
INDONESIA'S ACCOUNTABILITY TRAP: PARTY CARTELS AND PRESIDENTIAL POWER AFTER DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

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Idolization and "Immediate Help!": Campaigning as if Voters Mattered

On July 14, 2004, just nine days after Indonesia's first-ever direct presidential election, a massive inferno ripped through the impoverished, gang-infested district of Tanah Abang in central Jakarta. Hundreds of dwellings were destroyed and over a thousand Jakartans were rendered homeless. While such catastrophes are nothing unusual in the nation's chaotic capital, the political responses suggested that some interesting changes are afoot in Indonesia's fledgling electoral democracy. The next day, presidential frontrunner Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) took a break from watching his burgeoning vote totals at the five-star Borobodur Hotel to visit Tanah Abang's fire victims. Since he had just clinched pole position in Indonesia's run-off presidential election in late September, SBY's public appearance made fantastic copy. The handsome former general comforted distraught families, then crept, head and shoulders protruding through the sunroof of his campaign minivan, through a swarm of star-struck locals. Never mind the knock-off reality-television program screening for talent just a few miles away at the swanky Semanggi shopping complex; here, in one of Jakarta's least swanky settings, appeared to be the true *Indonesian Idol*.

¹ This article draws on a comparative project with Marc Craighead, conversations and collaboration with whom have been invaluable in refining the theoretical arguments presented here. It has also greatly benefited from the thoughtful comments of Jamie Davidson, Dirk Tomsa, and an anonymous reviewer at *Indonesia*; the savvy and sensitive editing of Deborah Homsher; and generous fieldwork support from the Academy for Educational Development, Emory University, and the Ford Foundation. All translations in the essay (along with any errors and all opinions) are the author's.

Yet candidate SBY was not alone in seeing political opportunities in Tanah Abang's tragic blaze. Along one of the sprawling district's main thoroughfares, large banners were quickly printed and unfurled offering "Immediate Help!": beds and shelter for up to 1,115 souls displaced by the conflagration. The banners were emblazoned with the black-and-gold logo of Indonesia's PKS,² the part-reformist, part-Islamist upstart that placed first in Jakarta in April's parliamentary elections. While the personal appearance of SBY in Tanah Abang was clearly a novelty, the institutional appearance of the PKS in this post-disaster setting was commonplace; the party is by now renowned for its efforts to win political converts via grassroots constituency services. What was striking, however, was that the party was trying to attract mass support immediately *after* a general election. Five years removed from its next shot at the polls, PKS was already preparing the ground for 2009.

These vignettes provide a fitting introduction to the two political forces that have most severely disrupted Indonesia's elite politics in its "year of voting frequently": SBY the man, and PKS the party. Whether or not one trusts or supports the ultimate intentions of these rising political forces, it is important to recognize that both are changing the face of Indonesian politics, albeit in quite different ways. SBY is trying to capture the presidency through force of personal popularity rather than party machinery, a road to power that was blocked in post-Suharto Indonesia until the recent introduction of direct presidential elections. PKS's approach to winning power is similar only insofar as it also directly and energetically targets ordinary voters. It is radically different in the basis of its popular appeal. It would have been out of character, for instance, for the party to have tried to woo residents of Tanah Abang with a personal appearance by party leader Hidayat Nurwahid, let alone to entertain them with a performance by Rhoma Irama, Indonesia's "*raja dangdut*"³ and a major PKS supporter. By the same token, SBY was not about to offer displaced slum-dwellers a place to stay at his hilly retreat in nearby Bogor.

These differences notwithstanding, both SBY the man and PKS the party have served as election-year jolts to the two parties that dominate Indonesian politics from the national to the local level: Golkar and the PDIP.⁴ Neither party boasts a figure who can match SBY's personal, popular touch; nor can either credibly claim that its party machinery is primarily geared, à la PKS, to organizing and cultivating its mass base. Rather, both parties almost exclusively serve in the post-Suharto era as institutional vehicles for elites to capture power and patronage. More importantly for the argument to follow, Golkar and PDIP have taken the lead in devising a system in which these parties *share* power far more than they *fight* over it. PKS represents a challenge to this system insofar as it insists that politics should be about representing the *rakyat* (the

² PKS stands for Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, or the Prosperous Justice Party. I relegate full party names to the footnotes throughout—partly for readability, and partly because the full names convey precious little information about the parties themselves.

³ The "king of *dangdut*," a musical style. His financial backing for PKS is discussed in "'Kami Mengganti Kemimpinan Nasional,'" *TEMPO*, April 12-18, 2004, pp. 46-50.

⁴ Full names are Partai Golkar and the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, or Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.

people) rather than carving up the perquisites of state.⁵ SBY is probably too much of a creature of this system to represent a direct threat to its foundations.⁶ But he has nevertheless presented an immediate and important disruption by shaking up the specific elite agreements concerning how power and patronage are to be shared.

For an initial sense of how Golkar and the PDIP have managed to share power, and of what kind of status quo these two parties thereby constitute, another local vignette might prove instructive. In July 2000, the local legislature in Manado, North Sulawesi, held its first election for mayor since the fall of Suharto. Of the forty members doing the actual voting, thirteen were from Golkar, and eleven belonged to PDIP. As a naïve observer scribbling notes in one of the back rows of the gallery, I eagerly anticipated a peppery partisan contest—an expectation apparently shared by the festive swarm of red-and-black-clad PDIP supporters commingling outside.

Instead, all five nominated tickets *matched* a Golkar figure with a PDIP counterpart. Golkar held the top spot on three tickets while PDIP led two, but this would prove to be immaterial. In the first round of voting, the two tickets fronted by PDIP received only eight out of forty votes: meaning that at least three of the party's eleven members voted for a Golkar candidate for mayor, even though there were still two PDIP candidates for mayor in the race. In the second round of voting, one Golkar-PDIP ticket soundly defeated another. The final results were announced by a relatively young representative from the Islam-based PPP,⁷ who had implausibly attained the top legislative post in a Christian-dominated city. Nearly everyone in the jam-packed hall bolted from their seats to try to congratulate the winner. Few observers seemed to be grumbling. In short, no one seemed to have *lost*.

Barely a year later, in the aftermath of President Abdurrahman Wahid's impeachment in July 2001, Golkar and PDIP managed to reproduce this cozy style of provincial politicking at the national level.⁸ As I will show below, these parties have used the spoils of office—notably cabinet ministries and seats on parliamentary

⁵ PKS only captured around 8 percent of the national vote, and its Islamist leanings will make it hard for the party to expand its base. For purposes of the present analysis, therefore, its significance is more stylistic than substantive. If more reformist politics is to emerge in Indonesia, it is more likely to result from larger parties emulating PKS's tactics than from PKS seizing power itself. I return to this line of argument in the conclusion.

⁶ Even a cursory biographical sketch shows SBY's longstanding links to Indonesia's political elite. Born in 1949 in Pancitan, Central Java, SBY went on to finish first in his class at the national military academy in 1973; hence beginning his meteoric rise as an "intellectual general." His marriage to a daughter of Sarwo Edhi Wibowo, one of the leading anti-communist figures in the military during the pogrom of 1965-1966, certainly did nothing to slow his ascent under Suharto's New Order. Before his retirement in 2000, his military career spanned several academic and training tours in the United States, as well as several tours of active duty in East Timor. SBY also held a high-ranking position in the Jakarta command during the violent suppression of Megawati's PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, or Indonesian Democratic Party) faction in the capital city in July 1996. But he has not been individually implicated in any specific human-rights abuses. Thanks to Douglas Kammen for sharing his personal data on SBY. Also see "Profil Susilo B. Yudhoyono," *Koran Tempo*, July 28, 2004.

⁷ Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, or United Development Party.

⁸ This is by no means to imply that all or most Indonesian localities exhibit cozy politics like Manado's. I suggest that Manado's local politics is illustrative of emerging patterns at the national level, not that it is broadly representative of existing patterns at the local level. Thanks to Jamie Davidson for his insights on this point.

commissions—to co-opt all significant political parties into what is effectively an expansive party cartel. This collusive approach to politics, best expressed institutionally in President Megawati's *kabinet pelangi* (rainbow cabinet), was not an entirely new invention; it reflected a return to the collusive logic that informed Wahid's first "National Unity Cabinet," founded upon his ascent to the presidency in October 1999. Whereas the party cartel's first attempt at power sharing was disrupted by Wahid's efforts to reshuffle his cabinet to his own benefit in 2000, this second effort stuck. Between August 2001 and March 2004, Indonesian national politics under Megawati resembled what one parliamentary faction leader rightly called a "political moratorium"⁹: a term so evocative for Golkar leader Akbar Tandjung, he proudly incorporated it into the title of his recent book.¹⁰

Such moribund politics was not merely a matter of presidential predilection or the limited policy agenda imposed by neoliberal economics and a crushing foreign debt. *It was intimately connected with the structure of the coalition that had seized power.* Because this vast coalition essentially swallowed all political opposition whole, neither the Megawati administration nor its coalition partners has been under any pressure whatsoever to perform. Even if voters were unhappy with Megawati's performance, their only viable electoral alternatives appeared to be parties that were part and parcel of her party cartel. While most critics of Megawati's power-sharing formula have emphasized its negative effects on government effectiveness and performance, the fact that such a coalitional arrangement stifles democratic accountability by limiting effective voter choice has gone relatively unmentioned.

Before the April 2004 parliamentary elections, it would have been tempting to conclude that the Megawati administration's accountability to the people had been "strangled" rather than merely "stifled." Yet despite a lack of appealing and well-organized alternatives, Indonesian voters managed to register their discontent with the party cartel by giving *all five major parties* a lower vote share than they had received in 1999. Megawati's PDIP suffered far and away the largest losses, slipping from 34 percent to just under 20 percent; but Golkar, PPP, as well as Amien Rais's PAN and former President Wahid's PKB suffered more minor setbacks as well.¹¹ PDIP voters did not swing to the party's coalition partners. In Suzaina Kadir's apt phrase, they "swung out" instead.¹² Rather than realignment, the 2004 parliamentary vote produced dealignment. The two biggest beneficiaries were the PKS and SBY's electoral vehicle, the Democrat Party (PD), which won nearly 15 percent of the total vote combined.

The sudden success of SBY's party in April's parliamentary contest foreshadowed his first-place finish in July's direct presidential vote, which made the retired general a huge favorite to defeat President Megawati in the second and final round of voting in September. Might this mean major alterations to the coalitional structure that Megawati has presided over as well? If so, what kind of structure would be likely to

⁹ "Format Kabinet Hampir Final," *Kompas*, July 28, 2001, p. 11.

¹⁰ Akbar Tandjung, *Moratorium Politik Menuju Rekonsiliasi Nasional* (Jakarta: Golkar Press, 2003).

¹¹ PAN is the Partai Amanat Nasional, or National Mandate Party. PKB stands for Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, or National Awakening Party.

¹² Comments at public forum, Asia Research Institute (ARI), Singapore, April 28, 2004.

replace it? What would be the conceivable consequences for democratic accountability? And would a Megawati victory likely mean more of the same?

My primary aim in the following sections is to propose and elaborate a new analytical and theoretical framework for post-Suharto party politics. This will hopefully serve to make these questions a bit less intractable. In short, I argue that Indonesia's post-authoritarian politics has been caught until now in an *accountability trap*. This trap is structural and systematic, and not merely the sum of strategic decisions by individual party elites. Such individual strategies are more likely to determine which part of the accountability trap Indonesia winds up mired in after the 2004 elections, rather than whether or not Indonesia actually remains trapped. Escaping this trap altogether will probably require changes in patterns of mass political mobilization or informal norms of elite interaction that are by no means unthinkable, but also by no means imminent. On the other hand, the 2004 elections have cast some important beams of light into an otherwise murky political process, with potentially liberating—if perhaps unintended—consequences for national politics in the years to come.

Theorizing the Trap: Collusive Democracy vs. Delegative Democracy

It is an article of faith among proponents of democracy that elections force politicians to compete for public support. It is—no exaggeration—the whole point. Shrewd observers recognize that candidates may compete by bribing, stealing, and even killing, thereby undermining the presumed benefits of the electoral exercise. But political scientists' expectation that elections will produce party competition remains perhaps even more unshakable than economists' assumption that markets produce competition among firms. Yet in both fields of endeavor, cartels can emerge to stifle competition instead.

In economics, cartels differ from markets in that they crush competitors and strangle potential new market entrants. In politics, cartels differ from coalitions in that they co-opt *all* major political parties into a vast national alliance, marginalizing small outsider parties in the process. While this may be ideal for stability, it is deeply problematic for popular representation. Leaders can only be held accountable if they can be replaced—and as the old saw goes, you can't beat something with nothing. Richard Katz and Peter Mair recognized this phenomenon nearly a decade ago, in a trenchant critique of the Putnam-esque argument that European political parties were becoming weaker because of their attenuating ties to civil society. Instead, Katz and Mair noted that parties were drawing succor and strength from "an ever closer symbiosis between parties and the state."¹³ The defining feature of such symbiosis was that "colluding parties become agents of the state and employ the resources of the state (the party state) to ensure their own collective survival."¹⁴

¹³ Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy," *Party Politics* 1,1 (1995): 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

They dub these “cartel parties.” In the European context, Katz and Mair saw this development as extremely problematic for democratic accountability. Back when parties still drew more resources and support from society than the state, they argued,

. . . not only were there some parties that were clearly “in” while others were clearly “out,” but the fear of being thrown out of office by the voters was also seen as the major incentive for politicians to be responsive to the citizenry. In the cartel model, on the other hand, none of the major parties is ever definitively “out.” As a result, there is an increased sense in which electoral democracy may be seen as a means by which the rulers control the ruled, rather than the other way around . . . Moreover, as the distinction between parties in office and those out of office becomes more blurred, the degree to which voters can punish parties even on the basis of generalized dissatisfaction is reduced.”¹⁵

I would submit that this is a relatively fair description of Indonesian party politics both under Abdurrahman Wahid’s National Unity Cabinet (October 1999–August 2000), as well as Megawati Sukarnoputri’s longer-lasting rainbow cabinet (August 2001–March 2004). The purpose of casting Indonesia’s recent experience in such a comparative light is not to impose a European straitjacket on the analysis of Indonesian politics. Rather, it is to recognize that in Indonesia, as much as in Europe, local politics contains elements of the general as well as the particular. Not only will such explicit theorizing hopefully enhance prospects for comparative analysis; it also provides a useful basis for critiques of culturalist, often essentialist, arguments that Indonesia’s exceptional recent levels of elite collaboration are deeply rooted in national political character. Nowhere is this more boldly expressed than in Megawati’s assertion that hers is a “*kabinet gotong-royong*,”¹⁶ rather than a transparent attempt by elite politicians to dominate Indonesia’s lucrative patronage networks with political impunity.

And it is indeed in the cabinet where Indonesia’s party cartels have found their clearest institutional expression. Rather than thinking of Indonesia’s cabinet as a body of advisers and executors of presidential policy and commands, it is more accurate to picture it as a gilded bridge between parliament and the presidency, providing a fortunate few with access to the bounteous patronage resources of the state executive. In the local parlance, cabinet seats vary widely in how *basah*, or “wet” they might be; but all cabinet positions provide greater patronage opportunities than run-of-the-mill parliamentary seats. Although there are signs that the imbalance between the cabinet and parliament is narrowing—and not in the direction reformers would prefer—politicians appear to remain especially obsessed with seizing the *fasilitas* that come from controlling a ministry: i.e. the chauffeured government car, the larger office, the higher salary, and the opportunity to appoint more personal staff. In less

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁶ *Gotong-royong* may be loosely translated as “mutual assistance,” and refers to ostensibly timeless forms of cooperation at the village level. Yet it connotes shared poverty and sacrifice—“a general ethos of selflessness and concern for the common good,” writes John Bowen—making it a spectacularly inappropriate descriptor of the kind of cooperation that actually occurs in Indonesian cabinet politics. See John R. Bowen, “On the Political Construction of Tradition: *Gotong Royong* in Indonesia,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 45,3 (May 1986): 545-561.

remunerative terms, cabinet seats provide politicians with increased prestige and decision-making authority as well.¹⁷

It is harder to prove, but nearly universally assumed, that cabinet seats also provide ministers with direct access to far grander patronage treasures. Most obviously, playing a gate-keeping role in regulating particularly *basah* sectors such as finance, energy, industry, transportation, and state-owned enterprises invests ministers with potentially valuable personal authority over the commanding heights of the national economy. Even a ministry one would presume to be comparatively *kering* (dry), the Department of Religion, has been reputed to be highly lucrative for its ministers. The trick: to skim the interest from mandatory deposits of those preparing to perform the *hadj*.¹⁸

Of far more gravity is the chronic problem of “non-budgetary funds” held by government ministries, a major fiscal hangover from the Suharto years. Opinions differ over how much money is stored in such accounts, and over how much effective access ministers have to these funds. Yet foreign economic advisers to the Indonesian bureaucracy have generally surmised—drawing on the pessimistic assessments of local economists—that there could conceivably be enough money stashed away in these off-budget accounts to pay off Indonesia’s entire national debt, should those funds ever be recovered.¹⁹ Even if this represents a wild overestimation of the problem, it is clear that cabinet seats provide opportunities for far greater private remuneration than the cushy *fasilitas* that officially accompany the position.

It should hardly be surprising, then, that both Wahid and Megawati have struggled mightily in their efforts to construct cabinets that could assuage all parties’ demands. Once these cabinets have been formed, however, political infighting has essentially stopped. The year of political instability leading up to Wahid’s impeachment in July 2001 was so unstable precisely because the president refused to abide by the *quid pro quo* that accompanied his election by parliament: We give you the presidency, and you give us the cabinet. Partisanship practically grinds to a halt once a cabinet is formed, because winning cabinet seats is the primary partisan task of party leaders.

It may well be denied that Wahid’s removal was caused by any clash of deep political structures, rather than resulting simply from the foolishness of a particular individual. Alternatively, one might cast Wahid’s Quixotic attempts at preserving a powerful presidency in a more culturalist light. If party cartels find echoes in particular Indonesian notions of *gotong-royong*, a president’s desire to rule absolutely might reflect the lingering influence of Javanese notions of power.²⁰ The notion that Javanese think of power as zero-sum fits rather well with Wahid’s style of rule, but quite badly with Megawati’s. Cultural notions of mutual assistance and zero-sum power might not

¹⁷ Interview with Golkar parliamentarian Burhan Magenda, Jakarta, July 16, 2004.

¹⁸ As of 2001, such deposits had to be in place for a full year before one’s departure to Mecca, but the Department paid no interest on such deposits. Personal communication with Ben Olken, August 2001.

¹⁹ Interview with Douglas Todd, KPMG/Barents Consulting, Agency for Fiscal Analysis, Ministry of Finance, Jakarta, August 2001.

²⁰ Benedict R. O’G. Anderson, “The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture,” in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Claire Holt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).

be irrelevant to recent patterns in Indonesian politics, but it is hard to see how they can be considered determinative either.

In point of fact, for all the understandable attention given to Wahid's wily and mercurial personality, we might gain greater analytic traction by considering his actions as an instance of a very common political phenomenon: presidential efforts to gain personal domination in new, fragile democracies. No region has experienced more instances of this syndrome than Latin America; and no scholar has tried harder to theorize it, understandably enough, than Guillermo O'Donnell.²¹ He begins his analysis by drawing a clear distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" accountability which, I submit, proves quite useful in the Indonesian context. *Vertical accountability* refers to a reciprocal relationship linking masses and elites, a bond most typically established via the ballot box. If government officials live in fear that dissatisfaction from below could lead to their dismissal, and respond by devising strategies to win broad popular appeal, then vertical accountability can be said to be strong, or at least not entirely absent.

O'Donnell's central argument is that Latin American presidential systems have been very effective at producing vertical accountability, but quite ineffective at generating *horizontal accountability*. This refers to a president's relations with other institutions of state: i.e. parliament, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, and political parties. In O'Donnell's view, the main scourge of Latin American democracy has been presidents who see themselves as sentinels of the common national will, and thus refuse to be constrained by constitutional checks and balances at the elite level. Parliaments, parties, and courts are at best ignored, or at worst disbanded. Democratic legitimacy comes to rest on the continued popularity of a single strong-willed individual—as fragile a political reed as can possibly be imagined.

Systems exhibiting weak horizontal accountability are dubbed *delegative democracies* in O'Donnell's work. "Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit," he explains.²² Such systems have been especially liable to emerge in regimes simultaneously facing a turbulent transition from authoritarianism and a serious economic crisis: two conditions that Indonesia sadly fits rather well. Even after a democracy becomes relatively far removed from the authoritarian period, "crisis generates a strong sense of urgency and provides fertile terrain for unleashing the delegative propensities that may be present in a given country."²³ In Indonesia's case, the presidential domination that defined Suharto's New Order had barely been tempered when Wahid willfully attempted—albeit in the guise of a delegative democrat rather than a brutal autocrat—to recapture it.

Both elements of what I call Indonesia's *accountability trap* are now in place. Rather than insisting that Indonesian politics is overwhelmingly inclined to resemble either O'Donnell's "delegative democracy" or what Katz and Mair might call "collusive democracy," I argue that the best way to situate contemporary Indonesian politics in a suitable theoretical framework is to pit O'Donnell and Katz and Mair against each

²¹ Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5,1 (1994): 55-69.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

other. O'Donnell assumes that any democracy with strong horizontal accountability is a "representative democracy." But this fails to recognize Katz and Mair's vital point that vertical accountability can be snuffed out in electoral settings as well, as parties strangle popular representation by constructing party cartels.²⁴ By the same token, O'Donnell's insistence on the importance of strong parties and an effective parliament in making democracy function serves as a useful addendum to Katz and Mair's conception of collusive democracy.

This is not to suggest that a more fully representative form of popular rule cannot emerge in Indonesia, in which governments in power cater to the needs of the mass population, while respecting the parallel authority of parties, parliaments, and courts. Indeed, this is precisely the standard to which elected officials in Indonesia should be held. Yet it would be heroically optimistic to view such an outcome as looming on the political horizon. The blame for this does not rest primarily with Indonesian voters, who have been given a limited menu of credible options, yet have managed to strike a significant blow against the parties that had formed an ineffective and unresponsive cartel. In doing so, it seems reasonable to estimate that roughly half of the voters who bolted "the big five" went for PKS, which campaigns (especially in Jakarta) as if it aspires to introduce a much more representative pattern of politics. But another half voted for SBY, who to date has acted as if he will either sustain the practice of collusive democracy that has generally served him quite well, or else try, by force of personality and popularity, to do what Wahid could not: install delegative democracy in its place. Indonesia's accountability trap has thus been set.

Origins of Collusive Democracy: From Competitive Elections to the Party Cartel

Having introduced this theoretical framework, I hope now to show its usefulness in grasping the superficially *kacau* (chaotic) politics of elite coalitions in Indonesia over the past five years. The analysis begins with the fall of President B. J. Habibie, Suharto's hand-picked successor, in October 1999. That was when the diverse collection of newly elected politicians and New Order holdovers comprising Indonesia's parliament were forced to figure out how to run a government, without Golkar hegemony making it all rather simple.

For an electoral democracy emerging from such a long bout of authoritarian rule, Indonesia enjoyed a relatively functional and consolidated party system. This facilitated the construction of a new governing coalition. The top five parties had garnered over 85 percent of the votes in the June 1999 parliamentary election,

²⁴ Parties tend to emphasize the sharing of patronage over the competition for mass support when "each side recognizes that it cannot destroy the other . . . In the case of political parties, total victory is out of the question when each party enjoys a solid base of support within some segment of the electorate." See Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 7. In the Indonesian context, this demands critical attention to the continuing relevance of the politics of *aliran*, or social cleavages. The stronger such cleavages, the less likely parties will be to compete for support outside their own *aliran* bailiwick, and the more likely party cartels will emerge and endure. For the classic treatment of *aliran*, see Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976). For a sophisticated recent analysis arguing that *aliran* politics still counts, even if it is clearly not all that counts, see Dwight Y. King, *Half-Hearted Reform: Electoral Institutions and the Struggle for Democracy in Indonesia* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

Indonesia's first truly open and competitive election since 1955. PDIP, bolstered by Megawati's image as a prime victim of New Order repression (and, ironically, the inherited party apparatus of Suharto's puppet PDI), had come in first with 34 percent of the votes. Golkar was second with 22 percent, while three parties with a more Islamic flavor—PKB, PPP, and PAN—trotted across the finish line with 13 percent, 11 percent, and 7 percent, respectively (but exact totals, as we shall soon see, would prove to be irrelevant). The Indonesian military, or TNI,²⁵ retained between 7-8 percent of the seats on an appointive basis, thus providing the country's strongest institution with a firm parliamentary toehold to complement its coercive and commercial might.

As party leaders began selecting a new president and vice-president, they enjoyed several options in constructing a working majority. The easiest option, mathematically, was a broadly *nationalist* coalition comprising PDIP, Golkar, and, for some added coalitional ballast, perhaps PKB and/or TNI. This would have produced a government with some measure of ideological compatibility, while leaving a modest opposition in the parliament. A second option, clearly preferable from a democratic perspective, would have been for a more *reformist* coalition to emerge from those political parties led by figures who played somewhat oppositional roles during the late New Order period: Megawati's PDIP, Wahid's PKB, and Amien Rais's PAN. If this coalition could have inspired more reformist elements in PPP to take over the party at the expense of its old guard, thus leaving Golkar, TNI, and a few small Islamic parties in the opposition, it would have served as an inspiring success in the spirit of the broad-based *reformasi* movement that overturned Suharto in May 1998. Having briefly united to issue the reform-minded "Ciganjur Declaration" in November 1998, the triumvirate of Megawati, Wahid, and Amien had at least some experience of collaboration that could have conceivably carried over into a new governing coalition.²⁶

Both of these coalitional options failed to materialize. First, PDIP failed to take the lead in crafting either of these winning coalitions, letting the initiative slip to a new "Central Axis"²⁷ of Islam-oriented parties, loosely led by Amien Rais. These parties were united by their shared desire to deny the presidency to Megawati, whom they saw as a woman with weak Islamic credentials. But they were in no position to build a winning coalition on their own. What thus emerged was a loose anti-Megawati coalition comprising the Central Axis, PKB, Golkar, and TNI, in support of Wahid as a compromise presidential candidate. Although Wahid's PKB barely held 10 percent of all seats in parliament, he defeated Megawati in the presidential vote, leaving Megawati and her party's 30 percent share of parliament (temporarily) holding the bag.

Even with PDIP denied what seemed its rightful victory, it was still not structurally essential that a "National Unity Cabinet" be formed, rather than a cabinet based on a narrower nationalist or reformist coalition. If any party besides PDIP had a foot in both of those camps, and was thus in a position to negotiate such a limited coalitional

²⁵ Tentara Nasional Indonesia, or the Indonesian armed forces. After the military and police (Polisi Republik Indonesia, or Polri) were officially divided, the parliamentary fraction became known as TNI/Polri.

²⁶ Yogyakarta's Sultan Hamengku Buwono X was a fourth signatory to the Ciganjur Declaration.

²⁷ *Poros Tengah*. Again, we see the name of a political group failing to convey any clear political purpose.

structure, it was Wahid's PKB. But for a second time, it was not to be. As the focus turned from the presidency to the vice-presidency, Wahid found himself buffeted by pressures both from the masses and from within the elite. At the mass level, PDIP supporters rioted, most severely in Jakarta and Bali, in understandable outrage at Megawati's having been denied the presidency. Against such a backdrop, it became politically untenable to deny Megawati the vice-presidency as well. With PKB and PDIP ensconced atop the government structure, party elites had yet a *third* opportunity to construct either a limited nationalist or reformist coalition, this time via its formation of Indonesia's first democratic cabinet in nearly half a century.

It was at this juncture that things fell apart—or, more precisely, came together—in a most instructive way. Although Wahid ostensibly enjoyed the right to appoint his own cabinet, this privilege was either willingly surrendered or forcibly yanked away. As noted earlier, it appeared that Wahid had agreed to a quid pro quo in which the price of the presidency was a cabinet he could not control. Rather than the struggle for the cabinet resembling an orderly cafeteria line in which the president and vice-president enjoyed ultimate authority over who got fed what, the process descended into more of a mad and disordered collective plunge into an open feeding trough. Backroom negotiations among all five major faction leaders (Wahid, Megawati, Amien Rais, Golkar's Akbar Tandjung, and TNI head Wiranto) produced a cabinet that had to be expanded from twenty-five to thirty-five members to dissipate disputes over each group's share of the pie.²⁸ The president tried to put a brave face on the process, insisting that "the theme of the cabinet is national unity." At the same time, however, Wahid hinted at the contentiousness of the bargaining process, noting that the other four faction leaders would act as "guarantors" of their cabinet nominees in case they "misbehaved."²⁹

As the post-Suharto/Habibie government struggled to find its feet, no party or group of parties enjoyed the necessary confidence to impose defeat on any other faction; if holding seats in the parliament, but not the cabinet, can truly be construed as "defeat." Everyone was in, and no one was out. Even parties as minuscule as the PBB and PK,³⁰ which each won less than 2 percent of the parliamentary vote, managed to secure a cabinet seat apiece by situating themselves in the Amien-led Central Axis. From the election of the president through the naming of the cabinet, the entire coalition-building process showed little concern with issues of party compatibility, electoral proportionality, or the importance of retaining some significant opposition to preserve vertical accountability and voter choice in elections to come.

How this result was achieved was as significant as the result itself. Although the National Unity Cabinet itself lasted only six months in its original, purely cartelized form, and less than a year overall, the process of selecting it appeared to have powerful path-dependent consequences. Specifically, informal norms have arisen in which a

²⁸ One Golkar legislator, Marwah Daud Ibrahim, even floated the suggestion of anointing a second vice-president, so Megawati's victory would not come at the expense of PPP leader Hamzah Haz. See "What went on behind the scenes," *Business Times* (Singapore), October 22, 1999.

²⁹ "Gus Dur forms 'compromise' Cabinet," *The Jakarta Post*, October 27, 1999.

³⁰ Partai Bulan Bintang, or Star and Crescent Party, and Partai Keadilan, or Justice Party. The PK is the forerunner to the PKS, discussed in the introduction.

small and familiar handful of party and military elites settle their respective fractions' recurrent distributional disputes entirely in opaque rather than transparent settings. "Politics takes place entirely outside the public domain," as Benny Subianto more elegantly put it.³¹

The magic word is "entirely." All political systems are largely driven by backroom maneuvers, but what is striking in the Indonesian context is the abject unwillingness of ostensibly democratic political elites to discuss even the general gist of their political discussions after they reenter the public sphere. Even when top politicians hold discussions under conditions that are unmistakably connected to concerns with coalitional politics, they almost universally emerge with the claim that the meeting was only a *silaturahmi* (a friendly social call), and not a political negotiation at all. To be sure, voters and journalists should expect at times to have their gaze evaded; but they should not expect to have their intelligence so chronically insulted. Yet since all political elites behave in this manner, voters cannot punish any particular party for failing to be transparent in its elite dealings.

Of more significance for the analysis here, however, is that the National Unity Cabinet (1) reduced pressure on the government to respond to societal pressures, and (2) threatened to stifle voter choice if it survived until the 2004 election. Indonesians could not support the opposition because there was no opposition to support.³² Even those voters savvy enough to know of some tiny party that had not been vacuumed into the vortex of the party cartel would have had little reason to believe that their vote might play even a small part in displacing an elite party figure such as Akbar Tandjung or Megawati. Having made their personal positions effectively impenetrable atop Indonesia's steep political pyramid, party elites had virtually escaped vertical accountability within a few short months of the country's first post-Suharto election.

Escaping Horizontal Accountability: Cabinets and Confrontation under Wahid

Katz and Mair would find much that is familiar in the preceding narrative. For nearly six months, Indonesia's cabinet was colonized by a quintessential party cartel. But in April 2000, President Wahid began making maneuvers that would seem much more familiar to O'Donnell. Chafing under the horizontal constraints imposed by his National Unity Cabinet, Wahid expelled two leading economic ministers, one each from Golkar (Jusuf Kalla) and PDIP (Laksamana Sukardi), and replaced them with reputed personal loyalists (Rozy Munir and Luhut Panjaitan). In so doing, Wahid not only targeted Indonesia's two largest political parties; he hit them where it hurt most, depriving them of especially *basah* positions atop economic ministries. The president's effort to overturn collusive democracy by flirting with delegative democracy had commenced.

³¹ Personal communication, July 2004.

³² Since groups in civil society lack the capacity to impose accountability on incumbents by threatening their removal, they can only oppose certain policies, not the government per se. For a discussion of this more limited type of opposition played by NGOs, the press, and students in Indonesia, see Zaenuddin HM, *Prospek Gerakan Reformasi: Dalam Era Pemerintahan Gus Dur-Megawati* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo, 2001).

In retrospect, it is easy to say that Wahid's gambit was bound to fail. Yet he was able to use the power of the Indonesian presidency to put party elites on the defensive for over a year, in spite of his weak position in parliament. Crafting an effective parliamentary response was difficult for two reasons. First, Wahid may have been boldly transgressing emergent *informal norms* by reshuffling his cabinet at will, but he was not violating any *formal rules*. This was grudgingly admitted by the chairman of PDIP's parliamentary faction, Dimiyati Hartono, who, while accepting the legality of Wahid's dual sackings, complained that "it was unethical for him to have done so without consulting their political affiliations."³³

Second, it would be no small feat to transform the anti-Megawati coalition that had installed Wahid into an anti-Wahid coalition that would, via impeachment, install Megawati. Given the tortured character of the impeachment process under Indonesia's constitution, even parliament's most reputedly savvy operator, Akbar Tandjung, was initially uncertain of what angle to take. "We might withdraw ministers who come from Golkar," he insisted. "But that's a last resort," he meekly concluded.³⁴ The next day, Akbar renewed his expression of frustration, but retracted his bluff: "We will not withdraw our cadres from the cabinet."³⁵ While Golkar refused to cut off its nose to spite its face, Finance Minister Bambang Sudibyo, representing PAN, simply seemed pleased to have avoided the axe. "I'm just following the boss's decision," he shrugged. "I can work with anyone."³⁶

But parliamentary leaders were only willing to work with a president who would work with them. This meant sharing executive power, and nothing less. Unwilling to pull their members from the cabinet in a self-defeating protest, party leaders tried, rather limp-wristedly, to force Wahid to explain his cabinet reshuffle before parliament. Flaunting his brightening delegative plumage, Wahid denied that parliament had the right to question him except during parliament's annual special session. But by early August 2000, when the annual session came due, the parliamentary cat finally got its paws on the presidential mouse, amending the constitution to make it easier to summon the president to confront articles of impeachment at any time. Nevertheless, it was still fair to conclude that parliament ultimately "did not succeed in doing what it had been most determined to accomplish—to emasculate Wahid, or at least to force him to respect its component parties' wishes."³⁷

Later in August, elite conflict escalated dramatically. Once again, ground zero was the cabinet. Wahid reshuffled it wholesale, replacing the thirty-five-member National Unity Cabinet with a twenty-six-member cabinet nicknamed "All the President's Men." The frustrations that led the president to take such precipitous action were similar to those that inspire the presidential shirking of horizontal accountability elsewhere. "I feel sometimes I have no control over my government," Wahid lamented.

³³ "Parties Warn of Desertion from Cabinet," *The Jakarta Post*, April 27, 2000.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "House to Question President over his Cabinet Reshuffle," *The Jakarta Post*, April 27, 2000.

³⁶ "Gus Dur defends Cabinet reshuffle," *The Jakarta Post*, April 27, 2000.

³⁷ Jose Manuel Tesoro and Dewi Loveard, "Blind Man's Bluff," *Asiaweek*, September 1, 2000.

"I don't get a response from anyone. I need a way to assert my authority."³⁸ Golkar parliamentarian Muchyar Yara was remarkably and refreshingly candid in responding to his party's expulsion from the cabinet: "I'm really disappointed because I wasn't named labor minister as Gus Dur³⁹ promised," he moaned. "But this is his loss. In the future we'll be more critical."⁴⁰

"Vindictive" might be a more fitting term. With no cabinet posts remaining to temper their appetite for confrontation, party elites quickly announced plans to investigate Wahid's role in two political-finance scandals: a US\$4 million diversion of funds from Bulog⁴¹ by the president's personal masseur, and a US\$2 million personal gift to the president from the Sultan of Brunei. Wahid pleaded ignorance in the first case and claimed noble intentions in the latter. These were arguably stouter defenses than the ones offered by Akbar Tandjung in his own criminal trials related to illegal diversion of funds. For now, however, the pressing need is not to debate the president's sins. Rather, it is necessary, first, to note the rapidity with which Wahid was transformed in party elites' eyes from a worthy compromise president to an intolerable and impeachable rogue. And second, one should recognize this transformation's intimate connection to the president's emboldened efforts, in structural terms, to replace collusive democracy with delegative democracy.

Throughout a tiresomely legalistic, year-long struggle, the anti-Wahid coalition in parliament remained effectively in lockstep. This is all the more impressive (in the normatively neutral sense of the term) when one considers that individual parliamentarians would have presumably faced powerful incentives to break ranks and cut side-deals with the president, to regain access to patronage lost. Indeed, at the onset of full-blown *konfrontasi kabinet*, political researcher Irman G. Lanti opined that Wahid appeared to have gained the upper hand. "The situation may have slipped out of the control of party leaders—reflected by a new acronym, KISS (*ke istana sendiri-sendiri*)—or, 'going to Istana on his or her own.'"⁴² Yet such defections from the party cartel's shoulder-to-shoulder opposition to the President proved to be the exception, not the norm.

The Battle Backstage: Informal Norms and Networks in the Cartel's Resurgence

This issue of party defections raises a broader theoretical and comparative question, which helps set the stage for the discussion to follow. From a comparative perspective, it is worth considering why Wahid's maneuvers did not lead to the sort of rampant party-switching that has been routine in the Philippines and Thailand. Stated theoretically rather than comparatively, the impeachment of Wahid stands as a fascinating test of arguments regarding the relative significance of formal rules and

³⁸ John McBeth, "Military Manoeuvres," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 9, 2000.

³⁹ Wahid's widely used nickname.

⁴⁰ Tesoro and Loveard, "Blind Man's Bluff."

⁴¹ The Board of Logistics (Bulog) has long been entrusted with maintaining price stability in politically strategic commodities. It has also long served as a stupendous source of discretionary finance for presidential favorites.

⁴² Irman G. Lanti, "Gus Dur's Line-up Pits Cabinet against House," *Straits Times*, August 29, 2000.

informal norms in producing political outcomes. It might well be that Indonesia's combination of proportional representation and closed party-list voting (known colloquially as *kucing dalam karung*, or "cat in a sack") generates greater party cohesion than the more candidate-oriented electoral systems of Thailand or the Philippines.⁴³ If so, we should probably expect to see important changes in patterns of coalition formation manifested in the 2004 elections, given the country's recent switch to direct presidential elections and at least limited open-list party voting.

A third, intermediate possibility is that Indonesia's coalitional politics is being shaped by informal *networks* more than informal *norms* per se. As already noted, the *dagang sapi* (literally "cow-trading") that surrounded the formation of the Wahid-Megawati government in October 1999 involved a very small number of players, whose backgrounds crisscrossed party lines. Adopting a somewhat longer view, one might trace the origins of this cartel to the broad anti-Habibie coalition that emerged in late 1998 and early 1999. The first step came with the pro-reform "Ciganjur Declaration" delivered by Megawati, Wahid, Amien Rais, and the Sultan of Yogyakarta in November 1998. Just two months later, military commander Wiranto took the lead in reconvening these figures in a "Ciganjur-Plus" meeting that subtly insinuated the military into the coalition against Habibie. Most fascinating of all, as Jun Honna has noted, Wiranto entrusted the clandestine preparation of the meeting to the current rising star of Indonesian politics: none other than SBY.⁴⁴ Foreshadowing our analysis just a bit, one can draw a straight line from Ciganjur-Plus in January 1999 to four of the five presidential candidates in July 2004. And a fifth Ciganjur-Plus participant, Wahid, was disqualified from the most recent presidential sweepstakes due to his virtual blindness and precarious cardiac health.

Yet the anti-Wahid coalition could not simply be a straightforward sequel to the anti-Habibie coalition of two years before. Most obviously, if also most implausibly, Wahid himself no longer served as the unifying figure at the center of the coalition, *circa* 1999, but as its common enemy, *circa* 2001. Former TNI chief Wiranto, the mastermind of Ciganjur-Plus, had been sacked by Wahid and was keeping a low profile. But as the President increasingly ignored his former partners in the cartel, party leaders shifted their energies from sharing power to seizing it. This took the form of a series of memoranda that tightened the constitutional noose around Wahid's neck. Given the cartel's incredible breadth across parties, it was ideally structured for this line of attack—throughout the year-long process, only Wahid's own PKB tried to stop or slow the grinding wheels of impeachment. But this extraordinary level of parliamentary cohesion across parties, even as the coalition's *raison d'être* apparently experienced a 180 degree shift, is still a puzzle to be explained.

I would argue that the cartel's robustness throughout impeachment can best be explained by the fact that its core mission, contrary to all appearances, had not changed in the slightest. The cartel had come together in 1999 to seize the cabinet; it

⁴³ A more sociological view would be that *aliran* politics stifles party-switching. This is especially noteworthy in the case of Wahid and his PKB, which has strong *aliran* roots in its NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) popular base. More broadly, if identity cleavages prevent any single party from winning majority support under democratic conditions, no party can become inordinately attractive to opportunistic party-crashers.

⁴⁴ Jun Honna, *Military Politics and Democratization in Indonesia* (New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 170.

had taken mortal offense in 2000 at its expulsion from the cabinet; and it needed to come together again in 2001 to regain the cabinet. To some degree, new means (impeachment) were required to fulfill these familiar ends. But at a deeper level, removing Wahid was the same sort of collective-action problem that party leaders had already faced in removing Habibie, sidelining Megawati, anointing Wahid, and constructing the National Unity Cabinet. In these processes, networks had been formed and experience had been gained. What the cartel knew best was how to share power, and the critical point about impeachment was that it was perfectly tailored to this emergent *modus vivendi*. One might say that in the first several years of post-Suharto politics, these patterns of cross-party interaction have become more institutionalized than Indonesia's parties themselves.

Based on the precedent of Habibie's defeat in 1999, every party that joined in the effort to remove Wahid in 2001 would expect to be included in the new Megawati coalition. This inspired party elites to begin informal negotiations over the format of the first Megawati cabinet *long before* Wahid had been officially removed. Impeachment was not about Wahid or Megawati per se, but about parliamentary party leaders' shared interest in replacing a delegative democrat with a collusive democrat. To bolster the cartel's confidence that Megawati would be the latter and not the former, she and her kingpin husband Taufik Kiemas deputized two PDIP leaders to organize new channels for cross-party dialogue. First, Arifin Panigoro established the Forum Lintas Fraksi (Cross-Fraction Forum) to coordinate party preparations for amending the constitution, and thus to clear the road to impeachment before the August 2000 special parliamentary session. This parliamentary body became a political force after Wahid's August reshuffle, when it began coordinating party positions on investigations into the President's "Buloggate" and "Bruneigate" scandals.⁴⁵

More informal cross-party channels were opened by Kwik Kian Gie, a former coordinating minister for economics and a staunch PDIP loyalist. His working group became known as the "November 11 Caucus," referring to its formation nearly nine months before Wahid's ultimate removal from office. Given the opaque nature of such informal politics, it is difficult to say how heavily the November 11 Caucus's discussions were initially weighted toward the future structure of the cabinet, rather than the more immediate problem of crafting a common *lintas-fraksi* stance on parliamentary memoranda. As of early April 2001, *TEMPO* reported:

Besides their official faction meetings, there are informal inter-faction meetings. Always left out are the president's National Awakening Party (PKB) and its scant allies. Sometimes these combined anti-Wahid forces adopt the banner of Kwik's November 11 Caucus. Sometimes they just lobby among themselves. And their attitude is very clear. They want to get the second memorandum out of the way, then push for a special session.⁴⁶

Before pushing confrontation to the brink with a second and final memorandum in late May 2001, however, the party cartel offered Wahid a predictable compromise: "Perhaps authority over appointing members of the cabinet should not be wholly held

⁴⁵ "Srimulat Meriahkan Syukuran Lintas Fraksi," *Koran Tempo*, August 1, 2001, p. 1.

⁴⁶ "When Will this Boring Game End?," *TEMPO*, April 9, 2001, p. 27.

by the president."⁴⁷ Wahid the delegative democrat predictably declined, insisting that "staff appointments should not be taken out of his hands." With this final act of stonewalling on the issue the party cartel cared about most, Wahid's fate was sealed as far as parliament was concerned.

The special session was indeed secured in late May 2001, at which point the November 11 Caucus apparently degenerated into little besides a command center for cabinet negotiations. *TEMPO* reported, a bit prematurely, that "an agreement has been reached on sharing out the seats in Mega's new cabinet among the parties."⁴⁸ Defense Minister Mahfud MD, a PKB stalwart, remarked bitterly: "Now we hear that PDI-P has started to form a cabinet lineup." In reality, the process was still very much ongoing, with Kwik Kian Gie remaining at the center of the process. "He has discussed the new cabinet with chairs of the large parties . . . The concept at first is a grand coalition government, based on the balance of votes in the legislature." Informal discussions on constitutional memoranda had thus shifted seamlessly to informal discussions on how to carve up the next cabinet. Months before Wahid's impeachment was finalized, collusive democracy was being frantically restructured behind closed doors.

But delegative democracy was not dead yet. To the contrary, Wahid dove ever deeper into delegative democracy's bag of tricks. It is instructive at this point to return briefly to O'Donnell. When a delegative democrat becomes stifled by elite opponents, he is generally left with two distinct, but not mutually exclusive, options. The first is to mobilize mass support behind the personage of the president. This does not in and of itself constitute a return to authoritarian rule, in O'Donnell's view, but it certainly undermines the significance of democratic institutions. Venezuela's Hugo Chavez provides an ideal example, while the Philippines' Joseph Estrada fits the general mold as well.⁴⁹ A second option, best exemplified by Peru's Alberto Fujimori, is the *auto-golpe*, or "self-coup." Here, a president enlists the support of loyalists in the military to crush parliament rather than simply circumventing it. When leaders cross this regime-type Rubicon, says O'Donnell, delegative democracy loses what little democratic credibility it still enjoyed.

For all its undeniable quirks, Wahid's response to the second parliamentary memorandum showed powerful harmonies with both of these common tricks.⁵⁰ He was able to mobilize mass support: ten thousand radical Wahid supporters in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) torched PDIP offices in East Java on May 28, leading to the arrest of nineteen Wahid followers. Recognizing that he needed more muscle to defeat the party cartel's impeachment efforts, Wahid reshuffled his cabinet on June 1, largely in an effort to gain tighter control over the military and police. One major casualty of the shakeup was Bimantoro, the chief of national police, whom Wahid evidently perceived as having cracked down too hard on his NU rowdies in East Java. Another

⁴⁷ This and following quote come from "Crisis in Slow Motion," *TEMPO*, May 28, 2001, p. 25.

⁴⁸ Source of quotes in this paragraph, *ibid.*

⁴⁹ In Estrada's case, bribery apparently succeeded in defeating official impeachment procedures, but the transparently fixed outcome led Estrada's *opponents* to mobilize first. Only after Estrada had been forced to abdicate did his own popular forces counter with their own street actions.

⁵⁰ The pertinent details in the following discussion are drawn from "Last Throw of the Dice," *TEMPO*, June 11, 2001, pp. 16-18; and "What's Behind the Reshuffle?," *TEMPO*, June 11, 2001, p. 21.

was coordinating security minister SBY, who had apparently offended Wahid by promising that the military would defend parliament's upcoming special session from a potential onslaught by NU militants bussed in from East Java.

To drum up broader mass support and strike a bigger blow at his strongest enemies, Wahid also suddenly tried to get his *reformasi* groove back. The day before reshuffling his cabinet, Wahid met with an NGO alliance called Lindas Orba, or the National Anti-New Order Coalition. This was a prelude to Wahid's sacking of Attorney General Marzuki Darusman, a Golkar member who, while personally independent of Akbar Tandjung, had apparently disappointed Wahid by failing to bring New Order über-crony Ginanjar Kartasasmita to justice. Marzuki's replacement was Baharuddin Lopa, the "untouchable"-style prosecutor who had brought Suharto's crooked son Tommy to book. (Only weeks after his appointment, Lopa would die under mysterious circumstances in Mecca.) Nearly two years after Wahid had strategically decided to cooperate with a vast party cartel rather than a more limited reformist coalition, he tried to return to the spirit of Ciganjur to save his own neck.

Unfortunately for Wahid, the spirit of Ciganjur-Plus had lived on in the informal elite networks that defined the post-New Order polity, while the initial spirit of Ciganjur had never become embedded in concrete elite arrangements. As mentioned above, the second Ciganjur meeting had *combined* military elements with party leaders, whereas the first had witnessed the possible birth of a party coalition that did not depend directly on military support. It was clear on the night of the NU-PDIP riots in East Java that Wahid would not simply lose power to the party cartel, but to a party cartel drawing strong support from the military. That same evening of May 28, Megawati was personally visited by SBY, TNI Chief Widodo A.S., sacked police chief Bimantoro, and new security chief Agum Gumelar. Meanwhile, no fewer than thirty-two police generals signed a statement condemning Wahid's sacking of Bimantoro.⁵¹ Since Wahid was now left with neither mass nor military support in his conflict with parliament, his dangerous flirtation with delegative democracy was effectively finished. The challenge for the party leaders who overturned him then became one of reconstituting the party cartel of 1999 under more reliable leadership. With one part of the accountability trap averted, Indonesia prepared to plunge straight back into the other.

Recrafting the Ruling Cartel: Megawati's Cabinet and the Political Moratorium

Wahid's impeachment was celebrated by parliamentary elites in an atmosphere of unabashed glee and unmasked collusion. On July 31, a festive gathering was held at parliament to permit the Forum Lintas Fraksi to bask in the post-impeachment glow. An official statement of the cross-party group was delivered by PDIP parliamentary leader Arifin Panigoro and his PBB counterpart, Ahmad Sumargono, declaring that "the fraction leaders are committed to continuing their close cooperation, just as they

⁵¹ If Wahid crossed the Rubicon with parliament by reshuffling the cabinet, he did so with the military and police by interfering in their internal appointment processes as well. See Siddharth Chandra and Douglas Kammen, "Generating Reforms and Reforming Generations: Military Politics in Indonesia's Democratic Transition and Consolidation," *World Politics* 55 (October 2002): 96-136.

have closely cooperated up until now.”⁵² Arifin gave special thanks to the military representatives in parliament for their support: “During the first memorandum, the TNI/Polri fraction truly took a firm stand, as they did during the special session as well.” When a journalist asked Sumargono if party elites were acting a bit too “drunk on power” by having such a celebration after as somber an occasion as an impeachment, the PBB leader staunchly defended the cause for celebration. “The fractions in parliament have just succeeded in overcoming a major source of instability in the very heart of our nation’s political life.”

While Sumargono was right to say that the impeachment of Wahid had been accompanied by instability, this had taken place almost entirely at the elite level. When mass unrest did arise, it was *in defense* of Wahid, *against* the actions of parliament. Sumargono’s insinuation that parliament had somehow succeeded in bridling some broader source of political instability was at best disingenuous, and at worst dangerous. The notion that the co-optation of all potential opposition groups is necessary to prevent societal tensions has become a recurring theme in Indonesian political discourse in the post-Suharto era. How well it harmonizes with New Order claims that only elites could practice politics without resorting to violence should be rather self-evident.

Even more than the birth of the party cartel at the special parliamentary session in 1999, its rebirth at the special parliamentary session in 2001 was marked by a sense that no one had truly lost. Even Wahid’s own PKB parliamentary fraction had been invited to the fête, with no apparent sense of irony. “We’re not in a framework of winners and losers,” Sumargono claimed, as a winner might be expected to do. Amien Rais echoed the sentiment, if with more rhetorical flourish: “There are no losers in this matter, because the real winners here are the Indonesian people.”⁵³

While that sentiment was debatable, it was undeniable that the original party cartel of 1999 was back in command, this time *sans* Wahid. But as in all cartels, a shared interest in the victory of the whole does not eliminate each party’s interest in maximizing its share of the spoils. This was precisely why the Forum Lintas Fraksi and November 11 Caucus had worked so tirelessly and painstakingly on preparing the details of a Megawati cabinet, literally for months before Wahid’s removal. Such cross-party meetings had often dragged on “until dawn,”⁵⁴ one parliamentary leader reported.

Rather audaciously, participants in these informal sessions had endorsed a precise mathematical formula for dividing up cabinet seats, initially proposed by PAN’s Bambang Sudibyo—Wahid’s former finance minister, who had bragged he could “work with anybody.”⁵⁵ New President Megawati was said to have agreed to the

⁵² This and following quotes in the paragraph come from “Srimulat,” *Koran Tempo*. If one wanted to pick two Indonesian parties that are as different as possible, to prove that all parties were willing to work as one, it would be hard to do better than the PBB and PDIP.

⁵³ Both quoted in “Syukuran Lintas Fraksi MPR/DPR,” *Kompas*, August 1, 2001, p. 6.

⁵⁴ “Srimulat,” *Koran Tempo*.

⁵⁵ Kwik Kian Gie subsequently pushed Megawati to reappoint Bambang as finance minister, again suggesting the staying power of informal networks established during the impeachment process. See “Berebut Tanggung Jawab atau Duit?,” *TEMPO*, August 5, 2001, pp. 26-27.

formula in principle, which gave ten points for the presidency, six for the vice-presidency, four for the finance ministry, three for the interior ministry, and so on. The total figure added up to one hundred, so dividing up the key positions was effectively a matter of transposing each party's share of the 1999 parliamentary vote onto an organizational flowchart of executive posts.⁵⁶

But as so many economists have learned the hard way, political struggles cannot be reduced to technical fixes through mere quantification. Once the power of appointment was placed in the hands of Megawati (who appears to have little stomach for hard political bargaining) and her husband Taufik Kiemas (who appears to enjoy a voracious appetite for same), the temptation to gain an extra edge for PDIP favorites was enormous. More to the point, the opportunity to use the power of presidential appointment to slip out of the grip of the parliamentary party cartel was even bigger for Megawati than it had been for Wahid. Not only did the PDIP have a much stronger position in parliament than the PKB. There was also no way that parliament would have embarked on another high-stakes impeachment gamble if Megawati had reneged on her apparent pledge to bring all parties that helped overthrow Wahid into her new cabinet. The tensions between collusive democracy and delegative democracy are not merely personal—they are profoundly structural.

The most important division that emerged was between PDIP and Golkar. First, efforts by Akbar Tandjung to win the vice-presidency were thwarted when PDIP parliamentarians backed the PPP's Hamzah Haz, a far less talented politician with a far weaker party base in parliament. As in 1999, Akbar's attempt to secure the number-two position was partly stymied by mass opposition, in the form of student protests against his candidacy. At a PDIP meeting just days before the vote, party opposition to Akbar became so strong that the party agreed to vote him down unanimously. "All agreed to say 'no' to Akbar Tandjung. The Golkar Chairman was considered to be a potential burden on the Megawati presidency."⁵⁷

While opposition to Akbar was unanimous, an instructive division emerged within PDIP concerning which vice-presidential candidates to support in his stead: Hamzah Haz or SBY. Experience with cross-party dialogue appeared to have an important causal effect. Those PDIP members most closely involved in such meetings were inclined toward Hamzah, while more hardcore nationalists blanched at his Islamist reputation and preferred SBY.⁵⁸ Once again, it appeared that informal cross-party networks had similar levels of influence in the Indonesian parliament as the parties themselves.

Yet the fight over the relatively *kering* vice-presidency paled by comparison to struggles over the more *basah* seats in the cabinet. In spite of the painstaking informal preparations for a Megawati cabinet that had preceded Wahid's removal, reconstituting a cartelized cabinet proved to be an extremely contentious and drawn-

⁵⁶ For detailed discussions of the formula's political implications, see "Kabinet Baru, Harapan Baru?," *TEMPO*, August 5, 2001, pp. 20-21; and "Skor Pembagi Kue," *Gatra*, August 4, 2001, p. 28.

⁵⁷ "Hamzah Haz, Merdeka!," *TEMPO*, August 5, 2001, p. 24. PDIP made no secret of its opposition to Akbar. By writing "Hamzah Haz, Merdeka!" on their secret ballots, they signaled to the gallery—and to Akbar—that the votes were from PDIP. Personal communication with Rizal Sukma, August 2001.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

out process. The biggest fights appeared to arise over the biggest prizes: the economic ministries. To most observers, the key question was whether Megawati would grant those vital posts to party favorites or to respected technocrats for the sake of economic recovery. This was no doubt important, and no doubt a factor that weighed on the new president's mind. But this treatment of the controversy tended to miss a deeper political point: namely, that access to such ministries would provide potential financial bonanzas to the individuals and parties who controlled them.

Because some cabinet seats are more equal than others, struggles over those seats introduce a zero-sum element to political negotiations that cross-party forums have difficulty managing. As a result, Megawati needed to postpone the official announcement of her new cabinet on several occasions, even as financial markets panicked amid justifiable "speculation that squabbling among political parties has worsened."⁵⁹ Akbar Tandjung, a central player in the negotiations despite his snubbing by Megawati in the vice-presidential race, insisted that the cartel was not breaking down: "The main point is we support the new government." But Wahid supporter Mahfud MD reasonably suggested that parties were probably stalling the process by demanding "to be accommodated proportionally in the Cabinet in accordance with their role in ousting Abdurrahman Wahid." He also rightly raised the possibility that Megawati might try her own hand at delegative democracy if the parties refused to accept her choices. "Megawati might turn to the Indonesian Military . . . to fill key positions," indeed as many as half of all positions by Mahfud's rough estimation.

While Mahfud's observations were obviously not those of a disinterested party, they did not exactly come from a complete outsider either. He had been privy to such negotiations on previous occasions and was intimately familiar with the main players' bargaining strategies. Having served under Wahid, Mahfud recognized the delegative temptations that come from confronting a demanding party cartel. Megawati did not take the drastic measures Mahfud thought she might; but the fact that they seemed so possible suggests that delegative democracy is indeed a presidential Sword of Damocles hanging over Indonesian politics.

In the final analysis, Megawati gave the party cartel most of what it asked for. While journalists tended to rave at the fact that the two major economic postings wound up in technocratic hands,⁶⁰ they failed to recognize that the new *kabinet gotong-royong* followed the November 11 Caucus's mathematical guidelines almost to a tee.⁶¹ The most notable divergence from the formula was that Golkar and the PDIP each received five mainline ministries, whereas the formula had suggested that Golkar deserved a 6-4 edge. (Each received one coordinating ministry, as predicted.) For all the "inherent distrust"⁶² that supposedly characterized Golkar-PDIP relations as a

⁵⁹ All quotes in this paragraph are from "Haggling Stalls Cabinet Making," *The Jakarta Post*, August 3, 2001, p. 1.

⁶⁰ John McBeth, "A Parade of Surprises," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 23, 2001.

⁶¹ A chart for the "pure" mathematical version is provided in "Skor Pembagi Kue," *Gatra*, August 4, 2001, p. 28.

⁶² John McBeth and Djini Djalal, "The Puppet President," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 2, 2001, p. 16. Quite intriguingly, this article also speculates that the main rift delaying the cabinet selection was between Arifin Panigoro and Kwik Kian Gie: the PDIP grandees in charge of the Forum Lintas Fraksi and November 11 Caucus, respectively. It will require further research to determine (1) whether this tension

remnant of New Order rivalry, Megawati and Taufik Kiemas had clearly agreed on terms with Akbar Tandjung that Golkar must have found extremely agreeable. All other party fractions received seats as well, with the partial exception of PKB, which expelled leader Matori Abdul Djalil before he accepted the Defense Ministry post. However, PKB has not used its relative exclusion from state patronage to position itself as any sort of parliamentary opposition; and after the party endorsed Golkar nominee Wiranto in the 2004 presidential sweepstakes, no one expects the party to go willingly into opposition anytime soon.⁶³

If Megawati gave substantial ground to Golkar, she did not fail to seize some big prizes of her own. Most notably, while observers were busy praising the new president for her political courage in appointing technocrats to the top economic posts, Megawati pulled a stupendous bait and switch. At the very first meeting of her new cabinet, she announced that authority over the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA) was being shifted from the finance ministry to the ministry of state-owned enterprises.⁶⁴ This took the disposal of approximately US\$1.3 billion in assets out of the hands of a reputed technocrat, and placed it into the hands of Laksamana Sukardi, the PDIP's long-time treasurer and "a close confidante of Megawati."⁶⁵ Laksamana now controlled not only IBRA, but the ministry of state-owned enterprises, one of the most *basah* in the Indonesian bureaucracy. Yet this was generally perceived in positive rather than negative terms, since Laksamana was reputed to be "one of Indonesia's few genuine reformers." While foreign media at least raised the question of whether IBRA would "be turned into a money-making opportunity for the PDI-P in the run-up to the 2004 elections," local press coverage focused entirely on the implications of the switch for economic rather than political concerns: i.e. how it would affect the efficiency of asset disposal, and whether it might lead to costly bureaucratic infighting.⁶⁶

Three years later, well-informed sources suggest that Laksamana's clean reputation has counted for less than the obvious political temptations of such concentrated bureaucratic power. While investigations into the disposal of IBRA's assets are still ongoing,⁶⁷ initial perceptions are that PDIP indeed benefited immensely from its long-time treasurer's discretion over the flows of such copious state funds. On a more personal level, two long-time friends of Laksamana expressed disappointment to me

was real or only rumored; and (2) whether it related to their respective roles in those informal forums before Wahid's dismissal.

⁶³ Matori himself suggested that the PKB's official stance against joining the cabinet was mere posturing. "This is a problem that sometimes makes me feel fed up," he said. "They yell and yell that they want to be in the opposition and don't want to be in the cabinet, but . . . then they ask me to talk to Megawati about giving PKB three ministries and five director positions in state-owned enterprises." See "Kutipan," *Koran Tempo*, August 1, 2001, p. 15. This begs the question of whether some Indonesian parties are more desperate to join the cabinet than others because they lack access to other types of resources. For instance, PKB is tightly linked to NU, which may provide the party with succor in times when PKB cannot gain access to wealth via the cabinet. In a very different vein, Golkar holds so many local executive positions off Java that it might need cabinet access less than a party such as PAN or PPP.

⁶⁴ IBRA's Indonesian name was *Badan Penyehatan Perbankan Nasional*, or BPPN.

⁶⁵ This and subsequent quotes come from John McBeth, "A Parade of Surprises."

⁶⁶ "Untuk Naikkan Penjualan Aset, BPPN Dialihkan ke Menteri Negara BUMN," *Koran Tempo*, August 13, 2001.

⁶⁷ Interview with Luky Djani, Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW), Jakarta, July 19, 2004.

that someone they had so long respected as a reformer would behave as he did when disposing of IBRA assets.⁶⁸ While neither accuses Laksamana of having enriched himself personally, his reputation as a loyal backer of PDIP and Megawati makes it hard to believe that IBRA-related funds did not flow into party coffers and into the president's 2004 reelection campaign fund.⁶⁹ Indeed, it is a matter of public knowledge that PDIP has significantly outspent all of its competitors in the current election season. The example of Laksamana Sukardi should thus serve notice that cabinet appointments involve a great deal more of political import than whether or not ministers are personally honest or claim to be champions of reform.

Although the consensus on the cabinet was a challenge to craft, it proved to be an easy bargain to sustain. Megawati's ascent to her rightful place upon her father's former throne, and her calculation that sharing her cabinet among all groups who *put* her there was the best way to *keep* her there, have ushered in an era of remarkable elite camaraderie. In contrast to Wahid's frequent reshuffles, Megawati has left the cabinet alone—so much so, in fact, that when Defense Minister Matori was incapacitated by a stroke, Megawati preferred to keep the post vacant rather than stir up a political hornet's nest by appointing a successor.⁷⁰ In short, an unmolested cabinet has meant a tranquil parliament. Ginanjar Kartasmita nicely captured the elite gestalt of Megawati's first half-term, perhaps feeling flushed with the recognition that Wahid's impeachment had rescued the former Suharto minister from persistent criminal investigations:

We have entered a new phase. The atmosphere among the people is now like it was two years ago . . . The atmosphere of conflict, so tumultuous before now, has suddenly subsided. Support is flowing from everywhere. Throughout the country, the society is almost unanimous in giving support to this new partnership [Megawati-Hamzah].⁷¹

The Cartel Faces the Voters: Dealignment, Direct Elections, and a Disrupted Elite

At least that was how things looked from the cozy confines of Senayan.⁷² Between Megawati's inauguration in July 2001 and the official start of election campaigning in March 2004, Indonesian party elites found precious little to disagree about, at least in public. Opposition became effectively non-existent. "Parties may take an oppositional stance on a specific issue," Bivitri Susanti notes. "But they don't adopt an oppositional

⁶⁸ Personal communications, June–July 2004. While any confidential source must perforce be treated with caution on my part and healthy skepticism on the reader's, I can go so far as to say that neither source is a figure with clear partisan interests, and therefore neither has anything obvious to gain by besmirching Laksamana's reputation.

⁶⁹ One personal informant has told me that Wahid sacked Laksamana as finance minister in April 2000 because he was perceived as more loyal to Megawati than to the president, and as someone trying to enhance the PDIP's position in the ministry more generally. Personal communication, July 2001. The same point about non-partisanship expressed in the previous footnote applies here as well.

⁷⁰ Thanks to Benny Subianto for pointing this out.

⁷¹ Ginanjar Kartasmita, "Pasca-Gus Dur: The Do's & The Don'ts," *Gatra*, August 4, 2001, pp. 36-37.

⁷² The area of Jakarta where parliament is located.

attitude in general.”⁷³ Like all cartels, Indonesia’s party cartel grew less responsive as it gained immunity from competition. The lack of vigorous leadership typically ascribed to aloof Megawati applied equally well to party elites in parliament. The entire government, not just the presidency, appeared to be on auto-pilot.

Three changes occurred during this “political moratorium,” however, that altered the political landscape in the run-up to the April 2004 parliamentary election. The first was the gradual coalescence of Golkar and the PDIP into something of an unofficial political combine. Anchored by the warming relationship between Akbar Tandjung and presidential husband Taufik Kiemas, relations between the two parties had gone way beyond thawing; PDIP red and Golkar yellow seemed to be melting indistinguishably into a common pool of mucky orange.⁷⁴ Recalling one of the vignettes with which I opened this essay, one might call this process the Manado-ization of Jakarta politics.

That politics had been largely contained in the comfortable surroundings of Senayan certainly helped cement this tightening bond. As by far the two largest parties in parliament, Golkar and PDIP were masters of the house. With so little of ideological consequence to fight about, and so much shared interest in accessing the burgeoning patronage opportunities of the parliament, the pretense of party difference became harder to sustain. By late February 2004, Taufik made the rather peculiar election-year move of *admitting* that PDIP was basically indistinguishable from Golkar, even though Suharto’s old ruling party remains a hated holdover from the New Order to many Indonesians. When pressed to say whether this meant Akbar Tandjung had become an acceptable partner to most PDIP members, Taufik responded as if national politics had been reduced to nothing more than the sum total of his own personal relationships: “*Pak Akbar is a friend of mine.*”⁷⁵

Less than two weeks later, the emergence of a ragtag alliance of student and labor groups called “The Anti Mega-Akbar Tandjung Movement” suggested how linked the parties were starting to appear in at least some quarters. According to the group’s leader, Megawati’s failure to provide political backing for Akbar’s corruption conviction proved that she was “a traitor to *reformasi*,” and that “the PDIP-Golkar alliance must be confronted by a united opposition group.”⁷⁶ The growing Golkar-PDIP partnership may have made sense as a lubricant for day-to-day parliamentary business. But it was bound to cost the PDIP support among voters who still fondly associated the party with opposition to Suharto’s New Order.

Had party elites been playing closer attention to the political ground, they might have noticed that society at large was more restless than its ostensible representatives.

⁷³ Interview with Bivitri Susanti, Executive Director of the Pusat Studi Hukum and Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK, Indonesian Center for Legal and Policy Studies), Jakarta, July 21, 2004.

⁷⁴ The biggest exception to this emerging détente helps prove the rule. Backbenchers from PDIP pushed for Akbar to be inactivated after his initial conviction on corruption charges in September 2002, but their petition was dead on arrival, garnering only sixty-eight signatures. Thanks to Dirk Tomsa for relating this story. For the basics on the Akbar scandal, see Rachel Langit, “Akbar verdict: A glimmer of light,” *Asia Times*, September 5, 2002.

⁷⁵ “Taufik Kiemas: Golkar dan NU Punya Platform Sama Dengan PDIP,” *Koran Tempo*, February 28, 2004.

⁷⁶ “Gerakan Oposisi Serukan Anti Mega-Akbar,” *Koran Tempo*, March 11, 2004.

This was best reflected in the second big change that took place during Megawati's first half-term: the grassroots civil-society movement in favor of constitutional reform.⁷⁷ Most importantly for the analysis here, this movement pressed for the introduction of direct presidential elections as a means of reimposing some semblance of vertical accountability on the increasingly rarefied political elite. By 2002, the notion of direct elections had become so obviously popular among voters that no party wanted to be seen as the force stonewalling the initiative. By the time the issue made it to parliament, party fractions found themselves relegated to finding ways to tweak the reforms to their narrow advantage, rather than trying to stop the tide of demands for constitutional reform altogether.

This second change paved the way for a third. In March 2004, as elections fast approached, Megawati suffered a falling out with her coordinating minister for politics and security, SBY, after her husband Taufik publicly referred to him as "childish." If Taufik's warm remark toward Akbar Tandjung had been the most ill-advised political comment in recent memory, his nasty remark toward SBY far surpassed it in terms of bad political judgment. With a bang, Minister SBY was transformed into Candidate SBY.

This third change (the Megawati-SBY split) was not merely the product of Taufik's loose tongue. It was more fundamentally a product of the second development mentioned above (direct elections). For all his apparent brains, brawn, and presidential aura, SBY had faced a glass ceiling under the post-Suharto disposition, in that he was a military man rather than a party man. When SBY finished third behind lesser mortals Akbar Tandjung and Hamzah Haz in the 2001 vice-presidential race, SBY attributed the loss to electoral rules rather than any personal flaw. "In Bambang's [SBY's] eyes, the result of the vice-presidential election in parliament shows a basic reality of politics," *TEMPO* reported at the time. "It points to the extremely important role of political parties. As a result, he says, people who belong to no party will have a hard time penetrating that blockade."⁷⁸ The introduction of direct presidential elections had made this party blockade easier to penetrate, at least in terms of *formal rules*. Whether *informal norms* at the elite level can sustain the cartel against an SBY challenge—and indeed, whether those norms will prevent SBY from challenging it at all—is perhaps the most important mystery in Indonesia's ongoing presidential and coalitional politics.

For the initial parliamentary vote of April 5, however, SBY still needed a party label. Rather than jumping to a major party with a major leader, SBY joined a barely breathing party vehicle, the PD, which warmly welcomed his leadership as a cheap ticket from pretender to contender status. As mentioned above, the two main surprises in the April parliamentary vote were (1) the PDIP's plummeting vote share, and (2) milder dealignment more generally, as all five major parties lost ground vis-à-vis their performances in 1999. The party cartel had clearly not done as thorough a job of marginalizing small outside parties as it would have hoped; and the PDIP clearly received the brunt of the blame for the lackluster performance of Megawati's government, anchored though it was in a *kabinet pelangi*.

⁷⁷ The following text gratefully draws on a conversation with Bivitri Susanti from PSHK.

⁷⁸ "Meneropong Para Calon," *TEMPO*, August 5, 2001, pp. 22-23.

What was immediately evident was that the PD and PKS were the big gainers from this dealignment process. To be sure, the sudden rise of each could arguably be seen more as a trend toward political *deformasi* than *reformasi*. While PKS's well-deserved reputation as a hard-working grassroots machine has earned it a wide degree of immediate admiration,⁷⁹ its apparent disingenuousness regarding its long-term Islamist intentions has also made it a source of significant trepidation.⁸⁰ As for PD, Bill Liddle fairly concluded that, "The Democrat Party doesn't exist, really. A voter for the Democrat Party is a voter for SBY."⁸¹ In point of fact, PD does have other elite figures on board, but has understandably chosen not to call much attention to them, given their unsavory New Order backgrounds. Besides former President Habibie's brother Fanny, PD also counts among its top figures a former PDI member from its Soerjadi days, while party chairman Subur Budhisantoso had been a high-ranking Golkar official during the time of Harmoko. Budhisantoso defended his party cohorts by insisting, rather colorfully, that the past was the past: "This party is like a wastebasket. But that doesn't mean we don't have principles."⁸²

More importantly for SBY, the upcoming direct elections permitted him to cast aside his party label and make his run for the *Istana* on a more individual than institutional basis. Yet the month following the parliamentary vote was not so much a time for personalized campaigns aimed at the mass of voters, as one might expect from direct presidential elections; rather, party elites moved directly into their familiarly opaque coalition-building mode, tirelessly holding private *silaturahmi* to discuss which presidential/vice-presidential tickets would compete in the July 5 vote. With only one month to make such tickets official, the buzz of coalition politics was louder in Jakarta than it had been since the formation of Megawati's cabinet in August 2001.

Rather than attempting to detail the web-like patterns of elite wheeling and dealing that accompanied the crafting of presidential/vice-presidential pairings, I hope it will suffice say the following: If one were to write the names of Indonesia's top fifteen or twenty political elites on a single page, and draw lines between every pair that met behind closed doors at some point during April 2004, the latticework of linkages would have few if any gaps. Everyone seems to have strongly considered pairing up with virtually everyone else at some point during the process. Deserving of special note is the fact that *all five* eventual vice-presidential nominees were wooed at one point by multiple presidential candidates. The mathematical possibilities for coalitional pairs in a cartelized setting proved to be virtually endless. Golkar's Jusuf Kalla, who decided to pair up with SBY over Megawati, and perhaps other suitors as well, captured the promiscuity of the process perfectly: "I'm kind of like a monkeywrench," he laughed. "I can fit with anybody."⁸³

⁷⁹ The joke that PKS stood for *Partai Kantong Sendiri*—loosely, Self-Funding Party—seems more complimentary than dismissive, especially when compared to the epithet aimed at Wahid's PKB: *Partai Kaya Baru*, or Party of the New Rich.

⁸⁰ As one prominent non-Muslim scholar prognosticated, with obvious discomfort: "PKS is the party of the future." Personal communication, July 2004.

⁸¹ Comments at a public forum, Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, April 16, 2004.

⁸² "Tiga Menguak Takdir," *TEMPO*, April 12–18, 2004, p. 26.

⁸³ "Saling Silang Mencari Sekondan," *TEMPO*, April 19–25, 2004, p. 27.

All five tickets that emerged were fronted by figures with deep experience operating at or near the center of the party cartel: SBY, Megawati, Wiranto, Amien Rais, and Hamzah Haz. Four of the five (not Hamzah) could trace their cooperation all the way back to Ciganjur-Plus in January 1999; all five had been closely involved in the rise of Abdurrahman Wahid, while all except Wiranto had been centrally implicated in his fall, as well as tightly embedded in the subsequent Megawati coalition. If SBY was an outsider, he could only claim to have been so for a grand total of *one* out of the past *sixty-three* months. This is important to keep in mind when considering the likelihood that a President SBY might try to reinstate a more presidential style of delegative democracy at the expense of the interests of this party cartel.

Coalition-building for the first presidential round primarily took the form of vice-presidential selections. Since all the main parties except PKB had their own candidates in the running, there was little room for attracting big-party endorsements. The big prize was thought to be PKB, with its links to the NU mass base; both Megawati and Wiranto bid for this vote by selecting vice-presidential candidates from (rival wings of) the NU. In the only other endorsement of much significance, PKS stood behind Amien Rais, whose PAN serves as PKS's partner in the *Fraksi Reformasi* in parliament. This was a rare moment of a party seemingly sticking to its ideological guns, although it did not go unchallenged. A significant minority in the PKS preferred to back Wiranto, but was voted down in what appeared to be a refreshing instance of intra-party democracy at work.

Meanwhile, even more sheen was rubbed off of SBY's outsider pretensions, insofar as his "monkeywrench" running mate was a Golkar member who had long served beside SBY as one of the coordinating ministers in Megawati's cabinet. Amien's longshot campaign did a moderately better job of maintaining a reformist veneer with its selection of Siswono Yudhohusodo, a seemingly well-respected figure in the worlds of politics and business despite his deep roots in the New Order.⁸⁴ But Amien had already done his waning reformist image untimely damage by publicly stating early in the campaign that he hoped to attract a military man as his running mate.⁸⁵ By expressing this desire but failing to make the match, Amien clumsily managed to attract the opprobrium of anti-military groups without attracting any support whatsoever to compensate.

⁸⁴ Siswono claimed to prefer Amien as a partner, due to what he called his "good, clean, reformist track record." But Wiranto is his frequent golf partner, and Siswono clearly did not reject his advances out of hand. "I also respect the offers from other parties. If I accept one offer, what about the other offers? It's really something I have to think about." See "Siswono Juga Mengaku Dilamar Wiranto," *Koran Tempo*, April 28, 2004. Indeed, Siswono's New Order roots appear rotten as well as deep. He was especially notorious for his hardline views on East Timor and on the economic role of the Chinese, even though they clearly did little to encumber his personal enrichment under Suharto. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer at *Indonesia* for pressing this point.

⁸⁵ In an extremely frank interview, Amien talked freely of his own "monkeywrench" quality. Calling any potential pairing with another Islam-oriented politician "political incest" [English], Amien said he needed a running mate with nationalist credentials. "Pragmatically, I can't look for leading figures in Megawati's camp. So finally I've turned my attention to TNI, because we can't doubt their nationalism and patriotism." Amien went on to note that he and SBY are "old friends" and that he and Agum Gumelar (the former general who was apparently Amien's second choice behind SBY) often played basketball together in Yogya and Solo. See "Amien Rais: 'Pemilu Presiden Merupakan The Last Battle,'" *TEMPO*, April 19-25, 2004, pp. 43-46.

To put it mildly, then, the first round of presidential voting did not offer any obvious alternative for opponents of the status quo, as embodied by the PDIP-Golkar-led party cartel. Nevertheless, turnout was quite high, as SBY and Megawati moved on to the second round. At the five voting stations I observed with an Asia Foundation monitoring team in Cawang, east Jakarta—where vote totals and turnout figures quite closely mirrored those in Jakarta as a whole—the atmosphere broadly suggested a sense of purposefulness and enthusiasm, given that this was the first time voters had been entrusted with choosing individual candidates at the national level. The final tallying of ballots was greeted with universal applause, and not just partisan shouts from victorious SBY supporters. For once, it appeared to be a chance for *non-elites* to feel, with their new direct electoral powers, as if they could all be on the winning side.⁸⁶

While it is analytically dangerous to infer voter moods, what appears rather clear is that voters felt less beholden to the dictates of party machines than many observers expected. Most notably in East Java, where PKB and NU were presumed to rule the roost, SBY pulled off an upset victory over Megawati and Wiranto, both of whom were backed by NU running mates. Similarly, Golkar's endorsement did relatively little good for Wiranto in eastern Indonesia—where the Golkar machine is presumably strongest—as voters went more heavily for SBY and his Makassar-based running mate. Several analysts have gone so far as to claim that this rejection of party dictates represents a full-blown *pembangkangan massa*, or mass rebellion against party elites.⁸⁷ Even if only partly true, this raises fascinating comparative questions, given the seemingly more tenacious hold of local “bossism” in electoral politics in Thailand and the Philippines.⁸⁸

For purposes of the present analysis, the key point is that direct elections have shaken party elites' confidence in their own mobilizational capacities. This raises the prospect that coalitional politics might play a surprisingly limited role in the second

⁸⁶ This anecdotal evidence was echoed in conversations with far more seasoned observers from the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) and the locally based Komite Independen Pemantau Pemilu (KIPP, or Independent Committee of Election Observers). Still, one can clearly not assume that electoral atmospherics in Jakarta were nationally representative. Melbourne University researcher Dirk Tomsa described the voters he observed in South Sulawesi as “disillusioned,” with “hardly any enthusiasm discernible.” Personal communications, July–August 2004.

⁸⁷ See, for instance, the interview with Sukardi Rinakit in “Pertarungan Wibawa dan Popularitas,” *Kompas*, July 17, 2004, p. 8. It is also commonly and contrarily asserted that the major party machines remain robust, but that elite splits prevented them from functioning effectively in the first round of presidential voting. The significance of such splits in the machines' underperformance is indeed undeniable; but this might well reflect a deeper problem of adjustment to the introduction of direct elections, not merely a temporary aberration.

⁸⁸ Two especially notable works would be John Sidel, *Capital, Coercion, and Crime: Bossism in the Philippines* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); and James O'key, “Crime, Society, and Politics in Thailand,” in *Gangsters, Democracy, and the State in Southeast Asia*, ed. Carl A. Trocki (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1998). My own sense is that the key to variation might rest in the fact that Indonesian local bosses tend to be *party* bosses, while their Thai and Philippine counterparts are rarely creatures of any wider party machine. In such a context, direct elections might prove quite locally liberating. For a useful corrective to overly pessimistic views of Philippine elections, see Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, “Contested Meanings of Elections in the Philippines,” in *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia*, ed. Robert Taylor (New York, NY: Woodrow Wilson Press, 1996).

round of presidential voting in late September. A close political adviser to the Muhammadiyah movement explained the group's decision not to endorse either candidate in the September vote: "They realize that if they try to tell people what to do, they'll wind up looking like fools."⁸⁹ No doubt the embarrassing failure of NU elites to guide their minions in the July vote served as a cautionary tale to their Muhammadiyah counterparts.

The big questions then become: Will this initial outbreak of modesty intensify among political elites, leading them to withhold electoral support from both candidates? Or, conversely, will SBY or Megawati decide that party elites who claim the power to mobilize their members are mere "fools," and refuse to trade cabinet seats for the electoral equivalent of a pig in a poke? If so, will this leave the winner with a freer hand to craft what SBY intriguingly calls a *koalisi terbatas*, or limited coalition, rather than an expansive cartel in which opposition entirely vanishes? If major parties are indeed excluded from the cabinet, will they come to adopt constructive oppositional roles? Or will they try to undermine rather than check the presidency, renewing the distracting and destructive elite conflict of the Wahid years?

Whither Accountability? Formal Rules vs. Informal Networks and Norms

This brings the discussion full circle, back to the accountability trap. Prospects that Indonesian politics will remain mired in a condition of collusive democracy, or, alternatively, return to flirtations with delegative democracy, seem to depend primarily on how the clash between formal and informal politics is resolved.

At the level of formal rules, there is simply no denying that the next president should have an immensely stronger hand in dealing with parliament. His or her mandate will come directly from the voters rather than from Senayan. Impeachment has been made more difficult by the 2002 constitutional reforms. And for all the talk among party elites about the need for the next president to have a "strong position in parliament" for the sake of social stability, this is little more than thinly disguised blackmail. Social unrest has only arisen over national elite politics in the post-Suharto era because *parliament tried to deny power to a leader with mass support*, not because a president played too rough with parliament.⁹⁰ If SBY or Megawati has the courage to form a cabinet that denies access to Golkar and other major parties, will parliament dare to try to knock that chip off the new president's shoulder?

While coalitional politics surrounding the September election is still inchoate, one pattern seems unmistakable: Megawati is willing to grant greater concessions to other members of the party cartel in advance of the vote than is SBY. Having finished well behind SBY in the first round, and lacking SBY's popular and personal appeal,

⁸⁹ Interview with Rizal Sukma, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, July 23, 2004.

⁹⁰ The two instances to which I refer are the PDIP riots upon Megawati's denial of the presidency in October 1999, and the NU riots in May 2001 as impeachment proceedings against President Wahid gained momentum.

Megawati is plainly more desperate for elite support. By contrast, as SBY ponders the costs and benefits of building a coalition, he is thus far “not selling for cheap.”⁹¹

Yet this might well change. Kusananto Anggoro presents an original and intriguing argument for why SBY would have little choice but to give into parliamentary demands for a large role in the next cabinet, even if he does not receive electoral endorsements from those parties. The point is not that the scorned party cartel would express its wrath through impeachment, but that it could poison the bureaucracy against President SBY. “The President cannot make appointments below the first level,” notes Kusananto. “So from the second level down, it’s all New Order people,” with longstanding formal and informal ties to party elites in Golkar and PDIP. Even if SBY could countenance the prospect of an uncooperative parliament in matters of policy *decisions*, could he tolerate being unable to *implement* policy as well? In sum, Kusananto agrees that recent changes in formal rules should give either SBY or Megawati more leeway. But given the robustness of old informal networks linking party and state, most political elites seem to have reached a different conclusion: “The mentality is that there will continue to be a dictatorship of the parliament.”⁹²

There are other reasons to believe that informal politics might prevent even a partial dismantling of the party cartel. For one, the old assumption that the cabinet is generally *basah*, while parliament is relatively *kering*, appears no longer to ring true. To be left in the parliament does not mean being left out of highly lucrative patronage networks. This suggests that even if the next president manages to exclude major parties from the next cabinet, the wounds may be salved by helping arrange plum positions on parliamentary commissions. This practice already appears to be becoming institutionalized, as parliament’s thirteen standing committees currently divvy up their chairmanships as follows: PDIP and Golkar have four each, PPP has two, while the remaining three are allotted to PKB, TNI/Polri, and Fraksi Reformasi. In parliamentary commissions as in the cabinet, everyone is in, and no one is out.

These commissions appear to be a consummate example of the informal conquering the formal. Officially, Bivitri Susanti notes, their seats are supposed to be apportioned according to straightforward criteria reflecting parties’ overall strength in parliament, while chairmanships are only supposed to entail basic gavel-swinging authority.⁹³ But since these impersonal rules have no grounding in concrete personal relationships, real practice looks rather different. Informal negotiations can place strategic players on the most *basah* committees (i.e. budget, trade and industry, finance and banking, and energy and mineral resources), providing ample opportunities for lower-ranking members to be included in parliament’s circuits of money politics.⁹⁴

Just as importantly, committee chairmanships provide more informal benefits than their formal powers imply. This suggests that such posts can be shared—via the same logic as cabinet posts—to prevent political opposition from emerging. “The Chairmen

⁹¹ Interview with P. Partogi Nainggolan, Center for Research and Information Services (Pusat Penelitian dan Pelayanan Informasi, or PPPPI) at the Indonesian Parliament, Jakarta, July 23, 2004.

⁹² Interview with Kusananto Anggoro, CSIS, Jakarta, July 23, 2004.

⁹³ Interview with Bivitri Susanti, PSHK, Jakarta, July 21, 2004.

⁹⁴ Thanks to Luky Djani at Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) for his insights on parliamentary commissions.

are like the conductors of the orchestra," says parliamentary researcher P. Partogi Nainggolan.⁹⁵ In a setting where formal rules of procedure are yet to become effectively institutionalized, committee chairmen largely determine the order of business, making them potentially powerful gatekeepers. With so many patronage opportunities at hand, one wonders whether even the best-intentioned party leadership could discipline its members into serving as a vocal opposition in parliament, rather than quietly joining in on the take.

A second informal barrier to the cartel's demise is the recent political background of the two presidential candidates. As noted earlier, both SBY and Megawati have been major players in Indonesia's charmed inner circle since Ciganjur-Plus in January 1999. From a comparative perspective, when more collusive forms of democracy have come under attack elsewhere from delegative-style presidents (and, more rarely, prime ministers), these challengers have normally emerged from outside the traditional political elite. For instance, recent delegative democrats such as Thaksin Shinawatra, Carlos Menem, Alberto Fujimori, and Silvio Berlusconi have parachuted into politics from the world of business; others, such as Joseph Estrada and Hugo Chavez, have used charismatic mass appeal and backing from anti-establishment elements in the military to challenge ruling cartels. SBY and Megawati have precious little in common with such figures. Running roughshod over the party cartel would imply running roughshod over longstanding coalition partners, if not necessarily partisan favorites.

If the informal can truly be expected to conquer the formal, the 2004 presidential election probably means very little in structural terms. Indonesia will likely remain trapped as a collusive democracy, with little prospect for a near-term escape. Yet if Abdurrahman Wahid once became convinced, against all evidence to the contrary, that he might succeed in trampling any and all institutions designed to ensure horizontal accountability, might not a President SBY similarly pursue his own, less fanciful delegative dreams? The fact that delegative democracy almost universally fails does not mean that it is not frequently attempted. If SBY sticks to his early campaign pledge to avoid the *dagang sapi* process until after his electoral mandate has been secured—and his formal bargaining power over the party cartel thus expanded exponentially—he might prove willing to use popular and/or military support as leverage against hostile elements in the bureaucracy and parliament alike.

The 2004 runoff election might thus represent something quite structurally consequential, even if at the level of the two individual candidates it appears to be little more than a face-off between two very familiar figures with indistinguishable policy platforms. It might well represent a fundamental clash between two very different—yet similarly dysfunctional—democratic structures. A Megawati victory would most likely mean extremely little reshaping of the party cartel, and a continuation of collusive democracy. If anything, the fact that Megawati would almost certainly be ineligible to run for another presidential term in 2009 would make her even less accountable to popular concerns than she has been to date.

The prospect that SBY would govern with popular concerns in mind is at least somewhat more promising, not because he differs from Megawati as an individual, but because he would presumably ascend to the presidency at least somewhat less

⁹⁵ Interview with P. Partogi Nainggolan, PPPI, Jakarta, July 23, 2004.

beholden to the party cartel than Megawati would be. The downside is that this also means that SBY is far more likely to try to govern via the delegative path, wreaking havoc with Indonesia's post-Suharto political institutions before they have assumed solid form. Alternatively, SBY might avoid such confrontation and share power with a reconstituted party cartel. His choice of strategy might well depend on which of his informal networks is stronger: his factional ties with military elites, or his coalitional ties with the party cartel.

More optimistically, it is conceivable that the coalitional disruptions accompanying SBY's candidacy might open structural opportunities for more robustly representational forms of politics. The point is not whether SBY has strong democratic credentials per se; the point is that his run for the presidency has both sparked deep tensions within Golkar and called the cementing of the Golkar-PDIP alliance into question. If Golkar and PDIP had been intent on continuing to share power after the 2004 elections, as appeared rather obvious earlier this year, who besides SBY could have prevented this rather dismal prospect from becoming reality? In sum, a significant opposition appears much more likely to emerge from an SBY victory, if only because he is more likely to feel sufficiently emboldened to shape his coalition as he sees fit, and to force a party as large as PDIP into an oppositional stance.

Once some party or group of parties becomes forced to think of itself as an opposition group—even if forced to do so kicking and screaming—it will then have to consider how best to regain access to government power. If a critical mass of PDIP parliamentarians comes to recognize that they initially won overwhelming popular support by appearing to oppose the New Order, then lost it by appearing to betray those principles, narrow self-interest might prompt the party to work to revitalize its mass base.⁹⁶ Similarly, PAN might reflect on its shoddy performance vis-à-vis its closest coalition partner, PKS, and decide that a combination of elite opposition and mass constituency services would be the best way to win popular support. In sum, PKS and SBY might not be alone for long in taking their political acts to the streets.

Yet no one should expect Indonesian party elites to take such steps under anything but severe duress. This begins, but does not end, with the credible threat that popular dissatisfaction might translate into their exclusion from direct access to Jakarta's vast reservoirs of power and patronage.⁹⁷ Collusive democracy as recently experienced fails to meet this basic standard. Delegative democracy might restore some sense of oppositional activity and vertical accountability, but only at the considerable risk that Indonesia's experiment with democratic politics might degenerate into virtual one-man rule, or even be reversed entirely. Under either scenario, low-quality democracy will create ideal conditions for direct military intervention. From this perspective, escaping the accountability trap is not only important for improving Indonesian democracy, but perhaps for preserving it as well.

⁹⁶ One incoming PDIP parliamentarian expressed hopes to me that the party might indeed try to recapture what she sees as its *reformasi* roots. Personal communication, July 2004.

⁹⁷ As the SBY-PKS comparison that launched this essay suggests, parties often find it easier to win mass support by broadcasting media images than by building stronger grassroots organizations. For a fine discussion of factors influencing such party strategies, see Doug Perkins, "Structure and Choice: The Role of Organizations, Patronage, and the Media in Party Formation," in *Party Politics* 2,3 (1996): 355-375. Like Katz and Mair's analysis, Perkins's article draws heavily on Martin Shefter's seminal work.