DEMOCRATIZING INDONESIA
The Challenges of Civil Society in the Era of Reformasi
Mikaela Nyman

The fall from power of Indonesia’s President Suharto in 1998 has drawn much media and academic attention but the focus has been on the elite perspective, the role of the regime and military; little has been published on civil society, let alone gender issues.

This study, which covers the period from Suharto’s fall up until the elections in 2004, analyses the role of civil society in Indonesia’s transition towards democracy. Here, the author argues that social movements are civil society’s primary catalysts for change.

In support of her argument, Mikaela Nyman discusses the shortcomings and successes of the pro-democracy movement and examines the actions and limitations of its various parts. Case studies are provided of three groups of actors – the student movement, the women’s movement and the labour movement.

The author warns that a strong civil society is needed to consolidate the gains achieved by social movements in the political, social and economic spheres. Taking this as her standpoint, she looks at prospects for the future health of Indonesian civil society.
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30. Mytte Fentz: *Natural Resources and Cosmology in Changing Kalasha Society*
31. Børge Bakken (ed.): *Migration in China*
32. Donald B. Wagner: *The Traditional Chinese Iron Industry and Its Modern Fate*
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DEMOCRATISING INDONESIA
THE CHALLENGES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE ERA OF REFORMASI

Mikaela Nyman

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Preface

‘Civil society’ became the buzzword of the last decades of the twentieth century and its popularity seems to carry on into the new century. An old term has been turned into a trendy concept that is freely used by the smallest of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the United Nations alike. Just like ‘democracy’, ‘civil society’ is a term that carries a great deal of promise. While civil society can be narrowly or broadly defined, definitions and interpretations vary widely depending on when and where they are used, and by whom. This is particularly the case in a country experiencing democratic transformation, such as Indonesia, where the discourse is still considered to be new and even alien. There is no unitary interpretation of what constitutes an Indonesian civil society, let alone what its role should be. In the new climate of openness brought about by the fall of Suharto, the debate about civil society is not only alive, but is crucial for Indonesia’s future democratisation process.

Any claim to have comprehensively covered the topic of civil society in Indonesia would be futile indeed. Every turn a researcher takes is bound to end up at new crossways, with new choices to be made and new paths to explore or disregard, for the time being. In this case, there is still a wide range of issues to be studied and disseminated, such as the Islamic context, which constitutes a vast and complex topic in itself. Despite such limitations, the aim of this work is to provide an insight into the Indonesian civil society discourse, thereby creating greater understanding of the specific Indonesian context, as well as showing the power of some of the social movements that make up Indonesia’s vibrant civil society.

This study would have been seriously limited in its scope without the information volunteered by some inspiring Indonesian civil
society activists and scholars, who generously shared their time and experiences with me. Therefore this work is dedicated to the staff at Solidaritas Perempuan, ACILS, Yakoma-PGI, Sisbikum, LBH APIK, Kapal Perempuan, YLBHI, Griya Lentera, Yasanti, Balairung, the Centre for Civil Society Studies at the University of Indonesia, as well as Mr Mohammad Sobary, Mr Papang Hidayat, Dr Hadi Soesastro at CSIS, Mr Kun Adnanya and the many individuals who wanted to discuss this topic without necessarily being mentioned by name. All translations from Bahasa Indonesia as well as the interpretations of the interviews are entirely my own.

The field research in Indonesia in January and February 2002 was funded by a research grant from the University of Southern Queensland. I would like to sincerely thank Mr Richard Gehrmann and Dr Libby Connors at USQ for generously providing their time and expertise in Indonesian politics and social movement perspectives. My thanks also goes to other members of the USQ Faculty of Arts who have assisted my work, in particular Dr Michele Ford and Dr Philip Kitley for their constructive criticism and generosity with Indonesian sources and personal contacts. I am also grateful to Dr George Aditjondro and Mr Putu Suasta for assistance in this regard, while Katarina Reychman deserves thanks for sharing her experience and research about the Indonesian women’s movement.

I am furthermore deeply indebted to other scholars who have given valuable feedback and advice on how to proceed. Among them are Dr Anders Uhlin, Dr Edward Aspinall and Professor Robert Elson. Last but not least I am grateful for the support from my partner Steve and our daughter Emelie Skye. Thank you to all – your support and help is greatly appreciated and will never be forgotten.
## Glossary and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJI</td>
<td>Aliansi Jurnalis Indonesia; Alliance of Independent Journalists</td>
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<td>AAK</td>
<td>Aliansi Anti Komunis; Anti-Communist Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABRI</td>
<td>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia; The Armed Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACILS</td>
<td>American Center for International Labor Solidarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amarah</td>
<td>April Makassar Berdarah; Bloody April in Makassar</td>
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<tr>
<td>angkatan</td>
<td>generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arus bawah</td>
<td>undercurrent; the lower classes/grassroots’ politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>asas keluargaan</td>
<td>family principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babinsa</td>
<td>Bintara Pembina Desa; the Village Guidance Army Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bakorstanas</td>
<td>Badan Koordinasi Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional; the military Co-ordinating Agency for the Maintenance of National Stability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balairung</td>
<td>Gadjah Madah University’s student magazine, Yogyakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bapak</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBM</td>
<td>Bahan Bakar Minyak; household oils and fuels</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDP</td>
<td>Badan Perwakilan Desa; Village Representative Board</td>
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</table>
Democratising Indonesia

BEM Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa; Executive Student Bodies
berani brave, assertive
CEDAW 1979 United Nation’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
Ciganjur Four Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Amien Rais and Sultan Hamengkubuwono
CSIS Center for Strategic and International Studies
Dharma Pertiwi the government-backed organisation for the wives of men in the Armed Forces
Dharma Wanita women’s duty; the government-backed wives’ organisation
DPR Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat; House of Representatives
dwifungsi dual function; a concept that institutionalised the military’s social and political involvement
ELSAM Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat; the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy
FAMRED Front Aksi Mahasiswa untuk Reformasi dan Demokrasi; Student Action Front for Reform and Democracy
FBLKB Forum Buruh dan LSM untuk Keadilan Buruh; the Forum of Workers and NGOs for Justice for Workers
FKSMJ Forum Komunikasi Senat Mahasiswa Jakarta; Jakarta Communication Forum of Student Senates
‘floating mass’ 1971 doctrine that outlawed political community engagement
FNPBI Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia; the National Front for Indonesian Workers’ Struggle
### Glossary and Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Forkot</td>
<td>Forum Kota; City Forum, or Kommunitas Mahasiswa se-Jabotabek; All-Jabotabek Student Community</td>
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<td>FORSOL</td>
<td>Forum Solidaritas Buruh; the Workers’ Solidarity Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBSI</td>
<td>Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia; the All-Indonesia Workers’ Federation, the only state-sanctioned union established in 1973</td>
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<td>Gerwani</td>
<td>Gerakan Wanita Indonesia; the Indonesian Women’s Movement</td>
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<td>GMKI</td>
<td>Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia; Indonesian Christian Student Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMNI</td>
<td>Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia; the Indonesian National Student Movement, linked with PNI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golkar</td>
<td>Golongan karya; functional groups, the New Order state’s political party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griya Lentera</td>
<td>organisation for female sex workers in Yogyakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIP</td>
<td>Hubungan Industrial Pancasila; Pancasila Industrial Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMI</td>
<td>Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam; Islamic Students Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRA</td>
<td>the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ibu</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICMI</td>
<td>Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia; Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFID</td>
<td>International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabotabek</td>
<td>Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi; the greater Jakarta area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabupaten</td>
<td>regency, the regional administrative level below province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMI</td>
<td>Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia; the Indonesian Student Action Unit/Front</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Democratising Indonesia

KAMMI
Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia; the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Unit/Front

Kapal Perempuan
Kapal Perempuan – Lingkaran Alternatif untuk Perempuan; the Circle of Alternative Education for Women

KAPPI
Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia; the Youth and Pupil Action Unit/Front

KB-UI
Keluarga Besar – Universitas Indonesia; the Extended Family of University of Indonesia

kecamatan
sub-regency, the regional administrative level below kabupaten

keterbukaan
openness; the period of limited liberalisation, 1989 to 1994

kedaulatan rakyat
people’s sovereignty

Keppres
Keputusan Presiden; Presidential Decree

KIPP
Independent Election Monitoring Committee

KKN
Korrupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme; Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism

KNPI
Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia; National Youth Council

Komnas HAM
Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia; National Human Rights Commission

Komnas Perempuan
Komisi Nasional Perempuan; National Commission on Violence Against Women

Komrad
Komite Mahasiswa dan Rakyat untuk Demokrasi; Student and People’s Committee for Democracy

Kopkamtib

Kostrad
Komando Strategi Angkatan Darat; Army Strategic Command

KOWANI
Kongres Wanita Indonesia; Indonesian Women’s Congress
Glossary and Abbreviations

KPU  Komisi Pemilu Umum; the General Elections Commission

LBH  Lembaga Bantuan Hukum; Legal Aid Institute

LBH APIK  Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan; Legal Aid of Indonesian Women’s Association for Justice

LBH FAS  Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Forum Adil Sejahtera; the Legal Aid Institute Forum for Justice and Prosperity

LIPI  Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia; Institute of Sciences

LMND  Liga Mahasiswa Nasional Untuk Demokrasi; the National Student League for Democracy

LPHAM  Lembaga Pembelaan Hak Asasi Manusia; the Institute for the Defence of Human Rights

LSM  Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat; community self-help organisation

Malari  Malapetaka Limabelas Januari; the disaster of 15 January

malu  shy, embarrassed

Marsinah  labour activist whose brutal death in 1993 sparked mass protests

masyarakat adab/beradab  masyarakat berbudaya  masyarakat madani  masyarakat sipil  masyarakat warga/kewargaan  Indonesian terms for civil society

Masyumi  Majlis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia; Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims, the major modernist Islamic party in the Sukarno era

MPR  Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat; People’s Consultative Assembly
Democratising Indonesia

MPBI
Majelis Permusyawaratan Buruh Indonesia; the Consultative Assembly of Indonesian Workers

Muhammadiah
‘The Way of Muhammad’; the major significant modernist Muslim organisation, estabished in 1912

Nahdlatul Ulama
‘The Rise of the Religious Scholars’; orthodox Muslim organisation, established in 1926

negara hukum
state of law

NKK/BKK
Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan; Normalisation of Campus Life/Student co-ordination bodies

ONP/ORNOP
Organisasi Non-Pemerintah; non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Orde Baru
The New Order

OTB
Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk; organisation without form, (NGO)

Pam Swakarsa
the military’s paramilitary groups

Panca Dharma Wanita
the government’s policy spelling out the role of women

Pancasila
‘The Five Principles’, Indonesia’s ideological foundation

pembangunan
development

Petisi 50
The Petition of Fifty

PDI
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia; Indonesian Democratic Party

PDI-P
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia–Perjuangan; Indonesian Democratic Party–Struggle

pengasas-tunggal
or asas tunggal, meaning ‘sole basis’; sole national ideology

Pijar
Pusat Informasi dan Jaringan Aksi Reformasi; Centre of Information and Action Network for Reform

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Glossary and Abbreviations

PKI  Partai Komunis Indonesia; Indonesian Communist Party

PKK  Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga; Family Welfare Movement

PMII  Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia; the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement

PMKRI  Persatuan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia; the United Indonesian Catholic Students

PNI  Partai Nasional Indonesia; the Indonesian National Party

Polri  Polisi Republik Indonesia; the National Police

PPBI  Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia; the Centre for Indonesian Working Class Struggle, independent union established in 1994

PRD  Partai Rakyat Demokratik; Democratic People’s Party

PSI  Partai Serikat Islam

PSW  Pusat Studi Wanita; women’s study centres

PUSKA-PMA  Pusat Kajian Pengembangan Masyarakat Adab; the Centre for Civil Society Studies at the University of Indonesia

PWI  Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia; Indonesian Journalists Association

SARA  Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar golongan; matters regarding ethnic, religious and racial relations

SBM Setiakawan  Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setiakawan; the Solidarity Independent Workers’ Union, established in 1990

SBSI  Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia; the Indonesian Prosperous Workers’ Union, independent union, established in 1992

Sisbikum  Saluran Informasi Sosial dan Bimbingan Hukum; the Channel for Social Information and Legal Guidance
Democratising Indonesia

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMID</td>
<td>Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi; Indonesian Student Solidarity for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOBSI</td>
<td>Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia; All-Indonesia Central Workers’ Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSI</td>
<td>Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia; the All-Indonesia Workers’ Union, the only state-sanctioned union during New Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOKSI</td>
<td>Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia; the Central Organisation of Indonesian Socialist Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidaritas Perempuan</td>
<td>Solidaritas Perempuan Untuk Hak Asasi Manusia; Women’s Solidarity for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘state ibuism’</td>
<td>defines women as appendages of their husbands; existing primarily for their husbands, their families and the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suara Ibu Peduli</td>
<td>SIP, the Voice of Concerned Mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>takut</td>
<td>afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNI</td>
<td>Tentara Nasional Indonesia; the Indonesian National Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trisakti</td>
<td>Trisakti University in Jakarta; the killing of four students at Trisakti triggered mass protests in May 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tritura</td>
<td>Tri Tuntutan Rakyat; the three demands of the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unjuk rasa</td>
<td>emotional display; protests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UU</td>
<td>Undang-Undang; law, act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UU ORMAS</td>
<td>Undang-Undang Organisasi Kemasyarakatan; 1985 law on social organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSTP</td>
<td>Vereeniging van Spoor- en Tramweg Personeel in Nederlandsch-Indie; the railway workers’ union during the colonial era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisma Antara</td>
<td>the national news agency</td>
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### Glossary and Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yakoma-PGI</td>
<td>Yayasan Komunikasi Masyarakat–Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia; the Association for People’s Communication—the Council of Churches in Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasanti</td>
<td>Yayasan Annisa Swasti; the Independent Women’s Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yayasan</td>
<td>foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YLBHI</td>
<td>Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia; Indonesia’s Legal Aid Foundation</td>
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PART I

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATISATION
Chapter One

Introduction: Civil Society and Political Opportunities

The fall of Indonesian President Suharto in May 1998, and the ongoing political transition that was manifested in his demise, was one of the most unexpected and important events occurring in the Asia-Pacific region in recent years. Whereas the broader historical, political and economic context, such as the impact of the regional economic crisis in 1997–98 in undermining President Suharto’s legitimacy, cannot be ignored, the role of what is commonly known as ‘civil society’ is also frequently emphasised. In particular the leading role of student activists in the broader movement for social and political change, alternatively called the movement for demokrasi or reformasi, has been widely acknowledged by media as well as by academic scholars both nationally and internationally. However, the pro-democracy movement was far greater than the students. They may have been one of the core groups of a broad-based social movement for change, but they certainly only represented one of numerous civil society groups.

The aim of this book is to critically analyse the role of civil society in Indonesia’s political, economic and social transition towards democracy during the past decade, as well as discussing civil society’s future role. It sets out to show the importance of social movements as civil society’s primary catalysts for change and the need for a strong civil society to take over where the social movements left off in order to consolidate values and attitudinal changes.
While a certain amount of background history is needed to understand the Indonesian context, such as the trajectories of the social movements discussed in the case studies, this work focuses on Suharto’s demise in the 1990s and the post-Suharto era, where hope and frustration are closely interlinked. During the first three years after Suharto’s ousting, Indonesia witnessed numerous democratic innovations and fundamental changes to laws and regulations, in addition to the launch of one of the most extensive decentralisation processes ever attempted. In August 2002 the People’s Assembly (MPR) decided to end the military’s presence in parliament and introduce direct presidential elections by 2004. These were two of the most important government changes in four decades and were considered strategic issues by the pro-democracy movement.

Yet, the implementation of the necessary building blocks of a new governing structure is lagging behind. High levels of unemployment, rising economic and social inequality, widespread disillusion with the leadership, in addition to a sense of loss of momentum and direction for the democratisation process, have fuelled public frustration. Six years after Suharto’s fall the nation is at a crossroads. The 2004 general and presidential elections constituted a defining moment for the Indonesian people. The post-election road may lead to a new wave of democratic reform and consolidation, frequently referred to as a ‘second wave’ of reformasi, or it may bring about a new form of authoritarian rule. Thus the 2004 elections, which in essence constitute the end of the first wave of reformasi, provide a suitable ending point for this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND TERMINOLOGY

The theoretical frameworks that have been used to analyse the role of civil society and the popular movements that spearhead it are social movement theory and the more recent framework of political opportunities in social movement studies. The book is divided into three parts:

The first part outlines the theoretical framework, in particular the Indonesian civil society discourse and the specific Indonesian political and social context. The actions and limitations of various parts of the pro-democracy movement are discussed in the second part, providing case studies of three different groups of actors, focusing on times when these very disparate and internally divided
groups managed to briefly unite to form social movements. These focus groups are the student movement, the broader labour movement and the women’s movement.

It is important to note that never at any time was there a fully coherent student movement, women’s movement or workers’ movement. As will become evident in the case studies, each of the three focus groups is composed of a wide spectrum of organisations and groups, some with radically opposing agendas, ideologies and strategies. Each of these focus groups harboured elements that supported Suharto and others that opposed him. Nevertheless, some overarching or dominant themes and strategies can be discerned within each focus group. In addition the majority of groups and actors within each focus group have undoubtedly joined forces to form social movements around specific issues at certain times. For student organisations and individual students the demand for Suharto’s resignation in May 1998 proved to be such a uniting issue. For women it was the mass rapes of mainly Chinese women that same month that served to unite women from all corners of the spectrum. The focus of this work is to highlight these overarching themes, strategies and issues that forged various actors, core groups and secondary groups into social movements.

Such themes as the roles of the actors, the reasons for social mobilisation, issues and strategies, alliances, outcomes, and political and public space, the relationship between parts of Indonesian society and the political processes they have experienced are analysed. The aim is to assess to what extent these social movements have contributed to the development of an Indonesian civil society, how the actions of civil society have influenced the regime and its politics, and what role civil society may play in Indonesia’s future democratisation.

Important to note is that secessionist movements, such as the ones in Aceh, former East Timor, and Papua – which challenge the self-limiting radicalism of social movements since they are potentially revolutionary and aim at breaking up the state – are not included in this study. Given the extraordinary situation in Aceh and Papua, some comments are nevertheless warranted in connection with the role of the military and the new regional autonomy legislation.

The third part analyses the 1998 pro-democracy movement from the activists’ and observers’ points of view and discusses the future prospects for Indonesia’s civil society.
With the benefit of hindsight, it is evident that a profound broadening of the popular base for political and social opposition has occurred in Indonesia during the past decade. An important aspect when discussing social movements is whether the various groups at any time joined forces and co-operated for a common goal, or whether they only focused on their own, separate issues. Crucial questions to be asked concern the reasons and timing for this collective action, as well as who participated. Did the three focus groups play a role in this development as part of a broader movement for social and political change? If so, what was their role, what were their particular goals and strategies in relation to the broader pro-democracy movement and what motivated them? And if they did not take part, was this a voluntary decision or were they for some reason excluded?

Of special relevance to this study is how the situation and strategies of activists have changed in the post-Suharto era, as well as the interviewed activists’ and observers’ assessment of past achievements and the future role of civil society. In this context there needs to be a clear understanding that while respondents see themselves as representatives of a certain school of thought, a particular focus group, or even a social movement, they are nevertheless only individual voices in a multi-faceted phenomenon. It is vital to keep this point in mind where respondents comment on, or speak on behalf of, a focus group as a whole. Having said this, the value of the respondents’ contributions should not be diminished because they inform the discussion in the following chapters and help shed some light on specific Indonesian aspects.

In order to achieve political and social change, and perhaps eventually democracy, the development of a diverse civil society that addresses people’s concerns is considered necessary by many democratisation scholars (Rodan 1997: 156). Some democratisation scholars highlight NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and social movements as the most important civil society actors (Uhlin 2002: 181). Their interrelated nature is clarified by civil society theorists, who see social movements as the ‘dynamic element in processes that might realize the positive potentials of modern civil societies’ (Cohen and Arato 1992: 492).

Until the late 1990s much of the scholarly work on Indonesia’s political development emphasised continuity, stability and the role of the middle class and the elite, while viewing popular movements
as ‘idealistic’ and rejecting them as a viable approach for studies concerning political change (Tornquist 2000: 6). Since the late 1990s, however, Indonesian scholars have stressed the importance of non-state actors other than the political elite, especially in so-called developing countries, and the existence of civil society as a prerequisite for genuine democratisation and reform (Culla 1999: 12–13; Hikam 1999a: 260; Panjaitan 2001: 10).

Much of contemporary social movement studies are concerned with the 1980s and 1990s Latin American, Eastern European and former Soviet Union’s experiences. In comparison, the body of literature concerned with civil society and social movements in the Asian region, particularly in Indonesia, is still very limited, possibly as a result of Indonesia’s authoritarian past. The unprecedented changes Indonesia has experienced in the past few years warrant an analysis of the events and outcomes from another perspective, giving credit to the impact of democratisation forces from below and highlighting the political and social alternatives they can provide.

With the overwhelming majority of scholars favouring a state-centric approach and crediting the elite with being the driving force, or even the only force, in Indonesian politics and development, there is a need for more research that recognises other forces and mechanisms in Indonesian society. Thus the elite and the middle class are not dealt with in-depth in this book. This does not imply any ignorance about the role of the elite and middle class in Indonesian politics and society; it is merely an acknowledgement that other perspectives exist, although they have generally been neglected. Civil society forces are becoming increasingly important in the post-Suharto era. Yet, they did not emerge overnight. Thus the rationale for this book is an attempt to balance the scales by exposing the power, influence and determination of civil society in Indonesia’s transition to democracy.

One weakness with the majority of social movement studies is that scholars often neglect the importance of providing a broader historical and political context, as they tend to focus on particular events and protests. Apart from the fact that events are difficult to delineate properly, the broader context in which these protests and movements evolved and what occurs in between mobilisation has been neglected (McAdam et al. 1996: xiii; Rucht et al. 1999: 17). The importance of providing the particular historical and political context is emphasised by Tarrow (1994: 3), who states that
collective actions mirror the specific social and political struggle and the prevailing ideological discourses at the time. Indonesian scholars are also keen to stress Indonesia’s unique cultural preconditions (Culla 1999: 211; Dhakidae 2001: 3).

Recognising this need for a multi-dimensional context is the main reason for providing some historical background in Chapter 2, as well as placing the case studies in a broader historical context than merely the 1990s. For the benefit of the discussion, key terms such as ‘civil society’, ‘mass social movement’, ‘political opportunities’, ‘state’, ‘regime’, ‘transition’, ‘democracy’ and ‘democratisation’ are defined before proceeding further.

Civil Society

Civil society is a broad concept that in its Western interpretation generally is seen to include formal and informal voluntary organisations and networks, including political parties, churches, trade unions and media but excluding business and government institutions (Shaw 1994: 648; Cohen and Arato 1992: ix). It is worth noting that not all aspects or actors of civil society are necessarily positive, or ‘good’, since civil society also includes extremist groups of various kinds, not all of them benign let alone democratic. It is furthermore manifested in voluntary organisations’ attempts to build deeper social structures, including norms and policies (Scholte 2000: 277). Others explain it very generally as a space between individuals and families on the one hand and the modern state on the other (Hann and Dunn 1996: 6).

In this study civil society will be defined as comprising individuals, formal and non-formal organisations and networks, both religious and secular, in the public and political sphere outside state institutions. Business corporations, government institutions, as well as organisations and political parties established by the government are not included. While not all factions of civil society necessarily oppose the state, civil society as a whole has the potential to challenge the state.

The concept has been narrowed down for practical reasons, in order to have a clearly delineated definition as a parameter for assessing similarities and differences between a general Western and an Indonesian concept of civil society. However, it is important to note that this definition does not necessarily encompass all
Indonesian civil society elements, as the highly corporatised New Order polity left little political space for organisational activities outside government initiated institutions and business.

The government initiated political parties, for example, include both former President Megawati’s PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia) and the official state party Golkar. Whereas Megawati eventually became the head of state, her party certainly possesses civil society and social movement qualities, particularly evidenced in the 1990s when its vast network of supporters and sympathisers challenged the existing regime. The latter, on the other hand, is definitely an extended arm of the state.

Similarly, there has been a tendency to include business in Indonesia’s civil society, yet in 2004 scholars and commentators increasingly draw a sharp line between civil society and business (The Jakarta Post, January–February 2004). This seems to reflect attitudinal changes in the public mind, a consequence of escalating corruption, economic inequality and a resurgent business elite that includes the military and official power holders. These examples merely demonstrate the complexity of the Indonesian context, which is further discussed in the next chapter.

Mass Social Movements

Like civil society, social movements are neither clearly defined nor uniformly interpreted. Mass social movements are only partly institutionalised, they are both social processes and structures, and they seldom have a formal membership, strategic programme or even an ideological consensus. They are anti-systemic in nature and their strong value-orientation has often caused them to be labelled ‘moral crusades’. Their tendency to mobilise against rather than for a specific cause has furthermore enabled them to unify widely differing groups and actors for campaigns and protests. Far from being the main factor effecting social and political change, they nevertheless often spearhead change by undermining the legitimacy of political institutions, as well as the prevailing cultural and social norms, and by moralising government politics (Pakulski 1991: xiv–xx, 32–38). Part II deals with how Indonesian social movements have challenged the regime in all of these aspects.

It is worth noting that social movements generally do not aim at taking over political power (Pakulski 1991: 35–36). Furthermore,
sustained interaction with opponents and allies is needed, implying that single campaigns do not classify as social movements (Tarrow 1994: 20).

Pakulski (1991) and Tarrow (1994) are scholars who, besides outlining the theoretical framework, also show its applicability. Their writings constitute a highly useful guide in assessing the Indonesian pro-democracy movement, since they take a broader approach to the study of mass social movements, not letting one specific approach dominate. Tarrow (1994, 1996) and McAdam et al. (1996) have also contributed significantly to the understanding of political opportunities in social movement discourse. This provides a useful tool in assessing both the ‘old’ movements, such as labour, and the ‘new’ movements that include the women’s and student movements. Before moving on to political opportunities, the essence of social movement theory and how it links in with the Indonesian context needs to be delineated.

Despite its name, social movement theory is not a unitary theory. While there are six major streams in contemporary social movement theory – the collective behaviour theories, the class-expressive accounts, the resource mobilisation stream, the new values interpretations and the two Marxist-inspired approaches of action-identity and new social movements – the major dividing line can be drawn between approaches which see social movements as responses to structural strain and those which interpret them as part of normal processes of change (Pakulski 1991: 4–5).

Another major distinction used to be made between the European action-identity approach and the American resource mobilisation theory, which is now being increasingly challenged after having been the dominant paradigm of the 1970s for social movement studies (Buechler 2000; Hutton and Connors 1999). With increasing interaction, scholars perceive that the distinction between American and European perspectives is no longer valid (McAdam et al 1996: xii).

Habermas, along with Touraine, Melucci and Offe, is among the influential theorists of the new social movement approach. This theoretical approach emerged largely as a response to Marxist economic and class reductionism after it had proved flawed for analysing collective action (Buechler 1995: 2). The framework is useful as it offers new ways for assessing the contributions of the Indonesian
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pro-democracy movement and bridges some central paradoxes highlighted by other scholars.

First, far from being unified, the diversity and fragmentation of the Indonesian democracy movement has often been emphasised and heavily criticised (Mangunwijaya 1999; Budiman 1999a; Djalal 2001; McBeth 2001a). Whereas various actors, organisations, supporters and sympathisers were unified under a general call for change, they nevertheless retained their separate agendas and goals. However, this is very much in line with social movement theory, which argues that ‘fragmented and disunited’ does not necessarily imply ‘weak’. One of the strengths of social movements is their inherently disparate nature, which in essence makes them more difficult for an authoritarian state to repress. Under the general umbrella of the broader movement, the various actors may still be able to achieve some of their more specific goals (Pakulski 1991: 36, 73–74).

Second, the morality and value-laden characteristics of social movements are often highlighted, in addition to the fact that they do not compete for institutionalised political power (Pakulski 1991: 35–36). This moralisation of politics fits the Indonesian situation nicely. The Indonesian students, for example, have often been depicted as a ‘moral force’, aspiring to correct government, not necessarily to overthrow it (Budiman in Aspinall 1996a: 223; interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002). They have also been accused of not taking the opportunity to access political power and not being radical enough to achieve true change (Mangunwijaya 1999).

This tendency of not wanting to access formal political power is typical of social movements and does not imply that the movement as a whole has ‘failed’. In fact, until recently little has been known about the degree of change desired by the various groups of actors in relation to the broader pro-democracy movement.

Third, the aspect of change itself is important; and how can ‘success’ be measured? Social movement theory states that even if mass social movements do not ‘succeed’ in terms of realising officially proclaimed goals, they nevertheless do seriously challenge the political system and undermine the status quo. Whether they can be said to have won or lost in the short term, by their very activities they serve as catalysts for social and political change (Pakulski 1991: 36–37, 83). Tarrow (1994: 172) highlights the politicisation of participants, the impacts on political institutions and practices,
and the inevitable changes in political culture as three important indirect, long-term effects of social movements.

The effects Tarrow identifies are of importance, since they ultimately concern the much needed change in mindset emphasised by the respondents in Chapter 6. Without overestimating its importance, this study argues that the demokrasi/reformasi movement acted as a catalyst of irreversible change, although the degree of change is open for debate. Certainly, in the early twenty-first century there seems to be little scope for a return to a New Order Indonesia.

Having said that, it is vital to stress that future developments are far from certain. As has been mentioned earlier, Indonesia may head for democratic consolidation and a new wave of democratic reforms after the 2004 legislative and presidential elections. However, a backlash in the form of a new kind of authoritarianism brought about by disillusion with the current status quo, in combination with nostalgia for the stability and relative prosperity of the past, is an equally likely scenario at this stage. The major difference is that this time it will take place within a framework that has changed considerably since Suharto held power. This scenario is further discussed in Chapter 6.

Political Opportunities

The major criticism that can be brought against the concepts of civil society and social movements alike is that they can be defined in very general terms that virtually render the concepts useless for research. The same applies to political opportunities. This poses the need for some limiting definitions. McAdam et al. (1996: 27) have extracted four dimensions of political opportunities that are crucial for the emergence and destiny of social movements:

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalised political system;
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity;
3. The presence or absence of elite allies;
4. The state’s capacity and propensity for repression.
Once again, the unique broader context of the political opportunities and limitations that shape social movements in different countries is emphasised (McAdam et al. 1996: 3). All four of these political opportunities are relevant for the Indonesian context, as they help explain the behaviour of the assessed social movements and the ebb and flow of political space for their actions.

**State and Regime**

For reasons of clarity the state is defined according to Hewison et al. (1993: 4) as ‘an amalgam of social, political, ideological and economic elements’, more an expression of power than a function or an actor. While the government is the legislative and executive branches of the state, regimes include the judicial and bureaucratic state institutions, organised according to different ideological models ranging from liberal democracy to authoritarian corporatism or dictatorship. It is important to note that regimes and states may carry on even though governments crumble (Hewison et al. 1993: 5). This is a vital point in the Indonesian case, since it has been a major issue of discontent in the post-Suharto era.

**Democracy and Democratisation**

Democracy is yet another term that holds many different interpretations and carries a great deal of promise. A too narrow definition limits the term to equating a political system with general elections, which is not very useful in many developing countries where the economic and social sectors are deeply intertwined with the political. Sundhaussen (1991: 100–113) cautions against dismissing democratic attempts in other parts of the world by comparing and applying strictly Western assumptions and definitions to processes that need to conform to a diversity of political cultures. Uhlin (1997: 9) furthermore states that ‘with a minimalist definition of democracy, social movements are seen as not important in the democratization process and gender issues are excluded because the political is defined narrowly to include only elite institutions in the public sphere’.

Uhlin (1997: 13) offers a general, culture neutral definition of democracy as ‘people’s rule based on popular control and political equality’, whereas the process towards democracy is referred to as
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‘democratisation’ and defined as ‘the extension of people’s rule to an increasing number of institutions, issues and people that were not previously governed by these democratic principles’.

The link between civil society and democratisation can best be explained through the familiar concept of providing checks and balances: namely that various interest groups are balanced and checked by a multifaceted civil society, whose pluralist nature ascertains that no single group gains exclusive control of power.

Transition

Using the above concepts of democracy and democratisation, the idea of democratic transition needs to be discussed in an Indonesian context. Ever since Suharto’s ousting Indonesia has routinely been referred to as a nation ‘in transition’, both in the media and by scholars (see for example *The Jakarta Post* February 2004; Deuster 2002; Manning and van Diermen 2000). Given that a transition by its very nature cannot last forever, this naturally raises the question of how to define its beginning and its end.

In democratisation literature the transition period between authoritarianism and democracy generally ends when the authoritarian regime is replaced by a democratically elected political regime (see for example O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Pickvance (1999: 354–355) notes three weaknesses with this type of linear thinking, namely it assumes a knowledge of when a period of change ends; that the transition period will be temporary, brief and implying a return to ‘normality’; and that it ignores the diversity that exists within the categories of authoritarianism and democracy respectively, in addition to neglecting the transitions taking place in the economic and social spheres. These issues are all relevant for the Indonesian situation, as discussed below.

So when does a transition start? Transition begins, according to Uhlin (1997: 158), when ‘repressive laws are replaced with laws guaranteeing individual and collective rights’. He lists the central concepts of democratisation, liberalisation and regime transition as prerequisites for a transition to democracy, quoting O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986: 7) definition of liberalisation as ‘the process of making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties’ (Uhlin 1997: 14). Uhlin concluded in 1997 that
Indonesia had entered the pre-transition phase in the late 1980s, and stressed that once a transition had begun the end result may not necessarily be democracy, although some form of democratisation was ‘not unlikely’ (Uhlin 1997: 158–159). In this context it is worth noting that democratisation scholars O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 48–56) consider a resurgent civil society marks the crucial turning point in a democratic transition.

Applying this discussion to the Indonesian situation, it is evident that the criteria outlined above have only been partly fulfilled. In 1999 the first democratic elections since the mid-1950s were held, but the outcome was contested (see Chapter 5), and it is debated whether the elections resulted in any real regime change (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002, Irianto 14 January 2002). The elections in 2004 revived this debate (see Chapter 6).

Nevertheless, the liberalisation process is under way, with a number of repressive laws repealed and changed, although much of the legal framework still has to be implemented. Regarding the extension of people’s rule to an increasing number of institutions and people, this democratisation process has certainly begun, but progress is slow and much remains to be done in terms of policy framework as well as in practice. These issues are further discussed in the three case studies.

In addition, the majority of scholars and observers seem to take a pragmatic approach, viewing Indonesia’s transition as a protracted process and predicting that it will take at least 10–15 years, perhaps even 30, to change the ingrained system structure and the mindset of the leaders and the people (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002, Soesastro 15 January 2002 and Hidayat 15 January 2002; The Jakarta Post 16 February 2004).

Perhaps it all boils down to a confusion over terminology, a liberal use of the term ‘transition’ instead of ‘transformation’, but Indonesians will probably continue to refer to a nation in transition for years to come while patiently waiting for the return of some degree of ‘normality’ and predictability in their daily lives. Whereas the democratisation process may continue, temporarily come to a hold, or even reverse in the next few years, it may be safe to conclude that this initial period of Indonesia’s democratic transformation will have come to an end with the 2004 general and presidential democratic elections. Indonesia’s transition is further discussed in the next chapter.
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METHODOLOGY AND KEY ISSUES

Using social movement theory and the political opportunities structure as a framework, the emergence and development of the Indonesian student movement, labour movement and women’s movement and their contributions to civil society are assessed in relation to the regime’s actions and the public and political space available.

This division into precise categories is not as clear as it seems. Women activists, for example, are to be found among both students and workers, while the very nature of being a student is limited in time. There is a need for the reader to be aware that this provides scope for some overlapping but also for some interesting comparisons concerning the political space available for various groups and their strategies to overcome obstacles. Moreover, it allows for a more holistic view of three aspects of civil society that could otherwise be seen as very separate. From a social movement perspective this is of interest, since it gives an overview of the issues and concerns of various civil society groups during different time periods, as well as providing evidence of the critical times when different groups felt the need to unite in order to achieve a common goal.

In addition to secondary research, this study is based on primary source material obtained during field research in Indonesia in January and February 2002. While it is inevitably limited in its scope, due to the limited sample population and time period, it nevertheless provides an opportunity to identify and assess valuable insights from Indonesian civil society representatives.

The information was obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews and discussions with activists from the three focus groups, as well as with journalists, intellectuals and members of the general public in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Bali. In addition to the interviews, the methods and techniques employed have consisted of personal observations, general discussions and the gathering of written material in NGO offices, archives, from local newspapers and at demonstrations. In addition, the fieldwork has provided an invaluable opportunity to access the most recent literature on civil society that is only available in Bahasa Indonesia, essentially a primary source in itself. For the most current issues and recent changes that have taken place around the 2004 elections, just as this work was being finalised, the media have provided the main available sources of information.
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All translations and interpretations of the sources and interviews, which took place in Indonesian and English, are entirely my own. For reasons of consistency the modern spelling of Indonesian names and terminology will generally be used throughout this book (for example Sukarno, instead of Soekarno).

While acknowledging that Indonesia is a multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic society, with the majority of its 216 million population living on Java, the limitations in word-length, time and scope for this study make it necessary to keep the level of analysis on a national level, thus not taking regional and ethnic differences into account to the extent they deserve. In addition, the activists themselves generally use terms such as ‘workers’ and ‘women’ without making any regional distinctions, except in specific cases where these distinctions are of relevance. However, since the majority of sources are urban and Java-biased, there is a need for future research to look beyond Java and the urban centres for some comparative views.

Given the Western domination of the theoretical discourse on civil society and social movements, it is important not to adapt a form of intellectual or cultural imperialism. This implies that whereas the concepts may be rooted in Western scholarly thought, the contributions of non-Western scholars should also be acknowledged, as well as the attraction and relevance of these ideas to other cultures.

Methodologically, this means that there is a need to explore the definitions and implications of the concepts from an Indonesian perspective and in an Indonesian context. As will be further discussed in Chapter 2, the findings are not always consistent with Western scholarly thought, thus providing some interesting perspectives that contribute to the existing literature on civil society and social movements.

The Focus Groups

The three focus groups have been selected from a broad range of actors, networks and organisations. The selection is based on the fact that all three groups have a potential mass-base with connections, supporters and sympathisers beyond limitations of class, ethnicity, religion or national borders. They furthermore consist of both formalised and non-formalised organisations and networks, dis-

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playing a plethora of agendas. Although reference will be made to the women’s movement, the student movement and the labour movement, it is important to bear in mind that never at any time was there a fully coherent student movement, women’s movement or labour movement. Nevertheless, there were times when the vast majority of a particular focus group managed to unite around a certain issue and form a social movement that was perceived as united from the outside. It is also vital to recognise that while the interviewed activists see themselves as representatives of a particular focus group, or even a social movement, they are only individual voices in a multi-faceted phenomenon. Through their affiliations and actions, however, they were undoubtedly part of the historical events that have shaped, and continue to shape, Indonesia – and in this capacity they have made a valuable contribution to this research.

While the students are limited in numbers, they have a privileged position in society and are credited with spearheading the pro-democracy actions; therefore they cannot be by-passed in this kind of assessment. Clearly, they were one of the so-called core groups of the movement, while labour and women were among the numerous affiliated or secondary groups whose impact, according to Pakulski (1991: 74–76), is often ignored by social movement scholars.

Another issue of relevance for the choice of focus groups is the possibility of differing identifications along the lines of ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements. In Western scholarship, peasants and workers who challenge the existing social order constitute the ‘old’ social movements, while students are usually defined as ‘new’ and women are included in both categories (Kriesi 1996: 158). New social movements are created by the middle classes, who change the focus to issues transcending conventional class borders, such as human rights, socio-economic justice and the environment (Callahan 1998: 151). A division along these lines would partly explain labour’s relative absence from the broader reformasi struggle during the crucial years around 1996 to 1998.

The role of the middle class is an aspect that, like gender issues and religion, cuts across the empirical analysis of all three focus groups. In the literature and media the movement for democracy and reform has often been referred to as middle class led. It is true that the old type of Indonesian NGOs, in particular the urban-based organisations that emerged before the late 1980s, were often
driven by dedicated middle class activists who were involved in advocacy work for the grassroots, yet they seldom worked together with the underprivileged on an equal basis (interview with Nababan 9 January 2002; Rinaldo 2002: 8–9; Uhlin 1997: 104).

This distancing from the grassroots was also true for a majority of elite dissidents, such as the Petition of 50. Elite dissident groups and middle class driven NGOs have been criticised for their general lack of a mass base, as well as their unwillingness to organise people and confront the New Order regime. By the same token middle class activists, contrary to the elite dissidents, have been commended for their commitment to the cause of the underprivileged. In this way the work of middle class activists has undoubtedly contributed to the development of Indonesian civil society (Uhlin 1997: 104–105).

Although Indonesia is a very class-conscious society, there is still no consensus on how to define an Indonesian middle class beyond sheer material wealth. The question of who does, or does not, belong to this elusive Indonesian middle class has been a topic for research in its own right and will not be dealt with here (see for example Tanter and Young 1990; Sundhaussen 1991). Class-consciousness is further discussed in Chapter 4.

As for gender issues and the alleged limited participation of women in the pro-democracy movement, one of the findings of this study is that the contributions of women have been largely invisible due to cultural, political and religious factors (see Chapter 5). Yet, women have demonstrated remarkable strategic thinking and a solidarity that transgresses borders of gender, religion and ethnicity. In managing to unite a vast array of diametrically opposed organisations and individuals around particular issues, women in particular have displayed clear social movement characteristics.

In this context the role of Islam and its impact, particularly on women, is highlighted. Religion is furthermore a matter of relevance in the theoretical discussion on the Indonesian civil society concept. However, since the role of Islam would require a separate volume to be dealt with properly, no specific attention has been accorded to Muslim organisations in this study, as the space is too limited to do the topic justice. This limitation is further justified by the fact that an assessment of Islam would need to include Aceh, Indonesia’s northernmost province that has been fighting for an independent state since 1976. As has already been mentioned,
no separatist movements are included in this study, since they challenge the self-limiting radicalism of social movements and aim at breaking up the state. Aceh is nevertheless briefly discussed in Chapter 6.

The intricacies of Islam in Indonesia can for instance be seen in Hefner’s (2000) work on Civil Islam that has gained acclaim but also severe criticism for being too categorical in its generalisations of Muslim groups, as well as falling short of showing how civil Islamic forces contributed to Suharto’s ousting (Aspinall 2001).

The complexity of Muslim civil society has only increased in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the October 2002 Bali bombings, which have left a lasting negative connotation for Muslim organisations in the public mind world-wide. This is clearly an area warranting further research. Due to mounting international pressure the Bali bombings were swiftly dealt with in Indonesia. The police first suspected the militant Muslim group Jemaah Islamiyah and its alleged leader, Abu Bakar Bashir. Later Amrozi bin Nurhasyim was arrested and in August 2003 he was found guilty of the bombings. The swift action and the efficiency of the police in finding the culprits earned President Megawati public acclaim both nationally and internationally (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 134; Sherlock 2002: 2; Martyn 2003: 1–2).

The decision not to pay any specific attention to Muslim organisations is further justified by the fact that any clear-cut divisions between religious groups can only be discerned within the student movement. However, in line with what has been repeatedly emphasised in relation to the various movements, they did not take a united stance; Muslim student groups lobbied both for and against Suharto. For the labour movement Islam is not an issue, in the sense that religion is not deemed relevant in the struggle for better working conditions and workers’ rights. As for the women’s movement, Islam is an issue mainly in terms of its implications on gender relations, not in terms of divisions between various women’s groups, although women’s organisations of various religious faiths do exist. In this sense, both workers and women have shown a remarkable unity and strength to focus on issues central to their respective movements as a whole.

The majority of the organisations included in this study depict themselves as secular, regardless of the religion of their staff. One
example is the women’s NGO Yasanti, where the majority of the staff was Muslim at the time of interview, although they state they are not a Muslim organisation (interview Muftiyanah 22 January 2002). Yet, it would not be correct to state that Islam is not an issue at all for Indonesian civil society representatives. Several respondents raised concerns about the growing division between Muslim fundamentalists and secular Muslims that is currently fuelled by the implementation of the new regional autonomy law (interviews with Sirait 10 January 2002 and Setyawati 11 January 2002). Others again stress the importance of the Muslim community organisations as a foundation for Indonesia’s civil society (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002). This is further discussed in the next chapter.

Other important aspects that can not be ignored concern the powerful role of the Indonesian military (see Chapter 2), and the influence of transnational links, an issue that has been highlighted by Uhlin (1997, 2001, 2002). By its very nature civil society is not confined to the borders of the nation-state but reaches beyond it. Thus, the impact of transnational links in supporting activists and putting pressure on the regime can be traced in all three case studies. Yet, both Tarrow (1996: 52–53) and Uhlin (2002: 182) state that the transnational dimension is often neglected in civil society literature.

Another aspect that deserves to be included is the close relationship with the media, considered to be a mass social movement characteristic by scholars. In a world thriving on the fast flow of information, media coverage is an indispensable tool for social movements wanting to make an impact on decision-makers and the general public. While media are highly selective, and have their own motives for covering events, the media provide an important source of information for researchers and are crucial for protest movements (Rucht et al. 1999: 18). Thus, by strategically using the media, activists can reach the public and bypass restricted political channels (Pakulski 1991: 37).

**Key Issues**

Indonesia’s political culture has been largely shaped by the authoritarian regimes of the two first presidents, Sukarno and Suharto, when a *de facto* depoliticisation of society took place. How
this separation of politics from society affected people in terms of popular political engagement and patterns of thought is further discussed in the next four chapters.

Key issues to be addressed concern the nature of the state’s intervention, and the political and public space available for the actions of civil society during various time periods. The unexpected demise of Suharto’s New Order marked a watershed in Indonesia’s political and social transition and the reasons for it will affect any research concerning contemporary Indonesia. However, the democratisation process is far from over. The necessity of finding new structures and new ways to deal with the current issues and problems that Indonesia faces, even the necessity for a new generation of leaders, was emphasised by a majority of the respondents interviewed in 2002. This view is seconded and reinforced by political commentators in 2004 (see Chapter 6).

Other important issues concern the strengths and weaknesses of the various activists, in addition to their goals and strategies in relation to the goals of the broader movement for demokrasi and reformasi. The achievements and shortcomings of reformasi are discussed, as well as the criteria for genuine social and political change. In this context it is of interest to note to what extent, and how, mass participation has translated into any real engagement on the national as well as local decision-making level, although it has to be kept in mind that social movements generally do not aim at taking over political power. Finally, the role of civil society in Indonesia’s future democratisation is assessed.

CIVIL SOCIETY ISSUES AND THE INDONESIAN CONNECTION

The Western roots of civil society discourse have been mentioned several times and they are also acknowledged by Indonesian scholars (Budiman 1990: 4–5; Hikam 1999a: 1–6; Madjid 2001: 47–50). Yet, the enormous variety of definitions and assessments of the most important characteristics of civil society, some of them quite contradictory, is the primary weakness of the concept. In order not to let historical detail clutter this discussion, only the most important characteristics relevant to the Indonesian context will be identified here and further discussed in the next chapter.

The issues have been selected for two reasons: they either fit the Indonesian perception of civil society, or they stand in stark contrast
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to it. Some important concepts concern the relation between state and civil society, the importance of voluntary associations and the free public sphere, political space, the role of religion and the link between democratisation and the empowerment of civil society. Comparisons with civil society struggles in other Southeast Asian nations are included where relevant.

State versus Society

Whenever civil society is discussed, in the majority of instances it is assumed that civil society stands in opposition to the state. The basis for this tendency of a sharp division between the state and civil society can be found in Hegel’s political philosophy, which was based on Kant’s thinking. This view was largely taken over by Marx and has prevailed until now (Kumar 1993: 379; Hann and Dunn 1996: 4). Yet, Marx did not believe in the potential of civil society. Rather, he saw it as a fraud and believed that the bourgeois state co-opted dominant elements of civil society (Gellner 1994: 53).

Influenced by the writings of the Italian socialist Gramsci, about the importance of ‘mass national-popular action’ in the 1930s and 1940s, both Marxists and non-Marxists have come to stress the non-economic dimension of civil society (Gramsci 2000; Cohen and Arato 1992: 71; Habermas 1996: 367). A central theme in Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks, which have been translated into Indonesian (Gramsci 2001), is the close relationship between the political and civil society. In fact, he is ambiguous in his categorisation of the state, as well as the church, labelling them as both part of political society and in an extended sense also part of civil society (Sassoon 1987: 65, 112–113).

This is relevant for the Indonesian context, since Gramsci’s sense of a fluid border between civil society and government-backed organisations mirrors the Indonesian reality.

The relation between civil society and the state is a central factor. While some see civil society in opposition to the state, others emphasise their co-existence and interdependence. It is important to note that this dichotomy, which is stressed in the West, is not necessarily acknowledged in Indonesia where a much more organic state developed during Suharto’s New Order (Suryakusuma 1996: 93; see Chapter 2). With limited political space for organisational activities in the highly corporatised New Order state, it was in fact
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the government initiated institutions, parties and organisations that often harboured civil society elements.

Yet, with increasingly close co-operation there is also a risk of civil society being co-opted by the state, as discussed in the case studies (Rodan 1996b: 19; Aspinall 1996a: 215). This is vital to keep in mind when discussing the relationship between Indonesia’s civil society and the state beyond 2004. Hewison and Rodan (1996: 41) emphasise the importance of civil society’s independence from the state as imperative for its potential to influence the political sphere. They furthermore stress that the state’s reluctance to enforce repressive measures or legally restrict political activities is as important as the legal recognition of civil society’s independence (Hewison and Rodan 1996: 41). In other words, the state’s actions ultimately determine the political space available for the activities of civil society.

The view of the state as a protector and guarantor of the people’s right to fulfil their basic human rights and civil liberties is also a vision of Indonesian civil society organisations, such as the Indonesian Legal Aid Institution (YLBHI 2001: 8).

Voluntary Associations

A key figure in the modern liberal approach is the nineteenth century French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville. He emphasised the social structures in democracies, in particular the forming of associations by the people, and stated that democracy could become oppressive and self-destructive if dominated by individualism and materialism and left unchecked by various forms of associations (Foley and Edward 1997: 2). Here we find the roots of the idea that civil society should check and balance the state, a notion that has grown even stronger in the twenty-first century.

In the 1960s and 1970s writings on social movements flourished as political frustrations were catalysed into civil strife and mass protests for civil rights in different parts of the world. But apart from Gramsci’s writings, the concept of civil society remained conspicuously absent from the debate for nearly 40 years. The revival of civil society was a consequence of the events in the late 1980s, when popular movements challenged authoritarian regimes in Latin America, Eastern Europe and East Asia (Rodan 1997: 158).
Yet, de Tocqueville’s thoughts on the importance of associations have by no means been forgotten. One of Indonesia’s leading authorities on civil society, Muhammad A S Hikam, for example, bases himself on de Tocqueville (Hikam 1999a: 3). The ‘social capital’, which civil society is said to thrive on and generate, is furthermore a key issue for the neo-Tocquevillian school of thought. One of these neo-Tocquevillians is Robert Putnam, who stresses the importance of networks of voluntary associations for any civic action, since they generate social capital by supporting norms of civic engagement that build social confidence and provide resources that can be mobilised (Foley and Edwards 1997: 3).

Kumar (1993: 391) notes that de Tocqueville saw politics preceding civil society. Consequently, the establishment of a democratic policy framework and a public sphere for political debate and activity are the primary conditions for a vibrant civil society of independent associations. Without going further into the discussion on social capital, it is worth noting that the importance of an independent public sphere, or political space, is seen as a prerequisite for a strong civil society by many contemporary scholars, such as Habermas (1996), Hewison (1999), Rodan (1996a, 1997), Keane (1988b) and Cohen and Arato (1992).

This public space must be guaranteed by the state, since the basic freedoms and civil liberties mentioned above, and the development of a ‘self-reflexive identity’, require freedom of choice and a free public space unrestricted by government, state institutions or political parties. The free public sphere is thus a necessary precondition for democracy (Melucci 1988: 258–259). This view is shared by the interviewed Indonesian activists and scholars (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002; Hikam 1999a: 3, 6).

**Democratisation and Civil Society**

In contemporary Western discourse there is a strong link of association between democratisation and civil society, with some scholars hailing a strong civil society as a prerequisite for democracy (Rodan 1997: 158), although this connotation is contested by modernisation theorists who instead link democratisation with economic development (Emmerson 1999b: 300; Hadiz 1999: 105–106).
These opposing views will be further discussed in the Indonesian context. Suffice to say at this point that New Order economic development and the economic crisis in the late 1990s have played significant roles. Yet, while the economic downturn undoubtedly helped set the stage for Suharto’s ousting, and most probably triggered the escalation of events, this study argues that neither economic upturns nor downturns are the primary explanatory mechanisms for democratic transition in Indonesia. These mechanisms can only be based on people’s demands and actions, which in this case translate to the determination and power of Indonesia’s civil society.

Other relevant approaches connect sustainable development with a strong civil society. This kind of argument can be found in contemporary development theory (Robinson and Fitzpatrick 2000: 255). The majority of NGOs interested in community development embrace this school of thought.

Among contemporary authors, political thinkers like Habermas and Foucault have influenced thinking on the empowerment of civil society and democratisation. Whereas Foucault sees history in real terms of conflict and power, Habermas cites the importance of Kant and the need to develop universal rational foundations for democracy. Habermas’s main methods for strengthening civil society are institutional development and the establishment of frameworks, such as constitutions, which he sees as the main device for uniting citizens in a pluralist society (Flyvbjerg 1998: 2–4). Habermas’s ‘two-track’ model of democracy rests on the constitutional democratic state and the public sphere of civil society and their interaction (Gimmler 2001: 24).

This dual need for both state and civil society, as well as a free public sphere for a stable democracy, is also emphasised by Indonesian scholars. The need for frameworks and structures along Habermasian lines of thought are furthermore emphasised by several respondents (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002).

Uhlin (2002: 182) argues that the link between successful democratic transition and the role of cultural and religious diversity in providing favourable conditions for democratisation has been overlooked in civil society literature. Despite the negative experience of former Yugoslavia in this regard, this is of relevance for Indonesia, where the issue of primordialism and civil society’s potential to
overcome this kind of factionalism is frequently stressed by scholars and activists (see also Cribb 1999b).

In this context the role of religion has to be mentioned, since the inclusion of religious organisations in the definition of civil society is a contested issue. Warr (1999: 1–2) explains this as a disagreement over whether religious organisations can foster the kind of social capital that benefits democracy in the context of civil society. Religious organisations are also commonly seen as belonging to the ‘old’ type of social movements (Kriesi 1996: 158).

Hikam (1996: 33), on the other hand, argues that Muslims and non-Muslims have to co-operate in empowering civil society and underscores the importance of civil society not being confined by religious boundaries.

While Hikam takes an Indonesian perspective, authors like Callahan (1998), Rodan (1996a, b, c, 1997) and Hewison (1997a, b) provide some much needed perspectives on civil society in other parts of the Asian-Pacific region. Whereas Callahan (1998: 153–154) notes that democratic movements are not uncommon in the Asia-Pacific, the relationship between democracy, popular movements and the state is nevertheless problematic in many countries in the region. Popular organisations often find themselves co-opted by the state, which might instead mobilise its own groups, as has been witnessed in Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar and Malaysia.

Both Callahan (1998: 164) and Rodan (1997: 164) stress that while civil society in Asia is generally considered weak, there are notable exceptions, like the strong farmers’ movements in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and the popular movements that in the 1980s and 1990s aided the overthrowing of authoritarian rule in the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

Whereas mass demonstrations are rare in Malaysia and Singapore, civil society has nevertheless tried to challenge authoritarianism on a broad range of political, economic and cultural issues. In Malaysia in the 1980s the middle class driven NGOs posed such a threat to government on issues of political liberalisation and democratisation that civil society activities were subsequently banned in the 1990s (Kleinberg and Clark 2000: 7; see also Heryanto and Mandal 2003). Singapore’s strategy has been to co-opt civil society and transform it into a community service provider for the government. This has resulted in close collaboration between civil society and the state (Tay 1998: 244–256; Singapore Government 2001).
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**Political Space and Social Movements**

The importance of political space has been mentioned, and if this crucial political space does not exist, civil society actors seek ways to expand it. Among these civil society actors are social movements.

Callahan (1998: 151) highlights how social movements, which are seen as ‘social’, meaning they are perceived as contributing to the common good of society rather than being ‘political’ and potentially oppositional, can provide the links that unite collective action with the democratic potential of civil society, even in authoritarian states where political activities are not generally tolerated.

This is an important aspect in the case of Suharto’s Indonesia, where political activities and mass organisations were severely restricted, as the case studies show. Civil society activists had to find alternative ways of organising in order to reach their target groups and manage to mobilise people. Callahan’s notion is supported by Ford’s findings on labour NGOs in Indonesia during the 1990s (Ford 2001: 110–112), as well as by several Indonesian women’s organisations (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

**CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Part I of this book concerns the theoretical framework for the research. The main areas of concern have already been outlined in this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 addresses the prevailing debate on civil society and social movements from an Indonesian perspective. The necessary historical and political context for the case studies is also provided.

Part II is divided into three case studies. Here some of the civil society actors, or activists, and their visions of civil society and political and social change in Indonesia are discussed without getting too deeply involved in the structure and strategies of individual organisations. Chapters 3 to 5 are devoted to the actions and strategies of the student movement, the broader labour movement (including labour NGOs) and the women’s movement. Here the various groups’ contributions to the demokrasi/reformasi movement and to civil society at large are discussed.

Part III consists of a comparative and analytical chapter followed by the conclusion. Chapter 6 discusses the role of civil society in the post-Suharto era and the prospects for political, economic and social
change. The post-Suharto era includes the tenures of Presidents Habibie, Wahid and Megawati. This chapter compares the situation of the three focus groups and discusses the achievements and shortcomings of the 1996–98 pro-democracy movement. Differing views and objectives help explain the alleged fragmentation of the movement after 1998. Thus, any conflicts between and within the various interest groups are important.

Significant political changes have already taken place in policy terms, but many of the changes still remain to be implemented. Thus, the validity of the critical comments from observers regarding Indonesia's needs – in terms of peace, stability and a strong economy, rather than a vibrant civil society with its potentially destabilising effects – are also assessed in this chapter.

A proposition that will be tested in this study is that civil society, spearheaded by social movements, has contributed and continues to contribute to Indonesia’s ongoing democratic transition, despite criticism concerning its fragmentation and failure to achieve any real political and social change. It is furthermore argued that the criticised fragmentation and shortcomings of the reformasi movement fit well into the theoretical assumptions made by social movement scholars, such as Melucci, Tarrow and Pakulski, concerning the nature and aspirations of mass social movements. In fact, viewed from a social movement standpoint, it can be argued that the Indonesian movement for demokrasi and reformasi has been successful in managing to attract a broad base of core and affiliated supporters, to challenge effectively the status quo and resist being co-opted by government or business.

The sophistication and significance of civil society is steadily increasing. In the post-Suharto era political opportunities exist in the sense that the regime is allowing and indeed inviting civil society participation to a greater degree, although formal mechanisms for participation and interaction have yet to be established, without civil society losing its integrity and independence. It will be proposed that the first wave of reformasi, ending with the elections in 2004, provided critical political opportunities for civil society to consolidate and expand its political space. However, a successful outcome for securing future democratisation and reform depends largely on the ability of civil society forces to unite around core issues and to forge alliances across boundaries of class, ethnicity, religion and gender.
Chapter Two

The Search for an Indonesian Civil Society Concept

Having discussed aspects of civil society from a more general and indeed Western point of view, this chapter focuses on the Indonesian background, providing some essential historical and political context for the case studies in the next three chapters, as well as specifically outlining the civil society debate from an Indonesian perspective.

Whereas civil society was originally perceived to be a Western concept, the majority of Indonesian scholars and respondents take the view that transnational diffusion of ideas has always taken place, thereby essentially saying that good ideas can be adapted and that civil society is no exception. Frequent references are made to civil society models and experiences in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and parallels are often drawn with social movements in Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea (Panjaitan 2001: 33, 51; Hikam 1999a: 83; Madjid 2001: 44–45).

However, there is generally a cautious note that Indonesia can learn from these experiences, but not adapt any model directly (Culla 1999: 211). Indonesian scholars express a need for acknowledging the Indonesian roots of democracy and civil society, as well as recognising the particular cultural, historical and political circumstances that have shaped and continue to shape Indonesian civil society. Only by providing this culture specific framework can the problems of the past and the challenges of the future be fully understood (Dhakidae 2001: 3; Culla 1999: 211).
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While this standpoint is understandable, it may harbour anti-global or anti-Western sentiments and is an expression of twenty-first century nationalism as well. More importantly, it implies that Western and Indonesian ideas about civil society might differ in some important aspects, which are further discussed below.

THE SEARCH FOR AN INDONESIAN CIVIL SOCIETY CONCEPT

Since Indonesia proclaimed its independence from the Dutch colonisers in 1945, the nation has experienced a period of revolutionary struggle for independence (1945–49), a period of democratic liberalism and parliamentarism (1950–57) under Sukarno, followed by four decades of increasingly authoritarian rule; first under Sukarno’s Guided Democracy (1959–65), then under Suharto’s New Order until it fell in May 1998. Fundamental political changes have occurred within these periods as well, resulting in cycles of expansion and limitation of political space that have had a deep impact on the development and actions of civil society.

Influential liberal Islamic scholar Nurcholish Madjid (2001: 46) states that as a nation Indonesia has been independent since 1945, but for the people freedom has only existed since Suharto was ousted. The challenge is now to maintain and guard this freedom, and use it for the benefit of the entire population, with no exceptions. In order to do this Madjid sees the development of a strong, vibrant civil society as a necessity and a primary challenge.

The Emergence of Civil Society

While it was not called civil society at the time, some Indonesian scholars and cultural observers claim that Indonesian civil society, particularly social movements, have historical and cultural roots dating back to the early nineteenth century and to the anti-colonial struggle (Culla 1999: 212; Kartodirdjo 1991: 32). Kartodirdjo (1991: 32) regards the widespread agrarian upheavals in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indonesia as forerunners of political organisation (see Kartodirdjo 1973 for a comparative analysis). A minority see traditional social organisations, like the Islamic Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, as the foundation of civil society (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002). As previously mentioned, the role of religious organisations is controversial; the reasons for this are further discussed below.
The majority of scholars argue that this is a completely new discourse, which was only established in Indonesia around 1990 (Culla 1999: 3; Sularto 2001: xi). Madjid (2001: 51) moreover claims that Indonesians have only experienced civil society since 1998 and that there is still a general lack of awareness about civil society. Yet Hikam, one of Indonesia’s foremost scholars on civil society, takes an in-between stance and argues that while civil society did not exist in traditional society, it began to emerge with modernisation and the establishment of modern social organisations (Hikam 1999a: 3–4).

Recognising the novelty of the concept, some of the respondents preferred to talk cautiously about an ‘embryo of civil society’ that still has to develop and mature considerably (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002 and Hidayat 15 January 2002). Many activists acknowledge the lack of awareness among the broader population; instead of referring to the strengthening of civil society, they use alternative terminology in their work, such as ‘people’s empowerment’, ‘awareness raising’ and ‘alternative education’ (interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002, Sirait 10 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Setyawati 11 January, Ibu Titin 21 January 2002).

The Indonesian Terminology

The Western roots of civil society are widely acknowledged and reference is commonly made to the ancient city-states of Greece, to the period of Enlightenment in Europe, and the ideas of de Toqueville, Hegel, Marx, Gramsci and Habermas (Budiman 1990: 4–5; Hikam 1999a: 1–6; Madjid 2001: 47–50; Culla 1999: 4). The ambition of understanding and developing an Indonesian civil society has resulted in both international and national research projects, to the extent that in late 2001 it was decided to establish a new centre for civil society studies at the University of Indonesia (Erasmus University 2001; PUSKA-PMA 2001; discussion Wirutomo 15 January 2002).

Since the mid-1990s there has been a lively debate concerning the proper Indonesian terminology for civil society. The debate and critique of the meaning and suitability of various Indonesian words for civil society go beyond a purely semantic discussion.

For example, the term masyarakat madani, which was favoured in the late 1990s and can be translated as ‘civilised society’ or...
even ‘city-society’, is strongly rejected by some scholars because of its Islamic connotations. First, while masyarakat means society, the word madani is derived from the community that prophet Mohammed founded in Madinah. Second, the term was introduced in Indonesia in 1995 by Malaysia’s former deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim. Consequently the term is considered too Muslim by many. Contrary to Western civil society discourse, masyarakat madani also includes the state (Culla 1999: 6; Sularto 2001: xii; interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002; discussion with Wirutomo 15 January 2002).

Whereas Budiman, Madjid and Culla use masyarakat madani, Dhakidae uses masyarakat warga, and Hikam refrains from translating it altogether, instead using the English term ‘civil society’ in order to avoid confusion. Other terms that are occasionally used are masyarakat kewargaan, masyarakat beradab and masyarakat berbudaya. Masyarakat warga or kewargaan both imply a society of citizens. The concept was introduced in 1995 by political scientists from AIPI (Asosiasi Ilmu Politik Indonesia). Masyarakat adab or beradab, and masyarakat berbudaya on the other hand translate as a ‘cultural’ or ‘civilised’ society (Culla 1999: 3–7).

The civilised nature of civil society is emphasised both in the Indonesian terminology as well as by the majority of Indonesian scholars (Dhakidae 2001: 12–13; Culla 1999: 212). To a critical mind this essentially implies that the more destructive and chaotic aspects of civil society are automatically disregarded, or at least not considered to be aspects of a genuine civil society. Given Indonesia’s authoritarian past this distinction is problematic, as it has the potential to become a mechanism for censoring or even repressing parts of civil society that are not considered to be civil enough. Ultimately this may have a negative impact on Indonesia’s democratic transformation.

The confusion over which word to use reflects a dual problem of translation and a lack of consensus. Paraphrasing Culla (1999: 4), the terminology should preferably be clear, uncontroversial and understood to refer to the same phenomenon by all its users. This is definitely not the case with the last option, namely the direct translation of civil society into masyarakat sipil.

Masyarakat sipil is seen as too Western by some factions, especially by the military. More importantly, the military feels threatened by its use, as their corporatist and hierarchical concept
of power, *dwifungsi* (further explained below), clashes with Western democratic ideas about civilian supremacy over the military (Culla 1999: 8–9). Essentially this constitutes the core of the power struggle between the military and civil society that needs to be resolved in order for civil society to prosper. This military–civilian dichotomy is one of the main issues in Indonesian civil society discourse that sets it apart from the Western discourse.

THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY AND DEPOLITICISATION

In order to fully comprehend the civil–military power struggle and the problems Indonesian society faces today, the powerful position of the military and the repressive system inherited from the New Order need to be understood. While the Indonesian military is too complex to be dealt with in detail here, some central issues are highlighted.

The military’s role in politics was shaped during the revolutionary struggle for independence, with the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) acting as a political force from the start, although it became a dominant political factor after 1965. It is deeply engrained in society and is considered to be one of the truly integrated national institutions (Cronin and Ott 1997: 1; Said 1987: 16, 19). The powerful role of the military was a result of the social, political and economic volatility of the post-revolutionary era, when people’s political consciousness was high, and the politics of the grassroots, or *arus bawah* (‘undercurrent’), were articulated and accommodated both in practice and in political discourse. Despite an increase in political space, the fledgling civil society did not have a chance to develop due to economic stagnation, social and cultural conflict, and a looming political crisis (Hikam 1999a: 115–117).

A multi-party system introduced after independence sparked politicisation of the military and society beyond government control (Said 1992: 39; Cribb 1999a: 32–35). In addition to the extraordinary political diversity, increasing social and regional unrest was perceived to threaten national unity. By 1956 Sukarno decided to end the democratic experiment and embark on a strategy of depoliticising society. In order to avoid ideological conflicts, Sukarno developed his authoritarian ‘Guided Democracy’, with *Pancasila* and the Armed Forces at its core, and in 1959 the 1950
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parliamentary democratic constitution was replaced with the 1945 constitution, favouring a strong executive. The republic would rest on Pancasila and respect Islam, without being an Islamic state (Cribb 1999a: 31–35).² Penders (1968: 17) identified three forces as the basis for unity at the time: the Communist Party, Sukarno and his special brand of Sukarnoism, and the army. The last he assessed as the then most powerful political player.

Similarly to the late 1990s, people’s frustrations were fuelled by economic and social hardship. The early 1960s saw hyperinflation reaching 500 to 900 per cent and widespread starvation (Nusantara et al. 1998: 3; Ricklefs 1993: 280). Sukarno’s era ended dramatically with a coup on 30 September 1965, which at the time was blamed on the Communist Party, PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia). The subsequent persecution of communists and other outspoken opponents established the New Order regime’s authoritarianism and created a legacy of ‘communist threats’ that prevailed until President Wahid in 2000 proposed to lift the 1966 communist ban (Ricklefs 1993: 280–288; Heryanto 1996b: 260; Everett 2000: 2).

With Suharto’s ascendancy to power after the 1965 coup, communism was obliterated, Islam was sidelined and development (pembangunan) was seen as the way to modernisation (Cribb 1999a: 34). Two things remained unchanged: Pancasila and the military, whose power only increased.

Dwi-fungsi, Territorial Management and Functional Groups

The power of the military is based on the three doctrines of dwi-fungsi (dual function), territorial management, and functional groups (Anderson et al. 1999: 146). Dwi-fungsi institutionalised and legitimised the military’s deep involvement in society and its political role from 1958 onwards. It stipulated military and non-military roles for the army and created a network of military governments with subordinated civilian governments (Emmerson 1990: 115, 121; Jenkins 1984: 270). As Leifer (1995: 358) points out, the ideas of dwi-fungsi and a strong, independent civil society are difficult to reconcile. There is simply no room for the idea of civilian supremacy over the military.

Firmly embedded in this is the idea of territorial management to secure the nation. The territorial function has been criticised for preventing both development and democracy. During 2001 a
vague rumour turned into a more tangible promise when official spokespersons publicly stated that the military would gradually hand over its territorial function to local administrations and the police (The Jakarta Post 23, 25 August 2001; Sherlock 2003: 6).

The military’s political representation has declined drastically in the post-Suharto era. From having had 100 non-elected seats in parliament (DPR), the military retained only 75 in 1998, after which it was further reduced to 38 seats or 8 per cent of DPR’s membership (Anderson et al. 1999: 143; Said 1987: 29). According to the plans the military was to be fully removed by 2004 (The Jakarta Post 5 February 2004, 11 August 2002; Kompas 10 August 2002).

Yet in 2004 political commentators questioned the military’s motive for withdrawing from official politics. Some commentators fear they will use the new regional autonomy and the ongoing decentralisation process to spread their authority via their territorial networks, in a renewed effort to militarise civilian institutions (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004). While the military nowadays is decidedly less prominent in all levels of civil government and have lost considerable political power since 1998, they have certainly not given up their efforts to maintain and increase their power. They still perceive their role as the ‘guarantor of the country’s unity’, a unity to be upheld through force if necessary (Sherlock 2003: 5–6). The military’s role in 2004 is further discussed below.

The political arena underwent a drastic restructuring in the Suharto era, not least through the creation of the state’s own party, Golkar (golongan karya, functional groups) that won the first election in 1971. Through Golkar the military, as one of the functional groups or corporatist interest groups (labour, youth and women were other groups), was guaranteed massive political representation. Civil servants were forced to abide by the principle of monoloyalitas, mono-loyalty to the state party. The nine existing parties were amalgamated into two, the Muslim Development Unity Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP) and the Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, PDI), representing all non-Muslims.

Surprisingly, all three parties still existed in 2004. The PDI under President Megawati’s leadership has added a P for perjuangan (struggle) to its name, while PPP was under the leadership of Vice-President Hamza Haz. Before the Bali bombings Hamza Haz openly associated himself with some of the more extreme Islamic
organisations, such as the militant Laskar Jihad that gained fame for its notoriously violent campaigns against Christians in eastern Indonesia (Sherlock 2002: 2).

Golkar party leader and Speaker of the House Akbar Tandjung is best known for having been sentenced to three years jail for corruption, yet he is still pursuing his career undeterred and even aimed for the 2004 presidential elections. The case concerned misappropriation of Rp 40 billion (USD 4.8 million) of State Logistics Agency (Bulog) funds when Akbar was a minister and state secretary in 1999 (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 134). The failure to put Akbar behind bars has drawn massive nation-wide protests from civil society during the past years (see Appendix), as did his acquittal by the Supreme Court in February 2004 (The Jakarta Post 13, 14 February 2004; Kompas 13, 14 February 2004; Tempo Interaktif 28 February 2004).

The political amalgamation of the 1970s essentially implied the absorption of all civil society aspirations. Worth noting is the fact that Megawati’s PDI-P, depicted as the greatest promise for democratic change in the mid-1990s and with a sizeable popular following, was originally initiated by the state precisely with the objective of curtailing any forces that could challenge the regime. Her followers were at the time seen as spearheading civil society’s democratic ambitions. This is one example of the frequent blurring of boundaries between state and civil society that makes the Indonesian situation so complex.

The high degree of state control is evident, considering that Golkar won all of the New Order elections, while Muslim political influence was curtailed until 1993, when Suharto suddenly became very pro-Islam (Hefner 1999: 224; Said 1998: 545). President Megawati Sukarnoputri continued the trend of her predecessors. Her choice of Hamzah Has (PPP) as vice-president in 2001 was one strategy for uniting the two basic ideologies of nationalism and Islam (McBeth 2001b: 13).

Depoliticisation of Society

Society was further depoliticised through the 1971 ‘floating mass’ doctrine, which essentially reserved politics for the urban elite while the majority, the grassroots, were excluded from political activity (Dhakidae 2001: 15; Uhlin 1997: 42, 55). Together with the
principle of *monoloyalitas*, it provided Golkar and the government with extensive control over village leaders and civil servants. The ‘floating mass’ doctrine was only abandoned in 1999 (Antlöv 2003: 200).

By using *Pancasila* as the sole national ideology (*pengasas-tunggalan*) other ideological discourses and challenges were obliterated, giving the state total control. The state’s deep penetration of society through both repression and ‘ideological hegemony’ is important for understanding the legitimacy and power of the New Order regime (Hikam 1995: 5–6, 159). It also explains the lack of alternative thinking and the need for a change in mindset, emphasised by so many activists and observers as the necessary preconditions not only for a strong civil society, but for democracy itself in Indonesia (see Chapter 6).

The effects of this control of society could, for instance, be seen in the hostility to mass politics in the early 1970s. Mass mobilisation of the lower classes had been part of daily life under Sukarno, but in the early New Order, before disillusion spread, neither the military nor students or intellectuals supported mass demonstrations. Instead a culture of avoiding chaos characterised the 1970s opposition. Thus the opposition actually supported the military-backed government, which was firmly committed to economic development and political stability to make up for the previous political and economic chaos (Aspinall 1996a: 217, 222–223; Uhlin 1997: 55; Honna 2001: 55).

In the post-Suharto era this political and social engineering has been described as a ‘brain-washing’ of society through forced *Pancasila* education (Dhakidae 2001: 20, 28), or more figuratively as ‘making a “bonsai” of civil society’ (Hikam 1999a: 247). While *Pancasila* is still considered to be morally valuable, the main problem is perceived to be a lack of proper implementation of its ethics (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002).

Reform and Power-Sharing

When Suharto resigned in 1998 the military was weakened by public processes exposing its corruption and human rights abuses and seemed ready for power-sharing with civilians (Anderson et al. 1999: 142). President B. J. Habibie announced a new *dwi-fungsi* paradigm, separated the National Police (Polri) from the Armed
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Forces (renamed Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI, after being known as ABRI, Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, during the New Order), forced the military to pledge neutrality in the 2000 elections, halved military representation in parliament and lifted restrictions on political parties (Anderson et al. 1999: 143; HRW 2001b; Habib 2001: 77).

The separation of TNI and Polri implies that the police take care of internal security, while the military focuses on national defence. However, Habib (2001: 85) cautions that this does not imply elimination of the military’s socio-political role. TNI needs to be committed to thorough internal reform in order to regain people’s trust after decades of repression (Habib 2001: 77).

TNI regained power under President Abdurrahman Wahid, whose attempts to reform and curtail the army brought him powerful enemies (Anderson et al. 2000: 126; McGirk 2001: 31; HRW 2001b). By contrast Megawati seemed to have the full support of TNI, although critics pointed to the government’s weakness in carrying out the necessary military reforms (The Jakarta Post/ Political Outlook 2004; Sherlock 2003: 6). Unfortunately the global war on terrorism has provided staunch anti-reform elements within the military with a window of opportunity. The most important and controversial measures are as follows:

Within a week after the Bali bombings a draconian Anti-Terrorism Bill was proclaimed. It was passed as law in 2003, but can be used to prosecute offenders retrospectively (Martyn 2003). With the current revision of the Anti-Terrorism Law, security authorities are to gain even more power. The draft stipulates that intelligence reports are a sufficient basis for prosecution and targets persons suspected of both direct and indirect involvement in acts of terrorism. Human rights activists are appalled at this latest move, fearing that it paves the way for a new wave of abuses (The Jakarta Post 20 February 2004).

A martial law decree giving military operations in Aceh a go-ahead was signed in May 2003 and extended for six more months in November 2003. The extraordinary measures were justified as necessary for maintaining national unity (The Jakarta Post 19 November 2003; MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 137). Sherlock (2003: 1) describes the revival of the military’s ‘security approach’ and the failure to agree on Aceh’s future status as a military victory. The military emergency was downgraded to civil
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emergency only in May. Furthermore, a controversial Military Bill is being discussed and fiercely opposed by civil society since one article proposed by the military authorises direct deployment in a state of emergency, without the need to wait for presidential consent (The Jakarta Post 5 February, 24 February 2004).

The special forces unit Kopasus, best known for its notorious human rights abuses, is in charge of Indonesia’s war on terrorism, which was only launched in response to international pressure after the Bali bombings (Sherlock 2002: 4; Martyn 2003: 1). There is a certain irony that international demand and support should bring about a strengthening of the main opponents to democratic reform – the military and police – at a crucial time in Indonesia’s democratisation process, with general elections just around the corner.

The implications of the military’s socio-political role for Indonesia’s civil society cannot be emphasised enough. For the future development of civil society it is important that the military-civil relations are redefined, and that the military submits to civil supremacy. This also means that the civilian elite has to take greater responsibility. Military and political reforms are badly needed; they are inseparable from each other, and they depend on economic recovery (Habib 2001: 87; Panjaitan 2001: 47; Montaperto et al. 2000: 1).

Analysts are keen to stress that while TNI recognises the need for political reform, TNI reservations rest on its ‘historical self-image’ as responsible for and to the nation rather than to the state, as well as a fear that TNI officers will be made accountable for past abuses. TNI would be more positive towards civilian control if they believed that the civilian government is capable of maintaining national unity and territorial integrity, whilst making appropriate use of the military and police and boosting Indonesia’s economy (Montaperto et al. 2000).

THE IMPACT OF THE 1997 ECONOMIC CRISIS

In an assessment of internal forces for democratisation, external forces also need to be acknowledged. The impact of the 1997–98 regional economic crisis cannot be ignored for a number of reasons. While the crisis was crucial for the timing of Suharto’s ousting, it also exposed Indonesia’s political and economic situation
to international public scrutiny, which added to the pressure on the regime. In addition, a restored economy is seen as a prerequisite for the success of democratisation (Uhlin 2002: 187; Panjaitan 2001:3–4; Crouch 2000: 13). Feminists have seized the opportunity to further their demands of a reformed economic sphere that is more attuned to women’s and the majority’s needs and interests (Mar’iyah 2001: 107).

It is argued here that the 1997–98 economic crisis essentially served to create crucial political opportunities for the mobilisation of civil society, and while it may have triggered Suharto’s ousting, it was not the sole reason behind it. However, it is worth noting that the impact and role of the economic crisis is disputed and therefore deserves some attention, particularly since Indonesia is still recovering from its impact.

While acknowledging the 1996–98 pro-democracy movement’s efforts and its brutal repression, one school of thought argues that Suharto was toppled less by ‘the absence of democracy’ than by the collapse of the economy, which had more impact than any middle class led civil society. This view has been propagated by democratisation theorists who link economic development with democratisation (Emmerson 1999b: 300; Hadiz 1999: 105–106).

Another school of thought sees civil society as the driving force in the downfall of Suharto (Culla 1999: 22; Panjaitan 2001: 4; Uhlin 2002: 183). Uhlin (2002: 187), for example, agrees that transition may be initiated by external events, such as the economic crisis, but argues that the outcome and any potential democratisation depends on ‘the political struggle and power relations between different social forces’, such as the army and civil society in combination with pressure from external actors.

This is a valid argument as the economic situation in itself would not have been enough to oust Suharto, had his grip on power been intact. Although the economic crisis undoubtedly hastened the process by undermining Suharto’s legitimacy, it is vital to acknowledge that it was only the peak of a process that had already begun years before. The economic downturn served to further fuel an unprecedented strong popular movement for reform and democratic change. With the support of important allies among the military and elite, it eventually led to Suharto’s downfall. Without an impressive amount of popular pressure the elite would certainly not have deserted Suharto at this stage – and
until the end of 1990 the majority of elite actors had not had any reason to change sides.

Further evidence of the salience of this approach can be seen in the ungracious resignations of presidents Habibie and Wahid, where civil society once again exerted popular pressure on the leaders of the nation.

The economic crisis affected Indonesia most severely, and by early 1998 the economy was in a disastrous state. Price increases for fuel and food led to widespread socio-economic suffering, violence directed against ethnic Chinese (see Chapter 5), and anti-government protests (McGillivray and Morrissey 1999: 16–18).

Suharto’s development achievements were already being undermined by his abuse of power in the early 1990s. When he could no longer deliver the economic development on which his regime was built, the foundation of the New Order quickly crumbled (Vatikiotis and Schwarz 1998: 26). Finally, popular pressure led to Suharto being abandoned by his ministers and the military elite, who protected their own interests, as well as by other political allies and business cronies (Uhlin 2002: 173; Aspinall 2000: 315; Vatikiotis and Schwarz 1998: 22).

When the 1997 economic crisis developed into a fully-fledged multi-dimensional crisis, the military was found guilty of being an inherent part of it, since they had backed a corrupt, repressive government for so long. As a consequence the reformasi struggle had two main objectives: Suharto’s resignation and an end to ABRI’s political role, dwifungsi, which meant ABRI’s return to a purely professional defence role (Habib 2001: 82).

While civil society scored the first victory in May 1998, the second came in August 2002 when the MPR decided to remove the military from parliament by 2004, as has been previously discussed.

STATE VERSUS SOCIETY

Whereas the military–civil dichotomy is easily distinguished, the traditional dichotomy between state and civil society – so strong in Western discourse – is much more complex in the Indonesian case. This is a legacy of the New Order regime’s corporatism and co-opting of civil institutions and forces.
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It is worth noting that the New Order always tried to co-opt various forces in society into the state-monitored system while increasingly repressing ‘outside’ dissent. Some civil society groups also chose to ‘work from within’ the government system instead of openly opposing it. This was especially true of the military’s former allies (Aspinall 1996a: 224).

While it makes it difficult for an outsider to assess who is for or against the regime, this is nevertheless a typical example of the self-limiting radicalism of social movements that essentially helps them survive during times of repression. With little political space elsewhere, civil society had to resort to working from within the very elements of the system they were trying to change. Acknowledging that the Indonesian reality poses some difficulties in theoretical delineation makes it necessary to further qualify the relationship between state and civil society.

While some Indonesian activists and scholars argue that civil society is clearly in opposition to the state (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Hidayat 15 January 2002), others prefer to see them as parallel (Budiman 2001: 30), or as not necessarily in opposition, although civil society must have the potential to oppose government (interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002; Culla 1999: 201). One respondent further explains the desire for close co-operation between civil society and government in terms of civil society’s need to educate an inexperienced government in democratic matters (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002).

In the late 1980s Budiman (1990: 365) identified Muslim organisations, the press and private business as the most influential civil society sectors. The last is a typical Indonesian feature, since business is generally not included in Western civil society concepts. But in the post-Suharto era perceptions have begun to change. In 2004 Indonesian scholars and political commentators increasingly separated civil society from the business community (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004).

As has previously been mentioned, this seems to reflect attitudinal changes in the public mind regarding the virtue of business. Escalating corruption, economic inequality and a resurgent business elite that includes the military and official power holders are partly responsible for this change. Another plausible explanation is a more sophisticated understanding of the civil
society concept and what it entails, particularly among Indonesian scholars, journalists and NGO representatives.

Other distinctive Indonesian perspectives distinguish between the political society (the state domain) and civil society, with interaction between state and civil society still occurring, to the extent that some civil society organisations are even initiated by the government for the people (Culla 1999: 20, 122).

This idea of civil society in the service of government matches the Singaporean government’s approach (see Tay 1998). Indonesian activists call these government co-opted NGOs ‘plat merah LSM’ (‘red-plate NGOs’), referring to the red number plates of government cars. They argue that genuine civil society organisations, what they call CSO, can only be defined as ‘organisations set up by the people and for the people’ (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002). Following the same line of thought Panjaitan (2001: 10) underscores the independence of civil society by including only political parties established by civil society in his definition, which would exclude Megawati’s PDI.

In an attempt to further clarify the role of Indonesia’s civil society in relation to the state, Hikam (1999a: 3) defines civil society as not necessarily opposing the state, but displaying a ‘high degree of independence versus the state’, while it adheres to the laws and values of society, and has ‘self-generating’, ‘self-supporting’ and ‘voluntary’ characteristics.

The need for the state to guarantee the freedom of civil society is nevertheless emphasised by the majority of scholars and activists (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002; Irianto 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002; Hikam 1999a: 58). In this context the need for reform of the presidential institution is increasingly stressed by scholars, along with judicial reform in order to establish a state of law (negara hukum) (Harkrisnowo 2001; Panjaitan 2001: 43, 53; Lubis and Santosa 1999: 343, 360). Judicial reform has become an important niche of research in the face of widespread corruption and the introduction of the 1999 regional autonomy law, which opens up for decentralisation and legal debate (Sulastomo 2001: 64).

Civil society scored an important victory in August 2002, with the annual parliamentary session deciding on direct presidential elections from 2004. This is seen as the major government reform of
the past four decades, and a major gain for democratisation (Kompas 10 August 2002; The Jakarta Post 11 August 2002).

The Ambiguity of Civil Society

Budiman (1990: 9) cautions against seeing democratisation in terms of state versus civil society, since the diversity of civil society makes it impossible to conclude that democracy is a result of a strong civil society, when parts of it might support the authoritarian state. He nonetheless states that co-operation between groups on both sides does take place.

A decade later Budiman (2001: 39–40) argues that it is not the rise of civil society, or its strength or weakness that is the problem, but rather the weakness of existing government institutions. This is very much in line with the negara hukum debate. Along with Soesastro (1999: 259) he also takes a critical look at civil society and concludes that while civil society is needed in order to control a powerful government, civil society also causes disorder. If political institutions are weak and people’s participation high, this will inevitably result in political instability. What is needed in the twenty-first century is a parallel process of strengthening both civil society and political institutions (Budiman 2001: 30–42).

This ties in with the self-limiting radicalism of social movements. In fact, most civil society organisations accept the legitimacy of state authority and appeal to it, rather than destroy it. The importance of a link and dialogue between state and society in order to further the democratisation process has also been emphasised for years by Hikam, in addition to the view that a strong state can be a positive feature (Hikam 1999a: 52–53, 73). Ultimately it is a question of awareness. Indonesians need to be educated in order to start demanding a government that will serve the people, not vice versa (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

Another dimension is highlighted by the anxiety over increasing primordial sentiments, namely that freedom of thought and religion not only require a guarantee from the state, but also greater tolerance for pluralism in society. This is still lacking in Indonesia (Panjaitan 2001: 31; interviews with Setyawati 11 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002). In order to achieve greater tolerance in society, co-operation between state and civil society is crucial.
Despite a female head of state, there is still a prevailing tendency to exclude gender issues from the debate. With women being an inherent part of civil society, feminist scholar Mar’iyah (2001: 105) argues for ‘anti- or post-patriarchy’ as a necessity for a modern, mature civil society. Until now Indonesian ‘male stream’ politicians have not considered gender a relevant issue in political and democratic debate. Taking women into account in political decision-making would mean a radicalisation of Indonesian democracy discourse both in form and content (Mar’iyah 2001: 105–114; interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002 and LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

While all of these dimensions are important, the empowerment of civil society will not materialise if the concept remains confined to the desks of academic scholars. This is where civil society organisations have an important role to play in conveying the message of democratisation and the potential power of the people to the wider community. Human rights activists caution against the familiar Jakarta syndrome, stressing that ‘the way to strengthen civil society is not only in the centre of power, in Jakarta, but also in the province’. In this task the new autonomy law could serve as a useful tool (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

Habibie’s Civil Society Committee

It is worth noting that the first post-Suharto government had high expectations about the potential of civil society, although it seems to have been along the Singaporean lines of a civil society in the service of government (see Tay 1998).

In 1998 President Habibie established a civil society committee, which was supposed to come up with a new paradigm to accommodate people’s sovereignty, kedaulatan rakyat, to a greater degree (Culla 1999: 217; Keppres No. 18/1999; Keppres No. 41/1999). With the change of government the committee disappeared from the political scene, formally repealed by Wahid (Keppres No. 22/2000). It was essentially seen as yet another committee imposed solely from above, instead of being democratically implemented from the bottom up (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002; Irianto 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002).
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PRIMORDIALISM AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION

In discussing primordial sentiments the role of religion, which causes a lot of controversy in Indonesia, needs to be addressed. Religion easily becomes the domain of the state in a country where national and regional policies, as well as devastating ethnic conflicts, are underpinned by religious sentiments (Kleden 1999: 11). By the same token, the purely spiritual traits of religion effectively separate it from the political state domain, and may thus serve to provide religious groups with greater political space compared to many other civil society groups.

With 87 per cent of Indonesia’s population adhering to Islam the need for recognising the political force of Islam is frequently emphasised (Porter 2002: 202). Yet, while Islam undoubtedly is a political force to consider, it is far from a homogenous force. Porter (2002: 202), among others, notes that in the late 1990s Muslim groups were mobilised both for and against the regime (see Chapter 3). In fact, Muslim forces enjoyed a greater degree of freedom and cohesion due to their dual base as a religious and a political movement (Aspinall 1996a: 223). While an in-depth discussion on the role of Islam is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that the MPR in August 2002 rejected an implementation of shariah law (Kompas 10 August 2002a; The Jakarta Post 11 August 2002a).

Primordialism is the main reason why many scholars and activists are reluctant to include religious organisations in their definition of civil society (interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002). While Magnis-Suseno (2001: 75), usually a spokesman for greater religious tolerance, states that religion has been guilty of keeping society in ignorance through censorship, Culla (1999: 201–211) stresses the importance of civil society’s independence not only in its relationship with the state, the economic or political spheres, but also in the interaction between various civil society organisations. In essence he underscores the necessity for freedom from ‘horizontal conflict’, which was briefly discussed above. Civil society is broader than any narrow class, ethnic, or religious base; therefore it should be a vehicle for overcoming destructive primordial sentiments, rather than exacerbating them (Culla 1999: 147; Hikam 1996: 36).

Not everyone wants to exclude religious organisations. Organisations like the Islamic Muhammadiyah are also regarded
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as the ‘embryo of civil society’, because they are firmly embedded in the community and have made important contributions to community services, education and organisation since well before independence (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002).

In this debate Hikam once again takes an intermediate stance. While he acknowledges critics who see an Islamisation of Indonesian politics as ‘dangerous’ and ‘detrimental’ to democratisation, he nevertheless emphasises the importance of a parallel process of empowering the Muslim community and building an Indonesian civil society (Hikam1996: 31, 33–35). A modern, just and democratic society can only be achieved through integration, by finding a common ground for all societal forces. Yet Culla (1999: 42–44), basing himself on Gellner (1995), concludes that many Muslims are not interested in building a civil society if it implies a tendency towards Western secularisation and individualism.

This does not imply that Muslims will never embrace the civil society idea. Budiman (1990: 367) draws attention to the fact that Indonesian Muslims are neither a homogenous group, nor do they retain a constant perception of other ideologies over time. He exemplifies this with the Muslim stance on Pancasila, which was supported in the late 1960s as it was seen as an anti-communist ideology. Yet in the late 1980s, with government efforts to make it the sole ideology, Pancasila was regarded as ‘damaging Muslim interests’.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is seen as a vital key for balancing state power and opening up opportunities for the broader society. Whatever the underlying cause, it was the dynamics of civil society striving for greater democracy that ultimately challenged the authoritarian regime and caused it to crumble, with social movements leading the change (Panjaitan 2001: 22, 51; Culla 1999: 22, 214; interview with Nababan 9 January 2002).

Political reform, or reformasi, is defined by Panjaitan (2001: 51) as a gradual process of change in political structures, mechanisms and culture, in order to create a more democratic political environment that strives for greater freedom, unity, justice and people’s sovereignty. While the state has been inclined to disempower and co-opt civil society, the need for a strong and independent civil society is seen as crucial for Indonesia’s democratisation process.
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The view implies that the state has to share power to a greater degree than it has previously been prepared to do. For example, by making genuine provisions for civil society input in the current debate on constitutional amendment (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002). Power-sharing is not only a necessary precondition for democratisation, it is also crucial in order to rebuild the public trust that has been eroded during the New Order. There has been an insolent tendency by the elite to label people in general, the grassroots, as ignorant or even ‘stupid’ (bodoh) (Hikam 1999a: 7, 71; Dhakidae 2001: 10; interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Power-sharing furthermore implies widespread education of people on all levels of society, in urban and rural areas alike. This is seen as the only way to establish a sustainable democratic culture (Panjaitan 2001: 21–22; interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002; Setyawati 11 January 2002; Sobary 14 January 2002; Irianto 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002). The role of civil society is to check and balance the state’s power to interfere in order to achieve greater popular participation in political life and governance, as well as further the development of people’s initiatives and creativity (Panjaitan 2001: 10, 46; Sulastomo 2001: 63).

In addition, a strong civil leadership that is capable of cooperation and dialogue with all other sections of society, including the military, is seen as vital for the future (Habib 2001: 89). This is all part of Indonesia’s democratic transition and transformation, and in order for this to take place political opportunities are crucial.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND TRANSITION

In discussing democratic transition two important developments in the 1980s deserve special mention. First, conflicts within the ruling elite started to emerge, once again showing the existence of civil society elements within the state framework, as well as the lack of tolerance for any criticism even from the elite.

One of the most prominent examples was the 1980 ‘Statement of Concern’ from a group of 50 persons consisting of retired army officers, religious and secular nationalists and respected elderly statesmen. ‘The Petition of 50’ (Petisi 50), as it became known,
expressed concern about Suharto’s interpretation of Pancasila, which instead of being used to unite the nation had turned into a tool for the elimination of Suharto’s political enemies. For their bravery in speaking up these dissident army thinkers were severely punished by isolation and exclusion from their former peers (Jenkins 1984: 162–163).

Second, popular demand for democratic reforms increased notably, and the social base for opposition widened due to inter-class co-operation between workers, peasants and middle class activists, such as students, often facilitated by non-governmental organisations (Uhlin 1997: 164). The alliance between peasants and students in the 1980s and 1990s proved to be of great importance and occasionally even made headlines internationally, for example in the widely recognised protest against the Kedong Ombo dam project (see Chapter 3).

Robison (1993: 63–64) concludes that the new civil society alliances between workers and peasants, who were traditionally considered to be outside the legitimate social and political arena, and middle class activists constituted much more ‘formidable political forces and much less susceptible to the tactics of co-option or exclusion which have been used so successfully on ICMI and Petisi 50’.5

Referring to the Latin American experience, O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 19 quoted in Liddle 1998: 201) state that ‘there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the regime itself’. Liddle (1998: 202) goes on to outline some possible opportunities for the Indonesian democratisation forces to exploit. One of them was the cleavage within the armed forces between pro-Islamic and secular forces, the so-called ‘green’ faction against the ‘red-and-white’.

Kingsbury (2000: 12), among others, credits the Wiranto-led red and white group for destabilising Suharto and opening up political space for the opposition, which he sees as a necessary precondition for democratisation. As has been mentioned previously, external pressure may play the same role. In addition, a certain amount of ‘regime fatigue’ was noticeable in society (Aspinall 1996a: 238).

Whereas the support for the pro-democracy movement from parts of the military may have been indirect rather than direct, this reluctance to legally restrict or repress political activities is as important as the legal recognition for civil society’s independence, as has been outlined in the introductory chapter. Given the powers
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of the security apparatus, without Wiranto’s silent consent the students would hardly have managed to occupy the parliament in May 1998. The role of the military in the final days of Suharto is further discussed in the next chapter.

Political opportunities having been considered, the popular but sweeping term ‘transition’ warrants a few more comments, in addition to those discussed in Chapter 1.

Budiman (1999b: 42–44), in drawing on Huntington, cites four modes of political transition from an authoritarian to a democratic regime – transformation, replacement, transplacement and intervention – and applies these to the Indonesian situation in late 1998. It clearly illustrates the competing forces at the time, with different political groups favouring a different mode of transition.

Whereas Habibie’s government favoured transformation, the students wanted replacement, in the manner previously demonstrated by people power in the Philippines. The less radical but popular Ciganjur Four (political leaders Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Sukarnoputri, Amien Rais and Sultan Hamengkubuwono) advocated transplacement, while the military preferred a return to the authoritarian regime. Transition through transplacement, involving negotiation between government and opposition, seemed most likely in late 1998 (Budiman 1999b: 44).

Looking back over the recent chaotic years, various stages of replacement, transplacement and transformation can be discerned, without any one of these modes carried out to its full extent. While civil society is still depicted as weak in relation to the state (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002), it was nevertheless massive popular pressure, in addition to external pressure, that forced Habibie to stand down and allow for democratic presidential elections to take place.

Continuing this line of thought and looking at the democratisation process as a whole, Indonesia does not seem to fit any of the generally acknowledged democratisation theories. At a democratisation conference in Jakarta in January 2002, democratisation scholar Olle Törnquist assessed the main theoretical approaches in relation to Indonesia: First, the approach stating that modernisation and economic development automatically lead to democracy. This approach has clearly proved to be flawed in the light of 30 years of New Order modernisation and development politics. Second, the acclaimed role of the middle class in leading democratic change.
has not been realised in Indonesia. Third, like movements in Eastern Europe, Latin America and South Africa, the working class is expected to form a democratisation movement in response to capitalist expansion. While Törnquist saw some potential with this approach, he concluded that this has not yet happened in Indonesia (Kompas 19 January 2002).

THE CONTROL OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Regime control and social cohesion were already breaking down before the economic crisis. The declining power of the regime could be seen from 1996 onwards in growing dissent and increasing demands for democracy, justice, media freedom, equality and a government untainted by corruption, collusion and nepotism (KKN). There was no tolerance for any political protests jeopardising the nation’s development, and the security apparatus harshly repressed any perceived threats to order. Excessive violence and human rights abuses were common and their methods did not stop at murder, kidnappings and torture. But people had had enough. Protesters were not even discouraged by the new demonstration law, UU No. 9/1998 (Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen 2000b: 323; Wagemann 2000: 322).

Besides outright repression, the New Order regime was skilled at using legal, cultural and ideological frameworks to circumscribe civil society. This is further discussed in the case studies. Workers, for example, were only supposed to work, there was little tolerance for any attempts to organise labour (Dhakidae 2001: 14).

The political, social and economic developments of the 1970s and 1980s, in addition to the increasing power of the state brought forth a new kind of organisation, the NGOs or LSM (Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat, community self-help organisations). Whereas the NGOs in the beginning mainly focused on development projects they increasingly became issue-oriented, concerned with human rights and the environment, for example. They targeted the most disadvantaged, promoting self-help projects and empowering people, politically, economically and socially. Their emergence and focus has been interpreted as a social response to, and rejection of, the government’s strictly controlled developmental policies, which
were seen as ‘biased towards the elite’s interests’ (Hikam 1999b: 218–219, 229). Eldridge (1990: 506) states that the introduction of the term ‘LSM’ instead of ‘NGO’ in 1983 was a strategic decision to underscore the non-political nature of the organisations, since ‘non-government’ could be interpreted as ‘anti-government’. However, for some activists the use of LSM is not acceptable anymore, as they are perceived to be charity organisations co-opted by government, without any agenda for empowering people and facilitating change. Instead the use of ONP or ORNOP (Organisasi Non-Pemerintah, NGO) is preferred (interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002).

Another strategic move was to use the organisational form of foundation (yayasan) in order to avoid the negative connotations and tight control of mass organisations brought about by the 1985 law on social organisations, UU Organisasi Kemas rarakatan No. 8/1985, or UU ORMAS. Since a foundation could not have a mass membership it was not perceived as a threat by the government (Culla 1999: 14–15; Eldridge 1990: 510–511; Aspinall 2000: 131–132).

UU ORMAS stipulated that the government policy of development had to be supported and that organisations had to adhere to and contribute to Pancasila, or be considered subversive (Culla 1999: 14–15). All organisations had to accept state guidance and supervision to the extent of admitting government officials on to their boards of directors. If an organisation’s activities were considered subversive, that is threatening to national security and order, they could be dissolved (Wagemann 2000: 306–308).

Social movements belonged to the category of non-formalised organisations (Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk, OTB), seen as increasingly dangerous from 1995 onwards and often victimised as allegedly communist (Honna 2001: 70–71).

It is worth noting that the concept of political opposition is not accommodated in Pancasila ideology. The official view does not allow for conflicting and divisive interests in society, and definitely not between society and state (Aspinall (1996a: 217; Budiman 1999a: 7). Essentially this is rooted in the idea of the integralistic state, which erases the state–society distinction. A contributing fact, according to Lambert (1997a: 9–10), is the character of Javanese
culture with its strong notions of respect that prevent the majority from questioning authorities.

All of these issues have had a profound impact on civil society organisations, in terms of their common lack of a mass base and the dominating perceptions regarding the relationship between civil society and the state. As has been previously noted, Muslim forces have had a greater degree of freedom and cohesion in this respect due to their dual base as a religious and a political movement. Hikam (1999a: 260) nevertheless sees NGOs as the primary driving force in Indonesia’s civil society, since they have the cultural and social roots that would enable them to be the major agents of change and provide a political alternative.

Finally, two events considered to be major watersheds in the political struggle between the regime and civil society need to be mentioned: namely the limited period of liberalisation, keterbukaan, and the crackdown on Megawati’s PDI. The importance of these events is not primarily the state-sanctioned repression but the unprecedented widespread public reaction to it.

THE MUZZLING OF MEDIA AND ‘KETERBUKAAN’

In his Tocquevillian definition of civil society Hikam (1999a: 6, 58) stresses the importance of the Habermasian free public sphere, which includes free media. During the New Order the Indonesian media was expected to support the unity of the nation and the official development policy. In addition, media reports had to ‘reflect the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution’ (Schwarz 1994: 241).

Adequate information and the public airing of controversial thoughts are essential for a society in forming their values. Thus the need for a free mass media to open up public debate and stimulate creative discourse and free dialogue is seen as vital for civil society (Magnis-Suseno 2001: 74; Panjaitan 2001: 3, 7; Hikam 1999a: 6, 62; interview with Sobary 14 January 2002). In addition, Jakarta’s traditional dominance of the information flow needs to be rectified. Increased regional autonomy could open up opportunities for strengthening the role of local media in relation to the centre (Panjaitan 2001: 44–45). This would be of great benefit to civil society in the rural areas and in the regions.
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The period of limited liberalisation, *keterbukaan*, initiated in 1989 as a result of growing social pressure and elite conflict, saw freedom of speech and association flourish. Parallels are often drawn to *glasnost* in the former Soviet Union, again illustrating transnational influence. The social pressure was manifested in the highest level of student activity in a decade, increasing numbers of industrial strikes and farmland disputes, involving both peasants and students, and a more politically outspoken press (Uhlin 1997: 159–160).

The elite conflict was manifested in growing factionalism and increasing disillusion with Suharto within the parliament and military (Uhlin 1997: 159; Aspinall 2000: 67). However, Aspinall (2000: 340–341) argues that while social pressure was an important context, the driving force behind the 1980s liberalisation was elite disunity, not social mobilisation. In stating this, the possibility that elite disunity was itself a symptom of social mobilisation is nevertheless ignored.

The government’s closure in June 1994 of three major influential magazines, *The Editor*, *DeTik* and *Tempo*, which had become increasingly critical of the regime and its cronies, is generally considered to mark the end of *keterbukaan* (Aspinall 2000: 77–78, 340–341; HRW 1995).

Limiting the political space for civil society did not have the intended effect. Instead of intimidating people, the bans underscored the importance of freedom of press and speech and provoked demonstrations from diverse groups, such as journalists, students, lawyers and human rights activists (Uhlin 1997: 162; Stanley 1996: 1).

Heryanto (1996b: 248–253) notes four important developments after the press bans that implied significant gains for civil society. First, continuous mass demonstrations took place nation-wide for the first time in New Order history, also provoking international response. Second, an urban middle class alliance emerged for the first time since the mid-1960s, cutting across religious, ethnic, gender and class divisions. Third, journalists, who had previously refrained from demonstrating, were now protesting against the government and its compulsory journalist union (PWI, Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia). Finally, the government was for the first time defensive and apologetic.
The second major watershed evolved around popular political leader Megawati Sukarnoputri. Her party, PDI, the Indonesian Democratic Party, was formed in 1973 and was considered to be weak and passive until Megawati, who was elected in spite of government manipulation, became chairperson in 1993.

In the lead-up to the 1997 elections a civil society coalition comprising students, intellectuals, NGO activists and journalists, among others, set up an Independent Committee to Monitor the Elections (KIPP) in early 1996 (Uhlin 1997: 153–154; Aspinall 1996b: 1–2). But at a government-backed party congress in June 1996, Megawati, who was seen as a challenge to the regime, was deprived of the PDI leadership. Her ousting has been described as ‘a crass exercise in state-organized political engineering’ (McBeth 1996b: 14).

Once again government intentions misfired. Megawati and her supporters chose to confront the government instead of giving up. Despite the police brutality, demonstrations outside PDI’s headquarters continued for weeks. The pro-democracy activists demanded a ‘restoration of Megawati, the repeal of repressive election laws and an end to corruption and dwi-fungsi’ (Liddle 1998: 212–213; McBeth 1996b: 15).

On 27 July government security forces stormed the PDI headquarters, provoking bloody riots. The radical and outspoken leftist Democratic People’s Party (PRD) was blamed for the violence, denounced as communist and its leaders were arrested on charges of subversion (Liddle 1998: 212–213; Vatikiotis 2000: 28). The military, still seeing the ‘PKI ghost’ behind any democratic movement, once again used the communist scare for repressive measures (Honma 2001: 71–73).

The Megawati/PDI protests have in hindsight been mentioned by many scholars and journalists as marking ‘the beginning of the “long fall” of Suharto’ (Aspinall 2000: 240). Uhlin (1997: 237) believed that a pro-democracy movement was ‘gaining strength’ at the end of the 1990s and argued (1997: 157–158) that Indonesia at the time was only in a pre-transition phase, initiated in the late 1980s. Real transition would only occur after fundamental legal reform had removed repressive laws.
In the next three chapters the contributions of students, labour and women to the development of Indonesia's civil society and the movement for democracy and reform will be assessed.

NOTES

1. The *arus bawah* is often equated with the ignorant grassroots, including workers and urban poor. The New Order regime’s and the middle class’ fear of the *arus bawah* is founded on the belief that it would bring chaos and anarchy if given too much political space (Aspinall 2000: 343; Hikam 1999a: 71). Hikam (1999a: 56, 71) argues that the future democratisation process will be determined by the politics of *arus bawah*.

2. The *Pancasila* (Five Principles) doctrine in the 1945 constitution states ‘a belief in one God, humanitarianism, national unity, consensual democracy and social justice’. In 1985 the government launched a law that all associations had to adhere to and contribute to the development of ‘a *Pancasila* society’ (SarDesai 1997: 275; Sulastomo 2001: 57–58).

3. According to Budiman (1999b: 49) it was widely believed that the military, specifically Prabowo, had master-minded the anti-Chinese riots in May 1998. See also Honna (2001: 85). Anti-Chinese sentiments are rooted in a belief that the ethnic Chinese community, the majority being business people, have benefited more than indigenous people from the government’s development policies (Bourchier 1998: 2).

4. Primordial conflicts (based on religion, ethnicity, race, class) are often referred to as ‘horizontal conflicts’ and seen as destructive for national unity and stability. They are also referred to as SARA (*suku, agama, ras, antar golongan*, meaning matters regarding ethnic, religious and racial relations) (Sumartana 1999: 253). Examples in the post-Suharto era are the bloody clashes between Christians and Muslims in Maluku, and between transmigrants from Madura and Dayaks in Kalimantan (Budiman 2001: 33–34). Ethnicity has also been used by the government as a tool for preventing working-class mobilisation (Hikam 1995: 368–369).

5. ICMI, the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals, was created in 1990 on Suharto’s initiative and headed by B.J. Habibie, then Minister for Research and Technology. ICMI was controversial from the start and its reasons for existence are both religious and political. It was seen by Muslim leaders like Wahid as an attempt to increase vital Muslim support for Suharto (Schwarz 1994: 162–163, 176–188).

6. While Budiman distinguishes between four modes, he states that any democratisation process is a mixture of these modes. *Transformation* implies liberalisation of the political system, with democratisation imposed by a strong state on a weak civil society (e.g. Taiwan in the 1990s). *Replacement*
is when opposition forces impose democratisation from below and force the government to resign (e.g. the Philippines in 1986). Transplacement, or ‘negotiated change’, sees civil society and government as more equal, neither strong enough to take charge over the other (e.g. the Solidarity Union in Poland). Whereas intervention (e.g. the US in Panama) is externally imposed democratisation (Budiman 1999b: 42–43).

7 The salience of this legacy was seen in April 2001 when the Anti-Communist Alliance, AAK (Aliansi Anti Komunis), raided bookstores for leftist books and burned them. AAK is made up of 38 secular and religious organisations and some angkatan ’66 students. According to Magnis-Suseno (2001:71-75) this event shows how leftist thinking is still misunderstood and vilified, and that society lacks the intellectual capacity to evaluate fanatics like the AAK.
PART II

CIVIL SOCIETY IN ACTION
Chapter Three

Students Stealing the Limelight

The Indonesian students have been widely credited in national and international media, as well as in scholarly contributions, with spearheading the movement for reform and democracy that in 1998 brought President Suharto down (Budiman et al. 1999: vi; Uhlin 2002: 173; Aspinall 1999a: 234; Pabottingi 1998: xiii; McBeth and Vatikiotis 1998: 12). Historically this was not the first time students protested against the regime, and they were definitely not alone in voicing their criticism.

The aims and strategies of a wide range of student groups and networks during various time periods are assessed in this chapter, paying particular attention to times when a majority of them joined forces in the lead-up to Suharto’s fall and the post-Suharto period. The emergence and trajectories of what can be labelled a student movement in Indonesia are discussed, specifically focusing on times when it was most at risk from the regime.

Although the term ‘student movement’ is used throughout this chapter, it needs to be emphasised that never at any time did it encompass the whole spectrum of student organisations. Yet, this is the intrinsic nature of social movements that manage to unite widely disparate groups and supporters under one umbrella for a certain cause and a limited time period. While the various groups and individuals support the overarching cause of the movement, they may still retain their own ideologies and separate agendas.

This is particularly evident when dealing with student activism. The very nature of being a student is limited in time and thus
puts additional pressure on student activists to make a difference, to profile themselves and stand out, rather than conform and risk remaining anonymous in the annals of history. Similarly, the limited numbers of students necessitate greater co-operation among various factions of students, as well as with other civil society forces, in order for them to have any impact at all.

The historical context is needed to explain how the students came to be depicted as a moral rather than a political force – although in 1998 they undoubtedly acted as a political force as well – and how students came to be seen as civil society’s major agents of change. The context also helps to explain the government’s ambiguity in its attitude towards students: sometimes tolerating a greater degree of dissent from students than from any other civil society group, such as labour or urban poor; at other times fiercely repressing student activists and banning their activities.

Besides the aims, strategies and demands of various student groups, key issues include networking and alliance building (between student groups, as well as with power holders, other opposition forces and the general public) in addition to the conflicting ambitions of attempting to build a ‘people power’ movement versus preserving the ‘purity’ of the student movement. In this context government strategies and legal restrictions that have circumscribed the actions of students are also discussed.

This study argues that in 1998 a coalition of students, using the privileged position students enjoy in Indonesia, seized the opportunity to act as a catalyst for political change in circumstances that were favourable to radical change, and that their actions were, if not supported then at least not resisted, by some important power holders without whose indirect support the students would never have managed to mobilise collectively as they did.

The highlights of student mobilisation having been discussed, the reasons for the shortcomings of the student-led democracy movement in achieving political and social change in the post-Suharto period need to be discussed as well. This chapter concludes that the great internal diversity of what has been termed ‘a student movement’ contributed to its fragmentation over different issues once Suharto was gone and that this, in the eyes of the majority of the population, was seen as the major indicator of a severe weakening of the democracy movement. However, this ebb and flow of activity constitutes the nature of social movements that
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generally do not aspire to take over political power and can actually be a strength in a repressive climate.

THE EMERGENCE OF A STUDENT MOVEMENT

In the early twentieth century education was limited to a privileged few, yet youth, education and nationalism were the keywords for the early social movements in Indonesia, such as Young Indonesia and Young Muslim League (Anderson 2001: 11). Important milestones for the early generations of students were the first modern Javanese organisation, Budi Utomo, founded in 1908, and the 1928 Youth Pledge. The latter was a declaration by students and youth that they would overcome ethnic differences and build an independent united nation by realising the three principles of one nation, one country and one language, Bahasa Indonesia. Many of Indonesia’s young emerging leaders, including Sukarno, took an active part in this historical event that would foster national cohesion (Vatikiotis and Schwarz 1998: 21; Ricklefs 1993: 166; The Jakarta Post 29 October 2001).

In discussing student dissent during various time periods, the most important student generations (angkatan) are generally referred to as angkatan 1928, angkatan ’66 and so forth. McRae (2001: 1) notes that the various generational movements vary significantly in character and that student dissent also existed in between the more famous generations, although it was less prominent.

It is worth noting that students and intellectuals were instrumental in establishing societal structures that would channel broader youth dissent into the nationalist struggle for independence decades before independence was obtained. This served to prepare the ground for the future position of students in Indonesia’s civil society.

In the newly independent nation, Indonesian students would not play any prominent political role until the mid-1960s, when they contributed to the fall of the nation’s first president. While nationalism and decolonisation were the main driving forces for students in the 1940s, students in the 1950s were concerned with finding modes for political representation. In practice this meant that in the late 1940s some students, for example, joined the student militia in the protracted struggle for independence (The Jakarta Post 15 December 2001). By contrast, in the 1950s the existing student organisations linked up with political parties that had similar goals (McRae 2001: 3). Parallels can be drawn with the development of labour
unions in the 1950s, and to the links between student organisations and various political parties in the 1990s. Far from being any social movement, students thus became part of mainstream institutions in the 1950s.

Students as a movement entered the political scene in 1965–66, when unprecedented mass demonstrations against communism and Sukarno took place. The two major actors were the student organisations KAMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia), consisting of youth from the Partai Serikat Islam (PSI) and Islamic and Catholic students, and KAPPI (Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia) with an Islamic core of Masyumi and PSI supporters (McRae 2001: 3; Ricklefs 1993: 287). Claiming to speak on behalf of the people, the students demanded the dissolution of the Communist Party (PKI) and the Cabinet of Ministers, in addition to lower prices on basic commodities. These demands became known as Tritura (Tri Tuntutan Rakyat, the three demands of the people) (Nusantara et al. 1998: 5; McRae 2001: 3).

The broader social, political and economic context that fostered people’s frustrations in the late 1950s and early 1960s has been outlined in the previous chapter. From the mid-1960s onwards Nusantara et al. (1998: 4–6) refer to the widespread protests as a mass-movement, in which the students played a vital role in bringing together women’s, peasants’ and workers’ organisations. In this context the controversial role of the Armed Forces should not be forgotten.

Strategic Links and Outcomes

In the 1950s and early 1960s ABRI was split internally, along left- or right-wing ideological divisions and along territorial lines, both of which caused internal conflict (Liddle 1998: 202–203). During the 1965–66 protests parts of the army that were decidedly anti-communist supported the major student organisations, an occurrence which has provoked speculation about the nature of the student–military relationship. Debate continues as to whether it was purely a coinciding of mutual interests, or whether the army in fact exploited the students (McRae 2001: 3; Budiman 1999b: 45; interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Whatever the true nature of their relationship was, the actions of the angkatan ’66 students resulted in three significant outcomes:
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first, Sukarno was forced to sign over his presidential authority to Suharto in early 1966 in order to prevent further anarchy. Second, students unwittingly assisted the formation of the New Order through distributing a certain ideology and political culture via demonstrations and media. Third, the foundation for students to be seen as a moral force, with political impact, was established (McRae 2001: 3; Ricklefs 1993: 289). The students were instrumental in uniting various groups and seizing the political opportunity to channel the anti-communist crusade into an anti-Sukarno movement, which contributed to Sukarno’s loss of power after the 1965 coup (Aspinall 1999a: 212).

It is important to note that not everyone agrees with this glorified ‘myth’ about the angkatan ’66. Besides speculation about the army–student relationship, critics argue that the student movement was nothing more than an emotional and ornamental figurehead. Once the cabinet had been reshuffled, the PKI destroyed and the price rises brought under control, the very reasons for the student movement ceased to exist (Nusantara et al. 1998: 19). However, by that time the students had provided the popular legitimacy needed at this critical moment for Suharto and ABRI to take power (Aspinall 1999a: 212; Heryanto 1996a: 3).

There is great resemblance between the criticism voiced against the angkatan ’66 and the criticism launched against the students after May 1998. Yet, due to their involvement in 1965–66, students have been depicted as the major agents of social change in Indonesia ever since, and have occupied a glorified position in the New Order history books. It needs to be acknowledged that they could not have done this without support from the broader civil society, as well as from influential elements within the military. The military manipulation of students served to incorporate the students into mainstream institutions, essentially furthering the military agenda, just as the 1950s close relationship with political parties in fact distanced students from any real social movement activity.

NEW ORDER LIMITATIONS ON STUDENT ACTIVISM

The New Order regime’s control of civil society, its increasing repression and corporatism have been discussed in Chapter 2. While the political space in general was limited, there were certainly
ebbs and flows in government tolerance during these three decades. Students managed to seize the opportunity to mobilise at various times, particularly during the 1970s and 1990s.

Important legal limitations on students were introduced in 1978 (NKK/BKK), and on civil society in 1971 (‘floating mass’) and 1985 (UU ORMAS). As has been previously discussed, the end of the 1980s saw a brief period of liberalisation (keterbukaan), which provided incentives and opportunities for the students to join forces with various civil society organisations in a bid for democratisation. In the following sections the character of New Order opposition, mobilisation and demands are discussed, as well as the concept of ‘tolerated opposition’.

Character of Opposition

The character of opposition varied widely over time. A culture of avoiding chaos marked 1970s opposition, with dissent characterised by ‘small but open groups, lengthy petitions and memoranda, without mobilisation, mass membership or underground methods’ (Aspinall 2000: 37–38). Youth activities in general were organised and monitored through the state-sponsored corporatist youth organisation KNPI, Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia (Robison 1993: 65).

In defending the inertia of civil society, scholars like former student activist Arief Budiman (in Aspinall 1996a: 223, 2000: 37) argue that students took the stance of ‘a moral force seeking to correct government rather than a political force seeking to overthrow’ it. Others point to the 1971 ‘floating mass’ doctrine that outlawed any political community activities, thus effectively suppressing people’s political engagement and pacifying them (Uhlin 1997: 55).

The ‘floating mass’ doctrine and the high level of control during the New Order, exercised from the top down to the village level, has undoubtedly had a profound impact on the ways of thinking and the actions of a whole generation of Indonesians. This is why activists and scholars in the post-Suharto era emphasise the need for a complete change in mindset before the potential of civil society can be fully realised (see Chapter 6).

During the 1980s the majority of politically active students joined study groups or NGOs, both considered non-radical and thus harmless by the regime, in order to be able to engage in advocacy work (McRae 2001: 4). Some regenerating changes took place
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within the government system, particularly in Golkar, when in 1983 some influential civilian politicians and businessmen were included. Among them were former angkatan ‘66 student activists Sarwono Kusumaatmadja and Rachma Witoelar (Robison 1993: 65). Kusumaatmadja has held several ministerial posts since.

Referring to Lane (1989), Robison (1993: 63) notes that the difference between the student movements of the 1970s and 1980s was in terms of students’ desire to rid the regime of irregularities, such as corruption, in the 1970s versus the 1980s realisation that irregularities were an inherent part of the system. Aspinall (2000: 40) furthermore identifies an attitudinal change among dissidents that indicated a change towards embracing broader democratisation efforts, instead of only focusing on ‘regularisation’, or correcting the government.

While there was some support for student protests from parts of the political elite and ABRI in the 1980s, McRae (2001: 5) nevertheless concludes that after a decade of repression scarred activists were unable to unite around issues and co-ordinate an efficient movement. A former student activist sees this as the most disturbing legacy of the New Order (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Once again attention is drawn to people’s mindset when it comes to changing the status quo; and not only the mindset of the general public, but also of activists and dissidents clearly in opposition to the regime. This merely shows that the extent and impact of the New Order manipulation of society cannot be emphasised enough. The prevailing inertia was to change drastically in the 1990s, which saw a high level of political engagement from students and other dissidents.

The 1990s student movement has been covered in-depth elsewhere (see Aspinall 1999a, 2000: 160–195; McRae 2001; Nusantara et al. 1998). However, two significant incidents deserve to be mentioned, as they shaped the character of the opposition in the lead-up to Suharto’s fall. The first is the period of limited openness, keterbukaan, which was abruptly ended in 1994. The second is the crackdown on Megawati Sukarnoputri and her party PDI in mid-1996.

Their significance lies not so much in the government’s repressive actions as in the unprecedented public reaction to the crackdowns. In essence they served to pave the way for social movement mobilisation, in the sense that the harshness of the regime ultimately undermined
its legitimacy, while it enhanced the morality of the students and mobilised crucial public support for the cause of democratisation.

Despite a higher level of activity, Aspinall (2000: 194–195) states that the student movement during *keterbukaan* was less united, but perhaps more significant, than in the previous decade. Besides being more diverse, activating other social groups and finding new forms of political action, political space was significantly expanded with public protests back on the agenda. Public protests had not been a normal feature of Indonesian political life for decades.

Yet, while Aspinall (1999a: 214) contends that the students were the key figures in most important mass-based political campaigns in the 1990s, they were nevertheless dismissed as ‘bourgeois brats’ by earlier generations of student activists. Their main criticism concerned students giving priority to career interests and ‘pragmatic politics’ instead of criticising the regime (Robison 1993: 61). Critical comments like these warrant a closer look at the issues that mobilised students during the New Order and the demands voiced by the various student generations.

**Mobilisation and Demands**

Besides minor expressions of increasing disillusion with the government, two major clashes between students and security forces challenged the New Order in the 1970s. The first, in 1973–74, culminated in the riots known as Malari (*Malapetaka Limabelas Januari*, the disaster of 15 January), while the second occurred in 1977–78. Both protest movements criticised the government for neglecting the underprivileged and for allowing corruption, not only in government but also in business, accusing the government of selling Indonesian assets to foreign businessmen (Aspinall 1996a: 219). Interestingly enough, these issues are almost identical to the concerns that triggered protests in 2002 (see Appendix).

In 1974 massive demonstrations commemorated the 1966 Tritura demands, ending in violent confrontations with the Japan-ese PM Tanaka that left hundreds injured (Nusantara et al. 1998: 7–9). Since student representatives had met with Suharto just days before to explain that they were not anti-government, but saw their role as checking and balancing government actions, many felt that students became a scapegoat for the clashes. One group considered to have a vested interest in this was ABRI (Nusantara et al 1998: 10–11, 21).
In 1977 student protests began ahead of the 1977 presidential elections and the 1978 general session of the parliament. In addition to concerns about corruption and social justice, demands focused on political freedom and development strategies. Students were also campaigning against a re-election of Suharto. Disillusion with their former military allies was visible in demands like ‘Return ABRI to the people!’ (McRae 2001: 4; Nusantara et al. 1998: 11–14; interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Compared to earlier movements, *angkatan ‘77/78* was ‘more explicitly anti-government, anti-military and anti-Suharto’. The students’ objectives were to achieve a ‘moral renewal’ of the corrupt New Order regime, a separation of legislative and executive powers, limited presidential terms, and to ensure a lawful society, or *negara hukum* (Aspinall 2000: 38, 40).

Although opposition in 1977–78 was more widespread, with students and other middle class dissidents taking to the streets with workers and peasants, this co-operation was not co-ordinated in any way. The support from above was also limited, as there were few conflicts among the ruling elite at the time (Uhlin 1997: 164).

A lack of inter-class alliances among organised and non-organised civil society representatives, in addition to the absence of internal conflicts among the elite, provides some explanation for the limited success of the *angkatan ‘77/78* in achieving their demands. Nonetheless, the 1970s exposed some true social movement activity, with the voicing of genuine social criticism from various civil society groups.

*Reaching Beyond Campus*

While students generally were campus based, there were some officially recognised student organisations that extended beyond the limits of campus, religion or ideology. One of the most well known was the 1972 Cipayung group, consisting of five cross-campus student organisations that together represented an impressive range of religious and political affiliations (Aspinall 1999a: 214; McRae 2000: 6). In the officially sanctioned University student councils students possessed a useful base for organising nationwide dissent, making them one of the few groups besides religious movements that had a relatively independent institutional base. They did not retain this platform for long. When the media, students and other
dissidents were targeted after the 1978 protests, student councils were banned (Aspinall 1996a: 223–225).

In flexing their muscles, the students had managed to put themselves in the spotlight. After the 1974 and 1978 challenges the government deemed it necessary to depoliticise and co-opt the student movement by limiting student bargaining power on and off campus, as well as limiting the maximum study time in order to force students back to their desks. The new regulations were known as NKK/BKK (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002). NKK (Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus) implied a policy of normalising campus life, while BKK (Badan Koordinasi Kemahasiswaan) stood for the student co-ordination bodies that replaced the student councils. Together they effectively banned political student activities (McRae 2001: 4).

The repressive conditions of the 1980s eventually made students venture outside the campus to meet workers, peasants and the urban poor, and engage in grassroots’ social problems. Because of their intellectual background, the students defined their position as ‘organising the masses’ (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002). The language used reveals how the students visualised themselves on some moral highground in relation to the ignorant masses that needed to be organised. This not only caused grievances and inter-class communication problems in the immediate future, in the post-Suharto era this attitude among students is still highlighted as a serious problem by other groups of activists (interviews with Setyawati and LBH APIK 11 January 2002. See also Chapter 6).

Nevertheless, the co-operation between students and peasants was an important phenomenon, as it demonstrated an increasing interest in issues that concerned a broader section of society, thereby furthering interaction across class-based and urban–rural boundaries. The 1980s also saw the emergence of new, more radical NGOs that focused on the environment, feminism and human rights. One highly publicised case where students and NGO activists were involved together with peasants was the 1989 protests against displacement of rural farmers at a proposed dam site in Kedong Ombo (see Aditjondro 1998). The Kedong Ombo protests signalled the beginning of a new radical wave of public mass action and protests that lasted throughout the 1990s (Lane 1999a: 245).
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Tolerated Opposition, Issues and Strategies

The issues that, according to Aspinall (1996a: 217–218), motivated opposition in the 1970s and that have remained significant concerned two main areas, namely greater social justice and democracy, including human rights and legal reform. However, Uhlin (1997: 238) contests this view and argues that the interest in promoting democracy was generally very limited among the angkatan ’66 and the activists of the early 1970s.

Considering the students’ relative isolation from society and the general lack of inter-class alliances, Uhlin’s notion seems plausible. Students’ efforts at the time could possibly be better described in terms of attempts at deregularisation and limited reform rather than broader democratisation. Nevertheless, Aspinall rightly identifies social justice as one of the drivers of student activism. With the imminent emergence of a new breed of NGOs, and increasing transnational links, democracy issues were soon to feature prominently on the agenda as well.

Due to their historical role in 1966, the political space available for students was much greater than for any other civil society group (Aspinall 2000: 36). In this aspect Indonesian students were no exception, as students in most countries are privileged in having a ‘political licence to break the official rules’, although the boundaries are seldom clearly delineated (Heryanto 1996a: 2). Heryanto (1996a: 2) outlines the ‘sacred’ role of intellectuals, which ‘finds an ideal expression in students as a social group’, since:

Their youth gives them an air of innocence. Their position outside the world, of work, political parties or state bureaucracies makes them appear free of considerations of material gain. Their educational experience and their high sounding pronouncements make them look intelligent. They seem to be very courageous in pursuit of public interests because they are reported in the press as suffering the consequences of opposition to the violence of the state machinery.

Although the boundaries were not clearly defined, regime critics had to instinctively know the limitations of what Aspinall (2000: 36) calls ‘the dissident niche’. It determined what issues could be publicly debated and what actions could be undertaken without...
being subject to repression. Exercising this self-limiting radicalism, so vital for the survival of social movements, meant that students became a form of tolerated opposition.

The double-edged nature of this ‘political licence’ is neatly summed up by Heryanto (1996a: 3), who states that because of the weakness and fragmentation of other social forces, including labour unions, the media and political parties, the students in New Order Indonesia had an influential position. However, while the students exploited the political licence given to them, they were themselves also exploited. On the one hand, the government allowed public criticism by granting students some freedom of speech. On the other hand, the platform provided was very limited and easily controlled. Furthermore, students only had this space as long as ‘the movement remains within apolitical limits, and it functions to isolate student activists from the society around them’ (Heryanto 1996a: 3). Essentially, the political licence allowed for moral criticism in more general terms, rather than specific political or personal criticism of members of the government.

Despite the actions of 1974 and 1977–78, the students were deceived and pacified by the official story glorifying their moral courage, and were thus content to keep a low profile. The backlash in the form of a rejection of this glorified past by a new generation of radical students did not come until the late 1980s (Heryanto 1996a: 3–4; interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Student-led mass protests continued during the early and mid-1990s on a wide range of issues, such as demonstrations against the state lottery, which united students with the Muslim community, who based their protests on religion and morality. The enduring protests eventually resulted in the government abandoning the lottery (Heryanto 1996b: 258–259). Nation-wide student protests also commemorated the death of three students in Ujung Pandang in April 1996. The students, protesting against rising public transport costs, were killed on campus by the military. The incident is known as Amarah (April Makassar Berdarah, Bloody April in Makassar). These protests gained vital support from the broader society (McBeth 1996a: 22; McRae 2001: 54).

Whereas it is important for social movements to find supporters and sympathisers for their cause among the general public, this is not an easy task. Not only do repressive regimes attempt to restrict the interface between dissidents and the general public;
different groups and issues also call for different strategies, some of which may have negative effects when it comes to attracting public support. An example of the problems in accommodating various social movement tactics can be seen in the emergence of the radical left-wing party PRD.

PRD, the People’s Democratic Party, was originally a student NGO that in 1994 transformed itself into an illegal political party. It still has its own affiliated student body in SMID (Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi, Indonesian Student Solidarity for Democracy), established in 1992 and one of the most radical student organisations. The party was the first political organisation to openly declare it opposed Suharto’s New Order and is known for actively organising workers and peasants. Before the 1996 and 1999 elections PRD sided with Megawati’s PDI, which led to ABRI’s hard-line ‘Crush the PRD/Mega’ campaign (Vatikiotis 2000: 28–29; Hearman 1996: 1–3; Honna 2001: 71,75).

The harsh measures against PRD and its supporters can be explained in terms of PRD’s leftist ideology, its links with the arus bawah and its revolutionary tactics, which combined to make PRD a substantial threat in the eyes of the military. While it was a severe blow to the fledgling pro-democracy movement, the crackdown nevertheless exposed that there was widespread support for Megawati beyond Jakarta and Java. Like her father and his PNI before her, Megawati also enjoyed a strong following in Bali. In 1993–94 Bali experienced the greatest increase in public protest and debate since the 1960s. The Bali protests have been described as some of the most united and sustained in all of Indonesia at the time, and the Balinese continued to challenge the New Order regime until it fell (Suasta and Connor 1999: 92–94; Aditjondro 2001; interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

In this context it is worth noting that revolutionary organisations can undermine the moral, value-laden and inclusive nature of social movements and adversely affect their ability to mobilise large numbers of people (Pakulski 1991: 41–42). This is particularly true in a society with an authoritarian past, where a deeply entrenched barrier of caution and submission to the authorities has to be overcome first. Revolutionary organisations can furthermore contribute to the fragmentation of social movements, which is particularly evident in the case of the labour movement (see Chapter 4).
The Fall of Suharto

Whereas the reasons for Suharto’s downfall can not be sought in internal explanations alone, elite conflicts nevertheless combined with societal pressure to increasingly challenge the New Order regime. The events of May 1998 have been extensively covered elsewhere, including in international media reports, and will therefore only be mentioned briefly here (see Aspinall 1999a, 2000; McRae 2001; Lane 1999a).

This section focuses on student strategies, divisions and alliances, which were crucial to the fall of Suharto. While civil society was far from united and the student movement itself was internally divided, students nevertheless managed to successfully exploit the political opportunities available and were seen as the undisputed leaders for the pro-democracy movement that brought Suharto down.

Political Opportunities, Divisions and Demands

The political opportunities of 1998 have been previously discussed. They included splits within the army and elite, in addition to disputes based on religion and regionalism. A certain amount of ‘regime fatigue’ also existed. A new generation, who had not been involved in the New Order’s ascendancy to power, demanded renewed justification for the regime’s existence and policies (Aspinall 1996a: 238). This climate also served to radicalise student dissent. However, there were divisions within the student movement that need to be outlined before proceeding further.

There are various ways of structuring the array of organisations, networks and study groups that made up the student movement in the 1990s. While Aspinall (1999a: 218) distinguishes among student senates, Islamic students, and activists/informal groups, McRae (2001: 15–17) divides students into formal (on-campus) organisations, informal (single campus) activist groups and multi-campus/city level organs. These various student groups and organs existed in provinces outside Java as well. It is worth noting that a university may have several campuses with several different kinds of student groups, none of which can be said to fully represent the university.
Students Stealing the Limelight

A former student activist belonging to KB-UI (Keluarga Besar Universitas Indonesia) chose to distinguish between off- or on-campus, non-formal and formal student organisations, with student senates and executive student bodies (BEM) being the only formal on-campus organisations. In addition, he used the typology of LIPI researcher Hermawan Sulistijo, who distinguishes between students who criticise the government and want to reform it, without necessarily wanting rapid, total change, and radical students who want to transform every aspect of the regime, the power holders and the structure (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

The difficulty in assessing student organisations is exacerbated by the fact that they remain fluid constellations. McRae (2001: 16) states that KB-UI, the Extended Family of the University of Indonesia, consisted of five faculty-level student senates, i.e. clearly formal organisations, liaising with informal and other campus organisations, whereas Hidayat (interview 15 January 2002) would not describe KB-UI as either formal or on campus. After Suharto's resignation KB-UI transformed itself into 'an alliance of 12 mass-based informal organs' (McRae 2001: 29).

Most scholars avoid making any ideological distinctions between student groups. Although these exist, as the SMID–PRD connection or the undisputedly Islamic KAMMI demonstrates, McRae (2001: 18–19) contends that ideological distinctions ‘manifested themselves in the structure, actions and tactics of the organs, rather than the mass support that these organs could attract’. Moreover, most organisations did not have a mass membership, due to the New Order's strict societal control, and the loyalties of their supporters often overlapped.

The informal campus organisations consisted of the student press, action committees or loose strategic alliances, whereas the multi-campus coalitions emerged for three reasons: to provide new, objective vehicles for mobilisation, to co-ordinate activism and to activate smaller, passive campuses. The two largest multi-campus fronts in Jakarta were the Jakarta Student Senate Communication Forum (FKSMJ) and the City Forum (Forkot); the latter was formed after the Trisakti shootings and the May riots, uniting activists from 14 campuses. By the end of June 1998 Forkot encompassed 49 campuses (McRae 2001: 17–18; Lane 1999a: 242).

There were also regional distinctions. Student protests in Java were more concerned with urban issues than in Bali, where local
nationalism and environmental awareness was strong. In Bali students’ ongoing active participation in their local communities virtually implied that any critique of the system or leadership had to be made in a community context (interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002). Aditjondro nevertheless argues that the student movement in Bali was one of the most radical. The protests of Balinese students forced the provincial parliament to close down well before the parliamentary occupation in Jakarta. Students furthermore brought the provincial governor to justice over corruption allegations and launched a promising anti-corruption movement (Aditjondro 2001). The student movement in Ujung Pandang, Sulawesi, differed from the Javanese movement in its more moderate attitude towards ABRI, the existence of greater internal splits and conflicts, and strong ethnic and cultural influences within the movement (McRae 2001: 54–55).

McRae (2001: 9–11) identifies three factors that triggered student mobilisation in early 1998: the economic crisis and the subsequent price rises, the General Session of the Parliament and the students’ collective identity, which challenged other students to mobilise. All of these helped portray the students as a more heterogenous movement than it actually was. Students’ demands generally centred on ending KKN and repression, as well as lowering prices, eventually evolving into a call for Suharto to resign (Elliott 1998: 1; Aspinall 1999a: 215).

The specific demands varied. More moderate groups, such as student senates and larger Islamic groups, were in favour of a 1970s return of ABRI to the people, while more radical groups, PRD associates among others, demanded Suharto’s resignation, abolition of dwifungsi and a fundamental restructuring of government (Aspinall 2000: 305).

Indonesians in general thought students’ demands for Suharto’s resignation was their ultimate goal and labelled their other differing demands ‘reformasi’, without specifying the meaning of reform (McRae 2001: 20). In reality, however, Suharto’s resignation was never the final goal, but students did not have a clear, united strategy of how to pursue the democratisation struggle after Suharto’s resignation. Thus, Suharto’s name became a convenient tool in the reformasi struggle (McRae 2001: 21–22, 41; interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).
One strategy of social movements is to find collective action frames in the form of familiar symbols that will serve to mobilise people while disregarding any questions concerning strategy and tactics (Tarrow 1994: 118–122; Pakulski 1991: 35–36). The students were undoubtedly successful in this. Since 1996 grassroots’ mobilisation had posed a threat to the political leadership, while it had created greater awareness among people. Paraphrasing Lane (1999a: 242), the clear demands of the students at the time served to channel general mass disillusion in a coherent political direction.

The May 1998 events

By May 1998 Indonesia saw nation-wide protests on student campuses on a daily basis. The tragedy at Trisakti University on 12 May 1998 was a turning point, when among 10,000 protesters four students were killed and became heroes of reformasi. The violent riots, with widespread looting and burning, that followed on 13–15 May have been described as ‘amuk massa’, mass action beyond student participation. Once again the army, more specifically Prabowo, was suspected of engineering the riots with the help of hired thugs (Honna 2001: 85; Santoso 1998: 2).

While the amuk massa, ABRI’s manipulation and the subsequent ethnic rapes were not part of any social movement activity, but rather an attempt at undermining the morality of student protests, Trisakti nevertheless gave the opposition its vital momentum. On 18 May the occupation of the parliament building began, culminating in the resignation of Suharto on 21 May (Nusantara et al. 1998: 49–57; Uhlin 2002: 183; McRae 2001: 13–15). It is estimated that between 400 and 1,200 persons died in the May riots, while hundreds of Chinese women were raped. The May Rapes, as they are commonly referred to, provoked an unprecedented and united condemnation from Indonesian women (see Chapter 5).

Strategic Alliances

In this context it is vital to point out that parts of the army, particularly the Wiranto faction, were invaluable to the pro-democracy movement. While there was no formal alliance, the students would not have managed to occupy the parliamentary building without the indirect support and protection of the military, and the occupants
would certainly have been targeted by the Prabowo faction. Yet, this did not happen (Aspinall 2000: 316–319; McBeth et al. 1998: 17). Aspinall (2000: 317) sees Wiranto’s blocking of a presidential declaration of martial law in May 1998 as ABRI’s most important contribution.

The students were also supported by other civil society groups and enjoyed widespread public sympathy, as evidenced in the 20 May mass demonstration in Yogyakarta that attracted around one million people (McRae 2001: 19), as well as the support given to the students by women’s organisations and local businessmen during the parliamentary occupation (Nusantara et al. 1998: 59; Mc Beth et al. 1998: 16).

Conflicts between various activists and organisations nevertheless continuously existed, mainly because the majority of protesters did not belong to any organisation at all (McRae 2001: 19). What was perceived as elite thinking among students also ruined many potential alliances; labour for example was largely and deliberately excluded (see Chapter 4).

**Strategies – ‘Purity’ and Violence**

The strategic disputes were whether to mobilise and confront the government, or to choose more subdued forms of action. In 1998 a crucial strategic question concerned whether to build a mass base through alliances with other social and political forces, like the controversial but very active PRD, or maintain the ‘purity’ of the student movement (Aspinall 1999a: 214). These issues were closely related to the idea of a moral versus a political movement, and the use of violence.

While some students interpreted the morality question as a need to focus on purely moral issues, others saw possibilities for broader political engagement, as long as the ‘moral identity’ of the movement was kept intact. For example, in order to mobilise Muslim students, socio-economic or political issues were often presented in religious terms (Liddle 1998: 207). McRae (2001: 34–35), on the other hand, picks up on the morality in the students’ aims and methods and argues that the student movement, unlike a political movement, did not want to seize power, but to voice their ‘moral concern’ and ideally use ‘moral methods’ to achieve this.
The ideas about ‘morality’ and ‘purity’ are closely linked. For some students this meant that alliances with non-student forces were unacceptable (Hadiz 1999: 111–112). In the 1998 parliamentary occupation students wore jackets and other student identification that clearly set them apart, while preventing non-students from joining. This strategy was also exemplified in the students’ general rejection of co-operation with the lower classes, the military or elite (Aspinall 2000: 306–307, 314). For various reasons students thus consciously isolated themselves.

According to Hadiz (1999: 112) this clearly shows how the current generation is influenced by the ‘floating mass’ policy, fearing that mass movements involving the urban poor could lead to chaotic riots, which in turn would justify a crackdown by security forces and the imposition of martial law. This would then alienate middle class activists and supporters who were known to fear the arus bawah and anarchic mass politics (Aspinall 2000: 342–343; Djalal 2001: 27). On the other hand, this conscious isolation could also be seen as a strategy to avoid manipulation by the government or military.

Civil society was further manipulated by the phenomenon of paid demonstrators that essentially undermined the morality of the pro-democracy movement in the eyes of the people.

The problem is education for the uneducated people. They are mostly used by the elite for demonstrations, by paying [them] let’s say 10,000 or 5,000 [rupiah] and they are on the street. Just yelling, assaulting, but not understanding what they are doing. (Interview with Irianto 14 January 2002)

The most radical and militant students nevertheless wanted to forge alliances with the lower classes and build a Philippines-inspired ‘people power’ movement. A people power movement meant that the students had to leave the campus and take to the streets, something they had been reluctant to do until May 1998 (Aspinall 2000: 306–307).

Besides demonstrations there were other innovative forms of student dissent, such as printed leaflets, propaganda and ‘action media’, political banners and graffiti, discussion groups and free speech forums (nimar bebas), marches through the city, occupation of
official buildings, hunger strikes and creative street art and theatre performances (McRae 2001: 19–20; interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

In this context the issue of using violent or non-violent tactics is an important distinction to make. For a moral movement non-violence is crucial. The primary driving force and power of social movements, besides their mass commitment, is their morality and sense of mission, not the attainment of political power and economic justice (Pakulski 1991: 209).

Violence on both sides escalated dramatically during 1998 and different organisations took different stands on this issue. Forkot, for example, saw violence as self-defence, provoked by police violence. Nonetheless, Forkot managed to alienate local communities and student groups, who saw their Molotov cocktail and stone throwing as that of a common protest group, not a force for greater social and political change (Djalal 2001: 27).

The radical SMID, supported by PRD, openly approved of violence (Vatikiotis 2000: 28), whereas a coalition like FAMRED was established in September 1998 on the very principles of being a non-partisan ‘moral force’ and ‘actively non-violent’ (FAMRED 2000). A former Balinese student leader was keen to stress that peaceful, constructive criticism of both government and society is crucial for building greater awareness and trust. Criticism does not necessarily have to be delivered through demonstrations; it can also be conveyed through the strategic use of media and art. "This is exactly what is most important in democratisation – that it is not destructive, but builds a new world through the use of criticism that is constructive" (interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

Pro-violence activists justified violence and social riots in several ways. They saw violence as a tool to politically educate and radicalise the masses, as a necessary part of processes of change, as self-defence, or to be used simply because violence had already been institutionalised by the state. Others again feared that violence would only provoke more violence (McRae 2001: 38–39).

Violence is a dangerous tool, since it also justifies repression of civil society. Nevertheless, violence was one factor identified by McRae (2001: 25) as contributing to the success of the pro-democracy movement, when instead of fear, state-sanctioned violence only created widespread outrage while at the same time there was no end to the economic crisis and no real reforms in sight.
Students Stealing the Limelight

It is important to bear in mind that whereas state repression can encourage collective action, violence also gives authorities a mandate for oppression. In addition, violence generally diminishes the number of sympathisers. The potential of non-violent protests is in fact more powerful, because ‘they pose the possibility of violence without giving police or authorities an excuse for repression’ (Tarrow 1994: 92, 102–104, 109).

The Role of the Media and the Internet

The role of the media and the Internet for the pro-democracy movement’s success has to be addressed, since students were skilled at utilising both strategically. Although the 1994 media bans were implemented to discourage outspoken journalists and publishers, they instead led to the emergence of a number of alternative media and modes of communication. Among these publications without formal permit were student papers and NGO bulletins. Operating outside the boundaries of state censorship, alternative media contributed to the democratisation process by expanding political space and raising awareness about censored issues, such as the presidential succession, which was otherwise not publicly discussed (Stanley 1996: 1–3; interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

Heryanto (1996b: 250–251) highlights the close relationship between Indonesian student activists and journalists, many of whom are former activists. Until June 1994 journalists mainly expressed ‘their grievances by proxy’, through interviews with key figures, rather than becoming personally engaged. New Order repression also forced journalists to become skilled in using self-censorship, on top of the existing official censorship (Maher 2000: 43–44; Schwarz 1994: 240).

Despite censorship and their limited numbers – Uhlin (1997: 106) estimated the number of students to be equivalent to 0.6 per cent of the Indonesian population and only a fraction of these are activists – student protests received wide national and international publicity in 1998, and thus demonstrated their ability to use the media strategically for their purposes.

While television and print media remained heavily censored throughout the period, and telephones were bugged by the police, advanced technology greatly assisted in co-ordinating and mobilising the opposition, particularly students. Mobile phones, e-mails, web-
sites and Internet discussion groups were not easily controlled and became important tools in the 1998 mobilisation. This partly explains how crucial information and protests could quickly spread around Indonesia (Thoenes 1998: 1–2; GILC 1998: 2; Lintner and Craddock 1998: 1). ABRI established a special Internet intelligence unit in the mid-1990s with the task of monitoring anti-government activity, but the Internet was one of the few areas that were beyond the regime’s control (Honna 2001: 70).

Part of the student movement was mostly concerned with networking through the use of media. One example is Pijar, an NGO dedicated to building student networks, that produced a controversial website and news bulletin for which its chief editor, Tri Agus Susanto, was jailed in the mid-1990s (Stanley 1996: 2; Thoenes 1998: 2). In the post-Suharto era the media is one area that has undergone tremendous transformation. Long-time ABC correspondent Michael Maher (2000: 256) claims that the freedom of debate under President Wahid transformed Indonesia into one of the most open societies in Asia.

Transnational Links and Influences

The Internet also furthered information exchange with the outside world. The transnational links with Indonesian exiles, support groups and media outside Indonesia helped in keeping up the spirit of the activists, and added to the pressure on the regime (Uhlin 2002: 184; Heryanto 1996b: 245; GILC 1998: 2).

In comparing the student movement of the 1990s with previous movements, Heryanto (1996a: 4) notes that it had gained a new political and intellectual maturity, partly because of the influence of discourses from abroad, such as dependency and feminist theories, Islamic modernism and neo-Marxian structuralism. Indonesian students were also influenced by the Philippine and South Korean socialist and Maoist discourses (Aspinall 2000: 189–191).

This is an important part of the self-reflexivity of contemporary social movements: the capability to learn not only from their past experiences but also from other social movements, both nationally and internationally, even though Indonesian civil society scholars, such as Culla (1999: 211) and Dhakidae (2001: 3), argue that it is not possible to translate overseas experiences directly into the Indonesian context.
In summarising the New Order era it is evident that student activists played a major role in Suharto’s resignation. They operated in a highly politicised climate, with the majority of the population suffering under major socio-economic hardships in the late 1990s. The period of *keterbukaan* nevertheless enabled students to formulate demands on behalf of the people and function as a catalyst for ousting Suharto. However, they could neither have done this alone, nor could they have done this without some necessary preconditions.

First, the political openness in 1989 to 1994 enabled them to build their institutional base, raise awareness among people in general and create some networks and alliances with intellectuals, NGOs and professionals. Second, state repression, especially violent crackdowns by the security forces, only served to legitimise the demands and morality of the student-led democracy coalition in the eyes of the people and to unite opposition against a common enemy. Finally, indirect support from sections of the elite and army, as well as direct support from the international community, were crucial. All of these factors are essential characteristics of the political opportunities’ structure, as discussed in Chapter 1.

While there are certain themes and demands that continue throughout the decades, the student movements of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s each have their own distinctive character. The absence of inter-class alliances was probably a major factor for the limited success of the *angkatan ‘77/78*, whereas the divisions of the student movement in the late 1990s were obscured by their uniting against a common enemy – Suharto.

**IN THE POST-SUHARTO ERA**

Although civil unrest and protests continued after Suharto’s resignation, student activism quickly receded and changed direction, becoming more concerned with local issues. Suharto’s resignation, and the fact that the students were more concerned with mobilisation than strategies for the post-Suharto era, was one reason. Another was the unprecedented political openness, which created a new uncertainty and diminished the need for mass action.

One exception was the July 1998 nation-wide student meeting concerning a transitional government. The movement only gained momentum in late 1998, with the largest demonstrations since
May occurring on Youth Day, 28 October, in preparation for the November special parliamentary (MPR) sessions (McRae 2001: 26–28). Despite a lower frequency of mass mobilisation in the immediate post-Suharto era, Budiman (2001: 33) nevertheless contends that civil society gained increasingly in strength during the presidential terms of Habibie and Wahid.

**B. J. Habibie – Mobilisation and Issues**

Suharto was succeeded by his vice-president, B. J. Habibie. Bourchier (2000: 16) identifies three forces competing for political power during Habibie’s era. These were the ‘status quo’ forces (Golkar and ABRI), the ‘moderate reformists’ (including the main political leaders) and the ‘radicals’ demanding reformasi total (including many student groups, democracy activists and intellectuals).

It was soon evident that Habibie lacked popular legitimacy among the elite as well as among students, who saw him as a continuation of the New Order. ABRI tolerated him only because of the constitutional succession. Even if Habibie had intended to stay in office until 2003, it would have been virtually impossible. Demands for elections and political reforms were already articulated a few days after Suharto’s resignation (McBeth et al. 1998: 16–18; Crouch 1999: 133).

By October 1998 disillusion with the government and the pro-democracy movement loomed large, and students were criticised for giving up too easily and being too timid in their demands (Mangunwijaya 1999: 10). Meanwhile the NGO community was concerned about the fragile nation being threatened by elite and social conflict, manifested in primordial conflicts over religion and ethnicity (INFID 1999: 15).

From September onwards student activism increased. With the abolition of NKK students were free to organise on campus; in addition relations with external student groups were furthered by three major cross-campus groups, Forkot, Famred and Komrad (Aspinall 1999a: 226–227). Whereas the various student groups had been united in their call for Suharto’s resignation, conflicts and internal splits now became increasingly visible. Moderate student groups wanted to give Habibie’s government a chance to hold elections, Muslim students largely supported Habibie’s presidency, but the majority of students wanted to see a clear break from the

Some new common platforms emerged, among which was the overarching question of the legitimacy of the MPR and the government. Habibie’s resignation, abolition of dwifungsi and a proper trial for Suharto were other key demands (Aspinall 1999a: 226–227; Lane 1999a: 244; Crouch 1999: 132).

Lane (1999a: 244) outlines some differences between the 1998 May and November mobilisations, stating that the 10–14 November mass protests were decidedly more radical and militant. The political demands were more advanced, the students had lost their illusions about ABRI, inter-class co-operation with the urban poor now existed, and there were new strategies that included targeting TV-stations and military bases. Twelve people died in the November protests and many were injured by ABRI and its para-military groups (Pam Swakarsa). Lane (1999a: 244) contends that ‘without the use of force to prevent an occupation during the MPR session, the MPR would have been occupied by a huge mass of students and Jakarta poor’. Yet, preventing anarchy seems a weak excuse for justifying excessive use of military force.

The Ciganjur Agreement

The students had their hopes set on ‘the Ciganjur Four’, the popular political leaders Wahid, Megawati, Amien Rais and Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, to force Habibie to resign and form a provisional government, but they were let down. The Ciganjur Agreement, issued on 11 November 1998, generally supported reformasi but did not support any transitional government. Instead democratic elections were preferred. Nor did it support any immediate abolition of the military’s political role, recommending that military presence in parliament should be gradually removed over six years (Cohen 1998: 16). Yet, the agreement, described by Young (1999: 77) as ‘the most important expression of the common aims of the reform movement’, was still significant:

It marked a parting of ways between those demanding reformasi total and those party leaders who favoured only incremental change. In retrospect it also appears to have been an important
step in the process of accommodation between the party leaders and the status quo forces. (Bourchier 2000: 19)

Aspinall (1999a: 233) offers an explanation for the stance of the Ciganjur Four, stating that the students had become too radical and anarchic. They had rejected alliances with more moderate civil society forces and had instead become increasingly violent, thus alienating the students from their popular support base. Lane (1999a: 245) concludes that ‘none of these New Order fringe dwellers [the Ciganjur Four] wanted to come to power at the hands of the mass movement. That would set a precedent which could come back to haunt them at a later date.’

Yet, according to Budiman (1999a: 7) the students’ moral role was based precisely on the notion that other forces would take over. They were not a mainstream institution capable themselves of governing the nation, but were striving to install a more accountable transitional government.

Thus, in early 1999 students had to reposition themselves, while Habibie had to embark on swift reform in order to survive. A key opposition demand was for the abolition of the 1985 five political laws, ‘the legal cornerstone of the New Order’, regulating elections, political parties, representation in the DPR and MPR, and activities of mass organisations (Bourchier 2000: 17; McBeth et al. 1998: 18).

While not keen on reform, Habibie was nevertheless forced to implement changes, such as setting a date for free elections, relaxing political controls and releasing political prisoners (HRW 1999: 1). He ratified the international convention against torture, paved the way for the UN-supervised referendum on East Timor, formally separated the police from the military and lifted restrictions on political parties in June 1999 that led to Indonesia’s most democratic elections since 1955 (HRW 2001b: 1; Crouch 2000: 11). More liberal labour laws were also introduced (see Chapter 4) and he was forced to investigate the fatal May riots (see Chapter 5).

Despite his reform efforts, Habibie lost the elections and on 20 October 1999 Wahid became Indonesia’s first democratically elected president, even though Megawati technically won the elections with 33 per cent of the votes against Wahid’s 11 per cent (Sulastomo 2001: 55).
Abdurrahman Wahid – Mobilisation, Demands and Divisions

President Wahid, nicknamed Gus Dur, was highly regarded by the majority of civil society and seen as the best choice in a bad situation by many others. Accepted by both pro-Megawati and modernist Muslims, Wahid was also a ‘safe’ choice (Vatikiotis 2000: 29; The Jakarta Post 13 February 2001; interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002).

His reforms included the abolition of the internal security organ Bakorstanas and legislative provisions for a human rights court. Wahid furthermore promoted religious and ethnic minority issues, regional autonomy and allowed greater freedom of speech and association. But he devoted little time to reform institutions, and alienated important allies, like the military and the elite leadership (HRW 2001b: 1–2). Within months allegations of financial corruption had tainted him, and it was clear that he was not able to live up to the high expectations of quick reform and structural transformation.

Throughout 2000 the students voiced their disillusion with the reform process, demanding that the military be removed from representative bodies and urging Wahid to take demands for reform seriously or resign (The Jakarta Post 13 February 2001; Panjaitan 2001: 4). PRD leader Budiman Soedjatmiko predicted continuing political unrest and ‘growing political effort to oust Wahid which, if successful, would bring conservative political forces and the army back to power’ (Vatikiotis 2000: 29). However, Crouch (2000: 13) saw any imminent military coup as unlikely, given that this would trigger widespread rioting and bring about further economic hardship and international criticism.

In January 2001, in what was labelled ‘the first massive head-to-head meeting between anti-Abdurrahman protesters and his supporters’, thousands of students nation-wide took to the streets with renewed calls for maintaining and reviving the reformasi movement. As well as demands for ousting the remnants of the New Order, demands were divided over whether Wahid should remain in office or not. Wahid supporters demanded the dissolving of Golkar, an action seen by the majority on both sides as the only way to get reformasi ‘back on track’, and the resignation of the speakers of DPR and MPR, Akbar Tandjung and Amien Rais (The
While the media reported the divisions among students, the students themselves did not take a similar view. They saw the differences as a sign of students’ increasing political maturity and their message was clear – reform was to be completed. Echoing the 1998 demands this essentially implied constitutional reform, abolition of \textit{dwifungsi}, law enforcement, establishing an egalitarian democracy, in addition to holding the New Order regime accountable for past deeds. For his lack of action Wahid was labelled ‘anti-reform’ (\textit{The Jakarta Post} 13 February 2001; interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

In March 2001, with the reasons for social discontent remaining, such as basic material shortcomings along with the military structure, the students surrounded the palace to force Wahid to resign. Despite this action a political observer noted that the student movement was not as solid as in 1998 and did not have as much support from NGOs and the broader society. Students were also criticised for trying to use extraconstitutional means instead of democratic mechanisms (\textit{The Jakarta Post} 16 March 2001).

On 21 July 2001, after 21 months in office, Wahid was forced to resign. In the end he tried in vain to retain power using authoritarian tactics, such as declaring a state of emergency and dissolving the parliament. ‘The army’s decision to side with the parliament put it in the paradoxical position of defending democracy against Indonesia’s great democratic hope’ (HRW 2001b: 1–2). With rumours spreading that the country was heading for civil war, observers were relieved that Wahid’s resignation had at least been peaceful (McGirk 2001: 30).

\textit{Megawati Sukarnoputri – Facing a Diversity of Issues}

Megawati inherited the unsolved problems of the past with regard to the legacy of the New Order, economic hardship and the culture of reform. While the military consolidated under Habibie and disliked Wahid for trying to reform them, they were fully supportive of Megawati. But the price has been a reduced promotion of human rights and renewed fear of restrictions on the freedom of speech and media (Mc Girk 2001: 30; \textit{The Jakarta Post} 8 January 2002; interview with Sobary 14 January 2002; Tjhin 2004).
Students have kept active, as evidenced in various protests. The proposed amendments to the Constitution fuelled student protests in August 2002 (*The Jakarta Post* 11 August 2002; *Kompas* 10 August 2002), as did the announced rise in fuel, electricity and food prices earlier in 2002 and again in January 2003. In the face of massive public protests the government in 2003 bowed to public pressure and reversed the price increases that resulted from an attempt to abolish government subsidies on fuel (*The Jakarta Post* January 2002, January 2003; Waslin 2003: 6). While MacIntyre and Resosudarmo (2003: 135) describe the abolition of subsidies as ‘fiscally responsible’ in order to get Indonesia’s battered economy back on track, Megawati and her PDI-P have nevertheless borne the brunt of the criticism and lost voters’ confidence in the process. Other party leaders and key players abandoned her stance in order not to lose their support base.

There is no denying that students in the post-Suharto era are far more fragmented and divided over a wide range of issues. Among the issues that united mobilisation in early 2002 and attracted media attention were the prosecution of those responsible for the Trisakti shootings; protests against the pardoning of Suharto; the rising cost of living due to the increasing prices of oil and household fuels (BBM, Bahan Bakar Minyak) and electricity; smaller government subsidies; and the corruption allegations against DPR speaker Akbar Tandjung (see Appendix).

The sequel to the Akbar Tandjung case sparked some of the greatest nation-wide student protests in recent years when the Supreme Court on 13 February 2004 announced its decision to free him, after he had previously been found guilty in the District Court and the High Court and sentenced to three years in jail. The Supreme Court argued that Akbar was simply following the instructions of former President Habibie (*The Jakarta Post* 13, 14 February 2004; *Kompas* 13, 14 February 2004).

The prosecution of the Golkar party leader and potential presidential candidate has come to be regarded as a defining case in Indonesia’s fight against escalating corruption. Legal practitioners fear that Akbar’s case could become a precedent, thereby further stifling the attempts to prosecute high-ranking officials. Student protesters demanded an inquiry into the Akbar verdict and accused
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five judges of making ‘back-room deals’. In Bandung the Front for People Safeguarding the Transition to Democracy (Fortrad) carried a banner stating ‘Supreme Court, please side with Indonesian people’. In Semarang Muslim and Catholic students together with the PRD carried banners stating that the Supreme Court verdict equaled ‘the deathknell of law enforcement in Indonesia’. In Jakarta peaceful protests turned nasty with 60 students injured in clashes with the police. The following day students in Medan condemned the brutal police repression and demanded that authorities investigate the clashes, as well as Akbar’s controversial acquittal (*The Jakarta Post* 13, 14 February 2004; *Kompas* 13, 14 February 2004).

Not all activists agree with the allegations that the student movement has lost its momentum and is fragmented:

What is true is that it is more multifaceted and complex. We need to start rebuilding an infrastructure that is good on all levels, a system that functions well. We do not need to have one issue; it is OK for students to choose different issues and deal with them wherever there is a need. Because there is a lot of need. One issue would cause the momentum to be lost, many problems will keep up the momentum. We need to build a better society together – this is democratisation from all its different dimensions. (Interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002)

Hidayat (interview 15 January 2002) sees the formal and non-formal student organisations united again on the issues of rising energy costs and reduction of government subsidies, although there is less visible unity since they are ‘not united in the mass protests, only in the issues. They still work separately’.

This view is supported by personal observations in Yogyakarta in January 2002, where several small demonstrations were held on the same day by separate groups of students, women and NGOs concerning BBM (the increasing prices of oil and household fuels) and the government’s neglect of the underprivileged. A women’s organisation had tried in vain to contact student groups, without knowing that various groups of students planned their own demonstration on the same issue (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002; LMND et al. flyer).
Students Stealing the Limelight

Furthermore, staff at the Gadjah Mada University’s student magazine Balairung did not have current contact addresses for any secular student organisations, only for two Muslim student groups (interview Balairung 23 January 2002). This is surprising in Yogyakarta, where activists know each other well, and where some of the most violent mass mobilisations and greatest solidarity demonstrations were held in 1998 (Elliott 1998: 1–2).

Leafing through Balairung editions of the past few years, the low-key, popular themes of the more recent issues contrast starkly with the radical and highly politicised tone of the 1998 editions.

After May 1998 we changed focus and moved away from political issues. We reorientated and came back to local issues instead. We are now in the transition time, an era of decentralisation. People are tired of hearing about the democracy movement, reformasi, about the struggle. It is not interesting any more! They are tired of it. And we don’t want to be like other media, we want to be an alternative. (Interview Balairung 23 January 2002)

The local issues that the editorial staff refer to above, and that have become the priority of Balairung, include topics such as life in Yogyakarta and the surrounding villages, life on campus, spirituality and regional autonomy (interview Balairung 23 January 2002).

Elitism and Lack of Alliances

Whereas there is a certain amount of self-reflexivity among students they, along with other elite dissidents and middle class-based NGOs, are often accused of lacking roots in the broader population (interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002; Uhlin 1997: 116; Heryanto 1996b: 241). Students are seen as ‘elitist’, although Hadiz (1999: 112) speculates that this might have changed after the November 1998 demonstrations where the urban poor were involved, thus showing tendencies towards ‘downward linkages’ when links to the elite leadership weakened.

Hadiz nevertheless concludes that there is a serious lack of links with workers and peasants; ‘they have been largely excluded from this process, leaving the reformasi struggle largely a middle class one, up to the present time’ (Hadiz 1999: 112–113). Yet, as Sundhaussen (1991: 114) states, it would be delusive to rely solely on the middle
class to lead the democratisation struggle, or even to safeguard the democratic gains that have been made. Besides lacking a broader support base, sections of the middle class are far more likely to side with the elite and the state than with civil society organisations demanding greater rights.

It is worth keeping in mind that neither the middle class nor the students constitute one homogenous group; social cleavages exist within both of these groups. While acknowledging that students ‘stopped’ Suharto, a non-organised, part-time student expressed his experience of student activism:

The University students who demonstrate are the ones who get money from their parents so they can be at Uni and plan for demonstrations and do them. People like me, who have to have a job to be able to study, cannot afford demonstrations. (Discussion with Arief 21 January 2002)

While student activists are admittedly only a small proportion of the population, many of them have engaged in poor people’s issues in an attempt ‘to make a difference’. Not all of them would see it as making a political statement, but they definitely see it as an expression of solidarity, rather than simply involvement with charity (interviews with LBH APIK 11 January 2002 and Ibu Titin 21 January 2002).

The link between centre and base is important for the unity and ultimately the power of social movements (Tarrow 1994: 99). This has proved to be a major shortcoming for the broader pro-democracy movement, as well as for the student movement with its lack of mass membership and perceived elitism in relation to the lower classes. One difficulty is the choice of language and metaphors in public protests that in some incidences, instead of connecting students with their supporters, has served to alienate them. For the campaign against Akbar Tandjung, who was accused of being a liar, the students used the image of Pinocchio. I was several times asked by street vendors in Jakarta who or what a Pinocchio was, and why he had such a long nose (personal discussions, Jakarta, January 2002).

In addition, the student movement has been riddled with allegations about pay-offs from political parties, which have contributed to the
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decrease in student solidarity (Djalal 2001: 27). Allegations like these do not fit well with any genuine social movement activity.

CONCLUSION

There is enough evidence to conclude that the students indeed constitute a movement, albeit fluid in structure, that keeps appearing whenever political opportunities coincide with widespread dissatisfaction in society regarding the socio-economic and political situation. This is largely due to the nature of social movements, more often mobilising against something than for something, and the fact that people are students only for a short period of their life. Whereas mobilisation under repressive circumstances goes against the Western tendency of social movements to mobilise in favourable circumstances, when real gains can be made, state repression can also serve as a mobilising and legitimising factor, as the Indonesian experience shows.

Although the various student generations that have been officially acknowledged have their own characteristics, determined by both external and internal issues, there are similarities in student demands over the years. Such demands concern corruption, government accountability and social justice. The ‘moral force’ characteristic can not be emphasised enough, as it has shaped the perception of the students among themselves and legitimised them among the population at large. Paradoxically it has also assisted them in forming links with the regime and the military. These factors have largely determined the political opportunities and the political space available for student actions. The direct and indirect support from parts of the military was crucial for the success of the students in 1966 and 1998, as were external events, such as the economic crisis, for the timing of the 1998 mobilisation.

A radicalisation of the student movement occurred with the onset of keterbukaan in the late 1980s and the emergence of new radical NGOs. Many students engaged in NGO work and cooperated to a greater extent with workers and peasants, thereby acquiring important civil society experience and broadening their potential support base. After 1998, however, some analysts claim that the student-led movement for democracy and reform seems to have fragmented internally and lost its momentum. Students are criticised for being elitist and career-minded, and for not having
completed the struggle for genuine political and social change. In a time of greater political openness they have suddenly become apolitical, and the tendency to isolate themselves is now evident in the lack of inter-class alliances, especially with lower classes. This stands in great contrast to the successful co-operation between students and peasants in the past.

However, as the activists themselves state, this perceived fragmentation is in reality an expressed interest in a variety of issues, which is a normal part of democratisation and greater political openness. The ebbs and flows of mobilisation are certainly a normal feature of the cycles of social movements. Many groups focusing on different issues may not necessarily be a weakness; it can also be a strength for social movements, making them harder to repress, as long as they still manage to unite for specific campaigns. It is also true that the needs are many, and who is to decide where to start building a new Indonesia? Students never aspired to take over political leadership but saw their moral role as checking and balancing the government. In doing this, they have certainly contributed to civil society and continue doing so.

NOTES

1 One of them was Ahmad Dahlan Ranuwihardjo, the founder of the Indonesian Muslim Students Association (HMI). His student activism is briefly described in his Obituary (The Jakarta Post, 15 December 2001).

2 The Cipayung Group consisted of the Islamic organisations HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam – linked with the Islamic modernists) and PMII (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia – linked to Nahdatul Ulama), the nationalist GMNI (Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia – linked with the National Party PNI), and the Christian organisations GMKI (Gerakan Mahasiswa Kristen Indonesia) and PMKRI (Persatuan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia) (Aspinall 1999a: 214; McRae 2001: 6).

3 Trisakti was an elite university and not a radical campus at all, yet four students were killed. This, in combination with media attention, turned Trisakti into a ‘national tragedy’. McRae (2001: 13) states that many of the solidarity demonstrations and massive riots that followed had been planned earlier, by others than students, but since Trisakti was highlighted in most protests these seemed to be in response to the shootings.

4 Balinese students from STSI Denpasar launched an art week called ‘Demokrasi dalam Ekspresi Rupa’ in 22–29 February 2000 to show how democratisation could be furthered through art (KAMASRA STSI 2000).
Chapter Four

Workers and NGOs in Solidarity

While observers acknowledge the role of civil society, in particular the role of students, as well as the socio-economic impact of the regional economic crisis in the downfall of Suharto, the role of the labour movement is rarely mentioned. Whereas some argue that this is because labour has played only a minor role in the development of Indonesia’s civil society, others judge it more favourably. Besides emphasising the historical role of the labour movement in raising awareness and organising people in spite of government repression, they stress labour’s critical role in broadening the social base of the struggle for political and social change in the 1990s.

These differing standpoints are discussed in this chapter, which focuses on the labour movement’s role in the development of civil society in Indonesia. It is argued here that not only did middle class activists and students exclude workers from the reformasi struggle, but to some extent the unions chose not to participate in the broader democratisation process, instead keeping their focus on workers’ production-related interests.

In this context an assessment of the nature of the state’s intervention is central, as it determines the political space available for union activities during various time periods. Likewise strategies and alliances that have both strengthened and inhibited mass mobilisation, including transnational links, are important to outline.

Two aspects that are often ignored in the labour literature are the situation of women workers and the impact of labour NGOs.
Hikam (1995), for example, does not address these aspects in his PhD thesis on workers’ activism in the late New Order. Yet both issues are too important to be dismissed.

While the Marxist revolutionary agenda has both influenced and hampered the labour movement as a whole, women workers have had to overcome a multiple legacy of communist fear, religious practices and paternalism. As for the labour NGOs, their involvement has been facilitated by three historical conditions that in addition to the communist legacy have impacted negatively on the Indonesian trade unions’ opportunities to contribute to civil society. These tensions concern the revolutionary tradition from the early 1900s, the military’s and the regime’s harsh repression and control of labour, and the political parties’ attempts to co-opt unions.

Many of the Marxist ideas that have influenced scholars and labour movements world-wide do not fit the Indonesian situation. For example, one of Hadiz’s (1997a: 39–41) main concerns is the lack of industrial growth in the first half of the twentieth century, which he sees as an obstacle to any real trade unionism. Yet, one cannot ignore the fact that the situation in most developing countries with a largely agricultural base does not align with the Marxist vision of the industrial proletariat as the driving force of revolutionary change. The Australian experience, for example, shows that industrialisation is not necessarily a prerequisite for unionism.¹

Another frequent criticism concerns a perceived lack of class-consciousness among Indonesian workers. Although Indonesia is a very class-conscious society, the concept of class is notoriously difficult to define in an Indonesian context. As has been previously discussed, there is a longstanding debate on how to define the emerging Indonesian middle class beyond mere affluence (see for example Tanter and Young (1990), Robison (1996)). Given the Indonesian historical and cultural legacy, it would have been hard for any class-consciousness in the Western Marxist sense to develop. Yet, it is important to note that the lack of expressed class sentiments does not reflect a lack of consciousness among workers.

The time period covered in this chapter encompasses the emergence and development of the labour movement up until the general elections in 2004, with particular focus on the lead-up to Suharto’s downfall and the post-Suharto era. This broad time frame is necessary for determining the forces that have shaped
the labour movement, its weaknesses and strengths, as well as for comparing the political space available for organisation and mobilisation. Finally, it is argued that the various actors in civil society, not all of them necessarily wanting democracy, need to join forces in order to achieve much needed political and social change, and that labour has a crucial role to play in this process.

THE EMERGENCE OF UNIONS

Similarly to the students, the historical roots of the Indonesian labour movement date back to the early years of the twentieth century, when the railway workers’ union (VSTP) became the first trade union with Indonesian leadership and majority membership (Ingleson 2001: 99; Tedjasukmana 1958: 5–6).

The division between the political and industrial roles of trade unions, so important in the New Order rhetoric, was apparent from the very beginning. From early on unionised workers began to play a political role and experienced the repression that forced them to come up with various strategies in order to survive (Tedjasukmana 1958: vii–viii; Hikam 1995: 179–180). Naturally, this also served to radicalise workers.

While the unions managed to improve working conditions and wages for their members, they were also crucial in promoting the development of political consciousness among Indonesians. Like many labour movements in colonised nations they aimed at ending colonial rule and played an important role in the early nationalist movement (Ingleson 2001: 86, 98–100; Hadiz 1997a: 40). After the crushing of several general strikes and a communist uprising in 1926, the unions had to ensure their survival by distancing themselves from party politics. From the 1930s onwards the more outspoken political parties were banned by the colonial government and freedom of speech and assembly were severely curtailed (Ingleson 2001: 87, 93; Hadiz 1997a: 32, 44).

One on-going dispute concerns labour’s contribution to the nationalist movement after 1926. Ingleson (2001: 89) states that whereas political parties had practically no manoeuvring space after 1930, unions were allowed to keep up their activities, which basically kept the nationalist movement alive. In essence, Ingleson argues that nationalism grew out of the labour movement. This notion is contested by scholars like Hadiz (1997a: 44–45), who
argues that the leading unions had been eliminated by 1923 and that the remaining labour movement played an insignificant political role in the nationalist struggle.

Given the limited political space available for ordinary Indonesians with political ambitions, Ingleson’s argument seems valid, in the sense that the political debate was kept alive by the unions and served to inspire other parts of civil society.

Unions were forced to co-operate or perish during the Japanese occupation, although the major public sector unions continued their activities underground. It is worth noting that unions constituted some of the strongest Indonesian organisations in the 1940s, and throughout their existence they had had more members than the political parties (Ingleson 2001: 87, 95; Elliott 1997: 4).

In addition to their industrial and political roles the unions also played an important social role, creating a sense of solidarity and community among workers, as well as providing opportunities for education and learning organisational skills (Ingleson 2001: 88–89; Elliott 1997: 50). In these activities they contributed to strengthening an emerging civil society. However, the extent of this social transformation is questioned by Hadiz (1997a: 41) who acknowledges its significance but emphasises that it was very limited since no large-scale industrialisation had taken place. Yet, as has been previously mentioned, industrialisation is not necessarily a prerequisite for workers’ activism.

It is evident that the early labour movement grew out of a highly politicised context where the nationalist struggle became a priority for society in general. However, the workers wanted more than merely to abolish the colonial regime: they also wanted better working and living conditions for all workers.

After independence the labour movement became increasingly radical. Freed from colonial restrictions, the movement attracted an influx of new members and new small unions emerged (Elliott 1997: 7–8; Ingleson 2001: 100). Social, economic and political conflicts were widespread under Sukarno’s rule. While mass-based politics were common, and ‘people power’ at its strongest during the 1950s, Hikam (1995: 517–518) argues that the masses were not mobilised for action or for genuine political participation, only in demonstration of popular support for the regime. Hikam (1995: 192–195) further maintains that unions at the time did not have an ideological base or a sense of class-consciousness. It was primordial
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collections of religion or ethnicity that mobilised workers, not class solidarity.

Whereas it may be true that workers, despite transnational socialist and Marxist influences, tended to lack a sense of class solidarity in the Marxist sense, this does not rule out the existence of workplace solidarity. In addition, the labour movement certainly made some gains, manifested in the achievement of important industrial objectives, such as labour legislation.

Among these achievements were the 1951 Basic Labour Law, amended in 1957, and the 1954 Collective Agreement Law, although these gains were counterbalanced by several repressive strike laws. Some of the largest strikes in this period were seen in 1950–51 with workers demanding the nationalisation of foreign companies (Hikam 1995: 190, 196–197).

The legacy of internal union rivalry and political divisions was revived during the late 1950s. All nine existing political parties had their own affiliated labour unions and the main rivalry developed between unions linked with the Islamic and communist parties, respectively.

After 1957 the relation between the military and the left-oriented union SOBSI (Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia) deteriorated when the military took control over the newly nationalised foreign companies. The army found allies among some anti-leftist unions; in addition it founded its own labour organisation, SOKSI (Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia) (Hadiz 1997a: 45, 2000b: 247; Rinakit 1999: 143). These links could, and certainly did, pose a danger to independent unionism, as unions risked being co-opted by the various parties and their differing political agendas, thus preventing mass mobilisation in the name of workers’ solidarity.

The 1965 coup and the subsequent communist purge ended Sukarno’s rule and the tradition of militant radical unionism that had prevailed since the early decades of unionism. Moreover, the historic legacy of the political anti-communist struggle of the 1960s would always identify labour as a left-oriented, and thus potentially dangerous, social and political force (Hadiz 1997a: 32, 45, 1997b: 250; Honna 2001: 71). In the decades to come, this legacy would further limit the political space available for civil society and allow the state to severely curtail the effectiveness of organised labour, in particular.
When Suharto gained power, society was further depoliticised by the state’s creation of its own corporatist system and its own party, Golkar, with labour among its corporatist interest groups (Uhlin 1997: 42, 55; Aspinall 1996a: 217). In order to promote economic development, the New Order regime developed an obsession with control and stability. Workers’ activism, even advocacy work, was seen as decidedly destabilising. In fact, workers were not supposed to organise at all outside the officially sanctioned channels (Dhakidae 2001: 14).

This became evident in the government’s exclusionary, corporatist organisation of labour. The links between the political parties and their affiliated labour unions remained until the political reorganisation in the early 1970s when a new state-supported organ, MPBI (Majelis Permusyawaratan Buruh Indonesia), comprised of union leaders, replaced the various unions (Rinakit 1999: 143; Hikam 1995: 217). In 1971 MPBI identified the reasons for the weakness of the labour movement as a lack of political and financial independence, its political rather than worker orientation, and divisions due to internal and external factors. The necessary changes would need to include political independence, structural reform, a focus on economic issues affecting workers and a trade union act (Hikam 1995: 217–218).

In 1973 the state-sanctioned FBSI (Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia), consisting of 21 sector unions, was created as the only legal labour organisation (Rinakit 1999: 144). Its task was not so much to represent labour as to control it. In a strategic move to further nullify labour’s political potential, industrial relations were linked with Pancasila ideology. Pancasila Labour Relations, launched in 1974 and later renamed Pancasila Industrial Relations, was used to co-opt labour and create an obedient workforce by emphasising the importance of family, harmony and consensus instead of confrontation. It was also used to justify military and bureaucratic intervention in industrial relations (Ford 2000: 64; Tanter 1990: 253–255; Hadiz 1994: 192–194).

In addition, Pancasila Industrial Relations did not recognise the existence of independent labour unions. Despite this carefully constructed framework, the Pancasila ideals did not work. Instead walkouts and ‘wildcat strikes’ proliferated in reaction to the official
concept of labour relations and the lack of constructive, fair negotiations with employers (Rinakit 1999: 147, 155; HRW 1994: 40).

In 1985 FBSI was replaced by the even more centralised SPSI (Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia) and all sector-based unions, perceived as potential sites for labour unrest, were abolished (Lambert 1997b: 61; Ford 1999: 385; Hikam 1995: 226). Rinakit (1999: 144) notes that while FBSI was able to function independently to a certain degree, the SPSI quickly became deeply involved with party politics through Golkar, the PPP and PDI. This also led to severe criticism from members accusing union leaders of pursuing their own political ambitions to the detriment of workers.

Table 4.1 Strike frequency during the Sukarno and Suharto regimes (average figures)

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<td>40/year</td>
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The issue of wages has been at the heart of many of the strikes in Table 4.1. Laws regulating minimum wages have existed since 1981 and 1989, but living costs often outweigh the minimum wage, if the laws are implemented at all. This is why wage issues in 1992 were listed as the major cause of 148 out of 155 strikes in East Java (Hikam 1995: 303–306), and why wage issues continue to mobilise workers in the post-Suharto era (see Appendix).

Opposition and Systematic Repression

In Indonesia workers are guaranteed freedom of association by article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, and the organising of labour by laws 18/1956 and 14/1969, as well as the right to bargain and strike by the ILO Convention No. 98 (Eldridge 1995: 112). Yet this has been of little real value in the past, since the concept of political opposition is not accommodated in *Pancasila* ideology.

Labour was furthermore particularly targeted due to its leftist legacy. This has been an obstacle to overcome for social movement activists, whether they have been workers or other civil society forces wanting to engage with workers. In an ironic twist of circumstances,
government repression has actually helped to create a sense of solidarity among Indonesia’s workers and caused them to unite against a common oppressor, which is a typical social movement characteristic. It is nevertheless important to note that repression can also discourage collective action, when the cost of mobilising is perceived as too high (Tarrow 1994: 92, 95). While the oppressor in the 1980s would still be identified as the employer and management, the mid-1990s would see a crucial change in attitude that identified the regime as the root cause of workers’ problems.

In the previous chapter tolerated and non-tolerated opposition was discussed, with tolerated opposition defined as not threatening to national unity. Labour, unlike students, never at any time belonged to the tolerated opposition.

Tanter (1990: 253–255) reveals the sophisticated systematic structure of military surveillance and intervention in labour issues, such as the Labour Assistance Teams and the Early Detection Systems, which were designed to detect and prevent potential industrial conflicts, and links this structure in particular with Admiral Sudomo, commander of the security agency Kopkamtib from the mid-1970s to 1983 and thereafter minister of labour.² When in 1986 the military was officially empowered to suppress strikes, it served to further curtail the labour movement (Hadiz 1994: 193, 195; Inside Indonesia 1996: 1; HRW 1994: 48).

One should not underestimate the courage needed to engage in organising workers. State-sanctioned military violence, abduction and torture of labour activists, as well as intimidation and banning of supporting NGOs and student activists, prevailed during the 1990s (HRW 1994: 76, 85–88; interview with Sirait 10 January 2002). Solidaritas Perempuan has been advocating the rights of female migrant workers since 1992 and has experienced the repression of the 1990s first-hand:

Earlier it was difficult to have meetings, the police often interrupted. In the Suharto era, in 1996, police took two activists from SP and beat them for two days. They were held in a military camp. In 1997 Suharto was still big. NGOs and activists were watched and intimidated, since they were against the Suharto rule. Since 1998 the situation has changed. (Interview with Safitri 8 January 2002)
In this context the plight of women workers has to be addressed, since two major heroes of the Indonesian labour movement, Marsinah and Dita Sari, happen to be female labour activists as well as victims of state-sanctioned violence. Although these strong women are figureheads for the current generation of workers, the labour movement has nonetheless failed to cater for women’s interests throughout its history (Blackburn 1994: 172; Ingleson 2001: 96).

Whereas women constituted only a small part of the workforce of the modern urban economy in which unions developed, this proportion has grown significantly since the 1970s, reflecting a change in attitude to women’s work (Jones 1994: 149). Women have also become more involved in formal industrial work as a result of a decline in the agricultural sector and a shortage of farmland (Benjamin 1996: 83, 87).3 However, women’s role as important income earners remains ignored and gender inequality is exacerbated by culture and religion (Guinness 1994: 283; Wolf 1996: 151–152; Kompas 21 January 2002).

In addition, the ILO in 1993 documented ‘36 Indonesian laws which specifically protect female workers’, but at the same time found that ‘these “protections” are commonly ignored and in fact lead to further discrimination against women’ (Hancock 2000: 7). This was still the case in 2004, as a survey conducted by Women’s Journal Foundation (YJP) revealed. The majority of companies and employers neglect women’s legal rights (The Jakarta Post 24 January 2004). In the government’s bids to attract foreign investment women became an important bargaining pawn, exploited and marketed as cheap, docile labour to transnational companies in sectors like textiles, garments, shoes and electronics (Wolf 1996: 142, 145; Mather 1983: 7).

Yet changes, both positive and negative, have taken place. While Mather (1983: 8) found that maintaining low wages and avoiding a ‘troublesome workforce’ were the major reasons behind companies’ strategies to employ uneducated young people, aged 13 to 20, Wolf (1996: 149) a decade later found that many managers preferred a more educated and disciplined workforce.

The 1997–98 economic crisis impacted heavily on the industrial sector. Many workers were made redundant and women workers, in
particular, suffered. After Suharto’s fall it was estimated that up to 50 per cent of the 88 million strong workforce were to be under- or unemployed by the end of 1998 (McBeth 1998: 64). More workers became redundant after the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States and a subsequent slump in textile industry exports, which again affected mainly women who constitute up to 90 per cent of the workforce in some textile companies (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

From having considered women as cheap labour, some employers now consider women to be expensive in their demands for the implementation of such rights as maternity and menstruation leave. Women are nevertheless still favoured by many employers, since they are perceived to be more docile and passive and therefore less likely to protest than men (Kompas 21 January 2002).

This view of the docile female worker is not entirely accurate. In the early 1990s strikes in light manufacturing companies, where a majority of women work, accounted for 90 per cent of all strikes nationwide (Hikam 1995: 301). Citing political scholar Franz Magnis-Suseno, Rinakit (1999: 154) states that it is ‘very rare for [Indonesian] women to engage in violent behaviour’. Nonetheless, their engagement in violent protests in 1991 was documented. The reasons for their violence were reported as ‘very high feelings of frustration and injustice’. Rinakit (1999: 150–151, 154) also states that the triggering factors were often seemingly minor issues, like an employer not paying holiday bonuses or paying smaller bonuses than expected.

In discussing resistance strategies of Indonesian women workers, Smyth and Grijns (1997: 13) underscore the importance of ‘everyday forms of resistance’, in addition to large-scale demonstrations. The actions of these women might not gain headlines, and have often been dismissed as ‘emotional displays’ (unjuk rasa), but they are nevertheless an important form of resistance. The actions can either be open and collective, like street protests, or indirect such as mass hysteria among workers, conducting the work in a noisy or slow manner, as well as individual ways of cheating the system. The main difference is that ‘women act within the given constellations of gender roles and relations, rather than protesting against them’ (Smyth and Grijns 1997: 20–21). This is a clear example of the self-limiting radicalism of social movements. Gender-related strategies are further discussed in the next chapter.
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Strategic Alliances

Regardless of the absence of independent trade unions, the economic constraints of the late 1970s and early 1980s led to widespread labour unrest (Hadiz 2000b: 247). Whereas the 1970s and 1980s saw extended sporadic workplace protests, with workers’ demands for ‘basic rights such as wages, bonuses, health insurance and work security’ and the occasional demand for the right to organise, activism changed with the onset of keterbukaan in 1989, reaching beyond the workplace and becoming more politicised (Hikam 1995: 538–539).

Economic growth furthermore gave rise to two urban-based oppositional forces: namely the industrial workers and the middle class professionals and activists (Heryanto 1996b: 257). Heryanto (ibid) stresses the crucial function of the urban middle class activists in developing the labour movement and giving cases of abuse, like the death of labour activist Marsinah in 1993, widespread publicity (see HRW 1994: 51–53, 129–135). He nevertheless sees the potential for broader social change limited by their differing natures (Heryanto 1996b: 241).

The case of Marsinah is interesting, since the government’s attempt to show it wouldn’t tolerate labour dissent backfired and instead served to galvanise the labour movement. Marsinah’s fate drew widespread support from other civil society forces, both nationally and internationally, thereby demonstrating the importance of transnational links to put the spotlight on national issues and directly, or indirectly, support civil society’s efforts. Once again this illustrates the ability of social movements to create important issues that mobilise a broader public from events that could otherwise easily be ignored (Pakulski 1991: 66–67).

Key events like this can generate activism and support from an array of core groups and secondary groups, all uniting under one umbrella. While disparity can be a strength for social movements, making it more difficult for government to repress activists, co-operation can also be hampered by very diverse organisational cultures. Uhlin (1997: 117) states that middle class activists had difficulties in accessing workers, due to communication problems and workers’ profound suspicion of being used for undisclosed middle class purposes.

The public disclosure of objectives and goals was possibly the main reason the illegal party PRD found its successful niche as an
organiser of protests. According to Vatikiotis (2000: 28–29), PRD mobilised workers and students in the first openly anti-Suharto campaigns in the late 1990s, and by May 1998 the party was deeply entangled with parts of the student movement, like Forkot. While PRD certainly managed to mobilise students and workers in the late 1990s, they can not take credit for the documented increase in labour activity during the height of keterbukaan.

Regardless of any existing communication problems, middle class led NGOs became increasingly involved in labour issues from the mid-1980s. Eldridge (1995: 110) states that the reasons for this were the exploitation of low-paid labour as a result of industrial growth and the government’s deregulation policies to attract foreign capital, as well as the emergence of the highly controlled SPSI.

Interviews with activists confirm that the perceived shortcomings of SPSI in properly representing and empowering workers, as well as the lack of representation of informal workers, were strong reasons for the emergence of labour NGOs (interviews with Sirait 10 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

Labour NGOs

Ford (2001: 104) criticises the Eurocentric approach of many scholars analysing the labour movement in so-called developing countries. She highlights the importance of looking beyond trade unions and class actors for Indonesian labour organisations and argues that government repression from 1985 created conditions that favoured labour-oriented NGOs, led by middle class activists, over trade unions.

These NGOs played a leading role in the Indonesian labour movement, although they did not seek mass membership and had their own social agendas, of which labour issues were just a part. Moreover, along with other NGOs that have emerged since 1970 they constitute a vital part of civil society (Ford 2003b, 2001: 101, 103–105; Uhlin 1997: 119–121).

This new interest in labour issues was also reflected in the creation of special labour divisions in many development or human rights NGOs, for example in the Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI) and Yakoma. In addition, many women’s organisations that emerged during this time found issues concerning women workers and
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women migrant workers to be a new niche that needed support. As a matter of strategy, all of these organisations have framed labour rights as human rights, as will be discussed further.

Yakoma, established in 1971 and one of Indonesia’s oldest NGOs, spearheaded the now famous Nike campaign, exposing the horrific conditions in an Indonesian sweatshop owned by a transnational company. When the campaign had gained global attention, Yakoma withdrew (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Nababan 9 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002 and Irianto January 2002).

Since labour NGOs are not by any definition a homogenous group, their strategies also varied considerably. While Sisbikum was directly involved in the organising of unions, Yakoma would generally only facilitate workers’ education:

We only do work and campaigns related to workers, not trade unions. Yakoma never advocated the cause of workers publicly, that would be done by workers themselves. But we can train them to enable them to stand up for themselves and show them how to lobby. (Interview with Nababan 9 January 2002)

Despite their campaigning strengths, the role of labour NGOs and their importance for the broader labour movement is contested (interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002 and Sirait 10 January 2002). Whereas Hikam (1995) does not even consider labour NGOs, Hadiz (1997a: 8) acknowledges alternative workers’ organisations, but labels NGOs as gap-fillers in the labour movement and dismisses them as not sufficiently radical. Yet, this self-limiting radicalism is a social movement characteristic that helps avoid state repression or co-optation. NGOs are furthermore important since they reach beyond the factory floor, express broader concerns, and have social networks that are vital for stimulating broader movement participation (Tarrow 1994: 22; Pakulski 1991: 35–36).

More recently Hadiz (2000b:249) has acknowledged that labour-oriented NGOs have managed to challenge the legitimacy of the industrial relations framework. Yet NGOs are still defined by workers and the government as ‘outsiders’ in the labour movement (Ford 2003b, 2001: 103).
The significance of ‘outsiders’ should not be dismissed. As Kitley (2002) argues in the context of media development in post-Suharto Indonesia, it is the outsiders that manage to break free of the lingering New Order ideology who will contribute to a more radical change. This vital change in mindset is also emphasised by civil society representatives as a precondition for democracy in Indonesia (see Chapter 6). However, trade union representatives are willing to include labour NGOs as part of the labour movement only if they fulfil government requirements and register as unions:

If you want to register collectively, to be able to do collective bargaining, you have to register with the Minister of Labour – and NGOs are not trade unions. The final goal [for the labour movement] is empowering trade unions. NGOs do advocacy, which is also good. But they cannot follow up legally after strikes and negotiations. After strikes, NGOs have left the workers hanging in the air. Trade unions could do grievance-handling afterwards. But in campaigning and advocacy – there they could meet and join forces. (Interview with ACILS 9 January 2002)

It is important to recognise the strategic role of labour NGOs in providing political opportunities for workers in a repressive climate. Although NGOs were also repressed they had more freedom to organise workers’ meetings, whereas unions could not meet without military intervention (interviews with Sirait 10 January 2002 and Muftiyah 22 January 2002).  

In this context the impact of transnational links should not be forgotten. The mid-1990s witnessed an increased interest in Indonesian labour rights practices by domestic and international organisations. While the regime was concerned to keep up its image, since its relations with the international trade union movement and ILO were already strained, activists used their transnational links strategically to put further pressure on the regime, in addition to addressing labour rights within the broader framework of human rights (HRW 1994: 129; Eldridge 1995: 112–113; Ford 2001: 106). Thus political space for labour NGO activists opened up considerably in the 1990s, benefiting both workers and the broader civil society.
Independent Unions

The 1990s witnessed a remarkable increase in organised working-class activism with three new independent unions, SBM Setiakawan (Serikat Buruh Merdeka Setiakawan, the Solidarity Independent Workers’ Union), SBSI (Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia, the Indonesian Prosperous Workers’ Union), and PPBI (Pusat Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia, the Centre for Indonesian Working Class Struggle) emerging in the new climate of political openness (Hadiz 2000b: 249; Bourchier 1994).

Taking an openly oppositional stance Setiakawan (which means ‘solidarity’, a name inspired by the Polish Solidarity union) used the term buruh for worker, a term banned by the government due to its leftist connotations, instead of the politically correct pekerja or karyawan (Eldridge 1995: 110–111; Hikam 1995: 258–259).

None of these unions was recognised by the government. In fact, SBSI was considered an NGO, not a union (Hikam 1995: 268; Eldridge 1995: 112). Two of them were initiated by labour NGOs, namely Setiakawan by LPHAM (Lembaga Pembelaan Hak Asasi Manuasia, the Institute for the Defence of Human Rights) and SBSI by LBH FAS (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Forum Adil Sejahtera, the Legal Aid Institute Forum for Justice and Prosperity)(Ford, September 2002, personal communication).

Setiakawan was established in 1990 and already rendered inactive by mid-1992. Although it was never directly repressed, the government denied activists access to factories, thus prohibiting organising efforts (Eldridge 1995: 112–114). In 1992 SBSI emerged, described by Kingsbury (1998: 188) as one of the ‘most viable genuine points of opposition to the New Order government’. Hikam (1995: 250) notes that SBSI was more skilled than Setiakawan in exploiting the political momentum presented by keterbukaan. SBSI demanded better working conditions, higher minimum wages and an end to the exploitation of workers (Kingsbury 1998: 188). These demands were very similar to the ones voiced in 2002 (see Appendix).

Whereas SBSI took a non-political strategy, claiming to be a ‘professional organisation’ focusing on improvement of workers’ standards, it nevertheless went beyond the labour movement and sought alliances with other pro-democracy forces, such as students and NGOs, both nationally and internationally (Hikam 1995:
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252, 545–546; interview with ACILS 9 January 2002). These links were particularly obvious after the jailing of SBSI’s leader, lawyer Muchtar Pakpahan, as a result of SBSI’s involvement in a mass demonstration in Medan in 1994 (Uhlin 1997: 118–119; Hikam 1995: 262–269; HRW 1994: 57–75). In his focus on core issues, Pakpahan clearly followed a Western strategy of social movement activism. His arrest only enhanced his moral status and sparked national and international campaigns for his release.

A third independent union, PPBI, was established in October 1994 by the political party PRD. PPBI’s demands concerned better wages and working conditions, an end to the government’s ‘cheap labour policy’, freedom of assembly and speech, the right to establish new unions and to strike, and the abolition of military intervention and discrimination against women and child workers (Sundaram 2001: 1).

Like SBSI and Setiakawan, PPBI activists also co-operated with other societal forces. Between 1990 and 1995 PPBI, PRD and its student affiliate SMID organised 29 joint solidarity demonstrations (Aspinall 2000: 177). The state’s repeated suppression of the freedom of association is often stated as one reason for the 1993–94 proliferation of labour unrest (HRW 1994: 40). In 1996 PPBI and PRD organised one of the largest workers’ demonstrations during the New Order, drawing at least 15,000 factory workers from ten companies (Uhlin 1997: 119).

In July of the same year PPBI’s leader, Dita Sari, was arrested and imprisoned for three years in a major government crackdown, which also sparked international campaigns for her release. Changing strategies, the activists used temporary local workers’ committees for protests in order to rebuild the movement, and in 1999 FNPBI (Front Nasional Perjuangan Buruh Indonesia), often referred to as Indonesia’s most radical union, emerged (AWIN 1998: 1; Lane 1999b: 1–3; Sundaram 2001: 1).

LABOUR AND THE FALL OF SUHARTO

As previously discussed, the social and political volatility of the 1990s was amplified by the regional economic crisis in 1997–98, culminating in Suharto’s resignation. Aspinall (1999b, 1996: 215) and renowned labour NGO activist Fauzi Abdullah (Inside Indonesia 1996: 1–2) claim that the broadening of the social and political
base of opposition in the 1990s was most evident in the spread of labour activism, although labour has remained structurally weak, a notion supported by Hadiz (2000b: 255–256).

Whereas the opposition in general was fragmented, the labour movement continued to be haunted by internal divisions and a split between rural and urban workers, very similar to the Thai experience (see Hewison and Brown 1994). Consequently, the contribution of workers to the pro-democracy movement that brought Suharto down is disputed. It is only fair to point out that the question of participation was not entirely left for the workers to decide, since some factions of the pro-democracy movement did not necessarily wish to include workers in the mass protests, as has been discussed in the previous chapter.

Labour Exclusion and Alliances

Hadiz (1997a: 32) sees the political exclusion of labour occurring in all the South-east Asian ‘aspiring Newly Industrialised Countries’; he even talks about a ‘common model’. But whereas in Thailand in the late 1990s the business sector had largely taken over labour control and unions had expanded their political space, Indonesian labour was mostly still under rigid direct state control, curtailed by the official state unions. Like Malaysia, Indonesia has always had an internally divided labour movement, not even sufficiently united politically to fight for class interests (Crouch 1993: 148; HRW 1994: 46–48).

Thus, while Uhlin (1997: 121) identified labour as ‘the part of the pro-democracy movement with the greatest potential’, he along with Heryanto (1996b: 263) and Hadiz (1999: 124, 193), also emphasised the importance of inter-class alliances for the future democratic struggle, with the success of earlier strategic alliances evident in the Kedong Ombo and Marsinah protests.

As has been repeatedly argued in this study, inter-class alliances are imperative for the unity and impact of Indonesia’s civil society. Given the limited numbers of students and unionised workers, cooperation across borders of class, religion, gender and professional occupation is vital if civil society as a whole is to play a more significant role in Indonesia’s transition to democracy than it did until the mobilisation of the 1990s.
An example of fruitful co-operation in this respect was the alliance between the women’s organisation LBH APIK, the human rights organisation YLBHI and the Workers’ Solidarity Forum (FORSOL) in 1996–97 that resulted in an alternative labour bill (Katjasungkana 2001: 10).

Labour activists claim that many trade unionists sided with the students in the crucial months of 1998 and while only some workers took part in rallies, the majority supported the call for reformasi (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002). Two main reasons are commonly provided for workers’ absence from the scene:

Most of them were busy working, making a living for their families. Also, they felt the pressure from the government. After 30 years of repression it has made the workers feel as if they could not demonstrate and criticise government, like they did in the West and in South Korea. (Interview with ACILS 9 January 2002)

In addition, the limited numbers of workers and urban poor that came to the parliamentary occupation in May 1998 were turned away by students, who for strategic reasons refused to mobilise non-students (Lane 1999a: 244; see Chapter 3).

In 2002 activists remained divided over the need for broader co-operation. Although labour was not generally linked with the students, they were not necessarily linked with the urban poor either. While the majority of respondents stress the importance of inter-class alliances (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002; Hidayat 15 January 2002 and Soesastros 15 January 2002), the labour NGOs prefer to cautiously reserve the right to define the nature of their engagement (interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002 and Sirait 10 January 2002). Others again base their apprehensions on past experience:

The labour movement was not linked with the people’s movement [in 1998]. Our experience was that when we organised a demonstration, labour said ‘No, it’s not our issues, it’s political’. Labour organisations are for labour interests only, they do not always support people’s broader interests. Trade unions do not recognise poor people, although you think they should since workers are also among the poor. (Interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002)
Hadiz (2000b: 249) suggests that the emergence of new independent trade unions and the links between labour and student activists parallel the South Korean experience (see Koo 1993). This notion is supported by Everett (2000: 2) and Dalton and Cotton (1996: 292), who also stress the importance of strategic alliances.

However, Hadiz (2000a: 25) is ambiguous in his argumentation; in another source he concludes that unlike student activists in South Korea or Thailand, the Indonesian students did not liaise with workers, peasants and the urban poor because their struggles were perceived as being ‘social-economic’ and ‘self-intereste’d. Although inter-class alliances developed in the 1980s, workers were left outside the mainstream *reformasi* movement (Hadiz 2000a: 25, 1999: 124). Labour activist Dita Sari supports this argument, stating that the number of workers who joined the pro-democracy actions was limited, concluding that ‘the big upheavals of 1998 passed most workers by’ (Lane 1999b: 3).

Given the previous discussion regarding labour’s unwillingness to broaden its focus and the exclusion of labour, it seems fair to agree with Winters (2000: 141), who states that despite the activity of the early 1990s labour did not play a significant role in Suharto’s ousting and has not emerged as a coherent, powerful actor in the post-Suharto years.

Qualifying this statement, this does not mean that labour does not have the potential to be a unified force with considerable impact. On the contrary, labour definitely possesses a great democratisation potential that has been acknowledged by many scholars, as has been previously noted. Yet the post-Suharto era and its expansion in political space has had a negative impact on the unity of labour and its democratisation potential in two important aspects: first, with the ousting of Suharto there is no common enemy outside the world of industrial relations any longer. That is in a national context. Internationally there are still transnational companies, globalisation, the International Monetary Fund and other forces for workers to unite against. Second, there has been a virtual explosion in the number of unions in the post-Suharto era that has added to the fragmentation of organised labour. These issues are further discussed in the next section.

In summarising the New Order era, it is evident that the state played a crucial role in determining the expansion and narrowing down of political space, thus curtailing industrial militancy and the
effectiveness of organised labour. This intervention has also affected the broader civil society. The labour movement has undoubtedly contributed to the development of civil society; similarly various civil society groups have contributed to the development of the labour movement, as evidenced by the interest in labour issues and the emergence of labour-oriented NGOs and their dominant role in the Indonesian labour movement during the mid-1990s.

In the 1990s political space was available for the NGOs to engage in labour issues when the unions were constrained, just as the unions could further nationalism in the 1930s when political parties were severely restricted. However, when the student-led pro-democracy movement was increasingly challenging Suharto, labour was largely absent from the arena. This was both due to labour’s exclusion by other pro-democracy forces, such as students, as well as the reluctance on behalf of workers to sacrifice job security and the focus on industrial relations for the benefit of the broader democratisation struggle.

**LABOUR IN POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA**

Despite many gains in the post-Suharto era, labour remains marginalised and divided, mainly over labour’s role and what strategies to employ. The marginalisation of labour as a political and social force is not purely an Indonesian phenomenon; it is an inherent part of globalisation, with its mobility of capital and unravelling of the welfare state. In addition to a widely recognised chronic labour surplus, it certainly adds to the difficulties for Indonesia’s organised labour (Hadiz 2000b: 240, 242).

Manning (in Marks 2004: 158–159) cautions against taking the generally quoted figure of 40 million unemployed at face value, when the latest 2003 National Labour Force Survey in fact puts it at 9.5 per cent of the total labour force, or 9.5 million unemployed. Many people who have chosen to work less than full time end up in the aggregated figures that are commonly quoted. Manning argues that Indonesia’s main problem is not low wages, but low productivity, which is subsequently reflected in low wages. Aggressive minimum wage policies are only going to have an adverse impact on the workforce, depriving many workers of necessary formal employment, while the key issue is about creating
better job opportunities that contribute to higher productivity, which subsequently increases wages.

Manning may have a viable case, but it does not seem feasible that workers would stop lobbying for higher minimum wages unless they can see the benefit in relinquishing this most basic of workers’ demands (see Appendix). Once again, the key is education and awareness raising in issues beyond the shop floor.

In the immediate post-Suharto era disappointed activists observed that reformasi did not result in any greater influence for labour in the political and economic spheres. Amiruddin, a human rights activist with ELSAM, moreover concluded that the general preoccupation with macroeconomic recovery, including the need to attract more foreign investment, had resulted in reformasi being decidedly anti-labour (Amiruddin 1999: 28–29).

The weakness of organised labour spills over onto the broader democratisation movement. Emphasising that democratic reform is not the ‘exclusive preserve of elites’, and that active participation from the public and the subordinate classes is necessary, Young (1999: 71) expresses concerns that the absence of a strong labour movement will have negative consequences for the strength and durability of the pro-democracy movement.

On the other hand, the impact of Indonesia’s global integration has already contributed to a more mature, better-educated industrial workforce with a greater tendency to organise, and more importantly – with a growing working-class consciousness and identity (Hadiz 2000b: 243; Lambert 1997a: 14; Uhlin 1997: 48, 117). This development partly explains labour’s tendency to mobilise in spite of a repressive climate, which essentially is out of character for social movements.

Labour activists remain divided over labour’s political role, a legacy of three decades of depoliticisation. While some are still careful to separate the workers’ struggle from politics (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002), others like FNPBI’s Dita Sari want to take a more revolutionary approach and merge the two, stating that ‘the workers’ struggle cannot be just for wage rises, transport allowances, menstruation leave and so on, although these are important. The workers’ struggle is also a political struggle’ (Lane 1999b: 3). Foremost among the political demands is the abolition of the military’s dwifungsi.
Thus it is not surprising that union leaders who express political aspirations, like Muchtar Pakpahan, meet with resistance among their own members. SBSI even passed a resolution in 1998 to prevent him from entering politics (McBeth 2001a: 24). Despite this, many activists in 2002 hinted at Pakpahan’s political ambitions, and rumours that he would resign from SBSI to become the leader of the new Social Democratic Labour Party (PBSD) abounded. Pakpahan in fact faced the 2004 elections as the leader of PBSD while still the Chairman of SBSI (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002; *The Jakarta Post* 20 January 2004).

**Migrant Workers**

A new labour phenomenon has emerged in the form of female overseas migrant workers, commonly known as TKW (*tenaga kerja wanita*). Wagemann (2000: 313) contends that the Indonesian government has been turning TKW into ‘commodities’, earners of foreign exchange for the government. Between 1969 and 1974 only 5,624 Indonesian migrant workers ventured overseas on government-sanctioned schemes. Between 1994 and 1999 the official migrant labour scheme catered for 1,461,236 Indonesian migrant workers, over 400,000 of them in the year 1998–99 alone (Ford 2003a).

Many of the human rights NGOs and women’s NGOs, such as Solidaritas Perempuan, have made TKW a central issue in their programmes and network with other organisations regionally and globally for greater protection of migrant workers’ rights. In early 2002 all Indonesian migrant workers were still legally unprotected (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Nababan 9 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

The emergence of larger numbers of Indonesian migrant workers also means that the government’s labour policies receive attention abroad. In early 2002 migrant workers were causing the government great embarrassment by staging violent riots outside Kuala Lumpur. The protests concerned the deportation of Indonesian workers. Official statistics vary, but in early 2002 around 900,000 Indonesians worked legally in Malaysia, in addition to 400,000 illegal workers. After the riots Malaysia planned to halve the number of legal workers and ban the hiring of new Indonesian
workers (The Jakarta Post 22, 28 January 2002). Migrant workers were a hotly debated issue in Indonesian media in early 2002.

The debate has continued ever since. The Indonesian government set the Malaysian government a deadline of March 2004 for a memorandum of understanding regarding Indonesian labour in the formal sector. Without an agreement the labour supply would be suspended. The draft agreement has drawn criticism from civil society for not protecting Indonesian workers adequately (The Jakarta Post 11 February 2004).

With allegations that the labour movement in the post-Suharto era is weak and splintered, that trade unions are not democratically formed and labour laws still not in the interest of workers, some respondents interpret the increase in migrant workers as a sign that workers prefer to seek better opportunities abroad, rather than struggle to change the system at home (interview with Nababan 9 January 2002).

Legal Space Increases Unionism

Yet formal space for labour organisation has definitely expanded. Indonesia has ratified ten ILO Conventions dealing with concrete working conditions. With President Habibie in 1998 ratifying the Convention on the Freedom of Association, significant changes in military and political intervention occurred, although more changes are needed (Ford 2001: 108–109; Etty 1996: 2; Sundaram 2001: 1).

Habibie abandoned the New Order policy of ‘single-vehicle interest representation’ but maintained the formal industrial relations structure under Manpower Law No. 25/1997, which was only implemented in 2000 (Ford 2000: 59, 2001: 109; Hadiz 2000b: 254; interview with ACILS 9 January 2002). Furthermore, Pancasila as the only foundation for unions was removed in 1999, but the Pancasila Industrial Relations framework remains for the time being (Ford 2000: 82).

Under President Wahid, Labour Law 21/2000, which prohibits government or employers from denying workers the right to join unions or intimidating unionised workers, was introduced (Sundaram 2001: 2). Overall, labour activists welcomed this move, but noted that striking workers can be made to pay for the employer’s losses under the law (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002).
Decree No 150/2000, on severance pay and compensation to redundant or sacked workers, was also issued under Wahid. But protests from both domestic and international business communities resulted in a backlash with two new decrees in 2001, No 78/2001 and 111/2001, basically annulling any compensation. In addition the circumstances under which workers could be fired were also regarded as ‘controversial and seen as infringing on their right to legal trade union and protest activity’ (Sundaram 2001: 2).

The debate on how to strike a balance between labour protection and the mounting concerns that Indonesia is becoming unattractive for labour-intensive manufacturing has continued, particularly as the bid for foreign direct investment intensifies in the wake of China entering the WTO. In February 2003 the above decree and the old Manpower Law, along with eleven other pieces of legislation, were replaced by one all-encompassing Manpower Law (UU No 13/2003) (Waslin 2003: 11; MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 148–149). Basically this meant that the unions lost some ground, yet the new framework is still considered ‘one of the most anti-business in the region’. Whereas the larger unions, SPSI, SPSI-Reformasi and SBSI, accepted the new framework, it has been bitterly opposed by smaller unions and labour NGOs concerned with greater political reform (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 148–149).


It is the same situation for labour issues as before 1998. They have ratified ILO conventions, so many changes, but nothing has been implemented. It is only the political elite meeting international pressure. Many trade unions are corrupt, led by the [company] owners and backed up by government. (Interview with Sirait 10 January 2002)

Megawati replaced the 1957 law on dispute settlement with a new Law on Settlement of Industrial Disputes, Law 2/2004. The new law provides for the establishment of a special court for labour
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disputes, something that has been strongly resisted by parts of the labour movement due to its similarities with New Order structures that did not result in any fair trials of workers. Yet this law is a result of extensive tripartite consultations between the government, employer organisations and the labour unions. The benefits include faster, less expensive trials and the opportunity for both workers and employers to bring their cases before the court. For the court to function, labour unions, as well as the employer organisations, are furthermore required to brief ad hoc assistant judges (*The Jakarta Post* 19 December 2003, 26 January 2004).

It remains to be seen how the labour court functions in practice. Provided it manages to maintain its integrity *vis-à-vis* the state, this may turn out to be an institution where labour can provide some real input once activists have gained more confidence in the process and the various parties involved.

The changes ushered in under President Habibie encouraged an explosion in union registration and activity. Many of these newly registered unions developed from informal workers’ groups, established by what Ford calls ‘grassroots-oriented NGOs’, which she distinguishes from the political ‘policy-oriented NGOs’ (Ford 2001: 110–112). These originally informal activities can be characterised as examples of genuine social movement activity, where individuals have come together for the collective purpose of furthering workers’ rights, eventually seizing the political opportunity ushered in by the regime change to establish formal union structures.

The following figures give an idea of the rapid growth in unionism. While there were more than 15 new trade unions in 1999, in 2001 hundreds of small unions and splinter groups existed, often within the same company. In addition, 43 union federations had registered. Even the still existing state-sanctioned SPSI had splintered into three different unions (Lane 1999b: 3; McBeth 2001a: 22; interview with ACILS 9 January 2002). In 2002 labour activists estimated the number of registered trade union federations to be about 60 (interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002, Sirait 10 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002).

A viable economy is a problem not only for the government but also for the labour movement. Statistics show that ‘only 10–15 per cent of the country’s 80 million-strong industrial workforce is unionised and only a fraction pay dues’ (McBeth 2001a: 22). Even
SBSI, which has grown considerably, only has 300,000 paying members out of its claimed 1.7 million members. Together with the loss of international donor funding, this phenomenon has caused SBSI to downsize in order to overcome financial problems (McBeth 2001a: 23–24).

Restructuring NGO Involvement

With the opening up of political space in the early post-Suharto era, evident in the increase in political and media freedom, labour issues paradoxically became less conspicuous (Ford 2000: 59; HRW 2001b: 1). The political and legislative changes have certainly affected the labour-oriented NGOs, many of whom decided to reposition themselves and let the unions reclaim their position in organising workers (Ford 2001: 101, 113).

So many labour NGOs focused on labour issues before. But now, how are we going to change position? In order not to directly interfere with trade unions, but to strengthen the unions through education. Many NGOs now focus on trade unions and how to reposition, how to take a step back. Sisbikum focuses only on education, training and skills for leadership and political awareness. This is repositioning. Before, we directly organised the trade unions, not anymore. Now Sisbikum is only a facilitator. (Interview with Sirait 10 January 2002)

NGOs and workers meet and co-operate in solidarity forums like FORSOL, which includes most trade unions, the Jakarta-based May Day alliance consisting of 30 organisations and the FBLKB. Nevertheless, some NGO activists remain sceptical, stating that unions and NGOs were certainly allied before, but no longer in 2002 (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002; FBLKB 2000a; Lane 2001: 1).

One area where they do co-operate is women workers’ rights. Many activists saw the increase in street prostitution since the late 1990s as an example of women forced to seek additional income outside formal employment, but they nevertheless witnessed more women organising themselves in the post-Suharto era (interviews with LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Ibu Titin 21 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002). With women’s labour considered ‘a
poor people’s issue’, women’s issues are raised more frequently by both labour NGOs and trade unions, although they are not always addressed in specific programmes (interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002, Sirait 10 January 2002 and LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

Workers’ Mobilisation and Strategies

Workers have continued to mobilise during the post-Suharto years. The Labour Information Centre in Bogor registered no less than 148 strikes between January and August 1999. Workers’ demands have focused on basic rights and freedom to form factory-level unions, decent working conditions and compensation, elimination of repression and intimidation, changes in management and labour law reform (Humanika 1999: 4). The military’s ‘security approach’, intimidation and violence against workers, in particular, remain sources of discontent (Lane 1999b: 3; Kompas 21 January 2002; interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002, Sirait 10 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002). In addition, labour activists have been disappointed with the lack of support from political leaders like Megawati, arguing that she owes her winning position to ordinary workers and people (Lane 1999b: 4).

Other demands can be seen in the campaigns of broader civil society coalitions. FBLKB campaigned in May and June 2000 for the freedom of association and the abolition of a proposed labour organisation law (RUU Serikat Pekerja) that did not comply with the ILO Convention No. 87 (FBLKB 2000a,b). May Day 2001 saw the largest demonstrations since 1998, with at least 50,000 workers protesting in 19 cities nation-wide (Lane 2001). Most of the workers were FNPBI members, but they were joined by NGO activists from the May Day Alliance in Jakarta, among others. They demanded the International Monetary Fund’s abolition and that the government should reject Indonesia’s foreign debt. In addition FNPBI called for a 32-hour week and for workers ‘to begin the struggle for a genuine parliament based on people’s councils’ (Lane 2001: 1–2).

FNPBI has also accused President Megawati of liaising with the New Order’s main power holders, the military, business and the conservative elite leadership. According to Dita Sari, there is ‘the ever-increasing chance of the business-bureaucrat-military nexus trying to use “labour unrest” as an excuse for going back to the previous repressive era’ (Sundaram 2001: 2).
Referring back to the discussions regarding a definition of civil society in Chapter 1, as well as on Indonesia’s civil society in Chapter 2, this is one of the main reasons for not including business in the definition of civil society: namely that Indonesian business collaborates intensely with the elite and the military. In an authoritarian state business tends to have close ties with the leadership, if not by choice, then as a survival strategy. This is certainly the case in Indonesia, as evidenced in the major business holdings of the Suharto family and its cronies – the main targets of the protests against KKN, or corruption, collusion and nepotism.

Not everyone is as political as FNPBI. Although four labour parties took part in the general elections in June 1999 (Ford 2001: 111), activists contend that ‘workers are still the same, they fight for normative rights, and also rights of association’, with workers’ rights related to national policy as their primary concern, not broader rights for people in general (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

For social movements public support, or widespread public disapproval of the regime, is nevertheless as vital as the movement’s claim to be a moral force. Without these the movement will not succeed (Pakulski 1991: 34, 41; Tarrow 1994: 93, 124). FNPBI’s revolutionary strategy alienates some supporters and sympathisers, just as the more radical factions of the student movement did. While FNPBI is certainly at the forefront of demands concerning workers’ rights and democratisation, its revolutionary strategy creates problems for the other labour organisations and adds to the fragmentation of the movement.

Yet there is no denying that FNPBI also helps put Indonesian labour issues on the world map. In August 2001 Dita Sari received the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award as ‘an implicit international recognition of the role played by workers in the democratisation’ of Indonesia (Sundaram 2001: 1).

Workers’ strategies have also changed, most importantly in workers’ relations with the government, where new modes of cooperation have to be found. Many activists admit this is one of the biggest changes, and that it is difficult to become partners after having been in opposition against government for so long (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002). Others see new avenues for communication:
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Government is not repressive anymore, so there is no use to fight it. Jacob Nuwa Wea, the new minister of labour, was also in SBSI. There is no need to fight government when the links are there! Many ex-SBSI activists are now advisors to Ministers. (Interview with ACILS 9 January 2002)

Given the legacy of the New Order corporatist structure, it is quite ironic that former labour activists, who are now incorporated into the state apparatus, should be seen to facilitate greater government and labour co-operation.

Media Coverage of Labour Issues

After an initial drop in the early post-Suharto era, media coverage of workers’ protests has again increased (Ford 2003a; interview with ACILS 9 January 2002). The above-mentioned 2001 May Day demonstrations, for example, were widely covered by the media (Lane 2001:1). Yet while Wahid abolished the media censorship board, Megawati has brought it back again (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Sobary 14 January 2002). An editorial in The Jakarta Post (8 January 2002) even expressed concern for a new era of increased media restrictions, although the interviewed activists were divided over the truth of this claim.

In early 2000 the editor of Tempo magazine was attacked by a business owner and dragged in front of the police after publishing a controversial report of the devastating Tanah Abang market fire. The police did nothing to stop the harassment. This is clearly a worrying incident if it reflects a tendency towards renewed erosion of the freedom of expression. Tempo later lost the lawsuit filed by businessman Tommy Winata (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003:149–150; Tempo Interaktif 18 March 2004).

The strategic use of the media varies widely among labour activists. FNPBI, in particular, has been good at strategically using media coverage to raise awareness and sympathy for their cause, a fact that has contributed to Dita Sari’s popularity nationally and internationally.

Some activists recognise the need for labour to work together with the media in order to influence public opinion (interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002 and LBH APIK 11 January 2002; AWIN 1998:1–2). Others have been more reluctant to co-operate,
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claiming that while there undoubtedly is more media freedom, the media have been co-opted by business and focuses on political issues while neglecting social issues (interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002 and Sisbikum 10 January 2002).\textsuperscript{8}

For those who do not trust mainstream media, alternative media still exist, in the form of information published by NGOs, students and the underground movement (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002). Labour needs to become more skilled in using these various avenues in order to secure broader public support and sympathy for workers’ issues.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that the Indonesian labour movement has survived a long struggle and that throughout its existence it has been influenced by ideas and developments from outside Indonesia, although Marxist ideals about the industrial proletariat and class-consciousness do not fit the Indonesian reality.

The great changes around independence and in the 1990s resulted in a remarkable increase in labour activity and new independent unions emerged. Regardless of these peaks in activity, the labour movement has remained inherently weak and internally divided over roles and strategies. The post-Suharto era has seen greater political openness and major legislative changes, yet some scholars state that labour issues have become more inconspicuous. One contributing factor is the fact that strikes and demonstrations are more institutionalised nowadays and not met with as much openly violent repression.

The state has always played a crucial role in determining the expansion and narrowing of political space, thus curtailing industrial militancy and the effectiveness of organisational labour, particularly from the onset of the New Order. This has also affected the broader civil society, serving both as a restraint for anyone associated with leftist ideas but also as an incentive for new niches of dissidence and co-operation beyond the shop floor. While labour did not play a major role in the ousting of Suharto, both due to its exclusion by other forces and by choice, the debate about its role in the 1990s and the significance of the labour movement’s contribution to the earlier national struggle will without doubt continue.
Labour has undoubtedly contributed to the development of civil society and democratisation in the post-Suharto era, although labour in 2004 seemed more diversified and fragmented than ever. The labour-oriented NGOs and their influential role in the labour movement also need to be considered, especially in connection with migrant and women workers’ rights, two issues that appeal to a broader community beyond factory-based unionism. In the Indonesian context, with its legacy of repression, there is clearly a need to look beyond trade unions and class actors for a mass-based Indonesian labour movement.

In the 1990s political space was available for NGOs to engage in labour issues when the unions were constrained, just as the unions were able to further nationalism in the 1930s when political parties were severely restricted. This cross-fertilisation of ideas has taken place during most of the twentieth century and has undeniably contributed to the development of Indonesia’s civil society.

Having said this, there is clearly a need for deeper inter-class alliances in order to develop a stronger, broadly based civil society. Labour activists also acknowledge this need for alliances. The evidence of an emerging, better-educated working-class with a greater awareness of democratisation issues is a positive sign for a stronger labour movement – and imperative for genuine social and political change.

NOTES


2 Kopkamtib, the Operational Command for Restoration of Order and Security, was the central unit of the Indonesian government’s security apparatus from the beginning of the New Order until Kopkamtib was dissolved in 1988. It was replaced by Bakorstanas, the Co-ordinating Agency for the Maintenance of National Stability (Tanter 1990: 218).

3 Women workers are mainly found in the rapidly expanding light manufacturing sector, such as textiles, garment and shoes (Benjamin 1996: 83, 87). The manufacturing industry has grown from 6.5 per cent of the workforce (equivalent to 2.7 million workers) in 1971, to 8.5 per cent (4.4 million workers) in 1980, to 11.6 per cent (8.2 million workers) in 1990 (Hikam 1995: 300). The light manufacturing share of GDP went from 8.4 per cent in 1980 to 14.3 per
cent in 1990 (Benjamin 1996: 83), and amounted in 1999 to 15.6 per cent of GDP, which equals over USD 17 billion (Ford 2002a).

4 Yakoma–PGI (Yayasan Komunikasi Masyarakat–Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia, the Foundation for People’s Communication—the Council of Churches) is a Christian NGO that targets both religious and secular groups in its efforts to empower people. Its objective is to utilise media communication for the interest of the people, especially the poor, and the church. The Urban Community Mission, PMK, is affiliated to Yakoma and has a migrant worker division and an industrial relations division. PMK and its allied organisations publish a newsletter, Buruh, presented as ‘media for workers, from workers, by workers’ (Buruh 2001, No. 15, December 2001; interview with Nababan 9 January 2002).

5 Indonesia’s Legal Aid Foundation YLBHI, or LBH, established in 1971, is a nationally and internationally well-known human rights organisation that had aspirations of becoming the ‘locomotive of reformasi’. LBH also organised the labour NGO network FORSOL (Aspinall 2000: 149, 157). For information on Solidaritas Perempuan and LBH APIK, see Chapter 5.

6 Sisbikum (Saluran Informasi Sosial dan Bimbingan Hukum, the Channel for Social Information and Legal Guidance) was established in 1988 for labour issues by theology students, protestant priests and human rights activists. Its vision is justice and democracy for workers. This is to be achieved through the education of workers and awareness-raising activities, providing legal aid for labour disputes, community organising as well as documentation and information. In January 2002 Sisbikum had 11 staff, five of them lawyers (interview with Sirait 10 January 2002).

7 In 2000 FBLKB (Forum Buruh dan LSM untuk Keadilan Buruh, the Forum of Workers and NGOs for Justice for Workers) comprised YLBHI, LBH Jakarta, LBH APIK, LBH FAS, Sisbikum, Elsam, ISJ, Akatiga, Kompak, YBP, KPKB, SBJ, GSBI, ABGTeeks, SBM, FNPBI, KOBAR, SBSI Garteks, SBM SK, SBSI KIKES and SBSI Kamiparho. Its secretariat was at LBH Jakarta’s headquarters (FBLKB 2000a, b).

8 Nonetheless, Sisbikum uses the media extensively to further their cause (Ford, September 2002, personal communication).
Chapter Five

Women Fighting a Double Battle

Compared to the students and the labour movement, little information about the struggles and actions of women has reached outside Indonesia, although women constitute more than half of Indonesia’s population. Based on numbers alone women have the potential to form a mass-based social movement. They have moreover contributed extensively to the unity of Indonesia’s civil society in volatile times, possibly exercising a greater degree of cohesion across divisions of class and religion than students and labour.

In this chapter, the terms ‘the women’s movement’ and ‘women’ will be used indiscriminately to refer to various kinds of women’s organisations and activists, as well as to Indonesian women in general even though the regional, ethnic, cultural and religious differences can be enormous.

Feminist Laurie Sears (1996: 4) argues that it is an impossibility to speak of ‘Indonesian women’. While recognising the diversity of Indonesia, it is nevertheless problematic to discuss the Indonesian women’s movement without referring to ‘Indonesian women’, since this terminology is used by the activists themselves. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this does not imply any ignorance about the feminist critique against Western post-colonial feminist writing that seems to speak about a homogenous group of ‘third world’ women, ‘thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular “third world woman”’ (Mohanty 1991: 53 cited in Sears 1996: 5).
Differences are furthermore prevalent between women from various social strata of society, as well as between urban and rural dwellers, or between the centre and periphery. However, the uniqueness of certain groups of women and their specific circumstances has to be disregarded for the sake of discussing the women’s movement on a national level. In this context this is a valid generalisation, since in the words of Oey-Gardiner and Sulastri (2000: 6):

The major concern of poor Indonesians, half of whom are women, remains that of gaining access to basic services and facilities which others take for granted. This objective guides the activities of public institutions and women’s organisations and activities. While past achievements have been substantial, gender concerns have not received the attention they deserve.

Far from being a homogenous movement of any kind, a broad spectrum of activities and ideologies exists among various groups of women. Reychman (1997: 28–32) has made a rough but useful categorisation of feminist organisations, that is those with expressed feminist or gender-related objectives, into Muslim feminists, secular feminists (including less orthodox Muslims), and ‘solidarity’ feminists, whom she sees as ‘feminists in the bud’ even though they do not consider themselves as feminists. Solidarity feminists recognise that women face different problems from men, based on their sex alone. Their solidarity actions are mainly in support of poor women.

This chapter discusses the role of the women’s movement and women’s contribution to Indonesian civil society. The focus here is on secular women’s organisations, both feminist (such as Yasanti, Kapal Perempuan, LBH APIK) and the not explicitly feminist ones, namely Reychman’s ‘solidarity’ feminists (such as Griya Lentera).

Whereas most of the organisations discussed in this chapter are secular, the influence of Islam on gender issues cannot be ignored. The Qur’an may not be gender-biased in principal, but due to changes in society over time contemporary interpretations may be gender-biased (Fakih 1996: 135–137; Machali 2001: 8–9; Kompas 14 January 2002). As Reychman (1997: 28), along with many other
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scholars, argues: ‘the Moslem feminists fight a double struggle; the struggle against patriarchy and the struggle to make their claims go along with what is said in the Qur’an’. An analysis of Muslim feminists’ struggle would require a separate volume to do the topic justice. Given the parameters for this work, the impact of Islam is mainly dealt with in the context of cultural and religious frameworks that have circumscribed women’s actions.

The aim of this chapter is to assess whether Indonesian women, regardless of background, have at any time taken the opportunity to collectively mobilise and organise themselves in order to achieve social and political change. Assuming that collective mobilisation has taken place, what was it that triggered it, and what were the issues that united them? Did they network with other civil society groups, or are women’s issues considered to be separate from mainstream political, social and economical issues? And finally, what role did they play in the fall of Suharto and Indonesia’s subsequent transition?

The evidence gathered here clearly demonstrates that the turbulent political and social events of 1998 provoked a greater involvement not only from students, but also from women from all walks of life. The role and activities of Indonesian women have been heavily circumscribed by cultural traditions as well as by targeted government policies, particularly during the New Order. This chapter discusses how women have managed to overcome the obstacles posed to them by government, by their husbands or by traditional and religious forces through clever strategies, using the traditional stereotypes and constraints in their favour.

It needs to be kept in mind that whereas women have achieved greater political and social rights since the 1970s, and the women’s movement has shown a remarkable unity in times of crisis, women nevertheless remain divided over issues and how to continue the struggle in the post-Suharto era. Adding to the uncertainty are socio-economic factors that cannot be ignored, such as the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor is growing. Finally, contrary to what may be commonly believed, that Indonesia has had a female president has not helped to promote gender sensitivity in the broader society (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Sobary 14 January 2002 and Muftiyah 22 January 2002; Machali 2001: 4).
THE EMERGENCE OF THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

Throughout history injustice, inequality and powerlessness have constituted strong reasons for the establishment of women’s movements for greater social justice. This was for instance the case with the American women’s movement in the mid-nineteenth century. These reasons also led to the emergence of women’s movements in many Asian and African colonised countries, although these were born out of a slightly different context. In the colonised world the main oppressors were foreign nations; consequently, many women’s movements grew out of, and parallel to, national movements for independence and the struggle against colonial oppressors (Suryochondro 2000: 224–225).

The Indonesian women’s movement is no exception. All Indonesian women’s organisations of the pre-independence period basically had the same goal: to eliminate colonial injustice, ‘especially the social stratification based on racial differences’ (Suryochondro 2000: 229). Interestingly enough, it was not only the fight against the Dutch colonisers that occupied these women but also questions of equality, the impact of customary laws and traditions in limiting women’s advancement and the need for education to overcome these problems (Rahayu 1996: 29; Suryochondro 2000: 226–227).

The first Indonesian women’s organisation, Poeteri Mardhika, was founded in 1912 and was followed by many others in the following years. Their common goal was to foster ‘a sense of national belonging’ (Buchori and Soenarto 2000: 141). However, their aspirations did not end there. In their magazine, Poetri Mardhika No. 5, 1915, readers are informed that the objectives of the association are to educate women, to provide opportunities for women to venture outside the home and voice their opinion in public, as well as to strive for greater equality between women and men (Rahayu 1996: 29).

It is notable that at this time women and men fought side by side to achieve the nationalist goals and ultimately independence, and that women’s attempts to organise received strong support from their brother organisations. The reasons behind this were strategic, since the women were seen as convenient conveyors of ‘the aims of progress and freedom’ (Suryochondro 2000: 227).

Shortly after the Youth Pledge in 1928, the first Women’s Congress was held in Yogyakarta. The Congress is widely mentioned in writings on the Indonesian women’s movement, since it clearly showed how women’s social awareness had been raised during
the previous decade and channelled into political awareness. The participants voiced a unified demand for equal rights for women and men in a society that was considered unjust (Rahayu 1996: 30).

A federation of women’s associations was also formed on this occasion, the Perserikatan Perkumpulan Perempuan Indonesia (PPPI), consisting of 20 women’s organisations. All of the members were committed to the nationalist struggle and saw the women’s struggle as an integral part of it. They were furthermore committed to human rights and unity among all nationalist women’s organisations, regardless of religious belief (Suryochondro 2000: 228; Kompas 23 December 1999).

The PPPI underwent frequent name changes during the following decades, and in 1946 it became Kongres Wanita Indonesia (KOWANI), a name it has retained until the present day. The women’s federation in the post-independence era was still based on the principle of unity, thereby disregarding any political, ethnic or religious differences that might prove to be an obstacle in the struggle for greater rights, as well as recognition for Indonesian women and the aspiring new nation (Suryochondro 2000: 229).

As with labour, the development of women’s activities came to a standstill during the Japanese occupation when all associations and organisations were forbidden, except those that served the purposes of the Japanese. Women were obliged to join Fujinkai, an organisation that aimed to assist those less fortunate. Yet for the nationalists Fujinkai’s objectives were not compatible with their own objectives (Rahayu 1996: 30; Suryochondro 2000: 229).

The structure of Fujinkai resembled the structure of the government, from the top down to the sub-regency level (kecamatan), with the wife of the head of government forced to take on the leadership role, even though she had never led an organisation before (Rahayu 1996: 30). It is hardly a coincidence that there are strong parallels to the structure and aim of the government-backed women’s organisation Dharma Wanita, which was introduced during the New Order with an aim to empower the state through women’s support of their husbands. Dharma Wanita is further discussed later in this chapter.

It is worth noting that in all of these aspects – promoting nationalism, unity and a higher standard of education for the people – the women’s organisations from the very beginning seem to have sided with the new government to be.
Sukarno’s Liberalism and Greater Diversity

Having taken an active part in the prolonged fight for independence and no longer united around a single goal, the various women’s groups drifted off into different directions in the 1950s and 1960s (Rahayu 1996: 30). The Sukarno era saw women’s organisations move from a basically nationalist platform into greater diversification of activities, ideologies and strategies. While they all grew stronger and gained experience, some organisations consolidated their activities along the more familiar lines of charity and welfare, while others became decidedly more radical, despite the restrictions on political expression after 1956.

As has been previously discussed in the student and labour chapters, there was plenty of political space for associations to organise during the liberal era of Sukarno’s reign. Women also gained the right to vote shortly after independence in 1945 (Blackburn 1999a: 1).

Regardless of the political changes ushered in by Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, women’s activities continued to flourish and diversify. Some women’s organisations continued in the footsteps of Fujinakai, mainly engaged in charity and social welfare. Other organisations were closely linked with political parties or professional organisations. In addition, there were more complex organisations with multiple activities and objectives that promoted gender issues for all women, regardless of status or class. They did this through social work, through lobbying parties and the parliament, through awareness-raising activities, media publications and through demonstrations and protests. Among these were mass-based organisations like Wanita Demokrat (Democratic Women) and the left-wing organisation Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, Indonesian Women’s Movement) (Rahayu 1996: 30; Machali 2001: 2).

With its mass base and radical anti-imperialist agenda, Gerwani is of great interest for the study of Indonesian women’s activism in the past, since it represented an entirely new kind of women’s organisation. Gerwani promoted its own brand of feminism, developed by Wieringa into a concept of “militant motherhood”. Wieringa argues that it was less due to Gerwani’s ideological focus than the fact that it encouraged women to engage in politics, thus challenging the traditional realm of men, which made it
powerful enemies among more conservative forces (Rinaldo 2002: 2; Wieringa 2000: 137–138; Wieringa 2002). For an excellent comprehensive account about Gerwani, one of the first ever to be published, and women’s activism during the revolutionary period, see Wieringa (2002).

As the women’s wing of the Communist Party (PKI), Gerwani was severely punished in the aftermath of the 1965 coup. Many Gerwani women were killed and imprisoned for life, and they have remained outcasts in society until very recently (van Klinken 1999b: 16; Bianpoen 2000: 293; Wieringa 2002). Not only was the PKI brutally crushed following allegations of instigating the coup, Krishna Sen (1999:14) states that this incident ‘transformed the whole basis of women’s participation in politics’. Ever since, women harbouring political ambitions have been extremely cautious about being linked to Gerwani, since it carries a stigma of sexual immorality and unruly women (Rinaldo 2002: 2–3; Wieringa 2002).

The coup and its aftermath also had direct implications for the women’s federation KOWANI, which was perceived as representing the Indonesian women’s movement. Mirroring the political situation and the social upheaval at the time, all leftist women and women's organisations were immediately expelled (Suryochondro 2000: 231).

Thus, the crushing of Gerwani could be seen as a political strategy to discourage women, once and for all, from engaging in political activities. It served as a first efficient step by the state towards co-opting the women’s movement and constituted the beginning of a systematic depoliticisation and domestication of women that would last for 30 years.

NEW ORDER DOMESTICATION OF WOMEN

Suharto’s extreme control over society and the development of a corporatist and integralistic state has already been discussed, as has the close co-operation between the regime and the army. Despite the seemingly closed environment during the New Order, the nation was nevertheless open to influences from outside during these decades. The impact of transnational organisations can for instance be seen in the attention the Indonesian government suddenly gave to the role of women in development, after having
attended the UN First World Conference on Women in 1975. A few years later the position of Junior State Minister for the Role of Women was created, which was upgraded to State Minister for the Role of Women in 1983 (Oey-Gardiner and Sulastri 2000: 6–7).

This merely shows how multilateral forums can serve to influence a government by means of peer pressure, thus assisting the struggle of a nation’s civil society. Yet, the New Order was not particularly well known for its open-mindedness regarding women’s issues, the contrary was more evident. In the following sections the legal framework, cultural traditions and religious practices limiting the social, political and economic space available for women are outlined.

The Legal Framework

The 1945 Constitution is seen as a basic and democratic foundation by the majority of Indonesian intellectuals and activists, whether they are Muslim or secular, women or men. The Constitution does not contain any gender bias and does not specify any roles for women and men; consequently it is seen to protect the basic rights of Indonesian female and male citizens in an egalitarian manner (Uhlin 1993: 23; Wagemann 2000: 308; INFID 1991: 2).

Along with many other nations Indonesia has also signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has been formalised into the legal system through Law No. 7/1984 (Suryochondro 2000: 241).

Previous chapters have dealt with the tight control of civil society during the latter half of the New Order through the 1985 law on social organisations. Legal frameworks did not constitute the only restraint. In addition, the official development policy had to be supported by organisations and individuals alike. Organisations considered subversive could simply be dissolved. To show support for the official development policy organisations were to include health, literacy and other areas of government interest into their organisational plans, and formulate these in official development terms. This was a strategy many women’s organisations used in order to survive. As a result, the various women’s organisations showed a striking similarity in aims and objectives during the New Order (Wagemann 2000: 306–308).
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Besides legal frameworks and official policies there are other significant frameworks, some imposed from above and others through cultural and religious practices, which have curtailed the actions of women.

Cultural and Religious Frameworks

In order to fully understand Indonesian society and the challenges civil society now faces, the synergetic relationship between state and society cannot be emphasised enough. As well as the influence of the military and the corporatism of the state, the ‘family principle’ (asas keluargaan) is another example of how deeply ingrained the organic state was in both the public and private spheres. This principle described the state as a family, with President Suharto as the father figure (bapak) for a state and society heavily influenced by Javanese paternalism, ‘marked by deference to power and authority, [which] coincide with military norms of hierarchy and obedience to the command’ (Suryakusuma 1996: 95). Each family was seen as an important building block of the nation (Suryakusuma 1996: 95–97).

While the majority of scholars seem to agree that there is a paternalistic Javanese political culture, not all scholars agree that the Javanese concept of power is necessarily gender biased. Basing herself on Ben Anderson’s insightful research on the idea of power in Javanese culture, Machali (2001: 13) states that power in itself is gender neutral and that the ‘Javanese concept of power does not contain any gender overtones’. Nevertheless, there are numerous accounts of Javanese women being repressed by religious power holders, who happen to be men.

Mather (1988: 153) argues that whereas the promotion of similar kinds of values and ideologies exist in many religions, this is not enough to conclude that there is a universal patriarchal ideology. However, she admits that ‘patriarchal values subordinating women and youngsters are promoted, not exclusively, but most importantly, through mosques, prayer houses, schools, and other institutions […], all with reference to Islamic scriptures and practices’.

In her field research on women workers and the Islamic patriarchy in Western Java, Mather (1983: 4) describes what in the public eyes is seen as the most appropriate attitude for women, namely to be ‘malu’:
This refers to both the mental and physical attitudes of women, encouraging them to appear shy, embarrassed and retiring, deferring to superiors... Women are also encouraged to feel afraid 'takut' of new experiences and new people. The opposite 'berani' applies to behaviour which is assertive and forceful, and this is considered most inappropriate, even dangerous, for the women.

The negative connotations associated with assertive and forceful women essentially meant it was dangerous for women to be regarded as feminist. Not only were feminists considered odd, even abnormal, by the majority of people, they were depicted by the regime as radical elements, which in essence implied that they were considered subversive and, as such, potential enemies of the state (Reychman 1997: 24).

In addition to these cultural and political limitations, Wagemann (2000: 306) states that public criticism of the leftist women’s organisations and the experience of Gerwani served to ensure that the New Order had some loyal women’s organisations to liaise with from the beginning. Certainly the New Order regime did not hesitate to use this advantage to further circumscribe the political space available for women.

'State Ibuism' and 'Housewifisation'

Combining Indonesian religious and traditional values with those of the European bourgeoisie, the government in the mid-1970s laid down the roles of women in a document called the Panca Dharma Wanita. In this document women were restricted to five officially recognised roles. In order of priority women were to be seen as: wives (as appendages to their husbands), mothers (giving birth to and educating a new generation), organisers of the household economy, social workers and dutiful citizens (Rahayu 1996: 33).

Thus, women’s roles in general were domesticated and ‘reduced to social functions’, while women’s interests were officially restricted mainly to their families and social welfare. Additional expectations were placed on upper and middle class women, who were expected to support and promote their husband’s careers (Machali 2001: 2–3).

Outspoken Indonesian feminist Julia Suryakusuma has called this social construction of the domesticated woman the ideology
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of ‘state ibuism’, which virtually ‘defines women as appendages of their husbands and casts female dependency as an ideal’, while reducing independent women to ‘dependent wives who exist for their husbands, their families and the state’ (Suryakusuma 1996: 98).

While ‘state ibuism’ is a complex cultural, economic and political concept, ‘housewifisation’ is mainly an economic concept. ‘Housewifisation’ defines all women socially as housewives and as such economically dependent on their husbands, regardless of their own contribution to the household or whether they in fact are housewives at all (Suryakusuma 1996: 101). In practice both have served to effectively denigrate the role of women.

This attitude prevailed despite later amendments in the Marriage Act of 1974, which basically led to women and men being divided into different spheres:

It led to the women being identified as the domestic area, whereas men were the public area. They were separate – and still are! The government, the police, lawyers and so on continue to discriminate against women. Gender has to become a mainstream perspective, it has to change. But the idea of a woman providing service to her husband is very strong in our culture. (Interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002)

The ideal of ‘state ibuism’ was fully endorsed and propagated by the government-backed, militarily structured women’s organisation Dharma Wanita, which has been seen by feminists as a convenient government vehicle for controlling women and their families and immersing them in the correct kind of political and ideological thinking. Membership is compulsory for all civil servants’ wives and the hierarchical status of a member reflects her husband’s position in the civil service (Suryakusuma 1996: 99–100).

Suryakusuma (1996: 100) goes on to state that this essentially implies that a ‘double patriarchy is imposed on women: a hierarchy of gender is superimposed on the hierarchy of bureaucratic state power’. Dharma Wanita was established in 1974 as a government initiative, and it is referred to as a ‘functional organisation’, just like the other groups that constitute the state party Golkar (Suryochondro 2000: 235). Sen (1999: 14) concludes that at this point in time independent women’s organisations had virtually ceased to exist.
Given the government’s apparent low regard for women’s competence and potential, it is quite remarkable to note the extent to which the public and political space for women was circumscribed.

Government-backed wives’ organisations like Dharma Wanita or Dharma Pertiwi, the organisation for the wives of men in the Armed Forces, are considered a major setback for the Indonesian women’s movement by feminist scholars, since they primarily serve the interests of the husbands and the state. In fact, the early women’s organisations like Poeteri Mardhika had more in common with the new women’s NGOs that emerged in the 1980s than with Dharma Wanita. Similarities can be seen in their advocacy of equal rights for women and men, not only socially but also in politics, in education, and in the workforce – issues that are not raised by Dharma Wanita (Buchori and Soenarto 2000: 141; Suryochondro 2000: 235–236).

However, for the majority of women brought up in the traditional way with concepts like ‘malu’, who are not inclined to radical activism, Dharma Wanita and other similar organisations nevertheless present an alternative to staying at home and may even enhance the educational and social status of active members. Women have also been skilled at adapting state-sanctioned programmes to their local context and using them for their own purposes (Buchori and Soenarto 2000: 144; Rinaldo 2002: 6–7; interview with Ibu Titin 21 January 2002). Other organisations in this category include the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) and the umbrella organisation KOWANI, which was co-opted by the New Order (Wagemann 2000: 320; Rahayu 1996: 40–41; Sen 1999: 15).

**The New Women’s NGOs**

It was not until the early 1980s that the women’s movement received some fresh input with the emergence of new kinds of women’s organisations – the NGOs, which focused on both development issues and specific, but very diverse, problems in society. Larger numbers of educated and professional women, as well as transnational feminist networks and influences, account for their emergence. The concerns of these women’s NGOs have since the 1980s included issues such as violence against women, women workers’ rights, including migrant workers (TKW), careers and employment, equal representation and issues related to health.
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With the increasing participation of women in the labour force during the 1980s and 1990s, especially in trade and the manufacturing industries, the new focus on women workers was quite logical, as it was seen as a new area of concern by many women’s organisations (Benjamin 1996: 86–87; interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002). The significance of these new women’s organisations is that they strongly resisted co-optation by the New Order regime (Rahayu 1996: 32). In doing this, they showed a remarkable strength, clearly breaking with the conservative ideals imposed by the state.

The first of these new women’s organisations was Yasanti (Yayasan Annisa Swasti), established in 1982 by six female student activists in Yogyakarta (Sen 1999: 15; interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002). Their major concerns were to take action to combat violence against women and to organise women in the informal sector, starting with small-scale farmers and school leavers in Yogyakarta province. Both farmers and school leavers were seen as disadvantaged categories and generally discriminated against on a gender basis.

Yasanti’s vision is to raise awareness among women that they are capable of doing anything they want to do, in addition to eradicating discrimination and oppression of women. The methods used are skills training in leadership and small-scale business, as well as gender awareness in order to increase the household economy and raise awareness about gender issues in society. Regardless of the fact that most of the staff is Muslim, Yasanti is not a Muslim organisation and does not discriminate on any religious, ethnic or gender basis (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

Yasanti has built a reputation as a spokesperson for and educator of women workers, and is considered to have been successful in building solidarity and co-operation among female workers (Smyth and Grijns 1997: 15).

Women should have the right to organise, to have a say. Women have been very discriminated against, they have not been able to
share together before. I think women are the second social strata in society in Java. (Interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002)

Another example of this ability to address the needs of society and to formalise methods and strategies to assist women is Solidaritas Perempuan (SP). SP grew out of the women’s study movement in co-operation with a non-formalised group of farmers, all victims of government policies, who kept fighting for their rights. SP was established as a foundation in 1990, but changed into a mass-based association in 1993.

In the 1980s there were so many land cases in Java, but no women’s groups were supporting women in land rights – and women were often the victims! More than 100 families lost their land because of government development projects. So they started organising and defending the rights of women. It took two to three years to reach the stage where people said ‘We need an organisation, not only to rally or get an audience with the government; it is not enough!’ (Interview with Safitri 8 January 2002)

Since 1992 SP has spearheaded a group of organisations engaged in female migrants’ issues. SP’s political programme contains political and feminist education, as well as training about issues that affect women, such as environmental destruction, the impact of globalisation and new legislation. The Director of SP, Salma Safitri, firmly believes that her organisation and its supporters can influence the government and women to put the feminist perspective into regulations and legislation (interview Safitri 8 January 2002).

Strategies

The strategies women’s organisations have employed to avoid being co-opted or closed down are many. One that has already been mentioned is the effort to fit organisational objectives and grassroots’ needs into the policies and proclamations of the government. Another issue has been discussed in previous chapters, namely the regime’s tendency to view mass mobilisation as a threat to law and order, with organisation of the masses considered to be the privilege of the state. For women in particular, the traumatising
experience of Gerwani has continued to haunt any attempt to build a mass-based women’s organisation. Consequently alternative ways of organisation and mobilisation have had to be found.

The use of excessive violence and repression against peaceful protesters is a common feature of repressive states that regard any public protests as ‘potential riots’ (Tarrow 1994: 107). In order to avoid accusations of mass mobilisation and subsequent repression, most NGOs, including feminist organisations, have had no mass membership – only a core group of dedicated staff and volunteers (Reychman 1997: 25).

Some examples of clever strategies that deceived the New Order regime and the security apparatus were revealed by the interviewed activists in Yasanti and LBH APIK. The latter is a human rights organisation for women, established in 1995 by seven human rights lawyers. Its objective is to change the legal system to make it more useful for women. Like Yasanti, LBH APIK is also a staunch advocate for ending violence against women.

If you organised women factory workers, government did not give permission. In 1995 the situation entered a new era. It was time for change, for appraisal of women workers. If we organised women workers, the government assumed that ‘this is something illegal’. So we held activities which the community understood what they were. For example skills-training, sewing. In these activities we can discuss, we can share about the condition of women workers right there. (Interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002)

Human rights organisations in general were intimidated, through phone calls, letters, the military showed up at workshops and so on. APIK had the opportunity because we dealt with women’s rights. Taking the opportunity we used our stereotype that women must be taken care of, women have to be supported and sheltered. So it was quite easy for us to do some activities or demonstrations. The reaction was ‘oh, this is the women, we have to take care of them’. The women were even helped and supported [by the government] when taking to the streets demonstrating! They were ‘clean’ [peaceful] demonstrations with flowers. (Interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002)
The women’s movement also includes the university-based women’s study centers (Pusat Studi Wanita, PSW). The social research of the PSW provides information on women’s situation in various regions, information crucial for improving the status of women. Since this also benefits national development, PSW are supported by the ministries of Higher Education and Home Affairs, and their work has drawn interest from experts in other scientific fields. The PSW strategy is to get access to government funds and facilities for research, but also to grow stronger and more influential through their connections. The success of this strategic positioning can be seen in advances in the status of women within different government sectors. In 1997 the centres numbered around 70 and were spread over 27 provinces (Suryochondro 2000: 236–237).

However as always there is a fine balance between close inter-relation with the government and co-optation. Far from being satisfactorily resolved, this intricate problem continues to haunt civil society in the post-Suharto era, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The overlapping connections between students, labour and women have been mentioned several times. In addition, many women student activists joined LSM or established their own NGOs after completing their studies (Rahayu 1996: 32). All these activities and interests of, by and for women had resulted in a broad-based, diverse social movement by the end of the New Order.

The women’s movement has in recent years struggled to overcome two major identity and image problems: namely its perceived roots in urban centres, particularly Jakarta, and its middle and upper class base of activists (Rinaldo 2002: 7–8; interview with Setyawati 11 January 2002). Rinaldo (2002: 2) argues that this is an inadvertent consequence of the New Order manipulation of women’s organisations and the attempts to domesticate women. Although the women’s movement might have been seen as an ‘urban middle class luxury’ in the beginning, in the late 1990s the movement had diversified and was certainly no longer restricted to either Jakarta or the middle class (Sen 1999: 15).

However this does not imply that by the late 1990s civil society, in the form of new radical NGOs, had suddenly won a victory over the state and become the alternative for the people. On the contrary, there was still a firm belief both within the government as well as among the general public that NGO activities and social tensions were closely interrelated (Hikam 1999b: 230).
In summarising the New Order up to the mid-1990s, it is evident that Indonesian women started out alongside the men in the same nationalist struggle against the colonial oppressors. However the women’s organisations underwent profound changes during the New Order’s development-orientated regime.

Using both brutal and more subtle ways of repression, the government attempted to domesticate and pacify women in accordance with the *Panca Dharma Wanita* and the ideology of ‘state ibuism’, in order to make the role of women and women’s organisations reflect an ideal role of women as wives, mothers and service providers for the state and society. In addition to an inadequately implemented legal framework, women’s actions and initiatives were also circumscribed by cultural and religious traditions and practices. Thus women came to bear double burdens, imposed on them by patriarchy and the bureaucracy.

In this context – where women were struggling to literally break out of the imaginary glass cage they had been placed in by the New Order regime – it is quite remarkable to note the emergence of new socially and politically oriented women’s organisations, some of whom became increasingly radicalised by the very nature of their activities. These organisations cleverly used stereotypes about women to further their struggle and would not let their organisations be co-opted by the state.

**WOMEN LEADING THE WAY IN THE BID TO OUST SUHARTO**

The year 1998 was a watershed in Indonesia’s history in many ways, not least for the women, as it became increasingly clear that women’s concerns could not be separated from men’s concerns. Bianpoen (2000: 283) sees 1998 as a ‘turning point in establishing crucial roles for women in political agendas’.

It was also a year that brought shock and horror for the women’s community, as political tensions and social unrest were channelled into ethnic tensions that included race riots and the collective rape of Chinese women. ‘The May rapes’, as they were commonly referred to, were severely and openly condemned by all women’s organisers and sympathisers, so vital for the strength and impact of a social movement. In their protests against the May rapes, women furthermore showed the strength, determination and unity of civil society at its best. Paraphrasing Pakulski (1991: 66–67) this action
illustrates the ability of movements to create important issues, which mobilise a broader public, from daily events. Yet, like labour, women’s participation in the broader pro-democracy movement has been disputed and needs to be further examined.

Roles and Strategies

As the effects of the economic crisis intensified in early 1998, women were not only heavily affected but also worried what might happen if things did not improve, mainly fearing uncontrolled violence. Once again women cleverly used traditional stereotypes for their benefit. Using the mother image a group of young feminist intellectuals, who were also involved with the feminist magazine *Jurnal Perempuan*, began to sell cheap milk under the name of *Suara Ibu Peduli* (SIP), the Voice of Concerned Mothers (Kolibonso 1999: 335–336).

This solidarity act with poor women gained both sympathisers and supporters, morally as well as physically, among the broader public. Together with other women activists, SIP also held peaceful demonstrations, smiling, chanting and praying in public, thereby managing to avoid military repression. Their efforts drew great attention in both national and international media and, more importantly, attracted a new generation of women to the movement. They also showed political engagement in providing food for the student activists during the 1998 parliamentary occupation (Bianpoen 2000: 286–287; Kolibonso 1999: 336).

In using these peaceful strategies the women’s movement managed to avoid the alienation of supporters, caused by too radical or violent strategies, as experienced by some student and labour groups. Women also gained the broad public support so vital for social movements and strategically drew media attention to their cause (Pakulski 1991: 37).

Not all activities were planned and formalised. There were also non-formalised activities in the form of spontaneous gatherings on days like International Women’s Day, which was not condoned by the government as it was considered to have communist connotations. Another example was the Indonesian Women’s Call, Seruni (Seruan Perempuan Indonesia), that managed to unite women from all kinds of ethnic, religious and class backgrounds in one big gathering, expressing a united critique of the prevailing system and the oppressive regime (Bianpoen 2000: 287). For a
Concentrating on discourses of women’s activism during the reformasi period, see for example Budianta (2003).

Concerning women’s role in the pro-democracy movement, the interviewed women activists gave contradicting evidence. Some argued that women were an important part of the movement for reformasi and demokrasi (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002; Rinaldo 2002: 2). Others are adamant that women, especially women workers, actually achieved more than the students and that they had been active long before the students (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

The latter view is supported by Bianpoen (2000: 284, 286), who states that women activists were at the forefront of the democratic movement and that they co-operated across borders, regardless of their specific interest niches, in order to put pressure on the government. Differences of background and class did not matter, their united demand concerned ‘a new, clean, and de-militarised government’. In their unified moralisation of a corrupt system the women displayed some genuine social movement characteristics (Pakulski 1991: 36–37).

A different view is proposed by activists who, while agreeing that women took an active part in the movement, maintain that they mainly wanted to change the situation of women but did not have a common platform. And while the women did provide some support to the students, they did not support them fully and unreservedly (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

In this context one has to be careful not to generalise too much about ‘women’s’ concerns and demands, since differences in regional, rural and urban concerns can be discerned. In the rural areas the roles of women and men tend to be quite set, even conservative and old-fashioned, and many people remain largely ignorant about gender issues to the extent that they even question the need for discussing women’s rights (interview with Setyawati 11 January 2002; discussion with Bianca Smith 23 January 2002).

An overview of the New Order is not complete without mentioning Megawati Sukarnoputri and her party, PDI, who played an important role in the movement for reformasi. Whereas the role of the party has been previously discussed, Megawati’s contribution to greater gender equality will be assessed in the concluding part of the following section.
Despite internal differences of opinion, women did firmly unite around one issue – the May rapes. A Volunteers Team linked to the women’s information NGO Kalyanamitra published revealing reports about the rapes, which were initially vehemently denied by the government. Media coverage of the Team’s findings was crucial in putting pressure on the government and uniting individual women in a Statement by Civil Society on Violence Against Women, supported by 4,000 people (Bianpoen 2000: 289; Kolibonso 1999: 337). Tay (2000) also highlights the importance of on-line activism in drawing national and international support for the women’s cause. Through the use of the Internet, information was circulated, awareness was spread and international attention was drawn to the tragic events. All of which added to the pressure on Habibie.

A women’s delegation to President Habibie in June 1998, ‘the first of its kind during the past few decades’, eventually led to a favourable response and in October 1998 a National Commission on Violence Against Women, KOMNAS Perempuan, was established (Bianpoen 2000: 289–290). Through advocating legal and policy reform, KOMNAS Perempuan endeavours to work towards eliminating all forms of violence against women in Indonesia. Besides advocacy, legal services, publication of books, needs assessments for survivors of violence and support to district-level institutions in providing services for victims, they have also established a national dialogue inviting government and civil society to make a commitment to ending violence against women (KOMNAS Perempuan 2004).

This work is important, as legal protection for victims of domestic violence is still weak and the public debate has kept a low profile because domestic violence, as in many other countries, is considered a private issue in Indonesia. Yet there is no denying that most of the violence against women takes place in homes. Data from KOMNAS Perempuan for 2003 reveal that of the 5,934 cases it was involved in, nearly 50 per cent were victims of domestic violence and the majority of these (75 per cent) were wives of the abusers. Most of the cases never made it to court; only 162 domestic violence cases were ever heard. By 2003 KOMNAS Perempuan had registered 303 associations nation-wide that provided services to female victims of violence, among them women’s crisis centres and legal aid services (Pikiran Rakyat 7 February 2004; KOMNAS Perempuan 2004).
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Since 1997 women activists have been lobbying for a domestic violence bill (RUU Anti-Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga). In 2003 the bill, drafted by activists, was finally accepted by the legislature, yet the government has deemed it to be too controversial to be discussed due to what it considers an invasion of marital privacy, including definitions on marital rape. KOMNAS Perempuan had urged Megawati to see it through before the 2004 elections commenced, but to no avail (Pikiran Rakyat 7 February 2004; interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

Far from giving up, women have in this case once more demonstrated their ability to strategically work towards long-term gains for the benefit of all Indonesian women. In July 2004 the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dr Yakin Ertürk, paid a visit to Jakarta, specially invited by KOMNAS Perempuan. During his visit Dr Ertürk met with 30 women’s organisations, informed the Indonesian government of its obligations in ending violence against women and sent a strong message about women’s rights being human rights to all the ASEAN ministers (Kompas 30 July 2004). Women’s organisations have clearly become more assertive and sophisticated in their strategies during the past 15 years, not hesitating to use transnational contacts and international organisations as leverage against their own regime.

Regardless of the advances that have been made in raising awareness about issues affecting women, the women’s movement has been hampered by a lack of information about their activities and about gender issues in general. The need for increasing the strategic use of various kinds of media in order to also reach those who are illiterate, or can not afford to buy a newspaper, is emphasised by women activists and journalists alike (interviews with LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Sobary 14 January 2002 and Ibu Titin 21 January 2002).

While some organisations, like Griya Lentera, have made limited use of radio broadcasts and comics to get their message about sexual awareness across, others like LBH APIK have become more assertive, even calling for press conferences: ‘60 media groups came here for a workshop recently where our yearly report was presented. The media makes it easier for us to lobby government’ (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002; Kompas 9 January 2002).

The lack of information and the difficulty, particularly for rural women, to access existing information is a major obstacle to
the empowerment of women. With the decentralisation process still labouring to find its feet, it is increasingly important that both women and men keep themselves informed about developments in Jakarta and in their own region, and about the choices they will have to make.

News reports from the outer islands reveal that women in rural areas were enthusiastic about the upcoming April 2004 elections, but felt they did not receive enough information about the election issues to be able to make an informed choice. Besides widespread illiteracy placing constraints on their ability to access written information, the majority did not prioritise spending money on newspapers and very few listened to radio reports. In Kalimantan ideas on how to rectify the situation and educate villagers to become more ‘newspaper minded’ included mobile media and photo exhibitions, free newspapers for villages, and educational seminars about the role of the media as well as the implications of regional autonomy (Kompas 24 February 2004).

Complicating the matter further is the fact that Indonesian media are still very gender biased, even sexist in the way women are depicted in the news, feature stories and the popular soap operas (sinetrons) (interviews with LBH APIK 11 January 2002 and Sobary 14 January 2002; Kompas 21 January 2002; Aripurnami 1996; Sears 1996). In the post-Suharto era women are no longer silently watching journalists continue their ingrained reporting habits; on the contrary, women’s organisations are taking a pro-active stance and challenging journalists on this issue.

The media use biased words. For example, in prostitution and domestic violence they still blame the victims, the women. We went directly to media to discuss a strategy and to analyse their publications, for example the use of erotic language like ‘sexy girls’. We said it’s not gender-sensitive reporting. We have to educate the media! (Interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002)

Political Representation

In a confirmation of women’s newly found political power the second Women’s Congress took place in December 1998, 70 years after the first was held. The participants’ diversity was simply enormous. Some
Women Fighting a Double Battle

of them, like lesbians and prostitutes, had never been recognised before, whereas others, like ex-Gerwani members, could for the first time in 33 years speak in public. No unified women’s movement was created, but in the words of Krishna Sen (1999: 15): ‘For the first time in a generation they [women] were able to express their views without constraints. The networking that went on was probably of far greater importance than the congress itself.’

After the first democratic elections in June 1999 that for the first time saw a female presidential candidate, Megawati Sukarnoputri, and her party PDI-P win the parliamentary elections, many women started to reclaim a public and political role. They considered it to be a national issue of concern that women should have access to credit and be included in the administration on all levels of society, from village to state. Affirmative action was considered the most viable strategy for achieving this (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002; Machali 2001: 2; Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen 2000b: 326).

The 1999 Elections Law includes a statement that every party should strive for a minimum of 30 per cent women among their candidates. Consequently elections should result in at least 30 per cent women among the legislators in the House of Representatives. In reality women constituted less than 9 per cent of the legislature in 2000 (see Table 5.1). Besides reluctance by male party leaders to nominate more women candidates, the problem lies in the formulation of the law itself, since the 30 per cent quota is not mandatory. The law has drawn heavy criticism from civil society activists who see a real quota as the only way for women to achieve greater representation in Indonesia’s male-dominated politics. Campaigns for a revision of the law have continued ever since it came into effect. The viability of the criticism is demonstrated by the fact that in 2004 only a handful of the 24 parties contesting the polls managed to meet the required 30 per cent of female candidates (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002; Tempo Interaktif 5 September 2002; The Jakarta Post 11 February 2004).

The importance of recognising gender aspects for the success of Indonesia’s democratisation process is increasingly emphasised (Kolibonso 1999: 340; Mari’yah 2001: 107; Kompas 14 January 2002, 19 January 2004). Prominent social activist Fakih (1996: 163) sees two strategies as crucial for women’s future: first, to integrate gender into all programmes and policies of organisations as well as into
the educational system, and second, the importance of advocacy. These are exactly the kinds of strategies that all the interviewed organisations, as well as international women’s forums, have highlighted.

All issues are women’s issues and women cannot be separated into ‘women oriented’ or ‘women specific’ sectors. The feminist perspective must inform all issues and no aspect should be subsumed and/or marginalised (ESCAP 1993:73).

Q: What is your definition of reformasi?
A: Reformasi for women means demokrasi in both the private and public areas; that people have achieved this change.
Q: And reformasi for all of Indonesia?
A: The same! Women’s issues and issues for the whole of Indonesia’s people are indivisible. (Interview with Safitri 8 January 2002)

Fakih (1996: 164) stresses the importance of recognising legal obstacles that perpetuate gender injustices, not only in formal national laws, but also in the rules and restrictions of religious communities and in traditional law (hukum adat).

Table 5.1 Women’s representation in higher government institutions in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPR <em>(Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, People’s Consultative Assembly)</em></td>
<td>660</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPR <em>(Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, House of Representatives)</em></td>
<td>457</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA <em>(Mahkamah Agung, The Supreme Court)</em></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPK <em>(Badan Pengawas Keuangan, The State Audit Board)</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA <em>(Dewan Pertimbangan Agung, The Supreme Advisory Council)</em></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women Fighting a Double Battle

Women still have a long way to go in this respect, as the political turns around Megawati’s presidency in the June 1999 elections show. Whereas Megawati won 33 per cent of the votes compared to Wahid’s 11 per cent, the election ultimately resulted in Wahid taking power, despite women constituting about 57 per cent of the voters. Thus, women’s increased participation in politics has not translated into greater formal power, as Table 5.1 shows (Powell 2001: 14–15; Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen 2000b: 326–327; Sulastomo 2001: 55). This is partly blamed on the system inherited from the New Order and partly blamed on Megawati’s personality and preferences.

Megawati and the Power of Islam

The national Islamic congress held in Jakarta in November 1999 objected to the possibility of a woman becoming Indonesia’s head of state and moved to ascertain that this road would be barred to women for a foreseeable future. In an in-depth discussion of Javanese and Islamic power concepts in relation to the barring of Megawati from the presidential post, Machali (2001: 4–5) sheds some light on the controversy:

The core of the controversy lies in the interpretation of the concept of ‘power’ – which ‘aspects’ of power women are allowed to hold and which are prohibited. From the Islamic point of view, being the head of state has everything to do with aspects of power. However, in the case of Indonesia it is not enough to see the concept of ‘power’ just from the viewpoint of Islam, since women’s being powerless during the New Order era was a result of systematic repression by those in power. The dominant political and power system in Indonesia is the Javanese power system. Therefore it is important to consider also the Javanese concept of power, particularly because many aspects related to Megawati’s case can be attributed to Javanese political culture.

In Indonesia there are two main streams of thought among Muslims: those who support religious formalism and who would not allow a woman to be a leader, and the more moderate Muslims, who want to separate religion from the state (Machali 2001: 7; Platzdasch 1999: 346–348).
Quoting the Egyptian scholar Ja’far, Machali (2001: 6) states that ‘Islamic teachings emphasise that men and women are created equal’. Nevertheless, there are three different standpoints among Islamic scholars on the issue of women and political power: (1) that Islam does not recognise women’s political rights; (2) that men and women are equal, even in political matters and (3) women’s political rights are recognised, but limited to not include the right to be elected as head of state. Besides these, there are also scholars who argue that ‘matters relating to women’s political rights fall outside the sphere of religion, the Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and the constitution’ (Machali 2001:6).

This merely illustrates how complex an issue Islam in Indonesia is. While Megawati ultimately became Indonesia’s first female president, the issues behind the power struggle in the first post-Suharto elections have not been satisfactorily resolved, just pushed aside for the time being.

**Megawati and the Women**

One of the most severe criticisms against Megawati comes from fellow women, who state that since she appeared on the political scene she has shown no documented interest in gender issues (Machali 2001: 4). On the contrary, Megawati has often managed to anger and alienate women, as witnessed during the 1999 election campaign when she would not recognise the mistreatment of women by her own party members (Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen 2000b: 326).

Megawati’s passive attitude stands in stark contrast to the proactive stance of Sinta Nuriyah Wahid, the wife of Abdurrahman Wahid, who not only supported the calls for women’s political rights and an end to violence against women during her husband’s presidency, but has a degree in women’s studies and is a staunch social activist herself (Bianpoen 2000: 301–302; interview with Sobary 14 January 2002). ‘During Gus Dur’s period women NGOs were very close to the Palace. But then we were also criticised for being too close’ (interview with Setyawati 11 January 2002).

Representatives of women’s NGOs consider Megawati to be uninterested in gender issues and preoccupied with what she regards as political issues, not recognising that women’s issues are an inherent part of these. Her ignorance and lack of gender sensitivity is explained as a result of her middle class upbringing and political
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career. In the words of one activist, she lacks gender awareness since she comes from an environment that does not support women'. Nor does Megawati support affirmative action or special quotas for women, for example in parliament. If she had, she would not have signed the 1999 Elections Law, or at least changed it after the election. In fact, women activists felt more supported before she came to power (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Setyawati 11 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Ibu Titin 21 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002; Kompas 9 January 2002).

Social commentators see the prevailing shortcomings in gender awareness and gender sensitivity in terms of a long educational process: namely the need to bring feminist training not only to the grassroots but also to the leadership, including the president (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002).

The Way Forward

Where then do the women stand today? Despite the ratification of CEDAW, there has been no significant change in the position and role of women, because the general policy of the state has always been in contradiction with the Convention principles (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

Moreover, the women’s movement itself is considered to be too disparate and divided to have a significant impact, even if nobody denies that it has had a strong political influence in recent years (Machali 2001: 2; interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002; Kompas 19 January 2004).

New women’s organisations have emerged in the post-Suharto era, some with great ambitions to forge a common platform for women. One such example is the Indonesian National Women’s Coalition for Justice and Democracy (Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan dan Demokrasi, KPI), established in late 1998 (Sen 1999: 15; Katjasungkana 2001: 11). At the time a majority of women wanted a strong coalition instead of a multitude of NGOs. However, this did not materialise and in 2002 activists suspected the Coalition had splintered into different issue-based NGOs again, since little was heard of KPI (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002).

More recently KPI held its second congress, where one of the labour movement’s most prominent activists, Dita Sari, criticised the women’s movement for being splintered on too many fronts,
which she regarded as the inherent weakness of the movement. Dita’s criticism was dismissed by KPI’s secretary general, lawyer and activist Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, who envisaged a future with a broad women’s coalition with several platforms that could unite, if need be. KPI itself is an example of this, established as an umbrella organisation for a broad spectrum of organisations and individuals from 15 sectors, ranging from academics and professionals, to housewives, peasants and urban poor (Kompas 19 January 2004).

Nursyahbani’s stance is similar to the views of some former student activists, who consider the existence of a variety of issues and platforms to be a healthy aspect of Indonesia’s current democratisation process, not a weakness (interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

Despite the above criticism, there are nevertheless signs of unity, as evidenced in women’s broad-based support and active participation in civil society protests and demonstrations against KKN and BBM, the widespread corruption and the price hikes on fuel and basic commodities that have plagued the country since 1998 and that struck with renewed force in early 2002 and 2003 (Oey-Gardiner and Bianpoen 2000b: 325; Waslin 2003: 6; see Appendix). In the 2004 elections, the widespread corruption and the call for the prosecution of major corruptors have in fact become the main focus issues for civil society groups, in particular for women, who see the prevalence of KKN as one of the major shortcomings of reformasi (Kompas 19 January 2004; The Jakarta Post 29 February 2004).

While there is no denying that the political climate has changed radically, there is still scepticism about the role of civil society. ‘It is a New Order legacy that NGOs are seen as radical’, not only by the government, but also by many academics, states a researcher for Kapal Perempuan (interview 11 January 2002). Kapal Perempuan was established in 2000 with the objective of combating 32 years of New Order homogenisation of society and increasing primordialism by providing alternative education for women. Its focus is on feminist training and the dissemination of the idea of pluralism in the region.

According to the majority of the interviewed women activists reformasi has not taken place yet, or only to a very limited extent.
Their view that gender issues remain marginalised is supported by media reports and scholars (Media Indonesia 9 January 2002; Kompas 9 January 2002; Heryanto 1999c: 330; Mari’yah 2001: 110–114). The activist’s views are further discussed in Chapter 6.

What Indonesia needs for genuine change to take place is a new generation of uncorrupted leaders, greater representation of women on a national, regional and local level, increased cross-border co-operation between various parts of civil society in order to push the government to implement real changes, a new legal system, an end to KKN and equal rights for women and men in both the public and private spheres (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Setyawati 11 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Ibu Titin 21 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

CONCLUSION

With the wisdom of hindsight it is easy to conclude that a women’s movement definitely exists in Indonesia and that it has come a long way. It seems equally clear that despite claims of ‘new’ women’s organisations and the prevalence of new types of issues, such as the rights of women migrant workers, the contemporary women’s movement essentially continues a tradition that was initiated in the beginning of the twentieth century. The interlude caused by the repressive New Order regime proved to be a major setback, not only for the women’s movement but for Indonesian women in general and for civil society in particular.

The struggle against colonial oppression has been replaced by the struggle against other kinds of repression, such as legal frameworks and patriarchal cultural and religious traditions, which have severely curtailed the political, social and economic ambitions of women. Nevertheless, women have mobilised and organised collectively, and contrary to what is commonly believed women were at the forefront of the movement for democracy and reform. Collaboration with other civil society forces such as students, workers and the media has continued ever since, with the women taking on the demanding task of not only educating the broader population on gender issues but also the media.

The deteriorating economic and social situation in the 1990s served as a trigger for women’s mobilisation, in addition to fear of bloodshed, the breakdown of society and unprovoked ethnic
violence against women, as witnessed in the May rapes. These issues have managed to briefly unite the diverse women’s organisations along with their non-organised supporters and sympathisers, thus showing the multi-dimensionality and strength of civil society, and the ability of social movements to mobilise people in great numbers from all walks of life.

However, the unity did not last. The women’s coalition KPI, launched in 1998, reflects the tendency of social movements and ambitious civil society coalitions to divide along the lines of various issue-based activities, to the extent that they split up into a number of NGOs. Regardless of the perceived fragmentation it is important to recognise that each organisation and network enriches civil society, and that they are still able to unite under one umbrella if need be.

Sheer numbers alone, combined with multiple interests, vouch for women’s contribution to a greater level of information sharing among civil society forces in addition to vital co-operation across borders. Likewise, the impact of women in furthering co-operation and exchange of information between civil society and the state, through formalised and non-formalised channels, should not be underestimated.

Despite gloomy comments concerning the homogenisation of society during the New Order and the lack of alternative thinking among this generation of Indonesians, women have shown a remarkable strength in inventing strategies and cleverly using traditional stereotypes in order to further women’s cause. While they have come a long way, there is still much left to do before the aspirations and engagement of a precious few materialise into tangible gains for Indonesian women in general.

NOTES

1 For a comprehensive discussion, see Mohanty, C. 1991, ‘Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourse’ in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Mohanty, Russo and Torres (eds).

2 Many thanks to MA candidate Bianca Smith, Monash University, for posing questions about the perception of gender issues and women’s rights to women in the village in Yogyakarta province where she conducted her anthropological field work in 2001–2002.
PART III

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF
THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
Chapter Six

The Role of Civil Society beyond 2004 and the Prospects for Change

In the previous chapters three diverse Indonesian civil society forces have been discussed, and how they fit into the social movement framework has been reviewed. Their determination and efforts to overcome a complex set of legal, cultural and religious constraints have been shown, in addition to the political opportunities available to them and how they have used these opportunities to expand their political space for action in their attempts to bring about change in the social, economic and political spheres.

Although they have been treated in a somewhat generalised fashion for the benefit of the theoretical approach taken in this book, it deserves to be reiterated that never at any time was there a homogenous student, women’s, or labour movement. In a study of social movements this homogeneity is neither desired nor realistic. The key to understanding why mobilisation occurs is to analyse the major issues that cause various strata in society to mobilise and unite for a certain overarching cause. An analysis would not be complete without identifying crucial strategies, opportunities, constraints and alliances.

In this chapter the situation for civil society and democratisation in 2002 is examined from civil society’s point of view and compared with the widespread expectations in 1998 and the situation in 2004. The developments since 2002 serve as a good indicator of the accuracy and potential of the trends and tendencies that
were considered matters of importance in 2002. By analysing the intersections of the social movements discussed in the previous chapters and the broader civil society, the prospects for Indonesia’s future democratisation and the way forward are assessed. In doing this, four main sets of questions will be addressed.

First, four years after the fall of Suharto, what was the perception of the memorable events of 1998 retrospectively? Moreover, are there any lasting legacies that prevailed in 2004? Of interest is the categorisation of the popular participation of the 1990s, whether seen as a people power movement, a pro-democracy movement or indeed as a movement at all. Here the roles of the students, women and labour, as seen by some representatives of the other focus groups, are discussed.

Second, the issue of transition, transformation and genuine change needs to be addressed. In addition to the fall of Suharto, to what degree has reformasi been achieved, and in what sense? The main points in this section concern a growing nostalgia for the past, the role of the military, including the fate of Aceh and Papua, the efforts at decentralisation and macroeconomic recovery. A crucial, but difficult question concerns how to directly relate any achievements and shortcomings to the democratisation movement.

Third, if reformasi has not been achieved, what is then needed in the near future and in the longer term to bring about genuine political, economic and social change in Indonesia? Besides identifying weak areas of reform, this section also discusses the rampant corruption, as well as the 2004 legislative and presidential elections that at the time of writing were well under way. And finally, looking ahead, what role is accorded to civil society in Indonesia’s future development?

1998 IN RETROSPECTIVE

The emergence and trajectories of the coalition of activists and supporters that joined forces under the overarching umbrella of a student, women’s, or a broader labour movement have been outlined in previous chapters. While there are similarities, in addition to co-operation across boundaries and a certain amount of overlapping between the three focus groups, each movement nevertheless displays its own characteristics in terms of internal
rivalries, strategies employed, the goals striven for and the political space available for their actions. Students, women and workers – in the form of a variety of formal and non-formal organisations and networks, as well as in their individual capacities – have contributed greatly to the ongoing democratisation process, although their involvement in the reformasi movement took various forms.

Over time historical events and participants’ roles tend to be re-evaluated; the pro-democracy movement is no exception. In 2002 the perceptions of the 1998 events among a number of interviewed activists and observers were far from coherent. There was even disagreement on how to categorise popular participation in 1996–98. While some, like Indera Nababan (interview 9 January 2002), dispute the status of students as the leaders of the 1998 democratic movement, claiming instead that it was civil society or ‘the people and the dollar’ that led the movement, others acknowledge students as the 1998 leaders but perceive that they have lost this role and status in the post-Suharto era. These issues will be more closely examined below in the context of each focus group.

The Students

While the students were proclaimed internationally as the leaders of the pro-democracy movement, some students remain ambivalent about their role in the 1998 upheavals. Pointing to the small number of students in proportion to the population and the lack of any real regime change, a former student activist, who has moved on to become a university lecturer, stated: ‘the students gave an alternative for democracy, as a discourse. But the students’ role in the democratisation movement is not very significant’ (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

In making an overview of the past 20 to 30 years and particularly looking at protest frequencies, Hidayat, who does not believe in the students’ glorified historical role as ‘agents of change’, argues that the most significant and frequent protests were not launched by the students but by the people themselves – the workers, peasants and urban poor – although their participation in the 1998 demonstrations was limited and often separate from the students, who attracted most of the media coverage. He furthermore emphasises the shortcomings of students in understanding the high level of politics as well as managing to relate it to the basic,
everyday issues of the people. ‘They can not explain why Suharto must go… and they don’t come to the workers, the peasants and the urban poor and explain why democratisation is necessary’ (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

While some of the interviewed feminist activists reject outright the notion of the students’ leading role (interview with Setyawati 11 January 2002) others, like LBH APIK, acknowledge that students were the leaders in 1998, but stress that they lost their privileged status after that. Whereas women supported the students to a certain extent, their support was somewhat hesitant due to what many perceived as a growing attitude problem among students: ‘Students were seen as acting like they were going to a party, like they were some heroes. They thought they were ‘the beautiful ones’! They were more responsible before, not now’ (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

This lack of maturity among current students is also noted by other respondents, who regard it as a result of the new unprecedented openness in the post-Suharto era (interview with Setyawati 11 January 2002). Women activists also stress the fragmentation among students and the lack of a common enemy for students to unite against. ‘They are divided between each other, like the NGOs, like the government’ (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

As has been discussed in the context of the case studies this tendency to mobilise against something, such as a common enemy, rather than for various causes is typical of social movements. In this regard, Suharto served as the common denominator and unifier for a plethora of civil society forces. Once the president had resigned the major driving force and social glue of the pro-democracy movement had in fact ceased to exist. Tarrow (1994: 20) highlights the prevalence of factional splits as a common factor that contributes to dissolving movements. Former student activists even talk about an ‘implosion’ of the student movement, which after 1998 splintered into numerous small groups (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Other NGO activists and political and social commentators state that the students admittedly played a strategic role in toppling Suharto, but they are keen to emphasise that the students were far from alone. While students may have kept up the momentum, the pro-democracy movement was much larger than the students (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002).
In 2004 students continued to keep up the momentum, albeit to a lesser degree than in 1998. Nation-wide student demonstrations sparked by the acquittal of House Speaker Akbar Tandjung by the Supreme Court in February 2004, served once again as a reminder that fundamental structural obstacles to democracy remains. The failure to prosecute high-ranking officials, including Suharto, is just one of them (The Jakarta Post 13, 14 February 2004; Kompas 13, 14 February 2004). More importantly, it should remind the general public and civil society activists alike that in a democracy where leaders are elected, there is also an obligation on behalf of the people to provide the necessary checks and balances to the state and its institutions.

The Women

While some of the interviewed NGO activists argue that women were mostly concerned with their own separate agendas, they nevertheless admit that women did co-operate with other civil society forces on certain issues, for example on labour issues concerning both men and women (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002). However, this is one of the few areas where other groups of activists have acknowledged, or indeed noted, women’s involvement. Some women’s groups, like Griya Lentera, did not feel part and parcel of the broader democratisation movement at all. They hardly noticed any protests in Yogyakarta and felt left out, particularly by more radical Muslim women’s organisations, mainly because of differing views, target groups and activities since Griya Lentera deals with sex workers regardless of religion (interview with Ibu Titin 21 January 2002).

Taking an opposite stance, Solidaritas Perempuan clearly saw themselves as part of a larger social movement in 1996–98, united in a call for reform of the prevailing political, economic and social system. They argue that women spearheaded the more radical demands not voiced by students or NGOs at the time, such as demanding Suharto’s trial (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002). Their argument is supported by Yasanti (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002), who particularly stress the role of women workers in the broader democratisation process, while admitting that workers in general were not included in the 1998 reformasi struggle.
Others state that women wanted to change the situation for women in general, but that their issues and strategies varied. While supporting each other, there was no common platform and a serious lack of a strong leader with the power to unite the women’s movement (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002). This situation is typical of social movements, as they are seldom controlled by one organisation or one single leader. Furthermore they often lack a clear membership since they are often informally developed from a range of organisations, individuals, supporters and sympathisers (Tarrow 1994: 6, 15).

The women’s movement in 2004 was still splintered into a number of NGOs and networks with their own agendas and issues. Although these may frequently overlap, most issues do not seem to unite the women enough to form a movement. There is one exception to this: the call for an end to corruption, which once again leads back to the issue of morality, or in this case the lack of morality. Like the students, this is the one objective the majority of women can agree upon.

However, they do not necessarily need to express their stance within the boundaries of a women’s movement. In a pre-election demonstration in Central Jakarta female members of the People’s Movement for Justice displayed a sign stating ‘Corruption is the hobby of power holders’, while warning the public against electing corrupt politicians in the upcoming elections, as well as calling for Golkar’s dissolution and the trial of human rights abusers and corrupt citizens (The Jakarta Post, 29 February 2004).

The Labour Movement

As with the women, workers have been accused of mainly campaigning for their own rights and being more concerned with production-related issues than with broader democratisation (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002). Women activists have also criticised the labour movement for its absence from the political scene in 1998 (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

This behaviour pattern mirrors tendencies of social movements in other parts of the world. While it often is problematic to discern the boundaries of social movements, unions are usually categorised as ‘second-tier’ groups that are not closely linked to the core concerns of the movements (Pakulski 1991: 43–44). Despite this, they still
do have an impact, which representatives of the labour movement are keen to emphasise. In 1996–98 the state-sanctioned SPSI was still the only official union, but workers nevertheless supported the students and demonstrated for *demokrasi* and *reformasi*. The two main explanations commonly given for the absence of workers in 1998 were simply that many workers did not feel comfortable criticising the government after 30 years of repression. They were also concerned about losing their jobs (interviews with ACILS 9 January 2002 and Muftiyanah 22 January 2002).

Some student activists consider workers’ protests much more significant in the longer term than students’ protests. This is a valid comment, given the short-lived nature of being a student, as well as the perceived lack of a broader context and links to what is seen as the real world outside the campus. Hidayat points to the fact that not only manufacturing workers, but also white-collar workers in the banking sector and the stock exchange openly expressed their disillusion, sparked by the many bank liquidations in the wake of the economic crisis (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Taking a broader, more openly political stand than the majority of unionised workers, the labour NGOs saw themselves as an inherent part of the *reformasi* movement. It was a radicalisation process, to criticise the government system, to make people aware of the system and how to organise. We believe that our people have the potential to criticise not only our government, but also our society. We are not only meeting political issues of reformation, but also other aspects of life, like labour legislation issues and economic reformation. (Interview with Sirait 10 January 2002)

In discussing a media topic that was hotly debated at the time about the forthcoming Trisakti murder trials, labour activists dismissed this call for justice as ‘not important’ for labour issues, thus again drawing a clear line between labour issues and political issues that concern a broader civil society (interview with Sirait 10 January 2002; *The Jakarta Post* 10 January 2002).

This prevailing division of interests between students, workers and women is regarded by many activists as a New Order legacy, when civil society groups were purposely divided so they could not join forces (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002). It also illustrates a division between old and new social movements, with
labour representing the old type of movement, whereas for example environmental, feminist, peace and human rights movements belong to the new type of movements, which may have radically different and more flexible ideas about their collective identity, their strategies and orientation (Kriesi 1996: 158).

Workers’ confidence has nevertheless increased significantly over the past decade. In 2002 the increase in workers’ activity was manifested in strikes, demonstrations and greater media coverage. ‘Workers were not able to publish, to be seen in the press during Suharto. They are able to now, which makes it look bad, although in reality it is better’ (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002; see Appendix).

The tendencies to separate political issues from industrial relations have continued, as well as the restructuring of labour NGO involvement. The major unions have focused solely on labour interests, as evidenced in the case of the 2003 Manpower legislation and the 2004 Law on the Settlement of Industrial Disputes, whereas the smaller unions have collaborated with labour NGOs not only in industrial relations but on issues concerning broader political, economic and social reform (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 149; The Jakarta Post 19 December 2003, 26 January 2004; Tempo Interaktif 8 March 2004).

A People Power or Democracy Movement?

The interviewed activists’ views differ on how to characterise the 1998 movement that brought Suharto down. Whereas a union representative states that it definitely was a people power movement from below, similar to the 1986 Philippine experience (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002), women’s representatives are divided on this issue.

While Yasanti (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002) considers it to be a true people power movement that ousted Suharto, LBH APIK, who also deals with women workers’ issues, disagrees stating the division over different issues among the protesters as a sign that it was no coherent movement. Neither would LBH APIK characterise it as a democracy movement, mainly because of its limited achievements. Yet, this does not prevent LBH APIK from depicting itself as part of an ongoing ‘democratisation movement’ (interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).
Taking a similar stance, a representative for the renowned human rights organisation YLBHI does not want to characterise the 1998 movement as a democracy movement, ‘since the regime still exists until now’. He prefers to regard it as a people’s movement, because so many people openly expressed their disillusion with the Suharto regime. ‘Like in the Philippines, it was just a people’s movement to topple someone, but not the regime’ (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

Indonesian activists often refer to the Philippines; parallels are also drawn to the popular movements in Thailand in the 1990s and to South Korea. While acknowledging some similarities with these movements, former student activist Hidayat emphasises that it was different in Indonesia. Whereas he does not doubt the power of civil society, he expresses scepticism about the students’ glorified role. Pointing to the lack of regime change he even speculates whether regime transformation has to be initiated by the elite in Indonesia. This line of thought follows the dominant democratisation literature that emphasises conflicts within the ruling elite as a prerequisite for democratic transition (see O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Additional Indonesian characteristics that have previously been discussed concern the significant role of the military in 1998 in attempting to avoid a coup, and the perceived ignorance or ‘backwardness’ of the majority of the population (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Other political and social commentators characterise the pro-democracy movement as ‘a movement very much driven by reaction’ that made it difficult for the various groups to unite and draw up a new vision for the country once Suharto had resigned (interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002). As mentioned previously, this mobilisation against one enemy is a common social movement characteristic. Furthermore, movements do not compete for institutional political power and they often lack defined platforms and programmes, which partly explains the perceived fragmentation of the movement once the old strongman had been removed. Social movements are nevertheless an important part of the national power struggle (Pakulski 1991: 36–37; Tarrow 1994: 26).
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REFORMASI – ACHIEVEMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS

Many observers were quick to express scepticism, commenting that under Habibie the New Order institutions had been reinstated and reused without any significant reform. By 1999 the need for more radical transformation in order to achieve true political and social change was already being voiced (Mangunwijaya 1999: 10; Budiman 1999a: 7; van Klinken 1999a: 2).

Four years after Suharto’s resignation the euphoria had settled and a sense of disillusion with the slow pace of transformation and democratisation loomed large among national and international activists, scholars and observers. This was also evidenced in the predominantly negative assessment of Megawati’s achievements after one year in office (interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002, Sirait 10 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002; Kompas 24 July 2002; The Jakarta Post 23, 24, 26 July 2002). According to political analysts Megawati’s broad coalition government, where many parties represented powerful anti-reform forces with links to the New Order, only exacerbated her own indecisiveness and tendency to inaction, as well as exposed her lack of political ideology or agenda. Her strained relationship with her vice-president Hamza Haz, leader of the United Development Party (PPP), was identified as one of the major problems (Sherlock 2002: 2).

Six years after Suharto’s fall, not only was disillusion widespread, a decidedly more dangerous nostalgia for the past was growing in the face of what was perceived as weak leadership, increasing social and economic inequity, growing regional competition as a result of decentralisation, looming threats to national unity in the form of ethnic and religious tensions and a loss of direction for transformasi and reformasi (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004; Shari 2004: 58; Kenward 2004: 32). In a national survey conducted by the Asia Foundation at the end of 2003 a strong leader like Suharto, willing to make swift decisions and restore order, was desired by 53 per cent of the population even if it implied considerable reductions in freedom and civil rights (Radio Singapore 7 January 2004).

This nostalgia for the past, characterised by predominantly positive remembrances of the Suharto era and a longing for stability, was already evident in 2002. Considered to be an expression of people’s self-deceit, it was nevertheless seen as a disturbing tendency in need of close monitoring. ‘To force a president to step
down, that was easy, but how to create a compact new local scene and administration with a totally new spirit, that is very difficult’ (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002). The political reforms have undoubtedly created a slower, more complicated system than people were used to under the heyday of Suharto’s rule, but that is an inevitable part of democratisation (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 153).

More importantly, the political, legislative and constitutional reforms that have been made to date should ensure that there is no repeat of the 1950s, when democratic aspirations were crudely crushed. In summarising the major reforms since 1998 the impressive list includes: transforming Indonesia into an electoral democracy; freedom of press and association; abolishing the doctrines of monoloyalitas and ‘floating mass’; securing the presidential tenure against parties’ attempts to remove the president; making the president accountable to the electorate; decentralisation of power to the regions; new labour legislation; new financial laws guaranteeing increased fiscal transparency and monitoring; civil service reform; the establishment of independent institutions such as the National Law Commission, the General Elections Commission, the Constitutional Court, and the Supreme Audit Agency; and last but not least, involving civil society organisations, the media and international observers in various monitoring processes (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 152–153; The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004; Antlöv 2003: 200, 209–210; Hamilton-Hart 2001: 69–73).

There is no doubt that the current political climate is decidedly different from the late 1950s, with a new freedom of expression, increased transparency in policy making and governance, military and judiciary reforms on the agenda, the lack of any communist threat and the independence struggle fast becoming a distant memory in the minds of the majority.

The radical change in political climate can be illustrated by the unprecedented outspokenness and freedom of Indonesian media. Journalists and editors have truly managed to shake off the shackles of censorship and repression and the media have risen to become one of the nation’s strongest democratic assets. Internews Indonesia country director Kathleen Reen hailed Indonesian media in mid-2003 ‘as the freest and most dynamic of South East Asian media’ (USINDO 2 July 2003).
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Despite these substantial democratic gains, whose importance should not be minimised, there is nevertheless a possibility that the 2004 elections will have ushered in a more authoritarian government. The reasons for this are further discussed below, in the context of problem areas and reforms that will be needed to secure the future democratisation process. Such a democratic backlash, even though it may be temporary, could be brought about by continued slow macroeconomic recovery in combination with increasing socio-economic hardship and regional volatility.

Some parties are adept at using the nostalgia for the past in their election campaigns, as discussed later in this chapter. At the moment there are no guarantees that the democratisation process will continue in the foreseeable future, at least not at this pace. Yet, given the changes discussed above and those further discussed below, it would be safe to conclude that Indonesia will not experience a return to a repressive New Order, although the incoming government and president might well be less democratic than earlier administrations.

The Military, Aceh and Papua

Despite the promise of military reforms, the military is still a considerable force to take into account and uncertainty surrounds their future role. While there is widespread agreement that the military has behaved reasonably well and in accordance with the constitution for the first six years of the post-Suharto era, apprehensions are mainly based on a widespread belief that military reforms have so far only been superficial and that further reform would require a more committed leadership than the one currently in power.

Sherlock (2002: 1) commented in late 2002 that ‘Megawati has been unable to confront the vested interests in Indonesia who oppose political reform, including the still-powerful military’. In this respect nothing had changed by mid-2004. On the contrary, the Anti-Terrorism Law and the new Military Bill constitute a window of opportunity for staunch anti-reform elements within the military and a means for retrieving some of the power that has been lost.

The failure to uphold peace in Aceh has further boosted the power of the military. Harsher measures on terrorism have meant that the military’s ‘security approach’ has been revived. A martial
law decree signed in May 2003 launched a six-month military operation with the objectives of restoring law and order, reinstating a civil government and providing humanitarian assistance to war-torn Aceh. It was then extended for another six months, with the justification that the developments made since May had to be ‘maintained and increased’ for the sake of national unity (Kompas 19 November 2003; The Jakarta Post 19 May, 19 November 2003; HRW 2003a). In reality this meant that the civilian government was suspended.

Surprisingly, the first decree did not create any ripples on the surface of national politics. Instead the nationalist concerns expressed by Megawati seem to have been embraced by all political leaders, as well as by the largest mainstream Islamic organisations, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (MacIntyre and Resodudarmo 2003: 134; Sherlock 2003: 8). Recognising the power of the media to sway public opinion, TNI (the national army) swiftly took control of all media links in a move similar to the US military policy on the media in Iraq. TNI even set up 50 undercover journalists to report ‘patriotically’ on events in Aceh (USINDO 3 July 2003).

The military operation was condemned by scholars and human rights activists, nationally and internationally. Their criticism concerned the fact that a military offensive was again prioritised over humanitarian and economic assistance to civil society. During Suharto’s regime Aceh was a military operations zone for ten years; Habibie ended the military operations in August 1998. This created high expectations among the Acehnese who hoped for justice, recognition of past abuses and increased local political power, including the launch of political parties (HRW 2003c; Sherlock 2003: 4, 9; The Jakarta Post 19 November 2003; Tempo Interaktif 20 October 2003). Their hopes have not materialised. Several years down the track the Acehnese people are experiencing a return to the past, instead of democratic reform.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) documentation of Aceh under martial law makes for disturbing reading. As could be expected the documented military abuse against civilians, including summary executions, arrests and beatings, has been flatly rejected by the Indonesian government. In December 2003 the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), which has been fighting for an independent state since 1976, was publicly labelled a ‘terrorist organisation’ by
Indonesia’s ambassador to the UK, Sudarsono. HRW considers it a worrying statement if it reflects prevailing government sentiments, since Sudarsono is seen as part of the government’s more reform-minded faction (HRW 2003a; HRW 2003c; The Jakarta Post 19 November 2003). Sherlock (2003: 7–8) stresses that GAM’s Islamic identity is an expression of Acehnese identity, not of any Islamic fundamentalism per se. In fact, there is no evidence of any links between GAM and international terrorist networks.

According to an ELSAM report released in late 2003 the Acehnese people have paid a high price. In addition to nearly 1,200 people killed since May 2003, economic and social problems are rampant, with thousands of displaced people, increasing poverty, widespread unemployment, and a generation of uneducated children (The Jakarta Post 19 November 2003; HRW 2003a). Clearly the democratic reform attempts in relation to the military and the situation in Aceh have fallen well short of expectations. The military emergency was downgraded to civil emergency status in May 2004, bringing the administration back under civilian authority.

In order to avoid a parallel to East Timor’s secession, Aceh and Papua, two of the most resource-rich provinces in Indonesia, have both been granted extended self-determination under the law on special autonomy (Law No. 21/2001). It was only enforced in Aceh in January 2003, but has led to very limited economic and political change in reality. The most obvious changes concern the religious sphere: namely the enforcement of an Islamic dresscode, Islamic law (shariah), and a name change to Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (HRW 2003b). As long as the issue of self-determination is not addressed properly, the Acehnese will not accept this limited special autonomy (Sherlock 2003: 4–5).

Similarly in Papua, with no enabling legislation in place there has been little benefit from the special autonomy so far. In contradiction to Law 21/2001 Papua was officially split into two provinces during Habibie’s reign, yet this was not enforced until 2003. The controversial measures are regarded as an attempt to put pressure on the Free Papua Movement (OPM), as well as suspending the full implementation of the special autonomy law, since power-holders in Jakarta fear this might lead to secession. For Papua the special autonomy law is undoubtedly the key to future prosperity and greater influence in provincial governance. For instance, it grants Papua the right to 80 per cent of its forestry and
fishery revenues, as well as 70 per cent of revenues from gas, oil and mining (The Jakarta Post 18 February 2004; HRW 2003b).

For the local people who have become accustomed to witnessing a one-way flow of resources out of the region, these changes would indeed mean an enormous shift towards increasing financial and political power, and the opportunity to do an overhaul of the social sector that has long been overdue.

Thus it is not surprising that Indonesian political observers in 2004 – the year when military representation in parliament was supposed to end – expressed distrust in the process and questioned the military’s intentions, stressing that the military influenced the political agenda during 2003 to a considerable extent, on a national as well as a regional level. The situations in Papua and Aceh are clear examples of this tendency, as is the number of retired high-ranking members of the military in political parties and in the Regional Representative Councils. Cynical political and social observers fear a greater indirect involvement in civilian institutions will replace the current direct involvement of the military, and that the decentralisation process could be manipulated for military purposes via their ingrained territorial networks (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004).

It remains to be seen if this is just a conspiracy theory, or if it contains some substance. Although reforms have been initiated and military power has been reduced since 1998, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is evident that there is still much to be done in this area.

Decentralisation and Regional Autonomy

While most villages still have to endure the presence of the Babinsa, the Village Guidance Army Officer, their power has diminished considerably and they have not been able to hinder Indonesia’s ambitious decentralisation process from taking off (Antlöv 2003: 210). Law 22/1999 laid down the framework for the regional autonomy, but it was not implemented until January 2001 when the number of provinces officially increased from 27 to 32 and Papua was split in two. Antlöv (2003: 200) calls the new regulations ‘a quiet revolution in the countryside’, a major democratic breakthrough that redefines the relationship between villages and government, and transforms villagers from ignorant ‘objects of development’ into citizens with the right to decide their own future in a democratic manner.
Yet, the new regulations were not hailed with great enthusiasm in the urban centres a year after their implementation. Many respondents thought the timing could not have been worse. The nation had already enough problems without having to add to the chaos by implementing one of the most extensive decentralisation processes ever undertaken (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002 and Sobary 14 January 2002). Others added that the regional reforms had not been implemented properly and feared that greed, power politics and growing primordial sentiments would split the nation. ‘The way everybody tries to manipulate, using all the elements of the local culture, local values, for their own gains – that’s the problem’ (interview with Setyawati 11 January 2002).

While scholars acknowledge the existence of these negative tendencies towards ‘intolerance and ethnic chauvinism’, and media reports reveal a disturbing lack of political co-operation at a regional level, in the rural areas the new legislation has nevertheless created great expectations (Antlöv 2003: 208–209; The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004). And rightly so, as the new law clearly outlines that the basis for the new regulations on village government is ‘diversity, participation, genuine autonomy, democratisation and people’s empowerment’. Even though these concepts reflect high moral principles whose practice may be fairly shallow, there is a sense of real change in the law. (Antlöv 2003: 208)

With the abolition of the principles of mono-loyalty to Golkar and the ‘floating mass’, politics have suddenly come to the villages. For the first time in three decades village heads have become accountable to the villagers, not only to the district and central government. It will certainly take time to overcome the New Order legacy and build democratic, autonomous village institutions and communities, but the opportunities are there. The benefits for the local community can be measured by more dedicated leaders, less corruption as public scrutiny increases and a widespread knowledge about democratic procedures. In Antlöv’s words, these reforms imply that ‘institutions can be adapted to local needs and wisdom. These are real and meaningful changes’ (Antlöv 2003: 200, 209–210).

While the local communities have gained more power, provincial governors are concerned that they are being bypassed in the
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routine dealings with the central government, since the legislation has devolved power directly to the districts (The Jakarta Post 25 September 2003). Despite both legislative and real gains in bringing democracy to the villages, an Asia Foundation report of the progress made since the autonomy legislation was introduced reveals that not all provinces have managed to fully implement the autonomy. Local legislative councils are identified as one of the main obstacles; in many instances councils have been unable to respond to the expressed needs of the local community (The Jakarta Post 28 January 2004).

For civil society activists building on local wisdom and according to local needs is nothing new; they have worked according to this strategy for years, providing different kinds of targeted support depending on the needs of the local people (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Nababan 9 January 2002 and Setyawati 11 January 2002). Clear distinctions in regional needs can for instance be seen in the work of human rights activists. While the emphasis in Jakarta is on the urban poor and political rights, in Medan the urban situation is of no interest; there the focus is instead on peasants, fishermen and economic and social rights, rather than political rights. Support and assistance based on local needs is seen as the best way to strengthen civil society (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

Regional needs and resources also determine the local revenue raising powers and obligations that are an integrated part of the decentralisation process. This has created additional worries since only a minority of the provinces consider themselves resource rich enough, with a steady income from natural resources or from tourism, to meet the new economic obligations (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004). Taking a positive approach, one of the labour respondents concludes that the new economic framework will finally enable the various provinces to develop on their own, without the central government draining all the riches (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002).

An Economy in Transformation

Decentralisation is just the latest measure affecting the national economy in the post-Suharto years. Since the economic crisis in 1997–1998, the state of the economy and the pace of the necessary
economic reforms have created daily headlines in Indonesian media, and have been dealt with in an impressive amount of proceedings, reports and research. This space is far too limited to do justice to Indonesia’s macroeconomic problems and the strategies needed to overcome them. It will serve merely to highlight a few important issues, since economic recovery and reform are seen as vital for social stability and Indonesia’s future democratisation.

Megawati inherited a national economy in ruins. There was little confidence in her managing to turn the economy around, but she has frequently been given credit for performing surprisingly well (see for example the annual reports of international rating agency Moody’s Investors Service). Much of it boils down to her sensible choice of a competent economic team to lead the Ministry of Finance and develop the macroeconomic plans for recovery.

Indonesia’s macroeconomic picture has continued to improve, albeit slowly. For 2001 a 3.3 per cent GDP growth was recorded, for 2002 a slightly higher 3.77 per cent and in 2003 the official target was even exceeded with a recorded 4.1 per cent GDP growth. This is still much lower than the desired 6–7 per cent growth Indonesia experienced before the economic crisis (The Jakarta Post 17 February 2004; MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 133; Deuster 2002: 5).

However, it creates obvious problems in a society squeezed by economic hardship when a predominantly positive economic reporting clashes with the contradictory actions of a government imposing yet another heavy economic burden on the people. One example is the government’s less successful attempts to remove subsidies on household fuels and petrol that has led to price rises in staple commodities. While MacIntyre and Resosudarmo (2003: 135) regard it as a ‘fiscally responsible move’, it has a tremendous impact on the strained economy of many Indonesians and subsequently met with huge protests from civil society in 2002 as well as 2003 (see Appendix).

Political commentators argue that the reforms have focused too much on Indonesia’s macroeconomic recovery and annual GDP growth, while disregarding the need for important reforms in the state apparatus, political parties, judiciary, police and military, and even within civil society. These reforms are what Mishra regards as ‘the enabling conditions which make a new kind of growth possible: more regulated, more stable, and widely shared’ (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004).
This is viable criticism, as the Indonesian situation is arguably complex with a range of parallel reforms needed in various spheres that cannot be seen as entirely separate. Yet according to a survey conducted by the Asia Foundation in late 2003, 60 per cent of the respondents rated the economy as Indonesia’s greatest problem that needed to be solved (Asia Foundation 2003a). With predictions that the slow economic progress will continue for some years to come, in addition to a level of foreign direct investment well below what it should be and possibly even decreasing, there are some disturbing implications for Indonesia’s future stability: ‘In the short term this is satisfactory. But over the longer term, a 3–4 per cent growth trajectory has worrying implications for unemployment, poverty and social stability’ (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 134, 146–147).

An overview of economic reforms would not be complete without mentioning the massive restructuring of the banking sector that has taken place in the wake of the economic crisis.

In January 1998 IBRA, the Indonesian Banking Restructuring Agency, was set up to recover state funds through the sale of struggling private banks in which the government had a substantial share. IBRA has been criticised for not selling the assets quickly enough. Despite meeting annual budgetary commitments, it did poorly until 2002 when the process suddenly gained more momentum. In addition, an attempt to privatise state-owned companies in order to bring in more funds to the state budget met with difficulties, and economists predicted that with rising nationalist sentiments privatisation would become even more problematic (Waslin 2003: 18–20).

Students and workers have been among those most vigorously opposed to the privatisation of Indonesian assets (see Appendix). The latest attempt is a controversial bill that promotes privatisation of the water sector. Civil society representatives fear that this will turn water into an expensive commodity, with increasingly high quality standards making clean water unaffordable for the poor, and no guarantees provided for the irrigation needs of farmers (The Jakarta Post 17 February 2004).

IBRA officially closed down at the end of February 2004. Media reports estimated that Indonesia would lose about 72 per cent of the 660 trillion rupiah (USD 7.76 billion) that the state had injected into private banks during the economic crisis. The loss should be regarded as part of ‘the cost of the crisis’, according
to IBRA’s chairman, Syafruddin Temenggung, who maintains that IBRA met its annual targets for the state budget, and that IBRA’s compliance is 116 per cent (*The Jakarta Post* 16, 28 February 2004). IBRA’s performance has not impressed local economists who have already labelled IBRA an ‘institutional failure’. They argue that IBRA failed to fulfil its main priority, namely to cure Indonesia’s ailing banking sector, financially as well as through the implementation of internal preventative control mechanisms (*The Jakarta Post* 28 February 2004).

Another special crisis measure with implications for Indonesia’s future economic recovery was the IMF agreement on Extended Fund Facility (EFF) that expired in December 2003. In the lead-up to the decision on the renewal or expiry of EFF, political debate increasingly questioned the need for any further IMF funding agreements after 2003. Anti-IMF sentiments, growing political nationalist sentiments, as well as a certain antipathy against perceived Western interference in Indonesian affairs, underpinned the government’s decision to end Indonesia’s dependence on IMF as soon as possible (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 144–146; *The Jakarta Post* 18 March 2004).

This move gained broad support among the general public and the elite alike, although not everyone may have realised that it adds considerably to the immediate economic burden on the state and the taxpayer. For instance, in the absence of debt restructuring facilities the Indonesian government will be forced to repay all its maturing foreign debts at once. On the other hand, cutting the ties to IMF may turn out to be a bonus for Indonesian voters, in the sense that political leaders have to take responsibility for their actions to a greater extent instead of conveniently blaming IMF for the unpopular economic policies (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 144–146; *The Jakarta Post* 18 March 2004).

Nevertheless historic policy changes have taken place in fiscal governance, with three new laws replacing outdated Dutch laws on treasury management. The State Finance Law, passed in March 2003, clarifies the responsibilities and relations of all the officials and institutions handling public funds, in addition to providing for increased accountability through the Supreme Audit Agency. The State Treasury Law, passed in December 2003, is crucial for the enforcement of the State Finance Law, since it states how state funds, assets and debts should be managed nationally and locally. Together with a related law on State Financial Audit they provide
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a sound framework for a gradual restructuring of the sector. For the future management of the nation’s public finances this legal reform, that has been termed a ‘milestone in accountability’, is absolutely necessary (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 142–143; The Jakarta Post 19 December 2003).

Effects of Social Movements

It would be unfair to let any unsolved economic problems overshadow the quite remarkable changes that have taken place in a short time. Some important political, legal and social changes in the post-Suharto era have been discussed in the case studies and mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Assessing which changes are a direct or indirect result of pressure from civil society forces is in most cases problematic, as is the attempt to measure the effects of social movements in general. While movements openly struggle for reform they generally include other goals and aims besides reform, with some movements completely denouncing ‘reformism’ (Tarrow 1994: 170).

With the highly heterogenous composition of movements and the lack of a clear leadership, it is difficult to distinguish which goals are the most important and link the struggle to the outcome. The result is in addition determined by the reaction of the elites, who often serve as mediators between the state and civil society. Rather than reacting to any single demand, elites often face the complex challenge of the movement as a whole, thus mediating a multitude of demands, ‘looking for solutions that will defeat their enemies, impose social control and satisfy allies and supporters. It is in part for this reason that challengers are almost always disillusioned with reformist outcomes’ (Tarrow 1994: 171).

Acknowledging that the idealism that drives social movements can never be fully realised, movements nevertheless have an impact and do make a difference. While it is difficult to draw a clear line between the effects of social movements and other internal and external factors that affect political and social change, it is still important to note that even suppressed movements serve as catalysts and lead to change (Pakulski 1991: 82–83). Thus, it is imperative to discuss Indonesian activists’ and observers’ views about the achievements and shortcomings of the democracy movement and to what extent reformasi has been achieved.
A minority of the interviewed activists stated that reformasi has only been achieved to a limited degree, while most perceived that the movement stopped short of achieving it altogether. Student representatives who argued that reformasi has been achieved to some degree pointed to political structural changes and free elections, but they perceive that real political change was not endorsed and promoted by the Megawati government. ‘Politics is the struggle for power. The people want more radical transformation than this’ (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

Labour representatives also saw partial reform attempts, as manifested in new labour legislation, but the changes have not been fully implemented and enforced, and intimidation of workers still occurs (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002).

There is not only need for political reformasi but for reformation of the labour laws and the economic system. There is child abuse, sexual exploitation, 6.5 million child workers in the streets... The reformation has been for the elite, not for the people! (Interview with Sirait 10 January 2002)

The women’s organisations interviewed were united in saying that so far only lip service has been paid, although they realise that the process of democratisation and reform takes time. They also pointed to the growing gap between grassroots and elite women and stated that while the situation for women might have changed in Jakarta, little has changed in other regions (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Setyawati 11 January 2002 and Muftiyah 22 January 2002). The women’s views were supported by other activists and social commentors who also rejected any claim that reformasi has taken place, some even adding that there is ‘little change, but more poor people now’ (interviews with Nababan 9 January 2002 and Sobary 14 January 2002).

These views were still valid in 2004, with student groups claiming that five years of reformasi had not resulted in any real change, only in a growing number of impoverished Indonesians (Kompas 18 March 2004). In the election campaigns such sentiments were exploited by politicians, such as Amien Rais, who argues that the existing leadership has not understood the essence of reformasi (Tempo Interaktif 27 March 2004).
Democratisation is a long-term process and some of the gains of the reformasi movement are only starting to materialise, as has been previously discussed. When the MPR in August 2002 decided to end the military’s presence in parliament and introduce direct presidential elections by 2004, it was two of the most important government changes in four decades – both considered to be important strategic issues by the pro-democracy movement (Kompas 10 August 2002; The Jakarta Post 11 August 2002).

Only time will tell whether the accumulative outcome of these changes will prove to be yet another step towards democracy, or a step back. The political and social climate following the 2004 election will provide some indication of the way Indonesia is heading.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR GENUINE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In discussing the pro-democracy movement’s intentions and call for reformasi the interviewed activists agreed unanimously that reformasi had not been fully achieved as yet. In the words of feminist Salma Safitri: ‘People have exchanged reformasi for demokrasi’, without really knowing what democracy post-Suharto implies (interview 8 January 2002).

What is then needed in the short and longer term to bring about genuine political and social change in Indonesia? The need for alternative education, both as a short-term and long-term strategy, is frequently emphasised by activists. To achieve reformasi, true democratisation is needed with citizens choosing their leaders. The simple task of electing responsible democratic leaders implies a need for popular and political education to raise awareness and empower people so they can make informed decisions (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Nababan 9 January 2002 and Adnanya 1 February 2002).

In the lead-up to the 2004 elections the importance of popular education in politics and governance issues was once again highlighted by complaints from rural women, who felt they did not know enough about the election issues in order to make an informed choice (Kompas 24 February 2004). This need for educational and awareness raising activities nation-wide was already identified in 2002 by civil society activists, who saw it as a necessary but not
Democratising Indonesia

sufficient condition for democracy to succeed in Indonesia. ‘As of now demokrasi is promulgated from above, but not a single political party has conducted grassroots education in what democracy really is’ (interview with Nababan 9 January 2002). Likewise there is a need for political education for the members of the hundred or so new political parties (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002).

While the government and the political parties have failed to provide such training for the electorate, a civil society coalition of 30 NGOs of all denominations, the People’s Voter Education Network (JPPR), mobilised more than 140,000 volunteers to conduct voter education in all provinces prior to the elections. JPPR also monitored 0 per cent of the polling stations during the elections (Asia Foundation 2003a).

The 2004 Elections

In a mid-2004 survey the legislative and presidential elections were singled out as the major internal event that would determine Indonesia’s progress on a national as well as a local level in 2004, while the increased inflow of foreign capital has been highlighted as the most important external influence. Prior to the presidential elections the two top priorities for the Indonesian electorate were identified as overcoming corruption and improving the economy (Marks 2004: 151).

Compared to the previous elections, voters were decidedly less optimistic in 2004. Only 44 per cent believed Indonesia is developing in the right direction, while 34 per cent believed developments are going the wrong way and 18 per cent were uncertain, according to a survey of the Indonesian electorate conducted in late 2003 (Asia Foundation 2003a, b). The low expectations reflect disillusion with politics in general and the nation’s leadership in particular. The prevailing climate actually opens up political space for civil society to lend credibility to the formal process and to provide some alternatives in terms of leaders, strategies and the direction of democratisation. Such an initiative is counterbalanced by a tangible reformasi fatigue among the general public. This fatigue was already noticeable in 2002 as, for example, evidenced in the student magazine Balairung’s deliberate focus on non-reformasi issues (see Chapter 3).
The 2004 general and presidential elections took eight months to complete, including the pre-election campaigns between 11 March and 1 April. These elections were generally considered to have more clout than the 1999 elections, since Indonesian voters have gained considerably in maturity and democratic experience (Singh 2003: 446). In Indonesia's first direct presidential elections ever, an unprecedented large number of contenders were vying for the limelight and the voters. One of the concerns of civil society and government alike was to promote a peaceful campaign period. The media was quick to dub the 2004 campaigning less violent than the 1999 elections, but even as the elections progressed fears of widespread disorder proved to be unfounded (Tempo Interaktif 17 March 2004; The Jakarta Post 5 July 2004; Kompas 6 July 2004).

The voting commenced on 5 April, as scheduled, with elections for the national, regional, provincial and district legislatures, namely the House of Representatives (DPR), the newly formed House of Regional Representatives (DPD) and the provincial and district bodies (DPR-D). Initially 112 political parties registered for the 2004 election, which was reduced to 24 after administrative verification and assessment by the General Election Commission (KPU). The presidential elections were conducted in two stages; the first round ballot in July and the second in September at a date set after the results of the first round were released.

A group of civil society activists focusing on labour and poverty issues expressed concern that all six parties that met the electoral threshold in 1999 were 'unscrupulous'. They accused the parties of failing to meet the interests of workers and the obligations of democratisation and human rights, in addition to maintaining links with the New Order regime. FNPBI, PRD, the Indonesian Transport Labor Union (SBTI) and the Indonesian Labour Union (GSBI) called on voters to boycott the six parties in the 2004 elections (The Jakarta Post 6 February 2004).

In a successful bid to grab attention, a nation-wide civil society coalition of 150 NGOs under the name of the National Movement Against Rotten Politicians published a list of 61 candidates who were considered unworthy of holding public office. The offences of well-known figures within the military and the government were listed under four categories: human rights violations, corruption, violence against women and environmental destruction. Intentions to publish the list on the Internet (www.antipolitisibusuk.org), as
well as in print, were marred by technical problems (The Jakarta Post 14 March 2004).

In compiling these lists and other damning reports, the NGOs definitely overstepped their authority in the government’s eyes, who regarded the publicised documents as a threat to national interest and have warned of a potential return to old repressive methods of curtailing and controlling civil society (Tjhin 2004; The Jakarta Post 28 May 2004). The re-emergence of a more repressive climate would constitute a considerable narrowing down of political space for civil society, and a loss of momentum they could not afford at this crucial point. This merely shows how fragile, how fraught with uneasiness, the truce between government and civil society is.

Prominent political analyst Rizal Mallarangeng, director of the Freedom Institute in Jakarta, considers the 2004 elections to be ‘the biggest test for Indonesia after a series of democratic innovations’ (Radio Singapore 7 January 2004). Supporting this view, 2004 was termed ‘the year of voting dangerously, the year of living dangerously, the year of defining our future’ by Eep Saefulloh Fatah at a seminar on the Presidential elections, arranged by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta in May 2004 (Fatah 2004).

Rizal Mallarangeng predicted that the main contenders in the general elections would be Megawati’s PDI-P and the former state party Golkar that has maintained its grassroots organisation. The Islamic parties would not be part of the contest. Had the elections been held in January 2004 Golkar would have won, according to surveys conducted in late December 2003 (Radio Singapore 7 January 2004).

A Golkar victory in the second democratic elections since 1955 seemed like a truly ironic twist of events. The election results prove these predictions were not far-fetched at all (see Table 6.1). The results clearly reflect the electorate’s lack of faith in Megawati’s politics (Marks 2004: 152), just another indication of people’s longing for stability and a certain amount of predictability in the political sphere. Indonesians are even said to suffer from SARS, in this case not the fatal infection but an equally fatal ‘Sindrom Aku Rindu Suharto’, or an ‘I Miss Suharto Syndrome’ (Kenward 2004: 32).
Table 6.1 The five top-ranking parties in the legislative elections, April 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final ranking</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes (numbers)</th>
<th>Votes (%)</th>
<th>House seats</th>
<th>House seats (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Golkar</td>
<td>24,480,757</td>
<td>21.58</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>23.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)</td>
<td>21,026,629</td>
<td>18.53</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>19.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>PKB (The National Awakening Party)</td>
<td>11,989,56,</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>PPP (The United Development Party)</td>
<td>9,248,764</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>10.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>PD (The Democratic Party)</td>
<td>8,455,225</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Elections Commission (KPU); The Jakarta Post 29 August 2004

Despite the challenges discussed above, the elections posed an important opportunity for civil society to see more like-minded people come into power. As has been previously discussed, civil society activists have entered party politics and government institutions in more ways than one. Former labour activist turned minister of manpower and transmigration, Jacob Nuwa Wea is just one example. While this is beneficial for the democratic consolidation process, prominent military figures are also drawn to politics. Among these the former generals Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Wiranto and Prabowo Subianto are three of the most renowned. All three harboured presidential ambitions.

While the National Awakening Party (PKB) was quick to nominate former president Abdurrahman Wahid, commonly known as Gus Dur, as their presidential candidate, they hoped to have former general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as a back-up in case Gus Dur failed to enter the contest. Wahid also announced that he was not willing to join a coalition with Megawati’s PDI-P, because he firmly believes PDI-P has failed in governing Indonesia. Meanwhile Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono gained in prominence
and popularity due to his hard line on terrorism that he used to justify the harsh military measures in Aceh. His popularity was boosted after appearing on TV in 2003, displaying a strength and decisiveness that are not prominent characteristics in Megawati (Kompas 24 February 2004; Radio Singapore 7 January 2004).

On the first day of campaigning Susilo resigned from his post as co-ordinating minister for political and security affairs after an open rift with Megawati. He was seen as Megawati’s strongest challenger for the presidential post and had been courted by several political parties in addition to PKB (Kompas 12, 26 March 2004; The Jakarta Post 13 March 2004; see Table 6.2).

In a speech in Singapore in mid-February 2004 retired general Wiranto, Indonesia’s former Armed Forces chief, announced his presidential aspirations. Wiranto’s anti-democratic baggage includes a UN indictment for crimes against the humanity in East Timor in 1999. Like Susilo, Wiranto also played the experienced ‘strong leader’ card, juxtaposed against Megawati’s weakness, but did not stop at vying for national support for his candidacy. For Singapore a politically and economically stable Indonesia, without social upheavals and where investments are back on track, is of great importance and could be worth considerable support (The Jakarta Post 29 February 2004; Tempo Interaktif 3 March 2004).

Officially the presidential candidates could not be announced until after the outcome of the legislative elections, since the political parties needed to get a certain percentage of the votes to be eligible to contest the presidency. The party most likely to nominate Wiranto as their presidential candidate was all along Golkar, which just resonates with familiar New Order sentiments. However, Wiranto stated that his platform was not to revive New Order or to construct a military regime, but that he would ‘unwind some of the most painful reforms by reintroducing farm subsidies, rewriting Indonesia’s open foreign investment rules, and getting tough with the International Monetary Fund and other creditors’ (Shari 2004: 58).

Until early 2004 Golkar’s most likely presidential candidate was their own Chairman, Akbar Tandjung. Following massive protests regarding Akbar’s acquittal in the Supreme Court in mid-February 2004, he seemed to have run out of luck. At the Golkar Party Convention in Makassar in February, Akbar Tandjung was asked to stop proclaiming his candidacy as it was pre-empting
the democratic process and moreover demotivating for Golkar members (Kompas 24 February 2004). Ironically, Golkar turned out to be one of the most democratic parties, holding extensive nationwide elections to determine the future party leader (MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 134).

Former Kostrad Commandant Prabowo Subianto, known for his notorious role in the Trisakti shootings and the May Rapes, was also a potential candidate for Golkar and promised voters a solution to Indonesia’s economic problems, were he to secure the presidential post. Akbar, Wiranto and Prabowo were all going for the top job; none of them was interested in running for vice-president (Tempo Interaktif 3, 9, 15 March 2004).

Another former general with links to the past is Suharto’s former aide Hartono, who established the Concern for the Nation Functional Party (PPKB). His party hoped to nominate Suharto’s eldest daughter Siti ‘Tutut’ Hardijanti Rukmana as their presidential candidate (The Jakarta Post 24 February 2004).

Both Golkar and PPKB took advantage of voters’ disillusion with the progress of reform and discontent with Megawati’s government. Riding on people’s nostalgia for the past, their campaigns contained frequent references to the stability and prosperity of years gone by. Whereas PPKB actively campaigned for a reinstatement of New Order politics, including the reinstatement of the military in district and village politics, Golkar was forced to do some damage control in order to keep voters. The former state party tried to recreate its image and did not want to be seen as a tool of the New Order any longer (The Jakarta Post 17, 18 March 2004; Tempo Interaktif 12 March 2004).

This overview merely shows that whereas the elections may be democratic in theory, and all the presidential candidates listed democracy or good governance in their official mission and vision statements, there were certainly some contending individuals with less than democratic reputations and serious leadership aspirations. Civil society representatives feared that due to the lack of voter education these elections would once again show little evaluation of programmes or party platforms, and that the most well-known figureheads would attract the votes (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Sobary 14 January 2002; The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004; Tempo Interaktif July 2004).
Unfortunately the first weeks of election campaigns did nothing to allay these fears. Parties were struggling to engage voters in policy dialogue, while giveaways and free entertainment turned out to be greater crowd pleasers than information about the political platforms. Since a majority of the parties could not even boast a detailed political manifesto, accusations of buying voters abounded (Kompas 17 March 2004; The Economist 20 March 2004; Bali Post 26 March 2004).

In the surprisingly close presidential elections in July 2004 Megawati performed better than predicted (see Table 6.2). Comments by the Indonesia Survey Institute suggested that the Sukarno heritage helped her gain around 6 per cent of the undecided voters just days before the elections (McBeth 2004).

The 2004 elections might be regarded as a watershed in Indonesia’s democratic transition, but in reality they only marked the end of the first wave of reformasi. The development after the elections will be the true indicator of how deep into society democratisation has managed to penetrate.

Table 6.2 Final results of the first round of presidential elections, July 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final ranking</th>
<th>Presidential + vice-presidential candidates</th>
<th>Votes (numbers)</th>
<th>Votes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono + M Yusuf Kalla</td>
<td>39,838,184</td>
<td>33.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Megawati Sukarnoputri + Hasyim Muzadi</td>
<td>31,567,104</td>
<td>26.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Wiranto + Solahuddin Wahid</td>
<td>26,286,788</td>
<td>22.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Amien Rais + Siswono Yudho Husodo</td>
<td>17,392,931</td>
<td>14.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hamzah Has + Agum Gumela</td>
<td>3,569,861</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Votes</strong></td>
<td><strong>118,656,868</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Elections Commission (KPU), The Jakarta Post 29 August 2004

Finally, four other matters of interest deserve to be highlighted in this context, as the first two indicate a significant break with the legacy of the past, while the latter two identify problem areas that cannot be ignored for the sake of greater democracy.

For the first time in nearly four decades Chinese Indonesians were able to run for office in the general elections. This is an enormous
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victory for the 3–4 per cent ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. They were prevented from political representation by the decree on SBKRI (a citizenship document required for Chinese Indonesians to be recognised as Indonesian citizens), which was revoked by Wahid in 2000, but it took four years for the operational regulations to be repealed. In addition to the legal dimension there is an equally important ethnic and ideological dimension, as is the case with so many matters repressed during the New Order. In the aftermath of the 1965 coup many Chinese were victimised, accused of being communists. As a survival strategy in the post-Suharto era Chinese Indonesians tended to seek political representation as part of mainstream parties, rather than establishing any ethnic parties that might become targets of prejudice and racism (The Jakarta Post 24 February 2004; Radio Australia 3 March 2004).

In addition, the newly established Constitutional Court in a historic verdict reinstated the constitutional rights of former members of the Communist Party, PKI. For the first time since 1965 this gave former PKI members and their families the opportunity to contest the elections. This move took the military by surprise and met with strong negative reactions from some Islamic groups, who requested a judicial review. More secular civil society representatives have instead called for an end to all forms of discrimination against former PKI members and their relatives (Tempo Interaktif 4 March 2003; Kompas 12 March 2004; The Jakarta Post 26 February 2004).

The symbolic significance in lifting these restrictions should not be underestimated, as they constitute a tangible break with the past regime and its repressive practices. The move is furthermore a civilian power demonstration, albeit minor, against the military and its need for total control over national security matters and its reluctance to relinquish any power, no matter how altered the reality might be. The changes imply a step towards a more inclusive, pluralistic society, so vital for a democratic nation.

Third, mounting national and international criticism over restrictions on media freedom in Aceh and a proposed military ban on independent foreign monitoring teams before, during and after the 2004 elections achieved a positive result after a lengthy struggle. Just weeks before the elections were due to begin the media reported that foreign observers would be allowed to monitor the elections in Aceh after all (The Jakarta Post 16 December, 13
February 2004; *Kompas* 13 February 2004). Despite this little victory for civil society, Aceh nevertheless found itself in the paradoxical situation of facing a military offensive during the nation’s great celebration of democracy.

Finally, the quota of 30 per cent female candidates was only fulfilled by an embarrassing minority of the 24 parties contesting the polls and none of the major parties were among them. This led to Golkar women protesting outside their national headquarters against what they perceived as a betrayal by the party’s male leadership (*The Jakarta Post* 11 February 2004).

Media reports concluded that the renewed reformasi spirit brought about by the elections had made it ‘fashionable’ to accept and encourage women’s political participation. Yet advocates of greater political representation for women fear that women are becoming pawns in a political game, a commodity for fulfilling the requirements for the next elections (*The Jakarta Post* 11 February 2004). Their views are supported by the findings of a pre-election survey conducted by *Kompas*, where the majority did not believe a higher degree of women’s political participation was a sign of greater political awareness among the people, or indeed among the women themselves (*Kompas* 9 February 2004).

Thus, civil society representatives’ call for widespread popular education in matters regarding democratisation, gender and popular participation is not an unreasonable demand. There is a danger that the bid for popular education will only focus on current issues, whereas decidedly more ambitious training and awareness-raising need to take place on all levels of society.

The strengthening of civil society through education and group discussions is seen as absolutely vital by the labour movement in order to reach beyond the elite (interview with Sirait 10 January 2002). Whereas NGOs stress the need for greater awareness about workers’ rights and improved working conditions for everyone, regardless of whether they are unionised or not (interview with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002), unionists emphasise the need for real trade unions, ‘not just political paper unions’. They also consider greater unity among unions as vital, which will be a major task to achieve. Unionists are nevertheless positive about the future, while retaining a realistic perspective about the time frame needed for structural change and the amount of international assistance that will be required. However, they cautiously note that excessive
assistance can also serve to disempower and pacify people (interview with ACILS 9 January 2002), thus acknowledging that the battle for workers is mainly a national one, although transnational support is important.

It should come as no surprise that women particularly stress the empowerment of women, through affirmative action if necessary (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, Muftiyah 22 January 2002 and Ibu Titin 21 January, 2002). Interviewed activists also identify the need to develop a new awareness about politics and leadership, particularly among younger women, along with a greater degree of ‘collective feeling’ and a strong leadership. These matters are considered urgent and need to be expressed and acted upon not only within the women’s movement, but also at a government level (interviews with Muftiyanah 22 January 2002 and LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

In 2004 women’s call for affirmative action continued. Whereas women’s representation in legislative bodies averaged a mere 5 per cent it should be at least 30 per cent, according to the 1999 Elections Law. Central Java with its population of 33 million provides a good case in point. Among the 100 legislators at provincial level only six were women (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004).

Whether the issues at stake concern empowerment of workers or women, neither workers nor women will manage to bring about change on their own. Strategic alliances are dearly needed. While social movements are generally reluctant to become involved in strategic alliances that might compromise their value-laden, moral concerns, networking is crucial for a strong civil society.

Greater co-operation among civil society forces, nationally and internationally, as well as between activists and the broader community is emphasised by several activists as the only way to put pressure on the government to achieve genuine change (interviews with Muftiyanah 22 January, LBH APIK 11 January 2002 and ACILS 9 January 2002). ‘Now is an important time. If we can work together we can achieve change. Now we have political space’ (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002).

As Uhlin (1997: 46–48) and Törnquist (van Klinken 1999: 3–4) emphasise, a poorly organised and divided opposition needs to join forces in order to achieve change. The middle class cannot do it alone and may ultimately not even desire democratisation, as has been previously discussed, thus inter-class alliances are
inevitably needed. One issue with the potential to facilitate greater co-operation from the whole spectrum of civil society is the battle against the rampant corruption.

*An End to Corruption*

An end to corruption and mismanagement, and a government that is accountable to the people scored high on the priority list in 2002 (interview with Safitri 8 January 2002). These issues have continued to gain in prominence as people search for an answer to why Indonesia is experiencing the current chaos.

We cannot divide it into women’s issues, workers’ issues and so on – it is all part of the democratisation process! The chaos of today is a reaction against earlier repression. The autonomy law means that the regions do not need to follow the centre anymore. The corruption is worse than before. It is a bad habit and was not caused by the economic crisis. A new generation of uncorrupted leaders is needed! (Interview with LBH APIK 11 January 2002).

The war against corruption has been a major issue for the pro-democracy movement ever since it gained momentum. Besides the desire to do away with the old regime and its immoral practices, managing to bring corrupt power-holders to justice is tangible proof for people from all walks of society that circumstances have truly changed in the post-Suharto era. It can furthermore be seen as evidence of the impact of popular pressure on decision-makers.

Outspoken regime critic George Aditjondro (2001) considered corruption in 2001 worse than in the Suharto era, since it, mirroring Indonesian society in general, was more controlled during the New Order and the major corruption was in the hands of a few. He furthermore argued that Megawati would never prosecute Suharto or his closest cronies, because she depended heavily on the elite for support. Her controversial husband, Taufiq Kiemas, is deeply involved with big business and the discredited elite, again reflecting negatively on Megawati’s credibility.

The rampant corruption has caused people to cynically joke that even corruption has become decentralised (Aditjondro 2001; interview with Safitri 8 January 2002; The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004). A study conducted in 2001 of 2,300 respondents
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(including public officials, households and businesses) across 14 provinces revealed that corruption in the public sector was regarded as very common by 75 per cent of the respondents. The post, news media and religious institutions were hailed as the least corrupt, while the judiciary, customs authorities and the traffic police were regarded as Indonesia’s most corrupt institutions (Deuster 2002: 18).

Looking at the strikes that made headlines in 2002 many concerned KKN, or corruption, collusion and nepotism, as did the strikes that made headlines in 2004 (see Appendix; The Jakarta Post 13, 14, 29 February 2004; Tempo Interaktif 28 February 2004). In Transparency International’s global survey for the 2003 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) Indonesia ranked at the very bottom as number 122 out of 133 countries, with number 1 being the least corrupt country (Transparency International 2003). Thus it is not surprising that in 2004 the elimination of corruption and the call for good governance were the main priorities, not only for the reform movement but also for the Indonesian community at large (The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004; Marks 2004: 151).

While activists and the general public alike have voiced disappointment with the limited success of judicial reforms, scholars argue that this is a consequence of applying only external measures to deeply rooted problems, while internal discipline is still lacking (Hamilton-Hart 2001: 77). It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that this is symptomatic of the majority of Indonesia’s reforms at this stage. Major changes have been launched in writing and in official speeches, but the necessary regulations and practices, as well as the political will needed to translate theory into practice have until now been insufficient.

In October 2003 Indonesia’s corruption-ridden judiciary finally started a major internal clean up. The National Police, the Attorney General’s office and the Supreme Court have all been struggling with reform, a move that pleases Indonesians as well as the international donor community. The blueprint for the Supreme Court’s reform was launched by Chief Justice and Professor of Law Bagir Manan, and includes education of judges, financial management and a new judicial commission. Bagir Manan expressed cautious optimism and predicted that it will take ‘10-15 years to build a credible judiciary, providing it had the full support of all related parties’ (The Jakarta Post 16 January 2004).
The reform spirit of the Supreme Court was dealt a severe blow with the acquittal of Akbar Tandjung in February 2004. Student protesters called it a ‘deadly blow’ to the whole anti-corruption campaign. Human rights organisations YLBHI and PBHI denounced the acquittal, stating it was ‘a betrayal of the reform agenda’ and would serve to further undermine public trust in the judiciary (The Jakarta Post 14 February 2004; Tempo Interaktif 28 February 2004).

The call for an end to KKN has become an issue of such importance that the failure to prosecute major corruptors and human rights violators among high-ranking officials and the elite, such as Akbar, Suharto and Suharto’s son Hutomo ‘Tommy’ Suharto, constitutes one of the most fundamental shortcomings of the democratisation process. It is a major problem that needs to be resolved before Indonesians can move on.

In this context it is also worth noting that the closure of IBRA at the end of February 2004 revealed that 39 co-operative bank owners still owed 600 billion rupiah of the 144.5 trillion rupiah they received during the crisis. Many of them are accused of misappropriating government bailout funds and breaking the banking law. However, several former bank owners, among them some of the biggest recipients of state funds, have already had the threat of criminal charges dropped. More recently discharge status was accorded to Bank Yakin Makmur’s former owner, Suharto’s eldest daughter Siti Hardijanti ‘Tutut’ Rukmana (The Jakarta Post 16 February 2004).

Finally, any discussion of reforms to achieve greater accountability and transparency cannot ignore the military’s special treatment in monetary matters. According to labour activists and scholars, roughly two-thirds of military expenditure is currently not even listed in the official budget. Besides posing a fundamental problem from a legal aspect, this undermines the whole reform process and poses a serious threat to Indonesia’s democratisation. The military expenditure cannot be allowed to continue being off-budget, if public trust in the viability of the process and the resulting institutions is to be maintained (interview with Sirait 10 January 2002; MacIntyre and Resosudarmo 2003: 143).

Public trust is further eroded by the fact that the military derives additional income through their involvement in private and government business, drug smuggling, illegal logging, extortion
and other lucrative business – activities that do not boost its public image (Sherlock 2003: 6).

It is issues like these that create frustration among the majority of Indonesians – the grassroots, the villagers, the urban poor – when they see the continued preferential treatment of the military and the elite, when they witness large business entrepreneurs and power-holders escape justice, avoiding being held accountable for their excesses and legal breaches, while the social and economic inequalities just keep increasing.

New Leaders, New Mindset

The demand for good governance goes hand in hand with an accountable leadership. Not only a change in leadership but a genuine change in regime in combination with a strong civil society are seen as the necessary enabling conditions by human rights activists. While education in democratic matters is considered an important long-term objective, an agenda for Indonesia’s democratic transformation and the fulfilment of that agenda is an important short-term goal. ‘Until now government has no agenda for transition, because they are busy fighting amongst each other, among the elite. So a united government and an agenda for change, with clear parameters, is needed’ (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

Not everyone agrees that reformasi can be based on some sort of blueprint. ‘It is very rigid. It has to evolve out of a certain process. But the process has to be led by an enlightened leadership, which is not there’ (interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002).

The need for a radical change in mindset cannot be emphasised enough. It does not purely concern a rethinking of authoritarian attitudes and behaviour among the leaders, it concerns the wider community as well. While the desire for a completely new leadership has been mentioned, there is also need for changes in political culture and cultural attitudes in a broader sense. The majority of respondents state that it is comparatively easy to change public policies and structures, compared to changing the ideas and ways of people. ‘It is not only a matter of system, but of mentality’ (interview with YLBHI 14 January 2002). By its very nature, changing the mindset of a whole generation is a gradual, time-consuming process.
We are entering a new political atmosphere but still with an old mentality, old traditions, and an old culture. The economic, political and social crisis is still far from over. Indonesia’s transition will last for the next 30 years. To deconstruct a very fixed and established mentality needs a long time, it is a long, difficult process for all of us. So we should educate a totally new people, free from all *Orde Baru* domination. A very challenging task. Hopefully we do survive, although we are close to political chaos. (Interview with Sobary 14 January 2002)

This change in mindset in society also involves a language reform, since ‘so many words have been manipulated and contaminated with heavy political meanings’. In addition an independent, credible media that serves and educates the people, regionally and nationally, needs to be developed (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002). In order to fulfil all of this, critical awareness and open, critical communication is needed to a greater extent in the local communities throughout Indonesia (interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002).

Developing critical thinking and awareness among the grassroots of a society that has been under systematic oppression for so long is not an easy task, as most of the respondents are keen to point out. Yet, it is one of the fundamental building blocks for a strong civil society that has the ability not only to check and balance the state but also possesses the strength to monitor and balance itself. Besides decades of repression, there are considerably older cultural, traditional and religious practices to take into account in this transformation, in addition to old boundaries and hierarchies that have to be broken down, including the challenge the military poses to greater civil society engagement in governance and public policy-making.

There is urgent need not only for a thorough reform of the military, but more importantly a need for rethinking the military’s role in Indonesian politics and society. TNI is not an efficient, well-functioning entity; it is tainted with power struggles, factionalism and corruption, as has been discussed (Sherlock 2002: 3). For the future democratisation of Indonesia and in order to regain public trust, it is imperative for the government to take a firm stand on this contentious issue.

Activists emphasise the need to involve all elements of society in building ‘a new’, more democratic and just Indonesia, as well as the
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importance of catching the momentum while it exists (interview with Adnanya 1 February 2002). Many activists in 2002 saw the 2004 elections as some sort of benchmark where the pros and cons of democratisation would be weighed up and the road towards a new wave of reformasi, or even a retreat to a more familiar and more authoritarian system, would be determined (interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002).

In 2002 political analysts predicted that Megawati would be safe until the 2004 elections, since politicians would be too busy preparing for the elections to try to unseat her. In addition, Hermawan from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) concluded that the prevailing chaotic situation was not appealing for any aspiring power holder, including the military, to attempt to take over (Nurbianto 2002; Deuster 2002: 5).

The predictions have proved to be correct. Yet, while it is acknowledged that Megawati’s presidency undeniably brought some political stability to Indonesia after the chaotic rule of Habibie and Wahid, maintaining stability has been allowed to take priority over the momentum of reform, which in many cases has stopped short of implementation (Deuster 2002: 5–6; The Jakarta Post/Political Outlook 2004). With the inability of all the post-Suharto leaders until now to turn the situation around, the legitimacy of the traditional political system, as Indonesians have hitherto known it, is seriously undermined. This opens up space for greater participation by civil society.

In order for society to enter into democratic consolidation you need to go ten steps. By 2004 we will be at most two steps out of ten. In 2009, depending on what happens, maybe we have progressed another three steps. But again, who will lead this development? The champions can only come from civil society. They need to continue to put pressure on the government, therefore they have to be strengthened. (Interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002)

THE FUTURE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

What role is then accorded to civil society in Indonesia’s future democratic transformation? Whereas Young (1999: 70) argues that the 1998 reform movement ‘failed to adequately engage
the participation of the broader citizenry’, broader popular participation is usually both the result and the purpose of social movement mobilisation. With reformasi still an unfinished project, the post-Suharto agenda has to focus on further constructive structural reform and consolidate the changes that have been achieved on paper to date – a task that requires a strong civil society to take over from the point where the social movement lost momentum.

Prior to the presidential elections Fatah identified three major factors that will have an impact on Indonesia’s democratic consolidation in the long term: the emergence of factions rejecting democracy; the challenge of increased militarism, including the lack of military reform; and the endurance of civil society in the face of the economic and social failure of a democratically elected regime and a growing popular support for a more authoritarian regime (CSIS 13 May 2004).

The majority of activists interviewed in 2002 emphasised broader civil society participation in governance and policy-making as a necessary condition for democracy. Qualifying this statement, it is not sufficient to simply achieve broader participation or to be granted access to the chambers of government; there must be a political will and proper mechanisms put in place for real and meaningful co-operation between state and civil society. This need for an enabling environment is further discussed below.

Social and political commentators furthermore acknowledge the need for a stronger, more united civil society in the current democratisation process in order to re-establish ‘the social contract’ that has been eroded by the New Order, and the solidarity among people that has been lost:

There is no question that we need a strong civil society. The reason is that change can only come from civil society. The political system is hopeless, so change can not come from the government. Of course, one concern is that too much is expected of civil society.

(Interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002)

It is worth noting that a strong civil society does not automatically imply it is more democratic, but in its common use ‘strong’ implicitly refers to the positive, constructive and more democratic forces within civil society.
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Contrary to the negative connotations about the potentially destabilising effects of a strong civil society, voiced by Western scholars and the New Order regime alike, the activists and commentators interviewed believe that a civil society has a key role to play in Indonesia’s democratic transformation and consolidation. While civil society representatives generally had faith in Wahid, they lacked confidence in Megawati, because it was not perceived that she understood the strategic importance of greater civil society involvement in Indonesia’s future democratisation process (interviews with LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Sobary 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002). Some areas of strategic importance for greater co-operation between civil society and the state are outlined below.

One of the areas where civil society has a strategic role to play is in poverty alleviation and rural development. Antlöv (2003: 194) argues that whereas democratisation and decentralisation provide the necessary preconditions, they are not sufficient without active involvement from both government and civil society at national and regional level. This is the only way to ‘ensure that regulations are not distorted and that ordinary people, not only the elite, are included in public policy making and local governance at community level’.

One should not underestimate the importance of this role in the face of increasing social and economic inequities. With a slow macroeconomic recovery, predictions about continued low growth rates that might lead to social upheaval, and the impact from exiting IMF, which implies less money for social reforms and rural development among others, there will definitely be a need for more human resources and services in rural development and poverty alleviation than the government is able to provide.

Given the previous disenfranchisement of the Indonesian people, civil society is needed in a monitoring capacity as well as for balancing the scales in favour of the broader community. Unless they manage to do this successfully, journalists, like Mishra, fear it might pave the way for a re-entry of the discredited elite into the public arena. With high-ranking offenders escaping justice, a resurgent business elite assuming more political power and a weak leadership with no transparent plan for political reforms, Indonesia might end up heavily dependent on the elite for the next few years. The 2004 elections were counted on to avert that
danger. A new strong leadership, with great collective ambition to release and implement a second wave of *reformasi*, would effectively counterbalance this tendency (*The Jakarta Post*/Political Outlook 2004).

Journalists are not the only ones who express apprehensions regarding the future role of the elite. Antlöv (2003: 210) cautions that district elites and the state continue to pose the main threats to grassroots’ democracy in Indonesia, emphasising that there are ‘powerful forces in Jakarta who would want to recentralise and maintain control over the countryside’.

Many activists comment on the prevailing factionalism and infighting in government and among the elite, which they see as one of the main reasons for the slow implementation of reforms. ‘As long as they fight each other the recovery will be as long. Unless there will appear one strong man who can control the situation’ (interview with Irianto 14 January 2002).

Besides strength, the new leadership should preferably be untainted by New Order thinking. This change in mindset, discussed previously in this chapter, necessarily stretches beyond the leaders to the people and is frequently emphasised as a task that can only be achieved through the greater involvement of civil society (interviews with Irianto 14 January 2002 and Sobary 14 January 2002).

There is no escaping the impact of decades of restrictions on political and social rights when discussing the present situation and the future for civil society. Even the fragmentation of the *reformasi* movement can partly be attributed to 32 years of New Order manipulation and the lack of alternative education.

The most significant role of the New Order was not violence and horror, but to teach us to forget how to organise, how to develop civil society. Even when people have energy to protest, to oppose the regime, they don’t know how to make a permanent movement. In the New Order all organisations in civil society were co-opted by the state. As a result people do not have any reference. All of us, Gus Dur, Megawati are pupils of what Budiman termed ‘the New Order School’ and have a big barrier to overcome with respect to how democracy operates. (Interview with Hidayat 15 January 2002)
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A strong regime does not by default have to equal an authoritarian regime. However, for the majority of Indonesians it does, since this is what they have experienced during their lifetime. For the democratisation process to stay on track civil society has to overcome these barriers of the past and assist the wider community in doing so as well. Greater co-operation between civil society forces is required, in addition to a more systematic co-operation between the state and society in order to disseminate power from government to civil society.

Genuine power sharing would eliminate some of the criticism from civil society groups, since they would not only contribute to the outcome but through their links and activities further ensure that the wider community was involved in the policy-making process. This would subsequently eliminate some of the criticism brought against civil society organisations, regarding their limited political power and tendency to safeguard their image by not engaging with the corrupt state and business sectors, in which case they would essentially be restricting civil society to the margins of political life.

The Indonesian constitution does not provide for contributions from the people, yet the need for greater consultation is frequently emphasised and considered imperative for the achievement of a more democratic society (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002, LBH APIK 11 January 2002, Irianto 14 January 2002 and Hidayat 15 January 2002).

The MPR is the people’s representative, that’s all. When we have a proposal they invite us to get involved but our suggestions are never included in the draft, despite their announcement that ‘this draft is written by inviting NGOs and people’s representatives’. We don’t see our ideas there! (Interview with Irianto 14 January 2002)

Increased government involvement of civil society implies a greater unity of civil society, including the organisations depicted by some as ‘the embryo of civil society’, namely the religious organisations, such as Muhammadiyah (interview with Sobary 14 January 2002). However, this would generate several problems.

As has been outlined earlier, religious organisations are not necessarily seen as part of Indonesia’s civil society. They are also
considered to belong to the old generation of social movements that work on behalf of the underprivileged but seldom together with them on an equal basis. However the inclusion of religious organisations and issues is seen as an important strategy by several activists for overcoming and pre-empting primordial conflicts that might be exacerbated by the new autonomy law – a task the government seems unable to handle on its own (interviews with Setyawati 11 January 2002 and Nababan 9 January 2002).

By its very nature civil society is multifaceted and harbours a wide range of formal and informal groups and networks that display a variety of objectives, principles and strategies. How is unity to be defined in this context? This factor consequently turns the selection of civil society representatives for various joint committees and monitoring capacities into a precarious issue. Who will decide which organisations and persons should be chosen, and what special interest groups they should represent? And who will decide which organisations are genuine representatives of civil society and which ones are not? There is scope for some serious disagreement on the very basics of this process.

In line with their inclination towards seeking practical solutions to problems, civil society has tried to avoid infighting and favouritism by forming issue-based coalitions for various purposes, with a rotating chairmanship among the member organisations (interviews with Safitri 8 January 2002 and Irianto 14 January 2002). But in the long run this democratic process may not be efficient enough. The risk is that civil society will lose ground and once again be sidelined by the government if the process of co-operation becomes too complex and too laborious.

This discussion shows that robust mechanisms and practices have yet to be established to provide for genuine and meaningful input from civil society in some strategic areas. The problems in this context are twofold. First, there must be political will on behalf of the government to make the necessary legislative and procedural changes in order to create an enabling environment. Second, civil society representatives have to overcome a lingering New Order legacy in the form of an ever-present suspicion and mistrust of the government’s ulterior motives.

An example of the latter is the debate regarding the Law on the Settlement of Industrial Disputes (Law 2/2004), where labour activists were hesitant to embrace the opportunity to actively
assist in the running of the proposed court for labour disputes. Bad experiences from the past, when government has sided with employers, underpin these sentiments (The Jakarta Post 19 December 2003, 26 January 2004). Essentially, it is an entirely justified fear of being hijacked by the government and used for legitimising policies, institutions and decisions that are not in the interest of civil society or the general public.

Attempts to allow for greater formalised input from civil society in various commissions and committees have already taken place. Examples of these are the National Law Commission that offers legal advice; the Joint Investigation Team that operates from the Attorney General’s office and monitors corruption; the Anti-Corruption Commission and a commission for the audit of assets of state officials and politicians. In these commissions civil society representatives find themselves working side by side with government and bank officials, politicians and the police. Yet, the positive connotations of these first attempts at formal co-operation between state and civil society have been marred by a biased selection process, which has seen some of the more prominent civil society activists and professionals excluded from the committees. Nevertheless, the Indonesian public is provided with a greater insight into government activities than ever before because of the significant monitoring roles of civil society, including the media (Hamilton-Hart 2001: 69–74).

The signals from the Indonesian government regarding greater civil society involvement are mixed. The views of government officials range from expressing outright hostility to the idea of greater popular participation, or regarding civil society merely as a nuisance, to being rather sympathetic to greater civil society engagement. ‘So even the government does not have one view; it depends on which groups you talk to’ (interview with Soesastro 15 January 2002).

The row over NGOs as a potential threat to national interest in May 2004 proved to be a setback in the fragile relationship between state and civil society. Political researchers stress that there has never been a greater need for constructive engagement between civil society and government. The democratic future of the nation lies in their hands (Tjhin 2004). To a certain extent the Indonesian government has been forced by international donors, the IMF and the World Bank to consult with civil society representatives to a
greater degree than previously. Similarly, requirements for good
governance and anti-corruption measures have been part and
parcel of the international assistance in the wake of the economic
crisis and the fall of Suharto (Hamilton-Hart 2001: 66, 73; Deuster
2002: 17). This once again shows the importance of transnational
influences.

While civil society undeniably has grown and matured during
the democratic transition and transformation – as manifested
in the diverse and vibrant activity of many small formal and
informal grassroots groups, with people being more outspoken and
challenging local authorities to a greater extent than in the past
decades – civil society is still in a developing stage and not without
problems.

Civil society is weak, it is fragmented, and one of the problems
with these various civil society organisations in this country is that
the people involved tend to have great egos. It is very difficult to
see how they can be able to co-operate with each other. (Interview
with Soesastro 15 January 2002).

Besides greater internal unity, Soesastro argues that two external
conditions necessary for an emerging civil society are still lacking
in Indonesia:

There must be an enabling environment for civil society to
develop. Number one is recognition by the state. It means that
room for civil society has to be provided through the constitution,
as in Thailand. In the case of the Philippines government
has recognised that civil society can play a role as partner in
development. This is ensured not through the constitution but
through a series of government regulations on the national and
regional levels. This is totally missing in Indonesia! The second
aspect is an environment that would allow civil society to mobilise
funding, which is a critical issue in developing countries. (Interview
with Soesastro 15 January 2002)

Academic scholars describe Indonesia’s current situation as a nation
in ‘moral crisis’, a ‘sick’ nation, plagued by horizontal conflicts as
well as corruption, collusion and nepotism, which has virtually
become a culture in itself, threatening to taint the next generation.
The social situation can only be improved by strengthening civil society and by creating an understanding of what a ‘civilized society’ (masyarakat adab) is about. These issues constituted the reason for establishing a new centre for civil society studies at the University of Indonesia in 2002 (PUSKA-PMA 2001; discussion with Wirutomo 15 January 2002).

In the post-Suharto era corruption has become the new core issue around which civil society can unite, regardless of religious or political affiliation, ethnicity or region. The anti-corruption campaign has emerged as a new moral force, with great social movement potential, in a society struggling to rid itself from ingrained immoral practices in the midst of enormous structural reform and economic hardship. Paradoxically, it remains to be seen how the anti-corruption movement will influence Indonesia’s future democratisation process. With corruption undoubtedly becoming more widespread and more visible in the post-Suharto era, it is tempting for voters to associate a lower level of corruption with a stronger, more authoritarian regime.

Yet, Hamilton-Hart (2001: 67) concludes that ‘corruption can only occur when government actors have discretion over the use of resources or the imposition of costs on private actors’. She identifies three main groups of strategies to reduce corruption: by implementing policy changes and institutional reforms to minimise the scope for corruption; by introducing a system that forces government to exercise internal self-restraint; and by applying external monitoring and sanctioning procedures to enhance the early detection of corruption, as well as making corrupt behaviour too costly.

In this process civil society has an important role to play, not only in publicly condemning corruption, but in monitoring and detecting corruption, as well as ensuring that government will exercise self-restraint and that the cost of corrupt behaviour is too great to make it worthwhile. Civil society will furthermore be needed to do what it does best, namely conduct educational and awareness-raising activities and campaigns nation-wide in order to combat the widespread perception that a culture of KKN is not only inevitable but acceptable. This is a battle for future generations that the government cannot win without the support of civil society.

The outcome of the 2004 elections was important in terms of determining the political space available for civil society to consolidate and pursue further democratic reforms for the benefit
of the greater community. The new government will have to face the challenges of civil society and determine the relationship between state and civil society, as well as the mechanisms for this relationship, more explicitly than the previous government did. Following the election, civil society actors and the broader community alike will undoubtedly enjoy more fundamental rights and freedom than during the New Order, although there might initially be a slight narrowing of political space under the new head of state.

Civil society representatives take a pragmatic approach; they look at the long-term impact of reform and consider the elections in 2009 a better benchmark for evaluating the achievements and shortcomings of the democratisation process and for civil society’s role in this process (interviews with Sobary 14 January 2002 and Soesastro 15 January 2002). Analysing the political and social situation in 2003 and looking ahead, MacIntyre and Resosudarmo (2003: 153) predicted that

the fundamental contours of the political landscape are unlikely to change dramatically over the next five years. This is because there is general acceptance (including by the military) that Indonesia is to be governed constitutionally for the foreseeable future; it is also because there is no sign of any shift in underlying social cleavages such as might cause realignment of the party system.

Their assessment is supported by Singh (2003: 447), who also cautions against underestimating the enormous changes that have already taken place and the steps towards additional reform that have been initiated since the ousting of Suharto. At the current pace Indonesia might in fact be moving too fast for the majority of the population. What is needed is time for Indonesians to reflect upon the changes and implement them in their daily lives, little by little.

Thus, the period between the 2004 and the next elections are a crucial window of opportunity for civil society. Even if the pendulum should temporarily swing back, under a less democratic government and president, the political climate should nevertheless be sufficiently altered since 1998 to provide civil society with the necessary political space and opportunities not only to consolidate but to take a more proactive stance in matters of governance and
public policy-making. Now that Indonesia is moving beyond the first wave of reformasi and the initial stage of democratisation, civil society needs to translate the gains of the pro-democracy movement and the lessons learnt in the first six years of the post-Suharto era into a language that people in the broader community will understand.

It is the task of civil society to facilitate the necessary links between the government and the people and put pressure on both parties to actively participate in the further democratisation process. All stakeholders need to gain a deeper appreciation of the rights and obligations of the state and its citizens in a modern democracy, and make it work in an Indonesian context. This is the challenge for civil society beyond 2004.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

In the previous chapters the intersections between social movements and civil society in Indonesia have been discussed in the context of three case studies of students, women, and labour, followed by an analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of reformasi and the pro-democracy movement’s contributions to the democratisation process. An important part of this study concerns the future role of Indonesia’s civil society and what is needed in order to secure genuine reform and further the democratisation process.

Drawing on the social movement and political opportunities frameworks it is evident that external factors, in particular the 1997–98 economic crisis, influenced the timing of the pro-democracy movement and triggered the escalation of events that led to the movement’s peak in May 1998. Nevertheless, the roots of the pro-democracy movement emerged well before 1998. Civil society forces gathered strength for a decade preceding Suharto’s fall and by 1996 their efforts and determination had built the necessary foundation for channelling widespread discontent into the 1998 mass social movement for reform and greater democracy. In this form, civil society undoubtedly contributed to the fall of Suharto by questioning the legitimacy of his regime and gaining widespread support for their moral cause among the broader population. The pro-democracy movement was simply too substantial to be ignored.

However it is important to acknowledge that the pro-democracy movement – just like the student, women’s or labour movements – was never coherent. On the contrary, under the umbrella of the pro-democracy movement a multitude of actors, issues and strategies co-existed. They only managed to unite for a short time
around one core issue: the call for Suharto’s resignation. Students had a vital role in keeping up the momentum of the movement in the final days of Suharto’s regime, but in the post-Suharto era they have lost their leading role and status and the student movement has imploded, fragmented and divided over a variety of issues. This has been symptomatic not only of Indonesian civil society in general but also of the nation’s previous leadership, which, in the absence of an official plan for Indonesia’s future democratic transformation, adds to the perception of a loss of direction for transformasi and reformasi.

Other contributing factors in the 1998 events that cannot be ignored concern the military’s and elite’s diminishing support for Suharto and the strategic support the pro-democracy movement received, directly as well as indirectly, from some factions within those groups. The national and international media, in addition to transnational links with donor organisations, NGOs, global networks and Indonesian exiles, contributed to put pressure on the New Order regime, making it increasingly difficult for the regime to use excessive violence to repress the opposition without drawing international attention and criticism.

This transnational dimension has only gained in importance in the post-Suharto era with the Indonesian government now keen to be respected internationally, as well as forced to meet criteria regarding good governance and democratic structures, as stipulated by international donors in the wake of the economic crisis.

Although civil society is still regarded as a new concept in Indonesia, the long history of the student, labour and women’s movements, in addition to the religious organisations that some consider as ‘the embryo of civil society’, provide evidence that a fledgling civil society has existed since well before independence. The Indonesian government has had a tendency to co-opt civil society forces from the very beginning, resulting in severe repression during Suharto’s New Order through the use of legal, cultural and ideological frameworks. In addition to manipulation by political parties and the military, this has had a profound negative impact on the development of a vibrant, independent civil society with the ability to challenge and monitor the state and its institutions.

Before any real gains can be made, scholars and activists emphasise the need for a total change in mindset in Indonesian society to get rid of the lingering New Order legacy, not only in terms of political institutions and structures but also in social and
cultural practices. This vital change in mentality encompasses the leadership as well as the wider community, and can only be achieved through awareness-raising and alternative education facilitated by civil society, in combination with a genuine regime change.

Contrary to the dominant Western civil society discourse, Indonesian scholars and activists stress the need for increasing cooperation between the state and civil society. While it is important that civil society remains independent, and has the potential to check and balance and even oppose the state, the state needs to provide political space and proper mechanisms for greater civil society participation in order to further stability and prosperity in the political, economic and social spheres. Important issues to resolve for the benefit of the future democratisation process concern not only the relationship between the state and civil society, but also the relationship between the military and civil society.

Military reforms are urgent and long overdue. The military’s ongoing special treatment in economic and legal matters undermines the whole reform process and poses a serious threat to Indonesia’s democratisation. If public trust in the viability of the process and the resulting institutions is to be maintained, there needs to be a serious rethinking of the role of the military in Indonesia’s political, economic and social spheres.

In this context the situation in Aceh and Papua also deserves to be highlighted, since excessive military violence is not a viable method for dealing with discontent and separatist movements. On the contrary, it will hamper the prospects for future stability, prosperity and democracy in Indonesia. Besides the human suffering that is an inevitable result of prolonged conflict, failure to negotiate peaceful settlement of the conflicts will only assist staunch anti-reform elements within the military. Moreover, continuing unrest will reflect negatively on Indonesia in the eyes of the international community.

As well as the fall of Suharto, the achievements of the pro-democracy movement can be seen in newly won freedoms of association and expression that even allow for scathing public criticism of the president. Numerous legislative reforms, a decentralisation process well under way, improved fiscal transparency and monitoring, in addition to direct presidential elections, and the removal of the military from the parliament in 2004 are other substantial democratic milestones. These gains have only started to be realised
Conclusion

recently, thereby demonstrating the tendency of social movements to serve as catalysts for long-term change, regardless of the alleged shortcomings of their immediate achievements.

Thus, the perceived fragmentation of the pro-democracy movement is essentially the natural ebb and flow of protests, or cycles of protest, so characteristic of social movements that do not aspire to take over political power or institutionalise any gains, only to moralise politics in order to achieve political and social change. The immediate task for civil society is to take over where the social movement left off, in order to consolidate values and attitudinal changes.

All three movements have shown self-reflexivity in learning from their past experiences and in developing new strategies to overcome government repression. They used political opportunities to mobilise, assessing that the potential long-term gains outweighed immediate government repression, but without widespread popular support they would not have managed to do this. Furthermore they united around the same campaigns and core issues, even though the three movements were internally divided.

Due to the legacy of communism and the fear of the arus bawah, labour was largely excluded from the 1998 reformasi and demokrasi movements. Many unionists also chose to focus on industrial relations instead of democracy issues, while the labour NGOs took a broader political stand. For Indonesia’s future democratic transition greater participation by workers and women is nevertheless vital to facilitate co-operation across borders of class, religion, ethnicity and region. A greater inclusion of women on all levels of government and society is also essential.

Clearly the current social and economic situation in Indonesia is not conducive to gradual long-term change that requires substantial systematic restructuring on all levels of society and a great deal of patience from everyone concerned. Community development and democratic progress alike are going to be hampered by the predicted slow economic recovery for the next few years. In combination with the increased burden of debt repayment, a consequence of Indonesia’s exiting the IMF funding programmes, this may lead to increased economic hardship for the wider community and even social upheaval.

It would be naive to think that government or civil society can solve Indonesia’s complex structural problems by themselves without
consulting the other stakeholders, including the broader community. A successful democratisation process requires all parties to work together in order to achieve genuine political and social change, as well as greater economic prosperity in the longer term. Numerous legislative changes have taken place, yet their implementation is lagging behind since enabling policies and procedures still have to be put in place. In the era of decentralisation these measures require greater consultation with the local community than ever before.

In 2002 there were great expectations that the political space up until the 2004 elections would translate into some formal mechanisms and provisions for greater co-operation between government and civil society, thereby according civil society a consultative role in democratic governance and policy-making. To the great disappointment of many civil society activists this process has only just begun.

In order to achieve a functioning relationship between government and civil society greater tolerance is needed, not only between state and civil society, but also within civil society itself. Similarly the need to monitor, check and balance not only applies to the state institutions, but in equally high degree to civil society, which in Indonesia by definition is neither democratic nor united.

Challenges like regional autonomy, increasing primordial conflicts and greater gender sensitivity require a holistic perspective and co-operation beyond any boundaries of class, religion or ethnicity. Civil society has a strategic role to fulfil in meeting all of these challenges to Indonesia’s future democratisation. Furthermore, issues such as poverty alleviation, rural development and the rampant corruption are all examples of battles for greater socio-economic justice that carry implications not only for the current generation but also for future generations – important battles the government cannot win without the support of civil society.

The outcome of the 2004 elections will be important in terms of determining the political space available for civil society to consolidate and to pursue further democratic reforms for the benefit of the greater community. The new government will have to face the challenges of civil society and determine the relationship between state and civil society, as well as the mechanisms for this relationship, more explicitly than the Megawati government was able, or willing, to do.
Likewise civil society has to reach a general understanding regarding the form and limits of state–society co-operation. Formal structures of extended co-operation may be desirable in the Indonesian context, but by its very nature this will also restrict the space for civil society and may prove detrimental to democratisation. There is also the vital issue of trust. Civil society and the general public need to regain the trust in the state and its institutions that has been eroded by three decades of entrenched New Order rule.

Whether or not the 2004 elections result in a temporary setback for the democratisation process, civil society actors and the broader community alike will undoubtedly continue to enjoy more fundamental rights and freedom than during the New Order. During the past six years Indonesia has made considerable democratic progress in many areas, but fundamental problems remain. Widespread corruption is just one of them.

Strong anti-reform forces within the elite, military and government, in combination with increasing nostalgia for the past, limited economic recovery, and a weak civil society may temporarily slow down the democratic pace. Yet paradoxically the prevailing disillusion among Indonesian voters regarding formal party politics and the current leadership also serves to open up political space. Civil society is needed more than ever to lend credibility to Indonesia’s democratisation project. Thus, the period between the current and the next elections in 2009 is a crucial window of opportunity for civil society to consolidate and take a more proactive stance in matters of governance, public policy-making and societal change.

It is the task of civil society to keep the pressure on the government to continue the democratisation process that has only just begun. Civil society is furthermore essential in facilitating the necessary links between the government and the people, thereby actively involving all stakeholders in the democratic process. A greater understanding of the rights and obligations of the state and its citizens in a modern democracy is required within all parts of Indonesian society – the wider community, the elite, the military and the leadership. Likewise, there is a need for constructive debate on how to make democracy and greater civil society participation work in an Indonesian context.

Undoubtedly this represents a great challenge, with a number of significant obstacles to be overcome by the state as well as by civil
society. Nevertheless, this seems to be the only way to build a ‘new Indonesia’, untainted by New Order sentiments, in accordance with the visions of Indonesian civil society activists and scholars alike.
## Example of protests and demonstrations held by students, women and/or workers in Indonesia in January 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activists + Supporters</th>
<th>Issues + strategies</th>
<th>Source (all from 2002)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Jan</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Majelis Penyelamat Reformasi Semesta (Committee of Saviours of the Total Reformasi)</td>
<td>Planned to hold a ‘People’s Council 2002’ in the Gedung Joang 45 but were not allowed in. Protesting outside the building demanding it be cleansed from ‘New Order lackeys’ and that an incompetent government should go.</td>
<td><em>Kompas</em>, 7 January, ‘Rapat umum gagal’, p. 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Jan</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>The Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations (Ornop) for Democracy</td>
<td>Demonstration at the House of Representatives protesting against government plan to drop graft charges (abolition) against ex-President Suharto</td>
<td><em>The Jakarta Post</em>, 8 January 2002, ‘Protest made on Suharto charges’, p. 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Jan</td>
<td>Sriwijaya, Sumatra</td>
<td>Dozens of protesters under the umbrella of Sriwijaya Youth Council</td>
<td>Rally outside the DPR building, protesting against a new board of directors of the South Sumatran state-owned coalmine PT Tambang Batubara Bukit Asem and government failure to consider any local people on the board.</td>
<td><em>The Jakarta Post</em>, 9 January, ‘No to new management’, p. 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Jan</td>
<td>Kediri, Java</td>
<td>Hundreds of teachers from the teachers’ union PGRI (Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia)</td>
<td>Protesting against the local leaders’ (Bupati) decision to enforce retirement at age 56; not in accordance with PP 32/1979 giving functional government officials the right to work until 60 years of age.</td>
<td><em>Media Indonesia</em>, 9 January, ‘Diminta Pensiun Dini, Ratusan Guru Protes’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Source Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Jan</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>About 500 people, mainly women and children, among the 3,000 people evicted from the canal slums on the 7 January were supported by NGOs belonging to the Anti-Eviction Network (Jaringan Anti Penggusuran). A peaceful rally in front of the State Palace demanded that government and legislators seek proper solutions to the eviction problem, e.g. relocating victims.</td>
<td>The Jakarta Post, 10 January, ‘Evicted people stage protest’, p. 1. The Jakarta Post, 8 January, ‘City forcibly evicts thousands of squatters’, p. 6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Jan</td>
<td>Medan, Sumatra</td>
<td>About 100 students belonging to Aliansi Semangat Rakyat demonstration outside the regional assembly building against the increase in fuel prices (BBM, Bahan Bakar Minyak) and electricity, the ‘abolition’ of Suharto, and violence against women.</td>
<td>Kompas, 11 January, ‘Daerah Sekilas’, p. 20.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Jan</td>
<td>Semarang</td>
<td>2,000 Telkom workers protesting against the planned sale of their division to Indosat, using banners with slogans and a truck full of props, e.g. a telephone box.</td>
<td>Kompas, 11 January, ‘2,000 Karyawan Sekar Telkom Tetap Tolak Tukar Guling’, p. 19.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Jan</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Varying from ‘more than 1,000 protesters’ (JP) to ‘hundreds’ (Kompas) from the Muslim organisation Hizbut Tahrir and the leftist League of National Students for Democracy (LMND) protests against government plans to raise fuel, telephone and electricity fees.</td>
<td>The Jakarta Post, ‘Protesters reject price hikes’, p. 6.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- 50 per cent of protesters women from Hizbut Tahrir; speeches and arts performance, demanding implementation of economic regulations based on Muslim law and rejection of capitalism.  


Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI) showed up later at the same place (the roundabout next to Hotel Indonesia).

- About 100 LMND members demanded raising of minimum wages and reduction in prices of basic staple foods.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Jan.</td>
<td>Pontianak, Kalimantan</td>
<td>Persatuan Melayu Kalimantan Barat and student org. Dewan Pimpinan Cabang Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia Kalbar. Protests against the fuel price rises (BBM) and the higher electricity fees.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solo and Semarang, Central Java</td>
<td>Hundreds of youths from the Front Pemuda Islam Surakarta.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bandung, West Java</td>
<td>Himpunan Masyarakat untuk Kemanusiaan dan Keadilan (Humanika) Kota Semarang.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Komisi B Jabar in Bandung.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Jan.</td>
<td>Samarinda, Kalimantan</td>
<td>Thousands of timber industry workers went on a mass strike for the minimum sectoral wage (upah minimum sektoral, UMS) of Rp 633,625 per month. About 4,000 workers returned to protest outside the provincial governor's office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Jan.</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>Hundreds of students, workers and LSM (NGO) representatives participated in peaceful demonstrations outside Hotel Indonesia and Merdeka Square, with loud speakers and happening art. Workers from the Komite Anti Penindasan Buruh (the Committee Against Repression of Workers; consisting of labour org. such as FNPBI, SBMNI, SBTP, SB, SP Hero and others like LBH, PRD and the journalists AJI) demanded the minimum wage 2002 UMP (Upah Minimum Provinsi) and rejected the increase in fuel prices (BBM) and electricity. Students from BEM se-Jawa dan Sumatera (network of 28 universities), only a few Javanese Universities represented this time, presented ‘the People’s Ultimatum’ to the political leaders and elite, demanding lower prices, an end to KKN and human rights crimes, and the cancellation of foreign debt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Jan.</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>The Front Against Corrupt Tycoons Demonstrators burned effigy of corruptor outside Bank Indonesia, calling on government to rectify the Salim family’s control of Bank Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Jan.</td>
<td>Sidoarjo, Gresik, Mojokerto, Java</td>
<td>About 2,000 workers from a plywood factory in Gresik and workers from three factories in kabupaten Sidoarjo. A coalition of workers and students from kabupaten Mojokerto. Workers demand implementation of 2002 minimum wage in city and regency. Workers demonstrate in the factory yard and on the streets, while the student–worker coalition demonstrates outside the local government building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>17–22 Jan.</td>
<td>Several regions: 1) Mataram, NTB; 2) Indramayu, West Java; 3) Makassar, Sulawesi</td>
<td>(1) Hundreds of fishermen, including mothers and children / supported by local NGO (1) Demonstrations against economic plight due to an increase in price of fuel and commodities (2) 120 drivers of city minibuses / supported by local NGOs and student groups (2) Demonstrations against increase in fuel prices and government’s neglect of low-income earners (3) Drivers of local transport / supported by local NGOs and student groups (3) Demonstrations against the price of fuel and commodities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–21 Jan.</td>
<td>Yogyakarta</td>
<td>Small group of students from LMND, KFM, PIJAR, IDEoLOGY, SPI, KOBAR, K3H, KS2K and the democratic party PRD. Demonstrations outside UGM University against the increase in BBM, electricity and telephone fees. Calling for a government of and for the poor people. Burning an effigy of corrupt politician outside the local government building on the 21 January.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Jan.</td>
<td>Tanjung Pinang, Sumatra</td>
<td>About 2,600 citizens from Riau (i.e. Tanjung Pinang, Batam, Kabupaten Karimun and Natuna) including LSMs, youth organisations, political parties and students from the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Raja Haji. Demonstrating outside the Riau local government building for greater local autonomy. Planning to go to Jakarta with an appeal for the establishment of the Riau Islands (Kepulauan Riau, Kepri) province.</td>
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*Demonstration leaflet by LMND et al. (Witnessed by author, 21 January).*

21 Jan. Jakarta

Hundreds of students from: Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamatan Organisasi (HMI-MPO), Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI), Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa (BEM), Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Jakarta + others not named.

Protesters wore masks of House Speaker Akbar Tandjung with a Pinocchio nose. Protesting outside the DPR against their reluctance to investigate Tandjung’s role in the graft scandal known as Bulog II, despite the police declaring that he is a suspect. Stating that Bulog II could be the start of a crackdown on KKN.


21 Jan. Jakarta

Hundreds of students from: Jaringan Aktivis Prodemokrasi (Prodem, the Pro-democracy Network), belonging to: Universitas Dr Moestopo, Universitas Jakarta, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN), Syarif Hidayatullah, Universitas Nasional, Komite Aksi Mahasiswa Trisakti, Universitas Mercu Buana, Universitas Indonesia, Institut Pertanian Bogor, Sekolah Tinggi Administrasi Negara, Universitas Bung Karno, Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI), Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI),

Starting from the traffic circle at Hotel Indonesia, walking to the MPR/DPR building. Protesting against the fuel price hikes (BBM), demanding some sort of compensation for the poorest groups in society. Protesting against KKN and trying to get members of the public to join in.

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<tr>
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<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 Jan.</td>
<td>Semarang</td>
<td>40 female Muslim students from Kesatuan Aksi mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (KAMMI). Peaceful street protest against immorality, i.e. prostitution and gambling</td>
<td>Kompas, 23 January, ‘Anti Kemaksiatan’, p. 25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Jan.</td>
<td>Bandar-lampung, Sumatra</td>
<td>300 students and activists representing 36 NGOs</td>
<td>Demonstration demanding major changes to the draft budget, threatening to occupy the legislative building. Subsequent meeting with Lampung provincial legislative council, accusing them of allocating more for bureaucracy than for the poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Jan.</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>More than 3,000 workers of state-owned Telkom, based in Yogyakarta, Semarang, Solo and Purwokerto in Central Java</td>
<td>Peaceful rally against the planned transfer of Telkom's assets in both provinces to state owned Indosat (and possible foreign investment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Jan.</td>
<td>Pekanbaru, Riau, Sumatra</td>
<td>3 students from the Sultan Syarief Kasim State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN)</td>
<td>Hunger strike for 4 days in protest against the increase to fuel prices, slamming the government for ignoring the plight of low-income earners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Jan.</td>
<td>Denpasar, Bali</td>
<td>Aliansi Mahasiswa Bali, supported by many onlookers from the general public who gathered at Puputan Badung</td>
<td>Demonstration against BBM, electricity prices and corruption. Singing and performance theatre showing how people are oppressed by the leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Jan.</td>
<td>Surabaya, Java</td>
<td>Hundreds of fuel truck drivers.</td>
<td>A sit-in strike in a depot belonging to the state oil company Pertamina. Demands for higher pay and better working conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Jan.</td>
<td>Semarang, Yogyakarta and Central Java regional offices</td>
<td>More than 3,000 workers from the state-owned Telkom</td>
<td>A one-day strike, protesting against the plans to transfer the unit to state-owned tele communications company PT Indosat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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