs to be "saving" and a prudent response to their financial insecurity.

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[83] Bina Swadaya Brochure 2005; Interview with B. Sigit Jati Waluyo, 27 September 2005. Literature indicates that the level of financial independence of NGOs engaging in the development sector is usually better than those who engage in advocacy. One explanation for this is because they can generate money from their activities.

[84] Interview with Bambang Ismawan, 27 September 2005. As mentioned in chapter two, Bambang had been the Director of Bina Swadaya since its inception in 1967 to 2008. The name Bina Swadaya is thus associated with Bambang Ismawan. For discussion about personification of an Indonesian NGO, see Chapter 5.

[85] Holloway 2001: 11.

[86] Confidential communication with several NGO workers, October 2006 and August 2007. See also Sinaga, 1993: 145.

[87] See Hilhorst, 2003: 103.

As I shall demonstrate later, savings practices fit well with Scott's term, the *hidden transcript*, and expose the weakness of any analysis which terminates at only the level of the *public transcript*. Local NGO subordination to international NGOs is far from absolute.[88] To reiterate the concept explained in chapter one, Scott argues that previous theories of hegemony neglect the ability of subordinate groups to use means and opportunities available to them to "penetrate and demystify the prevailing ideology."[89] Therefore any analysis which overlooks "both the hidden transcript and the necessity of routine and pragmatic submission to the compulsion of economic relations as well as the realities of coercion" may understate the capacity of the subordinated to resist hegemony. The following section will thus demonstrate how local NGOs use available opportunities to resist international funding mechanisms.

Local NGO Savings Practices: the "Hidden Transcript"

Indonesian NGOs have several methods of "saving" in practice.[90] The most famous and common practice is for NGO management to deduct money from staff income. One source, *Endang*, who is on the finance staff of an advocacy NGO says:

> we have an agreement among us to deposit 30% of staff fees that we receive from conducting facilitation, training, or consultancy jobs into our organisation's account [*"kas organisasi"*]... this way, our organisation could survive when we do not have funding.[91]

Not only does the NGO apply this rule to its own staff, according to Endang, but it also does so to external sources hired for the organisation's activities, such as to facilitators of their workshops and training events. She admitted that the nominal amount written on the receipt the workers sign for the purpose of financial reporting to their donor is thus different from the actual amount her colleagues and guest facilitators receive.

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[88] Scott suggests the term hidden transcript as "the discourse that takes place offstage, beyond direct observation by power holders" (Scott, 1990: 4).

[89] Scott, 1985: 317-318.

[90] It should be noted that my experience when conducting fieldwork was that it was not easy to get Indonesian NGO staff to talk in detail about their organisation's finances. There was a variety of different levels of openness among NGO workers on the subject: from those who were more than willing to talk freely and specifically, including providing me with access to their financial documents, to those who were very defensive. It generally took many meetings over a long period of time before I was able to gain access and obtain detailed information on this subject. Furthermore, although some NGO staff do not mind speaking on the record, many do. Therefore I have decided to use pseudonyms for the names of sources and their organisations in this section.

[91] This is a pseudonym and so are all the names of NGO workers and their organisations in this section. I also decide not to be more specific about the field and activities of these NGOs as doing so would risk revealing their identity. Endang's decade-old NGO has thus far never been in the position of not having an international donor.

As this has been a common practice in NGO circles in Indonesia, Endang said she has not yet encountered protests from any guest facilitators who question the difference between the amount they receive and the nominal amount stated on the receipt they sign. She added, "Well, they understand. This has become a norm among us, like an unspoken agreement." When questioned about how her donors respond to this practice, Endang simply said, "We have never had problems with our financial reporting (to our donors)." Her boss, Ali, the director of the NGO agreed. "As long as we accomplish the points stated in the agreement, with orderly reports and sufficient supporting evidence, they (the donor) are not really concerned about savings. We can even be fictitious ['*bikin fiktif juga bisa*']." This indicates that as long as NGOs have proper receipts and reports, donors "turn a blind eye."

In regard to this practice of deducting money from staff salaries, Holloway has identified it as "the largest and the most extensive" corrupt practice among Indonesian NGOs.[92] He argues:

> A budget is agreed with the donor to pay a staff person, for instance, Rp. 2,000,000 a month, but that person is actually only paid 1,500,000 per month, and the balance is put into the overhead pool for the organisation to pay for expenditures that are essential, but which the donor refuses to countenance. This means two sets of books – one that can be shown to the donor, and one for internal use.[93]

Holloway does indeed have an argument, at least in cases unlike those of Endang's organisation, which only 'taxes' external activities. Holloway's point is that there is an element of deception about this particular saving practice. He is right – deception is the essence of the "off-stage" practices that Scott identifies as part of the hidden transcript. But the complacency of international NGOs is a crucial enabling element of this savings process, as donors usually just audit a particular program that they fund with a local NGO, rather than scrutinising the entirety of the NGO's budget. This situation makes it easier for local NGOs to tailor their books and reports to comply with the donor's particular program requirement.[94] However, the latest de-

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[92] Holloway, 2001: 11.

[93] Ibid. While agreeing with Holloway on the existence of double book-keeping practices of Indonesian NGOs, my findings indicate that there are NGOs that only asked for a percentage of the income their staff obtained from external jobs. For example, a former staff member of a prominent local NGO which specialises in training and consultancy said, "My former organisation is very strict in its financial matters. We do not keep double books." He continued, "Yet we do not need it. My former boss has received so many training jobs that he donates up to Rp. 600 million per year from his consulting and training fees alone!" (Interview with Wishnu, 2008). According to Wishnu, the standard rate for an international donor agency consultancy or facilitator job is US$300 per day. My interview with other NGO workers confirmed this information.

[94] Interviews with NGO workers, including Ali and Endang.

velopments indicate that more international funding agencies are starting to demand more comprehensive financial status reports beyond their specifically-funded program.[95] In such instances, decisions by local NGOs to continue requesting part of their staff's salaries become a deliberate act of disobedience towards the hegemonic system.

Another method of saving is to subcontract. In this situation, a local NGO would sign an agreement with an international donor agency to conduct a certain project. However, instead of implementing the project itself, the NGO would hire an external party to carry out the project for a lesser amount than the NGO received from its donor. The NGO would then keep the remaining funds to support its other non-donor funded activities. As an illustration, Ali, the director of a prominent advocacy NGO admitted that in early 2008 he hired an external party to conduct a one-year project funded by an international NGO in the field of democracy. The NGO kept twenty percent of the total amount of funding for the project for the organisation which, according to Ali, "was enough to support our twice monthly discussion program for one year."[96] He suggested pragmatism was the main reason for the decision. "Savings is one reason and it just happened that around the same time a good old friend of mine came to me and asked for a job. I then hired him for this particular project only, so our organisation did not have to set up a new division to carry the project."[97]

While Ali's example was a one time act of pragmatism-cum-nepotism there is another case of subcontracting from his NGO that provides a clearer example of exploitation. Ali said that in the mid-2000s, during the leadership of his predecessor, his organisation once engaged in a two-year project on the strength of the name of his NGO alone. In a "brokering" act, Ali's NGO, let us call it NGO A, lent its name to another local NGO, NGO B, to enable this NGO B to receive international funding for its activities. NGO A only received a percentage of the total value of the in-

[95] For example, Ali expressed his concern that, starting 2009, an international NGO with which his NGO cooperates with demands to audit the NGO as a whole instead of its funded program only and he stated that this would mean that he and his colleague would have to find a new strategy to deal with this.

[96] For this particular project, the NGO received over Rp. 130 million from its funding, thus it enabled the organisation to have savings of around Rp. 26 million from this project alone.

[97] It is important to put this case in context. As indicated earlier, Ali's organisation is one of the well-known NGOs in its field. Its founders and leaders are mostly prominent activists in their field. In addition, the donor for this project is its long-term partner which also engages in other projects with the NGO. Had Ali's organisation not have a good reputation and track record working with its donor organisation, as well as good relationship with the international NGO program officer, the story would probably have been different.

ternational donor-funded project in return.[98] This operation was necessary because NGO B's organisational structure included one of the officers of the international NGO, a conflict of interest which forbade the international NGO from working directly with NGO B. "I sense that," reflected Ali, "the international NGO officer was determined to give funding to NGO B. Yet he could not do it directly." As the solution, Ali said, "the international NGO signed an agreement with my NGO [NGO A], but immediately afterwards we transferred fifty percent of the funds to NGO B's account." Commented Ali, "this shows in practice how an international NGO program officer can abuse his or her power."

In the case of the NGO where Ali and Endang work, substantial funds are generated from their saving activities. As an illustration given by Endang, during ten years of its relationship with international NGOs, the NGO has been able to fully cover the office's overhead costs and run regular non-donor-funded activities such as discussion programs, as well as having a "perpetual fund" of Rp. 1 billion [*Dana Abadi Satu Milyar*].[99] Confidential interviews with different NGO workers also confirm that this NGO's savings practice is common and that some NGOs could generate substantial amount of money from it.

The discussion on international NGO funding procedures and local NGO savings practices in this section illuminates the everyday politics of international and local NGOs in Indonesia. Here I adopt Kerkvliet's definition, as explained in chapter one, that everyday politics consists of "the debates, conflicts, decisions and cooperation" among international and local NGOs in Indonesia regarding the control, allocation, and use of resources and the values and ideas underlying their activities.[100] The discussion has shed light on the local NGO practices of using the opportunities available to them to carve out some marginal autonomy from the international

[98] Both local NGOs were the grantees of this particular international NGO.

[99] On a different topic, it is interesting to observe the revealing language of the two NGO workers. Endang, an accountant by training, tends to be very cautious and vague in speaking about the NGO's savings. She also emphasises "voluntary commitment," and "ideals and willingness" as the main drive behind their NGO's sustainability, rather than its savings. In addition, she claims that they can survive without international donors and be independent as they have been demonstrating their capacity to do so by their ability to save. Yet Ali, a veteran NGO activist, was more direct and blunt in making his statements on the practice of creating savings. Ali suggested that his NGO would not survive without funding and that international donors' funds are a major determinant of the NGO's survival. Most tellingly he points out that even their savings originate from international funding. The different opinions of these two sources demonstrates the different layers that exist among local NGO staff, which also illustrates the fact that the rhetoric of the "public transcript" is not confined only to relationships between international and local NGOs, but can in fact go on within the NGO itself. I will discuss this topic of intra-NGO relationships in chapter five.

[100] Kerkvliet, 2002: 11. See also Hilhorst 2003: 4 and Leftwich 1984: 64-65.

NGOs.[101]The discussion in this section reveals the discrepancy between the *public transcript* and the *hidden transcript* of the relationship between international and local NGOs. Under the surface there is non-compliance and resistance by local NGOs towards their international counterparts. The *public transcript* of the financial relationship is defined by two points: firstly the imposition of thorough, bureaucratic procedures by the international funding agencies on local NGOs. Secondly and most importantly, the weaker local NGOs comply with the financial reporting standards of the dominant international NGOs. In this public sphere the hegemony of international donors might seem at first blush to be complete. All is "open," "accountable" and "transparent", according to the dominant good governance paradigm.

However, as demonstrated in the above discussion about local NGOs' savings practices, closer scrutiny reveals a hidden transcript, in which local NGOs engage in calculated non-compliance with international NGOs' demands. All local NGO savings methods, in the words of Holloway, "require lying to donors consciously and intentionally."[102] Local NGOs are anything but submissive to international NGOs. Local NGOs have different ideas from their international counterparts about how they should manage and allocate their funding for activities, in the same way as Kerkvliet, in his study of hegemony, described how poor villagers resisted the authority of more powerful groups in the village of San Richardo.[103] Local NGOs also articulate specific and general reasons for their actions. Notably, the say they must skim off money from their donors to raise funding for their regular off-donor-funded programs and to maintain their sustainability. This again is much the same as Kerkvliet's findings about the anti-hegemonic practices of San Richardo villagers.[104]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an historical overview of international NGOs' funding of local NGOs in Indonesia. I have followed this with a scrutiny of international funding procedures and practices and the implications of these financial relations for hegemony and resistance.

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[101] For other examples of NGOs' common methods in obtaining income for their operational costs, see Holloway, 2001: 11. Furthermore, in his paper which addresses corruption, Holloway warned that while the practices are for a "good cause", corrupt practices "encourage corrupt mentalities which will not blink at augmenting personal income, particularly when the society around the NGO person is doing such things all the time" (Holloway, 2001: 12). For discussion dealing with corruption among NGOs, see chapter six.
[102] Holloway, 2001: 12.
[103] Kerkvliet, 2002: 262.
[104] Ibid.

The discussion about international funding procedures indicates rigorous and bureaucratic procedures are involved in the relationship between international and local NGOs. In this section I have demonstrated the influential role of international NGOs in setting up the terms of funding in the relationship, and I have linked this with Scott's concept of the *public transcript* in power relations. I conclude by discussing the practices of local NGOs in overcoming their financial constraints. The discussion reveals a "hidden transcript" in the relationship, in which local NGOs have developed passive tactics of non-compliance which attempt to claw back some autonomy from the international NGO community.

The discussion in the last section reinforces Scott and Kerkvliet's critique of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. According to Kerkvliet, Gramsci "does not allow much room for continuous struggle between subordinate and dominant people over ideas and values."[105] The general theory of hegemony is inadequate in explaining power relations between superior and subordinate groups, both in the context of a rural village and in the context of global civil society. The next chapter will take up the theme of power relations between international and local NGOs by examining the characteristics of local NGOs and how they affect and are affected by the relationships between international and local NGOs.

[105] Ibid.

Chapter Five

The Micropolitics of NGOs in Indonesia: Personalism and Rivalry

Introduction

Chapter three provided a case study of the everyday life of a local NGO in Indonesia. We saw in that example how a leader within an organisation can have a great influence on it. This chapter takes up the issue of the internal dynamics of local NGOs and holds it up for further scrutiny, this time teasing out how internal organisational issues influence local NGOs' relationships with international NGOs and hegemony, and, conversely, how the domination of international NGOs generates internal problems. In other words, in the context of the relationships between international and local NGOs, the discussion in this chapter argues that the internal problems of local NGOs are both a result and a facilitator of domination by international NGOs.[1]

In discussing the theme of local NGOs' internal characteristics, I employ Elliot's term *micropolitics*.[2] Elliot coined this term when discussing asymmetrical power relations between international and local NGOs. As Elliot does not specifically elaborate on the definition of micropolitics, here I borrow the definition from Blasé who says:

> Micropolitics is the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations. In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups... Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political signifi-

[1] It should be noted that it is not my intention to argue that the internal problems of local NGOs are the sole result and the one and only contributing factor which facilitate domination by international NGOs. As we will see later, I acknowledge other factors that may play a role in triggering local NGOs' problems and in facilitating international NGOs' domination. However, in the context of the relationships between international and local NGOs, the domination of international NGOs appears as both a main contributing factor to, and a significant by-product of, the internal problems of local NGOs.

[2] Elliot, 1987: 65.

> cance in a given situation. Furthermore, both cooperative and conflictive actions... are part of the realm of micropolitics.[3]

In other words, as Spaulding notes, "micropolitics describes the ways in which individuals attempt to influence others in order to attain desired goals."[4] Thus our definition of micropolitics has two components: it is action within the NGO, and it is action (either unconscious or conscious) to advance the cause of a particular group or person in competition with another.

Looking at the micropolitics of local NGOs enables us to understand that hegemony works as an intentional consequence of how the system of global civil society is organised. I argue that some of the internal characteristics of local NGOs – especially personalism and rivalry in and between local NGOs – have helped international NGOs to exercise their domination over local NGOs. Thus in this respect hegemony can occur due to the internal weaknesses of local NGOs which enable the hegemonic system to function more effectively.

On the other hand, the discussion in this chapter also reveals how the internal characteristics of local NGOs can also be the *result* of the international NGOs' domination of local NGOs. International NGOs prefer to deal with individuals they know well: this causes personalism in the NGO sector. Similarly, international NGOs sometimes unwittingly encourage rivalry and competition between local NGOs by making them compete for a limited pool of resources, and rewarding only the favoured few who can make their programs conform to international donors priorities.

Although I frame the characteristics of personalism and rivalry among local NGOs as both a result and a facilitator of the domination of international NGOs, we should keep in mind there are other reasons for personalism and rivalry. I do not argue that personalism and rivalry exist exclusively because of international NGOs. They can occur in situations where there is no international NGO influence. We can also put personalism and rivalry in the wider social and political context in Indonesia, where these characteristics also exist in other sectors such as political parties. However, in the context of the relationships between international and local NGOs, my research leads me to argue that they are a result and a facilitator of the domination of international NGOs.

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[3] Blasé, 1991: 11.
[4] Spaulding, 2000. Available from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-1/spaulding.html [accessed on 23 March 2009].

The discussion in this chapter starts with an examination of personalism in an NGO, by looking at an example of when a leading figure comes to dominate an NGO. The second half of this chapter looks at rivalry in the NGO sector. By rivalry I mean competition between NGOs for professional opportunities. In concluding this chapter I relate all these themes back to a discussion of hegemony by arguing that the characteristics of local NGOs discussed in this chapter both have enabled and been affected by the domination of international NGOs.

Personalism in the NGO sector

In starting this section I will firstly elaborate on the term personalism. I use the word personalism to describe the way in which a local NGO is closely associated with or becomes a personification of its leader. The aim of the discussion is to demonstrate how personalism within local NGOs affects and is affected by the NGOs' relationships with international NGOs. International NGOs' emphasis on individuals rather than organisations in finding partners has encouraged personalism among local NGOs. On the other hand, local NGOs' lack of management systems and tendency to engage in conflict reflect their willingness (if sub-consciously) to be co-opted into the domination of international NGOs. At least, by their weak management and conflicts, local NGOs make themselves more vulnerable to the hegemony of international donors.

The Story of Meth Kusumahadi and USC- Satunama

The Unity Service Cooperation Foundation (Yayasan Kesatuan Pelayanan Kerjasama), which is usually referred to as USC-Satunama, was established on March 23, 1998, in Yogyakarta. Previously, USC-Satunama was the Indonesia office of USC Canada which has been operating in Indonesia since 1975.[5] USC Canada is an international NGO that was founded in 1945 as the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada, a voluntary organisation with close links to Unitarian congregations across that country.[6] In describing what the organisation does, USC states:

> While it began as an emergency assistance organisation, USC has been carrying out long-term development for decades. We work with partner organizations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to strengthen com-

[5] See Direktori LSM Yogyakarta published by LP3ES <http:www.lp3es.or.id>, USC-Satunama website <http:www.satunama.org>.

[6] USC claims to be "one of Canada's very first internationally-focused NGO" (http://usc-canada.org/lotta/usc-history/). For the year 2007 to 2008, its largest donor was the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (USC Annual Report 2008: 7). The report is available online from http://usc-canada.org/UserFiles/File/USC_AR_2008.pdf [accessed on 20 March 2009].

> munity livelihoods, promote food security, and support peoples' actions for social justice and equality.[7]

In Indonesia, USC Canada "provided development program assistance to Indonesian NGOs and grass root organisations in the areas of Community Development, Sustainable Agriculture, Small Business Development, Health, Education and Training," with a total annual budget of "between C$300,000 and 1 million."[8]

According to Satunama's director, Methodius (Meth) Kusumahadi, in the early 1990s, when USC Canada no longer considered Indonesia to be a poor country, the Canadian head office started to consider closing down the office in Indonesia.[9] That decision naturally prompted a reaction from the Indonesia office. Meth Kusumahadi, who was the Indonesian country director of USC, did not see the need to close the office. He proposed to keep the Indonesian office open by becoming independent and finding its own source of income.[10] That episode marked the beginning of an effort to establish an independent organisation. This succeeded in 1998 with the establishment of USC-Satunama. Since then USC-Satunama has become one of the best-established NGOs in Indonesia, committed to "the eradication of poverty and the attainment of an Indonesian society that is self-reliant, democratic, socially just, and upholds human rights."[11] With seventy-six staff and around Rp. 12 billion funds in late 2005,[12] the NGO is one of the largest in Indonesia. In early 2009, Satunama had relationships with three international NGOs – the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* (KAS) and the USC Canada.[13]

In NGO circles, the name USC-Satunama is undoubtedly identified with Meth Kusumahadi, who started working for USC Canada in Indonesia in 1988 and has since become the 'face' of the organisation. The following paragraphs discuss the crucial

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[7] See http://usc-canada.org/who-we-are/usc-todayfaqs/ [accessed on 20 March 2009].
[8] See the *pengalaman kerja* section in http://www.methkusumahadi.com [accessed on 23 February 2009]. According to Meth Kusumahadi, when they were about to establish Satunama, USC Canada office in Indonesia has seven staff (Interview with Meth Musumahadi, 23 October 2005).
[9] Interview with Meth Kusumahadi, 23 October 2005.
[10] Ibid.
[11] USC-Satunama website [http:www.satunama.org]. The quote is USC-Satunama's vision, while its mission statement is, "USC-Satunama strives for the development of local resources and universal values through intercommunity partnerships at local, regional, national and international levels in democratic and non-violent ways."
[12] Interview with Meth Kusumahadi, 23 October 2005. According to him, 67% out of Rp. 12 billion comes from internal fund raising. He says most of the organisation's income derives from consultancies.
[13] See http://www.satunama.org/index.php?lang=id&page=links [accessed on 23 March 2009].

significance of this person for the growth of USC. His personal journey shows what can make a person like him become the dominant force in an NGO.

Pak Meth has a colourful background with over thirty years of experience in the NGO sector.[14] He worked for *Bina Swadaya* for twelve years, before joining USC as its representative in Indonesia in 1988. Meth held various positions with *Bina Swadaya*, including Senior Trainer for almost a decade. His last position at Bina Swadaya was as the head of the division for developing self reliant groups [*Usaha Bersama* or *UB*] where his tasks were designing and managing rural development programs with a US$1.5 million annual budget provided by a German foundation - the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*. While at *Bina Swadaya*, Meth started to attend various courses in NGO management as well as developing his skills as a trainer.[15] As we shall see, this experience became critical for the later growth of USC.

The thirty years of accumulated experience of its leader is one of the bed-rock strengths of USC. Meth's experience clearly shows up in the programs that Satunama administers. In Satunama, Meth and his team have regularly run training modules with "catchy" names such as CELOP (Civic Education for Local Politicians), CEFRUL (Civic Education for Rural Leaders), CEFIL (Civic Education for Future Indonesian Leaders) and HOT (History of Thoughts).[16] Up to 2005, Satunama developed sixteen training modules.[17]

By early 2009, Meth had built a firm reputation as an expert in community development, particularly in generating training and providing consultancy services.[18] The

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[14] See the *pengalaman kerja* section in <http://www.methkusumahadi.com>.

[15] His detailed biography lists ten courses that he attended between 1977 to 1995 in places as far as New York and Ethiopia. In addition, during 2000 and 2001 he attended six more training programs abroad on subjects like community-based conflict resolution, fundraising and training of trainers on integrated strategic and financial planning. Ibid.

[16] Interview with Meth Kusumahadi, 23 October 2005; http://www.satunama.org [accessed on 10 December 2007].

[17] Ibid.

[18] As indicated in previous footnotes, Meth Kusumahadi has developed a personal website, http://www.methkusumahadi.com. Launched in mid 2007, the website contains comprehensive detail on his work and his writings. The bilingual (English and Indonesian) website introduces him as "Senior Consultant for Major International Donor Organization and Embassies (Germany, Australia, Canada, Britain, Denmark, USA) operating in Indonesia on the areas of Capacity Building, Community Management, Empowerment Program Design, Projects design, research, and feasibility studies, Results Monitoring and Evaluation of projects/Program." He also claims that he is "One of the six certified Indonesian ZOPP Moderators (*Ziel Orienterte Project Planung* = Objective Oriented Project Planning) a standardized German development planning approach, and the only ZOPP Moderator who combines ZOPP with LFA (Logical Framework Approach), MBO (Management by Objective), PCM (Project Cycle Management), Result Based Management (RBM), TOPP (Team Oriented Program Planning), AURA (*Auftrags Rahmen*), Germany." In addition, he states that he is "Currently The only Facilitator who mastering [sic] the various Development Planning Mechanism: MBO, LFA, ZOPP, PCM, TOPP, RBM, AURA (*Auftrags Rahmen*). Special areas of expertise include General

list of Meth's consultancy jobs in various places from early 2000 to January 2009 alone amounts to ten pages, with 162 activities and up to four activities on any given month.[19] By way of illustration, Meth's schedule in November 2006 shows that he travelled to four different places in Indonesia in one month for various consultancies.[20]

As an experienced facilitator and trainer in the NGO sector, Meth's people skills, passion and idealism about community development can be detected the minute one starts a conversation with him. I interviewed Meth once in Salatiga, while he was there for a week long evaluation program of a local NGO. Despite his reputation as an NGO expert, he was very friendly and humble. Our meeting lasted for several hours in which he talked passionately about the NGO world and tirelessly answered my questions. To further illustrate Meth's public speaking abilities Sunaryo Broto, a participant of one of Satunama-organised training in organisational development in 2008, says (in publicity material for Satunama):

> What strikes me [about the training] is the all out performance [*penampilan* all out] of the training instructor, *Pak* Methodius Kusumahadi. At the age of 62, he shows high stamina and speaks tirelessly. The volume of his voice could go up or down or turn to jokes which keeps the training participants attention to the training and discussion materials. He would approach a sleepy participant and start a discussion with them. He resembles a main actor at the theatre. When we are slowing down and some of us display the signs of boredom, he would invite us to sing a motivational song, to be sang interchangeably by male and female participants. [the song goes like this:] I am captain of the ship/ I am cap-

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Management, Training, Community Development, Empowerment Program, Organizational Development, Strategic Planning, Co-operative Studies, Small Business Development, Rural Credit, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution." [sic.] See http://www.methkusumahadi.com [accessed on 23 March 2009]. These statements appear in English in both the English and Indonesian version of the webpage. This indicates that the website targets international development practitioners. In quoting these statements I also aim to demonstrate the language used by well-established local NGOs adopts mainstream international development jargons. This control of the language in the sector is a subtle hint of the hegemony of international development organisations.

[19] See http://www.methkusumahadi.com [accessed on 23 March 2009]. His biodata also shows that apart from working for USC-Satunama and undertaking consultancies, the past two decades saw Meth actively involved as a board member of several NGOs and chairperson of NGO groups and forums. This again confirms the characteristic discussed in chapter three, that managers of successful NGOs depend on wide professional networks. This system makes local NGOs disproportionately dependent on the strength of their leaders.

[20] He started his consultancy work on that month in Banda Aceh, where from 7 to 9 November he was the facilitator of OXFAM Strategic Planing for Aceh Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2007 to 2011. Afterwards, from 13 to 17 November he facilitated a Strategic Planning workshop to draft the Five Years Integrated Planning Program of a local NGO, *Maha Boga Marga*, in Denpasar. Then, from 20 to 23 November he was the Lead Facilitator of the Second EED-Germany Partners NGOs Indonesia Consultation on the Practice of Good Governance in Makassar. And finally, from 27 November to 1 December he was the Facilitator and Trainer on Organizational Development organized by Satunama in Yogyakarta. See Ibid.

> tain of my fate/ Yes I am, Yes I am, Yes I am/ Whatever you can do/ I can do, I can do better than you/ Yes I can, Yes I can, Yes I can.[21]

Meth's fine professional network, public exposure and experience are directly proportionate to the flow of funds to Satunama. Meth admits that the success of USC-Satunama, particularly in attracting international funds, is heavily influenced by the personal relationships he has managed to build with donor organisations:

> You should be known by the decision makers or donors. You have to present your ideas [on] Indonesian development and this has to be done at the personal-point-of-view level, from heart to heart.[22]

Meth Kusumahadi continued to stress the importance of good personal relations by providing an example of his relationship with the then-Ambassador of Denmark:

> I have a story about the beginning of our relationship. The Ambassador once offered me some funds but I rejected them. My principle is that the initiative should come from the community in need, not based on a donor's order. Apparently the Ambassador agreed with my approach. He even visited my office. Finally, when we were approached by the community, we started working together. From then on, we sailed smoothly. When we requested Rp. 1.5 billion funds for Aceh, we were even given Rp. 3.5 billion. That's the example of a personal relationship which has helped me obtain funding.[23]

Another example of the benefit of Meth's personal contacts for USC is his ability to retain old donor relationships. Even in 2009 he still receives funding from the same international organisation - *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* - that funded his program when he was working for a different organisation in the early 1980s. Throughout his career movements, the funding follows him from organisation to organisation. This condition shows how a prominent individual like Meth can be a lifeline for his or her organisation.

Characteristics and Causes of Personalism

The above case study of Meth Kusumahadi and USC Satunama shows how a prominent individual can become crucial to the success of an NGO and become the virtual "public face" of the organisation. The dominant role of individuals, including the association or attachment of an individual to a well-established NGO, is a familiar characteristic in the Indonesian NGO sector. This association between individual

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[21] See http://www.satunama.org/index.php?lang=id&page=news&id=21 [accessed on 23 March 2009].
[22] Interview with Meth Kusumahadi, 23 October 2006.
[23] Ibid.

and organisation usually happens when the founder of an organisation goes on to work for the organisation after it is established.

At other times this relationship develops simply when a prominent individual works for a significant period of time with a particular NGO. The discussion in chapter three, for example, has introduced how influential Mansour Fakih was to Insist as the founder and director. In addition, the discussion in chapter two introduced Bambang Ismawan who founded *Bina Swadaya* in 1967 and led the NGO for forty years. Other associated names and organisations include Adnan Buyung Nasution and Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara with YLBHI [The Legal Aid Institution Foundation], Anton Sujarwo with *Dian Desa*, Erna Witoelar with WALHI [Friends of the Earth Indonesia].[24] Sometimes, the association can last even when the person has left the organisation.[25]

Scholars writing on Indonesian NGOs have noted the influence of personalism. For instance, in discussing the leadership style of Indonesian NGOs, Hadiwinata provides two examples of organisations dominated by strong individuals, namely *Bina Swadaya Yogyakarta* [BSY] and *Yayasan Annisa Swasti* [Yasanti].[26] In observing the leadership style of BSY which is a spin off of *Bina Swadaya* in Jakarta, Hadiwinata notes that:

> The fate of the organisation depends entirely on the presence of Aleks Wiyarto, its long-term director and co-founder, who controls almost all of the organisation's decision-making and operation (programme planning, proposal writing and fund-raising). His long association with the organisation and long experience in community development activities (longer than anyone else in the organisation) have made staff members hold him in such high esteem that they grant him the privilege of determining BSY's strategy and action. Moreover, its small size and family-like management style have prevented BSY from developing procedures of operation. Rather than functioning as a bureaucracy, BSY operates instead on the basis of guidance from its director.[27]

Meanwhile, from his study on Yasanti's early years, Hadiwinata writes:

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[24] It should be noted that this is not to imply that all these names exhibit behaviour discussed in this chapter.

[25] During an interview with Charles (a pseudonym), the executive director of a prominent advocacy NGO, the interviewee described an incident that happened to him at an international meeting abroad. The interviewee said he was really surprised when introducing himself to someone at a meeting. The interviewee's new acquaintance said, "So, your organisation has two executive directors, doesn't it? I just met a woman who said she's an executive director of [the name of his organisation]." Apparently the woman was the former executive director of the interviewee's NGO. The person could just have made a mistake in identifying the former director as the current one; however, the interviewee believed that this was an example of how one person '*mencatut nama besar organisasi*' [uses the good reputation of the organisation for their own benefit].

[26] Hadiwinata, 2003: 163-165, 201-205.

[27] Ibid.: 164.

> Yasanti relied on a prominent figure, Sri Kusyuniati, also known as Mbak Kus (a Javanese term for sister Kus). She was one of Yasanti's founders and a long-serving director. This organisation's success during its 'high' period in the late 1980s and early 1990s was a result of the indefatigable effort of Mbak Kus whose hard work had attracted foreign funding agencies. Indeed, for many years Mbak Kus came into sight as the personalisation of Yasanti.[28]

These observations suggest that the domination of a prominent leader within his or her NGO is not only recognised in the elite circles of NGO managers and donors. This recognition also occurs within the organisation itself. In other words, the issue of personalism discussed here is not only whether an individual becomes the "public face" of an NGO, but also whether he or she dominates the internal life of the organisation, and all aspects of it, in fact. The quotations also suggest that, as with the story of Meth Kusumahadi, *individuals* attracts funding and not necessarily the local NGO. This view is widely shared by NGO workers in Indonesia. For example, one deputy director of an Indonesian NGO says:

> With regard to donors, their parameter is not solely on the organisation but on personal trust. Naturally there are other considerations. However, a donor will not fund an organisation without knowing the person in that organisation... Their consideration in choosing an NGO as a partner, firstly, is based on personal relations. After that, comes the NGO's performance.[29]

The deputy director of ICIP (the International Centre for Islam and Pluralism), Syafiq Hasyim, shares his experience of being offered funds by a prominent international NGO director to develop a "good program proposal" on the basis of what he calls "a personal guarantee."[30] He says he and his team then wrote a program proposal which was approved by the international NGO with one condition. Syafiq recited the words of the international NGO director: "you should not go anywhere during the three years of the agreed program."

Similarly, an international NGO staff member once said:

> If I need a partner organisation, I would run to individuals I know first, [who are] my friends. Then I ask what my friend's organisation is. In my experience, it is very, very, rare that *"nama besar"* [a good reputation] of an organisation outmatches that of an individual's in Indonesia."[31]

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[28] Ibid.: 204.
[29] Interview with Syafiq Hasyim, 30 January 2007.
[30] Syafiq explains that he has a long working history with this international organisation which started in the mid-1990s when he was still working for a different local NGO which was funded by the international NGO.
[31] Interview with Muhammad Miftahudin, 22 January 2007.

A local NGO worker, Hetifah Syaifudian, adds, "The incentives offered by international organisations (study, travel abroad and networking opportunities) tend to be oriented to the individuals, not the organisation or the community the organisation serves."[32] In defining the type of individuals in the NGO sector who benefit the most from international aid, this local NGO worker says "most of the time, the same people (the charismatic, the articulate and the powerful) benefit over and over again [in the division of funding]."[33]

This phenomenon of the domination of well-connected individuals in the NGO sector is not exclusive to Indonesia but is a widespread condition of NGOs in many developing countries, where NGOs "are known by who is leading them, rather than by their proper name."[34] In analysing this condition, Fowler argues that:

> This is not a function of charisma as such – an aspect of NGDO (Non-Governmental Development Organisations) which is more myth than reality – but of who the individual is seen to be in the wider society. In NGDOs, leadership and management are highly personalised. No matter what the formal position and job description may specify, the individual occupying it is expected to make a qualitative difference to how things get done. This is a natural outcome of voluntary commitment and co-ownership – each person counts as a person not simply as a functionary occupying a chair.[35]

While Fowler's observation is as applicable to Indonesia as to any other developing country, there is something special about the Indonesian context which amplifies the power of the individual. In Indonesia, NGOs widely adopt the form of the *yayasan* [foundation] as their chosen organisational model. But the *yayasan* has a very top-down legal structure. This system encourages the domination of NGO leaders.[36] As scholars have noted, the institutional structure of a *yayasan* is very undemocratic, as its highest decision makers are appointed-members of an executive body usually consisting of the organisation's founders and management team.[37] As a result, Sinaga observes that the form of *yayasan* "has converted NGOs into static, steeply hierarchical, authoritarian organisations."[38]

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[32] Hetifah Sjaifudian, "The Activists' Dilemma" in *Inside Indonesia* 84, October-December 2005.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Fowler, 1997: 74.
[35] Ibid.
[36] One of the main reasons many NGOs opted to establish themselves in the form of a foundation was to avoid government control.
[37] Soemitro, 1993: 164 quoted in Hadiwinata, 2003: 167; Sinaga, 1993: 154.
[38] Sinaga, 1993: 154.

Other sources note that international donors have a role in emphasising the importance of individual leaders in domestic NGOs. For example, one Indonesian NGO director has said:

> Funding agencies usually need prominent figures who are trustworthy for disbursing funds. For example, a prominent person's name appears in many boards of NGOs but perhaps this person doesn't know much [about the details of these NGOs] and does not have a clear commitment [towards these NGOs]. This phenomenon possibly shows that donors trust individuals more than the NGO's performance.[39]

There are two points that we can draw from the preceding discussion. First, the discussion indicates, at least to a degree, the emptiness of the egalitarian rhetoric of NGOs. Most NGOs use a language of "participation," "community empowerment" and "bottom-up democracy" when describing their activities. In reality, many are dominated by a few personalities.

The second point relates to the origin of personalism and how this is linked to international NGOs' domination. As the illustration of my meeting with Meth Kusumahadi in the beginning of this chapter, and the discussion about characteristics of Insist leaders in chapter three, suggest, people who form NGOs exhibit special characteristics of being idealistic, forceful and strong-minded. Consequently their traits generate personalism. They tend to be people who have strong ideas, attract devotion and like to get their own way. In addition, the social convention in Indonesia with its *budaya sungkan* [a culture of being deferential] and being respectful to the elders contributes to personalism.

Therefore, I see a combination of factors as leading to personalism: the NGOs' historical background (especially if most of its founders continue to lead the organisation), the type of people who form NGOs, and the organisational structure. However, we can also see that an influential factor giving rise to this personalism lies in international donors' tendency to emphasise "personal guarantees" in their relationships with local NGOs.

Why Personalism Helps the Relationships between International and Indonesian NGOs

Having identified the characteristics and causes of personalism in the Indonesian NGO sector, I now look at the implications of personalism for the relationships be-

[39] Interview with Stanley Prasetyo, 14 October 2005.

tween international and local NGOs. I first look at the advantageous implications of personalism before discussing the drawbacks.

As pointed out in the preceding discussion, the benefits of personalism for local NGOs are that these links provide easy access to international funding. Being identified with a prominent NGO leader can result in a rich flow of funds to a local NGO. Prominent NGO figures sometimes even receive more funds than their organisation requests from a donor (as in the experience of Meth Kusumahadi) and they are also often sought after by international NGOs who initiate programs and funding, rather than having to ask international NGOs for funds (as in the case of Mansour Fakih in chapter three, as well as the above illustration of Syafiq Hasyim).

Easy access to international donors consequently guarantees such local NGOs security of funding, something that is rare in the Indonesian NGO world. In explaining the benefits at the individual level, a local NGO worker says, "besides expanding our horizons and allowing us to experience new situations and gain new knowledge, these opportunities also bring us direct financial gain. Honorariums are paid in US dollars, and they're substantial."[40] As an illustration, according to many NGO staff, the minimum daily rate for consultancy work in the international development sector is US$250.[41]

As for international NGOs, personalism serves as a tool for them to separate the wheat from the chaff, to borrow a phrase. International NGOs maintain links with proven individuals for a simple practical reason: by entrusting their projects to proven performers international NGOs can have greater confidence in the success of their projects. The reputation of prominent individuals serves as a guarantee for international NGOs.

Besides their reliability, dealing with prominent individuals also carries a potential efficiency dividend. By operating through personal networks, international NGOs minimise the time and funds that would otherwise be spent in identifying and selecting new partner organisations while reducing the risks associated with unknown organisations, such as the misuse of funds or inexperience in conforming to international NGOs' reporting mechanisms.

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[40] Hetifah Sjaifudian, "The Activists' Dilemma" in *Inside Indonesia* 84, October-December 2005.
[41] Conversations with NGO workers during fieldwork. The term "consultancy work" in the NGO sector is a general term which covers a range of jobs, from facilitators and trainers to external program evaluator.

Why Personalism Hurts the Relationships between International and Local NGOs

Two broad inter-related issues emerge when identifying the drawbacks of personalism. The first is how personalism affects the internal relationships *within* a local NGO and how it affects and is affected by the relationships *between* international and local NGOs. The second issue concerns how personalism affects the external relationships of the local NGOs with other local NGOs and how these inter-local relations affects and are affected by the relationships with international NGOs.

The influence of prominent individuals on the internal organisation of local NGOs can have three negative consequences. First, the strong domination of these NGO leaders creates conditions for undemocratic decision making processes. As shown in the case study of Insist in chapter three, younger NGO workers believe that certain individuals within their organisation are too "dominant." In particular, the younger generation at Insist felt under-appreciated and marginalised. This leadership tension actually led to internal conflict in Insist with one such incident resulting in the firing of the Insist Press director, who left the organisation with his entire staff of fourteen young people.

Although such internal conflicts happen across society too, it is more prevalent in NGOs. Sinaga provides an example of such conflict in a well-known legal aid NGO, the Jakarta branch of YLBHI [the Legal Aid Institute Foundation], which involved its executive director and the legal staff, and also concerned undemocratic leadership:

> Young lawyers and volunteers from the Jakarta office demanded the withdrawal of Mrs. K from her position as director of the Jakarta office. She had been appointed as director because she was the sister-in-law of the director of central YLBHI. This protest finally resulted in the resignation of six young lawyers.[42]

One of my informants who is a former deputy director of a well-established NGO (let us call it "NGO X") led by a prominent NGO figure, claims that the domination of the leader inside his organisation is *real* and not just *an impression.*[43] According to Wishnu, who worked for five years before resigning from NGO X, his boss was "a much feared [*sangat ditakuti*] figure at the organisation. There are only two people [in the organisation] who could talk with him. They are his long-time best bud-

[42] Sinaga, 1993: 153.

[43] Wishnu is a pseudonym. Prior to working for the local NGO, Wishnu worked for an international NGO which funded and developed a program with the local NGO. According to Wishnu, he was interested to join the local NGO because he likes living in the city where the NGO is located.

dies who have been working in the organisation for a long time too." Wishnu also observed there is often an "an inner circle" in local NGOs which consists of individuals who hold top positions at the organisation. These individuals, according to Wishnu, usually share a similar background with the prominent NGO figure. Wishnu says, "This [situation] reflects the organisation's lack of transparency, particularly in staff recruitment." Such conditions cause frustrations among those outside the inner circle like Wishnu, who, in the end, chose to resign from his organisation. These phenomena are very common in the NGO sector in Indonesia.

It goes without saying that these practices again contradict NGO rhetoric about democracy, egalitarianism and transparency. My discussion with Wishnu reveals that even the direction of programs in NGO X – which made the organisation gain its reputation – were heavily influenced by the predilections of the leader of NGO X. "He [the NGO leader] would feel unwell if he couldn't run his favourite sort of program activity. If two weeks went by without him being able to conduct the activity, he would gather us, his staff, for a meeting to create one," recalled Wishnu. However, Wishnu also notes his former boss's high dedication to his organisation: "He [the NGO director] lives for NGO X. Twenty four hours a day for the NGO." Such dedication can help to establish the authority of the leader, so much so that the NGO, including its program direction, is personified in the people who lead it.

The domination of an NGO leader inside his or her organisation can mean that the NGO serves as the vehicle of the NGO leader's interests, including the NGO leader's preferences for international donors. Dominant individuals can monopolise information about, and personal contacts with, donors. For example, my conversation with several staff members of another prominent local NGO reveals that despite having been running programs which were heavily funded by an international NGO, these local NGO workers had very little knowledge about their organisation's relationship with the international NGO. "We are here just as *kuli* [labourers] and we just do what our director tells us," says one staff. His colleague adds, "We do not know about donor-related matters as they are exclusively handled by our director." In the case of their NGO, their organisation ended up working with one international NGO only due to their director's personal preferences. Yet in this particular case, other international NGOs were also willing to cooperate with them and could have diversified the local NGO's funding sources.

What does the domination of individuals mean for the relationships between local NGOs and international NGOs? This question brings us to the next topic which concerns sustainability. Since most local NGOs greatly depend on international NGOs as their main funding sources, a heavy reliance on an individual NGO leader has the potential to jeopardise the NGO's sustainability. The influence of a prominent leader can be an effective guarantee of international funding, at least for a time. But, by the same token, it can also make the NGO concerned very vulnerable should the leader abandon it. The story of a local NGO, Yasanti, and its founder, Sri Kusyuniati (Mbak Kus), illustrates this point.[44] The organisation suffered when Mbak Kus, left to pursue her advanced education abroad. Acording to Sih Handayani, a staff member of Yasanti, after Mbak Kus left in 1993 Yasanti had to "scale down or even cancel" some of its programs.[45] Sih Handayani explains the reasons for Yasanti's decision:

> There were no other staff with the same degree of competence and connections to take over Mbak Kus' role, especially in attending international conferences or in maintaining contacts with the national and international NGO networks. For example, we were no longer able to raise funds to pay for travelling costs to participate in those activities because we were relatively unknown to those who used to be approached by Mbak Kus. .... Funding bodies began to leave us, partly due to the changing policies of international donors to Indonesian NGOs and partly due to our failure to convince them that we could proceed in the absence of Mbak Kus.[46]

As I have mentioned earlier, this discussion on NGOs' funding sustainability and personalism could therefore also be read the other way around: i.e. it is the international donor's emphasis on prominent individuals and local NGOs' funding insecurity that encourages personalism in the Indonesian NGO sector. In other words, personalism not only facilitates the domination by international NGOs, but it also exists as the result of domination by international NGOs.

The last issue we can identify in discussing the impact of personalism on local NGOs concerns regeneration. When the NGO is all about one particular person, generational change within the organisation consequently becomes problematic. It is a common criticism that local NGOs fail to manage regeneration or succession well. In his study of twenty two NGOs back in the early 1990s, Sinaga suggests that "the

[44] Hadiwinata, 2003: 204.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

leader who is the founder of the NGO tends to hold on to the top position for a lifetime."[47]

During my research, I found concern over succession planning in local NGOs mostly originates with the younger generation of volunteer and staff in the NGO sector and those coming from an advocacy-NGO background. Commenting on one lasting NGO director, one of my informants says, "[name of Director] has not been willing to be replaced. He thinks of himself as the sun, so there can only be one sun [in the organisation] and not two."[48]

Some local NGO workers compare the prominent NGO leaders who have been leading an NGO for several decades with dictatorships where the ruler just wants to keep in power. Another local NGO staff member sees the style of senior NGO leaders as the result of a dilemma: "[they] got stuck on the top position and [they] do not know where to go to from there."[49]

However, several "older-generation" leaders reject the accusation that they are unwilling to step down. For some, succession mechanisms are already in place in most NGOs and it is just a matter of "timing", as suggested by Meth Kusumahadi:

> We have discussed this topic of regeneration and we actually have implemented it in our organisation. Even now I rarely show up at the office any more but all of us are on the same page already. I communicate with the office through my mobile phone and over the internet. Since 2001 I already have a deputy, which is a two-year-term. Therefore up until now we already have had three deputies. And since 2003 I have already offered, 'whoever feels ready for it, please take over'. It is working now. I am still the recognised figure but actually we already have a system in place, everything has its own division and staff.[50]

For others, it is just a matter of the "readiness" of the next generation. As shown in the case study in chapter three, Insist leader, Roem Pattimasang, states that Insist's "regeneration" was slow as it was rather difficult to find people who wanted to follow Insist's organisational philosophy of not being dependant on external funding. According to Roem, younger-generation NGO workers were mostly brought up in a relatively comfortable environment with ready funding available, and thus are not prepared to struggle to raise their own funds.[51] Thus, Roem argues that regeneration

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[47] Sinaga, 1993: 154.
[48] Interview with Wishnu.
[49] Confidential communication with a local NGO worker.
[50] Interview with Meth Kusumahadi, 23 October 2005. However, my confidential communication with one of his former staff suggests that despite having a deputy, Meth still runs the organisation. He is still the leader and the decision maker in Satunama.
[51] Interview with Roem Pattimasang, 27 January 2007

is not stalled by the unwillingness of the older generation to leave power. Rather it is stalled by the inability of the younger generation to ready themselves to take greater responsibilities. Roem may have a point, but some people in the NGO sector see responses of this sort as self-serving and even contradictory, insofar that younger workers cannot prove themselves responsible leaders unless they are given leadership responsibility.

At the first glance, the topic of NGO regeneration might not be seen as connected with the discussion of the relationship between international and local NGOs. However, since local NGOs rely heavily on international funding, local NGOs need to be careful about leadership change to ensure that whoever eventually takes over the prominent leader's position should not jeopardise the NGO's funding security. As an illustration, Yusuf (a pseudonym), a board member of one local NGO active in promoting democracy and pluralism, recalled sitting at the local NGO's steering committee meeting when it discussed the selection criteria for a new director. Yusuf says their discussion ended up focusing on "the mission of finding somebody who is marketable to donors."

The same could be said of the topic of NGO internal conflict, which often occurs as a by-product of personalism: internal conflict might not be seen as being connected with the discussion of relations between international and local NGOs. Nevertheless, as the discussion of YLBHI in chapter four has demonstrated, internal conflict of an organisation can result in the cessation of international funding.

In summary, in discussing the links between personalism and local NGOs' internal management, I have identified two reasons why personalism can cause internal conflict. First, the prominent individuals can themselves become dictatorial. Second, the atmosphere of favouritism and hierarchy fostered by personalism can lead to poor succession planning.

Linking the discussion of internal conflict with the relationship between international and local NGOs, we can see that internal conflicts result in the inability of local NGOs to focus on its program which weakens the local NGOs in dealing with international NGOs or can lead to the discontinuation of funding by international NGOs. Personalism and internal conflict can serve to facilitate the domination of international NGOs.

However, as the preceding discussion has shown, personalism and internal conflict in the NGO sector are also a result of the international NGOs' domination. They occur because the international NGOs system tends to operate through personal networks among the elite directorship of local Indonesian NGOs. We can thus see here that personalism is also the result of international NGOs' domination.

Having looked at how personalism affects the *internal* organisational relations of local NGOs, and is in turn linked with the relationships between international and local NGOs, I will now discuss how personalism affects the *external* relations of local NGOs. Included in the discussion are the relationships local NGOs have with other local NGOs, and the relationship between international and local NGOs.

One of the effects of personalism is that it leads to favouritism and special support being lavished by international NGOs on prominent individuals. As put to me by an international NGO consultant, there are "Barons and Baronesses of Indonesian NGOs."[52] With their international funding connections, these NGO elites and the NGOs they lead dominate the development sector in Indonesia. Consequently, favouritism can create hierarchy among Indonesian NGOs. The small Indonesian NGOs then become dependent on the large Indonesian NGOs. This issue can be considered as one of the classic issues in the Indonesian NGO sector. For instance, a meeting of an NGO working group consisting of thirteen local NGOs and six international funding agencies in 1993 have identified the domination of BINGO ("Big NGOs") over LINGO ("Little NGOs") as one of the main problems confronting Indonesian NGOs. The meeting report states:

> BINGOs also tend to develop hierarchical relationships with small NGOs in the regions and tend to dominate the small NGOs' decision making process on [NGOs'] issues and programs that should be implemented – just like the existence of the hegemony of [international] funding agencies towards NGOs (BINGOs). Funding agencies' blocked fund ["block fund"] encourage this hierarchical and dominative relationship.[53]

A local NGO worker comments, "Well, what happens is the emergence of some kind of a monopoly as the small organisation without a name would not get a chance [to get international funding]. This puzzles me too as it becomes unfair."[54] More-

[52] Interview with Benny Subianto, 25 January 2007. He introduced this term to label prominent NGO figures whose names could be found in many NGOs.
[53] Billah, et al., 1993: 9.
[54] Interview with Syafiq Hasyim, 30 January 2007.

over, international donors' favouritism can also result in rivalry among local NGOs. I will explore these issues in the next section.

Rivalry among Local NGOs

This section will explore the existence of rivalry and jealousy between Indonesian NGOs and link these phenomena with the heavy reliance of Indonesian NGOs on international funding as well as the dominant presence of personalism in the NGO sector. The discussion will demonstrate that, although there are clearly other factors which contribute to the development of rivalry among local NGOs, their relationships with international NGOs are one of, if not the most important factor behind the presence of rivalry among Indonesian NGOs. In other words, I argue that, just as with personalism, rivalry can be a by-product or a result of the relationships between international and local NGOs.[55] I also argue that at the same time, rivalry among local NGOs is a factor that helps to facilitate the domination of international NGOs too. I will provide a case study later in this section to illustrate my points.

Rivalry among local NGOs has been identified widely as one of the most ubiquitous characteristics of local NGOs. For instance, a local NGO worker notes:

> Competition [in getting international funding] is fierce. I have watched hundreds of local activists communicate with donors (especially foreigners). They treat them as potential patrons, or even as deities. ... Those activists who have access to international networks live a lifestyle that is unimaginable for those who don't. Their laptops, passports and mobile phones create deep-seated jealousies and undermine social solidarity within the NGO community. The resulting conflict at the local level is difficult to resolve.[56]

The above observation identifies rivalry as one of the by-products or results of the relationships between international and local NGOs. Competition in securing funding can produce rivalry.

Previous studies on Indonesian NGOs have identified the existence of widespread rivalry between local NGOs. For example, a study of Indonesian NGOs in 1999 mentioned that "the relations between these groups have not always been smooth, largely because the imbalance of resources and influence with both funding agencies

[55] Other factors that may play a role include culture, agency (i.e. individual choices by business managers) and human nature. However, it should be kept in mind that I only explore these issues in the context of the relationships between international and local NGOs.
[56] Hetifah Sjaifudian, "The Activists' Dilemma" in *Inside Indonesia* 84, October-December 2005.

and the Government."[57] Furthermore, in her study of Indonesian labour NGOs, Ford notes the existence of "strong rivalry" among labour NGOs and argues that "conflict between labour NGOs was a major obstacle to their effectiveness in the rebuilding of the Indonesian labour movement.[58] In her study, Ford observes that NGO workers' interpretations of their resentment towards each other, which range from those who blame "not enough communication between labour NGOs because each NGO believes they are right (*merasa diri benar*)" to those who see "the relationship between some labour NGOs as being one of mutual disparagement (*saling ejekan*)."[59] She provides a view of one local NGO worker:

> Different labour NGOs have different paradigms. There's nothing wrong with having different opinions in a democracy. The problem doesn't arise out of not cooperating – it arises when NGOs start denouncing each other. Then they get exclusive because they think that they are right (*merasa diri benar*).[60]

Having observed the relationships among local labour NGOs and their links to international funding, Ford argues:

> Sometimes actions taken in response to pressures to take on donor-promoted programs, to compete for donors' funds, or to prove to donors that one NGO was more effective than another, resulted in accusations that workers were 'sold' (*dijual*); 'kept' (*dipelihara*); and 'subdivided' (*dikapling-kaplingkan*) for organisational gain.[61]

By rivalry I mean firstly, as alluded by Ford, to an atmosphere of criticism, including destructive criticisms exchanged among local NGOs. My observation during meetings with NGO workers reveals that they were often not hesitant in expressing their criticisms of each other, particularly those NGOs active in the same sector. Secondly, rivalry involves an avoidance of or failure to cooperate on issues of joint interest. When local NGOs disagree with each other, or see themselves in competition for the same limited source of foreign funds, conducting program coordination can be difficult. Thirdly, rivalry involves unnecessary duplication of work carried out by different NGOs. Local NGOs often implement very similar programs. Rather than coordinating their activities and avoiding wasteful repetition, local NGOs

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[57] ADB, 1999: 5. The report grouped Indonesian NGOs into three categories: Big NGOs (BINGOs) who generally have access to external funding and high-government influence, Little NGOs (LINGOs) who are more traditional, grass-roots NGOs, most often without significant access to resources or political power, and Red Plate NGOs which indicate they have a direct affiliation with the government.
[58] Ford, 2003: 257-260.
[59] Ibid.: 259.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

sometimes effectively repeat the work done by others. Part of the reason for this is because NGOs have access to different donors who have the same types of programs.

Of course, a healthy rivalry, in which local NGOs compete with one another in pursuing their interests (which includes securing international funding), can contribute to each organisation striving to perform at its best and increase the quality of its programs. I do not deny that such healthy rivalry, and some of its positive effects, occurs in Indonesia.

However, the negative aspects of rivalry – manifested in an NGO culture of what Ford called "mutual disparagement" – are far more visible.[62] Moreover, rivalry among NGOs also weakens their positions not only collectively but individually vis-à-vis the international NGOs. In this sense, rivalry among local NGOs thus affects the relationships between international and local NGOs and facilitates the dominance of international NGOs. To illustrate my points, I will discuss the relationship between Muslim NGOs which received international funding from the same NGO, the Asia Foundation.

It should be noted that the discussion in this section focuses on rivalry between local NGOs. Therefore, although I start this illustration by describing the relationship between the Liberal Islamic Network (JIL) and the Asia Foundation, I will not provide an in-depth discussion of their relationship. Yet it is necessary to briefly discuss this relationship to provide us with background information before looking at the rivalry between JIL and other Asia Foundation-funded Islamic NGOs, which can be seen as one of the contributing factors leading to the end of the JIL-the Asia Foundation relationship.

The Relationship between Islamic NGOs: the Controversy Surrounding the Liberal Islam Network

JIL or *Jaringan Islam Liberal* [the Liberal Islam Network] was established in 2001, initially as a division of ISAI – Institute for the Study of the Free Flow of Information [*Institut Studi Arus Informasi*] in Jakarta, before it formally became an independent foundation in 2003.[63] According to its activists, JIL was set up in response

[62] See ibid.

[63] ISAI was established in 1995 after the New Order government shut down three print media, *Tempo, Editor* and *Detik*. It is part of a larger community of progressive Indonesian journalists, intellectuals and writers which aimed to act as what they call "a pocket where alternative art, thought and journalism could mutually support each other in creating a network for freedom of expression." This

to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and aimed to promote religious tolerance and alternatives to literal interpretations of Islam.[64] As one of its key figures, Hamid Basyaib, explains:

> If there were no conservatives, there would be no need for us to have this organisation. What for? Things would be fine. But we emerged as a reaction towards the incredibly intolerant take of the hardline Islamic groups, who use their religion as a justification for hating foreigners, destroying churches, beating fellow Muslims such as the Ahmadiyah [a Muslim sect], all in the name of religion. Others remained quiet thus it was unbalanced [*tidak sebanding*].

The main aim of JIL was thus "to show the discourse on liberal Islam as widely as possible in the society."[65] JIL had three points as its missions, namely:

> Firstly, to develop a liberal interpretation of Islam in accordance with the principles we believe in and also to promote it to the society. Secondly, to open spaces for dialogue free from the pressures of the conservatives. We believe open dialogues can nurture a healthy Islamic thought and movement. Thirdly, to foster the creation of a social and political structure that is just and humane.[66]

JIL's primary actors were young *pesantren* (or religious school) educated activists, who overwhelmingly had a *Nahdlatul Ulama* [NU] background, such as Ulil Abshar-Abdala, Luthfi Assyaukanie, and Nong Mahmada. The organisation mainly worked through the media. Its programs included media syndication (a weekly column published in newspaper and a radio talk show), publications, a mailing list, regular discussions and public service advertisements.[67]

According to one if its activists, Nong Mahmada, JIL was formed following a workshop organised by the Asia Foundation in late 2000 in Bandung. At that time the Asia Foundation invited various Indonesian civil society groups that were its partners to a meeting to discuss its program development.[68] Nong, who attended the workshop representing ISAI, recalls:

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community is called *Komunitas Utan Kayu* [the Utan Kayu Community], after their location in a complex of old warehouses and offices at 68H *Utan Kayu* street, a small but busy street in East Jakarta. The complex has a small cafe in its leafy backyard and is the home of other members of *Komunitas Utan Kayu*: *Lontar* Galery, *Utan Kayu* Theatre, Radio 68-H, and later, the Islamic Liberal Network (JIL). <Http://www.utankayu.org/en/index.cfm?action=about&tick=1591712125>.

[64] Interview with Nong Mahmada, 24 January 2007; Hamid Basyaib, 18 August 2007; Anick H.T., 15 August 2007; Burhanuddin Muhtadi, 23 March 2007.

[65] See http://islamlib.com/en/pages/about/ [accessed on 20 March 2009].

[66] Ibid.

[67] Interview with Nong Mahmada, 24 January 2007; Hamid Basyaib, 18 August 2007; Anick H.T., 15 August 2007; Burhanuddin Muhtadi, 23 March 2007.

[68] The Asia Foundation has been working with various civil society organisations in Indonesia for more than three decades. The Asia Foundation's first grantee organisation in Indonesia was an Islamic women's organisation, *Aisyah*, in 1975 (interview with Robin Bush, 27 October 2005). The fact that

> The agenda of the workshop was to discuss what kind of programs were suitable for the contemporary situation in Indonesia. This is what I like about the Asia Foundation. In formulating its program, the Asia Foundation always had a discussion with its partners first. [At that time] I proposed [to create] a public campaign to counter hardline Islam [*Islam garis keras*] because it would be dangerous if we didn't do it. After the workshop, I came back to *Utan Kayu* and shared the discussion with other friends. We then submitted a proposal to the Asia Foundation. The organisation enthusiastically responded to it.[69]

As JIL's proposal was approved by the Asia Foundation, JIL started to run its programs in 2001 with the support of the Asia Foundation.

JIL enjoyed a close association with the Asia Foundation. For many, including JIL members themselves, JIL was known as the Asia Foundation's "golden child." For example, according to Nong, "JIL was always mentioned by the Asia Foundation everywhere, including in its reports to its headquarter in San Francisco, as its [The Asia Foundation's] success story."[70] JIL activists also developed good personal relations with the Asia Foundation staff members and leaders. The Asia Foundation for instance provided scholarships for some of JIL's activists to study abroad, an activity which was not part of their initial program agreement.[71] Furthermore, in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, it was JIL, after being approached by the Asia Foundation, which did a series of public service announcements to promote peaceful, tolerant and plural Islam.[72]

However, the relationship ended abruptly in early 2006. This outcome created a major stir within Islamic NGO circles in Indonesia, as the Asia Foundation's decision was widely seen as being somewhat sudden and arbitrary.

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its first grant was for an Islamic women group says something about The Asia Foundation's history. In the late 1990s, the Asia Foundation established "Islam and Civil Society" program in Indonesia. Through the program, the Asia Foundation claims it has worked with over thirty Islamic NGOs to support these NGOs "in their efforts to promote the concept that Islamic values can be the basis for a democratic political system, non-violence, and religious tolerance." (See "Indonesia" The Asia Foundation Brochure, 2004). In political terms, this program was significant as it served as a bridge between the Asia Foundation – an International NGO and arguably a face of the Western World (the U.S.) – and peak development groups within Islamic civil society. The Islam and Civil Society program gained even more significance in the period after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks when anti-American sentiment rose in Indonesia as a response to the American government's "war on terror" which many Indonesians perceived as discrediting Islam.

[69] Interview with Nong Mahmada, 24 January 2007.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Interview with Burhanuddin Muhtadi, 23 March 2007; Anick H.T., 15 August 2007; Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007; Hamid Basyaib, 18 August 2007.

[72] The protests by hardline-Islamic groups forced several TV stations to stop airing the ad. According to JIL people, this left an unresolved financial issue (the Asia Foundation, through JIL, had paid for the costly time-slots yet when a TV station cancelled the ad one-sidedly, the station did not refund the money). Interview with Anick H.T., 15 August 2007.

The official explanation from the Asia Foundation leaders of why it stopped providing funds for JIL was that the Asia Foundation's decision simply followed a natural program cycle in the NGO sector: JIL and the Asia Foundation's yearly program agreement finished in 2006 and the Asia Foundation opted not to extend it.[73] The Asia Foundation had to make an adjustment as the result of a policy change which caused the organisation to re-evaluate its programs with local NGOs. The change included ending the "Islam and Civil Society" program in 2008 and instead creating a new program division, "Islam and Development".

The Asia Foundation stated that it is an international development NGO working in Indonesia and it wanted to stay "mainstream."[74] Since it had to prioritise its recipients as it could not fund all NGOs, it decided not to renew its program agreement with JIL.[75] According to the Asia Foundation Country Representative in 2007:

> It seems that JIL's main interests are theological rather than developmental, that's normal. But does that fit The Asia Foundation's mandate now? Maybe not. So I think it's [i.e. ending the cooperation] natural, normal. I just hope that people can put things in that context. [The] Asia Foundation is not a political party, [it is] non-profit, non-partisan, and we are here to have good relationships with everybody and we are very proud of that.[76]

However, it must also be pointed out that JIL had made no alterations to its own programs, and did not do anything it had not done in the past. The references of the Asia Foundation officials to their desire to remain "mainstream" and "non-partisan" point to the underlying political sensitivities of the issue.

The unofficial version of the event, as it is widely understood in Muslim NGO circles, is that prior to making its decision, the Asia Foundation had been having intensive discussions, both internally and externally with parties such as other Islamic partner organisations. Basically, the Asia Foundation members were "calculating" the gains and losses of having JIL as a partner. At that time JIL already had a high profile and it had caused much controversy in the media. For example, an article by Ulil published in a newspaper in 2002 infuriated Islamic religious scholars.[77] In describing the event, Fealy notes:

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[73] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007.
[74] Ibid. According to him, the Asia Foundation's mandate is for government reform, poverty reduction and women's rights.
[75] But that did not mean that they cut off the relationship as they were still related through JPPR (People's Voter Education Network) program. The Asia Foundation also continues to provide scholarships for JIL members.
[76] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007.
[77] See "*Menyegarkan Kembali Pemahaman Islam*" in Kompas, 18 November 2002.

> A number of groups demanded that the police charge Ulil with blasphemy and that the Council of Indonesian Ulama [MUI] declare JIL to have deviated from Islamic teachings. The strongest reaction came from the Bandung-based Forum for Islamic Community Ulama (FUUI), which stated that Ulil's writings fell into that category of offences for which the maximum penalty was death.[78]

In the heat of anti-American sentiment and the rise of radicalism in Indonesia, JIL was the target of massive verbal attacks and threats from hardline Islamist organisations who accused it of being an enemy of Islam.[79] Many people believe that in that context, the Asia Foundation's close association with JIL was somehow too much for the Asia Foundation to handle. Conservative Islamic magazines such as Sabili and Hidayatullah provided a special coverage on the Asia Foundation, which linked it with CIA and questioned the Asia Foundation interests in funding what they perceived as "non-mainstream" Islamic organisations.[80] During this turbulence, for the first time in almost five decades of its existence in Indonesia, the Asia Foundation's office in South Jakarta had to be guarded by the elite unit of the Indonesian police, *Brimob* [Mobile Brigade], due to threats of attacks by hardline Islamist groups.

For JIL, the Asia Foundation's decision came as a huge surprise. Prior to the Asia Foundation's cessation of relations with it, JIL had already gone through a series of preparations with the Asia Foundation to extend their cooperation. The Asia Foundation had sent a consultant to work with JIL in solving their problems and in designing JIL's future programs.[81] Together the Asia Foundation and JIL had even prepared a draft budget. According to JIL, they were already at the final stage of preparation. "The Asia Foundation program officers indicated to me that, say, 99.9% of the program would work," said JIL's program coordinator.[82]

JIL people say they were very hurt [*sakit hati*] after going through the lengthy preparation process and anticipating its success, when the Asia Foundation suddenly decided not to continue their relationship. Commenting on the Asia Foundation's reason for discontinuing the relationship, Nong says,

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[78] Greg Fealy, "A Conservative Turn" in *Inside Indonesia* 87, July-September 2006. He further explains that "it was later revealed that several JI [Jemaah Islamiyah]-affiliated militants planned to kill Ulil but abandoned the attempt after an ulama declared that only a religious court could impose a death sentence." Ibid.

[79] Ibid. See also historical overview discussion in chapter two.

[80] See Sabili, No. 10/XII/3 Desember 2004 and Hidayatullah, December 2004.

[81] The discussion included a serious consideration of not using the name JIL to repair the "bad image" associated with the name.

[82] Interview with Nong Mahmada, 24 January 2007.

> If that is the case [that the Asia Foundation changed its policy which included a cessation of the Islam and Civil Society program and therefore stopped funding JIL], then the Asia Foundation should discontinue its relationship with all religious-affiliated NGOs. But that is not the case, is it? This gives the impression that JIL is just the scapegoat for the Asia Foundation's fear [*kambing hitam dari ketakutan Asia Foundation*] of being attacked from everywhere. This is their main reason. That's alright for me. It's normal for them to do that. But if that's the case from the beginning, then why didn't they tell us right from the start so I did not waste my time to negotiate, to write a proposal, etc?[83]

Similarly, Nong's colleague, Anick H.T., says:

> Their explanation is irrational because we [JIL and the Asia Foundation] were already in the middle of the final stage of budget negotiation. We even had agreed on the budget. It was then we found out about the discontinuation.[84]

The JIL program coordinator said that although they occasionally worked with other organisations such as JICA and UNDP, JIL's main funding source had always been the Asia Foundation. She admitted that they probably should have thought of diversifying their funding sources earlier, but they felt that working with the Asia Foundation was enough and clearly they were not expecting that the Asia Foundation would stop funding them so abruptly.[85] However, the Asia Foundation said that it has no obligation to permanently fund any organisation. After the Asia Foundation's decision, JIL was not able to continue its programs on their previous scale.

As well as being disappointed with the Asia Foundation, JIL members were also deeply disappointed with the critical attitude they encountered from some other moderate Islamic NGOs which were also funded by the Asia Foundation. Pressures from these groups, JIL members believe, were one of the crucial factors behind the Asia Foundation deciding to stop funding JIL. JIL members believe that the Asia Foundation conceded to the complaints of other moderate Islamic NGOs rather than remaining loyal to JIL. Nong explains:

> We are saddened because we are under attack by our own friends [*digempur teman-teman sendiri*]. We are saddened because essentially all of us are the same. In the beginning, there was a division of labour among us. *Utan Kayu* focuses on media and campus, *Rahima, P3M* and *Lakpesdam* [these are the names of other influential Islamic NGOs] focus their work in the pesantren. JIL does not work in pesantren. From the beginning we did not want to engage in grassroot-level activities as the grassroots was the focus area of LKiS and Lakpesdam. Consequently, JIL was more "popular" [i.e. higher profile] – this is normal as we worked

[83] Ibid.
[84] Interview with Anick H.T., 17 August 2007
[85] Interview with Nong Mahmada, 24 January 2007.

> through media. We fought [*menghantam*] people in the media. If there was a division of labour, when JIL was criticised, our friends should have backed us up. They should have explained to the community that "we are actually similar to JIL." What happened instead was that they [other NGOs] accused us of being extreme-fundamentalist. I am truly hurt [*Saya sakit hati betul*]. From the beginning I am consistent in this work area, I did not want to intrude on our friends' work focus even though we could.

On the other hand, members of these other Islamic NGOs admitted that they had difficulties in their work because they were associated with JIL. Some were under verbal attack and threats of physical violence from hardline groups. Some also complained they had been rejected by some grass roots communities where they focused their activities, because of their association with JIL. These local NGOs complained that JIL people were "stubborn" and "too abrasive" in their approach, therefore these organisations did not want to be associated with JIL.[86]

They also raised their concerns with the Asia Foundation who funded all of them. In the years leading to the discontinuation of JIL funding, Islamic NGOs cooperating with international NGOs were frequently accused by Islamist groups that they were agents of foreign interests. In 'countering' these accusations, NGOs with grassroots links, be it in the form of links to a local community they worked with or strong affiliations to other groups like NU, considered themselves to be in a more advantageous position than the NGOs without a grassroots organisation like JIL. However, other moderate NGOs that also received funding from the Asia Foundation were often put in the same category as JIL by hardline Islamist groups.[87] Therefore these organisations did not want to be associated with JIL and since 2006 even reportedly went as far as refusing to work with international donors who funded JIL. This reportedly made it difficult for JIL to find international donors who wanted to work with them.[88]

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[86] Interview with different Islamic NGO workers.

[87] My interviews with various Islamic NGO workers and international NGO staff provided detailed accounts of complaints and criticisms from both parties (JIL and other Islamic NGOs). For example, one topic of concern was JIL's take on liberalism, which was different from the other Islamic NGOs which emphasised 'liberation' [i.e. liberating people from poverty and injustice] instead of liberalism. They accused JIL of neglecting the social justice aspect, including raising concerns about the fact that JIL leaders also worked for The Freedom Institute, an allegedly neo-liberal think-tank. Interviews with Syafik Hasyim, 30 January 2007; Farid Wajidi, 26 October 2005; Ahmad Suaedi, 23 January 2007.

[88] Many in the NGO circle also see the Asia Foundation's act of discontinuing its relationship with JIL as affecting other donors's willingness to work with JIL. As the international donor community is small, what one funding agency – particularly an influential one like the Asia Foundation – thinks of an NGO matters for other donors. Confidential communication, 2008.

JIL people said they sensed that other NGOs were jealous of them because JIL was "popular" and had become successful in gaining a high media profile and generating discussions about moderate Islam. Because of that, other NGOs started to become argumentative with JIL: "This is more about the existence of egos in the NGO world. When one NGO emerges and starts to become popular, then the others would knock them down so they do not "emerge" [and fully succeed]. This situation is normal in the NGO sector," comments Nong.[89]

Although my observation during fieldwork indicates that there is indeed a tendency for NGO staff members to criticise others, which suggests that rivalry exists among them, I consider this comment to be exaggerating the issue. I see NGO rivalry mostly as a matter of securing self-interest rather than a deliberate attempt to sabotage other NGOs.

As noted earlier, the case of JIL and the Asia Foundation is unusual in its causes. The rivalry between JIL and the Asia Foundation's other Islamic NGOs was triggered by "attacks" by hardline Islamic groups on JIL. The hardline groups attacked JIL, so other moderate groups said, because JIL was too direct and confrontational in its approach to conservative Islam. The rivalry was basically about strategy: JIL's approach was frontal, high-profile, with the media as its medium, while the other Islamic NGOs were more subtle and involved implementing activities at the grassroots level. However, their differences in strategy spilled over into affecting their relationship with their international counterpart, the Asia Foundation, who funded both of them. If JIL had not had conflict with other Islamic NGO partners of the Asia Foundation, it would have had a better chance of maintaining its initially excellent relationship with the Asia Foundation and other international NGOs. The other Islamic NGOs may have supported JIL, instead of abandoning it.[90]

We can thus conclude that this case, despite other political aspects which also contributed to it, demonstrates how rivalry among local NGOs can affect their relationships with international NGOs. In this case, rivalry even diminished the local NGO's opportunity to receive support from international NGOs. Other Islamic NGOs' complaints about JIL, and their refusal to associate with JIL, became factors that contri-

[89] Interview with Nong Mahmada, 24 January 2007.

[90] Reportedly even during the Asia Foundation's meeting with its local Islamic NGO partners in early 2009, when one consultant brought up the issue of JIL and whether or not the Asia Foundation should reconsider its decision, he received strong responses and criticisms from these Islamic NGOs who apparently still did not want to have any association with JIL. Confidential communication, April 2009.

buted to the eventual decision of the donor, the Asia Foundation, to discontinue funding JIL. The Asia Foundation's decision created a bad precedent for JIL as it made other donors very cautious about funding it. Although NGO rivalry can affect the relationship between an international and a local NGO, this case, again, displays the domination of international NGOs in their relationships with local NGOs.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the micropolitics of NGOs in Indonesia and touched on the broad issues of personalism and rivalry among local groups. The discussion of personalism has scrutinised this common characteristic of local NGOs and looked at its implications for the relationship between international and local NGOs.

I argue that on the positive side, personalism makes it easier for local NGOs whose leaders are "trusted" by international NGOs to short-cut international donors' bureaucracy and easily obtain program approval. Their easy access to international donors consequently guarantees those local NGOs' security of funding for their own activities. Meanwhile, personalism enables international funding organisations to simplify the process of identifying trustworthy grantees and to obtain a type of personal guarantee for the international NGO's programs. We can thus see that the system works for both sides: for the international NGO sector which gets a guarantee on the completion of their contracts and for the small elite of local NGOs which are trusted by the international NGOs, who get funding. In this sense, we can see that personalism is at least encouraged by the domination of international NGOs over local NGOs.

However, personalism encourages undemocratic practices in local NGOs and contributes to internal conflicts within them. These conditions can harm the ultimate survival of the local NGO concerned as it can ultimately lead to a cessation of funding from donors upon the exit of the dominant leader. Internal conflicts also frustrate the ability of the NGO to unite on a common agenda and program, and weaken the NGO's leverage with international NGOs. This condition thus makes the NGO more vulnerable to the international NGO's influence in the relationship. In this respect, we can see personalism acts as a facilitator of international NGOs' domination.

The discussion in this chapter has also identified rivalry as one of the characteristics of local NGOs, despite the rhetoric of the development sector which tends to depict NGOs as having similar interests and thus working in the same direction of pursuing

the public good. But more importantly, similar to the discussion about personalism, my discussion of rivalry demonstrates that it can be both a result and a facilitator of the domination of international NGOs. Local NGOs need to secure their funding and this can lead them to have conflicts with other NGOs. Moreover, as the case study of JIL has displayed, local NGOs can also campaign against one another when their interests are in direct conflict of competition. Such situations demonstrate the ability of local NGOs to ignore the value systems which rhetorically underpin the development sector. Because local NGOs fail to acknowledge such inconsistencies between the language they espouse and their attitudes towards one another, the high-sounding values of development arguably ring somewhat hollow. Moreover, the ease with which local NGOs can sacrifice unity for the sake of self-interest makes the hegemonic system of international NGOs easier to maintain. International NGOs already – effectively if not by intent – pursue a "divide and conquer" strategy by forcing local NGOs to compete for funding. Failing to unite, local NGOs enable this system to function more easily.

This situation indeed opens up the final significant point I wish to make. In the course of my research I have encountered a number of interviewees who engage in a "dance of complaints" about the unfairness of their subjection to international NGOs.[91] Many interviewees bemoan the state of their dependence on international NGOs. But what the evidence from this chapter shows is that such belief in their own victimhood can only be taken so far. It is true that the system of development in Indonesia is hegemonic. But local NGOs themselves are responsible in at least a minor way for failing to take actions which would offer them some defence against the domination of the international NGOs. Local NGOs could develop processes of succession planning for their leadership teams. They could rally to back one another and avoid unconstructive clashes. By not doing these things local NGOs share a small element of responsibility for the hegemony of powerful international actors they all face. In other words international NGOs are not entirely at fault.

In conclusion, an analysis of the micropolitics of NGOs in this chapter suggests that the local NGO sector's characteristics of personalism and rivalry have both *enabled* international NGOs to smoothly function and exercise their domination over local NGOs, and can be the *result* of the domination of international NGOs. In other

[91] See chapter six for examples and more detailed discussion about local NGOs complaints. I borrow the term "dance of complaints" from John Lindsay, an international organisation staff member in Jakarta, email communication, 24 April 2009.

words, local NGOs make themselves more vulnerable to the domination of international NGOs by allowing internal conflicts, personalism and rivalry.

Chapter Six

Contending Views: The Perception Gap between Local and International NGOs

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the characteristics of local NGOs and how they shape and are shaped by their relationships with other local NGOs. This chapter takes the discussion further by looking at the perspectives of international and Indonesian NGOs regarding their relationship with each other. Specifically we will look at the sources of tension that occur as they work together and how individuals in both types of organisation talk about these tensions. By doing so, we open up other dimensions of the topic, the issues of domination and resistance.

The discussion will shed more light on how international NGOs assert dominance over Indonesian NGOs. Yet at the same time the chapter also reveals more evidence for resistance by local NGOs towards their international counterparts. Part of this resistance is evidenced by the deep resentment local NGOs show towards international NGOs, specifically in response to the ways in which international NGOs try to use the relationship to their own advantage.

This chapter starts by looking at the dominant issues, or problems, in the relationship as defined by international NGOs. Their concerns focus on accountability and lack of capacity in local NGOs. Following this, the chapter analyses the major problems in the relationship identified by Indonesian NGOs. Local NGOs see the relationship as being driven by donors. The discussion thus shows that local and international NGOs have different perceptions of the challenges they face in their relationship.

Many of the issues at the heart of these differing perceptions, namely accountability, capacity and donor dominance, are closely related and even overlap with one another. However, for analytical purposes, this chapter dedicates one section for each of these issues, i.e. accountability, capacity and donor dominance. Dealing with these

issues separately will enable me to illustrate the underlying tensions better and therefore clarify my arguments.

As I have demonstrated in my discussion throughout the previous chapters, I borrow the approach of Scott and Kerkvliet that looks at everyday practices of domination and resistance. Here, I employ Kerkvliet's concept of everyday politics in discussing the perspectives of international and local NGOs on the sources of tension in their relationship.[1] I also borrow Scott's concept of the *public transcript* and the *hidden transcript* in the attempt to study domination and resistance in the context of the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia.[2]

The findings of this chapter support the argument of both Scott and Kerkvliet who argue that Gramsci's theory of hegemony is inadequate in explaining power relations between superordinate and subordinate groups. We will see that the "hidden transcript" of local NGOs views about their international partners demonstrates considerable anxiety about international NGOs and contestation and even rejection of their views. As will be seen, the discussion about international and local NGOs' views of their relationship draws a striking parallel with Kerkvliet's eloquent study of how people in different status groups in a Philippine village see their relationship with each other.[3]

The discussion in this chapter reveals that although the domination of international NGOs is apparent, local NGOs' deep resentment of that domination and their ability to make use of "hidden" or "off-stage" opportunities for their own benefit, demonstrate non-compliance by Indonesian NGOs' towards the domination of international NGOs. Because consent is absent, the system of hegemony is incomplete.

The issue of NGO accountability

As has been demonstrated in chapter four, when it comes to working with local NGOs, most international NGO workers say the issue of accountability is one of the most prominent challenges they face. For example, an international NGO worker suggests:

> [Indonesian] LSMs [NGOs] have a major problem when it comes to accountability and transparency. As different grantees have different ca-

[1] As I have introduced in chapter one, Kerkvliet argues that "politics consists of the debates, conflicts, decisions, and cooperation among individuals, groups, and organisations regarding the control, allocation, and use of resources and the values and ideas underlying those activities." (Kerkvliet, 2002: 11).
[2] See chapter one for the definition and discussion of these concepts.
[3] See Kerkvliet, 2002: 164-201.

> pacities, their [approaches to] accountability are also different. Problems tend to occur with repetitious frequency. [There usually are difficulties with their] financial reports. In Papua, we gave money for lawyer's training, but we found out that the money ended up being used for unclear expenses. The "naughty" ones do exist.[4]

Another international NGO country director lamented, "the issues with local NGOs concern accountability and governmentality."[5] This dissatisfaction with Indonesian NGOs' accountability profile is also repeated in much of the secondary literature on Indonesian NGOs, particularly in the post-Suharto period.[6]

The discussion in this section scrutinises the accountability issue. First, it examines the issue of accountability in the NGO sector, before scrutinising the dominant accountability mechanisms employed by international NGOs. Following that, I discuss the problems that typically arise in realising the international NGO's vision of accountability.

I note two basic issues concerning accountability. First, there is a basic conflict concerning the question of whom an NGO is accountable to: is it to their funding provider or is it to the people in whose name the local NGO speaks and whose interests the local NGO says they serve? The second issue is the nature of the accountability mechanisms themselves: what they are and how do they make domestic NGOs accountable? In scrutinising this issue it is apparent that many local NGOs feel that accountability only flows in a one way direction – from them to their donors.

Within the development sector, Brown and Moore define accountability in the following way: "an actor (whether an individual or an organisation) is accountable when that actor recognises that it has made a promise to do something and accepted a moral and legal responsibility to do its best to fulfil that promise."[7] The term appears to be simple and straight-forward. However, for many, accountability is "a nebulous concept subject to multiple interpretations and understandings."[8] In the realm of development, Gaventa suggests:

> Accountability is a real buzz word used in many ways – in development contexts it is argued that greater accountability will allow aid to reach the

[4] Interview with Martin (pseudonym), 3 January 2007. I am mostly going to use pseudonyms in this chapter due to the sensitivity of the material.
[5] Interview with Brian (pseudonym), 12 December 2006.
[6] Davis, 2007: 45. See also Hadiwinata, 2003; Demos, 2005; Ganie-Rochman, 2002; Stanley Prasetyo et al., 2005; Suharko, 2005.
[7] Brown and Moore, 2001: 570. See also Cutt and Murray, 2000; Fox and Brown, 1998; Najam, 1996; Paul, 1992.
[8] Blagescu and Lloyd, 2006: 12.

> people for whom it is intended. But as we know, making accountability count in the lives of ordinary people is a different matter altogether.[9]

When people in the NGO scene talk about accountability, my observation during fieldwork suggests that they usually mean financial accountability.[10] For instance, when talking about the problem of accountability, an international disaster and humanitarian NGO director says: "Problems happened because NGOs are used as a personal business. It is easy to create an NGO in Indonesia." He then blamed the government oversight system saying, "there is no requirement to register with the tax office and audit." This makes it easy to "double [duplicate] funding [sources] and [commit] dubious practices which include multiple accounting systems."[11] This remark is in tune with the complaint of an international NGO consultant: "one characteristic of Indonesian NGOs is that they just want money."[12] Such comments are typically made by people from international NGOs, reinforcing the idea that accountability is expected to operate in a single direction, from local NGO to international NGO. As the discussion in chapter four has illustrated, financial accountability mechanisms often take the form of rigid reporting procedures which international NGOs impose on their local counterparts.

The Rise of an Accountability Agenda

The emergence of concerns among international NGOs about accountability in Indonesia corresponds with increasing coverage of this issue in both the international literature on NGOs and among international NGOs in general. As noted by Edwards:

> When the first systematic writings on NGO accountability became available in the mid-1990s, NGOs still occupied a relative backwater in politics, international affairs and academic research. Ten years on, both NGOs in general and the accountability question in particular have moved to centre stage.[13]

According to Jordan and Van Tuijl, accountability initially was a "by-product of the prevailing paradigm regarding the role of NGOs in development," but by 2006 had "become a hard issue at the centre of NGOs' political and organisational profile."[14]

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[9] One World Trust, "Making Accountability Count: Citizens, NGOs and the State Discussion." Events notes. March 21 2007. http://www.oneworldtrust.org/documents/Making_Accountability_Count_21_March_2007_Event_Notes.pdf [accessed on 15 October 2008].

[10] There are of course those NGO workers who discuss accountability beyond the financial dimension. For this view, see Baswir, 2004.

[11] Interview with Brian (pseudonym), 12 December 2006.

[12] Interview with Tony (pseudonym), 25 January 2007.

[13] Edwards, 2006.

[14] Jordan and van Tuijl, 2006: 9.

One explanation for the emergence of accountability as an issue of significance is the increasing awareness of "good governance" as a part of the 'New Policy Agenda' promoted by multilateral and bilateral funding agencies.[15] In this context, multilateral and bilateral funding agencies, which oftentimes function as an extension of their respective governments, evidently perceive accountability as one of the key issues in good governance. One international NGO worker confirmed this notion by noting that it was the bilateral funding agencies, instead of international NGOs, that first promoted the issue of good governance in the context of international development in Indonesia.[16] The discussion thus suggests that the accountability agenda is above all imposed by donors.

The media has also amplified the accountability issue in the public arena, as news of accountability failures in NGOs can create controversy and helps to "sell" media time. For example, internationally, Jordan provides three examples of media scrutiny of "scandals" in the NGO sector which grabbed the attention of the media, including a case where journalists in the Netherlands questioned the salary of a senior NGO official who asked for a higher wage than that received by the Prime Minister, and a practice of trading relief supplies for sexual favours in Africa.[17]

Looking specifically at the Indonesian context in the search for answers as to why accountability failures emerge as an attention grabbing issue, Davis locates the trend within the circumstances of Indonesia's democratic transition. He suggests that:

> Increased opportunities for political parties and other social organisations mean that advocacy NGOs' lack of accountability and transparency to the broader Indonesian public and their target groups is increasingly evident.[18]

Furthermore, Davis notes that the mass media has given significant attention to the issue of NGOs and accountability, with no less than thirteen feature articles with titles like "Questioning NGO Accountability" and "*Gerakan Masyarakat: Tuntutan Akuntabilitas LSM, Isu yang Berulang*" ["People's Movement: the Demand for NGO Accountability, a Recurring Issue"] appearing in various leading Indonesian news-

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[15] Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 2. For the discussion of the 'New Policy Agenda' see Robinson, 1993. The term "good governance" is usually associated with accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law. For example, according to the World Bank, "good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs." (World Bank, 1994: vii).
[16] Interview with Muhammad Miftahudin, 19 October 2005.
[17] Jordan, 2005: 6.
[18] Davis, 2007: 55.

papers between the year 2002 to 2007.[19] The point is that democratisation, by freeing up access to information and provoking debate over issues of public concern, has visited questions of accountability on the NGO community. In addition, as explained in chapter two, the massive amount of foreign development funding that flooded into the country in the post-Suharto era has raised public interest in how the money is spent. In an ironic twist, the community that championed the struggle against authoritarianism is having to answer uncomfortable questions about itself under the very system it wished to create.

The debate over accountability and civil society internationally can be observed through an array of public discussions, seminars and workshops, as well as an ample number of reports and publications produced around the theme of accountability. Charnovitz notes that "a voluminous literature exists on the accountability (or lack thereof) of NGOs."[20] At the international level for example, two books with the theme of "Making accountability count: citizens, NGOs and the state" were launched in London in March 2007.[21] One organisation, *One World Trust*, has even been publishing an annual Global Accountability Report since 2003. Each year, the report assesses the accountability performance of a set of thirty international organisations in three categories: public, private and non-governmental to see "how accountable thirty of the world's most powerful organisations are to civil society, affected communities and the wider public."[22] The Global Accountability Project, conducted by an international organisation called *One World Trust* came up with what they call "four core accountability dimensions" which they perceived as "critical to managing accountability claims for both internal and external stakeholders."[23] The four dimensions are transparency, participation, evaluation and complaint and response mechanisms. Each dimension has a set of key indicators which are used to measure accountability. The end result is what they called as "Global Accountability Index." These initiatives are some of the examples of attempt to address the issue of accountability within civil society at the international level.

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[19] These articles appeared in the *Jakarta Post* 11 April 2006 and *Kompas* 24 April 2004 respectively. Davis, 2007: 55.
[20] Charnovitz, 2006: 24. Other publications include Bendell, 2006.
[21] The two books are 'Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability' edited by P. Newell and J. Wheeler and 'NGO Accountability: Politics, Principles ands Innovations' edited by L. Jordan and P. van Tuijl. See www.oneworldtrust.org/pages/download3.cfm?did=514 [accessed on 20 October 2008].
[22] Blagescu and Lloyd, 2006: 13. The thirty organisations consist of ten intergovernmental organisations, ten international non-governmental actors and ten transnational corporations.
[23] Ibid.: 14. See also: http://www.oneworldtrust.org/ [accessed on 20 October 2008].

At the national level, in the case of Indonesia, examples of the ways in which accountability has become an obsession in the NGO sector are many and various. One example is a series of public discussions in seven cities in Indonesia which started with a workshop held in September 2002 organised by a local NGO called PIRAC.[24] This workshop "gathered various NGOs which are concerned with and are implementing accountability programs in their organisations and networks."[25] The papers from those events were then compiled and published as a book titled "*Kritik dan otokritik LSM: membongkar kejujuran dan keterbukaan lembaga swadaya masyarakat Indonesia*" ["Criticisms and Self-criticisms of NGOs: Scrutinising the Honesty and Openness of Indonesian NGOs"].[26]

These kinds of activities are usually done with the funding support of international NGOs, in this case, the event was funded by the Ford Foundation. That this workshop and book were funded by an international organisation could itself be taken to reflect the influence of an external agenda, or at least as an attempt by Indonesian NGOs to respond to the criticism addressed to them by international NGOs.

What do international NGOs think of local NGOs regarding accountability? Because of the diversity of international NGOs, we can find a range of opinions from reasonably positive remarks on the issue to very negative views. This was certainly my finding during my fieldwork. For example, a country director of an international NGO who has an optimistic view of Indonesian NGOs says:

> It [accountability] is the big responsibility of donors. Do not give money without giving appropriate financial support and training. The other dimension of accountability is absorptive capacity. It is our obligation to give not just a grant to a project but to help the organisation run itself professionally according to international standards.[27]

On the other hand, a different country director of another international development NGO said that with the mushrooming of NGOs after Suharto stepped down:

> The interesting thing was that these NGOs that came out from that time did not necessarily have constituencies. So using the term that we call

[24] PIRAC stands for Public Interest Research and Advocacy Center. The organisation was formed in Jakarta in 1998 and its core activities are research, training and advocacy as well as disseminating information on philanthropy and strengthening civil society organisations in Indonesia. For more information on PIRAC, see <http://www.pirac.org>.
[25] Abidin and Rukmini, 2004: 14.
[26] Another example is the workshop "Remote Sensing and forest governance in Indonesia: Increasing transparency and accountability" in Bogor in June 2004. See http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/events/remote_sensing.pdf [accessed on 15 October 2008].
[27] Interview with Douglas Ramage, 12 January 2007.

> them, they were civil society groups. But (what) we often call them – these so called NGOs, it's just a bunch of guys sitting around, and smoking cigarettes, having a drink of coffee and thinking about (how) Indonesia should be, good governance, (how) it should be improved. They don't have any sustainability. And also they are not representatives of people. And lots of NGOs are like that.[28]

However, my observation suggests that even those international NGO workers who sound upbeat about local NGOs, often still make comments about the local NGOs' lack of accountability. For example, a program development specialist admits:

> The technical part of this job is that we have to engage in conversation with our local partners not over substantial issues but about a missing ticket, a fake address, and that sort of stuff. Often tensions arise from this – from missing money or failed documentation.[29]

Meanwhile, a veteran international development consultant suggests:

> Whatever it is, there's a hundred and one ways for it [misuse of funds] to be done. Unfortunately, sometimes it is inevitable ... Many cases of these cases actually involved the *plat merah* [Red Plate] NGOs. Donors may say we want to support the *kabupaten* [district] government but we want you to tender it to NGOs. One solution is the government creates its own NGO. You get [an NGO headed by the] *kepala BAPEDA* [the head of the Regional Planning Agency] and *istri kepala BAPEDA* [the wife of the head of the Regional Planning Agency] and that type of thing happening. I am sometimes encouraged by the developments at the provincial level but sometimes discouraged. It's never a straight story; it's never a black or white in terms of the development and progress of the civil society organisations in Indonesia.[30]

This situation indicates there is a widespread assumption among international NGOs that local NGOs flout or are incapable of following the international NGOs' accountability system.

The majority of international NGO workers I interviewed would give me, on average, at least one illustration of a case of financial irregularity with local NGOs that they have worked with. For instance, Daniel (a pseudonym), an international program consultant in governance reform says:

> Things [misuse of NGO funding] happen and there's much more things [that are] happening than what I know of. To be very frank, we know that a lot of their documentations [i.e. receipts submitted by NGOs as part of their reporting to international NGOs] is fake: [from] vendors, you know this is Indonesia. [for example, reporting] 20,000 photocopies, so we have to be satisfied with that. But there are all sorts of ways to siphon money even from an in-kind project because we can't take care of all the photocopying that's been done and often we also say you

[28] Interview with Thomas (pseudonym), 14 September 2005.
[29] Interview with Daniel, 27 September 2005.
[30] Interview with Jonathan (pseudonym), 22 September 2005.

> know, hey, we can't send somebody so you do it on the ground. Hotels – prices are marked up. So there's a lot happening and frankly I don't want to know what's happening. Or salaries: where a salary has been paid, but the organisation [then takes a] cut.

This kind of view suggests that international NGO people tend to turn a blind eye to what goes on.

As the discussion in chapter four indicates, corruption is pervasive among local NGOs. Richard Holloway, also a long-time international development sector practitioner in Indonesia, has written extensively on the issue of corruption. In one of his papers on civil society and corruption in Indonesia, Holloway discussed two issues. Firstly, he looked at the Indonesian NGOs working in the anti-corruption area and secondly, the corruption practices in Indonesian NGOs. He provided a long list of common practices of corruption:

> false invoicing from hotels for the cost of meetings, false invoicing from the NGO for activities that they have not carried out (maybe because they have chosen to do other activities with the money that seem more important to them), shuffling of funds between budget heads supported by false receipts, writing of false reports documenting non-existent activities to keep the funds flowing, taking of funds from two sources for the same activity, and taking funds for one activity and using them for another activity (particularly to bridge periods where funding has not come on stream).[31]

Holloway's paper takes the form of a briefing or policy recommendation paper for international donors and is thus revealing of the way in which international actors view the Indonesian NGO sector. It is understandable that those in the Indonesian NGO community want to create a standard for Indonesian NGOs given the explosive growth in the number of domestic NGOs in the post-*reformasi* era, when many of these organisations were only performing what some scholars called 'cheque-book activism.'[32] However, as the earlier discussion in chapter four suggests, many of these things can be seen as a form of resistance by local NGOs.

At the national level, Indonesian NGOs' quest for better accountability mechanisms, as Antlov et al. have noted, has resulted in at least five initiatives. The initiatives range from the formulation of an NGO code of ethics and the establishment of an Indonesian NGO certification program, to attempt to legislate changes in the organisational form of Indonesian NGOs from closed foundations into "broad based membership organisations" in order to "obtain better social legitimacy."[33] These ef-

[31] Holloway, 2001: 11.
[32] Nugroho and Tampubolon, 2007.
[33] Antlov et al., 2006: 157-161. See also Kelompok Kerja Akuntabilitas OMS, 2004.

forts, which are mainly initiatives of prominent NGOs, in part respond to pressures from international funding agencies.

Apart from acknowledging the accountability problem, international NGO workers also point out that they find it difficult to broach the issue of accountability with local NGOs. As an illustration, an international development worker explains "the dilemma for donors":

> On the one hand you would want to empower local NGOs and not try to tell them what to do. But if you send out those signals [of] "I don't want to tell you what to do but you tell me what your plan is and we support you" they smell, that and then you get an outrageous proposal of billions of rupiahs. They hire twenty people for a job that can be done by two, and then you have to come in and you have to be the *bule* ["whitey"] [and say to them], "We can't do this, why are you doing this?" But then you have their reaction sometimes: "You guys, you come from abroad and you don't really understand the Indonesian context – you really should empower us and not be so authoritarian," and so on and so on. That's the balance. .... There's no compromise between these two. I always feel [that I am] balancing these two. If I get too liberal to the partners I get these hilarious proposals but if I'm too authoritarian then they complain about foreign interference so it's always back and forth between these two extremes. There's never the middle ground. Once the balance tips to one direction, you should always get problems.[34]

According to an international program consultant who has been a long-time resident of Indonesia, local NGOs become defensive when it comes to accountability because many of them assume that any impositions on the local NGO are heavy-handed interference. This source, Daniel, recalls a "horrendous" and prominent Indonesian NGO leader as:

> The one who runs into town telling everybody that all the donors are neo-colonial bastards and all that sort of thing, when you just tried to explain to that person that we have standards as well. We have to be accountable to [the name of a bilateral funding organisation who funds his organisation] and they have to be accountable to [their citizens' representative] who release the money so we need to put this on paper. We need to know – sorry – where did the money go? [the name of the person] is notorious.

In addition to shedding light on the perspective of the international NGOs, this illustration also indicates the dynamic nature of the relationship between international and local NGOs concerning the issue of accountability.

In recalling the discussion of the NGO funding mechanism in chapter four, local NGOs try to avoid accountability, presumably partly because they are tying to cream

[34] Interview with Daniel, 27 September 2005.

off funding to provide stable incomes for their organisations. On the other hand, as the preceding discussion in this chapter suggests, international NGOs' motive is to ensure that local NGOs are efficient and honest, as they see it. The international NGOs fear that if there were no accountability regime, they would be exploited. These are both legitimate concerns.

The example also shows that international NGOs are aware that the accountability agenda causes opposition from the local NGO community and makes them feel dominated or subordinated. At least some officials from international NGOs feel uncomfortable about this but they do not feel they can change. This is partly because they view accountability standards as not only making the local NGOs work for their money, so to speak, but mainly because the international NGOs themselves also have to be accountable to their donors.

The system of hegemony of international NGOs then is a personless machine: the international NGOs are responsible for perpetuating the system of hegemony but they themselves are not in total control of it. Furthermore, the above example introduces the multiple layers of actors and agendas involved in the relationship between international and local NGOs, an issue we turn to now.

Accountability to Whom? Serving Multiple Agendas

As the above illustration demonstrates, the accountability relationship between international and local NGOs involves many stakeholders. Besides the local and international NGOs themselves, we can also see an important role is played by the donors of the international NGOs, and if the donor is a bilateral funding agency, the government of the country concerned as well. In addition, we also have target beneficiaries of the local NGOs (the recipients on the ground) and the local government and the wider community where the local NGOs work. In illustrating this complex web of interests, Brown and Moore argue that:

> An international NGO may be accountable to donors for the proper handling of donated resources; to clients and beneficiaries for the delivery of high-quality, responsive services; to staff for continued support of the mission that drew them to the organization; or to partners and allies for living up to commitments for action made in the course of developing and executing a joint project.[35]

Edwards and Hulme elaborate on these "multiple accountabilities" by placing accountability in two broad types namely "downward" accountability to NGOs' "part-

[35] Brown and Moore, 2001: 571.

ners, beneficiaries, staff and supporters" and "upward... to their trustees, donors, and host governments."[36] An immediate question emerging out of this debate is which form of accountability should come first – the "upward" or the "downward" accountability.

Ideally, according to NGO rhetoric, an NGO should be accountable to all of its stakeholders: the donor, program beneficiaries, partner organisations and government. As some observers note, NGOs' donors demand NGOs be accountable for the "integrity, efficiency, and impacts of programs that they have funded"; at the same time, beneficiaries put pressure on NGOs to "live up to their rhetoric about fostering locally determined development rather than imposing their own priorities;" and NGO partners, such as other NGOs and government agencies, "expect the NGOs to live up to promises they made in forging their partnerships."[37]

Yet these different expectations are likely to be in conflict. One frequent example is when a local NGO expects to engage in a long-term partnership with an international NGO while the international NGO is only able to make a short-term commitment. This project-based paradigm is in contradiction with the fashionable rhetoric on NGO accountability. In the words of Edwards and Hulme:

> Of course, equal accountability to all at all times is an impossibility. Many of the concerns expressed about the weak accountability of NGOs relate to the difficulties they face in prioritizing and reconciling these multiple accountabilities.[38]

In the case "when the expectations and claims of the different stakeholders are not aligned", as suggested by Brown and Moore, an NGO "must decide which of the claims should be honoured" and the problem is that "it is not clear which of the stakeholders should be so honoured."[39] Although these two writers were referring to an international NGO when discussing this particular issue, I find it totally appropriate to apply their discussion to local NGOs in Indonesia because local NGOs deal with this very same problem. In the end, an NGO has to decide and in many cases, NGOs prioritise the more powerful stakeholder, which as the above illustrations suggest, is almost always their donor. The result is that ultimately what exists in many cases is, at least on paper, the one-way, upward model of accountability, from the

[36] Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 8.
[37] Brown and Moore, 2001: 570.
[38] Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 9.
[39] Brown and Moore, 2001: 73.

NGO to its donor (but with that decision to prioritise the donor's expectations, there is plenty of space for small-scale and hidden acts of resistance).

My field research on Indonesian NGOs mostly confirms local NGOs are accountable in an upward direction. For example, a researcher from a multilateral funding organisation in Indonesia shared his research result which indicated that most NGOs only give their report to their donors and not to their other stakeholders.[40] However he added that the reason for this was, "Because basically these NGO activists make a living out of their projects."[41]

Furthermore, in the context of international development projects, Ginting compares the patterns of funding with the flow of accountability. Both patterns go in one direction, with funds flowing from international donors to local NGOs, then to the community; at the behest of the international NGOs, accountability flows from the local NGOs upward to donors.[42] Rizal Malik, a country representative of an international NGO in Indonesia offers a similar view to Ginting but notes that local NGOs do not offer an alternative for dealing with upward accountability:

> As most relationships between the Northern and Southern NGOs contain the element of funding cooperation, there will always be big questions about to whom they [local NGOs] are accountable: is it to donors who give them the money or to their beneficiaries i.e. those who these NGOs base their funding requests for? The Northern NGOs who receive financial aid from [their] governments usually pass on the burden of financial reporting to their Southern partners. This situation usually overloads the burden of the Southern NGOs. On the other hand, the Southern NGOs themselves are often unable to provide the alternative for acceptable [forms of] accountability. Is there another option? Say for example, a relationship without a funding element and solely based on similar values and ideas? The majority of Northern and Southern NGOs still can not accept these options because they are deeply gripped by the aid industry. We can even say that NGOs are the products of this aid industry.[43]

Although funding dependency is a natural by-product of the nature of a development sector in which aid mostly travels from the West to the developing world, my fieldwork suggests that the entrapment of local NGOs in this one-way accountability model also derives from the fact that many local NGOs lack constituencies of their own. This observation is particularly true in the case of advocacy NGOs which, unlike development NGOs, do not usually engage in community-based activities. Be-

[40] Although one could argue that you do not need reports to be accountable, having a report at least suggests the intention of local NGOs being accountable to the public.
[41] Interview with Luthfi Ashari, 31 August 2005. For his research result, see Ashari, 2004.
[42] Ginting, 2004: 188.
[43] Smeru, 2000: 42.

cause this type of NGO speaks for a cause or movement, many of them do not have geographically bounded constituents. A director of a Yogyakarta-based advocacy NGO, for example, recalls that "we just realised that our grassroots links in Yogyakarta were very limited when the [Yogyakarta] earthquake hit us."[44]

In addition, it is significant that the organisational form of many local NGOs comes, as mentioned in chapter five, in the form of a foundation with the highest decision makers the foundation's executive board. This organisational model specific to Indonesia has strengthened the upward accountability in the relationships of Indonesian NGOs with international NGOs. As Edwards and Hulme suggest, "Legally, most NGOs, as non membership organisations, are accountable to their trustees, who often exercise only a light hand in governance. NGOs cannot be formally accountable to their beneficiaries, however much they want to be."[45]

The issue of NGOs lacking constituents also raises questions of legitimacy and representation, or, to put it simply, there is the question of "who does the NGO represent?"[46] Peruzzotti notes that this is a common question asked by "elected authorities, corporations or bureaucrats when confronting challenges by specific social actors."[47] In the context of Indonesia, an international development consultant for a donor agency provides an example of what he perceives as the resistance of some Indonesian government officials towards NGOs:

> They ask [donors]: who are these NGOs accountable to? We are at least elected. Donors pay attention to that so when things go wrong with NGOs, donors move away from them and focus on local governance instead. Part of this is not [the] NGO's fault but it is partly because of the government's resistance. This might be solved in what I would call a maturing process of civil society here that involves constituency building, developing real constituents in Indonesia, building accountability – not only in funding, but in terms of public accountability.[48]

These observations suggest the vulnerability of local NGOs, particularly the critical ones, in answering the question of representation and legitimacy posed by government officials. Although we can see some government officials' questioning of local NGOs' status as just their way to divert attention back to local NGOs who are often critical towards the government, nevertheless these sorts of questions indicate the local NGO's weak position.

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[44] Interview with Tarik (pseudonym), 13 November 2006.
[45] Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 8.
[46] Peruzzotti, 2006: 49.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Interview with Paul McCarthy, 22 September 2005.

NGOs Accountability Mechanisms

Various attempts have been made to address the issue of accountability within civil society. For example, at the international level, a range of reports and initiatives have come out recommending NGOs establish more structured and rigorous reporting systems by donors and international NGOs and the creation of the International NGO Accountability Charter.[49]

However, even where there are accountability mechanisms, other observers warned that "it is unrealistic to expect an organisation to use the same type of mechanisms at all times and to be equally accountable to all stakeholder groups; this would lead to paralysis."[50] One clear solution for this is to offer different kinds of accountability mechanisms for different types of NGOs. Brown and Moore provide a useful chart to identify accountability to stakeholders for different kinds of NGOs. They classify NGOs into three categories: service delivery NGOs, capacity-building NGOs and policy and institutional NGOs. The stakeholders of each category are then identified using three stakeholder categories. In the first category are the "value creation" stakeholders, then "support and authorization" stakeholders and lastly, "operational capacity" stakeholders.[51] The chart is actually made for international NGOs, but as I mentioned above, I find it useful to adopt their arguments for local NGOs as well. However, Brown and Moore, although acknowledging the constraints for each type of organisation in being accountable to their stakeholders, only stop at 'identification'. They do not really go further and provide a real solution to how to measure accountability and the concrete steps to achieve accountability.

As I have discussed at length in chapter four, the basic accountability mechanism used by international NGOs in Indonesia is through their reporting system, which consists of two components: financial and program reporting, with a varied spectrum of rigidity and instruments. Some international NGOs, as several illustrations in chapter four suggest, have rather detailed and rigid mechanisms which starts before local NGOs can even enter a relationship with the international NGO, while other international NGOs have a simpler two-page reporting system.[52] Yet my observation

[49] For example, see the Global Accountability Project with its annual Global Accountability Report <http://www.oneworldtrust.org>, the International NGOs Accountability Charter <http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org>, and publications by the United Nations-Non Governmental Liaison Services <http://www.un-ngls.org>.
[50] Blagescu and Lloyd, 2006: 13.
[51] Brown and Moore, 2001: 579.
[52] See chapter four for more discussion of reporting mechanisms.

of various international NGOs reporting requirements leads me to conclude that international NGOs usually are more rigid in the financial aspects of their reporting requirements rather than in the program aspects of their reporting requirements.

Different international NGOs evidently have developed different reporting styles and frequencies. However, a typical reporting period for an annual program has at least a mid-year report and an end-of year report.[53] In terms of content and style of a program reporting, most international NGOs usually ask for a narrative report describing program activities, achievements and constraints, which is sometimes accompanied with a tool called a LogFrame.[54]

One key point that emerged from the discussion concerning international NGOs' reporting mechanisms in chapter four is that their reporting system is usually determined by the international NGOs' donors. As an illustration, an international development NGO program officer who works with local NGOs recalls:

> When we introduce a new reporting system to our local partners, I received complaints from them. One organisation even told me directly that our organisation is *penjajah* [a coloniser]. I was a bit insulted and shocked by that. However I told them that although I consider them my equal, in certain matters, particularly when it comes to funding-related issues, I have to position myself as your superior in the way my donor [organisation] treats me.[55]

Although one can perhaps sympathise with this individual's feeling of discomfort, her statement does also clearly illustrate the existence of the upward accountability in the relationship between international and local NGOs.

My observations of international NGOs' reporting systems also suggest that their systems largely depend on the requirements of their donors. A clear example of this, as has been shown by my discussion in chapter four, is that the reporting period imposed by an international NGO to their local counterparts generally follows the international NGOs' own donor's reporting period. A seasoned local advocacy NGO director shared his experience: "We have been working with this particular international NGO for about a decade. Thus we have become pretty familiar with its report-

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[53] Some international NGOs also require a quarterly report.

[54] LogFrame or Logical Framework is a USAID-pioneered tool which is widely used and modified by bilateral agencies in planning, monitoring and evaluating projects. It basically consists of a four by four matrix. The four rows contain overall objectives, project purposes, expected results, and activities; the four columns contain intervention logic, verifiable indicator of achievements, sources and means of verifications, and assumptions. For the example of LogFrame, see <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/project-management/InfoKits/infokit-related-files/logical-framework-information>.

[55] Interview with Sinta (pseudonym), 5 August 2005.

ing system." Throughout the decade, the director claimed no significant reporting problem occurred. However, recently the international NGO changed its reporting system rather drastically:

> We had to adjust ourselves with this new and more complicated reporting requirement that even the international NGO's program officer himself is having a hard time understanding; he complained to me about the headache he got because of this new system.[56]

Apparently, what happened was that this international NGO recently changed its donor for this particular program. The new donor has a stricter reporting system.

Some donor reporting systems which are designed to enhance accountability arguably seem to ignore the local context. Several local NGO workers mentioned the difficulties they encountered in following their donor reporting guidelines when trying to reconcile their receipts with their expenses. For example, a common complaint is that not every service provider, particularly in remote areas in Indonesia, is equipped with a proper receipt book and stamped tax invoices: "Can you imagine if you are in the field at some remote village and asked for a receipt from the people there who feed you?" or "do you think an *ojek*-driver (motorcycle taxi driver) or a boatman would be able to give you a stamped receipt every time you use their services?"[57] One can question whether international NGOs really ask for such details. As the following discussion will show, local NGOs' expenses in question are often settled amicably. Nevertheless, as I have discussed in chapter four, most international NGOs do require rigid book keeping and administrative arrangements from their local counterparts.

Some NGO workers even add that rigid reporting systems actually "encourage us to engage in unconstructive practices such as creating fake receipts" in order to meet the reporting requirements.[58] "Wouldn't this create a backlash to the very concept of accountability and transparency promoted by the international donors?" added another senior local NGO worker.[59] In recalling chapter four's discussion, in the end local NGOs find ways of abusing international donors' rigid reporting systems.

Another way to look at the above problem is to see it as reflecting different attitudes to the issue of accountability: internationals see the issue as one of evidence based

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[56] Interview with Ali (pseudonym), 26 August 2008.
[57] Interviews with Charles, 25 October 2005, Lesmana, 11 September 2008, Omar, 27 January 2007 (all pseudonyms).
[58] Interview with Kamal (pseudonym), 16 October 2006.
[59] Interview with Omar (pseudonym), 27 January 2007.

performance ("seeing is believing") which would assist them in being accountable to their donors, while the locals see it as an issue of trust. Therefore, for local NGOs to have international NGOs constantly checking on them and demanding accountability for what locals perceived as trivial matters means a violation of trust.

Naturally these negative views are not held universally, as many Indonesian NGO workers do not find problems with the reporting system imposed by their international counterparts. Local NGO staff often see the program and finance training offered by donors as well as their cooperation with the international NGOs' program and finance officers, as being relatively effective. Usually problems over receipts can be settled "peacefully" by the local NGO signing a statement acknowledging the occurrence of an expense in question.[60]

Indeed, many of the accountability agreements found in this research lacked sanctions or enforcement mechanisms in instances where the local recipient NGO failed to comply with the accountability guidelines of its international counterpart.[61] Thus the accountability arrangements were something of an "on-paper only" affair. But presumably the local NGOs would not be funded again if they violated them.

Some local NGO initiatives, like the Indonesian NGO certification program mentioned earlier, also caused strong resentment in the Indonesian NGO community. The scheme is "intended to improve NGO public accountability and management performance in order to strengthen partners' trust in NGOs and to make NGOs capable of serving their advocated groups well."[62] In 2005, the scheme task force's activities included establishing "solid instruments, procedures and certification standards," creating "an NGO certification agency" and in the future, creating NGO certification with NGO accountability and transparency programs as its core.[63]

The resentment particularly came from those NGO workers who had particularly strong pro-egalitarian views and therefore perceived such schemes as products of the Indonesian NGO elite.[64] One person asks, "Who do they think they are to be in a position to accredit us – can they be objective? What are the indicators used?"[65] This

[60] Interviews with Lesmana, 11 September 2008; Endang (pseudonym), 26 August 2008.
[61] My observation in the field indicates it is very rare for an international NGO to bring the financial irregularity of its local partner to court. Instead, the common practice is for the international NGO to stop funding the local NGO and blacklist that organisation. An informant says that since the NGO community in Indonesia is a small community, once an international NGO blacklists an NGO, usually no international donor would want to work with that organisation. (Interview with Marcus Mietzner, 27 September 2005). This social sanction has been proven to be effective.
[62] Satunama Foundation, 2002, quoted in Antlov et al., 2006: 158.
[63] Antlov et al., 2006: 158.
[64] For a critical view of the initiative, see Abdullah, 2002.

sition to accredit us – can they be objective? What are the indicators used?"[65] This response itself offers a fascinating glimpse into the fractiousness of the local NGO sector, as introduced in chapter five. That the agenda of international NGOs was taken up by some local NGOs itself shows the hierarchy and rivalry between Indonesian NGOs, and more importantly, it arguably shows how one part of the local NGO sector aligns itself with the interests and outlook of the donor community and, arguably, seeks to play the role of agents of the dominant international actors within the local NGO community. To the critics, the accountability initiatives benefit only a certain type of NGO: those who are willing to accommodate themselves with the criteria and standards established by mainstream international NGOs but fail to acknowledge the heterogenous nature of local NGOs.

An additional common criticism of international NGOs' accountability mechanisms concerns their reporting systems. A local NGO worker questions the tendency for donors to 'limit' the pages of local NGOs' reports: "I find it ridiculous that a one-year-program report must have a maximum limit of only twelve pages and the report must always include pictures which show, for example, banners with their name and logo."[66] This type of resentment about international NGOs or international donors' logos is actually very common among local NGOs.[67] This local NGO worker said that when he asked his international counterpart why this was necessary, the answer was "you have to do this as part of your accountability."[68] This kind of answer was clearly unsatisfying to him as he continued suggesting that this method of reporting only benefited the donors. My conversation with various other local NGO workers during fieldwork confirms that this informant's view of international NGOs' preferred reporting style is common in the NGO sector.

Double Standards? Demanding Accountability from Donors

The reporting requirements for local NGOs might be detailed or simple but that in itself is not the main problem. The main problem for local NGOs is that they see that their donors expect them to be transparent, yet these donors themselves are not

[65] Interview with Omar, 27 January 2007. As indicated earlier, the indicators were still being formulated and it appears that this program is not running yet.
[66] Interview with Arya (pseudonym), 11 November 2006.
[67] However, since the recent development of anti-American sentiment in Indonesia, some American organisations have become more flexible towards local NGOs. Interviews with Yusuf, 30 January 2007; Ali (pseudonym), 26 August 2008.
[68] Interview with Arya, 11 November 2006.

transparent to them. A former local NGO worker who is now working for an international NGO suggests:

> They [international NGOs] scream for anti-corruption [measures], they call for transparency, but they do not want to challenge their own structure, mechanisms and bureaucratic culture. If we demand change, (then) it should be reflected in ourselves [the international NGO sector]. This means that we ourselves need to change.[69]

This section will review the responses of local NGOs towards international NGOs' demand for their accountability. In other words, this section discusses local NGOs' demand for international NGOs' transparency and accountability towards them – downward accountability – particularly on the issues of funding mechanisms and procedures.

Unsurprisingly, the question of funding is at the centre of local NGOs' concerns about "one-way accountability." Local NGOs rarely know how much money is available for them or for work carried out in their sector. The usual procedure is for them to just make a request to their international counterparts, starting with an informal request followed by a written one. The international NGO will then decide whether or not they have funding available. Local NGOs perceive this whole scenario as being "highly secretive." A local NGO worker says:

> I do not know how much funds they have inside their *pundi-pundi* [purse]. They always conduct their meetings in *hotel mewah* [luxurious hotels], with a very lucrative amount of money for their per diem. Where does their money come from? What do they use the money for? They demand our report [it is therefore fair that] they should also tell us how much their budget allocation [for us] is. I think it is rather naïve for them to behave like that and to claim that they are promoting clean governance.[70]

The above observation is rather extreme. As the discussion in chapter four suggested, some international NGOs do publicise their own budgets and some announce how much money is available for work in particular areas. However, my observation suggests that international NGOs tend to disclose this kind of information rather broadly, i.e. this information is usually included in the general annual report produced by their headquarters, and if it is a detailed one, selectively to their donors and prospective donors rather than to local NGOs. The consequence of this lack of transparency from the donor side is, according to this informant, that local NGOs face difficulties in dealing with questions and comments such as "I thought you had the

[69] Interview with Adam (pseudonym), 19 October 2005.
[70] Interview with Arya, 11 November 2006.

money for this [request or activity]?" [*"Iho, Anda kan punya uang?"*] from their constituents at the local level. According to him, the constituents do not know that the local NGO has a very restricted *ruang gerak* [literally meaning "wiggle room" or, as put by Hilhorst, "room to manoeuvre"[71]] when it comes to financial matters because donors impose strict rules. On the use of their funds, there are stories of donors who are even so 'ferocious' that they would demand an explanation over things such as "one rupiah spent for a parking fee."[72]

Some local NGO workers' moral outrage regarding this one-way accountability can become very sharp. For example, a vocal NGO activist working in the field of advancing democracy admits that it has become a common secret among Indonesian NGOs that the percentage of project funds spent by international NGOs on their operational costs including expenses for running an office, salaries and the like is actually higher than the percentage of funds that were spent for the actual projects. "Their [the expatriate donor staff] [monthly] salaries" he says, "could reach over one hundred million [rupiah]."[73] He continued, "Therefore, if they talk about accountability, I think that's nonsense."[74] The resentment among the local NGO community runs very deep.

In response to my questions about their budget reports, some international NGO staff give answers that all but confirmed the local NGO workers' frustration. As an example, one international NGO staff expressed her view:

> The situation is self-explanatory. We are [the] funding provider. [So] why do we have to provide a report to our recipient? They are the one who should be publishing their report. Why [should we] take-off [our] clothes in public? Do you see the United Nations [agencies] disclosing their program budget [for local NGOs] to the public?[75]

According to this Geraldine, local NGO representatives frequently raise this question during NGO forum meetings and receive the same response. While not all persons I interviewed expressed the point so starkly, her view does represent a common opinion in the international NGO world: accountability is not an affair for them, it is an affair for the local NGOs.

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[71] See Hilhorst, 2003: 103-124.
[72] Interview with Arya, 11 November 2006.
[73] More than US$10,000.
[74] Interview with John (pseudonym), 23 January 2007. The discourse about expatriate's salaries in international aid sector is one of the "hot" issue that comes up frequently during my discussions with local NGO workers.
[75] Phone conversation with Geraldine (pseudonym), September 2007.

One obvious method of cross-checking the propositions of local NGO workers about the lack of transparency of international NGOs is to consult the annual reports of the internationals. In theory it should be relatively easy to check the claims that international NGOs spend most of their project funds on their own operational expenses. But therein lies the problem. As the discussion in chapter four suggests, teasing out precisely how much money an international NGO allocates to a specific local NGO or its project requires clever detective work. Some organisations, like The Asia Foundation and Ford Foundation, have their annual reports produced internationally from their headquarters. This means that a specific country program budget, like Indonesia for example, only occupies a tiny part of the overall budget or even is incorporated into the organisation's programs or regional categories, making country specific data impossible to find. The annual report is often descriptive and provides only an overall budget allocation per sector or program. Some international NGOs, like Save the Children UK (SC-UK) and World Vision Indonesia (WVI) do produce their own separate annual reports for Indonesia. However, just like the international versions, their country annual reports also only provide general information. For example, for the 2006-2007 annual report, both SC-UK and WVI provided a chart of funding allocation based on particular programs without providing information on funding allocation based on implementing partners such as local NGOs.[76] In sum, the task of looking at international NGOs' budget allocation is a difficult assignment, particularly for local NGOs.

In highlighting this issue, I should mention that it is not my intention to insinuate that by not revealing their budgets to local NGOs, international NGOs are "misusing" their funds. I am aware of the rigid accounting system that exists within most international NGOs.[77] I am, however, merely trying to illustrate a one-way accountability tendency that exists in the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia and to show how donors use the accountability discourse as means to insert their authority into the everyday life of Indonesian NGOs and to order their everyday practices. Yet at the same time the discussion of accountability has also

[76] Save The Children in Indonesia, 2008; World Vision Indonesia, 2008. It should be noted that in its report, SC UK also provided a chart of funds distribution according to location.

[77] An auditing system for an international NGO, as explained by several international NGO workers, usually consists of two types: external and internal. Internally, an international NGO usually conducts an audit once every three months. While the frequency of external audits depends on its donor's requirement. For example, an international NGO Human Resource Director said that although an external audit at this informant's organisation normally happens once a year, there was one case, with their tsunami program where their donor insisted on auditing them six times in a year. Interviews with Irma Sopamena, 6 September 2008; Galuh Savitri, 14 September 2005.

revealed deep resentments that local NGOs have towards their international counterparts.

Thus far it appears that international NGOs are being deliberately evasive on the subject of their budgets. However, closer scrutiny reveals that one reason why international NGOs do not reveal their budgets to local NGOs is because they wish to deflect attention from their own role as financiers. For example, a country representative of a prominent international NGO says:

> Money is important, but we believe there is more than that. If there is an NGO or government agency that we feel only seeks funding without a real partnership, it makes them less interesting. It sounds idealistic ... we want to make the world a better place .. [So] let's start with the issue. We will come to funding later. But if they come and ask us, "What do you give money for?" we will usually ask them "what does your organisation do? What is your concern? What do you worry about? And let's see if we can come to some agreement.[78]

Similarly, an international development consultant explains:

> When they [local NGOs] come and say, "I need the money so what do you want me to do?" I often say, "Don't do that. You tell me what you want to do and then we talk about the funding." I hate these phone calls when people call me up and ask: "What do you want to fund?" I say, "That is the wrong question. What do you want to do?" Of course I can say, "You know, this is our area of interest," but then they would really have changed [their proposals] so they would have to ask me that question. My experience is .. those programs when they ask, "what do you want me to do" are just a *proyek* [project], you had better not touch it.[79]

These illustrations suggest that one reason why international NGOs do not reveal their budgets is to avoid opening opportunities for local NGOs to abuse the funding. In other words, not publicising their budgets is their way of anticipating the project-seeker type of NGOs. This demonstrates that international NGOs are aware of the existence of local NGOs who are just interested in funding and not serious about working with international NGOs. Viewed in another light, this attitude suggests that the international NGOs still seek to monopolise relevant information and to maintain their exclusive power to judge what sort of activities and organisations deserve funding. The discussion thus reveals some perception gaps between international and local NGOs concerning the accountability issue.

[78] Interview with Russell (pseudonym), 12 January 2007.
[79] Interview with Daniel, September 2005.

The Accountability Issue: Summary and Conclusion

Four points can be identified as being most important from the preceding discussion on accountability issue. First is the emphasis that international NGOs put on financial accountability. This emphasis suggests, that international donors, as Edwards and Hulme put it, tend to favour "accountancy rather than accountability, audit rather than learning."[80] On the other hand, financial accountability is not all there is to accountability, it is just one aspect.[81] Yet in relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia this aspect is perceived as being by far the most important. Because it is the internationals who above all promote this issue above all others, and in a way that suggests one-way accountability, one can conclude that the way accountability is dealt with confirms the imbalance of power relations between international and local NGOs.

The second point that can be drawn out of the preceding discussion concerns the question of what is the real power behind the international NGOs. If financial accountability is a key indicator of power relations and if international NGOs are not accountable towards the local NGOs, then to whom or what are they accountable? Does this mean that the real power lies with those who provide funds to international NGOs? It is necessary to answer in the affirmative. Our discussion thus far indicates that although rhetorically, both local and international NGOs, are supposed to be accountable to their many stakeholders, in reality they practice a one-way or an upward accountability, where they are more accountable towards their donors than towards their other stakeholders. The discussion of how international NGOs' dependency on their own donors shapes their own strategy of accountability illustrates how hierarchical the system is. Thus the discussion confirms Hilhorst's suggestion that "the accountability process itself is as vulnerable to power, hierarchy, conflicting interests and interpretations, and as much informed by culture, as the 'real' situation it aims to provide an account of."[82]

On the other hand, the discussion of accountability in this section also reveals a third point, namely that local NGOs deeply resent the accountability agenda of their international counterparts, which local NGOs see as patronising, interfering and even hy-

[80] Edwards and Hulme, 2006: 13; See also Bendell, 2006: 17.
[81] Other aspects of accountability include political and social accountability. For an informative discussion of alternative aspects of accountability in the development context, see Hilhorst, 2003: 125-145.
[82] Hilhorst, 2003: 144.

pocritical. This reality contradicts common NGO rhetoric about "partnerships" and about the ideal values that supposedly motivate their relationship.

The fourth point the discussion in this section raises is about the nature of domination and resistance in the relationships between international and local NGOs. Although on the surface we can see the domination of international NGOs in stressing the importance of the accountability agenda and in determining accountability mechanisms in their relationship with local NGOs, the discussion suggests that local NGOs are sometimes extremely critical towards this international NGOs' issue of concern. This situation indicates the lack of consent international NGOs possess which thus suggests that the domination of international NGOs towards their local counterparts is at least incomplete. I will come back to this point and elaborate in greater detail in the last section of this chapter.

The Question of Indonesian NGO "Capacity"

This section continues our discussion of the perspective of international NGOs about problems in their relationships with local NGOs by looking at another common source of complaint: local NGOs' capacity, or rather their alleged lack of it.

Alongside the word "accountability", "capacity" has become one of the popular catch phrases used in the NGO world over the last decade or so. Although the concept could be traced as far back as the beginnings of development assistance, according to Smillie, it re-emerged more forcefully alongside of the discourse about civil society in the aid sector in the 1990s.[83] Workshops and training seminars with the theme of capacity-building now regularly fill the schedule of Indonesian NGO workers. Many international NGOs, the United Nations agencies and international development consulting firms incorporate capacity building in their programs and services. The literature on capacity building in the international development literature is massive.

This section will first look at the reasons why Indonesian NGOs' capacity (or perceived lack thereof) has come onto the agenda of international NGOs. I then analyse the implications of this agenda and critically discuss issues that arise from international NGOs' complaints about capacity. Criticisms of local NGOs' "capacity" can be seen – arguably – as subtle and patronising ways that international NGOs seek to dominate Indonesian NGOs. I argue that it was the international NGOs who defined

[83] Smillie, 2001: 13.

and put meaning to the word "capacity", usually drawing on a "Western" understanding of how NGOs should "professionalise" and improve their proposal writing, reporting, and other skills. In other words, the international NGOs used the discourse of capacity not to acknowledge the diversity of ways and contexts in which capacity can be interpreted, but rather as a way of imposing their own vision of how an NGO should operate.

I conclude by pointing out that by raising the issue of capacity, international NGOs demonstrate their superior position in the unbalanced relationship between international and local NGOs by constructing a discourse in which it appears that the international NGOs are the "enlightened bringers of knowledge". At the same time, this discussion also reveals the critical, sometimes resentful attitude of local NGO workers towards this agenda of international NGOs.

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, I am aware that the discussion of accountability and capacity contains some overlapping elements. I try to minimise the overlap by considering the issue of capacity mostly as an administrative issue. This way of viewing capacity is more in line with the way international NGOs perceive capacity.

It should also be noted that it is not my intention to show that local NGOs are being patronised by the international NGOs into thinking they need capacity building. I am aware that many local NGOs have problems with the quality of their human resources and that they often want training.

But the point with the capacity building discourse is that it is constructed by the international NGOs to remake the Indonesian development sector in their own image. Regardless of the benefits it may or may not bring, it is still the image of the international NGOs. In this sense, the process taking place here resembles a classic process of hegemony construction in which subordinate groups appear to take on and support the values espoused by the dominant group. When they buy into this capacity building agenda, the local NGOs are buying into hegemony.[84]

[84] However, as will be seen later, this research argues that the hegemony of international NGOs is not complete.

What Do International NGOs Mean by "Capacity" and Why Has It Become a Problem?

As with the issue of accountability, many international NGO workers complain a lot about local NGOs' "lack of capacity". This issue is perhaps more an issue for the officers who deal directly with their local counterparts rather than a concern of the country director of an international NGO.

To start the discussion in this section, I will first provide a glimpse of what international NGO workers mean by "capacity," based on my interviews with many of them. In these interviews a common pattern emerged from the international NGO workers when asked about the challenges they encounter in working with local NGOs: workers in international NGOs have strong impressions that their counterparts in local NGOs lack organisational and administrative skills. For example, a veteran international NGO worker complains:

> It is hard to find a local NGO to work with. They have limited capacity, in this case human resources. There are no capable staff. Those with capacity ran to work for more promising NGOs: the international NGOs. It is rare to find somebody who wants to work and be stationed in a remote area.[85]

When being asked about the *tantangan* [challenges] of working with local NGOs, another funding organisation director immediately responds, "*Kapasitas rendah* [(they have) low level of capacity]." He continues by making a list:

> They have a low *sumber daya* [human resources], including low ability to read and write, they do not have strategic planning capacity, [they] lack internal management, and they are not used to the concept of accountability and transparency.[86]

A staff member of another international NGO adds:

> Local NGOs lack coherent strategic planning ... they do not know how the international organisation works ...[they have no knowledge of]... program content, which includes program design, monitoring, management and, in terms of finance, accountability and institutional administration.[87]

The above views reflect the complaints of many international NGO staff towards the administrative competence of local NGOs.

One way to interpret the views of such international NGO staff members is that they give us an accurate picture of the lack of organisation and managerial skills among

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[85] Interview with Gunawan (pseudonym), 1 February 2007.
[86] Interview with Erlambang (pseudonym), 18 October 2005.
[87] Interview with Kevin (pseudonym), 18 October 2005.

local NGOs. By recalling the discussion in chapter five about internal management conditions in local NGOs, conditions that are characterised by strong personalism and unclear decision-making structures, we can see there is some truth to the proposition. On the other hand, this prevalent view of international NGO staff also hints at the desire of international NGOs to impose their own management and programming standards and practices on domestic, Indonesian NGOs. In other words, this interpretation reveals the imbalanced nature of the relationship between international and local NGOs. The following example eloquently illustrates this point for us.

In early 2003, an international development NGO in Jakarta announced that it had grants available and invited submissions from local NGOs in the form of concept papers. One of the submitted concept papers came from a small *yayasan* [foundation] that I will call *Yayasan A* in a town in Central Java. The *yayasan* was founded and led by a middle-aged female doctor and it had been running a small community clinic and health program for children in the heavily populated slum area of the town for a number of years. This local NGOs' work of running a community clinic exposed it to a large number of malnourished babies. Therefore, the local NGO proposed to participate in a supplementary feeding program for malnourished babies combined with nutrition classes and a micro-credit scheme that it would provide for their mothers (as the *yayasan* discovered that apart from being poor, the malnourished babies' parents did not have adequate knowledge of nutrition).[88]

The international NGO accepted *Yayasan A's* program idea and invited the local NGO to the next selection round. The next round required a full proposal submission using the international NGO's proposal guideline and a field visit by the international NGO to the local NGO. However, during the selection meeting, the *yayasan* was very close to being rejected. Most of the international NGO program division members who attended the meeting considered that this local NGO's proposal did not meet the international NGO's high proposal writing standards which required, among other criteria, a comprehensive background, explicit program objective, program goals, program activities, budget and budget narrative, logical framework and program schedule.

[88] It should be noted that I do not wish to engage in the discussion of program effectiveness here. One could argue this approach is a typical local NGOs' method of conducting their program by assuming a more powerful role (e.g. as the outsiders, teachers or trainers) than their target group thus revealing the existence of an unequal relationship between the NGO and their beneficiaries (see for example, Ford, 2003; 260-268; Hadiwinata, 2003: 108). But it is not the intention of this dissertation to explore this set of relationships.

The local NGOs' proposal was approved only because the program officer who conducted the field visit and met the people at this *yayasan* fought on behalf of it. She was heavily criticised by her colleagues for her decision. However, the program officer realised that the senior director and her staff – who were mostly in their late 50s or older – were not very computer literate. According to the program officer:

> They still do their bookkeeping by writing in a big notebook instead of the MYOB software promoted by most international donors. Do they have to be "punished" because of that? They have a very clear idea of what they are going to do and they already have the experience of working with the community. It's just they are not used to working with the international NGOs' system.[89]

In the end, this program officer had to sit down with the local NGO staff and spend hours revising their proposal together. She said:

> I didn't mind doing that. But many times international program officers can be very rigid and do not want to *tambah kerjaan* [add to their workload]. They prefer to accept a well-written proposal, even though it is written by a bunch of university-graduates who do not have any contact with their proposed beneficiaries.[90]

She then mentions an alternative experience of sitting down in a community hall during a field visit to assess a local NGO and their well-written proposed program, only to find out that the community in that village, which supposedly were the target beneficiaries, did not even know the name of that local NGO bidding for the grant, let alone the local NGO's staff.

The previous example points to the tendency of international NGOs to insist on applying their own standards in their relationships with local counterparts, standards which may not necessarily account for realities on the ground. Sometimes a mismatch happens because of the local NGO's limited human resource skills, but at other times it is because the local NGOs do not see – or agree with – "the importance" of the administrative measures demanded of them. As noted by a senior inter-

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[89] Interview with Sarah (pseudonym), 18 December 2006. MYOB [Mind Your Own Business] is a popular accounting software.

[90] Ibid. An international NGO program officer's workload often includes report writings, meetings and field-visits. For many officers, traveling is a main feature of their work. In a month, they can spend at least two weeks away in the field to visit local partners. This creates a widespread perception in the development sector that the job of an international NGO staff member is comparable to that of a flight attendant. For both of them travel is the main feature of their career. Even this travel practice can be a source of tension. It is widely known that most international NGO program officers are *Garuda* Frequent Flyer members. Many international agencies require their staff to travel with the high-standard Indonesian national air carrier only. Although the requirement derives from safety concerns over the other Indonesian commercial airlines (as most of them are budget carriers), it adds to the jealousy felt by many local NGO staff, for those who work with the internationals.

national NGO practitioner in Indonesia: "Sometimes donors make very specific bureaucratic requirements for project reporting or administration which the NGO finds either irrelevant, or overly burdensome or plain unnecessary." For instance, he suggests, one could look at "the volumes of regulations that USAID demands NGOs to be familiar with, and to comply with."[91]

One explanation for the creation of these exacting standards of report writing is that they benefit international NGOs, because they make their reporting procedures to their donors easier. As a country director of an international NGO points out: "The Northern NGOs who receive funding from [their] government usually pass on the burden of financial reporting to their Southern partners. This situation often gives Southern NGOs an overloaded burden."[92] The discussion in the previous section of accountability, about how a local NGO has to change its reporting format to match that of its long-time international counterpart, supports the argument. The international NGO apparently just switched to a different donor with a different reporting style than the international NGO's previous donor.

In other words, international NGOs tend to mimic the reporting style of their own donors, transmitting the directives and practices they are subjected to from above down the chain to their own recipients. When they receive an inadequate proposal or report from local NGOs, international NGOs have to struggle to "adjust" the local NGOs' reports to the international NGOs' standard. This may require the international NGO program officer concerned to talk to his or her local counterpart, visit their office and sit down and work on the particular proposal or report of concern. However, this outcome can greatly add to the international NGO's staff workload and expenses. Moreover, just as some international NGOs do not reveal their budgets to local NGOs to avoid opening opportunities for abuse, as I discussed above, in revising poorly written reports or proposals from local NGOs, international NGOs could also open opportunities for abuse.

Nevertheless, the bigger point to make here is that the relationship between international and local NGOs is unequal, with international NGOs largely defining the terms of the relationship. For international NGOs, what is meant by "capacity" is that the recipients of their grants have the ability to be legible or "user friendly" for

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[91] Holloway, 2001: 16. Available from: <http://www.10iacc.org/download/workshops/cs30a.pdf> [accessed on 7 November 2008]. USAID is one of the major donors for both international and local NGOs.
[92] Smeru, 2000: 42.

them. Such capacity is not necessarily the most important criteria for success in the field that local NGOs prioritise: "capacity" for the local NGOs to meet its beneficiaries' needs. In all my discussions with international NGO staff I rarely heard them complain about the "capacity" of local NGOs to be user friendly for the beneficiaries.

Training and Capacity Building

One of the typical ways international NGOs attempt to improve the "capacity" of local NGOs, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, is through "capacity building" programs and support. Eade notes that the term "capacity building," along with "empowerment", "participation" and "gender equity," is seen in the international development sector as "an essential element if development is to be sustainable and centred in people."[93] As an illustration, a survey among western international NGOs reveals that nine out of ten respondents describe the core activity of what they do in the South as "capacity building".[94] One bilateral funding agency staff member explains that capacity building training and workshops are typically a basic component of any grant program for local NGOs in Indonesia: "First there is the initial program introductory workshop then there is also an on-going workshop, on-going training, etc."[95]

Capacity building training typically involves standard themes, such as program improvement or financial management. It can also include specific activities, such as health or agriculture, or specific technical issues such as using the internet as an advocacy tool. However, criticisms of the concept and the way development agencies employ 'capacity training' have been around for many years. For example, Moore questions the broad interpretation of the concept:

> What is "capacity building"? That is the problem. It includes everything that was covered by the different definitions of "institutional building" and much more besides .... Aid agencies would be wise to have no truck with the new jargon of "capacity building" and to insist on using language and terms that have identifiable and precise meanings.[96]

Meanwhile, Oxenham and Chambers criticise the basic idea behind capacity building, which they perceive as an effort to impose changes on local NGOs and communities by outsiders:

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[93] Eade, 1997: 1.
[94] James, 1994, quoted in Eade, 1997: 2.
[95] Interview with Henri Pirade, 6 January 2007.
[96] Moore, 1995, quoted in Eade, 1997: 1.

> By providing specialist people-services, it necessarily implies that they have the expertise which the people lack and must transmit it [the expertise] to the people. So the people 'to be developed' start out on an unequal footing ... the fairly strong human bias towards authoritarianism is legitimised and reinforced through the explicit authority of professional expertise.[97]

My observations in the field show that local NGO workers have similarly critical views of capacity building training in the international development sector. For example, there is a common view among Indonesian NGO workers that training programs and workshops do not produce anything but *jago training* [training champions] or *ahli workshop* [workshop experts]. These are commonly used labels for those individuals who spend most of their time attending workshops or seminars. A local NGO worker comments how donors themselves do not have a "standard" in conducting capacity building training.[98] By standard he means a thoroughly thought-ful concept and training materials which suits the needs of local NGOs. Another international NGO worker blames international NGOs' lack of preparation and their tendency to rely on superficial activities:

> The main problem is that actually there are many training courses on offer, but they are applied without proper consideration beforehand. [Consequently] what happens is that we waste money, hard work and energy. [We] hire expensive facilitators, and also hire expensive training venues and accommodation but without any significant result... The only outputs or indicators or means of verification are certificates and participants' attendance record.[99]

In short, even when a training program is well-intentioned, in the end NGO workers often perceive that it fails to achieve its expected result and merely becomes part of a program's bureaucratic machine or mechanism. They often see training as not effective because the topics are sometimes irrelevant, and there are often no follow up activities, and frequent training does not guarantee successful implementation in the field. However, in recording these views I also observed that local NGO workers often complained about the ineffectiveness of donors' training programs, without offering alternative solutions or preferred topics or methods of training.

Of course it would be inaccurate to conclude that all local NGO staff harbour resentment towards the motives behind capacity training. Occasionally, I have also

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[97] Oxenham and Chambers, 1978, quoted in Lecomte, 1986: 45.
[98] Interview with Rahman (pseudonym), 18 September 2006.
[99] Interview with Seth (pseudonym), 6 January 2007. International NGOs are known for conducting training and workshops at upmarket hotels. Local NGOs would then be invited, housed at the hotel and received a per diem according to the international NGOs' standard.

heard local NGO workers praise certain dedicated international NGO workers they deal with in such contexts. It is not my intention to present the critical view that arises from local NGOs as if it was a voice that chimes in unison.

The point I am trying to convey here is that the existence of the critical view among local NGOs over the issue of capacity once again suggests the unequal relationship between international and local NGOs, e.g. if one theme is most common in all the criticisms I have heard of capacity building programs, it is that international NGOs tend to design programs that do not necessarily conform to the needs and interests of local groups and their recipients, but are instead most interested in ensuring that locals understand and follow their own ways of doing things.

Concerns over "Donor-Driven" Assistance

Thus far, this chapter has looked at two issues, accountability and capacity. Both derive from the perspective of international NGOs on issues they face in their relationships with Indonesian NGOs. The discussion has helped to shed additional light on the power imbalance between international and local NGOs in Indonesia, because both issues are centrally concerned with the ways in which international NGOs try to assert their influence in the relationship, and the frustrations they experience while doing so. On the other hand, the discussion in this section has also revealed that the Indonesian NGO community is critical of these parts of the international NGO agenda.

To reiterate my observations of the preceding section, some local NGO workers are very cynical and bitter when talking about their relationships with international NGOs. During my fieldwork, I often heard accusations such as "the donor only wants to work with those who they can control" or "no matter how good our idea and proposal is, if they do not like our organisation, our proposal won't be accepted."[100] Many local NGO staff also insist that, no matter what the rhetoric, programs they run that are funded by international NGOs always have to follow the international NGOs' agenda.[101] In addition, many long-time NGO workers suggest that the role of most international NGOs is comparable with the role of a "broker," in which, they see international NGOs just as intermediary parties in channelling funds from their

[100] Interview with John, 23 January 2007.
[101] A high percentage of NGO workers I interviewed stated this, in different degrees.

donors to local NGOs.[102] One international NGO worker for example, says that since donors see international NGOs' ability to "spend the money" as one of "the indicators of a successful program," international NGOs appear to be interested only in "how to spend money."[103] Although these critical opinions sound too black and white, they nevertheless starkly indicate where local NGO workers see the real power as lying in their relationships with international NGOs.

It should also be noted that the degree of bitterness on the part of local NGOs varies. On one end of a continuum there are local NGO workers who are totally antipathetic toward international NGOs. At the other end, there are local NGO workers who are very keen to work with international donors and perhaps who seek to become staff members of international NGOs. Those local NGOs whose proposals are rejected by international funding agencies say things that are likely to be more negative.

Having this general observation in mind, this chapter will now turn to look more closely at the perspectives of Indonesian NGOs in viewing problems in their relationships with international NGOs. Of course, discussions throughout this thesis have already shed light on how local NGOs view their international partners. Now I want to focus more concertedly on these perspectives. The remaining discussion in this section therefore will look at two prominent issues mentioned by the majority of the local NGO workers I interviewed for the study: the issue of "donor-driven" assistance and the topic of local NGOs' feelings of "helplessness". As we shall see later, the complaints of local NGO workers are related to the topics of accountability and capacity discussed in the previous section.

The Significance of the English Language in the NGO Sector

One of the common complaints that local NGO workers express is that they feel burdened by an agenda which is largely "driven by donors." This criticism emerges in a number of different contexts. For instance, many local NGOs feel pressured to conform to international NGO accountability and capacity standards. But the problem of donor domination is also evident in even seemingly minor things, such as the use of jargon and language.

The dominant language used among international NGOs is English. Certainly in their internal communications or in their communication with head office, international

[102] Approximately 70% of my interviewees stated this, yet they mostly do not want to be identified for this statement.
[103] Interview with Martin (pseudonym), 3 January 2007.

NGOs use English. They also, however, often use English when dealing with local partners. Moreover, English terms have been inserted in the Indonesian development vocabulary. These phenomena have created a type of post-colonial cultural superiority.

The power of the international NGOs dialogue can especially be seen when looking at the language used in the Letters of Agreements (LoA) or Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) made between many international and local NGOs. As explained in chapter four, some international NGOs provide bilingual LoAs, in both Bahasa Indonesia and English, but most agreements are written in English. A local NGO worker recounted her experience of being asked by a staff member from another local NGO several months after both NGOs signed an agreement with the same international organisation. This second person asked my informant about the meaning of some aspects of the LoA. Apparently he did not understand what was written in the agreement and only signed it because he was attracted by the large amount of money offered by it.[104] This illustration suggests some local NGOs sometimes adopt agendas that they are not really familiar with – even to the point where allegedly they did not know the terminology that formed the basis for its contract – in order to get money.

One defence for the use of English as the language of the sector is that translation involves an interpretation and sometimes the interpretation can be misleading.[105] Therefore it is better to use English as the medium of communication. Nevertheless, this defence does not deny the presence of cultural domination. This disadvantageous use of English extends beyond letters of agreement, to include NGO vernacular. Most of the terms in the Indonesian development sector derive from English words, such as the Indonesian word 'akuntabilitas' for 'accountability' and 'pengarusutamaan jender' for 'gender-mainstreaming.' Even so, the usage of English terms instead of the Indonesian ones, such as 'capacity building' instead of 'penguatan kapasitas' or 'monev' (which derives from 'monitoring and evaluation') is rather common in the Indonesian NGO scene.

Although one could say that this might just reflect the nature of the Indonesian language in general, which practically absorbs many foreign words and adopts them as

[104] Interview with Endang, 26 October 2008. This informant however says that afterwards the international program officer told them that they would be "more than happy" to help translate the letter of agreement and to answer any concerns raised by local NGOs.
[105] Interview with Kamal, 19 October 2006.

its own, or the growing significance of English language usage as a symbol of wealth and education among Indonesian society, the overwhelmingly widespread use of English in the development sector also signals that international NGOs have a large influence and cultural domination in it. An experienced local NGO director once commented: "Indonesian NGOs are *latah dengan jargon* ['copy-cat' or 'imitate' jargon] like "good governance" and "gender mainstreaming" while they actually are clueless about what it is."[106] She notes that these two terms are two examples of popular terms found in local NGOs' programs. The director said, "It is all because of funding requirements." What she means here is that international donors are the ones who introduced these terms as agenda items to the development sector and thus added these terms to the vocabulary of local NGOs. On this topic she says: "Yet the base of a program should be the [needs of the] community instead of funding."[107] Other informants say that there are many local NGOs who, in order to survive, "are willing to do anything for money."[108] Linguistics may seem trivial but they are actually quite significant. In an environment in which soft-power dominates rather than force, controlling discourses through language is a powerful indicator of the balance of power within the sector.

Whose Agenda Counts? The Domination of Donor Priorities

As the discussion throughout preceding chapters and sections indicated, Indonesian NGOs' dependency on international NGO funding makes local NGOs vulnerable to regurgitating the program interests of international NGOs. This section will now turn to discuss the topic of what is commonly known in the NGO sector as a "donor-driven" agenda. In other words, this section looks at how local NGOs perceive their relationship as being driven by their donors' interests.

The influence of international donors on local NGOs' has long been a common topic of discussion in the NGO sector. We can identify several examples which demonstrate international NGOs' domination in different matters, from programming priorities, international campaigning issues, to issues in an internal debate of a local NGO. The first example is the issue of program priorities, on the issue of gender. In her study of labour NGOs in the 1990s Indonesia, Ford notes:

[106] Interview with Ratih (pseudonym), 19 October 2005.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Interview with Tony, 25 January 2007.

> NGO funding and the possibility of excessive donor influence were questions which concerned every respondent [NGO activists] to a greater or lesser degree. ... One strong indication of donor influence was the number of labour NGOs that had gender programs, even though gender was clearly not an issue of high concern for many of the activists involved.[109]

She states that one of her respondents "observed that their NGO had no plans to establish a gender program until donors encouraged them to do so."[110] Indeed, this confirms my own observations during fieldwork in which I see gender participation as one of the keywords in the Indonesian NGO sector. A country representative of an international NGO admits that although for his organisation gender justice is "an uncompromised core value" when establishing partnerships with local NGOs, many of his local partners do not share a similar view. According to him, these local NGOs thus feel that the international NGO is "forcing their interests" on the local NGOs by putting gender justice as one of the requirements for their partnership.[111] These observations indicate the important attachment international donors have towards gender. Hadiwinata notes that gender started to become an issue in the international development sector in the mid-1970s, with the shift from welfare to equality in the development process.[112]

During my research, I met local NGO advocacy workers in Jakarta who shared many stories which reflected their concerns that the perspectives of local NGOs were being eclipsed by the dominant concerns of their international partners. This does not only concern the adoption of programs (such as gender programs) at donors' behest, but also the role of local groups in what are supposed to be highly collaborative and equal campaigns. One of their concerns was the involvement of local NGOs in global environment advocacy campaigns.

This observation thus brings us to my second example, which concerns environmental campaigning issues. Local NGO workers are often frustrated that most international environmental campaigns are conducted in what they perceive as the context of developed nations. Two local NGO workers provided an example: "how can we talk about [the issues of] carbon taxes [*pajak karbon*], the Kyoto Protocol and forests in Indonesia like the global campaign trend wants us to while we are still

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[109] Ford, 2003: 258.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Smeru, 2000: 41.
[112] Hadiwinata, 2003: 168. He argues that the United Nations' declaration of the "decade for women" (1975-1985) has played a role in it (ibid).

dealing with issues of (properly zoning) national parks?"[113] It is therefore unsurprising to learn that one Indonesian member of a large international environmental network suspected that her organisation's role in the network was simply to "be used" to strengthen the legitimacy claims of the international network to represent her area of the world.[114]

The third example, which is in the field of democratic advocacy, demonstrates that the struggle over whether the priorities of international or local NGOs' interests should be served not only occurs at the inter-institutional level, i.e. in relations between local and international NGOs, but it also happens *internally* within local NGOs. As an illustration, a local NGO worker shared with me the case of his organisation, which is a member of a major network involved in democratic advocacy in Indonesia. The local NGO worker admitted that the network's decision to focus more on election monitoring activities than voter education programs sparked a heated debate inside his organisation. The decision, according to him, was heavily influenced by the preference of an international NGO which funded the network. His organisation actually believed that voter education was more important than election monitoring because it had a philosophical concern with the empowerment of the community. The argument waged in this organisation's internal meetings thus revolved around the line of "we know our country best, why can't we decide what's best for our country?" He admitted that the arguments stayed inside his organisation as "this was just part of *dinamika organisasi* [the organisational dynamics] and an on-going process of negotiation." Yet, he confessed that ultimately his local NGO had to choose to back the international NGO's proposition because the local NGO felt "helpless."[115] It felt that it risked loosing its funding support if it remained focus on voter education. As this example implies, there is a common view among local NGOs that they are often powerless and unable to control their own direction because they do not have money of their own. Many local NGO workers related to me that dependence on international NGOs comes at the price of accepting their agendas, as well as their money.

This feeling of helplessness among local NGOs also arises over the perception that their international counterparts do not want to listen to their input. For example, a local NGO director shared a story about an exchange that occurred when the Iraq

[113] Interview with Gita and Nabila (pseudonyms), 1 February 2007.
[114] Interview with Seth, 6 January 2007.
[115] Interview with Lesmana, 11 September 2006.

war happened. His organisation together with other local NGOs which received funding from a U.S government-supported international NGO expressed a firm protest over the U.S government's actions. Yet he said the international NGO did not do anything to even pass their concerns on to U.S government representatives (like the Department of State).[116] It should be noted that of course it is rather naïve to expect that the international NGO would express their local NGOs' views to the Bush administration without the risk of losing funding. However, this example also suggests that international NGOs are quite capable of dismissing the concerns of their counterparts.

The obvious way to interpret the emerging theme of local NGOs' "helplessness" is by seeing this phenomenon as a reflection of the lack of leverage that Indonesian NGOs have when dealing with international donors. A minority of local NGOs themselves critically admit they lack bargaining power, partly as a result of their lack of knowledge and related skills.[117] In my analysis perhaps the informants understate the situation. The main problem is simply that local NGOs lack the money which would give them autonomy.

After complaining about "donor dominance", about being treated unfairly, and about lacking the ability or resources to sustain their organisations; some local NGO workers admitted that things would be much better for them had they "equipped" themselves with appropriate skill sets. As an example, several Indonesian advocacy NGO workers pointed out it is common to see local NGO representatives turning up unprepared in international forums abroad, in large delegations like "*rombongan sirkus*" ['circus group'] with "most of them not even able to speak English." Yet according to my informants these participants often complain about the results of such forums though they implied these participants are incapable of contributing anything

[116] Interview with Ali, 25 October 2005. The point to make here is that the international NGO did not make any effort to deal with the situation other than gather its local partners for a meeting. It is important though, to note, on the topic of protesting over Iraq war, in 2004 Walhi, a national environmental network cut its ties with USAID, DFID and AusAID as a protest over the involvement of these aid agencies' parent governments in the Iraq war (interviews with Walhi staff, September 2005). This points to the fact that a prominent organization that has relative autonomy (in this case because Walhi has its own mass membership base and affiliations with other international NGOs) has considerably higher leverage and is in a better position than other local NGOs to bargain with international agencies and even reject their cooperation.

[117] Interviews with Rashid, 23 January 2007; Adam, 19 October 2005; Kamal, 12 October 2006; Omar, 27 January 2007; Charles, 16 August 2007; Sri, 16 August 2007; Kuntala, 1 August 2007; Chandra, 19 December 2006; Martin, 3 January 2007; Richard, 14 October 2005; Ali, 26 October 2005; Yusuf, 30 January 2007; Wulandari, 1 November 2005. (All pseudonyms).

to them.[118] A local advocacy director expressed her frustration of the fact that Indonesian NGOs "do not have a face [she means presence] they are not present in the international arena." She mentioned an experience of attending a "high-level panel" at an international meeting in 2000 where a "Filipino NGO director, instead of an Indonesian" talked about the financial crisis in Indonesia. This made her feel deeply embarrassed.[119]

Other informants revealed that when it comes to decision making processes or other high level meetings of international NGO networks, the fact that many representatives of Indonesian NGOs who are supposed to represent the interest of Indonesian NGOs, as has been pointed out in chapter four, are prominent figures, distracted with many personal pursuits which makes it difficult for them to fully contribute to managing their organisations' interests.[120] A long time Indonesian NGO worker who was present in some of these meetings said: "it is not surprising if in the end the interest of the international board member prevailed. They (the international board member) came well prepared, they were well argued, they followed the entire meeting sessions, from the first day right to the end, unlike the local board members, who sometimes "disappeared" ["*lari-lari*"] during the meeting."[121] These examples thus reveal that Indonesian NGOs themselves can be in some measure culpable for some of their own dependency.

However, it should be recalled that while local NGOs partly contribute to the domination, the main cause of this problem is the money issue I discussed in chapter four. The reason why local NGOs are unable to attract high quality of staff and send their staff for English training, as they lamented here is because they do not have the money to do so.

Naturally internal weaknesses are a sensitive issue among local NGOs. Talking about one's own weakness is not a favourite subject in general but in NGO circles, doing so can mean revealing the contradiction between NGOs' claims of coherence and effectiveness and the reality of their weakness. As explained in chapter one, the mainstream view of global civil society, with NGOs as its main pillar, tends to depict it as an idealised domain where values such as democracy and civility are fostered, not as an arena inhabited by groups that jealously compete, are frustrated by their

[118] Interviews with Kuntala, 1 August 2007; Wulandari, 1 November 2005; Omar, 27 January 2007.
[119] Interview with Kuntala, 1 August 2007.
[120] Interview with Wulandari, 1 November 2005.
[121] Interview with Sri, 16 August 2007.

weaknesses and dependence, and exaggerate their own influence to gain access to funds.

Thus far the discussion in this section has shed light on the resentment local NGO workers feel towards the power imbalance they have with their international counterparts. Yet this problem is not exclusively experienced by local NGO workers. International NGO workers also admit this weakness is a problem for them when dealing with their own donors. Some international NGO workers, as mentioned in the previous section, acknowledge their organisations have a tendency to be donor-driven in much the same way that local NGO workers see the situation. Furthermore, as has been touched on in the previous section, many long-time international NGO workers express pragmatic views on the relationship between international and local NGOs, which they perceive as part of the aid industry. In the end, as expressed by a veteran international NGO country director:

> The NGO can say they want to do something that way, in a particular place, or with this group, but it depends on the donor. The donor is always behind us [the international NGO]. We don't have our [own] funds to give to the NGOs. The fund comes from the donor, so we have to direct them [the local NGOs]. If they [the local NGOs] came to us with their own proposal and there are no funds, we can't fund them.[122]

When it comes to dealing with their own donors, which are bilateral or multilateral funding organisations, some international NGO workers even admit that their positions are even worse than the local NGOs as no "partnership" exists. The international NGO is merely the "subcontractor" of the funding agency. As one international NGO worker says: "it's basically the case of funding organisations giving money and dictating the terms." In international NGOs' relationships with their donors, "there is no such thing as discussions, technical assistance and capacity building the way we do it with our local partners"[123] This is an important point to emphasise, as it again indicates that the ultimate power behind the relationship between international and local NGO is in the hands of international NGOs' funding sources. The governments of developed countries, through their bilateral and multilateral organisations which fund most international NGOs, are the ultimate source of the hegemony, while international NGOs are the agents of it. International NGOs are also vulnerable, particularly if they do not have their own funding base but instead they themselves depend on donors to survive.

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[122] Interview with Thomas, 14 September 2005.
[123] Interview with Laksmi (pseudonym), 14 September 2005.

Everyday Politics of NGOs and the Arts of NGO Resistance[124]

This chapter has scrutinised several issues which derive from Indonesian and international NGOs' complaints about each other and about problems they have in working together. The discussion has revealed that international and local NGOs working in Indonesia have different perceptions of their shared problems, achievements and aims. The inter-related issues of accountability and capacity were the most common problems identified by international NGO workers. On the other hand, Indonesian NGOs stated that, from their vantage point, the problem of donor-driven agendas was their main concern.

The discussion about the complaints of international NGOs, concerning Indonesian NGOs' alleged lack of accountability and capacity as well as Indonesian NGOs' corrupt practices, reveals that there are highly unequal power relations between the two sides. The discussion has also shed light on the rather critical view local NGOs have towards their international counterparts. Although the two sides work closely together, and might even be said to be locked in an inter-dependant relationship, what was striking through much of my research was the vehemence of local activists' views about the international organisations that fund them and with which they co-operate.

The discussion about international and local NGOs' views on their relationship in this chapter, as I mentioned in the introduction, draws a striking parallel with Kerkvliet's eloquent discussion about how people in different status groups in a village in the Philippines see their relationship with each other.[125] In explaining poverty and wealth, Kerkvliet suggested:

> The better-off frequently have an understanding that conflicts with the poor's. Broadly speaking, rich people explain poverty in terms of the failings of the poor and explain their own wealth in terms of their abilities. Meanwhile, poor people do not blame themselves for their situation; rather they tend to put at least some of the blame on the better-off and say that the wealthy have used the poor to attain their status. People in the adequate-status group tend to share the view of the rich regarding the poor; but agree with the poor that the rich abuse lower-status people to get or maintain their standard of living. These alternative explanations are manifested in how people talk and behave and in obligations and responsibilities that poor think the better-off have toward them, and hence claims the poor make on wealthy people's resources.[126]

[124] As the title has suggests, the discussion in this section draws heavily on the work of Kerkvliet and Scott. See Kerkvliet, 2002, 2005; Scott, 1985, 1990.
[125] See Kerkvliet, 2002: 164-201.
[126] Ibid.: 165.

The parallel between the discussion in this chapter and the above paragraph starts right from the beginning.

The rich-poor dichotomy presented in Kerkvliet's work strongly resembles the international-local NGO divide in Indonesia. And just as in Kerkvliet's village, international and Indonesian NGOs have different understandings about the problems they experience in their relationship and the sources of those problems. On the issues of accountability and capacity, international NGOs see these problems as failings of the Indonesian NGOs, similar to the attitude of the rich people of Kerkvliet's case study. They view local NGOs' weakness as arising from their lack of skills, knowledge, and, sometimes, integrity.

On the other hand, just as poor Philippines villagers did not blame themselves for their own situation, local NGOs in Indonesia also do not blame themselves for their problems. Rather, like the attitude of the poor towards the "exploitation" of the rich described in Kerkvliet's research, Indonesian NGO workers put most of the blame on the International NGOs, by saying among other things that international NGOs themselves do not have a proper accountability standards, employ the wrong kind of standards (derived from corporate auditing standards, with heavy emphasis on receipts and proper procedures) and sharply criticise international NGOs' reporting and training systems.

More fundamentally, similar to the view of the poor people of San Ricardo that the better off in their village have used them to maintain their status, Indonesian NGOs also believe that they have been used by international donors, for example as seen in the discussion of reporting in this chapter, in order to maintain international NGOs' status before the international NGOs' own donors. The discussion thus suggests a wider implication which leads to the donor factor, namely that they follow the capitalist agenda.

The attitude of the adequate-status group of people in San Ricardo is also parallel to the attitude of well-established Indonesian NGOs and their prominent leaders, who together constitute the Indonesian NGO elite.[127] As we have seen, these NGO elites have an initiative to develop an NGOs' certification program and a 'Code of Conduct for Non-Governmental Organisations' [*Kode Etik LSM*]. This evidence tends to indicate that the well-established among the local NGOs are adopting the interna-

[127] For a more thorough discussion of this subject, see chapter five.

tional NGOs' view of local NGOs' problem of accountability, capacity and corruption, similar to the attitude of the adequate-status group's position in Kerkvliet's study.

However, my study finds that the similarity between Kerkvliet's adequate-status group and the Indonesian NGO elite is not complete. This research does not find that the well-established Indonesian NGOs share the view of other local NGOs that international NGOs "abuse" and "use" local NGOs to get and maintain their position of dominance. This point is clearer in my discussion in chapter five. The characteristics of local NGOs and the relationship between international and local NGOs in chapter five, particularly the heavy emphasis on the role of prominent leaders and the existence of a strong hierarchy and rivalry among the local NGOs indicate this point. There exists a strong hierarchy in the NGO sector. Access to funding and closeness to donors, with confidence of donors support make them align with donors' interest. One way to interpret this condition is to see the well-established Indonesian NGOs as not standing in the middle between international and local NGOS, but being co-opted and thus have become a part of the international development regime.

The discussion in this chapter also relates to Kerkvliet's study on class and status relations insofar as, in Kerkvliet's case, "although analyses and expectations in everyday discourse regarding rich-poor relations are frequently contentious, they rarely erupt into full public view."[128] He suggests two reasons why conflict rarely erupts. First, unbalanced distribution of power makes the poor very vulnerable. A second reason was that the poor were divided. Had they been coherent, Kerkvliet claims that these subordinate people could have become more powerful. He provides several cases where this unity and increased authority occurred.[129]

In trying to understand why open conflict rarely erupts between international and local NGOs in Indonesia, I find Kerkvliet's argument helpful. The clearly unequal power relationship between international and local NGOs is noticeable, as has been shown throughout the discussion in this chapter. It was revealed, for instance, when discussing the "upward" accountability pattern, as well as the issue of the agenda of the relationship which is largely "donor-driven." Deep factionalism also exists among local NGOs. For example, there are those who agree with donors' bureaucratic accountability measures while others disagree. Moreover, some of the infor-

[128] Kerkvliet, 2002: 176.
[129] Ibid.: 176-198. For more discussion around how ordinary people can make a significant impact, see also Kerkvliet, 2005.

mants point out that some local NGOs fail to even organise themselves in international meetings, let alone an organised resistance to international NGOs dominance.

The discussion of the interactions between local and international NGOs in this chapter can also be understood by using Scott's framework of *the public transcript* and *the hidden transcript* of resistance. As introduced earlier, Scott suggests that *the public transcript* is "a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate" but that it is often misleading because "it is frequently in the interest of both parties to tacitly conspire in misrepresentation."[130]

The *public transcript* of the relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs mostly contains positive stories about "partnership" and cooperation between the two types of organisations. It is also a discourse largely dominated by international development agencies. For example, the vocabularies of the NGO sector are filled with donors' phrases such as "strengthening civil society," "good governance," "accountability" and "gender empowerment".

However, in reiterating the discussion in chapter one, Scott mentions three characteristics behind why the public transcript is not the whole story. First, "the public transcript is an indifferent guide to the opinion of subordinates." Second, "to the degree that the dominant suspect that the public transcript may be "only" a performance, they will discount its authenticity." And thirdly, "the questionable meaning of the public transcript suggests the key roles played by disguise and surveillance in power relations".[131] These points are helpful in explaining international and Indonesian NGOs' contrasting views of their relationship.

As the discussion throughout this chapter has indicated, the public transcript of NGOs in Indonesia largely does not take into account the opinion of local NGOs. For example, the discussions of accountability mechanisms and capacity, shows that it was the discourse of the donors that prevails. It was donors who largely established the terms of individual relationships, such as the system of reporting and training and even the dominant language.

The discussion of interactions between international and local NGOs also revealed the way Indonesian NGOs go along with the international NGOs and even disguise their own interests in the relationship. Thus we saw the discussion about local NGOs' notions of "helplessness" which revealed that although local NGOs disagree

[130] Scott, 1990: 2.
[131] Ibid.: 3.

with their international counterparts, they are reluctant to confront the issues where they see themselves as differing.

In discussing the public transcript further, Scott enumerated several ways for dominant groups to "realise" and "maintain" the public transcript, namely acts of a concealment, euphemisms, stigma, and unanimity.[132] The discussion in this chapter illuminates the above points well. For example, the international NGOs 'conceal' the exact amount of funding they have available for local NGOs. On euphemism, the example given previously of how international NGOs refer to local NGOs as "partners" in public but "grantees" internally fits perfectly. By calling local NGOs their partners, international NGOs play down the inequality that exists between international and local NGOs. "Stigma" occurs, for example, when international NGOs label local NGOs as lacking in capacity, and they maintain their own superiority in this process by defining what counts as "capacity", namely organisational and management skills. By demanding accountability compliance and capacity building, international NGOs are able to coerce (but not force) local NGOs into a system that is of the international NGOs' making, and where they set the rules.

However, Scott also calls for people to 'test' the authenticity of the public transcript. He thus suggests that analysts "peek backstage" by looking at what he calls the hidden transcript. Scott defines the hidden transcript as the "discourse that takes place "offstage," beyond direct observation by powerholders."[133] He argues that "the hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.[134]

Similar to my arguments in previous chapters, in this chapter, the hidden transcript thus can be found in the perspectives of local NGOs that are expressed privately as shown repeatedly, and I hope, vividly in this chapter. Their highly critical attitudes towards their international counterparts and their everyday practices of non compliance contradict the public transcript. On almost every point, ranging from basic matters of principle and direction, to detailed matters of organisation and administration, local NGO members question, criticise and mock the requirements placed on them by their international partners. But they do these things almost exclusively in private

[132] Ibid.: 45-69.
[133] Ibid.: 4.
[134] Ibid.: 4-5.

settings only, so as not to jeopardise the relationships with donors they depend upon to fund their activities.

In seeking to understand the perspectives of local and international NGOs on the challenges they encounter in working together, this chapter has identified how local and international NGOs view their problems differently. This revelation confirms the existence of asymmetrical power relationships between international and local NGOs, as well as deep seated resentment that local NGOs have towards international NGOs. This resentment serves as evidence of local NGOs' non-compliance towards international NGOs. Utilising the framework of everyday politics and everyday resistance, I thus conclude that the chapter has demonstrated that because local NGOs do not give their consent to the rule of international NGOs, the international NGOs are unable to completely dominate local NGOs.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia. While scholars of Indonesian NGOs tend to discuss NGOs in the context of their relationship with the state and democracy, this study has looked at Indonesian NGOs and their relationships with international NGOs within the context of theories on global civil society and hegemony.

The thesis questions the nature of the relationship between local and international NGOs in Indonesia through finding answers to two inter-related sets of questions. The first set of questions looks at the everyday politics of the relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs in their own terms, particularly their perspectives on the challenges each side faces. The second set of questions involves a higher level of conceptualisation by scrutinising the answers to the first set of questions within the context of theories of global civil society and hegemony. It asks: are local NGOs dominated by international NGOs as some literature suggests, or is global civil society an arena of cooperation as suggested by its proponents? In the attempt to find answers to these research questions, the approach I adopted in this study was to examine the everyday interactions of these two types of NGOs. This methodology included scrutinising the perspectives of local and international NGOs to reveal how they perceive their relationships. This approach has led me to adopt a framework that draws heavily on the work of James Scott and Benedict Kerkvliet on the politics of domination and resistance in everyday life.

This research has found that the dominant pattern in the relationships between local and international NGOs is a hegemonic one: through controlling the supply of funds, through enforcing conditions of compliance on grant recipients, and through dominating the discourse on development, international NGOs are able to exercise a profound influence on local NGOs in a way that contradicts the egalitarian rhetoric of the development sector. As discussed in chapter one, Gramsci's concept of hegemony refers to the process of ideological domination by one class over the other,

not by coercive actions but through consent. However, this study finds that in contrast to the classical theories of hegemony which conclude that hegemonic subjects consent to their domination (or are co-opted), local NGOs in Indonesia passively resist the agenda of international NGOs and criticise it vehemently when they are in private settings, even if they comply in their public performance.

The discussion in this thesis started with a literature survey of civil society, global civil society and hegemony. It first looked at two opposing perspectives of the relationship between international and local NGOs. On the one hand, there is what we can describe as a mainstream liberal view. This school of thinking takes an overwhelmingly positive perspective on global civil society and tends to neglect the power relations between elements within global civil society. In this view, the relationship between local and international NGOs is essentially mutually beneficial and promotes ideal values such as democracy. On the other hand, there is a body of literature which associates global civil society with hegemonic power relations and the dominant influence of powerful political and economic forces rooted in the advanced capitalist countries. This strand of thinking perceives the relationship between international and local NGOs as asymmetrical and as being dominated by the international NGOs. These two approaches are mutually exclusive and it has been the intention of my study to hold these contending propositions up to analysis.

In conducting the research, I found that both two approaches are biased towards sets of assumptions which, as I have shown, do not fully describe the full spectrum of relationships within global civil society. Although the relationships between elements of global civil society are much more equal and negotiated than, for example, relations between government and society which are premised upon legal compulsion and the coercive power of the state, hegemonic patterns and inequality still exist in the NGO sector. At the same time, neither are local NGOs merely compliant victims of the domination of international NGOs. As my research demonstrates, the nuances in the relationships between international and local NGOs are greater than the dominant bodies of thinking suggest.

In order to allow me to better approach these nuances, I therefore borrowed from writings about the politics of domination and resistance in everyday life, which offered a useful approach to understanding power relations and hegemony in "ordinary" conditions where there is no political crisis or revolutionary upheaval to lay bare the underlying structures of inequality. The proponents of this strand of think-

ing, led by Scott and Kerkvliet, suggest that Gramsci's concept of hegemony is inadequate for explaining ideological domination in relationships between subordinate and superordinate people. As I have discussed in chapter one, Gramsci's concept of hegemony is premised on consent, which at first impression is an adequate explanation of how international NGOs can create a system in which local NGOs are co-opted. However, my research has revealed that local NGOs deny consent – a critical component of hegemony. This framework proved useful as it allowed me to explain contradictions between everyday practices of local and international NGOs, both separately and when interacting with each other.

As this study has demonstrated, although the domination of international NGOs is evident and beyond dispute, the resentment of Indonesian NGOs towards that domination and their capacity to take advantage of opportunities that arise within it for their own benefit, displays a remarkable amount of non-compliance and independent behaviour on the part of local NGOs. This non-compliance therefore demonstrates the absence of local NGOs' consent (at least full consent) towards the dominance of international NGOs, which is essential to hegemony.

In studying the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia, I began in chapter two by providing a historical overview. I have identified that the relationships between international and local NGOs in Indonesia fall into three distinct periods: the "Old Order" era, the New Order era and the *Reformasi* era. Political trends in Indonesia have played an important role in defining the main themes in the relationships between international and local NGOs. As chapter two has shown, this study observes that international NGOs can by and large only implement activities and establish relationships with local NGOs within the parameters set by the government and these parameters were generally narrow during authoritarian rule. On the other hand, this study also argues that the limiting effect of the government only goes so far, and that NGOs demonstrate resilience. As a result, international funding enabled Indonesian NGOs to make a contribution to what Aspinall refers to as "a new hegemony of democratic ideas – especially among the primarily middle class audience of NGO campaigns – and thus lay the ground work for democratic transformation" in Indonesia.[1]

While links with local NGOs mainly provide international NGOs with access to the domestic sphere in Indonesia, the relationship with international NGOs enables

[1] Aspinall, 2000: 159.

Indonesian NGOs to access a range of benefits like networks, material resources, exchanges of ideas, leverage and most importantly, funding. The fact that most Indonesian NGOs rely heavily on external funding to be able to survive has made funding one, if not, *the* most important aspect of the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia. At the same time, funding provides the basis for the hegemonic influence of the international NGOs on the domestic sector.

This study also has examined the influence of funding on the relationship between international and local NGOs by scrutinising NGO funding mechanisms in some detail and their implications for hegemony and resistance. As the discussion in chapter four suggests, a major pillar of the hegemony of international NGOs occurs through the establishment of funding patterns on terms dictated mostly by the international NGOs and through the establishment of rigorous and bureaucratic funding procedures to audit spending by local NGOs. By deciding what sorts of programs and themes they are willing to fund, international NGOs also, at least in broad terms, set the agenda for the local NGO scene. Although this aspect of the relationship is important, it also falls within the confines of Scott's concept of the public transcript – financial mechanisms are very much the formal and open transcript about the relationship. On the other hand, the discussion about funding mechanisms demonstrates a hidden transcript of the relationship, wherein local NGOs have built acts of non-compliance (such as compiling savings from grants) by which they attempt to gain some autonomy from the international NGOs.

In addition, this research has identified several patterns of relationship between international and Indonesian NGOs that range along a continuum, from a near equal relationship, where both international and local NGOs have a say in the decision making process, to a relationship where the local NGO acts as a "subcontractor" for the international NGO. Even though there are some Indonesian NGOs that consider their relationships with international NGOs as equal, a close examination reveals that power relations are asymmetrical in most cases. This outcome is the predictable result of a situation where resources come from one party and are channelled to the other. However, this trend patently contradicts NGO rhetoric. Rhetorically, the development sector emphasises the promotion of democratic values such as transparency and equality and most notably, maintaining egalitarian 'partnerships' between international and local NGOs – a notion which has been repeated endlessly by actors in the development sector over the past several decades. My research reveals this

rhetoric misrepresents the reality on the ground. International NGOs in most cases dominate and dictate their agenda to local NGOs.

As the discussion in chapter six has shown, in the attempt to study the nature of the relationship between international and local NGOs in Indonesia, this research has adopted the approach of analysing the perceptions of these NGOs' members on how they perceive the relationships in the sector. In other words, my research scrutinises the way Indonesian NGO actors actually talk about and perceive their relationships with international donors and partners, and how those international actors view their Indonesian counterparts. This study reveals that local and international actors have very different perceptions of their cooperation, achievements and aims.

For most international NGOs, the main challenges of working with local NGOs are their organisational capacity (or in some cases lack of capacity) – concerning their human resources, accountability, inefficiency and problems pertaining to corruption. While common complaints from Indonesian NGOs about international NGOs concern the latter's high expectations and rigidity in forcing local NGOs to abide by alien organisational frameworks, their excessive bureaucracy in matters like proposal formats and their use of English as the dominant medium of communication. But underlying these complaints on technical matters were a range of deeper-seated objections that concerned how local NGOs feel that donors and international NGOs set the agenda for the sector, determine what issues are important and, even, in the view of some local NGOs, act like new "colonialists."

In scrutinising the views of local and international NGOs about their relationships, I thus find local NGOs are typically very critical of and resentful of international NGOs. A comparison of local NGOs' critical attitudes with the subordinate people in Kerkvliet's study of domination and resistance in everyday life suggests, like the poor who are highly critical towards the rich in rural settings, Indonesian NGOs tend to criticise international NGOs' practices and procedures in their relationships. Local NGO members blame their international counterparts for their failure in meeting international NGOs' standards, such as reporting standards.

This study also reveals that local NGOs demonstrated the act of non-compliance with international NGO demands, as shown in chapter four, by conducting the deliberate and conscious act of lying to international NGOs with regard to financial reporting in order to save funds for their own survival. In this regard I use Scott and Kerkvliet's studies and propose that the absence of consent by Indonesian NGOs to-

wards the domination of the superordinate, which in this study are international NGOs, constitutes resistance. Although international NGOs may have created a system of hegemonic relations with local NGOs, the existence of resistance by local NGOs means that international NGOs' hegemony is incomplete.

Placing my findings of the relationships between international and local NGOs in the context of the debates over theories of global civil society and hegemony, we can thus conclude that global civil society is indeed a domain of hegemony but one that is more or less understood as such by local NGOs. In their relationships, international NGOs dominate Indonesian NGOs through providing the funding which is the life blood of local groups, and by setting conditions with which local groups must comply if they wish to receive such funds. Dominance is also facilitated by local NGOs' dependence on international funding and by their internal weakness. However, local NGOs' non-compliance and their critical views towards international NGOs demonstrate that international NGOs do not wholly dominate local NGOs.

Therefore, although a hegemonic system clearly has established itself in the relations between international NGOs and local NGOs, the important thing to note is that this is not the only reality. Hegemony is not complete. Local NGOs resist through acts of non-compliance. There is a hidden transcript that shadows and undermines the public one. Local NGOs resist discursively by complaining about the established state of relations between themselves and their sponsors: there is an incessant sub-text in which local actors criticise international NGOs' behaviours, demands, priorities and outlooks. They also resist by taking actions: for example by engaging in creative financial and other practices which seek to claim back some of their autonomy from international NGOs. Although these forms of resistance seem underwhelming, they are important demonstrations of the fact that the subordinate are clearly able to articulate their own interests and that they deny their consent to the system to which they are subjected. Global civil society therefore may be an arena dominated by the powerful, but it is also one where the weak are constantly seeking new weapons with which to subvert and resist.

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Gatra

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Jakarta Post

Jawa Pos

Kompas

Koran Tempo

Media Indonesia

Merdeka

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Formal Interviews:

The organisations listed here are my informant's affiliations at the time I interviewed them. As noted in chapter one, during three years of my fieldwork, many NGO workers moved around to different organisations. To maintain the anonymity of my informants, I exclude the interview dates. Several people requested to be anonymous.

Aguk Irawan, LKiS.

Agus Purnomo (Pungki), Special Assistant to the Minister of Environment, Formerly with Walhi National Office.

Ahmad Fuad Fanani, PSAP, Muhammadiyah.

Ahmad Suaedi, the Wahid Institute, formerly with the Asia Foundation and LKiS.

Alexander Irwan, Ph.D, Tifa Foundation.

Amalia Pulungan, IGJ.

Andi, Walhi National Office.

Anick HT, JIL.

Ardita Caesaria, CWS.

Ari, LKiS.

Arif Sulasdiono, Department of Home Affairs.

Arimbi Heruputri, LBH Apik, Formerly with Walhi National Office.

B. Sigit Jati Waluyo, Bina Swadaya.

Bambang Ismawan, Bina Swadaya.

Benny Subianto, Institute for Multiparty Democracy.

Binny Buchori, Prakarsa, Formerly with INFID.

Bob S. Hadiwinata, Ph.D, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan.

Bonar Saragih, Insist Press.

Bowo Priyatno, Nurani Dunia.

Burhanuddin Muhtadi, JIL.

Chairus Salim, LKiS, Majalah Gong.

Chalid Muhammad, Walhi National Office.

Ciciek Farha, Rahima.

David T. Prettyman, Americares.

Dian Kartika Sari, INFID.

Donatus K. Marut, INFID, Formerly with Insist.

Dony Hendro Cahyono, Insist.

Douglas Ramage, Ph.D, The Asia Foundation.

Dwi Astuti, Sekretariat Bina Desa.

Dwiyanti Wiratmi, LKiS.

Eko Prasetyo, Pusham UII, Formerly with Insist.

Estee, Walhi National Office.

Farah Sofa, Walhi National Office.

Farid Wajidi, LKiS.

Farid, Walhi National Office.

Fitri Andyaswuri, Insist, Formerly with LSPPA.

Galuh Savitri, PCI.

Garthini Isa, USAID.

Gatot, Yayasan Geni.

George Aditjondro, Ph.D, Universitas Sanata Darma, Formerly with Walhi National Office.

Glenn Gibney, PCI, Formerly with CARE.

Hamid Basyaib, JIL.

Hans Antlov, Ph.D, The Ford Foundation.

Hariman Rico (Koko), Walhi National Office.

Hening Parlan, MPBI, Formerly with Walhi National Office.

Henri Myrttinen, KEPA.

Henri Pirade, AusAID, Formerly with CWS.

Herbin Siahaan, ICITAP, Formerly with the Asia Foundation.

Imam Prasodjo, Ph.D, Nurani Dunia.

Irfani Darma, PCI, Formerly with CARE.

Irma Sopamena, CWS.

Iskandar K., PCI, Formerly with CARE.

Ivan Hadar, Ph.D, INFID, IDe.

Jauhan, Foreign Technical Cooperation Bureau of the State Secretariat.

Jeff Latumahina, Bastaman & Partners, one-time Lawyer of CWS.

Jerome Cheung, NDI.

Jerry Chamberland, CRS.

Jopie Sinanu, PCI, Formerly with CARE, UNDP.

Julia, Walhi National Office.

Kastorius Sinaga, Ph.D, Special Advisor to the Head of Police, Formerly with PACT.

Letiza Sampetoding, CWS.

Lilis N. Husna, Lakpesdam NU.

Lutfiyah Hanim, IGJ.

Luthfi Ashari, the World Bank.

M. Imam Azis, Syarikat, Formerly with LKiS.

Marcus Mietzner, Ph.D, DAI (USAID Contractor).

Maurice Bloem, CWS, Formerly with CARE.

Meth Kusumahadi, USC Satunama.

Michael Koeniger, CWS.

Muhammad A.S Hikam, Ph.D, DPR Member, LIPI.

Muhammad Jadul Mauna, LKiS.

Muhammad Miftahudin, Save the Children UK.

Mukhatib, LKiS, PKBI.

Mulyono, YIS.

Mirna Mutiara, CWS.

Najib Kailani, LKiS.

Nanik Puwanti, Foreign Technical Cooperation Bureau of State Secretariat.

Nasir, Dian Desa.

Nick Wiratmoko, Percik.

Nicodemus Tuturoong (Binyo), Give2Asia, Formerly with the Asia Foundation.

Nong Mahmada, JIL.

P. Raja Siregar, Walhi National Office.

Patrick Anderson, Walhi National Office.

Paul McCarthy, the World Bank, Formerly with CARE.

Prianti Utami, Yayasan Dian Desa, Jaringan Kerja Tungku Indonesia.

Pusvita, LKiS.

Puteri Yunifa, CRS.

Rahmawati Husein, Komnas Perempuan, Muhammadiyah.

Ranto, Yayasan Geni.

Ray Rangkuti, Lingkar Madani, Formerly with KIPP.

Ria, LKiS.

Rini Nasution, Walhi National Office.

Riny, The Asia Foundation.

Ririn, Walhi Yogyakarta.

Rizal Kurniawan, PSAP, Muhammadiyah.

Robin Bush, Ph.D, The Asia Foundation.

Roem Topatimasang, Insist.

Ruth Murtiasih S., Qaryah Thayyibah.

Saleh Abdullah, Insist.

Sandra Hamid, Ph.D, The Asia Foundation.

Sheila Town, European Union to Indonesia, Formerly with CSSP.

Sidqhi, LKiS.

Syafiq Hasyim, ICIP.

Tedjabayu Basuki, ISAI.

Todung M. Lubis, Lubis, Santosa & Maulana Law Firm, Formerly YLBH, Founder and Board Member of a number of NGOs.

Ulya, LKiS.

Vanessa Johanson, Common Ground.

Wiratmo Probo (Bimbim), ISAI.

Yanto, Yayasan Geni.

Yasir Alimi, Formerly with the Asia Foundation.

Yosep Adi Prasetyo (Stanley), ISAI, Formerly with Yayasan Geni.

Yoyok, Percik.

Informal Interviews/Email communication:

Dody, Walhi National Office.

Dr. Meuthia Gani-Rochman, Labsosio UI.

Dr. Suhatmansyah I.S, Department of Home Affairs.

Jacqui Baker, Formerly with the Asia Foundation.

Karin Johnson, Save The Children UK.

Riri, Lakpesdam NU.

Sabirin, Lakpesdam NU.

Yayuk Sri R., Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Janne Sivonnen, KEPA.

Anu Lounela, KEPA.

John Lindsay, ILO.