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Part One: Opposition and Suharto's New Order

Chapter One

Political Opposition and Democratisation in Authoritarian Regimes: Theoretical Considerations

This study of democratic opposition in the final decade of Suharto's Presidency addresses some questions which are relevant for the study of political oppositions in authoritarian regimes in general. What form does opposition assume under authoritarian regimes and what strategies are utilised to ensure survival and attain political influence? Under what conditions, and by what processes, does political opposition grow? What is the role of opposition in liberalisation and democratisation, and how does it interact with other factors, notably regime disunity and societal change?

1. Authoritarian Regimes and Political Opposition

A useful starting point for the examination of opposition in non-democratic polities, like Indonesia's New Order, is Linz's still influential analysis of authoritarian regimes. In Linz's view, authoritarianism contrasted with totalitarian political systems, in part because of the 'limited pluralism' of such regimes.¹ In part, this pluralism existed within government structures. For example, he argued that individuals with a range of political and professional backgrounds were represented in the core government institutions of Franco's Spain.² Pluralism also typically existed 'within institutions and social forces,' with limited space for professional, sectoral and other interest groups, even scope for participation in the electoral or party system.³

The crucial point, however, was that, in contrast to the more or less unconstrained pluralism of liberal democracies, participation was always fettered by coercion, or the threat of it:

The pluralistic element is the most distinctive feature of these regimes, but let us emphasize that in contrast to democracies with their almost unlimited pluralism, we deal here with *limited* pluralism. The limitation may be legal or de facto, serious or less so, confined to strictly political groups or extended to interest groups, as long as there remain groups not created by nor dependent on the state which influence the political process one way or another.⁴

¹ Other features of authoritarianism included the absence of elaborate ideologies and substantial political mobilisation of the population. Totalitarian systems were characterised by monistic centres of power, elaborate guiding ideologies and mobilisation of the citizenry by single parties: Linz, 1975, p. 191-2.

² Linz, 1970, p. 275-80.

³ Linz, 1973, p. 188.

⁴ Linz, 1970, p. 255-6. Italics in original.

In authoritarian regimes there was thus no legally-sanctioned, institutionalised opposition of the kind found in liberal-democratic party-based systems. The presence of such opposition – political parties or coalitions which openly compete for governmental power through a democratically organised electoral system, guaranteed by civil rights and an independent judiciary – is typically believed to be a defining feature of modern liberal democracy.⁵

Of course, even in liberal-democratic systems there are many varieties of ‘opposition’ beyond the party system. According to Schmitter and Karl, ‘Modern democracy . . . offers a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values - associational as well as partisan, functional as well as territorial, collective as well as individual.’⁶

The variety of political phenomena which may be classed ‘oppositional’ is perhaps even greater in authoritarian regimes where, precisely because they are expressed at most only in highly constrained form via the electoral system, oppositional impulses seek other channels. At times, they may be vented in confrontational, even explosive, forms. More commonly, opposition is expressed by a variety of evasive, indirect and ambivalent techniques. There are many forms of disguised opposition, criticisms cast obliquely in officially sanctioned language, and a blurred line between advocacy of reform within the system and promotion of systemic change from without.

One method of categorising opposition behaviour is suggested by Peukert in an article on working-class resistance under the Third Reich. Peukert proposes a scale, sliding from ‘non-conformist behaviour’, through ‘refusal’, ‘protest’, to ‘resistance’. Criteria for locating particular behaviours on the scale are the extent to which they involve *public* and *intentional* challenge to the regime. Peukert’s scale is useful for reminding us that while one end of the opposition spectrum is represented by organised, collective and public action, the other dissolves into a range of more individual, private and equivocal acts.⁷ These might range through satire and jokes, refusal to participate in regime programs, and other forms of passive resistance and non-conformity.

⁵ The classic study is Dahl, 1971. See also Dahl, 1966 & 1973, McLennan, 1973, Ionescu & Madariaga, 1968, Jung & Shapiro, 1995.

⁶ Schmitter and Karl, 1991, p. 78, quoted in Rodan, 1996, p. 10. The danger in conceptualising opposition, therefore, is vagueness. As Barker (1971, p. 4-5) cautions, the term is commonly used to denote a variety of phenomena ranging from ‘total resistance to the form and basis of the state, and a determination to overthrow it by whatever means’ to ‘the methods whereby the citizen or group, without condemning the government as inherently oppressive, modifies its action, mellows its harshnesses, and prevents its tyrannies.’

⁷ Scott (1985 & 1990) refers to the ‘hidden transcripts’ by which subordinate classes and other groups challenge and undermine the ‘official story’ of dominant, public discourse.

This study is primarily concerned with the more ‘public’ and ‘intentional’ end of the spectrum. However, it is important to remember that publicly articulated opposition always overlays a wellspring of more private resentments and insubordination.

There are many possible criteria for classifying more public and organised opposition.⁸ Three sets of question seem basic. First, what does the opposition oppose, what are its *aims*? The target may be relatively minor, or temporary, such as specific government policies or the dominance of a particular faction. At the opposite pole, opposition actors may aim for thorough change of the political system, and perhaps of the underlying social and economic structure. Questions regarding ideology are clearly of crucial importance here.

Second, *how* does the opposition group oppose, what are its *techniques* or *strategies*? Again, it would be possible to construct a spectrum. This might range from non-confrontational techniques, like casting criticisms within official language or organising support via ostensibly non-political institutions, the utilisation of official structures (like the courts or the official party system), right through to public protest or violent resistance. In part, the spectrum bridges the perpetual tension between ‘reformist’ and ‘revolutionary’ strategies, although, as we shall see, the range of choices is far more textured than this dichotomy implies.

Third, what is the *base* of the opposition? Does the opposition group consist only of a narrow circle of prominent individuals, or does it organise a broader constituency? What is the social background of those involved?

These questions are basic to any analysis of opposition and they guide my own inquiry into Indonesian groups. However, in authoritarian conditions, the answers are always obscured and complicated by restrictions on political expression and organisation. Many who privately claim to be working for the end of the regime speak and act in public more like its loyal supporters. Conversely, groups or individuals who seek a share of power and patronage, sometimes act like fundamental opponents in order to increase their leverage. It may also be difficult to judge claims of support where open organisation is replaced by informal and concealed ties.

The question of how the security apparatus distinguishes between tolerated and non-tolerated opposition thus inevitably intrudes on attempts to categorise opposition types. Categorisation must therefore attempt to grapple with both opposition’s ‘internal’ features (aims, strategies,

⁸ See for example the six criteria used by Dahl and discussed in Blondel, 1997, p. 465. The six are: organisational coherence, competitiveness, site or setting, distinctiveness, goals, and strategies of the opposition.

base) and its 'external' relations with political power. On the basis of his observations of the Franco regime, Linz proposed such a typology, which posits a correlation between degrees of state toleration and opposition characteristics. His approach is a useful starting point for considering opposition under Indonesia's New Order.

1.1 Semi-Opposition

Linz's first category is, he argues, most characteristic of authoritarian regimes, due to their limited pluralism:

Semi-opposition in our sense, consists of those groups that are not dominant or represented in the governing group but that are willing to participate in power without fundamentally challenging the regime. This attitude involves partial criticism and some visibility and identity outside the inner circle of participants in the political struggle.⁹

Linz's definition implies two elements. First, is the rather problematic phrase 'participate in power', which Linz elaborates by suggesting that semi-opposition groups 'have some share in the government or in the political power structure, but oppose some aspects of it, advocating certain policies...or some long-range objectives...'¹⁰

On this basis, it is possible to suggest some typical sites and forms of semi-opposition. At one end of the spectrum, semi-opposition blurs into intra-regime factionalism, whereby different politico-bureaucratic factions may develop policy objectives or interests distinct from the dominant group. Next, critics may operate from institutions which form part of the state apparatus proper, or are located on its fringes (particular government departments, agencies or research institutions). The institutions of 'political society' which Stepan lists as 'political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership and legislatures,'¹¹ where they exist in authoritarian regimes, are subject to numerous explicit and de facto constraints, and do not normally function as vehicles for replacing governments. But they may become vehicles for semi-opponents who criticise certain aspects of regime policy. Many authoritarian regimes adopt a corporatist pattern of representation for professional, functional and other group interests, via organisations tied to the state or dominant party.¹² Such corporatist organisations, largely depending on their prior history (do their origins predate the regime?) and the extent of state intervention in them, may also harbour semi-opponents. Finally, semi-opposition may

⁹ Linz, 1973, p. 191-92. Italics in original.

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 192.

¹¹ Stepan, 1988, p. 4.

shade into a range of associations which operate more or less outside the official corporatist framework, while endeavouring to influence state policy. Such groups, which I label ‘proto-opposition,’ are discussed below.

The second element suggested by Linz is that semi-opposition has partial aims and does not ‘fundamentally challenge’ the regime, instead typically promoting modification of particular policies. It might be added that semi-opposition is also usually associated with a characteristic style of language, which justifies reforms in terminology drawn from official ideology.¹³

Semi-opponents limit themselves to partial goals and participate in government-dominated structures for many reasons. They may believe that repressive political conditions provide them with no viable alternative. They may consider (for whatever reason) it possible to bring about change from ‘within’. They may have genuine ideological affinities with core power-holders. At the same time, there are typically material rewards for participation in official structures, especially in regimes which maintain cohesion partly through distribution of patronage. This often results in accusations of co-optation.

For such reasons, Linz argues that semi-opposition can be both ineffective and highly disillusioning, largely accounting for the irony that in Spain in the late 1960s there was a ‘widespread tone and mentality of opposition’ yet a ‘simultaneous failure of structural or principled opposition.’¹⁴

The semifreedom under such regimes imposes on their opponents certain costs that are quite different from those of persecution of illegal oppositions and that explain their frustration, disintegration and sometimes readiness to co-optation, which contribute to the persistence of such regimes as much as does their repressive capacity.¹⁵

Although there is much to be said for this analysis, and Linz’s conclusions are largely supported by my own observation of Indonesia, it is important to note that under certain conditions semi-opposition may give rise to significant challenges to authoritarian rule.¹⁶ Ding, for example, argues that much of the opposition to Dengist rule in China in the late 1980s was

¹² Schmitter, 1974.

¹³ Feith (1964, p. 7) has described the ‘muted political action’ of Indonesian intellectuals during the Guided Democracy period, who were forced to make their criticisms by the ambiguous or ironic use of official terminology. He defines such action as ‘finding political outlets for one’s dissatisfaction while remaining within the limits of what is tolerated by the government.’

¹⁴ Linz, 1973, p. 176

¹⁵ Linz, 1975, p. 273.

¹⁶ One may note, after all, the dramatic transition from authoritarianism which occurred in Spain only a few years after Linz wrote his gloomy assessment.

initiated by a 'counterelite' operating from official or semi-official academic institutions. These institutions were 'gradually coopted by critical forces that used them for counterpurposes.'¹⁷ Less formal oppositional activities were made possible only by the sponsorship, coordination, funding and cover provided by such bodies. He labels this phenomenon 'institutional parasitism' or 'institutional amphibiousness.'¹⁸ Its prevalence, Ding argues, means that discussing opposition in terms of a state-civil society dichotomy fails to account properly for the crises that communist governments experienced in the late 1980s, including the emergence of mass protest movements.¹⁹

Similarly, during political liberalisation or regime crisis, semi-oppositions located within the formal political system may transform themselves into more fundamental oppositions advocating regime replacement.²⁰ Again, the analysis of Indonesia in later chapters bears this out.

¹⁷ Ding, 1994a, p. 27, 1994b.

¹⁸ Ding (1994a, p. 26) suggests that institutional amphibiousness was characterised by, first, a 'vague and indeterminate' boundary between institutions, 'mainly because one institution grows and is sheltered on or in a different institution from which it draws its partial or total resources'; and, second, 'a single institution can be used for contradictory or conflicting purposes or functions'. Linz (1975, p. 273) indicates that one characteristic of opposition under authoritarian regimes is its 'ambiguity', which 'contrasts with the clear boundaries between regime and its opponents in totalitarian systems.'

¹⁹ Ding (1994a, p. 31) on the whole limits the application of his ideas to 'transitions from communist rule'. Later, however (p. 203), he suggests that the concept of 'institutional parasitism' may be relevant for broader comparative politics, because in many 'non-Western civilizations, the states are organizationally pervasive or have vague institutional boundaries.'

²⁰ As Grugel (1991, p. 31) notes with reference to Brazil, even a 'legitimate opposition' within an authoritarian regime, although it might initially appear 'to have no teeth... can become ferocious opponents in moments of crisis.'

1.2 Alegal Opposition/Dissidence

Linz's next category is 'alegal opposition':

opponents whose activities, without being strictly illegal, have no legal sanction and run counter to the spirit if not the text of the Constitution and laws of the regime. They are outside the law: alegal.²¹

Alegal opposition 'in contrast to semiopposition, aims at a basic change in the regime and in its political institutions and to a large extent a basic change in the social and economic structure.'²²

These are critics who operate on the margins of legality and who take advantage of ambiguities in the regime's laws or inconsistencies in their application. Their activities are monitored and curbed by selective police action, their leaders occasionally intimidated or arrested. Such intermittent, but generally low-level, repression is the main technique used to control them. Thus, although alegal opposition groups may make more or less fundamental criticisms, they are often essentially tolerated by the regime. As we shall see, over a long period alegal opponents develop an awareness of the boundaries of tolerated action. These boundaries shift and are intrinsically unpredictable, which itself encourages caution.

Various factors may account for the relative toleration secured by alegal opponents. Most important is social origin. Capitalist authoritarian regimes are more likely to tolerate criticism or mobilisation by elite groups, like university students, lawyers or religious leaders, than by subordinate classes. Toleration is also more likely where opponents can trace personal involvement in, or ideological affinity with, the regime's founding coalition.²³ Opponents who do not organise or mobilise a large constituency are also more likely to be tolerated.

The most characteristic form of alegal opposition, especially in the early stages of opposition activity, is dissidence.²⁴ Dissidents are typically disillusioned supporters or participants in the regime or the coalition which established it. Accordingly, dissidence is characterised, first, by professions of loyalty to foundational regime ideology and, often, calls to 'return' to the

²¹ Linz, 1973, p. 191, fn 35.

²² *ibid*, p. 219.

²³ *ibid*, p. 211.

²⁴ The following analysis of dissidence is developed from Linz, 1973, as well as Schapiro, 1972 (Schapiro uses the term 'dissent'), Rupnik, 1979, and Bernhard, 1993, especially p. 312.

regime's original aims.²⁵ Second, and most characteristically, dissidents typically rely on moral suasion: they address those in authority and appeal to them to initiate reform, rather than calling on society to take action.

Linz argues that alegal opposition is subject to weaknesses of its own:²⁶

Their freedom permits their activity to be visible to the government but not necessarily to any large constituency, and this allows the government to co-opt and corrupt them, to know their weaknesses and failings. On the other hand, this freedom creates a subtle gratitude and dependence on those in power that limits their contestation activities.

Even so, it is again important to note that during conditions of liberalisation or political crisis, previously repressed behaviour may be tolerated, and it may become possible to appeal to society, abandon pretence of loyalty to regime ideology, and mobilise supporters.

1.3 Illegal Opposition

Linz's final category is illegal opposition.²⁷ Typically, authoritarian regimes proscribe political action and organisation by forces which were the target of the original authoritarian coalition. Usually, this applies to the political left and, by extension, virtually all lower class groups. Often, other political forces which have real or suspected 'maximalist' aims, such as separatist or religious movements are also affected.

In authoritarian regimes, as Linz notes, the boundaries of legality are fluid and unpredictable, and what forms of opposition are tolerated can shift over time. Alegal and even semi-opponents can rapidly make the transition to an illegal opposition 'fearful of police persecution.'²⁸ In the early phases of regime establishment and consolidation, conditions may be particularly harsh, at least for the coalition's opponents (though often not for disillusioned supporters). Similarly, when authoritarian regimes age, they often experience legitimacy problems and are forced to depend more on coercion. As opposition escalates, a wide range of critics who were previously tolerated may be repressed.

Organised, and therefore underground, illegal opposition is typically weak in authoritarian regimes. This is partly due, of course, to coercion. But illegal opposition is frequently even

²⁵ See for example Zirker, 1986.

²⁶ Linz, 1973, p. 220-1.

²⁷ *ibid*, p. 230-38.

more effectively undermined by the very existence of ‘semi-freedom’. Avenues for criticism and opposition, even though partial and ineffective, and rewards for those who participate, make illegal opposition appear attractive only to the most determined and ideologically committed opponents.

Illegal opposition thus flourishes most vigorously, sometimes to the point of achieving regime overthrow, precisely where the repressive element is strongest and avenues for tolerated participation-opposition minimal. This is especially the case for sultanistic regimes (see below), characterised by unrestrained and arbitrary personal rule by the dictator, and consequent absence of significant pockets of pluralism in official structures. Even otherwise moderate critics thus often view regime overthrow as the only realistic strategy.²⁹

1.4 Civil Society: Proto-Opposition

It is useful to add a further category of opposition: ‘civil society’ organisations, which may also be labeled proto-opposition.³⁰ This class of organisation frequently overlaps with Linz’s semi and alegal opposition, although, as shall be explained below, there are distinctions.

Since the 1980s, there has been tremendous academic interest in the concept of ‘civil society’, and it has emerged as a central and ubiquitous analytic tool in the literature on democratic transitions.³¹ In some literature, it appears as a synonym for ‘society’, pictured as an undifferentiated force engaged in a heroic, zero-sum conflict against the state. Other definitions are cast at a higher level of abstraction, such as those which emphasise ‘rule setting’, hegemonic and legitimation functions.³² Many interpretations disagree about civil society’s

²⁸ Linz, 1973, p . 211.

²⁹ This phenomenon is discussed in greater detail in chapter nine. On sultanism and its implications for opposition, see for example the articles in Chehabi & Linz, 1998 (especially Chehabi & Linz, 1998b, and Snyder, 1998), also Thompson, 1995. Chehabi & Linz (1998a, p. 9) distinguish sultanistic regimes analytically from authoritarian ones, but suggest it is possible to speak of regimes with ‘sultanistic tendencies.’

³⁰ My thanks to Dr. Harold Crouch, for suggesting the second term.

³¹ This was first observable in studies of the democratic movement in Poland, where autonomous societal organisations emerged from under the aegis of all-pervasive state control to challenge and eventually transform the political regime. For early writings on Poland, see Rupnik, 1979; and the especially influential Arato, 1981; also Pelczynski, 1988. For a sample of the prolific literature on civil society in communist and post-communist regimes, see Gold, 1990; Miller, 1992; Weigle & Butterfield, 1992. There was a similar trend in much literature on democratic transitions in the authoritarian regimes of Southern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. In the highly influential study by O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986, p. 48-56), for example, ‘the resurrection of civil society’ is portrayed as a key turning point in the democratic transition. For Stepan (1988, p. 5) civil society was the ‘political celebrity of the *abertura*.’

³² Harbeson (1994, p. 4) argues that the essence of civil society is that it is the sphere where the ‘rules of the political game’ are determined. In his view, ‘individuals, groups and associations’ are ‘part of *civil*

relationship with other entities like the state itself, associational life, and the market. For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that most contemporary usage of the term centres around phrases like a 'sphere of autonomy', 'independent public space' or 'free public sphere', located between private or family life and the state, where citizens pursue joint interests.

Many liberal and pluralist writings on authoritarian regimes thus present a shorn-down definition of civil society which concentrates on its constituent organisations, usually voluntary associations which organise to advance their members' interests or achieve limited goals. Stepan's definition is typical:³³

. . . that arena where manifold social movements (such as neighborhood associations, women's groups, religious groupings, and intellectual currents) and civic organizations from all classes (such as lawyers, journalists, trade unions, and entrepreneurs) attempt to constitute themselves in an ensemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interests.

A crucial element of this conception of civil society is that the component groups aim to influence, rather than capture, state power. According to Diamond³⁴:

. . . civil society *relates to the state* in some way but does not aim to win formal power or office in the state. Rather, civil society organizations seek from the state concessions, benefits, policy changes, relief, redress or accountability.

Clearly, there may be considerable overlap with Linz's category of alegal opposition. For example, civil society organisations may be subject to the fluctuating repression typical of authoritarianism. They differ from most alegal opposition primarily because their activities and discourse focus on achieving partial, particularistic aims.

There may also be much blurring with semi-opposition, precisely because of this partial, policy orientation. 'Relating to the state' and pressuring for reform often entails some semi-oppositional participation in the state's legal and administrative structures. However, the distinction is that civil society organisations endeavour (albeit often unsuccessfully) to remain independent of the corporatist or other official structures for organising group interests; they strive to achieve a 'zone of autonomy' from state intervention.

society to the extent that they seek to define, generate support for, or promote changes in the basic working rules of the game by which social values are authoritatively allocated.'

³³ Stepan, 1988, p. 3-4

³⁴ Diamond, 1994, p. 6. Thus the definition includes all manner of reform oriented, pressure and interest groups, but necessarily excludes those with more 'maximalist' aims. Chazan (1992, p. 287) has a similar view.

For many writers, ‘civil society’ thus requires formal guarantee by a functioning legal system and civil and political rights which restrict arbitrary state interference in the societal domain.³⁵ Such guarantees are at best only minimally present in authoritarian systems. Civil society thus often becomes an aim (as well as a vehicle) of democratic opposition. Arato³⁶, notes of Poland in the early 1980s:

In one form or another, the idea of the reconstitution of civil society through the rule of law and the guarantee of civil rights, a free public sphere and a plurality of independent associations is present in all of the opposition documents.

Despite their partial aims, as Bratton notes, civil society organisations can become the refuge for many and varied oppositional impulses, especially during particularly repressive conditions.³⁷ They can harbour individuals who aim to transform, even overthrow, the authoritarian regime. During more liberal political conditions such aims may become explicit: hence the term proto-opposition. But even during ‘normal’ conditions, their effects may be considerable, especially in challenging regime hegemony, and thus laying the groundwork for later political transformation.

2. Opposition and Democratisation

Since the early 1980s a vast political science literature has been produced on democratisation processes.³⁸ Many paths to democratisation have been identified, although most are a variation on Huntington’s three-fold division: ‘transformation’ (democratisation initiated by governing elites), ‘replacement’ (where the government collapses and is replaced by opposition actors) and ‘transplacement’ (the most common path, where democratisation is the product of bargaining between government and opposition elites).³⁹ Much of this literature focuses on the dynamics of the democratisation process, with considerable emphasis on its unpredictability

³⁵ For Cohen (1988, p. 325) a legal system which can ‘protect and demarcate’ civil society is one of the crucial components of civil society itself. Bernhard (1993, p. 309) writes that for ‘autonomous organizations’ which are ‘located between official public and private life’ to constitute civil society ‘they need the sanction of the state; the public space must be guaranteed as a realm of freedom from the state by the state itself.’ Blamey and Pasha (1993, p. 7) argue that ‘a system of rights’ which ‘establishes the sphere of civil society as “autonomous” in relation to the state’ is the crucial ingredient.

³⁶ Arato, 1981, p. 23.

³⁷ Bratton, 1994, p. 57. Linz (1975, p. 272) himself notes that, under authoritarian conditions, ‘[o]pposition is often channeled into formally apolitical organizations of cultural, religious, or professional character.’

³⁸ For a useful summary of much of this literature, see Shin 1994.

³⁹ Huntington, 1991, chapter 3, ‘How? Processes of Democratization’, p. 109-63. See also Stepan, 1986.

and the centrality of elite choices: ‘contingent choice theory’, as it has been called.⁴⁰ Others turn to the broad canvas of interaction between societal and state forces.

A particularly useful contribution to the discussion of opposition functions in democratisation is a brief 1993 essay by Stepan.⁴¹ He identifies five key tasks performed by opposition in achieving democratisation.

First, ‘resistance to integration’, he argues, is the *sine qua non* of opposition: if the ‘active opposition...allows itself to become effectively demobilized and co-opted into authoritarian institutions...[it] will have ceased to exist.’ If it ‘maintains some independent ideological, cultural, and above all, institutional existence, it will remain able to carry out its other tasks.’⁴²

Second, ‘guarding zones of autonomy’ is similarly crucial for enabling opposition to carry out other functions.⁴³ While the analysis of the Indonesian case in the following pages largely bears these two points out, it is important also to recall Linz and Ding’s insights into the fluid boundary between semi-oppositional participation within the system and more fundamental opposition from the outside. Significant challenges to authoritarian rule may originate from institutions located in the blurred, ‘grey area’ between state and society. During relatively liberal or crisis conditions, as we shall see, semi-opponents may rapidly become more fundamental opponents.

Stepan’s third opposition task is ‘contesting the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime,’ alternatively formulated by O’Donnell and Schmitter as ‘corroding the normative and intellectual bases of the regime.’⁴⁴ As Stepan argues⁴⁵:

The more a regime rules by hegemony, the less it has to rely on coercion. The greater the degree of hegemony or tacit consent an authoritarian regime can acquire, the less pressure will be felt by its coercive elite.

Conversely, as hegemony declines, the coercive basis of rule becomes increasingly apparent.

This leads to Stepan’s fourth opposition task: ‘raising the costs of authoritarian rule.’ In Dahl’s influential formulation, democratisation becomes possible when it appears to power-holders

⁴⁰ The phrase is from Zhang, 1994, p. 110. For some of the important early works in this vein see O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Share, 1987; Di Palma, 1990.

⁴¹ Stepan, 1993.

⁴² *ibid*, p. 64.

⁴³ *ibid*, p. 65.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, p. 65; O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986, p. 50.

that the costs of maintaining control outweigh those of reform.⁴⁶ In its most extreme form raising the costs of rule can involve a popular upsurge which threatens intractable crisis and growing radicalisation. In such cases, the choices for authoritarian incumbents are stark. More typically, it involves incremental expansion of political organisation and action which contests the state on a multiplicity of fronts. As O'Donnell and Schmitter note, even the gradual spread of new forms of political action although 'not too immediately and threatening to the regime ... tend to accumulate, become institutionalized, and thereby raise the effective and perceived costs of their eventual annulment.'⁴⁷

It might be argued that there is a fifth important opposition function which bridges the preceding two: encouraging the 'decline of fear' among members of society, and their willingness to take political action. As Przeworski notes, many illegitimate regimes may be maintained in power for long periods by threat of force alone.⁴⁸ Action by 'exemplary individuals' may encourage wider political activation.⁴⁹ Typically, however, broader layers of society are drawn into action incrementally, often via initially non-confrontational methods. However, at crisis points, it might appear that large numbers are prepared to mobilise. The perceived risks of individual participation drop suddenly, and opposition can achieve 'momentum,' leading to spectacular surges of mobilisation.⁵⁰

Stepan's final task for democratic oppositions is 'creating a credible democratic alternative.'⁵¹ Even illegitimate regimes may remain in power if there is an 'absence of preferable alternatives.'⁵² Stepan argues that in order to appear as such an alternative, oppositions need to 'integrate as many antiauthoritarian movements as possible' and present 'some kind of broadly agreed-upon formula for the conduct of democratic contestation.'⁵³

⁴⁵ Stepan, 1993, p. 65.

⁴⁶ Dahl, 1971. Dahl's ideas inform Stepan's analysis in the piece quoted above, as well as, for example, Bermeo, 1997.

⁴⁷ O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p. 7. They are referring specifically to the spread of political action under conditions of liberalisation.

⁴⁸ Przeworski, 1986, p. 53.

⁴⁹ It might also, Martínez (1992, p. 145-6) argues, lead to a 'heroic syndrome' which paradoxically reinforces feelings of passivity in the majority of the population.

⁵⁰ Martínez, writing on the mass protests in Chile during the early 1980s, argues that when individuals believe a large number will participate in protest action, this itself becomes a 'protective barrier' encouraging participation: Martínez, 1992, p. 148. On the importance of the decline in fear, see also Garretón, 1989 and Corradi, Fagen & Garretón, 1992.

⁵¹ Stepan, 1993, p. 67-69.

⁵² Przeworski, 1986, p. 52. Stepan (1993, p. 68) argues '[t]he presentation of a clear alternative would undermine one of the authoritarian regime's central self-justifications, namely, its claim to be indispensable.'

⁵³ Stepan, 1993, p. 67.

2.1 Opposition and Elite Conflict

One theme which arises from the democratisation literature is the complex relationship between friction inside the regime and the emergence of societal opposition.

The first important phase in the democratisation sequence is usually ‘liberalisation’, whereby the authoritarian government allows previously non-tolerated forms of political expression to be tolerated. A common argument is that political liberalisation is typically sparked by, and dependent on, divisions inside the ruling bloc. In O’Donnell and Schmitter’s⁵⁴ oft-quoted formulation:

... there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence - direct or indirect - of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners.

Similarly, Przeworski⁵⁵ suggests:

Where some perspectives of an ‘opening’ (*apertura*, ‘thaw’) have appeared, they have always involved some ruling groups that sought political support amongst forces until that moment excluded from politics by the authoritarian regime. This is not to say that once liberalization is initiated, only such chosen partners are politically mobilized: once the signal is given, a wave of popular mobilization often ensues. But it seems to me that the first critical threshold in the transition to democracy is precisely the move by some group within the ruling bloc to obtain support from sources external to it.

The emphasis on regime soft-liners partly derives from the parallel interest in negotiation and ‘crafting’ of democracy. In this view, successful democratisation necessitates, at least, acquiescence by sections of the old regime: ‘... no transition can be forced purely by opponents against a regime which maintains the cohesion, capacity and disposition to apply repression.’⁵⁶

As the above passage from Przeworski indicates, divisions in the government are also considered crucial because they may open new space for initiative by non-state actors. Where there is internal competition, one or more of the competing elite factions may decide it is advantageous to seek support from the broad political public, or from particular constituencies. In order to do so, it might make concessions in the form of greater toleration for public dissent

⁵⁴ O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p. 19.

⁵⁵ Przeworski, 1986, p. 56. For another example, see Stepan’s (1985, p. 337-38) emphasis on the central importance of contradictions and conflicts within the state apparatus for allowing initial liberalisation and the emergence of opposition.

⁵⁶ O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986, p. 21.

or particular policy reforms. Stepan describes this process as the ‘courtship of civil society’ or the ‘*downward reach* for new allies in civil society.’⁵⁷

Many writers note that after the original gesture toward political liberalisation, the process may quickly escalate. Often, a snowballing of opposition and protest occurs (‘the resurrection of civil society’). During this period, all varieties of political opposition may endeavour to transform themselves from the debilitated forms they represented under consolidated authoritarianism. Elite factions are then forced to adjust to the new realities and the process may proceed far beyond what its initiators contemplated.⁵⁸ Conversely, depending on the shifting balance of forces within the regime and elite threat perceptions, escalated opposition can trigger a retreat to repression.

Several writers, however, have forcefully criticised the assumption that democratisation is typically set in train by elite conflict. Bratton, on the basis of African case studies, argues that opposition pressure may initiate splits within government and liberalisation:⁵⁹

This formulation [of O’Donnell and Schmitter’s, that liberalisation by government precedes and triggers energisation of civil society] depicts the relations of civil society to the state as being far too passive and reactive. Undoubtedly, opposition actors in society stand ready to exploit any divisions that emerge in the state elite and to expand any political opening provided by official concessions. But civic action, especially in the form of mass political protest, commonly comes first, precipitating splits within the ruling group and causing the government to concede reforms. Indeed, the dynamic of political transition can only be fully apprehended when the lens of analysis is widened beyond interelite relations to focus on state-society relations. In recent African cases of political transition, ‘the popular upsurge’ preceded elite concessions and was an important factor driving African political leaders to open the door to liberalization.

Collier and Mahoney similarly criticise elite-centered democratisation literature for neglecting the societal impetus (in their case, labour protest) for the hard/soft-liner division.⁶⁰ In this view, it is crucial not to accept elite conflict as a ‘given,’ explicable by reference to the dynamics of internal regime factionalism alone, but to locate it within a broader context.

⁵⁷ Stepan, 1988, p. 7.

⁵⁸ See O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986, especially p. 26-8 (‘The Cycle of Mobilization’) and p. 48-56 (‘Resurrecting Civil Society (and Restructuring Public Space)’). For another example see Mainwaring, 1989, especially p. 196-7.

⁵⁹ Bratton, 1994, p. 63.

⁶⁰ They argue that labour protest frequently ‘contributed to divisions among authoritarian incumbents, who previously had no transitional project.’ They argue that this was the case for countries like Spain, which proponents of the ‘crafting’ of democracy thesis view as typical examples of elite-initiated democratisation: Collier & Mahoney, 1997, p. 300. See also for example Foweraker, 1994, p. 225.

One aim of this thesis is to examine the relationship between regime disunity, liberalisation and the escalation of opposition in Indonesia. In particular, I aim to explore (assuming a link existed) through what particular *mechanisms* the relationship operated. Precisely *how* did elite factionalism contribute to political loosening and increased activity by opposition groups? Conversely, what was the impact of opposition on regime disunity, liberalisation, and subsequent events?

2.2 Opposition and the Demise of Authoritarianism

Even if oppositions do raise the costs of authoritarian rule, and even where a viable democratic alternative exists, it is still, strictly speaking, almost always authoritarian incumbents who oversee the final transition to democratic rule. This is obviously the case where the transition is controlled by the regime (Huntington's 'transformation') or where it flows from negotiation ('transplacement').⁶¹ However, even in 'society-initiated' transitions with 'sudden upheavals', opposition forces do not usually simply 'take over' government from authoritarian incumbents. Stepan⁶² argues:

In theory, such a transformation could be brought about by diffuse protests by grassroots organizations, massive but uncoordinated general strikes, and by general withdrawal of support for the government. However, upon closer analysis this is a path toward government change rather than a path toward full redemocratization. The most likely outcome of sharp crises of authoritarian regimes stemming from diffuse pressures and forces in society is either a newly constituted successor authoritarian government, or a caretaker military junta promising elections in the future.

Thus, even where opposition action succeeds in forcing authoritarian regimes to rapidly dismantle themselves ('replacement') the authoritarian regime, albeit usually a radically reconstituted version, typically remains in power temporarily and oversees a (sometimes very hurried) transition to democracy.⁶³

⁶¹ Most 'third wave' democratisations followed these patterns, according to Huntington (1991, p. 109-163), 27 of 35 transitions that occurred or began in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁶² Stepan, 1986, p. 78-9. Stepan argues (at least implicitly against the regime disunity thesis) that such cases of democratisation may be classified as 'society-initiated transitions' At p. 79: 'On theoretical grounds, therefore, one is tempted to argue that society-led upheavals *by themselves* are virtually incapable of leading to redemocratization but are, nevertheless, a crucial, or in some cases an indispensable, component to the redemocratization.'

⁶³ Usually, this involves a dramatic shift of power within the regime itself, entailing the victory of soft-line elements. As O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, p. 20-1) argue: 'In Greece, Peru and Argentina circa 1970 [all cases which Huntington describes as replacements], the 'decision to open' was heavily influenced by the presence of strong opposition forces in the civilian population. Nevertheless, several putsches and purges had to occur, in the government and in the armed forces, before the soft-liners acquired sufficient control over governmental and military positions to be able to implement such a

Following from this, it is possible to argue that a seventh opposition function, perhaps the most crucial, is strengthening the 'reforming impulse' within the state. This may be understood either as encouraging the ruling elite as a whole to contemplate, initiate or accede to reform, or, alternately, strengthening the relative weight of the soft-line element within it.

The tactics adopted by opposition groups to achieve this will differ widely, as might be expected given the variety of opposition types typical under authoritarian regimes. Some opposition groups will endeavour to raise the costs of governance simply by increasing mobilisation. This may be driven primarily by moral revulsion, it may reflect 'maximalist' aims for regime overthrow and seizure of power. It may also follow from tactical calculation, and be combined with other approaches. In any case, such protest may ultimately confront the ruling coalition with the choice between reform and political crisis. Some elements in the regimes will recognise long in advance that such a crisis is coming and attempt reform to pre-empt it. Others will respond with escalated repression. This may be effective, at least for a time, but it will often make the eventual crisis all the more dramatic and bloody.

Other opposition groups will use 'persuasive' methods, relying on lobbying, moral appeals and force of argument to encourage a gradual, negotiated path from authoritarian rule. Others (again remembering the frequency of semi-opposition and 'institutional amphibiousness') may attempt to penetrate sites within the state apparatus itself, to strengthen the reform impulse from within.

One particular argument in favour of such moderation which has been much emphasised in the literature is that successful democratisation requires regime leaders (or at least soft-liners) to be convinced that social chaos, retribution, and threats to core interests (typically property relations and the military's institutional interests) will not automatically follow democratisation.⁶⁴ Incumbents fearful of such phenomena will be more liable to resort to coercion.

The choice of tactics will depend on opposition groups' compositions, backgrounds and ideological outlooks. The relative weight of 'moderate' versus 'confrontational' approaches

decision.' Perhaps the only exception to this was the Philippines, where Marcos's attempt to steal the 1986 election from Corazon Aquino meant that there was an opposition leader with the electoral legitimacy to directly take Presidential power. But even here, the defection of a considerable part of the armed forces from Marcos was necessary to secure Aquino's victory.

⁶⁴ Bermeo presents a summary (and argument against) this view (1997, p. 305-22). The emphasis on moderation itself largely flows from the concentration on negotiation and pact-making in the literature. See for example O'Donnell and Schmitter, p. 69; Huntington, p. 150, 162, 165-174. Such writers argue

across the entire opposition spectrum will itself largely be shaped by the regime's own history, structure and internal cohesion. In regimes with a high element of pluralism, it is likely that there will be greater willingness for compromise and negotiation. Because at least semi-opposition is relatively institutionalised, opposition leaders will also be more able to enforce restraint from their followers.⁶⁵ Where the regime is deeply divided and soft-liners strong, it is similarly likely that substantial parts of opposition will see obvious benefits from compromise.

The opposite situation will obtain in regimes where the reactionary, 'standpatter' element is strong.⁶⁶ This is especially so in sultanistic regimes, where personalistic dominance by the ruler and widespread use of terror preclude the emergence of reformers within the regime or moderate opposition outside it. Here even groups instinctively inclined toward moderation, will often believe that they have little choice but confrontation.⁶⁷

However, in all cases opposition is divided and a range of different strategies are pursued. As we shall see from the Indonesian case, these apparently contradictory strategies may in fact be complementary, with some sections of opposition raising costs of rule, others offering incumbents an exit strategy.

3. Opposition and Social Structure

Much 'third wave' literature stresses the unstructured and indeterminate nature of democratic transitions and the crucial role in them of elite choices. This study assumes that to understand opposition behaviour, it is essential to pay due attention to the structural (particularly class) and historical setting where it occurs.⁶⁸ This requires looking at the constellation of social forces underpinning the regime and its opposition and the impact on both of changes in social structure wrought by economic transformation. Although it is beyond the scope and intent of this thesis to present a detailed class analysis of the New Order regime and its opposition, I hope to ground my discussion in a broader consideration of the social context in which both operate.

that moderation is also necessary in order to win over more conservative social groups, like the middle class and business.

⁶⁵ Zhang, 1994, p. 112.

⁶⁶ Huntington, 1991, p. 144-45, O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p. 34-5.

⁶⁷ We shall see in chapter nine that a process of 'sultanisation' in the later years of Suharto's rule imparted elements of this pattern to the Indonesian transition. The blockage represented by Suharto's dominance of the ruling elite meant that there was little alternative to a sudden, society-initiated transition.

⁶⁸ The emphasis on elite choices in much of the literature has, of course, been criticised by many scholars (see for example Bratton, 1994). There have also been attempts to reconcile the emphasis on choice with structure: for example, Karl & Schmitter, 1991a, or, in the context of transitions from sultanistic regimes, Snyder, 1998.

This is hardly a novel approach. Interest in democratisation has been accompanied by renewed interest in the longer-standing tradition in political science (which the ‘contingent choice theory’ literature was largely a reaction against) of exploring the economic and social foundations of the democratic impulse. After all, a large body of quantitative, cross national studies reveals a positive relationship between higher levels of socio-economic development and liberal democracy.⁶⁹ Recently, there has also been a revival in the optimistic views of early modernisation theory, which posited an essentially unproblematic link between economic development, social modernisation and political democratisation. In this view, economic growth generates democratic pressures by spawning phenomena like societal differentiation, education, and (especially in recent literature) autonomous associations in ‘civil society.’⁷⁰

Many writers have thus focused on the question of agency: if, as a society progresses economically, pressures for democratisation accumulate, which social groups nurtured by economic development propel the democratic impulse? Both liberal-modernisation and Marxist-derived structuralist traditions have long identified the middle classes as playing this role.⁷¹ This view retains considerable currency in recent democratisation literature. According to Huntington⁷², for example:

Third wave movements for democratization were not led by landlords, peasants, or (apart from Poland) industrial workers. In virtually every country the most active supporters of democratization came from the urban middle class.

In explaining its democratising propensity, scholars since Lipset have looked partly at middle class interests. These include, so the arguments go, interests in limiting capricious state interference in their affairs and in encouraging conditions of social stability. Middle class

⁶⁹ See Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, 1992, p. 26ff for a review of this literature, also Londegran & Poole, 1996. In much of the democratisation literature, however, levels of economic development and attendant class structure simply join other factors (behaviour of political elites, party systems, ethnic cleavages, political culture and so forth) as essentially unconnected variables which can each impact on democratisation. Potter (1993, p. 355) criticises such approaches for presenting little more than a ‘shopping list.’ Rueschemeyer et al (1992, p. 157-8) make a similar criticism of Diamond & Linz’s (1989) introduction to a collection on Democracy in Latin America.

⁷⁰ This approach has been particularly dominant in writing on democratisation in East Asia, where it found a natural fit with already lively debates about the social, cultural and institutional foundations of the region’s rapid economic growth. For an example of particularly elegant writing in this vein, see Tien’s 1989 study of the social and political changes generated by economic growth in Taiwan.

⁷¹ Lipset, in his influential 1959 article argued that the correlation between economic development and greater democracy was largely due to the presence of a better educated and more well to do middle class. Barrington Moore (even if his main focus was on the role of rural class relations), similarly famously wrote: ‘No bourgeois, no democracy’ (1966, p. 418).

⁷² Huntington, 1991, p. 67. See Jones, 1998, for a brief (and dismissive) survey of the middle-class-as-agent-of-democratisation literature in the East Asian context.

groups also have greater resources for leading democratic movements, including greater financial resources and leisure time, higher education levels and even their 'respectability' (meaning, as Cheng notes, that middle class protestors are less likely to be shot.⁷³)

However, viewing the middle class as the primary agent of democratisation has been widely criticised, above all on two fronts. First, it is often argued that the middle class is too blunt a category for careful analysis.⁷⁴ The problem derives from the fact that the 'middle class' occupies an intermediate position in the social hierarchy and consists of many varied sub-groups, ranging through civil servants (of varied rank), medium (or sometimes even large, depending on one's viewpoint) capitalists, professionals, white-collar workers, and that spectrum of lowly clerks, and petty entrepreneurs who fade imperceptibly down into the 'informal sector'. The result is that the 'middle class' is likely to be as heterogeneous in political outlook and behaviour as it is structurally.⁷⁵ Many attempts have been made to sharpen the focus by identifying particular sub-groups (typically independent professionals, especially intellectuals and lawyers) which are most likely to support democratic movements.⁷⁶

Second, it is obvious that in many actual historical cases middle class groups have supported, or been ambivalent about, authoritarian rule. Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens⁷⁷ in their monumental historical comparative study of democratisation, have this to say on the role of Latin American middle classes:

The middle classes played an ambiguous role in the installation and consolidation of democracy. They pushed for their own inclusion but their attitude towards inclusion of the lower classes depended on the need and possibilities for an alliance with the working class. The middle classes were most in favor of full democracy where they were confronted with intransigent dominant classes and had the option of allying with a sizeable working class. However, if they started feeling threatened by popular pressures under a

⁷³ Cheng, 1990, p. 10-11. In Lipset's view (1959, p. 83) a large middle class tended to play an important role in 'moderating conflict', not only by 'reward[ing] moderate and democratic parties and penaliz[ing] extremist groups' but also by drawing lower class groups (especially relatively well-to-do ones) into 'an integrated national culture as distinct from an isolated lower class one.'

⁷⁴ The term is notoriously imprecise and much ink has been spilled in the search for the most appropriate criteria for defining it. Such criteria typically include indices of income, consumption or ownership patterns; occupation, skill or qualification categories; plus factors like 'social status' or cultural identity: see Robison and Goodman, 1996, for a review of the literature in an Asian context. For attempts to identify the Indonesian middle class, see the various articles in Tanter & Young, 1990, also Dick, 1985.

⁷⁵ This has been argued forcibly in the Indonesian case by Robison (1992, p. 341).

⁷⁶ Some such literature tends to replace a rose-coloured view of the 'middle class' with a similar view of 'intellectuals', 'professionals', 'legal professionals' or whichever category is under discussion. For example, Ding (1994a) replaces a civil society-state dichotomy with what is in many respects a 'ruling elite' versus 'counterelite' dichotomy. Both groups lack any real texture and variety. To the 'counterelite' (which he defines more or less as intellectuals and professionals: p. 12-13) he implies a more or less homogeneous (anti-Communist, reforming) political outlook.

⁷⁷ Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, 1992, p. 8.

democratic regime, they turned to support the imposition of an authoritarian alternative.

Thus, middle classes were important in the coalitions which founded authoritarian regimes in many developing countries, elsewhere (e.g. Singapore) they have long co-existed comfortably with non-democratic rule.⁷⁸

There are thus three qualifications which may immediately be made to the ‘middle class as agent of democratisation’ thesis. First, as suggested by the quotation from Rueschemeyer et al, the middle class cannot be viewed in isolation from the wider historical and class context. It cannot be reified as a consistently democratic force, nor as a consistently illiberal one.⁷⁹ This is the core of the argument made by Rueschemeyer et al: the political weight and attitudes of the different classes are themselves historically structured, by a particular country’s timing of, and path to, industrialisation, and by an array of other factors.⁸⁰ It is particularly important to examine ‘the *structure of class coalitions* as well as the *relative power of different classes*’ in each historical case.⁸¹ Changing middle class relations with the lower classes (are these seen as a threat or a possible ally?) and with the ruling elite (oppressor or protector?) are especially crucial for understanding middle class attitudes toward democracy.

A second qualification is that middle class support for democratisation is frequently conditional and ambivalent. Support is most often forthcoming for limited democracy: ‘the middle classes first and foremost pursued their own inclusion.’⁸² In countries recently undergoing democratisation the middle class role has often been equivocal, supporting democratisation, but then pulling back when lower class unrest threatened.⁸³ ‘Successful’ democratisation, or at least initial democratic breakthrough, has often combined electoral democracy with continued

⁷⁸ Jones & Brown, 1994.

⁷⁹ For a particularly unfortunately timed example of the second kind of argument in the East Asian context, see Jones, 1998.

⁸⁰ Other factors they point to include the development of civil society, the party system, and the influence of transnational structures of power. As Kitschelt (1992, p. 1031) notes ‘[their argument] is so complex that it is not entirely clear in the end what has been achieved in terms of explanatory parsimony...The discussion of state structures and transnational relations leaves so many options and contingencies open that just about anything appears to be possible.’

⁸¹ Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, 1992, p. 6. Italics in original.

⁸² *ibid*, p. 222. As Therborn (1977, p. 17) put it (with regard to 18th and 19th Century Europe) ‘...none of the great bourgeois revolutions actually established bourgeois democracy’.

⁸³ The best example is South Korea, where middle class groups decisively supported the massive mobilisations against the Chun regime in 1987, only to withdraw that support after concessions were offered by Roh Tae Woo and increased working class militancy and student radicalism seemed to portend a descent toward anarchy: Cheng, 1990, p. 14; 16; Choi, 1993, p. 37-9; Koo, 1993b, p. 159. It was not until the 1990s that a more thorough-going process of democratisation took place in South Korea.

restrictions on political, social and economic claims by subordinate groups.⁸⁴ By extension, it might be possible to argue that the hesitant and often ambivalent nature of much semi, alegal and proto-opposition in authoritarian regimes often reflects deeper middle class structural weaknesses and ambivalent attitudes toward democracy (and is thus not simply a product of regime structuring of state-society relations).

A third response is to look for other class forces which might play the role of democratic agent. In 1977 Therborn argued that capitalist industrialisation led to democratisation primarily via the creation and expansion of the working class.⁸⁵ Rueschemeyer et al agree that the working class was the most consistently pro-democratic force, but point out that it was rarely strong enough to achieve democratic breakthroughs on its own, and class alliances - especially with middle class groups - were crucial.⁸⁶

Despite all these objections, it must be emphasised that especially in 'third wave' democratisations, there have been few cases where the middle class role was not critically important, even if this was often initially only to limited democracy.

All of this has obvious implications for the study of Indonesia's democratic opposition. Although a detailed examination is beyond the scope of this thesis, I am interested in examining the relationship between the structural position and attitudes of the 'middle layers' (especially as transformed by economic development) and the prevalence and behaviour of the various opposition types.

4. Chapter Plan

⁸⁴ Petras, 1989; Gills & Rocamora, 1992; Cumings, 1998. It might be argued that the emphasis on the middle class in much recent democratisation literature thus accords with the minimalist, procedural definition of democracy typically employed in it.

⁸⁵ Therborn, 1977. In Western Europe, he argued, labour unions and the working class parties of the Second International had played the crucial role in the establishment of democracy (even if his analysis focused primarily on the 'second stage' of the democratisation process when universal suffrage was introduced, and if he explicitly acknowledged the importance of other factors, including ruling class disunity).

⁸⁶ This was especially so in the Latin American 'late developing' countries where the middle class took the leading role, but '[o]nly under the influence of a significant working-class presence did they fight for and defend full democracy': Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens, 1992, p. 222. In the Latin American late developers, the working class role was less important because it tended to be structurally weaker than in the core countries of Europe and North America at comparable levels of development. The state was also stronger and more able to control and corporatise the labour movement from the outset. This was because growth of the export economy triggered urbanisation and development of the state *before* significant industrialisation: *ibid*, p. 180-5.

This thesis is divided into three parts. The next two chapters provide a general overview of Indonesian regime and opposition. Chapter two discusses regime and opposition in the early and mid New Order, while chapter three overviews the period of *keterbukaan* (openness) and its aftermath, 1989-95. Part two presents case studies of opposition during the same period, focusing on how various groups strove to respond to the shifting opportunities presented by *keterbukaan*. Chapter four presents a discussion of several exemplars of the dissident model of alegal opposition, chapter five investigates the civil society model of proto-opposition by focusing on NGOs, especially the prominent human rights body, LBH (Legal Aid Institute), while chapter six looks at the development of student activism. Chapter seven discusses the phenomenon which led to the definitive end of *keterbukaan*: the challenge posed to the government by the Megawati Soekarnoputri leadership of the PDI, one of three participants in the New Order electoral system. Part three returns to a wider focus. Chapter eight comprises an analysis of the PDI crisis of 1996 and its aftermath, while chapter nine presents an analysis of the dramatic upsurge of opposition which preceded President Suharto's resignation in May 1998. Chapter ten concludes with a consideration of some of the general questions raised in this chapter, as played out in the Indonesian case.

Chapter Two

State and Opposition in the early and mid New Order, 1965-1988

This chapter aims to present a general introduction to the New Order regime and the varieties of political opposition which emerged during its first two decades. The aim is not to present a detailed analysis of this period, but rather a starting point for comparison with the later opposition and regime transition examined in subsequent chapters.

1. The New Order Coalition and its Erosion

The New Order regime was brought into being by a coalition which drew on significant social support. Indonesia had experienced profound economic, social and political conflict in the later years of President Sukarno's Guided Democracy. Civilian opponents of the Indonesian Communist Party, PKI had developed a siege mentality; their chief organisations were either banned (Indonesian Socialist Party, PSI and the modernist Islamic party, *Masyumi*), under threat of banning (Islamic Students Association, HMI) or being wrested away from them (Indonesian National Party, PNI). Hyperinflation caused great hardship throughout society.

The September 30 Movement affair of 1965, when leftist soldiers kidnapped and killed six senior army officers, was the trigger for the coalescence of the 'New Order coalition.' The core of this alliance was the army, which had dramatically increased its power since martial law was declared in 1957. In conditions where the private economy was weak, civilian foes of the left emasculated, and the majority of the population peasants, it had long been apparent that the army would be key to the inevitable political showdown. Political forces of all description had long been cultivating support within it.¹

Among the army's many allies in the campaign against the PKI and, eventually, Sukarno two groups were especially important. First were the mass Islamic organisations, the followers of which were crucial in both the urban demonstrations and the elimination of the rural left.² Second, was the urban middle class – secular, Muslim and Christian – which had hesitantly emerged in the years after independence. The new urban elite, although still very weak, was

¹ See for example MacDougall, 1975, on the early 1960s links between the army leadership and the University of Indonesia economists and other intellectuals who later furnished the military with key support.

² The Islamic role was partly linked to the danger posed by the rise of the left to the landlord and entrepreneurial interests embedded in the main modernist and traditionalist Islamic organisations.

defined not only by its relative wealth and access to education, but also by its adherence to an emergent 'metropolitan superculture.'³

After the September 30 affair, many middle class university students, journalists, legal professionals, intellectuals, economists and others, rallied to the army. Many of them were associated with the old anti-communist parties like the banned PSI, the Catholic party and *Masyumi*. In close cooperation with military officers, they formed the Students' and Scholars' Action Fronts KAMI, KAPPI and KASI.⁴ Student protests were crucial for turning the initially anti-PKI mood against President Sukarno, while intellectuals organised seminars, established newspapers, and in other ways attempted to provide the military with a policy framework. Some of the most capable became 'technocrat' Ministers.

However, in a pattern similar to many authoritarian regimes, opposition in the first two decades of the New Order was largely produced by the splintering of its founding coalition. To be sure, there were some attempts to forge a lasting sense of purpose, even a shared doctrine for the New Order coalition, notably via the 'ideology of modernisation'.⁵ However, as Anderson argues, 'with the decline of the vividness and plausibility of the "communist threat", the prime cement of the 1965 coalition necessarily grew brittle.'⁶

Much early disillusionment centered on the perceived failure of the government to live up to promises to support supremacy of law and economic modernisation.⁷ From the late 1960s, journalists from New Order newspapers campaigned vigorously against corruption, which seemed to them a betrayal of promises of efficient economic development and rule-based,

³ Geertz, 1963, p. 33-38.

⁴ KAMI, was *Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia* (Indonesian University Students' Action Front), KAPPI, *Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Pelajar Indonesia* (Indonesian Youth and High School Students' Action Front) and KASI, *Kesatuan Aksi Sarjana Indonesia* (Indonesian Graduates' Action Front).

⁵ A melange of ideas was associated with support for '*modernisasi*', most of which had long been promoted by various anti-communist political forces, especially the PSI. They were given added refinement by the influence of modernisation theory, a recent product of American social science. The essence of the outlook was that the New Order represented an historic opportunity to overcome 'tradition', 'backwardness', 'primordialism' and 'feudalism' in all spheres. It was now possible to work to replace the agrarian, subsistence economy with modern industrialism; traditional cultural values based on superstition and deference with rational, problem solving norms; and the primordial, ideological, mass party system with 'pragmatic,' 'program-oriented' politics. See Raillon, 1985, Liddle 1973b, Ward, 1973.

⁶ Anderson, 1978, p. 7.

⁷ Arief Budiman (1973, p. 78), as a prominent young intellectual critic of the government in the early 1970s, for example, remembered reacting to the 1968 appointment of economist Soemitro Djojohadikusumo to Suharto's cabinet by thinking that 'the image of Suharto as a leader who was earnestly striving to improve the nation's development efforts seemed almost perfect' and shouting out 'For the first time since I am aware of politics I feel I have a Government I can support.'

rational and honest administration.⁸ In 1970 and 1971-72, students organised street protests on the same issue, and against Tien Suharto's pet project, the Taman Mini 'Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature' park. The failure of early promises to legislate to protect civil liberties and judicial independence also caused disillusionment, exacerbated by heavy-handed intervention in Islamic groups, occasional arrests of critically-inclined former supporters and many other arbitrary acts.

Criticisms on such themes reached a crescendo in the months prior to the *Malari (Malapetaka 15 Januari, 'the Fifteenth of January Calamity')* in 1974, when student protests against a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka were quickly overtaken by riots elsewhere in Jakarta. *Malari* was a decisive turning point. Civilian critics of the government, especially from the PSI and *Masyumi*, were blamed for the riots, and a decisive crackdown against them occurred.⁹ The very forces which had been at the forefront of the coalition with the army in 1965-66 were now treated as its most immediate threats. An era of increased authoritarianism began, and the political space for opposition, even by former coalition partners, narrowed substantially.

A renewed outburst of political discontent in the approach to the 1977 elections and the 1978 MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) session followed, however, leading Anderson to suggest that 'the coalition which has kept Suharto in power since 1966 is breaking up.'¹⁰ Large student demonstrations were accompanied by open expressions of defiance by numerous intellectuals, artists, Muslim leaders, party legislators, and retired officials.¹¹

However, in January 1978 troops occupied campuses, many student leaders and dissidents were arrested and six major newspapers were suspended.¹² Although expressions of defiance continued afterwards, in retrospect it seems that the outburst of dissent in 1977-78 was the dying spasm of the old New Order coalition. The decade which followed saw much tighter political control and substantially less toleration of critics. Press restrictions were enforced, a 'Normalisation of Campus Life' policy saw the permanent abolition of student councils, even respected national figures, including prominent retired military officers, suffered political and economic ostracisation.

2. The New Order Political System

⁸ Causing particular alarm were several scandals which involved generals and others close to Suharto: Crouch, 1975, p. 637; 1988, p. 306-9.

⁹ See Arifin, 1974 for the main attempt to set out this case.

¹⁰ Anderson, 1978, p. 2.

¹¹ On dissent in the late 1970s see Anderson, 1978; Lane, 1982; Jenkins, 1984; van Dijk, 1978a, 1978b & 1980a.

¹² See for example van Dijk, 1978b.

The precise character of the regime which emerged in the early 1970s was long a subject of academic debate. Some argued that the New Order represented the unqualified victory of state over society, whether conceived as a 'bureaucratic polity' (Jackson, 1978), 'state qua state' (Anderson, 1983) 'beamtenstaat' (McVey, 1982) or 'bureaucratic-authoritarian' regime (King, 1982). Others argued in terms derived from Marxism that the New Order was a Bonapartist regime, whereby a weak bourgeoisie abdicated power to the military (Robison, 1993).

These diverse interpretations, however, shared a view that the New Order was relatively insulated from a sphere 'outside' or 'independent' of the state. This was demonstrated, first, by the continuing reliance on the military as the institutional core of the regime. A ramshackle but often brutally effective internal security apparatus monitored society from the smallest village to national politics, legitimised by the military's *dwifungsi* ('dual function') doctrine. Although politics became increasingly routinised and ritualised from the mid-1970s, the use or threat of coercion was never far from the surface.

Second, in the economic sphere, there was no strong capitalist class institutionally independent from the state and grounded in the private economy. Instead, there was considerable integration between capital and the state, with military-bureaucratic officeholders utilising their control of state enterprises and licenses to enrich themselves and their cronies.¹³

Finally, state ascendancy was demonstrated in the corporatist political system constructed between 1966 and 1973. This was founded on extensive military intervention in surviving political organisations.¹⁴ By the combination of crude intimidation, cajolery and bribery, formal political pluralism was transformed into a formal but hollow shell. Although a large number of political and mass organisations survived, by the early 1970s most were run by government appointees or collaborators and professed loyalty to the New Order. Others were paralysed by deliberately fostered internal conflicts.

Enforcement of 'mono-loyalty' on civil servants, massive mobilisation of state resources, and widespread intimidation delivered 62.8 % of the vote to the state party, Golkar, in the 1971 elections, and victories of similar magnitudes in successive elections. In 1973, the surviving political parties were forced into hurried, undignified mergers, which created the PPP (Development Unity Party, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*) and PDI (Indonesian Democracy

¹³ Crouch, 1979; Robison, 1986.

Party, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia*). These strange agglomerations were destined for decades of incessant factional squabbling, which left them highly vulnerable to continued government interference. At the same time, the government endeavoured to corral other societal organisations into bodies subordinate to Golkar. Although this did not succeed in all cases, it was particularly effective for lower class groups.¹⁵

Finally, to underpin its political triumph, from the mid-1970s the government endeavoured to construct a comprehensive ideological justification for authoritarian rule. Government agencies fashioned a revived 'Pancasila ideology', which stressed social harmony and the organic unity between government, society and their component parts. All forms of societal division, and political opposition in particular, were labeled inimical to the Indonesian national character. 'Pancasila education courses' were organised for ever-expanding sections of the population.¹⁶ Legislation in 1985 required all societal organisations to adopt Pancasila as their 'sole basis' (*asas tunggal*), causing particular affront in many Islamic groups.

The sum total of these different elements was a system of 'exclusionary corporatism.' However, as MacIntyre argues, corporatist structures did not 'function to aggregate demands from different sectors of society and channel them upwards to policy makers within the government.' Rather, their function was 'to absorb and contain the demands of extra-state groups.'¹⁷

3. The Triumph of Suharto's New Order

Loss of civilian support brought the Suharto government close to the precipice during *Malari*. By the mid-1980s conditions were reversed and the New Order appeared, to borrow from Liddle, at the 'height of its powers.'¹⁸ There was little overt opposition, organised political forces were mostly confined within corporatist structures, and the government and military appeared unified. An omnipotent state loomed above a weakened and mostly quiescent society.

¹⁴ This began with the PNI congress of April 1966 when delegates were crudely intimidated into supporting a compliant, pro-army leadership: Crouch 1975, p. 363-65; McIntyre, 1972, p. 206-10. Similar processes followed for Islamic and other organisations.

¹⁵ Hence, FBSI (*Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*, All-Indonesia Workers' Federation) and HKTI (*Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia*, Indonesian Farmers' Association for Harmony) becoming the sole recognised representatives of their respective 'functional groups.'

¹⁶ For a contemporary discussion of this effort, see Morfit, 1981.

¹⁷ MacIntyre, 1989, p. 226. On New Order corporatism, see also King, 1979 & 1982; Reeve, 1985; MacIntyre, 1994; and Hadiz, 1997, p. 84-104. Despite their general passivity, however, the network of corporatist organisations which surrounded the state constituted a kind of buffer zone - 'organizational and political props' - which meant that the regime did not face the almost immediate legitimacy problems confronted by some more nakedly military regimes in Latin America: Kaufman, 1986, p. 91.

The chief condition for the turnaround was the sharp increase in oil prices during the early 1970s. Between 1971 and 1981, Indonesia's real GDP expanded at an annual rate of 7.7%.¹⁹ Such growth delivered rising living standards and other benefits to many social groups.²⁰ It was particularly important for securing middle class support, or at least acquiescence. Although there was much manifest discontent among groups with independent incomes and professional interests in a free public sphere (notably private lawyers and journalists), overall the middle class remained structurally weak, and concerned about threats of social unrest. Moreover, with the state so important economically, much of the middle class remained dependent on it, either as civil servants or via patrimonial business ties. Thus, despite some sharp discontent and more widespread cynicism, there was no wholesale desertion of the middle class, or even the intelligentsia, from the New Order. Most saw little point in openly challenging the state when its dominance was so clear, and while living standards continued to rise. Even many intellectuals who criticised corruption and other abuses remained basically committed to the New Order development project.²¹

A second, related condition for greater state dominance was Suharto's success in forging internal unity in the ruling elite, especially in the army. In the 1960s, Suharto and his supporters successively purged leftists, Sukarnoists, then 'New Order militants' from the military.²² Signs of disunity in the military significantly contributed to political unrest in both 1973-74 and 1977-78. However, Suharto proved particularly adept at identifying, containing and moving aside potential challengers in the officer corps (like Generals Soemitro and, later, Mohammad Yusuf). Suharto's growing supremacy in the military was paralleled by similar narrowing of political representation in the civilian arm of government.²³

Many observers have drawn attention to Suharto's tremendous political skills, citing especially his ability to control subordinates by distributing patronage and manipulating conflict between

¹⁸ Liddle, 1988.

¹⁹ Hill, 1996, p. 16.

²⁰ For example, neo-populist adjustments to economic policy provided small and medium indigenous businesses with some access to special programs and there was increased expenditure on poverty alleviation measures and basic infrastructure in rural areas.

²¹ For example, in that most critical intellectual journal of the 1970s and 1980s, *Prisma*, despite particularly critical articles, the overall tone remained conciliatory and optimistic, expressing an underlying faith in a shared purpose with government in the development and modernisation of the country. The journal served as a forum for dialogue between the government and intellectuals on development policy, with contributions by NGO activists, intellectuals and political activists, as well as by officials from government agencies and Ministers.

²² Crouch, 1988, p. 221-44.

²³ Many of the most liberal elements were cast aside in the late 1960s; party representation in cabinet ended after 1971. After *Malari* there was a further purge of the more liberal elements from Golkar.

them.²⁴ At the highest level, these skills played more than a small part in the greatly increased internal unity and stability of the regime between 1974 and the late 1980s.

The resources provided by the oil boom and associated economic growth also played a crucial role. Timber concessions, easy lines of credit, contracts in the petroleum industry and similar perquisites were used to tie the military and civilian bureaucracy to the regime (at the highest level, to tie prominent officials to Suharto). Similar methods were used to buy the compliance of retired bureaucrats, party chiefs, and community leaders. Suharto positioned himself at the centre of the distribution of these resources. This role was partly institutionalised through agencies like the State Secretariat.²⁵ But, as Robison notes, Suharto's role as dispenser of economic resources was primarily informal.²⁶ A strong personalistic and patrimonial foundation remained a basic underpinning for the polity.

The factors which contributed to the survival and consolidation of the New Order – economic growth, corporatist structures, distribution of patrimonial rewards, and an increasingly unified ruling elite – had important implications for opposition.

4. Forms and Trends in Opposition

The anatomy of opposition during the early and mid New Order was structured fundamentally by the conflicts of 1965-66. The government continued to distinguish tolerated and non-tolerated opposition on the basis of the alliances and enmities of those earlier years. Largely as a result, it is difficult to conceive of opposition in the 1970s and early 1980s as simply the mobilisation of political forces from a societal domain 'outside' or 'against' the state. Instead, there was considerable overlap between opposition and regime, state and society. This was reflected in the three main forms of oppositional activity: semi-opposition, dissidence and even early 'civil society' organisations. First, however, it is important to outline what opposition was not tolerated.

4.1 Illegal Opposition: Left and Right

²⁴ See for example Jenkins, 1984, p. 145-56; Liddle, 1985, 1991, Crouch, 1988b.

²⁵ Even small-scale infrastructure projects which brought obvious benefit in rural areas were formally linked to the President through their designation as *Banpres* (Presidential Aid) projects.

²⁶ 'Soeharto's power is comprised largely of networks of political and economic alliances, systems of patronage and sources of finance which are not bestowed by the formal constitutional powers of the President...': Robison, 1993, p. 49.

The New Order government's initial claim to legitimacy was that it saved the nation from communist treachery. The memory of the 'trauma' of 1965-66, when an estimated half a million were killed and hundreds of thousands imprisoned, multiplied immeasurably the effectiveness of government control measures. Through the 1970s and 1980s a sustained anti-communist ideological campaign was maintained. Phrases like *bahaya laten PKI* (latent danger of the PKI) and *ekstrim kiri* (extreme left) became potent centrepieces of the regime's ideological armoury.

In reality, however, the organised left posed little threat. By 1968 the PKI was destroyed as a significant force. Surviving guerrilla remnants in Kalimantan were eliminated in the early 1970s. Many thousands of surviving cadres remained in detention until the late 1970s. When they were released they were closely monitored, but were anyway mostly too traumatised to resume political activity.

There were two important corollaries to the anti-communist political atmosphere. First, was the emasculation of the Sukarnoist political current. Supporters of the PNI had been an important secondary target of repression from the late 1960s. The resultant fear in the Sukarnoist grassroots, plus ideological confusion caused by the New Order's adaptation of Sukarno's Pancasila, largely accounted for the ease with which they were shepherded into the highly ineffective PDI and subsequent quiescence (see chapter seven).

The second corollary was more general incapacitation of virtually all lower class political action. Systematic attempts were made to isolate subordinate classes from politics ('floating mass') and to channel their organisation via corporatist bodies under Golkar's control.²⁷ Warnings of communist influence were a powerful means to evoke fear whenever there were signs of collective action. Overall, the entire early and mid New Order period was remarkable for the very low level of political action among both rural and urban poor.²⁸

The targets of the New Order coalition – the communist left, populist Sukarnoism and independent lower class political organisation – were thus largely unable to resurrect themselves through the regime's first two decades. It was in this greatly denuded political landscape that former allies of the military became its chief public opponents.

²⁷ 'Floating mass' was a policy which aimed at the creation of a rural population insulated from politics by a ban on the operation of political parties below the level of district (*kabupaten*) capitals.

²⁸ Of course, there were exceptions, some of which are addressed in later chapters. Mass frustration was vividly expressed by occasional riots, at times political Islam succeeded in tapping resentments among the

Through the 1970s and 1980s, in addition to the continuing emphasis on the left, the term ‘extreme right’ was increasingly deployed by military leaders to refer, above all, to those who sought to establish an Islamic state. As with the targeting of the left, however, there was considerable spillover of repression against all manner of Islamic activists.

In part, this was because after the elimination of the left the Islamic organisations were the only political force which could seriously challenge the military. They had not suffered debilitating repression, and possessed a resilient counter-ideology, mass base and institutional network which, because based on religious identity and practice, remained relatively impervious to external intervention.²⁹ Moves against political Islam from the late 1960s were thus partly simply an extension of the overall emasculation of civilian politics.

Additionally, as has often been noted, Islam’s political marginalisation related to the significant cultural gulf which separated the Islamic *umat* (community) from the new ruling elite. In general, senior military officers were suspicious of political Islam. They usually had non-orthodox social origins, some being Christians, while most were from Javanese syncretist *priyayi* or *abangan* backgrounds.³⁰ Many secular or Christian Action Front intellectuals were likewise fearful of Islamic aspirations and some supported the military partly because they viewed political Islam as its only realistic civilian alternative.³¹ Much of the bitterest Islamic resentment reflected this gap, and centered on government social policies interpreted by leaders of the *umat* as attempts to legitimate secular and Javanist norms.³²

Suppression of Islamic political activism began from at least 1967 with Suharto’s veto on the resurrection of *Masyumi* and its leaders, followed by clumsy intervention in its successor, *Parmusi*, intimidation against Islamic parties in 1971 and their forced fusion into the PPP. It reached a new peak in the late 1970s after military intelligence manufactured the *Komando*

urban poor, and there was an observable increase in strike activity among industrial workers in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

²⁹ McVey, 1983, p. 207 (McVey notes that this was especially the case for traditional Islam); Crouch, 1986; Jones, 1984.

³⁰ In Geertz’s influential 1960 analysis of Javanese society, *santri* were orthodox and observant Muslims. The non-*santri*, while nominally Muslim, held a variety of animist and other pre-Islamic beliefs. The *abangan*, formed the larger (lower class) group, while the *priyayi* were from higher status, often aristocratic, backgrounds.

³¹ This was especially the case for the Catholics associated with Ali Moertopo’s *Opsus* (Special Operations) group, and the think-tank he sponsored, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, CSIS: Ward, 1974, p. 35-36.

³² The clearest early example was the proposed introduction of uniform marriage and divorce laws in 1973, which generated substantial protest because it was widely viewed as directly contradicting Islamic law: Crouch, 1988, p. 312-13.

Jihad (*Jihad* Command) affair before the 1977 election.³³ The final indignity came with the government's 'sole basis' legislation.

Many of those most directly affected by the politics of exclusion, especially those from the chief urban-based modernist organisations like *Masyumi*, *Muhammadiyah*, and HMI, developed a deep sense of grievance.³⁴ It thus appeared to many observers in the late 1970s and early 1980s that political Islam constituted the most significant threat to the regime. There was much evidence to support this view, such as the vigorous PPP election campaign of 1977, a 1978 walkout from the MPR by PPP legislators, HMI prominence in student protest, even the social protest *dakwah* (proselytising) music of singers like Rhoma Irama. Many Islamic activists angrily rejected adoption of Pancasila as 'sole basis', and some groups (like HMI) split over the issue. In the early 1980s there was also growth of small militant cells, even sporadic bombing campaigns (although the role of military *agents provocateur* in these remains unclear). But even the most determined conspirational groups were unable to organise on a sustained basis. Instead, anger was most forcibly expressed by occasional mass violence, as with the Tanjung Priok riot of 1984 (see chapter four).

For all this, political Islam never achieved the pariah status of the left. Instead, the government pursued a policy of splitting the Islamic community, fostering purely 'religious' activities and accommodationist leaders, while dealing harshly with assertion of Islamic political aspirations. Political Islam was thus most characterised, not by clandestine or revolutionary politics, but by 'semi-opposition', discussed below.

4.2 Alegal Opposition and Dissidence

As noted above, through the 1970s most forthright opposition was a by-product of the splintering of the New Order coalition. Many students, journalists, intellectuals, and others who had first supported the government gradually became disillusioned, excluded from official institutions and more openly critical. The most common initial product of this process was dissidence.

Dissidence was first characterised by its alegal character: former allies of the military at least initially escaped systematic persecution and operated relatively openly. Students in particular had a license to protest not afforded to other groups, derived from the student role in

³³ Jenkins, 1984, p. 56-59.

legitimizing the military's rise to power in 1966.³⁵ It was even harder for the government to move against the retired politicians and military officers who from the late 1970s gathered in organisations like *LKB (Lembaga Kesadaran Berkonstitusi*, Institute for Constitutional Awareness) and *Fosko-AD (Forum Studi dan Komunikasi-AD*, Army Forum for Study and Communication) and who in 1980 signed the famous 'Petition of Fifty' in protest against two speeches by President Suharto.³⁶

Even so, the freedom of political movement of alegal opponents was not unlimited. There was unpredictable harassment from the outset, which intensified as the New Order consolidated.³⁷ By the late 1970s, space for tolerated political dissent had narrowed substantially. Critics of the government developed an almost instinctive understanding of the boundaries of the 'dissident niche', of what topics were considered taboo and what forms of action would attract repression. However, even at the height of repression in 1974-75 or 1978-79, such tolerated critics never experienced the fate of those deemed altogether beyond the pale.³⁸

4.2.1 The Dissident Outlook

Over the first decades of the New Order, dissident views hardened in parallel with the decline in pluralism inside government. In the late 1960s, when the first seeds of doubt began to germinate in the minds of New Order liberals, such people generally remained emotionally committed to the new government, shared with it underlying commitments to modernisation and stability and anyway could see no realistic alternative to it.³⁹ Their early criticisms thus tended to attack neither the government nor its economic program per se, but were explicitly aimed at 'saving' both from mismanagement and corruption. Many critics also sought to formulate a new role which combined a critical posture with continued adherence to the New Order 'partnership'. For example, there was much discussion of the concept of 'social control',

³⁴ This was encapsulated in Mohammad Natsir's famous 1972 remark that they had been treated like 'cats with ringworm': Hassan, 1980, p. 125; McVey, 1983, p. 199.

³⁵ In the early 1970s in particular government leaders went to extraordinary lengths to appear to accommodate student criticism. In 1970-72 and 1973-74, chief technocrat Ministers, senior generals, even the President himself, felt it necessary to participate in face-to-face meetings with them. Similar meetings occurred in 1977-78, although the student response was by then more hostile and a planned meeting with the President was aborted.

³⁶ On these groups see Jenkins, 1984, p. 90-112; Sundhaussen, 1981; Bouchier, 1987; Effendi, 1989. See also the more detailed discussion in chapter four of this study.

³⁷ An early case frequently cited as a turning point in the government's treatment of civilian liberals was the 1967 arrest of civil rights lawyer, Yap Thiam Hien, after he named police officers whom he accused of corrupt behaviour: Southwood & Flanagan, 1983, p. 172.

³⁸ Student activists convicted of political crimes, for example, were jailed for terms rarely exceeding one or two years. They were never killed.

which envisaged that sympathetic civilians would monitor the exercise of power, offer constructive criticism when it was abused and thus contribute to effective functioning of the state.⁴⁰ Similarly, in the early 1970s, Arief Budiman (a leader of the anti-corruption group, *Mahasiswa Menggugat*, ‘Students Accuse’) and others developed a coherent dissident position, arguing that students constituted a ‘moral force’ seeking to ‘correct’ government, rather than a political force seeking to overthrow or replace it.⁴¹

Typical of dissidence in repressive regimes, tolerated critics tended to rely on moral suasion, whereby criticisms took the form of appeals to those in power to change their ways, rather than rallying calls directed at society.⁴² The characteristic tone of aggrieved chastisement is conveyed by the following 1970 statement by *Mahasiswa Menggugat*:

The aim of these demonstrations is not to overthrow the government, but instead they represent critical support for the government. We see the dangers in the government’s action [a price rise], which is destroying the good name of the government in the eyes of the little people . . . Once again, the government should be truly convinced that the protest actions which we are taking are intended precisely to improve the image of the Soeharto government in the eyes of the little people. Because we, the students, also helped to put in place the new order, we feel that we also have responsibility for their good name.⁴³

Indeed, many students, intellectuals and others who were becoming increasingly disillusioned initially believed that President Suharto was sympathetic to modernising ideals, but was surrounded by a clique of corrupt generals who sheltered him from the truth.⁴⁴ Critics thus believed they needed to awaken Suharto to his subordinates’ misdeeds.⁴⁵

³⁹ Many intellectuals, journalists and former students who were most stridently critical on issues like corruption and human rights actively supported Golkar during the 1971 election campaign, for example, Adnan Buyung Nasution of LBH.

⁴⁰ A free media, a vigorous legal system and the right to criticise were generally portrayed as the chief mechanisms through which such control might be exercised (rather than the party or electoral system, where middle class liberals knew they were weak). For an ironic discussion of the frustrations which many civilians believed they confronted in carrying out ‘social control’ by the end of the 1960s see an article written by *Angkatan 66* poet Iwam Simatupang in 1970 (‘Kontrol Sosial dan Watak Sisyphos’: reprinted by *Sinar Harapan* on December 27 1971 at the height of the Taman Mini controversy).

⁴¹ Budiman, 1973 & 1976. Budiman likened the critic to the *resi* (hermit) from Javanese tradition, whose role was to isolate himself from society and warn the sultan on problems threatening the kingdom.

⁴² Linz’s (1973, p. 213) comment on the characteristic tone of much alegal opposition was appropriate to much dissidence in Indonesia in this period: ‘Often the deeply felt moral indignation and the lack of any channel for access to responsibility lead to an “apolitical politicism”: a purely expressive politics that does not aim at assuming power but at expressing a mood and a moral position.’ In Indonesia in the 1970s, dissidence was thus typically associated with small but open groups, lengthy petitions and memoranda, without mobilisation, mass membership or underground methods.

⁴³ *Sinar Harapan*, January 19, 1970.

⁴⁴ This was especially so in the late 1960s. For instance, Ismid Hadad (of *Harian Kami*), wrote in *Nusantara* that ‘... there are signs which suggest that Pak Harto is surrounded by a cordon consisting of elements whose integrity cannot be relied upon.’ (May 18, 1967, quoted in Crouch, 1975, p. 638). For a

Before long, attitudes hardened. Student protest in 1977-78, for example, was more explicitly anti-government, anti-military and anti-Suharto than earlier in the decade, culminating in calls by student councils and senates for an 'extraordinary session' of the MPR to hold Suharto to account for 'deviations from the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila.'⁴⁶ The Petition of Fifty dissident group focused much criticism on Suharto and the institution of the Presidency.⁴⁷

But even as disillusionment deepened in the late 1970s, most critics continued to use terms like *koreksi* ('correction') and *peringatan* ('reminders') to describe their functions. As Lane argues, even the most outspoken critics of government did not entirely break with the New Order project and continued to express loyalty to its core ideological symbols.⁴⁸ For example, most student leaders in 1977-8 argued that they wanted a return to the ideals of the early New Order, and stressed they were a 'moral force' which did not aim to overthrow the government.⁴⁹ The repeated refrain of those associated with the Petition of Fifty was for the 'pure and consistent implementation of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution' and 'a return to the original 'resolve' (*tekad*) of the New Order'.⁵⁰ The 1965 coalition's aversion to mass politics and paternalistic attitudes toward the common people remained influential, often expressed as repudiation of 'chaos' or 'anarchy'.⁵¹

similar argument see 'Cosmas Batubara: Selama Jg Disekitar Pd. Presiden Tak Berubah Mentalnja', *Harian Kami*, January 13, 1968.

⁴⁵ To this end, student anti-corruption campaigners held a series of private meetings with the President in July 1970. Amongst other things they presented him with evidence of corrupt activities by his close advisor, General Soerjo (for reports see *Kompas* July 15, July 20, August 3, 1970).

⁴⁶ van Dijk, 1978a, p. 121.

⁴⁷ This was not surprising given that many of its key leaders had been Suharto's military and political equals or even superiors, and viewed him essentially as an upstart. For one example, in 1982 Petition of Fifty group members and other prominent dissidents signed a petition entitled 'Reject the Cult of the Individual and Absolute Power', in response to the proposition that Suharto be awarded the title 'Father of Development': *Kelompok Kerja Petisi 50*, 1987, p. 119. For further discussion, see chapter four.

⁴⁸ Lane, 1991a, p. 3-4.

⁴⁹ For examples of such terminology see Akhmadi, 1981, p. 112, 159, 161; 'The White Book', 1978, p. 166; Tarsono, 1979, p. 25, Hakim, 1980, p. 107; Yusuf, 1979. As Lane (1982) notes, the 1977-78 students viewed their movement as a continuation of that of 1966, even though they were an entirely different generation and had substantially different political aims. There were exceptions: the 1979 defence speech by Bandung student Indro Tjahjono argued that the New Order was a military plot from the start.

⁵⁰ This group was also particularly adept at using quotations from speeches made by Suharto early in the New Order. Particularly well-used was an extract from a speech made by Suharto in 1967 when he criticised the perversion of the *negara hukum* (law-based state) under Sukarno into a form of 'absolutism' where power was concentrated in the hands of the President. See for example *Kelompok Kerja Petisi 50*, 1987, p. 52, 61.

⁵¹ To cite one example, the 1978 ITB 'White Book' insisted that students did not intend to mobilise the poor: '...students have no intention of creating anarchy. Anarchy will only victimise the little people, who are uninformed and tend to act on their emotions': 'The White Book', 1978, p. 166.

As critics became increasingly alienated, they generally attempted to understand the government's shortcomings as the product of a process of degeneration. The student activists of 1977-78, the Petition of Fifty group and most other elite critics thus typically argued that the New Order was an initially sound system which had been perverted by its leaders.⁵² To account for the change, critics first highlighted the moral degeneration and culpability of those in power.⁵³ Many critics personalised their antipathy, blaming Suharto or other officials (most commonly the leading 'political general' Ali Moertopo) for the New Order's decline.⁵⁴

As dissidents moved beyond a sense of personal betrayal toward a systemic explanation, they typically argued that it was the uncontrolled character of state power which allowed opportunities for corruption and abuse.⁵⁵ The solution typically advocated, in addition to moral renewal, was thus the constraint of power by constitutional and legal order. Hence, the prominence of *negara hukum* and *rechtsstaat* (both terms meaning, essentially, a law-based state, although often translated as 'the rule of law') themes, the centrality of the critique of corruption and the emphasis on 'checks and balances' within the system, including judicial independence, separation of powers, and limitations on Presidential terms.⁵⁶ In short, dissidence remained essentially based on the call for the 'regularisation' of the existing political order.

Even so, by the early 1980s, signs of a change in mood were visible. Dissidents increasingly argued that the most effective way to achieve regularised government was to institutionalise democratic participation by the populace. As 1978 student leader, Heri Akhmadi put it, students' 'one demand... improved administration, can only be achieved through an open Presidential election.'⁵⁷ Control over the exercise of power by a strong legislature likewise became a chief theme of the Petition of Fifty group, who thus argued for ending military interference in the political parties. The beginning of a shift from 'regularisation' to 'democratisation' was apparent.

⁵² See for example Akhmadi, 1981, Chapter 3, 'The Fading of the New Order's Ideals', p. 38-49.

⁵³ The writings of retired General A. H. Nasution, for example, greatly stressed the need for a moral reawakening among powerholders (for a later example, see Nasution, 1995). Students also made great play of the moral corruption of the authorities, as did many artists and intellectuals.

⁵⁴ Petition of Fifty leader Ali Sadikin argued very strongly in an interview with the author on November 16, 1995 that Ali Moertopo bore primary responsibility for the deterioration of the democratic element in the New Order.

⁵⁵ Lord Acton's famous dictum - 'power corrupts ... absolute power corrupts absolutely' - was widely used by critics, as were terms like 'abuse of power,' 'concentration of power', absence of 'control' and suchlike. Acton was quoted, for example, by Heri Akhmadi, whose defence plea was one of the most comprehensive articulations of the student critique: Akhmadi, 1981, p. 83. For similar examples see 'The White Book', 1978, p. 153, 164; Kelompok Kerja Petisi 50, 1987, p. 125-7; Sadikin, 1986, p. 16-7.

⁵⁶ See Lev, 1978 for a discussion of *negara hukum* and *rechtsstaat* philosophy in the early New Order.

⁵⁷ Akhmadi, 1981, p. 22.

4.2.2 Dissidence and Regime Factionalism

The hardening of dissident views over the 1970s, in addition to being a product of general disillusionment, was also directly related to the greater cohesion in the ruling elite.

In the early 1970s, a multiplicity of intimate ties continued to connect the dissident milieu with government. During the struggle against Sukarno a few years earlier, many intellectuals, former student activists and other critics had developed close personal relations with military officers and others who were now senior government figures. As disillusionment with Suharto compounded, middle class critics continued to attach great hopes to whatever general or faction was viewed as most sympathetic to reform.⁵⁸

This enmeshment of dissidence and regime factionalism was clearest in the months leading to *Malari*, when escalating societal criticism coincided with growing tension within the regime between those whom Crouch calls the ‘military professionals’ around Kopkamtib (Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) Commander General Soemitro, and the freewheeling, ‘political’ and ‘financial’ generals, especially Ali Moertopo and Soedjono Hoemardani.⁵⁹ This conflict partly overlapped with another schism on economic policy, pitting the second group against the civilian technocrats.⁶⁰

During these months, many civilians sought government or army backers, while the feuding groups within the regime attempted to find civilian proxies. The Moertopo camp initially had some success doing this, but it was viewed by many liberals as embodying the corrupt trend within the regime, and quickly became the target of much student and press opprobrium. Many in middle class circles continued to view the technocrats sympathetically and looked to General

⁵⁸ For example, even while they demonstrated against corruption, student activists in groups like *Mahasiswa Menggugat* remained in constant informal contact with military officers and technocrat ministers whom they viewed as the more ‘clean’ or ‘modernising’ elements in government: Arief Budiman interview, October 14, 1995. Budiman recalled that during the *Taman Mini* protests, protesters knew that General Soemitro and the technocrat Ministers were opposed to the project. See also Budiman, 1970a (‘Gerakan MM [Mahasiswa Menggugat] dan Teknokrat’ [The ‘Students Accuse’ Movement and the Technocrats’], *Sinar Harapan*, January 24, 1970) where he portrays student protest as an attempt to stiffen the resolve of the technocrats.

⁵⁹ See Crouch, 1988, p. 306-17. Crouch’s views are essentially confirmed by Soemitro in his own memoirs on the *Malari* period (Cahyono, 1998) although he portrays himself more as the unknowing victim of the enmity of the two generals.

⁶⁰ The business generals, who also included figures like *Pertamina* chief Ibnu Sutowo, favoured economic nationalist, state-led industrialisation emphasising the military-run state enterprises and cooperation with Japan. The liberal technocrats generally favoured a more liberal economic policy, were seen as more sympathetic to U.S. interests and were concerned about the lack of financial accountability in some of the state enterprises: Robison, 1986, p. 131-175; Malley, 1989.

Soemitro, who had been promoting himself as a reformer, as a potentially powerful ally.⁶¹ It remains unclear to what extent students and other critics established direct links with Soemitro.⁶² However, many clearly attached great hopes to him. Drawing on their experiences from 1966, many calculated that protests and other pressure could create conditions which would enable Soemitro to, if not move directly against Suharto, at least force the removal of Moertopo and his coterie. This proved to be a mis-reading of Soemitro's intentions. It also under-estimated both Moertopo's and Suharto's capacities to retaliate. Many have suggested that the *Malari* riots were fanned by provocateurs linked to Moertopo, as a pretext for moving against Soemitro and civilian critics.⁶³ The subsequent crackdown on civilian dissent was accompanied by a parallel tightening of Suharto's control over the military. General Soemitro and many of his camp-followers were sidelined, Moertopo's influence declined soon thereafter.

This consolidation of Suharto's control significantly narrowed the scope for similar exchange between dissidence and the ruling elite. Afterwards, only a few important officials who were prepared to be openly sympathetic to critics, like Jakarta Mayor Ali Sadikin (1966-77) or Foreign Minister and later Vice President Adam Malik, maintained their posts, and mostly not for long. In the late 1970s, some critics had hopes for Generals Soerono, Widodo, and Mohammad Yusuf (the latter two publicly signaled unease about over-extension of the military's political role).⁶⁴ But the officers students actually cultivated were already marginal figures.⁶⁵ Similarly, after Sadikin was removed as Jakarta mayor, government funding for the bastion of liberal, *negara hukum* philosophy, the Legal Aid Institute (*Lembaga Bantuan Hukum*, LBH) dried up. In the early 1980s, Emil Salim, Minister of Environment and Development Supervision was able to offer important support to critical development-oriented and environmental NGOs, but only those which avoided an overtly political role.

⁶¹ In preceding months he had advocated the abolition of the military's Command for the Restoration of Security and Order, Kopkamtib, and, using a theme initially advanced by President Suharto, a 'new pattern of leadership' which would involve greater 'two way communication': Crouch, 1988, p. 313.

⁶² Both Hariman Siregar, the head of the University of Indonesia student council, and Soemitro denied that such links existed: interviews, March 11, 1994; December 6, 1995. Some rather tendentious evidence is presented in Gunawan, 1975.

⁶³ For discussion of the role of provocateurs in *Malari*, see Cahyono, 1992, p. 143-170. For further discussions of *Malari* and the tensions leading up to it, see: Crouch, 1974 & 1988, p. 306-317; Gunawan, 1975.

⁶⁴ For example, many believed that Deputy Armed Forces Commander, General Soerono might emerge as a challenger to Suharto: Jenkins, 1984, p. 83; fn. 63, p. 84. On Widodo and Jusuf, see Jenkin's book more generally.

⁶⁵ They included Sadikin himself, as well as the former New Order 'militant', Dharsono and former Army Commander A.H. Nasution, both of whom had been sidelined by Suharto a decade earlier. These disillusioned retired generals could themselves initially rely on General Widodo when they began to meet in Fosko-AD in 1977-78, but by the time of the Petition of Fifty in 1980 they were without powerful protectors.

Internal regime consolidation thus greatly reduced the scope for critics to gain succour from elements within the ruling elite. In the short term, loss of protection meant political marginalisation. But it also compounded disillusionment. Although there was a time lag, and critics often retained residual loyalty to the New Order, in the longer term it laid the groundwork for more independent politics.

4.3 Corporatism and Semi-Opposition

As we have seen, from the start the New Order regime sought not merely to repress, but also to co-opt and incorporate most social and political forces (except the communist and populist left). MacIntyre and others have argued that the corporatist system so produced was designed to exclude and muffle societal demands. However, it also meant that from the late 1960s, there were many niches in official institutions for individuals and groups with views somewhat at variance with core groups, provided they did not challenge regime fundamentals. This led to the frequency of semi-opposition, characterised by ‘participation in power’.

Some early allies of the military deliberately adopted a ‘work from within’ strategy and entered various state institutions, Golkar or its affiliated institutions. Many were simply absorbed by the bureaucracy, but others maintained a sense of purpose, seeking to win leadership positions and influence policy making. For example, the ‘Tamblong Group’ of young ‘modernising intellectuals’ from Bandung entered Golkar where one of its leaders, Rahman Tolleng, became a member of the central leadership board and editor of the newspaper *Suara Karya* in the early 1970s. The weekly newspaper associated with this group, *Mahasiswa Indonesia*, was among the government’s most outspoken press critics before *Malari*.⁶⁶

For political organisations which pre-dated the New Order, and represented the Islamic or Nationalist *aliran* (streams), semi-opposition was often an unavoidable response to forced incorporation. Members of the surviving political parties, for example, had little choice but to submit to the mergers of 1973 and to make the best of their new circumstances. To be sure, elements from the parties could sometimes offer criticism within the legislature. But the government majority was always so overwhelming, and rules of procedures so restrictive, that the legislature never emerged as a significant arena of contestation.

⁶⁶ Raillon, 1984. Similarly, GUPPI (*Gabungan Usaha Perbaikan Pendidikan Islam*, Association for the Improvement of Islamic Education) played an important role in attracting Islamic support to Golkar while its members, especially those in the Department of Religion, actively strove to modify or oppose various government policies, such as the 1973 Marriage Bill: Cahyono, 1992.

The passivity of the parties and other corporatist bodies was maintained by a combination of repression and co-optation. There was constant ‘political management’ in the form of incessant intervention, manipulation of internal disputes, and often blunt intimidation. But there also could be significant rewards for participation. And so, for example, semi-opposition remained the dominant pattern for Islamic politics partly because the government supported the costly educational and social programs run by many Islamic organisations, ran an extensive mosque construction program and otherwise supported purely religious expression. A strong strand of accommodation developed in response, among both urban modernists and rural traditionalists.⁶⁷ Even PDI leaders could make a reasonable living from political life if they attached themselves to powerful patrons (see chapter seven). Their constituency was also offered occasional symbolic sops, like Moertopo’s 1978 renovation of Sukarno’s grave.⁶⁸

In the 1970s, as limited pluralism in government gave way to a more centralised line of command tracing up to the Presidential Palace, there was less room for semi-oppositional maneuvering in the parties and other corporatist bodies. This was reflected in, for example, the expulsion from Golkar and imprisonment of Rahman Tolleng after *Malari*, the removal of the moderately oppositional Sanusi-Usep leadership of the PDI at the end of the 1970s, or the incessant conflicts fostered in the PPP in the early 1980s. During the 1980s, the political parties became especially ineffective, and it seemed there was little possibility of any independent initiative within the official political domain.

4.4 Civil Society: Painful Growth

By the late 1970s, a growing array of ‘civil society’ organisations (proto-opposition) constituted a third category of opposition. The growth of such organisations began from a low base. The mass-based Islamic and Sukarnoist *aliran* which had dominated pre-New Order institutional life were largely emasculated. Middle class liberals had lacked a robust institutional base since independence. Their prominence as junior partners of the military in the 1960s was accompanied by a brief organisational florescence. However, once bereft of military support their bases in the media, academia and eventually even the student councils proved vulnerable to repression.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Some prominent Muslim intellectuals, notably the young modernist Nurcholish Madjid, argued from the early 1970s for the abandonment of symbols which provoked government hostility, especially formal adherence to the goal of an Islamic state. Such arguments became increasingly influential from the early 1980s.

⁶⁸ McDonald, 1980, p. 249-51.

⁶⁹ As a result, urban middle class dissidence in the 1970s and 1980s more resembled a *milieu* than an organised movement. The 1971 *golput* (election boycott) campaign, for example, originated amongst a

As the space for open opposition narrowed, many critics sought forms and methods which avoided outright confrontation. Oppositional impulses retreated into ‘civil society.’⁷⁰ There were many examples. Nationalists, Modernist Muslims and others established a range of ostensibly apolitical ‘cultural’ or ‘educational’ groups as a means to perpetuate their old political affiliations.⁷¹ When student activism began to revive from the mid-1980s it took the form of low-profile study and discussion clubs (see chapter six). Another striking example was the 1984 decision by the major traditionalist Islamic organisation, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) to ‘withdraw’ from politics and disassociate itself from the PPP, in order to minimise confrontation, maintain organisational integrity and further members’ economic and social interests (see chapter five).

The most important expression of the civil society model, however, was Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which multiplied rapidly from the mid to late 1970s. Most were established by intellectuals, former student activists and others who had been politically aligned with the military in 1965-66.⁷² NGOs were active in many fields, ranging from legal aid to (at least by the late 1970s) environmental protection, but most were oriented to some aspect of community development work among the poor (see chapter five).

Often, the turn to civil society involved engagement, rather than confrontation, with the state. NU’s withdrawal from politics, for example, was in part driven by the desire to secure government backing for various development programs at the *pesantren* level.⁷³ Similarly, the founders of most NGOs saw their organisations not as products of disillusionment but as means

group of students and former activists who from the late 1960s habitually gathered in the *Balai Budaya* in Jakarta: interview with Arief Budiman, October 14, 1995.

⁷⁰ This is a common phenomenon during repressive political conditions: Bratton, 1994, p. 57.

⁷¹ For example, *Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (DDII, the Islamic Proselytising Council of Indonesia), was formed by Mohammad Natsir in 1967 as a body which could carry on proselytising activities and group the old *Masyumi* constituency, after it became clear that the party’s resurrection would not be tolerated (on Dewan Dakwah see Hefner, 1997 and Liddle, 1996d). About a decade later, following the government’s re-assertion of control in the PDI in the late 1970s, disillusioned Nationalist politicians established a range of cultural and educational bodies for adherents of Sukarno’s ‘Marhaenist’ ideology: van Dijk, 1981, p. 111. Although none of these organisations played a role as important of that of Dewan Dakwah, many, including *Yayasan Pendidikan Sukarno*, (YPS, Sukarno Education Foundation) and *Gerakan Rakyat Marhaen* (GRM, Marhaen People’s Movement) survived into the 1990s and played an important role in maintaining the old political loyalties.

⁷² Ismid Hadad (1983, p. 9) notes that the rural development NGO, Sekretariat Bina Desa listed some 200 NGOs in 1981, while the environment group WALHI claimed that 300 were part of its network in 1983.

⁷³ NU’s withdrawal from PPP initiated a honeymoon period between the NU leadership and the military and government, which produced a significant boost to the Golkar vote in the 1987 election, and which facilitated greater funneling of development funds toward NU *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools): van Bruneissen, 1990 & 1991.

to promote participation in the New Order modernisation project.⁷⁴ Most were charitable or developmentalist in approach and their leaders sought to cooperate with government agencies to secure support for their own projects or to promote policy reform. Many were established under the patronage of government officials. For example, LBH was established under the sponsorship of Jakarta Governor Ali Sadikin and relied on him for funding.⁷⁵ The important NGO LP3ES (Institute for Economic and Social Research, Education and Information) was sponsored by several technocrat ministers.⁷⁶ From the late 1970s Minister Emil Salim remained an enthusiastic backer of many, especially environmental, NGOs.

Most NGO leaders thus advocated a role that was strictly ‘complementary’ to that of government.⁷⁷ Indeed, the name which came to be used to describe them in the early 1980s, *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (LSM, translated by Eldridge as ‘Self-reliant Community Institutions’⁷⁸) was introduced by several NGO leaders precisely because it avoided ‘anti-government’ connotations.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, these diverse organisations shared an orientation of attempting to organise different societal constituencies beyond the reach of New Order corporatism. Some represented attempts to regroup after earlier independent institutions had been destroyed or co-opted (students or Nationalists); others were attempts to preserve the integrity of already existing organisations (NU). Many NGOs endeavoured to reach out to social sectors which had hitherto been largely unorganised under the New Order.

What these phenomena together represented was the beginning of autonomous societal organising, a shift (at least at the level of discourse, if not always in practice) from the dependence on the state integral to semi-opposition and ultimately implied by the dissident model. As we shall see, this had important implications for the future.

4.4.1 *The Beginnings of a Populist Shift*

⁷⁴ There were, of course, exceptions. Some NGOs, especially later in the 1970s and through the 1980s, were direct products of disillusionment with the government and the closure of other avenues for protest. This was very clear after 1978, for example, when former Bandung students established NGOs like Yayasan Mandiri (the Independent Foundation): interview with Indro Tjahjono, November 29, 1993.

⁷⁵ Indeed, according to its founder, Adnan Buyung Nasution, the organisation was established with the blessing of President Suharto himself, mediated through Moertopo: interview, February 8, 1994. Ali Moertopo gave a much celebrated gift of five scooters: Harman et al, 1995, p. 212.

⁷⁶ These included Soemito Djojohadikusomo, Ali Wardhana and Emil Salim: Eldridge, 1995, p. 86.

⁷⁷ See in particular the articles in *Prisma: The Indonesian Indicator*, No. 28, 1983 (especially those by Hadad, Hendrata, Pinney, Hainsworth, Ziad Salim, Emil Salim and Witular).

⁷⁸ Eldridge, 1995, p. xvi.

⁷⁹ The hitherto popular term was *organisasi non-pemerintah* (non-government organisation): Billah, Busyairi & Aly, 1993, p. 5.

The shift toward civil society was paralleled by a corresponding shift in the intellectual foundations of much middle class opposition. Through the 1970s, two trends were visible. First, as Lev argues, there was a ‘determination to separate state from society conceptually and to build some defenses for society against the state.’⁸⁰ This was most evident in the *negara hukum* / *rechtsstaat* ideal, most energetically promoted by lawyers, students and other liberal middle class elements.

This was paralleled by increasing concern with the poor and their problems, as various forms of neo-populist and alternative development thinking began to challenge the elitism inherited from the modernisation perspective of the 1965 coalition. From before *Malari*, through vehicles like the journal *Prisma*, a new breed of intellectuals (and some older ones) developed increasingly comprehensive critiques of the government’s development program, which they criticised for viewing equity and poverty eradication merely as elusive, long term goals to be produced by growth in the modern sector.⁸¹ This was combined with an increasingly intransigent tone on corruption and extravagant living by officials, and against foreign investment.⁸² Many intellectuals, influenced by the international burgeoning of alternative development thinking, promoted small-scale rural development, cooperatives and appropriate technology, and argued that equity and rural employment should be the immediate policy priorities.⁸³

The main practical expression of this was the rapid growth of NGOs, many of which derived their sustenance from former student activists who believed that, after the debacle of *Malari*, it was incumbent on students to break down their social isolation and establish links to the rural population.⁸⁴ Although most NGOs initially favoured partnership with the government, the NGO movement as a whole nurtured a new kind of political discourse which viewed the poor as important actors in their own right in the modernisation process.

⁸⁰ Lev, 1990b, p. 47. See also Lev, 1978, 1987 and 1990a.

⁸¹ Economists like Sarbini Sumawinata and Dorodjatun Kuntjoro Jakti argued that not only better and cleaner implementation but also more fundamental changes in economic policy were needed. Sumawinata, 1972; Kuntjoro-Jakti, 1972.

⁸² See for example the speech given by UI Student Council leader, Hariman Siregar, on New Years Eve, 1973: ‘Pidato Pernyataan Diri Mahasiswa’, in Siregar, 1994, p. 1-8.

⁸³ For an excellent example of a comprehensive neo-populist alternative development program, see Sumawinata, 1985. Works by writers like E. F. Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful*, 1973) and Hollis Chenery et al (*Redistribution with Growth*, 1974) and contributions by agencies like the ILO (which organised the 1976 World Employment Conference which formulated the basic needs model) and FAO (the 1979 international conference on agrarian reform and rural development) were highly influential on the thinking of many Indonesian NGO activists. Bina Desa, one of the more important developmental NGOs, was in large part a product of a 1979 FAO international campaign for agrarian reform: interview with George Aditjondro, February 19, 1994.

By the late 1970s, partly due to the influence of international intellectual trends (especially dependency theory) a new vogue for 'structural' analysis virtually displaced 'modernisation' as the main catch-cry among critical intellectuals.⁸⁵ Although structural analysis had many variants, the essential theme was that political and social problems were a product of deep inequalities which called for more than mere policy adjustments, but rather fundamental reconstruction of government, society and the economy.⁸⁶

Although the new mood was often superficial, in some circles it had important effects. For example, it was expressed starkly in sections of the 1977-78 student movement which combined dependency thinking with the earlier liberal critique of the abuse of power to produce an analysis of the New Order which focused on the corrupt alliance between ethnic Chinese tycoons, government officials and foreign capital.⁸⁷ LBH shifted away from an exclusive focus on litigation to a new 'structural legal aid' (see chapter five).

Given the repressive political atmosphere from the late 1970s, the populist shift in the intellectual foundations of dissidence remained mostly a subterranean process for much of the subsequent decade. The relatively limited circles of students, intellectuals and NGO activists affected by it had limited options for political action. However, we shall see that as political conditions loosened from the late 1980s, its long term impact became clearer, and there was a significant re-orientation toward subordinate social classes in parts of Indonesia's middle class opposition.

5. Conclusion

⁸⁴ Anderson (1978, p. 11-13) argues that this process was accelerated when the technocrat ministers encouraged policy-oriented research in the villages. This directly confronted students and young intellectuals with the disruption being wreaked by the 'green revolution' on rural living standards.

⁸⁵ In 1979, this trend was reflected in the adoption of the theme of 'Structural Poverty' by the Indonesian Association of Social Sciences congress held in Malang: Alfian, Tan & Soemardjan, 1980. The influence of academics returning from overseas studies (such as Arief Budiman who brought a Marxist-influenced mode of social analysis) deepened this trend. See, for example, the polemical articles written by Arief Budiman against Professor Mubyarto's 'Pancasila economy' concept, which convey his clear socialist bent in this period: Budiman, 1981, 1982 & 1984. Budiman's tone caused alarm among some liberals, with Christianto Wibisono (1985, p. 136) warning against the 'danger of Arief-ista', which he defined as 'a reactive and offensive attitude toward everything considered to originate from capitalism-liberalism.'

⁸⁶ For samples of writing in the dependency/ structural vein see: Sasono, 1980 & 1982; Lubis, 1981a & 1981b; Arief & Sasono, 1981. On the emergence of radical perspectives in this period see Lane, 1982, especially p. 122-26.

⁸⁷ The language used was thus sometimes superficially similar to the pre-1965 left: Lane, 1982, p. 126. Some students began to initiate links with members of poor, rural communities: interview with Indro Tjahjono, November 29, 1993.

The three main forms of opposition which emerged during the early 1970s - semi-opposition, dissidence and the civil society model - were all, in different ways, expressions of opposition weakness in the face of the New Order state. By the mid-1980s, a stable, authoritarian regime had emerged, secured by a strong sense of purpose, the institutional backbone of ABRI, a skilled leader in President Suharto, and patrimonial mechanisms for securing internal cohesion. The legacy of 1965-66 meant that lower class political organisation remained difficult, while the middle classes remained structurally weak and without effective organisational counterweights to the state. A combination of space for limited participation-opposition within the system, via corporatist and other structures, abundant oil funds for cooptation, and coercion for those who stepped outside, resulted in diffuse and ineffectual opposition. As a result, by the mid-1980s the New Order appeared virtually invulnerable to challenge. Before long, however, important social changes wrought by economic development and a return of tensions inside the regime, stimulated growth of more substantial opposition.

Chapter Three

Keterbukaan and after, 1989-1995

Much of the literature on transitions from authoritarian rule describes the turning point in the democratisation process as the *abetura*, the ‘opening’ or liberalisation phase, characterised by greater state toleration for dissent.¹ Although the opening is typically linked to conflicts within the governing elite, it frequently allows the ‘resurrection of civil society.’²

Politics in Indonesia after 1988 in many ways followed this pattern. Although there were signs of increased activity among groups like students as early as 1986-87, the watershed was the initiation of *keterbukaan* (openness) by the Fraksi ABRI (ABRI representatives in the DPR) in 1989. This marked the beginning of a period of limited liberalisation in the handling of political affairs.

Although liberalisation was always hesitant and partial, in the years after 1989, there was more toleration for dissent, gradual loosening of press controls, and steady escalation of activity by government opponents. At first, the traditionally most politicised (and tolerated) groups like students and NGOs posed the most visible challenge. Outspoken intellectuals, retired generals and others aired pro-reform views. The new mood rapidly affected social sectors which had hitherto been mostly quiescent (like labour) and political forces which had mostly been constrained within corporatist structures (like the PDI).

As criticisms compounded and opposition escalated, the government combined some minor concessions with ultimately renewed repression. By mid-1994 a retreat from openness was discernible.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the dynamics of the rise and decline of *keterbukaan* in 1989-95 (the events of 1996 are covered in chapter eight). The first section focuses on the socio-economic and political context for liberalisation, while the remaining four sections provide a discussion of the *keterbukaan* process from 1989 to 1995.

1. The Social and Political Context of Opposition

¹ O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986, p. 7) define liberalisation as ‘the process of making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties.’ They note that it is rarely complete nor irreversible, but has a ‘precarious dependence upon governmental power, which remains arbitrary and capricious’.

² *ibid*, p. 26, p. 48-56.

Many social, economic, and political factors converged in the late 1980s to contribute to the twinned processes of political liberalisation and renewed opposition. International pressures, including those related to the end of the Cold War and the decline of U.S. backing for anti-leftist regimes, clearly played a major role.³ Above all, the New Order confronted a basic legitimacy problem similar to that faced by many military-based regimes after long periods in power and after the crises they were ostensibly established to overcome had dissipated.⁴ In 1988, the turmoil which accompanied the foundation of the New Order was over 20 years distant. By 1995, 61 % of the population were not even born in 1965.⁵ Neither constantly repeated warnings about latent destructive forces, nor ABRI's insistence on the 'finality' of 'Pancasila Democracy', could entirely counteract such basic demography.

As indicated in chapter one, this thesis primarily aims to assess the impact of two sets of factors: changing class structure generated by economic growth and tensions within the ruling elite.

1.1 Economic and Social Transformation

If the crisis of 1965-66 occurred in conditions where the private economy and social classes were weak, by the late 1980s Indonesia's social and economic landscape was transformed. Real per capita GDP had trebled between 1965 and 1990.⁶ The percentage of the workforce employed in agriculture had fallen well below 50%.⁷ Declining oil prices in the early 1980s had prompted a shift toward economic liberalisation and export-oriented, consumer goods industrialisation. By the early 1990s, the manufacturing share of GDP was 21% compared with 8% in the mid-1960s.⁸

1.1.1 The New Capitalists

The tremendous increase in wealth at the apex of the economy generated by this growth was expressed in the dramatic growth of the family-owned conglomerates, which typically had interests in many sectors of the economy. As in the past, many of these new capitalists were

³ The world-wide wave of democratisation from the late 1970s similarly had an important stimulatory 'demonstration effect' on domestic critics of the Indonesian government: Uhlin, 1995.

⁴ See for example Rouquié, 1986, p. 110-11.

⁵ BPS, 1996, p. 1-2.

⁶ Hill, 1994, p. 56

⁷ In 1971, the figure was 64%, in 1995 it was 44%: BPS, 1975, p. p. 246; BPS, 1996, p. 330.

⁸ Hill, 1996, p. 5.

ethnically Chinese. Most large Chinese business groups had prospered on the basis of personalistic links with powerful officials. But in a country where ethnic Chinese remained a tiny minority of the population (approximately 3-4%) and were still the target of deep popular resentment, this section of the new capitalist class was clearly unable to stake a direct claim on political power.⁹

By the late 1980s an important ‘indigenous’ component of the new capitalist class had also emerged. Thirty years of access to the levers of economic decision making had generated spectacular cases of capital accumulation, centered around the new ‘notable’ families (most importantly the Suharto family but also those of other senior officials).¹⁰ This is not to say that there was no growth of capital outside the patrimonial framework.¹¹ But even during economic liberalisation from the mid-1980s the commanding heights of the economy continued to be dominated by crony capital, with those with political connections handed monopolistic control over important sections of the economy.¹²

Continued reliance on personalistic ties to officialdom made big business politically conservative. The fate of the major groups was tied closely to the regime, and they had little interest in economic regularisation, let alone political democracy.¹³ During *keterbukaan* there was no indication that any significant element of big capital provided even ambivalent support to democratic opposition.

1.1.2 *The Social Middle*

By the late 1980s, the middle class was a far larger and more amorphous social entity than the tiny and besieged group which had supported the army in 1965.¹⁴ While Chinese and other minority ethnic groups (Christian Bataks and Minahasans, for example) seemed to remain disproportionately represented in the middle class, its new members also came from previously under-represented groups. In particular, the growth of a new *santri* (pious Islamic) middle class

⁹ As one such businessman, Sofyan Wanandi, later put it at a time when military operators were accusing him of anti-government activities: ‘We are cowards when it comes to politics. . . we’re afraid of making a wrong move.’: *Gatra*, January 31, 1998, p. 33.

¹⁰ The term ‘notable’ is borrowed from Robison (1994, p. 52).

¹¹ Kammen (1997, p. 26-37), for example, argues that ‘market-exposed’ light manufacturing, the engine of growth from the mid-1980s, was dominated by new players who generally lacked political connections.

¹² Robison and Hadiz, 1993.

¹³ Crouch 1994a, p. 116-17. See Hadiz’s (1997, p. 176-81) discussion in the context of business relations with labour.

¹⁴ The proportion of the population employed, according to census data, as professional, technical or related workers, managers and administrators and clerical or related workers increased from approximately 5% to 9% of the total workforce between 1971 and 1995: BPS, 1975, p. 250; BPS, 1996,

was obvious, and not only in the traditional petty entrepreneurial sectors, but also among professionals, in the civil service and businesses tied to the state.¹⁵

The new middle classes were far more self-confident than their predecessors. By the late 1980s a brash and exuberant middle class consumer culture was plainly visible in the shopping malls, fast-food outlets, night clubs, golf courses, business schools and housing estates which mushroomed in and around the big cities. Consumption indexes grew spectacularly: for example, sales of sedans increased from 159.7 thousand to 263.3 thousand between 1987 and 1991 alone.¹⁶ This new enthusiasm was not limited only to a few top beneficiaries of economic growth: alongside luxurious shopping centres like Jakarta's Pondok Indah Mall and Plaza Indonesia there were many less ostentatious supermarkets which catered for the more modest tastes of the growing lower middle class market. Meanwhile, the societal legitimacy of capitalism increased, and a new vocabulary of *globalisasi* (globalisation), *swastanisasi* (privatisation), *deregulasi* (deregulation), and *liberalisasi* (liberalisation) gradually pervaded government agencies, the press and academe.¹⁷

Following the modernisation thesis, it could be expected that greater middle class social weight and confidence by the late 1980s would be supportive of democratisation. The case studies in later chapters do indeed illustrate many examples of increased middle class restlessness. However, there were also reasons for continued caution, which have been extensively canvassed in the relevant literature.¹⁸ Many in the middle class remained dependent on the state for their prosperity, as civil servants or via business links with state officials or larger crony capitalists. Above all, despite its growth, the social middle still represented a small and largely insecure fraction of the overall population, surrounded on all sides by impoverished rural and urban masses.¹⁹ Many had little interest in jeopardising their steadily increasing prosperity for

p. 330.

¹⁵ Hefner, 1993.

¹⁶ Production of motorcycles also increased from 31 thousand units in 1970/71 to 435.5 thousand in 1991/92: UN Industrial Development Organisation / Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993, p. 173, 169.

¹⁷ Even among the most aristocratic elements of the civil bureaucracy entrepreneurship was increasingly seen as a valued, lucrative and respectable profession. Nothing symbolised this better than the choice by all of Suharto's children of careers in private business rather than the bureaucracy or military. See: Shin 1989.

¹⁸ See the various articles in Tanter & Young, 1990; Robison, 1990 & 1996; Chalmers, 1993; Bertrand, 1997, p. 422-23.

¹⁹ Reformist regime leaders argued that the small size of the middle class was a reason to postpone democratisation: see Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, in 'Jangan Ngomong Demokrasi Dulu', *Gatra*, July 8, 1995, p. 34. Fear of the explosive combination of lower class resentment at the gap between rich and poor and popular anti-Sinicism remained a concern of the ethnic Chinese. Likewise, for many non-Islamic and secular-oriented members of the middle class, fear of unrest from below remained inextricably bound up with anxiety about an Islamic resurgence.

the sake of an uncertain project of regime change. As we shall see, fear of social unrest influenced even oppositional middle class discourse.

1.1.3 The Lower Classes

Economic growth also caused tremendous social dislocation in the poorer population sectors. Rapid growth of labour-intensive light consumer industry on the outskirts of Jakarta and other cities, saw a correspondingly large industrial working class come into existence. This process of class formation was very disruptive, with a large labour surplus and tight regimentation maintaining Indonesia's 'comparative advantage' in labour costs, with low wages, poor working conditions and squalid living conditions.²⁰ During the 1990s it also gave birth to the most significant labour unrest yet faced by the New Order.

Industrialisation also had important impacts in rural society. There was considerable underemployment and unemployment in most regions, especially in Java. The intrusion into rural areas of urban based capitalism and the developmental state, in the form of agro-business, real estate, infrastructure and similar projects, gave rise to frequent and acute conflicts over land use and ownership.²¹

Another politically significant, but under-theorised, group was the urban poor. Because population growth continued to outstrip demand for wage-labour, a significant proportion of city dwellers continued to eke out an existence in the informal sector.²² The poor *kampung* of Jakarta and other big cities were by the late 1980s better hidden from the casual visitor than in the past, but their inhabitants – marginal traders, unemployed youth, petty criminals, newly arrived villagers – still constituted a majority of the urban population. In later years they also emerged as a significant, albeit often destructive, political force.

²⁰ See Hadiz, 1997, p. 111-33.

²¹ See Lucas, 1992 & 1977; Fauzi, 1994a & 1994b. According to then DPR Speaker, Amirmachmud, 'land problems' was the issue most often brought to the DPR by petitioners in the 1982-87 period: Radjab, 1988, p. 65, *Kompas*, September 21, 1987.

²² According to BPS census data, between 1980 and 1995, a declining proportion of the urban workforce (24% to 19%) was employed in the chief middle class categories (professional, technical or related workers, managers and administrators and clerical or related workers). The growth of the middle class, it would seem, was being outstripped by that of other urban groups, notably the urban poor.

1.1.4 The Political Consequences of Growth

As during the New Order's first decades, economic growth continued to be crucial for political stability (witness the sudden collapse of support during the economic crisis of 1997-98). For much of the 1990s, absolute poverty continued to decline, ample patronage funds remained available, and the 'social contract' with the middle classes largely held. Nevertheless, economic growth and resulting structural changes did have negative consequences for political stability.

It was not simply that economic growth strengthened classes with interests in reform, although this was clearly indicated, for example, by the dramatic industrial strike wave in the 1990s and the forms of middle class opposition explored in later chapters. More particularly, tensions were generated because economic growth and attendant social change was occurring within a political framework which remained essentially unchanged since the early New Order. Tensions between the old patrimonial framework and the new pressures of economic globalisation, for example, were partly expressed by a revival of conflict between politico-bureaucrats and technocrats.²³ There were even signs of tension between the politically-connected capitalists and newer firms based in 'market-exposed' sectors.²⁴ The increasingly blatant privileges granted to well-connected capitalists, especially Suharto clan members, generated frustration among economic players, ranging from foreign investors frustrated at policy unpredictability and caprice, through to smaller players in the regions who lacked privileged access to officialdom.²⁵ From the early 1990s, the readership of the middle class press lapped up increasingly salacious press stories about corruption scandals or the greed of the Suharto children, often disguised as straight business reporting. The terms *kolusi*, *korupsi* and *nepotisme* increasingly began to recur in the press from the same time (eventually emerging explosively as the centrepiece of the *reformasi* movement of 1998). In short, there was a revival and spread of the old regularising ethos which had characterised middle class dissent since the 1970s.

²³ The technocrats' attempts to reform the economy along liberal lines were greatly assisted by the new international economic climate, but they had great difficulties in overcoming the resistance of well-connected business groups. See Schwarz, 1999, p. 49-97, for an excellent account of the technocrats' role in the final period of New Order development.

²⁴ Kammen (1997, p. 32-33) argues that for this second group of capitalists, corrupt payments to state officials were more a costly form of extortion than a beneficial guarantee of market access or other privileges. He is careful to argue, however, that there were few open struggles between the different fractions of capital and that these new capitalists were very cautious politically.

²⁵ For a discussion of the frustrations which could be experienced by foreign capital, see the discussion in Schwarz (1999, p. 66-70) of the fate of foreign lenders after the collapse of the East Java – based Bantoel firm.

There was also renewed concern about social inequality. From the late 1980s, phrases like *kesenjangan sosial* ('social gap') and *kecemburuan sosial* ('social jealousy') entered the country's political vocabulary. Continuing and visible mass poverty contrasted strongly with the signs of extreme affluence in major cities, and what was known about high-level corruption. Major news magazines like *Tempo* regularly featured cover stories on labour conflict, rural poverty, land disenfranchisement, and so forth. As we shall see in later chapters, such concerns also fuelled much middle class opposition.

1.2 Tension in the Regime

If Indonesia's social transformation provided impetus for discontent, increased tension within the ruling elite greatly influenced the political environment within which such discontent was expressed. The following section outlines main features of this tension and introduces some issues which will be examined concerning its relationship with liberalisation and societal opposition.

1.2.1 President Suharto and Succession

Suharto was 66 years old when he was elected for his fifth Presidential term in 1988. As his inevitable departure drew closer, the issue of Presidential succession came to overshadow all other tensions in the political elite.²⁶ However, it generated a contradictory set of pressures.

Suharto had already welded the Presidency into an enormously powerful institution, which towered above all others in the political architecture of the regime.²⁷ Its growth through the 1970s was part of the process by which Suharto eliminated his rivals and oversaw a reduction of intra-regime factionalism. Paradoxically, the very power of the Presidency made the institution a glittering prize above all others. By the late 1980s, as Suharto aged, it thus greatly intensified elite tensions. Key individuals, cliques and centres of political-bureaucratic power engaged in complicated manoeuvres to secure positions which might influence the succession process. Most important was the Vice Presidency, because it was the Vice President who was constitutionally empowered to succeed in case of Presidential death or incapacity.

²⁶ For discussions of the succession issue in Indonesian politics see Crouch, 1988b; Chua Beng Huat, 1993; Liddle, 1992b & 1994; Suryadinata, 1997.

²⁷ On the political power and centrality of the Presidency see for example Robison, 1993, p. 47-9; Liddle, 1985 & 1991.

However, as noted in chapter two, Suharto's pre-eminence was in large part not institutionalised, but rather based on a complex network of patrimonial ties. This had contradictory implications for the tensions surrounding succession. On the one hand, because power was so concentrated in Suharto's hands, and because of his close personal identification with the New Order regime, it was clear that a new President would necessarily be weaker and obliged to seek new sources of legitimacy. At this point a clear linkage could be identified between succession and political liberalisation. Logically, it would be to the advantage of elite players vying for the Presidency to cultivate present and future societal support. In this way, tensions surrounding succession could be expected to spill into the societal realm and contribute to pressures for political liberalisation. As we shall see, elements of this scenario, consistent with what might be expected from democratisation literature, were indeed played out in Indonesia from the late 1980s.

On the other hand, Suharto's continued pre-eminence constituted a countervailing pressure which tended to contain the succession-related tensions. Suharto indicated no clear preference for a successor, established no formal mechanisms to decide on such a person, and gave no indication of when he would vacate his post. He remained the supreme political authority and final arbiter of all major policy decisions and appointments. This tended to dampen the intensity of elite conflict and limited the extent to which vying factions could become genuine soft-liners who offered concessions which seriously threatened the established political framework. Intra-elite tension was thus substantially transformed into a competition between loyal lieutenants for Presidential favour.

At the same time, Suharto's advancing age and increasing isolation from his subordinates exacerbated the government's inflexibility in dealing with pressures for political change. In the early New Order, the military and government were led by Suharto's contemporaries from the revolutionary 1945 generation. Officers like Moertopo, Hoemardani, Widodo, and Yusuf had been Suharto's comrades-in-arms since the independence struggle and had helped him to establish the New Order. Civilian leaders like Adam Malik and Soemitro Djojohadikoesoemo also had substantial personal authority. Although Suharto had long been the New Order's supreme power, pushing aside his 1945 generation colleagues when necessary, at least he considered them his peers, consulted with them and valued their opinions.

During the 1980s generational change occurred. Officers trained at the Military Academy (AMN) in Magelang in the 1960s took control of the military and their civilian contemporaries

assumed greater cabinet responsibility.²⁸ As a result, a significant gap developed between the President and his subordinates. They were less likely to challenge Suharto and it is safe to assume that he trusted and valued their views less. This partly accounted for the prominence of Presidential adjutants, relatives and their proteges in promotions to key military and civilian posts.²⁹ By the early 1990s it was widely understood that there was poor communication between Suharto and most cabinet members, who were rumoured to be more likely to lobby him via trusted intermediaries rather than speak openly in his presence.³⁰ This situation contributed to lack of coordination and tension among senior officials.

Suharto's isolation undermined his political judgement and gave the regime an increasingly inflexible and irrational stamp, which equipped it poorly to respond to increasing societal challenge from the late 1980s. It is argued in chapter nine that this process of 'sultanisation' largely explains the tumultuous way in which Suharto's presidency eventually ended in 1998.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the contradictory pressures generated by the political logic of succession and Suharto's continued dominance generated manifest contradictions in the behaviour of members of the political elite. Senior officials often simultaneously stressed their loyalty to the President, harboured private misgivings and sought to present a reformist public face. While intra-regime friction contributed substantially to political uncertainty, and provided many opportunities to extra-state opposition actors, Suharto retained the ability to sideline every group of potential 'soft-liners'. The result was that there could be no decisive initiative for reform from within the regime

1.2.2 Tension within ABRI

Suharto's pre-eminence faced its greatest challenge in the regime from within the Armed Forces. From the late 1980s, there were many signs of often bitter disaffection within ABRI directed at President Suharto and his allies. This disaffection was generated by a range of disparate issues, including sudden or 'unfair' promotions and transfers, 'scapegoating' for human rights violations, and interference by non-military politicians in equipment purchases. Underlying such grumbles, however, were three main factors.

²⁸ They included some, like Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad, who had been student leaders in the movement against Sukarno in 1966. Even then, they had dealt with Suharto mainly through intermediaries like Moertopo.

²⁹ See the 'Current Data on the Indonesian Military Elite' series in *Indonesia* on the implications of generational change, especially in issues 36 (October 1983) and 56 (October 1993).

³⁰ Such intermediaries included his own daughter Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana (Tutut) and Minister Habibie (who was virtually adopted into the house of then Lieutenant-Colonel Suharto in Ujung Pandang in 1950

First, there was the generational change mentioned above. The President's increasing isolation from his subordinates and consequent reliance on hand-picked loyalists, exacerbated tensions between the President and elements in the officer corps.

Second, there was the secular decline in the role played by the military in the government's policy-making core.³¹ Whereas in the late 1960s and early 1970s the military more or less constituted government, from the 1980s a growing gap became apparent. As the New Order became increasingly institutionalised, civilian agencies like the Presidency, the State Secretariat and BPPT advanced in policy making power.³² The civilian bureaucracy, Golkar and other civilian bodies, including from the early 1990s, ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia*, Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association) became increasingly important sources of recruitment into senior government ranks. There was a concomitant decline in the military penetration of the civilian bureaucracy.³³

Thus, although the military remained influential and retained important veto power, its institutional interests less and less influenced policy formulation and the government was increasingly legitimated by civilian mechanisms. This was only partially masked by ABRI's continuing prominence in security maintenance functions. As Lane argued, 'ABRI has become increasingly an instrument carrying out general policies which it has no real say in formulating.'³⁴ As we shall see in chapter four, this situation generated considerable resentment in parts of ABRI. Disgruntled officers complained that ABRI was reduced to a 'fire brigade', charged with responding to social unrest generated by decisions in which it had no say.

Growing marginalisation from high policy-making also reflected the expanding power of the 'notables' centered around the families of Suharto and other senior bureaucrats. Their growing control over large parts of the economy speeded the displacement of military-controlled foundations and state enterprises.³⁵ They also began to play a more active political role,

and of whom Suharto in his autobiography wrote affectionately 'he regards me as his own parent': Dwipayana & Ramadhan, 1989, p. 457.

³¹ For discussions of this process, see: Lane, 1991a, p. 4-16; Crouch 1994a, p. 120-23.

³² BPPT was Habibie's *Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi*, Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology.

³³ For example, according to former Internal Affairs Minister Rudini, the proportion of all regional heads from ABRI declined from 58% to 39% between 1988 and 1993: interview with Rudini, November 14, 1995. Whereas in the early New Order, senior officers occupied numerous cabinet posts, by the Sixth Development Cabinet announced in March 1993 there was minimal military representation (see below).

³⁴ Lane, 1991a, p. 7.

³⁵ Robison (1993, p. 50), for instance, notes that in the late 1980s '... the military's lucrative forestry and transport monopolies had largely evaporated as better capitalized conglomerates and new family enterprises moved in.'

evidenced by the 1993 appointment of two of Suharto's children to the Golkar Central Executive Board.³⁶ Such developments added to discontent within ABRI. Stories abounded in elite circles (whether accurate or not) of senior military officers working up the courage to appeal directly to the President about the favours bestowed on his children, only to be angrily denied further personal contact.³⁷

The third important factor was the role of General Benny Moerdani and his network, which from the late 1980s served as the principal conduit for the kinds of frustrations described above. ABRI had always been permeated by informal networks, but that built around Moerdani was particularly pervasive. During the 1970s, Moerdani (a Catholic) attained a position of extraordinary power by his dominance of the military intelligence network. His authority was strongest during 1983-88 when he was concurrently ABRI Commander and Minister of Defence and Security. He succeeded in building a powerful network of political operatives through the military and civilian bureaucracy. Although Moerdani owed his position to the personal relationship he enjoyed with Suharto dating back to the 1960s, by the late 1980s the extent of his power (increasingly being used against his chief rival and fellow Presidential favourite Sudharmono) represented a threat to the President himself. Moerdani was thus abruptly dismissed as ABRI Commander in 1988, but continued to wield considerable influence to 1993, both as Defence and Security Minister and through informal channels. Afterwards, officers who had risen to positions of authority under Moerdani emerged as unofficial leaders of discontent. The most important was Edi Sudradjat who was ABRI Commander for a mere three months in 1993, when he promoted many of his followers into key positions.³⁸ As shall be discussed below, after Moerdani's fall, the President oversaw successive waves of promotions, transfers and military restructuring aimed at sidelining officers whose loyalty was questionable. Such moves generated further disillusionment, as officers rankled against peremptory dismissals and privileges of 'fast-trackers'. Nevertheless, by 1994-95 a new layer of loyalists occupied most important posts and continuing diffuse discontent lacked a factional focus.

³⁶ Robison, 1994, p. 56-7.

³⁷ The identities of those making the approach vary according to the political sympathies of the storyteller, but the significance of such stories lies not so much in their veracity, but in their prevalence and in the frustrations expressed by them. There were reports as early as 1988 that Moerdani personally warned President Suharto about corruption in his family (*Indonesia Reports*, No. 31, June 1988; Liddle, 1996b, p. 629). Former ABRI Commander-in-Chief Mohammad Jusuf was another person frequently named as having raised with Suharto the issue of his children.

³⁸ Sudradjat remained Defence and Security Minister (a largely powerless position with no command over troops) and, as we shall see, continued to make veiled criticisms of various aspects of government policy. Even Wismoyo Arismunandar, Tien Suharto's brother in law, and Army Chief of Staff (1993-95) earned Presidential disfavour, partly for protecting officers in Army headquarters who had previous associations with Moerdani: The Editors (*Indonesia*), 1995b, p. 104-5.

If Moerdani emerged as the focal point of military discontent in the late 1980s, two men were the primary targets of military resentments, chiefly because they most embodied the trend toward civilianisation. The first was Suharto protégé Sudharmono. Although he had a military background, as State Secretary and General Chairperson of Golkar (1983-88), he had attempted to consolidate the independence and power of the bureaucracy (including Golkar's independence from, and even willingness to criticise, ABRI).³⁹

From the early 1990s the focus of most open military discontent was Research and Technology Minister BJ Habibie, who emerged as Suharto's new right hand man and the most prominent civilian in government.⁴⁰ Military unhappiness with the Minister was prompted by many factors, including the transfer to his jurisdiction of ABRI enterprises, his interference in equipment purchases, and the part he played for Suharto in building a Muslim support base, discussed below.

In certain respects the tensions of the late 1980s and early 1990s thus continued the pattern of factional competition which had existed in the 1970s. Much apparent military discontent could be attributed to rearguard actions mounted by Moerdani supporters. However, dissatisfaction within the active officer corps was also now substantially directed at the President and his 'palace group', rather than merely at rival officers. The view that ABRI's institutional interests were threatened was also more pervasive.⁴¹ Moerdani's entourage attempted to play upon these concerns, but unease was not limited to the Moerdani group alone. Additionally, given the problems confronting the regime, military discontent also inevitably became entangled with debates about political reform.

As a final caveat, it is important to stress the ambivalence of much military discontent and the fluidity of political alignments in ABRI. Not only was the military permeated by Suharto loyalists, but ABRI's deeply ingrained doctrine of loyalty and discipline militated against action by the dissatisfied. Many discontented officers were ambivalent about the President, feeling that it was time for him to step aside, but retaining tremendous residual respect for him.

1.2.3 The Turn to Islam

³⁹ He also undercut the military's financial power and independence by his authority as State Secretary to decide on major government contracts. For an early discussion of the rivalry between Moerdani and Sudharmono see Crouch, 1988b, especially p. 162-65.

⁴⁰ On Habibie in this period see for example Liddle, 1993; Crouch, 1994 & 1994b, p. 125.

⁴¹ Though this, too, had clearly been influential in the 1970s among both retired officers, as well as serving commanders like Widodo and Jusuf, as Jenkins' 1984 study makes clear.

From the late 1980s President Suharto and his supporters took several initiatives to build a political base in the Islamic community. This resulted in a dramatic change in relations between the state and Islam, the magnitude - and effects on opposition - of which can hardly be understated.

The first concessions to the Islamic *umat* were in social and cultural policy. From 1989 there was new recognition of Islamic courts and religious education in state schools, and tolerance for female students who wore the *jilbab* headscarf.⁴² In late 1990 the government banned the magazine *Monitor* and jailed its editor when it published an article considered by many Muslims to insult the Prophet Mohammad. President Suharto made a well-publicised *haj* pilgrimage in 1990, and he and his family adopted a publicly more pious image. Other initiatives included the establishment of a Muslim bank, government sponsorship for Islamic arts festivals, lessening of harassment of Muslim preachers, and the promotion of *santri* officers to senior posts in ABRI. Such initiatives constituted a partial Islamisation of the public face of the New Order.

The centrepiece of the new accommodation was the establishment of ICMI in late 1990. Although an organisation for Muslim intellectuals was first mooted by a group of students, the idea was taken up enthusiastically by the President and his supporters. Suharto opened ICMI's founding conference, his trusted lieutenant, Habibie, became its chairperson. With such powerful endorsement, ICMI grew rapidly, claiming 42,000 members by the mid-1990s.⁴³ It attracted members of the Islamic middle class (indicated by the use of the term *cendekiawan*, 'intellectual', which was interpreted widely) and those who joined were mostly state employees (public servants, university academics, and so on) and businesspeople linked to the state. In this respect it differed from the old *Masyumi*, which was based on independent entrepreneurs, but like the older organisation ICMI attracted urban, educated, modernist Muslims, including many with Muhammadiyah and HMI affiliations (NU was poorly represented in it).

The shift to Islam partly represented an attempt by Suharto to cultivate a new societal support base at a time when he was increasingly concerned about the solidity of his support in ABRI. In this sense, ICMI represented an outgrowth of conflict within the regime.⁴⁴ It was also the most visible sign hitherto of the New Order's civilianisation. As the regime aged and society became

⁴² See for example on the legal position of Islamic courts and the changing place of Islam more generally, *Tempo*, June 25, 1989, p. 22-31 and Cammack, 1997.

⁴³ Liddle, 1996a, p. 64.

⁴⁴ For arguments to this effect, see Crouch, 1994a, Liddle, 1992b, p. 62; Schwarz, 1994, p. 38. Liddle (1996b, p. 615) is particularly explicit: 'ICMI should be seen primarily not as a mass political movement but as an instrument designed and used by President Suharto for his own purposes.'

more complex, it was increasingly apparent that new bases of societal support were needed to shore up regime legitimacy. The growing Muslim middle class was a natural candidate for co-optation, not only because it was large, but also because its members resented their long standing exclusion from power yet had clear interests in continued political stability and growth.⁴⁵

The formation of ICMI substantially transformed the architecture of political opposition. Many Islamic leaders who had previously been vehement critics of the government re-assessed their positions and joined ICMI (see chapter four). Partial neutralisation of many kinds of Islamic opposition followed. For example, from the mid-1980s PPP, which had previously been the more energetic of the two minor parties, became increasingly listless. Unlike the PDI, it largely failed to invigorate itself under *keterbukaan*.⁴⁶ The large student organisation HMI also became lethargic (see chapter six), while even the Petition of Fifty group was affected (chapter four).

Of course, this process should not be exaggerated. Regime leaders still occasionally warned of threats from the Islamic 'extreme right' and Islamic opposition remained substantial. NU leader Abdurahman Wahid was one of the most visible, if cautious, critics of the government (but this was largely because he criticised the government's use of Islamic appeals: see chapter four). Many modernist Islamic leaders remained skeptical, some became leading dissidents. Even the role of activists won over to ICMI was far from clear-cut; as we shall see, many of them brought their own political agendas to the organisation.

Nevertheless, there was a clear shift in the place of Islam for both regime and opposition. In the 1970s minority and secular fears of resurgent Islam were used to construct a constituency for authoritarian rule. Those who favoured a more prominent role for Islam in the political order became a major engine of opposition, sometimes dragging liberals and nationalists in their wake. From the early 1990s, as we shall see in later chapters, the situation was largely reversed and substantial opposition to the government was driven by hostility to the assertion of Islamic political and social claims. The government concurrently used Islamic appeals to bolster support and undercut opposition. The policy switch involved was breathtaking and its ramifications profound. But one basic element remained: the utilisation of the Islamic-secular divide to split opposition.

⁴⁵ This is essentially the argument advanced by Anwar (1992) and Hefner (1993).

⁴⁶ In the 1992 elections it publicly re-endorsed Suharto before even Golkar did so. In the DPR its performance was mostly lacklustre, and on several occasions its leaders moved to reprimand or expel critical party members. The best known example was the 'recall' from the DPR of the outspoken critic of President Suharto, Sri Bintang Pamungkas: Direktorat Operasional YLBHI, 1995.

The rapprochement with Islam generated significant tension within the ruling elite. These were partly based on ideological grounds. In previous decades, the army had been dominated by the secular and non-orthodox. Under officers like Moertopo and Moerdani it made vigilance against political Islam central to security discourse. From the start, it was clear that hostility toward ICMI was especially great in the old Moerdani circles in ABRI.⁴⁷ They, and other secular nationalists in the ruling elite, feared that ICMI and the broader shift to Islam signalled a turn toward ‘sectarianism’ and ‘exclusivism’ within the body politic, threatening the inclusive, essentially secular compromise embodied in Pancasila, which they considered essential for stability in Indonesia’s plural society.⁴⁸

Of course, such concerns were inevitably intertwined with more traditional competition for position. ICMI functioned partly as a new centre of politico-bureaucratic power within the government, essentially as a tool for Habibie and his clientele, and through them, the President. This became clear in 1993 when individuals associated with it secured many positions in the MPR, Cabinet and Golkar. Lower down, in the regional bureaucracy, Golkar, or on campuses, it also became advantageous for ambitious Muslims to be ICMI members. Inevitably, this generated resentment among the followers of secular-oriented leaders who were pushed aside (see chapter four). From 1993, this process began to be duplicated in ABRI as President Suharto promoted some *santri* officers who were close to Habibie and publicly endorsed ICMI (see below).

2. The Initiation of Openness

Some analyses portray the initiation of openness policies in 1989 as primarily a product of such elite conflict.⁴⁹ While there is much to be said for this view, it is also necessary to place the policy’s beginnings in a broader societal context. Elements within the regime, albeit relatively marginal ones, were influenced by what they saw as early signs of societal pressures for change and believed that pre-emptive, limited political reform was the appropriate response. Reform policies then gathered momentum, initially because of their entanglement with regime conflict, later due to societal pressures.

The conflict between Moerdani and Sudharmono (and by extension the President) was particularly obvious from early 1988. Before the March MPR session ABRI campaigned to

⁴⁷ Ramage, 1995, p. 138-44. Hefner (1993, p. 24) suggests that then ABRI Commander Try Sutrisno advised Suharto not to approve ICMI’s formation.

⁴⁸ Such fears were exacerbated by the fact that some ICMI supporters openly aimed to pursue more ‘proportional’ representation of Muslims within ruling circles.

prevent Sudharmono becoming Vice-President. Tensions peaked when Moerdani was perfunctorily dismissed as ABRI Commander in February. During the MPR session, there were numerous signs of military discontent.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Sudharmono was unanimously endorsed as Vice President, after which the military launched a bizarre whispering campaign about his alleged past left-wing affiliations.⁵¹ There was also a concerted attempt to restore military dominance in Golkar, resulting in Sudharmono's replacement as Chairperson by Wahono, a retired general and governor of East Java.⁵²

Liberalisation policies were also preceded by early signs of societal unrest. There was a sudden upsurge in student protest from late 1988, which was the culmination of a long, subterranean process of radicalisation (see chapter six). Numerous intellectuals, retired military officers and other commentators argued in the media that the student protests were a sign that official institutions were inflexible and unable to adequately reflect popular aspirations. The press had been becoming gradually bolder, and provided increasing coverage of the views of many such people, notably retired General Soemitro, who re-emerged from relative obscurity to argue that it was time to consider political reform and prepare for Presidential succession.⁵³ Then, in late May 1989, the departing US ambassador, Paul Wolfowitz, called for greater political openness to complement economic liberalisation. This sparked much debate, and from this point '*keterbukaan*' (openness) became a new catch-word in public political discourse.⁵⁴

In fact, there had been tentative calls for relaxation of political controls from within Golkar and ABRI from as early as 1987.⁵⁵ But shortly after Ambassador Wolfowitz's speech, the first

⁴⁹ For example, Budiman, 1992; Crouch, 1994a, p. 121; Bertrand, 1996.

⁵⁰ Most obvious was the 'interruption' by a previously little known officer, Brigadier General Ibrahim Saleh. Other signs included the unprecedented challenge to Sudharmono's candidacy by PPP Chairperson Naro, who had long standing military links. The Fraksi-ABRI initially refrained from stating their choice for the Vice Presidency, and eventually only 'supported', rather than 'nominated', Sudharmono. The PDI leadership, also close to Moerdani, likewise delayed declaring its endorsement, while Naro dropped his challenge only on the very day of Sudharmono's appointment: *Indonesia Reports*, No. 32, July 1988, p. 5-19. On the Moerdani-Sudharmono conflict in this period see Vatikiotis, 1993, p. 83-87.

⁵¹ For an example, see the translated leaflet, 'The Moscow Communist - Line Sudharmono - Soekarton Movement Intends to Create Disorder in the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan', in *Indonesia Reports, Politics Supplement*, No. 21, June 1987, p. 1-6. See also Honna, 1999, p. 85-86.

⁵² Before the October 1988 Golkar congress up to 70% of regional delegations and a majority of regional boards were captured by the military: van de Kok and van Langenberg, 1990, p. 165; Lane, 1991a, p. 13. This made Sudharmono's re-appointment as General Chairperson untenable. Although Wahono was primarily a Suharto loyalist he was also widely viewed as being more sympathetic to military interests.

⁵³ For collections of Soemitro's writings from this time, see Soemitro 1992a & 1992b. For an analysis of his views see Lane, 1991a, p. 30-41.

⁵⁴ The influence of the international environment in the nomenclature is obvious, given the considerable interest in the Indonesian press in Soviet *glasnost* over previous years.

⁵⁵ For example, in May 1987, Moerdani made a speech in Yogyakarta where he argued that the power holders could not be free of 'supervision', criticism and 'social control': *Indonesia Reports*, No. 22, September 1987, p. 19-20. For other discussions of the beginning of a loosening from 1987, see van de

serious break in favour of reform occurred in government ranks. The initiators were members of the Fraksi-ABRI in the DPR, officers with distinguished records like Major General Samsuddin (Head of Komisi II, the DPR Commission on Social and Political Affairs), Police Colonel Roekmini Koesoemo Astoeti and Majors General Saiful Sulun (an MPR/DPR Vice Chair) and Raja Kami Sembiring Meliala.⁵⁶

On June 21 1989 the *keterbukaan* era definitively began when Samsuddin and the other Komisi II leaders invited retired General Soemitro to address a public hearing.⁵⁷ Soemitro used the opportunity to promote some of his reform proposals, including Presidential succession by an MPR vote between multiple candidates, Ministerial responsibility to the DPR, and Golkar independence from the bureaucracy.⁵⁸ Next, Minister for the State Secretariat, Moerdiono, appeared before the Commission where he was rebuked by Colonel Roekmini who told him that that political communication was ‘blocked’.⁵⁹ These hearings were widely covered in the press and caused something of a sensation.

Although they were publicly reprimanded by ABRI Commander Try Sutrisno (according to Roekmini, Sutrisno was privately supportive), in following months and years, ABRI legislators continued to speak in favour of openness and on other issues.⁶⁰ They exhorted the media to be bolder in covering controversial issues (Roekmini suggested that widespread censorship had transformed newspapers into ‘government bulletins.’)⁶¹ More public hearings with controversial figures also occurred, including a sensational visit by signatories of the Petition of Fifty in July 1991.⁶²

Kok and van Langenberg, 1988, p. 180-6; *Indonesia Reports*, No. 26, January 1988, p. 16; No. 29, April 1988, p. 30-1; No. 30, May 1988, p. 13; No. 31, June 1988, p. 12.

⁵⁶ Samsuddin had been Regional Commander (Pangdam) in South Kalimantan, Saiful Sulun in East Java. At this time, only 20% of the F-ABRI were retired officers, the rest being still active: *Tempo*, July 8, 1989, p. 31. According to *Tempo* July 8, 1989, p. 23 there were signs of increased assertiveness from the F-ABRI from about mid-1987. For example, in 1988 Major General Samsuddin spoke out about land in Irian Jaya being divided up amongst ‘Jakarta people’.

⁵⁷ Lane, 1991a, p. 37, *Tempo*, July 1, 1989.

⁵⁸ ‘Keterbukaan: Mari Bicarakan Bersama,’ *Tempo*, July 8 1989, p. 22-25.

⁵⁹ Moerdiono’s tone at the hearing was highly defensive, arguing both that openness already existed, and that it needed to be limited: ‘Komunikasi Politik bukan Hal yang Sederhana’, *Tempo*, July 8, 1989, p. 26-7, ‘Mempertajam Ujung Sangkur’, *Editor*, July 8, 1989, p. 26.

⁶⁰ According to Roekmini, Sutrisno only issued the reprimand after Moerdiono reported his treatment at the Komisi II hearing to the President, who ordered Sutrisno to rebuke her: interview, November 29, 1995. For examples of later coverage of the Fraksi’s activities, see *Editor*, September 8, 1990, p. 24 and *Editor*, May 11, 1991, p. 25-6. Other controversial issues they took up included tolls on a road part-owned by the President’s daughter, Tutut and the plight of citizens deprived of their land: *Editor*, November 25 1989, p. 82; *Editor*, September 23, 1989, p. 30.

⁶¹ *Tempo*, July 8 1989, p. 23.

⁶² Soemitro also visited again in February 1991, expounding once more on the importance of Presidential succession: *Editor*, March 2, 1991, p. 27. In July 1992 a number of academics were invited to the Komisi

The vocal ABRI legislators were certainly part of the military camp which was increasingly disillusioned with President Suharto. It seems reasonable to view their initiative as partly as a means to pressure the President.⁶³ However, according to two of those involved, promotion of *keterbukaan* was entirely an initiative of the fraksi members and was not directly linked to frustrations with the President.⁶⁴ According to interviews and public statements, they were instead motivated by what they viewed as steadily increasing public criticism of the government. Since at least 1987 they had been carefully analysing press reports of social and political unrest, especially public criticisms of the toothlessness of the DPR. From this they concluded the government needed to find a new, more tolerant approach to societal criticisms.⁶⁵ If this did not occur, they feared future political alienation and disorder. In the words of Roekmini, '[We decided] that if we wanted to safeguard the system, we had to be accommodative.'⁶⁶ In short, a genuine 'soft-line', liberalising urge did partly account for the openness initiative.

The role of relatively marginal soft-liners is confirmed by the part played by a group of Golkar legislators in the DPR. Vocal Golkar legislators (like Marzuki Darusman, Oka Mahendra and Bambang Warih Koesoemo) were part of a reform current which had emerged in the 1980s under the tutelage of Sudharmono and General Secretaries Sarwono Kusumaatmadja (1983-88) and Rachmat Witoelar (1988-93), and which could in no way be seen as part of the Moerdani camp. This group had long hoped to slowly transform Golkar into a more independent organisation, strengthen the legislature and ultimately to oversee a gradual loosening of the political system.⁶⁷ From 1989 these legislators enthusiastically supported the Fraksi-ABRI

II and advocated reducing ABRI representation in the DPR: 'Andaikan ABRI Dikecilkan', *Tempo*, July 18, 1992, p. 26-7. For the meeting with Petition of Fifty see chapter four.

⁶³ Bertrand (1996, p. 426) notes that some F-ABRI members suggested (at least to the foreign press) that it might be time for President Suharto to step down.

⁶⁴ Interviews with Roekmini, November 29, 1995 and Sembiring, November 16, 1996.

⁶⁵ See, for example, *Tempo*, July 8, 1989, p. 22, 30; 'Bagai Bayi Belajar Jalan', *Editor*, July 22, 1989, p. 25-6. Roekmini thus insisted that the *Fraksi's* promotion of *keterbukaan* was initiated independently of factional disputes in the military, although she conceded it was possible that Moerdani used it for his own factional purposes: interview with Roekmini, November 29, 1995.

⁶⁶ Interview with Roekmini, November 29, 1995. See also the interview with Roekmini ('Polisi di Mata Srikandi') in *Editor*, September 18, 1993, p. 41-3, at p. 41: 'If input from society, the people's aspirations are not accommodated within the system, the result is that many people become frustrated, and aggressiveness can spread.... what I proposed [as DPR member] was to strengthen the system, not to destroy it.' Sembiring likewise suggested that without openness and 'the accommodation of aspirations from below', Fraksi members had concluded 'there would eventually be explosions': interview, November 16, 1996.

⁶⁷ Interviews with Marzuki Darusman, November 29, 1995; Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, October 19, 1998. On the 'progressive group' in Golkar, many of whom were former student activists from the Bandung *Grup Tamblong* of the late 1960s and early 1970s see Vatikiotis, 1994; Liddle, 1994. As early as 1986, Sarwono had argued that there would have to be better political institutionalisation and participation in decision-making in response to greater demands produced by societal and economic development:

initiative, for example challenging the government on an electricity price rise, and other issues.⁶⁸ Marzuki Darusman told one foreign journalist, 'we are trying to build the semblance of a political system using the DPR.'⁶⁹

In any case, the *keterbukaan* policy rapidly did become embroiled in high-level elite conflict. Senior ABRI officers, including Moerdani, publicly endorsed the policy.⁷⁰ Crucially, they also protected Fraksi-ABRI members against disciplinary moves, effectively transforming *keterbukaan* into official policy of Armed Forces' Headquarters.⁷¹ At meetings in December 1989 and 1990, senior officers like Army Chief of Staff Edi Sudradjat called for a new more open leadership style.⁷² Presumably, the motivation was largely to pressure the President.⁷³

In response, the President and his supporters adopted a similar posture.⁷⁴ In his independence day speech in August 1989 President Suharto addressed the openness theme, stressing that Pancasila was an open ideology and raising the possibility of a review of the electoral system.⁷⁵

Kusumaatmadja, 1986.

⁶⁸ See, for example, 'Bagai Bayi Belajar Jalan', *Editor*, July 22, 1989, p. 25-6, reporting on a meeting between Golkar legislators (Marzuki Darusman and Oka Mahendra) with the fraksi-ABRI, where they agreed to support the push for greater openness.

⁶⁹ Michael Vatikiotis, 'Galvanising Politics', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 20, 1989, p. 27.

⁷⁰ Moerdani himself appeared before Komisi I. Although he told them that *keterbukaan* would take a long time to be fully realised and would face many obstacles, he also publicly stated his support for the *Fraksi's* promotion of it: 'Bagai Bayi Belajar Jalan', *Editor*, July 22, 1989, p. 25-6; p. 26.

⁷¹ Roekmini said that both Moerdani and Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Harsudiono Hartas, protected her. There were moves to have her called before BAIS, the Strategic Intelligence Agency, but these were prevented, she suspected, by Moerdani: interview, November 29, 1995.

⁷² Vatikiotis, 1993, p. 88. As Robison (1993, p. 52-53) notes, Moerdani and other senior officers like Edi Sudradjat spoke out in a variety of contexts in favour of a more open political system, abandoning 'feudal' attitudes and 'protecting the weaker sectors of society against the wealthy and powerful.'

⁷³ As Crouch (1994a, p. 121, fn. 1) notes, Moerdani's 'previous record hardly suggested a deep commitment to democratic principles.' Vatikiotis (1993, p. 144) essentially agrees, suggesting that the main concern of the ABRI 'old guard', including Moerdani, was 'to maintain the relevance of ABRI's role in politics, not encourage a divorce between the two.' However, he also suggests that 'Moerdani's ejection from the Suharto inner circle apparently convinced him of the need to encourage political openness and look for new leaders.' For further discussion of ABRI support for reform, see chapter four.

⁷⁴ There were also warnings: in September 1989 President Suharto threatened to 'clobber' anyone who attempted to challenge him unconstitutionally, a threat many believed was directed at Moerdani: *Tempo*, September 24, 1989, p. 14.

⁷⁵ 'Wejangan Empat Point', *Editor*, August 26, 1989, p. 25. It is worth noting that Minister for the State Secretariat Moerdiono described this speech as Suharto's 'reply' to the discussions of openness, succession and related issues which had been developing in society. The promised review of the electoral system did not go to the heart of New Order authoritarianism, instead focusing on whether proportional representation should be replaced by single member constituencies (although this was in fact a reform supported by many critics, such as General Soemitro). Suharto's independence day speech the following year responded even more directly to the openness debate, with the President stressing that 'differences of opinion' were to be welcomed as a dynamic force in social life (Soeharto, 1990, p. 16), even if he still rejected 'individualistic' conceptions of human rights and warned against the continuing dangers posed by the extreme left, extreme right and liberalism (ibid, p. 17).

His confidante, Admiral Sudomo announced a loosening of controls on the press.⁷⁶ In 1990, the President emphasised that ABRI's role in society should be *tut wuri handayani* ('leading from behind'), which many critics interpreted as implying weakening ABRI's political role.⁷⁷ Most important were the string of concessions to Islam described above.

In the months and years which followed a kind of limited bidding war for public opinion developed, a version of Stepan's 'courtship of civil society.'⁷⁸ Discontented ABRI officers continued to speak out in favour of limited liberalisation and adopt an (intermittently) soft posture on political discontent, while the President and his camp continued to reach out to the Islamic community and promote their own reforms.

The preceding brief survey suggests that *keterbukaan* was not purely a product of elite conflict, although this was clearly a crucial pre-condition for its promotion by more important groups in the ruling elite. Liberalisation moves were also at least partly conditioned by perceptions of gathering societal discontent (why loosen controls at all in the absence of a potentially receptive societal audience whose sympathies it would be advantageous to win?).⁷⁹ Societal agency became even more important during the height of *keterbukaan* (1989-93). As we shall see in following chapters, societal actors responded to signs of elite friction and official talk of openness by testing the boundaries of tolerance. This resulted in a 'cycle of mobilisation' similar to that experienced by many authoritarian regimes when they experience significant internal conflict or when they begin to liberalise.⁸⁰

3. Keterbukaan at its Height: 1989-93

One of the earliest signs of the new climate was a more vocal press. While the electronic media (the main news source for the majority of the population) remained tightly controlled, from 1989-90 many major national newspapers and magazines published increasingly lively and investigative reporting of controversial political issues. Some turning points stand out, like the break in the embargo on reports about the Petition of Fifty from mid-1991, or the bold *Jakarta-*

⁷⁶ Bertrand, 1996, p. 427.

⁷⁷ Honna, 1999, p. 90.

⁷⁸ Stepan, 1988, p. 7.

⁷⁹ This is not to suggest that societal pressure 'forced' the regime to open. As Bertrand (1996, p. 322) argues, societal pressure was still too weak to achieve this. However, explaining liberalisation purely by reference to elite politics can lead to unbalanced conclusions. An example is Bertrand's suggestion that openness was controlled by Suharto to achieve a number of aims, including overcoming ABRI discontent. This analysis downplays the extent to which Suharto was reacting to actions taken by military opponents and, later, societal actors. It also understates how much politics passed beyond his control during the *keterbukaan* period, prompting clumsy and damaging repressive action to restore control.

⁸⁰ O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986, p. 26-28.

Jakarta coverage of the 1991 Dili massacre. But overall, the process was slow and tentative.⁸¹ In part it flowed from a noticeable decline in state intervention (like a reduction in the frequency of ‘telephone censorship’ from ABRI headquarters). In part it involved editors and journalists publishing articles on controversial topics, waiting for a response, and, if there was none, pushing further. A driving force was the hunger of the growing middle class readership for provocative news.⁸²

Later chapters explore in greater depth responses by various opposition groups to *keterbukaan*. At first, increased mobilisation occurred in sectors which were most prepared to challenge the government. There was a proliferation of student groups, NGOs and other small middle class groups (see chapters four, five and six). The mood of defiance rapidly spread to the lower classes, symbolised by attempts to establish independent labour unions. There was eventually also invigoration of historically compliant bodies (notably the PDI) located inside the formal political system.

A linked development was the re-establishment of mass action as a commonplace form of political expression. When students and farmers began to hold demonstrations in 1988-89, some government officials indicated their disapproval, but only a few such actions were violently suppressed. The attendant publicity created a ripple effect. Muslim groups organised some large protests, over the *Monitor* case in 1990, the Gulf War and the state lottery SDSB in 1991 and 1993. Mass action really came into its own as a form of protest for lower class groups. As well as actions by landholders, there was an unprecedented wave of industrial strikes from 1990, and other protests by lower class groups.⁸³

We shall see in later chapters that a wide variety of demands were articulated during this societal activation. For present purposes, it is important to note that the twinned themes of *Hak Asasi Manusia* (human rights) and *demokratisasi* became the public themes *par excellence* of the *keterbukaan* period. Their new prominence partly flowed from a focus by the press and oppositional actors on gross violations. Killings of civilians by troops in Lampung (1989), Dili (December 1991), and Nipah (1993), as well as the 1993 murder of labour activist Marsinah in

⁸¹ The Information Minister retained the power to withdraw publishing licenses (SIUPP), ‘telephone censorship’ remained a fact of life and journalists retained an instinctive feel for what stories remained off-limits. These included too much delving into Suharto family businesses, for example, or stories which questioned the inviolability of the military’s dual function or the ‘integration’ of East Timor.

⁸² This was indicated by the rapid circulation growth experienced by courageous journals like *DēTik*, which burst from nowhere to achieve circulation of almost 100 thousand by August 1993: ‘Didongkrak Berita Politik’, *Editor*, 14 August, 1993.

⁸³ These included massive demonstrations in August 1992 against new traffic laws, the dramatically increased penalties in which caused great anger among public transport workers: see *Progres*, Vol. 1, No.

East Java, became *cause célèbre* for human rights activists and attracted extensive press exposure. There was also growing focus on civil and political rights, partly in response to government promises of greater political tolerance. When expectant societal actors established organisations, mobilised supporters, and expressed their views, the state often reacted in a hostile manner. Campaigns for civil and political rights were thus typically defensive in character.⁸⁴

From the early to mid-1990s the question of wider ranging democratisation of the political system moved to the centre of the public agenda. Numerous retired generals, intellectuals, legislators and other elite actors promoted cautious and specific reforms which aimed at reinvigorating the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government (see chapter four). Other actors, like student groups and NGOs, began to more aggressively advocate thorough political democratisation. Discussion of political reform thus also permeated the print media, with coverage of debates about issues like ABRI's political role, electoral reform and Presidential succession.

This had a cumulative impact on government discourse. Through the early 1990s, senior officials frequently called for greater 'openness', 'communication', and a reduction in the 'security approach,' although such calls were generally highly abstract. Particular concessions began to be granted, like military tribunals which investigated certain cases of gross abuses, even punishing (albeit lightly) some of the soldiers involved.⁸⁵ As we shall see, eventually a profound shift in government discourse occurred, with senior officials conceding that *demokratisasi* was inevitable.

However, there were few substantive reforms. No repressive laws were repealed, and many reforms were essentially decorative.⁸⁶ Students, and especially labour and other lower class

3, 1993, p. 40-45.

⁸⁴ For example, from 1989 there was unprecedented press attention to bannings of political meetings and theatrical productions, and restrictions on public appearances and overseas travel by prominent critics. It is worth noting, however, that much of the opposition milieu increasingly formulated demands for greater civil and political liberties in terms of a struggle for a 'civil society', guaranteed by legal protections against arbitrary state intervention (see chapter five).

⁸⁵ The most famous of these was the tribunal which followed the 1991 Dili massacre. In the case of East Timorese abuses, such steps were primarily concessions to international pressure, given the absence of a strong domestic lobby on the East Timor issue. The reverse was the case, however, for abuses like the 1993 Nipah killings, where pressure from the domestic press, NGOs and other organisations was much greater than that exerted internationally.

⁸⁶ An example was the 1988 replacement of the security agency Kopkamtib (*Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban*, the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) by Bakorstanas (*Badan Koordinasi Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional*, Coordinating Agency for the Maintenance of National Stability). Human rights, student and other activists indicated that the change made no practical difference to the operation of ABRI security operatives in the field.

activists, were still routinely repressed, especially outside Jakarta or other big cities. There were new attempts to control NGOs and renewed emphasis on reactionary ‘integralist’ ideology.⁸⁷ Senior officials frequently employed extremely hostile language against critics, using terms like *pengkhianat bangsa* (national traitors) and ‘extreme centre’.⁸⁸ The new atmosphere of toleration was thus entirely contingent and arbitrary. For this reason, it is not possible to categorise the *keterbukaan* period as entailing full liberalisation, merely movement in that direction.⁸⁹

4. Regime Conflict and the Height of *Keterbukaan*: 1992-94

Societal mobilisation coincided with heightened tension in the ruling elite. By the June 1992 general elections it was clear that Suharto would again stand for the Presidency at the forthcoming MPR session in March 1993. This temporarily defused tensions: although focus shifted to the Vice Presidency, the bitterest struggles over succession could at least be postponed.

Partly for this reason, the 1992 elections were largely unremarkable. As in 1987, ABRI was praised for its relatively ‘neutral’ stance, PPP continued its listless performance, and student activists held lively, but largely ineffectual, boycott campaigns.⁹⁰ The campaign by the PDI (whose leaders were widely believed to have military ties) was particularly exuberant, however, and incorporated calls for ‘change in national leadership’ (see chapter seven).

As the MPR session neared, Suharto began to reap some rewards from his rapprochement with Islam, with an outpouring of statements supporting his re-appointment from Islamic organisations and leaders. This was countered, however, by the military’s presentation of a *fait accompli* on the Vice Presidency. Three weeks before the MPR session, Fraksi ABRI head, Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, and Moerdani associate, Lieutenant General Harsudiono Hartas, announced that ABRI Commander General Try Sutrisno was the military’s candidate for the post, although it was widely suspected that Suharto favoured either

⁸⁷ See Bouchier, 1997, especially p. 174.

⁸⁸ The first of these terms was typically used to describe those who campaigned for domestic reform in international forums. The second put liberals who campaigned for human rights and democracy on par with more traditional New Order foes of the ‘extreme left and right’.

⁸⁹ For this reason Uhlin argues Indonesia was in a ‘pre-transition’, phase, rather than liberalisation proper: Uhlin, 1993, p. 519; 1997, p. 157-59.

⁹⁰ These campaigns only developed a head of steam in Semarang, where a couple of students were arrested and later put on trial for supporting a boycott, and in Yogyakarta where quite massive street protests took place after youths linked to PPP and PDI joined in, protesting against government restrictions on party campaigning: Susanto, 1993.

Sudharmono or Habibie.⁹¹ This was the first time that ABRI had promoted a candidate without first consulting Suharto, and was an important turning point. It publicly revealed the depth of discord in the governing elite, and was duly noted by many civilians. Although Suharto was obliged to acquiesce to Sutrisno's nomination, the incident also clearly signaled to him the extent of his vulnerability.⁹²

Since moving against Moerdani in 1988, Suharto had acted where he could to sideline his camp-followers.⁹³ From 1992, he took action to move aside the Fraksi ABRI members who had initiated *keterbukaan*.⁹⁴ He also intervened in the selection of Golkar candidates for the DPR/MPR, excluding many of the most outspoken and others close to Wahono.⁹⁵ After Sutrisno's nomination, Suharto redoubled his efforts. Hartas himself was moved to the DPA (National Advisory Board) a constitutionally prestigious but powerless body, while Kharis Suhud, DPR speaker during the launch of *keterbukaan* was retired. In the Cabinet announced in March 1993 only a few Ministers had senior military backgrounds, notably Edi Sudradjat, who replaced Moerdani as Defence and Security Minister.⁹⁶ The most remarkable feature of the new cabinet was the prominence of sycophantic Suharto loyalists (like Information Minister Harmoko and Interior Minister Yogie S. M.) and close associates of Minister Habibie.

The next major arena for conflict was the Golkar congress scheduled for October 1993. Edi Sudradjat openly stated that the next General Chairperson should come from the 'big ABRI family' and ABRI again moved to dominate provincial branches.⁹⁷ Presumably partly as a result Sudradjat was replaced as ABRI Commander (after only three months) by Feisal

⁹¹ Schwarz (1999, p. 333-34) quotes Moerdani in an interview suggesting that this move was indeed taken by ABRI to forestall a Habibie or Sudharmono Vice-Presidency.

⁹² Some vocal members of the Fraksi-ABRI were even more outspoken on the Presidency, with Major General Samsuddin proposing that there be more than one candidate: 'Senandung Lebih Dari Satu', *Tempo*, July 11, 1992, p. 38.

⁹³ He was hampered, however, by the depth of their penetration through the ABRI officer corps, and there were not many examples of Presidential moves against Moerdani loyalists prior to 1993.

⁹⁴ These included Roekmini and Saiful Sulun: 'Siapa Lagi yang Vokal di Senayan', *Tempo*, September 7, 1991, p. 22. Several other Fraksi 'vocalists' hung on for longer, like Majors General Sembiring and Samsuddin who were removed in early 1994: 'Perginya Dua Vokalis', *Tempo*, February 12, 1994, p. 40; 'Bukan Hanya *Tour of Duty*', *Editor*, February 17, 1994, p. 34.

⁹⁵ According to several reports, when Wahono presented the President with a proposed list of candidates, Suharto did not even glance at it before handing over to Wahono a list of his own: interview with Marzuki Darusman, November 29, 1995. They were replaced by, among others, many ICMI members and Habibie followers.

⁹⁶ There were a few other retired officers in the cabinet, but these were mostly people who had risen to positions of authority through the civilian bureaucracy or due to Presidential favour. See Crouch, 1994b, p. 126.

⁹⁷ For Edi Sudradjat's statement, see *Forum Keadilan*, May 13 1993, p. 93-98. For reports of ABRI dominance at the local level, see: *DëTik*, August 18-24, 1993; *Forum Keadilan*, August 19 1993, p. 20; *Editor*, September 18, 1993, p. 32-3.

Tanjung, who dutifully insisted that the military had no candidate for the position.⁹⁸ At the congress the President's nominee, Harmoko, was smoothly appointed as new General Chairperson. Central Leadership Board members who had been viewed as sympathetic to military interests, led by Wahono and Rachmat Witoelar, were sidelined. The President publicly castigated Wahono for Golkar 'failures', especially the decline in vote at the previous election.⁹⁹ The new board contained two of Suharto's own children and numerous individuals linked to Minister Habibie and ICMI.

Sudradjat's replacement was the most dramatic incident in a broad and accelerating change in the ABRI leadership. In 1993-94, numerous important 'discontented' ABRI officers retired or were moved from senior posts and replaced by younger officers without links to Moerdani and his group.¹⁰⁰ Some were viewed as primarily loyal to the President, many were former Presidential adjutants, even relatives. Some, like Feisal Tanjung and the new Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs Hartono (later Army Chief of Staff), were pious *santri*, publicly sympathised with Habibie and ICMI and were identified as belonging to a group of 'green' or Islamic officers.¹⁰¹ The replacement of ABRI's intelligence body, BAIS by the less powerful BIA in January 1994 was also important in undermining Moerdani's army support base.¹⁰²

These changes reconsolidated Suharto's control over key levers of power, but they also deepened resentment in the sections of the military and political elite affected. Especially after the Golkar congress, there were some very clear signals of military disgruntlement. Sudradjat ally, then Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Lieutenant General Hariyoto P. S. publicly stated that Golkar should reduce its dependency on Suharto (soon afterwards he lost his post).¹⁰³ In an extraordinary public outburst 'vocal' ABRI legislator Sembiring Meliala told *DèTik* that Habibie and newly elected Golkar chief Harmoko only attained their influence by Suharto's sponsorship:¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ In his short period as Commander in Chief, however, Sudradjat conducted many transfers to senior posts, so that, according to the editors of *Indonesia*, even in late 1993 the President was not assured of the loyalty of all of key commanders: The Editors (*Indonesia*) 1993, p. 123-4.

⁹⁹ Wahono publicly defended himself, saying that the *Dewan Pembina* (Guidance Board), led by Suharto, should bear its share of responsibility.

¹⁰⁰ The Editors (*Indonesia*), 1994, p. 84.

¹⁰¹ For an example of Hartono's sympathy for ICMI, see his interview: 'ICMI Itu Menyatukan Umat Islam', *Forum Keadilan*, February 17, 1994, p. 30-34.

¹⁰² The Editors (*Indonesia*) 1994, p. 85.

¹⁰³ '... to guarantee continuity in the struggle of Golkar in the future, it is very clear that Golkar will not be able to dogmatically rely only on the authority and charisma of Pak Harto.' *Editor*, October 28, 1993, p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ '1000 Orang DPR/MPR jangan Dianggap Togog', *DèTik*, 27 October - 2 November, 1993, p. 12. The Chief of the ABRI Information Centre, Brigadier General Syarwan Hamid (one of the Islamic 'green' officers, close to Feisal Tanjung) responded by holding a press conference where he denied that Sembiring's statements reflected official ABRI policy: 'Meletup Pascamunas', *Editor*, November 11

If there was no Pak Harto. . . They wouldn't have any role would they? . . . in the map of political forces in the future, if Pak Harto wasn't around anymore, they also wouldn't be around anymore. . . if Golkar is controlled by other people it would be better if we [ABRI] left it. It must be remembered that up to now, it's been ABRI which backs up Golkar, hasn't it? For example, if in the 1997 election we backed the PDI, the PDI would win.

Sembiring, too, was shortly thereafter moved aside.¹⁰⁵

Coinciding with these heightened elite tensions, *keterbukaan* escalated rapidly. After the March 1993 MPR session major newspapers and, especially, weeklies like *DèTik* and *Editor* pushed the bounds of independent journalism to hitherto unimaginable limits, with major press campaigns on issues like the Marsinah murder and increasing coverage of conflict within government.¹⁰⁶ Opposition also continued to accelerate, with more student protest, Megawati Soekarnoputri's late 1993 elevation as PDI leader and large workers' protests in Medan in April 1994.

Later chapters address the extent to which such phenomena was encouraged by disenchanted military elements. It is important to note, however, that striking concessions to public opinion also continued to come from the Palace camp and Habibie. The most significant was the June 1993 formation by Presidential Decree of a new National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM). Although NGO activists questioned the new body's independence, this was the greatest concession yet to rising public criticism about human rights issues (it was also a direct response to international pressures).¹⁰⁷

5. The Retreat from Openness: June 1994–Early 1996

There was never unambiguous government commitment to *keterbukaan*. Every small step in the direction of political liberalisation was tempered by continuing grass roots repression, every official endorsement of reform balanced by an arrest, a banning, or a trial. Nevertheless, pressures for change accumulated and demanded a response, whether more fundamental reform or a return to repression. From mid-1994 it became apparent that at least Suharto was opting for the second course.

1993, p. 32.

¹⁰⁵ 'Sang Vokalis itu Akhirnya Pulang Kandang', *DèTik*, February 9-15, 1994, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ Most remarkable of all were the exposés of the tactics used by officials against Megawati Soekarnoputri's leadership bid in the PDI in late 1993: see chapter seven.

¹⁰⁷ Other concessions included the release of Islamic political prisoners arrested a decade earlier in connection with the Tanjung Priok incident and the subsequent bombings and Habibie's attempted rapprochement with the Petition of Fifty group (see chapter four).

Just as elite disunity contributed to widening political space from the late 1980s, President Suharto's re-imposition of uniformity in the upper levels of the regime, especially ABRI, assisted the tightening of political controls. ABRI promotions and transfers accelerated to an almost dizzying pace through 1995 and 1996.¹⁰⁸ By mid-1994, most key command positions were held by the new breed of Suharto loyalists like Feisal Tanjung, Hartono, and Syarwan Hamid. Most remarkable was the rise of the President's son in law, Prabowo Subianto, who in November 1995 became the youngest officer to attain the rank of Major General, and was appointed chief of the special forces, Kopassus.¹⁰⁹ Such changes made the President more confident of ABRI loyalty and thus set the scene for greater repression.

Changes in ABRI also substantially transformed the character of elite friction. It was increasingly difficult to talk of a political elite divided between palace versus military camps, because the military itself was now more divided. By early 1994 Indonesian press reports openly speculated about division between ABRI '*merah putih*' ('red and white' – the colours of the Indonesian flag - secular nationalist officers) and ABRI '*ijo royo-royo*' ('green', Islamic, officers). There was also mounting discontent in Golkar and among secular Ministers disturbed by the rise of Habibie and his supporters (see chapter four).

As in typically sultanistic regimes, the reliance on relatives, former adjutants and other favourites imparted an ersatz quality to the new unity. Many serving officers felt that they had been by-passed by 'fast-trackers' whose main qualifications were links to the President and his family, although such resentment now lacked a factional vehicle, and was rarely expressed publicly. Instead, officers and other officials who felt power slipping from their grasp, increasingly criticised governmental inflexibility and appealed for reform and openness. Defence and Security Minister Edi Sudradjat and other marginalised (mostly now retired or retiring) senior officers sometimes openly criticised (usually obliquely, to be sure) specific repressive policies.¹¹⁰ Wahono, the former Golkar chief, now DPR speaker, and some Ministers

¹⁰⁸ Most remaining supporters of Moerdani were moved aside, as were others who had been promoted or protected by Edi Sudradjat and Wismoyo Arismundar during their brief tenures as ABRI Commander in Chief and Army Chief of Staff: The Editors (*Indonesia*), 1995b, p. 104. Note, however, the critique offered by Kammen and Chandra (1999) who argue that the rapidity of transfers can largely be attributed to the increase in class sizes which graduated from the Magelang Military Academy in the 1960s and early 1970s.

¹⁰⁹ Fealy, 1997, p. 23.

¹¹⁰ For example, Sudradjat responded to the bannings of the three magazines in mid-1994 (discussed below) with a speech where he stated that officials needed to 'adjust ourselves to the demands of the time' and that criticism of government corruption should not elicit a harsh response: 'Recent sharp focus on the cleanness of the government apparatus should not be interpreted as a political manoeuvre by any particular group, but should be interpreted as a demand from the people which should be greeted with an open heart.': 'Menhankam: Arus Perubahan Harus Dihadapi dengan Sikap Proaktif', *Kompas*, June 25,

made similar statements, culminating in open backing for several quasi-dissident groupings in late 1995 (see chapter four).¹¹¹

Early signs of the renewed security approach were visible from late 1993, but the watershed event was the banning of three news magazines, *DèTik*, *Editor* and *Tempo*, on June 21 1994.¹¹² These had been among the most enthusiastic supporters of the new press openness. *DèTik*, a cheap tabloid, had achieved spectacular circulation by its pioneering investigative reporting. The banning of *Tempo*, Indonesia's most respected news-weekly since the 1970s, was particularly shocking to many in the middle class.

The ban was clearly instigated by the President, who stated on June 9 that elements in the media were trying to create 'suspicion' inside government.¹¹³ He was referring to recent coverage of the controversy surrounding Habibie's role in the Navy's purchase of former East German naval vessels.¹¹⁴ The bans were thus, in immediate terms, a defence of Habibie and part of the President's over-riding aim in this period to re-impose unity inside the regime.¹¹⁵ More generally, of course, they were intended to stem the increasingly critical mood of the press.

1994. More direct criticism of the ban came from Harsudiono Hartas, now in the DPA: *Indonesian Observer*, June 27, 1994.

¹¹¹ Additionally, open discontent was now not only confined to the upper echelons of the ruling elite, but was causing some significant breaks in the lower levels of the state apparatus. This was apparent, for example, in the judiciary, which had long been a principal pillar of New Order control. From the early 1970s the government had not lost a single political court case, and yet in a series of remarkable cases in 1994 and 1995 - concerning compensation for villagers displaced by the Kedung Ombo dam development in Central Java, the banning of *Tempo* and the detention of labour activist Muchtar Pakpakhan - this is precisely what happened (even though each decision was eventually reversed, mostly after transparent political intervention): 'Menangnya Rakyat Kedungombo', *Forum Keadilan*, August 4, 1994, p. 92-103; 'Kedungombo, Balik ke Titik Nol', *Forum Keadilan*, December 8, 1994, p. 101-8; 'Jalan Lurus Benjamin untuk Tempo', *Forum Keadilan*, May 25, 1995, p. 98-101; 'Dan Tokoh Buruh Itu Pun Bebas', *Forum Keadilan*, October 23, 1995, p. 31-2. See Bourchier, 1999 for a discussion of these cases.

¹¹² One earlier indication was the response to a December 1993 student protest at the DPR building in Jakarta. This was broken up, and after President Suharto spoke out against those who used 'PKI techniques', twenty one of those arrested at it were put on trial, the largest trial of student activists since 1978.

¹¹³ 'Setelah Teguran dari Teluk Rantai', *Editor*, June 23, 1994, p. 29-30; 'Menristek Tak Tahu Apa-Apa', *DèTik*, June 15-21, 1994, p. 18. Years later Goenawan Mohamad of *Tempo* stated that he believed the initiative for the banning came from the President. While Habibie had been angered by the reports on the ship purchases, Mohamad believed that he had wished to punish the magazine through the courts: 'Lebih Jauh Dengan Goenawan Mohamad', *Kompas*, May 2, 1999.

¹¹⁴ Habibie's role had angered elements in ABRI who resented interference in military procurements. It also caused friction between Habibie and Finance Minister, Mar'ie Muhammad, who attempted to limit the funds allocated for the purchase.

¹¹⁵ It seems likely that the President believed that the journalists were being encouraged by disenchanted military officers.

After the bannings, reliance on coercion became increasingly overt. More dissidents were arrested and tried. For example, ‘recalled’ PPP legislator, Sri Bintang Pamungkas, was charged in 1995 for allegedly insulting the President in a speech made to Indonesian students in Germany.¹¹⁶ The military response to street protests became increasingly unpredictable: some protests were still tolerated, but many others were violently dispersed.¹¹⁷ There was also more harassment of pro-democracy activists, including leaders of previously mostly inviolate organisations like LBH and street toughs (*preman*) were increasingly utilised to terrorise opponents.¹¹⁸

There was also a return to bellicose language, including emphasis on the danger of resurgent communism. This reached an early crescendo in late 1995, when a campaign initiated by the President, later taken up by senior officers, alleged that the PKI was behind almost all opposition to the government through *organisasi tanpa bentuk* (OTB, ‘organisations without form’).¹¹⁹

However, even from mid-1994, repression never became entirely unconstrained or indiscriminate, nor did the atmosphere of openness entirely dissipate. Instead, coercion was focused on the most overt challenges, in order to limit societal mobilisation rather than smash it entirely (which, by now, would have required great repression). Indeed, military and state officials typically argued that repression was a necessary adjunct to openness, a means to ensure that reform did not give rise to ‘excesses’ or ‘radicalisation’ which would threaten the controlled and gradual democratisation they argued was underway. There was more public acknowledgment of the importance of human rights, Komnas HAM played an increasingly

¹¹⁶ In a visit to Germany in April 1995, President Suharto was confronted by angry protestors. On his return home, Suharto’s blamed the incidents on unnamed Indonesians who were ‘national traitors’. Pamungkas had been in Germany at the time. In the highly charged, but almost absurd, case against him, it was alleged he had insulted the President, by equating him with Sukarno, calling him a dictator and so on: see Human Rights Watch Asia, 1996.

¹¹⁷ Lethal force, however, remained rare. The unpredictability of the military response perhaps indicated that local commanders had scope to use discretion. My thanks to Harold Crouch for this point.

¹¹⁸ *Preman* were used against activists ranging from students in small regional towns to high profile national leaders: ‘Melawan Gerakan Pro-Demokrasi Dengan Preman’, *Suara Independen*, No. 10, Vol. 2, May 1996, p. 18-26; ‘Para-military gangs to the fore’, *Tapol Bulletin*, No. 135, June 1996, p. 5-6. For a more general discussion, see Ryter, 1998.

¹¹⁹ Among the most prominent officers to speak out on this theme were Commander in Chief Feisal Tanjung and Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Soeyono: ‘Feisal says communists on the move’, *Jakarta Post*, October 5, 1995; ‘Communists prey on youths, Soeharto warns’, *Jakarta Post*, October 7, 1995. Although all manner of social unrest was blamed on OTB, groups which organised around human rights and democratic issues were especially singled out. However, the campaign had an even greater air of unreality than previous communist scares, with allegations that communists were behind all kinds of petty crime, as well as attempts to establish an Islamic state. For an excellent analysis of ABRI doctrine and the OTB scare see Honna, 1999, p. 96-103.

important public role and there were still some specific, albeit primarily symbolic, reform gestures.¹²⁰

Coercion thus masked an important shift in regime discourse. From the mid-1990s, regime leaders routinely acknowledged that *demokratisasi* was unavoidable. Even at times of great repression, and often coexisting uneasily with continued statements about the ‘finality’ of Pancasila democracy, government and military leaders regularly insisted that democratisation was proceeding, albeit slowly, in pace with economic development and in keeping with Indonesia’s national character and ideology. In the words of ABRI Commander Feisal Tanjung in late 1997, greater transparency and democracy was not something which could be ‘bargained over’ anymore.¹²¹ Such admissions, even if designed primarily to disarm government critics, represented a significant change from a decade earlier, when senior ABRI Commanders’ repertoire when speaking of democracy had been limited to endless reiterations that Indonesia already practiced its own unique form of ‘Pancasila democracy.’ It thus indicated the extent to which societal forces had already succeeded in winning a major battle of political ideas with the regime, with the latter ceding the inevitability of political reform.

Increased repression was also no longer able to entirely contain opposition. Instead, in certain respects it seemed to galvanise it. This was evident from the time of the 1994 press bannings. Whereas past moves against the press had mostly been received with fearful acquiescence, this time there were large and angry demonstrations in many cities. Previously cautious intellectuals, artists and others openly condemned the banning, and an activist coalition, *Solidaritas Indonesia Untuk Pembebasan Pers* (Indonesian Solidarity for Freedom of the Press, SIUPP) was formed, uniting the broadest range of non-formal opposition yet to coalesce against a government policy.¹²² Similarly, the OTB campaign failed to effectively intimidate those

¹²⁰ For example, in 1995 the President authorised LIPI to conduct a detailed study on reform of Indonesia’s electoral system and the ABRI representation in the legislature (reduced from 100 to 75 seats in the same year). There was also cosmetic reform of rules governing permission for political meetings. Similarly, in a highly publicised move, the Commander of the Trikora Military Command (incorporating Irian and Maluku) in early 1996 issued a handbook for his soldiers on how to deal with the public and respect human rights: ‘Pujian untuk Pangdam’, *Forum Keadilan*, March 11, 1996, p. 25.

¹²¹ ‘Kehidupan Demokratis tak Dapat Ditawar Lagi’, *Kompas*, 2 September 1997. For a similar discussion, see ‘Ginjar Kartasmita: Demokrasi Indonesia Belum Optimal’, *Republika*, March 17, 1996. President Suharto’s public comments showed little sign that they were influenced by the new climate, however. See for example: ‘Demokrasi, Bukan Anarki’, *Tiras*, January 2, 1997; ‘Presiden Soeharto: Jelas Terlihat Peranan Kelompok Kecil Tertentu’, *Kompas*, December 2, 1997.

¹²² See Heryanto, 1996, p. 245-53 and Human Rights Watch Asia, 1994, p. 8-20 for a more detailed discussion of the press crackdown and the middle class coalition which coalesced in opposition to it. The bannings also triggered the formation of a new organisation for journalists, *Aliansi Jurnalis Independen* (Independent Journalists’ Alliance, AJI) as a rival to the corporatist *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* (Indonesian Journalists’ Association, PWI). AJI was soon publishing a news magazine of its own (*Independen*) without a publishing license. *Independen* was banned (although it soon reappeared as *Suara Independen*), three AJI activists were arrested and jailed and other members of the organisation were

targeted by it. In the 1970s, even the allegation of communist links was a devastating means of enforcing silence. Now, many intellectuals regarded it with open derision, and those accused defended themselves in the press and even threatened to sue.¹²³

6. Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to provide a general picture of the political dynamics underlying the rise and decline of *keterbukaan* and the associated escalation of opposition activity. It was argued that these processes should be understood within the context of two distinct, but inter-related, phenomena: changes in social structure produced by economic growth, and conflict within the governing elite. Particular attention was paid to the latter process, because of its importance in conditioning the onset of *keterbukaan*, and the retreat from it in mid-1994.

The emphasis on elite disunity has not been intended, however, to depict opposition groups as passive onlookers in the liberalisation process. On the contrary, it is my intention to argue for a considerable degree of societal and opposition agency. Following chapters thus explore a range of opposition types, strategies and impacts during *keterbukaan*, as well as the influence on them of social and economic change ‘from below’ and conflict within the ruling elite ‘from above.’

sacked from other publications.

¹²³ See for example ‘Unionist, academic deny they are communists’, *Jakarta Post*, October 18, 1995.

Part Two: Case Studies of Opposition, 1989-95

Chapter Four

Regime Friction and Elite Dissidence: Petition of Fifty, Forum Demokrasi and YKPK

In the 1970s greater authoritarianism in relations with society and declining pluralism within the regime caused alienation among some members of the ruling elite, like those who signed the Petition of Fifty. But because of the centralisation of power in the President's hands, such individuals could be successfully ostracised from public life, with little recourse beyond making moral appeals for change.

From the late 1980s, the decline of pluralism was partly arrested by friction in the military and President Suharto's rapprochement with modernist Islam. As a result, the line between dissident activity outside the state and semi-opposition within it once more became blurred, reminiscent of conditions in the early 1970s. Critics 'outside' the regime who were inclined toward a negotiated path to reform were, put crudely, confronted by a choice between the apparently reformist bloc within ABRI or the Islamic reformers of ICMI, behind whom stood Minister Habibie, and ultimately Suharto himself.

This chapter explores dissidence during 1989-95, by focusing on three groups: the Petition of Fifty itself, *Forum Demokrasi* (Democracy Forum) and *Yayasan Kerukunan Persaudaraan Kebangsaan*, (YKPK, Foundation for National Harmony and Brotherhood). First, however, it is useful to look briefly at the general phenomenon of elite advocacy of reform during *keterbukaan*, especially from the vying forces within, or on the outskirts of, the state.

1. Elite Discussions of Reform

From the late 1980s many ideas which a decade earlier had earned Petition of Fifty signatories punishment became common topics of public debate. Greater communication between government and society, toleration of differences, Presidential succession: such themes were promoted publicly and regularly, not only by marginal groups, but also by individuals with close or ambiguous relationships with power. Retired generals linked to Ministers, Golkar and ABRI legislators, intellectuals acting from institutions formally part of the state apparatus (like LIPI, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences) or close to it (like CSIS, the Center for Strategic and International Studies) and, from the mid-1990s, serving Ministers, all spoke out on the need for

change.

Many such reform proposals advocated change in government tone or style rather than specific institutional reforms.¹ Some were very detailed: General Soemitro, for example, wrote voluminously in the media, promoting reforms ranging from greater press freedom, Presidential succession, reducing DPR/MPR appointments to the end of the 'floating mass.'²

Such proposals tended to share two features. First was a *fin du regime* tone of praising the New Order for past achievements, but arguing that it was now necessary to adapt to changing social, economic and global realities. In the words of LIPI researcher Mochtar Pabotinggi, in a LIPI publication entitled 'Reexamining the New Order Political Format':³

We are all now on top of the New Order bridge [earlier he had evoked the image of the bridge across a deep ravine in Kafka's 'The Bridge']. From its beginning in 1966 to the fiftieth anniversary of our republic [1995] we could still feel an intensity of passion, almost ecstasy, in viewing the horizon and broad possibilities before us. It cannot be denied, that this regime has indeed recorded great achievements. However, on the other hand - especially in the last ten years - we have also felt our bridge beginning to wobble. There are signs that both sides of the ravine, the resting place of both ends of the New Order bridge, are beginning to crumble - the side which has supported us in the past, and the side where we have hung our hopes for the future.

This tone was due not simply to the age of the New Order, but more particularly to that of its helmsman. Suharto's dominance in the New Order, plus the absence of institutional mechanisms for leadership transition, contributed to a mixture of anxiety about unrest, and hope for reform, in many discussions of the future.

Second, precisely because change was considered necessary to safeguard stability and other New Order achievements, it was widely argued that it should be carefully planned and managed. General Soemitro, for example, was insistent on this point:

¹ For example, from about 1990 publications produced by CSIS (Moertopo's old think tank which in earlier years had done much to formulate a justification for authoritarian rule) called for a reformulation of Pancasila ideology to allow for greater openness. The key theme was that existing constitutional arrangements were sufficient, but there was a need for invigoration of the party system and the legislature. See for example: Silalahi, 1990 & 1991. After the deaths of Ali Moertopo and Soedjono Hoemardani CSIS was closely linked to Moerdani. The material produced from this institution clearly reflected the general unease in the Moerdani camp.

² See Soemitro, 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1996.

³ Pabotinggi, 1995, p. xi. The most active mainstream proponents of Presidential succession in the mid-1990s, General Soemitro and Muhammadiyah leader Amien Rais, took particular care to praise the New Order (i.e. President Suharto) for past successes. See for example: Rais, 1994, p. 4-5, Soemitro, 1992b, p. 89-90.

Change and reform should be implemented in an *orderly* manner, on the basis of clear concepts, and in stages. We do not desire drastic changes, because each change tends to bring with it instability, vacuum, confusion and even chaos...The Indonesian nation does not wish to experience a situation like that in the Philippines, we do not wish there to be victims like there were in the Tiananmen incident, and we also do not want a vacuum and confusion like there is in Eastern Europe and Russia.⁴

Despite the guarded tone, the ubiquity of such proposals during *keterbukaan* underlined the collapsing political certainties of the time and the regime's faltering political legitimacy. They also reflected the continued prevalence of Linz's 'semi-opposition': reformers were not gathered in a single movement, let alone one outside the official political system. Many were in ambiguous relationships with power, scattered through a range of institutions.

Indeed, while many elite calls for reform were presented as disinterested calls for change, unrelated to considerations of *realpolitik*, others reflected greater awareness of the practicalities of reform. General Soemitro for example argued that his proposals were aimed at convincing President Suharto of the need for change.⁵ Many such proposals were linked in some way to factional politics. Unlike the early 1980s, when the Petition of Fifty group had faced a united front from officialdom, there was now greater heterogeneity of views within the state, and, apparently, more openness to reform. The two important focal points of moderate reformist hopes were ABRI and ICMI.

2. Factionalism and Support for Reform in ABRI

It is relatively simple to identify the chief leaders of the 'discontented' group in the military from the late 1980s. They included General Benny Moerdani, Lieutenant General Harsudiono Hartas, Generals Kharis Suhud and Edi Sudradjat, and many of the outspoken ABRI legislators in the 1988-93 DPR.⁶ There were also various public statements of support for reform, from both Fraksi-ABRI members and senior serving officers.

⁴ Soemitro, 1992b, p. 170-1. Soemitro makes this argument in virtually all the chapters in this volume. Rudini, who retired as Interior Minister in 1993, made many similar contributions in following years, see for example: Rudini, 1994a, 1995b.

⁵ Interview with General Soemitro, December 6, 1995. He said that he was forced to do this indirectly, via the media, because Suharto had cut off all contact with him since before the 1988 MPR session, when he had told the press that the President would leave it to the MPR to select a Vice-President. Soemitro said that 'his only hope' was that Suharto would ultimately step down and hand over to an anointed successor.

⁶ It will be remembered that Moerdani was Armed Forces Commander (1983-88) and Minister of Defence and Security (1988-93), Hartas was Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs (1988-93) and chief of the Fraksi-ABRI at the 1993 MPR, Suhud was Speaker of the DPR/MPR (1988-93), while Sudradjat was Army Chief of Staff (1988-93), Commander of the Armed Forces for three months in 1993, and Minister of Defence and Security (1993-98).

However, identifying a ‘military position’ on political reform is difficult. This is partly because Suharto’s pre-emptive action prevented the emergence of a consolidated faction with shared views on key issues, partly because of the disciplinary ethos which prevented serving officers from articulating their views openly.

2.1 The Contradictory Logic of Military Discontent

Another difficulty is that views on political reform in ABRI were complicated by discontent motivated by other causes. As noted in chapter three, these included perceived political marginalisation of ABRI, tensions surrounding Presidential succession and hostility toward Sudharmono, Habibie and ICMI. The crux was always struggle for position within the regime. Discontented officers did not focus on developing a comprehensive reform vision, but on manoeuvring for position in state institutions in preparation for succession, and fighting rearguard actions against Palace supporters.

An important political contradiction followed. Despite their calls for reform, most ‘anti-Palace’ officers aimed to ensure a continued presence for the military in the body politic. Indeed, they often expressed their primary concern as being the decline of ABRI’s political weight, its transformation into a ‘tool’ of government. In the words of the most radically reformist officer of the 1988-92 DPR, Roekmini Koesoemo Astoeti:⁷

ABRI is no longer dominant, it is no longer even involved in decision making. It is only Suharto who makes the decisions. ABRI is simply the implementer of what the government decides. And yet, the politics of ABRI should be the politics of the state, not the politics of the government. If not, then ABRI will be just like the armed forces in other countries. ABRI should be able to correct the government. Now it can do nothing, and ABRI recognises it is no more than the fire brigade. We hope that ABRI can be more independent in the future.

Other military officers (albeit mostly recently retired) interviewed for this thesis had similar views, frequently stating that the erosion of ABRI’s leadership role meant *dwifungsi* was ‘losing its true meaning.’⁸ The resemblance to the 1970s protestations by the retired officers who signed the Petition of Fifty is striking, indicating that such language partly expressed the frustration associated with marginalisation.⁹ But at least at the philosophical level it reflected a

⁷ Interview with Roekmini, November 29, 1995. See also the interview with (by then retired) Lieutenant General Harsudiono Hartas, ‘ABRI bukan Alat Pemerintah atau Golongan’, *Serambi Indonesia*, September 19, 1995.

⁸ Confidential communications, late 1995.

⁹ In the 1970s, the retired officers later associated with the Petition of Fifty argued for a reduction in ABRI’s role in government and its disassociation from Golkar in terms drawn from the very ABRI

quintessentially militarist outlook: such officers were concerned by the military's supposed subjugation by the government and wanted to defend its independent role. The officers most active against the Palace and ICMI were thus often doctrinally inflexible. Even vocal ABRI legislators frequently condemned 'liberalism' and critics of the government, and defended the relevance of ABRI's 'social-political' role. Clearly, then, there was no simple division between military 'soft-liners' and Palace 'hard-liners.' In certain respects, officers most alienated from Suharto retained highly authoritarian views.

However, the other side of the contradiction was that because discontented officers found themselves (and, as they saw it, the military as an institution) in an increasingly marginal position, they had both the opportunity and motive to look at the regime with a more critical gaze. They noted the growing mood of restlessness in society and that ABRI was often blamed for harsh policies for which, as mere 'fire brigade', they believed it was not truly responsible.¹⁰ Believing that the long term legitimacy of the New Order and the ABRI's political role was endangered, they concluded that adjustments were necessary.¹¹ As they retired, or were pushed from power, their views hardened, and they were compelled to seek societal allies.

doctrines which legitimated military intervention in political life. Due to its revolutionary origins and historic unity with the people, they argued, the Armed Forces should not be a 'dead tool' of any one group, but rather protector of the people, state and constitution. In an early formulation by Ali Sadikin: '... as it carries out *dwifungsi*, ABRI should be owned by the whole people, including whoever is in government, whether that is PDI, PPP or Golkar, so long as they govern in accordance with the prevailing politics and rules of the state. But if they deviate, then ABRI has its *pentungan* (cudgel), doesn't it?': *Suara Karya*, October 12, 1979, reproduced in LKB, 1980a, p. 40.

¹⁰ Interview with Roekmini, November 29, 1995. Even Edi Sudradjat used this phrase while Army Chief of Staff in 1989: Vatikiotis, 1998, p. 154.

¹¹ As noted in chapter three, this was the core argument of the Fraksi-ABRI members who promoted *keterbukaan* from 1989. It is also a frequent cause of division in military regimes: Stepan, 1988, p. 30-43.

2.2 Reform Ideas in ABRI

Although it is not possible to point to an open and comprehensive ABRI reform position during *keterbukaan*, it is feasible to describe several key ideas about reform which circulated among discontented officers and which some partly publicly articulated.¹²

Above all, in part because of sensitivity to Suharto's increasingly sultanistic rule, they hoped for a government which was 'cleaner' and more efficient, but which remained authoritative, able to maintain political stability and pursue economic growth. Rather than concentrating on the institutional reforms which might be needed to bring this about, and similar to military dissidents in many countries (including coup plotters in democratic regimes) they talked in terms of a more 'moral' regime, of a purer application of regime doctrine.¹³ Many dreamed of a semi-authoritarian system like Singapore's, where strong government and probity existed without thorough political deregulation.

To the extent that discontented officers (especially those in the DPR) agreed that a change in governmental approach was needed, they focused on greater 'openness', tolerating greater press freedom, and such like.¹⁴ There was also talk of stronger 'control' mechanisms, especially that the DPR should be a more assertive watchdog which could curb corruption and other abuses by the executive.¹⁵ This was what Fraksi-ABRI members strove to implement from 1989. Even retired officers (except, notably, those linked to the Petition of Fifty) rarely took such arguments to their logical end by advocating thorough deregulation of the party system.¹⁶ However, various reforms which fell short of this were floated, such as reducing intervention in the parties, de-linking Golkar from the bureaucracy, party representation in cabinet, or

¹² These ideas, however, were argued most strongly and in greatest detail not by serving officers, but by retired ones, including those like General Soemitro who were already retired at the outset of *keterbukaan*, as well as those who were moved aside from the early 1990s as part of Suharto's reassertion of control. The analysis which follows is based primarily on interviews with several very recently retired ABRI officers in 1994, 1995 and 1996.

¹³ As Sembiring (interview November 16, 1996) put it: 'we agreed that the appropriate Pancasila political system existed, but it needed better implementation.'

¹⁴ For an early example, see reports of a speech by Edi Sudradjat (then Army Chief of Staff), to the 4th Army Seminar in Bandung in 1990, where he indicated that an increasingly critical society would require national leaders to be more open to 'criticism and two way communication': 'Di Bawah Atap Seskoad', *Editor*, December 22, 1990, p. 31-3. Often such ideas were expressed in terms of faithfully applying ABRI territorial doctrine, based on fostering unity between the military and the people.

¹⁵ Hence, Kharis Suhud in 1991 called for DPR involvement in selecting the composition of cabinet: *Editor*, February 23, 1991, p. 28-9.

¹⁶ Even retired generals like Soemitro, initially at least, did not endorse allowing for an increase in the number of political parties, rather that the existing ones should be allowed to function more independently: Soemitro, 1992b, p. 62.

increasing judicial independence.¹⁷ Similarly, there was widespread recognition of the need to limit (future) Presidential powers, by measures like limiting the number of terms served by a single incumbent.

However, even the most ardent military supporters of reform typically insisted that ABRI's social-political role was historically and socially legitimate and thus inviolate.¹⁸ But it was widely accepted that changes in 'implementation' were necessary, toward a kind of 'openness' in ABRI's political behaviour: replacing the 'security approach' with a 'communicative' approach in dealing with social and political challenges, and being truly neutral ('above all groups') in settling political conflicts.¹⁹ It appears that only a tiny minority of officers active during *keterbukaan* contemplated more decisive withdrawal from politics.²⁰

2.3 Suharto Loyalists: 'Green' Officers

A final caveat is necessary. As we know, as *keterbukaan* ended, many command positions passed to officers who Suharto felt were more loyal: Feisal Tanjung, Hartono, Syarwan Hamid, Prabowo Subianto, and others. These 'green' officers were also characterised by their mostly devout *santri* backgrounds.²¹ They were also very anti-Moerdani, believing that that devout officers like themselves had in the 1980s been discriminated against in promotions and transfers.²² They thus viewed ICMI and related Muslim groups as potential allies in the struggle against Moerdani and his supporters.

The previous discussion is mostly concerned with officers from the '*merah-putih*', 'anti-Palace' camp. But this does not mean that these others were unaffected by pressure for political reform. Indeed, they assumed control precisely as the inevitability of democratisation became a common theme of national political discourse. Many of them thus frequently spoke about the

¹⁷ Harsudiono Hartas in 1991 promoted PDI and PPP participation in cabinet: 'Kabinet Buka Pintu', *Tempo*, August 17, 1991, p. 27.

¹⁸ See for example Soedjono [i.e. Roekmini Koesoemo Astoeti], 1993.

¹⁹ The role of Jakarta Military Commander Hendropriyono in the appointment of Megawati as PDI leader was often cited as a positive example: see discussion in chapter seven. Rudini was also well known for advocating this during his period as Interior Minister (1988-93).

²⁰ Roekmini's position was particularly strong: she felt that although *dwifungsi* was still greatly needed, ABRI could be restricted to a supervisory role in the legislature: interview, November 29, 1995.

²¹ Hartono was a devout Madurese Muslim, and according to Liddle (1996b, p. 629, fn. 12) claimed to be close to Habibie. Feisal Tanjung had a Kopassus background and there were claims that he had been religiously observant only for a few years (ibid.) Prabowo, the son of former Finance Minister (and PSI leader) Soemitro Djojohadikoesoemo, 'lacked a credible Muslim background': Mietzner, 1999, endnote 14 (p. 230). Mietzner suggests that Prabowo was aware of this image problem.

²² Liddle, 1996a, p. 61. According to Schwarz (1999, p. 336), Prabowo had an 'obsessive hatred' of General Moerdani, which probably dated back to his service in East Timor in the mid-1980s.

need for reform, for ABRI to deepen its *tut wuri handayani* ('leading from behind') approach, although this was mostly expressed in abstract terms. On the role of civilians in government, they often adopted a softer line than those associated with the old Moerdani group (even if this was principally because it accorded with Presidential wishes, as when Feisal Tanjung agreed to Harmoko's 1993 appointment as Golkar leader). Because Feisal, Hartono and other 'green' officers were willing to cooperate with Habibie and ICMI, many ICMI activists argued that they were in fact the 'real ABRI democrats'.

According to several informants, many of these officers, including Feisal Tanjung, privately accepted the need for substantial political reform after Suharto departed from the Presidency.²³ They were divided from the '*merah-putih*' camp by (in addition to their willingness to cooperate with ICMI and more militant Muslim activists) their ties to the President. In the words of one (recently retired) officer aligned with Habibie:

The present leadership of the military [Feisal etc] accept the need for reform, but they have learned the lesson from Indonesian history that when there are splits within ABRI, then there is chaos. The present leadership of ABRI will thus not oppose President Suharto. So, they will wait.²⁴

Because such officers owed primary loyalty to the President, in practice they tended to adopt reactionary attitudes toward societal opposition, especially when it seemed directed against the President or hostile to the government's reconciliation with Islam. They were thus the chief agents of the retreat from *keterbukaan* policies in the mid-1990s.²⁵

3. ICMI and the Revival of 'Reform from Within'

In ABRI, support for reform was linked to growing political marginalisation. Movement in ICMI was in the opposite direction. Suharto sponsored the organisation to attract wider support in the face of deteriorating relations with ABRI. ICMI's vigour thus largely resulted from the entry into it of political actors previously excluded from official politics who now adopted a 'work from within' strategy.

Other writers have described in detail the foundation of ICMI, noting that the organisation was based on a coalition of diverse forces.²⁶ Its strength was largely derived from President

²³ Confidential communications late 1995 & 1996.

²⁴ Confidential interview, November 1995.

²⁵ See Honna, 1999, for a detailed discussion of these officers' elaboration of the 'latent danger of communism' discourse in response to dissent from the mid-1990s.

²⁶ Hefner, 1993; Ramage, 1995, p. 90-101; Schwarz, 1999, p. 173-93; Anwar, 1993 & 1995.

Suharto's backing, with Habibie as his chief agent. Government bureaucrats with little apparent previous commitment to Islam or political reform dominated its leadership. But it also attracted many intellectuals and Islamic activists who had previously been outspoken critics of the government, providing opportunities for personal advancement that had been blocked earlier. These included people like the Muslim intellectuals Immaddudin and Ismail Sunny (both arrested in 1978), NGO activists like Dawam Rahardjo and Adi Sasono, and the prominent Muhammadiyah leader Amien Rais. Beyond these were much wider circles of (mostly modernist) Islamic leaders and organisations who sympathised with ICMI and all it symbolised.²⁷

3.1 The Aims of ICMI Reformers

Islamic activists who joined ICMI argued that they were pursuing three main goals.²⁸ First was simply greater respect for Islamic sensitivities and a more prominent role for Muslims within the New Order. They were impressed by government policies from the late 1980s which ceded ground to Islamic social and cultural claims. In the language of Indonesian neo-modernism, they argued that ICMI assisted the goal of establishing an 'Islamic society,' and was merely an extension of a societal Islamic renewal which had been visible for over a decade.²⁹

Some took these arguments further and argued that ICMI was a vehicle for the 'Islamisation' of government and bureaucracy, a means to achieve 'proportionality': representation of Muslims in positions of power proportionate to the religious composition of the whole population (i.e. approximately 90%). Sometimes this was linked, though rarely openly, to demands for *dekristenisasi*, 'dechristianisation'.³⁰

Second, some in ICMI saw the organisation as a vehicle to promote neo-populist economic measures involving mobilisation of state resources to alleviate poverty and, develop small-scale indigenous (Islamic) business. Leaders like Dawam Rahardjo, Adi Sasono and Umar Juoro had spent years supporting such policies from within community development NGOs. After the

²⁷ For example, even youth and student groups which had been banned when they refused to accept Pancasila as their 'sole foundation' during the 1980s, began to re-evaluate their hostility to the government. One such organisation was *Pelajar Islam Indonesia* (PII, Indonesian Islamic Students), which began a revival in the mid-1990s: *Media Dakwah*, December 1994, p. 7-18.

²⁸ For more detailed discussion of some of these objectives, see Ramage, 1993, p. 209-218; 224-230; 1995, p. 90-96; 98-101. The analysis of ICMI in this chapter relies greatly on these works by Ramage.

²⁹ Many, for example, cited how prayers, fasting and Islamic greetings during the 1980s became common in government offices where previously such practices had been anathema. See for example Anwar, 1993.

³⁰ Ramage, 1995, p. 98-101. For a typical statement by Adi Sasono, see 'Itu Bukan Islamisasi Tapi Demokratisasi', *Tiras*, September 26, 1996, p. 39-46; p. 42.

formation of ICMI, their chief institutional stronghold was CIDES (Center for Information and Development Studies), a research institution headed by Sasono.³¹

Third, some argued that ICMI was a vehicle to promote political reform and democratisation. At the simplest level, it was argued that ICMI assisted overcoming hostility between the government and the Islamic majority. If relations remained characterised by suspicion on one side, fear and resentment on the other, democratisation was necessarily impossible.

The most reformist supporters of ICMI went further and argued openly that democratisation required demilitarisation and ‘civilianisation’ of government, that it was, above all, the military’s preponderant and privileged role which blocked democratic reform. Hence, increasing the role of civilian structures (like ICMI) and leaders (like Habibie) was in itself appropriate. This, of course, was closely related to the historical enmity between much of the Islamic community and the officer corps, which reached its nadir when officers like Moertopo and Moerdani in the 1970s and 1980s inflated the Islamic threat to legitimate a continued military role.³² Anti-military sentiment was thus intermingled with a sense of historical grievance and desire to exact punishment on those officers and their followers (e.g. CSIS) considered responsible for past misdeeds.³³

3.2 The Price of Participation

Reformers attracted to ICMI pursued a typical ‘work from within’ strategy.³⁴ The goal was to win important positions in the organisation and in governmental structures, from where they hoped to wield power and put into effect their aims.

³¹ See for example Rachbini, 1995. That such forces should congregate around Habibie was natural, given his status as the head of the ‘technologists’ in government who favoured a state-led process of industrialisation dependent on government investment. Much of the public work of ICMI in its early years consisted of an array of programs designed to foster ‘human resources development’, often similar to those pursued by NGOs: supporters often spoke in terms of ‘fostering the growth of an Islamic middle class’. Promotion of popular welfare and Islamic enterprise often dovetailed with concerns about economic dominance by ethnic Chinese and other non-Muslims, and their alleged support by non-Islamic technocratic Ministers. See for example the interview with Adi Sasono, ‘Itu Bukan Islamisasi Tapi Demokratisasi’, *Tirias*, September 26, 1996, p. 39-46; especially p. 41.

³² On the demilitarisation arguments see Ramage, 1993, p. 219-223; 1995, p. 96-8. Ramage stresses that political demilitarisation was an explicit aim of only a minority of ICMI activists.

³³ Many modernist Muslims regarded the Catholic-dominated CSIS with particular fury, considering it to have been a chief architect of the policies of ‘Islam-phobia.’ See for example ‘A M Fatwa: Sekarang Saya Melawan Dengan Diam’, *Tiara*, November 7, 1993, p. 68-75.

³⁴ As Ismail Sunny put it: ‘Don’t be an opposition just for the sake of being an opposition. If we can bring about change from the inside, what’s wrong with that? The New Order government has heard and taken account of the Islamic *umat*’: *Tempo*, October 3, 1992, p. 30.

However, as argued by Schwarz, Suharto had 'been careful to structure ICMI in a way that constrains the inclinations of its more radical members.'³⁵ Reformist ICMI members were outnumbered in its leadership by bureaucrats and other 'New Order Muslims'.

Working from within also necessitated abandoning frontal criticism. The neo-modernist intellectual Nurcholish Madjid, a participant in ICMI (albeit one disillusioned by the experience) argued that those who entered ICMI were required to compromise to achieve a 'secure area for freedom [of] action.' If they made direct demands for democratisation, 'from that moment ICMI would lose many things, and would not be able to do much. It could be completely finished.'³⁶

Because ICMI depended on backing from Habibie and, ultimately, Suharto, ICMI 'radicals' felt obliged to furnish both with political support, especially initially. Before the 1993 MPR session ICMI activists like Dawam Rahardjo and Amien Rais championed Habibie's Vice Presidential candidature, and endorsed Suharto's re-election. Many made great play of Suharto's 'change of heart' toward Islam to explain their accommodation.³⁷

Ultimately, support for the Habibie-Suharto camp was justified as more than mere tactics. Because their aims included 'Islamisation', ICMI radicals were enthusiastic participants in factional conflicts aimed at removing those they considered unsympathetic to the interests of the *umat*. These included Moerdani and his cohorts, and the Christian technocratic Ministers Johannes Sumarlin, Radius Prawiro and Adrianus Mooy, whom they blamed for economic policies which benefited Chinese conglomerates. Participation in ICMI's struggle to gain a foothold within government, thus became self-justifying, subsuming separate social and political aims.

As factional alignments within the regime changed, ICMI reformers readjusted their attitudes to ABRI. This was especially apparent after Feisal Tanjung became ABRI Commander in 1993 and Syarwan Hamid, Hartono, and other ICMI sympathisers followed him into senior positions. Talk of 'demilitarisation' among ICMI reformers was increasingly superseded by discussion of

³⁵ Schwarz, 1994, p. 176. See also Liddle, 1996b, especially p. 625 for a similar argument.

³⁶ 'Presiden Mendatang Tidak Akan Mampu Menjadi Pilot', *Forum Keadilan*, April 8, 1996, p. 94-8; at p. 97-8.

³⁷ See Dawam Rahardjo in *DëTik*, March 10, 1993, for an argument in favour of Habibie and against Try Sutrisno as Vice Presidential candidate, and Amien Rais in *DëTik*, March 3, 1993, p. 9, for a frank discussion of the assesment made by many in ICMI at this time that they opted for a '*figur tetap, policy berubah*' (same person, change of policy) strategy. See Ramage, 1995, p. 106 for a summary of Rais's arguments. My attention was drawn to both the interviews cited above by references in Ramage's book.

the need to foster healthy relations between the military and the Islamic community.³⁸ Such officers also sought support within ICMI ranks: for example, Syarwan Hamid worked closely with CIDES, often using it as an informal think-tank, while Hartono and Prabowo recruited intellectuals (notably Din Syamsuddin and Amir Santoso) from a different group within ICMI to their own CPDS (Centre for Policy and Development Studies).

3.3 The Fruits of Participation

However, it is important to stress the ambiguous character of co-optation, which might not only broaden a regime's societal support base but also result in institutions being used for purposes at odds with the core state leaders' interests.³⁹

Under Suharto, ICMI reformers only succeeded in establishing themselves as a reform bloc on the regime's periphery. Some of them secured important posts in ICMI itself, notably Adi Sasono who became secretary general in 1995.⁴⁰ But they never won, for example, cabinet posts. Nevertheless, many used their new positions of influence to promote gradual democratisation, respect for human rights and other reforms.⁴¹ For example, CIDES attempted to influence government policy in a range of areas, employed critical academics and former student activists, and published material on controversial topics like human rights.⁴² CIDES intellectuals, like Dewi Fortuna Anwar, were involved in LIPI reports on ABRI and the electoral system. It also organised seminars to which outspoken critics of the government were invited, attempting to play a role as a reforming broker between government and potentially

³⁸ For example see the interview with Anwar Haryono: 'Bekerjasama dengan ABRI, Kok Dianggap Aneh?', *Republika*, September 8, 1996. See also a cover story in *Media Dakwah* (No. 268, October 1996), published by Haryono's Dewan Dakwah, entitled 'Tut Wuri Handayani: The Older ABRI becomes the Wiser it Becomes'. Similarly, ICMI activists provided important support for Harmoko when he became Golkar Chairperson.

³⁹ Co-optation always involves a trade-off, as CIDES operator and former head of HMI-MPO, Eggi Sudjana (interview, November 29, 1995), put it: 'We know that there is an attempt to co-opt us. But you can only be co-opted if you are not aware [of the attempted co-optation]. We are aware, and we try to use that co-optation.'

⁴⁰ Even Sasono's elevation was only a partial victory. As Fealy notes, Suharto stacked the new ICMI board with 'half the cabinet and a range of ICMI antagonists and Habibie adversaries': Fealy, 1997, p. 25-26.

⁴¹ By the later years of Suharto's rule, even ICMI as an organisation began to promote 'democratisation and human rights' themes. See for example 'Demokrasi dan Hak Asasi dari ICMI', *Adil*, December 4-10, 1996, p. 9.

⁴² Adi Sasono (1995, p. 46) notes that some early seminars on controversial topics were not given permission by authorities. Petition of Fifty activist, A. M. Fatwa described the atmosphere in CIDES as similar to that in the Petition: Linrung et al, 1995, p. 50.

hostile forces.⁴³ Eventually, many ICMI activists argued that the various reforms implemented by the government from the early 1990s vindicated (even resulted from) the ICMI strategy.⁴⁴

If anything indicated the ambiguous character of co-optation it was the indications from 1993 that ICMI reformers were re-evaluating their support for Suharto, at time when the increasingly erratic and nepotistic character of his rule was being subjected to growing public criticism. In particular, Amien Rais campaigned strongly on the issue of Presidential succession. In a December 1993 Muhammadiyah meeting he (unsuccessfully) promoted six 'criteria for succession' in 1998, with a list which strongly pointed toward Habibie.⁴⁵ At a CIDES seminar in February 1994, he presented a paper entitled 'Succession 1998: A Must', where he highlighted problems which had been accumulating under the present government, including 'the cult of the individual', growth of corruption and a 'blunting of vision and creativity' in leadership. The present leadership was 'exhausted', he argued, and 'rotation' was needed for democratisation, clean government and social justice.⁴⁶ In following years, he continued to vigorously promote both Presidential succession and Habibie's prospects, including after he became Chairperson of the 28 million strong Muhammadiyah in 1994.⁴⁷

4. The Petition of Fifty

⁴³ See for example 'Konvensi Nasional Agenda Bangsa: Sejumlah Tokoh Ormas Baru Hadir', *Republika*, November 22, 1995; 'Konvensi Nasional' *Republika*, November 28, 1995, reporting on an conference organised by the institution (grandly titled a 'National Convention for a National Agenda') to which secular-oriented opponents of the government were invited. Adi Sasono (1995, p. 46) described such attempts as 'an attempt from above to loosen the opportunities for free organisation.'

⁴⁴ See for example Adi Sasono in 'Mereka Kelompok Penekan', *Paron*, August 10, 1996, p. 21-3; at p. 21. Sasono mentions changes like the entry of human rights into the 'official agenda', the formation of Komnas HAM, the loosening of restrictions on campus and reduction of the role of security forces in labour conflicts.

⁴⁵ 'Gagalnya Agenda Suksesti', *DèTik*, December 22-28, 1993, p. 19. The criterion which was widely understood as pointing to Habibie referred to a 'forward vision' centered on 'science and technology.' Although it was initially greeted with general acclamation, the meeting declined to endorse the proposal. According to the organisation's secretary, Dr. Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif, delegates agreed to it 'in their hearts', but worried that 'local authorities who are only just now getting on well with Muhammadiyah, will become distant once more.' (ibid).

⁴⁶ Like in General Soemitro's earlier interventions, Amien still included the obligatory praise for New Order 'achievements', and packaged his proposals in somewhat euphemistic language (for example, using phrases like 'the elite' or 'elite layer', instead of naming the President, when discussing phenomenon like the cult of the individual). Nevertheless, this was a direct and bold statement, and it was widely understood that it angered the President. Note that Amien had written in favour of succession, albeit cautiously, from as early as 1989: Rais, 1989.

⁴⁷ For press interviews in early 1994 where Amien reiterates his position, see for example 'Kita Melakukan Kesalahan Kolektif', *Forum Keadilan*, March 3, 1994, p. 85; 'Pak Harto Cukup Bijak Menyerahkan Tongkat Kepemimpinannya' [Pak Harto would be quite wise to hand over the leadership baton], *DèTik*, March 23-29, 1994, p. 19; 'Mereka Tidak Bisa Menyetir Saya', *Editor*, March 3, 1994, p. 64-70; 'Saya Akan Coba Mengurangi Kevokalan Saya', *Forum Keadilan*, August 4, 1994, p. 82-86.

As discussed in chapter two, the 1970s consolidation of Suharto's control within the New Order, generated substantial alienation among elements of the ruling elite who were marginalised by this process. The Petition of Fifty group was the most important product. It was centered on a combination of senior retired military officers and modernist Muslim politicians, although Nationalist and Christian politicians, liberal intellectuals and student activists were also involved. The most influential members had held senior government or political office before the New Order was established, or during its early years.⁴⁸ Many had been pushed aside after they clashed with Suharto or his favourites.⁴⁹

Although the group's members were mostly politically conservative (reflected in their professions of loyalty to various aspects of regime doctrine and the fact that they neither presented themselves as an alternative leadership nor attempted to build mass support) one uniting glue was hostility to President Suharto. The original Petition of Fifty was a direct response to two speeches made by the President, condemning him for his abuse of Pancasila to repress critics. A central theme in their subsequent statements was the need to control the powers of the Presidency.⁵⁰

4.1 The Petition of Fifty during the 1980s

The New Order origins of those who signed the Petition did not save them from punishment. Immediately after the Petition was signed, the chief of Bakin (*Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara*, the State Intelligence Coordinating Agency) Yoga Sugama announced that those who had added their names would be 'isolated': work permits and business licenses would not be renewed, and credit lines to state banks would be cut off.⁵¹ Many were eventually forced from their jobs, and a ban on media coverage was imposed. In later years, Petition members described this policy as a kind of 'civil death.'

⁴⁸ Effendi (1989, p. 235-36) provides a detailed analysis of the backgrounds of those who signed the petition, noting that they included three former prime ministers (M. Natsir, Syafruddin Prawirengara and Burhanuddin Harahap), seven former ministers or officials of ministerial rank, and ten senior retired ABRI officers, representing all four services, including former Commander in Chief A. H. Nasution, the Navy's first Commander, Admiral M. Nazir, former Jakarta Mayor, Ali Sadikin, and former national Police Chief, General Hoengeng Santoso.

⁴⁹ For example, Hoengeng, was removed as Chief of the National Police after 'tracking down an import racket that led to Madame Suharto': Jenkins, 1984, p. 292. Slamet Bratanata was removed from his post as Minister for Mines in 1967 after he clashed with Suharto ally and chief of the state oil corporation, Ibnu Sutowo: Bouchier, 1987, p. 9.

⁵⁰ They identified the enormous power of the institution of the Presidency, and its impunity from control mechanisms, as a source of many of the problems in the political system: *Kelompok Kerja Petisi 50*, 1987, p. 36, 47, 62. As one remedy, as early as 1980, they proposed strict limitations to the number of terms any official (including the President) might serve in office, in order to counter corruption and concentration of power: *ibid*, p. 19.

Exclusion from political office and public life deepened signatories' resentment of the government, and motivated them to look on the regime more critically. During the early 1980s they thus evolved into an archetypal dissident group. 'Working Group' members and a few other individuals met weekly, usually at the home of the former Jakarta mayor Ali Sadikin. The most prominent included Sadikin himself, Hoegeng Imam Santoso (former national police chief), Mohammad Natsir (former Prime Minister and leader of Masyumi and then Dewan Dakwah, the organisation established in 1967 as a vehicle for followers of the old modernist Islamic party), Slamet Bratanata (minister of mines in the early New Order), Anwar Haryono (also from Dewan Dakwah, and chief representative of modernist Islam in the group after Natsir's death in 1993), Catholic intellectual, Chris Siner Key Timu, and A. M. Fatwa (working group secretary, and a well-known preacher who had been harassed for his criticisms of the government since the mid-1970s).⁵²

At these meetings, the group typically drafted letters spelling out detailed reform proposals or protests addressed to the DPR/MPR, Ministers or the President. Such 'appeals to power' were characteristic of the dissident model of opposition. Even so, from the large body of material the group produced (by 1987 these were collated into a book of 264 pages⁵³), a reasonably clear program of political reform emerged. As Bouchier notes, this centered on calls for 'freedom of political organization, free elections, an end to unconstitutional bodies (e.g. Kopkamtib), oppressive laws (e.g. the 1963 Subversion Law), corruption, and monopolistic economic practices.'⁵⁴

Working group statements rapidly circulated through dissident circles. However, due to the continuing media blackout, and the fact that the signatories had already been forced from state institutions and important organisations, their broader impact was limited. It was only the group's modernist Islamic members who retained a link to a substantial (and alienated) mass base. It was no surprise, therefore that the group should be affected by the general repression of Islam which marked the 1980s.

The catalyst was the September 1984 Tanjung Priok killings. These were sparked after residents of the Jakarta dockland district accused low-ranking soldiers of desecrating a local mosque. Tensions quickly escalated, local mosque officials were arrested and an angry crowd

⁵¹ Jenkins, 1984, p. 169.

⁵² See Bouchier, 1987, for more details on some of the group's members.

⁵³ *Kelompok Kerja Petisi 50*, 1987.

⁵⁴ Bouchier, 1987, p. 10.

marched on local police and military headquarters. Before reaching their target, they were surrounded by troops and a large number (most estimates are in the hundreds) were shot dead.⁵⁵

The Petition working group released a ‘white paper’ questioning the official version, blaming the military and suggesting that the ultimate source of the unrest was the government’s violation of the ‘spirit and contents’ of the Constitution.⁵⁶ The government response was harsh. Among the scores of Muslim activists subsequently arrested, three were associated with the Petition: A. M. Fatwa, H. M. Sanusi, and Major General Dharsono, all of whom were sentenced to long prison terms under the subversion law.⁵⁷

The impact of this blow was to deepen the mood of alienation in the group. Members became particularly bitter toward Benny Moerdani, who was widely viewed as the responsible for the Priok killings and the ensuing crackdown.⁵⁸ Their political critique also hardened. For example, whereas group members’ early views on ABRI’s role were ambiguous, by the late 1980s many of them argued that *dwifungsi* should be expressed, at most, by maintaining a small, elected ABRI representation in the MPR, and that even this should dwindle away as the 1945 generation, passed from the scene.⁵⁹

4.2 Keterbukaan and the Habibie Initiative

Although their broader political impact was limited, the group had considerable moral authority and was widely respected in the broader political public.⁶⁰ In the looser political conditions of *keterbukaan*, any element in the ruling elite which could facilitate their re-entry into national political life, or win their support, would gain obvious political benefit. An initial breakthrough

⁵⁵ On the Tanjung Priok killings, the Petition of Fifty ‘white paper’, and the ensuing crackdown, see Cribb, 1986, van de Kok, 1986, Bouchier, 1987, Tapol, 1987, Burns, 1989, Tim penyusun PSPI, 1998.

⁵⁶ For a translation of the white paper, see Tapol, 1987, p. 107-110.

⁵⁷ Dharsono did not sign the original petition but he was a regular attendee at working group meetings through the 1980s. He was sentenced for his part in drafting the white paper, and for participating in a meeting where he dissuaded more radical activists from considering violent retaliation: Cribb, 1986, p. 4. A.M. Fatwa was accused of helping to draft the white paper and inciting the riots, while Sanusi was sentenced for allegedly financing the subsequent bombings of the Central Asia Bank and plotting to assassinate President Suharto: Bouchier, 1987, p. 9.

⁵⁸ It was widely believed, for example, that Moerdani was in charge of the conduct of military operations in Tanjung Priok on the night of the killings: Tapol, 1987, p. 20.

⁵⁹ In his defence speech at his trial, for example, Dharsono clearly argued that *dwifungsi* should eventually ‘disappear.’ He described this as ‘returning to zero point’: Dharsono, 1986, p. 83-87. For a later similar example, see the interview entitled ‘Saya Tidak Ngawur’, *Matra*, December 1993, p. 12-21.

⁶⁰ I was very surprised, for example, to find that youths in the South Jakarta *kampung* where I lived in 1993, when asked to name the political figure they most admired from modern Indonesian history, frequently came up with the name of Ali Sadikin (although Sukarno was, by far, the most popular). New Order leaders hardly rated at all.

came in May 1991 when the group successfully lobbied to meet Suharto loyalist Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs Sudomo, although Sudomo effectively vetoed their rehabilitation.⁶¹ Two months later, members of Fraksi-ABRI invited them to a public hearing in the DPR, allowing them to explain the origins of their group and the punishments they had experienced. This meeting elicited remarkable expressions of sympathy from some of the vocal ABRI legislators.⁶²

These meetings generated great media interest, but failed to permanently destroy the media embargo on the group. Even so, through the early *keterbukaan* years, the group continued to respond to the changing political climate, producing a stream of petitions and proposals, many of which reflected the hopeful atmosphere of the time.⁶³ They appeared to court the new discontented mood in ABRI, praising the initiatives of the Fraksi and encouraging it to initiate a dialogue with retired officers on mechanisms for Presidential succession.⁶⁴

Eventually, it was Habibie who made the decisive move toward the group, beginning with a chance meeting with Ali Sadikin in early 1993.⁶⁵ Sadikin questioned the Minister about a management controversy at PT PAL, the state-owned ship-building enterprise he managed. Habibie responded by inviting Sadikin to inspect its Surabaya plant. He took the proposal to Suharto, who approved it.⁶⁶ Eventually, on June 3, Habibie took several Petition of Fifty

⁶¹ This meeting occurred after a public debate about bans on overseas travel for dissidents. Sudomo insisted that the group's members still threatened stability and would only be allowed to travel if they apologised to the President: 'Mereka Sepakat untuk Tidak Sepakat', *Tempo*, June 1, 1991, p. 22-3.

⁶² Saiful Sulin, for example, described them as, 'people who feel responsible about the life of their nation'. Sembiring likewise insisted that, 'All of us in the ABRI fraction believe that they are still within the system': 'Jalan Keluar, setelah 11 tahun', *Tempo*, July 13, 1991, p. 28-31.

⁶³ In 1990, for example, it advocated a 'national political convention' to establish the framework for a negotiated transition to democratic rule. This was an 'attempt to offer Suharto a peaceful way of stepping down' at a time when his own intentions remained unclear. Interview with Chris Siner Key Timu October 30, 1995. The principal document containing these proposals for reform is a letter dated January 3, 1990 to the DPR/MPR.

⁶⁴ In an attempt to broaden the base of dissidence, group members also supported the August 1991 establishment of the *Forum Pemurnian Kedaulatan Rakyat* (Forum for the Purification of People's Sovereignty, FPKR), the 76 members of which included leaders of student groups and NGOs which had emerged in the 1980s. This group, too, proved unable or unwilling to build mass support, and did little more than replicate the kind of work long conducted by the Petition of Fifty, producing a long series of memoranda in the approach to the 1993 MPR session. For statements released by FPKR during its first two years, see: Forum Pemurnian Kedaulatan Rakyat, Jakarta, 1992 & 1993a.

⁶⁵ This meeting was at a *lebaran* function at the home of AH Nasution. The following version was that reported in the media, and endorsed in interviews with Petition of Fifty leaders.

⁶⁶ See for example 'Habibie: Mereka Teman Seperjuangan Pak Harto', *Republika*, June 5, 1993, where Habibie reports that Suharto responded warmly to his suggestion, describing Petition of Fifty leaders as his 'comrades in struggle.'

leaders (along with other retired officers like Soemitro and Hasnan Habib) on a guided tour of the plant.⁶⁷

In Surabaya, Sadikin and other group leaders avoided political comment, instead praising the enterprise's achievements.⁶⁸ This excited much media speculation that the group was prepared to be 'embraced' (*dirangkul*) by the government.⁶⁹ At this point, senior ABRI commanders, notably Commander-in-Chief Feisal Tanjung, apparently acting under Suharto's instructions, quickly ruled out political reconciliation.⁷⁰

On July 8, the group accompanied Habibie to the IPTN state aeronautics plant in Bandung, where they attempted to rectify the impression that they had surrendered. Sadikin publicly questioned the punishment experienced by Petition signatories, weeping as he contrasted A. H. Nasution's treatment with his record as 'father of the army.'⁷¹ According to one informant, Suharto was angered by this and ordered Habibie to discontinue contact. Planned visits to other Habibie projects never eventuated.⁷²

And yet, 'reconciliation' continued more selectively. Within days of Sadikin's speech the elderly and ailing retired ABRI officers associated with the Petition, Nasution, Dharsono and Hoegeng were provided medical treatment at state expense. The most senior military officers in the land, including Feisal Tanjung, paid them highly publicised bedside visits.⁷³ This culminated in July when Nasution was invited to meet briefly with Suharto at the Presidential palace (although nothing of substance was apparently discussed). By the end of the year,

⁶⁷ Hasnan Habib was a staff member in Habibie's BPPT, while Soemitro was also an advisor to the Research and Technology Minister. According to a senior journalist (confidential interview, November 1993), major media outlets received informal notice from ABRI headquarters that this story should not be covered. However, the ICMI newspaper, *Republika*, broke the story on the day of the visit. This emboldened other publications and the event attracted great attention.

⁶⁸ See for example 'Ali Sadikin Ikut Tekan Tombol Peluncuran Dua Kapal PT PAL', *Kompas*, June 4, 1993; 'When Habibie met Ali', *DèTik*, June 9-15, 1993, p. 4-5.

⁶⁹ Student groups and even some original signatories of the Petition (like former PNI leader Manai Sophiaan) criticised the group for its alleged softening: *Editor*, June 19, 1993, p. 25.

⁷⁰ 'Mesra Tanpa Rekonsiliasi Petisi 50', *DèTik*, June 23-9, 1993, p. 19, 'Pangab: ABRI 'Back to Basic' Hendaknya tidak Diperpolitisir', *Kompas*, June 17, 1993. Key 'merah-putih' officers, like Edi Sudradjat and Hariyoto P.S. followed suit: 'Kassospol ABRI: Jangan Kaitkan dengan Politik', *Republika*, June 5, 1993; 'Group of 50 travel ban remains: Edi', *Jakarta Post*, June 16, 1993.

⁷¹ 'Tangis Bang Ali Warnai Kunjungan di IPTN', *Kompas*, July 9, 1993.

⁷² Interview with Chris Siner Key Timu, October 30, 1995.

⁷³ 'Menko Polkam, Menhankam dan Pangab Menemui AH Nasution di RSPAD', *Kompas*, July 14, 1993. Hoegeng, and eventually, Nasution were sent overseas for medical treatment at government expense, while Dharsono declined a similar offer: 'Saya Hargai Tawaran Pemerintah', *Forum Keadilan*, July 22, 1993, p. 16-18; 'Nikmat' Politik buat Pak Nas', *Editor*, September 25, 1993, p. 34.

Nasution was a frequent visitor to state ceremonies, and had again met the President and senior ABRI commanders.⁷⁴

These meetings seemed primarily designed to respond to the accusations of inhumane treatment. Contact did not resume with more active (and healthy) Petition leaders like Sadikin. Even so, the ‘reconciliation’ was a major news stories in 1993, and marked an important advance in press openness. Coverage of the group and its leaders’ views was restored. Other by-products included an end to the overseas travel ban, and the early release from jail of Fatwa and Sanusi, who still had years of their post-Tanjung Priok prison terms to serve.⁷⁵

The political calculations underlying the ‘reconciliation’ of mid-1993 are a matter of debate. For Petition of Fifty leaders, the matter was simple. They had not chosen marginalisation and the essence of their appeal had always been a call for the power holders to initiate dialogue and reform. Thus, Sadikin and the others struck a conciliatory tone. Although they refused to apologise to the President, they said that they bore no grudges and wanted to meet him, and suggested a broader national dialogue.⁷⁶

From the government side, the motivations were less clear. Habibie no doubt partly aimed to boost his own prestige by effecting public reconciliation with the government’s most prominent critics. He also presumably hoped to draw them more permanently into his orbit. Suharto, in his

⁷⁴ ‘Presiden Soeharto Bertemu Jenderal Nasution di Istana’, *Kompas*, July 25, 1993; ‘Soeharto, Nasution have second encounter in a month’, *Jakarta Post*, August 18, 1993; ‘Suasana Ceriah Dominasi Pertemuan Pangab-Pak Nas’, *Kompas*, October 5, 1993; ‘Nasution, businessmen receive legion awards’, *Jakarta Post*, December 3, 1993; ‘Nostalgia ke Jawa’, *Tempo*, January 1, 1994, p. 29. He was also awarded a Veteran’s Star at a ceremony for his services during the revolution. Much later, in 1997, he was awarded the honorific title of ‘five star general’, along with President Suharto and the long-dead founder of the army, General Sudirman: ‘Jenderal Besar’, *Gatra*, October 11, 1997.

⁷⁵ Fatwa was released in August 1993, after serving nine years of an eighteen year term. Sanusi was freed in May 1994, after serving nine of nineteen years. There was no clear revocation of the travel ban, nor even a clear admission that it had formally existed, it was simply declared that no ban applied to the Petition of Fifty leaders: ‘Habibie: Presiden Katakan, tak Ada yang Dicekal’, *Detik*, July 14-20, 1993, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Ali Sadikin, when asked whether they still wanted to meet Suharto replied: ‘On our side, we are ready. I’ve even ordered a couple of safari suits, because my older ones are a little small (laughs). I wish to respect him as a President. From my side, there is no feeling of vengeance. I just feel that what I’ve been doing for the past years was providing correction, which I view as a responsibility of a comrade in struggle.’: ‘Bang Ali: Kita Ini Amar Ma’ruf Nahi Munkar’, *Editor*, June 12, 1993, p. 21-2; at p. 21. See also a statement released on July 14 1993 by the working group, entitled ‘Ajakan Pada Bangsa’ (Invitation to the Nation), calling for another meeting between Suharto and Nasution in order to begin national dialogue between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ leaders: ‘Petisi 50 Akui Keberhasilan Pembangunan Fisik Orde Baru’, *Kompas*, August 18, 1993; ‘Forum challenges government to political dialog’, *Jakarta Post*, August 25, 1993.

customary style, allowed Habibie to test the water, but called a stop when he considered the process had gone too far.⁷⁷

Above all, the episode must be viewed against the background of shifting government policy toward Islam. The Petition of Fifty was a product of the political conditions of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the government identified Islam as a chief security threat.⁷⁸ In addition to the modernist Islamic leaders active in it, some of the retired officers associated with the group, notably Nasution, were unusually pious.⁷⁹ Moreover, Petition members had a history of deep hostility to Moertopo and Moerdani. During the Moertopo years, those who later signed the Petition were first marginalised from public life. Under Moerdani, their penalisation continued, culminating with the post-Tanjung Priok arrests.⁸⁰

From about 1993, several Islamic leaders in the group publicly endorsed the changed climate in government-Islamic relations. The most enthusiastic was A. M. Fatwa. According to *Tempo*, while still in jail he telegraphed Habibie to offer support for ICMI and to apply to join the organisation.⁸¹ In numerous press interviews after his release he explained his changed views: ‘... if the door is open, should we really continue to kick at that door?’⁸² He praised President Suharto’s change of heart particularly enthusiastically:

Even though I am criticised for it, I still give thanks that Pak Harto had a new awareness after he went on the *hajj*. . . I was a critic of Pak Harto’s policies in the late seventies and eighties. But I do not want to be imprisoned by my old

⁷⁷ It is likely that one consideration was pre-empting further courtship between Petition leaders and discontented ABRI elements. Indeed, the ABRI leadership was put in a difficult position by the affair. They were ordered by the President to reconfirm the group’s pariah status at the same time that he (via Habibie) publicly denied that he had ordered the isolation of General Nasution. It thus appeared for a time that ABRI was the villain of the piece. This is partly based on Abdurrahman Wahid’s arguments: see *Editor*, August 7, 1993, p. 26.

⁷⁸ Suharto’s 1980 speeches, to which the original Petition of Fifty responded, had featured an attack on Islamic political forces for their alleged ambivalence about Pancasila. In one of them, he caused particular anger by suggesting that prior to the birth of the New Order ‘our national ideology had been smothered (literally drowned) by a range of ideologies, whether that be Marxism, Leninism, Communism, Socialism, Marhaenism, Nationalism and Religion.’ He also called for vigilance against, referring obviously to PPP, ‘political parties which as well as Pancasila also add other foundations.’ For a discussion of the two speeches see Jenkins, 1984, p. 157-58; Sundhaussen, 1981, p. 817-19; Tohir, 1989, p. 223-28.

⁷⁹ Sadikin, on the other hand, as a former Marine and Sukarno appointee as Jakarta Mayor, was closer to the Sukarnoist current.

⁸⁰ Some Muslim leaders of the group argued this particularly clearly. See for example the interviews with A. M. Fatwa in ‘Sistem Kepartaian Sekarang Belum Kondusif’, *Tiras*, November 9, 1995, p. 46-52 and ‘Sekarang Saya Melawan Dengan Diam’, *Tiara*, November 7, 1993, p. 68-75, where he blames Ali Moertopo for the major sins of the New Order, and argues that Moerdani was ‘only’ Moertopo’s ‘extension.’

⁸¹ *Tempo*, ‘Fatwa Keluar Penjara’, July 24, 1993, p. 34-5.

⁸² ‘Saya Mau Mengurus Keluarga Dulu’, *Detik*, September 1-7, 1993, p. 22-3 at p. 22. See also ‘Pak Harto Makin Arif’, *Editor*, September 4, 1993, p. 25; ‘Pemerintah Berubah, Saya Pun Ikut Berubah’, *Forum Keadilan*, September 16, 1993, p. 30-34.

opinions if someone has really changed. We should give thanks, after seeing that the old realities have really been changed.⁸³

Less outspoken, but more important in the working group was Dewan Dakwah leader Anwar Haryono.⁸⁴ From the early 1990s this organisation, which had been a virtual pariah during the 1970s and 1980s, reassessed its view of the government. Haryono met President Suharto several times in delegations of Islamic leaders and from 1993 frequently spoke in favour of ICMI and the new place of Islam.⁸⁵ In 1994, Dewan Dakwah explained its qualified support for the new dispensation thus:

Entering the 1990s, we see a change in the political weather [to distinguish from a more fundamental change in climate], although it must be acknowledged that this change has so far affected only the weather and has not yet touched any wider area. The colour green [i.e. the colour of Islam] is becoming visible in the Indonesian political rainbow, although it is still faint. . . In this change of weather, it is up to all parties, whether they want to play an active role, or simply be spectators.⁸⁶

In subsequent years, the changed tenor of government-Islamic relations affected the Petition of Fifty group ever more deeply. Although prominent members, notably Sadikin, refused to compromise, others were increasingly torn between their old loyalties and their determination to take advantage of the new political context. Haryono and Fatwa were especially reluctant to be associated publicly with the working group's most critical statements, and from early 1994 it rarely issued statements signed by all members.⁸⁷ As we shall see, a public split finally eventuated, in response to the 1996 PDI crisis.

5. Forum Demokrasi

If the Petition of Fifty was partly swept into the Habibie-ICMI orbit, the government's courtship of Islam also generated elite opposition. *Forum Demokrasi* (Fodem, Democracy Forum) was an example. Although, as we shall, there were important differences between the two groups, there were also similarities. Fodem was another coalition of elite individuals with

⁸³ 'Sistem Kepartaian Sekarang Belum Kondusif', *Tiras*, November 9, 1995, p. 46-52; at p. 52. In 'Sekarang Saya Melawan Dengan Diam', *Tiara*, November 7, 1993, p. 68-75 he even denies that the Petition of Fifty group had wanted Suharto to step down (p. 72).

⁸⁴ On the organisation, see Liddle, 1996d and Hefner, 1997.

⁸⁵ See 'Cita-cita Masyumi Sedang Hidup Kembali!', *DēTik*, November 17-23, 1993, p. 22-3.

⁸⁶ 'Penjelasan Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia Mengenai Situasi dan Perkembangan Terakhir di Tanah Air', *Media Dakwah*, April 1994, p. 31 In the same statement, the Council stresses that it should not be viewed as an 'opposition' to the government and that it offered the government both 'social control' and 'social support' wherever necessary.

widely differing *aliran* backgrounds, but who lacked a mass political base (the main exceptions in both groups were Islamic leaders). Both groups also confronted the same dilemma of wishing to promote political reform, but lacking the mass following, constitutional instruments or strong links to politico-bureaucratic power necessary to bring this about. They also faced the ever-present threat of repression. In both cases the outcome was a form of dissidence: statements expressing deeply-held moral convictions and desires for reform, but without a convincing political strategy.

Fodem was proclaimed in April 1991. This was a time of political uncertainty. Openness had been proclaimed two years before, but substantive political reform had not eventuated. Presidential succession remained a possibility at the MPR session two years hence. In October 1990 the magazine *Monitor* was banned by Information Minister Harmoko, and its editor jailed for blasphemy, after it published an poll which placed the Prophet Muhammad as its readers' 11th most popular figure. This angered many Muslims, and there were large demonstrations against the magazine around the country. Muslim leaders like Nurcholish Madjid and Amien Rais called for the magazine to be banned.⁸⁸ Shortly thereafter, ICMI was formed, attracting many of those who had been most vociferous against *Monitor*. These events (see below) were important triggers for Fodem's formation.

Those involved in Fodem were younger than the mostly 1945 generation Petition of Fifty signatories, and included few former officials. Rather, they represented Indonesia's non-government, liberal, intellectual elite, including prominent academics, journalists, religious and NGO leaders.⁸⁹ Whereas the older group was formed around a Military-Masyumi-PNI combination, Fodem was essentially a combination of NU, liberal intellectuals (sometimes informally identified with the PSI), Catholics and 'post-PNI' nationalists. The first group was above all represented by Abdurrahman Wahid, the chairperson of Nahdlatul Ulama since 1984. As the leader of an organisation claiming a membership of some 30 million, and a political player with many contacts in the ruling political elite, he was by far the most prominent individual in Forum Demokrasi, the one to whom the others looked for leadership.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Interview with Chris Siner Key Timu, October 30, 1995. See also his comments in 'Sudah tak sinkron lagi', *Tiras*, September 12, 1996, p. 85.

⁸⁸ Ramage, 1995, p. 87-89.

⁸⁹ This is not to say that they were not drawn from a narrow social milieu. Many had known each other well since the anti-Sukarno movement of the 1960s, or even before. According to Arief Budiman, the meeting was like '... a reunion, a piece of nostalgia (*kangen-kangenan*)': *Tempo*, April 13, 1993, p. 18.

⁹⁰ Also active was Abdul Gaffar Rahman, NU Secretary General. Prominent Catholics at the founding meeting included pastors Romo Mangunwijaya and Frans Magnis Suseno. Well-known liberal intellectuals and journalists included Rahman Tolleng, Arief Budiman, Marsillam Simanjuntak, Todung Mulya Lubis, Daniel Dhakidae, Aristides Katoppo and Aswab Mahasin. Most of these came to prominence in the 1966 student movement, and all were part of the dissident milieu of the 1970s. Lubis

5.1 Forum Demokrasi in Action

The formation of Forum Demokrasi excited intense expectations in the press and critical middle class circles. It seemed that it might become a coordinating vehicle for a revived democratic movement, with its founding document proclaiming that it aimed to build links between all who supported democratisation.⁹¹ Initial plans were ambitious: large public meetings were planned, a permanent working group established, and a building hired for a Secretariat. Forum Demokrasi 'branches' were established in Semarang and Yogyakarta.⁹²

However, the reaction from senior government and military officials was hostile. A statement by Internal Affairs Minister Rudini (who was considered relatively 'open') was typical⁹³:

The Forum consists of people with heterogeneous backgrounds. Some of them are even liberal, so if it is not controlled it could become an opposition institution, unknown to the institutions of Pancasila.

A particular concern of many officials was the group's name, reminiscent of organisations which had led democratisation in Eastern Europe.

In an attempt to defuse the situation, Wahid and others held several meetings with senior officials. Chief of Bakin, Soedibyo devised a list of 'parameters' - including that the group would remain loosely organised, that it would not be 'political' or act as an 'opposition.' These were accepted by Wahid and the others to prevent Fodem's suppression.⁹⁴ From the start, Wahid's response was conciliatory:

was a former YLBHI director; Dhakidae and Katoppo were prominent journalists (*Kompas* and *Sinar Harapan / Suara Pembaruan*); Dhakidae and Mahasin had long associations with LP3ES and *Prisma*. Mahasin was the only member of the group to have modernist Islamic associations: he was a prominent HMI leader from Yogyakarta in the 1960s. He had joined ICMI but later became critical of it. The Nationalist figure most closely identified with the group was Bondan Gunawan, a former 1970s GMNI leader.

⁹¹ This was the 'Mufakat Cibereum' (the Cibereum Consensus): Forum Demokrasi, 1991b.

⁹² The Semarang group was formed on May 2 1991: 'Cetusan Hati Nurani Forum Demokrasi Semarang.' For the Yogyakarta group, see: 'Arief Budiman: Fodek Daerah Hendaknya Menjadi 'Pressure Group'', *Bernas*, June 10, 1991. Most members were student activists and academics. There was no direct organisational link between these groups and the one in Jakarta.

⁹³ He added that action would be taken against the group if it attempted to behave like a 'political organisation'. *Jawa Pos* April 9, 1991.

⁹⁴ As Wahid stressed (interview, November 6, 1995), the parameters were extremely loose and capable of widely diverging interpretation. For media reports of the meetings see *Kompas & Suara Merdeka* April 10, 1991.

We accept, we will not become an opposition and will not become an institution. . . It seems that the government sees a tiger but what really exists is a cat. The attitude towards a cat shouldn't be the same as that towards a tiger. Because we are just a cat, well, there's no problem.⁹⁵

These concessions did not prevent further harassment. In early 1992 police twice took action to close Forum functions and senior officials continued to condemn the group.⁹⁶

Following these initial blows, the group's vigour and cohesion began to tail off. It produced public declarations increasingly irregularly, ultimately becoming a small, informal working group, consisting of a handful of dedicated members who met regularly to discuss political developments: in short, it resembled the Petition of Fifty.⁹⁷

Its public statements tended to be more minimalist than those produced by the older group, and by no means constituted a detailed program for democratic reform.⁹⁸ Their statements described in general terms the absence of democracy and basic freedoms in the country, often exploring in satirical prose the gap between the ideals of 'Pancasila democracy' and the reality, with Wahid's phrase '*demokrasi seolah-olah*' ('as though democracy') a recurring motif:

... our society is actually in an 'as though' atmosphere: as though the law is already strong, as though a democratic system already functions, as though the actions of the rulers are always constitutional, as though there is freedom and so on.⁹⁹

5.2 Forum Demokrasi and 'Anti-Sectarianism'

The character of the Petition of Fifty group was greatly influenced by the government hostility to Islam at the time of its formation. Forum Demokrasi, in contrast, was partly a reaction

⁹⁵ *Suara Merdeka*, April 10, 1991

⁹⁶ *Kompas*, February 24, 1992; *Suara Pembaruan*, April 20, 1992.

⁹⁷ Its statements included annual independence day statements, and occasional responses to particular government policies, like the 1994 press bans. Wahid described the group as an 'information clearing house' where activists could share ideas and develop a common platform. Since each member was already 'an activist' in their own field or organisation, it was not necessary to move beyond this and develop a stronger organisational structure: interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, November 6, 1995.

⁹⁸ They did, however, occasionally touch on specific issues, including supremacy of law, press censorship, even ABRI's dual function. See for example Forum Demokrasi, 1991b, p. 6, which stresses the importance of constitutionalism, an independent judiciary and judicial review. *Forum Demokrasi*, 1993, referring to dwifungsi, calls for 'a new interpretation, new forms, mechanisms and culture which is more *fair play* and reduces the dominance of power.' [English in original.] There is no specific advocacy of its rejection. For their call for an end to press censorship see Forum Demokrasi, 1991a. Forum statements also lacked the nostalgic tone of Petition of Fifty, never claiming that the New Order had begun well, only to be corrupted by its leaders.

⁹⁹ Forum Demokrasi, 1991c, p. 3. See also Wahid, 1992.

against the resurgence of political Islam in the 1990s, and the government's conciliation of it. A major theme of its public pronouncements was criticism of 'sectarianism' and religious intolerance linked to these processes. The group thus became, in effect, the major public critic of ICMI.

The *Monitor* affair was the principal trigger for the group's formation. It seemed to encapsulate its members' worst fears, combining militantly expressed intolerance, government appeasement and suppression of free expression. Wahid, for example, stated:

It [Forum Demokrasi] arose from our concern at signs that the tendency to favour one's own group (*mementingkan golongan*) was increasing. At the same time, the spirit of togetherness (*kebersamaan*) and democracy is growing weaker... Isn't [the *Monitor* affair] a case where sectarian feelings defeated the national spirit. People speak more about achieving the aims of their own group than the basic needs of the nation. Quite apart from everything else, this [the banning of *Monitor*] has killed off a vehicle of democracy. If this is allowed to go on, democracy will be trampled on in this country.¹⁰⁰

Douglas Ramage has written extensively on the views of Abdurrahman Wahid, especially his long-standing commitment to religious tolerance and the 'living political compromise' embodied in Pancasila, whereby Indonesian Muslims accepted that they did not deserve preferential state treatment.¹⁰¹ From the start Wahid refused to join ICMI and was openly critical of it, partly because he saw it as manipulation of Islam by Suharto for political ends, mostly because he disagreed with its supporters who promoted 'Islamisation' of society and government.¹⁰²

Liberals and nationalists in Forum Demokrasi shared similar views. Christians were especially concerned, given the resurgence of calls for 'de-Christianisation' and 'proportionality,' which painfully reminded them of their vulnerable minority status. However, none of these individuals were able to articulate their concerns as forcefully as Wahid. As a Muslim leader of unrivalled stature, he had the authority to criticise ICMI and other Islamic leaders, in a way which would expose others (especially non-Muslims) to attack.

¹⁰⁰ *Tempo* April 13, 1991, p. 20.

¹⁰¹ Ramage, 1995, p. 45-74. He particularly forcefully condemned the Islamic outcry which preceded the banning of *Monitor*, see for example the interview in *Editor* ('Yang Marah Cuma Sedikit'), November 24, 1990, p. 17-19.

¹⁰² For him 'Islamisation' meant elevating Muslims as a special class of citizen, threatening the consensus which protected minorities and national unity. He pulled few punches in his criticisms, in one interview comparing ICMI with the German Nazis because some members insisted on 80% representation for Muslims in formal institutions: 'Abdurrahman Wahid: Ya, Mending Pak Try', *Forum Keadilan*, April 1, 1993, p. 72-6; p. 74. This interview is a useful summary of many of Wahid's criticisms of ICMI.

Forum concerns about dangers posed to ‘national unity’ by ‘sectarianism’ and ‘primordialism’, perhaps ironically, resonated with long-standing government national security discourse, especially ABRI’s preoccupation with threats posed by sentiments based on SARA (*Suku, Agama, Ras dan Antar-Golongan*, ‘Ethnic, Religious, Racial and Group identities’). Some statements by Forum members seemed to echo old middle class fears of the mob: at the group’s launch, for example, Aswab Mahasin, referring to the *Monitor* case, said the group believed democracy was not simply an ‘ideal’ but also a ‘problematic’, involving the questions of ‘majority versus minority’, and of ‘politics of the masses, especially that which takes a mob form, or is violent.’¹⁰³

In contrast to regime discourse, however, Fodem members argued that primordial sentiment could be combated only by democratic methods. In a *Tempo* article, human rights lawyer Mulya Lubis denied that highlighting dangers of sectarianism meant tacit endorsement for anti-democratic measures taken in the name of preventing SARA. He argued that top-down methods created ‘pseudo-social harmony, or, even worse, social uniformity’ Genuine harmony could only be guaranteed by promoting democracy, social diversity, respect for majority and minorities, and human rights.¹⁰⁴

That Fodem statements tended to elucidate general democratic principles rather than appeal for specific reforms was thus partly because they were addressed to society as much as to the state. Members not only aimed to pressure the state to reform, but also to encourage conditions for democratic governance within society: a culture of tolerance, respect for difference and minorities.

This perspective also reflected the approach adopted by many liberal reformers who became active as part of the 1966 generation, reached political maturity in the early New Order and accommodated themselves to the slow pace of political change thereafter, assisted by modernisation theory, with its emphasis on long term cultural and social change.¹⁰⁵ To more fully explore the tactical implications, it is necessary to consider in greater depth the background of key Fodem members, especially Abdurrahman Wahid.

¹⁰³ *Tempo*, April 13, 1991, p. 19. ‘Mob’ in English in original.

¹⁰⁴ Lubis, 1991b. One Fodem statement (Forum Demokrasi, 1991c, p. 1) thus argued that ‘the issue of sectarianism ... is a symptom which arises because of the lack of freedom and democracy. The problem is that sectarianism has been taken up as if it is the central problem. As though it is a cause, not a result. The core of the problem is insufficient democracy and freedom.’

¹⁰⁵ According to Abdurrahman Wahid (interview November 6, 1995) the Forum’s role was a ‘contemplative’ approach, limited to espousing political ethics and structures: ‘We see democratisation as a long term process, and that means it is unavoidable to have cultural as well as action-oriented work.’

5.3 The Background

In Wahid's case, the starting point is to remember that in the late 1970s, it appeared that NU was emerging as possibly the country's most serious 'opposition' force.¹⁰⁶ As a result, the organisation was the target of much government hostility.¹⁰⁷ When Wahid and his supporters attained the NU leadership in 1984, they sought to remedy this situation by overseeing the organisation's acceptance of Pancasila as 'sole basis' and its withdrawal from PPP and the formal political arena.¹⁰⁸ Wahid argues that NU made these shifts to escape the government suspicion and control it experienced while it remained in PPP, and thus, to develop a 'distinctive, independent voice' on development and politics.¹⁰⁹ He argued that NU should focus on social and economic 'catch up' in NU rural communities. This involved activities ranging from 'community development' style projects, to more conventional business ventures, including the development of a national banking network.¹¹⁰ The new strategy resembled that pursued by many NGOs, in its emphasis on long term, grassroots economic, cultural and social change rather than political confrontation with the state.¹¹¹

The most immediate effect of NU's reorientation was a climate of mutually beneficial accommodation with the government. The government reaped the rewards with the dramatic fall of PPP's vote in 1987 (from 27.8 % to 16%). For NU, relations with the bureaucracy improved at the local level, often resulting in financial assistance for development programmes in *pesantren* (the Islamic boarding schools which formed the core of NU) and other activities.¹¹² Van Bruinessen notes that Wahid campaigned at the 1989 NU congress by

¹⁰⁶ This was reflected, for example, by the walkout of NU PPP members from the 1978 MPR session over official recognition for syncretist Javanese beliefs; or the 1981 refusal by a conference of NU *kyai* to endorse Suharto as 'Father of Development' or for a third term in office: Jones, 1984, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ This resulted in intense conflict within both NU and PPP, which came to a head with a major conflict in the PPP in 1981 when the party's head, Naro, unilaterally reduced the NU share in the PPP list of candidates for the upcoming 1982 election. On the parlous state of NU in this period, see Jones, 1984, van Dijk, 1982a, 1983 & 1984.

¹⁰⁸ Nakamura, 1996.

¹⁰⁹ Ramage, 1995, p. 56.

¹¹⁰ Van Bruinessen, 1991, p. 196.

¹¹¹ For an early indication of Wahid's view, see his 1981 essay, 'Islam and Militarism: A Historical Perspective', where he discusses 'cultural opposition' by the Muslim community against the Abbayisah dynasty. The similarity with NGO strategies was not coincidental: Wahid had been involved in LP3ES and its *pesantren* development programme since it started in the 1970s.

¹¹² Van Bruinessen (1991, p. 189) argues that Wahid's support base were local branch board leaders (rather than *kyai*) who tended to be younger, favour community development ideas, and many of whom were small businessmen who profited from accommodation with the government. At the national level, reconciliation with government was symbolised by Wahid's inclusion as an MPR member for the 1988-93 period: van de Kok and van Langenberg, 1990, p. 153-4. Wahid supported Golkar against the PPP on a number of controversial issues, including the *kepercayaan* (i.e. Javanist beliefs) issue, and the removal of religious education from school curricula. He resigned as an MPR member, under pressure from within NU, in November 1988.

stressing his acceptability to the government. In the NU leader's view, '[b]eing oppositional was perhaps more heroic but it did not leave one the freedom to do the things that really matter.'¹¹³

In addition, Wahid was well-known to have close ties with the ABRI leadership. In particular he developed warm personal relations with Moerdani after the Tanjung Priok affair, when the two toured NU *pesantren* together, aiming to dampen military-Islamic hostility.¹¹⁴ Once Moerdani's star began to wane Wahid continued to publicly defend him.¹¹⁵

Although none had a record to match Wahid, other Fodem members, many of whom had press and NGO backgrounds, were also well schooled in the non-confrontational methods which had characterised middle class dissent since the 1970s. Many also had cooperated extensively with the military during the 1960s campaign against Sukarno, or subsequently.¹¹⁶ Even if they had been profoundly disappointed with the outcome, they had learned valuable lessons in the politics of strategic and tactical alliances.¹¹⁷

5.4 Military and Suharto: Tactical Considerations

With this background in mind, it is striking that Forum Demokrasi adopted positions that in some respects dovetailed with those of discontented military elements.

¹¹³ Van Bruinessen, 1991, p. 193.

¹¹⁴ Wahid says: 'I did this in the interests of NU, so that nothing untoward should happen between NU and the military. My term was like the Gudang Garam [a tobacco company] slogan, 'strive for safety' (Upayakan Selamat), ha..., ha..., ha...' 'Abdurrahman Wahid: 'Ya, Mending Pak Try'', *Forum Keadilan*, April 1, 1993, p. 72-6; p. 76. As Fealy (1994) argues, NU political attitudes to state and society must be viewed within the context of the Sunni doctrines, especially those associated with the Syafi'i school, which stress 'caution, moderation and flexibility' and enjoin against rebellion against even a despotic ruler. The product was a strong tendency toward accommodation with the state.

¹¹⁵ For an insight into Wahid's friendship with Moerdani, see his introduction (Wahid, 1993) to J. Pour's biography of the General. Wahid (interview, November 6, 1995) describes Moerdani as a lively intellect, who had transformed himself from a narrow military man obsessed with security and stability, to a man with wider interests and vision. A second figure Wahid greatly admired was Minister of the State Secretariat, Moerdiono, who had been a protege of Sudharmono and from the mid-1980s became close to President Suharto. Wahid said he maintained contact with Moerdiono through the Forum Demokrasi years, and that the President did not take further action against NU and Wahid because of his moderating influence: interview November 6, 1995.

¹¹⁶ Bondan Gunawan for example established close relations with General Widodo during the 1970s, through his involvement in a major 1975 UGM student conference. This facilitated greater toleration of GMNI in the late 1970s and the launch of the nationalist magazine *Matahari* in the late 1970s. Interview with Bondan Gunawan, February 11, 1994.

¹¹⁷ For an early indicator of such disillusionment, see the article by former 1966 student activist Marsillam Simanjuntak (1973).

First was hostility to President Suharto. Some Forum members openly (but more often privately) argued that achieving democratisation required first aiming at the removal of Suharto. There were few open statements of this position, except by the Forum intellectual Marsillam Simanjuntak:

We're saying, Democracy is good, we need freedom to organize. I say that's wrong! I say we must elect a new president. Although it will be difficult, that is where we must begin, so that freedom to organize and democracy can become easier to achieve.¹¹⁸

The (simplified) core of this argument was a belief that Suharto's hold on the Presidency represented the single greatest obstacle to democratisation. This followed from the personalised and pervasive character of his power and his hostility to reform. As Simanjuntak put it: 'The system has become dependent on a person, or better still, the system and the leader has blended into one body, a sight common only in absolutist regimes.'¹¹⁹ A new President would necessarily be weaker and have to make reforms to renew governmental legitimacy. It followed that all must be done to accelerate Presidential succession.

Although Wahid himself never made this argument so clearly, he did imply support for succession.¹²⁰ Forum statements also took up the succession issue relatively directly. Before the 1992 elections, for example, it suggested that only elections which could bring about change, including the 'possibility of a change in President', would be meaningful.¹²¹

Antagonism toward ICMI was a second potential point of common interest. This related not only to the group's alleged sectarianism (the theme emphasised in public criticisms), but also tactical alignments, given that ICMI had become part of the President's support base. Wahid publicly and energetically argued against the view of ICMI reformers that democratisation required 'demilitarisation' and 'civilianisation', describing it as an 'empty myth.' He alleged this myth had captured Petition of Fifty leaders considering 'reconciliation' with Habibie, and castigated the group's members very harshly.¹²² He argued 'the question is actually not only whether [a person] is a civilian or military, but about which one will better improve democratic

¹¹⁸ Simanjuntak, 1991, p. 12 (cited in Uhlin, 1995, p. 143). In a confidential interview, one figure associated with Forum Demokrasi argued that opposing Suharto and supporting succession was such a priority that it had to come before addressing the problem of the military and *dwifungsi*, which was in any case personified in Suharto, and could not be addressed until he was gone.

¹¹⁹ Simanjuntak, 1994a, p. 306.

¹²⁰ For example, in the leadup to the 1993 MPR session he resisted intense pressure for NU to endorse Suharto's re-election: Ramage, 1995, p. 59-62.

¹²¹ Forum Demokrasi, 1992, p. 4.

¹²² 'Yang Ribut Kan Para Patih', *Forum Keadilan*, July 8, 1993, p. 95-6 p. 95.

life.’¹²³ The implication was clear: indeed, Wahid publicly stated his preference for Try Sutrisno over Habibie as Vice President during the 1993 MPR session.¹²⁴

Wahid was particularly concerned about the possibility of a military backlash. He argued that allying with Suharto to promote demilitarisation was a risky strategy because not only might it lead to ‘an undemocratic entrenched civilian bureaucracy’, but also to ‘a cornered military and hence fascism.’¹²⁵

This was the nub of the issue. For Wahid (as for many others in Fodem and broader middle class opposition circles) successful democratisation would require military participation, or at least acquiescence. This was not only (or even most importantly) because of the priority placed on Presidential succession, but because successful democratisation would necessarily require the assent of, and negotiation with, the country’s most powerful political institution. Wahid repeatedly argued that the two decisive forces which could determine whether democracy or pluralism could survive in Indonesia were the military and the Islamic community, and that ‘democratisation must be able to accommodate the needs of these two groups.’¹²⁶ He also repeatedly stated that dialogue with the military was possible:

We are not up against the power of the military [in democratisation]. It’s not like that. I can easily talk with those Generals about democracy. The only thing that the military are worried about is that excesses will occur. So we should sit down with them and discuss how to get rid of these excesses.¹²⁷

He went on to say he was ‘optimistic’ about dialogue with the military, disagreed with those who argued it would not be able to reform itself and noted that ‘behind the surface’ discussions between officers and civilian reformers were already proceeding.¹²⁸

Of course, all this does not necessarily imply that there was a conspirational alliance between Forum Demokrasi and military elements (even if they were accused of this by more radical

¹²³ Interview in *Kompas*, May 21 1993 (‘Ketua Forum Demokrasi: Isu Hubungan Sipil - Militer Harus Ditangani Hati-hati’). He went on to add that it was not clear that a civilian would necessarily be better than a military officer: ‘If the civilian is a bureaucrat who turns out to be very awkward [*kaku*] what then? Or an opportunist who only serves one person, what then?’ The attack on Habibie was thus very obvious.

¹²⁴ ‘Habibie is big in technology but small in politics’: ‘Abdurrahman Wahid: ‘Ya, Mending Pak Try’’, *Forum Keadilan*, April 1, 1993, p. 72-6; p. 75.

¹²⁵ He made this remark in the context of discussion of his criticisms of Petition of Fifty leaders who had been prepared to cooperate with Habibie: interview, December 6, 1993.

¹²⁶ Interview in *Kompas* September 16, 1991. See also *Tempo* September 28, 1991, p. 39

¹²⁷ ‘Abdurrahman Wahid: ‘Ya, Mending Pak Try’’, *Forum Keadilan*, April 1, 1993, p. 72-6; p. 76.

¹²⁸ *ibid.* It was well known that Wahid, as an important national figure, maintained extensive contacts with a range of military officers, including his friend, Moerdani.

groups).¹²⁹ Especially Forum members who were veterans of the 1965-66 New Order coalition were well aware of the possible pitfalls of cooperating with the military. Wahid himself argued that in order for the military to be 'brought forward', democrats had first to make clear that 'we will not yield' on principles, and that in a 'marriage of convenience' it might be possible for the military to give strategic concessions.¹³⁰ Indeed, he suggested that the Forum did not go 'far enough' in its criticisms of Suharto for some ABRI officers.¹³¹

The main factor militating against an alliance was, of course, ABRI's continuing reactionary character. Even officers most disillusioned with Suharto continued to view advocates of democratic reform with suspicion. Lieutenant General Harsudiono Hartas, for example, bitterly attacked the group in 1992, warning that it contained 'new left' and 'new right' elements, and would be permitted only if it did not aim to 'change the existing system.'¹³² This was the man who within a few months was instrumental in securing Try Sutrisno's Vice-Presidential nomination against President Suharto's wishes.

5.5 The Decline of Forum Demokrasi

Forum Demokrasi's failure to develop more vigorously may thus partly be explained by the stagnation of conflict within the ruling elite. While the reformist impulse, especially in ABRI, remained weak, Forum leaders, especially Wahid, wanted to avoid the fate earlier experienced by the Petition of Fifty group. Forum members thus confronted the perpetual dilemma of semi-opponents and dissidents: they wanted to develop a critical stance, but also to maintain their own positions of influence in societal organisations, academia and the media.

Above all, this was Abdurrahman Wahid's dilemma. As the leader of NU he was both uniquely powerful and vulnerable, simultaneously the greatest strength and weakness of Forum

¹²⁹ For example, their second major function in August 1991 was attended by outspoken ABRI legislator Major General Samsuddin. He spoke forcefully on the need for democracy and was subsequently given top billing in *Suara Pembaruan*, the newspaper managed by Forum member Aristides Katoppo: 'Samsudin: Demokrasi Pancasila Nonkonfrontatif; Gus Dur: Tak Apa Kalau Kita Tidak Didengar', *Suara Pembaruan*, August 9, 1991. According to one report (Madjid, 1991) Samsuddin at this meeting spoke out against 'unconstitutional' statements by groups advocating that Suharto be re-elected as President in the upcoming MPR session. Madjid's article, in the radical magazine *Progres*, accuses the Forum of aiming at an alliance with the military.

¹³⁰ Interview, December 6, 1993. In a 1995 interview, he stated that he believed even those military officers apparently in favour of reform were fundamentally authoritarian. Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, November 6, 1995.

¹³¹ 'Benny Moerdani's people said that Forum Demokrasi did not do enough to deepen the rift [within the government], they always wanted us to intensify the quarrel; they wanted us to be more political, more critical of Suharto...' Interview with Abdurrahman Wahid, November 6, 1995.

¹³² *Suara Merdeka, Jawa Pos, Kompas* April 25, 1992.

Demokrasi. Although he was reluctant to risk direct confrontation with Suharto,¹³³ as the President became convinced of a Military-NU-Catholic-Nationalist conspiracy against him, Wahid's position in NU became more insecure. At the NU congress in 1994 he barely survived a massive campaign to unseat him, backed by palace officers, including then Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs, Hartono. In following months and years his leadership continued to be undermined by a rival leadership board surreptitiously supported by the same elements.¹³⁴

Facing such pressures, it is not surprising that Wahid did not wish Forum Demokrasi to risk confrontation.¹³⁵ Some others group members (especially the non-Muslims) were perhaps even more cautious. The more outspoken intellectuals like Marsillam Simanjuntak, who had initially hoped that Wahid would emerge through the Forum as a rallying figure for broader pro-democratic forces, became increasingly disillusioned with his reluctance to pressure Suharto. Yet their own options were limited, because only Wahid had the stature and mass support to emerge as a national, alternative leader.¹³⁶

If by 1993 Forum Demokrasi was largely defunct, within two years new groups were formed which in varying degrees challenged ICMI and promoted political reform. One of these was founded on the kind of military-civilian alliance which had only been implied by Forum Demokrasi.

6. The Growing Ranks of the *Barisan Sakit Hati*

As noted in chapter three, after the 1993 MPR session, President Suharto increasingly moved against those in the military and bureaucracy he viewed as potentially disloyal or opposed to the Habibie-ICMI group. Those harmed by this process, increasingly referred to in the media by disparaging terms like '*kelompok yang tersingkirkan*' (marginalised group) or '*barisan sakit hati*' (ranks of the vengeful), began to rally their own forces.

The 'disillusioned' element inside ABRI remained most important, although by 1994 Suharto loyalists increasingly dominated key commands. Many of the vocal officers of previous years

¹³³ Early on, there was purportedly a kind of 'unwritten agreement' between Wahid and Suharto not to attack each other openly: interview with Franz Magnis Suseno, September 18, 1993. Although NU did not endorse Suharto's re-election in the 1993 MPR, neither it, Wahid himself, nor Forum Demokrasi directly suggested he should *not* be re-elected.

¹³⁴ Fealy, 1995 & 1996. Wahid survived partly because he retained the support of other powerful backers, notably Defence and Security Minister Edi Sudradjat and Minister of the State Secretariat, Moerdiono.

¹³⁵ For an example of Wahid's extreme caution, see his strenuous denial of an earlier report suggesting that the Forum would campaign to repeal the ban on more than the current three political parties: *Kompas*, May 21, 1993. (For the original article, see 'Additional parties demanded', *Jakarta Post*, May 19, 1993).

had been, or were shortly to be, retired or moved aside. Although this often freed them to speak out more openly, it also dramatically reduced their institutional strength.

From about 1993, there were also growing signs of friction within the civilian bureaucracy and Golkar. A number of overlapping groups were threatened by the ICMI-Habibie ascendancy, and were in varying degrees concerned about the place of Islam, the pace of reform and Suharto's own role. There were the Golkar 'progressives', who had risen to prominence during the 1980s under Sarwono Kusumaatmadja (who was now Environment Minister) and Rachmat Witoelar, many of whom had participated in the *keterbukaan* push in the DPR from 1989 and who had subsequently lost their positions when Suharto intervened in the selection of candidates for the 1992 election and in the 1993 Golkar congress. Most were linked to Golkar chair Wahono (1988-93), who had been humiliated by Suharto at the congress. Many members of various Golkar KINO (secular organisations which had been important components of Golkar since its formation, and who had long enjoyed generous apportionment of legislative seats, bureaucratic posts and other perquisites of power) also felt threatened by the rise of ICMI.¹³⁷ A looser network in Golkar and the bureaucracy consisted of individuals who had a history of personal or family ties to the PNI and its associated *ormas* (societal organisations), 'represented' in Cabinet by Minister of Transmigration and Forest Settlement, Siswono Yudohusodo.¹³⁸ Many from these groups were from non-Islamic minorities, although many, of course, were secular-oriented Muslims.

Such groups could draw on extra-bureaucratic societal constituencies via links to the political parties, academia, media, student organisations and suchlike. This especially applied for Christians, and for those with historic ties to the old PNI *aliran*. Add the Abdurrahman Wahid's NU supporters, and the kind of secular-oriented liberals attracted to Forum Demokrasi, and it is clear that there was a potentially broad coalition opposed to ICMI and Habibie.

6.1 Attempts to Counter ICMI

¹³⁶ Confidential communications, late 1993 - early 1994.

¹³⁷ KINO were *Kesatuan Organisasi Induk*, 'Basic Organisational Units' of Golkar. For a useful article on disgruntlement in the KINO, see 'Anak Tiri dalam Keluarga Besar', *Forum Keadilan*, October 7, 1996, p. 103. The chief Golkar KINO were MKGR (*Musyawarah Kekeluargaan Gotong Royong*, Mutual Aid Family-based Council), Kosgoro (*Koperasi Serba Usaha Gotong Royong*, Mutual Aid All-Purpose Cooperative) and SOKSI (*Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Swadiri Indonesia*, Indonesian Central Organisation of Self-Reliant Functionaries).

¹³⁸ Siswono had been a GMNI member in Bandung in the 1960s (he had temporarily been suspended from his enrolment as an ITB student during the purges of Sukarnoists which occurred in those years). Subsequently, he enjoyed considerable success in business and became a Chairperson of the *Himpunan Pengusaha Muda Indonesia* (HIPMI, the Young Indonesian Businesspeople's Association).

As in previous episodes of heightened elite discontent (like that which gave birth to the Petition of Fifty in the late 1970s) many of those who emerged as spokespersons were *already* retired or pushed from leadership positions. However, a number of senior serving officials were sympathetic to anti-ICMI views, including cabinet ministers Edi Sudradjat, Siswono Yudohusodo and Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, as well as DPR Speaker Wahono.¹³⁹

These individuals became increasingly outspoken from about 1993, although their concerns tended to be expressed in elliptical language. In particular, there was much discussion of the danger of *disintegrasi bangsa* (national disintegration) posed by unnamed threats of ‘primordialism’ and ‘sectarianism’. Much of this discussion went under the rubric of ‘*Wawasan Kebangsaan*’ (National Vision), which became a major theme of public discourse from early 1994 when it was promoted vigorously by Sudradjat. The term derived from military doctrine and referred to the basic nationalist ethos underpinning a united Indonesian nation-state. In the context of the time, it was obvious that renewed emphasis on the theme was code for criticism of ICMI.¹⁴⁰

In 1993, discussions began in middle-ranking Golkar and bureaucratic circles about forming a counter to ICMI. Various ideas were canvassed; the initially preferred model was an organisation specifically designed for ‘intellectuals’ (like ICMI) but which would be open to all religious denominations, in deliberate counterpoint to ICMI’s ‘sectarian’ membership. Eventually those involved in these discussions sought supportive ‘patrons.’ Sarwono, Siswono and Sudradjat were approached and found to be sympathetic.¹⁴¹ These plans were first hinted at publicly when Sudradjat called for the formation of an organisation for intellectuals based on ‘*kebangsaan*’ (nationalism) at a Yogyakarta seminar in March, 1994.¹⁴²

The first public attempt to establish such an organisation occurred in May 1994, when retired General Alamsjah Ratu Perwiranegara, a 1960s confidante of Suharto, flagged the formation of

¹³⁹ Other seniors Ministers and officials considered to be part of the ‘anti-ICMI’ camp but who were less outspoken included Minister for the State Secretariat, Moerdiono, Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs, Soesilo Soedarman, and Vice President, Try Sutrisno. Both Sarwono Kusumaatmadja and Siswono Yudohusodo were members of Kosgoro, one of the Golkar KINO which has been pressured by the rise of those with ICMI associations.

¹⁴⁰ See for example the 3 part article by Siswono Yudohusodo entitled, ‘Wawasan Kebangsaan di Tengah Kebhinekaan’ [The National Vision in the Midst of Diversity], in *Media Indonesia*, May 1994, 23-26, where he criticises organisations formed on the basis of a ‘horizontal matrix’.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Midian Sirait, November 28, 1995. Confidential communications, late 1995.

¹⁴² ‘Balada Cendekiawan di Tengah Retak Politik’, *DèTik*, May 18-24, 1994, p. 5. The palace camp attempted to respond to such discussions. Suharto instigated a three day Golkar seminar on *wawasan kebangsaan* in May 1994 where Habibie, Feisal Tanjung and others were provided a platform to expound on the idea: ‘Kebangsaan Sekte-Sekte Cendekiawan’, *Forum Keadilan*, May 26, p. 23-24.

ICKI, *Ikatan Cendekiawan Kebangsaan Indonesia* (Association of Nationalist Intellectuals). Despite doubts about Alamsjah's motives, this initiative prompted intense media speculation, with many publications portraying it as a strike against Habibie and ICMI. However, Alamsjah failed to win clear Presidential approval, and amid bickering among its proponents the group floundered.¹⁴³

Shortly afterwards, a 'Communication Forum' for former members of the formerly PNI-affiliated, nationalist student organisation, GMNI (*Forum Komunikasi Alumni GMNI*, FKA-GMNI) was formed. This group attempted to tap the large number of GMNI alumni who since the 1960s (when the organisation dominated many campuses) had developed successful careers in business, the bureaucracy, and the political establishment. In part, it was an attempt to rival the influential KAHMI (*Korps Alumni HMI*), the association for HMI alumni, whose ranks included important officials like Finance Minister Mar'ie Muhammad and which formed the organisational backbone of ICMI. The launch of FKA-GMNI was attended by about 1000 people, with keynote addresses from Edi Sudradjat and Siswono Yudohusodo. Siswono became the first Cabinet Minister to publicly attack ICMI when, to the applause of the crowd, he stated that although the 'concepts' behind ICMI were positive, 'as it has developed it has become too much involved in politics'.¹⁴⁴

Siswono stated that he had attained Suharto's blessing for the formation of the organisation. The directness of his attack on ICMI suggests that he was confident of Presidential backing. Indeed, according to confidential sources, approaches were made by at least Siswono and Sarwono to Suharto around this time. He gave them the impression that he shared their concerns with the rise of 'fundamentalists' inside ICMI, which they interpreted as a sign that the Presidential tide was turning in their favour.¹⁴⁵ Suharto's proclivity for playing his subordinates against each other by sending conflicting signals is well known. The important point, is that many of those who challenged ICMI were not necessarily opposed to, or willing to risk confronting, the President.

¹⁴³ See for example 'Setelah Islam, Kini Kebangsaan', *Tempo*, May 14, 1994, p. 32; 'ICKI Lahir Mengganjal ICMI?', *Detik*, May 11-17, 1994, p. 14. Among those involved were Edi Sudradjat's brother, Sambas Wirakusumah (director of private higher education in the Ministry of Education and Culture) and Major General (retired) Moehono (former military secretary to Suharto and rector of Krisnadwipayana University). According to confidential sources, Alamsjah's announcement was pre-emptive: he heard about the discussions about forming such a body, and took the idea to Suharto for endorsement. For similar comments, see Eki Syachrudin in 'Alamsjah ini pandai mencuri momen di tikungan,' *Detik*, May, 18-24, 1994, p. 11.

¹⁴⁴ 'Jurus jurus Membendung ICMI' and 'Sudah Lahir, Forum Nasionalis', *Forum Keadilan*, June 9, 1994, p. 92-97; at p. 93. Edi Sudradjat's speech was less specific, but also emphasised dangers of national disintegration.

¹⁴⁵ In a later interview (October 19, 1998), Sarwono Kusumaatmadja said that Suharto did not give any indications that he was preparing to abandon the ICMI strategy, but he did criticise ICMI 'radicals'.

6.2 New Organisations in 1995

By mid-1995 strains in the political elite had further intensified. Wahono, Sudradjat, Siswono and Sarwono spoke out increasingly frequently on topics like the rich-poor gap, corruption, government bias in favour of conglomerates, the need for greater communication between government and society, as well as ‘primordialism’, ‘sectarianism’ and other ‘threats to national unity’. In a typical statement, Siswono argued that the lack of ‘channels for the representation of societal aspirations’ was leading to ‘political blockages’, social disorder, political hatred and violence. He urged the country to continue moving toward democratisation and to discard old, inflexible concepts.¹⁴⁶ Minister Sarwono caused a minor sensation in late 1995 when he publicly complained about poor communication between cabinet ministers and the ill-advised public statements they made.¹⁴⁷ ‘Retiring’ military officers like Harsudiono Hartas, Samsuddin and Saiful Sulun, from the old *keterbukaan*-era Fraksi-ABRI, also became increasingly outspoken.¹⁴⁸ The plethora of comments from such officials added to the building public impression of impending crisis in political and social life.

In this atmosphere, a number of new organisations were formed in late 1995. These were distinct initiatives, but all were influenced by the tension generated by the rise of ICMI. PCPP (*Persatuan Cendekiawan Pembangunan Pancasila*, Association of Intellectuals for Pancasila Development) was the descendant of the earlier ICKI initiative. It was led principally by a

¹⁴⁶ ‘Siswono: Diperlukan Perluasan Saluran Aspirasi Masyarakat’ [Wider channels are needed for societal aspirations], *Suara Pembaruan*, November 7, 1995. For other statements by Siswono see: ‘Kritik Jangan Diartikan Anasionalis’ [Criticism shouldn’t be interpreted as non-nationalistic], *Kompas*, November 2, 1995; ‘Siswono: Ada Oknum Pejabat Tak Suka Dikoreksi [There are some officials who do not like to be corrected]’, *Sinar Pagi*, November 3, 1995. For typical statements by Wahono, see ‘Wahono: Pemimpin Harus Samakan Tindakan dengan Kata-katanya’ [Leaders must ensure their actions are the same as their words], *Media Indonesia*, October 31, 1995; ‘Ketua DPR/MPR: Pamer Kemewahan Pemicu Keresahan’ [Displays of luxury trigger unrest], *Kompas*, December 2, 1995; ‘Ketua DPR: Tinggalkan Gaya Birokrasi Arogan’ [Abandon the arrogant bureaucratic style], *Kompas*, January 5, 1996. For statements by Edi Sudradjat, see: ‘ABRI Sering Dianggap Pelindung Orang Kaya’ [ABRI is often considered a protector of the rich], *Media Indonesia*, July 20, 1995; ‘Violations rampant among elite’, *Jakarta Post*, December 22, 1995.

¹⁴⁷ See ‘Saya Prihatin Terhadap Kabinet yang Sekarang...’, *Forum Keadilan*, November 20, 1995, p. 80-84. He acknowledged that the age gap between Suharto and the Minister might contribute to the problems in Cabinet. In a later interview, Sarwono suggested that he had to speak to the press this way because he had tried to warn Suharto directly, but the President would not listen: interview with Sarwono Kusuumatmadja, October 19, 1998.

¹⁴⁸ For example, see the interviews with Harsudiono Hartas (the engineer of Try Sutrisno’s vice-presidential victory, who in 1993 was moved to a relatively powerless position in the DPA (*Dewan Pertimbangan Agung*, Supreme Advisory Council)): ‘Kritik Terhadap Orde Baru Jangan Dianggap Tak Loyal’ [Criticisms of the New Order should not be interpreted as Disloyal], *Merdeka*, June 2, 1995; ‘ABRI bukan Alat Pemerintah atau Golongan’ [ABRI is not a tool of the government or any group], *Serambi Indonesia*, September 19, 1995.

number of early New Order military and civilian officials and drew its members from university staff, members of FKA-GMNI and the Golkar KINO SOKSI.¹⁴⁹ PCPP was an essentially conservative organisation: its leaders disavowed political aims and openly sought official, indeed Presidential, backing.¹⁵⁰ Some of its leaders, however, were willing to publicly attack ICMI.¹⁵¹

Persatuan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Association, often called ‘PNI-baru’, the ‘new PNI’), and *Partisipasi Kristen Indonesia* (Indonesian Christian Participation, or ‘Parkindo-baru’, the ‘new Parkindo’) were less directly linked to conflict at the elite level. Essentially these organisations represented attempts to begin the revival of the old nationalist and Protestant political parties. Their leaders had mostly long been excluded from power and thus did not share the resentments of more contemporary officials threatened by ICMI.¹⁵² These organisations thus essentially reflected the revival of old political currents in the looser political conditions of the 1990s, although they were partly motivated by concern at the revival of apparently aggressive Islamic political ambitions.¹⁵³ ICMI and government rapprochement with Islam was thus triggering re-emergence of old style *aliran* politics.

7. YKPK

The grouping with the broadest membership was YKPK, *Yayasan Kerukunan Persaudaraan Kebangsaan* (Foundation for National Harmony and Brotherhood), which was publicly announced on October 23, 1995 to great press fanfare. Its 68 members included prominent

¹⁴⁹ ‘SOKSI-GMNI bersaing di Munas PCPP’, *Surya*, November 11, 1995.

¹⁵⁰ PCPP members had diverse aims. Many of the intellectuals involved claimed that they wanted it principally to be an academic institution: interview with Bambang Sulistomo, November 27, 1995. But others clearly hoped that PCPP would be a new political vehicle in anticipation of President Suharto’s abandonment of ICMI. PCPP was launched at a national congress in Yogyakarta in early November 1995. Its key leaders and backers included Suhardiman of SOKSI, Moehono and Sambas Wirakusumah (see above). According to press reports, in September, some of its initiators visited Sarwono; two days later he reported to the President on the group and its aims. Suharto’s response was ambiguous: all groups had ‘freedom of association,’ but thought needed to be given to the organisation’s aims, constitution, who would occupy leadership positions and so on. Sarwono stated he would be willing to lead the group if he was given Presidential approval, apparently he was not. See ‘Kita Sudah Terdidik Dengan Rekayasa’, *Tiras*, October 5, 1995, p. 61-64.

¹⁵¹ See for example the interview with former Vice-Commander of ABRI, Soerono Reksodimedjo, ‘ICMI Disalahgunakan Oknum’, *Forum Keadilan*, August 28, 1995, p. 23. In response, ICMI figures like Dawam Rahardjo attacked PCPP (for example, in Linrung et al, 1995, p. 65).

¹⁵² Most of those on the board of the ‘new’ PNI, for example, were former leaders of the old PNI who had never joined the PDI or who had been pushed out of it during the 1970s. More details on these organisations appears in chapter seven.

¹⁵³ Another new organisation was *Majelis Syarikat Ummat Muslimin Indonesia* (Council for the Indonesian Muslim Community, the ‘new Masyumi’). This organisation was a more minor initiative. It was established by the former HMI and PPP leader, Ridwan Saidi, and was condemned by surviving leaders of the original Masyumi party who were mostly now sympathetic to ICMI: Fealy, 1997, p. 28.

national figures associated with Golkar, the military, the nationalist *aliran*, Protestants, Catholics, NU, and even a few modernist Muslims (though none associated with ICMI). Some reports referred to it as a *kelompok pelangi*, ‘rainbow group.’

Prominent retired military figures associated with the organisation included Lieutenants General Bambang Triantoro (Chief of Social and Political Affairs under Moerdani, 1985-87), and Kharis Suhud (MPR/DPR Speaker during *keterbukaan*, 1988-93) and Majors General Sunarso Djajusman (former Deputy Chief of Bakin and ambassador to Malaysia) and Samsuddin (the former ABRI legislator, instrumental in the launch of *keterbukaan*).¹⁵⁴ There were several NU leaders close to Abdurrahman Wahid, such as Matori Abdul Djilil (PPP secretary general, 1989-94).¹⁵⁵ Golkar members in the group, most of whom were closely associated with Wahono, included twelve current DPR members, five former members of the Wahono-era central leadership board and vocal members of the 1988-93 DPR like Marzuki Darusman and Oka Mahendra.¹⁵⁶ Also involved were several prominent Catholic and Protestant figures, most of whom had Golkar or PDI backgrounds, other prominent PDI leaders, and several GMNI alumni linked to Forum Demokrasi figure, Bondan Gunawan.¹⁵⁷

YKPK was formed after a long process of negotiation. Meetings in Golkar and academic circles about forming a counter to ICMI had resumed after Alamsjah’s abortive 1994 announcement of ICKI. Eventually wider forces were invited to participate, including former Fraksi-ABRI legislators and members of Forum Demokrasi, although it was eventually decided that members of the latter group would not become members.¹⁵⁸ Forum Demokrasi participants insisted that

¹⁵⁴ Other military figures included Lieutenant General R. Soeprapto, former Governor of Jakarta and deputy chair of the MPR under Kharis Suhud; Majors General (retired) Hariadi Darmawan (a relative by marriage of Vice President Try Sutrisno) and Udju S. Dinata, current member of the Fraksi ABRI, where he served as a speech writer. Many others in the organisation had military links. For example, when Bambang Triantoro was Secretary General of the Department of Education and Culture, YKPK members Harsja W. Bachtiar and Sambas Wirakusumah had served under him. All three were replaced when Habibie associate and ICMI leader Wardiman Djojonegoro became Minister of Education and Culture in 1993: *Tiras*, November 2, 1995, p. 26.

¹⁵⁵ Others included Abdurrahman Wahid’s younger brother Hasyim Wahid and former NU Secretary General Gaffar Rachman. Allied to Matori Abdul Djilil in the PPP, and like him defeated at the 1994 congress, were Imam Charman and K. H. Cholil Bisri.

¹⁵⁶ There were five members of the Golkar executive board from the Wahono period: Jacob Tobing, Anton Prijanto, Widjanarko Puspojo, Didiet Haryadi, and Agus Tagor. The serving Golkar parliamentarians were also mostly associated with Wahono.

¹⁵⁷ The prominent Christians included Frans Seda (chairperson of the Catholic Party and Minister of Agriculture, Finance and then Communication and Tourism in the 1960s and early 1970s), Pontas Nasution (a leader of the Protestant Student group GMKI in the 1960s), Midian Sirait (a former member of the Golkar Central Leadership Board who had past links to Ali Moertopo and the Bandung group of ‘modernising intellectuals’ who joined Golkar in the 1970s) and Marcel Beding (a PDI legislator and one of the initiators of the new Parkindo). Other prominent PDI leaders involved in YKPK included Kwik Kian Gie and Sukowaluyo.

¹⁵⁸ Among the former Fraksi-ABRI members involved were R. K. Sembiring Meliala and Roekmini; Roekmini was even reprimanded by Army chief of staff Hartono for participating in ‘secret meetings’:

the group should not seek Presidential ‘blessing’ (*restu*). Eventually, senior retired military officers from the anti-ICMI camp, including Hariyoto P. S., Edi Sudradjat, Harsudiono Hartas and Wahono were also consulted.¹⁵⁹

YKPK’s spokespeople claimed for their group a wide ranging brief to promote national unity, prosperity, equality and democracy. The main emphasis was the by now familiar discourse about dangers to national unity: that (unnamed) groups were putting their own interests before the nation as a whole, undermining the ‘national spirit’ and risking national disintegration.¹⁶⁰

The group’s founders made standard denials of political aims, denied that they intended to oppose ICMI and stressed they would only hold seminars and otherwise promote discussion about the nation’s future.¹⁶¹ Triantoro stressed that the group would ‘channel’ its political views via existing political organisations. Some of the group’s leaders, especially Triantoro, remained deeply conservative, while others were more outspoken in favour of democratic reforms.¹⁶²

The organisation was immediately endorsed by several senior officials, most strongly by Wahono, Sudradjat, Siswono, and Sarwono. Sudradjat said the organisation was a ‘good idea’, which had ‘long been awaited by the broader community’; Siswono said it was ‘extraordinary’ and its aims ‘very noble’.¹⁶³ Officials more closely identified with the Palace were more

interview with Roekmini, November 29, 1995; confidential communications, late 1995. Those from Forum Demokrasi who were consulted reportedly included Abdurrahman Wahid, Bondan Gunawan and others: confidential interviews, late 1995.

¹⁵⁹ Wahono was invited to become the organisation’s chairperson, but declined: confidential communications, late 1995.

¹⁶⁰ In a typical statement at the group’s launch, its chairperson Bambang Triantoro suggested that the ‘this foundation is an attempt to save the nation from the attack of negative forces which are causing restlessness in society, and which if left undisturbed, will be able to shake the very hinges of our nation and state’: *Media Indonesia*, October 24, 1995.

¹⁶¹ The choice of the *yayasan* (foundation) format underlines their caution: as discussed in chapter five of this thesis this structure makes mass membership impossible. Noted PPP dissident, Sri Bintang Pamungkas was scathing about YKPK on this point, saying that if those who formed YKPK wanted a new political vehicle they should have formed a new party: *Merdeka*, October 25, 1995.

¹⁶² See for example comments by Triantoro in ‘Sejumlah Tokoh Mendirikan YKPK’, *Kompas*, October 24, 1995: ‘We will not damage the existing political structure. We will not become a political movement.’ Triantoro often cited ‘individualism’ and foreign influence as dangers: see for example comments in *Suara Pembaruan*, October 24, 1995; *Sinar*, November 18, 1995, p. 36-42. Matori Abdul Djalil was the most outspoken YKPK proponent of democratisation: see for example ‘YKPK pledges to promote democracy’, *Jakarta Post*, November 6, 1995.

¹⁶³ See for example ‘Ini Kan Suatu Kebutuhan’ (interview with Edi Sudradjat), *Tiras*, November 2, 1995, p.25; ‘YKPK gets positive responses from ministers’, *Jakarta Post*, October 25, 1995; ‘Sarwono: Yakin Tujuan Baik, Tapi di Baliknnya Saya Tidak Tahu’, *Merdeka*, October 25, 1995; ‘Siswono: YKPK Organisasi Luar Biasa’, *Kompas*, October 26, 1995; ‘Wahono Tegaskan Ormas Baru tidak Berbahaya’, *Kompas*, October 31, 1995.

guarded.¹⁶⁴ Suharto made his disapproval clear when he told reporters that the new organisations would have to be ‘evaluated’ in accordance with laws which ‘regulate the freedom of association’.¹⁶⁵

Subsequent developments seemed to confirm this. In early 1996 YKPK organised a major seminar in Surabaya, where Wahono gave the keynote address. The seminar was boycotted by local government officials on the urging of local Military Commander and Hartono ally, Major General Imam Utomo.¹⁶⁶

7.1 YKPK Assessed: Strategic Considerations

Clearly, YKPK (and those elite figures who quietly endorsed it) represented a broad coalition. They included longstanding advocates of reform from outside ruling circles (although they were mostly ‘semi-opponents’ from state-sanctioned organisations like NU, PPP and PDI) and individuals from deep inside the system, some of whom had previously evinced minimal appreciation of political reform.

Indeed, the formation of YKPK was the first occasion since the 1970s that a coalition between discontented elements from ‘inside’ the ruling elite (particularly from ABRI) and government critics from the ‘outside’ was consummated in a formal organisation.¹⁶⁷ To be sure, the military officers and Golkar officials who joined the organisation had mostly already retired or been removed from their posts (or perhaps feared that this would shortly be their fate). In this respect YKPK was similar to the group which coalesced under the banner of the Petition of Fifty in 1980: it was a collection of *already* marginalised officials.¹⁶⁸ But the military officers who were involved operated in close consultation with senior serving officers, especially Minister Edi Sudradjat. Similarly, the individuals from Golkar associated with YKPK may have mostly been pushed out of the Central Leadership Board, but they maintained some positions of

¹⁶⁴ For example, Army Chief of Staff Hartono, after stating that YKPK must be viewed positively, added that it was too early to judge, but that ‘hopefully’ it would serve the nation, and that if its activities were positive, ‘clearly, there would be no problem’: *Suara Pembaruan*, October 26, 1995.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Presiden Soeharto: Kehadiran Ormas Baru Perlu Dinilai Lebih Dulu’, *Kompas*, November 2, 1995. Another sign came on the opening day of the PCPP congress in Yogyakarta in November, when Ministers and senior officials who had been expected to appear (including Edi Sudradjat) did not do so, according to some sources because they were informed of Suharto’s displeasure: confidential communication, December 1995.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Bambang Triantoro: Ada yang Curigai YKPK’, *Kompas*, January 10, 1996. See Honna, 1999, p. 107.

¹⁶⁷ It will be remembered that only a few years earlier, Lieutenant General Harsudiono Hartas was highly critical of Forum Demokrasi, yet he publicly endorsed YKPK.

¹⁶⁸ Media outlets generally sympathetic to the ICMI or palace position made great play of this factor. See for example ‘Para Mantan’ Membentuk Yayasan Kerukunan Kebangsaan’, *Republika*, October 24, 1995; ‘Rukunnya Orang-orang Kecewa’, *Gatra*, November 4, 1995, p. 37.

influence, especially in the DPR.¹⁶⁹ (They mostly lost these, however, when the list of candidates for the 1997 election was announced in 1996.¹⁷⁰) They also retained links with senior officials like Sarwono, Siswono, and Wahono.

The hardening of YKPK's position illustrates the potentially reformist evolution of groups in the ruling bloc which lose out in factional competition. Elite critics of ICMI underwent a political transformation similar to that experienced in the 1970s by the officials who eventually signed the Petition of Fifty. As they saw their own positions of power slip away from them, they first blamed immediate rivals (Ali Moertopo / Habibie) and, eventually (albeit to varying degrees) Suharto himself. As their hold on power became more tenuous, they made common cause with civilian critics and were awakened to the need for more substantive political reform.

Within weeks of its formation, YKPK leaders thus spoke out increasingly forthrightly in favour of political reform. At the 1996 Surabaya seminar, for example, they advocated 'democratisation' and 'political restructuring', renewed emphasis on the rule of law, opposition to 'corruption and manipulation', ABRI being 'above all groups', and clean implementation of the forthcoming general elections.¹⁷¹

However, a note of caution is required. YKPK did not signify an *absolute* break within the ruling elite. The key factor which from the start united sympathisers of YKPK was shared apprehension about ICMI and what it represented. Some YKPK sympathisers thus appeared unprepared to lose all hope in Suharto. Not surprisingly, this was especially the case for those who, however precariously, maintained senior positions. Sarwono and Siswono, for example, despite their outspokenness in 1995-96, were among the first Ministers to publicly endorse Suharto's re-election (perhaps precisely because they believed their positions to be tenuous).¹⁷² Even among YKPK members there was a range of views. While some were resigned to an open break with the President, others hoped for a change of heart on his part, even that they might contribute to this. In the words of one of the Golkar veterans who joined YKPK:

¹⁶⁹ As Marzuki Darusman put it 'ideally we could put Golkar back on track from the inside. But now we have to start from the outside': interview, November 29, 1995.

¹⁷⁰ 'Duri dan Panasnya Menuju Parlemen', *Forum Keadilan*, October 7, 1996, p. 100-102.

¹⁷¹ See for example 'Harapan dan Imbauan YKPK: Para Menteri agar Bekerja Sama', *Kompas*, January 6, 1996; 'Bambang Triantoro: Ada yang Curigai YKPK', *Kompas*, January 10, 1996. The great similarity to 1970s pronouncements by LKB and Fosko A-D is obvious. They also shared many elements in common with other advocates of conservative and gradual reform, including support for the basic political structure developed under the New Order, an emphasis on moral leadership from rulers and the need to rectify the imbalance between strong institutions ('the Presidency, ABRI, bureaucracy and conglomerates') and weak ones (the political parties and Golkar).

¹⁷² See 'Gaung Kebulatan Tekad dari Kabinet', *Forum Keadilan*, December 4, 1995, p.100-102. According to a colleague, despite Suharto's poor treatment of him, Wahono also 'continued to view

If Suharto sees that the work of YKPK is effective, he might be influenced by it. This organisation is partly an attempt to show Suharto that it is not only Islam and ICMI which have power and potential, but so do we. . . At some time Suharto will probably need to find a new national consensus, and he will probably invite all forces, including us.¹⁷³

Some of the ABRI retirees aligned with YKPK similarly remained preoccupied with the competition for power within the regime.¹⁷⁴ When YKPK was formed it was widely believed that some of them intended to use it to promote Try Sutrisno for the Presidency in 1998 (something which did eventually happen: see chapter nine).

That individuals from the ruling elite with such views were prepared to identify with a group like YKPK illustrates the process Stepan referred to as the 'courtship of civil society'.¹⁷⁵ The emergence of tensions within a regime may compel such groups to begin the search for societal allies, including among supporters of democratic reform. New coalitions can emerge, in which previously authoritarian elements make concessions by adopting reformist postures.

To appreciate what those 'societal forces' (in this case civilian reformers involved in YKPK) gain from such alliances, it is necessary to refer back to the views on democratisation strategy held by many involved in Forum Demokrasi. Many such individuals believed that democratic reform first needed to address the blockage represented by Suharto's continued occupancy of the Presidency. Some involved in discussions prior to YKPK's formation clearly saw its primary function in this light, as a means to prize open hairline cracks in the regime, hence providing greater political space for societal initiative and beginning the development of a broad alliance which might one day influence Presidential succession.

Seeking allies with elements from the ruling elite also followed logically from the imperative of pursuing democratic reform through a negotiated process. One NGO activist associated with YKPK described the organisation as a meeting place for elements from inside and outside the regime, 'on the line separating the state and society.'¹⁷⁶ Some of the establishment figures

himself as a loyal servant of the President': interview with Marzuki Darusman, November 29, 1995. He was widely believed to be, however, highly resentful of Habibie.

¹⁷³ Interview with Midian Sirait, November 28, 1995.

¹⁷⁴ They also continued to view other pro-democracy actors unsympathetically: see for example 'Jangan Takut Berpolitik dan Berorganisasi', *Sinar*, November 18, 1995, p. 36-42, where Bambang Triantoro describes how anti-establishment sentiment and dislike for the government had become a new 'ism' (p.41). See also 'Menhamkam Pertanyakan Sejumlah LSM', *Kompas*, January 16, 1996 where Edi Sudradjat calls for special attention to be paid to NGOs which received funding from foreign sources and aimed to damage the state and nation.

¹⁷⁵ Stepan, 1988, p. 7.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Syarif Bastaman, November 7, 1995.

involved in the group were especially insistent that the coming political transition must be gradual, and carefully planned to avoid threats of instability: the obsessive emphasis on threats of ‘national disintegration’ illustrated nothing if not this point.¹⁷⁷

8. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the phenomenon of dissidence. The Petition of Fifty group, Forum Demokrasi and YKPK, despite their very different backgrounds, in two crucial respects accorded with the definition of dissidence presented in chapter one. First, they shared an ‘alegal’ character: they were not banned or hounded out of existence by the government, but were instead constrained and limited by harassment and the ever-present threat of more serious repression (experienced most acutely by some Petition of Fifty leaders in the 1980s). The primary product was the isolation of these groups from a mass constituency.

Second, and partly related to their isolation from a mass support base, all three groups adopted a strategy essentially based on ‘moral suasion’. Their chief public activity consisted in making statements advocating reform, usually directed specifically toward the regime’s leaders (although, as we have seen, Forum Demokrasi, also directed their appeals to society).

For both the Petition of Fifty group and YKPK, dissidence was a product of marginalisation from the ruling elite, and an expression of frustration, even hopelessness, on the part of formerly influential leaders who found themselves isolated from institutional power. The establishment backgrounds of many of those involved naturally inclined them toward conservative views. The origin of Forum Demokrasi was quite different, with the group being an initiative by non-state, middle class elite actors. However, the group’s members (notably Abdurrahman Wahid) retained important positions of influence elsewhere, which also provided impetus for political caution. In both the latter cases, too, attitudes toward political reform were complicated by (in the case of YKPK, secondary to) concerns generated by the rise of ICMI and political Islam.

Alegal, dissident opposition is described as being particularly ineffective in much comparative literature. Bernhard, for example, discussing dissidence in Eastern Europe in the 1970s, writes:¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ This was what YKPK member and former Golkar legislator Midian Sirait called ‘reform from within.’: ‘YKPK undaunted by absence of govt officials’, Jakarta Post, January 10, 1996.

¹⁷⁸ Bernhard, 1993, p. 312.

For dissidence as a strategy to have succeeded, ruling elites would have had to heed the suggestions of dissidents... Ultimately, [dissidence] was reduced to the articulation of an agenda for change without any concrete program to implement it, except a hope that those in power would listen.

This may seem harsh, but there is some relevance for the Indonesian case. Some members of all three groups indicated in interviews with the author that they had no illusions that their organisations could play a decisive role in initiating political change. Many radical, younger activists referred derisively to the '*revolusi kertas*' ('paper revolution') pursued by groups like the Petition of Fifty, with their voluminous output of political statements.

However, it is possible to argue that such groups did play a significant exemplary role. Figures like Ali Sadikin and Abdurrahman Wahid were widely respected in the broad political public for their moral courage (witness the regularity with which they appeared on the covers of the national press: editors clearly believed that they helped sell their publications). Because of the relative press openness during *keterbukaan*, the views of these groups were communicated to a large part of the population. In this way (unlike East European dissidents of the 1970s), they played an important role in contributing to the general strengthening of democratic sentiment in society during *keterbukaan*.

Another characteristic of the three groups was their entanglement with regime conflict. It is hoped that this chapter has illustrated that there was no clear dividing line between calls for reform from 'inside' the state and dissent from the 'outside'. Each of the three groups studied did not simply issue disinterested moral appeals for reform, but always had an eye directed at splits within the regime and the opportunities thereby afforded them. This was in large part because of their awareness of the difficulties inherent in confronting a unified state, and the orientation of many of them to a negotiated path to democratisation.¹⁷⁹ Forum Demokrasi thus had at least an implicit potential for a coalition with disgruntled army elements. There was also a 'reverse flow' toward the regime, with the rise of ICMI attracting the sympathy of many Muslim critics and leading to attempts to co-opt the Petition of Fifty group. YKPK, in contrast, was essentially a product of marginalisation of ICMI's opponents within the ruling bloc.

Indeed, it might be argued that the failure of these groups (especially Forum Demokrasi) to become more vigorous rallying points for a broader democratic movement was partly because fractures within the ruling elite did not deepen as rapidly as many expected in the early 1990s.

¹⁷⁹ As Chris Siner Key Timu of the Petition of Fifty working group put it in an interview on October 30, 1995: 'Whether we like it or not, ABRI is a key factor in the political system. Change of the political system must be via reformation, the dominant group must be convinced and persuaded of the need to change.'

Suharto's re-imposition of control, especially over the army, meant that there was no definitive break in favour of reform from inside the regime, and dissident groups thus lacked the bargaining partners or allies they hoped for. The implications of this are discussed in later chapters.

Chapter Five

Proto-Opposition: Non-Governmental Organisations

The dissident groups discussed in the previous chapter had general and explicit political aims, but were institutionally weak, comprised of small numbers of prominent individuals. This chapter looks at Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), bodies which often deliberately strove to avoid ‘politics’, but which had a well-established organisational presence in society.

Although reliable estimates are difficult to locate, it is clear that NGOs existed by the score, or even hundred, in all provinces in rural and urban areas.¹ For over a decade they had been a chief gathering place for critically-minded intellectuals. Some NGOs were islands of relative autonomy, amidst government attempts to establish a wholly corporatised, ‘integralistic’ society. Others remained highly cautious and had ambivalent relations with the state.

This chapter aims to explore the NGO model, and the ambivalences and contradictions which resulted when ‘civil society’ became a refuge for oppositional impulses, especially after relative liberalisation ensued. It begins by briefly surveying the range of NGOs, the reasons for their prominence, and their chief strategies. The chapter concludes with a case study of arguably the most important, certainly the best-known, of all Indonesian NGOs, the Legal Aid Institute (LBH). This study illustrates the dilemmas associated with the ‘apolitical politics’ of proto-opposition.

1. The NGO Spectrum

It is necessary to define at the outset what is meant by the term ‘NGO’. In many respects, NGOs were perfect exemplars of the kind of institutions which, according to liberal theorists, constitute civil society: located in the civic domain (‘between the family and the state’), and not themselves seeking political power.² Two features distinguished NGOs from other civil society associations. NGOs were ‘task oriented’, being focused on partial and specific aims (usually one particular aspect of ‘development’) and had limited support bases, being organisations of

¹ A 1991 directory produced by the environmental NGO WALHI and CUSO (Canadian University Service Overseas) listed some 240 environmental NGOs alone: Fauziah, 1991. In 1996 Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security, Soesilo Soedarman, estimated that there were some 8000 LSMs in the country: ‘Daftar Baru LSM “Mbeling”’, *Republika*, November 4, 1996.

² This rough working definition is drawn largely from Chazan, 1992; Stepan, 1988, p. 3-4; Diamond, 1994, p. 6.

directors, staff and volunteers, rather than members (we shall see this was exacerbated by features of Indonesia's legal system). Both factors distinguished NGOs from organisations which were open to entire social categories, like labour unions, professional groups, religious groups and the like. In Indonesian terms, the distinction was between LSM, *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* and Ormas, *Organisasi Kemasyarakatan* (Societal Organisations). The distinction is important: even the largest NGOs often had less than 100 staff and volunteers (though more could be associated with them through networks). *Ormas* could be huge: NU claimed a total membership of over 30 million.

Clearly, however, this definition encompasses a wide variety of organisations. Many Indonesian NGOs were tiny, informal groups, operating out of shabby rented buildings or private homes, struggling to cover basic operating costs. A few were large, professional organisations, centered in multi-storied, air-conditioned buildings in Jakarta, with staff throughout the country and access to lucrative sources of government or overseas funding (BINGOs - Big NGOs).

The range of activities pursued by NGOs was equally diverse. Eldridge has proposed a typology of Indonesian NGOs based on relations with the state and grassroots strategies.³ Billah bases a similar categorisation on ideological and strategic paradigms.⁴

A starting point is to distinguish two main categories. Most Indonesian NGOs in the late 1980s and 1990s were still concerned primarily with 'community development'. Some such NGOs operated on a small scale, encouraging alternative technology, income generation, housing, health or educational projects in poor communities. Others were larger, acting as intermediaries between community groups and sources of commercial, government or overseas credit for similar projects. The common thread was a 'practical' approach to improving the lot of the poor: as one NGO leader expressed it in the 1970s, 'we are looking for people who want to get their hands dirty'.⁵

Another broad category of NGOs represented what Frantz has referred to as 'institutionalised social movements', conducting 'advocacy' work on many issues: environmental protection, consumer affairs, workers', farmer's or women's rights, legal aid, defense of indigenous communities and so on.⁶ These constituted a category of 'rights-oriented' NGOs.

³ Eldridge, 1989 & 1995.

⁴ Billah, 1994. Billah distinguishes between developmentalist, liberal and transformative NGOs.

⁵ Soedjarwo, 1978. Soedjarwo was the leader of the major community development NGO Yayasan Dian Desa. Eldridge (1995, chapters 4 and 5) has written extensively on such NGOs.

⁶ Frantz, 1987.

2. The NGO Boom

In chapter two, it was suggested that NGOs thrived from the mid-1970s, as part of an overall retreat of critical political impulses into relatively autonomous zones in civil society. The founders of many key NGOs were former supporters of the military in 1965-66. Some NGOs, even the most liberal like LBH, initially received political and financial sponsorship from leading officials. Most NGO founders believed they shared modernising aims with the government (or at least enlightened elements within it) and stressed they aimed at partnership, not conflict. However, as the 1970s progressed many NGOs became a means to express opposition to aspects of the New Order project. Some, notably LBH, became vehicles for liberal, *negara hukum* ideas about the protection of citizens from state abuses. Others were manifestations of the neo-populist reaction against capitalist development.

NGOs initially became important for expressing such views because other vehicles were repressed. Many NGOs were formed by former student activists who had been driven off campus or by disillusioned intellectuals.⁷ Some were coalitions of disenfranchised activists from the old *aliran*, searching for new means of political expression.⁸

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.

Two more features of the growth of NGOs require consideration. First, was the utilisation by most NGOs of the *yayasan* (foundation) structure. Under Indonesian law, it was a simple process to establish a *yayasan*, all that was required was an act of a *notaris* (notary). Decision making power in a *yayasan* was also vested in a closed, unelected board of trustees, meaning that apart from board members, those involved in an NGO were employees or volunteers not

⁷ NGOs thus became a common career choice for the most critical student leaders. Mahasin (1989, p. 31) argues that NGOs were seen by many in the middle class as alternative career paths in a competitive job market. Some survey data also seemed to confirm this. According to one survey of 200 students from private and state universities in 1988, 4.8% of those questioned stated they intended to work for non-profit organisations after graduating: *Tempo*, April 22, 1989, p. 33.

⁸ For example, in its early years many Catholic, PSI-aligned and Modernist Muslims (typically with HMI backgrounds) were involved in the important applied social science research body LP3ES. The consumer organisation, YLKI, involved a large number of former PNI activists: interview with Permadi, December 2, 1996.

‘members’. This helped protect NGOs from the standard methods used to ensure compliance in membership-based *ormas* or political parties (infiltration by pro-government cliques, manipulation of internal disputes etc). Moreover, government officials were reluctant to limit *yayasan* by legislation, largely because they used such organisations for ‘extra-budgetary’ channeling of funds for political and other purposes.

International influences also had a striking impact on Indonesian NGOs, which emerged in tandem with a growing international discourse on alternative development, with all the philosophical, institutional and financial support that this implied. Links with partner organisations in industrialised countries offered some political protection, and from the late 1970s, they became the main source of funding for most Indonesian NGOs. Such support was important for their increased political autonomy from, and willingness to criticise, the government (LBH, for example, secured overseas funding in direct proportion to the decline in financial support it received from the Jakarta city administration). This was recognised by government and resulted in attempts to regulate NGO links with foreign organisations.⁹

3. NGO Strategies

NGOs used three main strategies to pursue desired social, economic and political aims. The first strategy essentially envisaged gradual evolution of the current political system, although a strong element of survivalism also accounted for this approach. The second two in part aimed at winning immediate concessions and reforms, although many NGO activists also argued that they helped prepare for the eventual replacement of authoritarian rule.

3.1 Direct Engagement with the State

The first strategy entailed direct engagement with the state and its personnel. This approach was most associated with community development NGOs whose aims to improve the living standards of poor communities did not often imply conflict with the state. Eldridge has written extensively on the strategies involved, which he describes with labels like ‘high level cooperation, grass roots development.’¹⁰ One method was for NGOs to engage government

⁹ Availability of foreign funding encouraged the proliferation of NGOs partly because activists who had gained experience, links to donors and a public profile in a major NGO could then strike out on their own by attaining project funding to establish their own organisation. Many activists criticised the consequent proliferation of NGOs with apparently similar aims (often led by individuals who had once been in the same organisation) as being essentially funding-driven, rather than reflecting genuine differences in aims or strategies.

¹⁰ Eldridge, 1989 & 1995.

agencies in joint activity on particular development projects. The aim was often not only to attain financial and institutional support for the project concerned, but also to convince the agency of the efficacy and desirability of community development approaches.

Many NGOs also sought to directly influence policy formulation by engaging senior officials in dialogue. Many government agencies from the late 1970s became used to cooperating with larger community development and environmental NGOs, which they sometimes invited to participate in drafting new development laws, regulations and programmes.¹¹ In effect, such NGOs pursued a semi-oppositional ‘work from within’ strategy, even if their intervention was made from (at least partly) autonomous institutions in the civic domain. In the words of prominent NGO leader Wardah Hafidz¹²:

If a LSM cooperates with the government, its principle task is how to infiltrate and place inside [the government] ideas which are beneficial to society.... [O]ur principle should be that although we are faced by a large concrete block, that concrete contains tiny pores which can be scratched open and hollowed out, so that it breaks open.

This approach was sometimes depicted as a choice over less palatable alternatives. As Kartjono, the leader of the major rural development NGO, Bina Desa, put it:

I’m one of those people who from the start really acknowledged that LSMs were part of development...Because of that I do not believe that LSMs can carry out ‘transformation.’ If I’m now in LSMs, it’s because there are no other alternatives for action other than ‘the possible among the impossible’ or ‘the best of the worst.’¹³

For many community development NGOs this approach also reflected an essentially benign view of the New Order, or at least an assumption that the government might be convinced to initiate policy reform by argument and example. This in turn, underlined the essentially ‘developmentalist’ outlook of many NGOs, a point strongly argued by Billah.¹⁴

There was a clear material foundation for this. From the mid-1970s the government attempted to address some of the concerns of its populist critics by devising a range of poverty alleviation

¹¹ To cite one example, in 1993 the new Minister of National Planning Ginandjar Kartasasmita invited NGO participation in the government’s anti-poverty drive. The resulting INPRES Kemiskinan (Presidential Instruction on Poverty) even made NGO participation at the district level obligatory: INFID, 1993b, p. 7.

¹² Indeco De Unie, 1993a (Diskusi Region DKI), p. 21.

¹³ *ibid*, p. 8.

¹⁴ Billah, Busyairi & Aly, 1993; Billah, 1994.

programs.¹⁵ Through to the 1990s, many key policy-makers supported economic policies entailing a major state role in poverty alleviation. Although the main levers of policy-making remained in the hands of liberal technocrats, advocates of neo-populist solutions also found room within government agencies.¹⁶

Just as economic growth shored up government legitimacy among urban middle classes as a whole, government attention to community development approaches provided a zone of cooperation with middle class activists. Some of the larger community development NGOs continued to be linked closely to the government.¹⁷ The decision by prominent Islamic NGO leaders, like Adi Sasono (of *Lembaga Studi Pembangunan*, Institute for Development Studies) and Dawam Rahardjo (of LP3ES) to join ICMI was in many ways a logical progression after their long involvement in the intricate process of lobbying and cooperating with government agencies on numerous development projects.¹⁸

The Ministry of the Environment and Population (before 1983 the Ministry of Environment and Development Supervision) under the leadership of Emil Salim was particularly sympathetic to cooperation with NGOs from the late 1970s. The formation of the important environmental NGO, WALHI (*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*, Indonesia Environment Network) largely occurred under his sponsorship.¹⁹ Environmental legislation from 1982 officially recognised the contribution of NGOs while WALHI and other NGOs, participated in drafting environmental impact assessment regulations.

¹⁵ As Burnell (1996, p. 182) notes, this also reflected changes in the international development paradigm promoted by international agencies like the World Bank. Major international donors increasingly emphasised the role of the non-government sector. As a result, government anti-poverty and rural development programmes increasingly provided room for initiatives from the voluntary sector.

¹⁶ This was symbolised by the 1993 appointment of UGM's Professor Mubyarto, the doyen of neo-populist economists and longtime advocate of a non-capitalist 'Pancasila economy' as director of a special development program for backward villages (*Program Inpres Desa Tertinggal*) in Bappenas (*Badan Perancang Pembangunan Nasional*, National Planning Board).

¹⁷ *Bina Swadaya*, for example - admittedly one of the more conservative NGOs - in 1995 listed Golkar leader Imam Sudarwo as chair of its executive committee: Bina Swadaya, 1995. *Bina Swadaya* could trace its origins back to *Ikatan Petani Pancasila*, the Pancasila Peasants' Association, an anti-communist outfit established by Catholic intellectuals in the late 1950s to counter the communist *Barisan Tani Indonesia* (Indonesian Peasants' League) in rural areas. From its early years *Bina Swadaya* received considerable government support. On the history of *Bina Swadaya* see *ibid*, p. 1-3; Eldridge, p. 66-72.

¹⁸ This was borne out when CIDES, the ICMI-linked think-tank headed by Adi Sasono, became a vehicle for the promotion of economic and neo-populist strategies long nurtured in NGO circles. Sasono (1995, p. 45) explained that the aims of NGOs could not be achieved without access to government: 'My experience based on more than a dozen years involvement in LSMs was that the problems of street vendors, who are frequently relocated, cannot possibly be resolved if we are not involved in decision making on town planning.' He went on to explain that LSM programs in areas like housing, banking and immunisation needed funds and, for that, links were needed to 'power'.

¹⁹ WALHI was headed for many years by Erna Witoelar, wife of Golkar secretary general Rachmat Witoelar (1988-1993). Emil Salim was one of the civilian technocrat ministers who had been close to

Even rights-oriented NGOs maintained links, although usually of a different order, with government officials, inviting government spokespeople to their public forums, lobbying on particular issues, and sometimes being invited to consultations (especially by DPR commissions) on draft regulations or laws.²⁰ Informal and chance meetings also often occurred on the elite Jakarta social circuit: many (especially older) NGO leaders came from similar backgrounds to many senior officials, and continued to move in similar social circles.²¹

Contact with sympathetic senior government leaders was often sought specifically for protection against of pressure from the security apparatus. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Emil Salim was even prepared to defend NGOs at moments of high tension, like after the Dili massacre.²² To a lesser extent Home Affairs Minister Rudini (1988-92) was also supportive. After 1993, NGOs had fewer sympathisers in cabinet, although Salim's replacement, Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, also promised to protect NGOs.²³

3.2 'Advocacy': NGO Campaigning

The public image of NGOs which emerged during *keterbukaan* was of increased political visibility and vigour. By the mid-1990s, the term 'LSM' became virtually synonymous with criticism of the government, losing its earlier deliberately non-confrontational connotations.

This was largely because many NGOs adopted a new campaigning approach from the late 1980s, publicly promoting themes of 'human rights' and, from the mid-1990s, 'democratisation'.²⁴ This trend became evident in 1989, when NGOs grouped in INGI (the

many intellectuals and students during the anti-Sukarno alliance, and had maintained relatively warm relations even with many of those who became government critics from the early 1970s.

²⁰ Interviews with Mulyana W. Kusumah, October 24, 1995; Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, October 30, 1995.

²¹ Many had known each other from their student days or the old anti-Sukarno alliance. For example, Adnan Buyung Nasution claimed to be a close friend of Ali Said, the former Minister of Justice: 'Saya Tidak Setuju Revolusi', *Panji Masyarakat*, 1-10 January 1994, p. 51. Kartjono, the head of the large community development oriented NGO, Bina Desa, maintained links with various Golkar functionaries who, like him, had GMNI or nationalist backgrounds: interview with Kartjono, November 17, 1995.

²² See for example 'Menteri KLH Emil Salim: LSM Berperan Di Antara Rakyat dan Pemerintah', *Suara Pembaruan*, January 15, 1992. Numerous NGO leaders interviewed in the course of field work stressed that Emil Salim had a genuine sympathy for NGOs and often acted to protect them.

²³ INFID, 1993b, p. 6 describes a meeting between INFID leaders and Sarwono in April 1993, where the Minister promised to 'make public his support for NGOs'.

²⁴ For example, the 1991 INGI conference was the first to include specific recommendations about the need for political democratisation: INFID, 1993a, p. 57. The 1996 conference of INGI's successor, INFID (International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development) produced a resolution which called for the repeal of the five political laws: INFID, 1996, p. 4.

International NGO Forum on Indonesia) and the SKEPHI-INFIGHT (Indonesian Network for Forest Conservation – Indonesian Front for the Defence of Human Rights) network, ran major campaigns against the Kedung Ombo dam development in Central Java, the Scott paper pulp project in Irian Jaya and the Inti Indorayon pulp mill in North Sumatra. These campaigns involved extensive domestic lobbying, cooperation with student protestors, legal challenges and other publicity-generating techniques, as well as the novel mobilisation of international pressure.²⁵

Such ‘advocacy’ campaigns became common in following years. Advocacy encompassed a wide range of activities, mostly the basic stuff of pressure group and social movement politics everywhere.²⁶ Documentation and research, publications, seminars, lobbying, and electronic networking were all part of the repertoire. Press and publicity work was central: NGO activists were adept at using links with liberal sympathisers in the media, especially as ‘openness’ increased. Litigation and legal challenges remained important, but these were increasingly viewed as publicity-generating adjuncts to broader campaigns. Although larger NGOs rarely organised protests, there was often a de facto division of labour, with smaller mobilisational NGOs or students demonstrating on issues currently the subject of advocacy by larger NGOs.

After 1989, the best publicised campaigns organised by NGOs included opposition to river pollution (1991-92), golf course construction (1993), the Marsinah killing (1993-94) and regulations allowing the military security agency *Bakorstanas* to intervene in labour disputes (1993-94). From the late 1980s, there was marked increase of ‘human rights’ campaigning, which was largely responsible for the greater prominence of this theme in national political discourse. LBH maintained its high profile in this area, but numerous new human rights organisations were established.²⁷ Four related areas where campaigning accelerated were the highly sensitive issues of land and labour, as well as environmentalism and women’s issues, with campaigning in all areas typically focussing on members of poor communities.²⁸

²⁵ In the case of Kedung Ombo, considerable pressure was exerted on the World Bank, greatly embarrassing it and the Indonesian government. On the Porsea pulp mill, see Dodd, 1989. The first concerted international campaign was a 1986 campaign on transmigration: interview with George Aditjondro, March 2, 1994.

²⁶ See Bunnell (1996, p. 198) for a discussion of NGO advocacy work.

²⁷ Among the most prominent were Yapusham (*Yayasan Pusat Studi Hak Asasi Manusia*, Centre for Human Rights Studies), established by Todung Mulya Lubis, former director of YLBHI, and Elsam (*Lembaga Studi dan Advocacy Masyarakat*, Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy), established by another former YLBHI director, Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara.

²⁸ Hence, environmental campaigns were usually essentially about control of land and other resources, while most NGOs concerned with women’s issues typically focused on the most disadvantaged, such as factory, domestic or migrant workers.

The prominence of ‘advocacy’ partly reflected the adoption of a new campaigning style by some of the larger, long-established NGOs, like WALHI and LBH, whose members increasingly believed that it was impossible to promote reform via formal channels like the legal system.²⁹ It was often pioneered, however, by the many new smaller ‘mobilisational’ NGOs (discussed below). The new campaigning was also facilitated by increased networking. INGI was established in 1984-85 as a meeting point for major Indonesian NGOs and their overseas donors and was designed to shadow and put pressure on the government of Indonesia’s own donors at annual IGGI (Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia) conferences. INGI, and its successor organisation, INFID (International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development), eventually resembled a national, indeed, international peak body of major NGOs. There were many other NGO networks, including numerous regional forums and networks huddled around major bodies like WALHI and LBH.

Many NGO activists argued that the totality of campaigning work constituted a long term and incremental struggle to shift the expectations and ground rules of politics, and force compounding concessions from the state. In a term which became popular in NGO circles during the early 1990s, the aim was a ‘counter-hegemonic’ struggle.³⁰ The main audience (as distinct from the beneficiary) for campaign work was those urban middle class elements who had the education, income, leisure time and inclination to observe the major public debates of the day, who read the quality newspapers where NGO campaigns were reported. In short, NGOs were, at least in large part, an instrument for changing middle class consciousness.

3.3. Organising the Poor

Although the audience for NGO campaigning was primarily middle class, NGOs derived their core legitimacy from working for the poor. However, they had varied approaches. The *raison d’être* of community development was practical action for improving living standards. As argued by Eldridge, Billah and others, some community development NGOs were essentially charitable, some based on a developmentalist philosophy similar to that of the government,

²⁹ For example, WALHI became increasingly prepared to confront the government, suing it in 1989 over the Inti Indorayon project, and damaging relations with Emil Salim in the process. In 1994 it ventured further into politically sensitive territory, when it took court action to have declared invalid a Presidential Decree which provided reforestation funds for Habibie’s airplane manufacturer, IPTN: Yayasan Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia et al, 1994. The increased activism in WALHI was accompanied by the displacement of Erna Witoelar at the peak of the organisation by a group of former Bandung student activists, including Zulkarnaen and Deddy Triawan, who were considered to be more prepared to take the organisation in an openly political direction. LBH went furthest among the older organisations, with proposals in the early 1990s that the organisation was to become the ‘locomotive’ of a broad democratic movement (see discussion later this chapter).

³⁰ See for example Aditjondro, 1990; Tirtosudarmo, 1991.

while others argued in neo-populist, ‘alternative development’ terminology that they were engaged in long term ‘empowerment’ (*pemberdayaan*). Mostly, such NGOs were based on a self-help philosophy (*swadaya* meaning ‘self reliance’) and encouraged the formation of small cooperatives in poor communities.³¹

Rights-oriented NGOs, especially larger ones, expressed their commitment to the poor primarily through advocacy work. Although they often stressed the importance of ‘community organisation, when they campaigned on a land dispute, environmental pollution or similar problem, they often had limited direct contact with the affected community. Typically, NGO workers would visit the site of the dispute, research and document it in detail, perhaps community members would be involved as witnesses or litigants in a court case, but their active participation would often stop there. In short, rights-oriented NGOs often spoke on behalf of the poor, without mobilising them.

Many, however, attempted to pursue a model described as *pendampingan* (literally ‘accompaniment’), *pengorganisasian masyarakat* (community organisation) or, sometimes, *mobilisasi* (mobilisation).³² Ideally, this meant facilitating the autonomous organisation of poor communities and their ability to confront their own social, political and economic problems. When a ‘case’ came to the attention of the NGO concerned, activists would enter the affected community, establish contacts, stimulate the formation of small groups, hold training sessions, and organise a public campaign on the issue in question. Such work entailed significant risk of repression and could rarely be carried out openly. Historically, it was a product of the 1970s ‘populist shift’ in the intellectual circles which underpinned NGOs.

Again, members of the larger established NGOs like LBH had been among the first to experiment with the new approaches (see discussion below). However, the new trend came into its own with a new generation of what Billah calls ‘transformative’ and Eldridge calls ‘mobilisational’ NGOs, from the mid to late 1980s.³³ As Eldridge notes, the emergence of this

³¹ Leaders of community development NGOs frequently argued that, by developing the skills and resources of target groups, they were contributing to long-term processes of social and political empowerment, which could pave the way for a politically significant movement of the poor in the future. Even in practice, there could be overlap with ‘advocacy’ and ‘mobilisational’ approaches. It was common for organisers from groups like Bina Desa (often student activists) to inject political discussion into the cooperatives they organised and, if they came across land disputes in the village where they operated, to organise protests by affected peasants. Such activities were not conducted with organisational blessing, indeed, they were frowned upon: interviews with Bina Desa field workers, 1994 and 1995.

³² Usage of such terms was widely varied. For many NGOs, ‘advocacy’ simply meant campaigning in defence of a community whose rights were being abrogated, and incorporated the kind of community organisation methods discussed here: see for example Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara in Ibrahim, 1995, p. 13-22.

³³ Billah, 1994; Eldridge, 1995.

new generation was definitively marked by the 1988 and 1990 NGO conferences in Bukittinggi and Baturaden, West Java, which passed resolutions criticising the ‘arrogance’ of the big NGOs, their ‘developmentalist’ paradigms and the gulf which separated them from the *rakyat*.³⁴ The essence of such criticisms was that traditional community-development approaches could not improve the poor’s overall social position, because their problems were structural and political in character. Only political empowerment would lead to change.³⁵

Some groups which promoted new, mobilisational approaches were designed as more aggressive counterparts to established NGOs. For example, WALHI spawned SKEPHI, INGI was mirrored (for a time) by its more radical counterpart, INFIGHT, and LBH was complemented by numerous smaller legal aid organisations which claimed to be more progressive. By the early 1990s, there was a large number of groups, many established by former student activists, focused on workers, women, indigenous people and farmers. As the 1990s progressed, many larger NGOs increasingly took on board ‘mobilisational’ arguments (see discussion of LBH below).³⁶

One example of a social sector where the new perspectives were practiced particularly intensively from the early 1990s was industrial labour. Several NGOs concerned with workers’ welfare were established in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but these mostly adopted a purely welfare approach.³⁷ Some pursued redress through the courts for workers who had been treated illegally, or encouraged workers to become active in the state sponsored union federation.³⁸ Following the accelerated industrialisation from the mid-1980s and subsequent increase of industrial disputes, some NGOs began to promote essentially underground working class organisation.³⁹ Mostly they were involved in establishing links with small groups of workers, educating them about their legal rights and potential industrial power, developing networks of labour activists and, sometimes, facilitating strikes or protests. Political perspectives varied widely among such NGOs. Some were formed by student activists who, for ideological reasons,

³⁴ See Eldridge, 1995, p. 39-40 for a summary.

³⁵ For one such example, see Tjahjono, n. d.

³⁶ By the early 1990s there was intense and lengthy reflection, including among some of the bigger and better established NGOs, about how to break free from old approaches and become a truly ‘counter-hegemonic’ movement aimed at ‘strengthening civil society’ and pursuing ‘social transformation’ For example, in 1992 an NGO meeting was held in Cisarua on the topic of ‘integrated rural development’, where much criticism of the weaknesses of NGOs in ideological and paradigmatic terms was put forward: Fakhri, 1993, p. 2. See also Indeco De Unie, 1993a.

³⁷ For example, *Yasanti*, a small women’s NGO established by former students in Yogyakarta, at first encouraged women workers to learn new skills, pool their savings, and to establish small sewing and similar enterprises for themselves - effectively encouraging them to leave wage labour: interviews with Yasanti activists, March 1994.

³⁸ LBH in Jakarta initially adopted this approach: see discussion below.

viewed the working class as an important strategic force.⁴⁰ Some were motivated by a vision derived from European social-democracy, others were linked to Protestant and Catholic groups influenced by the new social justice emphasis which affected many of the world's churches after the 1960s.⁴¹ Some groups began with a conventional community-development approach, but moved toward promoting quasi-union organising.⁴²

Such activities by NGOs led to the first attempts to establish open labour unions beyond government control. The first attempt was *Serikat Buruh Merdeka - Setiakawan* (The Solidarity Free Trade Union), which was established in 1990 under the influence of activists from several NGOs.⁴³ The more resilient SBSI (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia*, Indonesian Prosperous Labour Union) was launched in 1992, drawing on a network of Batak Christian and other NGOs.⁴⁴ These initiatives faced great challenges, due both to internal divisions and repression: Hadiz labels them 'aspiring unions', because they were prevented from operating within factories and were instead based on informal, *kampung* level groups.⁴⁵ Even so, it was clear that by the early 1990s, NGOs were giving birth to new kinds of mass organisation which partly superseded them.⁴⁶

4. Pressure from Government

With the growing heterogeneity of NGOs from the 1980s, relations with government became similarly diverse. Many developmentalist NGOs still maintained good relations, hence government discourse often differentiated between 'good' and 'bad' LSMs. Overall, however,

³⁹ See Hadiz, 1997, p. 134-156 for a discussion of the range of labour NGOs, the kind of organisational work they conducted, and the proto-unions to which they gave birth.

⁴⁰ For example, *Yayasan Arek* in Surabaya, *Yayasan Maju Bersama* (the Advance Together Foundation) in Jakarta, as well as numerous other open and more underground groupings in other cities.

⁴¹ Important examples were *Institut Sosial* (Social Institute) and *Yayasan Komunikasi Massa* (Mass Communication Foundation): Hadiz, 1997, p. 152-53.

⁴² *Yasanti*, discussed above, was one such, with income-generating projects eventually giving way to more quasi-union organisation. Many such organisations combined labour organising work with more traditional, legalistic approaches. For example, they might stress only workers' existing legal rights in the discussion circles they established, channel workers' grievances primarily through the courts, or (as a last resort) prefer organising delegations to the local Department of Labour office rather than encouraging strike action.

⁴³ See Bourchier, 1994; Hadiz, 1997, p. 145-147.

⁴⁴ Interviews with SBSI activists, including Muchtar Pakpakhan, February 9, 1994. See also Hadiz, 1997, p. 147-152.

⁴⁵ Hadiz, 1997, p. 136.

⁴⁶ Similar, though less dramatic initiatives occurred in rural organising. From the mid to late 1980s numerous small land-focused NGOs came into existence, eventually resulting in the 1994 formation of KPA (*Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria*, Consortium for Agrarian Reform), which grouped over sixty such organisations and also claimed six independent peasant associations as affiliates: KPA, n.d. These associations had also mostly been facilitated by small NGOs and student groups, and were required to operate on essentially underground lines.

increased political assertiveness prompted increased hostility. NGOs (especially those which took their campaigns outside the country) were called ‘national traitors’ (by then ABRI Commander Try Sutrisno) and accused of harbouring ‘extreme centre’ elements, even communists.⁴⁷ In the field, many NGOs, particularly newer mobilisational ones and those oriented to human rights, experienced harassment and surveillance.⁴⁸

Government pressure fluctuated in response to particular NGO initiatives and the wider political context. After INGI criticised the World Bank in 1989 over the Kedung Ombo project, there was a noticeable increase in harassment in the regions and condemnation by government officials. One result was a new regulation issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1990 (Inmendagri No. 8 1990) which provided for greater government supervision of NGOs.⁴⁹ International condemnation of the 1991 Dili Massacre resulted in further bellicose statements, and some leaders of large NGOs were reprimanded.⁵⁰ The government’s cancellation of Dutch aid in early 1992 greatly impacted on many NGOs, especially vocal ones like LBH. After the dissolution of IGGI in March 1992, Minister Rudini called for Indonesian NGOs to withdraw from INGI and there were attempts to draw NGOs into various government-NGO forums.⁵¹ Pressure recurred from late 1995, especially against NGOs involved in pollwatch and pro-Megawati campaigns (see chapter eight).

5. An NGO Case Study: LBH

LBH, the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute, was one of the oldest and most influential New Order NGOs. It was also one of the largest: by 1994 it claimed 10 branch offices and 4 project bases, and employed 129 persons (74 lawyers and 55 others).⁵² During the 1990s, LBH represented clients in thousands of court cases throughout the country, including most of those which involved political controversy, and its leaders appeared in the press virtually daily. At the same

⁴⁷ During the OTB scare of late 1995, for example, certain LSMs were targeted. According to the Chief of the ABRI Information Centre, Brigadier General Suwarno Adiwijoyo, there were ‘LSMs characterised by inflaming all differences into contradictions (*mempertentangkan segala perbedaan*), such as cultivating the hatred of poor people for the rich, of society for the government’ which displayed ‘communist characteristics’: *Forum Keadilan*, October 23, 1995, p. 18-19.

⁴⁸ Even community development NGOs often experienced difficulties at the local level when their operatives attempted to establish projects in remote rural areas: interview with Aris Santoso, October 25, 1995.

⁴⁹ See Eldridge, 1995, p. 49-50.

⁵⁰ Coordinating Minister on Political and Security Affairs Sudomo, for example, said that NGOs which disrupted national stability, received overseas funds without informing the government or assisted foreigners should be categorised as ‘dissidents’: *Suara Merdeka*, January 15, 1992.

⁵¹ See INFID, 1993b, especially p. 1-7. In early 1994 there were attempts to control NGOs more closely via a new Presidential decree on NGOs: Corruthers & Suryatna, 1995, p. 138-39.

⁵² Harman et al, 1995, p. 205. Figures reported in 1996 were 12 branch offices and 14 project bases in 26 provinces and approximately 160 lawyers: *Jakarta Post*, February 28, 1996.

time, LBH's aims - the consolidation of the rule of law and extension of legal, civil and political rights - constituted it as an archetypal institution of civil society, concerned to defend societal autonomy against the state. The LBH story also mirrors developments, and tensions, in the greater NGO movement.

5.1 LBH and *Negara Hukum*

LBH was established in 1970 essentially as a body to provide pro-bono legal aid to the poor. Despite changes over the years, its focus on the legal system continued. Through the 1990s, LBH continued to use the courts as an arena to promote the *negara hukum* or *rechtsstaat* ideal that the state should submit to the impartial rule of law, and that citizens should thereby be protected from arbitrary acts.

LBH was always largely an organisations of lawyers. It was founded as a pilot project of PERADIN, the Indonesian Bar Association, on the initiative of former KASI (*Kesatuan Aksi Sarjana Indonesia*, Indonesian Graduates' Action Front) leader, Adnan Buyung Nasution.⁵³ Although LBH became organisationally independent in 1980, it still maintained close relations with PERADIN (later IKADIN), cooperating in the formation of defence teams in important political trials, for example.

It is important to remember that LBH was very much founded as part of the 'New Order' project, with initial sponsorship (and financial support) from the Jakarta city administration under Mayor Ali Sadikin. Nevertheless, Lev argues that independent lawyers' direct interest in a powerful and autonomous legal system gave them a proclivity for *negara hukum* ideology. Indeed, he argues that 'law movements' can arise among broader middle class groups who look to legal protection to shield them against intrusive state action.⁵⁴ During the early New Order, many lawyers and other liberals were rapidly disabused from their initial faith in the new government's commitment to the supremacy of law, and this fuelled the growth of LBH and its campaigning style.

The kernel of the *negara hukum* argument advanced by the founders of LBH was that the exercise of state power had to be limited, divided and controlled if the rights of citizens were to be protected. From the start they were fully conversant with the arguments of liberal political theory that in order to protect citizens from state caprice, in addition to a strong judiciary,

⁵³ On the early history of LBH, see LBH, 1973a; Lev, 1987; Radjab, 1994.

⁵⁴ Lev, 1978, p. 38-42; Lev, 1996, p. 14-15.

political control mechanisms including civil liberties, separation of powers and, ultimately, government accountability to the populace via free elections were also needed.⁵⁵ However, in the early years LBH lawyers, along with many other New Order intellectuals, retained ambivalent attitudes about the government and political change, partly attributable to the influence of ideas associated with modernisation theory. A recurring theme in writings by LBH leaders in the 1970s was that weaknesses in the rule of law were partly because of cultural factors, notably the persistence of ‘feudal’ ideas in the general population, which in turn flowed from economic backwardness.⁵⁶ The logical conclusion was that a long period was necessary to construct a democratic system (one or two generations according to prominent LBH lawyer Yap Thiam Hien) and that a central motor of this evolution would be cultural and economic change.⁵⁷

LBH leaders in the early 1970s thus most strongly articulated the judicial, legal aspect of the *negara hukum* philosophy, that a strong and independent legal system was a prerequisite for control of state power. From the outset, they argued strongly for principles like equal access to justice, fair trials, and judicial independence.⁵⁸ They attempted to strengthen the legal system by providing legal aid to clients who were unable to pay for themselves. In this sense, LBH was primarily a service organisation: early LBH documents compared its role favourably with that of a health service in the legal system.⁵⁹ However, although LBH provided legal counsel in all kinds of civil and criminal cases, from the start the organisation ‘had no compunction about challenging the government’.⁶⁰ It was involved in political trials and lawsuits where ordinary citizens were pitted against the state, as when it represented kampung dwellers forced aside by the Jakarta administration for development projects.⁶¹

⁵⁵ See for example Yap Thiam Hien, 1973.

⁵⁶ See for example Adnan Buyung Nasution’s, ‘Tiga Hambatan: Kultur, Konsepsi Politik dan Keadaan Ekonomi’ [Three Obstacles: Culture, Political Conceptions and the Economic Situation] (which appears to have been written in about 1976) in Nasution, 1981, p. 23-48. Nasution argues (p. 41) that ‘[t]raditional values which put great stress on harmony and conformity in all matters’ were a key source of the poor state of the law in Indonesia. The aim was the development of ‘modern’ society where values like equality before the law, achievement and personal responsibility were widespread.

⁵⁷ Yap Thiam Hien, 1973.

⁵⁸ For example, despite the broad political sweep and philosophical grasp of the Yap Thiam Hien article cited above, the body of the article concentrates primarily on the narrowly legal aspects of the abuse of power. It begins with a narrow and legalistic definition of the term (p. 22) and concentrates on jurisprudential remedies to it, such as the writ of habeas corpus and mechanisms available in administrative law (p. 26-7).

⁵⁹ LBH, 1973a, p. 13.

⁶⁰ Lev, 1987, p. 17.

⁶¹ Some of these became *cause célèbre*, such as the case at Lubang Buaya in 1971: Lev, 1987, p. 17-18; LBH, 1973a, p. 27-29. On the land dispute cases handled by LBH in these years, see Saleh & Assegaf, 1977. Even at this early stage, LBH was not tied to an exclusively litigational role. According to Adnan Buyung Nasution the organisation in these early cases played an ‘intermediary’ between residents and the Jakarta administration, learning that it could resolve these cases by negotiation and pressure exerted via the press: interview, December 5 1995.

The legal core of *negara hukum* philosophy remained a central pillar of LBH down the years.⁶² Even into the 1990s the organisation was still run mainly by lawyers, including some of the most talented in the country. Its three executive directors during the *keterbukaan* period, Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara (1986-93), Adnan Buyung Nasution (1993-96) and Bambang Widjojanto (1996-) were all noted courtroom advocates. Representing clients in courts remained the core of LBH's work, and its lawyers continued to handle most controversial political cases, ranging from subversion trials of East Timorese or Acehese separatists, through to appeals against dispossession orders in land disputes.⁶³ LBH lawyers took their courtroom work very seriously, arguing legal principles strenuously, and taking great heart at victories, large or small, on points of law. They continued to view their role as an exemplary means to promote judicial independence, impartiality and effectiveness. The organisation also explored new judicial remedies to state abuses, such as class actions and judicial review of regulations. All of this was despite the great disillusionment caused down the years by the manifest absence of independence in the judicial system: by the early 1990s, no political trial defended by LBH lawyers had resulted in an acquittal.

5.2 LBH Campaigning and *Bantuan Hukum Struktural*

In the early 1970s LBH openly proclaimed it aimed to promote legal reform and awareness, to 'control' or 'correct' government action, playing a role similar to the *ombudsman* in Scandinavian countries.⁶⁴ Individuals associated with it - including lawyers Nasution, Yap Thiam Hien and Suardi Tasrif, and others like Mochtar Lubis and Johannes Princen, were among the period's most outspoken advocates of civil rights and many were harassed and detained for their views.

However, when it came to their organisation, LBH leaders initially disavowed political aims and stressed that there should be no misunderstandings with the government.⁶⁵ LBH founders had been active in the 1966 campaign against Sukarno, and in the early 1970s some remained

⁶² In the 1990s, LBH publications continued to reflect lawyers' professional and philosophical preoccupation with the strengthening of the judiciary, the rule of law and legal impartiality. See, for example, Harman & Hendaridi, 1991.

⁶³ In 1992, for example, the Jakarta office dealt with 613 political/civil cases, 382 labour cases, 343 land cases, 69 environment and 1152 'others' (marital, consumer etc): YLBHI, 1993, p. 5.

⁶⁴ LBH, 1973a, p. 12-13. Some of the younger activists associated with LBH argued from an early date that the organisation could act as a vehicle to express the aspirations of the poor: Lubis & Erman, 1973, p. 84.

⁶⁵ LBH, 1973a, p. 15 & 16.

close to certain senior military officers and technocrats and shared with them some similarities in political outlook.⁶⁶

As time passed, LBH was increasingly open about taking its *negara hukum* philosophy to broader political conclusions. A turning point was *Malari*, when several founding members of LBH, including Nasution, were detained or interrogated. The organisation survived only by scaling down its activities.⁶⁷ In the late 1970s, however, LBH expanded rapidly establishing new branches and relations with overseas donor organisations.⁶⁸ In 1980, the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) was established, partly to minimise the risks of infiltration, and was charged with coordinating the different branches.

From the late 1970s, LBH took on the appearance of a campaigning human rights organisation. In 1978 it coordinated a spirited campaign in defense of detained student activists. In 1979 it established a Human Rights Division, and outspoken members of the first post-1966 generation of student activists came to prominence in the organisation, including Todung Mulya Lubis who became head of the new division and the Jakarta branch.⁶⁹ They organised more vigorous outreach activities: seminars, public meetings, poster and essay competitions, magazines and, from 1979, an annual Human Rights Report.⁷⁰ In the early 1980s new programs, like training ‘para-legals’ and ‘barefoot lawyers’, were introduced to strengthen ‘community legal resources’. There were also early attempts to reach down to poor communities in more direct ways, including rudimentary organisational work among industrial workers in Jakarta.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Adnan Buyung Nasution campaigned for Golkar in the 1971 election. Early LBH documents were peppered with phrases like ‘*pembangunan hukum*’ (legal development) and ‘*perjuangan Orde Baru*’ (‘the New Order struggle’).

⁶⁷ During this period, according to Adnan Buyung Nasution (interview, December 5 1995) security forces initiated attempts to infiltrate and coopt LBH. Measures taken to safeguard the organisation included returning to a narrow focus on legal representation and the dismissal of some of its most outspoken activists, such as Mulya Lubis (still a student at UI): interview with Mulya Lubis, November 15, 1995.

⁶⁸ It received its first foreign grant (from the Dutch funding agency NOVIB) in 1977: interview with Adnan Buyung Nasution, December 5 1995. In 1978 LBH was allowed by the Interior Ministry to establish branches outside Jakarta (it had been disallowed from doing so since 1973 by Kopkamtib) and immediately did so in nine towns: Lev, 1995, p. 114.

⁶⁹ Interview with Mulya Lubis, November 15, 1995.

⁷⁰ Also in 1979 LBH initiated one of its first major public campaigns, for the elimination of the death penalty: interview with Mulya Lubis, November 15, 1995.

⁷¹ A group of LBH activists, led by Fauzi Abdullah, were inspired by contacts they made with striking workers in 1980. In following years, they held training sessions for worker activists recruited in the industrial areas around Jakarta, initially without formal sponsorship by LBH, but later organised under the rubric of a joint program between LBH and the official textile union affiliated to the corporatist labour union federation, FBSI. The initial aim was to provide training for workers concerning their legal rights, but the sessions evolved toward general discussions of conditions in participants’ workplaces, and from there to discussion of the need to organise. Eventually, by about 1982-83, many workers involved in this program went on to establish FBSI branches and many organised strikes and campaigns on wages and conditions: interview with Fauzi Abdullah, November 29, 1995. For contemporary evidence of LBH’s

In the late 1970s and early 1980s this new campaigning outlook came to be expressed in the concept of *Bantuan Hukum Struktural*, 'structural legal aid'.⁷² The concept remained the philosophical underpinning of LBH's approach through to the 1990s. The numerous attempts to expound on it after the late 1970s all indicated that three core propositions were involved.⁷³ First, was that the law itself reflected structural inequalities in society. In the words of a report drafted at a 1980 national legal aid workshop: "Law is a means for the strong to perpetuate their power, while the weak are left far behind with only their weakness."⁷⁴ Clearly, this attitude was part of the populist shift and vogue for 'structural' analysis in critical intellectual circles from the late 1970s.⁷⁵ It also reflected frustration with LBH's previous, litigation-based strategy. By the late 1970s it was plainly manifest that the judiciary was neither autonomous from government nor an effective control over it.

Second, it was suggested that legal aid should aim at fundamental structural change in the legal, social, economic and political systems. In a 1981 article, Nasution argued 'To build a more just and democratic society, it was necessary *not only* to change the basic outlook of society, which remains essentially feudal [the old, modernisation philosophy] but also to change exploitative social structures.'⁷⁶

Third, it was clear that a new style of legal aid was required, because *pro bono* legal aid for individual cases did not affect underlying, non-legal sources of social inequality. The medical metaphor was used once more, this time to criticise *pro bono* legal aid for being like a 'health

concern for labour see: Mahnida 1981; Lubis, 1981b, or a manual produced by the organisation which laid down in simple terms the rights of workers under law: Saleh, 1980.

⁷² The term began to be used in the organisation around 1978, was outlined in greater detail in a national legal aid workshop held in November 1980 and was finally adopted as official policy of the Foundation in 1982: interview with Mulya Lubis, November 15, 1995. For a report on the workshop see *Kompas*, November 21, 1980. This meeting was itself preceded by a meeting of PERADIN in August 1980 which discussed the idea: *Aneka Berita: Bantuan Hukum*, No. 13, September 1980, p. 10-11.

⁷³ For some of the major discussions of structural legal aid see *Laporan Komisi Bantuan Hukum Struktural*, p. 2, in LBH, 1981; Lubis, 1981a & 1986; Nusantara, 1981; Nasution, 1984 & 1985a, & 'Bantuan Hukum Struktural: Suatu Langkah Ke Depan' in Nasution, 1981.

⁷⁴ This was the meeting where the concept was first officially formulated: *Laporan Komisi Bantuan Hukum Struktural*, p. 2, in LBH, 1981. See also 'Bantuan Hukum Struktural: Suatu Langkah Ke Depan', in (Adnan Buyung) Nasution: 1981, p. 126 & 127.

⁷⁵ The volume on 'structural poverty' edited by Selo Soemardjan was widely quoted by LBH leaders, as were works by dependency theorists. See for example Lubis, 1981b.

⁷⁶ Nasution, 1981, p. 112.' The precise character of the structures which required fundamental change was not clearly enunciated, beyond a broad inequality between the 'strong and the weak' or 'centre and periphery' (the second formulation is from Lubis' 1981 article). This vagueness meant that the core liberal philosophy of the organisation remained intact. Nevertheless, Nasution argued that at this time there was even a 'revolutionary' sentiment current in LBH, which argued that traditional legal aid was postponing the process of 'regime decay', by responding to and salving societal grievances: Nasution, 1995, p. 23-24.

service which does not take into account social conditions.⁷⁷ Instead, legal aid should aim for the empowerment of the poor.⁷⁸ No advocates of the new concept suggested that courtroom legal assistance should be abandoned, merely modified and combined with other measures. Initially, Lev argues, 'structural legal aid' functioned largely to justify the non-litigational, work which LBH already conducted.⁷⁹ However, its implications were potentially far-reaching, and as opportunities for political change increased, they proved difficult to reconcile with LBH's litigational orientation.

⁷⁷ Lubis, 1981a, p. 57.

⁷⁸ In Mulya Lubis's (1981, p. 58) formulation, it should be a 'social movement' able to create 'power resources' in peripheral social groups. Adnan Buyung Nasution argued the new approach was mostly a change in emphasis, giving greater prominence to the *kesadaran* (awareness) promotion element which had always been present: Adnan Buyung Nasution, 1984.

⁷⁹ Lev, 1987, p. 21.

5.3. LBH Campaigning during *Keterbukaan*.

During the tenure of Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara as director (1986-93), LBH further refined its approach to litigation. It focused legal aid and advocacy on four strategic 'structural' areas: civil and political rights, labour, land and the environment, where conflict with the state was most acute, and where it was considered campaigning could most enhance collective rights.⁸⁰ LBH was to avoid, so far as possible, involvement in more routine civil and criminal cases. Citizens who approached the organisation on such matters were mostly directed to alternative legal aid bodies, which had proliferated since the 1970s.⁸¹

When a case with a 'structural dimension' came to the attention of LBH, the organisation aimed to move beyond a traditional lawyer-client relationship and instead treat each case as the focus for the development of a 'social movement'.⁸² In theory, this required LBH involving clients (who were increasingly collective groups) in planning and organising the campaign. During Hakim's tenure, the initial policy was to send legal aid workers directly into the field (for example, into a village affected by a land dispute) to provide para-legal training and facilitate community organisation.⁸³

It was soon recognised, however, that LBH lacked the resources to conduct such work alone. The solution was increased reliance on cooperation with other, often mobilisational, NGOs and student activists.⁸⁴ Cooperation was often on a case by case basis, with a de facto division of tasks in the handling of, say, a land dispute. LBH would handle legal aspects, often forming a defence team with lawyers from other NGOs and IKADIN, coordinate the groups involved, and provide the lion's share of the funding (acting, in effect, as intermediary for the disbursement of funds from an overseas donor). The smaller 'partner' (*mitra*) groups would spend more time in the field, organise training, demonstrations and other campaign elements. Such relationships were often tense, the smaller partners often resented LBH's legalism and its dominance of funds and public exposure. Nevertheless, through such ad hoc campaigns, LBH became the

⁸⁰ Interviews with Mulyana W. Kusumah, October 24, 1995; Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, October 30, 1995.

⁸¹ According to several LBH staffers interviewed, such individuals would usually receive some general legal advice before being referred to other legal aid providers. This varied from branch to branch, however, and some of the more legalistic LBH offices continue to provide legal representation on all kind of matters. Fieldnotes 1993-1994.

⁸² Interviews with Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, October 30, 1995; T. Mulya Lubis November 15, 1995, and other LBH activists.

⁸³ Interviews with Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, October 30, 1995; Mulyana W. Kusumah, October 24, 1995.

⁸⁴ Interview with Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, October 30, 1995.

centre of a broad network of NGOs and student groups.⁸⁵ Networking also occurred on a more permanent basis. LBH was important in initiating INGI and its successor INFID, as well as many regional NGO forums and issue-based NGO networks.⁸⁶

There was, however, considerable variation between LBH branches. Branches in Bandung, Surabaya and Yogyakarta, for example, were mostly run by younger individuals, often recruited directly from the student movement and worked closely with partner groups in advocacy campaigns, sometimes even experimenting with direct organisation of poor communities.⁸⁷ Some other branches were dominated by lawyers more suspicious of innovation and inclined to emphasise more traditional, litigation-based approaches.

5.4. LBH and Democratisation

LBH's transformation became even clearer after an internal crisis precipitated the return of its founder, Adnan Buyung Nasution, as director in 1993. Nasution introduced the idea that LBH should be the *lokomotif demokrasi*, the engine of a broad movement for democratisation, assisting the development of student groups, human rights bodies and other 'civil society groups'.⁸⁸ If the precise meaning of his proposal was unclear, it underlined the extent to which the focus of LBH had changed.⁸⁹ Through the 1990s LBH publications and public statements by its leaders, increasingly referred to the need for thorough political reform. A Four Year Plan released in 1994 stated that the two principal medium-term aims of the organisation were the development of 'democratic forces in society' and 'an increasingly democratic system of government.' Numerous specific benchmarks were proposed by which these goals could be measured, collectively constituting a comprehensive platform for political reform. These benchmarks included greater 'limitation of military intervention in social and political life',

⁸⁵ It is worth noting that human rights organisations frequently acted as informal coordinating centres for all manner of alegal and proto-opposition under authoritarian rule: see for example the discussion of the Church-linked *Vicaría De La Solidaridad* in Chile in Fruhling, 1992.

⁸⁶ One example of the latter was *Forsol* (*Forum Solidaritas untuk Buruh*, Worker Solidarity Forum) which grouped the major NGOs working on labour issues in Jakarta, including a number of mobilisational NGOs carrying out quasi-union organisation. *Forsol* was established in 1991 at the time of the massive strike at the Gajah Tunggul plant in Tangerang. LBH paid the wage of the coordinator of this group. Interview with Teten Masduki, January 31, 1994.

⁸⁷ The Surabaya branch, for example, developed extensive networks in the industrial areas surrounding the city and organised regular training sessions for workers at its headquarters: interviews at Surabaya LBH, March 1994.

⁸⁸ See for example Nasution, 1995, p. 27.

⁸⁹ 'In this decade of the 1990s it is even realised that the structural struggle must be increasingly broadened, in the sense that it is not sufficient just to strive for *empowering* at the *grass root* level, but it instead must also be carried through a political struggle which aims to bring about changes in the direction of democracy. The aim is to restructure the political system and institutions in order that they return to national aspirations for democracy, human rights and law.' (Adnan Buyung) Nasution, 1995, p.24.

repeal of the packet of five political laws, greater freedom for the press, judicial independence, ‘development of a more organized national mass movement’ and genuinely free elections.⁹⁰

There were many other expressions of LBH’s new focus. For example, in the mid-1990s LBH activists, most prominently Nasution himself, campaigned publicly against the ideological underpinnings of the regime, including previously sensitive areas like the sacrosanct (*sakral*) character of the 1945 constitution and ‘integralist’ ideology. In a series of press articles and speeches, Nasution argued vigorously that such concepts were fundamentally incompatible with aspirations for constitutional democracy.⁹¹

Intertwined with increased promotion of political rights and democratisation, was the idea of *masyarakat sipil* (later, *madani*) – ‘civil society’. This became another ubiquitous theme in material produced by LBH (and by many other NGOs and opposition groups) in the 1990s. Although the term was often used loosely, it generally connoted a pluralistic and organised society, guaranteed by respect for civil and political rights. ‘Civil society’ was thus conceived as both a vehicle to achieve democratic reform and a means to exercise vigilant control over the state, a way of conceptualising both goals and NGOs themselves. A paper by NGO activist M. M. Billah which circulated widely in NGO circles was typical:

In a normative sense, NGOs are ‘non governmental organisations’ established by the inhabitants of civil society, so that ‘ideologically’ and ‘organisationally’ they should be ‘independent’ from the state ... the ‘struggle for democracy’ is the struggle of civil society against (the uncontrolled power of) the state.⁹²

The new civil society discourse partly reflected international intellectual trends, toward which Indonesian NGOs had always been sensitive. In part it extended the philosophies of ‘social control’ and ‘self-reliance’ (*swadaya*) which had developed among critics since the early New Order. It also encapsulated long-standing desires of groups like LBH to constrain state power,

⁹⁰ YLBHI, 1994, p. 15. Note, however, that this document was not produced to be distributed publicly in Indonesia. It was, rather, prepared for foreign donor organisations.

⁹¹ See for example Nasution 1993d, a speech presented to a seminar at Yogyakarta’s Universitas Gadjah Mada in September 1993. According to Nasution his criticism of ‘integralism’ was discussed in a meeting of Political and Security Ministers later that year (I sighted a copy of a letter apparently from the Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs, Soesilo Soedarman, mentioning Nasution’s name and advocating more concerted ‘teaching’ of integralist doctrine). Thereafter, Nasution was prevented from addressing campus meetings at several campuses in late 1993 and early 1994: interview, February 8, 1994.

⁹² Billah, 1994, p. 1 In 1993 and 1994 a series of ‘reflective’ meetings were held by NGO activists and intellectuals in various towns in Jakarta, organised first by Indeco De Unie and later CPSM (Circle for Participatory Management, a Jakarta based NGO). The reports of these meetings give a clear indication of the extent to which ‘civil society’ discourse had penetrated NGOs: Indeco De Unie, 1993a and 1993b (Transcript of NGO seminars in Salatiga, Bandung, Boyolali, Jakarta and Bogor, March – May and June

in language suited to the greater political fluidity of the 1990s. The term ‘civil society’ invariably appeared in contradistinction to the ‘state’ (*negara*). Key documents produced by LBH, and many other NGOs and dissident groupings, primarily conceptualised the struggle as one between the (repressive, authoritarian) state and (essentially undifferentiated) society.⁹³

At the same time LBH intensified its emphasis on the ‘empowerment’ of lower class groups, in line with the focus on ‘structural’ cases. Indeed, the radical, anti-developmental, even anti-capitalist populism which characterised much student dissent and smaller mobilisational NGOs permeated some LBH literature.⁹⁴ Interestingly, there was also an extension of anti-statist arguments to the economic sphere, involving essentially liberal views about the congruence between economic and political freedoms. For example, Todung Mulya Lubis, the former LBH director (and Board of Trustees member in the 1990s) in the early 1990s wrote a series of articles arguing that economic deregulation should be accompanied by greater legal and political certainty, predictability and regularisation in order to provide a more stable investment climate.⁹⁵ This was a change from the early 1980s when Lubis had argued against ‘trickle down’ and attacked the alliance between capitalists and ‘*komprador*’ in terms derived from dependency theory.⁹⁶ Documents produced by LBH posited a similar link between political democracy and the market, arguing for example, that authoritarianism had become a break on economic development, and that democratisation would enhance economic performance by removing corrupt levies on investors.⁹⁷ Such discourse in LBH and among other NGOs reflected a broader intellectual shift in favour of liberal economic views, influenced by the international shift toward market ideology.⁹⁸ It is also possible to view it as an extension of

1993); Fakhri, 1993; Billah, Busyairi, & Aly, 1993; Billah (ed), 1994. See also Mahasin, 1995; Hikam, 1993.

⁹³ One reflection of this new consciousness was a revival of the old term ‘*ornop*’ or ‘*organisasi non-pemerintah*’ (non-governmental organisation) to replace LSM (*Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*, ‘Self-reliant Community Institutions’), which it will be remembered from chapter two, was initially introduced precisely because it did not imply opposition to the state. For an example of YLBHI documents suffused with the new civil society discourse and characterisation of the state as the chief adversary, see Radjab, Bastaman and Hendardi, 1991.

⁹⁴ To cite one example, one issue of an LBH magazine in 1994 incorporated articles on themes traditionally associated with the Indonesian left, such as the validity of May 1 as international workers’ day, the importance of the term *buruh* to describe workers and the fundamental incompatibility of interests between workers and employers: Hasan, ‘Sarekat Buruh dan Perjuangannya’ [Labour Unions and their struggle], in the May 1994 issue of LBH’s *Jurnal Demokrasi* (No. 3), p. 29-31. One of the editors of this edition was Wilson, later an important leader of the radical student based group PRD and secretary general of its labour affiliate, PPBI.

⁹⁵ See Lubis, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1994 & 1995.

⁹⁶ For examples of his earlier articles see Lubis, 1981a & 1981b.

⁹⁷ See for example Radjab & Ruswandi, 1991.

⁹⁸ As Liddle notes, many intellectuals who in the *Malari* era criticised government policy on economic nationalist and neo-populist grounds, from the late 1980s argued that the government needed to pursue economic liberalisation policies more consistently: Liddle, 1991, p. 423. One of those to whom Liddle refers is Sjahrir, one of the most prominent young populist critics of the government at the time of *Malari* and subsequent populariser of the basic needs approach, who emerged in the 1990s as one of the country’s

anti-statist arguments in the political sphere, even to view the new discourse on ‘civil society’ (a ‘private sphere’) as, at least partly, an expression of a rising liberal ideological tide in the middle classes.

During the 1990s, as LBH became increasingly assertive, and the security apparatus increasingly concerned about middle class dissent, relations between the two worsened. Senior military officers sometimes labelled LBH subversive, its members were subject to occasional harassment and detention, its publications occasionally banned and meetings broken up.⁹⁹ Unlike even the early 1980s, when at least Vice President Adam Malik could be called upon, the organisation had few protectors in government.

However, it was almost universally believed that the government could not ban LBH, or take other serious action against it. Its international links and its deeply embedded position in the legal system all militated against this.¹⁰⁰ So did its middle class support base, which Lev argues derived from the most liberal element of the Indonesian middle classes, not only lawyers but also journalists, intellectuals, students and others.¹⁰¹ At no time did this appear more true than in the mid-1990s when LBH operated as the de-facto centre of a broad network of activist organisations. LBH offices were hubs of activity, with a steady stream of students, NGO activists, lawyers, and others passing through its doors.¹⁰² LBH offices were meeting places and press conference centres for a broad range of groups.¹⁰³ In such ways, the *lokomotif demokrasi* moniker was partly justified. However, it was seriously brought into question by a series of internal conflicts.

5.5 Internal conflict

leading spokespeople for the market, economic deregulation and its eventual liberalising impact on the political system. See for example Sjahrir, 1994a & 1994b.

⁹⁹ ‘Teror Pun Terus Berlanjut’, *Tiras*, February 23, 1995, p. 50. See also Adnan Buyung Nasution’s (1995, p. 27) discussion of harassment in the Surabaya branch of the organisation.

¹⁰⁰ Although various smaller NGOs, student groups and other organisations in the 1990s took arguments in favour of democratisation and mobilisation much further than LBH, such groups generally lacked the institutional and financial infrastructure, networks and profile which LBH had built over its previous twenty years.

¹⁰¹ Lev, 1987, p. 27-31.

¹⁰² During my fieldwork in Jakarta, it was always relatively easy to locate someone from one of the student, dissident or other oppositional groupings discussed in this thesis: one needed simply to sit in the lobby of LBH and either the person him/herself or someone associated with his/her organisation would invariably soon appear through the doorway.

¹⁰³ Even the two extra-legal parties, PUDI (*Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia*, Indonesian United Democracy Party) and PRD (*Partai Rakyat Demokratik*, People’s Democratic Party) launched themselves in the Jakarta LBH office in 1996.

From its adoption, 'structural legal aid' created tensions within LBH. These first peaked in 1984, when a number of lawyers resigned from the organisation. They were led by Abdul Rachman Saleh, a former chief of the Jakarta branch, who attacked the concept for relegating litigation to a secondary position, implying loss of faith in the law, and setting LBH on the path toward organising an extra-legal, even revolutionary, movement.¹⁰⁴

During *keterbukaan*, internal disputes again caused major disruption to the organisation. In 1993 when the organisation had to elect a successor to Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara as director, demonstrations occurred in LBH offices and protest petitions were signed by LBH activists and 'partner' organisations. The institution was accused of being undemocratic and ignoring the views of staff and supporters.¹⁰⁵ This dispute was resolved temporarily by several internal reforms and Adnan Buyung Nasution's return as director.¹⁰⁶ Conflict flared again in 1995, this time sparked by a leadership dispute in the Yogyakarta branch. In 1996, after Nasution announced he would resign, the dispute over succession became especially bitter. For some months conflict virtually crippled the organisation, eventually resulting in a split.

These disputes partly reflected the personal enmities and factional fluidity common to most large organisations. But underlying them were two major points of contention. The first concerned participation in decision-making. This problem affected all NGOs which used the *yayasan* format which, as indicated above, was common as both a matter of convenience and security against government intervention. Unlike in membership-based *perkumpulan* (associations), whose leaders might be elected, in a *yayasan* ultimate decision making power was vested in an unelected *Dewan Penyantun* (Board of Trustees). In the case of YLBHI, this was dominated by prominent backers of LBH from its early days, such as IKADIN lawyers Harjono Tjitrosoebono and Soekardjo Adijojo, and New Order dissidents like Ali Sadikin and Mochtar Lubis. It thus tended to reflect the more conservative political outlook which marked dissent in the first decade of the New Order. The board had ultimate power over programmatic, constitutional and leadership decisions. LBH staffers, volunteers and branches, let alone members of 'partner organisations', had little formal say on such matters, even if their input into daily operational decisions was substantial. A pivotal issue in the conflicts of 1993 and

¹⁰⁴ The catalyst for the dispute was the appointment of Mulya Lubis as director of YLBHI. For a reply to Abdul Rachman Saleh and his colleagues by Adnan Buyung Nasution, where he takes pains to describe structural legal aid as a natural development of LBH's previous work, and stresses the continuing centrality of litigation, see (Adnan Buyung) Nasution, 1984.

¹⁰⁵ See for example Kelompok Pendemokrasian Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia, 1993, Forum LSM/LPSM DIY, 1993.

¹⁰⁶ See Thompson, 1993.

1996 was thus the call for greater input in the election of new directors, appointment of branch leaders, program formulation and so forth.¹⁰⁷

Intertwined with this, however, was often fundamental discord about the organisation's vision. Despite the simplification involved, it is useful to distinguish between a broadly 'litigational' pole in the organisation, inclined to a more cautious interpretation of LBH's traditions, and a more 'political' pole, which favoured a more vigorous, campaigning style.

Although the contours of this conflict were obscured by the fact that after 1984 LBH lawyers accepted 'structural legal aid', many lawyers in the organisation still tended to emphasise that litigation remained LBH's core activity, devoted much of their (and hence the organisation's) energy accordingly, and endeavoured to avoid a more political interpretation. They found natural allies in the Board of Trustees. Nasution's call for the organisation to become a 'locomotive of democracy' sparked unease among such elements, although during the 1996 conflict, Nasution himself ultimately remained loyal to the 'mainstream' tradition in LBH, indicating that he believed the *lokomotif demokrasi* argument had been over-ambitious.¹⁰⁸

Others desired to take 'structural legal aid' and '*lokomotif demokrasi*' arguments in a more frankly political direction. Some of these were lawyers, most were not. From the early 1980s, many former student activists were recruited to LBH and moved into campaigning and operational posts from the late 1980s.¹⁰⁹ These individuals often had close relations with the current and former student activists associated with LBH through advocacy campaigns. Members of 'partner' organisations were the bulk of demonstrators in LBH offices in 1993 and 1996. These leaders and supporters of LBH were far more inclined to emphasise campaigning and advocacy work over litigation, to talk about organising a 'people's movement,' the struggle for democratisation, organisation of subordinate classes and suchlike.¹¹⁰

Although alignments were often complicated, disputes over leadership and internal democracy often intersected with these more fundamental disputes on philosophy. For example, many

¹⁰⁷ As a result of the 1993 conflict, complex formulae were developed to allow consultative participation in the leadership selection process, without fundamental reform. A perception that these processes were not fully respected contributed to the conflicts of 1995 and, especially, 1996.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Adnan Buyung Nasution, December 10, 1995. See also (Adnan Buyung) Nasution, 1995, p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Mulyana W. Kusumah (a criminologist from UI) became executive director of the foundation in 1993. A number of individuals who had been active in Bandung campuses in the late 1970s and 1980s (like Hendaridi, Paskah Irianto, and Rambun Tjajo) were also appointed to various executive positions. Radjab (1995, p. 143) notes that many of the new LBH staffers did not have legal backgrounds.

¹¹⁰ For one example of the kind of criticisms from activists in partner organisations which urged LBH to take a more frankly political direction, see Wilson, 1995.

proponents of 'internal democracy' argued (at least privately) that their vision of the movement they were building, and LBH's place in it, differed fundamentally from that of those incumbent leaders who remained committed to the professional NGO model. In discussions with LBH activists in 1993-94 some argued their eventual aim was a 'democratically organised mass movement,' even some sort of mass political organisation or political party, and that perhaps LBH could be transformed into such a body.

Conversely, many LBH lawyers and Board of Trustee members argued that fundamentally changing the form of LBH or adopting an overly political approach, would invite repression. Some talked about 'outside forces' attempting to control the organisation and attempts to abandon LBH's principles and disregard its constitution.¹¹¹ More bluntly, Nasution warned of an unwanted process of 'radicalisation' occurring in LBH.¹¹²

The conflict in 1996 became particularly inflamed when Nasution's critics raised his alleged links with government officials. Nasution had long argued that it was essential to maintain lines of communication with officials, including ABRI officers, to obtain information and press for reform. However, personal meetings between him and Minister Habibie and then ABRI Chief of Staff for Social and Political Affairs Hartono (at the height of the furore over the press bannings in 1994), the contents of which he did not divulge to fellow LBH members, led to accusations of a 'deal'.¹¹³ Although he strongly denied the accusations, his opponents quickly tied this alleged 'deal' to what they saw as the conservatism of Nasution and his supporters.¹¹⁴ Accusations of co-optation by Habibie and ICMI became central to the dispute, with Nasution angrily denying that he was co-opted or that there was anything untoward about maintaining his long-standing links with ICMI activists like Adi Sasono and Dawam Rahardjo.¹¹⁵ In the eyes of

¹¹¹ Because Board of Trustee members could rely on the statutes of the organisation, it might be possible to argue that the conflict was partly one between the old dissident 'constitutionalist' outlook versus the new 'democratisation' discourse of the 1990s.

¹¹² 'Saya Tidak Pernah Dibeli Habibie', *Paron*, August 31, 1996, p. 25-27, at p. 25.

¹¹³ Interview with Abdul Hakim Garuda Nasution, October 30, 1995 and others. One widely circulated accusation was that Nasution was offered a post by Habibie as head of a planned human rights body linked to ICMI.

¹¹⁴ For example, when the organisation's Board of Trustees released a list which outlined desirable traits of a replacement for Nasution, including that the candidate should be 'accessible' and *luwes* [flexible, well-mannered] among government officials' or have a 'diplomatic character' [I have not sighted original documents outlining this criterion, press reports included minor variations on the wording]. In any case, this was used to argue that Nasution and his supporters were softening their attitudes toward the government. See for example: 'Suksesi YLBHI, Ribut Lagi, Protes Lagi...', *Kompas*, March 4, 1996. Nasution strongly denied this, arguing that this criterion had in fact been approved by those who criticised him for it: interview, December 15, 1996.

¹¹⁵ See for example 'Harus Ada Aliansi Besar Kekuatan Prodemokrasi', *Forum Demokrasi*, October 9, p. 95-100, where he argues (p. 99) that he did not like viewing ICMI members in a 'black and white fashion', or 'sentencing' them by accusing them of being traitors to the democratic struggle. See also 'Prodemokrasi bukan asal menumbangkan kekuasaan', *Tiras*, March 28, 1996, p. 64-69, at p. 67-68.

Nasution's critics, their suspicions were confirmed when immediately after his resignation as YLBHI director he took up a lucrative post as legal counsel for IPTN and PAL, the state-owned aircraft and shipping companies run by Habibie.¹¹⁶

In any event, eventually Nasution and his supporters, who dominated the Board of Trustees, won out in the conflict of 1996. Nasution's favoured candidate, Bambang Widjojanto a respected lawyer who had headed the organisation in Irian Jaya, was appointed as new director. This, and the process by which he was appointed, resulted in a split. Several LBH leaders, including several prominent non-lawyers, were expelled or left and formed PBHI (*Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia* – Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association). Many of LBH's supporters were disillusioned by the dispute and drifted away or switched their allegiance to the new body, although the organisation's basic infrastructure remained intact.

The internal conflicts in LBH were revealing of tensions inherent in the NGO, even the civil society, model of proto-opposition. LBH was the battleground for contradictory urges. On the one hand, there was the weight of LBH's history, its lawyerly and litigation-oriented heritage, the urge for regulation of the state rather than confrontation with it. There was the pragmatic survivalism embodied in the NGO model, which had enabled organisational integrity despite years of government pressure. Set against these tendencies, was the more impatient, even radical, tone of newer generations of middle class activism.

The conflicts thus illustrated the contradiction between the NGO form adopted by many middle class critics in the 1970s and 1980s, and the bolder political aspirations which strained for expression during *keterbukaan*. In microcosm, it reflected the strains felt as opposition made the transition from civil to political society, as an institution grounded in civil society became a forum for individuals who desired it to play a more political role. LBH's attempt to become the '*lokomotif demokrasi*' was an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to bridge the old format with the new expectations.

6. Conclusion

As noted above, from the late 1980s many younger activists criticised established NGOs for their alleged limitations and conservatism. Such criticisms appeared to partly be borne out by LBH's difficulties in realising the goals of the '*lokomotif demokrasi*'. All Indonesian NGOs,

¹¹⁶ 'Si Abang pun Terbang', *Tiras*, May 30, 1996, p. 8.

although they produced sharp criticisms of the government, coordinated robust campaigns on particular issues, and harboured the sharpest democratising instincts of the middle class, were far from being able to coordinate a mass democratic movement.¹¹⁷

NGOs flourished from the late 1970s largely because they were able to represent themselves in a way that did not appear to overtly threaten the state. When political conditions opened up from the late 1980s, the legacy of these origins made it difficult for NGOs to realise the democratising ideals nurtured by their members. As we have seen, the *yayasan* form, partly adopted to preserve NGOs during difficult times, was a conservatising influence. The very fact that many NGOs were generously supported by overseas funding agencies, which also aided their survival in the dark years from the late 1970s, similarly contributed to their domestication. The large NGOs were run by a professional strata with middle-class incomes and lifestyles and, thus, interests in ensuring that their organisations maintained good standing with the government and did not engage in illegal or otherwise overly risky activity.¹¹⁸ The larger NGOs were averse to risking their institutional resources, their staff, the interests of the communities they serviced and their prospects of achieving short-term aims, by precipitate action. In the words of Aswab Mahasin¹¹⁹:

The larger and stronger an organisation, the greater the political risks to its existence... As a result, it is only the small, the loose and the relatively unorganised who are capable of imagining total change, being very outspoken or taking actions which appear very radical.

In this respect, NGOs were accurate mirrors of middle class opinion, combining considerable caution and ambivalence with desires to constrain, regulate and influence state action and carve out an autonomous zone for societal initiative. Where middle social sectors were weak (not

¹¹⁷ Although there was much talk in NGO circles about being an important force for democratisation, some important NGO leaders were highly skeptical of the possibilities. See for example Mahasin, 1995, p. 8. Mahasin argues that the heterogeneity of NGOs, their organisational characteristics, methods of working and lack of a mass base greatly limited their ability to seriously threaten the government. The most they could do was make 'joint statements or protests, which might give rise to irritation, but are not at all dangerous.'

¹¹⁸ Some Indonesian activists argued more broadly that foreign funding encouraged NGOs to divert their energies to designing projects tailored to donors' requirements, which often included a community development orientation (rather than a more political approach), narrowly conceived professionalism (rather than developing a mass base), and even good relations with government. Nevertheless, from the mid-1990s many overseas donor institutions - including USAID - increasingly funded environmental, human rights, women's, and 'civil society' or 'promotion of pluralism' programmes.

¹¹⁹ Mahasin, 1995, p. 7. This is a common phenomenon, of course, for semi or proto-opposition in repressive climates. Chua Beng-Huat (1994, p. 622), for example, writes of NGOs in Singapore: 'In the interest of gaining incremental concrete benefits for its constituency, an association is constrained to promote reformist causes within the discourse and practices of the existing political framework, rather than risk deregistration by stepping out of bounds. Consequently, once certain levels of effectiveness and acceptability to the regime are gained, an association becomes risk-averse and its ability to promote fundamental changes in the organisation of the state becomes severely blunted.'

only in terms of size, but also in their degree of financial dependence on the state) it was not surprising that ambivalent forms of political action appeared (remember even LBH was dependent on state funds in the 1970s). As these social sectors expanded and grew more confident, it was equally unsurprising that NGOs should have done the same.

The Indonesian experience appears to confirm a key argument of many liberal and pluralist writers: that where economic growth generates an expanding middle class, an increasingly vigorous civil society may come into being. Although many NGO activists privately harboured dreams of a popular upsurge against authoritarianism, the practical focus of most was achievement of particularistic aims, like the improvement of the lot of a particular community, a particular reform in government policy, and so on. In short, NGOs sought to influence, contest and limit state actions at every turn (interacting with, rather than seeking to overthrow, the state). They resembled the multiplicity of private associations discussed in much civil society literature as the crucial bulwark against the state. Many NGOs based their strategies on just such an understanding, conceptualising themselves as part of emerging civil society which aimed to constrain the scope and impact of state action.

Such particularistic institutions of civil society are rarely the direct vehicle for overthrow of an authoritarian regime. However, if sufficiently dense they may contribute to long-term erosion of authoritarian rule, not simply by winning immediate concessions, but also by challenging authoritarian ideologies and changing underlying assumptions in society about how politics should operate. In short, they may contribute to a new hegemony of democratic ideas - especially among the primarily middle class audience of NGO campaigns - and thus lay the groundwork for democratic transformation. Clearly NGOs played an important political function in Indonesia in this respect, contributing prominently to what Chalmers refers to as the 'creeping acceptance in Indonesia of notions associated with political liberalism.'¹²⁰ By the mid-1990s, many issues long promoted by NGOs had become central to national political debate: the public prominence of human rights was a clear example. Indeed, the chief government concession in this area, the formation of the National Human Rights Commission, was initially widely discussed in the media as an attempt to establish an 'alternative' to LBH.

Institutions of civil society may be important for long term delegitimation of authoritarian rule, but as political space opens they may be superseded by bodies which seek more explicitly to mobilise a mass base, or which are located in political society.¹²¹ In Indonesia in the mid-1990s the government and media increasingly portrayed other political phenomena as constituting the

¹²⁰ Chalmers, 1997, p. 65.

¹²¹ Bratton, 1994, p. 57.

main challenges to the state. These included mass-based protest movements and, especially, the reinvigorated PDI. Following chapters discuss these phenomena.