

POST-AUTHORITARIAN INDONESIA

A Comparative Southeast Asian Perspective

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ABSTRACT: The article assesses the post-authoritarian situation in Indonesia in the light of experiences of Thailand and the Philippines, two societies in which the unraveling of authoritarianism has been followed by the rise of formal electoral politics. The authors suggest that the demise of authoritarian regimes in all three cases, born of the cold war, has more fundamentally seen the reconfiguration of politics in which dispersed, predatory, and frequently antidemocratic forces have appropriated the institutions and discourses of democracy. They also suggest that the Indonesian case has been less conducive to the emergence of effective pro-democracy, civil society-based movements in the wake of authoritarianism. This, they explain, is largely the consequence of the 1965 anticommunist massacres in Indonesia, which has no equivalence in the other two countries, and the resultant highly centralized authoritarianism that was more successful in disorganizing social and political opposition for three decades.

Indonesia provides yet another case where the demise of a once durable authoritarian regime has not ushered in an unambiguous process of democratization. The excited crowds that witnessed Soeharto's resignation ceremony on 21 May 1998 have long abandoned nearly all their once lofty expectations, although towards the end of 2004 there was new, if guarded, hope about the prospects of Indonesian democracy, following the successful administration of parliamentary (June 2004) as well as direct presidential (September 2004) elections, the first in the nation's history. Nonetheless few observers have any great illusions about what the new government of retired General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono can achieve.

This essay represents an attempt to examine and grapple with the nature of the problems that confront post-authoritarian Indonesia, how they emerged and continue to persist from government to government, while acknowledging

some of the more encouraging developments in selected areas of the democratization process. Our first concern is to explore the gap between the publicly expressed desire for more substantive democratization and the limitations delivered in reality. Second, we seek to understand what lessons can be learned from comparing the Indonesian experience in relation to two neighboring Southeast Asian societies, Thailand and the Philippines, which have also experienced democratization following the demise of authoritarian political systems, albeit at different times. The unraveling of authoritarianism in these two countries has also not fulfilled most of the expectations of those who struggled against it. Thus it is useful to critically reexamine the relevant literature on post-authoritarianism in Southeast Asia in the light of recent developments in Indonesia.

A premise of this essay is that even at the height of authoritarianism in Indonesia sources of almost constant challenge to the regime were evident, though these were disorganized and largely ineffective. One source of challenge was a section of the middle-class intelligentsia, typically nongovernmental organization (NGO) activists, some students, academics, and journalists.¹ Another source, especially in the years immediately preceding the 1997-98 economic crisis, was labor.² Thus, contrary to the view of many commentators of the day,³ the New Order state was in fact never able to exercise absolute control over all aspects and spheres of social life. A measure of meaningful autonomy always existed in some spheres, in spite of the state's attempt at virtually total surveillance and domination, a situation that accords well with Raymond Williams's observation of the contested nature of domination.⁴

The situation in Indonesia is gauged below by examining some major reform agendas in Indonesia and also the actors and forces that have promoted them. We ask, for example: How is organized labor faring under post-authoritarian conditions in Indonesia? How are journalists doing now that the media is free? What accounts for the limitations in the success in the promotion of reform agendas in the area of administrative decentralization? On the other hand, what have been some of the successes of *reformasi*? Examining these issues is crucial to developing an understanding of the Indonesian trajectory after more than a half a decade of post-authoritarianism.

The discussion below leads to two conclusions. First, the situation in post-1998 Indonesia resembles those in post-1986 Philippines and post-1992 Thailand in some important respects. The demise of highly authoritarian regimes in these countries, born of the cold war, has led to a new reconfiguration of politics still largely dominated by dispersed, often less than democratic, forces that have hijacked the institutions, discourses, icons, and paraphernalia of democracy. Second, the Indonesian case has been less conducive to the emergence of effective pro-democracy, civil society-based movements compared to the cases of Thailand and the Philippines.⁵ We suggest that this is a consequence at least in part of the 1965 anticommunist massacres in Indonesia that have no equivalence in the other two countries. We also suggest some profound contemporary implications of that violent episode in Indonesia's recent history.

We build our arguments on theoretical propositions formulated by others about democratization processes and how they are conditioned by the relation-

ship between a variety of structural and historical factors.⁶ These propositions include the historical legacy of colonialism (or in the case of never-colonized Thailand, the profound encounter with Western colonial powers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), the process of class formation associated with capitalist development, and ethnic/religious politics, to list just the most commonly mentioned factors. All these vary in their nature and mechanics in the different societies, but they uniformly impose the enduring limits and possibilities that cannot be quickly altered by the mere political will or passion of actors (even by democratically elected leaders), or the simple passage of time. To paraphrase the words of one specialist of the region, structural constraints in particular do “not determine the precise form of the political system but [they determine] what forms it cannot take.”⁷

A few preliminary points need to be made. First, it should no longer be necessary to spend time ridiculing modernization-style perspectives — in their classical and newer manifestations — that are premised on a strong correlation between political liberalization, participation, accountability, and transparency, on the one hand, and sustained economic growth, urbanization, secularization, education, globalization, and the rise of the middle class, on the other.⁸ Rehearsing these criticisms is perhaps akin to flogging a dead horse. Instead of arguing that idealized models of democracy *have not* prevailed in Indonesia, and Southeast Asia, it is perhaps more productive to look closely at what *has* in fact prevailed and why.

Second, there is growing agreement that the terms “authoritarianism” and “democracy” are but iconic metaphors. They are useful, but only when used with some caution. These labels often lead to an inadequate, overgeneralized, and overly dichotomous portrayal of mutually oppositional types of governance. An awareness of this tendency has lately led to the emergence of such concepts as that of “hybrid” regimes.⁹ These regimes, according to Diamond, embody both democratic and authoritarian characteristics. Thus, rightly questioning the significance of the mere presence of competitive, multiparty elections, he suggests that “an unprecedented proportion of the world’s countries” now have “some *form* of electoral democracy,” yet “fail to meet the substantive test” of democracy unambiguously.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the concept of hybrid regimes is also wanting. It provides little help in understanding the variety of ways in which the institutions of power and the mechanisms of popular participation and representation are shaped and maintained, or can be altered and challenged in different social and historical contexts. In fact, the concept arguably represents just a slight advance over the much-used notions of “semi-democracies” and “semi-authoritarian” regimes.¹¹ These latter merely imply that different “combinations” or “gradations” of democracy and authoritarianism are present in all polities. Though perhaps useful as a mode of description, they do not capture the differing relations of power and interests that underlie the way in which institutional frameworks of governance are distinctly shaped, the way in which they actually operate, and the potential or actual contradictions through which they may be transformed at a given moment of history.¹²



Maj. Gen. Soeharto, left, is shown in a 6 October 1965 photo with Gen. Sabur, commander of Sukarno's presidential guard. (AP Photo)

Third, we must recall the cold war context in which the emergence of a centralized authoritarian regime — Soeharto's New Order — first emerged in Indonesia. Soeharto attained power through a putsch in 1965 that was followed by several years of a bloody, national-wide, Western-supported campaign of eradicating communism.¹³ How many real and imagined communists perished is a subject of debate,¹⁴ though eight hundred thousand or so is a safe guess. Moreover, several hundred thousand suspected communists and sympathizers were detained without trial for many years. With the exception of Cambodia under Pol Pot in the 1970s, nothing of the scale of the massacres and trauma that took place in Indonesia took place in the rest of Southeast Asia.

It is also useful to point out that the New Order's outright "success" in eradicating communism facilitated policies of disorganizing civil society more generally and at the same time centrally organizing the establishment of "uncivil" social groups. As a result, power was centralized in Indonesia to an extent that was never "achieved" in much of the rest of Southeast Asia, with the exception of the city-state Singapore. As Sidel notes, officials "at all levels of the state hierarchy were highly responsive to demands and directives from 'above', as their assignments and promotions depended entirely on appointments determined in Jakarta."¹⁵ Military assignments and promotions during the New Order era were also stringently regulated by the center, with tours of duty designed to prevent the rise of local warlords. Power under authoritarian regimes in the Philippines and Thailand, by contrast, was more dispersed and diffuse — in spite of the best efforts of past dictators — as local "strongmen" gained ascendance over various aspects of local politics, often quite autonomously from the political "center." Thus, one persistent feature of Indonesia's New Order

was the tendency to destroy every sign of opposition or potential threat, from within or outside the regime, and to do so with a comparatively high degree of effectiveness.¹⁶

But the fall of cold war-era dictators did not necessarily mean the total collapse of the entire edifice of power they had built. In Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, elements from the “old” have adapted to new circumstances. In Indonesia, certainly, many of the elements of the multilayered and extensive system of patronage that had been constructed during the New Order have now reinvented themselves in new political vehicles and alliances.¹⁷ In the Philippines, the old powerful landed oligarchic families — freed from Marcos’s aspirations to subordinate them to a more centralized regime — reasserted their historical dominance over political life after 1986,¹⁸ including over local political and economic machineries. In Thailand, the *chao pho* — always at the intersection of business, crime, and politics — emerged in the 1980s as one of the most important players in the country’s lively system of parliamentary democracy.¹⁹ But lately the *chao pho* too have been sidelined as a consequence of the Asian Economic Crisis and the rise of an assertive section of the bourgeoisie that survived it. Under Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, this section of the bourgeoisie now enjoys greater direct instrumental control over the apparatus of the state. Armed with neo-populist rhetoric, Thaksin harbors grand centralizing ambitions, which puts him on a collision course with formerly entrenched local and provincial bosses that have an interest in safeguarding their autonomy vis-à-vis Bangkok.²⁰

Many analyses of post-Soeharto Indonesia have emphasized the legacy of authoritarianism — e.g., on the continuing disorganization of civil society.²¹ Yet the dynamics of post-authoritarianism in countries like Indonesia, or in the Philippines and Thailand, must still be linked to the kinds of roles played by non-state agents, and not least the pro-democracy and pro-reform groups.²² This is in keeping with the notion, suggested earlier, of certain areas that remained autonomous during the height of authoritarianism, even in highly centralized Indonesia. But to what extent, and in what ways, has the realm of political autonomy widened since the end of centralized authoritarian rule? How have pro-democracy and pro-reform actors actually fared in the post-authoritarian period? To gain a sense of this, we must move from levels of high abstraction and broad generalizations to a closer reading of the development of reform agendas in various areas of life and of the actual situation of pro-reform social and political actors.

Post-1998 Indonesia

The dramatic changes that have taken place in many areas of social life in Indonesia since 1998 need to be acknowledged, though there will be differing views about their long-term significance. Some in Indonesia suggest that these changes have been too few and too slow. Such people voice concerns about the return of New Order-era powerful figures, and about continuing corruption and other practices that are associated strongly with the New Order.²³ In other quarters, however, a growing nostalgia for the “orderliness” of Soeharto’s New

Order seems to be growing. Longing for a “strong ruler,” some people choose to harken back to the political stability and economic growth of the era, and lament the apparent rise of crime and violence in Indonesian society and the stalled economy, all of which is blamed on “democracy.”²⁴ Unsurprisingly, Yudhoyono’s success in the 2004 presidential elections is commonly read as an expression of voter disappointment with the “disorder” stemming from the fall of Soeharto and desperation for a return to “firm” leadership.

All in all, elements of the ancien régime have clearly remained powerful in various aspects of post-Soeharto Indonesian politics. However, the changed environment requires a reconfiguration of power and its mechanics. This includes the reinvention of old elites in such vehicles as political parties and parliaments — institutions that were merely ornamental in nature during Soeharto’s rule. Corruption, collusion, and nepotism continue to be prominent, but their practice has necessarily become decentralized — or multicentered — as central state authority has waned. Nonetheless, the appropriation of public institutions and resources for private accumulation, the leitmotif of the New Order, remains a defining feature of the post-Soeharto political economy.²⁵

It is noteworthy that the newly elected government of Yudhoyono has included the fight against corruption agendas among its top priorities. But the majority of those widely regarded as being most guilty remained quite unscathed under “reformasi” — as amply evidenced in early 2004 by the court acquittal of Golkar chief and house speaker Akbar Tandjung, then embroiled in a particularly controversial corruption scandal. The still-powerful military also remains a center of corruption — its various business operations are run in the most non-transparent manner and it is widely believed to be involved in a host of illegal but lucrative activities, including gambling, prostitution, and drug- and gun-running, from Jakarta down to the provinces and localities. Thus, as a corollary, militarism continues to be a force to be reckoned with, although it is no longer the sole domain of the military proper. “Uncivil” society groups like paramilitaries and organizations that host political gangsters — often linked with political parties or related mass organizations — have also become increasingly important players.²⁶

Compiling a comprehensive list of “change and continuity” in Indonesia since 1998 is impossible. But among the key developments worth examining are (a) the liberalization of the urban-based and privately run mass media; (b) the decentralization of state administration; and (c) the changing condition of the labor movement. These developments highlight many of the arguments proposed in the present article regarding changes and continuities in pre- and post-1998 Indonesia.

The media is examined here because the world of mass media professionals appears to have been most remarkably liberalized since 1998. Even under the politically repressive New Order, the media had flourished and expanded remarkably as an independent industry. During the economic crisis that began in 1997, when unemployment soared, the mass media recruited more employees than ever before. With the removal of state repressive agencies and policies in 1999, the mass media has become an even more robust institution.

We include an examination of organized labor here partly because of the contrast it provides to developments in the mass media. While the labor movement has made some gains since 1998, especially in the area of freedom to organize, the stubborn legacy of New Order authoritarianism continues to stifle its progress. In addition, we present an analysis of the process of administrative decentralization largely because of the way that it demonstrates so well how institutions of democracy and “good governance” can be hijacked by predatory as well as undemocratic interests under post-authoritarian conditions.²⁷

The Media: Liberalized but Unprotected

Nothing epitomizes change in post-1998 Indonesia better than developments in the media industry. Soon after the 1999 parliamentary elections, President Abdurrahman Wahid closed down the Department of Information, the main propaganda and censorship instrument of the New Order, an act of great symbolic and actual significance.²⁸ By that time, the number of licensed print media had jumped from 289 to around 1600, although more than half of these were no longer publishing in 2000 for reasons that were mainly financial and managerial.²⁹ Also importantly, the number of privately run television networks has now more than doubled from the modest sum of five in 1998. Moreover, more than fifty local television stations have spread out across the archipelago.

Of course, the news has not been all good. As the media has become more corporatized, and journalism more professionalized, new tensions among the major players in the media industry have emerged, not the least of which involves conflict between management and rank-and-file journalists, sometimes in the form of industrial disputes.³⁰ One development that vividly demonstrates both the remarkable progress of media liberalization and the new battles to materialize that newly acquired freedom is the recently enacted legislation that guarantees the constitutional freedom of media expression. Press Law No. 40/1999 and Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002 are not gifts from the government, however. Both are the result of hard-won legal achievements of broader pro-democracy groups and experts and professionals in the mass media.

Under the Press Law, a newly established Press Council is responsible for safeguarding press freedom from external intervention, drafting and supervising the implementation of a Journalistic Code of Ethics, and seeking resolutions to public complaints about news reports. Members of the Council consist of independent individuals from relevant backgrounds (journalists, media managers, and academics). Pursuant to the Broadcasting Law, on 26 December 2003 the government established the Indonesian Broadcast Commission as an independent, state regulatory body. The Broadcasting Commission has more power than the Council, and some media practitioners regard its power as both excessive and unconstitutional. The Commission has the power not only to set the code of ethics for practitioners in radio and television broadcasting but also to oversee a wide range of regulatory matters, including media ownership, licensing, and penalties for irregular practices.

Elements of the media industry have alleged that the Commission has shown an inclination to be as repressive as the New Order’s Department of Informa-

tion. Thus, Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002 has faced a series of legal challenges from associations of media companies — legal actions that have gone as far as the Constitutional Court. Even when the Court handed down a verdict that satisfied all contending parties (in July 2004), new disputes arose among the Commission, media companies, and the government over the more procedural issues of technical enforcement. Notwithstanding these legal battles, and continued grievances among some, it is safe to say that Indonesia has made giant steps toward both liberating the media and maintaining the standards of quality broadcasting.

Reform in the print media has been more difficult. If television has been censored mainly for its sensationalism (e.g., exposure of “pornographic” or violent images), the print media has occasionally provoked reactions because of its biting investigative journalism. Unlike the Broadcasting Law, the new Press Law, which governs the print media, has often been totally ignored. It is notable that despite better remuneration for journalists and greater freedom for their professional associations, by and large journalists have not been better protected at their place of work than during the Soeharto era.³¹ Management as well as individual journalists continue to be subjected to assault, intimidation, and violence, but this time usually from various non-state agents rather than from government officials proper. On several occasions, paid groups of thugs have raided the offices of publications or their regional representatives in response to something printed in the press (a critical comment on a political leader, for instance).

Furthermore, respected major publications have been regularly sued by well-connected elites in libel cases that threaten severe penalties. In many ways these echo a practice in Singapore, where the aim is to threaten political opponents with financial bankruptcy through the court system.³² Unlike in Singapore, however, the court system in Indonesia has for many decades lost all credibility in the eyes of the public. Also unlike in Singapore, it is most often powerful private individuals rather than government officials who are initiating the libel cases in post-1998 Indonesia.

To cite just one of many examples, in late January 2004 the South Jakarta court declared the daily *Koran Tempo* guilty of running a libelous report, discrediting a New Order-made tycoon, Tomy Winata, who is suspected of having interests in a wide range of industries, including illegal gambling. The court ruled that the accused had to pay compensation in the unprecedented amount of US\$1 million, and make a public apology in eight newspapers and six magazines, and on twelve television stations, including the international broadcasters, CNN and CNBC, for three consecutive days. It also ruled that failure to comply would entail a further US\$1,190 (Rp. 10 million) per day fine. This shocking verdict came within just weeks after the same daily was found guilty in a separate libel case filed by another New Order tycoon, textiles manufacturer Marimutu Sinivasan. In the latter verdict, the judges demanded that the daily print an immediate full-page apology (the contents of which would be decided by the plaintiff) in twenty newspapers and twelve magazines, and broadcast an apology on nine television networks, or again, face a fine of US\$1,190 per day.



Bambang Harimurti, chief editor of *Tempo* weekly, is surrounded by reporters after he was found guilty of libel, Thursday, 16 September 2004, in Jakarta, Indonesia. An Indonesian court sentenced Harimurti, who is the editor of the country's leading news magazine, to one year in prison for libel in a case that press advocates called a setback for media freedom. (AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana)

But it has not stopped there. The daily *Koran Tempo* belongs to the media holding company, the Tempo Group, whose principal publication, the respected magazine *Tempo*, was also sued by Tomy Winata and Marimutu Sinivasan in other libel cases. The total compensation that Mr. Winata was seeking in six separate libel cases from the

holding company amounted to US\$40.7 million (Rp. 342 billion).³³ In September 2004, Bambang Harymurti, *Tempo*'s chief editor received a one-year prison sentence in another defamation case filed by Tomy Winata. It should be recalled that *Tempo* was one of three Jakarta weeklies that were banned in 1996 for clearly political reasons.³⁴ Interestingly, the new threats and restrictions to the newly liberalized media have not provoked protests at a scale comparable to 1996, when *Tempo* was closed.³⁵

Thus, in the case of professional journalists and the media, we have seen dramatic formal advances in a range of freedoms. The state no longer monitors and censors the press in the way it did at the height of the New Order.³⁶ However, these advances are mitigated by still other developments, including new threats of litigation from well-connected individuals, the aggressively expanding media industry, and political thuggery. The formal rights that the media currently enjoys are in practice still restricted, no longer because of an authoritarian state, but because of the instrumental power wielded by powerful individuals and companies over the state apparatus, including its courts and security forces. The result is that journalists have more freedom — yet remain politically vulnerable.

There is yet another interesting development in the area of the media. As its importance is enhanced in the context of a changed political environment that emphasizes elections and political parties, political gangsters (*preman*) appear to be developing an interest in wielding control over press publications, as well as associations of journalists. This is the case particularly at the local level. In both North Sumatra and East Java, for example, *preman*, who straddle the formal business and political spheres and the shadowy underworld of organized

crime, produce tabloids that appear only irregularly for extortion purposes and in connection with competition over contracts or local office.³⁷ In other localities, the leadership of local branches of independent associations of journalists has fallen into the hands of individuals with similar backgrounds.³⁸ Thus, ironically, *preman* cultivated by the New Order have become an important beneficiary of Indonesia's hard-won freedoms of the press. This is the case even though several media-watch organizations have been established to ensure that press freedoms are not abused.³⁹

Although parallels can be found in the Philippines and Thailand, there are significant differences that are noteworthy. It has been commonly assumed that both the Philippines and more recently Thailand have enjoyed the freest press in the region. Less noted has been the dark side of media politics in these two countries.

The Thai press has been remarkably free and fierce in its critical reporting by any standard (notably, at odds with notions of "Asian values" and Thai gracefulness), but not always for reasons that might be associated with independent journalism. In fact, the Thai press has long been an extension of elite interests and deeply embedded in intra-elite conflict. Although the owners of individual companies of the Thai print media are distinguishable from state administrators,⁴⁰ the proprietors, editors, and columnists have a long tradition of allying overtly with particular sections of the political elite. One analyst suggests that "very few Thai newspapers are published solely for business reasons...newspapers have been vehicles for political lobbying, backstabbing and rabble-rousing, used by all manner of groups."⁴¹ In some ways, the salient features of Thai's "free press" are reminiscent of the pre-New Order Indonesian press of the 1950s,⁴² and to an important extent also of the Philippines in the 1960s.

Journalistic practices in the Philippines have been more comparable to those that prevail in the West, where professional ethics are espoused. This has been possible in part because Philippine journalists enjoy better legal protection than their other Southeast Asian counterparts. But even here the ideals of independent and responsible journalism constantly face serious challenges.

For example, Philippine press companies find themselves susceptible to the threat of embargo by advertisers. Major press companies in the Philippines are owned by a handful of rich families, running holding companies that are diversified in a wide range of areas: retail, manufacture, finance, property, transportation, hotels, banking, mining, agribusiness, and so on. So the editors of press publication often have to endure pressure from management when their sister companies are entangled in conflict or competition with rival companies.⁴³ Thus, corporate business relations with the state or other companies often dictate the compromises or biases that appear in print.

Although this should not be overstated, the different characters of the three national press in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines have something to do with their distinct origins. From its earliest days, state officials sponsored the Thai press. In Thailand, which was never directly colonized, the monarchy-sponsored press became the forerunner of what is today's Thai journalism, and its main drive was to bolster the political legitimacy of rulers. The presses in

both Indonesia and the Philippines owe their origins to the entrepreneurship of colonial-era Europeans, and, later, Chinese ethnic businessmen, before other groups entered the industry. As such, the press in Indonesia and the Philippines has a history of being founded on the basis of a relatively autonomous position from the state, and a great part of their histories consist of mutual distrust and disputes with these states (colonial and postcolonial).

Important differences exist, however, between the press in Indonesia and the Philippines. One difference is attributable to the distinct economic histories of the two societies. In the Philippines, a non-state bourgeoisie had been well developed since the era of Spanish colonialism and was entrenched politically during the era of U.S. colonialism — which also bestowed upon the country a broadly liberal outlook. As a result, a tradition of commitment to journalistic professionalism in a relatively liberal environment developed more easily there than in Indonesia. By contrast, no domestic bourgeoisie emerged and secured a legitimate position in the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch prevented the early rise of a nascent bourgeoisie among the ethnic Chinese through violent means as early as 1740. The media industry in Indonesia remained small until the late 1980s, and the work of journalism was characterized by a heavy dose of romantic activism, plus stifling bureaucratization under the New Order⁴⁴ rather than industrial professionalism.

In all three cases, then, we see that freedom of the press has clearly been a product of the post-authoritarian period. Nevertheless the exercise of that freedom has not been as straightforward as might at first be assumed. In Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, freedom of the press continues to be challenged, not by an authoritarian state — in spite of Thaksin's recent onslaught on the press in Thailand — but by a variety of vested business interests or by the exercise of societal political violence.

Decentralization: Reorganization, not Empowerment

In response to growing regional demands that have emanated more strongly since the demise of the New Order in 1998-99, the Indonesian government has undertaken a potentially massive experiment in regional decentralization and local autonomy. In some cases, like Papua and Aceh — the latter the site of a major military operation since May 2003 — there have been strong demands for secession from the Indonesian republic, which have raised fears of eventual balkanization.

Under the two umbrella laws promulgated in 1999 and implemented since January 2001, significant administrative powers have been designed to devolve from the central to the sub-provincial level of government (cities, towns, and regencies — known as *kabupaten*). This caused great excitement — not the least among local elites who have expected to benefit from new political and economic circumstances — as Jakarta's reach would become more limited under the terms of the 1999 laws. For example, decentralization has meant that the government in Jakarta no longer wields the power to appoint the top executives of provincial and sub-provincial governments as it had for decades. Under the decentralization legislation, Jakarta and the regions set up a revenue redistribu-

tion arrangement within which natural resource-rich areas would especially enjoy economic advantages.⁴⁵

At the same time, organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have been actively dispensing policy advice on administrative and fiscal decentralization in Indonesia. The premise underlying their advice is that decentralization would open the door to market reforms, mainly by breaking up stifling central state authority. In the worldview that permeates these organizations, decentralization will inspire local initiative, creativity, and entrepreneurship, and do away with administrative bottlenecks.⁴⁶ Moreover, decentralization will stimulate the emergence of a more vibrant (and market-friendly) civil society,⁴⁷ and even facilitate Indonesia's transition to a democratic, transparent, and accountable form of governance.⁴⁸

Partly because of the conceptual association made with "civil society" and "democracy," many Indonesian NGOs have supported decentralization — even though — many of these NGOs would be otherwise unimpressed with the neo-liberal free market agendas of organizations like the World Bank and IMF in Indonesia. Such Indonesian NGOs envisage decentralization as integral to reforms that will finally give a genuine voice to sections of society that had been politically and socially marginalized during the rigidly centralized and authoritarian New Order rule.

In spite of international and domestic sources of support, decentralization has been implemented with haste and with a great deal of tentativeness. This is reflective of an ongoing tug-of-war of sorts between various levels of governance for control and authority over resources at the local level. Provincial authorities, for example, have an interest in not being laid off, as the ambitions of those operating in the lower-level *kabupaten* and towns have grown rapidly over the last few years. Thus, legislation was introduced in 2004 that effectively swung the pendulum back in the direction of provincial authorities, at the expense of lower-level apparatchik and politicians. Although administrative decentralization has not proceeded in an unimpeded fashion, several reservations can be raised about the nature and outcomes of decentralization in Indonesia.

First, decentralization has been part and parcel of the development of a post-authoritarian regime in which electoralism run by money politics and political violence is a key feature. At the local level, the beneficiaries have mostly been those who formerly occupied the middle and lower echelons of the New Order's vast, centralized system of patronage, which has since fragmented. In other words, decentralization has opened the door for those elements of New Order rule at the local level — political operators and entrepreneurs, petty apparatchik, enforcers, and gatekeepers — to achieve positions whereby they wield more direct, instrumental power over the apparatus of state.⁴⁹

Second, rather than leading to fiscal regularization and transparency — as initially hoped for — administrative decentralization has opened the door to new forms of decentralized rent-seeking and corruption and the development of localized, predatory systems of patronage, in which political gangsters, for example, find new opportunities for advancement. It has also been apparent

that administrative decentralization can create serious obstacles to investment and business activity, rather than help create a supportive environment, as expected, for example, by neoliberal economist and advisers in international development organizations.⁵⁰ It is well documented, for example, that local governments have been enthusiastically instituting new levies on business and the public, to the great consternation of Jakarta.⁵¹ Not surprisingly, the central government quashed a bid by local governments to allow them to raise sources of revenue through foreign borrowing. Indeed, it is suggested that decentralized corruption has meant that local officials misappropriated up to 40 percent of central government subsidies to the regions under a fiscal assistance scheme, less than one year after the official implementation of local autonomy.⁵²

But the outcomes of decentralization in Indonesia — which have included mutually contradictory legislation and regulatory frameworks,⁵³ great confusion on the ground about jurisdictional matters, and deterioration in the provision of some social services — cannot be explained away as mere technical shortcomings. All these are more essentially reflective of the dynamics of a newly emergent and highly diffuse system of power that remain essentially predatory — characterized by the rise of parties, parliaments, and elections.⁵⁴ These decentralization characteristics produce local governments that are at least partly captured by old predatory interests — significantly, those that reinvented themselves after the institutions of New Order rule collapsed. Thus, Malley notes that “Allegations of vote buying mar the election of nearly every governor, *bupati* and mayor.”⁵⁵ Recalling Anderson’s argument about political murders in Thailand in the 1980s, that competition over local offices has become so intense, costly — and often brutal — is a good indicator of how vital they have become, but not necessarily in terms of “empowering” local peoples or “civil society.”⁵⁶

Potentially, however, decentralization does offer opportunities to develop democracy as well as accountability in governance. Popular pressure has been increasing at the local level across the nation to bring suspected politicians and government officials to court on corruption charges. In some cases the notoriously corrupt judicial system has even responded positively. In West Sumatra, for instance, nearly all newly elected councilors were legally charged with corruption in 2004. In nearly all cases, however, the investigation proceeded at a slow pace, and prosecution has been rare and difficult.

In many ways, some of the developments in Indonesia are reflective of decentralization experiences in Thailand and the Philippines. In the Philippines, in spite of a decentralization policy supported by international agencies, well-established political clans continue to dominate representative bodies and local government so that elections are tainted by money politics and intimidation.⁵⁷ In Thailand, the 1997 Constitution has called for the greater development of decentralized governance,⁵⁸ but even the Asian Development Bank acknowledges “the practice of vote buying in rural areas.” “Widespread perceptions of corruption” have also been hindrances.⁵⁹ Moreover, the advent of parliamentary democracy in Thailand in the 1980s had already witnessed the growing influence of local political and business alliances — frequently involving individuals



"Because minimum wages have increased since the fall of Soeharto...it has now become commonplace for businesses to argue that workers are demanding too much in a time of still-deep economic problems." Pictured here: Indonesian workers shout slogans during a demonstration outside the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, Wednesday, 3 October 2001. The 600 workers from a state-owned aircraft factory were demonstrating for better pay and working conditions. (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)

known as *chao pho*. Many of these *chao pho*, or their family members, have been elected as parliamentarians, town mayors, or village heads, as the families of local notables have tended to be in Indonesia as well.

In all three cases then we see that while decentralization has been on the agenda of post-authoritarian governments, the context for decentralization has differed in each case, given the legacies of the heavily centralized authoritarianism of Indonesia's New Order and the less "successfully" centralized rule of the Thai generals and of Marcos in the Philippines. In all three cases decentralization has been an integral part of democratic — as well as good governance — reform agendas. Nevertheless, decentralized democracy has not been fully successful in warding off the encroachment of predatory local elites on its institutions.

Labor: Free but Ineffective Organizations

Dramatic changes have been evident in the area of labor since the fall of New Order in Indonesia, although for the most part, developments in the labor area demonstrate the degree to which the effects of thirty years of authoritarian rule under the New Order continue to linger on. Under Soeharto's rule, rigid controls were imposed on labor organizing, partly due to the association in the past of labor militancy with the now-banned Indonesian Communist Party, the PKI.⁶⁰ Many labor activists oppose new legislation in the labor area because of some of their restrictive features, but at the same time dozens of labor organizations have registered in the Indonesian Department of Manpower. During most of

the New Order, there was just one, state-backed labor vehicle, the function of which was partly to circumvent independent labor organizing.

Nonetheless, labor has not yet shaken off the legacy of decades of systematic disorganization under the New Order, as demonstrated in particular by the continuing ineffectiveness of the labor movement. At the start of the post-Soeharto period, organized labor was particularly handicapped given the large-scale unemployment and underemployment that had resulted from the Asian economic crisis of 1997-98. Thus, organized labor played a relatively minor part in the mass demonstrations that led to Soeharto's fall, except near the very end.⁶¹ This in spite of the fact that labor unrest and independent organizing had been on the rise for most of the 1990s in the face of the prevailing rigidly authoritarian system of labor controls.

Because minimum wages have increased since the fall of Soeharto — but against the very real backdrop of the spiraling cost of living — it has now become commonplace for businesses to argue that workers are demanding too much in a time of still-deep economic problems. For example, the association of Indonesian Shoe Manufacturers, Aprisindo, has claimed that several shoe factories had to relocate to Vietnam due to escalating labor problems. These claims found support in the respective associations of textiles and electronics manufacturers, which also suggested that Indonesia was becoming increasingly unattractive as an investment site.⁶² Aprisindo has even asked the government to eliminate the system of setting minimum wages annually.⁶³

Korean, Japanese, and other foreign investors have warned against, in effect, a “capital strike” against Indonesia. Foreign investors commonly cite rising wages and labor troubles as factors that make Indonesia less attractive than competitors like China, Vietnam, or Myanmar. Government officials have seized upon these charges to push for a halt in wage increases and for controls over trade unions — while rarely mentioning other sources of high production costs, including costly red tape and bureaucratic kickbacks. Heavily reported in the national media, the charges by foreign investors provide much ammunition to those interests who seek to preempt the emergence of a more effective labour movement in the post-authoritarian environment.

The fact that Aprisindo's call for the elimination of the minimum wage was not granted cannot be taken as evidence of the strength of organized labor. On the contrary, post-authoritarian politics in Indonesia have not been characterized by the growing influence of organized labor in any tangible manner. Though the fall of the Soeharto dictatorship has provided workers with much needed political space, not one of the major political parties has made any effort to develop real labor constituencies in the 1999 elections. Evidently, alliances with organized labor were regarded as unnecessary, as one national parliamentarian from the PDIP headed by former President Megawati Soekarnoputri has observed.⁶⁴ Part of the problem is that the numerous labor organizations seem to be in perpetual competition with each other. This is not surprising, for the range of labor organizations includes those that are offshoots of the former state-sanctioned labor organization, the SPSI (All-Indonesia Workers' Union), and the liberal SBSI (Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union), formed by human

rights lawyer Muchtar Pakpahan, all the way to the radical FNPBI (National Front for Workers' Struggle), which seeks to resuscitate the leftist tradition in Indonesian trade unionism.⁶⁵ Thus, there is no effective or united labor leadership through which to advance labor interests and with which other social groups can negotiate.

In some ways this reflects the situation elsewhere in Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand. Labor federations in Thailand numbering no less than eighteen, as well more than eight "labor centers," had already existed by the 1990s. Rather than strengthening organized labor, this labor presence allowed the state to curb labor influence by encouraging rivalry among the groups, especially with regard to the privilege of sitting on tripartite bodies.⁶⁶ Moreover, unions preferred by the state have tended to monopolize positions in such bodies, perhaps unsurprisingly. Ungpakorn suggests that a related development has been that of the "gangster trade union leader." Such individuals "set up trade unions in order to extract protection money from employers by threatening strikes."⁶⁷ In Indonesia, this has occurred as well, though to a lesser extent, with some businesses complaining of extortion by politically connected "labor organizations" in particular.⁶⁸ In the Philippines, radical political unionism survived the Marcos regime's attempt to domesticate organized labor. This is due in part to a relatively liberal industrial relations environment that is a legacy of U.S. colonialism.⁶⁹ However, the labor movement has more recently been weakened by internal fragmentation — the main radical organization, the KMU (The First of May Movement), for example — has splintered badly.

In Indonesia and Thailand the labor movement has arguably suffered greater direct blows. In Indonesia the labor movement was crushed first by Dutch colonial authorities, and in the postcolonial period, by the New Order. In Thailand, the first labor unions were linked to the communist party, as in Indonesia, though to a predominantly Chinese one. During the dictatorship of Sarit (1958-1963), severe clampdowns on labor organizing took place. Since that time the fortunes of organized labor in Thailand experienced ups and downs throughout the periods of military dictatorship and gradual democratization since the 1980s.⁷⁰

The formal rights that labor organizations have enjoyed in post-New Order Indonesia do not necessarily work in practice, however. For example, local labor organizers often complain that local bureaucrats, in collusion with business, sometimes circumvent genuine efforts to form unions at the workplace.⁷¹ While it has been suggested that security forces proper have been less directly involved than in the past in breaking up strikes or intimidating workers, activists now face a new, equally dangerous and ruthless, nemesis, namely, paramilitary organizations connected to political parties that are now often hired by industrialists in place of the police or the military to maintain "order."⁷² Ironically many of those recruited were young unemployed males, some of whom had worked in companies where industrial disputes have occurred.⁷³

In Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, then, the unraveling of authoritarianism has at first glance provided room for free labor movements. Yet, labor has not been effective against the dominance of old and new elites whose politi-

cal dispositions can be distinctly anti-labor. Thus organized labor has made only limited headway within the post-authoritarian constellations of power.

The Legacies of Authoritarianism

In Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, the unraveling of authoritarianism has been accompanied by the emergence of political systems characterized by an emphasis on formal elections and on parliamentary politics at the national and local levels, predominantly run by money politics and by political violence.⁷⁴ All the cases show that old interests and such un-civil forces as political gangsters may reinvent themselves and appropriate the democratization process, thereby exercising predatory power through the institutions of democratic governance.

It would be misleading to suggest that these actions have gone unchallenged. All three countries have had vibrant pro-democracy movements for a long time, though clearly, in each country, there have been accommodating as well as more confrontational and militant streams in the various civil society-based movements.⁷⁵ It is evident as well, however, that these movements remained more overtly politicized in Thailand and the Philippines for longer periods of time than in Indonesia. As suggested earlier, the post-1965 mass killings in Indonesia have to a great extent been responsible for this difference.

Although the actual mass killings in Indonesia had ceased by the end of 1966, for the next thirty years the New Order periodically reproduced the terror of past violence through repressive measures geared to intimidate the citizenry.⁷⁶ Regular communist witch hunts were undertaken, while an extensive system of national surveillance was put into place — remaining intact for a whole generation. The New Order's propaganda established the Communist threat as the "master narrative," from which a potentially infinite number of politically discourses were produced.⁷⁷ The efficacy of the New Order master narrative has made it impossible for successive post-Soeharto governments to revisit the 1965 events, and make amends for past injustices. When the liberal-minded president Abdurrahman Wahid attempted to revoke the ban on communism in 2000, his move provoked controversy, and soon afterwards he was impeached and forced to resign in disgrace. The New Order's ban on communism and Marxism has not only been preserved, but its legal status was reaffirmed by the newly elected parliament in 2003.

Nothing quite like this occurred in Thailand and the Philippines. The New Order's systematic persecution of communism was extended to de-ideologize civil society-based movements, something that did not happen in Thailand and the Philippines.⁷⁸ In the Philippines, for example, authoritarian rule and antiliberal ideology were never presented as intrinsic features of the national culture, as it was in Indonesia, where Pancasila was extolled as an ideology that espoused harmony and nonconfrontation.⁷⁹ It also legitimized the virtual outlawing of overt political opposition.

Moreover, in the Philippines, a sustained though much weakened communist armed insurgency has to this day maintained connections with sections of the society (artists, journalists, academics, NGOs, organized labor, and so on).⁸⁰

This clearly provided an avenue through which radical political ideologies, for example, could remain influential. In Thailand, political activists — some of whom are notably survivors of the 1970s' student uprising as well as the communist rebellion that ended in the early 1980s — have tended to be more overtly political than their Indonesian counterparts, in spite of the propagation of national values that extol Buddhist-inspired ideas of peace and harmony. There has been, for example, increasing scrutiny over money politics in Thailand as a partial result of the work of such activists; this scrutiny has produced a number of notable reforms in recent years in relation to elections. In Thailand, the so-called Assembly of the Poor has been a vocal champion of the social, economic, and political rights of the marginalized.⁸¹

What accounts for the differences and similarities in the capacities of pro-democracy actors in post-authoritarian Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand?

In an article in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vincent Boudreau presents one of the first few comparative analyses of anti-authoritarian movements in Indonesia in 1998 and the Philippines in 1986.⁸² Boudreau paints a rather black-and-white contrast between a glowing success story of Philippines "people's power" and the later Indonesian "*Reformasi*" movement. According to Boudreau, democracy movements in Indonesia have been overly scattered, fragmented, and poorly organized. In contrast, their Philippine counterparts were broad-based, well-organized, and endowed with effective leadership. While one can question some of the evidence that Boudreau offers in support of this conclusion, there is more than an element of truth in the core and overall arguments he presents in his article.

However, the Philippines' trajectory is perhaps too idealized in Boudreau's article. *Contra* Boudreau, and Hedman,⁸³ the rise and fall of Marcos had at least as much to do with intra-elite conflict as with "people's power," as was the case in the fall of Soeharto twelve years later. In Indonesia, much of the political opposition, including vocal student demonstrators, fragmented or ran out of energy once Soeharto fell. This happened in the Philippines as well. The once seemingly solidly organized and broad-based movements of "people's power" in the Philippines evaporated into thin air as soon as Marcos left the center stage, thus leaving little if any coherence to confront the legacies of Marcos's authoritarianism and cronyism. To this day, many of the issues of the Marcos-era remain unresolved: foreign debt, agrarian reform, bureaucratic corruption and cronyism, business collusion, and the handling of past gross abuses of human rights.⁸⁴ Attempts to recreate "people's power" circa 1986 — in the recent EDSA II and III movements⁸⁵ — have been characterized by a degree of superficiality, as well as a lack of vital energy and focus. In Thailand, too, pro-democracy and civil society-based movements have experienced considerable setbacks. As one Thai observer succinctly notes, the 1997 "People's Constitution" has ironically given Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra more power than any of his predecessors.⁸⁶ Under Thaksin's leadership, for example, the media has been under pressure to conform to official precepts of the national interest.

Other analysts have emphasized the importance of the diffusion of Western, liberal ideas of democracy among democracy actors in the region. This is demonstrated in the work of Uhlin who suggests the importance of the “Third Wave” of democratization in the 1980s in the diffusion of democratic ideas among Indonesian political actors.⁸⁷ In a similar vein, Jetschke attributes the Philippines’ greater success with democracy (compared to Indonesia) to the deeper and longer process of being westernized and imbued with Western liberal values.⁸⁸

But does this explain the situation in Thailand? Civil society movements have been relatively more successful in Thailand than in Indonesia in spite of the Thaksin-era setbacks, but this clearly cannot be attributed to adoptions of Western thoughts and values. Thai and Filipino labor movements, for example, were relatively successful in delaying privatization plans in the wake of the Asian economic crisis that would have cost jobs in state firms. In fact, the ideological sources of democracy movements can vary greatly, even in Indonesia, where Pancasila was imposed as state ideology.⁸⁹ Besides Western liberalism, anti-capitalist and politicized strains of Buddhist thinking have been influential in Thailand, along with Catholic liberation theology in the Philippines and the social justice orientation of some readings of Islam in Indonesia. Marxism and varieties of socialism or social democracy have also clearly been influential especially given the nature of the nationalist, anticolonial movements in Indonesia and the Philippines, and the history of Thai communism — in spite of the earlier failures or political defeats of communist movements in these countries.

By contrast, Crouch offers a more structural approach in a wide-ranging essay comparing five Southeast Asian societies.⁹⁰ Following from Barrington Moore’s classic work,⁹¹ his approach emphasizes the political consequences of the unique formation (in the Southeast Asian context) of a well-entrenched, domestic, large land-owning class in the Philippines during the colonial period. According to Crouch, this colonial legacy made possible the development of independent sources of challenge to the state in the postcolonial period.

Significantly, a social base outside of the state proper developed within leading sections of the Thai bourgeoisie. From the 1970s, for example, a class of industrialists and bankers based in Bangkok had developed in a relationship of relative autonomy to the fragmented military dictatorship; this class gradually gained more influence and power in the 1980s and 1990s in the context of parliamentary democracy.⁹² As mentioned earlier, those who recovered from the Asian economic crisis have followed the lead of one of their own — Prime Minister Thaksin — whose populist agenda and rhetoric involved the insulation of some domestic business interests from foreign competition.⁹³ Moreover, the 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of powerful local political-bureaucratic and business alliances, along with a significant degree of autonomy from Bangkok politics. Like the local bosses of the Philippines,⁹⁴ these were to take instrumental control over local machineries of power.⁹⁵

In other words, powerful private interests came to colonize the apparatus of the state in both the Philippines and Thailand, at the national and local levels, though the genesis of these interests differed. Thus, the demise of authoritari-

anism in the Philippines in 1986 and its more gradual retreat in Thailand from the 1980s have both resulted in post-authoritarian environments in which different combinations of powerful private interests have been able to harness state power through the formal institutions of democratic governance (elections, parliaments) for the sake of predatory, private accumulation.

In Indonesia, by contrast, a capitalist oligarchy incubated more unambiguously *within* the centralized authoritarian state and fused politico-bureaucratic and corporate interests — cemented by Soeharto's personal authority — gradually gaining ascendance over the institutions of state power. Elements of that oligarchy have now reinvented themselves, and seek to maintain their position in relation to state institutions and resources in a new democratized and decentralized format.⁹⁶

As we have seen, the events of 1965 and their aftermath are distinguishing characteristics of the Indonesian experience. The main legacy of 1965 was a more thorough process of breaking down civil society and the greater centralization of state power in Indonesia at the height of authoritarianism than in the Philippines or Thailand, in spite of continuing sites of resistance mentioned earlier. The importance of this difference is hard to overstate. The consequence has been that the demise of authoritarianism in Indonesia has not seen the rise of well-organized pro-democracy, civil society-based movements. This is not just a matter of the more recent demise of authoritarianism in Indonesia; it is a matter of its persistent legacies. Thus, the post-authoritarian environment remains the arena of old elites and their protégés — in spite of free elections and the rise of parties and parliaments — giving rise to a greater sense of “failure” of democratization in Indonesia. Such is the situation as it stands in the beginning of the new millennium, and there is little to suggest the possibility of fundamental change in the first decade of the current century.

Notes

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1. Ariel Heryanto, “Indonesian Middle-class Opposition in the 1990s,” in *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*, ed. Garry Rodan (London: Routledge, 1996), 241-71.
2. Vedi R. Hadiz, *Workers and the State in New Order Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 1997).
3. See, for example, Arief Budiman, ed., *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia No. 22 (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990).
4. Raymond Williams put it succinctly when he stated that “no mode of production, and therefore no dominant society or order of society, and therefore no dominant culture, in reality exhausts the full range of human practice, human energy, human intention.” See *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso 1980), 43; see also his *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 125). For Ralph Milliband, the work of hegemonic rule “is never done” (*Capitalist Democracy in Britain* [Oxford University Press, 1982], 76).

5. It should be noted that conclusions from such a comparative assessment may vary depending on *when* the analysis is made. Ours is based on what had transpired by 2004.
6. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin University Books, 1966); Garry Rodan, ed., *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Eva-Lotta Hedman, "Contesting State and Civil Society: Southeast Asia Trajectories," *Modern Asian Studies* 35, no. 4 (2001): 921-51; Vincent Boudreau, "Diffusing Democracy? People Power in Indonesia and the Philippines," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 31, no. 4 (1999): 3-18. For the Indonesian case, see especially Richard Robison and Vedi R. Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).
7. Harold Crouch, *Economic Change, Social Structure and Political System in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: SEASP and ISEAS, 1985), 40.
8. See Gabriel Almond and James Coleman, *The Politics of Developing Areas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), and Lucien Pye, "Political Science and the Crisis of Authoritarianism," *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 1 (1990): 3-19.
9. Larry Diamond, "Elections without Democracy: Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2, April (2002): 21-35.
10. *Ibid.*, 22.
11. Scott Mainwaring, Daniel Brinks, and Anibal Perez-Linan, "Classifying Political Regimes in Latin America, 1945-1999," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, no. 1 (2001): 37-65.
12. Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia*, 27-29.
13. Coen Holtzappel, "The 30 September Movement: A Political Movement of the Armed Forces on an Intelligence Operation?" *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 9, no. 2 (1979): 216-40; Peter Dale Scott, "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967," *Pacific Affairs* 58, no. 2 (summer 1986): 239-64; Julie Southwood and Patrick Flanagan, *Indonesia: Law, Propaganda and Terror* (London: Zed Press, 1983).
14. Robert Cribb, "Problems in the Historiography of the Killings in Indonesia," in *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, ed. Robert Cribb (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), 1-43.
15. John T. Sidel, "Bossism and Democracy in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia: Towards an Alternative Framework for the Study of 'Local Strongmen,'" in *Politicising Democracy: The New Local Politics and Democratisation*, ed. John Harriss, Kristin Stokke, and Olle Tornquist (London: Palgrave, 2004), 61.
16. For details and examples, see Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power in Indonesia*, especially chapters 4 and 5.
17. *Ibid.*; Vedi R. Hadiz, "Reorganising Political Power in Indonesia: A Reconsideration of so-called 'Democratic Transitions,'" *Pacific Review* 16, no. 4 (2003): 591-611.
18. Benedict Anderson, "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams," *New Left Review* 169 (May/June 1988): 3-31; Paul D. Hutchcroft, "Sustaining Economic and Political Reform: The Challenges Ahead," in *The Philippines: New Directions in Domestic Policy and Foreign Relations*, ed. David G. Timberman, (New York: Asia Society, 1998); John T. Sidel, *Capital, Coercion and Crime: Bossism in the Philippines* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).
19. Ruth McVey, ed., *Money and Power in Provincial Thailand* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000).

20. Kevin Hewison, for example, notes that local "Godfathers" lacked the financial muscle to defeat Thaksin in the 2000-1 elections, which followed the economic crisis ("The Politics of Neoliberalism: Class and Capitalism in Contemporary Thailand," Working Papers Series no. 45 (Hong Kong: Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong, 2003).
21. Hadiz, "Reorganising Political Power in Indonesia."
22. Anders Uhlin, *Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratization": Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997); Rodan, *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*; Ariel Heryanto and Sumit K. Mandal, eds., *Challenging Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia: Comparing Indonesia and Malaysia* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
23. Musa Asy'arie, "Jalan Reformasi Menemui Kebuntuan," *Kompas*, 19 December 2003; Syamsuddin Haris, "Soeharto, Soekarno, dan Kegagalan Reformasi," *Korran Tempo*, 23 December 2003; Hendardi, "Demokrasi dan Orde Baru," *Kompas*, 22 December 2003; Indra J. Piliang, "Kembalinya Klan Politik Cendana," *Kompas*, 5 December 2003.
24. According to a survey conducted in late 2003 by the Indonesian Survey Institute (ISI) some 60.3 percent of 2,160 respondents (from 372 villages and cities in 32 provinces) preferred Soeharto's New Order political system to the current one. Only 25.2 percent of respondents had the opposite view. A separate survey a month earlier by Charney Research of New York and AC Nielsen Indonesia and commissioned by The Asia Foundation resulted in a similar outcome: 53 percent of eligible voters in the 2004 elections "preferred a strong leader like former president Soeharto, even if this meant that rights and freedoms would be reduced" (see Moch N. Kurniawan, "Polls to disappoint reformists," *The Jakarta Post*, 23 December 2003). See also Effendi Gazali, "SARS dan Politik Nostalgia," *Kompas*, 27 December 2003.
25. These processes are detailed in Robison and Hadiz, *Reorganising Power*.
26. Henk Schulte Nordholt, "A Genealogy of Violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Freek Colombijn and Lindbald J. Thomas (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 2002), 33-61; Loren Rytter, "Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto's Order?," *Indonesia* 66 (October 1998): 45-73.
27. We do not include the NGO and student activists in our case studies, despite the salience they continue to enjoy in many analyses of the fall of the New Order authoritarianism. Politically oriented NGOs and student activists played an important role when political parties were seriously emasculated during much of the New Order era, and the general population had no representation. Once political parties reclaimed their autonomy in 1999, many of these NGOs became redundant and appeared to be a spent force, as also occurred in Thailand under Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.
28. A similar office, called the Ministry of Communication and Information, was established soon after Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri succeeded Abdurahman Wahid, who was impeached in 2001. Compared to the old Department of Information, this new ministry has much less power and carries far fewer political responsibilities.
29. P. Bambang Wisudo, "Bulan Madu Pers Telah Berakhir," *Kompas*, 9 February 2000.
30. Ariel Heryanto and Stanley Yoseph Adi, "Industrialized Media in Democratizing Indonesia," in *Changing Times: ASEAN States in Transition*, ed. Russell Hing-Heng Heng (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), 47-82.
31. Jose Manuel Tesoro, "Indonesia: Learning the Ropes of Press Freedom," *UNESCO Courier*, 2 February 2000, 43-5; Muningsari Sri Saraswati, "Press Freedom Eroding in RI: RSF," *The Jakarta Post*, 28 October 2004.

32. Chris Lydgate, *Lee's Law: How Singapore Crushes Dissent* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2003).
33. M. Taufiqurrahman, "'Tempo' Magazine Still Standing Tall Despite Efforts to Topple It," *The Jakarta Post*, 28 January 2004.
34. For more details, see Ariel Heryanto, "Public Intellectuals, Media and Democratization," in Heryanto and Mandal, eds. *Challenging Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*, especially 41-7.
35. For the events in 1994, see Yasuo Hanazaki, "The Indonesian Press in the Era of Keterbukaan," unpublished dissertation (Department of Asian Languages and Studies, Monash University, 1996), chapter 6, 199-252; and Heryanto, "Indonesian Middle-class Opposition in the 1990s," especially 245-53.
36. Krishna Sen and David Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000); Angela Romano, *Politics and the Press in Indonesia: Understanding an Evolving Political Culture* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
37. Interview with J. Anto, media activist, Medan, 17 July 2002; interview with Jalil Latuconsina, publisher, *Buletin Sapujagat*, Surabaya, 13 July 2003.
38. Personal communication with Stanley Y. Adi (Jakarta, June 2003), a cofounder of the AJI (Aliansi Jurnalis Independen, Alliance of Independent Journalists) and a regular instructor for short-term, in-house training of AJI local branches across the country.
39. Adi Yulianto, "Gerakan Pengawasan Media Massa: Kasus KIPPAS, LKM, dan MWCC," in *Gerakan Demokrasi di Indonesia Pasca-Soebarto*, ed. A.E. Priyono, Stanley Adi Prasetyo, and Olle Tornquist (Jakarta: Demos, 2003), 335-63.
40. But ownership of electronic media has been restricted to the state and its officials, and to a few well-connected families.
41. Duncan McCargo, *Politics and the Press in Thailand: Media Machinations* (Bangkok: Garuda Press, 2000), 6-7.
42. Paul Tickell, "Free from What? Responsible to Whom? The Problem of Democracy and the Indonesian Press," in *Democracy in Indonesia 1950s and 1990s*, ed. David Bourchier and John Legge (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), 182-89.
43. Sheila Coronel, "Lords of the Press," *The Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism Magazine* 5, no. 2 (1999).
44. Daniel Dhakidae, "The State, the Rise of Capital and the Fall of Political Journalism: Political Economy of the Indonesian News Industry," PhD diss. (Cornell University, 1991).
45. For details, see World Bank, "Decentralizing Indonesia," *Report no. 26191-IND* (East Asia Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit, 2003).
46. World Bank Group, "Decentralization Net," <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/Different.htm>; no date.
47. World Bank Group, "How We Work with Civil Society," <http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ECA/eca.nsf/Initiatives/A98CDE16184FEDFC85256BD6004F486F?OpenDocument>; no date.
48. USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development), "Transition to a Prospering and Democratic Indonesia," <http://www.usaid.gov/id/docs-csp2k04.html>; no date.
49. Hadiz, "Reorganising Political Power in Indonesia."
50. Vedi R. Hadiz, "Decentralisation and Democracy in Indonesia: A Critique of Neo-Institutionalist Perspectives," *Development and Change* 35, 4 (2004): 697-718.
51. A manager of foreign company operating in Kalimantan testified to the effect that in the past one had to bribe one official in Jakarta to get things done. Now one has to bribe three hundred officials, but nothing gets done (from the con-

- ference on "Natural Resources in Indonesia: The Economic, Political and Environmental Challenges," hosted by the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 24-25 September 2004).
52. *Kompas*, 27 November 2001.
53. Gary F. Bell, "The New Indonesian Laws relating to Local Autonomy: Good Intentions, Confusing Laws," *Asian-Pacific Law and Policy Journal* 2, no. 1 (2001): 1-45.
54. Vedi R. Hadiz, "Indonesian Local Party Politics: A Site of Resistance to Neo-Liberal Reform," *Critical Asian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2004): 615-36.
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56. Benedict Anderson, "Murder and Progress in Modern Siam," *New Left Review* 181 (May/June 1990): 33-48.
57. Paul D. Hutchcroft, "Oligarchs and Cronies in the Philippine State: The Politics of Patrimonial Plunder," *World Politics* 43 (April 1991): 414-50.
58. See, for example: Surin Maisrikrod, "Changing Forms of Democracy in Asia? Some Observations of the Thai and Philippine Constitutions," *Asian Studies Review* 23, no. 3 (1999): 355-73.
59. ADB (Asian Development Bank), "Governance in Thailand: Challenges, Issues and Prospects," April 1999, <http://www.eldis.org/static/DOC7222.htm>.
60. See Hadiz, *Workers and the State*.
61. Vedi R. Hadiz, "Changing State-Labour Relations in Indonesia and Malaysia and the 1997 Crisis," in Heryanto and Mandal, eds., *Challenging Authoritarianism*, 90-116.
62. *Kompas*, 23 June 2001.
63. *The Jakarta Post*, 21 September 2000.
64. Interview with M. Yamin, Jakarta, 18 December 2000.
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66. Andrew Brown, "Locating Working Class Power," in *Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation*, ed. Kevin Hewison (London: Routledge, 1997), 163-78.
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70. See Andrew Brown, *Labour, Politics, and the State in Industrializing Thailand* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).
71. Interview with former workers of PT Tatsumi Seruni Indonesia, East Java, 18 July 2003.
72. Various interviews with workers in East Java, Central Java, and North Sumatra, since 2000.
73. Personal communication with Munir, a cofounder of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence, in Melbourne, March 2000. (Note: Munir was murdered in September 2003.)
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75. See Philip J. Eldridge, *Non-Government Organizations and Democratic Participation in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995); Bob S. Hadiwinata, *The Politics of NGOs in Indonesia: Developing Democracy and Managing a Movement* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Heryanto and Mandal, eds., *Challenging Authoritarianism*.
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 87. Uhlin, *Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratization."*
 88. Jetschke, "Linking the Unlinkable?"
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