

**THE ELUSIVE QUEST FOR STATEHOOD:
FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF THE STATE, POLITICAL CULTURES
AND ALIRAN POLITICS IN INDONESIA**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the difficulties faced by the Indonesian state in its attempt to achieve a stable statehood. Three fundamental and unresolved issues have vexed the Indonesian state since the inception of the nationalist movement at the turn of last century: the state foundation (the choice between a secular arrangement or an Islamic state), regionalism (a governmental arrangement dominated by the center or a devolution of power to the regions/districts), and the degree of political competition (an authoritarian state or an open political system).

Indonesia is a plural society, with hundreds of ethnic groups, speaking hundreds of languages and dialects. But throughout its history, the ethnic fault line has generally been drawn between the Javanese and the (*seberang*) outer islanders. The geographic distinction between the agricultural Javanese and the maritime *seberang*, coupled with the different extent of influence of Hindu-Buddhism, as well as Islam later on, have created divergent politico-cultural traits among these groups. These ethno-religious groups eventually manifested themselves into political groups. Earlier scholars of Indonesian studies, such as Clifford Geertz and Herbert Feith, called these groups the political *aliran*.

There are three major *aliran* in Indonesia: the nationalists (Javanese-based nominal Muslims), the modernist Muslims (*seberang*-based purist, reformist Muslims), and the traditionalist Muslims (Javanese-based pious Muslims). Each of these groups has a major political party, supported by a network of mass social institutions, and each holds a distinctive view on the fundamental issues of statehood.

Indonesian history has seen the ebb and flow of the *aliran*. After the heyday of "*aliranism*" in the 1950s, Sukarno and Suharto carried out "de-*aliranization*" measures in the name of "national unity", which lasted until the outbreak of *Reformasi*. The reform movement that helped push Suharto from office brought about a resurgence of *aliran* politics that had been in a state of hibernation for almost four decades. All of the important political parties that have arisen since 1998 have had an *aliran* cast or shape. The resurgence of the *aliran* has also marked a return of the debates on the three fundamental issues of the state mentioned above.

This thesis has found some reasons why the resurgence of these *aliran* has complicated the efforts at democratization in Indonesia. All three *aliran* and their parties profess to want "democracy". But their respective understandings of democracy are different when it comes to the three key issues that have vexed Indonesia throughout its history.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
Bakorstanas	<i>Badan Koordinasi Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional</i> (Coordinating Body for the Maintenance of National Stability)
Banser	<i>Barisan Serbaguna</i> (Auxilliary Force), NU's youth organization
Baperki	<i>Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body)
Barnas	<i>Barisan Nasional</i> (National Front)
BPPN	<i>Badan Penyehatan Perbankan Nasional</i> (Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency)
BPUPKI	<i>Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Independence Preparatory Studies Body)
BU	Budi Utomo
CIDES	Center for Information and Development Studies
CPDS	Center for Policy and Development Studies
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
DDII	<i>Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication)
DKP	<i>Dewan Kehormatan Perwira</i> (Officers' Honor Council)
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> (House of Representatives; parliament)
FKMSJ	<i>Forum Komunikasi Senat Mahasiswa Jakarta</i> (Communication Forum of Student Senates of Jakarta)
Fordem	<i>Forum Demokrasi</i> (Democracy Forum)
Forkot	<i>Forum Kota</i> (City Forum)

G30S/PKI	<i>Gerakan 30 September / Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (September 30 th Movement / Indonesian Communist Party)
Golkar	<i>Golongan Karya</i> (Functional Group)
HMI	<i>Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam</i> (Islamic Students Association)
ICMI	<i>Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association)
IPKI	<i>Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia</i> – Association of Indonesia’s Independence Supporters)
IPTN	<i>Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara</i> (Nusantara Aircraft Industry)
Iramasuka	Irian Jaya, Maluku, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan
ISDV	<i>Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging</i> (Indies Social Democratic Association)
KAMMI	<i>Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia</i> (United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students)
KISDI	<i>Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam</i> (Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World)
KKN	<i>Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme</i> (Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism)
KPU	<i>Komisi Pemilihan Umum</i> (General Elections Commission)
Kodam Jaya	<i>Komando Daerah Militer Jakarta Raya</i> (Greater Jakarta Regional Military Command)
Kopkamtib	<i>Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban</i> – Command for the Restoration of Security and Order
Kostrad	<i>Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat</i> (Army Strategic Reserve Command)
MAR	<i>Majelis Amanat Rakyat</i> (People’s Trust Council)
Masyumi	<i>Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Muslim Consultative Council)
MPR	<i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> (People’s Consultative Assembly)

MPRS	<i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara</i> (Provisional People's Consultative Assembly)
Nasakom	<i>Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis</i> (Nationalism, Religion, Communism)
NU	<i>Nahdatul Ulama</i> (The Ulemas Awakening)
P4	<i>Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila</i> (Guidelines for the Comprehension and Application of Pancasila)
Parkindo	<i>Partai Kristen Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Christian Party)
PAN	<i>Partai Amanat Nasional</i> (National Mandate Party)
PBB	<i>Partai Bulan Bintang</i> (Crescent and Stars Party)
PDI	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Democratic Party)
PDI-P	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan</i> (Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle)
PK	<i>Partai Keadilan</i> (Justice Party)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PKU	<i>Partai Kebangkitan Umat</i> (Muslims Awakening Party)
PMP	<i>Pendidikan Moral Pancasila</i> (Pancasila Moral Education)
PNI	<i>Partai Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
PPKI	<i>Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia – Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee</i>
PPP	<i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i> (United Development Party)
PRRI/Permesta	<i>Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia/ Piagam Perjuangan Semesta</i> (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia/ Charter of Common Struggle)
PSI	<i>Partai Sosialis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Socialist Party)
RCTI	<i>Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia</i> (Indonesian first private television station)
SI	<i>Sarekat Islam</i> (Islamic Union)
TGPF	<i>Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta</i> (Joint Fact-Finding Team)

TNI

Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Military)

TPI

Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesian Educational Television)

TRIBUTES

*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair)
of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes,
that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)).*

The Qur'an 49:13

*I'll be there someday, I can go the distance
I will find my way, if I can be strong
I know every mile will be worth my while
When I go the distance, I'll be right where I belong*

Go the Distance, M. Bolton

This thesis is a product of four long years of research. It has undergone various challenges and tribulations. Numerous drafts have been written before it came to its present form. Insights, discussion, and criticism abounded, but the most critical insights probably came from the "tyranny of events." These were especially harsh, coming from a polity undergoing tremendous, rapid, change such as post-Suharto Indonesia.

This study has attempted to demonstrate that despite all the turbulent changes that have rocked Indonesia during the last six or seven years, the underlying current of the Indonesian polity has remained the same. Indonesia is a plural society with various groups competing for space in a limited political sphere. These groups, termed the *aliran* in this research, have shown tremendous resilience. They have survived despite many attempts to subdue, coopt, or even suppressed them.

This research has also tried to argue that many issues that have divided the country since the inception of the movement for national independence in the 1920s remained debated until nowadays. Should the republic's founding parents be reincarnated, they would not be too far behind in the current public discourse. This is of course a sad phenomenon for an Indonesian like myself. The country seems to have been vexed by the differences in viewing the state's fundamental issues: what ideology should the state be based, should it be a semi-secular ideology known as Pancasila or should it be Islam, the religion of the majority of its people, should it be run as a free country or should political aspirations be tamed, and should it be governed as a unitary state controlled by the center or should the local aspirations be allowed to exert themselves, and to what extent?

Looking back to history, we are able to reflect that these questions remained unsolved because the *aliran*-based groups have not been given the appropriate time and avenue to evolve, coalesce, and eventually achieve an equilibrium. But of course, we can also speculate that the *aliran* are sufficiently self-interested, so that allowing them to roam unchecked in the political wilderness would only harm Indonesia. These difficulties aside, I marvel at the ability of my compatriots to overcome these tribulations and reaffirm their conviction in the "Indonesian dream" to achieve a true, working nationhood.

The present report would not have come to fruition had it not for the kindness of so many people. First and foremost is Professor Diane Mauzy, the research supervisor. She had spent many hours reading, revising, and commenting on this thesis. Time that I realize, she would have preferred to spend on doing something else. I am eternally grateful for the efforts and especially the confidence that she has bestowed upon me. I am equally grateful to Professors John Wood and Brian Job, members of supervisory committee, who have provided comments and consistent encouragement, especially when times were hard.

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In 2000, I spent the summer months at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore. During the period, I wrote a working paper, which would become the foundation of this study. I am thankful to Professor Chia Siow Yue, former director of the Institute, for granting me the opportunity.

Back home, I am grateful for the opportunity to spend a few months during the fall of 2002 at the Habibie Center, Jakarta, where I will be returning to after the end of this Canadian sojourn. The appreciation especially goes to Dr. A. Watik Pratiknya, executive director and Dr. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, director of research and program.

Back in Vancouver in 2003-2004, I have been greatly aided by the Centre for Southeast Asian Research at the UBC's Institute of Asian Research that has provided me with a comfortable space to work and toil many nights away. I am especially grateful to the Centre's director, Professor Michael Leaf.

During the last six years, I have been shuttling back and forth between three points on the Pacific Rim: Vancouver, Singapore, and Jakarta. But I always felt at home in all three places. This would not have been possible had it not for the camaraderie, friendship, and willingness to provide continuous moral support of all the wonderful people. In Singapore, I am proud to become a member of a small community of graduate students at the Nanyang Technological University. In Vancouver, many friends, especially among the small but closely-knitted Indonesian community have accompanied my days. The kindness of the staffs at the consulate general of the republic of Indonesia has helped tremendously. I am in debt to consul generals Ibu Binarti Fajar Sumirat and her predecessor, Bapak Marlis Syamsuddin.

Last but not least, my family back home has been the most reliable support system that I have had. Mamah, Papap, and the whole Lanti family, as well as Mami, Papi, and the Jusuf Supardi family have always been there for me and would jump to my aid whenever I cried for help. My wife, Mayang, has been an endless source of inspiration. Her love, friendship, and constant encouragement have been a gift that I always treasure. My daughter Kalista Maharani and son Andhika Reyhan have become my foremost reasons to exist. I always admire their cheerfulness and resilience, despite the constant absence of their father. The last six years must have been painful for them for all those nights and days that I was not on their side, and be a proper father and husband. Hopefully, the struggle would bring its prize.

Many people have contributed in many different ways to the completion of this study, as well as to the enrichment of my life for the last six years. The fallacies contained in the pages to follow, however, remain mine.

*This thesis is dedicated to the pearls of my heart:
Mayang, Kalista, and Andhika
I am coming home!*

Vancouver, March 2004

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL CULTURE, THE REVIVAL OF ALIRAN POLITICS, AND QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF THE STATE

This chapter provides information about how this study is to be conducted. It defines the subject matter, discusses the theoretical approaches, formulates the research questions, identifies the choice of research methodology, and lays out the organization of the thesis.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The phenomenon of political change in Indonesia is interesting to observe both for practical and academic purposes. More than fifty years after independence, three important issues critical to governance and the nature of the state in Indonesia remain unresolved and contentious. These issues concern, first, the state foundation. Should Indonesia remain a secular Pancasila state or should it become an Islamic state? Second, should Indonesia remain a unitary state with highly centralized powers and an emphasis on national unity, or should power be devolved so that the regions would have more authority in handling their own affairs? Third, should Indonesia be governed as a strong, autocratic developmental state, or a polity in which open political competition is the norm?

The rise of the *Reformasi* movement and the dramatic fall of President Suharto after more than three decades of oligarchic rule, opened the doors to more open political competition and in so doing revitalized the debate over these

crucial political issues once again. Although surprising to some, this critical juncture also witnessed the return to dominance of *aliran*-based politics, despite four decades of effort by former Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, in the name of national unity, to suppress *aliran* segmental allegiances and divisions.

In terms of attempts to implement democratic institutions, norms and procedures, there are some striking similarities between the political situation now, and that of the first years of independence in the 1950s. Despite fifty years of national unity efforts and economic development that has led to the creation of an educated middle class, the potential for turmoil in Indonesia today remains high.

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of this thesis rests on explaining these important issues of governance in terms of the beliefs and political goals of the major *aliran*¹ networks. Hence this thesis proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

The political scene in Indonesia is once again dominated by *aliran*-based group identities. Consequently, the debates over the state foundation, state institutions, regional arrangements, and type and form of governance are being delineated, shaped and waged by the elites of the three major *aliran* segments.

¹ In this thesis, the term "*aliran*" is used both as a noun, *e.g.*, indicating "streams" of thinking and beliefs of the major *aliran*, and as an adjective, *e.g.*, *aliran* affiliations, networks, segments, groups, politics, allegiances, institutional manifestations, etc.

Hypothesis 2:

The key to understanding the political positions, beliefs and goals of the *aliran*-based groups reside in their respective political cultures.

Hypothesis 3:

While the *Reformasi* movement and the fall of Suharto have contributed to a climate and spirit favorable to democratization, the outcome of the process is endangered because of the different views held by each of the *aliran* groups as to what democracy actually means when it comes to governing a state like Indonesia.

These hypotheses will be tested by exploration of the following questions:

1. What are the political *aliran*? What are their ethno-cultural bases? How do the politico-cultural traits of the ethnic groups comprising them affect their political behavior? What are the institutional manifestations of the political *aliran* and how have these changed over time from the beginnings of the independence movement until the *Reformasi* era?
2. What was the *Reformasi* movement all about? Was it pro-democracy or just anti-Suharto? Did the open political competitive structure created by the *Reformasi* movement lead to the revitalization of *aliran*-based politics?
3. What was the relationship between *aliran* affiliation and the platforms and the support bases of the major political parties in the 1999 general election? What similarities can be observed with the 1955 general election held during the previous democratic period?
4. How have the *aliran*-based parties and institutions, their elites and their representatives in state bodies viewed the fundamental political issues of the state foundation, regionalism, and political competition since the

beginnings of Indonesia's Independence movement? Has there been a resurgence of conflicting discourse among the *aliran*-based segments on these issues during the *Reformasi* era? How have the positions of the major *aliran* in terms of these issues evolved over time?

5. What is the impact of free elections and more open politics on the political stability of the state? What are the prospects for Indonesia's future?

WHAT ARE THE ALIRAN AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

In the Indonesian setting, the groups that make up Indonesia's important political segments are known as "*aliran*." The definitions of *aliran* are usually divided into two large clusters. The first definition is used more often in anthropological and cultural studies of Indonesia, since the concept was first coined in an anthropological study by Clifford Geertz in the 1950s. The focus of Geertz's study was on the divergent socio-religious practices in the Javanese community, between the syncretic *abangan*, the pious *santri*, and the aristocratic *priyayi*.²

Political scientists Herbert Feith and Lance Castles expanded the concept of the *aliran* as political parties encircled by a number of social organizations, which are linked through formal or informal networks.³ A number of studies have been undertaken using the political *aliran* perspective, especially in the

² Clifford Geertz (1960) The Religion of Java, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

³ Herbert Feith (1970) "Introduction," in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, eds. (1970) Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

1960s and 1970s.⁴ A further definition of *aliran* reflects its anthropological roots but contains political elements. For example, Benedict Anderson refers to a unique, integral cultural outlook adhered to by a number of people with a similar world-view who are either organized or unorganized (but potentially organizable) in socio-political groupings.⁵

In fact, the utilization of the *aliran* concept by political scientists could be perceived as an extension of the anthropological perspective, as an attempt to gauge the saliency of the divergent socio-cultural groupings in the political arena. The political science use of the *aliran* could therefore be defined as structural, as it focuses more on the *aliran* organizations and institutions, such as major political parties and associated major social organizations, whereas the anthropological use is more strictly cultural, as it focuses on the ideational aspects and socio-cultural practices.

However, it should be noted here that this division is not, by any measure, neat or clear-cut. Analyses of political issues, such as the relations between religion and state, were given considerable attention even in Geertz's, The Religion of Java.⁶ Feith's "streams of political thinking" also dealt with some ideational analysis, albeit not to a great extent. And then of course, Anderson's Language and Power was perhaps the best work linking both the

⁴ See for example, the analysis of the influence of the *aliran* on the elite bureaucracy in Donald K. Emmerson (1976) Indonesia's Elite: Political Culture and Cultural Politics, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. On the operation of *aliran* politics in the local level, see William R. Liddle (1970) Ethnicity, Party, and National Integration: An Indonesian Case Study, New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁵ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1972) "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," reprinted in Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1990) Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, fn. 85.

⁶ See *ibid.*, especially Chapters 13 and 15.

political and the cultural in the Indonesian analytical setting. Nevertheless, there is yet to be a systematic effort at mapping out the relationship between the structural, embodied in political *aliran* groupings, and the cultural, in terms of general group perceptions, on statehood matters.

Anderson's work could actually be perceived as a beginning in this direction. However, primarily it covered only one facet of the segmented society, albeit of the majority and dominant group, the Javanese political culture and its manifestation in Indonesian politics. While significant and important, Javanese political culture is but one subset of Indonesian society. It shares the same political space with other groups. These other groups who, for lack of a better term are known collectively as the *seberang* peoples, are spread throughout the archipelago (including the non-heartland of Java), which partly explains the difficulties in mapping out their political culture. However, they do share some common traits that eventually give rise to a discernible pattern of politico-cultural perceptions. It is important to note here that the role of Islam and its different modes of reception by different peoples of the archipelago, as well as its interaction with local tradition, also significantly influenced the politico-cultural traits of the *aliran* groups.

This thesis identifies three major *aliran* groups.⁷ The nationalists draw support from the *abangan* heartland of Java (occupying the fertile land in south-central parts of the island). Javanese society is agrarian, with a long

⁷ Also known as "*aliran politik*" (streams of political thinking). Clifford Geertz introduced this concept to academic circles in The Religion of Java. Subsequent efforts to map out and analyze the *aliran* were carried out by several Indonesianists. The most prominent of these were included in the Herbert Feith and Lance Castles edited book (1970), Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

history of encounters with foreign influence. Unity and harmony are among the most cherished values. One of the hallmarks of Javanese culture is syncreticism. The Javanese have adapted a succession of foreign influences into their own indigenous cultural traits. The arrival of Islam, therefore, did not wipe out the previous Hindu-Buddhist civilizations. They tended to be complementary, so as to create a socio-religious practice that was quite different from any of the religious beliefs practiced elsewhere. The term "*abangan*" reflects the relaxed, syncretic outlook of the Javanese.⁸

The modernist Muslims have roots in the *seberang* culture. Many of the *seberang* societies, especially the more assertive ones, such as the peoples of Sumatra and Sulawesi, are maritime-based. These societies tend to be more competitive and less obsessed with ideas of unity and harmony. The Hindu-Buddhist influence in these societies is also relatively less than in Java, except in the notable case of the Sriwijaya Empire. Islamic influence is thus more significant in these societies. The *seberang* generally practice Islam in a more pure, orthodox way than their Javanese brethren. In Indonesian political lexicon, they are known as the *santri* (pious Muslims).

The traditionalists are the hybrid *aliran* group. Most of the traditionalists hail from the eastern part of Java, out of the direct influence of the courts of the Javanese heartland, but still significantly influenced by the Javanese outlook. They are also *santri* in terms of Islamic practice, while at the same time are also syncretic. Elsewhere in this thesis they are also referred to as the Javanese *santri*. The traditionalist socio-educational institutions are known as the *pesantren*, whose history predates the arrival of Islam. With the arrival of Islam,

⁸ For *abangan* religious practices, consult Geertz, *op.cit.*, part 1.

Islamic teaching merely took over the theological content of these educational institutions, while keeping most of the rituals and societal structure of the past civilization.

Indonesia is perhaps the best instance of what J.S. Furnivall termed a “plural society.” Politics in plural societies have always been an interesting phenomenon, particularly because ethnicity tends to divide people and these divisions gain saliency when ethnic groups compete for scarce resources. Furnivall defines a plural society as “one in which ... different sections of the community live side by side, but separately, within the same political unit.”⁹ Such a society is marked by the presence of multiple ethnic groups in a geographical locale under common political administration. These communal segments are psychological communities possessing a collective identity based on similar cultural traits.¹⁰ The various ethnic groups interact with each other in temporal affairs. However, in some of these societies, each of the ethnic groups develops its own institution, regulates its own affairs, maintains its own culture, and carries out education and political socialization in separate institutions. As a result, while living in proximity with occasional interaction, the separateness of socio-cultural and political traditions and institutions means that the relationship between these groups has the potential for conflict. Being confined to a single political unit with limited resources, these segments of the political system may conflict as they interact. In some instances, these groups live side-by-side peacefully for quite an extended period of time. But it is

⁹ J.S. Furnivall (1948) Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 304.

¹⁰ Ted Gurr (1993) Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts, Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace.

the state or other external parties that often inadvertently or otherwise bring these groups into actual conflict. There are also instances where cooperation among the segments to achieve common goals is possible and indeed becomes the norm, as in the case of Malaysia's ruling multiethnic coalition, the *Barisan Nasional*. Such cooperation is especially possible when there is sufficient commonality in cultural values and/or a coincidence of interests. Conversely, when these are lacking or minimal, a conflictual relationship among the segments often predominates.

Since the advent of a nationalist movement in Indonesia early last century, the task of nation-building has been considered a daunting one. An amalgamation of more than 300 ethnic groups, speaking 365 local languages and dialects, living in a territory of 13,660 islands that make up the largest archipelago in the world, the "nation" of Indonesia came into existence only by external intervention rather than through a natural internal process. Consequently, there is a multifaceted nationalism in Indonesia. According to Anthony D. Smith, there are two types of nationalism as movements, *i.e.*, territorial and ethnic nationalism. The former refers to the creation of states based on certain definable territories. Usually these states include several ethnic groups living within the territory. What binds these disparate *ethnies* together is the idea of "a community of laws and institutions with a single political will."¹¹ As a movement, territorial nationalism seeks to achieve self-determination by opposing foreign colonial rulers, at least in the cases of Asia and Africa. As a state, it seeks to integrate divergent ethnic and religious

¹¹ Anthony D. Smith (1991) National Identity, Reno: University of Nevada Press, pp. 9-11.

components into a political community through the use of symbols and creation of a new national culture.¹² Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, is bound by the conception of ethnic and ascriptive commonalities. A nation of this type is defined by the properties and symbolism belonging to the single or predominant ethnic group that make it up.¹³ As a movement, ethnic nationalism tends to give rise to secessionist movements when an ethnic group seeks to establish a nation based on its own ethnicity or 'pan' movements (when an ethnic group seeks to achieve nationhood by incorporating the ethnic kinsmen living in the territories of another state).¹⁴

Smith's typology might explain the difficulties faced by many plural societies such as Indonesia in their nation-building efforts. It is plausible to assert that had the European colonial powers not carved up the region according to their own political and economic exigencies, the region of Sumatra, for example, would possibly have been united with Peninsular Malaysia (Malaya), since the two regions historically had been situated in the sphere of influence and control of the ancient kingdoms of Srivijaya and Malacca. Likewise, Java, with its long tradition, would probably have been established as a separate nation-state.¹⁵ In the words of Benedict Anderson:

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 79-84.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

¹⁵ For a succinct historical account of Indonesia's ancient kingdoms and their consequences for modern Indonesia, consult Nicholas Tarling, *ed.* (1992) The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Volume 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, especially chapters 3-5, and David J. Steinberg, *ed.* (1987) In Search of Southeast Asia, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, chapters 10, 17-18.

Some of the peoples on the eastern coast of Sumatra are not only physically close, across narrow Straits of Malacca, to the populations of the western littoral of the Malay peninsula, but they are ethnically related, understand each other's speech, have a common religion, and so forth. These same Sumatrans share neither mother-tongue, ethnicity, nor religion with the Ambonese, located on islands thousands of miles away to the east. Yet during this century they have come to understand the Ambonese as fellow-Indonesians, the Malays as foreigners.¹⁶

As probably expected, maintaining such a diverse archipelago under a single political entity is a difficult task indeed. Throughout its history, Indonesia has always been plagued by secessionist claims. This was especially true in the outer islands (non-Java) regions. The provinces of Aceh in Sumatra, Irian Jaya (West Papua), the Maluku, and later on East Timor in the eastern part had a long history of struggle for self-determination. Most of the ethnic separatist movements were quelled by the use of force by the central government.

However, while ethnic nationalism at various times posed a threat to the territorial integrity of the Indonesian state, power and politics tended to be concentrated overwhelmingly in the center or at the national level. This was due to two reasons. The first reason has to do with the politico-cultural traits of the dominant majority group, the Javanese. The Javanese conception of power necessitates that power be concentrated in one individual or group located at the center. A dispersion of power is regarded as a sign of weakness on the part of the power holder.¹⁷ The second reason was the emulation of the colonial

¹⁶ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1991) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso, pp. 120-121.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the Javanese conception of power, see Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1972) "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," reprinted in Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1990), Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. This subject and its implications for Indonesian politics will also be discussed in Chapter 2.

example. While the Dutch ruled the East Indies indirectly for the good part of their 350 years of colonization, from the beginning of the 20th century, coinciding with the territorial consolidation of the archipelago, their rule became more direct and controlled from the center. It was at this period that the nationalist movement began to blossom and the form of governance that the nationalists learned from the Dutch entailed a high degree of centralization. As a result, the idea of territorial nationalism was significantly stronger in determining the system and structure of Indonesian politics than were particular ethnic and regional aspirations.

The presence of European colonial powers eventually created among the local population a sense of nationalism and anti-colonialism that the elites molded into a powerful nationalist ideology. The nationalist ideology was born out of a reaction against the perceived common sufferings produced by colonialism. Being brought together under one colonial administration, that of the Dutch, these local peoples shared similar experiences of exploitation, then experienced rising expectations due to some educational privileges, and eventually experienced discrimination in both public and private spheres of life. The consolidation of Western rule in the territory also brought about increased mobility for the local population. This was the result of introduction of the means of modern transportation. Roads and railways connected regions of Java, thus reduced traveling time significantly. The same happened in parts of Sumatra. The outer islands were connected to Java and to each other by steamships, which traveled faster than the wind- and human-powered vessels

traditionally used by the peoples of the archipelago. The increased mobility facilitated more intense contacts among the peoples and created a sense of common identity, being *inlanders*¹⁸ in the Netherlands East Indies.

The nationalist impulse that started at the outset of the 20th century was driven by an overwhelming sense of purpose: decolonization. During the last couple of decades of Dutch colonial administration, it appeared that the divergent peoples of the archipelago were united behind the idea of achieving independent statehood. Every organization established by peoples of different socio-cultural backgrounds aspired to the creation of an independent Indonesia, while at the same time confirming particular identities. Thus, the first modern organizations in Indonesia, such as Budi Utomo, Sarekat Islam, and Jong Java were based on ethnicity or religion but at the same time were nationalist in orientation.

Despite the strong nationalist orientation of the political organizations, segmental politics divided the country along ethnic or religion lines. The aspiration of the segments, however, did not resemble ethnic nationalism as defined by Smith. The main political segments operated within the strict framework of territorial nationalism. Ethnicity in this sense took a different form. The segments based their views of what should comprise Indonesia or how Indonesia should be politically organized based on the politico-cultural traits from which they emanated. Their views sharply differed from one another

¹⁸ This refers to native peoples. Generally, the Dutch colonial administrations divided and ranked people into three classes with different privileges. The Dutch and other Europeans occupied the highest rank, next came the Chinese, Arabs, Indians and other Asians. The *inlanders* occupied the lowest rank.

and at various times have led to a conflict-ridden and divisive political system, albeit still in the framework of a national state.

Aliran politics surfaced almost immediately after independence. This was first apparent from debates surrounding the issue of the state foundation of the newborn nation. The Islamic parties and organizations strongly advocated Islam as the state religion and ideology, while the nationalists and Marxists were in favor of a secularist ideology. In the face of the Dutch effort to re-colonize the territory after the proclamation of independence in 1945, the issue was resolved momentarily as the political segments recreated a common front against the Dutch. However, soon after statehood appeared to be secured, this divisive ideological issue resurfaced again. For the good portion of the republic's life, this issue has tormented the Indonesian state.

Throughout the course of Indonesian politics, the three political *aliran* segments have dominated its landscape. Over periods of time, the patterns of political relationships among the segments have been in a state of constant flux. The extent of power and influence exerted by the segments has also ebbed and flowed. During the debate on the state foundation, the traditionalist and the modernist Muslims were united in advocating Islam *vis-à-vis* the nationalists, backed by the communists and other leftist groups on the other side. The political competition after the 1955 election in both the Parliament and the *konstituante*¹⁹ was lively, and because none of the *aliran* groups could dominate, created a stalemate in the constitution-drafting process. In the face of growing regional rebellions, Sukarno issued the Presidential Decree in 1959.

¹⁹ The Constituent Assembly, was a high state body tasked with drafting a new constitution. It was set up as a result of the 1955 election.

As a result, Sukarno and the nationalist *aliran* dominated the political landscape and the other *aliran* fell almost into oblivion. The ascendancy of the New Order regime, controlled by the Army, reflected another phase in the domination of Javanese political culture, although a decline in *aliran*-based politics. While the relationship between the nationalist civilian politicians and Army officers was estranged at times, both actually shared many commonalities in terms of political culture. The birth of the *Reformasi* movement in 1997, which helped topple the New Order regime, recreated an open and competitive political system. Almost by default, *aliran* politics regained ascendancy and became tangled again in political competition.

The history of the Indonesian political system has been marked by oscillation between two poles, authoritarianism or closed/controlled political order, and democratic or open political competition. The period of relative openness lasted for nine years (1950-1959) followed by Sukarno's authoritarianism (1959-1965). In contrast, Suharto's autocratic New Order regime persisted for 32 years before crumbling in 1997. As a result, no established system of governance has been consolidated in Indonesia. Instead, the route has been volatile and precarious.²⁰

WHY THE ALIRAN APPROACH HAS BEEN CRITICIZED

The *aliran* model is not without its critics. While many Indonesianists find the model quite useful in explaining the country's political dynamics, especially on electoral matters, some Indonesians see the model as

²⁰ Clifford Geertz (1973) The Interpretation of Cultures, New York: Basic Books, pp. 311, 315.

oversimplifying Indonesian governance issues, processes and players. This critique is correct on two counts. First, while the *aliran* segments are significant, they do not constitute the total landscape of groups. There are other non-*aliran* political entities, such as the minority groups, organized in political parties or otherwise. These groups include the Christian minorities, which in the past established important medium-sized parties, the Partai Katolik (Catholic Party) and Parkindo (*Partai Kristen Indonesia* – Indonesian Christian Party).²¹ The results of the 1955 election showed how important these parties were. They came in the sixth and seventh positions, almost right after the what was then four major *aliran* parties of the nationalist PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* – Indonesian National Party), the modernist Masyumi (*Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia* – Indonesian Muslim Council), the traditionalist NU (*Nahdatul Ulama* – The Ulemas Awakening), and the communist PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* – Indonesian Communist Party). They made a more significant presence regionally. In the same election, Parkindo came in as a close runner-up after Masyumi in the Maluku electoral district, while Partai Katolik won the election overwhelmingly in East Nusa Tenggara.²² Both parties survived the Guided Democracy era, but during the New Order they were forced to merge with the PNI and other nationalist-based parties to form the PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* – Indonesian Democratic Party).

²¹ On these parties, consult Paul Webb (1978) Indonesian Christians and Their Political Parties, Townsville, Queensland: South East Asian Monograph Series, No. 2, James Cook University.

²² The results of 1955 election and its analysis can be found in Herbert Feith (1957) The Indonesian Elections of 1955, Ithaca, New York: Interim Reports Series, Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

The other important group are the ethnic Chinese. This group played an active socio-political role, especially prior to the communist-attempted coup in 1965. The largest Chinese socio-political organization that made an impact on Indonesian politics was the Baperki (*Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia* - Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Body). Formed in 1954, Baperki participated in the 1955 election, albeit acquiring only one seat in the parliament. But perhaps the most important step in the Indonesian Chinese political history was the strategic decision of Baperki's leaders to align themselves with the PKI, which was on the ascendancy in the 1960s. Baperki enjoyed its alliance with the communists for it was able not only to dominate the Chinese community but also to steer the course of public debate with regards to the Chinese issues, although this alliance proved fatal later on after the communist purge in 1966.

But perhaps due to the overwhelming majority of *pribumi* (indigenous) Indonesians and of nominal and devout Muslims,²³ these two important groups have not been able to rival the major *aliran* segments in terms of significance on the national political landscape. These two minorities have therefore followed a flexible strategy *vis-à-vis* the major *aliran* segments in order to survive in Indonesian society. In the period leading to Guided Democracy, the Catholics maintained a good rapport with Masyumi figures. The leader of Partai Katolik, I.J. Kasimo, was known to have a close, mutually respectful relationship with the Masyumi's leader, Natsir. While both parties differed significantly in the

²³ Statistics vary from one source or one time period to another, but it is generally believed that the Chinese in Indonesia consist of fewer than five percent of the total population. For comparison, in Malaysia, for example, the percentage of Chinese population is around 35 percent. Indonesia's nominal and devout Muslims are believed to be around 85 percent of the total population.

discourse on the state foundation, they shared a common perception with regard to Sukarno's autocratic tendency. In response to Guided Democracy, the leaders of Masyumi, Partai Katolik, and Parkindo formed the *Liga Demokrasi* (Democratic League) in 1960, with the aim of advocating a return to parliamentary democracy.²⁴ But during the nationalist New Order, especially during its early period, the Christians and the modernists appeared to be in completely opposite camps. The modernists were vehemently against the so-called "*Kristenisasi*" (Christianization) that they alleged was being conducted by Christians closely associated with the regime. Conservative modernist organizations, such as KISDI (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam - Indonesian Committee for Islamic World Solidarity*) and DDII (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia - Indonesian Islamic Dakwah Council*), were at the forefront of this *anti-Kristenisasi* movement.

The Chinese, by contrast, have never shared the political views of the modernists to any extent. While it does not mean that there is a permanent similarity of interests, the Chinese have traditionally been closer to the nationalists and to a lesser extent to the traditionalists, than to the modernists. This is perhaps because the Javanese have tended to be more ethnically tolerant. The nationalists' insistence on having the state based on a secular ideology that would maintain pluralism, has led the Chinese to view them as an attractive alternative to the modernists' insistence on having Islam as the state ideology. But during the New Order, the reasons for Chinese acquiescence to and support for the regime might have been somewhat different. The authoritarian regime made it difficult for any group to maintain a dissenting

²⁴ Webb, *op.cit.*, pp. 78-81.

position. As a result, the Chinese communities proximity to the regime could be seen as an effort to survive, especially after its previous fateful association with the communists that ended in the 1966-1967 pogroms. Additionally, the regime also needed the Chinese to assist in development efforts. Traditionally, the Chinese ran much of the economic activity of the country, so the New Order provided incentives for Chinese businesses to set up joint ventures with some *pribumi* entrepreneurs, or with family members of the ruling elite. As a result, many Chinese business people became close associates of the regime.

The second criticism of the *aliran* approach is also worth examining. The major groups coalesce into their *aliran* networks mostly only on a limited range of issues relating to statehood. These issues include those to be examined in this study, namely the state foundation, degree of centralization or regional autonomy, and degree of political openness and competition. On these high-political issues, the stance of some *aliran*, especially the nationalists and to a lesser extent the modernists, tend to be consistent over time, while the traditionalists have shown their flexibility. But the *aliran* organizations rarely develop any significant platforms on non- or low-political issues, even those that have some direct relevance to public policy, such as development and economics, let alone issues considered new for the public discourse in developing nations, such as the role of women and the environment.

The *aliran* elite tend to draw on foreign ideas, such as capitalist developmentalism or Marxism, to set up policy frameworks should the need arise. They also tend to measure their position relatively to those adopted by the others. So, if there is a change in the outlook of a rival *aliran* on a certain issue, the others tend to amend their positions accordingly. This is apparent from the

comparison of economic platforms of the nationalists and the modernists over time. In the 1950s and 1960s, the nationalists adopted a state-based, command economy. The ideology of Marhaenism driving the nationalists at the time was even dubbed as “socialism *a la* Indonesia.” The modernists at this time were widely recognized as representing the entrepreneurial spirit of the nation, and quite vigorously advocating a market-based economy. The positions could be perceived as reversed during the New Order. The nationalist administration adopted a rigorous policy of capitalist developmentalism, opening up the economy to the world market system.²⁵ The modernists on the other hand, turned increasingly to being more pro-state intervention and less market-oriented during this period. The *ekonomi kerakyatan* (people’s economy) initiative launched by some prominent modernists looked very much in design like the heavily state-sanctioned Barisan Nasional’s New Economic Policy in Malaysia.

Another example that might be construed as evidence of the *aliran* organizations’ lack of platform coherence on issues that are not strictly or solely political, is on the subject of the role of women. In the earlier period (from before independence until the late New Order), women’s representation in politics usually came from the fold of the nationalists and the non-*aliran* groups. Some modernist women politicians were also apparent. But women were practically absent from the public space on the traditionalist side.²⁶

²⁵ Albeit also still heavily state-sanctioned, according to Kunio Yoshihara (1988) *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South East Asia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

²⁶ This is in spite of a very active role played by the NU’s women organization wing, the Muslimat and the Fatayat. But in the early period, their focus was mainly on the domestic functions of women.

However, during the New Order period, women's nationalist representation became significantly less. Under the nationalist regime of New Order, women's organizations turned to be state-sanctioned. The traditionalists on the other hand, especially under the tutelage of liberal *kyai* such as Abdurrahman Wahid, made exponential progress with regard to enhancing the role of women in public life. Many of the young traditionalist intellectuals now came from the NU's women's organizations.

WHY FOCUS ON THE ALIRAN TO UNDERSTAND INDONESIAN POLITICS TODAY

The attempts by both Sukarno and Suharto to bury *aliran*-based politics resulted in significantly fewer numbers of studies of Indonesia's politics conducted using the *aliran* model. Indeed to study the *aliran* during the New Order period risked losing relevance due to the virtual "non-existence" of the *aliran* in public and political discourse. The New Order was especially adamant in "de-*aliran*-izing" Indonesian politics as divisive. Despite the fact that the New Order regime also hailed from one of the *aliran* segments, the notion of the *aliran* became increasingly associated with a sense of "primordialism," and hence signified backwardness. Various efforts were carried out to root out *aliran* politics and to "modernize" Indonesian politics, for example with the "simplification" of the political party structure in 1973 and the introduction of the *azas tunggal* (sole foundation) policy in 1985.²⁷ As a result, studies on the

²⁷ Douglas E. Ramage (1995) Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and the Ideology of Tolerance, London: Routledge, esp. chs. 1 and 6; R. William Liddle (1973) "Modernizing Indonesian Politics," in R. William Liddle, *ed.* (1973) Political Participation in Modern Indonesia, Monograph Series No. 19, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

aliran politics disappeared from the body of Indonesian scholarship for quite a long time.²⁸

As this study will point out, the *aliran* did not die off but instead were simply in a state of hibernation during the authoritarian periods under Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, and have since resurfaced as political openness has been reestablished. Indonesian politics since the fall of Suharto appears like *déjà vu* from the era when political competition was in earnest. Many of the characteristics of the parliamentary democracy period of the 1950s have reappeared. These include political divisiveness, seemingly irreconcilable differences on some of the most fundamental questions of state, as well as conflicting tendencies between continuing open political competition and increasing efforts to reassert more elite control. Even the regional voting pattern in the 1999 election resembled that of the elections of 1955, with the nationalists winning mostly in Java and Bali, and the modernists in the outer islands. Questions about democracy that besieged the nation in the 1950s, and which were previously thought to have been resolved under the political control of Guided Democracy and the New Order, are now once again in the limelight of public discourse. The way political debate is being shaped for the most crucial questions concerning the state, and the way political groups are being organized, it will be shown, reveal that the most salient political divisions in the country for this debate are the *aliran* segments.

A number of new books have been published since the fall of Suharto. While some books have dealt mostly with accounts of events leading to the

²⁸ A succinct review of the pre-*Reformasi* major works on Indonesia is provided in Damien Kingsbury (1998) The Politics of Indonesia, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, pp. 256-263.

demise of the New Order and the rise of the *Reformasi* movement,²⁹ others have focused on an analysis of socio-political transformations that have accompanied the regime change. A number of studies have focused on the institutional-structural aspects of political change. Among this genre is Jacques Bertrand's Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia.³⁰ Bertrand analyzes the resurgence of ethnic conflict in Indonesia toward the end of Suharto's rule, which was further intensified after *Reformasi*. He argues that ethnic conflicts in Indonesia were not dependent solely on cultural factors, such as ethnic identity or group fear. Analyses of ethnic conflicts should also take into account structural-institutional factors, such as the role of elites, socio-economic disparities, group opportunities. Bertrand, using a "critical junctions" theoretical approach, examines the tensions between the national unity dream of the Indonesian founding fathers and the multicultural, sometime conflictual, realities of the plural nation. Bertrand provides a very useful and detailed analysis of the troubled regions in Indonesia as well as the friction between religious groups. However, he focuses mainly on the issues of regionalism and ethnicity, and the tension between the regions and the center, rather than on political divisions and competition in the national arena.³¹

²⁹ For instance, Kees van Dijk (2001) A Country in Despair: Indonesia Between 1997 and 2000, Leiden: KITLV Press; Kevin O'Rourke (2002) Reformasi: The Struggle for Power in Post-Suharto Indonesia, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

³⁰ Jacques Bertrand (2003) Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³¹ Similar issues of regionalism are also the main theme of another recently edited book by Damien Kingsbury and Harry Aveling (2003) Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia, London: RoutledgeCurzon.

The authors in the edited book by Donald K. Emmerson³² have looked at various aspects of change in Indonesia, from politics, society, the economy, to a description of the transition process. As a book that was meant to be published before Suharto's downfall (but in fact was published after *Reformasi*), the book offers a comprehensive view of the state of the republic in the final years of the New Order regime. Many of the articles serve as an evaluation of the more than thirty years of Suharto's rule. This being the case, it is quite understandable that discussion of *aliran*-based politics is not included in the book. As mentioned above, owing to repression and control, the *aliran* were not a political factor during the New Order.

One of the major and influential recent works on Indonesia is Robert Hefner's Civil Islam.³³ This study analyzes the positions of different political groups in Indonesia in terms of civility and democracy. Of particular importance is Hefner's effort to compare and contrast the two main Islamic groups in Indonesia. He adds another typology to the characterization of Indonesia's Muslim groups: what he calls "civil" and "regimist" Muslims. Hefner actually refers mainly to the traditionalists when he discusses the civil Muslims, and he labels some modernists as regimists. In this book, he clearly makes a value-judgment by favoring the traditionalists' pluralist traits and at time appears to be much less positive towards the modernists' majoritarian stance. As such, while not discussing the *aliran* at length, the study employs some of the *aliran* model, including some politico-cultural arguments. However,

³² Donald K. Emmerson, *ed.* (1999) Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

³³ Robert W. Hefner (2000) Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

because of Hefner's focus on Islam in Indonesia, there was much less discussion of the nationalists. It should be noted here that, in fact, one of the issues discussed in this thesis, the state foundation, resembles Hefner's focus of study.

Other recent studies focusing on the 1999 election have been more disposed toward the *aliran* approach. Dwight King's Half-Hearted Reform,³⁴ for instance, has used statistical methodology to measure the correlations between the voting patterns of the 1999 and 1955 elections. While the book does not at the outset explicitly mention the *aliran*, either as an approach or as the Indonesian political groupings, the objects of study are unmistakably the major *aliran* parties.³⁵ This is evident from the classification of the major parties in 1955 and their "heirs" in 1999 in order to measure the continuities in the bases of party support. The nationalist PNI is clustered with the PDI-P, the modernist Masyumi with the parties of *Poros Tengah*, and the traditionalist NU with the PKB.³⁶

FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF THE STATE

The basic requirements of statehood include reasonably secure and recognized borders, the establishment of a governmental structure with the

³⁴ Dwight Y. King (2003) Half-Hearted Reform: Electoral Institutions and the Struggle for Democracy in Indonesia, Westport, Conn.: Praeger.

³⁵ Likewise, Leo Suryadinata's book also demonstrates the adaptation of the *aliran* approach to analyzing the 1999 election. See Leo Suryadinata (2002) Election and Politics in Indonesia, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, especially ch. 10. This is the case despite his assertion made at the beginning of the book that Geertz' and Feith's *aliran* models "are no longer valid." See *ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁶ See the book's summary and conclusion in King, *op.cit.*, pp. 133-134.

institutional capacity to provide at least some key services and maintain some semblance of law and order, and the ability to generate revenue. Beyond these, there are a number of options as to what form, type, system or model of government should be instituted, how the state should be structured, and how power should be dispersed in the state. Should the state have a presidential or parliamentary system, or perhaps a monarchical one? Should it be a unitary, federal, or confederal state? Should power ideally be concentrated at the center or dispersed? Should it be a secular or religious/ theocratic state? Should it be democratic to some extent, consociational, authoritarian or autocratic, communist, socialist, fascist? Should minorities have special protection? Resolving these issues about the structure and nature of the state to the satisfaction of most of the people is critical to its legitimacy. It allows the government of the day to perform its various functions without having the quality of its performance bringing into question the state's legitimacy.

In many former colonial states, these critical issues, which one would have hoped to have been amiably resolved at Independence, were papered over with imposed political systems, often embodied in constitutions, put in place by the departing colonists or hurriedly cobbled together by nationalists facing the demands of imminent Independence. In some cases, a viable consensus favoring the system in place emerged; in others, the issues remained contentious. Many of these states have since undergone "readjustments" to the original form or system of government, often by force of arms, and some of these are still struggling to resolve these fundamental issues. Indonesia is one of these states.

1. A Secular Pancasila State versus an Islamic State

Most states in the world today are secular. The secular state calls for the separation of church and state, and civic law. The concept of secularism was advanced by the Enlightenment scholars as a way of preventing rulers and officials from imposing their religious views and practices on society as a whole, and engaging in religious wars. Secularism is not anti-religious per se, although it is sometimes perceived as substituting moral values for civic virtues. Conversely, a religious state (such as Ireland or Saudi Arabia) is one that promotes and defends religious values and prohibitions. It need not be a theocratic state ruled by the religious clergy (such as in Iran). Under the secular Pancasila state in Indonesia, only "Belief in God" is enshrined as a pillar, Islam is not specifically mentioned or given priority. There are disagreements among Muslim intellectuals as to what constitutes an "Islamic State". However, basically, with an Islamic state, the barrier between religion and politics and religion and the state is dropped; Islam becomes the official and state religion (although religious freedom may be permitted), and, importantly, Islamic (*syariah*) law replaces civic law.

The issue of an Islamic versus a secular state is perhaps as old as the idea of Indonesia itself. As will be seen in the following chapters, this issue has occupied the center of contention over the nature of the Indonesian state. From the advent of the nationalist movement in the early decades of the twentieth century until the 1950s, *aliran*-based elites have debated this issue, but could not come to any agreement. This issue was muted during the forty years of authoritarian rule of Sukarno and Suharto, giving the impression that the question of Islam versus Pancasila had been resolved. But the political

openness that has come with *Reformasi* has changed such an impression. The issue once again has come into the limelight of the debate on the nature of the state. The *aliran*-based elites have resumed the debate but, as shall be demonstrated, the positions of some of the *aliran* organizations have changed quite considerably.

2. A Centralized Unitary State versus a Decentralized State with Power Dispersed

With unitary states, the powers of government are held by the central authority. Examples of unitary states include the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Iceland, Japan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and of course, until now, Indonesia. Local or regional governments may exist, but whatever powers they possess have been delegated to them by the central government and can be withdrawn by the central government. Unitary states can be highly centralized (France) or decentralized (Great Britain, the Netherlands, Paraguay since 1992). There are also unitary states that allow specific regions a certain amount of political and cultural autonomy (e.g., Spain, France, Italy, and Great Britain). Regardless of the degree of decentralization or amount of regional autonomy, devolved powers, theoretically at least, can be taken back by the central authority in a unitary state (as opposed to a federal state with divided sovereignty). The issue of a unitary state versus a federal state is distinct from the issues of decentralized versus centralized power, and democratic versus authoritarian systems. There is no necessary link between these issues. For example, Sweden is a unitary state with a constitutional monarch that is highly decentralized and allows for considerable local-level democracy; Malaysia is a federal state with strong central powers and no local government. In the Republic of Indonesia, a

geographically large state with many islands and regional minorities, the unitary arrangement that was adopted is due at least partly to the bad experience Indonesia had with a federal system imposed on it in 1949-1950, and also due to the fact that one island, Java, has a clear majority of the population and historically has almost always been the site for most of the power in the archipelago, especially during 350 years under Dutch colonial rule.

As will be seen, the issue of a centralized unitary state versus some form of federalist arrangement with power decentralized has been one of the most contentious issues facing Indonesia. The debate was especially at its peak in the 1950s as the *aliran* segments with outer island bases of support tended to believe that the country should be managed along a federalist line, whereas those with Javanese support maintained that a unitary centralized system should remain the form of the state. Again as in the issue of the state foundation, the debate was temporarily and rather forcefully resolved during the authoritarian rule of Sukarno and Suharto. But the issue once again has come to the forefront of the public discourse in the *Reformasi* period. As shall be described in the following chapters, Indonesia today is trying to implement an extensive decentralization of power and responsibility from the center to the regions.

3. An Authoritarian-type State versus a Democratic-type State

The Asian developmental model has been the strong quasi-authoritarian state that constrains and minimizes “politics,” represses the opposition, minorities and regional unrest in the name of national unity and stability for the sake of the overriding goal of attaining rapid economic growth.

Unfortunately, in Indonesia it has also led to a state plagued by rampant corruption that wasted and mismanaged state resources under Sukarno and found its economic modernization turning into a “house of cards” under Suharto.

But before being turned into an authoritarian state, Indonesia had an experience with an open, albeit rather chaotic, political system practiced during the period of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s. The struggle between authoritarian rule and open political competition became one of the contending issues in Indonesian political management. As this thesis shall attempt to demonstrate, the various *aliran* segments tended to favor one these forms of political management over the other. So, despite the bad experiences of weak, immobilized government in the 1950s, the *Reformasi* movement and subsequent fall of Suharto has renewed considerable interest in an open and competitive political structure.

DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Given the confusion surrounding definitions and requisites of democracy, the complexities of the process of democratization, and the importance of these concepts to this thesis, some additional introduction is necessary. The most intractable question in the current discourse on democracy seems to be how it should be defined. Various scholars seem to have different ideas in mind when they are discussing “democracy.” This difficulty is reflected in the observation by Chan Heng Chee of the different classifications for Singapore made by Samuel P. Huntington in The Third Wave of Democratization, the Freedom House 1991-1992 annual survey, and Francis Fukuyama’s The End of History

and the Last Man, as non-democratic, partly democratic, and democratic, respectively.³⁷

Since democracy is best viewed on a spectrum, with various countries arranged along the spectrum, ranging from being fully democratic, to more or less, and ending at not very democratic, much of the debate concerned with democratization in the developing world revolves around the questions of what minimally constitutes a workable democracy, and how to consolidate and enhance these democratic practices. Joseph Schumpeter and Samuel Huntington offer minimalist (delegates or elite model) definitions: Citizens have the right to choose and authorize governments to act on their behalf. They exercise this right through free, fair, regular, and competitive elections.³⁸ Larry Diamond refers to this as electoral or procedural democracy, as opposed to liberal democracy at the other end of the spectrum. Diamond explains that a liberal democracy consists not only of elements found in the procedural definition, but also of values, rights and institutional safeguards that enhance individual freedoms. These include the protection of individual civil and political rights, the rule of law, an independent judiciary, a free press and media, freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of belief, freedom from fear, and other liberties normally associated with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

³⁷ Chan Heng Chee, "Democracy: Evolution and Implementation; An Asian Perspective" in Robert Bartley, *et.al.* (1993) Democracy and Capitalism, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

³⁸ Joseph Schumpeter (1947) Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, New York: Harper, Samuel P. Huntington (1993) The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, pp. 5-9; Diane K. Mauzy, "Democracy, Asian Values and the Question of Governance in Southeast Asia," in Amitav Acharya *et.al.* (2001), Democracy, Human Rights and Civil Society in South East Asia, Toronto: Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, pp. 107-122.

In addition to these rights and values is the principle of protection of minority rights and guaranteed access for the minority groups to state services, as well as protection of the minorities' own cultural autonomy.³⁹

Furthermore, Diamond argues that a political culture conducive to liberal democracy is necessary for its achievement and consolidation. Such a political culture values moderation, cooperation, bargaining, and accommodation among political elites, as well as tolerance, pragmatism, trust, willingness to compromise, and a certain civility in political discourse.⁴⁰

However, the difficulty with this is that the political culture deemed conducive to democracy seems to come out of Western political culture. As Diane Mauzy succinctly puts it in a study of democracy in Southeast Asia, "(t)here are several key value differences between Asia and the West that contribute to their different political cultures. The West puts a high premium on individualism, rights and freedoms, political competition, and contention. Asian political culture values communitarianism, duty and obligations, consensus and order, harmony and balance."⁴¹

Other political scientists have argued about the prerequisites for democratization. In addition to a supportive political culture, Seymour Martin Lipset argues that social equality is a key condition for the growth of democracy and that it can only be achieved through industrialization. Therefore, democracy is not likely to grow in poor countries. Economic development gives

³⁹ Larry Diamond (1999) Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁰ Larry Diamond, ed. (1993) Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p. 10.

⁴¹ Mauzy, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

rise to the growth of the middle class and the strengthening of the working class. As a result, a strong civil society that is independent from and curbs state power emerges. Thus, democracy is a product of capitalist development.⁴²

Yet, despite strong performances in industrialization as shown by decade-long dynamic economic growth, a number of East and Southeast Asian countries seem to disprove the economic development thesis of democratic growth. Donald Emmerson asserts that the Southeast Asian region has shown recalcitrance toward liberal democracy due to the lack of liberal traditions in the political culture, and to the different kind of middle class arising in the region. The middle class in Southeast Asia has not developed independently of the state. Rather, its very existence relies on the opportunities and benefits rendered by the state.⁴³ This might explain why the middle classes in this region seem primarily concerned with the creation of wealth and tend not to object against infringements of their civil and political rights. The performance of the government is also valued for its effectiveness to function in ways that, according to Mauzy, “promotes prosperity and security, general happiness, freedom from ordinary crime, human dignity, and economic advancement.”⁴⁴

Similarly, Robert Dahl argues against positing a direct, almost automatic, correlation between modernization and democracy. He maintains that due to different political cultures in different regions, there are divergent

⁴² Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy,” in *American Political Science Review*, March 1959; Larry Diamond and Gary Marks, “Seymour Martin Lipset and the Study of Democracy,” in Gary Marks and Larry Diamond, eds. (1992) *Reexamining Democracy*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pp. 5-8.

⁴³ Donald K. Emmerson, “Region and Recalcitrance: Rethinking Democracy through Southeast Asia” in *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1995, pp. 223-248; see also Mauzy, *op.cit.*, pp. 115-117.

⁴⁴ Mauzy, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

ways political change from a non-democracy to a democracy can take place, and that modernization will not necessarily create the conditions conducive to democracy.⁴⁵

Some of the new literature on democratization seems to abandon the notion that democracy needs prerequisites. In The Third Wave of Democratization, Samuel Huntington argues that there have been waves and reverse waves of democratization throughout the 20th century, and that between 1974 and 1990 a third wave took place. His study focuses on the role of political and strategic elites in pushing for democratization. It is based on the assumption that a growth in democracy does not simply emerge given certain socio-economic and politico-cultural conditions. Huntington argues that since the domestic societal bases are not the keys to democratization, such a process can actually be crafted or engineered by elites. For that matter, democratization can occur even in places where the economic conditions and political culture are deemed hostile. The crafting of democratization requires strategic elites. The most successful formula, according to Huntington, seems to be negotiating pacts among elites.⁴⁶

While the recent focus on strategic elite interaction makes democratization seem easier to begin,⁴⁷ the task of consolidating the newborn democracies is more formidable. In a more recent article, Huntington

⁴⁵ Robert A. Dahl, "Development and Democratic Culture," in Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-mao Tien, eds. (1997) Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 34-38.

⁴⁶ Huntington, *op.cit.*; Doh Chull Shin, "On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research, in *World Politics*, No. 47, October 1994, pp. 135-170.

⁴⁷ In The Third Wave of Democratization, Huntington even produced a number of "guidelines for democratizers."

acknowledges that the threat to democracy comes not from its usual enemies, such as the military, but rather from the participants in the democratic process itself.⁴⁸ The problems of consolidation are related to the difficulty of institutionalizing the rules of democracy, including elections and associated freedoms. According to Juan Linz, democracy is likely to endure if the institutionalization of those rules creates a situation “in which none of the major political actors, parties, or organized interests, forces, or institutions consider that there is any alternative to democratic processes to gain power. ... To put it simply democracy must be seen as the ‘only game in town’.”⁴⁹ In another article, Linz and Alfred Stepan identify five conditions that must be present to ensure the consolidation of democracy, *e.g.*, a lively and free civil society, an autonomous political society of political actors and parties, the rule of law, a state bureaucracy that can be employed by the new democratic regime and an institutionalized economic society.⁵⁰ Guillermo O’Donnell argues that formal institutionalization of democratic rules might be difficult in many of the non-Western countries where individual leaders are perceived to be more important than institutions. He then suggests the importance of informal rules that are agreed upon by the political elites in these countries.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, “Democracy for the Long Haul,” in Diamond, *et.al.*, eds., (1997) Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Juan J. Linz, “Transitions to Democracy,” in *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 13, 1990, p. 156.

⁵⁰ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, “Toward Consolidated Democracies,” in Diamond, *et.al.*, eds. (1997), pp. 17-23.

⁵¹ Guillermo O’Donnell, “Illusions about Consolidation,” in Diamond, *et.al.*, eds. (1997), pp. 43-47.

Another important problem related to the consolidation of new democracies is the quality of performance of the nascent democratic regime. If the task of the institutionalization process is successfully coupled with the effectiveness of the new regimes in delivering stability and prosperity, then the chances of these regimes being perceived as legitimate, and thus consolidating the democratic system, will significantly increase.⁵²

In a review of Indonesian democratization three years into the transition process, where the socioeconomic and political efforts have been intensely racked by instability, Olle Törnquist criticizes the Huntingtonian thesis and political recipe of a 'crafting of instant democracy.' According to Törnquist, respect for civil and political rights has not changed a great deal since *Reformasi* was launched in 1998. The social and political institutions were far from adequate in coping with the rising public expectations and demands for accountability. After almost four decades under the tight control of the Sukarno and Suharto regimes, the civilian political leadership was not accustomed to negotiations and bargaining associated with open political competition. Low or non-existent interpersonal trust among elites as well as the public created a predatory atmosphere where politics were regarded in zero-sum terms.⁵³

As this research will attempt to demonstrate, even after the pro-democracy forces successfully toppled an authoritarian regime and instituted some democratic practices, consolidation of the new system has not been easily

⁵² Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, Seymour Martin Lipset, eds. (1990) Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 52-57.

⁵³ Olle Törnquist (2002) "What's Wrong with Indonesia's Democratisation?" in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Volume 30, Number 3, September 2002, pp. 547-569.

accomplished, and the danger exists that it might create a situation of instability that leads to questions about the efficacy of the whole democratic arrangement. This is especially true in developing states like Indonesia where deep segmental cleavages, as found in the *aliran* divisions, make the potential for conflict exceptionally large, and where most of the necessary conditions for democratic consolidation are not present.

THE ALIRAN AND THEIR POLITICAL CULTURE ANTECEDENTS

The differences among the *aliran*, stemming from cultural beliefs and practices, have had a significant impact on their political views and subsequent behavior. Many observers of Indonesia, both from within or outside of Indonesia, cite the importance of understanding Indonesia's culture in order to make sense of the volatility of its politics. Not everyone, however, asks the right questions. According to Clifford Geertz, it is unquestionable that a country's politics reflect the design of its culture. But the most important task is how to demonstrate the connection between culture and politics.⁵⁴ Furthermore, many Indonesian observers base their analyses on an incorrect assumption. A common mistake lies in attempts to understand Indonesian politics exclusively through the prism of the cultural traits of the majority group, the Javanese. The fallacy of such a conjecture lies in the presumption that Indonesia equals Java. Although the Javanese are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia (comprising 41.71% of the total population in 2000⁵⁵) and their influence on state matters is

⁵⁴ Geertz (1973), *op.cit.*, The Interpretation of Cultures, p. 311.

⁵⁵ Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta (2003), Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape, Singapore: Institute of

therefore substantial, they do not have a hegemonic predominance either constitutionally, such as the constitutional privileges enjoyed by the Malays in Malaysia, or politically, such as the preponderance of male Caucasians in U.S. politics. At the very least, the Javanese position has always been balanced by the non-Javanese ethnic groups, known as the *seberang*.⁵⁶ That being said, the fallacy is understandable. Most of Indonesia's half-a-century history has been dominated by the political system amenable to Javanese politico-cultural traits, *i.e.*, authoritarianism. Open political competition, often associated more with the *seberang's* traits, has prevailed only intermittently. Nonetheless, even during the heyday of Java-centered oligarchic rule, the *seberang* political groups did not perish completely. They merely went into the state of political hibernation, waiting for the opportunity to reassert themselves.

One of the most significant links between culture and politics are institutions. To what extent have the cultural values become institutionalized in the social organizations established by the populace? The social organizations are tasked with socialization of politico-cultural values among their members, as well as articulation of group interests *vis-à-vis* those of others.⁵⁷ In order to delineate the influence of cultural factors on politics, a distinction must be made between socio-cultural organizations and formal state institutions. In Indonesia, political socialization has generally been carried out through a set of

Southeast Asian Studies, p. 32. This book offers a detailed breakdown of the comprehensive 2000 Indonesian population census data.

⁵⁶ The word "*seberang*" (or in the old Malay known as "*sabrang*") means "the other side." However, it can also be construed as "out there," signifying the centrality of the Javanese culture and the mutual alienation between the two political cultures.

⁵⁷ Geertz (1973), *op.cit.*, pp. 314-315.

aliran-based social institutions. The Muhammadiyah, for instance, is widely regarded as the social organization of the modernist Muslims. Many of its leaders were trained by this organization. Similarly, the Nahdatul Ulama (NU) has many branch organizations which cover almost every facet of social life of the traditionalist Muslims, such as women, youth, students, scholars, education of all levels, business and economic development, and so on. These *aliran* organizations even maintain paramilitary organizations, tasked with maintaining the security of the respective group's properties as well as ensuring the safety of its leaders.⁵⁸

These social institutions coexist with the formal state institutions. While the government institutions, such as the educational system and the bureaucracy, operate within the norms of modern state organizations and are widely regarded as truly national organizations, the *aliran*-based institutions function in accordance with the cultural traits of the respective organizations. These organizations are the vanguards of the political segments and the values they espouse. Since they command the allegiance of a large number of people, the social institutions are generally very powerful. Despite the aspiration of the government to be the ruler of the land, its activities remain merely official and routine. Even during the New Order regime, where the government was deemed as possessing sufficient coercive power to carry out its programs, the cooperation of the social organizations was still sought, not only because it

⁵⁸ One of these organizations, the Banser (*Barisan Serbaguna* – Auxiliary Force), commonly associated with the NU, was reportedly very active in the pogrom against communists and their sympathizers in the aftermath of 1965 failed communist coup attempt.

made implementation more cost-effective, but also in order to ensure the participation of the public.⁵⁹

Additionally, the link between culture and politics can also be traced through the extent that ideas, norms, and habits prevalent among a particular community have implanted themselves in the state structure. The more intrusive the cultural impact, the stronger the link.⁶⁰ In Indonesia, because of the enormous mass level support for the *aliran* networks, not only do the *aliran* strongly influence the state structure, but also most, if not all, of the members of the political elite, past and present, can be identified with one or another *aliran*. Sukarno, for example, had a Javanese nationalist background. So did Suharto. B.J. Habibie, who replaced Suharto in 1998, came from the *seberang* modernist Muslim tradition, while former president Abdurrahman Wahid was a scholar of the NU, the traditionalist Muslim organization. Megawati Sukarnoputri, the current President, like her father, has a Javanese nationalist background. Each leader has ruled in ways that were/are consistent with the politico-cultural traits from which they emanated. As a result, the sociopolitical structure of the country has largely been the product of the *aliran* structure and the segmental politics borne out of their interactions.⁶¹

⁵⁹ The most significant example was the *Keluarga Berencana* (Family Planning) program to ease population pressure. The government actively pursued the cooperation of the organizations belonging to the NU and the Muhammadiyah, among others.

⁶⁰ A similar argument about the autonomy of the state, or lack of, from ethnic influences is made in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (1985) Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁶¹ Geertz (1973), *op.cit.*, pp. 316-317.

The political culture approach, although not always appreciated, is one of the most important perspectives in political science. It aims at explaining political behavior through the investigation of the individual's fundamental values, sentiments, and knowledge that give form and structure to political processes.⁶² It refers to the cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes that the individuals perform in order to view, comprehend, assess, as well as eventually act upon political institutions and processes.⁶³

The study of political culture was influenced by developments in other fields of social sciences, most notably in psychology and anthropology.⁶⁴ Political culture can be understood in two ways. The first concerns the political orientation of the individual. Here, the focus lies in the psychological outlook of the subject individual. The puzzle in this level is individuals' perception of the political order and institutions. The second concerns the collective orientation of the society. Its focus lies in the political outlook of a group of people, either in the forms of national, ethnic, or sub-ethnic groups.⁶⁵ The latter, anthropologically-influenced analysis appears to have influenced the study of political culture more profoundly than the former, psychologically-based one. Political scientists are interested in studying the cultural traits that are widely

⁶² Lucian W. Pye, "Political Culture" in Seymour Martin Lipset, ed. (1995) The Encyclopedia of Democracy, Congressional Quarterly, p. 965.

⁶³ Harry Eckstein, "Culture as a Foundation Concept for the Social Sciences," in *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1996, p. 489; Harry Eckstein, "A Culturalist Theory of Political Change," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 3, September 1988, pp. 790-791. Eckstein drew his postulate from Talcott Parson's "action-theory."

⁶⁴ Pye, *op.cit.*, p. 966.

⁶⁵ Walter Rosenbaum (1975) Political Culture, New York: Praeger, p. 4.

shared by a substantial number of people, assuming that they will have a more significant bearing on political processes and eventually political outcomes.⁶⁶

Connecting the individual to the social is the notion of political socialization. Citing Talcott Parsons, Eckstein argues that: culture is shared and thus a collective phenomenon; culture is a social heritage transmitted from generation to generation; and that culture is socially learned.⁶⁷ Political socialization shapes a person's political orientations. It constructs the framework whereby an individual thinks, feels, evaluates, and acts upon political institutions and processes. There are various agents of political socialization, such as home, school, friends, neighborhood, social organizations. Political socialization can be carried out by the state through educational curricula, control of mass media, as well as direct indoctrination training. It can also be carried out by segments of the population. In Western democracies, political socialization tends to take place in families, as well as in schools. In communist countries, by contrast, party organizations are responsible for socialization from a very early age. In many nations, religious organizations are also engaged in shaping political perceptions of their followers.⁶⁸

There are also cases where political socialization is carried out by multiple agencies. Indonesia is one such case. In the formal educational system, the state was responsible for political socialization of the general public. The state ran a network of state schools from elementary to tertiary, and oversaw the curricula in private schools, including religious ones. Political

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Eckstein (1996), *op.cit.* pp. 490-491.

⁶⁸ Rosenbaum (1975), *op.cit.*, pp. 14-15.

socialization by the state was also carried out through other measures. During the New Order, Indonesians of virtually all walks of life had to undergo ideological “training,” known as the *Penataran Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (P4 - Upgrading Course on the Directives for the Realization and Implementation of Pancasila). As observed by a scholar, the aim of P4 “... is to provide an accepted framework to contain politics within defined boundaries. Pancasila, as propounded by P4, is the clearest and most self-conscious articulation of this ideological vision and, by implication, of the competing visions that the government is not willing to tolerate.”⁶⁹ In other words, the political socialization carried by the Indonesian state, especially during the New Order but also during the Sukarno era, aimed at creating a unified Indonesian identity as defined by the state, and at eradicating what were considered remnants of parochialism, such as those embodied within the political *aliran*.

However, the state was not the only agency carrying out this socialization. Even as all school-age children were required to attend the formal state schools, many, especially at the grassroots level, received “extra” education from their families and from the organizations that their parents belonged to. Many of these organizations, such as the *pesantren* and *madrasah* schools, to varying degrees, shared similar beliefs with the *aliran*, if not a straightforward *aliran* identity. Furthermore, while the state oversaw the curricula taught in these non-state educational institutions, they were still allowed to impart some values deemed uniquely specific to the particular

⁶⁹ Michael Morfit, “Pancasila: The Indonesian State Ideology According to the New Order Government” in *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXI, No. 8, August 1981, p. 838.

institutions, such as Muhammadiyahism or the teaching of the *Kitab Kuning* (the traditionalist revered religious texts). Political socialization did not only take place in schools. The strongest value socialization usually occurred in families and neighborhoods. In many villages, especially in Java, such socialization took place through traditional entertainment media, such as the *wayang* (puppet) show that told moral stories and imparted values in a fairly consistent form from generation to generation. Thus, political socialization following *aliran* networks remained alive and well, despite the efforts by the state to create a unified national identity and eliminate parochialism.

CRITICS OF POLITICAL CULTURE

The political culture approach is not without its critics. In fact, the earlier studies of political culture that made cultural factors the key explanatory tools for evaluating political behavior are considered unconvincing by many contemporary scholars. The main problem with this approach seems to be its inability to provide systematic evidence of the explanatory centrality of culture and its failure to explain how culture affects political outcomes.

The “newer literature” on the study of political culture seeks to evaluate the explanatory centrality of culture relative to the other factors, such as structure and institutions and political economy. David Elkins and Richard Simeon assert that cultural-based explanations are persuasive only after the structural and institutional explanations have been exhausted. They argue that examination of a phenomenon where two countries differ should first look at the structural and institutional differences between the two countries. Such differences may be examined in terms of relative proportions of groups, the

income levels and social class arrangements, ethnicity, age, and gender proportion in each country. If the differences can be explained by examination of the structural factors, then analysts can conclude that it is the structure rather than culture that matters. If the structural conditions are comparably similar, then a look at cultural factors is necessary to explain the variations. In short, culture is a second-order explanation. Culture is therefore residual, according to these authors.⁷⁰

Ronald Inglehart contends that while political culture may explain the stability of democratic political arrangements, it is formed, shaped, and influenced by political and economic factors. Employing large-*n* cross-national studies, he identifies three important factors in political (civic) culture that explain the durability of democracy, *i.e.*, interpersonal trust, life satisfaction, and support for revolutionary change. It seems that if the analysis stops here, it could be conclusive that culture does produce political outcomes, and therefore it is the explanatory variable. However, Inglehart goes on to argue that his statistical study shows a strong correlation between civic culture and the society's economic level. Higher levels of interpersonal trust and life satisfaction along with a lower support for revolutionary change, tend to be commensurate with the more developed stage of economic development. Therefore, it can be inferred that culture occupies a position of intervening rather than explanatory variable in explaining political outcomes.⁷¹

⁷⁰ David J. Elkins and Richard E.B. Simeon (1979) "A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain?", in *Comparative Politics*, January 1979, pp. 127-145.

⁷¹ Ronald Inglehart (1988) "The Renaissance of Political Culture," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 4, December 1988, pp. 1203-30. For similar work in assessing the impact of culture on political outcome relatively to economic and social factors, employing a large-*n* positivist methodology, see Jan-Erik Lane and

These newer studies certainly address some of the concerns about the difficulty in measuring culture as the explanatory variable. Whether or not culture affects political outcomes can be evaluated if the relationship between culture and other factors, such as institutions, is made explicit.

The relegation of culture to a secondary position, however, may or may not be useful in explaining political outcomes. The role of institutions and economic development (industrialization) in producing a democratic political structure in the West may surpass the importance of political culture. For instance, as shown by Barrington Moore, the presence of a bourgeois class and its relative strong position *vis-à-vis* the crown (a structural relationship) coupled with industrialization, explain the growth of liberal democratic systems in Western Europe. Another type of structural relationship is between the urban masses and the state, in which the state is relatively stronger than the society, and when combined with industrialization this produced fascism in Germany and Japan.⁷²

Structural institutional factors and rapid industrial growth, however, cannot convincingly explain why the interaction between these similar factors does not yield similar outcomes in non-Western societies. For example, the growth of a large middle class and rapid industrialization in Singapore could have been expected to produce liberal democracy in this country, as was the case in Western Europe. This has not been the case. One of the main reasons for this anomaly seems to be a potent cultural trait of Singaporean society,

Svante Ersson (2002) Culture and Politics: A Comparative Approach, Hants, England: Ashgate.

⁷² Barrington Moore (1966) Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of Modern World, Boston: Beacon Press.

especially its Chinese majority, as embodied in Confucian belief, of strong deference to effective leaders. The Japanese case also seems to demonstrate the primacy of culture in explaining political outcomes in the non-Western states. Even though formally democratic institutions have existed in Japan for more than half a century, democratic competition in politics and an open economy are not the best descriptions of the Japanese society. Until it lost power briefly, the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) had been the only political party in the developed world that ruled a country for more than forty years continuously. Capitalist development in Japan has also never been independent of the role of the state. The role of Japanese conglomerated companies both in politics and in the economy, marked by the so-called *zaibatsu* system before and during the World War II, remained strong even after General Douglas MacArthur attempted to reform this system and changed the designation of these companies into *keiretsu*.⁷³ The cultural impulses seem to be stronger in these cases than in the Western ones.

Donald Emmerson argues that despite dramatic economic growth, liberal democracy has not flourished in Southeast Asia. Many countries in this region have time and again demonstrated recalcitrance towards democracy.⁷⁴ This fact is mainly due to cultural factors. He points to the following reasons, among others, for the “illiberal” governmental systems found in Southeast Asia: first, they lack a liberal tradition of democracy; second, the common thesis of modernization and democratic theories that the more prosperous and wealthy a

⁷³ William H. Overholt, “Japan’s Economy: At War with Itself,” in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, January-February 2002, pp. 134-147.

⁷⁴ Emmerson (1995), *op.cit.*, pp. 223-248.

country, the more likely it will become democratic because of the demands of the rising middle classes, does not fit the Southeast Asian case. The middle classes in this region are the products of what Kunio Yoshihara called “ersatz capitalism”: state-sanctioned capitalist and industrial development. In this environment, the middle classes in Southeast Asia do not develop independently of the state. Rather, their very existence relies on the opportunities and benefits created by the state.⁷⁵

Another criticism of the political culture approach is its static tendency. This approach assumes that the core values of any society are enduring and relatively immutable, at least in the short term. Such a criticism comes mainly from scholars of rational choice persuasion. They argue that political culture research tends to focus on values and symbols, which take generations to develop and consolidate, and be less attentive to other more dynamic factors, such as the economy. As a result, scholars of political culture are perceived to be quite weak conceptually in dealing with political change, and political cultural explanations of change are not very convincing.⁷⁶ Political cultural theorists respond to this criticism by pointing out that in political culture “(c)ontinuity is the inherent ... expectation and so, therefore, is resistance to change of motion.”⁷⁷ Eckstein further argues that a theory of political change can be derived from the political culture perspective. Change, according to this perspective, is contextual, occurring within the framework of a general set of

⁷⁵ Yoshihara, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

⁷⁶ See for example, Ronald Rogowski (1974) Rational Legitimacy, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁷⁷ Eckstein (1988), *op.cit.*, p. 793.

patterns. This pattern-maintaining change allows for cultural flexibility but remains skeptical about revolutionary transformation. According to Eckstein, "... in the longer run, attempts at revolutionary transformation will tend to be regressive or at least have quite unintended outcomes."⁷⁸

More recently, there have been some works attempting to span the rational choice and political culture divide. One such work is authored by Lisa Wedeen.⁷⁹ She questions the validity of political culture's "essentialism," especially the tendency of some political culture theorists to regard culture as a given phenomenon that affects political outcomes. Wedeen seeks to explore the conditions in which culture actually becomes meaningful to the people dwelling in a society. This practice of "meaning-making" of the symbols inherent in cultures (what she calls "semiotic-practices") should take into account the historical circumstances and power relations in which people and their culture evolve. Culture is thus a product of social and political, as well as economic, relations that develop over time and are given meaning by agents or elites and understood by that society according to circumstances arising from such relations.

As this research shall demonstrate, while the political platforms of the *aliran*-based segments are derived from the politico-cultural traits of their respective constituents, they arrange their platforms according to their relative positions to each other. The *aliran* segment's positions are also continuously

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 801.

⁷⁹ Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 4, December 2002, pp. 713-728; see also Lisa Wedeen, "Beyond the Crusades," in *Items & Issues*, Social Science Research Council, Vol. 4, No. 2-3, Spring/Summer 2003, p. 1-6.

evolving, as products of historical circumstances as well as the changing power relations among them. However, these changes are hardly revolutionary, even in cases where they seem so, such as the position of the traditionalists in the issue of state foundation (discussed at length in Chapter Six). Instead, they reflect Eckstein's "pattern-maintaining change," as these changes can be viewed as modifications of position according to changing historical circumstances or power relations, but still take place within the larger framework of politico-cultural beliefs derived from the cultural roots of the respective *aliran segments*.

POLITICAL CULTURE MULTIPLICITY WITHIN ONE POLITY

In addition to the explanation of variations among states, political culture is particularly useful in explaining variations among groups within one state. The explanatory power of culture might be apparent when two or more different groups behave differently under similar constraints and opportunities imposed by the common state structure. In such cases, while structural institutional and economic factors remain important, the role of culture cannot be relegated to a second-order explanation. As this research shall attempt to demonstrate, Indonesia is one such case.

A number of scholars have pondered the notion of variation in political cultures within one polity as encompassing two dimensions. One is ethnogeographically-based. This refers to a situation of multiple political cultures where the segments are derived from ethnic or religious groups cultivated in different regions of the polity. The groups have grown along separate development paths throughout their histories, induced by different internal geographical factors as well as by external influences. As a result, they have

developed different cultural traits. The creation of national states, in many cases, has produced an incongruence between ethnic and national boundaries, resulting in such a multiplicity of political cultures. National governments have not been able to assimilate these different cultural traits, albeit many have aimed to create a “national culture or identity,” and this has been the source of conflict among these segments. Such a phenomenon does not solely belong to the decolonized countries of Asia and Africa. Many of the more developed countries of the West are also plagued by similar problems.

A more often cited example of a dual political cultural system is Italy. In one of the most persuasive research efforts showing the salience of political culture, using Italy as its case study, Robert Putnam has contended that in this country there are two separate regions with different historical and cultural traits resulting in distinct societal and institutional features. The Northern culture is influenced by the cultures of middle Europe while the Southern one resembles those of the Mediterranean. The South is generally perceived to be predominantly rural society with strong agricultural economics, while the North is more urban and industrialized. As a result, the political cultural traits of the South and the North are markedly different from each other. The role of familial lineage is much more influential in the South and significantly less so in the North. Paternalism and patronage are among the most salient factors defining political behavior in the South while similar behavior in the North is highly influenced by institutions.⁸⁰ Civic tradition and norms, social capital, and interpersonal trust are also generally higher in the North than in the South. In

⁸⁰ Joseph Lapalombara (1965) “Italy: Fragmentation, Isolation, Alienation,” in Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds. (1965) Political Culture and Political Development, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 303-306.

such different settings, democratic institutions function and perform more effectively in the “civic culture” North than in the parochial South.⁸¹

The other dimension in the variation of political culture within one polity is social class-based. Such variation occurs between different social classes in the society, *i.e.*, between the masses and the elite. The study by Lucian Pye and Sydney Verba on the effects of political culture on political development demonstrates such differentiation. According to the study, those who are in power or responsible for the decisions of the government tend to develop a different outlook and orientation toward politics from those who are marginally positioned in terms of policy-making. Such differences are not only caused by different rates of exposure to the complex issues surrounding the decision-making process, but also by separate socialization processes between the two classes.⁸²

An excellent example of this variation can be found in India in the 1960s. There were two political cultures operating at different levels of this country. One was in the districts. It covered the local politics, both urban and rural and local administrations. The other was concentrated in the nation’s capital, New Delhi. It would be quite misleading to suggest that the former was traditional and the latter modern, since even at the local level there were many modern components and at the federal level certain aspects of traditionality remained preserved. However, the two political cultures were derived from different processes of socialization carried out by and through different sets of social

⁸¹ Robert D. Putnam (1993) Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, Princeton: Princeton University Press, *passim*.

⁸² Lucian W. Pye (1965) “Introduction: Political Culture and Political Development,” in Pye and Verba, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 15-17.

institutions conveying different values. Political socialization in the districts was carried out mainly through various traditional ethnic and religious institutions. Here, traditional variables such as caste, ethnic ties, and religious affiliations in some parts of the country played a significant role. On the other hand, the elite political culture was devised and maintained through a process of political socialization highly influenced by the legacy of British colonial administration. The process was carried out by and through modern educational institutions both in Britain and in India, and was immersed not only in the English language, but also its traditions and practices. As a result, the ideas of modernity and secularism were generally perceived to be the norms of sociopolitical life among this elite.⁸³

The above two classifications of political culture multiplicity may be logically extended into some additional variants. For instance, the ethno-geographical classification can also be viewed as the social class one. This happens in cases where the ruling elites are predominantly derived from one ethnic group. The perpetual rule of the minority *Alawis* in Syria over the majority Arab groups might be perceived as an example of this congruence.⁸⁴

Perhaps the most engaging question in the political culture literature is the correlation between tradition and modernity. This is particularly true of the developing nations, most of which are plural societies and non-Western in tradition, but are under strong influence from the West, historically for many

⁸³ Myron Weiner (1965) "India: Two Political Cultures," in Pye and Verba, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 199-244.

⁸⁴ Oded Haklai (1999) When A Minority Rules Over A Hostile Majority, M.A. Thesis unpublished, Vancouver: Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia.

through a long period of colonization and contemporarily through a world system dominated by the West. As a result, modernity, understood as a product of the Western civilization, often collides with, influences, overtakes, or is being fought by local traditions. In many cases, modernity and tradition accommodate and moderate each other, yielding a sort of eclectic new culture embraced by the local populations as if it is emanating from their own native cultural traits. Socialization agents of many local cultures seek to moderate the influence of modernity through a process of selection, by leaving out the unwanted elements and embracing the desired traits. They also attempt to adapt modernity to traditions by translating the demands of modernity into languages and practices familiar to the local populations.

As a result of such an eclectic selective and adaptive process, the idea of modernity seems highly appealing, especially to the aspiring individuals seeking to explore the idea of promoting a single nationhood out of the disparate local cultures brought together only by the presence of foreign powers. For many of these individuals, the idea of a local culture for specific local people is less attractive, not only because it reminds them of the parochialism that has led to the defeat of their civilization by the West in the period of colonialism, but also, according to their view, it denies them the opportunity to reap the material benefits supposedly offered by modernity.

However, the socialization and internalization of social, cultural, and political values that these individuals have experienced in their respective traditional institutions prior to their exposure to elements of modernity, leaves traditional values deeply embedded. Consciously or otherwise, they filter modern ideas through traditional lens. The consequence of such a process is

the desire to broaden their political thinking beyond the confinement of ethno-geographical parochialism. These individual elites appear to claim that the ideas they espouse are national in scope but indigenous in origin. However, few of them readily acknowledge that the ideas actually originate from the particular ethnically-defined indigenous political culture from which they find their roots. But, while speaking in what seems to be national and modern terms, it is evident that their ideas and goals resonate better and find greater support from those of their own specific ethno-geographical group than from the other groups.

The present research argues that the makeup of Indonesian political culture belongs to this modified classification of multiple political cultures. The major political groups, namely the nationalist, the modernist Islam, and the traditionalist Islam, are derived from the political cultures of the ethno-geographical groups. Both the nationalists and the traditionalists have roots in the Javanese culture. The nationalist *aliran* is the manifestation of the culture of the Javanese heartland of the southern part of central Java, while the traditionalist Islam is derived from the culture of eastern Java. The proponents of modernist Islam mainly come from the outer islands (*seberang*) and the coastal northern area of central Java. The culture of the nationalist and the traditionalist Islam is based mainly on agriculture, while that of the modernist is based on maritime commerce.

The nationalist movement in Indonesia, which is different from nationalist *aliran*, was strongly tied to the quest for modernity. Such a quest was felt widely, especially among the elites. The overwhelming sense of purpose at the advent of the nationalist movement was directed at achieving nationhood

as an integrated people. There was a consciousness at that time that the particular local cultures signified feudalism and primitiveness, and therefore, in a quest for modernity, had to be abandoned.⁸⁵ Indonesia was to be modernity itself. Thus, being integrated as one people, as opposed to being identified with the local cultures, was seen as the foundation of modernity. This precept provided for a very powerful impetus for the establishment of the Indonesian nation.⁸⁶

The process, in which the idea of Indonesia as a community was imagined, in many ways was shaped by the educational system installed by the Dutch colonial administration. At the turn of the century, due to an increasing need to staff the administration of its newly consolidated colony, the colonial administration opened the gates to education for native Indonesians. While many primary and secondary schools were set up in the regions, tertiary education was concentrated in Batavia (now Jakarta) and Bandung. Both cities had become the Mecca for aspiring indigenous elites from all over the archipelago. In these schools, they found a common identity of being the inferior *inlander*, as well as coming to realize that there was a common *lingua franca* other than Dutch that most of them spoke (the Malay language). These

⁸⁵ Ruth McVey (1996) "Building Behemoth: Indonesian Constructions of the Nation-State," in Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey, eds. (1996) Making Indonesia: Essays on Modern Indonesia in Honor of George McT. Kahin, Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, p. 14; also see the accounts of young nationalist leaders in the Boven Digoel camp, especially Sjahrir in Rudolf Mrázek (1996) "Sjahrir at Boven Digoel: Reflections on Exile in the Dutch East Indies," in Lev and McVey, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 59-60.

⁸⁶ The Oath of the Youth in 1928, an all important milestone of the foundation of the Indonesian state, carried the message of "One Fatherland, One Language, and One Nation."

students thus invented the identity of an Indonesian nation.⁸⁷ Through this process, not only was the Indonesian identity created, but it was also made finite.⁸⁸ Therefore, the Malays in Malaya were not considered as compatriots by the Sumatrans, even though the two groups had many commonalities, but the Papuans were, despite all the differences.

After proclaiming independence in 1945, the Indonesian founding fathers, led by Sukarno, strove to create a national identity for the new nation by inventing a number of symbols and traditions. In a classic work on the subject of inventing traditions, Eric Hobsbawm argues that many state elites have been engaged in inventing traditions for the purposes of establishing or symbolizing social cohesion, establishing or legitimizing institutions, and/or for political socialization. The source of many invented traditions indeed came from ancient materials, in the forms of symbols, mottos, songs, or rituals. But they were clearly employed for novel purposes. Inventing traditions was especially important for new nation-states, as they themselves were novel historical innovations.⁸⁹ This was even more important for a plural society like Indonesia, where there was little or no prior precedent to the claim of statehood in the form of and to the extent that the modern Indonesian state would adopt.

The symbolism for the new Indonesian state invented by Sukarno and others was largely derived from the old kingdoms of Sriwijaya and Majapahit (especially the latter). The national colors, red and white, were said to be the

⁸⁷ Anderson (1991) *op.cit.*, pp. 121-123; 132-134.

⁸⁸ One of the features of imagined communities, according to Anderson, lies in the limitation of the communities. See *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., (1983) The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

battle flag used by the Gajah Mada (the prime minister of Majapahit) during wars to enlarge the kingdom's area of control. The national symbol of the Garuda bird was also said to be the sacred bird of the old kingdom. Many mottos of the state or state's bodies used Sanskrit words that were deemed to be used by the ancient kingdoms.

But perhaps more than mere symbolism, tradition was invented to lend credence to Indonesia's claim of statehood. It was argued that since the span of control exerted by both the Sriwijaya and Majapahit kingdoms encompassed the area that became part of independent Indonesia, the claim of statehood was therefore a valid, legal, and natural one. However, while Majapahit's rule indeed reached to many parts of the archipelago, including Serui in the western tip of New Guinea island (present day Irian Jaya), the extent of control was at best only tributary and indirect. Furthermore, most of Majapahit's area of control only extended to small coastal towns, and rarely touched the interior areas, except in Java.

Almost immediately after the establishment of the nascent state, it became obvious that there was a deep politico-cultural divide between the main political *aliran* groups. The new republic soon became entangled in prolonged, indeed continuous, debates on a number of fundamental issues, *i.e.*, the state ideology between Islam as propagated by the Muslim forces or a quasi-secular ideology advocated by the nationalists; the nature of state power and political competition between a high degree of authoritarian paternalism as believed by the Javanese and an egalitarian and open political competition consistent with the traits of the outer islanders; and the issue of centralization, sought by the

dominant Javanese versus a decentralization of power, wanted by the outer islanders.

Indonesian politics, thus, can be defined as encompassing conflict and cooperation between the major political *aliran* segments, which owe their existence to the ethnically divided political cultures, constrained and modified by the structure of modern nationalism. Such an interaction between tradition and modernity leads to the observation of a prominent Indonesianist, William Liddle, who concludes that at “the most general level, to be Indonesian is to be modern and indigenous at the same time.”⁹⁰

Along with the other fundamental issues regarding the state mentioned above, this study particularly seeks to explore the divergent ideas of the political cultures of the *aliran*-based groups in Indonesia toward democracy. It aims to discover whether or not there are different meanings attached to the concept of democracy as a result of different segmental politico-cultural traits in Indonesia. If there are, it also aims to determine the implications for the state of different interpretations of democracy, and to ascertain whether or not this is an impediment to democratization and the process of democratic consolidation in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In its current development, the field of comparative politics is enmeshed in theoretical and methodological controversy. At one end of the spectrum, postmodernist scholars argue against any sort of theoretical approach as an

⁹⁰ R. William Liddle (1996) Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, p. 68.

avenue to understanding issues, and even in some cases against causal explanations altogether. At the other end, adherents of the rational choice approach, inspired by quantitative analysis of microeconomics and game theory, claim that all aspects of political behavior can be understood by employing rational deductive logic and modeling. Attainment of knowledge about the particulars is therefore unnecessary.⁹¹

However, the majority of comparative politics scholars remain in between the two poles, the so-called “eclectic messy center.” According to Paul Evans, a research that falls within this category “draws on general theories whenever it can but also cares deeply about particular historical outcomes. It sees particular cases as the building blocks for general theories and theories as lenses to identify what is interesting and significant about particular cases.”⁹² In the methodological spectrum, the position of the present study can be considered as a part of the eclectic messy center. It is informed by theories of political culture, democratization, and segmental politics. In return, it also seeks to contribute to our understanding of political culture, political change and democratization. It is also concerned with the particulars of the case study at hand – Indonesia – and seeks to address questions that may be of interest to scholars specializing in its study or practitioners involved with this country.

One of the most renowned methodologies in studying political culture is Clifford Geertz’ “thick description.”⁹³ He argues that in order to understand the

⁹¹ Atul Kohli, *et.al.*, “The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium,” in *World Politics*, Vol. 48, October 1995, pp. 1-2.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹³ Geertz (1973), *op.cit.*; see also a collection of Geertz’ essays in (1983) Local Knowledge, New York: Basic Books; for a succinct analysis of Geertz

culture of any given society, analysts have to make detailed analyses of the symbols, belief systems, and other components of the culture, and interpret them so as to make intelligible. The analysis should not attempt to gain parsimony common in theorizing activity among scholars of the positivist tradition, especially if it is done at the expense of a detailed understanding and a cogent interpretation of the object of study. This research may not attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of the multiple political cultures of a complex polity of Indonesia, at least not in the way that Geertz has done in his case study of the Balinese culture.⁹⁴ It does, however, intend to rely on the local knowledge of the researcher to make a somewhat detailed analysis and a rather thick description of how politico-cultural traits of major ethnic groups translate into political actions.

In an article on comparative politics methodology, Arend Lijphart identifies several ways that research in the discipline can be carried out. These can be grouped into four methods: statistical, experimental, comparative and case study. For the purpose of the present research, the last two methods are considered here. As its name implies, the comparative method refers to comparison between a few but at least two cases (the statistical method is usually suitable for large-*n* research) with the purpose of discovering empirical relationships among variables. The case study method deals with one case. But it is closely connected with the comparative method in that it possesses the potential to be expanded to cover two or more comparable cases in further

epistemological position, see Stephen Welch (1993) The Concept of Political Culture, Hampshire: St. Martin's Press, pp. 104-108.

⁹⁴ Clifford Geertz (1980) Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth Century Bali, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

studies. The advantage of the case study method is the intensive examination of the case. While many scholars have criticized this method and questioned its contribution to theorizing, in certain instances the case study can be useful to theory-building in the discipline.⁹⁵

Lijphart points out six categories of case study: atheoretical, interpretative, hypothesis-generating, theory-confirming, theory-infirming, and deviant case studies. The first two types are descriptive, less theoretically informed, and aspire less toward theory-building. The studies of these types are mainly interested only in the single case. The latter types are more theoretically-conscious. The first of this type begins with a possible hypothesis and attempts to formulate a more definitive hypothesis that in turn is to be tested in studies involving a larger number of cases. Both theory-confirming and theory-infirming studies have direct theoretical relevance in that they seek to approve or disapprove parts of established generalizations. Deviant case analyses are studies of cases that are presumed to deviate from general theoretical propositions.⁹⁶ The present study can best be described as falling within the categories of interpretive, theory-confirming, and perhaps hypothesis-generating studies. Further research on different comparable cases can be carried out using the findings of this study as a basis. But this research also aspires to add to the theoretical understanding of theories of political culture, democratization, and segmental politics by pointing out several strengths and weaknesses of these relatively more established theories.

⁹⁵ Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, September 1971, pp. 682-683, 691.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 691-693.

One of the problems in comparative political analyses, especially the large-*n* ones employing statistical methods, is the assumption that all nations are solid and unitary entities. Referring to an earlier study by Stein Rokkan, Lijphart asserts that such a "whole nation bias" is the result of practicality because it is relatively easier to collect data on the national rather than subnational level. The comparative method can help correct such a bias. By reducing the number of cases, an analyst can expand on the subnational variables.⁹⁷ Viewed through this methodological perspective, the present research can also be classified as comparative. While the case study is one nation, it is concerned with comparing and contrasting the subnational groups on comparable variables, *i.e.*, the politico-cultural antecedents of the groups, their views on politics, the state, governance, and democracy, which are eventually translated into political behavior.

This study employs a combination of research techniques aimed at answering different parts of the research questions, *i.e.*, library research and field research. Library research in the form of scholarly books, journals, newspapers, and other types of publications has been carried out, using the libraries of the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, and other libraries in North America, as well as the libraries of several research centers in Southeast Asia, including the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Habibie Center in Jakarta, Indonesia; and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) in Singapore. This research has also made use of much of the

⁹⁷ Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," in *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, July 1975, pp. 167-169.

recent literature in the Indonesian language that has been published in great numbers since *Reformasi*, a testament to the explosion of creative impulses in the country during the last five years, with the aim of introducing them to the broader international audience.

Field research is intended to gain information from primary or quasi-primary sources. In addition to using written materials, such as official journals and newspapers, party documents and publications, a series of interviews with figures from the major *aliran* groups identified in this research have been conducted. These figures include political persona, scholars and observers. Some interviews have also been carried out with prominent student political activists, members of the press, and activists of nongovernmental organizations. A list of interviewees may be found after the bibliography.

THESIS ORGANIZATION

This study is organized into seven chapters as follows. After this chapter, the historical background of Indonesian politics is discussed in Chapter 2. The time frame covered is from the wake of the nationalist movement during the Dutch colonial period (1908) to the late New Order (Suharto's last Development Cabinet - March 1997) era. The discussion will revolve around the issue of Indonesia's contending *aliran*-based segments and their ethnic or religious antecedents. Another point of discussion is the political interaction between these groups that led to the adoption of authoritarian government as well as the experimentation with democracy.

Chapter 3 describes the events that led to the resignation of Suharto in May 1997 and the subsequent transfer of power to Habibie. It starts with the

description of the Asian economic crisis that struck Indonesia early in the year and led to the multitude of crises facing the old regime. Then, it discusses the ensuing political crisis marked by students and a mass *Reformasi* movement demanding Suharto's resignation. Of particular importance, this chapter aims to delineate the extent of support given to the *Reformasi* movement, or possibly the lack thereof, shown by the leaders of the political *aliran*. Furthermore, it seeks to explore the ideas underlying the variations in elite behavior. As such, this chapter serves as the departure point for discussion in the ensuing chapters.

Chapters 4 through 6 attempt to address the following issues: the ethno-locational roots of the main political *aliran* in Indonesia, namely the nationalists, the modernist Muslims, and the traditionalist Muslims, the socio-cultural traits of each *aliran*, and their respective views on matters of statecraft, including the three critical issues of state foundation, regionalism, and democratization described earlier, giving particular attention to comparing and contrasting the politico-cultural views of the segments on their respective understandings of what democracy means and what political form it should take.

The concluding chapter analyzes the findings in the preceding chapters in light of the theoretical approaches identified in this chapter. It also evaluates the usefulness of the perspective of *aliran* politics to understanding Indonesian studies today. Close examination is directed to the analysis of the different perceptions of the *aliran* political segments towards the critical issues of the state and interpreting what this means for the future of Indonesia.

CHAPTER 2

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN INDONESIAN POLITICS: POLITICAL CULTURE, EXTERNAL IDEAS, AND THE PRIMACY OF *ALIRAN* POLITICS

This chapter seeks to outline the elements of continuity and change in Indonesian politics from the advent of the nationalist movement until just before the outbreak of the *Reformasi* movement. In discussing change, it focuses on the external and internal factors that influence the socio-cultural as well as the political makeup of Indonesian society. In particular, this analysis will be directed toward the interaction between “Western” ideas, such as nationalism, Marxism, capitalism and democracy, and traditional values. The discussion of continuity focuses on the geographical and sociological roots of Indonesia’s contending political segments, especially the Javanese and *seberang* (outer islanders). Also discussed is the centrality of the influence of Islam in producing the streams (*aliran*) of political thinking, *i.e.*, the *abangan*, the *santri* and the Javanese *santri*. Particular attention is paid to the institutional manifestation of these political segments in the forms of political parties, mass and religious organizations.¹ The discussion of the politico-cultural traits of the political segments and their ethnicity antecedents serves as the foundation for the analyses of the different perceptions of the respective

¹ In this chapter as in throughout the thesis, the terms streams, *aliran*, segments, and groups are used to mean the same thing, *i.e.*, the division of Indonesian politics into several prominent groups whose political behaviors are primarily defined by their respective politico-cultural roots and are supported by a web of socio-political organizations with identifiable constituents. The terms are therefore used interchangeably.

aliran segments in viewing the issues of the state, which can be found in the chapters 4-6.

CONTINUITY: ALIRAN IN INDONESIAN POLITICS

Analyses of Indonesian politics from the 1950s onward have revolved around the issue of the "*aliran*." Indonesian politics are organized around *aliran* networks, and therefore easier to interpret through this concept. In general, there are two definitions of *aliran*, as asserted by Clifford Geertz. One is "a political party surrounded by a set of voluntary social organizations formally or informally linked to it." The other is "a comprehensive pattern of social integration."² Political analysts tend to use either one of these definitions or a combination of the two.

In a widely read article among students of political culture, Benedict Anderson has argued that he is more comfortable with the latter definition of *aliran*. According to him, *aliran* constitutes "a distinctive, integrated cultural outlook, together with its organized and unorganized (but potentially organizable) adherents."³ On the other hand, Herbert Feith in the introduction to his classic book that he co-edited with Lance Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965*, demonstrated the use of the concept of *aliran* as in the first definition. He defines *aliran* in terms of "streams of political thinking."

² Clifford Geertz (1959) "The Javanese Village," in G. William Skinner, *ed. Local, Ethnic, and National Loyalties in Village Indonesia: A Symposium*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 37-41.

³ Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1972) "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," reprinted in Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. (1990) Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, fn. 85.

Within each stream can be found a political party. These *aliran*-based parties are supported by various social groups, representing youth, labor, women, students, intellectuals, artisans, *etc.*⁴

This thesis tends to support both definitions. The *aliran*, as shall be demonstrated in the ensuing pages, represent a distinctive politico-cultural set of beliefs, represented in the public sphere by a number of social organizations, and in the political sphere by a political party. An *aliran*-based party is usually distinguishable from the other *aliran* and non-*aliran* parties by the level and kind of mass organizational support that it receives both in elections and in the society generally. Such mass support can be discerned for the most part according to geographical locality, for instance between Java and the outer islands, coastal and agricultural areas in Java, and rural and urban areas.

The above definition of *aliran* seems to fit the definition of ideology in modern political science literature: a coherent set of ideas and beliefs geared towards political action.⁵ The *aliran*, similar to ideology, represent a world-view adhered to by their followers. Each has its own set of values, political attitudes, moral views, and empirical beliefs. However, even though throughout the course of Indonesia's history the *aliran* have been influenced by a number of "Western" ideologies,⁶ their adherence to these ideologies has been less dogmatic and more relaxed and flexible. A number of *aliran*-based political

⁴ Herbert Feith (1970) "Introduction" in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, *eds.* (1970) Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁵ See among others, David Robertson (2002) A Dictionary of Modern Politics, London: Europa Publications, pp. 232-233.

⁶ Referring to "Western" ideologies, such as Marxism, nationalism, democratic socialism, democracy, and capitalism.

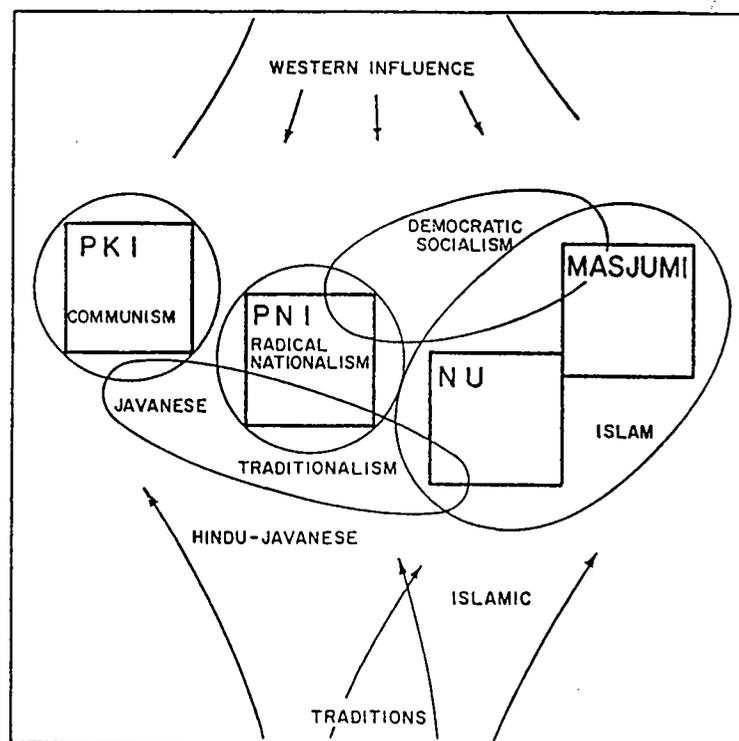
parties did try to demonstrate that they were the vanguards of certain ideologies. For example, PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* – Indonesian Communist Party) for Marxism-Leninism, PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* – Indonesian National Party) for nationalism, PSI (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* – Indonesian Socialist Party) for democratic socialism, and Golkar (*Golongan Karya* – Functional Groups) for capitalist developmentalism. However, as shall be argued in this chapter, these affinities have had less to do with winning mass support for their ideas than with presenting political platforms for purposes of waging political competition with the other parties. To say it from the perspective of the voters, the number of electors who vote for a certain party due to its ideological choice is significantly less than those who base their votes on the politico-cultural outlook of the party. This shows itself most clearly in cases where the *aliran* parties have shifted their ideological orientation, and such a shift has not resulted in the alienation of their constituents or disruption of their traditional core values.

The concept of *aliran* is also different from that of class. Although the PKI was notable for its Marxist-Leninist jargon that promoted a class struggle, the localized support that it received came mostly as a result of the ability of its leaders to communicate effectively with a certain cultural group, (the Javanese), rather than just with workers and peasants. Hence, each *aliran* segment can enjoy the support of its respective cultural group without regard to the class differentiation within such group.

However, it should also be noted that in the past, both class and ideology were still important in *aliran* politics, especially in trying to win the support of the majority group, the Javanese. Two *aliran* parties, the PNI and the PKI,

competed in the electoral race for Java. Here, the issue of class and ideology came forward. The PNI appealed to the middle and upper classes with a more conservative outlook, while the PKI gained more support from the more radical lower classes. Such a race also happened in some other areas, albeit not to the extent as in Java. In the contemporary setting, the growth of the middle class and increasing exposure to the outside world, as a result of economic development during the New Order era, has made class and ideology more salient in Indonesian politics. Nevertheless, such a phenomenon has by no means supplanted *aliran* politics.

Feith and Castle's edited book is the first systematic effort to map out the *aliran*-based political segments in Indonesia. As an illustration and as a basis for ensuing analyses, Feith's diagram of political parties and streams of political thinking is presented below:⁷



⁷ Feith, *op.cit.*, p.14.

Legend:⁸

PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
NU	Nahdatul Ulama (The Ulemas Awakening – Traditionalist Muslim party)
Masyumi	Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Council – Modernist Muslim party)

CONTENDING POLITICAL CULTURES

Selective Eclecticism

The richness in natural resources and the strategic position of the archipelago now known as Indonesia have attracted many civilizations to its islands to interact with its population. As a result, many of the world's major religious beliefs, *i.e.*, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, have come and influenced the way of life, world-view, and philosophy of the people. Of equal importance in shaping the Indonesian culture are the animist beliefs developed by the indigenous people prior to the arrival of the major religions. Probably due to the openness of the territory and waves of external exposures, the people of this archipelago tend to be flexible in accepting external influence and adapting the new influence to the old. As a result, many facets of the local cultures are eclectic and syncretic in nature.

Such eclecticism, however, is not uniformly applied across various ethnic groups in Indonesia. In general, it can be said that there is an inner selective mechanism found in each of these groups that filters which external influence

⁸ These four parties were the "big four" parties with the largest vote both in the parliamentary and the *Konstituante* elections in 1955.

is deemed acceptable and which not. Usually, such selection involves the suitability or compatibility of the external ideas to the existing pattern of social and power relationships of the indigenous population. This might explain why certain Western ideologies are more popular with certain ethnic groups than for the others. The belief system and worldview of the various ethnic groups are the result of such "selective eclecticism," which involves a long process of selection, internalization, syncretization and adaptation, articulation, and eventually value socialization among the people.

In much of the early literature on Indonesian politics, two political cultures appear to stand out. They are the Javanese and the *seberang* (outer islands) political cultures. The following is the discussion of the central assumption of the organization of society, and conception of power and politics held by these political cultures.

Javanese Political Culture

Javanese political culture has been much more widely explored by social scientists than the *seberang* political culture. This is probably due to the fact that the Javanese are the largest Indonesian ethnic group and that theirs is one of the ancient civilizations in the world.⁹ Given their long history, the Javanese have built a culture that is complex, intricate, and rich in spiritual life. The cradle of Javanese civilization is the fertile agricultural land in central Java around the present day cities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Historically, it has been an agricultural society. As in many such societies, the Javanese developed an inward-looking, insular, communitarian, status-conscious, and hierarchy-

⁹ In the words of Geertz, Java "has been civilized longer than England." See Geertz, Clifford (1960) The Religion of Java, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, p. 7.

mind culture.¹⁰ Such cultural features are also due to the heavy influence of Hindu-Buddhism in Java, which had been the predominant beliefs of the Javanese prior to the arrival of Islam in the 15th century. The caste system of Hinduism created significant social differentiation and stratification, which became deeply embedded within the Javanese psyche.¹¹ Due to its emphasis on hierarchy, the concept of Javanese leadership makes a clear distinction between *gusti* (lords) and *kawula* (subjects).¹²

The idea of power in Javanese culture is rather peculiar. It runs against the common perception of power in the West. Anderson argues that for the Javanese, power is concrete and finite, and holders of power are expected to be able to demonstrate power through the possession of certain objects deemed to have supernatural powers.¹³ Power is also homogeneous. It means that there is no differentiation of types of power. It is also regarded as constant in terms of total quality. It means that an increase of one's power must happen at the expense of others. Thus, the quest for power is perceived as zero-sum. Lastly, power is detached from moral questions. It is neither good nor bad, nor does it

¹⁰ R. William Liddle (1996) Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 65-66.

¹¹ R.M. Koentjaraningrat (1975) Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Indonesia and Malaysia, Menlo Park: Cummings Publishing Company, pp. 58-60.

¹² T. Mulya Lubis (1992) "The Future of Human Rights in Indonesia," in Harold Crouch and Hal Hill, eds. (1992) Indonesia Assessment 1992: Political Perspectives on the 1990s, Political and Social Change Monograph 17, Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University, p. 297; Anders Uhlin (1997) Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratization": The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in A Changing World, Surrey: Curzon, p. 52. The word "*gusti*" is also used to refer to God, which signifies the deep reverence toward the leaders.

¹³ Known as "*pusaka*" or sacred things. These can be in the forms of certain *kris* (dagger), spears, carriages, musical instruments, etc. See Anderson (1972), p. 27.

matter how it is achieved. What does matter is whether one has power or not.¹⁴ In terms of accession to power, the Javanese believe that power is either received from inheritance or from a divine favor (*wahyu*). Such favor is believed to be bestowed upon rulers of relatively humble origins, coming to power after a period of turmoil and bloodshed.¹⁵

In the Javanese conception, power is closely associated with “concentration” and “oneness.” Conversely, diffusion of authority means an impurity in power, and therefore should be avoided by all power holders. Thus, for a Javanese leader, diffusion of power within the state is regarded as a sign of weakness. A Javanese leader will always strive to unite different segments of the society under his rule and try to mold different - sometimes opposing - ideas believed by different groups into a single new idea that can be accepted by all.¹⁶

The search for harmony is the keyword in understanding Javanese social life, including statecraft.¹⁷ The Javanese have a profound ability to absorb new ideas, select parts of the new ideas suitable to their way of life, merge them with the existing culture, and thus rejuvenate the old culture as well as creating a new, syncretic one. Therefore the Javanese are known to be tolerant to the ideas of others, so long as these ideas do not contradict the central assumptions of their social lives.

¹⁴ Anderson (1972), pp. 22-23.

¹⁵ Koentjaraningrat (1985) “Javanese Terms for God and Supernatural Beings and the Idea of Power,” in A. Ibrahim, S. Siddique and Y. Hussain, eds. (1985) Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 290; Anderson (1972), pp. 38-39.

¹⁶ Anderson (1972), pp. 24-25; pp. 28-33.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-33.

Another important facet of the Javanese concept of power is the idea of *pamrih*¹⁸ to explain the ruler's downfall from power. A ruler is said to have *pamrih* in his leadership if he refuses or hesitates to carry out his duty to the state because of sympathy or empathy for his friends or family members. A *pamrih* is also said to exist if the ruler carries out a certain act in his personal favor (usually involving material benefits) or in the favor of his close associates or family members, or in other words corrupt and nepotistic practices.¹⁹ *Pamrih* is a sign that the power of the ruler is weakening and that a change of power is imminent.

Seberang Political Culture

As opposed to the vastness of scholarship on Javanese political culture, the outer islands political culture is rather inadequately covered. It is perhaps due to the fact that, in contrast to the Javanese, there are various groups living in these islands, and they tend to be spread out all over the archipelago. A relative lack of communication among them, unlike in Java, has rendered the creation of a single civilization among these groups unimaginable. Hence, it is quite difficult to define accurately the presence of an outer islands (*seberang*) political culture.

Nevertheless, there are some common qualities shared by many of these non-Javanese ethnic groups, or at least among the larger, more assertive and articulative ones. Among these groups are the Acehnese, Batak, and Minangkabau of Sumatra, and the Bugis and Makassar peoples of Sulawesi, as

¹⁸ The approximate meaning is "*concealed personal motive.*"

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

well as the people of the Maluku islands. The people living in coastal towns in the northern parts of Java (*pesisir* Javanese) can also be classified within this group, as well as the people of Banten (the westernmost part of Java island.)²⁰

According to Koentjaraningrat, there are two categories in the socio-geographical feature of these peoples. First, the majority of these ethnic groups live on the coastal areas. This is the case of the Minangkabau, Acehnese, Buginese, Makassarese, the many groups of Maluku, and the *pesisir* Javanese. Second, others of the *seberang* ethnic groups live in remote interior areas. Prominent examples of this category are the Bataks, Toraja and Minahasa of Sulawesi, and Dayaks of Kalimantan.²¹

These two categories of ethnic groups share a common feature concerning the extent of influence from Indic religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Compared to the vast Hindu-Buddhist influence in Java (and Hinduism in Bali), the presence of these two religions in the outer islands was much less prevalent.²² As a result, social stratification did not become the main

²⁰ The classification of the Sundanese of West Java is rather difficult. Due to the historical rivalry with the Javanese kingdoms, the Sundanese always insist that they are non-Javanese. However, to classify them as *seberang* is quite problematic, because the extent of Hindu influence is equally extensive in the Sunda land as in Central and East Java, especially in the eastern part where the courts of the old Sundanese kingdom of Padjadjaran was located.

²¹ It is important to note here that some interior *seberang* ethnic groups were still living in a fairly simple, secluded style, and still practice certain kind of animist beliefs (usually in combination with the practice of major religion, most notably Christianity). This is especially true in Papua (Irian Jaya), as well as some ethnic groups in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. Being situated in the margins of the country's social and political relations, they are relatively less significant in shaping up what is being considered here as the *seberang* political-culture.

²² Koentjaraningrat (1975), pp. 57-60. The high level of influence of Hinduism in Bali rendered its people share many similarities in political culture with the Javanese. Historically, the royal families of Bali originated from the Majapahit court fleeing from Java during the power struggle with the Islamic sultanate of Demak.

rule of the societies. While in many, if not all, of these groups there was a functional differentiation, especially the existence of the rulers and the followers, in general the differentiation was not as complex and intricate as in the Javanese model. In many of these ethnic groups, especially in the coastal communities, the rulers were less shrouded in an aura of mysticism and secrecy, and generally were more accessible. The decision-making process in the *seberang* communities was also generally more open and commoners were usually involved. The rulers frequently consulted the public for decisions regarding the societies in consultation meetings (*musyawarah*).²³

The socio-geographical difference between the coastal and the interior non-Javanese societies did not amount to significant differences in their world-views about statecraft. While in the interior outer-island tribes there was a significant degree of mysticism developed around the idea of power, the lack of Indic influence rendered a relatively more relaxed social stratification. The coastal communities were traditionally engaged in commerce and seafaring activities. As traveling merchants, they tended to possess the qualities of being culturally open, direct, and individualistic. This was due to the relatively small amount of time that they spent on land in their home villages, which did not enable them to contemplate or devise elaborate social customs and traditions. As a result, one's fortune was usually determined by individual rather than

²³ Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin (1996) "Masyarakat Aceh dan Demokrasi" (The Aceh Society and Democracy), in Muhammad Najib, ed. (1996) *Demokrasi dalam Perspektif Budaya Nusantara* (Democracy in the Perspective of Indonesian Cultures), Yogyakarta: LKPSM, Indonesia, pp. 40-47; Tadjuddin Noer Effendi (1996) "Demokrasi dalam Perspektif Budaya Batak" (Democracy in the Perspective of Batak's culture) in Najib, *op.cit.*, pp. 83-87; Sjafri Sairin (1996) "Demokrasi dalam Perspektif Kebudayaan Minangkabau" (Democracy in the Perspective of Minangkabau's culture) in Najib, *op.cit.*, pp. 142-146.

collective effort. Additionally, the *lingua franca* of the seafaring merchants in the archipelago in the 17th or 16th century was Malay. As opposed to the complex Javanese language, the Malay language was comparatively egalitarian and less stratified.²⁴ For these qualities, the Javanese have often regarded the *seberang* people as “*kasar*.”²⁵

Compared to the Javanese, the cultures of the *seberang* communities are less structured and elaborate. This is due to the small agricultural surpluses and high rate of mobility of the people.²⁶ In some instances, the effort to develop classes of civil servants and nobility was interrupted by the strengthening of colonial rule. Such was the case of the Bugis, where the direct rule of the Dutch colonial administration made the use of symbols of nobility decline rapidly.²⁷

Being maritime-based, *seberang* cultures generally promote a greater sense of individuality than the agriculturally-based Javanese culture. As opposed to Javanese inclusive and assimilative traits, the *seberang* cultures tend to be more exclusive and rigid. The sense of “we-they” is more prevalent in the *seberang* cultures than in the Javanese one. As an illustration, a Javanese would likely approach a difference of opinion by attempting to reconcile the differences by finding a middle ground or a syncretic solution, whereas a typical *seberang* person would likely approach similar situation by recognizing the

²⁴ The variant of the language used as the *lingua franca* was the *Melayu pasar* (market Malay). A different variant is used among the Malay aristocracy, which is a more stratified one. But even the extent of stratification of the latter variant is not as complex as the Javanese language.

²⁵ The literal translation is “rude.” However, it may also be read as “uncivilized.” See Koentjaraningrat (1975), pp. 58; Anderson (1972), pp. 50-51.

²⁶ Liddle (1996), p. 66.

²⁷ Koentjaraningrat (1975), pp. 94-95.

differences while maintaining each individual's position or suggesting a competition between the different ideas.

Islamic Influence

The differences between the Javanese and *seberang* political cultures are more apparent in the different reactions of the two cultures towards the influence of Islam. Islam came to the archipelago in the 13th century, brought by merchants from southern India and Persia.²⁸ It first arrived in the archipelago in Aceh, the northern tip of Sumatra, where the first Islamic sultanate in Southeast Asia was formed, known as the Samudera Pasai. It then spread to Malacca, where a powerful sultanate dominated the busy strait separating Sumatra and peninsular Malaya. From Malacca, Islam spread to the coastal towns of Sumatra, which were under Malacca's sphere of influence. Islam next was brought to the northern coastal towns of Java, where a new sultanate of Demak was formed. During the 15th century, the rising Demak state challenged the power of the declining interior Javanese kingdom, Majapahit. After a series of power struggles, which involved a mix between peaceful and conformist proselytization of the local people and the use of force, Majapahit fell. In its place, a new Javanese sultanate of Mataram was established.

The next stage was the Islamization of the peoples living in the other islands of the archipelago. This was primarily conducted by the Islamic Sumatra, Malacca, and Javanese sultanates. Before the arrival of European

²⁸ More recently, there has been a speculation that Islam also came to Indonesia from China, brought by some of the Muslim Chinese envoys, the most popular of whom was Admiral Cheng Ho, and that it came directly to Java. However, a systematic study of this claim has yet to be undertaken.

traders, Islam had become the predominant religion of the land. Its strongest foothold can be found all over Sumatra except in the interior of northern Sumatra, the whole of Java, the coastal areas of Kalimantan, all over Sulawesi except in the interior of South Sulawesi and the northern tip of the island, northern Maluku islands, and western Lesser Sunda islands.²⁹

However, there was a significant difference in the reception to Islam in Java from that in *seberang*. Such a difference resulted in different forms of Islam being practiced in Indonesia. In Java, Islam won adherents among the people primarily due to the cultural approach taken by the Islamic proselytizers, known as the "*wali*."³⁰ After the northern coastal towns of Java became Islamized through trading contacts with Sumatra and Malacca merchants, the effort to introduce Islam to the interior Javanese was carried out primarily by the Javanese *wali*. In an effort to convey the message of Islam to the Javanese masses, these *wali* employed the symbols, folklore, legends, and rituals of the old Hindu culture, such as *wayang* and *gamelan*.³¹ Such a strategy proved highly successful, for in a relatively short period of time, Java was Islamized.

²⁹ Koentjaraningrat (1975), pp. 20-22. The Western Protestant and Catholic missionaries, who later accompanied the traders, converted the peoples in areas where Islamic influence was weak. Such peoples were primarily the interior peoples of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua, as well as the coastal people of southern Maluku, and the eastern part of the Lesser Sundas. Until today, the Protestant and Catholics of Indonesia, who make up around 10 percent of the whole population, come primarily from these ethnic groups.

³⁰ There were nine prominent *Wali*, affectionately known to the Javanese as "*Wali Songo*." Each of these *wali* were said to possess supernatural abilities. Many stories surrounding the *wali* and their proselytization efforts were imbued with tales of mysticism. These myths, as well as the use of local folklore in conveying religious messages, greatly facilitated the spread of Islam in Java, as the Javanese felt that they could relate easily to the new religion.

³¹ Anderson (1972), p. 68.

The message carried by the *wali* through the conformist strategy led most Javanese to find Islam suitable to their way of life. This was aided by the fact that Islam came to Indonesia from Persia and southern India, where it had already been patrimonialized.³² Hence, in the interior of Java Islamic practices were mixed with the existing Hindu cultural attributes. In many cases, Hindu practices were more dominant than the Islamic rituals. From time to time, the Javanese would engage in Hindu ceremonies glossed over by some Arabic words said to be derived from the Koran. However, most Javanese would claim that they were Muslims, even though they would rarely execute the Islamic rituals as defined by the "Five Pillars of Islam."³³ The people who practice this variant of Javanese nominal Islam are known as the *abangan*.³⁴ In fact, the religious practices of the interior Javanese, signifying a balanced syncretism between animistic, Hinduistic, and Islamic elements, are so different from Islam, so as to create a new religion altogether.³⁵

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69. The version of Islam that arrived in Southeast Asia might have been infused with sufism that had previously taken root in the subcontinent where it came from. This appeared to facilitate its compatibility with local existing religions.

³³ These consist of belief in one God - Allah, performing prayer five times daily, fasting during the *Ramadhan* month, giving alms (*zakat*) according to Islamic law, and performing the *Haj* to Mecca if financially viable.

³⁴ This means "red." The term was introduced into academic circles by Geertz in "The Religion of Java." The term came from the color of the cloth (actually the color was red earth) that these Javanese wore, as opposed to the white cloth worn by the more pious Javanese Muslims (*putihan*).

³⁵ Geertz, *op.cit.*, p. 5; Liddle (1996), p. 65; Koentjaraningrat (1975), p. 21 called this belief as "*Agama Jawi*" or "*Kejawen*." After the failed communist coup in 1965, there was a fervor for religions, partly induced by the government. Hence all Indonesians had to declare faith in one of the five officially recognized religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism). Most of the Javanese claimed Islam as their religion. However, in the 1970s, there was a movement to get the *Kejawen* recognized as a religion. Later it was acknowledged as the "*Kepercayaan atas Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*" (belief in the one God). Although it was not officially acknowledged as a religion, it acquired

In East Java, which was considered as a hinterland of Java, outside of the sphere of influence of “proper” Java but still heavily influenced by the interior Javanese values, Islam was practiced more piously. Islam in this part of Java was developed through a complex schooling system, known as the *pesantren* and its followers known as the *santri*. Historically, during the height of Hindu Javanese kingdoms, religious and intellectual powers were not held by the ruling class residing in the *kraton* (palaces) in the heartland of the Javanese culture (Yogyakarta and Surakarta). Rather these powers were possessed by the *kyai* (teachers) living in the eastern coastal and interior areas of Java. As opposed to the decadent lifestyles of the urban *kraton* ruling class, the *kyai* built, taught in, and led a frugal lifestyle in the *pondok* (boarding schools), located mostly in the villages.³⁶

As in the other parts of Java, Islam was also welcomed and generally took over the social institutions in eastern Java. And as in the *kraton*, the *pondok* also embraced Islam syncretically. For the most part, the teaching styles and rituals in the *pondok* did not abandon the previous Hinduistic practices. Islamic teachings basically just glossed over the Hindu recitations. Additionally, the patrimonial worldview of the *kyai* toward power and leadership remained similar to that held by the Javanese *kraton*. But in contrast to the *kraton*, in most *pesantren* the relationship between the *kyai* and the *santri* was rather informal. Most *kyai* were relaxed and casual when they related to their

equal legal position with the religions. For a concise account of *Kejawen* practices, see Koentjaraningrat (1975), pp. 112-119.

³⁶ Benedict R.O’G. Anderson (1966) *The Languages of Indonesian Politics*, reprinted in Anderson (1990), pp. 126-129; Andrée Feillard (1999) *NU vis-à-vis Negara: Pencarian Isi, Bentuk, dan Makna* (NU vis-à-vis the State: The Search for Content, Form, and Meaning), Yogyakarta: LKIS, pp. 3-5.

santri. Nonetheless, this interaction was marked by the most stringent rule, namely that the *kyai* were to be respected and the *santri* were to follow the creeds laid out by the *kyai* at all times. The *santri* were also expected to protect and defend the honor and dignity of the *kyai* from outside criticism. It did not mean, however, that criticisms were not allowed to be uttered within the *pesantren*. In fact, in some *pesantren* the learning atmosphere could get very lively. But when it came to the interaction with the outside world, all *santri* were behind their *kyai* without any reservation. In essence, therefore, the presence of Islam did not alter the existing political culture and institutional power relations in Java.

Islam took the purest form in the outer islands. Due to the lack of powerful Hindu kingdoms when it entered, Islam was embraced without any major resistance. Many local rulers in Sumatra and later on in Sulawesi, and Maluku perceived that Islam was the religion of the merchants. Because of the flourishing trade with Islamic Malacca, the major trading power in the region at that time, the peoples of the outer islands quickly embraced Islam in order to facilitate their businesses. They also did not have any major cultural objections to Islam. Islam seemed to fit the egalitarian lifestyle and simple social structure that these maritime trading societies have developed over centuries. Furthermore, Islam was seen as an alternative to the Hinduism then embraced by the Javanese.

When Islamic reformism entered the archipelago in the early 20th century by way of Malaya, the *seberang* peoples were the first to welcome it. Islamic reformism was then a new movement propagated by the Egyptian Muhammad Abduh, aimed at purifying the teaching of Islam from local mystical practices.

Reformist Muslims called for the return to the Koran and *Hadits/Sunnah Rasu*³⁷ as the sole guidance of Islamic teaching. The teaching also intended to rationalize Islam and update it to the needs of the contemporary era, through the concept of "*ijtihad*."³⁸ Hence, it was also called "Islamic modernism." Again, the more straightforward *seberang* peoples accepted this movement wholeheartedly because it seemed to suit their cultural traits.³⁹ Therefore, the type of Islam developed in these communities was different from the Javanese variants. As will be shown later, such differences brought about a separate development of social and political institutions as well as distinct political ideas. But before that, the influence of Western ideas on the indigenous political cultures and the interaction between the two should be assessed. This interaction has resulted in the establishment of the streams of Indonesian political thinking and their institutions, known as the *aliran*.

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE: THE EXTERNAL IDEAS

Contacts with the outside world have occurred since the 4th century. The earliest evidence of the existence of a state in Indonesia indicates the presence of external influence, *i.e.*, inscriptions on stone denoting the presence of a Hindu kingdom in Kutai, Kalimantan. The early external ideas adopted by the Indonesians were taken from Hinduism and Buddhism. In that regard, Islam,

³⁷ The words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad, which deal mainly with social and political issues.

³⁸ "Interpretation" or "reinterpretation" of the Islamic texts.

³⁹ Anderson (1972), pp. 69-70; Koentjaraningrat (1975), p. 45; Feillard, *op.cit.*, pp. 6-7; Feith and Castles, *eds.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 201.

which came later, could also be regarded as one of the external influences. However, the influence of these eastern religions has been deeply embedded in the psyche of the various ethnic societies. So this form of external influence has been by and large indigenized in the belief system and practices, as well as in the social institutions of the local people.⁴⁰

The external ideas being considered here, then, are those coming from the Western world, *i.e.*, nationalism, Marxism, capitalist developmentalism, and liberal democracy. Indonesians began their acquaintance with these Western ideologies with the advent of Ethical Policy, which was introduced by the Dutch colonial administration. The policy provided education for the local people as well as career opportunities for positions in the growing colonial administration. These opportunities, however, were only granted to the members of the ruling class (*priyayi*). The policy was officially intended as a form of compensation to the Indonesians for the benefits accrued from the colony. But the policy could also be read as a means of winning the legitimacy of the local population after the Netherland's territorial possessions in the East Indies had been consolidated. The Dutch were also in dire need of manpower to administer their vast territory.⁴¹

In any case, the Ethical Policy gave the Indonesians the first look at the whole range of external Western ideas, which later on in an interaction with the local cultural traits created the streams of political thinking and the political segments (*aliran*). However, the influence of the various external ideas was

⁴⁰ For a critique of the indigenusness of Indonesian ideologies, see D.N. Aidit (1962) "Which Ideology is Native?" in Feith and Castles, *eds.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 310-313.

⁴¹ Anderson (1966), pp. 96-97.

gradual and almost continuous, becoming a constant factor in Indonesian history. The idea of nationalism was dominant early on, as well as communism and liberal democracy. Liberal democracy died in the end of 1950s, but was resurrected in the 1980s. Communism died in the later half of 1960s, and has never made a comeback. The idea of capitalist developmentalism became the dominant paradigm in the 1970s and although weakened is still very much adhered to.

Nationalism

As in many other colonized countries, the idea of nationalism was the first and most popular idea to influence the local population of the Netherlands East Indies. Creating a state in a territory comprising more than 13,660 islands where more than 300 ethnic groups speaking 365 local languages and dialects is indeed a tremendous and daunting task. Without a powerful ideology to unite all these peoples, a nation-state is difficult to imagine.⁴² Yet, Indonesia was established and has thus far stood the test of time. At many junctures in its history, the integrity of the state has come to the brink of collapse, only to rebound and be reconfirmed.

Here, once again, Anthony D. Smith's typology of nationalist movements might be of benefit in order to understand the problem of Indonesian nation-building. As has been described in the previous chapter, according to Smith, a nationalist movement can be perceived either as territorial or ethnic nationalism. Territorial nationalism seeks to create states based on certain

⁴² Anderson argues that a nation-state is indeed a community imagined by its populace to exist. See Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1983) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso.

territories with definable borders, while ethnic nationalism is bound by the conception of ethnic commonalities.⁴³ As the following description will show, there should be no doubt that due to its nature as a plural society and as a successor state to the colonial Netherlands East Indies, Indonesian nationalism is a territorial type. However, it is also a nationalism spurred by an insatiable drive to achieve modernity by creating a new identity of nationhood, and not just statehood. That new identity is Indonesian, which is perceived to be synonymous with modernity. On the other hand, the idea of ethnic parochialism is portrayed as backward and, therefore, undesirable. While this idea seems to be shared by all Indonesians, how to achieve the new identity of nationhood is a subject of contention. There are differences of opinion among the larger ethno-cultural groups in the country on what comprises nationalism.

To be sure, without the presence of a colonial power, Indonesia would not have existed. For example, culturally, the Sumatrans are closer to the Malays in Malaysia than to the Papuans in Irian Jaya, and the Papuans are closer to the Melanesians of the South Pacific than to the Javanese. What ties these disparate peoples in a common bond is what the first vice-president of the Republic Moh. Hatta once said is "*perasaan senasib sepenanggungan*" (the feeling of sharing a common fate and common plight). In this sense, therefore, nationalism can be seen as a reaction to the perceived sufferings produced by colonialism.

As an ideology, nationalism aspires to create a unified political and territorial entity. It may also seek a cultural identity. The new identity usually signifies a break from the past, but is also inspired by the old one. In some

⁴³ Anthony D. Smith (1991) National Identity, Reno: University of Nevada Press.

cases, the new identity merely reflects a change in symbolism while the structure remains largely the same. Indonesian nationalism was born out of a long history of struggle against the colonial rule launched sporadically but continuously by the various ethnic groups in the archipelago. Such struggle brought about a feeling of bitterness and strong resentment among Indonesians toward Dutch colonialism. As a result, nationalism in Indonesia was marked by the abandonment of symbols of Dutch rule. This was reflected in the adoption of Malay instead of Dutch as the national language, and subsequent relatively quick abandonment of Dutch as a social language.⁴⁴ Governmental symbolism was also rejected. Independent Indonesia adopted a presidential system instead of the parliamentary system as in the Netherlands.⁴⁵ The plan to create a Dutch commonwealth similar to the British one was rejected outright. Even later, in the 1950s, the remaining Dutch economic interests in the archipelago were frozen and nationalized.⁴⁶

However, the aspiration of nationalism was very much tied to the model and examples brought by the colonial power. Ruth McVey argues that the struggle to achieve freedom and nationhood was strongly associated with the

⁴⁴ In just one generation, Dutch ceased to be spoken or understood by most Indonesians. This is different from in Suriname, where Dutch continues to be the national language to this day.

⁴⁵ Between 1950-1959, a parliamentary democracy was in effect. The prime minister functioned as the chief administrator of the government, while the president presided over symbolic functions as a head of state. But, at the same time, the president also had significant power as the supreme commander of the armed forces as well as having the power to declare a state of emergency, by which the president would have the authority to dissolve the parliament and other state bodies. Sukarno used the latter power through Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959. The decree reverted the governmental system back to a presidential one.

⁴⁶ The nationalization of Dutch companies was carried out amidst growing tension between the two countries over the West New Guinea (Irian Jaya) question.

idea of achieving modernity. The growing contact with the outside world - the fruit of the Ethical Policy - brought about a collective awareness among the Indonesians of the virtues and strengths of modernity. They were aware of the fact that their civilizations had been defeated by the European wealth, power, and mastery over nature.⁴⁷ Similarly, Anderson asserts that the adoption of Malay as the national language instead of Javanese, the language of the majority, might have to do with the desire to emulate the "egalitarian" way of speech of the Dutch language without having to adopt the language of the oppressors. The Javanese language is stratified in a complex manner, while *Melayu pasar* (bazaar Malay), being the common language of the merchants, knows no strata.⁴⁸

The quest for modernity was felt widely, especially among the educated Indonesians. The overwhelming sense of purpose at the advent of the nationalist movement was directed toward achieving nationhood as an integrated people. There was a consciousness at that time that the particular local cultures signified feudalism and primitiveness, and therefore in the quest for modernity, had to be abandoned.⁴⁹ The concept of Indonesia signified

⁴⁷ Ruth McVey (1996) "Building Behemoth: Indonesian Constructions of the Nation-State," in Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey, eds. (1996) Making Indonesia: Essays on Modern Indonesia in Honor of George McT. Kahin, Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, p. 12.

⁴⁸ Anderson (1966), p. 139. However, it should be noted that in Malaysia, the use of the Malay language is tied to the aristocratic social structure. Words are organized according to one's aristocratic rank. In Indonesia, especially during the New Order, some words were introduced from the local languages to indicate individual's societal rank. Nonetheless, this has not altered the comparatively egalitarian nature of the Malay language.

⁴⁹ McVey, *op.cit.*, p. 14; also see the accounts of young nationalist leaders in the Boven Digoel camp, especially Sjahrir in Rudolf Mrázek (1996) "Sjahrir at Boven Digoel: Reflections on Exile in the Dutch East Indies," in Lev and McVey, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 59-60.

modernity. Thus, being integrated as one people, as opposed to identification with the local cultures, was seen as the foundation for modernity. This precept provided for a very powerful impetus for the establishment of the Indonesian nation.⁵⁰

The legacy of nationalism as a quest for modernity runs strong throughout the history of the republic. Even though after the end of revolutionary struggle it soon appeared that the archipelago was too diverse to be controlled from the center without risking imbalances, the idea of a federal state propagated by the Dutch was shortlived.⁵¹ The rejection may have been due not only to the colonial overtone of the idea, having been put forward by the Dutch, but also due to the strength of the nationalist integrative idea. McVey even contends that the regionalist movements of 1950s did not have secessionist aspirations. Rather, they can be perceived as having been an effort to change the dominantly-Javanese leadership in Jakarta with the non-Javanese.⁵²

As nationalism became socialized and institutionalized, it appeared that it was more suitable for the Javanese political culture and less for the *seberang's*. The integrative notion of the ideology fit nicely with the Javanese political culture's tenet of efforts to achieve harmony and oneness (*manunggal*),

⁵⁰ The Oath of the Youth in 1928, the most important milestone of the foundation of the Indonesian state, carried the message of "One Fatherland, One Language, and One Nation."

⁵¹ After the recognition of independence by the Dutch in 1949, Indonesia took the form of a federal state, in which the Republic of Indonesia was one of the members. However, in 1950 the Republic of the United States of Indonesia ceased to exist after its constituent states disbanded themselves and merged with the Republic of Indonesia.

⁵² McVey, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

while it was estranged from the *seberang's* individualist quality. This type of nationalism was further developed by the Javanese leaders as a credo of nation-building and as a foundation for authoritarian rule. Sukarno, for instance, declared that he was a nationalist, a Muslim, and a communist at the same time. This statement signified an embodiment of all political forces in the one body politic that he symbolized.⁵³

Hence, nationalism can be understood in two senses. First, in the sense of identity bound by the perceived common sufferings in the past and by the continuous goal of achieving modernity in the future. This idea is felt strongly all over the archipelago by the majority of the people regardless of ethnicity. Second, in the sense that it is a Javanese trait to achieve social and political integration by eradicating all the existing parochial characteristics and creating a new integrative one, where the whole process is maintained through strong control from the center. Such an idea is popular among the Javanese, and apparently less so among the non-Javanese.

Marxism

The impulse of the Indonesian nationalist movement was generally inspired by Marxism. It was through Marxist analysis of class relations and oppression that the movement for independence initially found its *raison d'être*. The Marxist tenet of colonialism as an extension of capitalism produced a widely popular perception that the indigenous people were of the oppressed working and peasantry classes, while the Dutch were the capitalist oppressors. This was true throughout the struggle for independence period, despite the fact that most of the nationalist leaders were from the *priyayi* (aristocrat) class.

⁵³ Anderson (1972), pp. 35-38.

Rather similar to nationalism, Marxism influenced all political forces from diverse political cultures in Indonesia. In the later periods of the country's history, the communists were at loggerheads with the Muslims. But the seeds of communism in Indonesia was actually sown in *Sarekat Islam* (SI), the first Muslim nationalist movement in the 1920s.⁵⁴ However, as with nationalism, Marxism proved more popular with the Javanese and less so with the *seberang*.

The nationalist leaders came to be acquainted with Marxism through the presence of Dutch socialist and labor movement leaders in the colony, the most renowned of whom was H.J. Sneevliet. He and other Dutch socialists formed ISDV (*Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereniging* – Indies Social Democratic Association) in 1914. It is important to note that the first leftist party in the Netherlands East Indies, which later would emerge as the PKI, was actually dominated by the Dutch.⁵⁵ After a number of measures taken by the colonial government against the ISDV, this party decided to look for greener political pastures. At that point of history, SI was the largest nationalist movement and naturally attractive to the ISDV. SI was then dominated by the urban merchants, *pesisir santri*. The presence of a modern rationalist idea such as Marxism attracted many SI followers. Initially, Marxism was not portrayed as antithetical to Islam. There was even a conscious effort on the part of some SI

⁵⁴ The first PKI leaders, such as Alimin and Semaun, came from the splinter group within SI, known as the faction of "*SI Merah*" (Red SI). For the history of the PKI, see Ruth T. McVey (1965) The Rise of Indonesian Communism, Ithaca: Cornell University Press; Justus M. van der Kroef (1965) The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its History, Program, and Tactics, Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

⁵⁵ McVey (1965), pp. 14-15.

leaders to synthesize socialism with Islam.⁵⁶ However, when the power base was sufficiently secured and as education process to be proper Marxists appeared to be successful, the leftist SI leaders joined ISDV's leaders in setting up the PKI in 1920.⁵⁷

Beside the nationalist and Islamic movements, the idea of socialism was also popular among the young Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands (the *Perhimpunan Indonesia* – Indonesian Association, of which Hatta and Sjahrir were the leaders) and in Bandung, where Sukarno was studying. So, the influence of Marxism was widespread. Marxist vocabulary was commonly spoken by all nationalist leaders during the pre-independence period.⁵⁸

However, in the post-independence period, the proponents of Marxism appeared to have been divided into two contending camps. First, there were the social democrats. Their main vehicle was the PSI (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* – Indonesian Socialist Party). This party was dominated by *seberang* intellectuals led by Syahrir, a Minangkabau. While there were also quite a number of Javanese in the party, such as Sumitro, Sujatmoko and Subadio, they were urban intellectuals trained in the West. Hence, they shared with the *seberang* the traits of being straightforward and open. Even though the PSI was not an Islamic party and their proponents were secularists, on a number of issues

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20. Marxism/socialism were popular among many anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa. At the same time, these movements also aspired at rejuvenating indigenous values *vis á vis* western values propagated by the colonial powers. As a result, there were similar efforts to synthesize socialism with local culture and religion, such as U Nu in Burma (with Buddhism) and Jawaharlal Nehru in India (with Hinduism).

⁵⁷ Van der Kroef, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-12. Initially PKI stood for *Persarekatan Kommunist di India* (Communist Association of the Indies).

⁵⁸ Anderson (1966), p. 137.

there was an affinity between this party and Masyumi, another *seberang* party, especially on the issues of central control, communist ascendancy, and Javanese domination. While the PSI's role as an influential party came to an end after the 1955 election, where it did not perform well, their functionaries remained active. Sumitro and Sujatmoko⁵⁹ continued to be revered as Indonesia's leading intellectuals. Sumitro was to be the chief architect of the New Order's economy through a network of economist protégés that he developed at the University of Indonesia.⁶⁰

The second force was the PKI. As opposed to the PSI's appeal among the urban intellectual *bourgeoisie*,⁶¹ the PKI was much more popular among the *abangan* rural masses in heartland Java. Its geographic sphere of influence was identical to that of the nationalist PNI. The difference was in the social-economic class. The PKI received more support from the lower-class *abangan*, while the PNI from the *priyayi abangan*.⁶² How could the PKI, which professed egalitarianism, modernity and rationality, be followed by the status-conscious, mystical Javanese? The answer perhaps lies in the ability of its leaders to use Javanese symbolism and common language in conveying their message to the

⁵⁹ Soedjatmoko once served as the Rector of the United Nations University in Japan.

⁶⁰ Ironically, as will be shown in the next part, most of the ideas associated with him could be categorized as capitalist, instead of socialist.

⁶¹ Thus, PKI leaders cynically nicknamed the PSI as "*soska*" (*sosialis kanan* – rightist socialists).

⁶² Here Geertz' typology of *abangan*, *santri*, and *priyayi* might be useful. See Geertz (1960). The typology actually received many criticisms because it seemed to lump class and cultural differences together. *abangan* and *santri* are cultural distinctions, whereas *priyayi* is a class or status term. See Donald K. Emmerson (1976) Indonesia's Elite: Political Culture and Cultural Politics, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 23-24, fn. 6.

relatively uneducated masses.⁶³ The PKI leaders also effectively portrayed themselves as leaders free from *pamrih*.⁶⁴ But the strongest reason seems to be the relaxed attitude of the PKI toward religion and religious obligation. The syncretic and tolerant *abangan* found refuge in the “*netral agama*” (neutral of any religion) attitude amidst the vehement calls for purism by the reformist Muslims. Conversely, as the PKI grew to become more Javanese and anti-Islam, the level of support that it received from the *seberang* became minimal.

The military suppression of the PKI after the failed coup attempt in 1965⁶⁵ fundamentally wiped out the PKI as a political force. Most of its supporters appeared to have shifted their allegiance to the nationalist party or the government party, *Golkar* (*Golongan Karya* – Functional Groups). Some socialist ideas were picked up late in the New Order era with the advent of the so-called “*ekonomi kerakyatan*” (the people’s economy) concept. However, it is doubtful that the communists were responsible for this, because the idea appeared to be propagated by the modernist Muslims.⁶⁶ In any case, even though there are some scattered remnants, Marxism, which was one of the powerful ideas in Indonesian history, ceased to exist in any notable form after the pogrom of 1965-1966.

⁶³ Anderson (1972), pp. 36-37; Anderson (1966), p. 146.

⁶⁴ Anderson (1972), p. 53.

⁶⁵ In 1948, the communists also launched a rebellion in Madiun, East Java. While the Madiun rebellion was followed by military suppression, the PKI was able to rebound as one of the largest parties in the 1955 election.

⁶⁶ The functionaries of ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* – Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association), such as Adi Sasono and Dawam Rahardjo, were the chief proponents of this idea in the 1990s.

Capitalist Developmentalism

The rise of General Suharto to power in 1967 marked the end of leftist policies in Indonesia. Attention shifted from political struggle against the Western powers to economic development. The role of communist and leftist politicians, which was growing in importance in the final years of Sukarno's rule, was supplanted by economists and technocrats. Many of these experts received training in the West. The economists who laid down the foundation of the New Order development policies were the *protégés* of Professor Sumitro Djojohadikusumo (former PSI leader) of the Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia (FE-UI). Most of them underwent training in the University of California, Berkeley; thus they received the nickname, the "Berkeley Mafia."⁶⁷

On the political side, the New Order saw the rise of the Indonesian military (TNI/ABRI - *Tentara Nasional Indonesia / Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*)⁶⁸ to power. While the military had been influential during the Sukarno era, where officers occupied several government posts, in the initial stage of the New Order there was a massive intrusion of officers into "civilian" positions. Posts such as ministers, governors, regents, ambassadors, and others were held by ABRI. The justification for such moves seemed to be to maintain vigilance against the threats to national security, *i.e.*, the communists.

⁶⁷ Included in these economists were Widjojo Nitisastro, Emil Salim, Ali Wardhana, Subroto, Moh. Sadli, even though the latter two actually went to Stanford and MIT respectively. All of them held several cabinet portfolios during the New Order.

⁶⁸ Acronyms for *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Defense Force) and *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia).

Thus, the platform of Indonesian development was crafted through the cooperation of the military and the economists/technocrats. Such cooperation was fostered by close relationships between the economists and the *Sekolah Staf dan Komando Angkatan Darat* (Seskoad - Army School of Staff and Command), which started in the early 1960s. The economists taught in the school and often held discussions with the then ascending officers that included General Suharto. As a result, the platform was a mixture between development economics and security priorities.

The main notions of this idea are related to the modernization thesis. Basically, the idea was to achieve high economic growth through export-oriented industrialization. The modernization of the country's infrastructure was deemed necessary to achieve this objective. A major transformation from commodity/ agricultural production, which had been the backbone of the economy, to manufacturing needed to take place. In order to realize this, capital was needed. There were two sources of capital -- development aid or loans from Western states, and foreign direct investment (FDI). The strong anti-communist stance of the regime in the Cold War environment was perceived as an asset to win the favor of the Western states. The previous policy of economic nationalism was abandoned and serious efforts were launched to attract foreign investment.⁶⁹

This idea asserted further that in order to achieve economic development, there needed to be a favorable political environment. For Indonesian foreign policy, this was translated into cessation of confrontation

⁶⁹ Richard Robison (1990) Power and Economy in Suharto's Indonesia, Manila: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, pp. 86-87.

politics with the neighboring countries and the establishment of a cooperative framework, which later turned out to be ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), established in 1967. In domestic politics, political order was given priority, even if it meant repression. The party political structure was simplified through the merger of political parties. While elections were held regularly, the regime made sure that *Golkar* would always win overwhelmingly. The press was put under strict control, and opposition efforts were suppressed.

Richard Robison calls such combination of economic development and political control created by an alliance between technocrats and the military, “repressive developmentalism.”⁷⁰ The results of such an approach were quite mixed. On one hand, the technocrats were able to revive the Indonesian economy that had been in terrible shape as a result of the mismanagement of the Sukarno era. Economic development no doubt resulted in more material prosperity and also improvements in standards of living, a better education system, improved health standards and sanitation, etc. Development of infrastructure also facilitated the mobility of the people throughout the archipelago. However, on the other hand, political life became monotonous. The political forces that embodied people’s aspiration became inactive. As a result, not only was communism extinct, but also Islamic modernism and traditionalism were seemingly on the verge of extermination.

The reactions of the divergent *aliran* segments towards “repressive developmentalism” varied. Aside of the different appearance at the surface, the New Order regime actually reflected a continuation of the previous one. If Sukarno tried to integrate the diverse political forces in Indonesia through the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

concept of Nasakom (*Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis* – Nationalism, Religion, Communism), the Suharto regime sought to achieve a similar objective through *Golkar*.⁷¹ Being the political vehicle of the military, *Golkar* also embodied many Javanese traits.⁷² For the other *aliran* segment, especially the *seberang* Muslims, the New Order clearly caused disappointment. After being banned by Sukarno in the early 1960s, Masyumi had hoped to make a political comeback. But the continuation of *abangan* rule dashed this hope. Simplification of the party system then further reduced the political role of the modernists, at least in the first two decades of the New Order.

The fruits of economic development were certainly welcomed by all. However, there was a discontentment also on this score, especially among the *seberang*. Traditionally, the outer islanders and the *pesisir* were the merchant class in Indonesia. Ever since the colonial period, they have been in fierce competition with the overseas Chinese.⁷³ In the independence period, some military officers reportedly maintained mutually beneficial relationships with some Chinese entrepreneurs. Such cooperation almost became the norm of business transactions during the New Order. Consequently, the Chinese and military joint ventures soared as the main economic actors. This was considered detrimental to the economic interests of the indigenous Indonesians (*pribumi*), and contributed to the growing tension between the two groups as

⁷¹ David Reeve (1985) *Golkar of Indonesia: An Alternative to the Party System*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 264-265.

⁷² Leo Suryadinata (1989) *Military Ascendancy and Political Culture: A Study of Indonesia's Golkar*, Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No. 85, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University.

⁷³ In fact, one of the *rationale* of *Sarekat Islam* was to organize the Muslim indigenous merchants *vis a vis* the Chinese.

well as dissatisfaction with the regime. As a result, a number of racial riots exploded in various places during the New Order era.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the stress on manufacturing was also perceived to have created an economic imbalance between Jakarta and Java on one hand and the outer islands on the other. Factories were set up mainly in Java, which already had good infrastructure. The growth of the service sectors also benefited Jakarta, where there was a concentration of professionals.⁷⁵ Such regional disparity exacerbated the *seberang's* dissatisfaction with capitalist developmentalism. Notwithstanding the deficiencies, this approach has been very influential in the last three decades of Indonesian history, and continues to be so, especially because of the growing interconnectedness of the economies among states. Indonesia's active participation in the global economy is the logical consequence of the capitalist development that had been carried out throughout the New Order era.

Democracy

The influence of the idea of democracy is perhaps the most puzzling of the external ideas in Indonesian history, partly because of the many definitions of democracy itself. Social scientists have debated the meaning of democracy. The debate revolves around the question of what constitutes a democracy. There are the procedural and liberal definitions of democracy. The former, usually refers to the holding of regular elections and alternation of people in

⁷⁴ Robison, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-19, pp. 23, pp. 51-52.

⁷⁵ For an account of the uneven regional growth in Indonesia, see Hal Hill (1996) The Indonesian Economy Since 1966, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 229-235.

office as conditions for being democratic.⁷⁶ The latter view posits that a liberal democracy consists not only of elements known in the procedural definition, but also of values of governance and society beyond elections. These values include protection of individual civil and political rights, and protection of the minority groups, including access for these groups to a share of state resources, as well as a guarantee of some degree of the cultural autonomy for minorities. This condition necessitates a tolerant attitude by the majority group.⁷⁷

Democratic values initially were generally alien to most Indonesians from all political cultures. This was then perpetuated by the colonial legacy. The divide-and-rule tactic employed by the colonial power rendered a sense of deep mutual distrust among different peoples of the archipelago. As a result, the tolerance needed for a functioning democracy did not exist immediately after independence. As has been described above, the Javanese are inherently more tolerant than the *seberang*. However, such a quality is at times overshadowed by their assimilationist tendencies, which means that toleration is rendered only after sufficient commonalities are achieved. Diversity is generally not considered as positive. Nonetheless, the Javanese are at least potentially more tolerant than the *seberang*.

The idea of democracy was in a state of hibernation during the Guided Democracy and most of the New Order eras. It made a comeback as a result of exposure of the increasing numbers of tertiary-educated younger generation to the outside world in the latter New Order period, facilitated by the economic

⁷⁶ Samuel P. Huntington (1993) The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, pp. 5-9.

⁷⁷ Larry Diamond (1999) Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 11-12.

globalization and the revolution in communication and transportation technologies.

In sum, while the idea of democracy had influenced different political cultures in Indonesia to varying extents since the beginning of independence, it was not until the latter part of the New Order, when economic and social development had reached a more advanced stage in terms of material attainment and global exposure, that democracy penetrated into the urban modern society. As the urban population grew exponentially during the last decade of the New Order, the idea of democracy won more adherents in Indonesia. However, it is quite important to note here that the growing popularity of democracy might be due to the association of the concept with the impression of material attainment. The middle class in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, was composed of "ersatz capitalists," which was dependent upon rather than developed independently of the state.⁷⁸

***ALIRAN* INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY AND CHANGE**

Each of the groups mentioned above, the *abangan* Javanese, the Javanese *santri*, and the *santri seberang*, have articulated their own political thinking and established various social institutions where their ideas can be disseminated and further developed. These have become known as *aliran*-based segmentation. The *abangan* Javanese manifested themselves as the nationalists, while the Javanese *santri* as the traditionalist Muslims, and the

⁷⁸ See Kunio Yoshihara (1988) The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South East Asia, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

seberang santri as the modernist/reformist/purist Muslims.⁷⁹ In different stages of Indonesian political history, each of these groups has been exposed to foreign ideologies, and through a process of selection has decided which ideology or which parts of a particular ideology were most compatible with its cultural traits. The result was a new eclectic form of political platforms that they associated themselves with.⁸⁰

In Indonesian socio-political life, these political *aliran* manifested themselves into contending social and political organizations. The ensuing analysis is based on Feith's classification of the political *aliran* that was discussed earlier. It aims at revising and extending this classification. As will be shown, the *aliran* segments have exhibited remarkable resilience and flexibility over time, as demonstrated by the adaptability of their organizations amidst political change. Figures 1 and 2 contain the description of the institutional manifestation and change of the major *aliran* encompassing the two periods covered in this chapter: early independence to the end of the Sukarno era (1945-1965), and the early New Order (1967-1990).

The Sukarno Era (1945-1965)

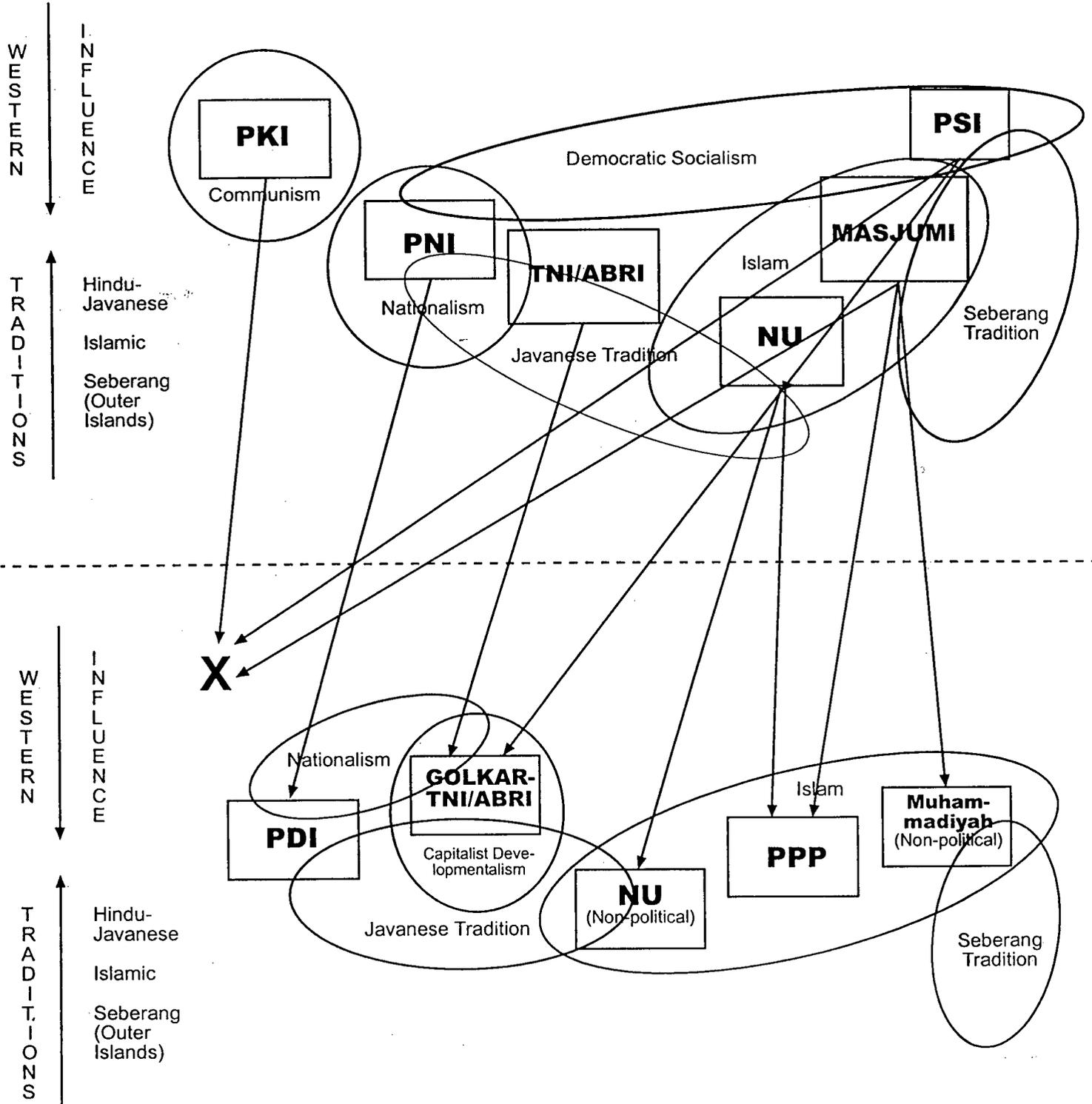
Figure 1 shows that there were six forces whose salience grants them the status of political *aliran* during the period of early independence until the end of Sukarno era. These were the PNI, Masyumi, the NU, the PKI, the PSI, and the TNI/ABRI.

⁷⁹ From this point on, the discussion of the *aliran* will use this more popularly known terminology.

⁸⁰ The political platforms of the *aliran*, especially those relating to state issues will be discussed in Chapters 4-6.

Figure 1 & 2

INDONESIAN POLITICAL ALIRAN
(1945-1965; FEITH REVISED)



INDONESIAN POLITICAL ALIRAN
(1971-1990)

Different from Feith's classification, the PSI and the TNI/ABRI are included in this figure. Feith actually acknowledged the centrality or at least the potential of both forces to become *aliran*-type organizations. But he either dismissed them as being inconsequential due to the lack of mass support, as in the case of the PSI, or incoherent in terms of political thinking, as in the case of the TNI/ABRI.⁸¹

Feith acknowledged that as time went on during this period, the TNI/ABRI became more united and also tended to create a distinctive political thinking of its own. However, he stopped short of describing such thinking. In general, it can be inferred that the military was heavily influenced by *abangan* values.⁸² While members of the TNI/ABRI came from all over Indonesia, and initially the *seberang* people such as Nasution, Simbolon, *etc.*, played important roles, by the end of this period most of its senior staff positions had become increasingly occupied by the Javanese *abangan*. Hence, the doctrine developed during this period resembled that of Sukarno, *i.e.*, nationalism and restricted political party competition. However, different from Sukarno, who translated the Javanese concept of power into the alliance of Nasakom, the military tended to be suspicious of the political parties, especially the communists.

In Figure 1, the PKI is located high on the Western influence scale. This is apparent from the efforts of the party leaders to educate their followers about communism. Even though most of its followers came from the lower-class *abangan*, the goal of the PKI elite was to bring modernity to its followers

⁸¹ Feith (1970), p. 17.

⁸² Suryadinata, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

through Marxism. Its aim was to replace ethnic and religious affinities with class affiliation.⁸³

Having the support mostly from the *priyayi abangan*, the PNI was more entrenched in Javanese values. Sukarno, who was also the founder of the party, exacerbated this situation further. The PNI was also influenced by democratic socialism, especially on the symbolic level. Its purported ideology was *Marhaenism*⁸⁴. Despite the controversial elitist lifestyle of its leaders, the party's image as the protector of the "*wong cilik*" (commoners) remained strong even today through its successor party.

While it is true that the urban-based PSI was unable to win sizable support from the rural masses, its influence in the Indonesian polity during the Sukarno era was more significant than is generally credited. The PSI was known as the party of intellectuals. In a newborn state where not too many intellectuals existed, the PSI's elites were actively involved in the government and the parliament, at least until the 1955 election.⁸⁵ Support for the party came mainly from the bureaucrats, who were responsible for day-to-day governance. Even after the eclipse of the party, individual PSI elite remained influential. The involvement of some of its functionaries in PRRI/Permesta rebellion also demonstrated its resilience as a political force. Most importantly

⁸³ Anderson (1972), p. 30.

⁸⁴ This is a class-based ideology strongly influenced by Marxism. Sukarno once said that *Marhaenism* was "Socialism a lá Indonesia." For a description of *Marhaenism*, see the statement of the PNI principles, "The Aims of the Party" in Feith and Castles, *eds.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 160-164.

⁸⁵ For instance, Syahrir, the PSI leader, served as the first prime minister of the republic during the revolutionary armed struggle period. Many PSI members also served in the various cabinets during the 1950s. Prior to the 1955 election, there were 15 members of parliament from the PSI. After the election, however, this number was reduced to a mere five.

perhaps, the idea of democratic socialism that it espoused remained alive all throughout this period, and, albeit transformed, gained increased saliency in the later periods.

In the early independence period, Masyumi became one of the major parties. Its history went back to the Japanese occupation period. In order to be able to maintain control of society more effectively, the Japanese promoted a merger of several Muslim organizations, modernists as well as traditionalists, which resulted in the establishment of Masyumi. Such an alliance of the two different Islamic *aliran*, however, proved short-lived. After 1949, there was an increasing modernists' grip on the party, led by Mohammad Natsir. Such a development made the traditionalists perceive that they were being marginalized. As a result, in 1952 the traditionalists in Masyumi left the party and declared the NU, the traditionalist organization formed in 1926, to be a political party.⁸⁶ Subsequently, the two Islamic parties developed different orientations.

The period of Sukarno's rule can be divided into three parts. First is the struggle for independence period (1945-1950). This period was marked by a situation of relative unity facing a common enemy. But, there were also political conflicts. The most notable was the communist rebellion in Madiun, 1948. The rebellion was swiftly crushed by the TNI and the country rallied strongly behind the leadership of Sukarno and the republic's first vice president Mohammad Hatta. Second is the parliamentary democracy period (1950-1959). In this period, political competition was in earnest. This was most apparent from the

⁸⁶ Feillard, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-46; Feith and Castles, *eds.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 201-202.

debates on the state foundation that took place in the *Konstituante*.⁸⁷ At that juncture of Indonesian history, the nation was faced with two options concerning the state foundation, whether it would be an Islamic or a secular arrangement. The Islamic parties (the largest of which were Masyumi and the NU) argued that since around ninety percent of the population claimed to profess Islam as their religion, it was only natural that Islam should become the state foundation. On the other hand, the proponents of secularism, spearheaded by the nationalist PNI and the communist PKI, rejected such a claim by pointing out that not only were there a number of regions where Muslims were in the minority (mainly in the eastern part of the archipelago), but also Islam in Java, where a large number of Indonesians lived, was practiced in a relaxed and syncretic way, blending with existing local traditions, and not amenable to an Islamic state.

The heated debate was resolved by force when President Sukarno intervened by dissolving the *Konstituante* and decreeing a return to the 1945 constitution, within which the state foundation was stated as Pancasila, the rather secular arrangement. It marked a victory for the *abangan*.

The *seberang* parties demonstrated their opposition to Sukarno's authoritarianism by launching regional rebellions. Most of the top echelon members of Masyumi and of the PSI fled to West Sumatra and established the PRRI (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* – Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) led by Sjafruddin Prawiranegara of Masyumi. The Sumatran movement was also met with enthusiasm in Sulawesi, where some

⁸⁷ A state body set up as a result of 1955 election whose task was to draft a new constitution.

eastern Indonesian military officers, dismayed by the growing Javanese control, declared the *Piagam Perjuangan Semesta* (Permesta – Charter of Common Struggle) led by Lieutenant Colonel Sumual of Minahasa.⁸⁸

Sukarno relied heavily on the military to suppress the rebellion. Additionally, during this period Indonesia was engaged in a struggle to wrest West New Guinea (Irian) from Dutch hands.⁸⁹ As Sukarno grew more anti-West, he carried out a military confrontation policy (*konfrontasi*) against the creation of Malaysia, which in his eyes was the British puppet to further Western interests in Southeast Asia. All these military operations enabled the TNI to gain more leverage in national politics. As Sukarno's policy turned more leftist, this period also saw the rise of the PKI. As a result, the period of Guided Democracy was a period dominated by *abangan* institutions, Sukarno and the nationalists, the TNI, and the PKI in a fragile balance. This balance was complemented by the inclusion of the NU, the traditionalist institution, in Nasakom. Due to the similarity of Javanese politico-cultural roots to the nationalist Sukarno, the NU did not have difficulty coping with the growing *abangan* power in the Guided Democracy period, while the *seberang* Masyumi felt estranged.⁹⁰

This period marked the almost complete domination by Javanese institutions. *Seberang* institutions were sidelined, while the similarity in

⁸⁸ Partai Katolik (the Catholic Party), which had many supporters in the eastern part of Indonesia, also initially opposed Sukarno's growing authoritarianism. But it stopped short of supporting the regional rebellions. See an interview with Frans Seda, the Partai Katolik leader in the 1960s in "*Lebih Jauh dengan Frans Seda* (Interview with Frans Seda) in *Kompas*, October 6, 1996.

⁸⁹ The Mandala military operation to "free Irian" was under the command of then Maj.Gen. Suharto, who would later become the president of Indonesia.

⁹⁰ Feillard, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-52; Feith and Castles, *eds.*, *op.cit.*, p. 202.

political culture between the Islamic Masyumi and the secular PSI actually brought them closer. The development in this period demonstrated the dominance of political culture over ideology.

The Early New Order Period (1967-1990)

The hallmark of this period was the rise of the TNI/ABRI to power after the failed communist coup in 1965.⁹¹ The power transfer actually went through a prolonged struggle. The political structure built by Sukarno during the Guided Democracy period was gradually replaced by a new structure. It was not until 1973 that the new party political structure was firmly in place. General Suharto himself became president only in 1968, although he had effectively run the country since 1967 after being appointed by the MPRS (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara* - Provisional People's Consultative Assembly), the highest state organ, as the President "ad-interim," while Sukarno remained the formal president.

The repression of the communists after the G-30S/PKI (*Gerakan 30 September* - the September 30 Movement) was thorough. Even though the number of victims varies from one source to another, it is clear that many of the rank-and-file of the PKI, and the elite were eliminated. Its remaining followers were reeducated and after being released were kept under close scrutiny by the security apparatus. As a result, communism as an ideological movement ceased to exist, or at least to be influential, throughout the New Order period.

There was a glimpse of hope among the party leaders, especially those of the *seberang* party of Masyumi and the urban-based PSI, which had previously

⁹¹ In official terms, it is known as the *Gerakan 30 September/Partai Komunis Indonesia* (G-30S/PKI - September 30th Movement/Indonesian Communist Party).

been banned by Sukarno, that their parties would be reinstated. However, such optimism proved false. Suharto rejected the formal reinstatement of both parties on the grounds that they had been involved in the PRRI/Permesta rebellion. From this point, it became apparent that the political platform of the New Order government was based on a tight control of the party political system.

A close association between a number of officers and some PSI leaders in the aftermath of the failed 1965 coup, especially Prof. Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, resulted in the inclusion of the PSI into the fold of Golkar and the New Order. Prof. Sumitro and his protégés in the Economics Faculty of the University of Indonesia (FE-UI) became the main architects behind the success of the New Order's economic development.

It was a different story for the other *seberang* party. While the modernist Muslims were allowed to establish a new party, Parmusi (*Partai Muslimin Indonesia* - Indonesian Muslims Party), the new quasi-military government banned the participation of Masyumi's old leaders from the party.⁹² The leadership of the new party was basically hand-picked by the government. This practice was also followed for the PNI, and the other parties.⁹³

Along with controlling of party leadership, the New Order regime also developed a strong alternative political force, called *Golongan Karya* (Golkar - Functional Groups). Historically, Golkar was set up by the TNI/ABRI as an

⁹² On the establishment of Parmusi, see K.E. Ward (1970) The Foundation of Partai Muslimin Indonesia, Interim Report Series, Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Allan A. Samson (1973) "Religious Belief and Political Action in Indonesian Islamic Modernism," in R. William Liddle, ed. (1973) Political Participation in Modern Indonesia, Monograph Series No. 19, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

⁹³ Julian M. Boileau (1983) Golkar: Functional Group Politics in Indonesia, Jakarta: CSIS, p. 53; Reeve, *op.cit.*, p. 278.

alternative to the political *aliran* system. Hence, Golkar officially does not belong to any *aliran*. However, since it was created by the military, at least during the early New Order period, its political values reflected the Javanese traits.

The TNI/ABRI has been active in politics since the latter half of the 1950s. General Nasution inspired the creation of IPKI (*Ikatan Pejuang Kemerdekaan Indonesia* – Association of Indonesia’s Freedom Fighters) after the end of the revolutionary war of independence. However, the military’s real involvement in politics coincided with the desire of Sukarno to minimize the role of political parties and to make the functional groups, such as peasants, farmers, laborers, fishermen, youths, women, etc., more visible in politics. Sekber Golkar (*Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya* – Joint Secretariat of the Functional Groups) was formed in 1964, largely driven by the military.

Golkar became the main political vehicle of the quasi-military New Order regime until the late New Order period. During the run up to the 1971 election, Golkar played the role of a “bulldozer.” Through its networks of civil servants, who since 1969 had to pledge a “monoloyalty” to Golkar,⁹⁴ and aided by the military apparatus, whose presence had obtruded to the village level, Golkar came out as the winner of the election by a significant margin. It received 62.8% of the votes, while the other former major parties failed miserably. The NU, Golkar’s closest contender, won 18.7%; PNI 6.9%; and Parmusi 5.4%.⁹⁵

Another political restructuring measure taken by the regime was the “simplification” of the party system. The idea was congruent with the suspicions

⁹⁴ Reeve, *op.cit.*, pp. 286-288.

⁹⁵ Boileau, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-57.

about political parties long held by some military officers that resulted in the creation of Golkar.⁹⁶ Even though the seed of such thinking had been expressed during the Second Army Seminar in 1966,⁹⁷ it was not until the parliament from the 1971 election was formed that the idea was turned into reality. In the parliament, the Islamic parties were persuaded to unite in one faction, known as *Fraksi Persatuan Pembangunan* (Development Unity faction), and the nationalist, socialist, and Christian parties in another, known as *Fraksi Demokrasi Pembangunan* (Development Democracy faction). In 1973, both factions announced the merger of their constituent parties into two new political parties, *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP - Development Unity Party) made up of the NU, Parmusi, Serikat Islam, and Perti; and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI - Indonesian Democratic Party), which comprised the PNI, *Partai Kristen Indonesia* (Protestant party), *Partai Katolik*,⁹⁸ Murba (socialist party), and the IPKI. From that point on, the party system in Indonesia officially acknowledged only the two parties and Golkar.⁹⁹

The depoliticization policy of the New Order created a general malaise among the *aliran* networks. While political activities still existed, they were limited to the power struggle within the parties, and rarely touched on the national political issues. In the PDI, there was the consensus of the merged

⁹⁶ Reeve, *op.cit.*, pp. 266-280.

⁹⁷ In which the political parties were classified into five groups, *i.e.*, Islamic, Christians, nationalists, "Pancasila" socialists, and Golkar.

⁹⁸ On the history of Indonesia's Christian parties from their establishment during the colonial Dutch period until prior to the parties merger during the New Order, see Paul Webb (1978) Indonesian Christians and Their Political Parties, Townsville, Queensland: South East Asian Monograph Series, No. 2, James Cook University.

⁹⁹ The new structure was made into a law in 1975. See Reeve, *op.cit.*, p. 290, Boileau, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

parties that the PNI was *primus inter pares*. All PDI chairpersons during the New Order came from the PNI. The choice of the party leaders required government approval.

In the PPP, the inclusion of both the modernists and traditionalists brought about an uneasy coexistence. Like in Masyumi, the NU felt that it was being gradually marginalized. This culminated in the declaration of the NU in 1984 to depart from the PPP and stay out of politics. Under Abdurrahman Wahid, the NU aimed to return to social, economic, cultural, and educational functions that were initially envisaged for the organization when it was established in 1926.¹⁰⁰ However, the separation of the NU and the PPP was not complete. Many NU activists remained in the PPP and later were even successful in taking control of the party. Different from the traditionalists, the continuous political malaise among the modernists that had existed since Guided Democracy meant that the social, economic, cultural and educational functions of Muhammadiyah, the largest social organization of the modernists, received more attention. Different from the NU, Muhammadiyah's schools, universities, hospitals, women and youth centers expanded to many parts of the archipelago.

In the spectrum of Western/traditional influence, nothing much changed during this period from the previous one. The new dominant political force, Golkar, was the most exposed to Western influence. This was due to the inclusion of the PSI-inclined professionals in the organization. The training of these economists underwent in the West served to introduce a new external idea, development economics. Additionally, the significantly better relations that

¹⁰⁰ Feillard, *op.cit.*, chs. VIII and X.

Indonesia had with the Western states in this period meant that the government was able to translate the idea of capitalist development into reality. Development aid poured in from donor countries, both individually and through a multilateral grouping, known as Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI),¹⁰¹ as well as from multilateral financial organizations, such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). Golkar's domination of the bureaucracy also made it virtually the only organization professionally capable of establishing and maintaining contacts with the increasingly interdependent outside world.

Among the other organizations, Muhammadiyah, which had already been accustomed to modern ideas, was more exposed to Western influence than the others. Even though the NU's modernization program was launched in the latter half of this period (since Abdurrahman Wahid's chairmanship in the early 1980s), for the most part, it remained highly traditional.

The rise of the military in Indonesian politics during this period marked the supremacy of *abangan* culture.¹⁰² Even though the role of another *abangan* institution, the PNI, was demoted along with the other political parties, Javanese cultural traits flourished during the New Order regime. The similar cultural roots between Sukarno and Suharto rendered their beliefs in political control as an underlying assumption of governance. Despite differences in their methods, both were consistent with Javanese conceptions of power. Sukarno

¹⁰¹ Later changed into Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI).

¹⁰² Robert Hefner called it "the victory of Javanism." See Robert W. Hefner (1995) *ICMI dan Perjuangan Menuju Kelas Menengah Indonesia* (ICMI and the Struggle toward an Indonesian Middle Class), Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, pp. 5-8.

unified differences in a political system revolving around himself, while Suharto simply tried to eradicate those differences.

As for the *santri*, both Javanese and *seberang*, this period was marked by decline in their political efficacy. However, the maintenance and development of their politico-cultural traits were still carried on in their mass social organizations, the NU and Muhammadiyah. This explains why, despite the political drought, the *aliran* persisted, and resurfaced quickly in the later periods when political control was more relaxed.

The Late New Order Period (1990-1998)

This period was marked by significant and interesting political changes. Such changes were the result of a relaxation in political control, the growth of the middle class as a result of economic development, and related to these two factors, increased accessibility of the public to the outside world. Additionally, political changes also took place as Suharto saw increasing opposition from the nationalists, especially from the military. Since the last few years of the 1980s, a number of prominent military officers discreetly voiced concerns over the ever-expanding business activities of Suharto's sons and daughters. Suharto sought to balance such growing opposition by co-opting the modernist Muslims, in the hope of creating a new power base should the old one become unreliable.¹⁰³

There was not so much change, however, in the political parties or at least in the structure of the formal party system, where the parties were still

¹⁰³ A risky balancing game was also played by Sukarno during the Guided Democracy period (between the military and the communists). As was his predecessor, Suharto would eventually be overwhelmed by this game.

under strict control. But outside of the formal system, this period witnessed the ascendancy of the modernist Muslims, and competition between the *abangan* and the *santri-seberang*. At the same time, there was also a significant change in the ideological orientation of the traditionalist Muslims.

The revival of the modernists was apparent from the establishment of the *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (ICMI – Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association) in 1990. Even though its name carried a scholarly tone, ICMI was actually an amalgamation of scholars, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, student and NGO activists, professionals, as well as underground and establishment politicians. Although initially intended as an umbrella organization for Muslims of all stripes, most of ICMI's members came from the modernist persuasion. Additionally, many of its members also came from the younger Indonesian generation of middle-class families. Most of them were the “New Order generation,” growing up in urban areas and in an environment where *aliran*-based identities were not the main theme of politics. ICMI's appeal seemed to lie in the atmosphere of openness within the organization, its aspiration for more political openness, as well as its role as a mediator between modern and religious values. Through its think-tank, the Center for Information and Development Studies (CIDES), ICMI carried out a number of studies, conferences and dialogues touching on a number of issues that were deemed as “sensitive” by the regime, such as human rights, sustainable development, and an equitable economy. At least during the first year of its establishment, ICMI's appeal as a movement to build a civil society in Indonesia was quite strong.

But ICMI could also be viewed in terms of its relations with Suharto. Its establishment was perceived by some analysts as an effort by Suharto to gain

new mass-based support after a series of rows with some military officers critical of the first family's involvement in business. The appointment of B.J. Habibie, Suharto's protégé, seemed to confirm such a notion. ICMI's establishment was openly opposed by some officers. A number of traditionalist Muslims, including Abdurrahman Wahid, also opposed ICMI, apparently because it had too much of a modernist flavor in it.¹⁰⁴ Despite the opposition and its non-political pronouncements, ICMI's political influence grew quickly. In 1993, only three years after its establishment, ICMI was able to penetrate deeply into Golkar. The appointment of Harmoko, a civilian close to the modernist circle, as Golkar's chief, and the subsequent "greening" of Golkar was seen as a major blow to the nationalist military. As a result, many modernist Muslims came to the 1993-1998 parliament on Golkar's ticket and many perceived that the cabinet of the same period was an ICMI Cabinet.¹⁰⁵

As a result of ICMI's rise, interesting changes also occurred in the internal composition of the TNI/ABRI. In this period, there arose a new faction within the TNI/ABRI. This faction was led by a number of Muslim officers with modernist inclinations, such as Prabowo Subianto (the son of the PSI's Sumitro and Suharto's son-in-law), and the two Sumatrans, Feisal Tanjung, and Syarwan Hamid. They grew closer to the modernist Muslims. At the same time, the Javanese officers with nationalist inclinations, such as L.B. Moerdani and

¹⁰⁴ On ICMI and its opposition, consult among others Hefner, *op.cit.*; Adam Schwarz (1994) A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

¹⁰⁵ Despite the appointment of Try Sutrisno, a nationalist military officer, as the Vice President, Habibie was given the opportunity to form the cabinet.

Try Sutrisno, appeared to lead the other faction. Such factions within ABRI were known as the “Red-White”¹⁰⁶ and the “Green” factions.

Another interesting phenomenon in this period was the modernization of the NU. Under Abdurrahman Wahid, the NU came closer to accepting some of the liberal ideas, for example the protection of minority rights as well as civil and political rights. This was the fruit of the educational process undergone by young traditionalist scholars in Western educational institutions. Also responsible for this “advancement” was the close relationship that Gus Dur enjoyed with the NGO communities, both at home and abroad. As a result, the image of the NU, especially of Gus Dur himself, shifted from that of rural *santri* advocating an Islamic state to a cosmopolitan and accommodating one with a strong leaning toward the protection of minority groups. However, it should be noted that not all *kyai* and *santri* welcomed Gus Dur’s position. Many, especially the NU elements in the PPP, chose to hold on firmly to their traditionalist Islamic beliefs.

In this period, there was a leveling of exposure to Western influence among the political groups. Greater openness to the outside world and growing global interconnectedness facilitated by the revolution in information technology were the primary factors behind this change. NU especially made significant leaps forward, leaving behind Muhammadiyah in this respect.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Signifying the national colors, it also has a nationalist connotation.

¹⁰⁷ Despite the political progress that the modernist Muslims made, Muhammadiyah was said to have undergone an intellectual stagnation during this period. For a collection of critiques of the organization, see Nur Achmad and Pramono U. Tanthowi, eds., (2000) *Muhammadiyah “Digugat”: Reposisi di Tengah Indonesia yang Berubah* (Muhammadiyah “in Question”: Repositioning in the Changing Indonesia), Jakarta: Penerbit Kompas.

The three major *aliran* groups were in the competitive mode during this period. While the formal political system remained fixated on the quest for economic prosperity and political stability, real politics experienced a high rate of dynamism. The rift within the *abangan* institution, as exemplified by the tension between Suharto and the TNI/ABRI generals, rendered a decline in its relative position *vis-à-vis* the modernists, although it remained predominant in absolute terms. The traditionalists transformed their platform substantially and were also vying for power. After being dormant for quite some time, all three *aliran* segments were about to engage in a dramatic power struggle that eventually led to the creation of a new structure in Indonesian politics.

CHAPTER 3

REFORMASI MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA: DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE RESURGENCE OF ALIRAN POLITICS

In the final years of the past millennium, Indonesia underwent another period of change in its political system. Similar to the changes of political structure in 1945 and 1965, this period was marked by bloody conflicts, confusion, and uncertainty. Indeed, many observers were baffled by the speed and extent of change that swept the country. Just like analysts thought previously about Sukarno, Suharto's power appeared to them so deeply entrenched in the Indonesian polity that only "an act of God" (mortality) could remove him from power. Suharto, however, not only stepped down from power, but the political structure he had built for three decades crumbled.

From the perspective of Javanese political culture, Suharto's downfall was due to his practice of *pamrih*¹. This *pamrih* took the form of corruption and cronyism that had become endemic especially in the final years of his rule, with the increasingly predatory first family business practices. The practice of *pamrih* by rulers usually resulted in the loss of *wahyu*,² as was the case with Suharto's downfall as well as Sukarno's previously.³

¹ Approximately this means a "concealed personal motive."

² This means "divine favor for power holders." For an explanation of Javanese concepts in this section, consult Chapter 2, especially the discussion on Javanese political culture.

³ Franz Magnis-Suseno (1999) "*Langsir Keprabon: New Order Leadership, Javanese Culture, and the Prospects for Democracy in Indonesia*," in Geoff Forrester (1999) *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?*, Singapore: ISEAS.

**GROWING DISCONTENTMENT:
THE FAILURE OF THE POLICIES OF POLITICAL OPENNESS AND
ECONOMIC DEREGULATION**

The seeds of *reformasi*, and in fact the very term itself, started to appear at the end of the 1980s. The politics of *keterbukaan* (openness) undertaken by the New Order regime in the latter half of its reign was responsible for the sowing of these seeds. Such a policy was initially meant as an effort to vent some of the steam that had been putting pressure on the system as a result of economic development and globalization. Economic development, a cornerstone of the regime, had vastly improved the standard of living. Combined with a markedly better educational system which had provided mass education, a new burgeoning middle class arose. This new class was composed of intellectuals, business entrepreneurs, and students. Most, if not all, of them belonged to the New Order generation in that they were the products of the New Order economic development and education system.

As an integral part of its economic development policy, the New Order regime actively sought participation in the global economic system. As a byproduct, the increasing interdependence in the global economy and the revolution in communications technology had exposed the new middle class to a plethora of ideas emanating mostly from the western world. Among these ideas was democracy. Despite the apparent deficiency in understanding comprehensively the concept of democracy, many in the middle class grew increasingly critical of the regime's authoritarianism. The politics of *keterbukaan* was aimed at gradually opening up the political system so as to avoid a sudden outburst of mass political participation. Among other things,

the opening up policy entailed the relaxation of press censorship, the granting of permits to set up privately-owned TV stations, and probably most important, the dissolution of the *Kopkamtib* (*Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban* – Command for the Restoration of Security and Order), the all-powerful security body responsible for the suppression of “subversive” activities.⁴

However, the policy of *keterbukaan* was perceived as half-hearted at best. While *Kopkamtib* was disbanded in 1988, a new body was established in its place. The *Bakorstanas* (*Badan Koordinasi Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional* – Coordinating Body for the Maintenance of National Stability) functioned similarly to its predecessor. Even though there was a relaxation of the tough security measures, it was meant merely for social activities. Nothing fundamental changed in terms of security clearance for political activities. In spite of the relaxation, the political structure remained the same. No new political parties were allowed to be established. Only the three acknowledged by

⁴ *Kopkamtib* was established in the aftermath of the communist coup attempt in 1965. It was initially tasked with finding and prosecuting the remnants of the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* – Indonesian Communist Party) membership or its “sympathizers.” Later on, its function was widened to include screening and background checks of candidates for the civil service. If any of the extended family of a certain candidate had any form of communist link, this body would declare the candidate not “*bersih lingkungan*” (social environmentally clean), which meant that he/she was not eligible for work in the public sector. During its heyday, any public activity that involved more than five people required permission from the *Kopkamtib*. Suharto headed the body during the first years of its inception. Later on, this task was given to the Chief of the Armed Forces. Some analysts view the disbandment of *Kopkamtib* as signaling a power struggle between Suharto and some military generals who were said to be disillusioned with Suharto’s rule at the end of the 1980s. The most powerful of these generals was General L. B. Murdani, who was then the Chief of the Armed Forces. For a brief description of this power struggle, see Michael R.J. Vatikiotis (1998) Indonesian Politics Under Suharto: The Rise and Fall of the New Order (Third Edition), London: Routledge, ch. 3 and ch. 6.

the government were allowed to exist, and control over the leadership in all three parties was as gripping as ever.

This was apparent during the struggle for leadership in the PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* – Indonesian Democratic Party), one of the three official parties, the result of the 1973 merger of nationalist and Christian parties. Growing public disenchantment with the New Order regime had increased the popularity of the Sukarno family. The PDI, in which the PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* – Indonesian National Party, Sukarno's party) was the most prominent among the five merged parties, took advantage of this by courting Sukarno's daughters and sons to run for election on the party's ticket. As a result, the number of votes the PDI received in the 1988 and 1993 elections increased dramatically, although the totals remained far below those received by Golkar, the government's party.

Aiming to gain even more votes, and probably to finally defeat Golkar, the party sought to make one of Sukarno's daughters, Megawati Sukarnoputri, its chairperson. The move was successful in 1994, but it was met with stiff opposition from the government, which later supported an effort by a number of the party's functionaries to set up a rival leadership in the party, led by Suryadi, the previous party chairman.⁵ The dual leadership problem was then solved by an iron fist approach supported fully by the government's security apparatus. A number of members of the police and other branches of the armed

⁵ Ironically, in the previous party congress in 1993, Suryadi, whom the government considered to be too successful in managing the PDI's performance in the two previous elections, was toppled from the leadership of the party. Such a move actually paved the way for Megawati's election. For details of the PDI affair, see Robert W. Hefner (2000) *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 180-184.

forces, clad in the PDI's tee-shirts, stormed the party's headquarters in Jakarta, which was occupied by Megawati's supporters. The attack resulted in a number of deaths, injuries, and missing persons, and was dubbed the "tragedy of July 27, 1996." The tragedy signified that there was no significant change in the government's policy on political liberalization, despite the policy of *keterbukaan*. Additionally, the use of force also marked a decline in the ability of the government to cope with political dynamics through the power of persuasion.

In the economy, despite the good performance in terms of economic growth, the latter half of the New Order administration saw an increase in corruption, collusion, and nepotism⁶ in government projects and businesses. This was especially true of the first family businesses, which involved the sons and daughters, as well as the grandson, of President Suharto. The policy of *keterbukaan* had its counterpart in the economic sphere, known as "*kebijaksanaan deregulasi*" (deregulation policy). But, unlike its political counterpart, deregulation was executed with fervor, partly because the opening up of the economy and privatization of several sectors benefited the businesses of the palace cronies, most notably those belonging to the president's family.⁷

In their business operations, the sons and daughters of President Suharto set up conglomerate-type companies.⁸ Each of them supposedly

⁶ This is known in Indonesia by its acronym "KKN" (*korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme*).

⁷ On the effects of deregulation on economic ownership, consult, among others, Ahmad D. Habir (1999) "Conglomerates: All in the Family" in Donald K. Emmerson, ed. (1999) Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

⁸ A number of underground reports, as well as those published in foreign media were circulated during the Suharto era on the businesses and wealth amassed by the first family. Consult, among others, George Aditjondro (1998) Guru Kencing Berdiri, Murid Kencing Berlari: Kedua Puncak Korupsi, Kolusi, dan Nepotisme Rezim Orde Baru dari Soeharto ke Habibie (The Teacher Urinates Standing, the

concentrated on certain sectors as his or her core business, so as not to conflict with the others. The most prominent among them were Siti Hardijanti Rukmana (Tutut), Bambang Trihatmodjo, and Hutomo Mandala Putra (Tommy). Tutut's group of companies was known as Citra group. Its core business was the construction and operation of toll roads. Bambang's group of companies, Bimantara, was engaged in automotive industries as well as trading. Tommy's Humpuss group initially did not have any clear core business but later was known for its automotive industries and clove business. The "no-competition rule" among the members of the first family was broken when Tommy was granted the license to develop the first national automobile industry, known as Timor, in cooperation with Kia automotive industry of South Korea. Bambang, who had been in this business for quite some time, reportedly was annoyed by the government's decision, but then decided to seek cooperation from Kia's Korean rival, Hyundai, to set up its own brand of national car, Bimantara. The sibling rivalry continued in the media business when Tutut set up a TV station, TPI (*Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* – Indonesian Educational Television), rivaling Bambang's RCTI (Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia), the first privately-owned TV station in Indonesia.

The business behavior of the first family created resentment among the public, largely because of the government licenses and facilities they relied on

Student Urinates Running: The Two Peaks of Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism Under the New Order Regime from Soeharto to Habibie), Jakarta: Masyarakat Indonesia untuk Kemanusiaan (MIK) and Pusat Informasi Jaringan Aksi Reformasi (PIJAR); Soesilo (1998) *Monopoli Bisnis Kroni dan KKN Keluarga Cendana: Asal Usul Kiprah Akhir Kejatuhannya* (The Business Monopolies of the Cronies, Corruption, Corruption, and Nepotism of the Cendana Family: Causes of Its Fall), Depok: Permata-AD. For recent accounts, consult Stefan Eklöf (1999) *Indonesian Politics in Crisis: The Long Fall of Suharto, 1996-98*, Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, pp. 8-13; Kees van Dijk, (2001) *A Country in Despair: Indonesia Between 1997 and 2000*, Leiden: KITLV Press, ch. IV.

and the predatory business behavior they frequently showed. Such resentment grew even stronger when Suharto's grandson, Ary Sigit, decided to go into business. Ary was infamous for his notorious habit of calling up provincial governors, summoning them to Cendana (Suharto's private residence). The governors, under the impression that there was urgent government business, rushed to Cendana, only to find that it was the grandson rather than the president who was calling them, usually for business-related purposes. Ary was also reportedly involved in drug trafficking during the last few years of his grandfather's rule.

At this point, the storm of political change was brewing in the horizon. Tensions escalated considerably in the 1990s; the number of mass actions and demonstrations, especially those related to land ownership issues grew significantly. ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* – Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association),⁹ which was established partially due to Suharto's desire to embrace the modernist Muslims in an effort to counter-balance growing criticism from the military, became increasingly critical under Secretary General Adi Sasono, who was elected in 1995. Through its think-tank, the Jakarta-based Center for Information and Development Studies (CIDES), of which Adi was the director, ICMI made a number of bold statements in its seminars and conferences. The topics covered by CIDES' activities included issues deemed "sensitive" by the regime, such as human rights, sustainable development, and an equitable economy. Among the statements made in one of CIDES' seminars and later published in one of its journals, *Sintesis*, was that by M. Amien Rais. Amien, the chairman of ICMI's board of

⁹ About ICMI and its *aliran* background, see the Chapter 2.

experts (*dewan pakar*) and a member of CIDES' board of advisors, as well as the chairman of Muhammadiyah (the modernist organization and Indonesia's second largest Muslim organization), said that in the run up to the 1997 general election, Indonesians needed to think about presidential succession.¹⁰ Such a statement raised the eyebrows of both observers and political players, Indonesians and foreigners alike, who used to be certain that given the nature of its establishment as Suharto's political vehicle amidst growing criticisms from the nationalists, especially the Army, ICMI would never dare to criticize the regime, let alone suggest a presidential succession when Suharto was still alive and in good health.¹¹ For this and Amien's other blunt statements in opposition to the regime,¹² Suharto pressured ICMI's chairman, B.J. Habibie, long considered Suharto's *protégé*, to censure Amien. As a result, Amien was stripped of his position in ICMI's board of experts, but retained the CIDES' position.

Yet, aside from a few disturbances and actual actions against the government, there was no organized mass movement to demand change. Such relative tranquillity had, in fact, led the outside world in general to believe that Indonesia was stable and that Indonesians were happy as a result of excellent economic growth performance. A number of analysts, such as Robert Hefner,

¹⁰ M. Amien Rais (1994) "Suksesi 1998: Suatu Keharusan" (Succession in 1998: A Must), in *Sintesis*, No. 9, Vol. 2., June-July 1994, Jakarta: Center for Information and Development Studies.

¹¹ For details on the presidential succession debates, consult Bilveer Singh (2000) Succession Politics in Indonesia: The 1998 Presidential Elections and the Fall of Suharto, Hampshire: MacMillan Press, Ch. 1.

¹² Among Amien's other "sins" were first, his fierce attack on the first family cronyism, especially involving the Busang mining project that involved the Canadian-based company, Bre-X, and second, his declaration that he was ready to run in the election in 1997 as a presidential candidate.

argue that the key behind Suharto's success in holding off any meaningful opposition during the last decade of his regime may have been due to the Islamic card he was playing. Facing growing criticism from the nationalist faction of the military (the so-called Red-White faction), Suharto courted the modernist Muslims for support. His blessing and active support for the establishment of ICMI in 1990, as well as the choice of his protégé, Habibie, to head the new organization, could be seen in this light.¹³ However, there was a contending explanation for such a move. It is the cherished ideal for a Javanese person like Suharto to retire from the world of the mundane after reaching a certain age and to concentrate on "preparation" for the afterlife.¹⁴ The fact that he had been counseled by a modernist religious teacher from the Army since 1987 strengthened this notion. As Suharto became more pious in religious practice, the modernist community was at the height of a search for an alternative institutional affiliation from that which existed at the time.¹⁵ The modernists realized from the beginning that in an autocratic set-up like the New Order regime, there needed to be a patron from the government circle for the new association if it was to be possible at all. The result from the ensuing interaction between the modernists and the regime that followed was positive

¹³ Hefner, *op.cit.* See also Douglas E. Ramage (1995) Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and the Ideology of Tolerance, London: Routledge, ch. 3.

¹⁴ Known in its Javanese idiom as "*lengser keprabon, madeg pandhito*." Suharto reiterated this intention on many public occasions from 1993 on.

¹⁵ Prior to ICMI's establishment in 1990, there had been a number of efforts by the modernists to set up similar institutions throughout the 1980s. See Hefner, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-131.

for the former, not only because the regime approved of such an institution, but also because the approval came from the paramount holder of power.¹⁶

Whatever Suharto's true initial intention regarding the approval for ICMI might be, subsequent events proved that he did use ICMI as a political platform to support his rule. As ICMI and CIDES grew more critical of the regime, funding for CIDES' activities were cut-off. Additionally, an alternative ICMI-oriented think-tank was set up. Known as the Center for Policy and Development Studies (CPDS), the think-tank adopted a staunch pro-Suharto line amidst growing calls for reform. This think-tank was founded with the help of the president's sons and daughters. At this time, Tutut (the most politically active among the siblings) and her brothers and sisters became increasingly suspicious of the modernists in ICMI, especially the CIDES-affiliated ones. They were also known to be not too fond of Habibie. At this juncture, Habibie had become the most senior minister in Suharto's cabinet. In such a position, he was not particularly easily swayed by requests for projects or licenses that came from first family businesses. They also envied Habibie's "strategic industries empire," which gave him the power to control a number of state-owned technology-intensive corporations, with assets amounting to trillions of Rupiah.

Approaching the 1997 election, the CPDS became more like a political operative seeking to undermine Suharto's opposition. Slowly but surely, ICMI was split into two camps: the loyalists led by the CPDS, and the increasingly critical camp led by CIDES. In the meantime, although now separated institutionally, Amien Rais maintained contact with a number of ICMI/CIDES activists. In Suharto's final days, Amien, together with other modernists such

¹⁶ Hefner provides the details surrounding ICMI's establishment. See *ibid.*, pp. 128-138.

as Adi Sasono, and M. Dawam Rahardjo (a respected modernist scholar), played a very important role behind the *Reformasi* movement.¹⁷

If the relationship between some nationalist exponents, especially the civilian nationalists in the PDI, and the regime in this late New Order period could be described as adversarial, and between the modernists and the regime initially marked by a reconciliation then becoming increasingly hostile, the relative position of the traditionalists *vis-à-vis* the regime took a different twist. The NU (Nahdatul Ulama, traditionalist vanguard institution) had been the most important Islamic organization partner of the government during the latter half of the 1970s and 1980s in terms of propagating the policy of Pancasila (the state official ideology) as the sole foundation (*asas tunggal*) of all officially recognized organizations.¹⁸ After the founding of ICMI, however, the relationship turned sour. The NU, especially its leader during this time, Abdurrahman Wahid, correctly viewed that the new Islamic organization was heavily populated by modernists. Therefore, it vigorously opposed ICMI's establishment. Even though the public position of Gus Dur (as Wahid is affectionately known) toward ICMI was that it represented a danger of the reintroduction of sectarian politics,¹⁹ on a number of occasions he also referred to ICMI as a "Neo-Masyumi" organization. It appears that almost forty years after the split

¹⁷ Together with several modernist activists, they coordinated the mass movement from the headquarters of Muhammadiyah in Menteng, Jakarta. Interview with Moh. Harun Al-Rasyid Songge, Fathullah, and Hilmi Rahman, modernist activists present in the Muhammadiyah headquarters, Jakarta, May 1998.

¹⁸ For the reasoning behind the NU's acceptance of the *asas tunggal* requirement, see Andrée Feillard (1999) *NU vis-à-vis Negara: Pencarian Isi, Bentuk, dan Makna* (NU vis-à-vis the State: The Search for Content, Form, and Meaning), Yogyakarta: LKIS, ch. IX. See also Ramage, *op.cit.*, ch. 2.

¹⁹ Schwarz, Adam (1994) *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 185-188. See also Ramage, *op.cit.*, ch. 2.

between the traditionalist and modernist Muslim organizations, the lack of trust between the two segments was still fresh in the minds of their elite.

The NU also perceived that Suharto's *rapprochement* with the modernists as its loss. In an apparent balancing act, Gus Dur set out to establish ICMI's rival, known as the *Forum Demokrasi* (Fordem – Democracy Forum). By establishing this organization, Gus Dur seemed to have hoped to attract the nationalists to his side. Faced with increasingly strained relations with Suharto, the nationalists were naturally inclined to ally with the traditionalists. During the modernists' "honeymoon" period with Suharto, Gus Dur's defiance served as a credible opposition, especially since it was backed by the NU, the largest Muslim organization. As a result, in 1994 a number of political operations were carried out by the regime to unseat him from chairmanship of the NU. Similar to the case of the PDI, the regime sought to replace him with a figure deemed more favorable, a wealthy traditionalist entrepreneur named Abu Hasan. Unlike Megawati, Gus Dur survived this coup by relying on the support of most of the NU's respectable *kyai*.²⁰

However, a couple of years later things took a sharp turn in the relations between the traditionalists and the regime. In the run up to the 1997 election, Gus Dur took advantage of the growing estrangement between the modernists, who became more critical of the regime, and Suharto, who increasingly came under the influence of his sons and daughters following the passing away of his wife in 1996. In a *rapprochement* move, Gus Dur succeeded in establishing a good rapport with Tutut. At this point, Tutut became more active in politics.

²⁰ For details on the political operation against Gus Dur, consult Hefner, *op.cit.*, 171-174.

There were even reports that she was seriously considering running for the presidency to succeed her father in the future. Gus Dur expressed his support for Tutut by referring to her as “the future leader.” As a result of this reconciliatory move, Gus Dur’s pro-democracy activist friends were dismayed, but the political operation against him was halted. During the 1997 election campaign, Gus Dur and Tutut were hand-in-hand in campaigning for Golkar.²¹

It was this intriguing political constellation that marked the end of the New Order regime. As mentioned above, the seeds for the resurgence of *aliran* politics were sown in this period. All three *aliran* segments were vying for power as Indonesia neared a post-Suharto era.

PRELUDE TO THE STORM: CURRENCY CRISIS AND SUHARTO’S CRONY CABINET

The mass political movement known as *Reformasi* that led to the downfall of the *ancien régime*, gained significant momentum in 1998. It can be perceived as a reaction against the crony-filled last Suharto development cabinet, as well as prompted by the regional financial crisis that had hit Indonesia in late 1997. Both became the precipitating factors and rallying points for the mass movement against Suharto.

Starting in Thailand, the financial crisis that struck East Asia in 1997 quickly spread to other countries. The crisis occurred after attacks from currency speculators who saw fundamental weaknesses in the economies of a number of countries. Generally, the problems involved several aspects, such as

²¹ Hefner, however, argues that Gus Dur’s move must be perceived solely as a political strategy to counter the modernists’ ascendancy rather than signifying a change in his democratic ideals. See Hefner, *op.cit.*, pp. 193-196.

overvalued local currencies pegged to the U.S. Dollar, unstable banking systems, and a lack of transparency in businesses and financial transactions. The value of Thai Baht fell against the Dollar by twenty percent after Thailand's central bank floated the previously pegged currency. This was soon followed by depreciation of the Philippines' Peso by more than ten percent. Malaysia fell next, when the Ringgit hit an almost three-year low.²²

Indonesia, which would prove later to be the worst hit, was at first actually perceived as able to ward off the crisis. Many analysts voiced their optimism that the crisis would not hit Indonesia. Such optimism was based largely on the false view that Indonesian economic fundamentals were sound, as well as the mistaken belief that Indonesia would be immune from currency speculators' attacks. Such views were based on the fact that, unlike Thailand, Indonesia had already semi-floated its currency.²³ The Bank Indonesia (central bank) had for some time applied a "downward-crawling peg." Basically it set a range of value through which the Rupiah was allowed to fluctuate. Throughout the 1990s as the U.S. currency was gaining strength, the Rupiah experienced a slow depreciation, but remained within the value of that range.

²² Many publications have been published on the regional currency crisis that eventually would also hit South Korea and Japan, as well as causing economic downturns in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. See, among others, K.S. Jomo, *ed.* (1998) Tigers in Trouble: Financial Governance, Liberalisation and Crises in East Asia, London: Zed Books; Callum Henderson (1998) Asia Falling? Making Sense of the Asian Currency Crisis and Its Aftermath, Singapore: McGraw-Hill. A survey specifically on the Indonesian financial crisis can be found in Richard Mann (1998) Economic Crisis in Indonesia: The Full Story, Singapore: Gateway Books.

²³ At a conference in Bangkok in 1997, a former governor of the Indonesian central bank reportedly laughed at the suggestion that the currency flu would eventually infect Indonesia, due to the fact that the floating exchange rate had been in effect for quite some time.

When the crisis symptoms started to appear, and the low value of the range was threatened to be breached, the central bank, equipped with able, mostly American graduate professionals, responded quickly by spending its foreign exchange reserves to buy Rupiah, and by raising the banking interest rate. The two measures were aimed at making the Rupiah less susceptible to speculators' attacks as well as making saving and investing more attractive than currency speculating.²⁴ In addition, having learned from the global economic recession of the early 1980s, the government was also quick to cut government spending and postpone a number of projects. The resolve of the economic authority and its expeditious reactions, as well as the sound economic indicators raised optimism that Indonesia would be able to weather the currency storm. Throughout the second half of 1997, analysts made rosy predictions about the Indonesian economy. Even just before the crisis hit, the World Bank still described Indonesia in a generally positive light.²⁵

The crisis, however, was something of a different nature from earlier recessions. As in other East Asian countries, conventional economic measures would later prove to be insufficient. The onslaught on the Rupiah originated from foreign speculators, and notwithstanding the efforts of the authorities to correct the economic distortion, this put great pressure on the currency. Finally, unable to withhold the prescribed range any longer without risking a drain on foreign currency reserves, the bank decided to abandon the peg altogether, hoping that although the Rupiah would slide down in the short

²⁴ Emmerson, Donald K. (1999) "Exit and Aftermath: The Crisis of 1997-98" in Emmerson, *ed.*, *op.cit.*, pp. 320.

²⁵ Eklöf, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-101.

term, eventually the above two measures would be able to stem the tide of speculation.

The result was the contrary. Observing that the Rupiah's deterioration was gaining speed after the peg was abandoned (in ten days in July 1997 its value plunged from Rp. 2,450 per US Dollar to Rp. 2,700), the general local public started their petty speculation in earnest. These new speculators were mainly members of middle and upper class urban households, including professionals, government officials, even housewives and students. The initial motive seemed to be profit-making, but later would turn into a loss of confidence in the local currency.

Unable to withstand the plummeting of the value of the Rupiah, the government decided to call for help from international financial institutions, most notably the IMF (International Monetary Fund). The IMF then started its rescue package by demanding that the Indonesian government carry out more extensive economic reform. The regime however, approached cooperation with the IMF cautiously and half-heartedly. A number of reform components proposed by the IMF would hurt the first family and palace cronies' businesses. Among the projects targeted by the IMF were the government subsidy for the money-losing IPTN (*Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara* - aircraft industry based in Bandung), the preferential treatment for the industrial monopoly involving a number of conglomerates, the proposed longest bridge in the world connecting the island of Sumatra and peninsular Malaysia involving Suharto's daughter, Titik Prabowo, and Tommy Suharto's pet project, the Timor national

car.²⁶ From the beginning, the government showed a reluctance to follow all of the IMF's conditions. While cutting off the subsidy to the IPTN and dropping the bridge project, it decided to retain the national car project.²⁷ Additionally, although agreeing to sign a letter of intent with the IMF, Suharto was also toying with the idea of currency control, popularly known as CBS (currency board system), suggested by an American economist, Steve Hanke.

Ironically, one of the IMF's suggestions that the government did follow, reform of the banking system, turned out to be highly unpopular and caused further damage to the economy. A concrete measure of this reform was taken in November 1997, when the government announced the closure of 16 banks. This decision caused general panic and resulted in a major rush on virtually all banks in the big cities, even though many of these banks had been declared "healthy." Contrary to the expectation that this policy would strengthen the banking system, the real result was a shattering of any remaining confidence in the local banking system. Such loss of confidence further hampered the government's effort to prevent more decline in the Rupiah's value by inducing saving and investment by raising the interest rate. More and more people turned toward currency speculation as a means to make a profit with their money. The bad situation deteriorated further as the repayment of huge foreign debts by Indonesian private enterprises was coming. As a result, demand for the U.S. Dollar was heightened, pushing the Rupiah further down. In slightly

²⁶ For a discussion of the projects under review by the IMF, see van Dijk, *op.cit.*, pp. 72-82.

²⁷ There were reports that Bambang, another son of Suharto, was dismayed by the decision favoring Tommy. This decision also confirmed the impression that Tommy was Suharto's favorite son.

more than half a year period (June 1997- January 1998) the Rupiah plunged from Rp. 2,350 per US Dollar to around Rp. 16,000.

Despite the currency havoc, Suharto was unanimously elected to his seventh five-year term in office in March 1998. But the level of authority his regime commanded was clearly significantly lower than in the past. The restlessness of the public was growing each day as the government failed to produce a formidable plan to overcome the economic crisis. In the eyes of the public, the legitimacy of the regime was dwindling rapidly with the Rupiah's value. Nevertheless, it was not until the composition of the seventh development cabinet was announced that the mass political movement against Suharto started to roll.

The new cabinet was regarded by many analysts as the most unprofessional and crony-riddled cabinet ever set up by Suharto in his more than three decades' rule. Actually, in a number of respects, this cabinet could be viewed in a positive light. For instance, there were leading professionals positioned as economic ministers with the apparent task of getting the country out of the crisis. This was also the cabinet with the least number of military personnel, continuing the trend of "civilianization" that had been taking place since 1990.²⁸ However, it was also filled by a number of controversial figures. Perhaps, the most critical mistake was Suharto's failure to accommodate demands for the cabinet make-up from increasingly assertive groups in the society.

At least four ministers were subjected to intense contention. Most controversial was Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana (Tutut), Suharto's eldest daughter,

²⁸ Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.

as the Minister of Social Services Even though the president's sons and daughters were actively engaged in business facilitated by the state, politics seemed to be an area that they were not allowed to venture into. This was the first time that Suharto included a member of the first family in his cabinet. As discussed above, in the run-up to the 1997 election, Tutut intensified her social and political role. She, along with Gen. Hartono (another controversial figure, discussed below) and NU chairman Gus Dur, were actively campaigning for Golkar in Java. The closeness of the three figures even came to the point where Tutut won the endorsement as Indonesia's "future leader." Even though the portfolio that she held was not considered influential, it was the circumstances surrounding her appointment that raised public eyebrows.

Because of his affinity with the first family, especially with Tutut, Gen. Hartono was viewed as another controversial figure. A "green"²⁹ army general, he was also close to ICMI. However, within ICMI he was widely regarded as a "Cendana"³⁰ man." As discussed above, as CIDES became more critical of the regime, he aided Tutut in setting up the CPDS as its rival think-tank within ICMI. When he later officially became a member of ICMI, it was clear from his statements that he aimed at taking over the organization's leadership in order to "straighten it up".³¹ As the powerful minister of home affairs, Hartono's position was especially alarming for the regime's opponents. In light of Tutut's

²⁹ This refers to the modernist-leaning ABRI (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* - Indonesian armed forces) officers. Green is the color of Islam. Its rival was the nationalist-leaning officers, known as the "red-white" (national colors) faction. See Chapter 2 for discussion on the *aliran* division in ABRI.

³⁰ The name of a street in the Menteng elite area in central Jakarta where Suharto's private home was located. It had become a sort of nickname for the first family.

³¹ Hefner, *op.cit.*

intention to run for Golkar's leadership,³² his positioning raised the suspicion that he was tasked with paving the way for Tutut's presidential candidacy at the end of her father's present term.

Another controversial figure was in the economic team. Mohamad (Bob) Hasan was the first ethnic Chinese minister ever to serve in Suharto's cabinets. On one hand, his appointment could be seen as a positive sign that discrimination against the ethnic Chinese, which was strong during the New Order era, was receding. On the other hand, Bob Hasan had a reputation as one of the biggest palace crony tycoons. His main business was forestry, and he was also known to be close to the Cendana family. His appointment as minister of trade and industry was widely viewed not only as a means to further the cronies' businesses, but more importantly to look after the businesses of the president's sons and daughters.

The appointment of Professor Wiranto Arismunandar as minister of education and culture presented another controversy in this cabinet. In his days as the Rector of Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB),³³ he was infamous for his iron-fisted approach to student demonstrations. In one instance, during a visit by Minister of Home Affairs General Rudini to the campus in 1990, a number of students staged a demonstration voicing concern over the issues of land ownership. Prof. Wiranto took a hard stance against the demonstrating

³² Golkar's chairperson, the minister of home affairs, and the chief of staff of the armed forces were the three key posts that defined Indonesian politics during Suharto era.

³³ One of the prime tertiary educational institutions in Indonesia. Its students were traditionally known for political activism. President Sukarno was a graduate of this institute, but in 1966 its campus became the hotbed of students' demonstrations against him.

students by not only dismissing them, but also reporting them to the authorities. These students were later tried on criminal charges and jailed.³⁴ His position as minister of education was regarded as an effort to curb growing student activism.

Perhaps the group most disappointed by the composition of the new cabinet was the modernist Muslims. While successful in pushing Habibie to become the new vice president, they appeared to be left out in the formation of the cabinet. There were reports that ICMI through Habibie had submitted a draft list of cabinet members to Suharto that included reform-minded figures, such as Adi Sasono, Dawam Rahardjo, and several others. But it received a strong objection from Tutut, whose draft was the one eventually endorsed by Suharto. Such an exclusion would later prove fatal for the regime, as it gave a strong *raison d'être* for mass mobilization against Suharto by the modernists, joining the other groups in the civil society that had long maintained opposition to the regime.

THE STORM FINALLY HIT: REFORMASI MOVEMENT AND SUHARTO'S RESIGNATION

As a mass movement, *Reformasi* kicked off as students began protesting against the regime on campuses in major cities, such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Solo, Bandung, Surabaya, Semarang, Ujung Pandang, and Medan in April 1998.³⁵ The students were mainly protesting against the cronyist cabinet

³⁴ Interview with Moh. Jumhur Hidayat, Jakarta, August 1996. Jumhur was one of the students involved in the incident. After being freed from jail in 1992, he later became the Executive Director of CIDES and the right-hand man of Adi Sasono.

³⁵ Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

composition and the failure of the government to deliver a way out of the financial crisis. Initially, these two issues became the stimuli for a mass movement demanding change. As the movement was gaining momentum, however, the protests rapidly escalated to include the fate of Suharto's rule itself. Initially held only on major campuses, which were usually state universities and a few private universities, student's demonstrations quickly flared up on some small campuses as well. Suddenly, demonstrations became the fashionable thing to do for students. Soon, virtually all academic activities in almost all higher educational institutions in Jakarta came to a standstill because their students were out on the street.

But *Reformasi* might not be viewed as a pure "people power" movement. It could also be perceived as an elite movement against Suharto or at least as a result of the interaction between the elite and the masses. This was apparent in visits to campuses by a number of opposition leaders, most notably Amien Rais. By April 1998, Amien Rais began coming out and speaking openly in opposition to Suharto, visiting a number of campuses in major cities in Java in an effort to rally the students.³⁶ This was soon followed by an outpouring of open support from Amien's fellow modernists, especially from the reform-minded ICMI and Muhammadiyah figures, such as Adi Sasono and Dawam Rahardjo, as well as from the secular NGO community, including women's groups and labor activists.

In facing a common enemy, the student anti-Suharto movement appeared at a glance to be united. They were steadfast in their demand for

³⁶ Amien had actually started his visit to campuses during the run up to the general session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) that elected Suharto for the seventh term. See van Dijk, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

Suharto's resignation. Various groups seemed to be able to resist efforts launched by pro-Suharto forces to divide them. The common battle cry at that time was, "*hanya satu kata, 'tolak!'* (only one word, reject!)" However, it was clear that the student groups were divided along *aliran* lines and usually had patronage relationships with the segmental leaders. A number of student activists who took part in the 1998 anti-Suharto movement³⁷ conceded that there were at least three large divisions among students in various demonstrations, including the occupation of the parliament building in mid-May 1998 that put enormous pressure on the regime. These groups were the modernist Muslim-leaning groups, the "secular"³⁸ nationalist-leaning groups, and the non-*aliran*-affiliated students. The modernist student groups were led by KAMMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* - United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students). This organization grew out of students' congregations in campus mosques. Many of its activists later supported the PK (*Partai Keadilan* - Justice Party), one of the modernist parties. Another organization that had some modernist connections was the FKSMJ (*Forum Komunikasi Senat Mahasiswa Jakarta* - Communication Forum of Student Senates of Jakarta), a loose association of student senates from various campuses in Jakarta. The "secular" nationalist groups were spearheaded by

³⁷ The following is based on interviews with Philips Jusario Vermonte, Indra J. Pilliang (former student activists, currently researchers at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies), Fahri Hamzah (former chairman of KAMMI, now a functionary of PK) in Jakarta, October 2001. Also see a written account of close observers during the movement, Ricardi S. Adnan and Arvan Pradiansyah (1999) "*Gerakan Mahasiswa untuk Reformasi* (Student Movement for Reform)," in Selo Soemardjan, ed. (1999) *Kisah Perjuangan Reformasi* (Stories of Reform Struggle), Jakarta: Sinar Harapan.

³⁸ The term "secular" was somewhat loosely used to refer to student groups with nationalist and non-Islamic orientations. Even though many activists in these groups rejected the use of the word, this term stuck.

Forkot (*Forum Kota* – City Forum). This organization was composed of student activists who were active in student journalism, and those with backgrounds in NGOs engaged in the advocacy of workers' rights and land ownership issues. These groups' main patrons were from the nationalist-oriented elite. Many of these elites were members of Barnas (*Barisan Nasional* – National Front), an organization set up by a number of retired military and government officials, as well as NGO activists. The third group was mainly non-political students who were engaged as a form of solidarity with their fellow students. While some of them got involved out of genuine concern, many were there because demonstrations seemed to be the “in” thing to do.

While the modernist and “secular” nationalist students and leaders, as well as NGO activists, were now actively trying to undermine the regime, the other segmental leaders were still hesitant. Despite her image as a martyr for the democratization struggle (due to the July 27 incident), Megawati remained quiet throughout the mayhem leading to Suharto's downfall. This was in spite of the fact that some activists of her party were abducted by security forces during increased repression against the anti-Suharto movement. Probably due to the *rapprochement* attitude shown toward the regime in the run up to the 1997 election, the traditionalist leader Gus Dur on a number of occasions even appeared to be blaming the students for the fatalities caused by conflict between students and security forces, which at that time were increasing. He also called upon the students to remain calm and moderate their actions, while advocating gradual change.³⁹

³⁹ van Dijk, *op.cit.*, pp. 198-199.

But the tone would soon change. The leaders found that instead of gradually dying down, the movement was heating up. At this juncture, the students approached a number of public figures whom they perceived as able to provide an alternative leadership to Suharto, such as Amien Rais, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Abdurrahman Wahid, Sultan Hamengkubuwono of Yogyakarta, Emil Salim, and Nurcholis Madjid. These leaders in turn became increasingly more open in speaking out on the need for reform. Just prior to Suharto's resignation, Amien Rais set up an umbrella opposition organization, known as *Majelis Amanat Rakyat* (MAR – Council of the Message of the People), which had 56 members, united in their opposition to the regime.⁴⁰ MAR also signified that the opposition to Suharto came from virtually all groups in the country.

At this juncture, in May 1998, the situation in Jakarta and other major cities became very tense. Demonstrations were carried out every day on campuses and now had spilled out to the streets. In one of these demonstrations on a campus of Trisakti University, a private university in West Jakarta, student demonstrators were shot by security forces, killing three Trisakti students. The public was angered at this blatant use of force. Such anger was apparently used by some people to further destabilize the situation. On May 14, organized protests turned into unruly mobs and started to loot, plunder, and burn several stores and offices, mostly owned by ethnic Chinese all over Jakarta. The rioters also reportedly raped ethnic Chinese women. The number of fatalities amounted to hundreds, if not thousands.⁴¹ A number of

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 193; Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-86.

⁴¹ A joint fact-finding team (*Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta – TGPF*), set up by the Habibie administration on July 23, 1998, conceded in its final report dated October 23, 1998 that it was difficult to calculate the exact number of casualties, because

lesser incidents also happened in various cities in Indonesia, such as Solo, Medan, and Palembang. As a result, many ethnic Chinese fled the country. A number of ethnic Chinese-owned major businesses also parked their money outside of Indonesia. The Indonesian economy came to a virtual standstill because of this capital flight. Indonesia became again what it was in the mid-1960s: the place of “living dangerously.”

There were many reports and rumors about the complicity of rogue elements of ABRI in these riots, especially in the Jakarta May 14 tragedy. The strongest suspicion fell on Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto, who at the time was commander of the elite force, Kostrad (*Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat* – Army Strategic Reserve), and Major General Syafrie Syamsuddin, commander of Kodam Jaya (*Komando Daerah Militer Jakarta Raya* – Greater Jakarta Regional Military Command) and a close associate of General Prabowo. Prabowo was known to be one of the most prominent “green” officers in ABRI. He was the son of Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, the Indonesian economic guru. He also married and later divorced Titik, one of Suharto’s daughters. His Cendana family background had been instrumental in his meteoric rise to important positions. For some time, Prabowo had been known in some circles in Jakarta to harbor a deep resentment toward the dominance of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs in Indonesia’s economy. NGO activists came up with reports that during the riots, there were “military-built” individuals

many of the casualties were trapped within the burned buildings, and thus the corpses were badly charred. But it was confirmed that most of the victims were the shop owners and the looters themselves. Similarly, the actual number of rape cases was difficult to pinpoint, because many of the victims were too afraid to come forward. On the TGPF’s work, its difficulties, and controversies, see van Dijk, *op.cit.*, ch. X.

appearing to direct and incite the mobs. However, the extent of involvement of Prabowo and his “green” associates was unclear. In the report by TGPF (*Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta* – Joint Fact-finding Team) formed to investigate the riots, both Prabowo and Syafrie were implicated for some involvement in the riots and were deemed responsible for failing to maintain security in Jakarta. But this report was highly contested. Only nine out of its 19 members actually signed the report. It also received much criticism from several mass organizations, especially those with Islamic backgrounds, for refusing to investigate the possible involvement of some “red-white” officers in the riots and therefore having an “anti-Muslim” bias.⁴²

Abdurrahman Wahid also expressed doubt about Prabowo’s involvement in the riots. According to him, in the early morning of May 15, a day after the riots, Prabowo visited him in his house. He looked desperate and asked for Gus Dur’s advice on how to handle the adverse security situation.⁴³ If the riots were indeed organized, then Prabowo did not appear to be someone with full control over the situation. Prabowo was later tried by the DKP (*Dewan Kehormatan Perwira* – Officers’ Honor Council), an internal ABRI mechanism, and was honorably discharged on August 1, 1998. The reason for his discharge was, however, not his alleged involvement in the May riots, but rather the abduction of several NGO activists in the run up to the 1998 MPR General Assembly that re-elected Suharto, a charge to which he confessed to have been involved. The circumstances surrounding the May 1998 riots remained unclear.

⁴² *Forum Keadilan*, November 30, 1998.

⁴³ *Media Indonesia*, November 11, 1998.

As the anti-Suharto movement grew bolder and security repression only incited more revolt, Suharto began to adopt a more conciliatory approach. A number of military officials were instructed to engage the students and the elite opposition in a dialogue. In a number of dialogue sessions held in Jakarta under the initiative of the armed forces headquarters, and in the regions by the provincial military commanders, the students refused to budge from their demands for reform. Instead, as days went by, they escalated their demands for Suharto's resignation. They also demanded a face-to-face dialogue with Suharto rather than having to talk to army commanders. This demand was never met.

The role of ABRI in this period was ambiguous. On one hand, on the official level it was clear that ABRI, up to a point, was behind its commander-in-chief, Suharto, in his efforts. The fact that Suharto had just recently been awarded an additional honorary star, which made him one of three five-star generals in ABRI, also worked in his favor as there were no officers who dared to confront their seniors, at least not openly. ABRI was actively engaged both in dialogue with the students and reform leaders, and in repressing a number of demonstrations, the most significant of which was the Trisakti incident. ABRI's commander, Wiranto, also came out from time to time reminding the students that reform had to be sought gradually and that ABRI would steadfastly defend the constitutionality of the reform process. However, below the surface, tension was mounting within the rank-and-file. The showdown between the "red-white" and "green" factions seemed imminent. The former was led at that time by figures such as Wiranto, Edi Sudradjat (former Army chief and former defense minister), and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (chief of staff for social and political affairs). The latter's leaders were Prabowo, Hartono (minister of home affairs),

Feisal Tanjung (coordinating minister for politics and security, and former ABRI commander), and Syarwan Hamid (deputy speaker of parliament and former chief of staff for social and political affairs).

Among the issues debated appeared to be the mechanism of succession if Suharto eventually decided to step down. With many of its officers raised to power under the patronage of Habibie, the "green" faction was of the opinion that the transfer of power should be carried out according to the constitution, which meant that the vice president would automatically become president if the president died, was impeached, or resigned. This would pave the way for Habibie's presidency. On the other hand, the "red-white" faction carried the traditional suspicion and dislike of Habibie among the military, partly because he had once been tasked by Suharto to run the nation's strategic industries, many of which had previously been ABRI's playground and source of lucrative financial ventures. This faction held the opinion that the transfer of power should not be automatic and instead a *Dewan Reformasi* (Reform Council) should be formed, made up of representatives of government, academics, and reformists.

Occasionally, differences of opinion surfaced. On May 18, for instance, Syarwan Hamid and other MPR (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* – People's Consultative Assembly, Indonesia's highest state body) leaders agreed to the demand of students to hold a special session of the MPR with the agenda of impeaching Suharto. Later the same day, Wiranto suggested the formation of *Dewan Reformasi*, instead of letting the MPR call the shots. On that day, the

situation in Jakarta was very tense. Many people even called the editors of a Jakarta magazine to find out whether a civil war would soon break out.⁴⁴

Realizing that he was unable to contain the mass opposition either through repression or dialogue, Suharto then offered to reshuffle the cabinet by replacing the controversial figures with reform-minded persons. This strategy was combined with another measure: discussion with the elite. On May 18 and 19, Suharto invited a number of public figures to the palace for a discussion on finding the best way out of the political crisis, but apparently these initiatives were a little too late. Some also viewed them as half-hearted. The meetings at the palace were held only with selected individuals. Amien Rais, who at that time had emerged as the “locomotive” of *Reformasi*, was not invited; neither were other critical modernists. As it turned out, no members of the minority groups were invited. Seeing an opportunity to discredit Suharto’s last effort to withstand the pressure, Amien blasted the meeting as “sectarian.”⁴⁵

Furthermore, *Reformasi* had already become a catchphrase. Under pressure from the thousands of students who were now occupying the parliament complex, even members of parliament, usually regarded as members of a rubberstamp institution, came out demanding Suharto’s resignation. This included its chairmen, who just two months earlier confirmed Suharto’s seventh presidential term. The effort to reshuffle the cabinet also failed when it was met with widespread refusal by individuals who were asked to join. But the real blow to Suharto came on May 20, when a number of cabinet members led by Ginandjar Kartasasmita, one of the three coordinating ministers, tendered

⁴⁴ *Panji Masyarakat*, June 1, 1998.

⁴⁵ van Dijk, *op.cit.*, pp. 200-202.

their resignation to Suharto while also declaring that they would refuse to serve in the reshuffled cabinet. At this juncture, even Wiranto declined to carry out the order to use force to evict student protesters from the occupied parliament building, despite an official open warning that he would do so.⁴⁶

In the palace the next day, May 21, Suharto announced his resignation to the nation. Vice President Habibie was immediately sworn in as the new president. He moved swiftly to guarantee support from the military by reaffirming Wiranto's position as ABRI commander. After the swearing in, Wiranto immediately announced that ABRI was fully behind the Habibie administration. This was done much to the dismay of Prabowo, who thought that Habibie should fire Wiranto and promote him to the job. A couple of days later, Prabowo was reportedly amassing troops in the neighborhood of Habibie's residence in South Jakarta, apparently in an effort to pressure Habibie to succumb to his demand.⁴⁷ Habibie even had to move temporarily to the state guest house, and Prabowo was pressured to recall his troops. For his misdeed, Prabowo was transferred to an insignificant post in Bandung, West Java.⁴⁸ This was viewed as a victory for Wiranto and his faction.

Indonesia thus entered a post-Suharto era. This was an era that was supposed to be based on the democratization effort, but would be marred by quarrels among the *aliran* elite, each claiming to be the vanguard of *Reformasi* and democracy.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

⁴⁷ Interview with one of Habibie's policy advisors, Jakarta, May 1998.

⁴⁸ Prabowo remained on active service until he was tried and honorably discharged on August 1, 1998 by an internal military mechanism set up to investigate high-ranking officers' misconduct.

HABIBIE'S INTERREGNUM

Professor Bacharudin Jusuf Habibie was a German-trained aeronautics engineer. He was born and raised in South Sulawesi and therefore regarded as a non-Javanese leader.⁴⁹ He also had strong modernist Muslim credentials, which had become an asset to his political advancement. However, his family was also closely acquainted with Suharto. They became quite close during Suharto's tour of duty as commander of the Mandala operation to liberate West New Guinea stationed in Makassar, South Sulawesi, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, where Rudy (as B.J. Habibie was known to family and close friends) grew up. Suharto often came by the house of the Habibie family, and became almost like a relative to the family. After completing his education in Germany in the 1970s, Habibie went on to work at MBB (Messerschmidt Blkw Blohm), a German aircraft manufacturing company. He was summoned by Suharto sometime in the 1970s to spearhead Indonesia's research development in high technology.

Habibie's close relationship with Suharto was an asset for his career in the bureaucracy during the New Order era.⁵⁰ He served several times in Suharto's cabinet as minister of research and technology. By the time he became vice president in 1998, he was the longest serving minister. While his previous record as a modernist Muslim had been obscured, after 1990 he

⁴⁹ Even though he came from a family of mixed (inter-ethnic) marriage. While his father was a Buginese from South Sulawesi, his mother was Javanese. He was also married to a Javanese.

⁵⁰ However, as we shall see later in this chapter, it would become his most burdensome liability in the post-Suharto period.

became closely associated with this segment when he was elected chairman of ICMI. He served in that position until his election as vice president.

Many analysts believe that Suharto hand-picked Habibie in his effort to offset growing opposition within the ranks of the nationalist military and to cultivate support among the modernists. But a number of ICMI's influential members contend that the choice of Habibie actually came from their own initiative. They had previously identified Habibie as a pious Muslim of modernist persuasion. The fact that Habibie was also close to Suharto seemed to provide another incentive for the modernists, as they realized that no public or political venture could proceed without the blessings of the country's top leader. It was said that Suharto merely gave his approval for ICMI's choice of Habibie afterward.⁵¹ In any case, Habibie's presidency marked the ascendancy of the modernists in Indonesian politics after a long period of obscurity under Sukarno's Guided Democracy and Suharto's New Order. A number of modernist leaders and "green" officers entered the cabinet. Among the prominent figures were Adi Sasono as minister of cooperatives and small and medium enterprises, Feisal Tanjung as coordinating minister of politics and security, Syarwan Hamid as minister of home affairs, Yunus Yosfiah, another "green" general, as minister of information, ICMI's functionaries Muladi and Muslimin Nasution as minister of justice and minister of forestry and estates, respectively, the PPP's (an amalgamation of Muslim parties) Hamzah Haz and A.M. Saefuddin as minister of investment and minister of population, and Muhammadiyah's Malik Fajar as minister of religious affairs. Habibie's presidential advisors (non-

⁵¹ Interview with Moh. Jumhur Hidayat, Jakarta, August 1996. On the circumstances surrounding ICMI's choice of Habibie, see Hefner, *op.cit.*, pp. 128-138.

cabinet members) were also overwhelmingly made up of ICMI's and CIDES' figures, such as A. Watik Pratiknya, Jimly Asshiddiqie, Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Indria Samego, and Umar Juoro.

Habibie's presidency was characterized by a dualism between the desire for reform and the persistent practices of the New Order regime, especially with regard to corruption. It was also marked by the return of *aliran* politics that had been dormant during the Guided Democracy and New Order periods, including the divisiveness and power struggles among the *aliran*.

Habibie's administration began by carrying out sweeping reform measures. He immediately ordered the release of political prisoners jailed during the Suharto era on charges of subversive activities, including those from the 1965 failed communist coup attempt who had been in prison for more than three decades. He also ordered the controversial SIUPP (*Surat Izin Usaha Pers dan Penerbitan* – press and publication license) that had shackled the freedom of the press to be repealed. As a consequence, censorship on political reporting was lifted.

Most importantly perhaps was Habibie's offer to the parliament to revise the five political laws that had been the mainstay of Suharto's authoritarian rule. These laws were on elections, parliament, political parties, social organizations, and referendum.⁵² Also revised was another law that was not part of the five political laws but equally, if not more infamous: the anti-

⁵² The referendum law referred to any proposed alteration to the executive-heavy 1945 Constitution. This law virtually eliminated any chance that the Constitution could be amended, since it required 90% of the population to participate in the referendum, and at least another 90% of this electorate to agree to the proposed amendment.

subversion law.⁵³ As a result of the new laws, the public was now free to set up political parties. In less than a year, between May 1998 and February 1999, 160 political parties were established, far more than the three official parties that had been allowed to compete in elections since 1973. Also, the parliament could now play a greater role than it had previously. For instance, it now had the power to draft laws, whereas previously all bills always came from the executive and parliament's legislative role was, in a rubber stamp fashion, limited to simple discussion and then outright adoption of the laws. Government officials, who previously had no alternative but vote in elections for Golkar, the government party, were now freed from this obligation. Elections would be organized by an independent KPU (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum* – General Elections Commission), whose membership now came from the public rather than government officials as in the past. It was also agreed that the next election day would be a national holiday. This measure was taken to ensure that all voters would vote in their neighborhoods, rather than in their offices where pressure to vote for a certain party often took place in the past.

On foreign policy, Habibie decided that the question of East Timor that had for so long impaired Indonesia's credibility in the international community, should be resolved as soon as possible. He first offered a special autonomy to the territory, but upon advice from the Australian Prime Minister John Howard, he decided to offer the East Timorese a referendum to decide whether they would like to remain part of Indonesia under the special autonomy plan, or be

⁵³ Ironically, efforts to replace this law with a softer one were met with stiff opposition from the students and activists, who remained in opposition to Habibie's rule. Apparently, the more relaxed content of the law did not matter as much as the perception about who drafted it.

independent. He also requested that the referendum be held under the auspices of the United Nations. It should be noted that some of the East Timorese freedom fighters, such as Xanana Gusmao, were initially reluctant to take up this offer. He offered Habibie another option in which East Timor would be put under special autonomy for a certain period (up to five years) and then at the end of that period a referendum would be held. Habibie reportedly rejected this option, saying that if at the end the East Timorese decided to become independent, then the five-year period would be a waste of resources for Indonesia.⁵⁴ The question, according to Habibie, needed to be settled then and there.

The referendum was held on August 30, 1999. The result was overwhelmingly (78.5%) pro-independence. Such a result was met with violence by pro-autonomy militias, which were reportedly set up by the Indonesian military to campaign against independence. The level of violence reached a point where the international community demanded an intervention to stop it. President Habibie relented by inviting an international peacekeeping operation to take place in the troubled territory. The militias then drove out more than a hundred thousand East Timorese to the neighboring Indonesian territory of West Timor. Since then, the militias have often carried out insurgency operations to the East Timor territory and remained a thorn in Indonesia's side. Contrary to Habibie's hope, the referendum notwithstanding, the issue of East Timor was not immediately resolved after all. Domestically, Habibie's handling of East Timor was met with disdain from many quarters, especially among the

⁵⁴ Interview with Dewi Fortuna Anwar, one of Habibie's policy advisors, Jakarta, June 1999.

nationalist segment, both the party and military variants. Later on, this issue would become one of the political liabilities that eventually drove Habibie out of power.⁵⁵

Another weak point also enfeebled Habibie's presidency. Despite political reforms undertaken by his administration, corrupt practices still occurred, especially those related to party financing by government officials using state facilities. The largest scheme was what became known as Bank Bali-gate. In order to finance the upcoming election, a number of Golkar functionaries contacted the officials at BPPN (*Badan Penyehatan Perbankan Nasional* - Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency - IBRA) and Bank Bali, one of Indonesia's largest private banks, to offer help in collecting debt from interbank loans to a number of Indonesian banks. In return for the service, Bank Bali offered payment of a large sum, which was then channeled to Golkar. The deal was uncovered by an economist, and it became a scandal that marred Habibie's administration.⁵⁶

In spite of delivering the promises of political reform, Habibie's administration remained largely unpopular, especially among the students and NGO activists. This, and other scandals, in which some officials in Habibie's administration were involved, seemed to confirm their accusation that Habibie was Suharto's protégé and an integral part of the New Order regime. Therefore,

⁵⁵ There are now quite a few eyewitness accounts of the referendum and the ensuing violence in publication. For a succinct account, as well as Indonesia's domestic circumstances surrounding the issue, see Donald K. Emmerson (1999) "Voting and Violence: Indonesia and East Timor in 1999," in Emmerson, *ed.*, *op.cit.*

⁵⁶ For details on Baligate, see among others van Dijk, *op.cit.*, pp. 417-430.

they stuck to their original demand of total reform, which meant eradication of all proponents of the old regime from government.

For segmental leaders, Habibie's administration was seen as a modernist government. They tended to see Habibie's ascendancy to the presidency as illegitimate because the election that formed the current parliament and eventually resulted in Habibie's election as vice president was carried out in the old era. The nationalist and traditionalist leaders used the image of Habibie as part of the old regime to mount a continuous attack on the modernist administration, in tandem with the ever-critical "secular" nationalists, and this time also traditionalist students and activists.

Among the modernists, Habibie did not enjoy full support either. Some prominent modernists, such as Amien Rais, continued their opposition to Habibie's rule. This was mainly due to Habibie's overwhelming public image as Suharto's protégé and his unwillingness to prosecute Suharto on corruption charges. Fresh from the success of the united movement to topple Suharto, Amien still maintained a close relationship with the nationalist leaders. However, while he still occasionally criticized Habibie's administration, the extent of Amien's opposition was certainly a far cry from his tough defiance and unwavering stance against Suharto's rule that earned him a nickname as the "locomotive of *Reformasi*."⁵⁷

Realizing that his regime lacked widespread support, Habibie announced that his was a transition administration and that the general election, formerly

⁵⁷ Amien would also later create distance between himself and the nationalists by not supporting Megawati's bid for the presidency. Eventually, Amien promoted the creation of a loose parliamentary alliance of modernist parties, the *Poros Tengah* (middle-axis). As its name suggested, the alliance was meant as a force opposed to the election of both Habibie and Megawati.

scheduled to be held in 2003, would be held in 1999. This election would be held under the new set of political laws, and became the first free, fair, and open election in Indonesia since the 1955 election. Out of the hundreds of political parties established initially, the KPU only allowed 48 political parties to contest the election.⁵⁸ It was to be an election marked by the rebirth of *aliranism* in Indonesia's political structure.

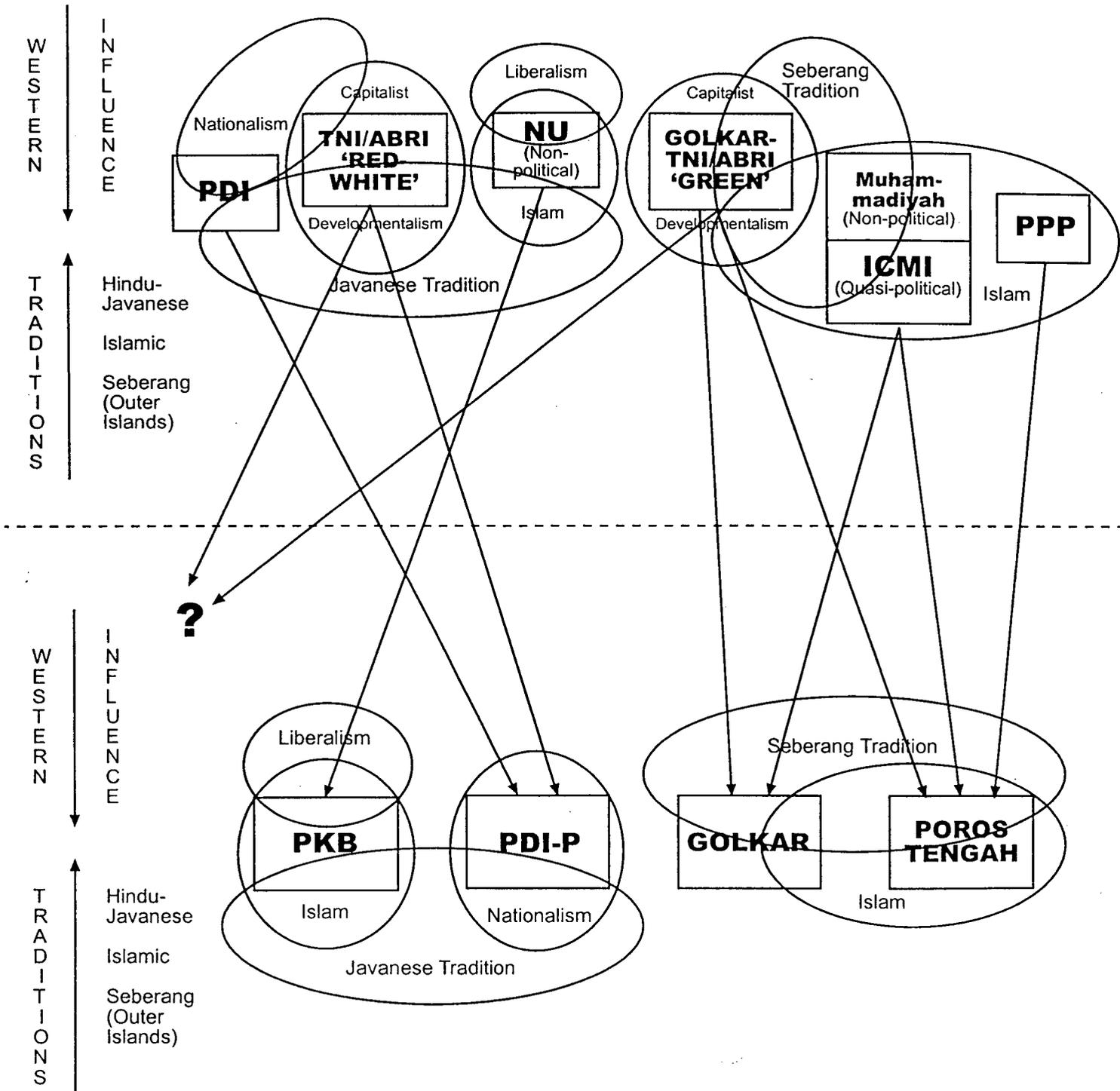
“NEW” POLITICAL STRUCTURE: THE RESURGENCE OF ALIRAN POLITICS

Despite the chaotic appearance of Indonesia's political transition, the new political structure itself was hardly a novelty in the country's history. Many elements in the new structure resembled those of the *aliran* politics prior to the *abangan's* taking control, *i.e.*, Guided Democracy and New Order. In this period, the *aliran* segments resurfaced. In spite of all the attempts to bury them during the Sukarno and Suharto era, they survived. When the political restraints were lifted, they reappeared in their natural habitat, *i.e.*, party and parliamentary politics. Figures 3 and 4 on the following page illustrate the institutional manifestation of the political structure in the *Reformasi* era as well as its institutional antecedent from the late Suharto period.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The selection was based on a regional representation principle, that a party should have the capacity to establish branches at least in half of the provinces, and it should also be able to establish branches in at least half of the districts in the province to validate provincial representation.

⁵⁹ These figures should be read as a continuation of Figures 1 and 2 in Chapter 2. Therefore explanation of the political thinking that each of the institutions espouses as well as its indigenous traditions and Western influence antecedents can also be found in that chapter.

INDONESIAN POLITICAL ALIRAN (1990-1998)



INDONESIAN POLITICAL ALIRAN (1998 - ...)

While a nationalist institution, *i.e.*, the military, was in significant decline in this period, another institution was on the rise. The suppression of the nationalist party during the New Order had not succeeded in eradicating it. The rise of Megawati and the subsequent effort of the government to get rid of her were only successful formally. In real political terms, the tide had been turned. Megawati and several of her followers decided to set up a rival splinter party to the official PDI, named the PDI-P (*PDI-Perjuangan* - PDI-Struggle). Although this was an underground party during the final year of the New Order, in the *Reformasi* era election held in 1999, it came out as the victor.

Despite the conflict that exploded between the party nationalists and the formal rank-and-file of the TNI/ABRI, which then had been under the control of modernist-leaning officers, the rival nationalist officers seemed to have found refuge in the PDI-P. Differences in methods between the party and military variants of the nationalist segment aside, the similarity in their Javanese politico-cultural background should explain such a union.

The traditionalist Muslims' institutional transformation in the *Reformasi* period was rather straightforward. The PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* - National Awakening Party) was set up in this era in the midst of the burgeoning traditionalist aspiration for a comeback to practical politics. The party was established by the NU's *kyai* and *santri*, and during the 1999 election most PKB regional offices were manned by NU's officials. Even though Gus Dur himself initially did not become a PKB member, doubtless his influence in the party was enormous.

Unlike the nationalists and the traditionalists, notwithstanding the gains that they had made during the latter half of the New Order, the modernists

seemed to encounter some difficulties uniting themselves in one political vehicle. In some respects, the difficulties resided in the personal conflict of interests among the elite. The other reason might be the lack of a strong institution that could accommodate the interests of the modernist masses. The modernists tended to be dispersed all over the various political organizations.⁶⁰

As a result, there were four parties representing this major *aliran* in the 1999 election. The PPP, which increasingly came under the control of the non-Gus Dur traditionalist faction but still retained a large modernist following, was one of the prominent parties. Modernist aspirations were also carried by PAN (*Partai Amanat Nasional* – National Mandate Party), led by the reformist Amien Rais, former chairman of Muhammadiyah. Similar to the NU-PKB relations, many Muhammadiyah cadres also became PAN's functionaries, although the party officially declared itself open and non-sectarian.⁶¹ Muhammadiyah's members carried out most of PAN's regional and national activities. Another party, the PBB (*Partai Bulan Bintang* – the Crescent and Stars Party) was set up by a number of protégés or descendants of former Masyumi leaders. However, their influence was rather limited. Another yet smaller party, the PK (*Partai Keadilan* – Justice Party) was set up by young urban modernists, many of them professionals.

Although coming to the election under different banners, similarities of political culture among these modernist Muslims parties have brought them

⁶⁰ Prominent modernists could even be found in the nationalist PDI-P.

⁶¹ A number of nationalist-leaning politicians and figures from minority groups also became members of PAN. In fact, PAN initially claimed to be a "rainbow coalition" party. But soon the reality seemed to set in that PAN had an irrefutable affinity with Muhammadiyah.

together in a parliamentary alliance, the so-called "*Poros Tengah*" (Middle Axis). The alliance was initially intended to provide an alternative to the intense presidential race between Habibie (Golkar's candidate) and Megawati (the nationalists' and traditionalists' candidate). However, there was a potential that these parties would create a sort of more permanent, albeit informal, alliance.

In this period, Golkar was becoming more influenced by the modernist tradition. The election of Akbar Tanjung, former chairman of the HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* – Islamic Students Association, a modernist student movement) during the early New Order years, accentuated such influence. The defeat of former Army commander Edi Sudradjat to Akbar in the Golkar's chairperson election resulted in the exodus of some nationalist elements in the party. Many of them, including Edi Sudradjat, established the PKP (*Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan* – Justice and Unity Party), which would later prove inconsequential in the 1999 election. But some of them also appeared to have joined the PDI-P and the PKB, solidifying an alliance along *aliran* lines.

However, given the non-*aliran*-specific and all-embracing nature of its organization, the *santri*-nization of Golkar was not complete, as had been the case with the incomplete *abangan*-ization of the past. So there remained some elements representing both the nationalists, although most of them had left the party for the PDI-P, and the traditionalists. The presence of the so-called "white Golkar" led by Marzuki Darusman may be seen in this perspective. In the run up to the 1999 election, a number of observers and political activists saw a split within Golkar's ranks between the modernists (HMI element) led by Akbar Tanjung and the remnants of the nationalist element led by Marzuki

Darusman. The terminology given to such division, “dark” and “white” Golkar, reflected the mood of the period, in which the modernists were labeled as pro-status quo or pro-old regime because of their support for Habibie, and the others, including the nationalists, as anti-status quo.

In this period, Golkar also increasingly became a regionalist party. As it lost a substantial portion of its support in Java to the PDI-P and the PKB, its influence in the outer islands grew proportionately. This was especially true in eastern Indonesia, especially in Sulawesi. This was due to the increasing representation of Sulawesi people in Golkar’s leadership, as well as its nomination of Habibie, who was born in Sulawesi, as a presidential candidate.⁶² While relations between the HMI and eastern Indonesia factions were sometimes uneasy, the fact that most of the latter are also modernist Muslims made it a working coalition.

The stature of “green TNI/ABRI” had largely dissipated during this period. Despite its inconclusive nature, the suspicion of complicity of some of its officers in the May 1998 racial riots against the ethnic Chinese in Jakarta, hurt its credibility. However, a number of associates of some influential generals of this faction became members of some of the *Poros Tengah* parties. The most prominent examples were some PBB members who had previously been active in a think-tank established by Gen. Prabowo.

The continuity of this “new” constellation of political forces from that of the 1950s was apparent in the similar regional basis of votes that the *aliran*

⁶² This faction was known as the Iramasuka (Irian Jaya, Maluku, Sulawesi, and Kalimantan) caucus led by Habibie’s close associate, Arnold Baramuli.

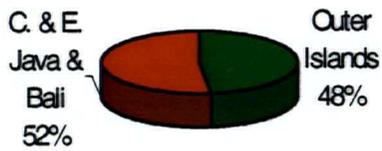
parties received from both the 1999 and 1955 elections. The graphs on the following page demonstrate such a similarity.⁶³

As can be seen from the graphs, the nationalists were more popular in Java than in the outer islands. This was especially true in 1955, and while their outer islands' votes increased significantly in 1999, the majority of votes still came from Java. The modernist parties, members of the *Poros Tengah*, received most of their parliamentary seats from the outer islands, resembling Masyumi in 1955, with a slight increase in their outer islands' portion. The traditionalist PKB, like the NU in 1955, acquired its parliamentary seats overwhelmingly from Java. And its share of votes from the outer islands shrunk by more than half in 1999.

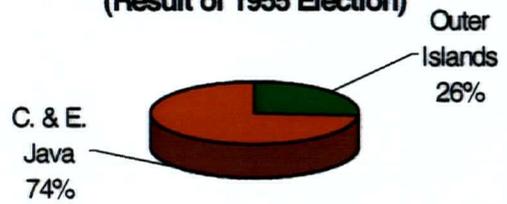
The alliance pattern in the *Reformasi* parliament also resembled the political pattern in the parliamentary democracy period, in that it was continually shifting depending on the issues. The factional proportion in the *Reformasi* parliament, estimates of *aliran* political affiliation of its members, and the voting pattern can be found in the graphs on the following page. Note that in the graphs, the traditionalists consist of the PKB and smaller traditionalist-affiliated parties. The modernists comprised the *Poros Tengah* parties and 75% of Golkar, as well modernist-affiliated smaller parties. And the nationalists are made up of the PDI-P and 25% of Golkar as well as the nationalist affiliated

⁶³ The data for 1955 election have been taken from Alfian (1971) *Hasil Pemilihan Umum 1955 untuk Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (D.P.R.)* (1955 Parliamentary General Election Result), Jakarta: Lembaga Ekonomi dan Kemasjarakatan Nasional, p. 16, while the 1999 data were acquired from *The Jakarta Post*, July 17, 1999, p. 2. The Javanese provinces in these graphs include Central and East Java as well as Bali. However, Bali was not included in the 1955 data because during that time it was still part of West Nusa Tenggara. The outer islands comprised provinces in Sumatra, Sulawesi, and the rest of eastern Indonesia, except for Irian Jaya in 1955, which was then still under Dutch rule.

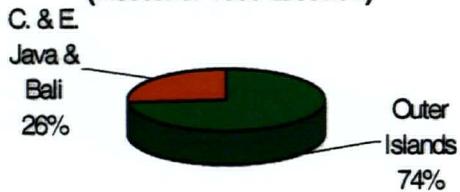
Graph 1
Distribution of PDI-P Seats
According to Region
(Result of 1999 Election)



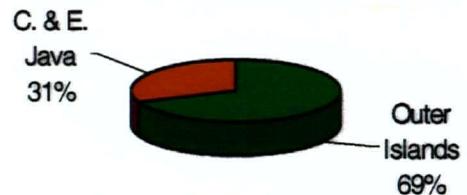
Graph 2
Distribution of PNI Seats
According to Region
(Result of 1955 Election)



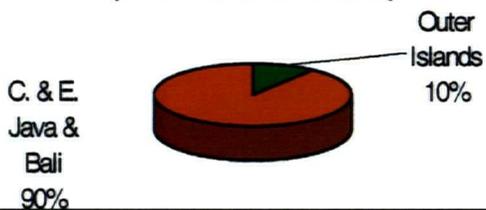
Graph 3
Distribution of the Modernist Parties
Seats According to Region
(Result of 1999 Election)



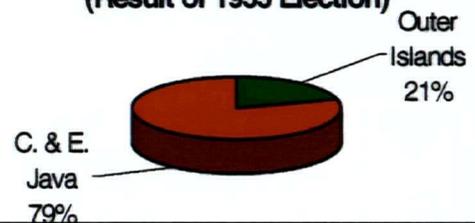
Graph 4
Distribution of Masjumi Seats
According to Region
(Result of 1955 Election)



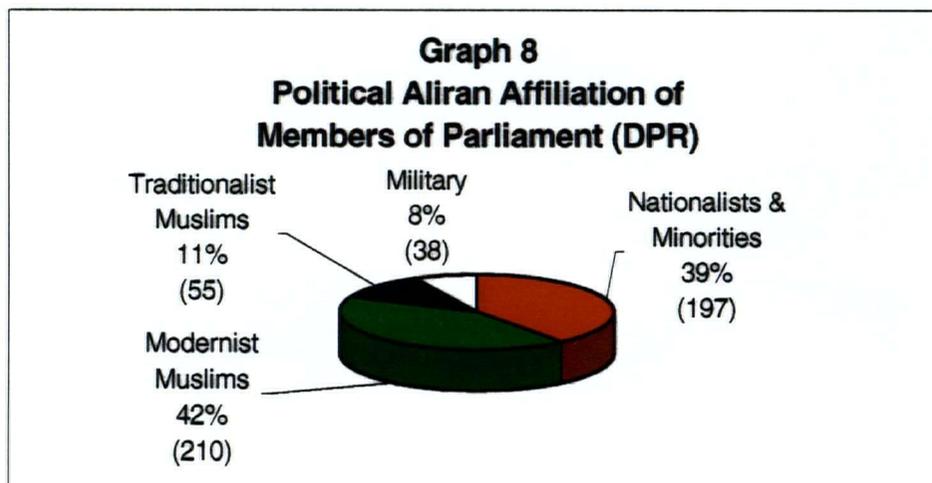
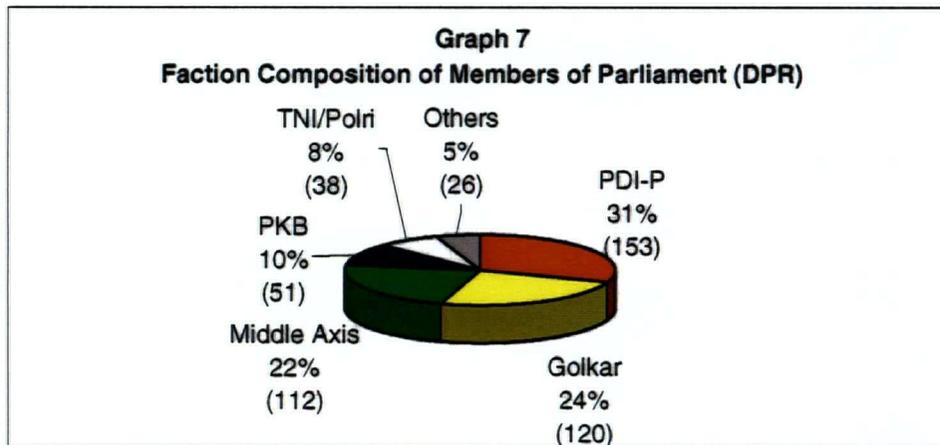
Graph 5
Distribution of PKB Seats
According to Region
(Result of 1999 Election)



Graph 6
Distribution of NU Seats
According to Region
(Result of 1955 Election)

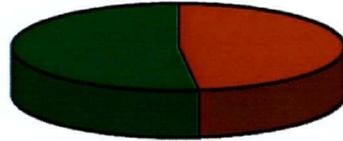


smaller parties. The division of Golkar here is a rough estimate. However, it is also conservative, since it means that the Marzuki faction commands 25% of the Golkar faction in the parliament. This was quite unlikely after the sweeping HMI victory in the Golkar congress prior to the election as well as the growing influence of the Iramasuka caucus. Nevertheless, it is important to note that due to the non-*aliran* nature of Golkar, its members tended to change allegiance more easily should the need arise, as shall be seen from the voting patterns in the following graphs.



Graph 9
Voting Pattern according to
Political *Aliran* Coalition

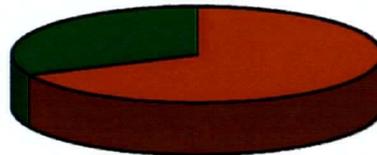
For Amien &
 Akbar
 52%
 (Modernist
 Muslims + 25%
 of Nationalists,
 mostly from
 Golkar)



For Matori &
 Sutardjo
 48%
 (Nationalists +
 Traditionalist
 Muslims)

Graph 10
Voting Pattern according to
Political *Aliran* Coalition

Pro Habibie
 36%
 (70% of Modernist
 Muslims)



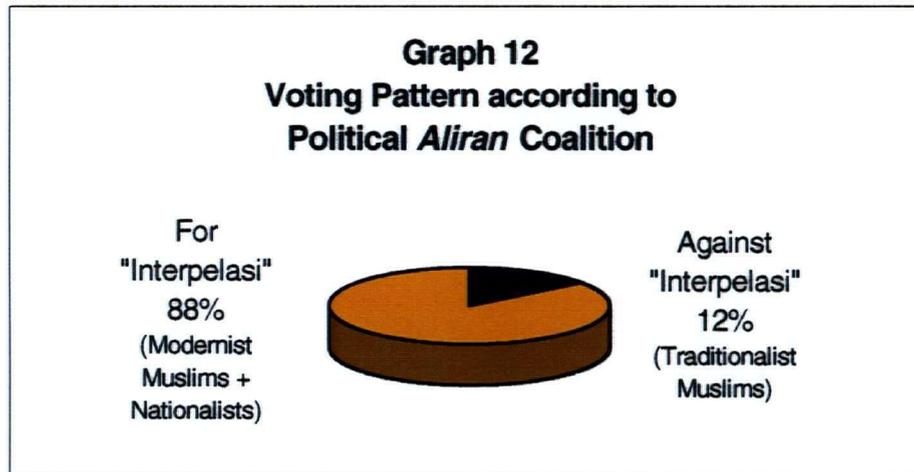
Against
 Habibie
 64%
 (Nationalists +
 Traditionalist
 Muslims + 30% of
 Modernist Muslims,
 mostly from
 Golkar)

Graph 11
Voting Pattern according to
Political *Aliran* Coalition

For Gus Dur
 64%
 (Traditionalist
 Muslims +
 Modernist
 Muslims)



For
 Megawati
 36%
 (Nationalists)



As we see from Graph 8, the modernist Muslims had a slight majority. Therefore, in the subsequent graphs, we see that the modernists almost always won in parliamentary voting.⁶⁴ But we also see that alliances were continually shifting. The nationalists and the traditionalists were in a close alliance during the DPR and MPR chairmanship elections. In Graph 9, we see that their candidates (Matori Abdul Djalil of the PKB for Speaker of the MPR and Sutardjo Suryoguritno of the PDI-P for the DPR) were defeated by the modernists' (Amien Rais for the MPR and Akbar Tanjung for the DPR). It was clear here that the modernist alliance enjoyed splinter votes from some nationalists, particularly

⁶⁴ All voting pattern graphs are based on votes on presidential evaluation and election in the 1999 MPR Special Session and DPR's vote on "*interpelasi*" in 2000. All figures are estimates. The military vote was not taken into account. This is because it is quite difficult to estimate their voting direction. For instance, there was a speculation that the military would vote for Habibie, owing to his closeness with Wiranto. But the East Timor fiasco brought a deep dissatisfaction among the officers toward Habibie. Furthermore, there was also a report that the military would remain neutral in the competition among political parties. However, the relatively low number of abstained votes indicated that this was not the case. Many contended that the military was playing the role of a kingmaker. But it was doubtful, given the low number of votes that it had in the parliament. Interview with Anas Urbaningrum, former chairman of HMI, member of KPU (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum* - General Elections Commission), Jakarta, August 2001.

from Golkar. This was apparently due to the candidacy of the party's chairman, Akbar Tanjung, for the post of parliamentary speaker. The nationalists lost as much as 25% of their votes in this election (which equals the percentage of the nationalist segment of Golkar in this estimation).

However, in evaluating Habibie's accountability speech, which determined his candidacy, this alliance pattern changed (Graph 10). This time, Golkar's splinter votes went the opposite direction. Marred by the Bank Bali scandal and the East Timor referendum, which many were afraid would trigger a chain reaction of disintegration, many modernists who initially supported Habibie moved to reject the speech. While it is quite difficult to trace which faction voted for rejection due to the closed voting, it is estimated that at least 30% of the modernists' votes went to the other side. Some suspected that the votes came from the modernist-leaning Golkar.⁶⁵

In the subsequent presidential election, this pattern shifted again. After winning the most seats in the 1999 election, the PDI-P claimed that Megawati should automatically be the next president. This was based on the reasoning that the most important political message during the campaign was the presidential nomination of this daughter of the late President Sukarno by the party. Therefore, the party argued that the voters were aware that they voted for Megawati when they cast their ballots for the PDI-P.

The other parties disagreed with this claim, arguing that the election was to elect members of parliament rather than the president. Indonesia's governmental system is rather unique. It is considered both semi-presidential

⁶⁵ After the rejection of Habibie's accountability speech, some of his supporters confronted Akbar Tanjung by chanting "traitor, traitor." Interview with Indria Samego, one of Habibie's policy advisors, Jakarta, July 2000.

and semi-parliamentary. The 1945 constitution mandates that the government is run by a president, aided by a cabinet whose members are under the presidential prerogative. But the president is not elected directly by the people. It is the task of the MPR (the highest state body), instead.⁶⁶ In the MPR, Megawati's party did not enjoy an absolute majority. While it did receive the highest number of votes of any party in the 1999 election, it controlled only slightly more than 30% of parliamentary seats.

On the other hand, the other parties, especially the modernists, perceived the transfer of power in terms of open political competition. They believed that jockeying for power was a function of any party, and that each party should be actively engaged in political bargaining and efforts to reach compromises. When it was apparent that the PDI-P did not have any intention to do so, the void was quickly filled by the politically more enterprising modernists.⁶⁷

Initially, the traditionalists supported the nationalists' claim that Megawati should be elected as president. However, it did not take long before a split within the ranks of the largest traditionalist party, the PKB, came to the surface. The party's president, Matori Abdul Djalil, a close associate to some nationalists, supported the PDI-P's contention that Megawati should become president. But the modernists, who were looking for an alternative presidential candidate to Habibie and Megawati, seemed to find the correct figure in the

⁶⁶ However, this indirect presidential election system will change in 2004, as Indonesians vote directly for their president and vice president in the general election slated for that year.

⁶⁷ Interview with Rizal Sukma, one of the functionaries of a modernist party, Vancouver, January 2000.

traditionalist leader, Abdurrahman Wahid.⁶⁸ When Gus Dur agreed to the modernists' promoting his presidential candidacy, he ordered the traditionalist party to withdraw its support for Megawati and back his presidential bid.⁶⁹ As a result, we see from Graph 11, in the presidential election, the coalition between the modernists and traditionalists prevailed over the nationalists and brought Gus Dur to the presidency.

Once the presidency was in hand, however, Gus Dur decided to abandon the coalition structure that brought him to power. He replaced a number of cabinet members, especially those with modernist and nationalist backgrounds with people from his own party, which commanded only eleven percent of seats in the parliament, or with those who were deemed close to him. Despite the pretext of creating a more solid cabinet, the move was seen simply as an act of greed.

In the Indonesian constitution, the president is accountable to the MPR and not to the parliament (DPR). But members of the DPR are also members of the MPR. Membership in the MPR is composed of the DPR, regional, social organizations, and ethnic minorities representatives. DPR members made up more than two-thirds of MPR membership. In a dispute between president and parliament, the constitution gives the latter more power. And Gus Dur's

⁶⁸ The modernist leader, Amien Rais, declined to run for the presidency, despite openly announcing during the parliamentary election that his party would nominate him for the post. The reason for this change of mind seemed to be the disappointing results achieved by PAN in the election. Optimistic that it would receive at least 15 percent of the votes, the vote total was only half the predicted amount. This discouraged Amien from continuing with his presidential bid. Interview with Rizal Sukma, a functionary of PAN, Singapore, October 2001.

⁶⁹ After the presidential election, however, Gus Dur insisted on having Megawati serve as his vice-president. This was done primarily to avert possible rioting by Megawati's supporters.

alienation of the modernists and nationalists during his first year as president changed the alliance pattern in the parliament once again.

In the "*interpelasi*" motion (the first step in impeachment proceedings by the parliament) before the MPR annual session in August 2000, the coalition of modernists and nationalists cornered the traditionalist president (Graph 12). In a subsequent battle between President Gus Dur and the parliament, which revolved around the issue of a financial scam involving the president's close aide and the state logistics agency (known as Buloggate); and the issue of "personal financial aid" from the Sultan of Brunei to the president (known as Bruneigate); the voting pattern in the process leading to his impeachment did not change. Ultimately, in the special session of the MPR in July 2001, this very powerful modernist-nationalist alliance brought down the defiant⁷⁰ fourth president of the republic in a unanimous impeachment vote that saw members of the president's party, the PKB, walk out of the assembly.

As a general rule, we may induce that when united, the modernists commanded a majority in the parliament. The traditionalists were the small minority and they continuously needed an alliance with the other to be consequential. The nationalists had greater potential for controlling the

⁷⁰ Gus Dur was known for his obstinacy in clinging to power, despite a clear indication that he lacked support from the political parties as well as from the military. In the final hours leading to his impeachment, he even issued a decree of civil emergency, which among other things, disbanded the parliament and the Golkar party. The decree largely went unnoticed since there was no support from either the military or the police who were supposed to enforce it. It even caused the MPR's special session to be held 10 days ahead of its initial schedule of August 1, 2001. For a succinct account of Gus Dur's initial problems, see Arief Budiman (2001) "Indonesia: The Trials of President Wahid," in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2001*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. For an illustration of what took place in the run-up to his impeachment, read Irman G. Lanti (2001) "Is Gus Dur Near the End?" in *the Straits Times*, May 30, 2001, Singapore.

parliament, but only if they were able to maintain an alliance with the nationalist element in Golkar, attract splinter votes from the Golkar's modernist-leaning element, and maintain a working coalition with the traditionalists. Being influenced by similar politico-cultural roots, *i.e.*, the Javanese, the potential of a nationalist-traditionalist coalition was greater than that of the other dyads.

Structural political change in this period would not have been possible had it not been for the changing composition of the Indonesian social structure. One of the important by-products of New Order economic development was the growth of the middle class in Indonesia. Some scholars contend that this new rich class was a product of state-led capitalist and industrial development. The result was a middle class dependent on state patronage. Its existence relied on opportunities and benefits rendered by the state.⁷¹

However, the information technological revolution, which swept Indonesia as it opened its economy, caused a growing exposure of the urban middle class to Western culture, either through the media or pop-culture. While it is debatable whether such influence brought a positive impact, such as a more open and independent society, or a negative one, like an identity crisis, there is no doubt that the exposure brought some nascent changes to the society. A study conducted by the CIDES in the final years of the New Order era

⁷¹ See for instance Kunio Yoshihara (1988) *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South-East Asia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press; Richard Robison (1996) "The Middle Class and the Bourgeoisie in Indonesia" in Richard Robison and David S.G. Goodman, eds. (1996) *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonald's and Middle-Class Revolution*, London: Routledge; Donald K. Emmerson (1995) "Region and Recalcitrance: Rethinking Democracy through Southeast Asia," in *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2.

confirmed such changes.⁷² The study demonstrated that the middle class took a more critical stance toward perceived abuses of power by the regime, showed more openness in the expression of ideas, and demonstrated wider aspirations for democratic governance than had been thought by more skeptical scholars.

The growth of the middle class and increasing analytical skills of the populace may have spurred the political transformation. But the end result, ironically, is “back to the future,” albeit a slightly different future as a result of increased contact with the outside world. The idea of democracy, which increasingly became a “global currency,” also influenced Indonesians. But as with other external ideas from the West that came previously, the different politico-cultural segments of the society try to select, internalize, and adapt the idea of democracy so as to emphasize certain aspects while de-emphasizing others. The processes of selection, internalization, and adaptation are informed and determined by the divergent politico-cultural traits held by each of the segments. As these segments interact in the now open political system, the issues of the state that had previously been perceived as “solved” returned to the public and political discourses. The results are a severely conflictual situation that hinders the process of democratic consolidation and a critical reexamination of various issues of the state, *i.e.*, the state foundation, leadership and political competition, and regionalism. The subsequent chapters will discuss how the *aliran* segments and their elites view these issues, and how these views have persisted or evolved over time.

⁷² Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *et.al.* (1998) *Kontradiksi Aspirasi and Peran Kelas Menengah di Indonesia* (The Contradiction in Aspiration and Role of the Middle Class in Indonesia), Jakarta: CIDES.

CHAPTER 4:
THE NATIONALISTS:
THE AUTOCRATIC PLURALISTS

The fall of the New Order regime in 1998 opened a new phase in the history of Indonesian politics. After the “experiment” with liberal parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, the country was under the authoritarian rule of Sukarno’s Guided Democracy from 1959 to 1966, and then under Suharto’s New Order from 1966 to 1998. In what appeared to be a sudden turning back of the clock, Indonesian politics abandoned authoritarianism and adopted many of the structural characteristics of the parliamentary democracy era. The political *aliran*, suppressed for almost four decades, resurfaced. Along with them came all the characteristics associated with politics in the 1950s, where political competition was unhindered and opposition politics operated in earnest. The public now enjoyed more political space. Repression of political beliefs became rare.¹

At the same time, however, the return of democracy, in terms of open political competition, brought about some elements deemed undesirable by at least some Indonesians. The images of the 1950s portrayed in Indonesia’s history books during the Sukarno and Suharto eras were those of politicians continually seeking to unseat their rivals, of regional rebellions, of government ineffectiveness, of divisiveness and malaise. Many of these elements have

¹ Although important exceptions should be made in a number of troubled areas, such as Aceh and Papua, where abuses by the state security apparatus still continued.

returned to the “new” political structure, and have thus added to the difficulties of consolidating democracy in this transition period. But perhaps the more elementary problem that gave rise to such difficulties lies in the different interpretations of the idea of “democracy” itself.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990 signified the end of an ideological battle between the superpowers, known as the Cold War. In some quarters, the end of the Cold War was viewed as the victory of liberal democratic ideals over authoritarianism. Most Eastern European countries, which had previously been under totalitarian rule since the end of World War II, rushed to embrace democracy as the control from the Soviet Union relaxed. Of course, the Soviet Union itself later broke up, and most of its successor states, in which Russia was the most predominant, also claimed to have replaced their totalitarian governments with democratic ones. So strong was this new infatuation with democracy in the final decade of the last millennium that a number of scholars, such as Samuel Huntington, argued that the conversion to democracy signified a new wave of democratization, the third after the two waves that took place earlier in the century.² Francis Fukuyama even went so far to suggest that the end of communist totalitarianism in Eastern Europe marked “the end of history,” where all human endeavor to search for a system that enables the pursuit of happiness for the general population has come to a terminus, with liberal democracy as the ultimate system.³

² Samuel P. Huntington (1993) The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

³ Francis Fukuyama (1992) The End of History and the Last Man, New York: Free Press.

Indonesia itself did not jump onto the bandwagon of democratization at this time. In the early to mid-1990s, it was still quite firmly in the grip of authoritarianism. But as described in the last chapter, the seeds of discontent with the New Order were sown in this period. "Democracy fever" also swept the Indonesian public at this time, especially among the urban educated. The presence of a globalized media and the spread of Western pop culture through products such as soft drinks, movies, clothing, *etc.*, have helped to disseminate Western lifestyles and ideas, and to some extent have also distorted the image of democracy as a potent means of attaining material prosperity.⁴ It was quite evident that authoritarianism became increasingly difficult to maintain. Imbued with the prevalence of global hype for democracy, this "Western" idea was seen as the only alternative.

Nevertheless, ideas of how to achieve democracy, and what a democratic form of governance entailed, were less clear. This was partially due to the lack of public discourse on the democratic transition during the New Order era. True, there was quite extensive discourse on *Reformasi* in the early 1990s, but by the middle of the decade, *Reformasi* had become more of a battlecry against the New Order than a carefully thought-out plan of democratic transition. Another cause for a lack of clarity in the democratic transition was "the black and white" way of perceiving governance: if authoritarianism falls then

⁴ Student demonstrators in China bore some placards expressing the perceived direct connection between democracy and western materialism, such as one that read "we want democracy, we want freedom, we want Marlboro Long Kent" in a demonstration in Nanjing. Indonesian student demonstrators advocating *Reformasi* were less forthcoming in this regard. However, many if not the majority of these demonstrators were not cognitively aware of the concept of democracy. They were there because the fight for democracy had become a fashionable thing to do. Interview with Philips Jusario Vermonte, a former student activist, Jakarta, October 2001.

democracy arises. It was perceived that a transition to democracy would happen almost automatically after the fall of Suharto.

While all of the *aliran* eventually joined in the opposition against Suharto's rule, they also seemed to lack a clear idea of an alternative system of governance, how to achieve democracy, and how the transition process should be carried out. Like the students, many *aliran* leaders also advocated *reformasi* and democracy, but over time it became clear that many of them did not actually share similar conceptions about a post-Suharto Indonesia. Even many of Suharto's past supporters who might have benefited from the regime's policies in the past turned into reformist figures almost over night. Like the students, it seemed that *Reformasi* and democracy had become fashionable for these politicians.

Apart from the above issues, the root of difficulties of democratic transition in Indonesia appeared to lie in the varying interpretations among the political *aliran* of the various fundamental state issues. Each of the *aliran*: the nationalists, the traditionalist Muslims, and the modernist/reformist Muslims, articulated their own political thinking and established various social institutions in which the ideas could be disseminated and further developed. As explained earlier in Chapter 2, in different stages of Indonesian political history each of these groups was exposed to foreign ideologies, such as nationalism, Marxism, and capitalism. Like other Western ideas that influenced Indonesia in the past, democracy too had to undergo a process of selection, internalization, adaptation, articulation, and eventually value socialization. As explained earlier, also in Chapter 2 (in the part discussing "selective eclecticism"), each of the politico-cultural groups in Indonesia filters which external influences are

deemed more compatible to its respective cultural traits, and sorts which aspects of a given idea are viewed as desirable, leaving out aspects that are not. The result was a new, eclectic form of political platform with which they associated themselves. This chapter and the subsequent two chapters seek to analyze the different *aliran*'s views on the issues of the state. They examine the correlation between the politico-cultural traits described in Chapter 2 and the fundamental issues facing the Indonesian state since the advent of the self-determination movement at the turn of last century until after *Reformasi*, and analyze how these views have persisted or evolved over time.

THE ISSUES

There are three sets of fundamental state issues that will be analyzed. First are the issues of characteristics of leadership and degree of openness in political competition. The questions here are: what type of leadership roles are played by *aliran* leaders? To what extent do the leaders embrace an open and egalitarian or a closed and hierarchical type of leadership? And what degree of openness in political competition and opposition politics is deemed acceptable?

Related to the above is the second set of issues, *i.e.*, regionalism and degree of power concentration. How much power should the national government command? What is the best power balancing arrangement between the central and regional governments? Should Indonesia have a system that stresses uniformity as expressed in the idiom of unitary state, or should it be more federalist in structure?

Third are the issues of the state foundation and protection of minorities. They involve the debate over what foundation the Indonesian state should have. Should it be Islamic because Muslims are the predominant population of the country, at least in statistical terms? Or should it be a rather secular arrangement, known as Pancasila, which supposedly protects and guarantees the rights of minority groups against assertive majoritarianism?

The rest of this chapter and the two subsequent chapters will discuss the traits and views of each of the political *aliran* on these three sets of issues. It will compare and contrast these positions. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to discussing how the nationalist *aliran* views the issues of the state, while the two subsequent chapters will discuss the views of the modernist and traditionalist Muslim *aliran*.

THE POLITICO-CULTURAL ROOTS OF THE NATIONALIST ALIRAN

The nationalists, whose values are very largely derived from the *abangan* political culture, draw their support mainly from the heartland of Javanese culture in Central Java and the western part of East Java, as well as from Bali. In terms of size, this region comprises only a small part of the vast Indonesian archipelago (estimated at four percent of the total size of the country), but its population is estimated to reach up to one-quarter of Indonesia's 220 million people, making it one of the most densely populated regions in the country.⁵

⁵ This estimation is derived from the results of 2000 Population Census carried out by the *Biro Pusat Statistik* (BPS - Statistics Indonesia). See <http://www.bps.go.id/sector/population/pop2000.htm>.

Historically, this region was known as the center of Javanese civilization, revolving around the great kingdom of Mataram. The history of this kingdom is commonly divided into two periods, known as Hindu and Islamic Mataram, with a long interregnum in between. The history of Hindu Mataram is somewhat obscured. It is mostly known as responsible for the building of numerous *candi* (temples) in Java, including the complex of Prambanan. The earliest recorded presence of this kingdom is dated 732 C.E. In the tenth century, for unknown reasons, Mataram's glory faded and the center of power in Java moved to the east, which eventually became the center of a number of great kingdoms, the most renowned of which was Majapahit.

Majapahit was an empire which could claim primacy over the other historical kingdoms reigning over Nusantara (as the Indonesian archipelago as well as neighboring Southeast East Asian area had been known). During the reign of King Hayam Wuruk and his able *Patih* (chief minister), Gajah Mada, in the 14th century, the span of Majapahit's control reached many parts that in modern days would become Indonesia. These areas included Sumatra and peninsular Malaya in the west, the Moluccas and Papua in the east, Brunei and Borneo in the north, and Timor and Sumbawa in the south. In fact, a number of Javanese leaders in the modern Indonesia, most notably Sukarno, referred to Majapahit's rule as an indigenous proof of Indonesia's "*raison d'être*," countering the opinion that Indonesia was a colonial creation. Majapahit's symbolism was also used extensively. The national colors of red and white were said to have been in the battle flag of Gajah Mada. The telecommunication satellite launched in the 1980s was named "Palapa," after a famous oath of Gajah Mada that he would not eat a favorite delicacy of young bamboo roots

(called palapa) until he was able to unite the whole of the Nusantara archipelago under Majapahit's rule.

Majapahit began to decline in the early 15th century. The arrival of Islam led to the creation of the Sultanate of Demak, which challenged Majapahit's rule and resulted in the creation of an Islamic Mataram. The Islamic Mataram Empire was the last great Javanese kingdom, reigning from 1587 until its breakup in 1745. The rebirth of Mataram in this new form was perceived as a result of efforts at the integration of various small kingdoms that had previously disintegrated following the fall of Majapahit. Its court was initially located in Kota Gede, on the outskirts of present day Yogyakarta. It was then moved several times to a number of localities in the primarily agricultural area between Yogyakarta and Surakarta, which is considered the heartland of Javanese civilization.

The Islamic Mataram actually started out as a Hindu kingdom with Panembahan (Prince) Senopati as its first king. Contacts with Islam occurred immediately after the establishment of the court. These contacts were made especially with small Islamic sultanates on the northern coast of Java, which had previously made an inroad in Islamic propagation on the island. In 1641, the greatest of the Mataram lords, Sultan Agung, embraced Islam, and thus turned Mataram into an Islamic Sultanate. While acknowledged as pious in carrying out Muslim practices, Sultan Agung did not order the abandonment of existing Hindu practices. The introduction of Islamic rituals did not replace the previous tradition. Rather, they were rather mainly regarded as complementary. Many of the attributes and rituals in Mataram's court remained the same, except for the Islamic words and titles that now glossed over them. As a result

of practices in the Mataram period, Islam in Java was embraced in a syncretic manner mixed with the previous traditions. This remains true to this day.⁶

Many of Indonesia's leaders, especially the nationalists, hailed from this region and hence their worldviews were heavily influenced by the Javanese concept of governance, society, leadership, and statecraft. Nationalist organizations, among the first of the indigenous movements to achieve self-determination, were established during the early 20th century, an era that is now known in Indonesian history texts as the period of "national awakening" (*kebangkitan nasional*).⁷ The first nationalist organization was Budi Utomo (BU), established in 1908. The BU was founded by a number of Javanese medical students studying in the Dutch colonial administration-established STOVIA (*School tot Opleiding voor Inlandsche Artsen* - school for the training of indigenous doctors).⁸ While officially opened for the indigenous population from all ethnic groups, most who attended the school came from families with ties to the various Javanese courts. The most renowned of its founders, Sutomo,

⁶ On the history of Mataram, see Kenneth R. Hall (1999) "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia," in Nicholas Tarling, *ed.* (1999) The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. 1, Part 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Koentjaraningrat (1985) Javanese Culture, Singapore: Oxford University Press; Keith W. Taylor (1999) "The Early Kingdoms," in Nicholas Tarling, *ed.* (1999) The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. 1, Part 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁷ From the Islamic side, the first national movement institution established during this era was SDI (*Sarekat Dagang Islam* - Islamic Trade Union) that would later transform into SI (*Sarekat Islam* - Islamic Union). For further description of these organizations, see the next chapter.

⁸ STOVIA was the first tertiary educational institution in the Netherlands East Indies. It was established in 1898 as a part of the colonial administration's ethical policy to provide education for indigenous Indonesians. But it, and many other educational institutions that soon followed, were exclusively provided for the members of aristocratic families. Most of Indonesia's first national movement figures, therefore, came from upper class background.

Wahidin Sudirohusodo and Cipto Mangunkusumo, also came from Javanese aristocratic families. As a result, the BU became an institution with a strong Javanese outlook, even as it aspired toward self-determination for the whole Netherlands East Indies. It is important to note here that the BU was the first indigenous association that was based on ethnicity, rather than on religion. Until that point, the national movement had always been associated with Islam, and hence the struggle for self-determination had been seen as a religious struggle.

As the control of the colonial Dutch administration became consolidated during the first decade of the 20th century, the idea of nationhood became pervasive among the indigenous people. The concept of “Indonesia” was invented during this period, and identity formation climaxed during a meeting of various ethno-religious groups from all over the territory on October 28, 1928. From that juncture, nationalism as the idea to achieve statehood became the single most important ideology, uniting all political groupings in a common purpose. This idea was shared by nationalist, Islamic, and even leftist, groups. The most important civilian nationalist institution of the PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* – Indonesian Nationalist Party), was founded in 1927 by Sukarno. Many non-Javanese entered the fold of its membership, including the future vice president Mohammad Hatta, a Minangkabau. At least for the duration of national movement (pre-independence) period until the early post-independence period, the PNI enjoyed an overwhelming support from virtually all groups of Indonesians. But during the 1950s, this party became increasingly Javanese-based. This was most apparent in the results of the 1955 election, where the PNI received the majority of votes in Java.

Another institution in this *aliran* is the TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia - Indonesian National Military*).⁹ This institution may be a truly Indonesian nationalist institution in the sense that it was perhaps the only institution capable of maintaining the span of control that reached all corners of the archipelago, including some of its most remote parts. In addition, it did not discriminate its membership on an ethnic, religious, or racial basis. Indeed some of its commanders have come from Sumatra, Sunda, and Sulawesi. However, as an institution, many of its doctrines came from the Javanese creeds. This is apparent in the doctrine of Dharma Pusaka '45, a document containing leadership values for all TNI members issued in 1972. The doctrine includes the following creeds (all but the first are given here in the Javanese language, followed by their approximate translations):

1. *Taqwa* (believe in God)
2. *Ing ngarso sung tulodho* (lead by example)
3. *Ing madyo mangun karso* (create initiatives)
4. *Tut wuri handayani* (build a supportive environment)
5. *Waspada purba wisesa* (always be alert)
6. *Ambek parama arta* (prioritize)
7. *Prasaja* (lead a simple life)
8. *Satya* (be loyal)
9. *Gemi nastiti* (be prudent)
10. *Belaka* (be honest)

⁹ From the Guided Democracy period, the TNI became known as ABRI (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*). The Indonesian National Police (Polri) was also a part of ABRI, but not of the TNI. Since *Reformasi*, Polri was taken out of the military. And the designation of the Indonesian military has since returned to the TNI.

11. *Legawa* (be willing.)¹⁰

It is important to note that as one of the most powerful institutions in the republic, the TNI has become an important tool in furthering particular political causes. This was also the case with the New Order government party of *Golongan Karya* (Golkar – functional groups). As discussed in Chapter 2, both the TNI and Golkar came under the influence of the modernist *aliran*, especially in the 1990s.

The following sections are reflections of political views of the nationalist *aliran* on the three political issues enumerated above.

LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL COMPETITION

Being entrenched in the Javanese *abangan* culture, the nationalist leaders and their constituents believe in the Javanese conception of leadership and social organization. As described in Chapter 2, Javanese culture is characterized as inward-looking, communitarian, status-conscious, and hierarchy-minded. As such, the ideas of power and leadership developed by the Javanese are marked by a high degree of hierarchical and feudalistic characteristics.

The Mataram court developed and consolidated certain conceptions of power and governance, which in turn were internalized and socialized over a long period of time by the Javanese, especially those living in the heartland of

¹⁰ H. Karkono Kamajaya Partokusumo (1995) *Kebudayaan Jawa, Perpaduannya dengan Islam* (Javanese Culture, Its Synergy with Islam), Yogyakarta: Ikapi, pp. 150-152.

Java.¹¹ Javanese statehood relies heavily on the concept of “*agung binatara*”(grand power of governance). The powers of leaders are viewed as limitless. Leaders are said to possess all things and subjects within their realm. The subjects always have to fulfill the wishes of the leaders. This is particularly enshrined in the doctrine of “*ndherek kerso dalem*” (following the leaders at all times), which became one of the most important credos of the bureaucracy, especially during the New Order administration.¹²

The distinction between superiors and inferiors, leaders and followers is one of the most important foundations of leadership on Java. Relations between leaders and followers are based on a familial pattern, in which the leaders are regarded as *bapak* (fathers) and the subjects as children or subordinates. As observed by a Dutch missionary in the first decade of the last century:

“The subjects paid the utmost respect for the royals. They asked for their blessings, they came to the royals if they have any question, and the royals always gave them directions and instructions on how they should approach the problem. In sum, the royals regarded all the subjects, big

¹¹ Mataram was much more influential on the matter of Javanese conception of power than Majapahit. There was no record on Majapahit's creed of leadership. The only historical record of Majapahit was the book of *Negarakerlagama*. Its content was mainly about the effort of Majapahit (under Hayam Wuruk and Gajah Mada) for territorial expansion, which eventually became one of Sukarno's “*nativistic raison d'etre*” for Indonesia because it included some parts of eastern Indonesia under its sphere of influence. That said, Majapahit did not develop any legal code or any written treaties that reflected the conception of power in Javanese society. Mataram did. In Mataram, the Javanese conception of power was developed and socialized, whose effects remained to this day. Most Javanese can identify more affectionately with Mataram, rather than with Majapahit. As an instance, Suharto was even viewed as a modern day Mataram Sultan, rather than a Majapahit king.

¹² G. Moedjanto (1987) *Konsep Kekuasaan Jawa: Penerapannya oleh Raja-Raja Mataram* (The Javanese Conception of Power: Its Implementation by the Mataram Kings), Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, pp. 77-83. Also see Akhmad Setiawan (1998) *Perilaku Birokrasi dalam Pengaruh Paham Kekuasaan Jawa* (Bureaucratic Behavior under the Influence of Javanese Conception of Power), Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

or small, men or women, as their children or grandchildren, and the subjects regarded them as fathers and mothers.”¹³

The use of *bapak* in reference to leaders and superordinates became common during Suharto’s New Order, but its usage among the elite could be traced back to Sukarno’s Guided Democracy days. Suharto, for instance, was awarded the honorary title of “*Bapak Pembangunan*” (father of development) by the MPR (People’s Consultative Assembly – Indonesia’s highest state body) in the 1980s. In the Guided Democracy period, Sukarno was gradually referred to as “*bapak*,” leaving behind the use of the egalitarian “*bung*” (comrade), a practice which dated back to the days of Indonesia’s revolutionary struggle for independence. In a widely publicized private conversation between Sukarno and Suharto in the former’s last days in office, Sukarno was said to have asked Suharto what the general would do to him, now that the balance of power was clearly on Suharto’s side. Sukarno phrased the question in such a way that he referred to himself as Suharto’s *bapak*. In reply, Suharto also reiterated that Sukarno was indeed his *bapak*. During the campaign for the 1999 election, another nationalist leader, Sukarno’s daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri, often referred to herself as “*ibu*” (mother) and to the electorate as “*anak-anakku*” (my children). In a speech aimed at placating the aspirations of people in Aceh for independence, she even used “*nyak*” (mother in Acehnese) as a self-reference. Despite the use of a local *seberang* language, the reference was clearly meant to demonstrate her status as a leader.

¹³ P.J. Zoetmulder (1911) *Radja Kapa-Kapa*, Surakarta: Vogel van der Heyde, Indonesian language translation quoted in Partokusumo, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

In such a belief system, the leaders are expected to be benevolent, and to care and provide for the children's sustenance, while the subjects are expected to be obedient to the leaders' directives, to honor them and to follow their advice. Good leaders must be able to act in fairness and uphold justice in their rules. They must be able continuously to balance the great amount of power they possess with a just provision of sustenance for their subjects.¹⁴ This is marked in the concept of "*ber budi bawa leksana, ambeg adil para marta*" (overflowing with good deeds in acting justly for all living beings). For the nationalists, benevolence-obedience marks the pattern of relationship between leaders and followers. This belief makes the nationalist elite "among the most status-conscious and hierarchy-minded in the world."¹⁵

The familial conception of social organization in Javanese political culture, from which many nationalist leaders and constituents emanated, also characterizes political conflict as undesirable. Because the common people are seen as children or subjects rather than as stakeholders in statecraft, they are not expected to question, or criticize, let alone oppose the way the leaders conduct their leadership. The family is expected to remain in a continuous state of harmony (*rukun*). Harmony and unity are the pillars of Javanese political culture, and a powerful and morally good leader always has to maintain harmony and unity within the family unit.¹⁶ As such, they view the presence of

¹⁴ Moedjanto, *op.cit.*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁵ R. William Liddle (1996) Leadership and Culture in Indonesian Politics, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, p. 65 and also Chapter 3; Niels Mulder (1994) "The Ideology of Javanese-Indonesian Leadership" in Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth, *eds.* (1994) Leadership on Java: Gentle Hints, Authoritarian Rule, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.

¹⁶ Franz Magnis-Suseno (1997) Javanese Ethics and World-View: The Javanese Idea of the Good Life, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, ch. 3.

political opposition as a sign that the power of the leader is weakening, and that he or she is on the brink of losing the mandate to rule. Hence, the nationalist leaders always strive to reduce potential opposition, first by co-optation and if not successful, then oppression.

If political opposition bursts out into the open, nationalist leaders are expected to crush it. Javanese political culture portrays the fight against opposition as similar to the epic battle of Mahabharata.¹⁷ The story of Mahabharata revolves around the conflictual relationship between two related families. The good is portrayed in the image of Pandawa Lima (five members of the Pandawa family), while the bad in the Kurawa family, consisted of one hundred family members. Javanese leaders always view themselves as Pandawa and the opposition as the evil Kurawa. In the final battle in Kurusetra, despite being vastly outnumbered, the Pandawa emerged as victors, while all members of the Kurawa family were annihilated.¹⁸ The Javanese do not see the decimation of political opposition, even if it means killing the opponents, as morally flawed. For the Javanese, it does not matter how power is achieved or maintained. What does matter is whether or not a leader is in possession of power.¹⁹ The words of a renowned scholar of Javanese culture,

¹⁷ A Hindu morality tale. It originated in India and was brought to Indonesia through the Hindu dynasties in Java. The story has been indigenized and has become part of the socialization process of the Javanese. In Java, the story was introduced into the mass culture through the use of *wayang* (puppet show).

¹⁸ Mulder, *op.cit.*, pp. 67-71.

¹⁹ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1972) "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," reprinted in Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1990) Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, pp. 22-23. See also MT. Arifin "Budaya Jawa dalam Pemerintahan" (Javanese Culture in the Government), in *Media Indonesia*, December 10, 2001.

Koentjaraningrat, seems to capture the negative correlation between the Javanese idea of power and public accountability:

“(l)egitimation of power by means of democratic election is ... irrelevant for traditionally oriented Javanese. For them power is an ascribed quality which is obtained through inheritance or by divine favour. Consequently the quest for power does not necessitate efforts to gain public support and approval.”²⁰

Both Sukarno’s Guided Democracy and Suharto’s New Order were indicative of this autocratic tendency of nationalist leaders. Sukarno’s Guided Democracy essentially crushed the structure of open competition in Indonesian politics during the parliamentary democracy era in the 1950s. He perceived political competition as inherently conflictual and unsuitable to Indonesia. Before finally declaring the dissolution of the state’s democratically elected bodies; the parliament and the *Konstituante*; in July 5, 1959, Sukarno criticized formal parliamentary democracy as divisive and detrimental to the process of nation-building for the nascent state.²¹

It is interesting to note that the disillusionment with political competition during the parliamentary democracy era was not felt only by the elite. Herbert

²⁰ Koentjaraningrat (1985) “Javanese Terms for God and Supernatural Beings and the Idea of Power,” in A. Ibrahim, S. Siddique and Y. Hussain, eds. (1985) Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 290.

²¹ See, for instance, Sukarno’s speech in the 30th Anniversary of *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Party), Bandung, July 3, 1957, entitled “*Shaping dan Re-Shaping Indonesia*” (Shaping dan Reshaping Indonesia) in Iman Toto K. Rahardjo and Herdianto WK, eds. (2001a) Bung Karno dan Partai Politik: Kenangan 100 Tahun Bung Karno (Bung Karno and Political Parties: Commemorating 100 Years of Bung Karno), Jakarta: Grasindo. For an early explanation of Guided Democracy see another of his speeches in the closing ceremony of the sixth national Congress of *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Indonesian Communist Party), Jakarta, September 16, 1959, entitled in Javanese language “*Yo Sanak, Yo Kadang, Malah Yen Mati Aku Sing Kelangan*” (We are Brothers, Relatives, and if You Died I would Miss You Dearly), in Rahardjo and Herdianto, eds., *op.cit.*

Feith pointed out that there was a psychological malaise mostly among the Javanese due to such competition. Parliamentary democracy was seen as incapable of delivering results, due to the divisiveness of the government.²² Ben Anderson, however, saw this malaise from a politico-cultural perspective. He suspected that for many Javanese, the problem of government ineffectiveness was not the result of actual political conflict among the parties. It was the very nature of the competitive structure of parliamentary democracy itself that had become the source of the problem.²³

While Sukarno did not do much to alter the formal party political structure so as to fit with his ideas of social and political organization,²⁴ in the Guided Democracy scheme he in fact created a political system that unified all contending parties under his command. The establishment of *Kabinet Gotong Royong* (Mutual Cooperation Cabinet), *Front Nasional* (National Front), and the conception of a political idea putting all the disparate political forces into an uneasy and leftist-dominated alliance, known as Nasakom (*Nasionalis-Agama-Komunis* – Nationalism, Religion, and Communism), could all be seen as efforts to alter the political structure from one based on competition to one based on Javanese conceptions of harmony and unity.

When eventually Sukarno's effort to achieve harmony and unity proved to be a failure because of political conflicts in 1965, Suharto went further in

²² Herbert Feith (1962) The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 221-224.

²³ Anderson, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

²⁴ Sukarno did, however, disband three important parties: Masyumi, the PSI (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* - Indonesian Socialist Party), and Murba. But the rationale behind this action had to do with the involvement of the first two parties in a regional rebellion, while the last was disbanded due to pressure from the PKI, rather than being politico-culturally driven.

this socio-political engineering.²⁵ He gradually but decisively reformed the formal party political structure, by forcing the political parties to merge into two government-recognized parties in 1973. The Islamic parties, both modernist and traditionalist, were merged into the PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* - United Development Party), while the nationalist and Christian and Catholic-based parties formed the PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* - Indonesian Democratic Party). While elections were held regularly every five years from 1973, it was clear that they were used merely as tools of formalistic legitimization for the New Order regime. Political competition and alternation of office-holders according to the accepted Western norms of liberal or even procedural democracy never really took place in these elections. The government always ensured, using all means necessary; be they co-optation, persuasion, or even coercion; that the government party, Golkar, would always win in these elections by a large margin. While a number of members of the other two parties did get elected to the parliament, the government apparatus would also ensure that these members did not stray from the prescribed line when dealing with the government. As a result, the parliament was known as a rubber-stamp institution, always granting legal formal approval to government policies.

After the Habibie interregnum following the resignation of Suharto, Indonesians went to the polls in 1999, which many observers described as the first free and fair elections since the 1955 election. The nationalist party, the PDI-P (*PDI-Perjuangan* - PDI-Struggle), led by Sukarno's eldest daughter,

²⁵ An excellent discussion on how the Javanese conception of power permeated the New Order regime can be found in John Pemberton (1994) On the Subject of "Java", Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Megawati Sukarnoputri, won the most seats. The PDI-P's victory at the polls was largely due to Megawati's overwhelmingly popular image as a martyr against the New Order government.²⁶ As the sole party that could make a credible claim for being the vanguard of nationalist ideas, the PDI-P also enjoyed support from the nationalist masses. In addition to this mass-based support, the party also received large support from minority groups. As the splinter group from the original PDI, Megawati's party was naturally supported by those previously independent parties that had been merged into the PDI, including Parkindo (*Partai Kristen Indonesia* – Indonesian Christian Party) and *Partai Katolik* (Catholic Party).

Soon after winning the election, the PDI-P claimed that its leader, Megawati should be elected president in the parliamentary presidential election. However, despite winning the most seats, the nationalist party did not command a majority in the parliament. Despite having the largest faction both in the DPR and MPR, PDI-P members accounted only for slightly more than one-third of the parliamentarians. In a situation like this, it would be expected that the government would be formed (or in the Indonesian case, the president would be elected) through a coalition of parties. However, consistent with the Javanese concept of power transition, Megawati refused to engage actively in seeking support from the other parties. Time and again, the party elite reiterated the idea that because the party had received the most votes in the election, Megawati should become president. Or in other words, because the mandate from heaven had fallen on Megawati, she should not actively seek power, because power would flow in her direction, instead. In practical terms,

²⁶ This was as a result of the July 27, 1996 incident. See Chapter 3 for details.

this meant that the PDI-P expected the other parties to approach it and offer to ally themselves with the victor, rather than the other way around.

It would be quite a mistake, however, to assert that because of the Javanese roots of their politico-cultural beliefs, the nationalists would not engage in political competition. In fact, the PNI, the foremost nationalist institution before the New Order, was able to garner the highest vote in the 1955 election and was engaged in fierce debate with rival parties in both the parliament and *Konstituante* during the parliamentary democracy period of the 1950s. Another nationalist institution, the TNI, was also engaged in a political balancing game with the communists during the Guided Democracy period. The PDI-P also received the most votes in the 1999 election. Nevertheless, whenever the opportunity arose, the autocratic tendency of nationalist leaders surfaced.²⁷ While Megawati did not show any outward intention of exercising political control similar to her nationalist predecessors, the change of leadership style was apparent when she took over from President Abdurrahman Wahid in July 2001. Whereas Gus Dur, the honorific reference to Wahid, applied a very informal style of leadership by allowing ordinary people to come into the presidential palace, where he also resided during his presidency, one of

²⁷ Such a view is shared by a number of traditionalist and modernist-leaning leaders and activists consulted in Jakarta, August and October 2001. Pramono Anung, a nationalist Member of Parliament consulted in February 2002 in Jakarta, however, vehemently rejected this notion. He argued that Megawati did allow for differences of opinion to be expressed within her own party, as exemplified by the row between two economic ministers from the PDI-P, Laksamana Sukardi and Kwik Kian Gie. However, another scholar consulted in Singapore in November 2001, argued that this was probably due to Megawati's own lack of comprehension of the economic issue at hand, rather than an open egalitarian leadership style.

Megawati's first actions as president was to "clean up" and put the palace in order.²⁸

Another indication of Megawati's autocratic tendency concerned the issue involving the State Secretariat during her presidency. During the Suharto era, this portfolio was regarded as one of the country's most powerful posts. Every legal product, both bills and departmental regulations, had to receive approval from the Secretariat. It also had *de facto* power over the channeling of development funds to virtually all departments and government bodies. It was also responsible for matters concerning presidential and vice presidential offices. During the Habibie era, many of these privileges were removed. Gus Dur continued with even more radical reform, ordering for example, that the presidential and vice presidential offices be organized separately and independently of the State Secretariat. While the move was considerably successful in cutting off the overarching power of the Secretariat, coordination among the presidential and vice presidential offices became abysmal. Megawati was quick to address this problem by appointing Bambang Kesowo, a seasoned bureaucrat from the State Secretariat who used to serve her in the vice president's office, as the State Secretary. He immediately reorganized this office, and his intention appeared to aim at restoring the *grandeur* of the portfolio's past.

Perhaps the clearest indication of Megawati's lack of affinity towards political competition could be inferred from her statement criticizing the tendency of members of parliament to arrive at decisions through voting

²⁸ See "Ketika Protokol Mengekang Presiden: Istana Kepresidenan Menata Diri" (When Protocol Restricts the President: Presidential Palace Tidy Itself Up), in *Media Indonesia*, December 20, 2001.

mechanisms. In a June 2002 speech in front of the Indonesian community in London, Megawati argued that voting to seek agreement by strict majority rule was not suitable to the culture of Indonesian people. In her opinion, Indonesians value consensus and extensive deliberation to solve differences (*musyawarah untuk mufakat*).²⁹ Interestingly, while Megawati had an image as a victim of the Suharto regime's authoritarianism, her view on this matter reflected a similar position to the political stability policy of the nationalist New Order regime that almost always sought to ensure that the parliament reached decisions not through voting, but rather through deliberation.

REGIONALISM AND CENTRALIZATION

Related to the issue of power and leadership is the issue of regionalism. Whereas the section above dealt with the degree of power distribution among political actors or political functions at the national level, this section focuses on the distribution of power between the central authority and the regional governments. As with the power distribution among political actors, the nationalists' view on the distribution of power between the center and the regions is also informed by Javanese politico-cultural views on leadership and power.

The continuous quest for unity and harmony in the Javanese conception of power and leadership also shapes and forms the nationalist elite's views on the degree of centralization within the state, and on the relationship between the central and local authorities. As with the viewpoint that sees power

²⁹ "Mega Keluhkan Budaya Voting di DPR/MPR" (Mega Complains about the Voting Culture in DPR/MPR), in *Republika*, June 15, 2002.

diffusion among political functions at the national level as weakening and therefore undesirable, the nationalists also perceive the idea of power devolution from the center to the regions as equally, if not more, ruinous.

For a country with immense plurality in terms of culture, languages, customs, and beliefs, as well as an adverse geographical condition with a sprawling archipelago, centralism may not appear to be the most appropriate form of government. It is also not easy to execute. Comparatively speaking, countries with a high degree of plurality and/or a vast territory, almost naturally opt for some kind of federalist structure. Such a structure generally enables more effective governance, because local governments are situated right in the local communities. They are more able to ascertain the needs of the local people and to respond to those needs more expeditiously if given sufficient authority and have the capacity to do so.

But since the very beginning, Indonesia has chosen a unitary form of government. Initially, this choice was supported by virtually all leaders from all segments. This was partly due to the powerful appeal of nationalism as an ideology, which could be seen as a reaction toward the colonial practices of the Dutch. Like many other colonial powers, the Dutch also applied a '*divide et impera*' tactic. Perhaps because of the vastness of the territory under their control, the Dutch were particularly active in executing this tactic. The Javanese were especially bitter about this colonial practice. They saw how the Dutch obliterated the last of a long Javanese tradition of powerful dynasties through the Treaty of Giyanti (1755), which effectively split the Court of Mataram into the Sunanate of Surakarta under Pakubuwono I, and the Sultanate of Yogyakarta under Hamengkubuwono I. Later, these two kingdoms

would be split again. In Surakarta, the court of Mangkunegaran was established in 1757, and in Yogyakarta the court of Pakualaman was founded in 1813. This practice did not only affect the Javanese. Several outer island kingdoms also fell victim to this colonial tactic. For instance, in South Sulawesi in the 17th century, the Dutch pitted the Sultanate of Bone, which predominantly comprised the Bugis ethnic group, against the Sultanate of Gowa, which was predominantly Makasarese. The effect of such rivalry can still be felt nowadays in the animosity between the two otherwise closely-related ethnic groups.³⁰ As a result, Indonesians shared a collective negative memory about being divided on the basis of ethnicity. They perceived that a unitary state could overcome divisiveness, and might facilitate the process of nation-building in the vastly plural country. Therefore, the choice of a unitary form of government seemed almost natural for most Indonesians during the period leading to independence and immediately after.

Later, the Dutch policy of seeking a face-saving exit from Indonesia following the unilateral proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945, further bolstered the belief in the unitary state. The Dutch offered to recognize Indonesia's independence only if the newborn country was organized along a federalist line. They claimed that many local leaders, probably rightly, feared that a unitary form of government would be dominated by the majority Javanese. The last Lieutenant-Governor of the Netherlands East Indies, H.J. van Mook, brokered a number of deals with local leaders to create federalist

³⁰ So much damage has been caused by this colonial practice on the Indonesian psyche that the latter independence movement leaders invented a word to refer to it as "*politik adu domba*" (the politics of ram fighting), from the favorite past-time entertainment of the West Javanese living in mountainous areas.

states in East Sumatra, South Sumatra, West Java (Pasundan), East Java, Madura, West Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and Eastern Indonesia.³¹ Through the Roundtable Conference (*Konferensi Meja Bundar*) in the Hague in November 1949, the Republic of Indonesia, which at that time was in control of only Central Java and most of Sumatra, acquiesced to the Dutch design of a federalist state. The RIS (*Republik Indonesia Serikat* - Republic of United States of Indonesia) was established in December 1949, in return for Dutch recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty.

But almost immediately, Indonesian leaders worked to return the country to its unitary form. One by one, these "van Mook states" dissolved themselves, starting with the *Negara Pasundan* only two months after the RIS was established. On August 17, 1950, the day that Indonesians celebrated their fifth anniversary of independence, the RIS was disbanded and Indonesia returned to the previous form of a unitary state, thus abandoning the federalist design associated with the colonial Dutch tactic of divide and rule.

Soon thereafter, the fear of some outer islanders became a reality. Indonesia became a country strongly dominated by the center. In line with his Javanese politico-cultural values, Sukarno regarded the unitary state as the ultimate phase in the nation-building process. He argued that there were several phases in the creation of Indonesia. First, the ethnic phase (*fase kesukuan*), in which each ethnic group regarded itself as an absolute entity (*kesatuan yang mutlak*). Then came the island or insularist phase (*fase kepulauan*), where inter-ethnic solidarity had been established but was limited

³¹ Later on, these states would be referred to derogatively as the "van Mook's puppet states."

to those living on the same island, hence the individual island became the absolute entity. The third phase was signified by the creation of inter-ethnic, inter-island solidarity on a national, but federalist basis. While Sukarno saw this phase as a marked development in nation-building compared to the earlier phases, he perceived that the ethnic groups and islands still had their own interests in mind and were unwilling to make a further sacrifice for the sake of the whole nation. Ultimately, the country arrived at its present form, the unitary state phase. Here, loyalties based on ethnic groups and islands had subsided and allegiance was transferred to the one state.³²

But this single state was later, at least as perceived by the outer-island ethnic groups, to be dominated by the Javanese majority. At the end of the 1950s, these outer-islanders reacted against such a perceived domination, in PRRI-Permesta (*Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia – Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta* – Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia – Struggle of All People) rebellion, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Sukarno moved against this rebellion with an iron-fist approach. With help from the TNI, he crushed the rebellion and disbanded two important parties perceived to be the masterminds. These parties were Masyumi, a modernist Muslim party with strong outer-islands support, and the PSI, a secular socialist party with an urban intellectual leadership.

³² See Sukarno's speech at the inauguration of the *Konstituante*, November 10, 1956, entitled "*Susunlah Konstitusi yang Benar-benar Konstitusi Republica!*" (Draft a Truly Republican Constitution!), in Iman Toto K. Rahardjo and Herdianto WK, eds. (2001b) *Bung Karno: Wacana Konstitusi dan Demokrasi. Kenangan 100 Tahun Bung Karno* (Bung Karno: Constitutional and Democracy Discourses. Commemorating 100 Years of Bung Karno), Jakarta: Grasindo, pp. 70-71. See also his address in the *Konstituante*, March 22, 1959, entitled "*Res Publica, Sekali Lagi Res Publica*" (Republican, Once Again Republican), in *ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

The transfer of power from Sukarno to Suharto, another nationalist leader with a military background, further consolidated this authoritarianism. Suharto created a system of strong central government, the function of which was not limited to facilitating and controlling governmental programs in the regions, but also included active engagement in executing those programs. As such, the local governments were not viewed as partners or counterparts of the central government, but rather as direct subordinates, whose main task was to ensure that the whims and wishes of the central government were fulfilled. Although according to the law on regional governments, governors and district heads (*bupati*) were elected and answerable to the local parliaments, they were also the representatives of the central government in the regions. Such a duality enabled the center to rein in regional matters effectively. In fact, the process of election of governors and district heads by the local parliaments was seldom done democratically. The powerful Home Affairs Ministry always decided beforehand which candidates the central government wished to be elected. In the cases of strategically important regions, the choice was even decided by the president himself.³³

Additionally, according to the New Order's regional government law, the local parliaments were parts of the local governing apparatus (*Muspida – Musyawarah Pimpinan Daerah – Regional Leadership Deliberative Council*). In such a position, similar to their counterpart at the national level, the local parliaments were unable to check and balance the executive branch. Members of the *Muspida* also included regional military and police commanders. Their

³³ Interview with Ryaas Rasyid, a former official in the Home Affairs Ministry, Singapore, August 2001.

functions were said to be the provision and coordination of local security and public order matters. However, it was publicly known that the local Army commanders were sometimes the *de-facto* rulers in the region, especially during the early New Order years. The tight control from the center also meant that politics at the local level was also not allowed.

The purpose of such a controlled and centralized arrangement of regional affairs was to ensure uniformity in carrying out national development programs. Such uniformity was one of the important cornerstones of the New Order regime. At one time, the uniformity rule was such that even the local government heads had to ask permission from the Home Affairs Ministry if they wished to renovate their offices, and the ministry usually produced a directive on how to carry out the renovation properly.³⁴

Reformasi brought about a change in this respect. Regional autonomy became one of the most important items on the reform agenda in Indonesia. Spearheaded by some autonomy-minded bureaucrats and intellectuals, many of whom were outer-islanders, for the first time in the republic's history, regional autonomy became a serious undertaking (this point will be discussed in length in the next chapter). But the ascent of another nationalist leader, Megawati Sukarnoputri, to the presidency in July 2001 seemed to put a brake on this initiative. This was apparent from her choice for the Home Affairs portfolio in her cabinet. Instead of choosing a supporter of regional autonomy for this important post, as expected by many observers, Megawati appointed Hari Sabarno, a retired military general known for his conservative outlook. One of the first policies of the new minister was to review the regional autonomy law.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Like their nationalist predecessors, Megawati and the PDI-P favored a unitary form for the republic. This position had been public knowledge for quite some time. During the campaign for the 1999 election, she repeatedly voiced concerns over the discourse on federalism put forward by some modernist parties. In a unitarist vein similar to that of her late father, she argued that any form of federalism would only serve as an impetus for the breakup of Indonesia. When she became vice president in 2000, she did not refrain from criticizing the autonomy concept put forward by the State Ministry of Regional Autonomy in her own coalition government.³⁵

At the same time, the implementation of the Law No.22/1999 on Regional Autonomy and Law No. 25/1999 since early 2001 has been widely considered as erratic and has created more uncertainties as many regions appear to be engaged in unhealthy competition with each other and are looking unprofessional in their economic and development management. Many newly empowered district and municipality heads are acting like local lords overseeing a fiefdom. Many new local government programs sound trivial and at times appear megalomaniacal, such as the erection of statues, setting up of amusement parks, and building unnecessary infrastructure.³⁶ The laws are

³⁵ See, for instance, "Ada Yang Ingin Martabat Bangsa Runtuh" (There Are Those who Aim at Denigrating the Nation's Pride), in *Suara Karya*, November 9, 2000, and "Wapres Megawati: Pikirkan Otonomi Daerah Secara Rasional-Obyektif" (Vice President Megawati: Think about Regional Autonomy in a Rational-Objective Manner), in *Kompas*, January 31, 2000. For comments from the former state minister of Regional Autonomy, Dr. Ryaas Rasyid on Megawati's unitarist stance, see his interview with *Koran Tempo*, May 18, 2001, entitled "Ibu Mega Itu Dari Dulu Curiga Pada Daerah" (Megawati Has Always Been Suspicious of the Regions).

³⁶ For an evaluation of regional autonomy and its mismanagement, see Soegeng Sarjadi Syndicated, Centre for Political Studies (2001) *Otonomi: Potensi Masa Depan Republik Indonesia* (Autonomy: The Future Potentials of the Republic of Indonesia), Jakarta: Gramedia. An evaluation from an economic perspective can

meant to devolve authority on wide ranging issues from the central to the district and municipality (*kabupaten* and *kota*) governments. The regions will receive a larger share of revenues obtained from natural resources exploitation in their respective territories. This would certainly benefit the resource-rich provinces, such as Aceh, Riau, East Kalimantan, and Irian Jaya, which in the previous arrangement remained impoverished due to the small share that they received from such ventures. But the new arrangement might create some problems with the less well-endowed provinces. As the central government's revenue will likely decrease, it might not have the same level of resources as it had in the past to subsidize the poorer regions.

Another problem associated with regional autonomy is the issue of human resources. The centralistic development approach has created a severe imbalance in the qualities of human resources between the center and the regions. The brightest and those with the highest levels of qualifications and education tended to be pooled in Jakarta. This was true both among public officials and private entrepreneurs. If regional autonomy is to be applied to its fullest extent, then it will involve a massive shift of bureaucrats from the center to the regions in a relatively short period of time. Even if this transfer is achievable, another problem might occur. Local officials might feel threatened by the influx of officials from Jakarta, and this situation might create tension at the time when proper coordination is badly needed to cope with the sharply increased levels of responsibility.

be found in Ehtisham Ahmad and Ali Mansoor, "Indonesia: Managing Decentralization," IMF Working Paper, 02/136, August 2002.

A problem of coordination might also occur in the inter-regional level. Granted with power that they had never enjoyed before, the local governments seem to be employing it in a manner that makes inter-regional coordination difficult. For example, since the limited implementation of the law, there was an instance where the local head of the *kabupaten* government, where a seaport is located applied an arbitrary taxation policy against all shipment of goods from its neighboring *kabupaten*. Many *bupati* and *walikota* also dismiss the role of the provincial governors in maintaining inter-district coordination and supervision as irrelevant.

The critics of the current regional autonomy laws have made a suggestion that while Indonesia indeed needs regional autonomy, the emphasis of such autonomy should be placed at the provincial rather than the district level. This would facilitate coordination and supervision as there are only 30 provinces as opposed to more than 300 districts and municipalities. It would also be able to carry out more responsibilities since the provinces are generally better equipped in terms of infrastructure and human resources than the districts or municipalities. However, there is a fear of putting too much power in the hands on the provinces because of the potential for secession. Since the provinces are more powerful than the districts and generally carry more weight in terms of formation of identity among the local people, the potential for disintegration is stronger than if the autonomy is relegated to the relatively weaker and less cohesive district units.

However, according to some proponents of regional autonomy, the confusion is due to the inability of the central government to provide leadership

in this transition period, rather than something inherent in the law itself.³⁷ Nonetheless, Megawati seems to be aiming at turning the policy around. Instead of reestablishing a regional autonomy portfolio in the cabinet, which had previously been incorporated into the Ministry of Home Affairs by President Abdurrahman Wahid after the resignation of its minister, Ryaas Rasyid, Megawati opted to maintain the status quo.

STATE FOUNDATION

The issue of the state foundation has been one of the thorniest issues facing the Indonesian republic from the time of independence to the present day. The debate has revolved around the issue of what the state's ideology should be, and what institutional forms it should take. Should it be based on Islam, professed, it is claimed, by around ninety percent of Indonesia's population, or a somewhat secular arrangement, known as Pancasila? The debate has been carried out peacefully through parliamentary means as well as violently through a number of revolts and rebellions, some including the use of terrorism. Indonesian observers generally perceive, albeit oversimplistically at times, that the debate constitutes a major fault in Indonesian society, signified by tension between a pluralist idea, where the state at least officially acknowledges and protects the rights of all Indonesians, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion, and a sectarian and majoritarian idea, in which the state's

³⁷ See M. Ryaas Rasyid (2001) "The Policy of Decentralization in Indonesia," paper presented at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), Singapore, 15 August 2001. Similar points were also made by Dr. Andi Mallarangeng of the Institute of Public Administration, at the Joint Public Forum on Indonesia held by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, 1 November 2001.

main responsibility is to ensure that the socio-political arrangement is molded according to the creeds of the majority religious group.

This issue is as old as the idea of Indonesia itself. The debate first occurred between members of the first independence movements, when these movements were still in their infancy. On one side were members of *Sarekat Islam* (SI), the Islamic-leaning movement set up in 1912, and on the other, members of *Budi Utomo* (BU), the *abangan* Javanese-based nationalist movement established in 1908.³⁸ Basically, the latter's position was to reject the claim advanced by the former that the anti-colonial movement was essentially an Islamic movement. Such a position initially baffled the Muslims, who until that point had viewed the nationalist movement as an Islamic movement. Being Indonesian was equated with being Muslim.³⁹ This was largely due to the fact that the colonial Dutch were seen as non-Muslims.

The establishment of the BU, which based its *raison d'être* on some sense of secular nationalism, provided an alternative to the otherwise confession-based independence movement. The BU could also be seen as a sort of reaction by the *abangan* Javanese against what they perceived as domination

³⁸ There is a disagreement, however, on which organization was established first. The modernist Muslims generally believe that the Muslim-based organization was established first. The SI was an offshoot of a Muslim merchants association, known as the SDI (*Sarekat Dagang Islam* - Islamic Merchants Union), which was established in 1905. The nationalists generally think that the beginning of the independence movement is marked by the establishment of the BU in 1908. They questioned the validity of the linkage, especially in objectives, between the SDI and the SI. They referred to the SDI as a mere merchants association. While many SI members did originate from the SDI, the pro-independence mindset was only assured when they joined the SI. The government officially acknowledges the date of the BU's establishment as the "*Hari Kebangkitan Nasional*" (National Awakening Day). On this debate, see Deliar Noer (1980) *Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia, 1900-1942* (The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942), Jakarta: LP3ES, p. 115, fn. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10, pp. 267-268.

of the independence movement by the *santri*. What began initially as an alternative movement quickly gained ground. By the 1920s, the nationalist BU had attracted numerous supporters, primarily from the *abangan* Javanese. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, there were a number of skirmishes between the two pro-independence movements, marking the very first schism between the nationalists and Muslims, which would later define the main political division in the republic.⁴⁰

But the debate was generally not well articulated until it emerged in the form of a polemical exchange between the nationalist leader, Sukarno, and Mohammad Natsir, a modernist Muslim figure, who would later become the chief of Masyumi. This debate was even more important because it took place at the end of the Dutch colonial rule, prior to the outbreak of World War II. We shall focus here on Sukarno's view in this debate, while Natsir's will be expounded in the next chapter. Sukarno's view was decidedly nationalist and secular, and again was shaped by the Javanese *abangan* politico-cultural views on power and leadership.

In the debate, Sukarno repeatedly cited Ernest Renan's and Otto Bauer's notions of nationalism as a historical product arising from a common struggle and a desire to be united in life or death (*le desir d'être ensemble*). A nation is defined by commonalities in race, language, or religion, and it would not exist in the absence of sufficient desire to be bound by a common purpose. Sukarno believed the desire of some Muslim leaders to make Islam the state foundation violated this spirit of solidarity, and therefore weakened the *raison d'être* of Indonesia. Instead of engaging in sectarianism, he thought all Indonesians

⁴⁰ For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 268-274.

must build a sense of nationhood by showing a deep affection for its cause. Allegiance to the nation should precede other allegiances.⁴¹ Sukarno actually had been one of the protégés of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, the leader of Sarekat Islam. But over the years he developed a different outlook and even became critical of his mentor.⁴² Although Sukarno was undoubtedly well-versed in Western political philosophy, his argument was unmistakably influenced by his Javanese politico-cultural traits. Commonalities and common purpose are of course consistent with the Javanese political objectives of achieving and maintaining unity and harmony. Furthermore, in instilling love for the nation and in finding justification for the Indonesian nation, Sukarno often reverted to indigenous historical episodes. To the dismay of the Muslims, he almost always used figures from the reign of the great Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Sriwijaya and Majapahit, the latter whose sphere of influence was claimed to have reached much of what was then the Netherlands East Indies.⁴³

The debate on the state foundation then continued using parliamentary means. The issue was seriously debated for the first time during the deliberations of the BPUPKI (*Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan*

⁴¹ See his writings on this debate, reprinted in Sukarno (1959) *Di Bawah Bendera Revolusi* (Under the Banner of Revolution), Jakarta: Panitia Penerbit di Bawah Bendera Revolusi, pp. 369-402. Later, he reiterated these points in his famous speech in front of the deliberations of the independence preparatory body (BPUPKI), June 1, 1945, reprinted in Rahardjo and Herdianto, eds. (2001b), pp. 17-39. On the Sukarno-Natsir debate see Noer, *op.cit.*, pp. 300-315; Dwi Purwoko "Konfigurasi Kekuatan Islam versus Nasionalis (The Configuration of Islamic versus Nationalist Powers) in Dwi Purwoko, et.al., eds. (2001) *Nasionalis Islam vs. Nasionalis Sekuler* (Islamic Nationalists vs. Secular Nationalists), Depok: Permata Artistika Kreasi, pp. 17-24.

⁴² Purwoko, *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12.

⁴³ But in speeches in later years, he would mention a number of Islamic sultanates, such as Mataram, Gowa, and Ternate.

Indonesia – Indonesian Independence Preparatory Studies Body, or *Dokuritsu Zyunbi Tyoosakai* in Japanese), an institution set up by the Japanese occupation government to prepare for Indonesia's independence in anticipation of a Japanese withdrawal from the territory and the possible return of the Dutch. The debate started out with one simple question from Dr. Radjiman Wediodiningrat, the chairman of BPUPKI, made in his opening address on May 29, 1945: "*negara yang akan kita bentuk ini apa dasarnya?*" (what should the foundation of the state that we are seeking to establish here be?) From that point on, Indonesia's would-be first parliamentarians were divided into two large camps, those supporting Islam as the ideology of the forthcoming state, and those supporting secularism.⁴⁴ The nationalists' position was mostly derived from Sukarno's arguments in the debate with Natsir. The two sides engaged in this debate for days, but Sukarno eventually came up with a compromise idea. In a speech on June 1, 1945, he offered Pancasila (the five pillars that eventually became the state foundation),⁴⁵ which was basically a compromise between secularism, where no single religion predominates in the state, and religiosity, where religion (especially Islam) becomes one of the important pillars of the state. Another item of compromise struck between the Islamic and nationalist camps was the introduction of the *Piagam Jakarta* (Jakarta Charter) on the same day as Sukarno's speech. The charter added

⁴⁴ The transcripts of the debate can be read in Rahardjo and Herdianto, *eds.* (2001b), pp. 1-56.

⁴⁵ After quite lengthy deliberations, in which the descriptions and succession of the pillars were changed over time, the current form of Pancasila was adopted. The pillars are belief in one God (which is consistent with Islamic strict monotheistic teaching), humanity, national unity, representative democracy, and social justice.

seven words to the Sukarno's original idea that ruled that Muslims are bound to execute Islamic law (*syariah*) in their daily activities.⁴⁶ It was agreed that these words would be included in the preamble of the constitution.

But the Charter soon received opposition from the minority groups. Some prominent members of Christian groups (Christianity is the predominant religion among some ethnic groups in the eastern part of the archipelago,) approached the Japanese military commanders in their area to express their reservations about the Charter. One of them, Dr. Sam Ratulangi, a Christian from Minahasa, North Sulawesi, even issued a warning that many of the eastern regions would not participate in the formation of the Republic of Indonesia if the Jakarta Charter remained in the preamble of the constitution. In a frantic series of meetings that followed, the BPUPKI delegates finally agreed to drop the seven words. The nationalists used this warning as a justification for what had been their position all along, that as a plural state, Indonesia could not be founded upon a single religion. The Muslims eventually gave in, due to the more pressing need of unifying the state in the face of an impending return of the Dutch colonial power after the end of World War II. In the final draft approved by the PPKI (*Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* – Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee, independent Indonesia's first parliament, the successor institution of BPUPKI) on August 18, 1945, a day after the proclamation of independence by Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta, the

⁴⁶ Thus, the full text of the first pillar was as follows: "*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa, dengan Kewajiban Menjalankan Syariah Islam bagi Pemeluk-pemeluknya*" (Belief in the One God, with Islamic Law Obligated Upon Its Adherents).

preamble of the 1945 Constitution did not contain the seven words.⁴⁷ However, there was a wide consensus that the 1945 Constitution would serve only as a temporary constitution. Once independence was consolidated and the situation stabilized, the state would discuss a new constitution.

After lying dormant for the duration of the independence war (1945-1949), the federal state period (1949-1950) and half of the 1950s, the issue resurfaced as a new constitution was debated in the *Konstituante*. The political constellation remained the same as it had been a decade earlier: the Muslims advocating Islam and the nationalists Pancasila. While the different political forces could agree on many other things, the issue of the state foundation remained a sticking point. The debate eventually reached a stalemate, with each side unwilling to give up its own position.⁴⁸ The inability of the political *aliran* to reach a solution on this matter became one of the reasons for Sukarno's July 5 Decree that disbanded the *Konstituante* and announced the return to the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila.

Suharto's rule further strengthened the position of Pancasila. His New Order regime was supposed to be based on the correction of deviant practices from Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Old Order (Sukarno's) regime. The New Order was said to be a regime that sought to implement Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution in a pure manner. During Sukarno's Guided Democracy,

⁴⁷ Alwi Shahab (2001) "*Piagam Jakarta: Kisah Tujuh Kata Sakral*" (The Jakarta Charter: The Story of the Seven Sacred Words), in Kurniawan Zein and Sarifuddin HA, eds. (2001) *Syariat Islam Yes, Syariat Islam No: Dilema Piagam Jakarta dalam Amandemen UUD 1945* (Islamic Law Yes, Islamic Law No: Dilemma of the Jakarta Charter in the Amendment of 1945 Constitution), Jakarta: Paramadina, pp. 3-7.

⁴⁸ For details on the debate in the *Konstituante*, see Adnan Buyung Nasution (1992) *The Aspiration for Constitutional Government in Indonesia: A Socio-Legal Study of the Indonesian Konstituante*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta.

Pancasila had become the foundation with which the state identified, but it had never been made into the sole ideology of the state. Other ideologies, such as Marxism, *Marhaenism*⁴⁹, and Islam remained valid ideologies embraced by various political forces. The New Order elevated Pancasila to the level of state ideology.⁵⁰ The course of PMP (*Pendidikan Moral Pancasila* - Pancasila Moral Education) was compulsory for all educational levels, from elementary schools to universities. In addition, beginning in 1978 all government and military officials as well as entering university students were required to attend crash courses on Pancasila, known as the *Penataran Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (*Penataran P4* - Education of Guidelines for the Comprehension and Application of Pancasila).⁵¹ Later on, P4 was also introduced to all walks of life, including religious teachers, politicians, women, youth, and even artists.

In the socio-political sphere, the government required all registered organizations to adopt Pancasila as their foundations. This policy, known as the *azas tunggal* (sole foundation) was introduced in 1984, and was quickly embraced by the nationalist-leaning as well as minority group organizations, but created much furor among Islamic organizations. Eventually, however, all

⁴⁹ This was a leftist-nationalist ideology associated with Sukarno. Sometimes also referred to as Sukarnoism. Sukarno often called *Marhaenism* "socialism/Marxism as applied in Indonesia."

⁵⁰ Michael R. J. Vatikiotis (1998) Indonesian Politics Under Suharto: The Rise and Fall of the New Order, Third Edition, London: Routledge, p. 95.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

organizations relented and adopted Pancasila.⁵² This condition held until the *Reformasi* movement began.

Reformasi opened up the political space as political restrictions were lifted. All that had been regarded as “sacred” by the previous regimes was now brought into question, including the state foundation. Many Islamic groups, especially the modernist-leaning ones, raised the issue of Islam, Pancasila, and the state once again. But the nationalists remained unwavering in their support for this somewhat secular arrangement. While many modernist and some leftist parties abandoned Pancasila as their parties’ foundations, the nationalist parties reaffirmed it.⁵³ And in the lively and open public discourse on this issue, the nationalists argued in favor of keeping Pancasila and against the application of Islamic law. The arguments sounded familiar to those made by their predecessors during the BPUPKI/PPKI and *Konstituante* periods, that Pancasila was the best arrangement for a plural Indonesia where both the rights of the majority and the minority were safeguarded.⁵⁴

The nationalist’s rejection of Islam and adherence to Pancasila as the state foundation stemmed out of a fear that Islamic law (*syariah*) would be applied, especially among those who professed the Islamic faith. As has been described in Chapter 2, while most of the *abangan*, from whose values the

⁵² On *azas tunggal*, see, among others, Robert W. Hefner (2000) Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, Princeton: Princeton University Press, chs. 5 and 7.

⁵³ There were quite a few publications about the forty-eight parties that contested the 1999 elections, including their foundations. Among others see Leo Suryadinata (2002) Election and Politics in Indonesia, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

⁵⁴ Interview with Pramono Anung, a Member of Parliament from the PDI-P, and one of the party’s central board functionaries, Jakarta, May 2002.

nationalist *aliran* was derived, claim they are Muslims, they rarely exercise their faith in terms of purist Islamic teaching. They have their own ritual practices derived from Hindu customs and traditions. In his classic work, The Religion of Java, Clifford Geertz argued that the religious practices of the *abangan* are so different from those practiced by the *santri* that there have been a number of assertions that their belief system should be regarded as a different belief altogether.⁵⁵ A Javanist observer noted that there were more than three hundred variants of the Javanese belief system in the 1980s, known as *aliran kepercayaan*. All are syncretic in nature.⁵⁶ As such, the *abangan* rejected the majoritarian notion of “90% Muslims” put forward by the Muslim leaders, as argued by one of the nationalist parliamentarians during one of the sessions of the *Konstituante*.⁵⁷

Related to the above is the notion of tolerance. Syncretism in Javanese belief is the result of the accommodation of various belief systems that the Javanese have come in touch with. A scholar of Javanese culture has observed that among the traits of Javanese culture, toleration, accommodation, and being non-doctrinaire are predominant. He further mentioned that the following

⁵⁵ Clifford Geertz (1960) The Religion of Java, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.

⁵⁶ Rahmat Subagya (1987) Kepercayaan, Kebatinan, Kerohanian, Kejiwaan, dan Agama (Belief, Inner Feeling, Divinity, Soul, and Religion), Yogyakarta: Kanisius; Sujanto (2000) Reorientasi dan Revitalisasi Pandangan Hidup Jawa (Reorientation and Revitalization of the Javanese Way of Life), Semarang: Dahara Prize, p. 21. Indeed the whole of the latter book is dedicated to the discussion of Javanese syncretism. A similar point was also made in an interview with Permadi, a Javanist observer and a member of parliament from the PDI-P, Jakarta, February 2002.

⁵⁷ Atmodarminto (1957) “The *abangan* Case against an Islamic State,” in Feith and Castles, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 192-196.

characteristics are typical of Javanese culture, all of which point to the notion of tolerance:

1. Not formalistic and non-doctrinaire.
2. Universal and non-sectarian
3. Emphasis on love and affection in human relations
4. Peaceful and harmonious relations
5. Non-fanatical
6. Flexible
7. Non-competitive.⁵⁸

The nationalist advocacy of Pancasila can be viewed as a manifestation of Javanese tolerance in the political sphere. Pancasila signifies a compromise to achieve unity, which is so central to Javanese socio-political thinking. Recognizing the plurality of the Indonesian society, this *aliran* argues for the consensus and compromises that all, including the minority groups, could agree upon. Through Pancasila, the state is able to unite the different cultures in Indonesia.⁵⁹

Furthermore, through *Pancasila* and the idea of nationalism, a new identity is expected to develop. In such a culture, the Javanese might be seen as rendering a number of compromises. For instance, although the Javanese are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, their language did not become the

⁵⁸ Sujamto (1992) *Refleksi Budaya Jawa dalam Pemerintahan dan Pembangunan* (The Reflections of Javanese Culture on Governance and Development), Semarang: Dahara Prize, pp. 136-138.

⁵⁹ An Indonesianist scholar called Pancasila "the ideology of tolerance." See Douglas E. Ramage (1995) *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and the Ideology of Tolerance*, London: Routledge. See also Eka Darmaputera (1988) *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.

national language. Instead, it is the Malay language, which had already been the *lingua franca* for centuries, especially among the traders.⁶⁰ However, the national culture is also a culture that is infused with many important Javanese symbols, such as *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (the nation's slogan), *Pancasila*, *Sapta Marga* (the military's code of conduct), *Pramuka* (boy scouts), etc. Many of the creeds that are frequently cited by the leaders are also Javanese, such as the popular leadership motto: *ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani* (in the front serving as an example, in the middle building initiative, in the back encouraging and nurturing). More importantly perhaps, the national culture is a culture dictated by the state. And in turn the Javanese dominate the state.

⁶⁰ For an interesting interpretation on this matter, see Anderson (1990), ch. 4.

CHAPTER 5

THE MODERNIST MUSLIMS: THE EGALITARIAN, MAJORITARIAN ISLAMISTS

This *aliran* has its roots in the *seberang* (outer-island) political culture. In the lexicon of Indonesian politics, the proponents of this *aliran* are known as the modernist Muslims. Indeed, one of the things that differentiates them from their traditionalist Muslim brethren is their different socio-geographical roots. The proponents of the modernist movement came mainly from the outer islands or from the coastal areas (*pebisir*) of Java, while the traditionalists were mainly from eastern Java. It is important to note, however, that as Islam progressed in Java, many Javanese *pebisir* people came to the heartland of Java (Yogyakarta and Surakarta) for economic activities and eventually resided in separate quarters in the towns of that area. The interaction with the local people ultimately brought the idea of Islamic reformism to the area, known as the “*kauman*.”¹

In terms of religious practices and interpretation of Islam, the adherents of this *aliran* are the most pious (*santri*) and purist. They are characterized by their aspiration to reform the practice of Islam by purifying it from local cultural elements that they perceive as debasing it. These local elements are divided into three parts, known as *takhyul* (irrationality), *bid'ah* (deviant practices) and

¹ Koentjaraningrat, R.M. (1975) Introduction to the Peoples and Cultures of Indonesia and Malaysia, Menlo Park: Cummings Publishing Company, pp. 21-22, p. 61. The actual meaning of the word is “the people,” but it may also be read as “the different people,” because they practiced a different form of purist Islam from the surrounding communities whose Islamic practice was eclectic and influenced by the prevailing Hindu-Buddhist customs.

khurafat (superstitious practices).² While such practices are common among Indonesians of all ethnic groups, they are most prevalent in Java, especially among the *abangan*. The syncretic nature of Javanese society infused many pre-Islamic beliefs into its religious practices. The *santri* among the Javanese (the traditionalists) were also known to practice some of these “impure” elements. The institution of *pondok pesantren* of the traditionalists had its roots in pre-Islamic learning schools in the eastern and central parts of Java, and retained many pre-Islamic practices.³

The modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia was influenced by a similar movement in the Middle East, brought about by reformers Muhammad Abduh, Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, and Rashid Ridha in Egypt at the turn of the 20th century. This reform movement in Islam was the product of Western colonialism in the region. It started initially as a soul-searching intellectual movement seeking to comprehend the “defeat of Islam by the West,” which was how colonialism was generally viewed in this quarter. The result was a set of ideas that encouraged Muslims to embrace modernity through mastery of science and technology. It sought to “catch up” with the West by reviving the intellectual traditions that had become the hallmark of Islamic civilization prior to its decline in the 18th century. This movement identified the problem with Muslim societies as having its root within the societies themselves. It criticized

² In the old Indonesian (pre-1973) spelling, these elements were written as *tachjul*, *bid'ah*, and *churafat*, popularly abbreviated as TBC. TBC is also a popular short form of tuberculosis, a common illness among Indonesians. By associating these practices with an illness, the reformists tried to point out that they were common among Indonesians and must be combatted.

³ A succinct critical account of the modernist – traditionalist religious practices debate can be found in Hendro Prasetyo *et.al.* (2002) *Islam & Civil Society: Pandangan Muslim Indonesia* (Islam and the Civil Society: the Views of Indonesian Muslims), Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, ch. 2.

the societies for moving away from the true spirit of Islam as practiced during the time of the Prophet Mohammad and engaging in irrational and superstitious activities. It also attacked the huge wealth gap between the ruling aristocrats and the masses, arguing that the message of Islam necessitated that the organization of Muslim societies be based on egalitarianism.⁴ In short, this movement sought to reform, purify, and modernize Islam.⁵

Islamic reformism was brought to Indonesia by a number of Islamic clerics who went to study Islam in various educational institutions in the Middle East, including those in Mecca and the Al-Azhar University in Cairo.⁶ Many of these scholars came from the Minangkabau area of West Sumatra, others from western Java and *pesisir* parts of central Java, as well as from *kauman* areas.⁷ Upon their return to the Netherlands East Indies in the early years of the last century, they were initially met with resistance from the local communities as they tried to propagate Islamic reformism. For instance, the founder of Muhammadiyah, one of the most important reformist social organizations, K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, was once instructed by a local religious leader to demolish a small mosque that he had built in the Yogyakarta *kauman* area, because the mosque had the direction of *kiblat* towards Mecca. That

⁴ On the intellectual roots of this movement, see Karen Armstrong (2000) Islam: A Short History, London: Phoenix Press, pp. 121-133.

⁵ For these reasons, the adherents of this movement are interchangeably known as reformist, purist, and modernist Muslims.

⁶ This was a phenomenon facilitated by the invention of steamships. Ironically, the same invention also enabled the Dutch to consolidate their power in the Netherlands East Indies.

⁷ For details of early reformists, consult Deliar Noer (1980) Gerakan Moderen Islam di Indonesia, 1900-1942 (The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942), Jakarta: LP3ES, ch. 1.

direction, even though correct according to the purist Islamic terms, was against the prevailing local practice of the time.⁸

But gradually, the reformists were able to make inroads in their efforts. This was largely made possible by two factors. First, in order to modernize the society, the modernists paid considerable attention to education and social activities. Spearheaded by Muhammadiyah, the modernists built a network of schools, that taught not only Islamic, but also secular subjects. At the time, the Modernist school system even rivaled the formal education system set up by the Dutch colonial administration. Muhammadiyah also established women and youth wings, as well as a disaster relief organization that later on would be transformed into hospitals and polyclinics. From the 1920s, Muhammadiyah became the first comprehensive and the largest social organization in Indonesia,⁹ and its example would later be emulated by organizations from the other *aliran*.

The other factor vital for the success of early modernists was their effort on the political front. *Sarekat Islam* (SI), established in 1912, was one of the first independence movements in Indonesia. It was set up by the modernists to propagate Indonesian nationalism along with its nationalist counterpart, Budi Utomo. SI was effectively the dominant organization until its split into red (leftist/communist) and white (Islamist) factions in 1920. Another modernist organization would fill this void, *Majlis Islam A'laa Indonesia* (MIAI – Indonesian Islamic Council), set up in 1937.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85; Haedar Nashir (2000) *Dinamika Politik Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah's Political Dynamic), Yogyakarta: Bigrif Publishing, pp. 1-23..

⁹ Harry J. Benda (1958) *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam Under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945*, The Hague: W. van Hoeve, pp. 47-48.

During the period of Japanese occupation (1942-1945), political Islam was further institutionalized. Being aware of the opportunity for self-determination that had been the main message of the Japanese colonial power,¹⁰ many modernist as well as traditionalist Muslims, along with their nationalist brethren, opted for cooperation and collaboration with the colonial administration. For the Japanese, an endless stream of Indonesians of all stripes willing to collaborate provided an opportunity for consolidation of their rule, especially in the face of threat coming from Allied forces. It was during this period that an important political force in Islamic modernism was born. Masyumi (*Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia* – Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims) was established in November 1943, replacing the MIAI. Its membership initially comprised both the modernist (Muhammadiyah) and traditionalist (Nahdatul Ulama) organizations.¹¹ But as shall be seen in the next chapter, during the independence period Masyumi gradually became associated with Islamic reformism to the detriment of the traditionalists.

In the early years of the republic, political Islamic modernism was always associated with Masyumi, until its dissolution in 1960. But even during the New Order era, the leaders of the former party and their protégés, many of whom went to Muhammadiyah, remained the voice of the modernists, albeit on a limited scale. During the *Reformasi* era, many of the modernist Muslim

¹⁰ The theme of self-determination became more pronounced as the Japanese were nearing defeat in World War II. Initially, the idea was presented as the concept of the *Asia Timur Raya* (Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere), which clearly affirmed the position of the Japanese as the new colonial masters in East and Southeast Asia.

¹¹ On the circumstances surrounding the establishment of Masyumi, and the role of the Japanese occupation force, consult Benda, *op.cit.*, chs. 5-7.

parties claimed to have been influenced by Masyumi, if not claiming outright that they were its legitimate "descendants." Therefore, many parts of the modernists' views on the three fundamental issues of the state analyzed next -- political competition, regionalism, and pluralism -- are drawn from the experiences of Masyumi and its "descendants."

LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL COMPETITION

The *seberang* political culture, in which Islamic modernism has its roots, is marked by egalitarianism. This is primarily due to three primary factors. First, many of the *seberang* societies are maritime-based. As in many such societies, there is a less elaborative social structure than in the agriculturally-based societies, due to the limited surpluses and the high mobility of the people.¹² Second, there is significantly less Hindu-Buddhist influence than in Java. This results in a more relaxed social stratification than in cultures influenced by the Indic religions. Third, many *seberang* people are engaged in commerce. Being merchants, they possess the quality of being direct, competitive, rational, and individualistic. They are less dependent on social or political leadership, because wealth is seen as the product of individual rather than collective effort. As a result, the *seberang* are more prone toward competition and show less inhibition about conflict than do the Javanese. Due to these egalitarian and competitive traits, the modernists are receptive to an egalitarian style of leadership and to open political competition.

¹² One such people in Indonesia, the Minangkabau, are known for their "*merantau*" (migrating) culture. They spend less time in their home villages than in other places. See Mochtar Naim (1971) *Merantau: Causes and Effects of Minangkabau Voluntary Migration*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Throughout the history of the republic, the modernists have demonstrated that they supported democratic political competition. In the post-independence period and in the period of parliamentary democracy of the 1950s, the modernist leaders, especially in Masyumi, played major roles. Seven cabinets were formed between 1949 and 1957, led by three Masyumi leaders and two PNI leaders. The Minangkabau Mohammad Hatta became the Prime Minister in one of them, as well as fellow Sumatrans Natsir and Burhanuddin Harahap of Masyumi. While many Indonesianists argued that the frequent alternations of cabinet reflected instability in the political system, there was little doubt that the political structure was based on openness and unimpeded competition.

Political competition was fierce in both the parliament and the *Konstituante*. Political debates in both state bodies were very lively. One of the most serious issues was the state foundation, which resulted in a deadlock. But the *Konstituante* had actually finished discussing most of the other major parts of the new constitution when Sukarno and the nationalists seemed to have had enough of the political impasse.¹³

It appeared that the democratic and open political processes appealed more to the modernists than they did to the nationalists. The nationalists, like Sukarno, seemed to be dismayed by the high degree of political competition and atmosphere of divisiveness that were the hallmarks of the era of parliamentary democracy, as was apparent in his remarks about the period:

¹³ Adnan Buyung Nasution (1992) The Aspiration for Constitutional Government in Indonesia: A Socio-Legal Study of the Indonesian *Konstituante*, Pustaka Sinar Harapan, Jakarta.

“On all sides, we see our people drifting, rudderless, suffering from confusion and dullness of the spirit.”¹⁴

Indeed, this period of Indonesian history was viewed by many as utterly unstable, marked by political conflicts, both within and outside of the parliament. Changes of government occurred in quick succession. There were seven cabinets during the period of 1945-1957. The longest stable cabinet was led by Ali Sostroamidjojo of the PNI (July 1953 – July 1955), while Natsir led the shortest one (September 1950 – March 1951).

In contrast to the views of nationalist leaders such as Sukarno, modernist politicians such as Natsir felt rather comfortable with this period that was marked by open political competition. According to him:

“If the constitutional parliamentary democracy system is allowed the opportunity to develop, we believe, it will save Indonesia from all the troubles that it has to endure as consequences of the transition in its position as a young state.”¹⁵

But history would have it differently. Sukarno initiated an authoritarian rule through the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959, which, among other things, disbanded both the parliament and the *Konstituante*. Under Guided Democracy, Masyumi, as well as the intellectual urban-based PSI, were also banned in 1960 for involvement in regional rebellions after the Presidential Decree. Masyumi's leaders were then sentenced to imprisonment (or exile in the

¹⁴ Herbert Feith (1962) The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 223. See also Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1972) “The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture,” reprinted in Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1990) Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 37-38.

¹⁵ Quoted in Ramly Hutabarat (1988) “*Mohammad Natsir dan Demokrasi*” (Mohammad Natsir and Democracy) in Anshari, Endang Saifuddin and Rais, M. Amien, eds. (1988) Pak Natsir 80 Tahun, Buku Pertama: Pandangan dan Penilaian Generasi Muda (80 Years of Mr. Natsir, First Book: The Views and Evaluations of the Young Generation), Media Da'wah, Jakarta, pp. 129-130.

case of some PSI leaders). Guided Democracy effectively ended Indonesia's first experiment with political openness.

The fall of Sukarno and the rise of the military's General Suharto initially provided some hope among the modernists that political openness would be restored, and that Masyumi would be rehabilitated. But the nationalist Suharto based his political construction on even tighter control than the one applied by his predecessor. Avenues for the modernists to engage meaningfully in politics remained closed for a good part of Suharto's New Order.

The 1990s saw a limited degree of opening up in the political role of the modernists. The establishment of ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* – Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association) in December 1990 provided the vehicle. Even though ICMI claimed to be an organization open to all Muslims, modernists or otherwise, it was actually dominated by modernists. The leader of the NU (Nahdatul Ulama), the traditionalist Muslims' vanguard organization, K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, referred to ICMI as "neo-Masyumi."¹⁶ ICMI was officially a non-political organization. But in reality, Suharto's patronage of the organization and some links that it forged with the modernist-inclined military officers provided the backing for ICMI's political clout. Once again, the modernists were engaged in politics, albeit still in a structure of limited political openness.

The view of democracy held by ICMI's functionaries and activists was generally consistent with that held by their modernist predecessors in

¹⁶ See his criticism of ICMI in Adam Schwarz (1999) A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 185-188. See also Douglas E. Ramage (1995) Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and the Ideology of Tolerance, London: Routledge, ch. 2.

Masyumi. There appeared to be two facets in this conception of democracy. One was political openness and the other proportionalism. The former was apparent from various remarks, studies, and activities of ICMI and its functionaries. ICMI was particularly active, especially during its early years, in voicing alternative views to the regime's authoritarian and developmental approaches. It strove to open up the discourse on sensitive previously considered "taboo," such as human rights, the environment and sustainable development, and an equitable economy in terms of redistribution of assets and economic opportunities. While not spelled out as one of its mission objectives, ICMI also launched quite a vigorous campaign on demilitarization. It sought to open wider political opportunities for more active roles by civilian bureaucrats and politicians. Until that point, many important governmental positions, such as ministers, governors, speakers of national and local parliaments, and ambassadorships, had been essentially reserved for active or retired members of the military. During ICMI's heyday, it sponsored many civilians to be appointed to those posts. And for the first time, a civilian politician, former Minister of Information Harmoko, was elected chairman of Golkar, the New Order's ruling party, in October 1993. Additionally, in the late New Order setting, ICMI called on the public to debate the issue of political succession.¹⁷ This was a very sensitive issue for the Suharto regime that would eventually result in the demotion and censure of some of its outspoken members, especially those with NGO and academic backgrounds, most notably Amien Rais.

¹⁷ ICMI, however, was not the first organization to call for Suharto's succession. The *Petisi 50* (Petition of Fifty) Group, an opposition group formed by fifty prominent figures in 1980, issued a similar call much earlier, coinciding with its establishment.

It is important to note that not all of ICMI's members were as daring as some of its NGO activists, especially those with bureaucratic or military backgrounds.¹⁸ ICMI was, after all, an organization founded on a coincidence of interests between the modernists' desire for political space and Suharto's need for an alternative political footing. Many saw ICMI's chief, B.J. Habibie, long-time State Minister of Science and Technology and widely regarded as Suharto's protégé, as the very embodiment of the regime's control over the organization. But even Habibie offered a fresh, more open approach to how the government was handling the issue of political opposition. In June 1993, Habibie made a *rapprochement* with the prime opposition group, *Petisi 50*, by inviting a number of its activists to a ship-launching ceremony at the largest state-owned shipyard, PT. PAL in Surabaya. Among the activists invited by Habibie, who was also Director of PT. PAL, were Ali Sadikin (former Marine general), Suyitno Sukirno (former Air Force Marshall), Anwar Harjono (former Masyumi functionary), Chris Siner Key Timu (former Catholic Student group activist), and Rajab Ranggasoli (former Muslim student activist). Until that time, *Petisi 50's* signatories had been considered social and political pariahs. No government officials dared to have anything to do with them. Despite the prevailing limitations of the time, Habibie did make a breakthrough.¹⁹

The other facet of ICMI's conception of democracy was *proporsionalisme* (proportionalism). This concept was basically the extension of the modernist's

¹⁸ On the divisions within ICMI's membership, see Robert W. Hefner (2000), Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 139-152; Schwarz, *op.cit.*, pp. 176-179; Ramage, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁹ A.M. Makmur Makka (1994) Koridor Menuju Demokrasi: B.J. Habibie, Petisi 50 dan Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat (The Corridor toward Democracy: B.J. Habibie, Petisi 50 and Public Political Participation), Jakarta: Cidesindo.

majoritarian idea of the predominant religious affiliation of the Indonesian people, that had been used to further the cause of Islam as the state foundation by modernist parties since before independence until the dictation of Guided Democracy. It basically argued that since Muslims made up around ninety percent of the population, making them the largest stakeholders in the country, it was only natural that they played a larger role in political and economic fields.²⁰ This concept had to be seen as a reaction toward the perceived disproportionate presence of minority groups, especially the non-Muslim indigenous groups, mainly Catholics and Christians, in the government and the ethnic Chinese in business. While comprising only slightly more than ten percent of the population, the Catholics and Christians were generally better educated and better off in terms of material attainment. This was due to the colonial legacy, which granted these minority groups greater access to education and state resources. During the 1980s, a number of Catholic/Christian figures rose to the top positions in the military and the economic-financial authorities. The phenomenon was known in Indonesia's political vocabulary as "*Kristenisasi*" (Christianization). The most notable of these figures was General L.B. Murdani, who became commander of the armed forces in 1982. Murdani's policy was widely regarded among the modernists as anti-Islamic. During his term in office, he launched a number of crackdowns on Islamic political movements that were on the rise as a reaction against the *azas tunggal* (sole foundation) policy of the government. The most severe of these

²⁰ On ICMI's proportionalism see Hefner, *op.cit.*, pp. 140-141; Ramage, *op.cit.*, pp. 98-102; Schwartz, *op.cit.*, pp. 181-182.

military actions happened in Tanjung Priok, north of Jakarta, in 1984, where soldiers shot at demonstrators, causing many casualties.

In the economic sphere, proportionalism centred on the issue of *pribumi vs nonpribumi* (indigenous vs non-indigenous). An even smaller minority group than the indigenous non-Muslim groups at around three to four percent, the ethnic Chinese controlled much of the nation's financial assets and many business sectors, as well as distribution lines. While the actual figures of how much ownership control the Chinese exerted on the economy varied, some estimates put the number as high as 70 percent.²¹ Other statistics showed that the state's economy was controlled by 200 major companies, 80 percent of which were owned predominantly by the Chinese.²² A conglomerate of companies owned by the most successful of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese tycoons, Sudono Salim, accounted for an estimated eight percent of Indonesia's GDP.²³ ICMI sought to redress this imbalance by asserting the idea of a "people's economy." The idea of proportionalism took a very structural form. Adherents argued that the government should intervene in an effort to strengthen the small and medium-sized enterprises, owned overwhelmingly by indigenous Muslims. The government should also restrict the opportunities available for

²¹ Schwarz, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

²² Center for Information and Development Studies (1997) *Pribumi dan Non-Pribumi dalam Perspektif Pemerataan Ekonomi dan Integrasi Sosial* (Indigenous and Non-Indigenous in the Perspectives of Economic Redistribution and Social Integration), Position Paper, Jakarta, p. 4.

²³ Linda C.Y. Lim and L.A. Peter Gosling (1997) "Strengths and Weaknesses of Minority Status for Southeast Asian Chinese at a Time of Economic Growth and Liberalization," in Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid, eds., (1997) *Essential Outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 298.

the business conglomerates through fiscal policies such as taxation, and should channel loans and grants to the small and medium enterprises.²⁴

As described in Chapter 2, the modernists were particularly active in unseating Suharto. His successor, the modernist Habibie, quickly carried out a number of reform measures, such as releasing political prisoners, reforming the five political laws that were deemed to be the mainstays of the New Order's authoritarian rule, attempting to solve the East Timorese question by first offering special autonomy status within the framework of the unitary republic and then by holding a referendum that eventually led to the territory's independence. But perhaps the most important step Habibie took was to declare that his administration was a transitional one, even though there was no constitutional stipulation for this, and he could have legally continued the administration until the end of its term in 2003. However, recognizing that he suffered a severe lack of legitimacy for having been handpicked earlier by Suharto as vice president, Habibie announced that the general election was to be held in 1999, which marked a new era in Indonesia's history.

In the *Reformasi* era, the modernists appeared to be the most comfortable among the three *aliran*, with the structure of open political competition that became the hallmark of this era. This was apparent from the ability of modernist politicians to push forward their agenda using parliamentary tactics of coalition-building, negotiation, and bargaining, despite

²⁴ On the people's economy, see M. Dawam Rahardjo (1997) *Pembangunan Ekonomi Nasional: Suatu Pendekatan Pemerataan, Keadilan dan Ekonomi Kerakyatan* (National Economic Development: Approaches of Redistribution, Equity, and the People's Economy), Jakarta: Intermedia; Mubyarto (1998) *Reformasi Sistem Ekonomi: Dari Kapitalisme Menuju Ekonomi Kerakyatan* (Reform of Economic System: From Capitalism to the People's Economy), Yogyakarta: Aditya Media.

initial divisiveness among the modernist parties and politicians during the 1999 election.

In the election, the modernists, like the other *aliran*, were plagued by divisiveness and a failure to unite in a single party. A number of modernist parties competed fiercely in the traditionally modernist areas, especially in the *seberang* areas. Unlike the nationalists and the traditionalists, whose vanguard parties were relatively more definable (the PDI-P for the nationalists and the PKB for the traditionalists), for the modernists it was less clear. At least four parties could be viewed as having some credence in claiming the modernists' votes. PAN was set up by Muhammadiyah figures, such as Amien Rais. The PPP was a fusion of some modernist and traditionalist parties, merged in the early years of New Order, one of which was Parmusi (*Partai Muslimin Indonesia* - Indonesian Muslim Party), the reincarnation of Masyumi allowed by Suharto after Masyumi had been banned by Sukarno. The PBB, chaired by Yusril Ihza Mahendra, had the clear backing of some former Masyumi politicians. And finally, the PK reflected the new generation of the modernist movement that was particularly popular among university students and youth.²⁵ Indeed, the division among the modernists was such that some analysts claimed that the Islamic parties lost the election.²⁶ Individually, the modernist parties did win a smaller number of parliamentary seats than the nationalist PDI-P or Golkar. The PPP, the largest of the modernist parties, won only 58 seats out of the 462

²⁵ On the interesting phenomenon of the PK, see Ali Said Damanik (2002) *Fenomena Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia* (Justice Party Phenomenon: The 20 Years Process of Transformation of Tarbiyah Movement in Indonesia), Jakarta: Teraju.

²⁶ See for instance, Saiful Mujani, "Kekalahan Partai Islam" (The Defeat of Islamic Parties), in *Gamma*, Vol. 1, No. 18, June 27, 1999; Suryadinata, *op.cit.*, ch. 5.

elected members, PAN 34 seats, PBB 13 seats, and the PK the smallest with 7 seats.

But to measure the modernists' political clout only by the attainment of the individual parties might well be misleading. As soon as the parliament was formed, the modernist parties closed ranks by setting up a parliamentary alliance, known as the *Poros Tengah* (Middle Axis). The alliance was initially formed on an ad hoc basis, for the purpose of providing a balancing power in the inevitable showdown between the two giants in the presidential election in September 1999, with the PDI-P nominating Megawati Sukarnoputri, and Golkar nominating Habibie.²⁷ Despite differences among the parties on a number of issues, such as on the role of Islam and Pancasila in politics and the state, the shared *aliran* background seemed sufficient in binding them together.

As a prominent parliamentarian from one of *Poros Tengah* parties wrote:

“It is a sociological fact that each of the religious (Islamic) social institutions...has possessed its own cultural segment. (But) these parties shared the same Islamic and national commitments.”²⁸

The voting pattern in the *Reformasi* parliament demonstrated the *Poros Tengah's* political prowess. All candidates that it supported: Abdurrahman Wahid for president, Amien Rais for MPR's chairperson, and Akbar Tanjung for DPR's speaker, won a majority of votes.²⁹ Its success was due to its ability to

²⁷ Presidents in Indonesia have not been elected directly by the electorate. Presidential elections have been held in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the highest state body. Members of Parliament (DPR) make up around 70 percent of the MPR.

²⁸ A.M. Fatwa (2000) “*Satu Islam, Banyak Partai*” (One Islam, Many Parties) in A.M. Fatwa (2000) *Satu Islam, Multipartai: Membangun Integritas di Tengah Pluralitas* (One Islam, Multi-parties: Building Integrity Amidst Plurality), Bandung: Mizan, p. 97 and p. 99. A similar point was also made in an interview with Muhammad Najib, a functionary in PAN's central board, Jakarta, October 2001.

²⁹ See Chapter 2 for the *Reformasi* parliamentary voting patterns.

ensure that members of its constituent parties voted according to the alliance's line. But even this kind of discipline was insufficient, because the alliance only possessed 22 percent of the seats in the parliament. It sought, therefore, to strengthen its position by striking a deal with the other parties. At different junctures throughout the course of the *Reformasi* parliament, *Poros Tengah* was able to garner support from all three of the other major parties on different issues. Golkar was its most important ally throughout, but especially during the opening of the parliamentary session in September 1999, which elected the chairpersons of the MPR, speakers of parliament, as well as president and vice president. The modernist link with members having an HMI background seemed to be the key.³⁰ Additionally, *Poros Tengah* was able to secure cooperation with the traditionalist PKB in the election of Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency. Later in 2001, as the discontentment toward Gus Dur's government was growing, the *Poros Tengah* struck another deal with the nationalist PDI-P for impeaching Gus Dur and replacing him with Megawati, as well as electing PPP's chairperson Hamzah Haz as vice president. While not opting to elect figures from among themselves for the presidency, the all-important position in the country, the modernists were clearly in the driver's seat for most of the major appointments. This showed that while the other *aliran* were apprehensive of the structure of open political competition and reluctant to "wheel and deal," the modernists were adept at it because it did not clash with their political culture.

³⁰ As described in Chapter 2, under Akbar Tanjung, Golkar became more modernist with the influx of people with an HMI-background into the party.

REGIONALISM AND CENTRALIZATION

As opposed to the views of Javanese-based *aliran* concerning the distribution of power between the center and the regions, the modernists have naturally been more favorable to the idea of such a power diffusion. There are at least two reasons why the modernists are generally more comfortable with the idea of local autonomy than the nationalists, and to a lesser extent, the traditionalists. First, the modernist *aliran* is *seberang*-based. The history of the archipelago is filled with rivalries and competition between Javanese and non-Javanese dynasties. And each ethnic group has tended to view history through different lenses. For instance, the great kingdom of Majapahit and its king Hayam Wuruk and prime minister Gajah Mada, whose span of control reached far and wide in the archipelago, were viewed as examples of a glorious past by the Javanese. Nationalist leaders often used the Majapahit fable as an indigenous *raison d'être* for Indonesia. But some *seberang* ethnic groups, such as the Sundanese, have a different memory of Majapahit. They saw it as an example of domination by the Javanese through coercive means. The *seberang* generally have feared that a unitary state with a strong center would lead to another period of Javanese domination.

Second, the politico-cultural background of the modernists also influences their views concerning the extent that power should be concentrated or diffused. As has been argued earlier, the *seberang* are more egalitarian. The commerce-maritime base of many of its ethnic groups, and the fact that the influence of the Indic religions was much less outside of Java, rendered a less

elaborative and less hierarchical social structure. As a result, the power structure of many *seberang* societies is diffused rather than concentrated.

Since the beginning of the republic, the tension between the Javanese and *seberang* politicians on the issue of power concentration and diffusion was apparent. One of the first ideas concerning a federalist arrangement was put forward by Mohammad Hatta. Hatta was the co-proclamator of Indonesia's independence, and the first vice president. Like Masyumi leader Natsir and PSI leader Syahrir, he was a Minangkabau. He was also initially a member of the nationalist PNI, as were many of Indonesia's independence movement leaders. But it was quite evident that his views were typically *seberang*, rather than shaped by Javanese political culture, as was the case with many other nationalist leaders. As such, Hatta's views resembled those of the modernists, and at times ran opposed to the views of the nationalists. Hatta eventually resigned from the vice presidency in December 1956, citing differences of opinion with President Sukarno on managing the state.

After his resignation, Hatta wrote a number of newspaper articles expressing his views on the subject of regional autonomy. This was probably indicative of Sukarno's growing tendency to centralize power. He wrote:

"Indonesia is divided into a number of islands and ethnic groups. Therefore each of the groups, large or small, needs to have its own autonomy, its right to self determination."³¹

In another article written in the same year, he argued:

"If democracy means a government by the governed, it is clear that democracy is not suitable with centralism that concentrates all power in the hands of the central government and parliament. The

³¹ Hatta's writing in *Indonesia Raya*, May 13, 1957 (title unknown), quoted in Sri-Edi Swasono, "Bung Hatta dan Otonomi Daerah" (Hatta and the Regional Autonomy), part 2 of 2 series, in *Republika*, February 8, 2000.

larger the territory of the state, the more differentiated interests are, (thus) creating more affairs peculiar to each of the regions, that the government in the center cannot sufficiently handle. ... A democratic government in a state with a large territory has to be based on decentralization.”³²

Hatta's concern was shared by other *seberang* leaders, including those who were modernists. Facing Sukarno's growing authoritarian and centralistic tendencies as evident from his "Konsepsi" speech in February 1957,³³ the modernists and other *seberang* figures supported two regional rebellions. Some top echelon members of Masyumi and the PSI fled to West Sumatra and established the PRRI (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* – Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) in February 1958, led by Lieutenant Colonel Achmad Husein and Syafruddin Prawiranegara, the former prime minister from Masyumi. The Sumatran movement was also met with enthusiasm in Sulawesi, where a year earlier, in March 1957, some eastern Indonesian military officers, dismayed by growing Javanese control declared the Permesta (*Piagam Perjuangan Semesta* – Charter of Common Struggle) led by Lieutenant Colonel H.N. (Ventje) Sumual. The rebellions were crushed by military operations that lasted until mid-1961. On August 17, 1960, the 15th anniversary of Indonesian independence, Sukarno announced the

³² Hatta's article in *Pikiran Rakyat*, April 27, 1957 (title unknown), quoted in Swasono, *op.cit.*, part 1 of 2 series.

³³ The speech was made in a radio address on February 21, 1957. It formally introduced for the first time the concept of "Guided Democracy." The full text of the speech can be read in Rahardjo, Iman Toto K. and Herdianto WK, eds. (2001) *Bung Karno: Wacana Konstitusi dan Demokrasi. Kenangan 100 Tahun Bung Karno* (Bung Karno: Constitutional and Democracy Discourses. Commemorating 100 Years of Bung Karno), Jakarta: Grasindo, pp. 164-176.

banning of both Masyumi and PSI, and many of the parties' functionaries were jailed due to their involvement in the rebellions.³⁴

The fact that the modernists allied themselves with the PSI, a secular party with a strong urban-base, led by Syahrir, a Minangkabau, and the military officers led by Sumual, a Christian from Minahasa, North Sulawesi, confirmed the assertion that there was a fear among the *seberang* peoples of Javanese domination. Judging by the demands they made to the central government, such as the expectation that power should be devolved from the center to the regions, and more opportunities given to the non-Javanese segments of the population,³⁵ the *seberang* might be defined as favoring a sort of local autonomous arrangement, where power is devolved.

As described earlier in the previous chapter, Suharto's New Order was just a continuation and extension of the centralistic rule that started out from Sukarno's Guided Democracy. Support for regional autonomy or even discourse about it was largely muted in this period. While in the 1990s with the gradual opening up (*keterbukaan*) policy, there were some discussions about this issue and even some initiatives on deconcentration and decentralization, Indonesia remained a very centralized place, where the central government controlled all governance and development matters in the regions. As a result, many of the resource-rich provinces, such as Aceh, Riau, East Kalimantan, and Papua, remained largely impoverished, while the urban centers, such as Jakarta,

³⁴ For details of the two movements and the ensuing military struggle with the central government, consult Feith, *op.cit.*, pp. 520-555, pp. 578-597.

³⁵ See "Otonomi dan Perimbangan Keuangan Sudah Diperjuangkan Permesta" (Autonomy and Balanced Financial Arrangement Have Been Exerted by Permesta) in *Suara Pembaruan*, April 28, 2000.

which lacked resources, became the economic and business havens. Most companies in Indonesia during the New Order period were listed as having their headquarters in Jakarta, even though most of their operations actually took place in the resource-rich regions.

Reformasi changed all this. The dramatic opening of the political system caused the resurfacing of many issues that had previously been regarded as “taboo,” including the issues of power distribution and regional autonomy. The modernists seemed almost naturally inclined to take the lead in this discussion. In the campaign for the 1999 election, Amien Rais, the leader of the modernist party PAN, opened up the discourse by suggesting that Indonesia should abandon its present unitary form of government and transform itself into a federal state. This message was part of PAN’s platform for the election. Federalism quickly became popular among the student movements. Being continuously antagonistic to the military, the students saw federalism as an antithesis to what the military stood for: the integrity of the unitary state. The reasoning behind the students’ support for federalism had to do with the desire to stem the incursion of the nationalist military in all aspects of civilian life, as had been the case during the New Order. They perceived that in a federal state the military would only be assigned to maintain security from possible external threat, since all regions would be responsible for maintaining their own internal security.³⁶

When the euphoria died down, however, it soon became clear that there were at least three viable options for Indonesia’s future form of government,

³⁶ Ichlasul Amal (1999) “*Rasionalitas dan Tuntutan Federalisme*” (Rationality and the Demand for Federalism), in St. Sularto and T. Jacob Koekerits, eds. (1999) *Federalisme untuk Indonesia* (Federalism for Indonesia), Jakarta: Kompas.

given that the possibility of a break-up of the country had been ruled out. On one extreme was continuing with the present unitary state form with a strong center and weak regions. This option was naturally favored by the nationalists. On the other extreme was completely overhauling the system and establishing a federal state with strong regions and a weak center. Somewhere in the middle of the two extremes was regional autonomy, in which the formal form of government remained unitary, and the central government still maintained considerable power, but in substance, the regions were significantly empowered by a wide-ranging autonomy to deal with local affairs.³⁷

In the end, there appeared to be a consensus that regional autonomy was preferred over federalism. There were at least two reasons for the choice. First, federalism had been stigmatized as, and associated with, foreign interference. As has been described earlier, the experimentation with a federal system in 1949 was quickly abandoned, because the RIS (*Republik Indonesia Serikat* - Republic of United States of Indonesia) was widely seen as an attempt by the Dutch to maintain a power base in their former colony. Additionally, the regional rebellions of PRRI/Permesta were aided by the Western powers, especially the United States. In the late 1950s, Sukarno was widely seen as moving closer to a leftist ideology as well as becoming the patron of the PKI (Indonesian communist party.) In the Cold War setting, the U.S. aided the

³⁷ For the debate on this choice, consult the articles in Ikrar Nusa Bhakti and Irine H. Gayatri, eds. (2002) Unitary State versus Federal State: Searching for An Ideal Form of the Future Indonesian State, Bandung: Mizan, especially Part Three.

rebellions with the intention of replacing Sukarno with pro-Western military officers and politicians.³⁸

The other reason why federalism was not chosen had to do with the lack of experience with a federal arrangement itself among the politicians. The present generation of Indonesian politicians was raised and educated either during the Guided Democracy or New Order eras. They were products of centralism. As such, they had very limited technical knowledge about what federalism actually entailed.³⁹ There was a general trepidation that an abrupt change of government would actually lead to a “balkanization” of Indonesia, instead of towards a positive change.

However, it is important to note that the new regional autonomy arrangement contained many components associated with federalism. It was federalism in spirit and substance, if not in name. The main brain-trust behind the regional autonomy law, enacted as Laws No. 22 and No. 25 in May 1999 was a team set up by Habibie’s administration, led by Ryaas Rasyid, a *seberang* bureaucrat. Ryaas’ team comprised mainly intellectuals and bureaucrats with *seberang* backgrounds, especially from eastern Indonesia.⁴⁰

³⁸ For U.S. involvement in PRRI/Permesta, consult Audrey R. Kahin and George McT. Kahin (1995) Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia, New York: New Press.

³⁹ See such criticism in Yusril Ihza Mahendra (1999) “*Perpolitikan Konsep Federal di Indonesia dan Konsekuensinya*” (The Politics of Federal Concept in Indonesia and Its Consequences), in Soelarto and Koekerits, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 154-155.

⁴⁰ There was even public cynicism that Habibie’s administration was an “SDM” administration. SDM, or *Sumber Daya Manusia* (Human Resource), had been Habibie’s main theme when he was state minister for research and technology. But during his presidency, it was twisted into “*Semua dari Makassar*” (All from Makassar). Makassar is the capital of South Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia, where Habibie hailed from.

The law on regional autonomy granted the regions wide-ranging authority. It transferred jurisdiction for a number of affairs from the central government to the districts and municipalities. The regional governments were now able to carry out development programs based on their own initiatives rather than on directions from Jakarta. They no longer have to seek approval from the center for local governance affairs. Revenues from local economic activities and from the exploitation of natural resources, such as forestry, mining, agriculture, and fisheries, were now channeled directly to the local governments, rather than going to the central coffer first, then being redistributed to the regions in the form of development programs, as practiced during the New Order. Additionally, the regions now had the power of appointments and could handle their own personnel affairs. They were also able to raise local taxes in order to cover their expenses. On the political side, the law empowered the local parliaments in dealing with the executive branch. The heads of the regions were no longer the representatives of the central government in the regions. They were now genuinely elected by and answerable to the parliaments. While in the past the parliaments had the legal right to elect governors, *bupati* (head of districts), and mayors, in reality the decision on who should get elected was made in Jakarta.

Of course, the law was not without its problems, and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, its application has been rather erratic. Both the Megawati and Gus Dur administrations appeared to be aiming at scaling back or retrenching the transfer of power from the center to the regions, citing

numerous irregularities in the transfer,⁴¹ as well as asserting that many of the regions were actually not ready for a devolution of power.⁴² Megawati's Ministry of Home Affairs even started its order of business by declaring that the law would be revised.⁴³ Eventually, the chief architect of the regional autonomy law, Ryaas Rasyid, resigned from his post in Gus Dur's administration in early 2001, citing differences of opinion with the president over the application of that law.⁴⁴ The proponents of regional autonomy argued that its chaotic appearance was due to the half-heartedness of the traditionalist, and later the nationalist, governments in its application.⁴⁵ The chief proponent of the law argued that in order to facilitate a smooth transfer of authority, the government needed to issue 197 decrees covering all details of the transfer. Not one has been produced by either the Gus Dur or Megawati administrations. These proponents even charged that the nationalist and traditionalist leaders were reluctant to lose their authority as power-holders in the central government to the regions. Whatever the end result may be of this debate, the issue of regional autonomy will most likely remain contentious and will probably be one of the most complicated issues facing Indonesia in the future. But at the very least,

⁴¹ For a detailed account of the irregularities in regional autonomy, consult Soengeng Sarjadi Syndicated, Centre for Political Studies (2001) *Otonomi: Potensi Masa Depan Republik Indonesia* (Autonomy: The Future Potentials of the Republic of Indonesia), Jakarta: Gramedia.

⁴² "Mendagri: Sebagian Besar Daerah Belum Siap Otonomi" (Most of the Regions are not Ready for Autonomy), in *Kompas*, December 16, 2000.

⁴³ "Baru Berusia Setahun, UU No. 22 dan 25 Direvisi" (Only One Year-Old, Laws no. 22 and 25 are Revised), in *Kompas*, August 31, 2000.

⁴⁴ "Tinggal Gelanggang Usai Lebaran" (Leaving the Arena after Ied-ul-Fitr), in *Kontan*, December 11, 2000.

⁴⁵ "Otonomi Daerah Digarap Setengah Hati" (Works on Regional Autonomy Half-hearted), in *Rakyat Merdeka*, September 25, 2000.

the law on regional autonomy has indeed opened up a new avenue of democratization in Indonesia in terms of a diffusion of power.

STATE FOUNDATION

Throughout the history of the republic, the modernist Muslims have steadfastly advocated Islam as the state ideology. The oft-cited ground for this stance rests with the demographical statistics. For them, the logical consequence of having a Muslim majority state is to have Islam as the state foundation. They reject the notion of religious differences between the *santri* and the *abangan*. They argue that rather than having differences of faith, the *abangan* are merely in the initial stages of Islamic awareness. The presence of an Islamic state, then, has been perceived as an efficient tool to bring the sense of faith of all Muslim Indonesians to the higher stages. In a secular state such a function would be less effective. Furthermore, there is a profound belief among the Muslim leaders that secularism will lead to the destruction of the society, because a secular state does not have a firm basis upon which to establish acceptable norms and morality.⁴⁶

The zeal for an Islamic state can also be explained using a politico-cultural perspective. The modernists are predominantly *seberang*-based, and the *seberang* possess the qualities of being open, direct, and individualistic. They are also not overly concerned about the quest for societal harmony. Differences, the modernists believe, should be confronted head on, rather than avoided. The Javanese stereotype of the *seberang* is of their being *kasar* (rude)

⁴⁶ Nasution, *op.cit.*, pp. 107-108.

and conflict-prone. As such, their perceptions of democracy tend to be based on the ideas conducive to open political competition and majoritarianism. For the modernists, "democracy" is first and foremost about the rights of the largest number, in other words, majoritarianism, where the winners take all and the minority succumbs to the majority's will. However, as will be seen in this section, this stance is variable, depending largely on the political structure within which the modernists find themselves operating. The modernists' position tends to swing like a pendulum between strict majoritarianism and accommodation.

As described in the previous chapter, debate on the state foundation started taking place even before Indonesia gained its independence. The debate in 1940 between Sukarno, a nationalist leader, and Natsir, a modernist, signified that the issue would divide Indonesians throughout their history. Natsir believed that there should be no differentiation between the nationalist and religious movements, because Islamic movements in Indonesia were also nationalist, aspiring to get rid of colonialism and to achieve an independent Indonesia. In fact, the establishment of a number of nationalist pro-independence movements, such as Budi Utomo, was initially seen by the modernists as sectarian, due to the predominantly Javanese membership of these organizations in their initial stages, whereas membership in the Islamic organizations tended to cut across ethnic lines.⁴⁷ Islam was thus seen as the *raison d'être* for the movement to achieve a sovereign statehood.

Natsir also argued that Islam provides a comprehensive set of values, encompassing virtually all aspects of human social interaction, including

⁴⁷ Anwar Harjono (1995) *Indonesia Kita* (Our Indonesia), Jakarta: Gema Insani, p. 210.

statecraft. Islam knows no separation between the church and the state. According to a renowned Islamic scholar from Al Azhar University in Egypt, Syeikh Mahmud Syaltut, Islam is “*din wa dawlah*” (a religion as well as a state).⁴⁸ Therefore, secularism is a strange concept for Muslims, one that was virtually unknown to them until the arrival of the Western powers in the Near and Middle East, and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey.⁴⁹ For the modernists, who were inspired by the reformist movement in the Middle East, secularism is associated with the defeat of Islam. According to Natsir:

“Islam, different from other religions, has a number of provisions relating to state and criminal laws, and some of these provisions also regulate social interaction. They are all inseparable parts of the religion of Islam itself.”⁵⁰

Furthermore, in the debate with Sukarno, Natsir attacked the nationalists’ rejection of Islam as the state foundation. According to him, the fear of an Islamic state among the minority groups was exaggerated and unbalanced because it did not address the concerns of the majority groups. The Muslims had the right to be ruled by Islamic law sanctioned by the state. Therefore, Natsir concluded in majoritarian terms that to deny the Muslims, as the majority group, such an opportunity was undemocratic and *dhalim* (an Islamic concept that means approximately “cruel”).

⁴⁸ Ulil Abshar-Abdalla (2000) “Emoh’ Negara: Menuju Paradigma ‘Gerakan Sosial’” (Reject the State: Toward A “Social Movement”), in Abdul Mun’im D.Z. (2000) *Islam di Tengah Arus Transisi* (Islam Amidst the Transition Stream), Jakarta: Kompas, pp. 13-20.

⁴⁹ Armstrong, *op.cit.*, especially Part 5.

⁵⁰ M. Natsir (1973) *Capita Selecta* (Selected Major Works), Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, p. 461.

This debate carried on to the *Konstituante* in the second half of the 1950s, where both the modernists (and to some extent the traditionalists at this time) and the secular nationalists basically took and elaborated on the positions held by Sukarno and Natsir one and a half a decades earlier. The polarization in this state body was clear. The modernist as well as the traditionalist Muslims⁵¹ fought vigorously for an Islamic state. Equally vigorous were the arguments made by the nationalists, as well as the communists, socialists, and the minority groups. The split along the *aliran* line seemed clear. However, the political constellation in the parliament was quite different. Here, the modernists showed that they were not too ideological but rather pragmatic. They were able to see past differences and cooperate with others, especially in the formation of governments. The modernist cabinets in this parliamentary democracy period (1950 – 1959) almost always included members of minority group parties. Natsir was said to be on especially cordial terms with I.J. Kasimo, the leader of *Partai Katolik*. The fact that Masyumi and PSI collaborated in PRRI/Permesta also suggested that members of the two parties were close to each other, despite the differences they might have on the crucial issue of the state foundation.

At one point during this period, Natsir even appeared to be shying away from an all-out demand for an Islamic foundation for the state and seemed to be condoning Pancasila. In a speech before the Pakistan Institute of World Affairs in 1952, he stated:

“There is no doubt that Pakistan is an Islamic country because of its Muslim population and the fact that Islam is the religion of the

⁵¹ At this juncture, the traditionalists still advocated Islam as the state foundation. This position would subsequently change, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

state. Indonesia is also an Islamic country, because Islam is the religion of its people, even though our constitution does not mention Islam as the religion of the state. Nevertheless, Indonesia never dismisses religion from its state system. It even places monotheistic belief in one God at the highest place in Pancasila – the five principles held as the ethical, moral, and spiritual foundation of the state and the nation.”⁵²

Suharto’s New Order continued Sukarno’s policy of alienating the modernists from the national political landscape. The modernists saw several government policies made by the regime, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, as particularly offensive to the Muslims. Those decades saw the unprecedented rise of non-Muslim, mainly Christian and Catholic, officers in both the civilian and military branches of the government. There were complaints from several Muslim officers that their chances for promotions and educational scholarships were made difficult. Accompanying this were government policies such as the ban on wearing *jilbab* (head cover) in public schools. But probably the most controversial policy was the formal ideologization of Pancasila through the *azas tunggal* (sole foundation) requirement. According to this policy, every social and political organization in the country should acknowledge Pancasila as its only foundation. Many Muslims saw this as a ploy by the government to decimate the electoral chances of opposition political parties, especially the Muslim-based PPP, which at that point had seen a steady rise of votes during the elections in 1977 and 1982. While the nationalists and to some extent the traditionalists accepted this policy quite readily, the modernists were resistant.⁵³

⁵² Mohammad Natsir (1954) Some Observations Concerning the Role of Islam in National and International Affairs, Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asian Program; Kamaruzzaman (2001) Relasi Islam dan Negara: Perspektif Modernis dan Fundamentalis (The Relations between Islam and the State: Modernist and Fundamentalist Perspectives), Magelang: IndonesiaTera, p. 66.

⁵³ Schwarz, *op.cit.*, pp. 172-173; Ramage, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-39.

During this early New Order period, a number of fringe groups, many of which were either members of or related to the Islamic modernism movement, carried out a number of extremist acts, including several terrorist actions. These acts included the bombing of Borobudur in Central Java, one of the largest Buddhist temples in the world; the bombing of a branch of Bank Central Asia, Indonesia's largest private bank owned by Liem Sioe Liong, an ethnic Chinese tycoon and close friend of the Suharto family; and the hijacking of a Garuda airplane, known as the Woyla incident.

The government's reaction to this rise of extremism in the 1980s was heavy-handed. This decade saw what turned out to be the bloodiest series of armed repressions that the Indonesian government had ever carried out against Islamic extremism. For example, in the incident of Tanjung Priok in 1984, the military opened fire at people protesting the *azas tunggal* (sole principle of Pancasila) policy, causing hundreds of casualties. Several other incidents also took place in Lampung, Nipah in Madura, and other areas.

The restrictions on access to active political participation hardened the positions of some modernist politicians, especially those from the old Masyumi family, known as the *Keluarga Besar Bulan Bintang* (big family of the Crescent and Stars – Masyumi's party symbol). Soon after Sukarno's downfall, when the New Order regime crushed any hope for reinstatement of Masyumi, many former Masyumi politicians, including Natsir, set up a *dakwah* (religious predication) institution, known as DDII (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* – Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication). While officially, DDII was a social institution, it was clear from the outset that Natsir and his Masyumi colleagues

viewed it as a substitute to Masyumi. Therefore, it has a strong political flavor in its activities.⁵⁴ In Natsir's own words:

“Politics and predication cannot be separated ... In the old time, we preached through politics, now we do politics through predication ... I feel that DDII is not inferior to politics. Politics without predication is sure to fail. More than that, I cannot remain silent.”⁵⁵

Realizing that the struggle to make Islam the state foundation was not fruitful in the face of an authoritarian nationalist regime, these modernists adopted a different approach. Throughout the New Order, especially prior to the establishment of ICMI in 1990, DDII continuously raised the issue of Islam being under threat. On one hand, the threat was pictured to come from the nationalist military, which was seen as trying to elevate the position of Pancasila and reduce the role of Islam in society. On the other hand, the minority groups were viewed as providing another threat. DDII voiced the loudest concern among the Muslim groups over alleged Christian and Catholic missionary works, especially in Java, known as the “*Kristenisasi*” (Christianization) phenomenon. Some DDII members also attacked the positions taken by other Muslim leaders, including modernist-leaning ones such as Nurcholis Madjid and Dawam Rahardjo, by branding them “too tolerant, too humanistic, and too theologically liberal.”⁵⁶

In an effort to win greater support for its cause, especially from the younger generation, some of the more conservative DDII members set up an

⁵⁴ Hefner, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-107.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Dwi Purwoko (2002) *Islam Konstitusional vs. Islam Radikal* (Constitutional versus Radical Islam), Depok: Permata Artistika Kreasi, p. 39.

⁵⁶ Hefner, *op.cit.*, pp. 109-110.

affiliate organization in 1987, known as KISDI (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam* – Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World). Under the pretext of showing solidarity with the plight of Muslims worldwide, such as in Palestine, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kashmir, KISDI was able to mobilize support, and thus engaged in political and value socialization.⁵⁷

Value socialization and attacks on the secular and minority groups were also conducted extensively through DDII's publication, *Media Dakwah*. During the early New Order years, the modernists still had a print newspaper media, *Abadi*. But it was banned in 1974, after being alleged to have been too outspoken in its reporting of the anti-corruption riot on the occasion of the Japanese Prime Minister's visit to Jakarta on January 15 of that year, known as the *Malari* (*Lima Belas Januari* – January 15) incident. *Media Dakwah* was seen as the substitute for *Abadi*, but had limited circulation because it was considered an internal organization publication, rather than a mass media paper. Nonetheless, *Media Dakwah's* message grew more radical and hard-line with each passing day without meaningful participation of the modernists in the political process.⁵⁸

Most of the activities of both DDII and KISDI were peaceful, and most of their leaders shunned violence. There were no credible direct links between the militant groups responsible for acts of violence in the 1980s with these

⁵⁷ Some in the DDII-KISDI's circle might have been genuinely concerned with the plight of Muslims worldwide. The information technology provided a means for an up-close and personal portrayal of events in the Muslim world that affected many conservative modernists on the personal level. Additionally, the idea of the Muslim brotherhood (pan-Islamism) was enthusiastically embraced by the proponents of this circle.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113.

conservative modernists. However, it was evident that their message had become radicalized and even less tolerant. Political exclusion and alienation had transformed these former Masyumi activists from figures willing to cooperate with others, even with those holding different political ideologies, to people whose political and social stance was hard-line and seemingly uncompromising.

The *rapprochement* between the nationalist Suharto regime and the modernist Muslims, marked by the establishment of ICMI, reopened the door of political participation for this *aliran*. Consequently, opposition from groups such as DDII and KISDI was greatly reduced. The view in this quarter toward Suharto was transformed from animosity to support, albeit limited. In the words of Ahmad Sumargono, one of KISDI's leaders,

“From 1966 to 1990, Suharto was the enemy because he marginalized Muslims. After 1990, Suharto became more conducive to Muslim wishes so we supported him.”⁵⁹

As a result, these groups became significantly less vociferous concerning the demand for an Islamic state foundation, although by no means had they given up on this issue. The tacit alliance between Suharto and the modernists could be seen at best as a temporary and interest-laden, rather than an ideological, alliance. Suharto was looking for an alternative power base as opposition from some nationalist military officers became evident, while the modernists were always on the lookout for any opening in the political system, without abandoning the goal of replacing Pancasila with Islam.

The temporary nature of the alliance between Suharto and the modernists became apparent when *Reformasi* brought about the full opening up of the political system. Realizing that the issue of the state foundation was no

⁵⁹ Quoted in Schwarz, *op.cit.*, pp. 330-331.

longer a taboo topic of discussion, some modernists jumped at the opportunity by re-launching the issue of Islam and the state. However, the locus of the debate was slightly transformed from the one in the 1950s. This time around, rather than dwelling on the question of Pancasila versus Islam, the debate revolved around a more practical question: whether or not the Jakarta Charter needed to be reincorporated in the constitution. For the first time since the issue was debated at the turn of last century, the modernists were divided on this issue. The division among the modernists appeared to be the product of education and economic development, the hallmark of the New Order development programs, which had given rise to a new middle class. Many modernist (as well as traditionalist) scholars received their education from various tertiary educational institutions in the West. Most were sent on government scholarships aided by the development assistance agencies of various Western countries.

The proposal to reintroduce the Jakarta Charter into the constitution did not necessarily mean that Pancasila would be supplanted by Islam as the state foundation. In fact, there had apparently been a near consensus among all parties in the *Reformasi* era that constitutional change would be carried out through amendments, rather than by a complete rewriting. This amendment process would target only the body of the constitution itself, but not the preamble, which contains a reference to Pancasila. Thus, the position of Pancasila was rather safe. However, it is important to note that, pragmatically, for the proponents of Islam in the *Reformasi* era, what seemed to matter most was the application of Islamic law (*syari'ah*) in Indonesia, rather than completely supplanting the Pancasila state foundation. By reintroducing the

Jakarta Charter, they aimed at a *fait accompli* compelling the state to enforce Islamic law, while at the same time keeping Pancasila as the official state foundation.

The modernists appeared to be divided along the fault line of different educational backgrounds. In broad terms, the more conservative activists arose from the Islamic *dakwah* activities launched by DDII and KISDI during the New Order era, while the more liberal modernists received their education from Western institutions. On the mass social organization level, Muhammadiyah, chaired by Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif, and Paramadina, a relatively new *dakwah* and educational institution catering to the urban middle and upper classes, set up by Nurcholis Madjid (Cak Nur), could be seen as being the front line of the moderates. Both Ma'arif and Cak Nur received their doctorates from the University of Chicago, working under the supervision of Fazlur Rahman, a world-renowned liberal Islamic scholar. The DDII, KISDI, and other new organizations established during the *Reformasi* era, such as FPI (*Front Pembela Islam* - Islamic Defender Front) and KAMMI (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia* - Indonesian Muslim Students Action Front), were the prominent conservative organizations. On the party level, the PPP and the PBB (due to its link with DDII-KISDI) represented the more conservative line, while PAN, with its Muhammadiyah's link, the more moderate stance. The PK's position was a bit ambivalent. On one hand, its association with PAN as a junior partner in parliament's *Fraksi Reformasi* (Reform Faction) made it more moderate, and many of PK's activists could be considered as "protégés" of PAN leaders,

especially Amien Rais.⁶⁰ But on the other hand, PK's grassroots links with conservative organizations, such as KAMMI, made it tremendously difficult for PK to stay moderate.⁶¹

The position adopted by the conservatives in the debate was basically similar to the one held by the modernists in the pre-New Order era. This proportionalist-majoritarian position asserted Islamic law as a natural and logical consequence for the predominantly Muslim country. The rights of the minority groups would be safeguarded and the minorities should therefore not attempt to obstruct the implementation of *syariah*.⁶² What seemed interesting was the position adopted by the liberal modernists in this debate. For the first time in the history of Islamic modernism in Indonesia, there was a recognition among some moderate modernists of the differences in religious practices between the *seberang*-based *santri*, the Java-based *abangan*, and the Java-based *santri*. In an interview with a Jakarta daily, Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif, for instance, argued that Islam came to the archipelago through the process of acculturation, and assimilation with existing local cultures. The reactions from the locals towards Islam varied from place to place, resulting in the division of political cultures in Indonesia (as has been the main theme of this thesis). According to Ma'arif, while the modernists might have no difficulty with and even demand the implementation of Islamic law, the other two groups,

⁶⁰ Interview with Irwan Prayitno, a member of parliament from *Fraksi Reformasi* and a functionary of PK's central board, Singapore, July 2002.

⁶¹ On the PK-KAMMI-Amien Rais links, see Damanik, *op.cit.*, pp. 189-197.

⁶² Interview with Eggi Sujana, a prominent modernist activist, Jakarta, August 2001. See also Eggi Sujana, "*Piagam Jakarta dan Logisitas Berlakunya Syari'at Islam di Indonesia*" (The Jakarta Charter and the Logic of Islamic Law Implementation in Indonesia), in *Civility*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 2001 – January 2002.

especially the *abangan*, clearly rejected it. He also acknowledged that: “the number of Muslims who are syncretic and *abangan* is quite large.” Finally, he asserted that if Islamic law was to be implemented in Indonesia, the country would be divided, not only along the confessional lines (Muslims – non-Muslims), but also along an intra-confessional divide (one Muslim group against another).⁶³

Responses to such an argument from the conservative modernists were typically dismissive of the differences in religious practices between groups of Muslims. Deliar Noer, for instance, responded to Ma’arif’s interview by pinpointing its weakness in arguing that such differences amounted to something fundamental. He asserted that such differences should be viewed in terms of different stages of awareness in Islamic faith. Acculturation, according to Noer, was not a thing of the past, but rather an ongoing process. The process of eradicating components of local practices was a slow but steady one. Eventually, if *dakwah* activities remained vigorous and were not impeded, all Indonesians would lead a *santri* life.⁶⁴

Indeed, Indonesian society had been undergoing a process of “*santri*-nization” since the 1980s and 1990s. After a decade of de-Islamization, the society underwent re-Islamization in earnest. Islamic greetings, which had been considered a sign of backwardness, now could be heard everywhere. Mosques were full on Friday prayers. The urban upper and middle classes, which previously had been indifferent toward Islam, now attended religious classes

⁶³ “*Pertimbangkan Dampak yang Akan Timbul*” (Think Carefully about the Likely Consequences), interview with A. Syafii Ma’arif, in *Republika*, August 23, 2000.

⁶⁴ Deliar Noer, “*Syariat Islam: Menanggapi Pendapat A. Syafii Ma’arif*” (Islamic Law: Response to the Argument of A. Syafii Ma’arif), in *Republika*, September 4, 2000.

held in four or five-star hotels. *Santri*-nization also meant that the public was more aware of its Islamic identity, which resulted in a higher degree of primordial or religious solidarity.

A survey conducted by the PPIM (*Pusat Penelitian Islam dan Masyarakat* – Center for Study of Islam and Society) of the State Islamic University in Jakarta in 2001 and 2002 demonstrated the inclination of average Indonesian Muslims toward greater Islamic assertiveness. The following entries appear to show such an inclination.

Table 1
Islamic Political Orientations among Indonesian Muslims

Questions	2001	2002
Agree that Islamic government, i.e. government based on the Qur'an and Sunnah under the leadership of Islamic authorities, such as <i>ulama</i> or <i>kiai</i> , is best for a country like ours	57.8%	67.0%
Agree that religion and the state should be separated	36.4%	NA
Agree that the state should require all Muslim men and women to abide by the <i>syariat</i> .	61.4%	70.8%
Agree that the ideals and struggle of Islamic movements or organizations (like Islamic Defenders Front, Laskar Jihad, Darul Islam, and others) to implement the <i>syariat</i> in the government and society must be supported.	46.4%	53.7%

Source: PPIM Survey, cited in R. William Liddle "New Patterns of Islamic Politics in Democratic Indonesia," in Asia Program Special Report, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, No. 110, April 2003, p. 9.

But moderates believed this phenomenon was not politically driven and had no political consequences. Rather, it was mainly a cultural and sociological phenomenon.⁶⁵ The general Indonesian Muslim public might be more pious in its religious practices and more aware of its Islamic identity, but its political behavior had hardly changed. This position seems to be confirmed by several opinion surveys that measured the attitudes of Indonesian Muslims toward the application of *syariah*. As a survey conducted by the Asia Foundation puts it:

“... attitudes to sharia and Islam among ordinary Indonesians ... seem ... more a matter of personal faith and private relations than a systemized political ideology.”⁶⁶

Additionally, the PPIM survey that confirmed the *santri*-nization direction of the Indonesian society above, demonstrated that only a minority of those who were polled thought that they should support Islamic parties, as can be seen in the table below:

⁶⁵ Seminar by Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, held by the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), Singapore, November 20, 2001; Azyumardi Azra, "The Megawati Presidency: Challenge of Political Islam", paper presented at Joint Public Forum on Indonesia, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, November 1, 2001; Abshar-Abdalla, *op.cit.*; Zuhairi Misrawi, "Titik Temu NU-Muhammadiyah dalam Piagam Jakarta: Mengutuhkan Gerakan Islam Kultural" (Converging Point between NU and Muhammadiyah in the Jakarta Charter: the Integrity of Islamic Cultural Movement) in *Civility*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 2001 – January 2002. A similar point was also made in interviews with Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, Singapore, November 2001, and with Azyumardi Azra, Vancouver, March 2003.

⁶⁶ "Indonesia: A Report on Public Opinion and the 2004 Elections," Qualitative Research Survey, *The Asia Foundation*, Jakarta, February 2003, p. 14.

Table 2
Orientations among Indonesian Muslims toward Islamic Parties

Questions	2001	2002
Agree that in the national election one should vote only for candidates who understand Islamic teachings and attempt to fight for their implementation in national politics	46.7%	46.1%
Agree that in the national election one should vote only for Islamic parties	22.6%	21.1%

Source: PPIM Survey, cited in R. William Liddle "New Patterns of Islamic Politics in Democratic Indonesia," in *Asia Program Special Report*, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, No. 110, April 2003, p. 9.

Similarly, a recent opinion poll showed that most Indonesians voters (53 percent) cannot identify differences between Islamic and other parties. Most of those who were polled (55 percent) also could not be certain as to what Islamic parties should do if they came to power.⁶⁷

The issue of the state foundation as well as the relations between Islam and the state has formed one of the most persistent issues in the history of the republic, and the likelihood is that it will remain contested and debated in the

⁶⁷ Figures taken from "Democracy in Indonesia: A Survey of the Indonesian Electorate 2003," *The Asia Foundation*, Jakarta, November 2003, pp. 96-98. A caveat should be attached to these and other opinion polls that have mushroomed in Indonesia since *Reformasi*. One of the most critical questions to be raised concerns the extent to which those polled represent the actual Indonesian electorate, in other words, how random are the samples? Many of these surveys made the urban middle-classes their target group, for obvious reasons of communication facilities and accessibility. This is not to mention the lack of sophistication on the part of the pollsters in terms of techniques. An article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 4, 2004, p. 19 said: "Political opinion surveys are notoriously unreliable in Indonesia, often coming up with wildly different results on the same topics." At the very least, we should approach the results of these polls with caution.

years to come. While the argument from both sides of the debate has hardly changed over the decades, it is interesting to note that the parties of proponents and opponents have shifted over time. In the pre-New Order era, the nationalists, supported by minority groups, were the main opponents of an Islamic state foundation, and the modernist and traditionalist Muslims were its proponents. But in the *Reformasi* era, not only the traditionalists (as shall be described in the next chapter), but also some of the figures and organizations within the movement of Islamic modernism itself, have shifted their positions and turned against the application of Islamic law sanctioned by the state.

CHAPTER 6

THE TRADITIONALIST MUSLIMS: THE FLEXIBLE HYBRIDS

The traditionalist Muslim segment, also referred to elsewhere in this thesis as the Javanese *santri*, is a hybrid *aliran*, combining the politico-cultural traits of the nationalists or Javanese *abangan*, and the modernist Muslims, or *seberang-santri*. The history of Islamic traditionalism can actually be traced back to the pre-Islamic era. Prior to the arrival of Islam in the archipelago and Java, Javanese society was divided into several functional classes. The rulers, also known as the *priyayi* class, usually lived in the *kraton* (palaces). The derivative of this class in Indonesia's *aliran* politics were the nationalists, as has been discussed previously. The *abangan* commoners also lent their support to secular nationalism, but were more prone to leftist ideas.¹ The third class was what Ben Anderson called "the ruler's critics."² This class was made up of teachers and students,³ living an esoteric way of life and tending to shy away from the mundane world. Usually the teachers and students, as well as their

¹ The PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* – Indonesian Communist Party), as well as the PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* – Indonesian National Party) with its "Marhaenism" (or to borrow Sukarno's term, socialism *a la* Indonesia), drew much of their support from this group.

² Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1972) "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," reprinted in Benedict R.O'G. Anderson (1990) Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 63-67.

³ Various names have been used to refer to these people. The teachers were known in pre-Islamic societies as "*begawan*," "*resi*," or "*ajar*," while the students as "*cantrik*." After the coming of Islam to Java, the teachers became known as "*kyai*" and the students "*santri*." Despite the change, the Islamic references remained locally rooted as these words were not Arabic in origin. See *ibid.*, p. 63.

families, live in compounds in rural areas, mainly in the eastern part of Java, most of which were separated from the general population. In these compounds, known as *pondok* or *pondok pesantren*,⁴ they interacted continuously in pedagogic and social terms. Education was not limited to classroom teaching. As a result, the teachers and students developed a strong bond.

This *intelligentsia* class maintained a critical posture toward the *priyayi*. Their separation from the general population can be seen as an effort to evade cooptation from the *kraton*. They provided views and lifestyles that were alternatives to the perceived worldliness and decadence of the courts, as well as the aloofness of the rulers. However, it is imperative to note that despite the differences, the traditionalists remained first and foremost Javanese, and therefore their institutions held fast to Javanese ideas and values. Life inside the *pesantren*, like that in the *kraton*, was ruled by a set of feudalistic traditions. Despite living together in the same compound, the separation and different social status of teachers and students were some of the most revered norms. The students were expected to remain obedient to and uncritical of the teachers at all times. They were also expected to defend the dignity of their teachers in the face of external challenges. The loyalty of the students towards their teachers was one of the prime values in these traditionalist institutions.

The arrival of Islam provided a new substance to this societal structure, but the structure itself remained largely unaltered. In the *priyayi* class, Mataram rulers almost readily changed their religious allegiance from Hinduism to Islam, without transforming the pattern of relationships between rulers and

⁴ Derivation from the word "*pe-santri-an*," meaning a place to study.

followers, and in most cases without changing the traditions of the courts. In the *pesantren*, Islamic creeds merely replaced the Indic religious values, without causing any meaningful alteration to the existing social structure, especially to the *kyai-santri* pattern of relationship. So while the modernist Muslims were known for their egalitarianism, and the arrival of Islam further enhanced this trait, the traditionalists maintained the feudalistic institutions, despite being influenced by the same religion.

The vanguard organization of Islamic traditionalism is the *Nahdatul Ulama* (NU). The NU was officially declared on January 31, 1926 in Surabaya.⁵ Its history has followed a path similar to that of the modernist Muslim organizations. The NU's founding fathers, such as *Kyai* Haji (K.H.)⁶ Hasyim Asyari, K.H. Mas Mansyur and K.H. Abdul Wahab Chasbullah, were Islamic clerics (*ulama*) studying in Mecca and other parts of the Middle East. Like many early proponents of Islamic reformism, they were influenced by and some were even members of *Sarekat Islam* (SI). In the 1910s, *Kyai* Mas Mansyur and *Kyai* Wahab set up and manned SI's representative branch in Mecca. Also similar to the path taken by the modernists with Muhammadiyah, upon their return to East Java these early traditionalists established two social and educational organizations: *Nahdatul Wathan* in 1914 and *Tashwirul Afkar* in 1918. Both

⁵ On the history of the NU, see A. Effendy Choirie (2002) *PKB Politik Jalan Tengah NU: Eksperimentasi Pemikiran Islam Inklusif dan Gerakan Kebangsaan Pasca Kembali ke Khittah 1926* (The PKB as the NU's Middle Road Politics: Experimentation of Inclusive Islamic and National Movement Thinking After the Return to the Oath of 1926), Jakarta: Pustaka Ciganjur, ch. 2; H. Rozikin Daman (2001) *Membidik NU: Dilema Percaturan Politik NU Pasca Khittah* (Aiming at the NU: the Dilemma of the NU's Political Game After the Oath), Yogyakarta: Gama Media, ch. 2.

⁶ *Kyai* Haji (K.H.) is the common honorific title of NU's *ulama*. Among the *santri*, some *ulama* are also addressed as "Gus," as a symbol of reverence.

organizations became part and parcel of Indonesia's early Islamic nationalist movement and its advocacy of independence, spearheaded by SI.

But it soon became apparent that there existed a gulf in the understanding and practice of Islam between the traditionalists and the modernists. Having adopted Islam in place of the previous traditions without changing the social structure, the traditionalists, albeit more pious than the *abangan*, practiced Islam in a syncretic manner. For instance, for traditionalist *kyai* and *santri*, the highest stage in the knowledge-attainment process lies in what is known as *ngelmu makripat* (the secrets of divinity), in which the individual *santri* is said to be able to communicate and interact with the spiritual world.⁷ The modernists, as explained in the previous chapter, aimed to eradicate such practices by branding them as irrational, deviant, and superstitious. Another point of contention between these two Islamic *aliran* revolved around the issue of the *pesantren* institution, especially the social educational relationship between *kyai* and *santri*. The modernists viewed the almost-divine position of *kyai* in the eyes of their *santri* as presenting another deviation (known as *taqlid*) from the teaching of Islam, at least as viewed from the egalitarian modernist perspective.⁸

As a result of these differences, tensions between the traditionalists and modernists had existed since the founding of their respective institutions in the colonial era. In fact, the very establishment of the NU as an amalgamation of

⁷ Anderson (1972), *op.cit.*, p. 55.

⁸ On the theological differences between the traditionalists and modernists, see Hendro Prasetyo, *et.al.* (2002) *Islam & Civil Society: Pandangan Muslim Indonesia* (Islam and the Civil Society: the Views of Indonesian Muslims), Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, ch. 2.

traditionalist institutions could be seen as an effort to counter the purification campaign of the modernists. It was also aimed initially to represent the aspirations of traditionalist Muslims to the outside world, most notably to the Saudi Arabian royal family.⁹ Despite the differences, the two *aliran* remained committed, at least for the time being, to the cause of Islam and Indonesia's independence. When the MIAI, Masyumi's predecessor, was established in 1937, the NU was one of its constituent organizations. When Masyumi was established in collaboration with the Japanese colonial government in 1943, the NU also came along.¹⁰ Even after independence, when Masyumi was declared as a political party, the NU remained an integral part. But tension was growing within the party as the traditionalists saw what they viewed as modernist dominance, especially in the party's central leadership. A split between the two *aliran* then became inevitable. In 1952, just three years prior to Indonesia's first election, the traditionalists announced that they left Masyumi and declared the NU to be a political party.¹¹

As will be seen next, this conflict and cooperation pattern of relationship between the traditionalists and the other *aliran* influenced the traditionalists' perceptions of the fundamental issues of the state. Being a hybrid *aliran*, certain parts of the traditionalists' political platform reflect similarities with the nationalists, while the others with the modernists. However, it is important to

⁹ Choirie, *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁰ K.H. Hasyim Asyari, the NU leader, even served as Masyumi's first chief executive. See Harry J. Benda (1958) The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam Under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945, The Hague: W. van Hoeve, p. 151.

¹¹ On the NU's withdrawal from Masyumi, see Daman, *ibid.*, pp. 94-103; Choirie, *ibid.*, pp. 77-83.

note that this *aliran* is the most flexible and dynamic one in its development. So, over time, its political position has shifted, and along with it, its position relative to the other *aliran*.

LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL COMPETITION

Being part of Javanese political culture, the traditionalist belief in leadership is deeply autocratic. This *aliran* shares the concept of leadership with its *abangan* brethren. For the traditionalists, legitimate leaders ought not to be contested and their rule should be adhered to obediently. *Kyai* are the sole leaders in the *pesantren* and *santri* are expected to abide by the rules set out by the *kyai* at all times. The social structure in the Javanese *santri* society is at least as hierarchical as, if not more than, that of the *abangan* society. The *kyai* are seen as occupying the top ladder of the pyramidal structure, due to the level of knowledge they possess in the largely illiterate rural setting in which many of the traditionalist institutions are situated.¹² A *kyai* even argued that for *kyai* there is no alternative to being authoritative and, if needed, to apply a rule with an iron-fist, in order to ensure that the *santri* follow the proper *pesantren* procedure.¹³ And since *pesantren* are not merely educational, but also social,

¹² Anderson (1972), *op.cit.*, pp. 57-58.

¹³ Interview with K.H. Syukron Makmun, chairman of the PNU (*Partai Nahdatul Ummat* – Ummah Awakening Party, a traditionalist party), Jakarta, October 2001. A similar point was made in an interview with Hermawan Sulisty, a researcher at LIPI (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia* – Indonesian Academy of Sciences), who was also close with some traditionalist figures, Jakarta, October 2001. See also Robert W. Hefner (2000) Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 35.

economic, and political institutions for the traditionalist society, this type of approach permeates into the belief system of the traditionalists.

There is also a clear demarcation between leaders and followers, with the leaders playing the role of benevolent patrons or parents in a familial setting, and the followers that of the children. The notion of benevolence is even more salient in the traditionalist conception than in the nationalist one. Living together in the same compound means the *kyai* are responsible for the welfare and well-being of their *santri*. While the *kyai* maintain the livelihood and sustenance of their *pesantren* by receiving "contributions" from the *santri*'s families and the local population where the *pesantren* are located, they are pictured as loving, responsible, and skillful parents as they distribute the resources for the *santri* and for the *pesantren*'s operation. This structure creates a higher sense of solidarity, where the *kyai* are perceived as benevolent leaders in the eyes of their followers. In return, the unwavering loyalty of the *santri* toward their *kyai* comes to be seen as a natural consequence. Such a loyalty is a lifetime commitment for the *santri*. It does not end when they graduate.

The traditionalists also share the nationalist conception of power as an ascribed rather than attained quality. Many influential *kyai* are descendants of powerful *kyai* of the previous generation. Although *kyai* always have to prove their superiority in front of their *santri* to win obedience, it is usually the fact that some of them are descendants of powerful *kyai* that make the difference in the level of reverence the *santri* show them.¹⁴ K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus

¹⁴ Ina Slamet-Velsink (1994) "Traditional Leadership in Rural Java," in Hans Antlöv and Sven Cederroth, eds. (1994) Leadership on Java: Gentle Hints, Authoritarian Rule, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, pp. 49-50.

Dur), for instance, is the son of K.H. Wahid Hasyim, NU's leader in the Sukarno era and minister of religious affairs in several cabinets. Wahid Hasyim himself, was the son of one of NU's founding fathers, K.H. Hasyim Asyari. While this conception does not automatically lead to the conclusion that these leaders are autocratic, the fact that power is viewed as something that is granted to them almost by birthright rather than as a mandate from the people through electoral processes yields the perception that public accountability is irrelevant.

Despite the similarities in politico-cultural outlook, the traditionalists are different from the nationalists on at least two counts. First, contrary to the secluded manner of the *abangan* rulers, *kyai* are open and more direct in their relationships with their *santri*. In the common compound of most *pesantren*, where *kyai*, *santri* and sometimes their families live side-by-side, social interaction in daily activities is unavoidable and even somewhat intense. During gatherings usually held late at night until the wee hours in the morning, *kyai* and *santri* sometimes exchange jokes and laugh heartily. Some *santri* even use this opportunity to criticize and even make jokes about their *kyai* indirectly, using parables and witticism. Such an atmosphere could not be found in the sacred, almost magical ambiance of the *kraton*. Hence, in social interaction, *kyai* do not detach themselves from their followers, and may be perceived as more relaxed and approachable in their leadership style. This is similar to the *seberang*, even though in substance, the notion of leadership remains Javanese.

Second, the traditionalists are more receptive to competition and tend not to shy away from conflictual situations, as the Javanese *abangan* are inclined to do. Their zest for a competitive environment may not be as profound

as the modernists'. This is due to the quest for unity and harmony that occupies the center of Javanese political culture in which the traditionalists are also embedded. But, being on the fringe of the cultural heartland dominated by the *abangan*, as well as being conventionally positioned as the rulers' critics, the traditionalists take up the challenge of competition without hesitation when the opportunity arises.

It is quite difficult to trace the traditionalist' political belief in action throughout Indonesia's recent history. This is partly due to the fact that in the early years, the traditionalists were part of the Islamic political force, led by Masyumi. Even after the Islamic split, the traditionalists never had the opportunity to take top state leadership positions, due to their relatively smaller number compared to the other *aliran*.¹⁵ As was the case with the modernists during the New Order, opportunities for political participation by the traditionalists were also severely limited. Only during Gus Dur's administration can the politico-cultural traits of the traditionalists on the issues of leadership and political competition be examined.

However, there was an episode in Indonesia's history in which the traditionalists' traits can be analyzed, albeit not in the leadership position. As

¹⁵ See Graph 8 in Chapter 3 for an illustration of the respective strengths of the three *aliran*. The traditionalists are the smallest of the *aliran* despite the claims put out by the NU leaders that their organization is the largest in the country in terms of membership, claiming to have around 30 million followers. But it is important to note that such a claim could have included non-voting age persons (under 17 years old). Taftazani, an Islamic scholar interviewed in Jakarta in September 2002, admitted that the NU's claim was somewhat exaggerated. Another important point to note is that the political preferences of the *santri* mass nearly always follows that of their *kyai*, and that many conservative *kyai* who were disillusioned with Gus Dur's liberal approach to Islam, opted not to vote for the PKB in the 1999 election but for some other smaller traditionalist-oriented parties, such as the PKU (*Partai Kebangkitan Umat* - Ummah Awakening Party) led by Salahuddin Wahid, Gus Dur's uncle. A number of *kyai* also remained in the PPP.

has been described in the previous chapters, Guided Democracy marked the eclipse of modernist involvement in the political process and conversely the rise of the *abangan*. Since the Islamic split in 1952, the NU has maintained an equidistance from the other two *aliran*. While it was virtually in the same camp as the modernists in supporting Islam as the state foundation, the NU was leaning closer to the nationalists in terms of political competition and control. The NU's support for the "*Konsepsi Presiden*" that outlined the plan for Guided Democracy is illustrative. Initially the NU, like the other Islamic parties, rejected the *Konsepsi*. But it later changed its position, especially after some of its leaders held a discussion with Sukarno. NU adopted an accommodationist approach to respond to the President's growing assertiveness and populism. Its leaders regretted Masyumi's "non-compromising" position *vis-à-vis* the president and the leftist parties, which resulted in the inability of Ali Sastroamidjojo, a PNI leader, to sustain a "rainbow" cabinet in line with the president's *Konsepsi* (known as the second Ali cabinet) between 1956 and 1957. The NU regarded the failure of civilian politicians to form a durable cabinet as a legitimate pretext for Sukarno's authoritarianism.¹⁶

Even prior to that, the seeds of the NU's proximity to Sukarno had been sown in the run up to the 1955 election. In 1954, a meeting of *ulama*, led by K.H. Masykur, the minister of religious affairs from the NU, had decided to grant Sukarno the title of "*waliyul amri ad-dharuri bi al-syaukah*" (a legitimate leader). This title was seen as legitimation of Sukarno's position, not only as the leader of the state but also of Muslims, and therefore Muslims were bound by Islamic law to follow the dictates of the president. The modernists rejected the

¹⁶ Choirie, *op.cit.*, pp. 86-89.

granting of this title, and this issue became one of the most contested topics during the 1955 election.

Ultimately, the NU's affinity for Sukarno came full circle when the NU became virtually the sole representative of Islam in Sukarno's conception of Nasakom (*Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis* – Nationalist, Religion, Communism). As described in Chapter 4, this conception is consistent with Sukarno's politico-cultural belief seeking unity and harmony among different and conflicting political forces. While Masyumi was disbanded by Sukarno, the NU became an active player throughout the Guided Democracy period.¹⁷

The NU's gradual acceptance of Sukarno's authoritarianism can be explained from at least three different perspectives. First, NU's politicians themselves defended their participation in Guided Democracy as a tactical move to counter the growing power of the communists, and to ensure that Islam remained a relevant factor in politics. According to NU's *ulama*, such an action is grounded in Islamic thought (*fiqh*) of "*akhaффud dlararain*," which essentially means choosing the lesser evil, as well as another creed that says avoiding an incoming danger should take precedence over doing good deeds.¹⁸

Second, modernist politicians tended to see this accommodationist approach as political opportunism. The NU was seen as putting the interests of its own organization first, over and above the interests of the general Muslim population and the religion.

¹⁷ Hefner, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

¹⁸ M. Ali Haidar (1998) *Nahdlatul Ulama dan Islam di Indonesia: Pendekatan Fiqh dalam Politik* (Nahdlatul Ulama and Islam in Indonesia: *Fiqh* Approach to Politics, Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, p. 164; Choirie, *op.cit.*, p. 89; Daman, *op.cit.*, p. 124, fn. 179.

The third explanation seems to be the most plausible. The “coalition” between the NU and Sukarno was based on similarities in their politico-cultural background. Both shared a paternalistic point of view regarding society and statecraft. Sukarno viewed himself as the father of the nation, and the public as his children. Such a view also defines the social relationship in many *pesantren* between *kyai* and *santri*.¹⁹ Both the nationalists and the traditionalists appreciate a traditional style of leadership rather than the rational, modern type, as practiced in Western democracies.²⁰ In the words of an Indonesian scholar:

“... (I)n many respects, the NU politicians were closer to the secular nationalists (the PNI elite) than to the Masyumi elite who had Western educational backgrounds. This was because the NU, similar to the PNI, had a strong base in Java, and was embedded with Javanese traditional values.²¹

The rise of Gus Dur to the presidency in 1999 provided an excellent opportunity for examining traditionalist leadership traits. For the first time in the history of the republic, a traditionalist had an opportunity to be the supreme leader. It is important to note that Gus Dur came to presidency neither by design nor through a general election process. Until a recent constitutional amendment, Indonesia’s presidents have not been elected directly by the electorate, but rather by the MPR, the highest state body.²²

¹⁹ A. Syafii Ma’arif (1996) *Islam and Politik: Teori Belah Bambu Masa Demokrasi Terpimpin* (Islam and Politics: Bamboo Splitting Theory During the Era of Guided Democracy), Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, pp. 88-90.

²⁰ Martin van Bruinessen (1997) *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru* (NU: Tradition, Power Relations, and the Search for A New Discourse), Yogyakarta, LKiS, p. 70.

²¹ Daman, *op.cit.*, pp. 108-109, translation mine.

²² The fourth amendment to the 1945 Constitution passed in the MPR’s annual session in 2001 ruled that the president and the vice president will be elected directly in

Around two-thirds of the MPR's membership is composed of parliament (DPR) members.

Indonesia's elections, held once every five years, only elect members of parliament. In the run up to the 1999 MPR session that would elect Indonesia's first president of the *Reformasi* era, two strong candidates emerged. Habibie was nominated by Golkar, and Megawati by the PDI-P. In the 1999 parliamentary election, the PDI-P emerged with the largest number of seats in the parliament, and hence the MPR. But it did not command a majority, so it needed to ally with other parties in order to secure Megawati's presidential bid. The PKB, the traditionalist party in the *Reformasi* era, was initially its most likely ally. And PKB's chief, Matori Abdul Djilil, had voiced publicly his party's support for Megawati. Golkar was the second largest faction in parliament. Many political forecasts predicted that Habibie would use his modernist credentials to garner support from the modernist parties. This was even bolstered by the fact that Golkar, under Akbar Tanjung, had become more modernist in its political leaning, because of Akbar's HMI-link.

The tension between the two opposing sides ran high. The candidates' supporters launched numerous public demonstrations and political maneuvers to undermine each other. But the general public's perception was that both candidates had shortcomings. Megawati was seen by the Muslims as lacking Islamic credentials.²³ Some even suspected she would marginalize Islam if she

general elections. Indonesia's first direct presidential election is slated to take place in 2004.

²³ Some modernist leaders, especially in some parties of the *Poros Tengah*, even launched a debatable theological argument that Muslims should not elect women as leaders. But as later events proved, such an argument was highly political and meant to obstruct Megawati's path to the presidency. After Gus

came to power, and would provide leeway for the minority groups to reassert themselves in the national political arena. The modernists, who were content with the achievements of the past decade, were especially wary about this. Habibie, on the other hand, despite having some Islamic or modernist credentials, was still largely viewed, even by some modernists, as Suharto's *protégé*, hence a holdover from the past.

The politicians in the MPR at that time toyed with the idea of finding an alternative candidate. Amien Rais came up with the figure of Gus Dur, who as well as being the traditionalist leader, was also perceived as a pro-democracy figure. Initially the PKB, especially Matori, was reluctant to support Gus Dur's bid, but eventually the coalition of modernist parties of the *Poros Tengah* (Middle Axis) and the PKB, as well as some members of Golkar, which at this time had lost its candidate after Habibie's accountability speech was rejected by the MPR,²⁴ were successful in bringing Gus Dur to the presidency on October 20, 1999.²⁵

Once in power, however, Gus Dur seemed to perceive himself as a *kyai* in a *pesantren*, and the public officials and political actors as his *santri*. While he declared a number of times that he and his administration were open to

Dur's highly controversial presidency, in which the modernists were alienated, these parties were quick to shift their support to Megawati. One of the most ardent advocates against women presidents, the leader of the PPP, Hamzah Haz, even agreed to become Megawati's vice president.

²⁴ The rejection was, among other things, due to the East Timor fiasco and a financial scandal involving Golkar, Habibie's party. See the previous chapter on these issues.

²⁵ On the background of Gus Dur's election, see Mohamad Sobary, Aristides Katoppo, Raymond Toruan, Suryopratomo, Bambang Harymurti, eds. (2000) *Gus Dur di Istana Rakyat: Catatan Tahun Pertama* (Gus Dur in the People's Palace: Notes on the First Year), Jakarta: LKBN Antara, pp. 19-34.

criticism, he did not disguise the fact that he was uncomfortable with some of the criticisms. While he repeatedly asserted the virtues of democracy, he also branded some members of parliament who criticized his policies as *kindergarten* pupils, as he did in a hearing between the parliament and the president on July 20, 2000.

The *pesantren*-type governance was also reflected in the vigorous defense launched by NU politicians, most of whom were members of the PKB, in support of Gus Dur. Every criticism against Gus Dur was answered by these *santri* at every opportunity. These politicians also accused Gus Dur's critics of attempting to overthrow him. The NU's defence of Gus Dur was not only by its elite; the NU's mass youth organization, Banser (*Barisan Serbaguna* – Auxiliary Force), also defended Gus Dur aggressively. Some of these youths raided and occupied the office of the Jawa Pos daily in Surabaya on May 6, 2000, after the daily reported a possible KKN case within Gus Dur's presidency.²⁶

Gus Dur also seemed unable or unwilling to realize that the new political structure produced by the free and democratic election of 1999 and by the constitutional changes that followed was different from the one during the Suharto era. The key difference was in the significantly curtailed power of the presidency. In many policy aspects, such as in the appointments of the TNI (Indonesian military) commander or chief of the national police, the president now had to seek confirmation from the parliament. This was meant to reduce the excesses of presidential power and prevent abuses by the two state coercive bodies, which was rampant during Suharto's rule. By trying to bypass the

²⁶ For an analysis of similarities in political leadership style between Gus Dur and nationalist leaders, such as Suharto, see Irman G. Lanti, "Will the Real Gus Dur Please Step Forward?", in *The Straits Times*, 1 July 2000.

parliament on a number of military and police appointment cases, and by expressing disdain for this parliamentary confirmation rule, Gus Dur operated on the assumption that presidential power was still predominant.²⁷

Almost immediately after assuming the presidency, Gus Dur decided to abandon the coalition structure that was responsible for his election. He replaced a number of cabinet members with people from his own party, which commanded only 11 percent of seats in the parliament, or with those who were deemed close to him.²⁸ The PKB politicians defended the president's actions by arguing that Gus Dur and the PKB should be regarded as the "ruling" party, while the other parties could function as the opposition. Such reasoning, however, was rejected by the other *aliran*, citing the fact that the PKB controlled only one-tenth of the parliament.

Gus Dur's actions in the run up to his impeachment proceeding also demonstrated his authoritarian tendency. When it became clear that his support base was rapidly dwindling, and amidst calls from many sides for his resignation, he remained defiant. As an effort to stave off his impeachment vote, Gus Dur decided to declare a state of emergency. In the early morning hours of July 23, 2001, from the presidential palace, he issued the decree that was meant to dissolve parliament, freeze the activities of Golkar, and to call for an

²⁷ A normative assesment of Gus Dur's presidency can be found in Budiarto Danudjaja (2001) *Hari-hari Indonesia Gus Dur* (Gus Dur's Indonesia Days), Yogyakarta: Galang Press. See also Irman G. Lanti, "Lessons from Gus Dur's Failed Presidency," in *The Straits Times*, August 1, 2001.

²⁸ After having relatively stable cabinet formations during the Suharto and Habibie administrations, the rate of cabinet reshuffling that Gus Dur undertook was unprecedented. Even the number of cabinets during the parliamentary democracy era of the 1950s, that saw a new cabinet forming almost every year, paled in comparison to Gus Dur's cabinets. In a period from June to mid-July 2001 alone, there were five cabinet reshuffles, involving political, economic, and legal posts.²⁸

election within a year. But neither the military nor the police deployed their forces to enforce the decree. In retaliation, the MPR decided to vote for his impeachment in its special session that very morning. The MPR voted 591-0 to remove President Abdurrahman Wahid from office, with PKB members walking out of the session.²⁹ This vote ended the short “experiment” of the traditionalists’ venture into the arena of national political leadership.

REGIONALISM AND CENTRALIZATION

The Javanese basis of the traditionalist Muslims makes them more comfortable with the idea of a unitary state with a strong center and dependent regions than with the idea of devolution of power. The traditionalists, like their nationalist brethren, also prefer a concentration rather than diffusion of power. But unlike the nationalists, the traditionalists’ position on this matter is not constant. As with the other issues, the traditionalists’ stance on this issue is flexible and dynamic. As will be seen below, over time they would change this position into an advocacy for some degree of regionalism. However, this regionalist idea would prove to be asymmetrical, as the traditionalists seemed to take the middle way between devolution and centralization.

The position of the traditionalists on this issue was not clear in the early period. But there was one episode in the 1950s that made this politico-cultural stance quite apparent. Such a trait could be traced by looking at the NU’s position *vis-à-vis* the regional rebellions of PRRI/Permesta. As explained earlier,

²⁹ A description of the final stage of the conflict between the president and the parliament can be followed in Irman G. Lanti (2002) “Indonesia in 2001: The Year of Continuing Turbulence,” in *Southeast Asian Affairs 2002*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

PRRI/Permesta, which was supported actively by some Masyumi and the PSI politicians, erupted as an adverse reaction to the strengthening of the central role and growing authoritarianism of Sukarno.

In fact, it appeared that many of NU's *kyai*, most of them coming from eastern Java, felt more at ease with Sukarno, who was from eastern Java,³⁰ than with the *seberang* people dominating the Masyumi. This cultural proximity made the NU a strong supporter of Sukarno during the fight against the *seberang's* rebellions. For the NU, PRRI/Permesta brought about a "major loss for the interests of the Muslims,"³¹ due to the involvement of Masyumi.

However, this position would change over time. Under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid, the NU experienced an exponential intellectual growth. Gus Dur had a zest for modernity and liberal ideas. He was an excellent mentor, who always pushed his *santri* to study modern philosophy and protected them from the scrutiny of the more conservative *kyai*. As a result, during his tenure as NU's chairman, younger NU *santri* had opportunities to be intellectually creative and engaged. Works of Derrida, Foucault, and Nietzsche became popular readings in many NU-affiliated *pesantren*. Some *pesantren* even made them standard textbooks, supplementing the traditional *pesantren* books, known as *kitab kuning* (yellow books). Many young Indonesian Ph.D.s who graduated from foreign universities have NU/*pesantren* backgrounds. This had caused the mushrooming of liberal ideas within the fold of the NU. Its consequence for the idea of regionalism could be seen in the fact that the

³⁰ Andrée Feillard (1999) *NU vis-à-vis Negara: Pencarian Isi, Bentuk, dan Makna* (NU vis-à-vis the State: The Search for Content, Form, and Meaning), Yogyakarta: LKIS, p. 89.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

traditionalists grew more receptive to the idea of local autonomy. Notwithstanding such liberalization, their Javanese politico-cultural background remained strong. The traditionalists' belief in the strong center remained. So, references to local autonomy made by the traditionalists were usually concerned with the issue of preservation of local cultural identity, whereas the economic, legal, and political autonomy of the regions were still considered to fall under the purview of central government's authority.

This position can be scrutinized during Gus Dur's tenure as president. Initially, Gus Dur's administration appeared to be continuing the policy line adopted by its predecessor under Habibie, by giving regional autonomy substantial attention. Gus Dur even elevated the portfolio responsible for overseeing regional autonomy from a directorate general level in the Ministry of Home Affairs to a state ministry. His choice for this portfolio, Ryaas Rasyid, was also seen as an indication of seriousness in furthering the agenda of regional autonomy. Ryaas and his team of seven intellectuals and bureaucrats, set up by Habibie's administration, were tasked with drafting new political laws, including the law on regional autonomy. Prior to that, Ryaas had served as director general for regional autonomy for several years during the Suharto era.

But since the beginning, Gus Dur's tendency to regard regional autonomy mainly as cultural autonomy and for the preservation of regional identity of the local peoples was clear. Gus Dur attempted to defuse the separatist sentiments of the people of Papua (Irian Jaya), which were on the rise following the fall of Suharto and were probably inspired by East Timor's

referendum.³² He did so early in his presidency, by declaring that he would see the sunrise of the new year of 2000 in the province. The symbolism of this gesture was positively received by the people of Irian Jaya. Later on, he further appeased the Irianese by enacting two controversial policies. First, he started calling the province “Papua,” even though at that time it was still officially known as “Irian Jaya.” The former was the name used by local separatist groups and was perceived to be “culturally closer” to the local people, while the latter was widely regarded as the name given by Jakarta’s elite. Second, he announced that the Papuan separatist flag could be flown side by side with, but in a lower mast than, the Indonesian flag. These actions by the president were met with tough criticism from his political rivals as well as from the military and the police.

In retrospect, however, Gus Dur was successful in breaking down the taboo of asserting one region’s cultural identity that had been put in place by the unitarist nationalists and proponents of strong centralism. After Gus Dur’s fall from the presidency, lawmakers passed the law on special autonomy of Papua in October 2001 that, among other things, declared the official name of the province was no longer Irian Jaya, but Papua, and that the province was allowed to have local symbolism and local institutions as a way of asserting of its identity.

But real devolution of power and authority from the center to the regions was problematic during Gus Dur’s period. Both of the regional autonomy laws,

³² For the debate on the future options of Irian Jaya (Papua), consult Frans Maniagasi (2001) *Masa Depan Papua: Merdeka, Otonomi Khusus & Dialog* (The Future of Papua: Independence, Special Autonomy, and Dialogue), Jakarta: Millenium Publisher.

No. 22 on administrative decentralization and No. 25 on financial administration, were supposed to be enacted effectively on January 1, 2001. But throughout 2000, the preparation measures, which included the issuance of government regulations and decrees that would serve as technical directives for the transfer of authority, proceeded in an agonizingly slow manner. The problem seemed to lie with the president's indecisiveness in approaching regional autonomy. On one hand, Gus Dur appeared to be a believer in the virtues of regional pluralism and local initiatives. But on the other hand, his Javanese politico-cultural background make it difficult for him to relinquish and devolve central power. According to the estimate of one of the chief architects of the regional autonomy laws, 197 government decrees were needed in order to provide reference for local governments in implementing regional autonomy. However, not only did the president fail to instruct his subordinates to work on these decrees, but he also responded passively to the ones that were actually drafted and passed to him for approval.³³ Such a failure has contributed to some of the problems with the erratic implementation of the regional autonomy laws described in Chapter 4.

A former minister in Habibie's cabinet, Bambang Sudibyo, even highlighted the president's tendency to render "empty promises" as dangerous. He warned that the president's indecisiveness could endanger the whole regional autonomy program, and did not help the effort to fight separatism. He also implied that the lack of progress in preparation for regional autonomy

³³ Interview with Ryaas Rasyid, one of the chief proponents of regional autonomy, Singapore, August 2001, also an interview with Andi Mallarangeng, Vancouver, March 2003.

signified the lack of willingness of the central government to loosen its grip on power to the regions.³⁴

The traditionalist president's lack of resolve was also apparent from the deterioration of his relationship with Ryaas Rasyid. Initially, as mentioned above, regional autonomy was one of the top government priorities. And despite reports that he was continually bypassed by the president in several autonomy-related issues, Ryaas continued to defend the government's policy.³⁵ But by roughly the middle of the administration's short tenure, regional autonomy appeared to have lost its appeal in the eyes of the president. In one of the early cabinet reshuffles, in August 2000, the portfolio of state ministry of regional autonomy was dissolved and relegated back to its "old home" as a directorate general in the Ministry of Home Affairs.³⁶ Ryaas himself was transferred to the post of state minister of administrative reform. In his new post, Ryaas was still responsible for one of the main aspects of regional autonomy, *i.e.*, transfer of responsibility over personnel from the central to regional governments. Again here however, he felt that his options were severely limited by the president's

³⁴ "Sikap Presiden Bahayakan Otonomi Daerah" (President's Stance Endangering Regional Autonomy), *Rakyat Merdeka*, November 3, 2000; "Tarik-Ulur Implementasi Otonomi Daerah: 'Pemerintah Pusat Belum Mau Kehilangan Dominasi'" (Push and Pull in Implementation of Regional Autonomy: 'Central Government is Still Unwilling to Give Up Its Domination,' *Republika*, October 12, 2000.

³⁵ "Otonomi Belum Puaskan Daerah" (Autonomy is Yet to Make the Regions Content), *Suara Karya*, May 20, 2000. In an interview in Singapore, August 2001, after he resigned from the cabinet, he conceded that he was actually willing to defend Gus Dur, whom he referred to as "a great democrat," all the way (Ryaas dedicated a chapter in his Ph.D. dissertation to discussing Gus Dur). But he became tired with the president's inconsistencies and thus felt increasingly useless, hence his resignation.

³⁶ See the adverse reaction of Andi Mallarangeng, a regional autonomy proponent, toward the dissolution of the state ministry in "Otonomi Bisa Menimbulkan 'Chaos'" (Autonomy Can Cause Chaos), *Suara Karya*, November 20, 2000.

inaction. And eventually, in early 2001, Ryaas tendered his resignation from the cabinet.

As mentioned in the discussion of nationalist *aliran* traits, Megawati's administration has moved against a far-reaching devolution of power and even demonstrated a proclivity for re-centralizing. In a speech in front of PKB supporters in an East Java town, Gus Dur criticized this policy, saying, "centralization is no longer a distortion, it is a crime."³⁷ According to him in this speech, the power of the central government must be balanced by the regions, to ensure that government at all levels would be responsive to the people's needs. In his capacity as PKB's chief of advisors, he also announced that regional autonomy would become one of the main themes of the PKB's campaign for the 2004 election.

But in an apparent wavering and vacillation between the impulses of regionalism and centralism, he quipped that regional autonomy has transformed governors, regents, and mayors into "petty kings," engaging in money politics. He claimed to have received many reports of various regional leaders' unethical behavior when he was still president. Gus Dur explained that this tendency was the reason behind his administration's lack of resolve on this issue. Interestingly, while the speech was meant as a criticism of the nationalist Megawati, he concluded the speech by practically approving her policy to revise the regional autonomy laws, citing that "the laws are imperfect." Whether Gus

³⁷ "Gus Dur: Otonomi Daerah, Program Kampanye Pemilu PKB pada 2004" (Gus Dur: Regional Autonomy, Campaign Program of PKB for 2004 Election), *Tempo Interaktif*, February 1, 2002.

Dur realized it or not, it was actually because of this revision of the laws that the regional autonomy proponents accused Megawati of re-centralizing.³⁸

STATE FOUNDATION

The traditionalists' flexibility in shifting political platforms was most apparent on the issue of the state foundation. Being a hybrid *aliran*, the traditionalists oscillated between the camp advocating Islam, led by the modernists, and that of Pancasila, led by the nationalists. What seems interesting to observe here is how a political *aliran* shifted its position from support for majoritarianism to backing pluralism.

In the early period of the republic, the NU and Masyumi were the two Islamic parties that aggressively pushed for an Islamic state. Such a position was of course inevitable when the traditionalists were still part of Masyumi. But even after the split in 1952, NU's position on this issue remained unchanged. This was evident from a party publication entitled "Interpretation of the Principles of the Party," adopted by the NU at its Congress in September 1954. In many parts of the publication, strong, assertive words were used to argue for an Islamic state foundation. It read:

"The world of materialism, under whatever name or system, is now holding a dagger to its own throat, a tragic spectacle unequaled in human history. And in the future the world will see the fact that the victory belongs not to the laws of materialism but to those of Islam, because Islam maintains the balance between matter and spirit, between this world and the world to come!"³⁹

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Nahdlatul Ulama* (1954) "God's Law and Its Interpretation," in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, eds. (1970) *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945-1965*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 211.

The line of argument made by the traditionalists at this juncture was fundamentally similar to the one made by the modernists, *i.e.*, Islam as a comprehensive way of life spanning all aspects of human social interaction, including politics and governance, the message of anti-materialism, and a strong attack on the propagators of secularism.

There were at least two reasons behind the traditionalist's position at this point of Indonesia's history. First, there was a fresh memory from the close link between the Islamic movements and the idea of achieving independent statehood. As explained in Chapter 5, during the period of struggle for independence in the 1920s, known to Indonesians as the *kebangkitan bangsa* (national awakening) period, Islamic organizations asserted the congruence between Islam and decolonization. Even the presence of organizations that would later on claim the banner of nationalism was seen as sectarian, because of the mono-ethnic nature of their membership in the beginning. Hence, in the eyes of the *santri*, there was supposed to be no strain between Islam and nationalism, and Islam was seen as a natural alternative ideology to colonialism. Even after independence, and after it was evident that the strain between Islam and nationalism did actually exist, Islamic organizations retained the view that Islam should be the foundation of an independent Indonesia. This was true not only for the modernists but also for the traditionalists. Although there existed a tension between the two Islamic forces that grew each passing day, both sides seemed to agree that the differences lie

mostly in *furuhiyah* (ritualistic) matters.⁴⁰ In the matters of *dawlah* (state), both *aliran* shared an advocacy of Islam at this point in time.

Second, there was a strong perceptual association between the idea of secularism and atheism or even anti-theism. This was mainly due to the fact that the supporters of a secular ideology came from the *abangan* fold. Two of its most vigorous proponents were the nationalist PNI and the communist PKI. While many members of these two parties were at least nominally Muslims, the majority of them claimed to be "*netral agama*" (religiously neutral). The communists were of course more vigorous in launching efforts at social reform, which in many instances caused brushes with the "*petit bourgeoisie*" in the rural areas, many of whom happened to be the NU's *kyai*. Islamic advocacy by the traditionalists could also be seen in light of criticism of the *abangan priyayi* by these Java-based *santri*. By stressing the materialist facet of secularism, the traditionalists might have hoped to highlight the moral decadence of the nationalists, even though many *abangan* were also spiritual in their own belief system, even if they did not follow the creeds of any established religion.

As a result, the NU was, for all intent and purposes, in a close alliance with Masyumi and other Islamic parties throughout the proceedings at the *Konstituante* in the latter half of the 1950s, especially on the critical issue of the state foundation.

The idea of Islam as the state foundation was politically defeated at the end of the 1950s, when Sukarno announced the *Konsepsi Presiden* and then established Guided Democracy in 1959. The modernists revolted against this

⁴⁰ Almost the other half of the same NU party publication cited above was devoted to explaining its position *vis-à-vis* the modernists on this matter. See *ibid.*, pp. 207-211.

new authoritarianism, but the traditionalists were quick to adapt to the new institution by playing down their advocacy of an Islamic state foundation. At that point, they became willing participants in the new power-sharing agreement between the Nationalists, Muslims, and Communists (Nasakom) arranged by Sukarno. It is interesting to note, however, that initially NU's participation in Nasakom actually raised a controversy within the rank-and-file of the party. The greatest concern at that time was the rapidly growing strength of the PKI, which enjoyed a close relationship with Sukarno. Due to a similarity of interests, some of the NU's *kyai* and *santri*, especially the younger ones, established contacts and good rapport with some military officers, who at this time were also wary of the communist ascendancy.⁴¹

After the transfer of power from Sukarno to Suharto's New Order regime, for a while there was a resurgence in advocating an Islamic state foundation which was launched by both the modernists and the traditionalists. But Suharto was just another nationalist leader. And unlike Sukarno, due to his military background Suharto was more prone to use force or political persuasion backed by the threat of force to control the system. Soon, it became apparent that the idea of an Islamic state foundation was not feasible to pursue. The NU again quickly adapted to the new circumstance and decided to drop the matter, while the modernists remained steadfast to the cause.

One of the hallmarks of the New Order government was the state ideologization of Pancasila. The policy of *azas tunggal* (sole principle) required all groups in the country to acknowledge Pancasila as their organization's principle. As described in the previous two chapters, nationalist organizations

⁴¹ Feillard, *op.cit.*, pp. 60-65.

embraced this policy quite readily, whereas the modernists were most recalcitrant. The traditionalists eventually adopted Pancasila, but not without going through a process of socialization and adaptation, as well as a power struggle within their organization. The NU officially adopted Pancasila as the organization's foundation at the *Muktamar* (National Congress) held in Situbondo in 1984. Prior to the *Muktamar*, several modernist organizations, including the student organization, HMI, which had previously rejected the sole foundation policy, sent letters to the NU functionaries, calling on the traditionalists to be firm in facing such an intervention by the government. A number of more conservative traditionalist *kyai* from Madura also made a similar appeal.⁴² As the largest Islamic organization in the country, claiming membership of around 30 million, the NU's acceptance or reluctance of the government policy was central in defining the future direction of Indonesia's politics, especially on the issue of state foundation.

Initially, most of NU's *kyai* were as recalcitrant towards the idea of *azas tunggal* as the modernists. Despite having cooperated closely with the nationalists and secularists for quite some time during the period of Guided Democracy, and having collaborated with the nationalist military during the transition to the New Order, it was still difficult for the traditionalists to abandon Islam altogether. The prevailing perception at the time was that once Pancasila was accepted as an organization's sole foundation, that organization should abandon other forms of foundation, including religion or ideologies. Even though the majority of the traditionalists were cognizant of the fact that pushing for an Islamic state foundation was no longer feasible nor realistic in

⁴² van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, pp. 135-136.

the face of nationalist military rule, and that Pancasila had already proven its effectiveness as the state's foundation, they found the idea of replacing Islam with Pancasila as their own organization's foundation inconceivable.

But after quite a strenuous process of negotiation and bargaining with government officials, including President Suharto himself, the traditionalists eventually accepted Pancasila as their organization's foundation. As a compromise, however, Islam, especially the *ahlussunah wal jama'ah* (Sunni) variant adhered to by the traditionalists, was still acknowledged in NU's constitution as the organization's source of identity.⁴³

There were at least two critical reasons behind this acceptance. First, the traditionalists' flexibility was driven by a sense of self-preservation. As in the period leading to the Guided Democracy, the traditionalists once again showed the ability to adjust to new structures and demands put forth by the state in an authoritarian setting. The *rationale* for the flexibility appeared to be similar in both cases. The first and foremost concern of NU's leaders was stability and protection of Islamic traditionalist institutions, rather than advancement of any political ideology.⁴⁴ According to a Western observer:

"Politics (for the Nahdlatul Ulama) was not the pursuit of the ideal but the art of the possible, and the clear political primacy of military and secular political power made accommodation necessary."⁴⁵

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

⁴⁴ Adam Schwarz (1999) *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, p. 171. In the final years of Suharto's rule, Gus Dur would reenact such flexibility when he ceased criticizing Suharto and even took a very accommodationist line with the regime and Suharto's family, most notably with Suharto's eldest daughter, Tutut. See Hefner, *op.cit.*, p. 193-196.

⁴⁵ Allan Samson (1978) "Conceptions of Politics, Power, and Ideology in Contemporary Indonesian Islam," in Karl Jackson and Lucian Pye, *eds.* (1978) *Political Power and Communication in Indonesia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 213.

The result of such an accommodationist approach was quickly apparent.

The NU's leader Gus Dur was even quoted as saying:

“We are free to pursue our activities without government interference. NU has publications, internal newspapers, and disseminates ideas through public meetings and oral instruction. Before we had to secure permits for all these activities. With the permits, there were limitations on what we could do.”⁴⁶

The second factor was the presence of influential *kyai* who held liberal views, such as K.H. Achmad Siddiq and the younger generation *kyai*, led by K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid. In the Situbondo 1984 *Muktamar*, these *kyai*, known as the reformist group (*kelompok pembaharu*) were successful in sidelining the conservative older *kyai*, led by K.H. Idham Chalid from the leadership of NU, and replacing them with the younger generation. *Kyai* Siddiq and Gus Dur were elected as the chairpersons of the advisory and executive bodies respectively, and many of the liberal-minded young traditionalists were posted in various NU bodies. Initially, there was a stiff resistance toward the election of Gus Dur coming from the older *kyai*, due to his liberal ideas as well as his proximity to some non-Muslim military officers, especially to Gen. L.B. Murdani, then chief of the armed forces. But *Kyai* Siddiq was able to convince the older *kyai* of Gus Dur's credibility, citing the fact that Gus Dur was the grandson of the NU's founder, K.H. Hasyim Asyari.⁴⁷

The ascendancy of liberal *kyai* to the NU leadership brought a significant change to the NU's perception of state ideology. Gus Dur and his protector,

⁴⁶ Michael R. J. Vatikiotis (1998) Indonesian Politics Under Suharto: The Rise and Fall of the New Order, Third Edition, London: Routledge, p. 123.

⁴⁷ van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, pp. 137-141.

Kyai Siddiq, had been known for some time to hold progressive and liberal views on societal and statehood matters, including on the issues of Islam, Pancasila, and the state. *Kyai* Siddiq, who played a pivotal role in securing the NU's acceptance of the Pancasila foundation, argued that Muslims should embrace Pancasila for two reasons: first, Muslim leaders played an important role in formulating Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution; and second, the values contained in Pancasila are in agreement with Islamic values. The latter point was especially true of the first pillar of Pancasila, the Belief in One God, which was not only consistent with, but believed to be derived from, Islamic fundamental teaching as a strictly monotheist religion (*tauhid*).⁴⁸

Gus Dur's view was even considered more liberal than that of both fellow traditionalists and modernists in Indonesia's Muslim politics.⁴⁹ He believed quite strongly in the vision of Indonesia as a plural society, and in protection of the rights of its minority groups. According to Gus Dur, statehood, indeed politics in general, should not be organized along confessional lines. The state should be a neutral arbiter and not inclined to further the interests of any single religious group. Political enterprises, claiming to function at the national level, should be all encompassing and not sectarian, especially along religious

⁴⁸ Greg Barton (1996a) "Islam, Pancasila and the Middle Path of *Tawassuth*: The Thought of Achmad Siddiq," in Greg Fealy and Greg Barton (1996) *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute. See also van Bruinessen, *op.cit.*, pp. 135-137.

⁴⁹ For an analysis of the roots of Gus Dur's liberal thinking, consult Greg Barton (1996b) "The Liberal, Progressive Roots of Abdurrahman Wahid's Thought," in Greg Fealy and Greg Barton (1996) *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute. For a debate on the plural tradition of the traditionalists, see Ahmad Rofiq (2000) "*NU/Pesantren dan Tradisi Pluralisme dalam Konteks Negara-Bangsa* (NU/Pesantren and Pluralism Tradition in the Context of Nation-State)," in Ahmad Suaedy, ed. (2000) *Pergulatan Pesantren & Demokratisasi* (The Struggle of Pesantren and Democratization), Yogyakarta: LKiS.

lines. Pancasila, in his view, is the guarantor that ensured the Indonesian state would remain open, secular, and accessible to all Indonesians, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity. In a Pancasila state, differences would be welcomed and the plural composition of the society maintained and even celebrated.⁵⁰

Gus Dur positioned himself as playing a dual role. At the local and particular level, his position as chairman of the NU made him an Islamic leader commanding the loyalty of millions of traditionalists. In the national arena, he played the role of a civil society activist, championing pluralism through organizations such as *Forum Demokrasi* (Democracy Forum), which he set up in 1991 with a number of intellectuals, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Gus Dur's liberal views also explained his strong rejection of ICMI and his disillusionment with Suharto's support for the organization. He saw ICMI as an attempt to revive the idea of an Islamic state by some modernists. He accused those who aspired to formalize Islam in the state structure of conducting a "shallowing of religion" (*pendangkalan agama*).⁵¹ Gus Dur was discouraged by the establishment and political ascendancy of ICMI in the early 1990s and warned against a "reconfessionalization of politics," which was effectively devastating two decades of efforts to deconfessionalize it, as the sole foundation policy signified.⁵² Gus Dur also rejected the modernists' view of democracy as "proportionalism," propagated mainly by ICMI's members. In a

⁵⁰ On Pancasila's pluralism see Douglas E. Ramage (1995) Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and the Ideology of Tolerance, London: Routledge, and Eka Darmaputera (1988) Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society, Leiden: E.J. Brill, especially chapters 3 and 4.

⁵¹ Choirie, *op.cit.*, pp. 144.

⁵² Ramage, *op.cit.*, ch. 2.

polemic with Amien Rais, who demanded that Muslims be represented proportionally in the political structure, Gus Dur argued that the emphasis should be on the democratic political mechanisms, and therefore the number of Muslims in both the government and representative bodies should not be made an issue.⁵³

Based on the above two factors, the traditionalists accepted Pancasila rather smoothly. Consequently, there was an intense effort launched by the NU's top leaders to convince their followers that Pancasila and Islam were not detrimental to each other, and that in fact Islam would flourish in the Pancasila state.⁵⁴ In the 1990s, just before *Reformasi*, the NU was transformed from being a proponent of an Islamic state foundation to being an ardent advocate of Pancasila. Gus Dur was quoted as saying:

“Without it – Pancasila – we will cease to be a state. ... Pancasila is a set of principles and it will live forever. It is the idea of the state that we should have, that we strive for. And this Pancasila I'll defend with my own life.”⁵⁵

During the *Reformasi* era, a number of politically active Muslims, especially from the modernist fold, attempted to revive the debate about the application of Islamic law by the state, by introducing a debate to restore the position of the Jakarta Charter in the 1945 constitution. The traditionalists, as might be expected after almost two decades of Gus Dur's leadership, were among the fiercest opponents of such an idea. Together with a number of liberal

⁵³ Choirie, *op.cit.*, pp. 144-145.

⁵⁴ Feillard, *op.cit.*, ch. IX.

⁵⁵ Ramage, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

modernists as mentioned in the previous chapter, they argued against the formalization of Islam as the state foundation.

However, as in the modernist camp, the traditionalists also experienced a split in their ranks on this issue. The more liberal wing, led by Gus Dur and comprising a number of young traditionalists, such as Ulil Abshar-Abdalla, extended the previous argument on pluralism by highlighting the importance of a cultural approach and civil society. These young liberal traditionalists argued that the previous attempts by Muslim leaders, especially the modernists, to seek dominance in the political structure had failed. This failure was most evident in the experiment of ICMI. While initially ICMI's presence was seen as a positive development in increasing awareness of Muslims and their empowerment in the national political landscape, at the latter stages, ICMI was shown to be very susceptible to cooptation by the regime. And when some reform-minded ICMI functionaries appeared to be too recalcitrant to the regime's interests, they were marginalized. Thus, according to these traditionalists, Muslims were better off as a civil and not a political society, and the Islamic movement ought to be a cultural rather than a structural one.⁵⁶ This position has brought them closer to that of the moderate modernists,⁵⁷ and seems to be supported by the general public mood, as portrayed in some recent

⁵⁶ Ulil Abshar-Abdalla (2000) "Emoh' Negara: Menuju Paradigma 'Gerakan Sosial'" (Reject the State: Toward A "Social Movement"), in Abdul Mun'im D.Z. (2000) *Islam di Tengah Arus Transisi* (Islam Amidst the Transition Stream), Jakarta: Kompas. Of course, during the *Reformasi* period, the traditionalists were also engaged in party politics, by forming the PKB. Gus Dur's election as president also put the validity of NU's civil society approach to question. For background on establishment of the PKB, see Choirie, *op.cit.*; Mohammad Muzamil (1999) "NU, PKB, dan Khitah 1926" (NU, the PKB, and the Oath of 1926), in Abdul Mun'im D.Z., ed. (2000) *Islam di Tengah Arus Transisi* (Islam Amidst the Transition Stream), Jakarta: Kompas.

⁵⁷ Interview with Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, Singapore, November 2001.

surveys.⁵⁸ The traditionalists also view the phenomenon of growing religiosity among Indonesia's Muslims, known as *santri*-nization, as a cultural rather than a political phenomenon. The desire of Indonesian Muslims for a greater piety in their religious practices does not automatically translate into greater support for a religious-based state. It seems on a limited scale, some recent opinion polls support the position of the traditionalists on this matter. The PPIM survey,⁵⁹ cited in Chapter 5, did indicate that most of those polled appeared to desire a more Islamic-oriented society, but as the issue became defined in political terms, a contradiction occurred. Most of those polled did not seem opposed on religious grounds to voting for the nationalist, traditionalist, or non-*aliran* parties that did not represent the banner of Islamism. In the Asia Foundation survey, this point was amplified. Most of the polled Indonesian voters did not know what differences existed between Islamic and non-Islamic parties.⁶⁰

On the other side of the debate was the more conservative wing, led by Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Solah), Gus Dur's brother and chairman of the PKU (*Partai Kebangkitan Umat* – Muslims Awakening Party), another traditionalist party. Gus Solah criticized the liberal traditionalists' defence of secularism. In his opinion, Islam should inspire the state, especially its laws. Muslims should

⁵⁸ See for instance, "Indonesia: A Report on Public Opinion and the 2004 Elections," Qualitative Research Survey, *The Asia Foundation*, Jakarta, February 2003, p. 14.

⁵⁹ PPIM Survey, cited in R. William Liddle "New Patterns of Islamic Politics in Democratic Indonesia," in Asia Program Special Report, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, No. 110, April 2003, p. 9.

⁶⁰ "Democracy in Indonesia: A Survey of the Indonesian Electorate 2003," *The Asia Foundation*, Jakarta, November 2003, pp. 96-98.

be allowed to have their social interaction ruled by Islamic principles. He pointed out that in the past, the NU had been active in supporting the state-sanctioned laws on social matters, such as the laws on marriages, religious courts, and alms (*zakat*).⁶¹

But what differentiated the conservative traditionalists and the conservative modernists was their respect for the role of Pancasila. While the modernists aspired to overhaul the legal system, so as to have Islam replace Pancasila as the state foundation (in other words, the foundation of all laws), the traditionalists were convinced that Pancasila should remain the foundation of the plural state, in order to ensure the protection of the rights of non-Muslim Indonesians. These differences notwithstanding, the conservative traditionalists generally agreed with the liberal wing that wholesale formalization of Islam, as the debate on the proposed re-inclusion of the Jakarta Charter in the amended Article 29 (1) of the 1945 Constitution seemed to indicate, was not necessary. They were also in agreement that Islam as a cultural movement would bring more benefit for Muslims than a politico-structural approach. In Gus Solah's own words:

⁶¹ Salahuddin Wahid (1999) "NU, Islam, dan Indonesia" (NU, Islam, and Indonesia), in Abdul Mun'im D.Z., ed. (2000) *Islam di Tengah Arus Transisi* (Islam Amidst the Transition Stream), Jakarta: Kompas. See also Rofiqul-Umam Ahmad, ed. (2001) *NU dan Islam Politik di Era Reformasi* (NU and Political Islam in the Reformasi Era), Jakarta: Pustaka Indonesia Satu. Similar point was also made in an interview with Masdar F. Mas'udi, a traditionalist-leaning scholar, director of P3M (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat* - Indonesian Society for Pesantren and Community Development), Singapore, July 2002.

“I am of the opinion that amending Article 29 (1) of the 1945 Constitution is not necessary. Formalization of Islamic laws through democratic processes in the legislative body on some aspects of social life...can proceed, but by remaining mindful of the interests and rights of non-Muslims.”⁶²

⁶² Salahuddin Wahid, “*Piagam Jakarta: Perspektif Hukum dan Politik*” (The Jakarta Charter: Legal and Political Perspectives) in *Civility*, Vol. 1, No. 2, November 2001 – January 2002, translation mine.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: ALIRAN POLITICS, POLITICAL CULTURE, DEMOCRACY, AND THE STATE

This thesis has discussed the tenacity of several serious problems facing the Indonesian state. It has done so by analyzing how the major political groups, known as the *aliran*, view three fundamental questions relating to the state, *i.e.*, whether Indonesia as a predominantly Muslim country should be based on Islamic law (*syariah*) or on a somewhat secular arrangement, known as *Pancasila*; whether the vastly plural country should be run as a unitary state with a strong center deemed able to unite the disparate elements and create a single national identity, or along some federalist principle that recognizes its plurality, where power is devolved from the center to the regions; and lastly, whether the state should be governed as an authoritarian system that represses oppositional politics and focuses on nation-building efforts, or as an open political system that recognizes the existence of the divergent array of political views and is characterized by open political competition.

This study has attempted to demonstrate that the *aliran*-based segments are among the most important features of Indonesian politics. *Aliran* politics are the “natural state” of Indonesian politics. Despite efforts to bury the *aliran* networks and parties or to render them irrelevant, they have remained salient in shaping the issues of Indonesian politics. Such tenacity is due to the politico-cultural makeup of the *aliran*. These *aliran* are derived from the divergent political cultures developed by the major ethnic groups. They are also the result

of different reactions by the various political cultures towards Islam, the largest and most influential religion of the archipelago, as well as, to a lesser extent, Hindu-Buddhist influence. The nationalist *aliran* is chiefly supported by Javanese political culture. The Javanese attitude toward Islam is relaxed and non-doctrinal, and its socio-cultural traits demonstrate a high degree of eclecticism concerning Islam, Hindu-Buddhism, and spiritualism. The traditionalist Muslim *aliran* is also based on Javanese political culture. But its followers are more pious in Islamic practices than the nationalists, while at the same time still exhibiting many facets of Hindu-Buddhist socio-cultural practices. The nationalists and the traditionalists also differ in the social classes of the Javanese groups that comprise them. The former are derived from the culture of the courts (*kraton*) of the Javanese heartland, while the latter come from the intelligentsia class based in *pesantren* (traditional educational institutions). The modernist Muslims mainly come from the outer islands, as well as from the northern coastal towns of Java. Among the *aliran*-based groups, the modernists were the purists in the practice of Islam and the least influenced by Hindu-Buddhism, or other accretions, such as mysticism.

The preceding chapters have attempted to demonstrate that the political platforms of the three *aliran* segments on the three issues mentioned above differ markedly from one another. In many instances, these positions appear to be irreconcilable, thus creating problems that have perpetually hindered efforts to create a cohesive state and political system. But, on the other hand, the positions of the *aliran* groups are not as static as may appear with short-term observation. Some of the *aliran*-based segments have proven capable of pragmatically adapting, changing position, and accommodating some changes.

This concluding chapter discusses the findings of this research as accounted for in the previous chapters in relation to the three hypotheses and the research questions stated in the introductory chapter. This study first hypothesizes that “the political scene in Indonesia is dominated by *aliran*-based group identities. Consequently, the debates over the state foundations, regional arrangements, and type and form of government are delineated, shaped, and waged by the elites of the three major *aliran*.” This hypothesis has been verified by the analysis of the divergent ways the *aliran*-based segments view and perceive the three statehood issues mentioned above. It is also meant to answer the following research questions: “How have the *aliran* parties and institutions, their elites and their representatives in state bodies viewed the fundamental state issues of the state foundation, regionalism, and political competition since the beginnings of Indonesia’s independence movement? Has there been a resurgence of conflicting discourse among the *aliran* on these issues during the *Reformasi* era? How have the positions of the *aliran* in terms of these issues evolved over time?” Analysis in this section also answers the following research questions: “What was the *Reformasi* movement all about? Was it pro-democracy or just anti-Suharto? Did the open political competitive structure created by the *Reformasi* movement lead to the revitalization of *aliran*-based politics?”

The second hypothesis: “the key to understanding the political positions, beliefs, and goals of the *aliran* reside in their respective political cultures” is discussed in the second part of this chapter. It also attempts to answer the first research question: “What are the major *aliran*? What are their ethno-cultural bases? How do the politico-cultural traits of the ethnic groups comprising them affect their political behavior? What are the institutional manifestations of the

major *aliran* and how have these changed over time from the beginnings of the independence movement until the *Reformasi* era?” This part also addresses another research question: “What was the relationship between *aliran* affiliation and the platforms and the support bases of the major political parties in the 1999 general election? What similarities can be observed with the 1955 election, held during the previous democratic period?” It also analyzes potential contributions of this study to the body of theoretical knowledge about political culture, especially to the study of political culture in a multicultural developing state, as well as to the treatment of “change” in this approach.

The third part analyzes the last hypothesis: “while the *Reformasi* movement and the fall of Suharto have contributed to a climate and spirit favorable to democratization, the outcome of the process is endangered because of the different views held by each of the *aliran* segments as to what democracy actually means when it comes to governing a state like Indonesia.” It also discusses the study’s potential contributions to the concept of democracy and its definitions. Then it discusses the implications of this study for general scholarship on Indonesia, especially for issues pertaining to the multiplicity of political cultures, *aliran* politics, and how the *aliran*-based groups view matters relating to the state.

The last part is a short epilogue on how *aliran* politics and the Indonesian state might evolve in the future. It takes into account a number of changes that have taken place in Indonesian society that might affect the *aliran* and how politics in the country are organized. It answers the following question: “What has been the impact of free elections and more open politics on the political stability of the state? What are the prospects for Indonesia’s future?”

THE ALIRAN AND FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES OF THE STATE

From the analysis in the last three chapters, the political platforms of each *aliran*-based segment can be summarized as in the table below. These platforms in general terms are meant to refer to the fundamental issues facing the Indonesian state. The matter of the state foundation largely refers to the question of pluralism as well as the protection of minority rights. The debate is between the secular pluralist *Pancasila* and the religiously exclusive Islamic

Table 3
The Political Platforms of the *Aliran*
Concerning the Three Fundamental Issues of the State

Political Platforms	Political <i>Aliran</i>		
	Nationalists	Modernist Muslims	Traditionalist Muslims
State Foundation	Pancasila	Islam	Islam (later Pancasila)
Leadership and Political Competition	Closed, Autocratic	Open, Egalitarian, Competitive	Open, Autocratic
Degree of Centralization	Unitary State with Strong Center	Local Autonomy/ Devolution of Power	Unitary State with Strong Center (later a mixture between local cultural autonomy and strong center)

state foundation. The issue of leadership refers to the contest between an open, egalitarian, competitive type of leadership and a closed, authoritarian, control-exerting one. The degree of centralization refers to the level of power concentration between the center and the regions. The contending positions on this issue are between those advocating a consolidated power held by a strong, dominating center in a unitary state platform where the regions are weak, and those seeking a devolution of power to the regions in a somewhat loose federalist or autonomous arrangement where the regions are at least equally strong with the center.

The modernists are generally more in favor of open political competition than the other *aliran*-based groups. The modernists are at ease with the idea of a dispersion of power. On the distribution of power among political parties and offices, they have greater affinity for the idea of competitive and oppositional politics than the other *aliran*. This *aliran* is not opposed to the idea of political competition through elections that result in an alternation of power, nor does it object to checks and balances among political institutions.

As described in Chapter 5, the modernists have always been more amenable to political competition than the nationalists or the traditionalists. During the period of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, the modernists were engaged in competition with the other *aliran*, and took turns in running the government and being in the opposition. The modernists were also actively involved in the discussions in the *Konstituante*, particularly on the issue regarding the state foundation, where they championed the adoption of Islamic *syariah*.

While the nationalist Sukarno decided that the rather chaotic political competition of parliamentary democracy was not suitable for Indonesia, modernist leaders, such as Natsir, had a positive perception of the system. And when Sukarno declared the change in the political system from parliamentary to Guided Democracy through the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959, the modernists were clearly dismayed. They first initiated the *Liga Demokrasi*, with other parties, especially the urban-based PSI (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* - Indonesian Socialist Party) and the *seberang*-based Partai Katolik (Catholic Party), as a protest movement. Later, some Masyumi and PSI figures were involved in the regional rebellions of PRRI/Permesta.

After the banning of Masyumi in 1962, there was a long hiatus of modernist active political participation, a period that included the final years of Guided Democracy and the first and middle parts of the New Order. In 1990, with the establishment of ICMI (*Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* - Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association), the modernists saw an opening to resume political involvement. While ICMI was undoubtedly a political vehicle of the regime looking for an alternative foothold, the views within ICMI on the state and governance were unmistakably modernist. During the period when the New Order authoritarianism was at its prime, ICMI opened up a discourse on some issues considered taboo by the regime, such as human rights, the environment, demilitarization, and an equitable economy. Some ICMI members even quite openly called for a presidential succession.

After the fall of Suharto, the modernists found an open space for political participation. During the interregnum period Habibie, the former chairman of ICMI with a *seberang* modernist background who replaced Suharto, carried out

a number of sweeping reforms of the system. While Habibie's administration was marred by corruption scandals and widespread opposition due to his image as Suharto's *protégé*, he did initiate an opening up of the political system. Among the reform measures he undertook were the releasing of political prisoners, reforming the five political laws deemed as the pillars of New Order authoritarianism, and allowing for a referendum in East Timor that eventually led to its independence.

Other modernists have also been actively involved in political competition since the beginning of the *Reformasi* era. But unlike the nationalists and the traditionalists, the modernists have been divided in their political expression. There has been no single party that could lay credible claim to represent the modernist votes. However, the modernists have proven quite shrewd in political moves. In the parliament after the 1999 election, the modernists were united in an ad-hoc alliance called the *Poros Tengah*. Through coalition-building with the traditionalists, the modernist parties of *Poros Tengah* were successful in getting their political nominees elected during the parliamentary session in 1999. Their candidates for Speaker of the MPR (Indonesia's highest state body) and Speaker of the DPR (parliament), as well as their candidate for president, were all elected.

On the issue of the distribution of power between the center and the regions, the modernists favor a devolution of power, varying from a federalist arrangement to an arrangement of regional autonomy. The *seberang*-based modernists generally fear a Javanese-dominated system manifested through control from the central government. In the early days of the republic, the idea of a federalist arrangement for Indonesia was discredited, mainly because it was

associated with the Dutch effort to regain control over the territory through proxy states in the RIS (*Republik Indonesia Serikat* - Republic of United States of Indonesia). The RIS lasted for less than a year (December 1949 - August 1950) before being replaced by a unitary state. However, the *seberang* modernists soon became disillusioned with the unitary form of the Republic of Indonesia. Having witnessed a growing tendency of Sukarno's administration to concentrate power in the central government, Masyumi joined the regional rebellions of PRRI/Permesta in Sumatra and Sulawesi, which lasted until 1961.

Reformasi allowed for a reopening of public debate on the center-regions relationship that had been considered as final during the Guided Democracy and New Order periods. Many of the proponents of regional autonomy were *seberang* modernists. PAN, a modernist party, initiated the discussion by launching a discourse on federalism. But it soon became apparent that a federalist arrangement might ignite secessionist tendencies. So a middle-way consensus was reached to further a regional autonomy arrangement in which the formal form of the republic remains a unitary state, but the district governments are given wide-ranging authority. Many of the proponents of regional autonomy have also been *seberang* figures, and this idea has been more popular among the *seberang* modernists than with the nationalists.

Concerning the issue of the state foundation, the modernists hold a strict majoritarian or majority rule position. Based on the statistical fact that the majority of Indonesians are Muslims, the modernists seek to introduce Islamic law (*syariah*) in Indonesia. Such a position has put them, a number of times, in an adversarial relationship with the other *aliran* segments as well as with the

minority groups, who in contrast desire the idea of a plural Indonesia in terms of ethnic and religious affiliations.

The debate between the modernists and the nationalists on the issue of the state foundation started at the end of the Dutch colonial rule. The modernists, such as Natsir, argued that since Muslims constituted the majority of Indonesians, they had the right to be governed under Islamic law. Hence, the state should be based on Islam. The modernists also perceived the struggle for independence in terms of a religious struggle, and thus the nationalist movement was also a religious movement. However, under pressure to achieve statehood in the face of the returning Dutch, the modernists relented on a compromise during the discussions on the constitution. A charter, known as *Piagam Jakarta*, was passed to accommodate both the secularists and the Islamists. It was also agreed that the constitution would only serve as a provisional arrangement before a new constitution was drafted.

After the 1955 election, the *Konstituante*, a state assembly tasked with drafting a new constitution, was set up. The discussion in the *Konstituante* became bogged down in the debate between those who advocated Islam and those who wished to have a secular arrangement. The modernist position in the debate basically rehashed Natsir's majoritarian position during the debate with the nationalists in the 1930s.

The issue of the state foundation, which had been considered as resolved during the forty years of nationalist rule, has resurfaced since the fall of Suharto. The modernists see an opening to resume the debate at this point. Despite having been suppressed for decades, the modernists remain fairly consistent with their earlier majoritarian position: that Islam is the logical

choice for the Indonesian state due to its predominantly Muslim population, and that it is undemocratic to deny the Muslim majority of the population the right to be governed under Islamic law.

Both the nationalists and the traditionalists are more receptive to the idea of pluralism and protection of minority rights. The extent of appreciation for such a stance, however, varies between assimilation and cultural autonomy. While both *aliran* segments are generally more tolerant toward the minority groups than the modernists, the nationalists (and to some extent also the traditionalists, especially in the pre-Abdurrahman Wahid period) believe that toleration and protection of minority groups' rights is possible so long as the minority groups assimilate to "national" norms, practices, and identities. In a politico-cultural phraseology, the minority groups should be able to merge themselves into the larger group so as to create unity, which is central to the Javanese conception of power. The introduction and subsequent growth of liberal ideas within the fold of the traditionalists after Gus Dur has produced a shift in their position into embracing more cultural autonomy for the minority groups.

As described in Chapter 4, the prime example of nationalist tolerance was reflected in the choice of Pancasila as the state foundation. During the debate with Natsir prior to independence, nationalist leader Sukarno made the argument from time to time that a plural society, such as Indonesia, should be bound by a sense of commonality and solidarity. In order to build a nation, all groups needed to have access to resources, goods, and services provided by the state, and the state was bound to protect all its citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. Sukarno regarded the demand by the modernists to have

Islam as the state foundation as sectarian, divisive, and violating the spirit of commonality.

It was apparent during the debate in the *Konstituante* that the nationalist position on the state foundation was based on the recognition that Islam was practiced differently and to different levels of piety in the many parts of the archipelago. Having derived from the *abangan* culture, the nationalists feared that the imposition of the strict form of Islam advocated by the modernists for all Muslims, whether nominal or pious, would create tremendous cultural pressure on their constituents.

Under the New Order, the position of Pancasila was solidified even more. If previously mass organizations could have other forms of ideological foundations besides Pancasila, the Suharto regime brought about a policy requiring all organizations to discard all other ideologies and adopt Pancasila as their sole foundation (*azas tunggal*). This elevation of Pancasila to the role of sole national ideology also required ideological indoctrination for all Indonesians. The issue of Islam versus Pancasila was thus considered to have been resolved during the New Order.

In the post-Suharto period, the position of the nationalists has been unchanged. Despite the unpopularity of Pancasila during this period, mostly due to the New Order's ideological indoctrination, the nationalists have remained firm in their objection to Islam as the state foundation. Their position has been consistent with that taken by their predecessors decades earlier, that state-sanctioned Islamic religiosity would alienate many Indonesians whose practice of Islam was syncretic and relaxed, as well as those who were not Muslims.

The traditionalist position on this issue underwent significant change over a period of time. During the *Konstituante* debate, the traditionalists sided with their modernist brethren in advocating an Islamic state. Their platform could not be distinguished from that of the modernists. If anything, it sounded even more conservative. The traditionalists regarded a secular state, in which the state was not guided by a moral standard accepted by the majority of the people (Islam), as an immoral state. Only Islam could provide the Indonesian state with a firm morality.

But several decades later, the traditionalist position on this matter appears to have undergone a dramatic change. The rise of liberal *kyai*, the most notable of whom was Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), has created a lively learning atmosphere among the proponents of this *aliran*, who predominantly are based in *pesantren*. The traditionalists adopted Pancasila as the sole foundation policy of the New Order with ease, whereas the modernists tried to resist. Gus Dur even attacked the establishment of ICMI by some modernists as sectarian, a shallowing of religion, and reconfessionalization of politics. Since *Reformasi*, the traditionalists have almost completely abandoned the desire for an Islamic state, and liberal *kyai* and *santri* have defended Pancasila in more eloquent ways than even the nationalists. For the traditionalists of this period, Pancasila is the embodiment of the whole concept of an Indonesian state, in which all groups can participate and the state does not discriminate.

On the other hand, both *aliran* segments also share a highly centralistic and authoritarian sense of governance. These *aliran*-based groups are not particularly fond of the idea of open political competition and oppositional politics. The nationalist and traditionalist elites exercise an “authoritarian-

paternalistic” kind of leadership. While they usually do not object to elections as part of the political process, they continually seek to eliminate the opposition, either by co-opting the opposition forces and trying to build a coalition structure in which they predominate or by repressing the opposition altogether.

The nationalists have dominated the landscape of Indonesian politics since independence. So there is ample evidence of nationalist behavior in terms of governing practices. As described in Chapter 4, Sukarno’s regime did not immediately show the true character of nationalist rule. Instead, its first decade was signified by a turbulent period of struggle for independence and an open political competition during the parliamentary democracy period, during which Sukarno functioned only as the nominal head of state.¹ But after the failure of the *Konstituante* to draft a definitive constitution, due to a deadlock over the issue of the state foundation, and a series of regional rebellions, Sukarno declared the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959, which initiated the era of Guided Democracy. Under Guided Democracy, Sukarno became a very powerful president. All state bodies were answerable to his office. He had the power to appoint even members of parliament. Sukarno promised an election, but an election was never held. Sukarno tried to ameliorate the divisive atmosphere of the parliamentary democracy era by pushing the political parties to join an ideological alliance, known as the Nasakom (*Nasionalis, Agama, Komunis* - Nationalism, Religion, Communism), of which he became the de-facto supreme commander.

¹ However, the constitution gave the president the strong power to declare a state of emergency, a power which Sukarno eventually exercised in the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959.

Suharto's rule was an extension of Sukarno's. From the very beginning, Suharto imposed authoritarian rule. The spirit of anti-political competition (or anti-"politicking") was even more prevalent during the New Order period. While during the Suharto era elections were held regularly, they largely served to legitimize the regime. The New Order apparatus always ensured that the government political force, Golkar, a *de facto* party, came out as the winner in every election by a significant margin. Immediately after the first election, Suharto also compelled the many opposition political parties to merge into two parties. The nationalists and Christian-Catholic parties formed the PDI, and the Muslim parties the PPP. The regime interfered regularly in the affairs of both political parties, especially on issues of party leadership. Suharto also relied on the five political laws (on elections, parliament, political parties, social organizations, and referenda to change the constitution) to regulate and control political life. Additionally, the security apparatus used a draconian anti-subversive law to crack down on political opponents of the regime.

After *Reformasi*, another nationalist leader emerged. Megawati Sukarnoputri, however, has not enjoyed the politically secure atmosphere that her father and Suharto had enjoyed. She has had to function within the setting of open political competition. But this has not prevented her from demonstrating nationalist traits of leadership. Following the 1999 election in which her party, the PDI-P, emerged with the largest vote, Megawati assumed that the "mandate of heaven" had been bestowed upon her. This was in spite of the fact that the nationalist seats in the MPR, the highest state body tasked with electing the president, did not constitute a simple majority (50 percent plus 1.) Consequently, true to her Javanese (and Balinese) political culture, she

did not actively seek power by building a coalition or making a political deal. Instead, she waited for the others to present her with the presidency. Furthermore, immediately after taking over the presidency from the traditionalist Abdurrahman Wahid in 2001, Megawati put in charge people with military or bureaucratic backgrounds who many considered to be conservatives who had built their careers during the New Order regime. She also restored the power of some ministries whose power had been rolled back by Gus Dur. Megawati also criticized the tendency of the politicians to arrive at decisions through voting and other means of political competition. She branded such a practice as unsuitable to Indonesian culture. These actions show that Megawati's leadership and her stance on political competition are consistent with the traits exercised by the previous nationalist leaders.

While equally authoritarian, the traditionalists have practiced a different style of leadership. As explained in Chapter 6, direct evidence of traditionalist governance, however, can only be found during the short administration of Abdurrahman Wahid. Gus Dur exercised an open leadership style by, among other things, opening up the Istana (palace)--a sacred place during the regimes of Sukarno and Suharto, which has become sacred again during Megawati's reign--to the common people. Often *kyai* and *santri* from various *pesantren* visited him unannounced and were never turned away by the guards. However, this relaxed, egalitarian style should not be mistaken as revealing a zest for political competition. Gus Dur remained deeply authoritarian in running the government, especially in facing opposition. When it became clear that his administration was not popular among the politicians of the other *aliran*-based parties and that he was likely to be ousted, Gus Dur tried to maintain power at

all costs. In the run-up to the MPR's special session that would impeach him, Gus Dur issued a futile decree (which was ignored) that was meant to dissolve parliament and disband Golkar.

The traditionalists' proximity to the nationalists in perceptions of authoritarian governance could also be seen during the Sukarno era. After quitting Masyumi in 1952, the NU became a willing collaborator with the Sukarno regime. The NU represented the religious faction in the Nasakom, and they presented Sukarno with the Islamic credentials necessary to legitimize his rule in the eyes of many Muslims, much to the dismay of their modernist brethren.

Concerning the distribution of power between the center and the regions, both the nationalists and traditionalists generally favored the unitary state form with a strong center. The nationalists were the most profound unitarists. Their belief in the unitary state for Indonesia seemed unwavering. The nationalist leader Sukarno, for instance, viewed the unitary form of the Indonesian republic as the ultimate stage in the evolution of Indonesia's nation-building. He perceived that Indonesia came to its unitary form through several stages of solidarity development: ethnic solidarity, then insular solidarity, and then national federalist solidarity. National unitary solidarity was then seen as the final stage in Indonesia's nation-building. Hence, Sukarno viewed engaging in a debate on federalism as a step backward for Indonesia. However, quite similar to Sukarno's stages discussed above, strong central rule did not happen immediately following independence. It took place rather gradually. But eventually, with Sukarno's growing authoritarianism came a stronger centralistic inclination. The regional rebellions of PRRI/Permesta could

therefore be seen as protest movements against both centralization and growing authoritarianism.

Suharto's New Order further consolidated this notion of strong center and weak dependent regions. All development programs that became the hallmark of New Order's capitalist developmentalism were planned, executed, and evaluated from Jakarta. The regional governments, either on the provincial or district levels, were the apparatus of the central government. This centralized approach also ensured uniformity in development programs, negating the unique characteristics of each region. The Ministry of Home Affairs became a very powerful portfolio, with tasks of supervising the running of government in the regions, including ensuring that the choice of regional top administrators accorded with the wishes of the central government.

In the period of *Reformasi*, regional autonomy became one of the most important reform agenda items. This idea was pushed forward during the Habibie interregnum, and at least during the initial period of Gus Dur's administration. But one of the first policies by Megawati's government was to attempt to roll-back some provisions in the regional autonomy law. Using the rather chaotic application of the law in its first few years, and lack of coordination among the regions, Megawati appeared to be aiming at restoring the central government's power. The Ministry of Home Affairs, which had lost much of its authority in the previous years, regained its power. And measures were launched to re-evaluate the regional autonomy law.

The traditionalists also believed in a strong center. This was apparent from the tension between President Abdurrahman Wahid and his regional autonomy team headed and manned mostly by figures with *seberang*

backgrounds. While initially Gus Dur seemed rather favorable to this program, by, for example, setting up a state ministry of regional autonomy, later he seemed to stall many initiatives proposed by this ministry. He even demoted its minister, Ryaas Rasyid, to another post. Ryaas later resigned from the cabinet, citing differences with the president over regional autonomy. The traditionalists also saw the virtue of giving some degree of autonomy to the locals. However, consistent with the traditionalist notion of maintaining and celebrating cultural pluralism in a diverse Indonesia, such autonomy was viewed mainly in terms of culture, rather than political and economic matters, which in their view still should be taken care of by the center. One of the examples of such a position was in Gus Dur's handling of the separatist movement in Irian Jaya. Much to the dismay of the nationalists, the president announced that the designation of the province should be changed to Papua, as demanded by many of its local people. He also allowed local symbols, such as flags, to be displayed alongside the national ones. Such a policy of offering elements of cultural autonomy to the troubled province was unthinkable during the previous nationalist rule of Sukarno and Suharto, and quite predictably was rescinded immediately following Megawati's ascension.

THE PRIMACY OF POLITICAL CULTURE IN INDONESIA'S ALIRAN-BASED POLITICS

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate throughout that the relationship between cultural traits and political behavior is real rather than imaginary. Culture matters not only in forming political behavior but also in influencing the structure and institutions of the state.

Some authors studying the role of culture in politics relative to the institutional-structural factors relegate it to a secondary order in the ladder of explanation. Many of these authors focus on modern democratic societies, where even the impact of religion is virtually dismissed.² Elkins and Simeon contend further that a cultural explanation can be convincing only after the structural and institutional factors are investigated and found not to satisfactorily explain variations in behavior.³ Along a similar line that puts culture as a residual factor, Inglehart notes that while culture may be important, it cannot be treated as an explanatory variable. Culture is affected, even produced by, political, structural, and economic factors. Hence, the best position that culture can occupy is as an intervening variable.⁴

However, in the real, "messy" developing world, at least, culture impacts political engagement, as has been shown in this thesis. Rather in contradiction to these studies on political culture, and without dismissing the importance of other political and economic variables,⁵ the present study finds that culture has been paramount in explaining behavior in Indonesia, at least for the three major political issues analyzed, and cannot be relegated to an insignificant role or dismissed without badly distorting the real political behavior that emerges from the hard-to-measure or the so-called "soft" factors of values, beliefs,

² Ronald Inglehart (1988) "The Renaissance of Political Culture," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 4, December 1988, pp. 1203-1230.

³ David J. Elkins and Richard E.B. Simeon (1979) "A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain," in *Comparative Politics*, January 1979, pp. 127-143.

⁴ Inglehart, *op.cit.*

⁵ Since this thesis is a single country study, a number of these political and economic variables are viewed as constant.

norms, symbols, and sets of ideas.⁶ The primacy of culture is evident from the analyses of its centrality in shaping the political world-views of each of the *aliran* and in the ways it forms the segments' divergent political preferences. As described in Chapter 2, and further expounded in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the three *aliran* segments have derived their political beliefs from the cultural traits of their respective ethnic groups or cluster of ethnic groups.

The modernist *aliran* is derived from the political culture of the outer-island ethnic groups, while the political cultures of both the nationalists and traditionalists are from derived from Java. As depicted in Graphs 1 to 6 in Chapter 3, most of the support for the modernists during elections came from the outer island provinces, while the nationalists enjoyed support from the heartland of Javanese civilization, and the traditionalists from the *pesantren* stronghold areas of eastern part of Java. There are many *seberang* ethnic groups, and each has unique characteristics. However, many of the more assertive groups share some common cultural traits. There is significantly less Hindu-Buddhist influence in the outer-islands compared to its extensive influence in Java. The other characteristic lies in the geographical situation. Many *seberang* communities lie on the coastal areas and their populations engage in commerce, as opposed to the agrarian preoccupation of many Javanese. These have resulted in a lack of substantial social stratification in *seberang* areas, whereas in Javanese communities, extensive social stratification seems to be the norm. As a result, the Javanese communities tend to emphasize social harmony, unity, tolerance, and shy away from competition.

⁶ Inglehart, for instance, argues "(t)he incompleteness of models that ignore cultural factors is becoming increasingly evident." See Inglehart, *op.cit.*, p. 1203.

The *seberang* communities, on the other hand, have not regarded unity as among their highest priorities. The ability to compete appears to be one of the traits most cherished by the *seberang*.

In terms of political culture, such cultural traits created differences in the political behavior of the *aliran*-based segments. The nationalists and traditionalists essentially believe that the power of the state should be concentrated at the center and in the hands of the leaders. Because social harmony is highly valued and a diffusion of power is considered a weakness in their cultural traditions, these *aliran* groups are not particularly partial to the idea of oppositional political competition, or a devolution of power from the center to regions. Due to their egalitarian and competitive traits, the modernists are generally in favor of opposition politics. The modernists are also partial to the idea of a devolution of power. On the other hand, as an "out-group", the modernists support political competition and opportunities for representation, and they also feel justified in their belief in the principle of majoritarianism. Although in fact the *abangan* and the minorities have constituted the effective majority electorally, because of Muslim divisions, the modernists reject the idea of divisions among Muslims. Rather, in the view of the modernists it is just that the *abangan* and the nominal Muslims are at a different and lower level of understanding of Islam and its religious practices at the moment.⁷ The modernists, thus, seek to introduce Islamic law (*syariah*) in Indonesia. Such a position has put them in an adversarial relationship with the other *aliran*-based

⁷ Such division and contention among Muslims is actually a global phenomenon. See Lisa Wedeen, "Beyond the Crusades," in *Items & Issues*, Social Science Research Council, Vol. 4, No. 2-3, Spring/Summer 2003, p. 1-6.

groups on a number of occasions, as well as with the minority groups, who in contrast favor the idea of an ethnically and religiously plural Indonesia.

Culture has thus not only informed the political platforms of individual segments, it has also greatly influenced the structure of Indonesian politics. The political structure in this plural society is characterized by political interactions among the three major *aliran*. In turn, this culturally-induced political structure defines how issues of statehood, the economy, and social affairs are perceived and acted upon by the major political players. So, rather than having political or economic factors dominating culture, this case study has demonstrated that the order is somewhat reversed, that culture has tended to dominate virtually everything political.

The other significance of this study for the political culture literature lies in the suggestion that in plural societies, political cultures should be approached in plural terms. Plural societies have multiple political cultures, rather than just the culture that dominates the state. Although this may sound a bit tautological, the predominant approach to political culture in comparative politics literature is to view any political entity, usually in the form of the state, as a unified, single entity, guided by a dominant culture. Studies such as the one by Inglehart cited above (albeit he studied only modern democracies), employed a large-*n* approach to achieve a higher level of generalization, deemed important for theorizing. But, in such studies, as many have pointed out,⁸ the risk of oversimplification is all too evident. As this study has revealed, the variations in political perceptions and behavior among the segments in plural

⁸ See the debate on the methodological choices in comparative politics in Atul Kohli, *et.al.*, "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium," in *World Politics*, Vol. 48, October 1995.

societies are very significant, so as to make any attempt to treat the state as a unified polity risks distorting reality. The Indonesian experience demonstrates the tenacity of multiple segmental political cultures. This is in spite of the efforts of various national governments to forge a national identity using tools that Eric Hobsbawm describes as "inventing tradition."⁹ Thus, in some ways, this study reaffirms the approach adopted by a number of previous studies that stress the need to look inside the confines of national borders, below the level of the state and dominant culture, and seek to learn about variations in political perceptions and eventually political behavior, especially among different ethno-religious-based groups that make up a plural society.¹⁰

The political culture approach is often criticized for its static tendency. In focusing on enduring but not immutable factors, such as cultural traits, this approach tends to perceive change as occasional and gradual. While powerful, cultural change generally takes generations to settle and be consolidated, whereas structural factors, such as the economy, tend to have more immediate effects. As a result, the political culture concept of change is viewed by many political scientists, especially from the rational choice persuasion, as rather weak. Political culturalists respond to this criticism by arguing that while considerable continuity is an inherent assumption of the political culture

⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰ These are studies such as the ones done by Robert D. Putnam (1993) Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, Princeton: Princeton University Press, and Joseph Lapalombara (1965) "Italy: Fragmentation, Isolation, Alienation," in Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds. (1965) Political Culture and Political Development, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Other studies also deal with political culture variations within a polity but are based on social-classes, such as Myron Weiner (1965) "India: Two Political Cultures," in Pye and Verba, eds., *op.cit.*

perspective, it also deals with change. But in political culture, change is generally slow and evolutionary, and is related to change in society at large. Political culturalists are therefore quite skeptical about the notion of revolutionary change, and argue that revolutionary transformation tends to be regressive in the longer run. In other words, the intended revolutionary effects tend to last for a relatively short time. Once the dust of the revolution has settled, the polity returns to the old structure and practices, which usually reflect its cultural foundation.¹¹

Another, more recent, review of political culture criticizes the fallacy of cultural essentialism. Lisa Wedeen argues that political culturalists tend to view culture as the source of all things political, without critically examining how other factors, such as power relations and the economy, affect how culture actually translates into political behavior. In a similar line of argument to the classic Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's work of Inventing Tradition,¹² Wedeen asserts that culture becomes meaningful to its adherents, and thus produces political behavior in the polity through an agent-generated process of attaching meaning to concepts. Such a process involves historical events and circumstances as well as the dynamics of power relations that affect the polity.¹³ This perspective facilitates an improvement in the treatment of change in political culture theory. While tenacious, culture is also susceptible to elite

¹¹ Harry Eckstein, "A Culturalist Theory of Political Change," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 3, September 1998, p. 793, 801.

¹² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *eds.*, *op. cit.*

¹³ Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 4, December 2002, pp. 713-728. She borrows from linguistics with her use of "semiotic practices" and "meaning-making".

construction and circumstantial change, according to the dynamics of its *milieu*.

This study has attempted to demonstrate how in a number of cases the positions of the major *aliran*-based segments have shifted over time. The most profound example can be found in the political platforms on the state foundation. The position of the nationalists on this matter has been the most consistent. They have rejected the majoritarian argument of the Muslim groups arguing for an Islamic state since the beginning, and have never wavered from this position, that is, supporting a quasi-secular arrangement embodied in Pancasila. In contrast, the traditionalist position has changed quite dramatically. From Independence up to the inception of Guided Democracy, the traditionalists were hand-in-hand with the modernists in arguing for Islam as the state foundation. Their position on this issue during the New Order, however, shifted to the Pancasila camp and has remained there. As explained in Chapter 6, this change occurred due to two reasons. One involved the changing power relations that took place during the New Order. Prior to the rise of Suharto to power, the traditionalists enjoyed a relatively secure position *vis-à-vis* the other major powers. It was the fourth largest party after the 1955 election, and became one of the pillars in Sukarno's Nasakom. Under the New Order regime, however, the traditionalists were put in a subordinate position. In order to preserve the traditionalist institutions from the regime's encroachment, the traditionalists ceded to the demand of the regime to acknowledge Pancasila as the sole foundation. The other reason is related to the historical and intellectual development within the traditionalist institutions. Many young traditionalists were sent to study Islam and secular subjects in many tertiary

educational institutions, including many Western universities during the New Order. This has resulted in a rapid growth of liberal ideas among the traditionalists, and consequently there has been more ready acceptance of the idea of a plural Indonesia, as embodied in Pancasila.

But it is important to note that these changes still transpired within the larger framework of the *aliran* cultural context. The traditionalists have been almost naturally non-ideological and pragmatic and flexible, due to their cultural hybrid traditions. Therefore, their shifting of positions did not create much cultural stress for the traditionalists. Under a similar transformation of power relations during the New Order, the modernists reacted differently. They have remained firm in the quest for an Islamic state. However, the modernists also have been politically entrepreneurial. Realizing that such a position could not be pushed through formal state channels, they have aimed to do so through alternative means, such as public education (*dakwah*).

REFORMASI, DEMOCRACY, AND THE RETURN OF ALIRAN POLITICS

An interesting question is what motivated the *Reformasi* movement and generated support for the movement? While there seemed to be relatively strong mass support for *Reformasi*, the circumstances surrounding the downfall of Suharto as well as what has happened after that, bring forth such questions. Various political forces that had previously been suppressed under Suharto's regime, *e.g.*, the modernist Muslims, the nationalists, and the traditionalist Muslims, have perceived an opportunity for gaining power. They have engaged in a deeply polarized political struggle for power that has caused the disruption

of stability in various parts of the country. These experiences have raised doubts as to the correlation between demands for reform and democratization.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the themes and catchphrases accentuating both the mass demonstrations and the political discourse in Indonesia during the rise of *Reformasi* were largely those advocating democratization. Whether consciously or otherwise, politicians, government officials, the press, academics, and the general public have associated *Reformasi* with democratization.¹⁵ To use jargon other than "*demokrasi*" in defining the movement would risk being considered part of the old regime. Thus, reform could at least be associated with democratization efforts. However, the problems with democratization in Indonesia are due to several factors that shall be enumerated in this section.

Reformasi has brought about a tremendous political change. The movement played a major role in bringing down Suharto and his "New Order" regime in May 1998. At the beginning of the movement, there was deep skepticism among analysts of Indonesian politics about whether the movement would be able to last long enough to cause a dent in the regime's structure, let alone topple Suharto. Such doubt was understandable, bearing in mind that for more than thirty years, Suharto had been able to consolidate his power not only by eliminating virtually all political contenders, but also through economic development that had won him widespread legitimacy.

¹⁴ Diane K. Mauzy (1999) "Reformasi: Comparing Democratization Efforts in Malaysia and Indonesia," paper prepared for the Joint Conference of the Northwest Regional Consortium of Southeast Asian Studies and the Canadian Council of Southeast Asian Studies, October 22-24, 1999, at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

¹⁵ It should be noted here that many groups fighting for political change, especially during the last two decades, almost invariably have carried the banner of democracy, despite the different interpretations attached to the concept by different groups.

The success of the *Reformasi* movement has led many analysts to believe that Indonesian politics have fundamentally changed, that new political forces have replaced the old ones, and that identities and loyalties have shifted. This is the fruit of economic development carried out by the New Order regime, which has indeed created higher prosperity, an improved health care system, and better education system. As a result, the new Indonesian generation, especially the middle class in urban areas, is a generation of modernity, seemingly detached from the old segmental loyalties that have divided their forefathers. Globalization, which Indonesia has been actively seeking to be a part of, has also made the younger generation more familiar with the ideas of democracy. Even though democracy is interpreted differently by the various political forces and actors in Indonesia, *Reformasi* was launched in the name of "democracy." Never before in the history of Indonesian politics had Western-type democracy won so many adherents, albeit vaguely defined.

During the New Order era, an obsession about national political stability as a precondition for economic development also necessitated the suppression of political activities. This took the form of regulation of the party system, control of the media, limited rights of association, and control of civil society and the political opposition. While such an approach curbed political liberties to a great degree, it also controlled the political divisions in the plural society that had created a situation of prolonged instability during the Sukarno era of the 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁶

¹⁶ The political polarization was at such a level that Sukarno in 1962 issued a call to 'bury the political parties.' Such a call was among the many measures he took in the Guided Democracy period.

Suharto's resignation and the crumbling of his New Order regime have brought back the divisive features of a plural society, in terms of the rise of ethnic nationalism and the resurgence of segmental politics. It has also brought about a sense of democratic euphoria among the public. After being tightly regulated for almost four decades since the introduction of "Guided Democracy" by Sukarno in 1959, Indonesian politics has enjoyed its newfound freedoms to the fullest. After President Habibie, who replaced Suharto in May 1998, announced that a general election would be held in 1999, some 160 political parties were established between the period of May 1998 and February 1999. This was a massive increase from the three parties previously allowed to participate in the elections during the New Order era.¹⁷

The problem with democratization generally is that it is relatively easy to grant new rights for political participation (and sometimes unavoidable), but it is less easy for a state, usually operating with diminished capacity, to control the new energy released into the political system. It is rather harder still to institutionalize the norms, procedures and rules of the game required to make democracy workable. The rather negative impact of the "participation explosion" that resulted from the political transition in Indonesia was a resurgence of ethnic nationalism in various regions that led to ethnic conflicts, at times fueled by religious paramilitary groups, such as in Maluku, West and Central

¹⁷ However, the General Election Commission (KPU) decided later that only 48 parties had a sufficient level of support and number of branches to be eligible to participate in the 1999 election. Data from *Litbang Kompas* (Research and Development Unit of *Kompas* Daily), 1999, quoted in Daniel Dhakidae (1999) *Partai-partai Politik Indonesia: Kisah Pergerakan dan Organisasi dalam Patahan-Patahan Sejarah* (Indonesian Political Parties: History of Movements and Organizations), in *Litbang Kompas* Team (1999) *Partai-partai Politik Indonesia: Ideologi, Strategi, dan Program* (Indonesian Political Parties: Ideologies, Strategies, and Programs), Jakarta: Kompas, pp. 31.

Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, and Aceh. One of the more positive aspects of Suharto's thirty years of iron-fisted rule was the maintenance of relatively stable and peaceful conditions in the relationships among the more than 300 ethnic groups, adherents of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, living in the archipelago. The approach pursued by the New Order regime combined economic development, the distribution of economic opportunities, and maintenance of political stability.¹⁸

The unleashing of ethnic nationalism was accentuated by the resurfacing of segmental politics in the form of deep polarization among elites and political groups. The political strife, still conducted within the framework of the unitary state, has made governance and economic recovery difficult. The foundation of the transition process laid out during the Habibie's interregnum period has largely been shattered by political quarrels among the elite of the *aliran*-based segments, especially after Abdurrahman Wahid assumed the presidency in 1999.¹⁹ The political infighting has been mainly precipitated by the different interpretations and expectations as to what system of government should prevail in the post-Suharto era. As has been demonstrated in this thesis, the consolidation and institutionalization of democratic practices, procedures and values have proven to be difficult to accomplish in Indonesia. Interestingly, all the *aliran* groups seem to claim that democracy should become the foundation of the new Indonesian political system. However, they tend to emphasize

¹⁸ Known for its jargon, *Trilogi Pembangunan* (Development Trilogy), it was one of the cornerstones of Suharto's regime.

¹⁹ For a recent account of the problems of Indonesian politics since *Reformasi*, consult Olle Törnquist, "What's Wrong with Indonesia's Democratisation?" in *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 30, Number 3, September 2002.

particular and divergent aspects of democracy, while wanting to disallow other aspects. As a result, there are competing claims put forward by the respective *aliran* groups that they have the “correct” understanding of democracy and therefore they are the true vanguard of *Reformasi*.

To the nationalists’ understanding, democracy primarily consists of the exercise of pluralism; that is, their acceptance of and tolerance for a multiplicity of ethnic, racial, and religious groups with competing interests residing within a single state. The nationalists have all along believed that the only way to build and maintain a unified state was through a pluralist approach that was embedded in the over-arching “nationalist” ideology of Pancasila and the *de facto* practice of secularism. The practice of pluralism has meant access for all citizens to government services, educational and economic opportunities, as well as opportunities for careers in the state bureaucracy.²⁰

If during the New Order the ethnic Chinese were rather severely discriminated against, this was due in part to the link that some prominent Chinese had had with the communists prior to the 1965 failed coup attempt. The nationalist military was and is staunchly anti-communist, and the discrimination that followed its victory in the 1960s was directed to all members of the PKI and its sympathizers, regardless of race or ethnicity. The discrimination against the Chinese did not extend to all spheres of interest, however. In the economic sphere, the Chinese did have a lot of space to operate, resulting in their domination of many of Indonesia’s economic sectors.

²⁰ Douglas E. Ramage (1995) Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and the Ideology of Tolerance, London: Routledge.

While supportive of pluralism, the nationalists have also believed that the state must have a strong hand to hold such a plural state together. They have tended to view “politicking” as disruptive and counter-productive. In line with a Javanese *aliran*-based predisposition favoring autocracy and hierarchy, whenever the opportunity or need has arisen, the nationalists have been inclined to resort to political control. Consequently, the nationalists’ understanding of democracy does not extend to contestation and opposition, except in a very limited and controlled context with the nationalists clearly in control.

In contrast to the nationalists, the modernists are culturally disposed to being egalitarian, in the sense of favoring social equality, with few differences in wealth, power, prestige, or status within the society, at least their society.²¹ The modernists also practice an open style of leadership. These traits have made them comfortable with the democratic idea of political competition and contestation. On the other hand, their understanding of democracy is primarily focused on support for the principle of majoritarianism or majority rule. For the modernists, democracy means, first and foremost, the satisfaction of those constituting the largest number. They believe it is the duty of the state to satisfy the demands of the majority group, in this case the Muslims. They disallow the democratic principle that the minority’s rights should be protected. Likewise, they dismiss the idea that in some circumstances the issues to be determined are so grave and significant that it is necessary to have more than a bare

²¹ On the other hand, the modernists are less inclined to be egalitarian when the word is used as a noun to mean equal rights for all people, nor would they likely support the notion of egalitarianism as a doctrine of the equality of humankind and desirability of political, economic and social equality for all.

majority to enact. Therefore, they believe that since Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country, the state should be based on Islamic law. Their belief in and determination to have majority rule has not been diminished by the fact that they do not actually possess the majority that they claim because of Muslim disunity. They tend to dismiss this problem by saying that it is not so much a matter of religious differences, as it is a matter of different levels of religious consciousness, which can be overcome through education. The modernists, then, the most fervent supporters of the democratic idea of political competition as a means to power, reject the democratic principle of protection for the rights and interests of the minority.

The position of the traditionalists has changed over time, owing to their more flexible cultural history, being pious Muslims but also Javanese. Initially, they actively supported the idea of an Islamic state foundation, and likewise the principle of majoritarianism. But since then they have reversed their position and supported the pluralism promoted by the nationalist leaders and also the ideology of *Pancasila*. In fact, the traditionalists are now the most liberal of all *aliran* segments in their interpretation of democracy as recognizing and respecting others' beliefs and practices. However, as was apparent during the short and tumultuous period of Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency, the traditionalists have less regard for the democratic principle of open political competition and tolerance of the opposition. When political difficulties arose, Abdurrahman Wahid sought to re-impose more political control by proclaiming parliament closed. In fact, in this regard, the traditionalists do not differ significantly from the nationalists. Thus, even as they become more liberal in

their views of society and the world, they tend to remain uncomfortable with the idea of democracy as political competition.

What then are the policy implications of this study, especially in light of efforts by some Western states to spread democratization worldwide? The post-Cold War perception in some Western democracies is that liberal democracy is the “final form of human endeavor.”²² After the fall of communism, and the supposed failure of other types of governance, liberal democracy is viewed as positive for humankind. All human beings, according to this line of reasoning, are entitled to the kind of good life that has been afforded to many Western states, as a result of liberal democracy. Furthermore, as others in this intellectual tradition assert, the experience of democratization in the 1980s shows that setting out to topple an authoritarian regime and establishing a “democracy” is not an impossible task. It is no longer fashionable to suggest that a polity should wait for various supposed prerequisites of democracy to be met before carrying out democratization, as was previously suggested by some.²³ However, many studies have shown that the correlation between economic prosperity and democratic evolution is not as tight as had been the case in the West. Some East and Southeast Asian countries have not taken the democratic path even after they have attained a certain level of economic prosperity.²⁴

²² Francis Fukuyama (1992) The End of History and the Last Man, New York: Free Press.

²³ Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy,” in *American Political Science Review*, March 1959

²⁴ Donald K. Emmerson, “Region and Recalcitrance: Rethinking Democracy through Southeast Asia” in *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 8 No. 2, 1995.

As the Indonesian *Reformasi* experience suggests, authoritarian rule can be toppled through a coalition of opposition elite,²⁵ and other ways, such as a foreign-imposed "regime change". While it did take more than thirty years to topple the New Order regime, once the opposition elite united, and the military did not object, the process came relatively swiftly. But then there was a tremendous difficulty in deciding what should come next, and finding agreement for it.

As this study has demonstrated, it is one thing to topple an authoritarian regime, it is quite another to replace it with a workable democracy that functions efficiently while the state is still in the process of establishing new institutions and procedures. While many in the anti-Suharto movement claimed that they aspired to a democratic form of governance, the fall of the old authoritarian regime did not necessarily lead to a straightforward transition to democracy. The democratization process in Indonesia has been doubly difficult because of the nature of its plural society. Not only was there was no general plan on what should be done to achieve a democratic polity, but also there was no apparent consensus on what democratic elements should be instituted. The political perceptions and behavior of the three major *aliran*-based groups toward democracy have been so varied and contradictory as to constitute a major stumbling block in the country's path toward democracy.

In the final analysis, this Indonesian experience should serve as a reminder to the supporters of global democratization, especially those in the Western states, that the transition toward democracy should be carefully

²⁵ Samuel P. Huntington (1993) The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

conceived, the perceptions of both the opposition elite and the masses concerning governance should be thoroughly investigated, and local conditions and situations, history and culture, including conflict and cooperation patterns among groups, should always be taken into consideration.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE ALIRAN-BASED APPROACH IN THE STUDY OF INDONESIAN POLITICS

The *aliran*-based approach dominated Indonesian studies in the 1960s and 1970s. Its popularity among Indonesianist scholars, however, dissipated in the 1980s and more so in the 1990s. This probably illustrates how scholarship tends to follow events and changes happening in the real world. Studies of Indonesian politics using the *aliran* perspective were quite popular in the decades following the *aliran*'s heyday during the parliamentary democracy period of the 1950s and political turbulence of the 1960s. In contrast, the *aliran*-based approach did not appear significantly in Indonesian political studies during the New Order era, as a result of the regime's political control that put a severe lid on politics and political competition, and for 'national unity' purposes, repressed the *aliran*-based politics.

The lack of *aliran*-based studies during the past two decades has rendered an impression that Indonesian politics has indeed been de-*aliranized* as intended by the New Order regime. But the *aliran* segments and networks were merely keeping a low profile during this period. And it can be argued that even at the height of Suharto's political control, the *aliran* networks were still operating, albeit in some modified and careful forms.

The modernists were the most badly hit by the authoritarian rule, at least in the first two decades. The suppression of the modernists went back to the Guided Democracy period, when in 1960 Sukarno banned Masyumi, the modernist vanguard party and the close runner-up in the 1955 election, for alleged involvement in the regional rebellion of PRRI/Permesta. Suharto continued the repression of the modernists by refusing to lift the ban for Masyumi in the early years of the New Order, and by barring prominent Masyumi figures from holding executive positions in the new modernist party, Parmusi (*Partai Muslimin Indonesia* - Indonesian Muslim Party).²⁶ All throughout the New Order, Parmusi and later the PPP (*Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* - United Development Party), became insignificant in terms of electoral politics. The modernists adopted different approaches toward the regime. Some modernists chose to abandon politics and became active in social educational organizations, such as Muhammadiyah, while others joined in government service, either as politicians or bureaucrats. A number of modernists opted to remain active in oppositional politics, including some prominent Masyumi leaders, by setting up quasi-political conservative organizations, such as KISDI (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam* - Indonesian Committee for Islamic World Solidarity) and DDII (*Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* - Indonesian Council for Islamic Predication). But it was not until the 1990s that the modernists made a meaningful return to mainstream politics. The establishment of ICMI in 1990 marked a renewal in modernist political participation. As described in Chapter 5, ICMI invited many

²⁶ In 1973, Parmusi merged with the traditionalist NU, and two smaller Islamic parties to form the PPP.

controversies, and many analysts perceived it as an effort by Suharto to cultivate a new power base among the Muslims. Robert Hefner, for instance, calls it a part of “the regimist Islam.”²⁷ However, many modernists saw ICMI as a window of opportunity for making a political comeback. So they flocked into this organization. The level of modernist involvement was so much that Abdurrahman Wahid, the traditionalist leader, referred to ICMI as a “neo-Masyumi.”²⁸

In quite a contrast to the modernist’s numerous institutional manifestations, the traditionalists enjoyed a relatively more stable and unified institutional arrangement. Similar to the other *aliran*, the traditionalists’ political participation was also curbed by authoritarianism. But they were able to maintain their institutional coherence and even were able to participate to some degree in both the Guided Democracy and New Order periods. During Guided Democracy, the NU was even considered one of the pillars in Sukarno’s Nasakom (*nasionalis, agama, komunis* - nationalist, religious, and communist) idea, representing the religious political affiliation. During the New Order, the traditionalists were also instructed to limit their electoral participation with the PPP merger. But the NU remained alive and active, both as a social organization and as a political grouping that even the New Order regime had to take into account. As described in Chapter 6, the regime repeatedly asked for NU’s consent in order to facilitate their development programs, such as family

²⁷ Robert W. Hefner (2000) Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia, Princeton: Princeton University Press, esp. Chapters 5 and 6.

²⁸ Adam Schwarz (1999) A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia’s Search for Stability, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 185-188.

planning, as well as to smooth the progress of some important political decisions, such as the Pancasila *azas tunggal* (sole foundation) policy.

The nationalists were, of course, in a position of dominance during both the Guided Democracy and New Order periods. The authoritarian rule and attempts at de-*aliran*ization were in line with the politico-cultural beliefs of the nationalists that shun the divisive nature of political competition. From the *aliran* perspective, the change of leadership from Sukarno to Suharto could be perceived as an “intra-*aliran*” rivalry that took place within the framework of the state. Sukarno and his PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia* - Indonesian National Party) represented the civilian nationalists, whereas Suharto and his TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* - Indonesian National Military) represented the military variant. This rivalry should be understood in terms of the Western ideological influence that permeated the nationalist *aliran*. Suharto had a pro-West outlook and a belief in capitalist developmentalism, while Sukarno held an anti-West platform and was a socialist. Within the *aliran* perspective, however, this difference was inconsequential, because both regimes exercised similar political behavior due to the resemblance in their politico-cultural backgrounds. The emergence of Megawati and the PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia - Perjuangan* - Indonesian Democratic Party - Struggle) at the end of the New Order regime, following the July 27, 1996 incident and their ever growing opposition to the regime, discussed in Chapter 4, should also be seen in the same light, *i.e.*, as an “intra-*aliran*” rivalry.

This study, thus, has attempted to demonstrate that the significance of the *aliran* goes beyond mere elections. In a setting of open and unimpeded political competition, the prominence of *aliran* networks and loyalties may also

be measured through electoral means. During the 1999 election, the *aliran* parties figured significantly, as they had been previously in the 1955 election. But in a controlled, authoritarian setting, the importance of the *aliran* should be evaluated through an observation of non-electoral political processes.

The tenacity and durability of the *aliran* and their institutional manifestations may be explained through a look at their nature. As explained at the outset of this thesis, the *aliran* segments and their networks are comprehensive entities which operate in social, cultural, and political spheres. Thus, even when political participation was restricted, the *aliran*-based segments could always fall back on their social, educational and cultural functions. Muhammadiyah and HMI (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* - Islamic Students Association), for instance, became the sojourn places for the modernists when their political wing, Masyumi, was banned. The NU's announcement that it was retiring from practical political involvement in 1983 through "the return to the *khittah* (oath) of 1926" which supposedly meant changing the orientation of the organization from political to social functions, could be seen as a similar move by the traditionalists.²⁹ But once the window of opportunity for political participation reopened, the *aliran*-based groups could with ease resume their political ventures, as the return of *aliran* parties after the fall of Suharto has suggested.

Aliran politics are not without their problems. The *aliran* elites, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, and as the preceding chapters have shown, have dealt almost exclusively with the fundamental political issues of

²⁹ See Andrée Feillard (1999) *NU vis-à-vis Negara: Pencarian Isi, Bentuk, dan Makna* (NU vis-à-vis the State: The Search for Content, Form, and Meaning), Yogyakarta: LKIS, Chapter X.

the state. Their political platforms on other public issues, such as economic development, the role of women, and the environment, are not developed and have tended to be in reaction to the stance adopted by a rival *aliran*-based parties. Even on some issues directly related to politics, such as foreign policy, the *aliran*-based parties have not taken discernable and distinct positions. Does this mean that the *aliran*-based allegiances might lose their relevance for Indonesia's future, especially taking into account an increasingly globalized world and more complex issues facing the country? While the answer to this important question remains to be seen, it is possible to speculate that the apparent lack of engagement of the *aliran*-based groups in these public issues is due to the fact that the long period of authoritarianism has retarded and restricted their politicization. This study has demonstrated that the *aliran* elite are capable of learning and adjusting their group's positions to the changing *milieu*. So it can be argued that given sufficient time and a stable environment, in which the *aliran*-based parties can evolve in an unobstructed manner, they may develop their distinctive platforms in dealing with the other state issues, especially as they come to realize that virtually all issues of state, even foreign policy, can have an impact on the future of *aliran*-based networks and loyalties themselves.

As mentioned at the outset of this thesis, the absence of studies about the *aliran* in recent Indonesian scholarship is due to the relatively muted positions of the *aliran* for the last forty years until Suharto's downfall. Many of the works that focused on the structural-institutional factors certainly have contributed to the understanding of the changes taking place in the Indonesian politics since *Reformasi*. Especially important in many of these works was the

discussion of the multi-faceted crisis that accompanied the political change. The authors in Emmerson's edited volume³⁰ have attempted to cover all of the relevant aspects of the Indonesian polity, and thus have provided state of the art analyses of Indonesian society, from the issue of politics and the economy to women and expression.

The issue of regionalism and the potential for secession are equally important. The East Timor referendum in 1999, in which an overwhelming majority voted to break away from Indonesia, has brought about the fear of many Indonesians as well as Indonesia's neighbors that the archipelago could undergo a Balkanization. After decades of being a center-dominated unitary state, the political change has brought about a window of opportunity for the regions to assert themselves in demanding greater control over their own affairs. The rather chaotic transition process has led to a vacuum of power in the regions, which has resulted in various inter-ethnic, or inter-religious conflicts. Some interesting recent publications, such as Jacques Bertrand's Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict³¹ and the Damien Kingsbury and Harry Aveling edited book,³² have focused on this theme.

Perhaps not surprisingly, studies that have focused on the 1999 election have adopted some aspects of the *aliran* model.³³ These studies have usually

³⁰ Donald K. Emmerson, ed. (1999) Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

³¹ Jacques Bertrand (2003) Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³² Damien Kingsbury and Harry Aveling eds. (2003) Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia, London: RoutledgeCurzon.

³³ Dwight Y. King (2003) Half-Hearted Reform: Electoral Institutions and the Struggle for Democracy in Indonesia, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, Leo Suryadinata (2002) Election and Politics in Indonesia, Singapore: ISEAS.

compared the election with the 1955 election that was carried out in relatively open, free and fair manner. Dwight King's perceptive book, in particular, has made the case that the support base for the major parties of the 1999 election has a positive correlation with those of the major parties of the 1955 elections. So even although the word "*aliran*" is seldom mentioned explicitly, the references to the works of Geertz and Feith in the 1960s should be sufficient to contend that the electoral studies have at least been informed by the *aliran* model.

While some recent studies have acknowledged the return of *aliranism* to Indonesian politics to varying extents, there have hardly been any significant attempts undertaken to keep the study of the *aliran* updated with the recent events. Likewise, there have been few efforts to explain the roots of the political behavior of the *aliran*-based segments, and the consistency or variation in the positions of the *aliran* elites since the early days of the nationalist movement until now. However, one exception perhaps should be made. Hefner's book is an outstanding attempt to explore the relationship between political culture and political behavior in the Indonesian context. Civil Islam³⁴ compares and contrasts the political behavior of two Muslim groups, the traditionalists and the modernists *vis-à-vis* the nationalist regime. As such, it has attempted to link the political behavior of the traditionalists, especially those in the liberal wing led by Abdurrahman Wahid, with their belief system. To some extent, the book also analyzes the political behavior of some modernists, especially the conservative ones.

³⁴ Hefner, *op.cit.*

This present study has attempted to contribute to the understanding of the cultural roots of political behavior in Indonesian politics. As has been argued throughout this thesis, the *aliran* and *aliran*-based segments constitute a main feature of Indonesian politics. They have shown resilience amidst challenges to render them irrelevant. Such resilience is due to the fact that the bases of the major *aliran* are derived from the major ethnic groups or clusters of ethnic groups that make up the Indonesian plural society. As such, their political behaviors are rooted in the politico-cultural traits of the groups that comprise them. By focusing on political culture, this thesis has tried to analyze the role of ideas, symbols, and belief systems in Indonesian politics, and relate them to the fundamental issues facing the Indonesian state.

AFTERTHOUGHTS: AN EROSION OF ALIRAN POLITICS?

It is important to note that what is being written in this concluding section is the author's personal impression. It has come as a result of being a middle-class Indonesian who has observed events that have unfolded since the final years of the New Order regime until the present day, and has attempted to put them into the context of political change and continuity facing Indonesian politics. It should, therefore, be regarded simply as an offering of possible paths that Indonesian politics and its actors might traverse in the future.

The growth of the new middle class generation in Indonesia has not only brought about an aspiration for a more open political system, it also has created the potential to erode *aliranism* to some extent in the future. Brought up in a social environment during the New Order where modernity instead of

aliran-based allegiance was the order the day, the new, albeit small, middle class may be indifferent to the *aliran*.

At the same time, urban development, modernity and better transportation facilities have led to a significantly higher influx of people to Jakarta, the capital city. In the past, many leaders maintained their ties with their places of origin and continually rejuvenated their ethnic and cultural identities. During the New Order, many of them found that professing an ethnic identity was antithetical to the New Order ethos, which stressed modernity.³⁵ However, their politico-cultural traits were not necessarily transformed by their modern lifestyles. These traits remained deeply embedded in their subconscious perceptions. As a result, there seems to be an effort now to dissociate the *aliran* from their geographic bases and to associate them with modern ideological terminology.

The combination of the above two trends has resulted in a de-ethnicization of the *aliran* in formal, educated political discourse. For the members of the new middle class generation, their political affiliation is largely due to their own "modern" ideas of statehood. In many cases, the image of the parties has become a more important factor than their political platforms. For instance, many young urban people voted for the PDI-P in the last election partly out of nostalgia for the Sukarno era. They have perceived it to have been an open, democratic and egalitarian period, overlooking the authoritarian and highly stratified nature of the regime.

³⁵ A tale of Purwoko and Usman in Emmerson's study of an *abangan* administrator and a *santri* parliamentarian in the New Order era might be indicative of this trend. See Donald K. Emmerson (1976) Indonesia's Elite: Political Culture and Cultural Politics, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

There are other factors behind the more politically conscious new middle class' support for political parties. The liberal traditionalist party, PKB (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* - National Awakening Party) was attractive to some of them, especially those with an NGO background, because of their platform of tolerance and protection of the minorities. The modernist parties received support because of their aspiration for an open political system, and the PDI-P for its unwavering stand on national unity and territorial integrity.

Indonesia's party system has remained organized along *aliran* lines because the new middle class is still relatively small. If the growth of the middle class returns to its previous rate before the economic crisis a few years ago, the de-*aliranization* of Indonesian politics may continue. It is important to note that de-*aliranization* should only be read as decreasing emotional support based on religious or ethnic ties for the *aliran* parties. The lack of allegiance of this new middle class to *aliran*-based parties and politics means that its members will be tempted to change their votes from one party to another depending on their performances. Therefore ideally, parties will be compelled to perform well in the modern setting in order to attract these swaying voters. But de-*aliranization* does not mean that the politico-cultural traits that have become the platform of the *aliran* will diminish altogether, or that the *aliran*-based segments and parties themselves will fade away, given that their roots are deeply embedded in the political cultures of Indonesia's diverse religious-ethnic groups.

It is also critical to emphasize here that since the number of Indonesians belonging to the urban middle-class remains small compared to the various *aliran* grassroots networks, the *aliran* parties will probably not have to worry about losing a substantial base of their constituents in the near term. A very

evident instance of the supremacy of the *aliran*-based networks *vis-à-vis* the urban middle-class can be noted in the relatively quick resurgence of *aliranism* following the collapse of the authoritarian New Order. The leaders of the *Reformasi* movement, including the some in the student movement, quite promptly demonstrated *aliran* allegiance during the 1999 election. And the urban middle-class non-*aliran* leaders failed to organize and lead new, modern, non-*aliran*-linked parties that had any voter appeal.

Political culture is an important aspect of the structure of any polity since it connects with a sense of identity, belief system, and pattern of social relationships of the populace, and there needs to be some congruence between elite and mass culture. While political change can occur abruptly and a revolution can topple an entrenched, established regime with surprising speed, a political culture tends to be relatively stable and quite persistent. Therefore, the rise of *aliran* politics in the *Reformasi* era should not have been unexpected. The *aliran* are the manifestation of diverse political cultures in the structure of the Indonesian polity. It is the “natural state” of Indonesian politics. It will surface whenever an uninhibited political system exists.

Many have viewed *aliran* politics as being undesirable. Some have contended that they are backward and antithetical to the modern idea of Indonesia. They have also been perceived as inherently unstable and conflict-ridden. Therefore, twice in Indonesian history, there have been efforts to control *aliran* politics, through Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, and Suharto’s New Order political paradigm. However, fifty years of those efforts have failed to bury the *aliran*.

Perhaps in the future, with further growth of the Indonesian middle class, the *aliran*-based segments will have to evolve or die out. The leaders might become aware that they cannot rely solely on 'cultural' ties as the only source of support. The more viable *aliran* groups will be the ones which are able to adapt their politico-cultural traits to the changing needs of the Indonesian polity amidst the ever increasingly fierce competition in the global economy.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

What then, can we expect for the future of democracy in Indonesia? There are three scenarios that can be considered, and these to some extent have already been discussed among intellectuals in Indonesia. The first is a return to authoritarianism. This could possibly take place if the current unstable situation becomes worse. Growing separatist tendencies, continued bickering among the *aliran* leaders, and a lack of improvement in the economic situation, marked by an increase in unemployment, could become the factors that lead to mass dissatisfaction with the uncertain process of democratization. The presence of a figure, probably with military background, aiming at re-establishing control, would probably be welcome. But this idea might be more popular among the Javanese with some *abangan* background than the others. Since the crisis period leading to *Reformasi*, there have been some prophetic predictions coming from this quarter, about the imminent arrival of a figure who would rise out of chaos and bring Indonesia to a new age of glory.³⁶

³⁶ In the Javanese language, this figure is known as "*satrio piningit*." The approximate translation is "the still hidden but imminent warrior."

This scenario could take place in the not-so-distant future and is the most plausible, albeit, in my view, undesirable, outcome. Various surveys on Indonesia's 2004 elections show that the public has grown more disinterested in politics. A survey by the Asia Foundation on the attitudes of Indonesian voters in the run-up to the 2004 elections had this to say:

In 2003, Indonesians indicated less interest in politics than even the low level found at the time of the first democratic elections in 1999. Two-thirds of voters (65%) now say they are not interested in politics, while fewer than three in ten (28%) express interest in it. This represents a growth in disinterest compared to four years ago, when 56% said they were not interested in politics. At present, only 5% say they are very interested in politics, while one-third are not at all interested.³⁷

While the same survey also indicated that the numbers intending to participate in the elections remains high,³⁸ it is indicative of a growing disillusionment among Indonesians due to the prevailing political instability and consequent economic uncertainties. Should this trend continue, the public, especially the non-*aliran* urban middle-class voter, might opt for a return to the authoritarianism increasingly perceived to be able to bring back a semblance of stability and economic progress.

The second scenario is for continued instability. Indonesia would muddle through amidst the unstable political, economic, and social conditions. The people would become apathetic and disinterested in the unseemly political rivalries. At the same time, the *aliran* elites would not find a way to break their *impasse*. Any effort to break the deadlock would be met with resistance and

³⁷ "Democracy in Indonesia: A Survey of the Indonesian Electorate 2003," The Asia Foundation, Jakarta, November 2003, p. 59.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55, 58.

would be politically risky. Eventually, no one would even attempt to make any breakthrough and instead would let the volatile *status quo* continue.

The third scenario is consolidation of democratic processes or experimentation with some democratic variations. This scenario is probably the most ideal but also the most challenging politically. The Indonesian polity in general still seems to be unaware of the whole notion of democracy. The Asia Foundation survey found that many Indonesians at the grassroots level do not have any meaningful conception of democracy. Educated elites, on the other hand, while cognizant of the democratic concept, appear to be disillusioned with the fact that *Reformasi*, which was carried out in the name of democracy, has not brought any tangible improvements to the lot of Indonesians.³⁹

Having said that, it is important to note an historical fact. Throughout its history, Indonesia has oscillated between the impulses of control and open political competition. Efforts to control the Indonesian polity, even for purposes of democratic advancement, can only be effective temporarily. Whenever the opportunity has arisen, the plural societal nature of the polity has resurfaced. So, it is difficult in the Indonesian context to create an efficient government that can ensure stability and also protect some liberal values, without risking more cyclical turbulence in the future.

Instead, there could evolve a collective consciousness among the *aliran* elite to put an end to this difficult transition cycle. This could be done if all the *aliran* leaders acknowledge the right of the others to co-exist and participate in the political processes. Bargaining and negotiation, then, could become the

³⁹ "Indonesia: A Report on Public Opinion and the 2004 Elections," Qualitative Research Survey, *The Asia Foundation*, Jakarta, February 2003, pp. 6-7.

norms through which important decisions about statehood could be decided. It is critically important for all the *aliran* elite to acknowledge that none can claim primacy over the others. Neither the position of the Javanese or the Muslims is preeminent in Indonesia's constitution. Factually speaking, there is no single ethnic group that constitutes a simple majority. There is no "*primus inter pares*" in Indonesia. Admittedly, this may be wishful thinking, however perhaps the most desirable outcome for Indonesia's future is the consolidation of Indonesia's democracy, and for that to happen the *aliran* leaders and their segments need to play an integral part by engaging one another in a setting of competitive yet tolerant coexistence.

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4. Fathullah, modernist activist, Jakarta, May 1998.
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6. Moh. Jumhur Hidayat, Executive Director of CIDES (Center for Information and Development Studies), Jakarta, 1996.
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8. K.H. Syukron Makmun, Chairman of the PNU (*Partai Nahdatul Ummat* – Ummah Awakening Party, a traditionalist party), Jakarta, October 2001.
9. Andi Mallarangeng, former member of Regional Autonomy team, Vancouver, March 2003.
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11. Moh. Harun Al-Rasyid Songge, modernist activist, Jakarta, May 1998.
12. Muhammad Najib, Deputy Secretary General of PAN, Jakarta, October 2001.
13. Permadi, a member of parliament from the nationalist PDI-P, Jakarta, February 2002.
14. Indra J. Pilliang, former student activist, researcher at the CSIS (Centre for Strategic and International Studies), Jakarta, October 2001.
15. Irwan Prayitno, a member of parliament from *Fraksi Reformasi*, Deputy Chairman of PK, Singapore, July 2002.
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19. Eggi Sujana, a modernist activist, Chairman of PPMI (Persaudaraan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia – Indonesian Muslim Workers Brotherhood), Jakarta, August 2001.
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